



## Kazakhstan



Last update:	5 April 2011
Author:	
Population:	15,460,484 (July 2010 est.)
Prime minister:	Karim Masimov (since January 2007)
President:	Nursultan Nazarbayev (chairman of the Supreme Soviet from February 1990, elected president December 1991)
Governemental type:	Republic; authoritarian presidential rule, with little power outside the executive branch
Ruling coalition:	One ruling party – Nur Otan
Last election:	Presidential 3 April, 2011
Next election:	Parliamentary 2012
Sister parties:	All-National Social Democratic Party 'AZAT' (membership agreed by the SI Council, to be ratified at the next Congress)

Nursultan Nazarbayev (1940), has ruled Kazakhstan unchallenged since the 1980s, when it was still part of the Soviet Union. He has been re-elected three times, the last time 3 April 2011 when he received 95,5 percent of the votes. This latest election, held two years earlier than originally planned, was called after a proposed referendum to extend Nazarbaev's term to 2020, was rejected by Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council. Only one party, Nazarbayev's Nur Otan, is represented in parliament.

### INTRODUCTION

President Nazarbayev's political party, Nur Otan, rules the parliament. It won all the seats in the parliament during the last parliamentary elections. Nazarbayev does not only control the political arena, with the help of his family he also holds power over the nation's society. His daughters and sons in law have influential and powerful positions in the media, the energy and oil sectors, services and banks.

The Mazhilis elections on 18 August 2007, could be regarded as a test to show that Kazakhstan is ready to chair the OSCE in 2009. If Kazakhstan becomes chairman it would be a great chance for the country to improve its reputation. However, to obtain the chairmanship Kazakhstan already needs to have a good reputation and a stainless image. According to the OSCE monitor report regarding the elections, this good reputation and stainless image was not yet achieved during the last elections. There were reports of vote manipulation, unequal access to media exposure and more powerful representation for Nur Otan than for other parties in the election administration. When the election results were published it became clear that the party of President Nazarbayev got 88,41 percent of the votes and won all the seats in the Mazhilis.

### POLITICAL SYSTEM

The presidential republic  
President Nazarbayev is the head of state and holds all of the nation's executive authority, this means that Kazakhstan is a presidential republic. He was first elected to that post in 1990 but he has been in power since 1984.



He first became the Chairman of the Council of Ministers and later the First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party during the Soviet period. The president also is the Commander in Chief of the armed forces and may veto legislation that has been passed by the Mazhilis.

The President is elected in a two-round system. To be elected in the first round of voting, a candidate must receive more than half of all votes cast. If no candidate reaches the required majority, the two candidates receiving the most votes contest a second round within two months of the first round. In this round the candidate who receives the higher number of votes is considered elected. Under the Constitution, no person can serve more than two consecutive terms as President. To be eligible to run for the Presidency, one must be a citizen of Kazakhstan not younger than 40 years old, with fluency in Kazakh language and official residency in Kazakhstan for at least 15 years.

The Election Law was amended several times, notably in April 2004. Some of the amendments adopted in 2004 represented considerable progress, although the electoral legislation needs further improvement. The OSCE/ODIHR made a number of recommendations addressing outstanding concerns with the election legislation in its 2004 Assessment of the Constitutional Law on Elections and in the Final Report on the 2004 Parliamentary Elections. None of the recommendations regarding the legal framework have been adopted to date, although the authorities have indicated their intention to make further improvements.

The presidential election is administered by a four level system of election commissions headed by the CEC. The second level consists of 16 commissions: 14 Regional Election Commissions and the City Election Commissions of Astana and Almaty (RECs). The third level comprises 205 District Election Commissions (DECs) and the fourth level comprises 9,730 Precinct Election Commissions (PECs). All election commissions consist of seven members appointed for five-year terms, although RECs, DECs and PECs are only active during election periods. CEC members are elected by the Mazhilis on the proposal of the President. The REC, TEC and PEC members are selected by the respective Maslikhats, local councils, based on proposals received from political parties and public associations. Parties are entitled to propose one nominee to each commission. However the OSCE monitors noted that in practice more Nur Otan representatives are appointed, which gives Nur Otan more power in the election administration. The Patriots Party, Ak Zhol, ANSDP, and Rukhaniyat have told the Election Observation Mission (EOM) that, in general, they are not well represented among the membership of TECs. The ANSDP has informed EOM observers in various locations that many of its nominees to RECs and TECs were rejected by the Maslikhats. The akimats, local government structures, are responsible for compiling voter registers.

