



Draft

**Declaration
on the creation of the Central Asian Higher Educational Area
(Turkestan Declaration)**

Turkestan

June 18, 2021

1. We recognize that our countries have a long tradition of cooperation and communication based on the commonality of languages, cultures, traditions and territories.
2. We recognize that the current stage of development is characterized by increasing regional migration, both labour and educational. Our countries are striving to improve living standards of our citizens by promoting employment and increasing labour mobility, especially of young people.
3. We recognize the importance of education and educational cooperation in the development of our nations. Education contributes to preventing the exclusion of young people from the labour market and thus contributes to the stability and security of society.
4. We recognize that one of the most important tasks is to harmonize our educational systems with regard to national needs.
5. We believe that the role of higher education institutions as centres of education, culture, science and new technologies is more important than ever. The higher education institutions with their tolerance should become the guardians of the traditions of humanism and Inclusiveness.
6. We recognize that cooperation in education at regional level among Central Asian countries provides a powerful potential for strengthening mutual ties for the benefit of all citizens of the region, increasing the international competitiveness of national higher education systems.
7. We recognize that the Bologna Process in higher education provides leadership and guidance for the further development of higher education,



enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching; promoting the employability of graduates throughout their work-life; shaping inclusive education systems; supporting agreed structural reforms in education.

8. We recognize that the Erasmus+ program, Tuning CAHEA and other regional education and science programs of the European Union, such as the Central Asian Education Platform (CAEP), the Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREN), etc. between Central Asian countries and the European Union have made valuable contributions to bilateral and regional cooperation.

9. Reaffirming our support for the general principles set out in the Bologna Declaration, we commit ourselves to coordinate our education policies and to establish the Central Asian Higher Educational Area (CAHEA), on the principles of the Bologna process, in order to achieve the following objectives:

- developing comparable National Qualifications Frameworks;
- optimization of the procedure for the recognition of educational documents, academic degrees and titles;
- implementation of a comparable credit system according to ECTS, the European Credit Transfer System;
- supporting regional mobility of students, faculty and academic staff by ensuring recognition and crediting of periods of time spent on learning;
- ensuring the quality of education in order to develop comparable criteria and methodologies;
- cooperation in the development of educational programs, joint study programs, practical training and scientific research;
- providing targeted grants for higher education to citizens of countries that have joined to this Declaration;
- participation in joint research projects.

10. Convinced that the establishment of the Central Asian Higher Educational Area requires constant support and adaptation to the external conditions, we decided to set up a permanent Secretariat, which will be localised in one of the countries that have joined to this declaration in turn.

Strategic issues will be considered at the Ministerial Conferences, which will be held annually in each of the countries participating in the Declaration.



Forums of University Rectors will be held every year between the Ministerial Conferences.

In order to consistently work to achieve the goals, we have identified the main areas of cooperation:

- Alliance of Central Asian Universities - cooperation on joint educational and research projects, scientific internships for students and teaching staff, student exchange on academic mobility, opening branches of universities, integration of educational programs.
- Association of Qualifications Recognition Organizations - assistance in increasing the cross-border mobility of students and specialists, as well as optimization of the procedure for the recognition of educational documents, academic degrees and titles.
- Central Asian Education Quality Assurance Network - collaboration between quality assurance bodies to improve the quality assurance procedures in education.
- Students' Alliance - attracting student youth to active participation in education, organizing and conducting joint research and educational activities.