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# Development of Bilateral Relations Between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in 1993-2013

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**Abstract.** In the period from 1993 to 2013, relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan developed steadily based on historical, cultural, and linguistic commonality, mutual respect, and strategic interests. The states in question, which became independent after the collapse of the USSR, built their bilateral ties, simultaneously forming an independent foreign policy identity and strengthening their positions in the international arena. Cooperation in the energy sector acquired special significance in bilateral relations. The signing of an agreement on cooperation in the oil and gas industry in 1996, as well as the 2006 agreement on the transportation of Kazakh oil through the Caspian Sea and the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, became breakthrough steps in bilateral relations. Kazakhstan received a reliable route for the export of its hydrocarbons, and Azerbaijan received a strategic partner in the development of its transit infrastructure. The article analyzes the development of bilateral relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan in the period from 1993 to 2013. The key stages of cooperation in the political, economic, energy, and humanitarian spheres are considered. Based on the study of diplomatic initiatives and economic indicators, the main factors that contributed to the development of mutually beneficial cooperation and the formation of a solid base for further interaction between the two countries are identified. The article highlights the main achievements and significant agreements that laid the foundation for further strategic interaction in the 21st century. The work uses the methods of comparative historical analysis, a systems approach, as well as elements of content analysis of official documents and speeches. The analysis of bilateral relations is based on the study of political, economic, and cultural aspects of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, with the involvement of both official sources and scientific literature. The work analyzes the key interstate treaties between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, which made it possible to identify the legal basis and institutional mechanisms for cooperation between the two countries. In conclusion, it is emphasized that relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the period under review were characterized by stable growth and deepening of multi-level interaction, which created a solid foundation for a long-term mutually beneficial alliance. Prospects for further development of the partnership are associated with the implementation of joint infrastructure and energy projects, as well as with strengthening coordination on topical issues of regional security and sustainable development. Thus, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan continue to form a model of constructive cooperation based on common interests, historical and cultural ties.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan; international cooperation; treaties; Caspian; energy security; oil, politics; economics; culture

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# Развитие двусторонних отношений между Азербайджаном и Казахстаном в 1993-2013 гг.

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**Аннотация.** В период с 1993 по 2013 годы отношения между Азербайджанской Республикой и Республикой Казахстан прочно развивались на основе исторической, культурной и языковой общности, взаимного уважения и стратегических интересов. Рассматриваемые государства, ставшие независимыми после развала СССР, выстраивали свои двусторонние связи, одновременно формируя самостоятельную внешнеполитическую идентичность и укрепляя позиции на международной арене. Особое значение в двусторонних отношениях приобрело сотрудничество в энергетической сфере. Подписание в 1996 году соглашения о сотрудничестве в нефтегазовой промышленности, а также договор 2006 года о транспортировке казахстанской нефти через Каспий и по нефтепроводу Баку-Тбилиси-Джейхан стали прорывными шагами в двустороннем отношении. Казахстан получил надёжный маршрут экспорта своих углеводородов, а Азербайджан – стратегического партнёра по развитию своей транзитной инфраструктуры. В данной работе рассматривается процесс развития двусторонних отношений между Республикой Азербайджан и Республикой Казахстан в 1993–2013 годах. Особое внимание уделено ключевым этапам формирования сотрудничества в политической, экономической, энергетической и гуманитарной областях. На основе изучения дипломатических шагов и экономических данных выявляются основные факторы, содействовавшие развитию взаимовыгодного сотрудничества и формированию надежного фундамента для будущего взаимодействия между двумя странами. В статье выделяются основные достижения и ключевые соглашения, которые заложили основу для дальнейшего стратегического партнерства в XXI веке. В работе использованы методы сравнительно-исторического анализа, системный подход, а также элементы контент-анализа официальных документов и выступлений. Анализ азербайджано-казахстанских двусторонних отношений осуществлён на основе комплексного изучения различных аспектов взаимодействия между двумя государствами с опорой на официальные документы, а также научно-аналитические источники. В рамках исследования проведён всесторонний анализ основополагающих межгосударственных соглашений, заключённых между Азербайджаном и Казахстаном, что позволило выявить нормативно-правовую базу и институциональные механизмы, обеспечивающие функционирование и развитие двустороннего сотрудничества. В заключение подчеркивается, что отношения между Азербайджаном и Казахстаном в рассматриваемый период характеризовались стабильным ростом и углублением многоуровневого взаимодействия, что создало прочную основу для долгосрочного взаимовыгодного альянса. Перспективы дальнейшего развития партнерства связаны с реализацией совместных инфраструктурных и энергетических проектов, а также с усилением координации по актуальным вопросам региональной безопасности и устойчивого развития. Таким образом, Азербайджан и Казахстан

