

EDUCATION AS A METHOD OF SOFT POWER IN KAZAKHSTAN: EXAMPLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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One of the basic tasks of the foreign policy of any state is to strengthen its position and authority in the international arena, creating favorable external conditions for a long-term social-economic development of the country. The methods and tools for implementing this task has been changing over the years. In the twentieth century, in the conditions of the bipolar world, primarily, the dominant trend was the build up of “hard power” - military and economic power.

At the present stage of the world development, under the influence of the globalization processes and in the conditions of the formation of a new "multipolar system of international relations", along with military-political weight and economic resources, the factors of "soft power" are put forward as the main factors influencing on world politics: achievements of states in the field of culture and art, science, technology, education, etc.

According to J. Nye, “soft power” is the ability to get the desired results in relations with other states due to the attractiveness of their own culture, values and foreign policy, and not coercion [1].

This method involves the realization of their own goals through cooperation in certain areas and is aimed at convincing and forming a positive perception, while minimizing the expense of resources.

In the modern global world the struggle for cultural influence is intensifying among the main actors in the international arena, the competition becomes cultural and civilizational. International leadership is increasingly determined by the ability of a state to develop its neighbor. Realization of such leadership today is impossible without an advanced development of human capital - the basis for the formation of an educated society. Therefore, many powers pay attention to the modernization and internationalization of the national education system. Only developed education system that meets the requirements of an innovative high-tech economy and integrated into the international educational and scientific space can become one of the most important competitive advantages of the country. Such system will assist in attracting the most talented students from abroad.

The educational services to foreign students is one of the most important components of the “soft power”. In their student years, young people form their ideological values and attitudes. During their studies creatively-minded students from other countries actively learn the language and become acquainted with the achievements of science and culture with sincere interest. Such students acquire valuable social capital and, by returning to their homeland with a new baggage of accumulated knowledge, connections, sympathies and new friends, as a rule, become effective guides of the language and culture of the country where they studied. As a result, the effectiveness of the impact on the outside world with the help of national education as a tool of “soft power” is much higher than with the help of military or other levers of pressure.

After achieving its independence, Kazakhstan has become the object of influence of large regional and global powers, each of which pursues its own interests. World leaders are increasingly focusing their attention on Kazakhstan, considering the energy potential and geopolitical location of the country.

In terms of “soft policy” in the field of education in the Kazakhstan market, it is important to take into account the following factors:

- formation of the education system of Kazakhstan. In this context, it should be emphasized that for Kazakhstan, after secession from the USSR in 1991, one of the important tasks was to build a national education system. However, during this period, negative trends took place in the

educational system, which was a consequence of the socio-economic problems that the state faced. The transition from the command-administrative system to regulatory functions under market conditions was complicated by the lack of financial capacity of the republican and local budgets. The outflow of teachers to business and entrepreneurship has had a negative impact on the level and quality of secondary education[2];

- high level of corruption. Signs of corruption are present in areas such as licensing and accreditation of higher education institutions, the demand for higher education diplomas and etc.[3];

- bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, which slows down decision-making processes, also causes considerable damage;

- mistrust of citizens to the structures of national education. Due to the above-mentioned factors, the phenomenon of studying abroad is gaining popularity in Kazakhstan society, which opens up great opportunities for young people to receive quality education and for self-realization.

Every year the number of students who want to study abroad is increasing. According to the Ministry of Education and Science in 2018, the number of Kazakhstan students studying abroad was 120,000. This indicates that every fifth Kazakhstan student is studying abroad. The most popular destinations were Russia, China, and South Korea[4].

The above mentioned aspects provide a very good niche for the promotion of national education in Kazakhstan in order to attract students, which is done by such countries as the USA, Great Britain, the EU, China and etc.

As it is known, the international mobility of students is stimulated by various programs, like the European programs «Erasmus+» and «Jean Monnet», and can take various forms: from full-time study programs in foreign universities to language programs. Following student mobility, the international academic mobility is growing, mainly due to the activities of specialized services for the promotion of the export of educational services and the academic exchange of teachers and students, such as the French «Campus France» and the German «DAAD». In addition, along with international student and academic mobility, new forms of internationalization have emerged and are actively developing, characterized by the cross-border mobility of universities and university programs. Mobility may include distance learning courses offered by foreign universities.

Particularly noteworthy is the policy of the European Union, namely the Bologna process, aimed at creating an European Higher Education Area. The key objective of this process is to increase the mobility of students and teachers, and standardize the educational process[5]. Assessing such policy from the position of “soft power”, it can be concluded that the process is a competitive struggle for the best students and teachers in the international educational market by increasing the attractiveness of the European system of higher education. Kazakhstan joined the Bologna process on March 2010, thereby starting the process of integration with the European system and opening the doors for Kazakhstani youth to Europe. The implementation of joint educational programs provides, in particular, general admission procedures, joint examinations, as well as academic mobility, providing students with the opportunity to study abroad for one or two semesters. Joint diplomas implement the linguistic and cultural diversity of Europe. In addition, joint programs of study and assignment of joint degrees provide an opportunity for lifelong learning for all categories of students.

Cooperation and integration into the world educational space is one of the main directions in the policy of Kazakhstan in the development of the country's foreign policy. And participation in the Bologna process means for the republic an increase in the competitiveness of Kazakhstan's educational services, recognition of the qualification level of scientists and teachers, and is considered as a means of improving the quality of training for the national economy, as well as a necessary condition for strengthening Kazakhstan's position in the international educational space. The intensive activities of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan in line with the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Convention provide students with the opportunity to receive education at leading foreign universities.

There are various European educational programs, the most popular of which is «Erasmus +». «Erasmus +» is a program of the European Union for the period from 2014 to 2020, aimed at

supporting projects, cooperation, academic mobility in the field of education, training, sports and youth policy[6].

In 2017, 519 Kazakhstani students got the opportunity to study under the «Erasmus+» program by international credit mobility. According to the national office of Erasmus+, Kazakhstan, the amount of funding for that period was 2 676 000 EUR[6].

Another European education program, functioning in Kazakhstan, is the «Jean Monnet» program, which aims to increase knowledge of European integration processes through training and research (chairs, modules, centers of excellence) at the level of higher education institutions both inside and outside the European Union. It is possible to finance cooperation projects, publications, conferences on the study of various aspects related to the history, politics, economics and legislation of the European Union, as well as EU relations with other regions of the world within the framework of the program. In 2017, a total of 1177 applications were submitted, of which 228 projects were selected for a total of 14 million EUR[6].

In 2013, «Erasmus+» replaced the program «Tempus» which was active in Kazakhstan from 1995 to 2013. In total, for the entire past period, 76 projects were financed with the participation of Kazakhstan partners (23 national and 53 regional), totaling over 54 million EUR. They were attended by 46 universities and 48 non-academic partners. Among the active participants in the Tempus program in Kazakhstan are: Kazakh National University - 13 projects and the Eurasian National University - 9 projects[6].

It is widely known that the quality of higher education greatly affects the prestige of the state in the international arena. Improving the national system of higher education in terms of such parameters as international student exchanges, the presence of universities in world rankings, the spread of educational centers abroad, increases the effectiveness of this tool as a component of soft power. Today, we can confidently assert that the European Union has effectively built an European education system that is capable of playing a key role in the European “soft power”.

Literature

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