

A.K. Kurmangali <sup>1\*</sup>, Saad Twaissi <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University Almaty, Kazakhstan e-mail:

<sup>2</sup> United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates, e-mail:

<sup>\*</sup>[a.kurmangali@sorbonne.kz](mailto:a.kurmangali@sorbonne.kz)

## THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE ARAB EAST: POLITICAL AND CULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

### *Abstract*

The subject of research devoted to the study of political and cultural relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East occupies an important place in modern scientific agency, highlighting the multifaceted nature of international relations and interaction. The study is aimed at analysing the dynamics and peculiarities of the development of relations between these regions, which is relevant in the context of globalisation and changes in world politics.

The aim of the study is to comprehensively analyse the political, economic and cultural interrelations between Kazakhstan and the Arab states and to identify the factors that contribute to the strengthening or weakening of these relations. The main areas of focus include the analysis of the political and cultural context, current initiatives and projects, and economic development between the countries.

The scientific and practical significance of the work stems from the need for a deep understanding of the mechanisms of political cooperation and cultural dialogue, which contribute to the formation of effective foreign policy and the development of intercultural communication. The methodological approach is based on a comprehensive analysis of primary and secondary data, application of qualitative research methods, including document analysis, expert interviews and case studies.

The main findings of the study highlight the role of Kazakhstan as a significant actor in the political, cultural and economic processes in the region and identify prospects and challenges for further deepening cooperation. The findings point to the need to strengthen cultural and educational initiatives and to promote international dialogue and mutual understanding.

The value of the study lies in the development of recommendations for the optimisation of bilateral relations, which contributes to the development of the theory and practice of international relations and diplomacy. The practical significance of the work is expressed in the formation of a knowledge base for political and economic analysts, contributing to the implementation of strategies for sustainable interaction and cultural enrichment between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, international cooperation, Arab East, Kazakhstan, economy.

А.Қ. Құрманғали <sup>1</sup>, Саад Твайсси <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup>Абай атындағы Қазақ Ұлттық Педагогикалық Университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан е  
Әл Айн, Біріккен Араб Әмірліктері

## ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ ЖӘНЕ АРАБ ШЫҒЫС ЕЛДЕРІ: САЯСИ-МӘДЕНИ БАЙЛАНЫСТАР

### *Аңдатпа*

Қазақстан Республикасы мен Араб Шығысы елдері арасындағы саяси-мәдени байланыстарды зерттеуге арналған. Халықаралық қатынастар мен өзара іс-қимылдың жан-жақтылығын көрсете отырып, қазіргі ғылыми агентте маңызды орын алады. Зерттеу жаһандану және әлемдік саясаттағы өзгерістер контекстінде өзекті болып табылатын осы аймақтар арасындағы қатынастардың даму динамикасы мен ерекшеліктерін талдауға бағытталған.

Бұл жұмыстың мақсаты-Қазақстанның араб мемлекеттерімен саяси, экономикалық және мәдени байланыстарын жан-жақты талдау және осы байланыстарды нығайтуға немесе әлсіретуге ықпал ететін факторларды анықтау. Негізгі бағыттарға саяси-мәдени контекстті, заманауи бастамалар мен жобаларды, сондай-ақ елдер арасындағы экономикалық дамуды талдау кіреді.

Жұмыстың ғылыми және практикалық маңыздылығы тиімді сыртқы саясатты қалыптастыруға және мәдениетаралық коммуникацияларды дамытуға ықпал ететін саяси ынтымақтастық пен мәдени диалог тетіктерін терең түсіну қажеттілігіне байланысты. Әдістемелік тәсіл бастапқы және қайталама деректерді кешенді талдауға, құжаттарды талдауды, сарапшылармен сұхбаттарды және кейс-стадиді қоса алғанда, сапалы зерттеу әдістерін қолдануға негізделген.

Зерттеудің негізгі нәтижелері Қазақстанның өңірдегі саяси, мәдени және экономикалық процестердегі маңызды актор ретіндегі рөлін атап көрсетеді, сондай-ақ ынтымақтастықты одан әрі тереңдету үшін перспективалар мен сын-қатерлерді айқындайды. Қорытындылар мәдени және білім беру бастамаларын күшейту, халықаралық диалог пен өзара түсіністікті қолдау қажеттігін көрсетеді.

Зерттеудің құндылығы халықаралық қатынастар мен дипломатияның теориясы мен практикасының дамуына ықпал ететін екіжақты қатынастарды оңтайландыру бойынша ұсыныстар әзірлеу болып табылады. Жұмыстың практикалық маңызы Қазақстан Республикасы мен Араб Шығысы елдері арасындағы орнықты өзара іс-қимыл және мәдени байыту стратегияларын іске асыруға ықпал ететін саяси және экономикалық талдаушылар үшін білім базасын қалыптастыруда көрінеді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Геосаясат, Халықаралық ынтымақтастық, Араб Шығысы, Қазақстан, экономика.

Курмангали А.К. <sup>1</sup>, Саад Твайсси <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Казахский национальный педагогический университет имени Абая, Казахстан,

<sup>2</sup> Университет Объединенных Арабских Эмиратов, Аль-Айн,  
Объединенные Арабские Эмираты

## РЕСПУБЛИКА КАЗАХСТАН И СТРАНЫ АРАБСКОГО ВОСТОКА: ПОЛИТИКО-КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ СВЯЗИ

### Аннотация

Тема исследования, посвященного исследованию политико-культурных связей между Республикой Казахстан и странами Арабского Востока, занимает важное место в современной научной агенде, освещая многогранность международных отношений и взаимодействия. Исследование направлено на анализ динамики и особенностей развития отношений между данными регионами, что актуально в контексте глобализации и изменений в мировой политике.

Цель данной работы состоит во всестороннем анализе политических, экономических и культурных взаимосвязей Казахстана с арабскими государствами и выявлению факторов, которые способствуют укреплению или ослаблению этих связей. Основные направления включают анализ политико-культурного контекста, современных инициатив и проектов, а также экономического развития между странами.

Научная и практическая значимость работы обусловлена необходимостью глубокого понимания механизмов политического сотрудничества и культурного диалога, что способствует формированию эффективной внешней политики и развитию межкультурных коммуникаций. Методологический подход базируется на комплексном анализе первичных и вторичных данных, применении качественных методов исследования, включая анализ документов, интервью с экспертами и кейс-стади.

Основные результаты исследования подчеркивают роль Казахстана как значимого актора в политических, культурных и экономических процессах в регионе, а также выявляют перспективы и вызовы для дальнейшего углубления сотрудничества. Выводы указывают на необходимость усиления культурных и образовательных инициатив, поддержки международного диалога и взаимопонимания.

