

YOUTH INTEGRATION PROCESSES IN EURASIA

Liliya ZAINIYEVA

*D.Sc. (Political Science), Professor, Department of Political Science and
Political Technology, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University
(Almaty, Kazakhstan)*

ABSTRACT

Building contacts between young people from different parts of one and the same state, groups of states, and across the world is a highly relevant area of youth policy. A solid basis for these contacts is provided by cooperation between the states

themselves. They are the ones who should see stronger ties between numerous, creative, and promising population groups called “youth” as an effective development tool.

This is why attention to young people and the establishment of an institutional framework for their cooperation should be among the top priorities in strengthening and creating new associations of states. Analysis shows a growing awareness of this need in today's world, as indicated by a faster and more effective response to youth problems on the part of associations of states, both new and long-standing. The youth dimension is incorporated into the general integration mechanism of states, often with the establishment of special youth integration structures. This helps to increase interaction between young people, to seek and find new and more effective forms of such interaction. The form and weightiness of such integration structures depend on the

scale of the group of states and the level of relations between them.

This article examines issues related to international cooperation between young people from different countries. On a global scale, such cooperation is largely fostered by the United Nations. These processes are being actively developed and perfected at the regional level, in various groups of states. The author analyzes the work of associations such as the CIS, SCO, BRICS, CICA, and the Turkic Council, that is, associations of countries with large populations and significant influence in the world community. These countries have large youth cohorts that make a substantial contribution to social development. The article identifies the specific features of the emergence and improvement of youth integration structures and their direct connection with the promotion of international cooperation between states in general.

KEYWORDS: *integration, youth, youth policy, state, forum, festival, summit, council.*

Introduction

There are various factors that promote international youth cooperation. This includes globalization, integration of states into the world community, and development of diverse ties between actors in international relations. One should note the positive role played in these processes by international organizations, primarily the United Nations. The forms of its work vary widely: it aims to reflect cooperation issues in its documents, engage young people in large-scale events, and increase the organizing and coordinating role of its bodies and agencies, especially those whose specific activities are associated with individual countries or groups of countries. Wide opportunities for international cooperation are provided by the new U.N. Youth Strategy (Youth 2030), launched in September 2018. It outlines five priority areas, which cover the key youth-related issues: engaging young people in addressing current problems; supporting their greater access to quality education and healthcare; promoting their economic empowerment through greater access to employment; protecting and promoting their civil and political rights; and supporting young people in situations of conflict and crisis. The Strategy notes that young people constitute a tremendous and essential asset worth investing in, because this investment opens the door to an unparalleled multiplier effect. This is why it is necessary to partner with young people and ensure “they are not only heard but understood, not only engaged but empowered, and not only supporting but leading global efforts and processes.” As I see it, all these issues can be addressed more effectively by developing interna-

tional cooperation, identifying and adopting good practices while taking into account national interests and peculiarities.

The objectives formulated in the Strategy are underpinned by organizational measures, including the creation of a Youth Focal Point in each U.N. country team and mission to support system-wide country level coordination on youth. It would make sense, as proposed in the Strategy, to consider the possibility of establishing youth advisory boards within each relevant U.N. entity to provide a channel for input and feedback from young people in order to collect information and young people's views on U.N. work. Such mechanisms should be put in place in ways that reflect the diversity of young people and their organizations. It is also necessary to establish regular online and offline engagements between young people and U.N. senior managers, including the Secretary-General.¹

Regional Cooperation: Experience of the Commonwealth of Independent States

A study of the process of international cooperation shows that cooperation between countries and between young people at the regional level is an increasingly important component of this process. Active youth cooperation is underway in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and this has been the case practically since its creation. The heads of national youth agencies of the CIS countries first met back in 1993, and the Eurasian Student Association (ESA) was established in 1994 at the initiative of the Lomonosov Moscow State University Student Union. In January 2006, the First Forum of Student and Youth Organization Leaders, held at the Moscow State University, set up an inter-university non-governmental association called "Commonwealth of Student and Youth Organizations." It included representatives of more than 60 higher education institutions and youth movements, many of which were active participants in the ESA.²