продолжают формировать модель конструктивного сотрудничества, основанную на общности интересов, исторических и культурных связей.
**Ключевые слова:** Азербайджан; Казахстан; международное сотрудничество; договоры; Каспий; энергетическая безопасность; нефть; политика; экономика; культура

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# Әзербайжан мен Қазақстан арасындағы екіжақты қатынастардың дамуы (1993-2013 жж.)

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**Андатпа.** 1993 жылдан 2013 жылға дейінгі кезеңде Әзірбайжан Республикасы мен Қазақстан Республикасы арасындағы қарым-қатынастар тарихи, мәдени және тілдік ортақтыққа, өзара құрмет пен стратегиялық мүдделерге негізделген тұрақты дамыды. КСРО ыдырағаннан кейін тәуелсіздікке қол жеткізген аталған мемлекеттер екіжақты байланыстарын құрып, бір мезгілде тәуелсіз сыртқы саяси бірегейлікті қалыптастырып, халықаралық аренадағы ұстанымдарын нығайтты. Екіжақты қатынастарда энергетика саласындағы ынтымақтастық ерекше маңызға ие болды. 1996 жылы мұнай-газ саласындағы ынтымақтастық туралы келісімге, сондай-ақ 2006 жылғы Қазақстан мұнайын Каспий теңізі және Баку-Тбилиси-Жейхан мұнай құбыры арқылы тасымалдау туралы келісімге қол қою екіжақты қарым-қатынастардағы серпінді қадамдар болды. Қазақстан көмірсутегі шикізатын экспорттаудың сенімді бағытын алды, ал Әзірбайжан транзиттік инфрақұрылымын дамытуда стратегиялық әріптеске ие болды. Мақалада 1993-2013 жылдар аралығындағы Әзірбайжан Республикасы мен Қазақстан Республикасы арасындағы екіжақты қарым-қатынастардың дамуы талданады. Саяси, экономикалық, энергетикалық және гуманитарлық салалардағы ынтымақтастықтың негізгі кезеңдері қарастырылады. Дипломатиялық бастамалар мен экономикалық көрсеткіштерді зерделеу негізінде өзара тиімді ынтымақтастықты дамытуға және екі елдің одан әрі өзара іс-қимылының берік негізін қалыптастыруға ықпал еткен негізгі факторлар айқындалды. Мақалада 21 ғасырдағы одан әрі стратегиялық өзара іс-қимылдың негізін қалаған негізгі жетістіктер мен маңызды келісімдер көрсетілген. Жұмыста салыстырмалы тарихи талдау әдістері, жүйелік көзқарас, сондай-ақ ресми құжаттар мен баяндамаларды мазмұндық талдау элементтері қолданылады. Екіжақты қарым-қатынастарды талдау ресми дереккөздерді де, ғылыми әдебиеттерді де тарта отырып, Әзірбайжан мен Қазақстан арасындағы ынтымақтастықтың саяси, экономикалық және мәдени аспектілерін зерттеуге негізделген. Жұмыста екі ел арасындағы ынтымақтастықтың құқықтық негіздері мен институционалдық тетіктерін анықтауға мүмкіндік берген Әзербайжан мен Қазақстан арасындағы негізгі мемлекетаралық шарттар талданады. Қорытындылай келе, қарастырылып отырған кезеңде Әзірбайжан мен Қазақстан арасындағы қарым-қатынастар көп деңгейлі өзара іс-қимылдың тұрақты өсуімен және тереңдеуімен сипатталды, бұл ұзақ мерзімді өзара тиімді одақ үшін берік негіз құрды. Әріптестікті одан әрі дамыту перспективалары

бірлескен инфрақұрылымдық және энергетикалық жобаларды жүзеге асырумен, сондай-ақ өңірлік қауіпсіздік пен тұрақты дамудың өзекті мәселелері бойынша үйлестіруді күшейтумен байланысты. Осылайша, Әзірбайжан мен Қазақстан ортақ мүдделерге, тарихи және мәдени байланыстарға негізделген сындарлы ынтымақтастық үлгісін қалыптастыруда.
**Түйін сөздер:** Әзірбайжан; Қазақстан; халықаралық ынтымақтастық; шарттар; Каспий; энергетикалық қауіпсіздік; мұнай; саясат; экономика; мәдениет

## *Introduction*

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, which became independent states, began to form bilateral relations on a new basis. The period 1993-2013 covers two decades, during which the interaction between the two countries developed in political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian spheres. Both states are united not only by common historical and cultural roots, but also by strategic interests within the framework of such international organizations as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the International Organization of Turkic Culture and others.