#### The parliament

The parliament consists of two chambers. The first is the Mazhilis, the lower house. It is formed on the basis of a proportional system of representation consisting of 98 deputies appointed by the ruling Nur Otan party, which Nazarbayev heads. In addition, the Mazhilis consists of nine deputies from the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. A 366-member organisation that has constitutional status but is really only a decorative body whose main function is to represent the nation's various ethnic groups. The assembly members are appointed by the president, who serves as its chairman for life.

In May 2007 the government of Kazakhstan adopted several amendments to the constitution, this also involved amendments to the Election Law made on 19 June 2007. The previous Mazhilis elections were held under a predominantly majoritarian election system, with ten seats elected through a proportional system. As stated above, under the new system 98 of the 107 deputies are elected in a proportional closed list system, the remaining nine deputies are appointed by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. The voters will vote for the competing political parties and the parties choose, after the publication of the election results, which candidate gets a seat in the parliament. To be eligible to earn seats a party must secure at least seven percent of the votes of the voters that participated in the elections. The idea behind the appointment of the nine remaining deputies is that this will provide additional representation for minorities.

Other amendments concerned the reduction of the presidential mandate from seven to five years, the removal of term limits for the first President of Kazakhstan, a provision to permit the President to engage in political party activity during his or her tenure and changes to the future composition of the CEC.

The parliamentary election is administered in the same way as the presidential elections. The nominations,



appointments and removals of members of all other election commissions are explained in the election law. However, the law only partially addresses previous OSCE/ODIHR concerns about formation of election commissions. Despite the fact that there is an inclusion mechanism that provides basic elements of a framework for political consultations to establish inclusive pluralistic election administration.

#### The Senate

The Senate is the upper house of parliament, and the President appoints one-third of its members directly. The other two-thirds of the Senate are appointed by the regions, two representatives from each region, but Nazarbayev also influences this process indirectly because he appoints the governors of each region.

In addition to these bodies, the country has a Constitutional Council, which is appointed by the president, the Senate and the Mazhilis in equal proportions. It also has a Supreme Court, which is elected by the Senate based on the president's recommendations.

#### The President

The president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, was first elected in December 1991 and re-elected in January 1999, December 2005 and April 2011. During his presidency Nazarbayev has made several legislative amendments to further strengthen his position. The 1995 constitution increased the president's powers and placed less emphasis on protecting human rights. As fleshed out by a presidential edict, the legislature does not control the budget, it cannot initiate constitutional changes or exercise oversight over the executive branch. The president's nominees for premier and state bank head are ratified by the legislature, but he appoints the rest of the cabinet. Most bills are initiated by the president and if the legislature fails within 30 days to pass one of his "urgent" bills, he may issue it by decree. In October 1998, the Kazakh legislature approved constitutional amendments that enabled Nazarbayev to call an early presidential race for January 1999 and extended the president's term from five to seven years. In 2001, the Constitutional Council struck down a bill initiated by deputies providing for staffs, reminding them that they do not control their own budget. In 2007 the parliament voted to allow him to stay in office for an unlimited number of terms. In 2010, he was granted the title "Leader of the Nation" and was given immunity from any prosecution. This means that Nazarbayev will be able to control Kazakh politics even when he retires.

Nazarbayev has given his family members powerful and influential positions in the country's society. His eldest daughter Dariga Nazarbayeva and her ex husband Rakhat Aliyev were media magnets and controlled numerous businesses in the energy and oil sectors, services and banks. Nazarbayev's other daughter, Dinara, is married to Timur Kulibayev. He is a powerful oligarch who is Vice President of Kazakhstan's state oil and gas company KazMunayGaz with political ambitions of his own.

#### The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, who is the head of the Council of Ministers, is appointed by the President. Currently this position is being filled by Karim Masimov, he is the seventh Kazakh Prime Minister since the country became independent in late 1991.

#### Parliamentary elections 2007

##### Background to the elections

After the adoption of the amendments to the constitution and the Election Law the President dissolved the Mazhilis and called for new elections on 18 August 2007. This came as a surprise for many of the political parties and it gave them little time to prepare. Furthermore, new to the election system was the prohibition on forming coalitions, which meant that the parties lacked sufficient time to assess whether they should merge with other parties. Moreover, in the new election system only parties could participate in the elections, there is no provision for independent or individual candidates. Candidates do not appear on the voting list since they are appointed by the political parties after the elections. The amendments also stated that candidates will lose their mandate when they resign from or get ejected from a party in whose name they are elected or if the party terminates its activity.

To compete in the elections the political parties have to be registered by the Ministry of Justice. This process includes the submission of signatures of 50,000 members, these signatures are checked by the Ministry. However there is no time frame for checking the documentations. Seven political parties submitted a candidate list to the CEC, and all seven were registered.