On 25 November, 2005, the CIS states signed an Agreement on Youth Cooperation, which provided for the establishment of a Youth Council under the CIS Executive Committee. The Council is tasked to consider issues related to the implementation of the agreement, develop recommendations, provide assistance in implementing national programs, and sum up the experience of different states and international organizations in working with young people. The experience of the Commonwealth of Independent States clearly demonstrates that youth development processes and the development of states cannot be separated. Speaking at the 11th Congress of the Eurasian Association of Universities in March 2009, First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev said that work with young people was a special area of integration. "Without efforts in this area," he noted, "the new generation of our citizens may lose the binding thread that holds our peoples together. We should not allow this to happen... It is necessary to support, on a systemic basis, various forms of youth exchange between our countries and interaction between youth organizations and youth leaders."³ At the beginning of 2019, the CIS had nine members: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

¹ See: "Molodyozhnaia strategiia OON 'Molodyozh—2030'," available at [un.by/images/news/2018/UN_Youth_Strategy-Russian.pdf], 23 February, 2019.

² See: "Materialy IV Foruma liderov studencheskikh i molodyozhnykh organizatsii stran SNG, 23-25 yanvaria 2009," *Voprosy molodyozhnoi politiki*, Issue V, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, 2009, pp. 18-20.

³ N.A. Nazarbayev, "Integratsiia—slishkom vazhnoye delo, chtoby doveriat yeyo tolko politikam!" in: *Kogda mysl—materialna*, Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Moscow, 2012, p. 90.

The CIS member states have adopted a Strategy of International Youth Cooperation to 2020. It is a set of agreed approaches to the key goals, objectives, principles, areas, forms, and mechanisms of the development of youth cooperation in the post-Soviet space. Its key goals include unlocking the educational, social, spiritual, and moral potential of the younger generation and strengthening friendship and cooperation between the CIS nations. These goals are realized through both cross-border and CIS-wide cooperation. For example, it has become standard practice for cross-border cooperation forums held by Kazakhstan and Russia to host various youth events.

In 2018, the Birlik-Edinstvo.KZ International Youth Forum of Cross-Border Cooperation was held for the eighth time in the Pavlodar Region of Kazakhstan. That year, the traditional challenge cup went to Zhangyru Zholy, the youth movement of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan (APK). This forum, organized by the regional APK, has already become something of a signature event for the Pavlodar Irtysh region. It was attended by more than two thousand young leaders from all regions of Kazakhstan and from border regions of other CIS and non-CIS countries: Russia, France, Germany, Poland, Nigeria, and Armenia. The topics presented for discussion are of current interest. In 2018, the issues raised related to patriotic education, mediation mechanisms, and the development of the volunteer movement. For the first time, the Forum was held not in the regional center, but in Bayanaul, a jewel of the Pavlodar Irtysh region. One of the Forum's main dialog platforms focused on the APK youth movement and its activities in fostering Kazakhstan patriotism and tolerance. Among the key events of the Forum was not only the presentation of the challenge cup to the APK movement, but also the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between the Coordination Council of Youth Associations of the Pavlodar Region APK and the Omsk regional branch of the Youth Assembly of the Peoples of Russia.⁴

One should also mention the Zhas Aktobe annual forum. In 2017, this international youth education forum, aimed at creating conditions for the realization of the creative, scientific, business, spiritual, and moral potential of young people, brought together representatives from various regions of Kazakhstan and neighboring regions of Russia: Ulyanovsk and Orenburg regions and the Republic of Bashkortostan. The main issues discussed related to diplomacy, integration into the international community, rhetorical and business negotiation skills, smart cities, and young people's contribution to national development.⁵

Youth problems are addressed at various CIS events. For example, the 13th Forum of Creative and Academic Intellectuals of the CIS Member States was held in Astana (Kazakhstan) in June 2018 on the theme "Dialog in the CIS: Prospects for Humanitarian Cooperation in the 21st Century" in the context of the Year of Culture in the CIS. Its participants discussed, among other things, concrete measures to engage young people in interstate cooperation.⁶

Development of cooperation between states generates new forms of contact between young people. Speaking at the Kazan Federal University during a working visit to the Republic of Tatarstan (Russia) in June 2018, the First President of Kazakhstan focused attention on the need to strengthen friendship between Kazakhstan and Russia and suggested holding a number of events designed to engage young people. It would make sense, he said, to organize a forum of young leaders of Kazakhstan and Russia so as to enable them to exchange ideas and put forward concrete proposals on the most relevant issues related to the development of the two countries. It is also necessary to increase cultural exchange by holding annual contests of young performers, artists, and musicians in order to support young talents in both countries, organize regular sporting competitions for young athletes, etc.⁷

⁴ See: Ye. Beskorsaia, "Vremia molodykh," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 6 September, 2018.