Ценность исследования заключается в разработке рекомендаций для оптимизации двусторонних отношений, что вносит вклад в развитие теории и практики международных отношений и дипломатии. Практическое значение работы выражается в формировании базы знаний для политических и экономических аналитиков, способствующей реализации стратегий устойчивого взаимодействия и культурного обогащения между Республикой Казахстан и странами Арабского Востока.

**Ключевые слова:** Геополитика, международное сотрудничество, Арабский Восток, Казахстан, экономика.

## **MAIN PART**

The main part of this article is structured to provide a comprehensive examination of the political and cultural relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Arab states of the Gulf region. It is divided into several interrelated sections, each of which addresses a specific dimension of bilateral cooperation within the broader framework of international relations and regional diplomacy.

The first section explores the historical background and evolution of Kazakhstan's foreign policy orientation toward the Arab world, focusing on key milestones in diplomatic engagement, official visits, and institutional mechanisms. This is followed by an analysis of political cooperation and Kazakhstan's positioning within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the OIC) and other multilateral formats that include the Gulf states.

Subsequent sections examine the cultural and religious dimensions of cooperation, emphasizing Kazakhstan's use of soft power, Islamic identity, and intercultural dialogue as tools of foreign policy. Special attention is given to bilateral initiatives in education, heritage preservation, and religious diplomacy.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The interaction of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the states of the Arab East within the framework of political and cultural ties occupies a significant place in the modern scientific discussion, representing a relevant field of research. In recent decades, there has been an increased interest in the development of mutually beneficial relations in this region, against the background of globalisation and rethinking of geopolitical alliances. Concurrently, however, an exhaustive examination of the extensive political and cultural connections between Kazakhstan and the Arab states has remained conspicuously absent from the existing scholarly discourse, underscoring the imperative for a comprehensive and detailed investigation of this subject.

The current research aims to examine the nature and characteristics of interstate cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East. Central to this analysis are the political and cultural dimensions of their mutual interactions, particularly focusing on how shared cultural identities and political perceptions shape respective foreign policy strategies. The primary objective is to explore how these political and cultural connections have evolved and intensified over time, as well as their potential trajectories in the coming years.

To systematically achieve this objective, several specific research tasks were defined:

Firstly, it is essential to analyze the historical context and assess the contemporary status of relations between Kazakhstan and the Arab states, identifying key milestones and current trends. Secondly, the study evaluates the extent to which political and economic factors influence the shaping and progression of these international relationships. Finally, it explores Kazakhstan's and the Arab East countries' positions in both regional and global politics, emphasizing their collaborative projects and initiatives.

The central hypothesis of this study is that the observed political and cultural convergence between Kazakhstan and the Gulf states is predominantly driven by aligned strategic interests. These common interests include matters of regional security, shared Islamic cultural heritage, the pursuit of diversified economic strategies, and enhanced cooperation in energy sectors. The validity of this hypothesis is supported through a detailed analysis of the current patterns and outcomes of interactions between Kazakhstan and the Arab East nations. Simultaneously, cultural diplomacy and religious proximity function as instruments to fortify soft power, whilst economic initiatives serve as a pragmatic foundation for interaction. The hypothesis is tested on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of bilateral initiatives, foreign policy steps and investment flows.

The present study aims to address the existing lacuna in understanding political-cultural interactions between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East, which is pertinent in the context of current international processes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts an interdisciplinary analytical framework, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, to provide an extensive examination of the multifaceted interactions—political, cultural, and economic—between Kazakhstan and Arab East nations. Central to the research methodology is an in-depth content analysis of various primary sources, including diplomatic correspondence, official policy statements, bilateral treaties, and strategic documents outlining plans for enhanced interstate collaboration. This method enabled the identification of core themes, objectives, and discourse patterns that shape mutual cooperation and foreign policy orientations of the involved states. This methodological approach facilitated the identification of key priorities, discursive emphases and rhetoric of cooperation in the political-cultural domain. In particular, the policy statements of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the Central Asia-GCC summits (2023), the strategic memoranda on cooperation with Saudi Arabia and the UAE (2022-2024), and the materials of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council, which highlight Kazakhstan's participation in projects in the Middle East, were analysed. The analysis encompassed speech markers of priorities such as 'strategic partnership', 'Islamic solidarity', 'cultural exchange', 'infrastructural integration', which facilitated the identification of stable ideologemes of foreign policy discourse.

In the subsequent phase of the study, a comparative analysis was employed to compare the features of Kazakhstan's bilateral interaction with the leading countries of the region, namely Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Kuwait. Furthermore, an analysis of statistical data from 2015 to 2023 on indicators of mutual trade turnover, investment activity, humanitarian projects and the volume of Islamic finance was conducted. This analysis was derived from open sources of the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the International Islamic Development Bank (hereinafter - IDB). In order to illustrate specific partnership formats, a case study was used, covering the implementation of infrastructure, cultural and financial projects. These included the construction of Abu Dhabi Plaza in Astana, the launch of the Islamic bank Al Hilal and the creation of joint cultural centres. The selection of these methodologies is predicated on the necessity for a comprehensive analysis of the subject, encompassing not only the political context, but also the cultural and economic dimensions. This approach facilitates an evaluation of the efficacy and prospects of interaction between Kazakhstan and Arab countries.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study of the political and cultural relations of the Republic of Kazakhstan with the countries of the Arab East is an interdisciplinary endeavour, encompassing several important conceptual directions.

The initial direction encompasses the analysis of geopolitical factors and strategic interests of Kazakhstan and Arab states. The primary focus of B. Ergashev's research endeavours lies in underscoring the pivotal role of transport and communication initiatives, energy security, and

ecological concerns as pivotal factors in fostering regional collaboration and exerting influence on global dynamics [1].

The second direction emphasises economic interaction and investment activities between Kazakhstan and Arab countries, in particular with the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In this study, L. Parkhomchik analyses the prospects of economic and cultural cooperation, stressing the importance of new forms and mechanisms of interaction [2].

The third direction is devoted to the role of Islamic finance and economic diplomacy. The works of L. Alaev, V. Akhmedov, R. Bekkin and others consider the peculiarities of Islamic banking, its socio-economic impact, as well as the specifics of the implementation of projects of the IDB in Kazakhstan, such as the development of water infrastructure and support for small and medium-sized businesses [3].

The fourth direction pertains to cultural and humanitarian relations, as well as inter-parliamentary cooperation. The studies emphasise the importance of exchange of experience and regular meetings at the parliamentary level, which contribute to deepening mutual understanding and strengthening bilateral relations.

