

Joint statement

**by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kazykhanov
and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland
on the occasion of the visit to Astana (11 October 2011)**

The first visit of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to Astana during which he was received by the President of Kazakhstan, met the Speaker of the Majilis (Lower House) of the Parliament, Secretary of State, Chairman of the Constitutional Council, Prosecutor General, Foreign Minister as well as other Ministers provided a good opportunity to give a new impetus to the relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Council of Europe, intensifying the mutual relationship beyond the already fruitful cooperation and institutional relations with the PACE and the Venice Commission towards a more advanced cooperation in a number of areas mutually agreed by the two sides.

This corresponds to the interests of Kazakhstan to deepen its links with the Council of Europe, including through the participation in a number of Council of Europe legal instruments and partial agreements, related to the promotion of good governance, based on the principles and standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Council of Europe considers Kazakhstan to be a very important partner in its policy towards countries in its neighborhood. The decisions of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul in May 2011 are a sign of the readiness of the member states of the Council of Europe to bring the relations with countries in Central Asia to a much higher level. Kazakhstan is in an excellent position to be among the first to benefit from this new opportunity.

Foreign Minister Kazykhanov and Secretary General Jagland expressed their commitment to intensify cooperation in order to build up the necessary capacities and facilitate the accession of Kazakhstan to the conventions for which it has already expressed interest. Parliamentary cooperation is another important area which could be further reinforced.

Against this background, the two sides identified the following areas for future enhanced cooperation. The list is non-exhaustive and can be expanded in the future with an agreement of both sides.

The rule of law with the emphasis on the fight against corruption and criminal justice system.

Human rights with the emphasis on children rights, juvenile justice and human rights education.

Democracy with the emphasis on cultural cooperation, inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue.

Foreign Minister Kazykhanov and Secretary General also underlined the potential benefits from closer cooperation and possible accession of Kazakhstan to relevant Council of Europe partial agreements.

Moreover, they also agreed to explore the potential for cooperation based on Kazakhstan participation in the European Cultural Convention in the field of education, culture, youth and sport. The co-operation had a successful start and both sides are looking forward to stepping it up. In this respect, the steps undertaken by Kazakhstan in advancing education reforms, in particular through acceding in March 2010 to the European Higher Education Area (Bologna Process) are particularly welcome and encouraging.