At the same time, external factors had a significant impact on the nature and dynamics of Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan relations. Russia, maintaining the status of the most important player in the post-Soviet space, sought to keep both Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the sphere of its political and economic influence. Through the mechanisms of the CIS, the CSTO (for Kazakhstan), and energy cooperation, Moscow influenced the strategic decisions of both countries, especially in matters of energy exports and regional security.

In the period under review, China gradually increased its presence in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, promoting initiatives in the transport, logistics and energy sectors. For Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, Beijing became an alternative partner interested in developing transit routes and energy projects, which contributed to the intensification of interaction between the two states in the sphere of East-West transport corridors.

On the contrary, the European Union showed interest in the South Caucasus and Central Asia primarily through the prism of energy security and diversification of hydrocarbon supplies. For Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, this opened up opportunities to strengthen cooperation within the framework of the Trans-Caspian Transport Route project, as well as attract investment in the energy sector. The EU also promoted the development of humanitarian ties and educational programs, which indirectly stimulated interaction between the two countries. Thus, in 1993–2013, bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were formed not only based on domestic needs and common historical and cultural ties, but also under the influence of external factors. Russia sought to maintain its dominance, China strengthened its economic presence and transport initiatives, and the EU acted as a source of investment and a partner in the energy sector. All this together contributed to the fact that Baku and Astana sought a balance between the interests of external actors and their own strategic priorities, which gave their interaction a multi-layered and flexible nature.

The relevance of this topic is due to the need to analyze the dynamics of Azerbaijani-Kazakh cooperation in the context of post-Soviet transformation and the search for new forms of

regional interaction. The purpose of the article is a comprehensive review of the key stages and directions of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in 1993-2013.

### *Materials and methods*

The methodological basis of the study is the historical-chronological and comparative-legal methods, allowing for tracing the evolution of bilateral relations and identifying key stages of the institutionalization of partnership. The use of content analysis of official sources made it possible to identify the main vectors of foreign policy interaction between the two states. Particularly important documents are analyzed in their legal context, taking into account the political situation of the period under consideration.

### *Literature Review*

The study uses bilateral agreements and official documents reflecting the main stages of cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan in 1993–2013. Key sources include the Treaty on Strategic Partnership and Allied Relations (Key sources include the Treaty on Strategic 2005), which establishes the political basis for interaction, and the Nakhchivan Agreement (Nakhchivan Agreement 2009), which confirmed the desire to deepen integration within the Turkic-speaking states.

Considerable attention is paid to energy relations, primarily the Agreement on Oil Transportation through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan System (Primarily the Agreement on Oil Transportation 2006) and the Agreement on Cooperation in the Oil and Gas Industry (the Agreement on Cooperation in the Oil 1997), which became the basis for energy partnership. Issues of the legal regime of the Caspian Sea are covered in the agreements on the delimitation of the Caspian seabed (Caspian Sea are covered 2001, 2003) and the joint statement of the presidents (1996).

Economic and transport cooperation is analyzed based on the agreements of 1993, as well as documents regulating scientific, technical, humanitarian and social cooperation – in particular, agreements in the field of health care, youth policy, science, pension provision and visa-free travel of citizens. Thus, the analyzed sources and empirical data contribute to the formation of a holistic and deeply reasoned idea of the process of institutionalization and strengthening of the legal and political foundations of bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan in the considered chronological period.

### *Results and discussion*

Being geostrategically located in the Caucasus region, Azerbaijan maintains multifaceted and mutually beneficial relations with the Central Asian states, which are manifested in various areas of interstate interaction - including historical and cultural heritage, economic cooperation, political dialogue and other forms of interregional partnership. These relations are based not only on a common Turkic identity, but also on centuries-old traditions of cooperation, similar mentalities and mutual interests. Azerbaijan has become a key participant in projects aimed at transporting oil, gas and other goods from Central Asia to Europe. Important international

corridors, such as the Trans-Caspian route, which connects China, Central Asian countries and Europe, pass through its territory. This turns Azerbaijan into an important transit country and a strategic partner for the states of the region.