The theoretical foundations of the presented studies are based on various scientific approaches. Geopolitical analysis employs the concepts of realist and neo-realist theories of international relations, which emphasise the role of states, national interests and power resources. Theoretical underpinnings of economic integration and international cooperation are critical components of economic interaction and investment activity studies. These theories emphasise the interdependence and mutual benefit of economic ties. Works on Islamic finance are based on the concept of economic diplomacy, where finance and investment are regarded as instruments of foreign policy, as well as on the theory of Islamic banking based on Shariah principles. The analysis of cultural and humanitarian ties is facilitated by the theoretical frameworks of 'soft power' and cultural diplomacy. These theories posit that cultural initiatives represent a significant component of international influence, with the potential to fortify bilateral relations.

Despite the considerable interest in the study of these aspects, the influence of cultural diplomacy and the religious factor on the development of Kazakhstan's bilateral relations with Arab countries remains under-researched in the literature. The present study addresses this lacuna by offering a comprehensive analysis of political-cultural interaction, with a particular focus on identifying the role of religious and cultural initiatives as tools to strengthen bilateral ties. The scientific novelty of the work lies in the integrative approach, which allows for a comprehensive review of the mechanisms of interaction of cultural, religious and economic components in international relations between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East.

## **RESULTS**

The foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan is focused on ensuring national interests, building confidence and cooperation with international organisations and the states of the Arab world. The strategy's key priorities are as follows: the attraction of foreign investment, the strengthening of transport and transit infrastructure, and the stimulation of export activity in the medium and long term.

In the current global economic environment, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the broader Muslim world, notably Arab states, have established themselves as significant actors, particularly through enhanced trade and economic partnerships. These interactions greatly benefit from the countries' mutual historical heritage, shared cultural traditions, and converging economic interests, all of which facilitate deeper integration. An in-depth examination of their international economic engagements identifies multiple pivotal dynamics that warrant detailed consideration. Foremost among these is the role and influence of globalisation processes, significantly reshaping the structure, content, and scope of interstate cooperation. Secondly, the necessity for legal regulation of these relations in the context of new geo-economic and geopolitical realities. Thirdly, the imperative to nurture qualified diplomatic personnel in Kazakhstan who are adept at safeguarding national interests and assessing the extent of the country's economic interaction with the global community.

The updated Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan, approved on 6 March 2020, clearly outlines the strategic guidelines of the state. The primary objectives encompass the preservation of autonomous foreign policy decision-making, the cultivation of mutually beneficial bilateral and multilateral international relations, and the enhancement of the nation's standing on the global stage [4]. These objectives are aimed at strengthening the sovereignty and improving the international image of Kazakhstan, which in turn contributes to a more active participation in global processes.

Following the attainment of independence by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the country commenced a period of active exploration in regard to novel foreign policy directions, including the deepening of ties with the countries of the Arab East. During the period of the Soviet Union, contacts with the Muslim world were limited, and the Middle East was perceived more as a region of risk associated with Afghan transit through Tajikistan.

However, with the advent of change in the geopolitical environment of Eurasia, Kazakhstan discerned significant prospects for cooperation from the south-east, particularly in the context of diversifying its transport and logistics infrastructure. For a landlocked country, such diversification is of particular importance.

The country's current involvement in the activities of prominent international Islamic organisations, including the OIC, the IDB, and the World Islamic League, among others, underscores its commitment to fostering ties with its Islamic neighbours. The presence of Kazakhstan within these organisations enables the country to play a central role in events within the Islamic world.

This multidimensional strategy has proven instrumental in fostering deeper mutual understanding and productive collaboration between Kazakhstan and Islamic countries. At the same time, it has positioned Kazakhstan as an engaged and constructive actor in addressing pressing international challenges. These include contributing to conflict resolution efforts in the Middle East, supporting the post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan, and participating in global initiatives to combat terrorism, violent extremism, and illicit drug trafficking.

Bakhtiyor Ergashev, Director of the Ma'no Centre for Research Initiatives in Uzbekistan, emphasises the significance of several pivotal domains that are instrumental in shaping the future trajectory of Central Asia. These include transport and communications projects, energy, which is closely linked to water resources, and environmental issues. Ergashev further contends that these domains will determine the trajectory of the region's economic advancement, both within local contexts and in a global perspective. According to the expert, the states that can offer the most attractive initiatives and solutions in these areas will take the lead in the region [1].

Lidia Parkhomchik, an expert from the Institute of World Economy and Politics, has asserted that the contemporary era is characterised by the aspiration of Central Asian countries, notably Kazakhstan, to enhance interregional relations with Arab states. This trend is gaining new momentum against the background of deepening economic and cultural ties, which puts the countries of the region in search of new forms and mechanisms of cooperation [2].

In the context of globalisation and evolving international political dynamics, the Central Asian states recognise the necessity to expand their diplomatic and economic horizons. Interaction with the Arab world is regarded as a priority, as it facilitates access to substantial investment resources and novel trade routes, which is particularly salient in the pursuit of alternative markets and financial sources.

Kazakhstan, leveraging its geopolitical position, has proactively engaged in the process of developing relations with Arab countries. This initiative has not only contributed to the strengthening of the country's economic potential but also enabled it to assume a more prominent role in the international arena. The enhancement of collaborative endeavours can be evidenced by the initiation of joint ventures in domains such as energy, investment and technological exchange. These endeavours are poised to foster the growth and development of both Kazakhstan and its Arab partners.

The role of Arab countries in the global economy, particularly within the energy sector, is significant. The countries of the Arab Gulf region hold some of the most substantial proven oil

reserves globally, collectively accounting for nearly half of the world's total. This immense resource base positions them as pivotal suppliers of raw materials on the international stage. Among them, the Arabian monarchies have emerged as dominant players in the global energy trade, a status reinforced by their exceptionally low production costs and advantageous geographical positioning at the crossroads of key maritime and overland trade routes. These structural advantages enable them to exert considerable influence over global energy markets.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts that oil will continue to play a significant role in the global energy mix, maintaining a share of around 40% of total energy consumption in the medium term. This highlights the importance of Arab countries not only as major exporters, but also as active participants in international investment processes offering high-tech products to the market.

In recent decades, the Arab East has undergone significant transformation, evolving into not only a prominent exporter of energy resources but also a noteworthy international financial centre. Experts have observed the rapid development of the financial sector in the Arabian monarchies, where globally competitive financial services have emerged in recent years. The lack of key components of a national financial system in the 1980s has since been overcome by the rapid growth of central banks, stock exchanges, and insurance institutions.

Despite the fact that Arab countries still do not rank highly on the Composite Index of Economic Freedom, they have significant advantages in creating a favourable business environment. The presence of low taxes and minimal corruption has been identified as contributing to a more favourable business environment, thereby rendering them attractive for international investment and commercial initiatives.