According to the OSCE rapport regarding the 2007 elections there were several obstacles for the parties during the campaign. For example the large majority of the parties complained about the high costs of the campaign material production, the high costs of the media advertisements and the unavailability of official stands of display material. There were also complaints from different parties regarding the media. For example ANSDP complained that TV Khabar refused to air some of its advertisements. The OSCE report stated that Nur Otan was given preferential treatment in the State media.

#### Election results

During the elections of 18 August 2007 all the parties except Nur Otan failed to reach the seven percent barrier required to get into the parliament. According to the official results Nur Otan won 88,41 percent of all the votes, with a 64,5 percent turnout, and thus won all the seats in the Mazhilis.

The OSCE said its monitors found flaws in the vote count in more than 40 percent of the polling stations they visited, in some cases votes counted for Nur Otan had been cast for a different party. The opposition parties accused President Nursultan Nazarbayev of ordering mass falsifications. According to one of the leaders of ANSDP, Bolat Apilov, the turnout was around 47 percent. Zholdasbek Nusenov, another ANSDP leader, stated that according to their data collected by their activists and observers, the official turnout in the Almaty region was not real. The ANSDP stated they got about 13 percent of the votes in Taldy-Kurgan part of the region.

#### Overview of election results

Party	Percentage of votes	Number of seats
Ak-Zhol	3,09	0
ANSDP	4,54	0
Auyl	1,51	0
CPPK	1,29	0
Nur Otan	88.41	98
Patriot's Party	0,78	0
Rukhaniyat	0,37	0

#### Presidential elections 2011

Nazarbayev called the early 3 April 2011 presidential election after a proposal to cancel the next two elections was ruled unconstitutional. Twenty-two potential candidates were counted before the registration process began; their number was finally reduced to four, including no established opposition leaders. The three candidates all gave support to Nazarbayev. The short period before election (two months since its declaration) was cited by opposition leaders as impeding them to prepare and contest the poll. Therefore they refused to take part in the elections and called for a boycott.

#### Results

Candidates	Votes	%
Nursultan Nazarbaev – Nur Otan	7,850,958	95.55
Ghani Qasimov – Patriots Party	159,036	1.94
Zhambyl	111,924	1.36



Akhmetbekov – Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan		
Mels Eleusizov – Tabighat	94,452	1.15
Total (turnout 89.99%)	8,216,370	100

The OSCE has complained about a lack of transparency and competition in the elections. International monitors cited numerous cases of ballot box–stuffing, voter intimidation and a lack of transparency.

#### Background

A referendum on extending the presidential term limits was proposed to be held in March 2011. Nazarbayev's term was due to expire in 2012 and the referendum would have bypassed the next two scheduled elections. Although Nazarbayev rejected the proposal, it would still have gone ahead if 80% of the members of the parliament voted for it, or if a public petition obtained at least 200,000 signatures. Media reports said that a petition for the referendum had already been signed by 2,600,000 people.

On 31 January the Constitutional Council rejected the referendum proposal, arguing that the Constitutional amendment did not specify for how long and how many times the term could be extended. The Court therefore referred the matter to the President himself, as required by Kazakhstan's Constitution. Nazarbayev agreed on putting aside the Constitutional referendum and directly called for early elections. Nazarbayev may have changed his mind on presidential term extension following negative reactions by the USA, EU and OSCE and in order to buy five years time to resolve succession issues, according to observers.

## IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES

### Corruption

Corruption is widespread throughout all the levels of government and businesses are forced to pay bribes in order to deal with the government bureaucracy. Administrative corruption is the most widespread form of corruption in Kazakhstan. In practical terms, it amounts to extortion, and shadow control of business by officials. There is no independent body investigating corruption allegations or conducting inquiries. The top figures within the government enjoy a virtual immunity from investigation, unless they engage in political or economic activities that challenge the president. Kazakhstan was one of the first to adopt the law on fighting corruption in 1998. And in May 2005, Nazarbayev issued a decree endorsing the Code of Honour for Government Officials. Corruption in Kazakhstan has a unique feature: the republic has ramified anti–corruption legislation, and "cleaning" agencies. But they exist side by side with corruption, which has pervaded the whole system, and exists within this legislation.

Kazakhstan was ranked 111 out of 163 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2006 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a CPI score of 2.6. This score relates to the perception of the degree of corruption as seen by business people and country analysts. It ranges between 10, which means highly clean, and 0, which means highly corrupt.