A common Turkic cultural foundation contributes to the rapprochement of peoples. In this context, the Organization of Turkic States, of which both Azerbaijan and a number of Central Asian countries are members, plays an active role. Regular meetings, forums, educational and cultural exchanges contribute to strengthening mutual understanding and friendship between peoples.

It should be noted that the Organization of Turkic States is an international association of Turkic-speaking countries, the purpose of which is to strengthen cooperation in the political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres. The organization was established on October 3, 2009, by the Nakhichevan Agreement signed between Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey in Nakhichevan. The main operational goals and objectives of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States are defined by the Nakhichevan Agreement and are as follows:

- strengthening mutual trust between the parties;
- establishing peace in the region and the world;
- developing common positions on foreign policy issues;
- coordinating actions in the fight against international terrorism, separatism, extremism and transnational crime;
- strengthening regional and bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest;
- creating favorable conditions for trade and investment;
- striving for comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development;
- expanding interactions in the fields of science, technology, education and culture;
- encouraging interaction between the media, as well as the exchange of information on a wider scale;
- strengthening cooperation in the field of law and facilitating the exchange of legal information (Nakhchivan Agreement on the Establishment of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States 2009).

Established based on common historical heritage, linguistic and cultural unity, the organization plays an increasingly prominent role in the Eurasian space. The organization includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan as full members. This organization plays an important role in preserving and popularizing the Turkic cultural heritage. Forums, festivals, and conferences aimed at developing a common cultural space are regularly held. Student exchange programs, joint educational projects contribute to the formation of a new generation that understands the importance of the unity of the Turkic world.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has repeatedly emphasized the strategic importance of the integration of the Turkic countries. After the Second Karabakh War, the role of Azerbaijan increased significantly: the country strengthened its authority and became an example of successful defense of territorial integrity, which found support among Turkic partners.

Kazakhstan is a country in Central Asia, possessing enormous natural resources and occupying an important geopolitical position between Europe and Asia. As one of the largest post-Soviet republics, Kazakhstan is actively developing its economy, transport infrastructure and international cooperation. After gaining state independence in the early 1990s, the Republic

of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan began to purposefully build sustainable bilateral relations based on the common historical and cultural heritage and similar strategic interests in the political, economic and humanitarian areas of interstate interaction. These relations gradually turned into a strategic partnership, important for the stability and development of the region.

The foundations of the long-term strategy of bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan were formed with the direct participation of the national leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev and the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev. Possessing strategic political thinking, as well as a deep understanding of the historical and cultural community of the peoples of the two countries, these statesmen played a key role in the formation of a sustainable conceptual and institutional basis for Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan cooperation.

The official establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan took place on August 30, 1992, marking the beginning of an institutionalized interstate dialogue. In January 1993, the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan began to function in Azerbaijan, and in March 2004, the diplomatic mission of Azerbaijan in Kazakhstan was opened. A significant step in expanding the bilateral diplomatic presence was the opening of the Consulate General of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the city of Aktau in September 2008. After gaining independence, several agreements were signed between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in various areas of activity. Below, we will consider some of them. On February 24, 1993, the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Basic Principles of Relations in the Field of Transport" was signed. The parties agreed to ensure conditions for the unimpeded passage of vehicles, with the exception of goods prohibited by law, transportation and safety of goods and products of the parties on their territory, including those in transit to third countries, as well as for the pumping of gas through transport communications located on their administrative territories. A similar procedure is established for the use of waterways and airspace by sea and aircraft of the contracting parties. The procedure for control over transit goods, as well as the collection of customs duties and other customs issues, is determined by the customs services of the contracting parties in separate agreements (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Basic Principles of Relations in the Field of Transport, 1993).