⁵ See: Zh. Baiturin, "Zhas Aktobe sobral druzei," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 1 August, 2017.

⁶ See: L. Syzdykova, "Oriyentiry gumanitarnogo sotrudnichestva," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 20 June, 2018.

⁷ See: "Traditsii druzhby nasleduet molodyozh," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 18 June, 2018.

Youth Cooperation in Central Asia

Cooperation between young people in Central Asia has become more active. The work of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) deserves attention. It is a platform for dialog between parliamentarians, exchange of experience on population and development issues, and formulation of a common strategy on reproductive health and protection of women's rights. The Forum has three priorities: women's empowerment, investment in youth, and active aging. At a meeting in Astana in September 2017, the Forum's senior officers and the Kazakhstan side expressed an interest in further collaboration. In June 2018, the heads of international organizations, representatives of government agencies of Central Asian countries and NGOs, and experts met in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) at an International Conference on the Role of Youth in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization That Lead to Terrorism. Kazakhstan suggested considering the possibility of creating a Youth Council of Central Asian Countries as an effective mechanism for conducting systematic work.⁸

The importance of the Asian process was best demonstrated by a conference called "Investing in Youth. Leaving No One Behind," held in Astana in October 2018. It brought together parliamentarians, experts, and representatives of government agencies, international organizations, and youth-led NGOs from 35 countries. The event was organized by the Majilis (lower house of parliament) and the Ministry of Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan jointly with the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA). Its participants discussed issues related to the rights and interests of young people, problems preventing the younger generation from realizing its potential, and measures to overcome these problems. They also shared good practices in legislation and in the development and implementation of projects and programs aimed at young people.

Conference participants noted the important role of the younger generation in the world community in general and particularly in the regions, including Central Asia. Young people in this region make up more than 60% of the population. They are the most important population group, which can be strengthened by ensuring access to education and creating better employment opportunities for young people. Otherwise, this group could become the main source of social discontent and instability. This is why it is necessary to invest in youth in all regions, especially in youth education. As the U.N. Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth said in a video message to the Conference participants, young people are the ones who will play the key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The moment has come, he said, when youth can actually be an agent of change as a powerful force for transformation. Today, young people have an opportunity to change the world.⁹

The United Nations also pays considerable attention to adjacent large groups of states. Among them, a prominent place belongs to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), whose members are Kazakhstan, China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, and Pakistan. In November 2018, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres spoke at a special joint event on the theme "U.N. and SCO: Cooperation Aimed at Strengthening Peace, Security and Stability." He noted that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization "is a leading player in regional diplomacy promoting multilateralism and fostering cooperation" in addressing the most pressing peace and security issues in Eurasia. He emphasized that the SCO represents the largest combined population of any regional grouping in the world: over 3 billion women and men. Young people, he said, are a "vital constituency for all our efforts towards peace and stability, and there is a perfect alignment between the strategies of our two

⁸ See: N. Akopyan, "Chetvert veka partnyorstva," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 20 September, 2017; Ye. Ivanova, "Razvivat potentsial molodyozhi," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 21 September, 2017; idem, "Zadeistvovat potentsial molodyozhi," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 14 June, 2018.