It is noteworthy that certain Arab countries have come to exemplify the process of modern economic modernisation. In a relatively brief historical period, the group of states: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain, united within the framework of the Cooperation Council of Arab States of the Persian Gulf, have become an authoritative actor in international relations [5].

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is widely regarded as one of the leading states in the Arab East. Since 1 October 1992, the United Arab Emirates has been one of the earliest states in the Persian Gulf to formalise diplomatic ties with the Republic of Kazakhstan. This cooperation was further institutionalised with the opening of Kazakhstan's Consulate General in Dubai in 1997. The diplomatic engagement between the two nations deepened with the inauguration of the UAE Embassy in Kazakhstan in 2005, followed by the establishment of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in the UAE in 2006. Since 26 February 2019, the position of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the UAE has been held by M. Menilbekov. Starting from September 2021, the same role in Kazakhstan is fulfilled by M. Al-Ariki, representing the UAE.

The enhancement of bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and the UAE has been facilitated by a series of official and working visits. The first President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, visited the UAE many times between 1998 and 2019, including in 1998, 2000, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2008, 2009, 2009, 2010, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2012, 2013, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019. It is evident that these visits have played a pivotal role in fortifying the bonds of interstate cooperation. In 2008, Kazakhstan received an official visit from the late President of the UAE, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who also made private visits in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013.

President of Kazakhstan K. Tokayev has actively participated in diplomatic engagements with the United Arab Emirates, having conducted four visits: two official ones in January 2020 and January 2023, and two working visits in May 2022 and December 2023. The commitment to high-level dialogue was reciprocated in July 2018, when the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, undertook an official visit to Kazakhstan, reflecting the mutual respect and growing strategic interest between the nations' leadership. Furthermore, inter-parliamentary collaboration between Kazakhstan and the UAE continues to intensify, as demonstrated by the working visit of Amal Al Qubeisi, Chairperson of the UAE Federal National Council, to Kazakhstan on 23-24 September 2019. This visit served to emphasise the importance of strengthening bilateral relations at the parliamentary level. A significant meeting was held on 17 June 2021 in the format of

videoconference between the Parliamentary Cooperation Group of the Majilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Federal National Council of the UAE. This inaugural meeting signifies a shared commitment to fostering further development in the realm of inter-parliamentary relations between the two nations. This commitment was further reinforced by the visit of M. Ashimbayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, to Abu Dhabi on 6-7 November 2023, which exemplifies the dynamic engagement at the highest levels of the two parliaments.

The volume and dynamism of trade and economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and the UAE is demonstrably significant. In 2023, the trade turnover between the two nations amounted to \$328.9 million, with Kazakh exports to the UAE accounting for \$210.3 million. Furthermore, from 2005 to 2023, the gross direct investment inflow from the UAE to the Republic of Kazakhstan totalled \$3.7 billion, indicating the UAE's significant interest and confidence in the Kazakh economy. Concurrently, investments from Kazakhstan to the UAE amounted to \$1.2 billion, underscoring the reciprocal nature of investment flows between the two nations. In 2022, Kazakhstan recorded a gross inflow of direct investments from the United Arab Emirates amounting to \$416.7 million, reflecting a notable 27% increase compared to the previous year. In contrast, outbound investments from Kazakhstan to the UAE totaled \$59 million during the same period [6].

The scale and diversity of investment cooperation between the two countries are evidenced by a number of high-profile projects. Among them, the construction of the Abu Dhabi Plaza multifunctional complex in Astana stands out, with a total investment of \$1.1 billion, serving as a prominent symbol of deepening economic engagement.

One of the key actors in bilateral investment relations is the Abu Dhabi-based Mubadala company, which has made significant contributions to the Kazakh economy, particularly in the exploration of oil fields in the Caspian Sea—highlighting the strategic relevance of energy collaboration. In addition, the establishment of the joint investment fund "Falah," with an initial capital of no less than \$500 million, reflects a shared commitment to supporting a wide range of development projects across Kazakhstan.

The United Arab Emirates has shown considerable involvement in Kazakhstan's banking sector. A prominent example is Al Hilal Bank, which maintains successful operations in key cities including Almaty, Astana, and Shymkent. Another major development was the acquisition of a 28.5% stake in Kazkommertsbank—Kazakhstan's largest bank at the time—by the Emirati investment holding Alnair Capital, owned by Sheikh Tahnoon Al Nahyan, the brother of the UAE President [7]. This move marked a significant milestone in the financial integration between the two countries.

Additionally, a substantial number of enterprises with Emirati capital have been established in Kazakhstan, functioning across diverse sectors such as tourism, logistics, and consumer services. Trade relations also continue to grow, with the UAE exporting automobiles, construction materials, and clothing to Kazakhstan, while Kazakhstan, in turn, supplies foodstuffs and agricultural products to the Emirates—highlighting the reciprocal and complementary nature of the bilateral economic partnership. The above data indicates a persistent enhancement in the strength of economic ties and the reciprocal benefits of investment activities between the two nations.

This study explores the evolution of bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (hereinafter - KSA), beginning with the establishment of diplomatic relations on 30 April 1994. Since then, notable advancements have been made in strengthening interstate ties. A key milestone was the opening of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Riyadh on 13 December 1995, followed by the inauguration of the Saudi Embassy in Astana in March 1997. Further institutional expansion occurred with the launch of Kazakhstan's consular office in Jeddah in December 2007, which was subsequently upgraded to a consulate general in August 2019.

The first President of Kazakhstan, N.Nazarbayev, made several visits to KSA, including official visits in September 1994, March 2004 and October 2016, as well as a working visit in May 2017. The current President of Kazakhstan, K.Tokayev, has also visited KSA, making an official visit in July 2022 and a working visit in July 2023.



Inter-parliamentary co-operation is also an important part of relations between the two countries. In 2015, the Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament, K.K. Tokayev, visited KSA to attend the funeral ceremony of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz. In September 2019, Astana played host to the IV Meeting of Speakers of the Eurasian Parliaments, with the Saudi delegation being led by Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al Al Al-Sheikh, Chairman of the Consultative Council of the KSA. In October 2021, an official visit was made by the Saudi parliamentary delegation to Kazakhstan, led by A. Al-Sheikh, who held talks with the top leadership of Kazakhstan, discussing ways to deepen inter-parliamentary dialogue.