On February 24, 1993, the two republics also signed the “Agreement on the Principles of Trade and Economic Cooperation.” This was one of the first official documents that laid the foundation for the formation of bilateral economic ties between the two newly independent states. The purpose of the agreement was to create a legal basis for sustainable and mutually beneficial economic cooperation. It defined the general principles of cooperation, such as equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for the national legislation of the parties. The main focus was on issues of developing trade, expanding economic ties, creating favorable conditions for investment, and ensuring access to each other’s markets (Agreement on the Principles of Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan for 1993, 1993). During the official visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to the Republic of Azerbaijan on September 16, 1996, the Joint Statement of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Caspian

Sea was signed, reflecting the consolidated position of the parties on key aspects of the Caspian problem. The document emphasized the priority and urgency of developing the international legal status of the Caspian Sea. Particular attention was paid to the need to ensure the activities of the Caspian states in accordance with the norms and principles of the UN Charter, to preserve the Caspian region as an area of peace, good neighborliness and mutual respect, as well as the need to delimit the water area. The parties agreed that the right to navigation in the Caspian Sea should belong exclusively to the coastal states. (Joint Statement on the Caspian Sea, adopted by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, 1996).

On September 16, 1996, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed an intergovernmental agreement regulating interaction in the field of pension provision, aimed at forming the legal and organizational bases for bilateral cooperation in the field of social protection of citizens. This document became an important step in the development of bilateral relations between the two post-Soviet states, striving to ensure social protection of citizens living or previously working in each other's territory. The agreement provided for the coordination of actions in the field of appointment and payment of pensions to persons with work experience in both countries. The main goal was to preserve the pension rights of citizens, regardless of the change of residence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This meant that the labor achievements of citizens in one country were recognized in the other, and pension provision was carried out, taking into account their total work experience. The signing of this agreement reflects the desire of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan to mutually respect the rights of their citizens and strengthen social justice. It also became a model for other countries of the CIS, showing how joint work in the field of social policy is possible in the context of new state borders and independent social security systems. Thus, the 1996 agreement became an important element in the development of the post-Soviet legal space, contributing to the protection of workers' rights and the strengthening of friendly relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of pension provision, 1996).

On September 16, 1996, within the framework of strengthening strategic ties between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, an important intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation in the Oil and Gas Industry was signed. This agreement became a key stage in the development of an energy partnership between the two countries, which have rich hydrocarbon resources. The purpose of the document was to create favorable conditions for the joint development, processing and transportation of oil and gas, as well as the development of the infrastructure necessary for the export of Kazakhstan's resources to international markets. The agreement was of particular importance for Kazakhstan, which sought to diversify its oil export routes, using the territory of Azerbaijan as a transit corridor. Within the framework of the agreement, the parties agreed to exchange experience and technology, attract investment and implement joint projects in the oil and gas sector. This subsequently gave impetus to practical cooperation, including the use of Baku infrastructure and Kazakhstan's participation in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline project, which significantly strengthened the energy integration of the region. This agreement laid a solid foundation for sustainable energy cooperation between Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, opening up new opportunities for their interaction within the Caspian region and in the global energy market (Agreement between the Government of the

Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the oil and gas industry, 1996). On the same day, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Youth and Sports. This document became an important element in the development of humanitarian cooperation between the two fraternal states, which were just beginning to form their foreign and domestic policies in the post-Soviet period. The agreement provided for interaction in such key areas as support for youth initiatives, development of mass and professional sports, exchange of delegations, holding joint events, forums, competitions and educational programs. The main goal of the agreement was to strengthen ties between the youth of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, foster a sense of mutual understanding, friendship and solidarity between the younger generations of the two countries. In the sports sphere, the document opened up opportunities for holding joint training camps, exchanging experience between coaches, and athletes participating in international tournaments under the auspices of bilateral cooperation. This, in turn, contributed to the growth of sports skills and the popularization of a healthy lifestyle among young people (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in the field of youth and sports, 1996).

On October 22, 1999, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the Agreement on Cooperation in Healthcare and Medical Science. The Agreement provided for a wide range of areas of cooperation: exchange of experience in organizing health care, joint scientific research, training and advanced training of medical personnel, exchange of medical technologies and information. Particular attention was paid to issues of prevention and control of socially significant diseases, development of pharmaceuticals, and introduction of modern diagnostic and therapeutic methods. The document became a platform for the development of practical interaction between medical institutions, research institutes and educational organizations of both countries. This contributed not only to improving the quality of medical care but also to deepening scientific ties, expanding international cooperation in the field of medicine. (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on cooperation in health care and medical science, 1999).