⁹ See: L. Tusupbekova, "Investirovat v nastoiashchee dlia budushchego," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 22 October, 2018.

organizations in relation to youth. Our new strategy for young people, Youth 2030, aims to scale up global, regional, and national action to meet young people's needs, realize their rights, and tap into their abilities as agents of change."¹⁰

The SCO's youth policy aims to support the creative aspirations of young people. In May 2007, a meeting of representatives of the SCO heads of state supported the concept for the creation of an SCO Youth Council presented by the Russian Union of Youth and the Youth Public Chamber of Russia. In October of the same year, representatives of youth organizations of the SCO countries met in Moscow, where they signed a joint statement on establishing a Youth Association of the SCO. At a summit in Qingdao in June 2018, the SCO heads of state adopted a Joint Appeal to Young People. The first SCO Youth Assembly, which opened in the Chinese city of Dongfang on 9 November, 2018, was a response to that appeal and, at the same time, a new form of communication between young people, a platform for educating young political leaders and diplomats. Its theme was "SCO Youth against Terrorism and Extremism."

The SCO Secretary-General regularly meets with young people. Such a meeting with activists of the SCO Youth League, attended by students from SCO member states studying in Beijing, was held at the SCO headquarters in August 2018. The theme was "Knowledge as a Way to Success."

The SCO Youth Council was established in 2007 to consolidate young people. The Regulations on the Council define it as a body that coordinates the activities of its constituent youth organizations, associations, and movements in the areas of activity of the SCO member states. It functions in collaboration with the SCO Secretariat and other governing bodies. Its main tasks include promotion of effective regional cooperation between national youth organizations, associations, and movements, establishment of direct contacts between them, development of cooperation plans and programs, engagement of young people in humanitarian projects, and information exchange.

The founders of the Youth Council are national youth organizations, associations, and movements of the SCO member states: the Youth Congress of Kazakhstan; Zhas Otan, the youth wing of the Nur Otan Democratic People's Party; the All-China Youth Federation; the Youth Public Council of Kyrgyzstan; the Russian Union of Youth; the Youth Public Chamber of Russia; and the Youth Union of Tajikistan. The Youth Council is formed on a parity basis, with no more than six members from each National Part, which consist of representatives of national youth organizations of the Council's founders. New members are admitted to the Council on its recommendation. To coordinate and control the implementation of Council decisions, one of its National Parts, depending on which country currently chairs the SCO, holds the chairmanship of the Council.¹¹ In accordance with the Regulations on the Council, it meets at least once a year in different countries, sometimes at youth forums.

The first SCO Youth Forum, which discussed issues related to youth involvement in the fight against drugs, extremism, terrorism, and separatism, as well as the problems of youth entrepreneurship, took place in Cholpon-Ata (Kyrgyzstan) in September 2011. The 2012 Youth Forum in Beijing focused on the Great Silk Road, cultural exchanges in the Eurasian region, and regional economic cooperation. In September 2014, young people engaged in international cooperation projects and experts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and SCO observer states met in Belokurikha (Russian Federation). The purpose of the event was to connect aspiring entrepreneurs with representatives of big business from SCO countries. In 2017, the SCO Youth Forum was hosted by Astana. Its main theme was development of the green economy, tourism, and

¹⁰ Generalnyi sekretar OON: "ShOS—vedushchi igrok regionalnoi diplomatii, natselennyi na protivodeistviye ugrozam miru i bezopasnosti v Yevrazii," 27 November, 2018, available at [<http://rus.sectesco.org/news/20181128/491370.html>], 6 February, 2019.

¹¹ See: "Polozheniye o Molodyozhnom sovete Shankhaiskoi organizatsii sotrudnichestva," available at [<https://pandia.ru/text/77/433/1201.php>], 8 February, 2019.

sports, as well as promotion of further comprehensive cooperation between young people. SCO Forums of Young Leaders are also being held (with the participation of the Youth Council). The first such forum took place in Omsk in 2016, and the second in Khabarovsk in September 2018.

Time has shown the relevance of the Youth Council and other youth policy structures for the development of good neighborly and mutually beneficial relations between the SCO countries. They have become an effective platform for expanding and seeking new forms of cooperation between youth organizations from different countries.

Youth Cooperation in the BRICS

In my view, youth integration processes in the SCO have inevitably affected the situation in the BRICS group of countries. The association includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The First Youth Summit of these states took place in Kazan (Russia) on 3-8 July, 2015, on the eve of the 7th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the BRICS countries in Ufa (Russia). Its main purpose was to establish international cooperation and share experience. The Summit participants—250 leaders—noted that BRICS has a future only if it works with young people, and this implies the need to invest in youth. On 6 July, 2015, BRICS youth ministers met in Kazan within the framework of the Youth Summit and signed a memorandum of understanding on youth policy in these countries, which was presented at a meeting of BRICS heads of state in Ufa.