Available data indicate that trade and economic relations between Kazakhstan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reflect a substantive and multifaceted level of engagement, supported by targeted investments in key sectors. Saudi Arabia has financed several notable infrastructure and social projects in Kazakhstan, including \$15 million allocated for the construction of the Senate building of the Parliament, \$12 million for the rehabilitation of the Osakarovka–Vishnevka highway, and \$2 million for the construction of a mosque in the city of Petropavlovsk. These investments are bolstered by the sustained presence of the Saudi Central Asia Investment Company, which has operated actively in Kazakhstan since 1997 and played a central role in expanding Saudi capital participation in the national economy.

Additionally, a major contribution to Kazakhstan's healthcare sector was made by Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz, who founded the construction and furnishing of a modern cardiac centre in Astana. Equipped with advanced medical technology, the centre became, upon its opening in 2006, one of the most technologically advanced cardiology institutions in Central Asia.

In terms of trade, the turnover between the two countries in 2023 reached \$15 million, including \$7.9 million in exports from Kazakhstan and \$7.1 million in imports from Saudi Arabia. This figure represents a slight decline from the \$16.4 million registered in 2022, indicating the need for renewed efforts to expand bilateral trade volumes. However, it is important to note that the pattern of trade is changing, with an increase in exports from Kazakhstan and a decrease in imports, which may indicate the development of production capacity in Kazakhstan. It is also noteworthy that in 2021, trade turnover was substantially lower than current levels, totalling \$8.6 million, thereby underscoring the prevailing trend towards the enhancement of trade relations between the two nations.

The Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Cultural, Humanitarian, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation functions as the principal institutional platform facilitating economic interaction between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the KSA. This body plays a key coordinating role in identifying priority areas, aligning strategic interests, and overseeing the implementation of joint initiatives across various sectors of bilateral engagement. The commission's mandate is to develop and deepen bilateral relations in various domains. The formation of the Kazakhstan-Saudi Business Council constitutes a pivotal platform for the enhancement of economic ties between the two nations.

The establishment of this council signifies a significant milestone in the evolution of bilateral business relations. The inaugural meeting of the Business Council was convened on 21 December 2023 in Riyadh, underscoring the commitment and enthusiasm of both parties to broaden the scope of their collaboration.

The Business Council is co-chaired by prominent figures from the business communities of both countries. Representing the Kazakh side is K. Kudaibergenov, General Director of Grey Wolf Management LLP, while on the Saudi side, the role is held by Ahmed Al Dakhil, General Director of Al Rajhi International for Investment (RAII). These leaders serve as the primary liaisons between their respective companies and countries on the global stage, playing pivotal roles in the advancement of commercial relations, as well as facilitating cultural and technological exchange.

The operation of such a council facilitates regular discussions on promising areas of cooperation, the development of strategies to attract investment and improve the trade balance, and the organisation of business missions and specialised economic forums, which contributes to the strengthening and development of economic ties at all levels [8].

The establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Sultanate of Oman on 27 April 1992 marked the beginning of a constructive and steadily evolving partnership. Since then, both sides have undertaken consistent efforts to deepen bilateral cooperation. A significant milestone in this process was the inauguration of the Embassy of Oman in Kazakhstan in August 2006, which became an important channel for promoting political dialogue and expanding collaborative efforts. The subsequent opening of the Embassy of Kazakhstan in Oman in October 2010 served as a reciprocal step, highlighting the shared commitment of both countries to fostering stronger diplomatic ties.

Political engagement between the two nations has been further reinforced through high-level exchanges, including the official visits of Kazakhstan's First President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to Oman in September 1997 and again in March 2008, which contributed to the institutionalisation of political dialogue and the identification of new avenues for cooperation. In January 2023, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Tleuberdi also made an official visit to Oman, emphasising the continuing vibrancy of diplomatic relations.

Parliamentary diplomacy has also played a significant role in strengthening relations, as evidenced by the participation of Khalid Al-Mawali, Chairman of Oman's Advisory Council, in the IV Meeting of Speakers of Eurasian Parliaments held in Astana in September 2019. This event contributed to the exchange of experiences and the strengthening of inter-parliamentary ties. In December of the same year, the Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan, B. Beknazarov, visited Oman.

In the context of analysing trade and economic relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Sultanate of Oman, it is important to highlight Oman's active involvement in Kazakhstan's energy sector. A key example of this engagement is Oman's initiative to participate in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, formalised through an agreement signed in Muscat in 1992. This underscores the Sultanate's strategic interest in supporting the development of regional energy infrastructure and enhancing Kazakhstan's role as a transit hub for hydrocarbons.

In addition to energy cooperation, Oman has demonstrated a commitment to supporting Kazakhstan's cultural and infrastructural development. In 1998, the Sultanate granted Kazakhstan \$10 million in non-repayable financial assistance for the construction of the Saltanat Sarayy Palace in Astana. This gesture not only contributed to urban development but also reinforced the cultural and diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Since 1994, the Omani state oil company, Oman Oil, has been actively involved in the development of oil fields in Kazakhstan, indicating long-term investment cooperation between the two countries. An analysis of trade relations reveals a significant growth in business activity between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Sultanate of Oman. Specifically, the volume of trade turnover increased from \$472.6 thousand in 2019 to \$10.2 million by 2023, signifying a substantial enhancement in economic interconnection and an augmentation in bilateral trade.

According to the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, from 2005 to 2023, gross direct investment inflows from Oman to Kazakhstan reached USD 253.4 million, emphasising the significant interest and contribution of Oman to the economy of Kazakhstan [9].

The data presented is pivotal in understanding the depth and scope of the economic partnership between the two states. The formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the State of Kuwait on 11 January 1993 marked the beginning of a comprehensive and steadily deepening bilateral partnership. This cooperation was further institutionalised through the successive opening of diplomatic missions: Kazakhstan inaugurated its embassy in Kuwait in 2014, followed by the opening of the Kuwaiti Embassy in Kazakhstan in 2015.

The development of bilateral ties between the two nations was significantly advanced by the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev, who paid an official visit to Kuwait from 31 August to 1 September 1997. This visit signalled the commencement of an active political dialogue between the two countries, and in the subsequent years, contacts at the highest level persisted. For instance, on 15 February 2020, the President of Kazakhstan, K. Tokayev, held a meeting in Munich

with the Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Sabah, which emphasised the constant interest of the parties in strengthening bilateral relations.

A particularly noteworthy event was the meeting of the President of Kazakhstan, K. Tokayev, with the Crown Prince of Kuwait. On 19 July 2023, during the first Summit 'Central Asia + Gulf Cooperation Council', initiated by the Kuwaiti side, Tokayev met with the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, on the margins of the event. These talks facilitated discussions on topical issues of regional and international politics.

Within the broader context of the academic study of inter-parliamentary relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the State of Kuwait, it is noteworthy to mention several significant visits that have contributed to the strengthening of bilateral ties.