### Economy

After independence, oil and gas regions developed fastest, as foreign investment flooded in. Resource diversity created income inequality. Almaty, the former capital, was the wealthiest city. Since it became the capital city, Astana caught up Almaty in per capita terms. Atyrau, the leading oil city, became the most prosperous city in Kazakhstan. The average Kazakhstani enjoys a higher income on average than do those in neighbouring countries,



this is shown in the following table.

Country	GDP per capita (2006)
Kazakhstan	,400
Turkmenistan	,500
Uzbekistan	,000
Kyrgyzstan	,100
Tajikistan	,300

Strong leadership by President Nazarbayev, combined with a gradualist approach and a wealth of natural resources, have resulted in a peaceful and mostly successful transition from Soviet dependency to economic independence and progress towards a full market economy. Wealth, flowing into Kazakhstan from oil interests, contributes greatly.

There were three time periods within the economic development of Kazakhstan. First, the Independence Shock between 1991 and 1992, it immediately followed independence, before Kazakhstan left the ruble system. The second period was a period of structural reforms between 1993 and 1998. During these six years, the government learned monetary management, fiscal management and deficit control, how to stabilize output and inflation, and simultaneously began the building of a market economy and its institutions. The Quasi-Market Economy began in 1999, when reforms were deepened, and Kazakhstan sought integration into global markets. Little of the growth since independence seemed due to the acquisition of skills, training, and experience. Kazakhstan has grown rapidly and successfully, but long-term growth will require a different kind of development.

Income inequality is still an unresolved problem. The greatest remaining challenge for the society and economy of Kazakhstan is to develop a protective social safety net. Public welfare in Kazakhstan has largely been ignored, with emphases having been placed on privatisation and attracting foreign investment. GDP per capita is the average, not the most common level of income. Hence, income inequality is visibly evident. Benefits from growth have been mostly isolated to the urban sector or the oil and gas industry. The Asian Development Bank sees growth passing by the rural population. It points to low investment levels and poor infrastructure in the rural sector. Poverty varies substantially from season to season. It is lower during summer than in winter, because of lower food prices and lower expenditures for heating. According to the World Bank the poverty headcount ratio at a day per person consisted of 16 percent of the population in 2005.

#### Human rights

There are several important human rights violations taking place in Kazakhstan. They vary from the harassment and obstruction of political opposition to human trafficking.

#### HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Kazakhstan is fuelled by human rights abuses against intravenous drug users and sex workers, who are not only the targets of stigmatisation, police abuse, and false criminal charges, but also are routinely denied humane medical treatment. Although by global standards the prevalence of HIV/AIDS remains relatively low in Kazakhstan, the country suffers from one of the fastest-growing HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. Between 1996 and October 2006 the number of officially registered HIV cases grew from 100 to over 5,440. Unofficially, the number was estimated in 2005 to be as high as 20,000.

The government has taken many steps in the fight against HIV/AIDS, including launching a US million program for 2006–2010 to fight the spread of HIV in Kazakhstan. However, Kazakhstan's HIV/AIDS laws have not been brought into compliance with international standards and government policies are discriminatory and continue to reinforce prejudice.

#### Human trafficking

Human trafficking is a serious issue for Kazakhstan. According to Sergei Dospolov, head of the foreign relations department of the prosecutor general's office, human trafficking is the third most profitable crime in Kazakhstan. Initially, the government was very slow to take action against human trafficking. However, after the US and other international parties expressed their criticism for not adequately addressing this issue the government amended



articles in the criminal codes, making it easier to prosecute human traffickers. In addition, a deputy prime minister was appointed to oversee the government's more stringent counter-trafficking efforts. In 2005 Kazakhstan ratified the UN Convention against human trafficking. Kazakhstan is a second tier country on the Trafficking in Persons Report of the US State Department of 2007. This tier placement is based on the extent of the governmental action to combat human trafficking and the size of the problem, the first tier represents the countries that do the most to combat human trafficking and the third tier represents the countries that make no significant effort.

#### Media

While the constitution provides for freedom of the press, the government has repeatedly harassed or shut down independent media outlets through measures including politicized lawsuits and confiscations of newspapers. There are numerous reports of intimidation or attacking of the independent media and the people behind these newspapers and television stations. For example, in June 2002 Leila Baiseitova, daughter of independent journalist Lira Baiseitova, was abducted. She reportedly hanged herself in police custody after been subjected to beatings. The newspaper, SolDat, had published a corruption article by Baiseitova over 'Kazakhgate'. Lira Baiseitova had herself been attacked by unknown assailants in 2000 and 2001. And in October 2002 Sergei Duvanov, a journalist, was arrested before he was to leave for a series of lecture tours on media repression in Kazakhstan. Subsequently jailed for three and half years for rape, his arrest and trial was one of the very few cases to receive any sort of international attention.