On November 29, 2001, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Limiting the Delimitation of the Caspian Sea Bed was signed in Moscow. This document became an important milestone in the process of legal regulation of issues related to the use of the natural resources of the Caspian Sea – a unique inland water body rich in oil, gas and biological resources. The document enshrined the principles according to which the delimitation of the seabed is carried out along the "median line" agreed upon on the basis of international law and practice. This made it possible to clearly determine which sections of the seabed belong to each of the parties, which provided a legal basis for the further development of oil and gas fields such as Kashagan and Kyapaz. The signing of the agreement became a significant step towards the formation of a stable legal basis for the interaction of the Caspian states. It also demonstrated the political will of Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan to peacefully resolve territorial disputes and share natural resources (Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Delimitation of the Seabed of the Caspian Sea between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2001).

On February 27, 2003, in the context of striving to deepen good-neighborly relations and ensure regional stability in the Caspian Basin, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the "Protocol to the Agreement on the Delimitation of the Seabed of the Caspian Sea". This document was a significant continuation and specification of the agreement concluded earlier in 2001, aimed at legally recording the principles of delimitation of the seabed between the two states. The Protocol established the precise geographic coordinates and technical parameters of the delimitation line, which was critical for the development and rational use of the hydrocarbon resources of the region. In the absence of a universal international legal regime for the Caspian Sea at that time, the bilateral agreements between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan served as an example of pragmatic diplomacy based on the principles of mutual respect and consensus. The document provided legal certainty in matters of jurisdiction over natural resources, which contributed to attracting foreign investment and developing specific projects in the oil and gas sector. It also strengthened trust between the two countries and became part of a broader process to establish a legal regime for the Caspian Sea (Protocol to the Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Delimitation of the Caspian Sea Bed between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2003).

The course laid down by the national leader, Heydar Aliyev, was continued and developed by the current President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, who came to power in October 2003. He maintained priorities aimed at strengthening the sovereignty of Azerbaijan, developing international cooperation and expanding economic ties. Ilham Aliyev paid special attention to developing relations with neighboring states, including Kazakhstan, which contributed to the formation of a strong strategic partnership and strengthened the role of Azerbaijan in the international arena. Under his leadership, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan began to build a strong strategic alliance based on mutual trust, common interests and support in various areas - from energy and economics to security and culture. On March 1, 2004, during the official state visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to the Republic of Kazakhstan, the "Declaration on Friendly Relations and Strategic Partnership" was signed between the two countries. This document was a fundamental step in the process of deepening and institutionalizing bilateral relations, accompanied by the signing of a set of related agreements aimed at expanding cooperation in various areas of interaction.

The main provisions of the declaration are as follows:

• Commitment to expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation, including the fight against international terrorism, drug trafficking, organized crime, human trafficking and arms trafficking;

• Confirmation of the same political support for the principles of sovereignty, integrity of borders and non-use of force, especially within the framework of the Caspian settlement;

• Intention to deepen cooperation in the field of defense, military-technical sphere and national security;

• Striving to develop transport, economic and energy infrastructure, including participation in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan projects and the construction of new export routes;

• Strengthening the role of the Caspian region as a zone of peace and stability;

• Agreements on cooperation in science, technology, culture, government communications and civil aviation were also concluded

As a result of signing the 2004 declaration, a powerful legal framework and strategic direction for Azerbaijani-Kazakh cooperation were formed: from security and transport to science and culture. On March 1, 2004, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the "Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation". This was an important milestone on the path to strengthening cooperation in the field of science, innovation and technological development." This document became part of a broader program of strategic interaction between the two countries aimed at joint progress in high-tech and knowledge-intensive industries. This document envisaged the institutionalization and development of cooperative research initiatives, ensuring the exchange of scientific and technical information, organizing and holding specialized conferences and symposia, as well as joint training of highly qualified scientific personnel. In addition, emphasis was placed on integrating the results of scientific developments into economic practice. Particular importance was attached to applied research in priority areas, including energy, ecology, agriculture, information technology and medical sciences. (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on scientific and technical cooperation, 2004). On May 24, 2005, the "Agreement on strategic partnership and allied relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan" was signed in Baku, which was a key stage in the evolution of bilateral relations, marking the transition to a new qualitative level of interaction in the political, economic, military-technical and cultural areas of cooperation. One of the fundamental articles of the agreement is the article devoted to strengthening political cooperation. It enshrines the principle of regular exchange of opinions on issues of regional and international policy, which helps to harmonize the positions of both countries in the international arena. This significantly increases the effectiveness of their joint efforts in solving global and regional problems.