In October 2002, a delegation from the Kuwaiti National Assembly visited Kazakhstan as part of a tour of Central Asian countries, which led to the initiation of a parliamentary dialogue. A follow-up visits by a Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation, headed by a member of the National Assembly of the GC, Waleed Musaid Al-Tabtabaghi, took place from 25 to 26 June 2010, highlighting the interest in deep cooperation.

The participation of the Kuwaiti parliamentary delegation, led by the Speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, Marzouk Ali Al-Ghanim, in the Meeting of Speakers of Parliaments of Eurasia, which was held in Astana from 22 to 24 September 2019, was of particular importance. The event provided a platform for the exchange of views on international and regional policy issues, as well as for the strengthening of parliamentary ties.

With respect to the analysis of trade and economic cooperation, the volume of trade between Kazakhstan and Kuwait amounted to \$3.6 million in 2023, with Kazakh exports accounting for \$2.9 million, thereby indicating the presence of active trade ties founded upon mutual benefit and strategic partnership.

A significant milestone in the international cooperation between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the State of Kuwait occurred in May 2000 with the ratification of the loan agreement for the Aralsk city water supply project. This initiative was financed by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which allocated approximately 24 million US dollars to support the project. The agreement underscored Kuwait's commitment to assisting Kazakhstan in addressing critical infrastructure and environmental challenges, particularly in the socially sensitive Aral Sea region [10]. The implementation of this project has been identified as a key factor in the enhancement of the water supply infrastructure in Aralsk, with broader implications for the enhancement of living conditions in the region.

The allocation of funding from the Arab Economic Development Fund is indicative of the significance attributed to cooperative endeavours in the development and support of socially significant projects, thereby underscoring the strengthening of bilateral relations on the basis of mutual benefit and cooperation.

A pivotal stage in the advancement of bilateral economic relations was the first meeting of the joint Kazakhstan–Kuwait Intergovernmental Commission, which took place in November 2008 in Astana. This event laid the foundation for structured intergovernmental dialogue between the two nations. Subsequent sessions of the commission—held in January 2010 in Al-Kuwait and in September 2013 in Astana—further demonstrated the shared commitment to broadening cooperation, extending beyond economic and trade matters to include cultural, humanitarian, and scientific-technical collaboration [11].

The Gulf States and the Republic of Kazakhstan demonstrate significant convergence in the areas of energy, transit, security, combating international terrorism and drug trafficking. In the context of these mutual interests, the development of the North-South international transport corridor, which provides new opportunities for economic and cultural interaction, is of particular importance.

The Eurasian Agro-Express project is a key element of that corridor, helping to strengthen trade ties between the Eurasian Economic Union and the countries of the Arab East. The initiative is being implemented under the auspices of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council and is coordinated by the

non-profit organisation Eurasian Agrologistics, which was established by Russian Railways Logistics.

The project has two main objectives. Firstly, it serves to strengthen existing trade routes. Secondly, it opens up new directions for agro-product supplies to such countries as Iran, UAE, Vietnam and India. This, in turn, contributes to expanding the export potential of Kazakhstan producers.

In February 2023, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council reached a strategic decision to expand the route network of the Agroexpress project, thereby enabling a substantial increase in the geographical coverage of deliveries. Later, in April of the same year, the Agroexpress project was expanded to include additional transport routes within the framework of the North–South international transport corridor, covering destinations such as Turkmenistan, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and India. These trains are travelling along the eastern route of the corridor, ensuring efficient connection of key EAEU countries such as Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

The realisation of extended transport routes under the Agroexpress project can be significantly enhanced through cooperation with the Emirati logistics company Abu Dhabi Ports Group. The company has expressed a keen interest in the development of maritime and port infrastructure on the Caspian Sea, which has the potential to play a pivotal role in the acceleration of logistics processes in the region.

The strategic partnership between Abu Dhabi Ports Group and the national company KazMunaiGas, as evidenced by the signing of the relevant agreement, underscores the commitment of Abu Dhabi investors to allocating resources towards enhancing Kazakhstan's infrastructure capabilities.

Consequently, the 'Eurasian Agro Express' emerges as a pivotal instrument in the execution of strategic economic initiatives within the Arab countries and the Republic of Kazakhstan, thereby contributing to the enhancement of international cooperation and the fortification of economic stability within the respective regions.

In the context of the global financial crisis, the IDB's activities merit particular consideration as they introduce unique principles of Islamic banking that significantly impact the economies of Muslim countries. According to expert L.B. Alaev, Islamic financial institutions contribute to national economies in distinctive ways due to their strict adherence to Shariah norms. These countries, for instance, operate interest-free banks, a prevalent practice in Islamic banking. The absence of interest, a practice that is strictly forbidden by Shariah, does not imply an absence of profit, as financial institutions derive income from commissions and participation in the profits of the projects they finance. Moreover, Islamic funds embody a dual role, combining economic and social functions. They are not merely large holding companies, but also a substantial source of charity for disadvantaged segments of the population, reflecting one of the fundamental principles of Islam – care for the needy [3].

Since joining the IDB in 1995, the Republic of Kazakhstan has participated in numerous projects financed by this significant international institution, with 67 projects totalling approximately \$1.8 billion being implemented in Kazakhstan with IDB participation (Islamic Development Bank, 2024). These projects encompass diverse sectors of the economy and infrastructure, including the construction and modernisation of water supply facilities, the development of transport infrastructure, the support of the agro-industrial complex, and the implementation of educational and health programmes [12].

A series of studies conducted by the Astana International Financial Centre in early 2024 have identified a number of key findings that highlight the significant prospects for Kazakhstan in Islamic finance. The studies indicate that the country has a number of advantages that could favour the development of Islamic banking and finance, including a favourable legal environment, a dynamic economy, ambitious infrastructure development plans and a significant Muslim population.

The country's strategic focus on post-resource economic development, with a particular emphasis on expanding the services sector, is particularly relevant in the context of its rapidly growing population. Statistics demonstrate that small private sector enterprises contribute significantly to the

services sector, creating favourable conditions for the dissemination of Islamic financial products, particularly in the domain of retail lending.

The potential for the implementation of Islamic finance in Kazakhstan is particularly promising in the trade sector, which accounts for approximately 17 per cent of the economy, and in the emerging creative economy sector. Islamic financial products that adhere to Shariah principles of non-interest and prohibition of speculation have the potential to contribute to job creation and support for SMEs [13].