Libel is a criminal offence, and the country's criminal code prohibits insulting the honour and dignity of the president; self-censorship is widespread. The content of websites has been subject to libel laws and the government at times has moved to block access to websites critical of the regime. In July 2006 amendments to Kazakhstan's media law were adopted that gave the government unlimited power to close independent and opposition media outlets for technical and administrative violations.

Most media outlets, including publishing houses, are controlled or otherwise influenced by members of the President's family or other powerful interest groups. Dariga Nazarbayeva resigned her position as head of the state-run Khabar television station before the 2004 parliamentary election campaign, but was thought to retain significant influence behind the scenes. Also, the director general of Dauir, a printing company, is President Nazarbayev's sister-in-law, Svetlana Nazarbayeva.

#### Political Opposition

The government continues to bringing spurious criminal and administrative charges against opposition activists and supporters. For example, the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan Party (DVK), which had been banned in January 2005, attempted to register under a new name (Forward Kazakhstan!). But on June 6, 2006, the Supreme Court refused to register it because of "errors" found in the list of more than 62,000 members that was submitted as part of the application.

In November 2005 in the run up to the elections the former mayor of Almaty and Emergencies Minister Zamanbek Nurkadilov was found dead in his home with a revolver by his side. The official enquiry concluded that it was suicide, however the lawyer for Nurkadilov's family questioned whether it could have been possible for Nurkadilov to shoot himself twice in the chest before firing the final deadly shot in the head. The opposition accused President Nazarbayev of ordering the killing of Nurkadilov, however pro-government figures suggested that Nurkadilov was killed by rivals within the opposition with whom he had a difficult relationship.

In February 2006 Altynbek Sarsenbaiuly was found shot to death along with his security guard and driver. Sarsenbaiuly was co-chairman of the Nagyz Ak Zhol opposition party and previously he had served under President Nazarbayev. He was Secretary of the National Security Council, Information Minister and ambassador to Russia before splitting with the presidential camp in 2003 and joining the opposition. The investigation of his murder pointed to the involvement of state security officers in the killing, but left many questions unanswered. There were claims that confessions had been coerced and the trial culminated in the sentencing of Yerzhan Utembayev, former head of the Senate Administration, to a 20-year prison term for organising the murders. Prosecutors said Utembayev had been acting on a personal grudge, but conflicting theories implicating higher government officials were aired by trial witnesses and the opposition.

Both Nurkadilov and Sarsenbaiuly had called for President Nazarbayev's resignation over the so-called "Kazakhgate"



scandal, in which high-level but unnamed Kazakh officials are alleged to have accepted bribes from western energy companies.

#### Refugee crisis

A number of Uzbeks seeking refuge in Kazakhstan from persecution were forcibly returned to Uzbekistan to risk of torture and ill-treatment, in violation of international law. In late November 2005 Kazakh authorities forcibly returned at least nine Uzbeks who had fled persecution in Uzbekistan. Upon their return to Uzbekistan some of the men were tried and sentenced, while others are awaiting trial at this writing on various charges related to "religious extremism." In addition, seven Uzbeks wanted on religious extremism charges for their alleged affiliation with Akramia (followers of an independent Islamic religious teacher) and in connection with the 2005 Andijan uprising are believed to have been forcibly returned from Kazakhstan in late November and early December 2005. To date, Kazakh authorities have not admitted their involvement in these returns.

#### International relations

Kazakhstan is a member of several international organisations. It joined the UN on 2 March 1992 and it currently has a seat in the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC). Kazakhstan was admitted to the OSCE on 30 January 1992 and the OSCE Centre in Kazakhstan was established in 1998. The Centre monitors political, legal and economic developments with a view to maintaining stability in the country and the region and it promotes OSCE standards and commitments within Kazakhstan. Furthermore, Kazakhstan is member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), which brings together the NATO and partner countries. Kazakhstan joined EAPC in March 1992. Within the NATO framework it is also a member of the Partnership for Peace programme, which it joined in 1995.

#### Relation with Russia

The relationship between Kazakhstan and Russia is a good one. The leaders of the countries meet each other several times a year, there are no border issues between them and the commercial relations are strong and long standing. Russia views Kazakhstan as a key regional player and therefore aims to maintain a good relationship with this country. Russia is reluctant to see its influence over Kazakhstan decreasing at a time when Kazakhstan's position in the region further strengthens. An important issue for their partnership is the energy sector, since most of Kazakhstan's oil is transported through Russia's pipelines. Russia and Kazakhstan are both members of a number of organisations which are discussed in reference to the relationship between Kazakhstan and Central Asia. Kazakhstan is recently pursuing a closer relationship with states that do not have good relationships with Russia, like Georgia. After a meeting between Putin and Nazarbayev in March 2007 some Russian and Kazakh media hinted that the relationship between the two countries was cooling down. However, Kazakh analysts believe this is not the case, they believe the bilateral relations between the two countries is still very cooperative and friendly. The interest of Kazakhstan in countries like Georgia have to be seen in an economic perspective. The fact that Russia and Kazakhstan are competitors in the oil and gas sector could have a negative effect on the relationship. However, Russia has few friends in the former Soviet Union countries so it is important for Russia to keep a good and stable relationship with Kazakhstan.