An important provision is the article devoted to security and defense issues. The treaty provides for mutual support in the event of a threat to national security, coordination of actions in the fight against terrorism, extremism and other challenges. This reflects the high level of trust between the countries and their desire to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Economic cooperation occupies an equally important place in the treaty. The relevant articles stipulate the development of trade and economic ties, cooperation in the field of energy, transport, investment and technology. Participation in joint projects and initiatives is aimed at achieving sustainable economic growth and improving the standard of living of the population of both countries.

Particular attention is paid to cultural and humanitarian exchange. The treaty provides for measures to develop educational programs, scientific cooperation, as well as the preservation of common historical and cultural traditions. This strengthens mutual understanding and creates favorable conditions for a long-term partnership.

Finally, the final articles stipulate the mechanisms for implementing the treaty, resolving possible disputes and ensuring its long-term effectiveness. These norms ensure stability and predictability of bilateral relations, which is the key to their successful development (Agreement on Strategic Partnership and Allied Relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan 2005).

On June 16, 2006, a significant agreement was concluded between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Kazakhstan aimed at supporting and ensuring the transportation of Kazakh

oil through the Caspian Sea and the territory of Azerbaijan using the strategic Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline. This document played a key role in deepening the energy partnership and providing Kazakhstan with access to global oil markets, significantly strengthening the regional infrastructure for the cross-border transportation of hydrocarbon resources. (Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Azerbaijan on Support and Facilitation of Oil Transportation from the Republic of Kazakhstan through the Caspian Sea and the Territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan to International Markets via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan System 2006).

On October 2, 2009, the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the "Agreement on Mutual Visa-Free Travel of Citizens". The agreement provided for the possibility for citizens of both countries to visit the territory of the other party without obtaining a visa for a certain period of time, usually up to 30 or 90 days (depending on the specific provisions of the agreement). This innovation significantly simplified the movement of people, contributed to the development of tourism, business contacts, educational and cultural exchange, as well as the strengthening of ties between families with roots in both countries.

The visa-free regime also opened up additional opportunities for expanding economic cooperation, especially in the field of small and medium-sized businesses, since entrepreneurs received more freedom to travel and establish partnerships (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Mutual Visa-Free Travel of Citizens 2009).

On October 20, 2011, the two countries signed the "Agreement on the Mutual Provision of Land Plots for the Construction of Buildings of Diplomatic Missions". This document became an important component of the development of official and institutional relations between the two states, securing a high level of trust and strategic partnership. According to the agreement, each party committed to providing the other party, on a reciprocal basis, with a land plot on its territory for the construction of embassy buildings, consulates or other diplomatic institutions (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the mutual provision of land plots for the construction of diplomatic missions 2011). This decision created a legal and property basis for the long-term presence of diplomatic missions and their full-fledged functioning in the capitals of the two countries.

### *Conclusion*

Research shows that there are great prospects for the development of relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Currently, Azerbaijan, which is one of the key participants in ensuring the energy security of the European continent, occupies a strategically important position as a transit state and a reliable partner in the dialogue between the East and the West, including the countries of Central Asia. Based on current trends, it is highly probable to predict the further expansion of international cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the strengthening of its significant role in regional and interregional geopolitical and economic processes.

The historical period from 1993 to 2013 became for Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan a time of formation and strengthening of a multifaceted partnership based on mutual respect, common interests and historical ties. Joint efforts in various areas allowed both countries not only to strengthen their positions in the international arena but also to contribute to the development of stability and prosperity in the region.

Over twenty years (1993-2013), relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have become an example of sustainable, good-neighborly and strategically verified cooperation. Both countries managed not only to maintain warm historical ties, but also to translate them into specific economic, political and cultural projects. Their partnership became an important factor in stability and development in the Caspian region and within the Turkic world. Thus, bilateral relations during this period laid a solid foundation for further expansion of strategic cooperation in the 21st century.

After 2013, the prospects of Azerbaijani-Kazakh relations are determined by their common interests in energy, transport, regional security and the cultural sphere. In the context of the transformation of the world system and new challenges, both states strive to strengthen the strategic partnership, which can become a support for the entire Turkic-speaking integration and development of the Eurasian region.

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