The IDB has demonstrated a notable commitment to the sustainable development of water infrastructure in Kazakhstan, with substantial investments in this sector. At the recent UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) held in Baku, a landmark agreement was concluded for a major project financed by the IDB, allocating \$1.15 billion for the development of Kazakhstan's water sector. This initiative is anticipated to significantly bolster the country's resilience to climate change by modernising and expanding its water supply and irrigation infrastructure, thereby addressing critical environmental and agricultural challenges.

Moreover, the IDB has allocated a \$3.5 million grant to further develop the water sector, thereby emphasising its commitment to sustainable water management in the region. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy, Nurlan Baibazarov, has acknowledged the importance and scale of this project for the country.

The project includes the construction of new water reservoirs, the reconstruction of existing ones, the comprehensive renovation of irrigation canals, and measures for replenishing the Astana reservoir. Its implementation is planned across several regions, including Akmola, Almaty, and other provinces. These initiatives aim to improve the efficiency of water resource distribution, ensuring greater availability for agricultural needs and local communities—an especially critical objective for Kazakhstan's arid and water-scarce areas.

The IDB has assumed a role in technical cooperation with the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation of Kazakhstan, including water basin studies and the evaluation of early response systems for preventive responses to water crises. Plans are in place to technically equip the Republican State Enterprise Kazvodkhoz and to build an automation centre, which will significantly improve the efficiency of water management [14].

Consequently, the IDB and its affiliated financial institutions are playing a dual role in stabilising the economy in crisis conditions and promoting a model of economic development that considers financial, moral and ethical aspects, emphasising sustainability and social responsibility. These activities demonstrate the IDB's strategic approach to supporting our country in water management and adaptation to global climate change, which will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the country's environmental and economic stability.

The structure of GDP in the countries of the Arab East displays distinct features, as highlighted in the analysis by the Eurasian Economic Commission regarding the access of agricultural products, raw materials, and foodstuffs from EAEU member states to Gulf markets. In nations such as Bahrain, the UAE, and Oman, the services sector constitutes the dominant share of the economy. Conversely, in countries like Iran, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, industrial production plays a more prominent role. The agricultural sector, though generally underdeveloped across the region due to unfavourable natural and climatic conditions, shows relatively higher contributions in Iraq (3.0%) and Saudi Arabia (2.2%) [15].

## **DISCUSSION**

The Republic of Kazakhstan, in particular, is poised to benefit from emerging prospects for agro-industrial exports, particularly in the context of the Arab East, where there is an acute shortage of agricultural land and water resources. The need to import staple food commodities, such as wheat, due to high costs and unsustainable domestic production, is a growing challenge for countries in this region.

In this context, Kazakhstan, which possesses substantial agricultural resources and production capacity, perceives a strategic advantage in leveraging Iran's transit capabilities to access Persian Gulf

markets. Plans to utilise the port of Bandar Abbas as a pivotal transit point for flour and other agrarian products are part of a broader strategy to expand export opportunities.

In turn, Iran functions not only as a transit hub, but also as a strategic partner in the development of joint ventures and the expansion of trade in grain, meat products, vegetable oils and confectionery. The Iranian shipping company Golden Line has offered Kazakhstan the opportunity to construct a terminal in the port of Bandar Abbas, with substantial areas designated for container transportation. The President of the company, Ali Akbar Ehsani, has emphasised the company's readiness to invest in construction and the provision of necessary infrastructure to strengthen logistics links between the two countries.

Such initiatives have the potential to significantly strengthen Kazakhstan's position in the international agro-industrial market, improve transport conditions and product availability, and contribute to the development of economic cooperation in the region. The investment in port infrastructure and the establishment of a Kazakhstani terminal in Iran will be a significant step towards the realisation of these ambitious plans.

However, it is important to recognise that the advancement of foreign economic relations in the Arab region continues to face several persistent challenges. Although recent years have seen a moderate economic recovery—driven by rising exports of oil, natural gas, agricultural products, and tourism services—these positive trends are still constrained by structural and geopolitical factors that limit the full potential of external trade and investment expansion. Nevertheless, this recovery has not been accompanied by a similar improvement in the living standards of citizens. It is evident that GDP growth does not directly correlate with the well-being of the population; rather, it is more influenced by factors such as inflation and exchange rate fluctuations.

A plethora of factors hinder the development of political, cultural and economic relations. Among these, the ongoing sanctions policy, rising interest rates, high inflation and new waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. The disruption to logistics chains, the risk of a food crisis, the instability of national currencies and unilateral grain export bans also significantly limit economic activity. Furthermore, geopolitical tensions have been identified as a significant factor impacting foreign policy, with the potential to lead to deterioration in the Arab countries and Central Asia.

The challenges encountered in foreign economic relations have been further compounded by the difficulties in political dialogue, stemming from the divergent positions of the involved countries. Kazakhstan has consistently prioritised the expansion of its foreign trade, aiming to leverage the economic and industrial-technical capacities of the Arab East countries. However, the growth of trade relations has been hindered by a range of commercial factors. Among them is the noticeable decline in interest from foreign business communities in engaging with Kazakhstan, particularly in the exploration and development of new raw material deposits. This trend is largely attributable to the global economic realignment that occurred in the 1990s, marked by the stabilisation of supply and demand for raw materials and energy resources, which redirected the strategic focus of many international investors away from Kazakhstan.

The countries of the Arab East have thus far been unable to provide a clear definition of their position within the geopolitical structure of the 21st century, which consequently makes it difficult for them to compete with the West. This situation complicates the undertaking of a comprehensive analysis of the prevailing academic challenges within a single study.

Serious socio-economic problems continue to persist in the Arab world, as well as in the Islamic community as a whole. Unemployment in the region remains high, affecting more than 15 per cent of the population. Despite the implementation of economic reforms in recent years, which have led to an average annual GDP growth of 7.5%, the situation remains challenging. According to official data from Egypt and international organisations, a significant proportion of the population lives below the poverty line. According to data from Egypt and international organisations, in 2018 (based on the 2017/2018 income survey), the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line reached 32.5%. The government has been providing food subsidies since 2011, and the poverty rate in Egypt fell for the first time in two decades in 2020. Egypt's economy, akin to numerous other

Muslim countries, is heavily reliant on foreign aid, including substantial financial assistance from the United States, amounting to a total of \$47 billion over the past two decades. The rise in global food prices in 2007-2008 exerted a negative influence on the domestic situation, and a similar trend is evident in the present day. While oil-exporting countries were able to temporarily allay popular discontent by introducing one-off cash payments (for example, in Kuwait, each citizen received \$3,500), Egypt's financial resources for such populist measures had been exhausted.

In the context of a dynamically developing world, Kazakhstan emphasises the need to abolish outdated restrictions that hinder innovation and technological progress. This position is founded on the understanding that advancements in science and technology impose novel demands on the regulation and management of the economy. The continuous emergence of new technologies and solutions necessitates a constant process of revising and adapting legislation in order to maintain an appropriate level of competitiveness in the international arena.