At the end of July 2015, Ufa hosted the Youth Forum of the SCO and BRICS countries. The fact that the tasks of the two associations are intertwined and complementary is important for such dynamic development of cooperation. At the same time, there are specific features in the activity of each association. Overall, however, this cooperation can be called unique. The Forum brought together more than a hundred young leaders from Russia, Brazil, India, China, South Africa, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan engaged in public activity, business, politics, and diplomacy. On that platform, they were able to meet each other, share experience, and map out ways of further cooperation.

The 3rd BRICS and SCO Youth Forum, held in Sochi in 2017 as part of the 19th World Festival of Youth and Students, focused on cooperation between national youth associations and the priorities of youth policy. The Brazilian director of the Moscow-based Ibero-American Institute and the president of the BRICS United Business Cooperation Center, Professor Vicente Barrientos, visited the Forum to assist Eurasian youth in joining efforts in the field of education. He told the Forum participants about the opportunities for promoting faster development of integration of higher education institutions in Russia and in the BRICS and SCO countries among themselves and with those of other countries in the field of postgraduate education. This includes, among other things, wider use of the Internet, which cuts costs and shortens distances. There were proposals to intensify cooperation in youth sports and to hold more competitions between national youth teams.

Representatives of countries that are not part of the BRICS or the SCO but are members of the EAEU also participated in the 3rd Youth Forum. For example, there was a large youth delegation from Armenia, which took part in the work of this forum for the first time. The young people of Belarus were represented at the event. Thus, it created yet another hub, this time for communication between young people from three large groups of states: BRICS, SCO, and EAEU. Speaking at the BRICS Summit in Ufa on 9 July, 2015, the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan noted that with the emergence of a multipolar world and growing interdependence between countries and regions, associations such as the EAEU, SCO, and BRICS play an increasing role. The unprecedented formula of these associations is an indicator of the unity and solidarity of the largest part of the

planet's population on the way to cooperation for security and prosperity. Their complementary potential and combined capabilities can play a positive role in addressing global issues.¹²

Youth Integration in the CICA

Youth cooperation has also been developing within the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The need to expand work with young people in this association of states and to make it more systematic, concrete, and purposeful was highlighted at the CICA International Conference in Astana in June 2012 on the theme "Youth Policy of the CICA Member States: Building the Future Together." The event was timed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the initiative to establish the CICA launched by the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Representatives of 23 states—young parliamentarians, government and embassy employees, and members of national youth organizations—discussed how to unlock the creative potential of young people, promote their cooperation, and develop mutual understanding between them. Speakers at the Conference raised issues related to cooperation between national executive bodies in implementing joint projects in support of youth. At a Conference roundtable on the current state and problems of youth policy and ways to address them, its participants spoke of youth policy in their countries with focus on its priority areas. The Conference speeches reflected the active interest of the CICA countries in developing bilateral and multilateral relations between youth organizations and young people in general. The Conference supported the proposal of Kazakhstan's representatives to create a CICA Youth Council which could be particularly useful in exchanging experience and implementing joint youth projects of the CICA member states. The participants in the event were acquainted with the approach to youth policy in Kazakhstan. At the end of the Conference, its participants adopted an appeal to the younger generation of this group of countries.

The CICA Youth Council was established by decision of the 4th CICA Summit in Shanghai in May 2014. The Council is a deliberative and advisory body that coordinates the activities of its member organizations, associations, and movements in the CICA focus areas. The first informal meeting of the Council on the theme of intercultural youth dialogue as the basis for trust in Asia was held in Ust-Kamenogorsk (Russia) in August 2014 in the wake of the International Youth and Youth Organizations Camp. It featured dialog platforms, master classes to improve youth leadership skills, and sporting and entertainment events. The meeting was organized by the Youth Congress of Kazakhstan and the CICA Secretariat with the assistance of the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan and the Akimat (regional government) of the East Kazakhstan Region. It was attended by representatives of eight CICA countries: Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan, China, Turkey, Iraq, and Palestine. The main purpose of the event—to develop contacts between young people at the interstate level—was achieved. One should also mention the activities of the CICA Civil Forum of National Cultural Centers, which has been meeting for ten years under the auspices of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. In 2018, the event took place under the motto "With Love to Astana" to celebrate the capital's 20th anniversary. One of the Forum's tasks is to develop cultural and business ties between young people of the CICA member countries.¹³

¹² See: *Pervyi Prezident Respubliki Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. Khronika deiatelnosti. 2015 god*, Delovoi mir, Astana, 2016, pp. 297, 299.