#### Relation with other countries in Central Asia

The neighbouring countries of Kazakhstan are Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. One of the main problems between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was the dispute concerning the borders between these countries. However, in 2006 Kyrgyzstan stated that the key focus of its foreign policy is strengthening the relationship with its neighbours, after which President Kurmanbek Bakiev made a visit to Kazakhstan to discuss their relationship. Despite the fact that Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed an eternal friendship treaty in 1998 their relationship has been difficult from the start. Among the reasons for this difficult relationship was the fact that the leaders of both countries fought for the leadership of the Central Asia region and the border issues between the two countries. This relationship changed when Uzbekistan turned to Russia and Central Asia after the relationship with the US became sour after a dispute in May 2005. The relationship between Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan has been a difficult one in the past, mainly due to the fact that Turkmenistan claimed a neutral status and isolated itself from the rest of the region. This changed when President Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov came into power in 2006, he began to pursue better relations with the neighbouring countries and opened up the possibility to cooperate in the energy sector.

Kazakhstan is a member of several organisations in which it cooperates with their neighbouring countries. The most



important organisations are: the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), an international organisation that was created after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it consists of eleven former Soviet Republics and Russia. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), this is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation created by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Its goals are the strengthening of mutual confidence and good neighbourly relations. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), this organisation aims to strengthen the cooperation between the Asian countries. And the Eurasian Economic Community, (EAEC), this organisation was established in May 2001 and the primary objective is to develop a full-scale customs union and common economic space. Its members are Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), this organisation was initially created under the name of Central Asian Economic Union in 1994. It consists of the states: Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. ECO's principal purpose is economic cooperation, other issues include communication and humanitarian cooperation.

#### Relation with China

China and Kazakhstan established diplomatic relations on 3 January 1993 and in October 1993 the two countries signed a Joint Statement on the Foundation of the Friendly Relations. Traditionally they had low-key security relations, Kazakhstan felt uneasy about China's long term interests in Central Asia, however the enhanced security cooperation within the (SCO) to combat terrorism changed this. Besides SCO China and Kazakhstan also work together in the CICA. Also, China's interests in the Kazakh energy sector further improved the relationship between the two countries. In 2006 China and Kazakhstan agreed on the construction of a second section of an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China, and a gas pipeline to transit Kazakhstan, taking Turkmen gas to China. Kazakhstan's national oil and gas company KazMunayGaz agreed on the principles of cooperation with China's CNPC, on the building of the second section of the oil pipeline. The trade volume between China and Kazakhstan reached .36 billion in 2006.

In 2006 President Hu of China expressed interest in cooperation with Kazakhstan in five areas: high level exchange visits between related governmental departments, expanding cooperation in trade, energy, transportation and promoting economic growth, deepening security cooperation against 'new threats' in the region, intensifying multilateral cooperation and expanding media and cultural ties.

#### Relation with the US

The US opened its first embassy in Kazakhstan in January 1992. According to the US the cooperation in security and non-proliferation is the cornerstone of the bilateral relations between the two countries. The US Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was 27 percent of the total FDI in Kazakhstan in 2006. Furthermore, the US has provided around \$ 1.205 billion in technical assistance and investment support. Moreover, Kazakhstan's military participates in the US's International Military Education and Training program, Foreign Military Financing, as well as NATO's Partnership for Peace program

The US has several interests in Kazakhstan. An important interest is the energy sector, since the country's energy sources are on par with Kuwait Kazakhstan plays an important role in making the US less dependent on the Middle East oil supply. Furthermore, Kazakhstan is strategically important since it shares borders with Russia and China, it can be a stabilising actor in the region. After 11 September 2001 the US intensified the military cooperation with Central Asia, because the region is close to Afghanistan for example. Moreover, Kazakhstan is an example of responsible behaviour in the international non-proliferation regime since it was the first state to complete voluntary nuclear disarmament. The emphasis on democracy in the foreign policy of the US was not received well in Kazakhstan. Therefore Kazakhstan slowly started to turn away from the US and focus more on Russia and China, since these countries are not critical of the domestic policies of Kazakhstan or the government corruption.