Concomitant with technological changes, Kazakhstan advocates for the enhancement of dialogue in trade and economic relations against the backdrop of a gradual reduction in geopolitical tensions between East and West. The restoration of trust and the defusing of tensions contribute to the creation of a favourable atmosphere for dialogue and cooperation, which is important for deepening economic ties and mutually beneficial partnerships.

In this context, Kazakhstan underscores the necessity for a flexible response to the novel challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation and technological progress, emphasising the pivotal role of international economic cooperation in fostering peace and prosperity for national economies.

The results of this study corroborate the hypothesis that Kazakhstan's political and cultural relations with the Arab East are intricate, embodying a combination of pragmatic and identity-based methodologies. In contrast to Kazakhstan's traditional orientation towards Eurasian or Western vectors, the direction towards the Arab East is designed as part of a 'multi-vector' strategy, where Islamic community, joint cultural codes and the experience of political modernisation in the Gulf countries are of particular importance.

A pivotal element in the process of rapprochement is 'soft power', a concept defined by the joint organisation of cultural events, religious initiatives (for example, Kazakhstan's participation in the OIC) and educational exchanges. Conversely, the economic component, encompassing Islamic finance, joint infrastructure projects and trade diversification, serves as a stable foundation for rapprochement.

It is important to acknowledge the challenges that are present despite the positive dynamics. These include limited institutionalised platforms for cooperation, competition from other major powers in the region (primarily China and Turkey), as well as differences in the forms of governance and the pace of reforms. The utilisation of Islamic banking as a tool of economic diplomacy is a subject of particular interest, as evidenced by the cases involving Al Hilal and the IDB.

The analysis clearly indicates that the political and cultural engagement between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East requires deeper strategic institutionalisation. This interaction should be supported at the level of systemic cultural diplomacy and economic cooperation, with a focus on the Islamic world.

## **CONCLUSION**

A key outcome of the research is the confirmation of the initial hypothesis that, despite various challenges - including geopolitical volatility and economic uncertainty - there remains substantial untapped potential for the advancement and intensification of Kazakhstan's foreign policy engagement with the countries of the Arab East. While the bilateral relations are already grounded in strong political, historical, cultural, and economic linkages, they stand to be significantly reinforced through the development of strategic partnerships and the exploration of new areas of cooperation, such as renewable energy, technological innovation, education, and sustainable development.

The study emphasised the significance of cultural dialogue and mutual understanding in this context. The Arab East and Kazakhstan share numerous cultural and religious values, which have the potential to serve as the foundation for more active cultural exchange and joint educational projects. These initiatives contribute to the establishment of trust and mutual respect, which is critical for the successful overcoming of political and economic barriers.

Moreover, the economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East has considerable potential in areas such as energy, investment and trade. The development of direct investments, joint ventures, and the strengthening of trade relations have the potential to contribute to economic growth and stability in the region. In this context, political will, the adoption of international agreements, innovation and technological cooperation are of particular importance, and can ensure the transition to a more sustainable and diversified relationship.

The study also emphasises the importance of geopolitical strategy in strengthening international cooperation. Kazakhstan, with its unique geostrategic position, has the potential to function as a bridge between the Arab East, Asia, Europe, and Russia. Such a role is predicated on the premise of comprehensive political, economic and cultural cooperation, with the overarching objective being to stabilise the region and resolve international conflicts.

The following strategic directions for enhancing and developing relations between Kazakhstan and Arab countries are suggested on the basis of the analysis:

1. The deepening of economic cooperation. In order to strengthen economic ties, it is recommended to establish joint business incubators and technology parks, which will allow companies from both sides to develop and implement innovative projects. The establishment of direct investment funds to support start-ups and small businesses is also recommended, with the aim of enhancing entrepreneurial activity and economic interaction.

2. The expansion of cultural and educational exchange is also recommended. The development of academic and cultural exchange programmes between universities in Kazakhstan and the Arab East is recommended, including the increase in the number of scholarships for students and researchers, the organisation of joint scientific conferences, cultural festivals and exhibitions. These measures will help to strengthen mutual understanding and respect between the peoples.

3. The promotion of political dialogue is identified as a key objective. The promotion of political dialogue is of paramount importance. The establishment of bilateral and multilateral platforms for the discussion and resolution of regional issues has been identified as a potential mechanism for the reduction of tensions and the enhancement of stability within the region. This may be facilitated by regular summits and working-level meetings, in addition to the utilisation of international organisations to coordinate peace and security efforts.

4. Renewable energy integration. Cooperation in the development and exploitation of renewable energy sources has the potential to be a key area of bilateral relations. The development of solar and wind energy, in conjunction with collaborative research and projects in this domain, has the potential to contribute to economic development while concurrently enhancing environmental quality in the region.

5. The development of transport infrastructure is another area of potential cooperation. The implementation of joint projects to develop transport infrastructure, such as the construction of new seaports, railway and road routes, improvement of port services and logistics chains, can significantly facilitate trade and economic interaction between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East.

6. The enhancement of the legal framework for cooperation is also imperative. In order to prevent legal obstacles and strengthen mutual trade, it is necessary to work on harmonising trade, investment and visa legislation. Simplification of procedures for business and tourism will serve to strengthen economic and cultural ties between the regions.

7. The development of joint programmes in the field of healthcare is also recommended. In the context of global challenges, such as pandemics, cooperation in the field of health may prove to be an important aspect of interaction. The exchange of experiences and technologies, as well as joint scientific research in medicine and pharmaceuticals, has the potential to significantly enhance public health and preparedness for new medical challenges.



The present study has confirmed the existence of significant potential for the development and deepening of bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East. Notwithstanding the inherent difficulties caused by geopolitical and economic challenges, there are vast opportunities for cooperation in economic, cultural and political spheres. Utilising its strategic position and multi-vector policy, Kazakhstan is well-positioned to serve as a conduit between the Arab East and the Eurasian Economic Union. Conversely, the Arab East offers Kazakhstan access to capital, technology and new markets, thereby contributing to the diversification of the Kazakhstani economy.

To capitalise on these opportunities, concerted efforts are imperative from government agencies and the private sector to establish a conducive investment environment, streamline visa and customs regulations, and harmonise trade standards.

The conclusion of this analysis indicates that the deepening of political and cultural ties between Kazakhstan and the countries of the Arab East will engender new horizons for both regions in terms of sustainable development, peace and prosperity. Achieving this potential necessitates a strategic vision, resilience, and creativity in addressing emerging challenges.

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