¹³ See: *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 8 June, 2012; L. Syzdykova, "Sila narodnoi diplomatii," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 29 June, 2018.

Youth Policy in the Turkic Council

Youth has also become a focus of attention for the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States (CCTS or Turkic Council), which includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. Youth festivals, youth camps, and courses for young diplomats are held under its auspices. The first Turkic Council University Sports Games took place in April 2018 with the participation of a national student team from Kazakhstan. The first three World Nomad Games, hosted by Kyrgyzstan, were important events for the Turkic world. The 6th Summit of the Turkic Council in September 2018 on the theme of “Youth and National Sports” noted that creating conditions for young people was a sacred duty and responsibility of each state. Such work depends directly on the country’s economic capabilities. Education of young people in a spirit of respect for the history, culture, language, and traditions of brotherly peoples and inter-religious tolerance is of special importance. The Summit adopted a Joint Statement of the Turkic Council States on the Development of Cooperation in the Field of Youth and National Sports. Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed the establishment of a forum of young leaders of the Turkic Council.

Meetings of youth and sports ministers are an established practice in the Turkic Council. The third such meeting was held in Astana in December 2018. Its participants were informed about the main aspects of implementation of state youth policy in Kazakhstan and the prospects of cooperation in the Turkic Council, considering that 2019 was declared Year of Youth in the republic. Kazakhstan expressed its willingness to host the Second Forum of Young Leaders of the Turkic Council in 2019. The meeting also considered questions of holding the 4th International Youth Camp and the 3rd International Youth Festival of the Turkic Council.¹⁴

Conclusion

Thus, youth integration processes have accelerated in recent years. The creation of specialized youth agencies and organizations has become characteristic not only of individual states, but also of their associations. Moreover, integration processes are at work between the youth structures of large associations of states. They are driven by factors such as greater focus on youth and youth associations in individual states and international organizations and improvement of youth policy at different levels of its implementation.

Practice shows that a significant event in the life of a particular group of states can be a spur to the development of youth cooperation. An example of such a relationship is provided, in my view, by the development and signing of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea by the five Caspian states: Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia, and Turkmenistan. In September 2017, the First International Youth Forum of this group of states, the Caspian Youth Forum: Zhas. Zhalyn. Zhan-gyru, took place at the new Youth Palace in Aktau (Kazakhstan). Among its 500 participants were leaders of youth organizations, young researchers, politicians, entrepreneurs, cultural workers, athletes, and members of the media from the Caspian states, as well as the heads of youth policy departments of Kazakhstan regions and the cities of Astana and Almaty. The Forum’s purpose is to foster intercultural dialog, share best practices and innovations in the field of youth policy, and consolidate

¹⁴ See: Yu. Mager, “Gorizonty tiurkskoi integratsii,” *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 4 September, 2018; K. Nurgaliyeva, “Budushcheye za molodyozhyu,” *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 5 September, 2018; M. Irzhanov, “Dorogu molodym,” *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 6 December, 2018.

youth organizations and young leaders of the Caspian states. A youth camp called Caspi Leader Camp, organized on the premises of the Baldauren Camp within the framework of the Caspian Youth Forum, was designed to motivate young people to do something interesting and useful for the country's development.¹⁵

More active youth cooperation, in turn, is of great help in developing state foreign policy, strengthening international structures, improving them organizationally, and enhancing their efficiency. It is important to create in good time robust and flexible mechanisms for developing international youth cooperation in the context of state youth and foreign policy, taking into account regional and global trends in social development.

¹⁵ See: A. Deviatkina, "Shkola motivatsii," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 21 September, 2017; idem, "Imeia chotki orientir," *Kazakhstanskaia pravda*, 27 September, 2017.