#### Relation with EU

The legal framework for the EU Kazakhstan bilateral relation is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). This PCA was signed in January 1995 and it came into force in 1999. This cooperation was expanded in 2002 by including energy and transport issues in the mandate of the existing Subcommittee on Trade and Investment. The EU has several other bilateral agreements with Kazakhstan. These include, among others, Steel Agreement, Nuclear Safety, Nuclear Fusion and Peaceful Use of Nuclear Energy. Furthermore, the EU is represented in Kazakhstan by 11 Member State Embassies as well as a Commission Delegation.



The EU sees itself as a balancer between the rival energy and geopolitical interests that Russia, China and the US have in Kazakhstan. For the EU Kazakhstan is an important energy source, also it is guarantor of stability in Central Asia and a potentially long term strategic partner in the region. Kazakhstan has shown an interest in the European Neighbourhood Policy and proposed to develop a foreign policy in which it will deal with the EU directly instead of with the separate member states. Furthermore, Kazakhstan is the EU's largest trading partner in Central Asia, the trade between the two partners exceeds 0,3 percent of the EU's total trade. Moreover, the EU has the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Kazakhstan.

#### OSCE Chairmanship 2010

On 1 December 2007, the OSCE announced during its annual ministerial meeting that Kazakhstan will assume chairmanship of the organization in 2010. Kazakhstan had originally aspired to assume OSCE presidency in 2009, but faced a hard time to be granted the position, as several OSCE member states criticized Kazakhstan's human rights record. Astana did secure its position as the first ex-Soviet country to assume OSCE chairmanship, something which the Kazakh leadership told the people "would show that the international community was taking notice of Kazakhstan's growing importance in the world community." Critics pointed to the contradiction between Kazakhstan's weak human rights record and the OSCE's stated goals to promote democracy and human rights. The US was one of the most skeptical countries, but reportedly gave its backing after securing a Kazakh "pledge" that Astana will protect the OSCE's election-monitoring body (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR), whose role Russia had proposed to alter. Kazakhstan furthermore had to promise to work harder on human rights reforms in the period leading to the OSCE chairmanship.

However, criticism has grown over Astana's lack of reforms over the past months. Several journalists have complained about the dangerous circumstances to work in in Kazakhstan. In addition, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty's Kazakh-language service was blocked for several weeks. There are still cases of arbitrary and politically motivated detentions. So far, the critics have it, little has changed despite the promises.

The issue could become thorny as especially the western OSCE member states continue to criticize Kazakhstan, pointing to the upcoming OSCE chairmanship as a commitment of Astana to promote democracy and human rights. Russia, on the other hand, firmly backs Kazakhstan, and alleges western OSCE countries are unrightfully trying to force their 'model' of democracy upon the former Soviet states.

---

## SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES

All National Social Democratic Party (ANSDP)  
Chairman: Zharmakhan Aitbayuly Tuyakbay  
Deputy Chairman: Amirzhan Sagitrakhmanovich Kosanov.

The party was established on 10 September 2006 and registered on 25 January 2007. The party has offices in Astana and Almaty. National Social Democratic Party has taken upon the task of building a democratic, legal and social state, the development of an innovative economy and the implementation of humanitarian policy. The party is working on realization of the values of the international social democratic movement as well as the principles of freedom, justice and solidarity in the political practice of Kazakhstan.

The party is known for being the most outspoken critic of the Nur Otan party of President Nazarbayev.

Kazakhstan Social Democratic Party Auy!  
Party Chairman: Gani A.Kaliev

The party was registered on 1 March 2002. The party has its structural divisions in all regions of Kazakhstan. The goals of the party are strengthening of the government regulation, support of agricultural sector, protection of interests of the rural workers, active assistance to implementation of economic, political reforms directed for further democratization of the society, reasonable business relationships in all economy sectors and increasing living standard of citizens. The Party participated in 2004 parliamentary election, however, it was not able to get any deputy mandates in the Third Convocation of Mazhilis.



Other opposition parties  
Ak-Zhol (Bright Path)  
Chairman: Alikhan Baimenov

The party was registered on 3 April 2002. The party has its structural divisions in 12 regions, towns and districts. The party goals are independent, prosperous and free Kazakhstan and the fundamental values are democracy, independence, freedom and justice. The party actively participates in activities of coordination commissions on development of recommendations for further democratisation of Kazakhstan. During 2004 Mazhilis elections the party received 12.04 % of votes and has 2 mandates in the Third Convocation of Mazhilis. On 8 July 2007 the Kazakh opposition party Ak Zhol united with the pro-government Adilet. Alikhan Baimenov retained his post as leader of the enlarged Ak Zhol party, while former Adilet leader Maksut Narikbaev agreed to join Lyudmila Zhulanova and Burikhan Nurmukhamedov of Ak Zhol as Baimenov's deputies.

Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan  
First Secretary: Vladislav B. Kosarev.

The Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan splintered from the Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK) at the start of 2004. Leader Vladislav Kosarev and others accused the original Communist Party's leader, Serikbolsyn Abdildin, of accepting money from questionable sources. This internal struggle lasted into the spring of 2004 before the new party broke off from the old. The new Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan did take some 15,000 members of the original party, which is not enough to meet the requirement for 50,000 registered members. The origin of the other 55,000 members Kosarev claims is unclear.

The party branches operate in all regional centres, as well as in the cities of Astana and Almaty. According to political platform of the party, the basis of the party's activities of Marx-Lenin ideology adapted to modern reality of social development. The party received 1.98 % of the votes during the 2004 Mazhilis elections and is not represented in the Third Convocation of Mazhilis.

Communist Party of Kazakhstan  
First Secretary: Serikbolsyn A. Abdildin.

The Party was registered on 27 August 1998. The Party branches operate in all regions of the country. The membership is mainly comprised by war and labour veterans, workers and pensioners. The main goals set by the Party are establishment of conditions for building the society for freedom and social justice in the country, based on principles of scientific socialism: establishment of the communist social order. During 2004 Mazhilis elections CPK was a part of the election coalition "People's opposition union and DVK", which received 3,44% of the votes and thus not securing a seat in the Parliament. The party did not nominate candidates for the 2007 election in protest of the fact that the parties decide which candidates will get a seat in the parliament.

Patriots Party  
Chairman: Gani E. Kasymov

This party was given provisional state registration on 4 August 2000 and it was registered with Justice Ministry in August 2001. On 24 April 2004 the Union of Officers (war veterans) announced they were joining the party and bringing their 27,000 members. The Party has its structural divisions in 12 regions, towns and districts. The Party declares the following goals: formation and implementation of the national revival of Kazakhstani people, building a judicial democratic state and a civil society with market economy, the involvement of socially active population for participation in management of government and public matters, the sustainable development of the country and the establishment of high quality of life with the priority to public health. In 2004 Mazhilis elections the Party received 0.55% of votes which was not sufficient for securing a seat in the Parliament.

Rukhaniyat (Spirituality)  
Chairman: Altynshash K. Zhaganova.

The party was registered on 30 October 2003. It was formed on the basis of the revival of Kazakhstan Party that writer-dramatist Altynshash Jaganova helped to establish in 1995.



The Party branches operate in regional centres, namely the cities of Astana and Almaty. Social basis of the Party–staff are educational institutions, healthcare system institutions, science and culture institutions, entrepreneurs and students. The main tasks of the Party are economic growth, solutions to social problems, development of society with high moral standards and spiritual wealth. According to the results of 2004 Mazhilis elections the Party received 0.44% of votes and it is not represented in the Third Convocation of Mazhilis.

#### PRO-GOVERNMENT PARTIES

National Democratic Party Nur Otan (Fatherland)  
Chairman: Bakhytzhhan Zhumagulov

Otan was formed shortly after the January 1999 presidential election by President Nursultan Nazarbayev's campaign manager, Sergei Tereshchenko, and other members of the campaign team. The party stated immediately that its goal was the re-election of Nazarbayev in the scheduled 2006 presidential election. Nazarbayev was elected party chairman at the first party meeting, a position he declined owing to a constitutional restriction on a serving president being the head of a political party. The party was formed on the basis of existing parties and movements supporting Nazarbayev's candidacy in the January 1999 elections, among them the National Unity Party of Kazakhstan, the Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan, the For Kazakhstan 2030 movement, and the Justice Party (Adolat). Civil servants are more or less compelled to join Nur Otan, as are the employees of private companies whose owners are Nazarbayev supporters. There is an obvious fusing of the party and higher bureaucracy. News Briefing Central Asia political analyst Eduard Poletaev believes that in the current political climate, one has to be a Nur Otan member if one wants to pursue a successful career in government. This and the fact that Nur Otan is the result of the merge of several political parties, explains the high number of members of Nur Otan, which is 607 557.

---

#### BIOGRAPHIES

Nursultan Nazarbayev  
President of Kazakhstan

Nursultan Nazarbayev was born in Chemolgan, Kazakhstan in 1940. He was educated in the Kazakh and Ukrainian Soviet Republics. Nazarbayev worked a metallurgical engineer, he was employed at the Karaganda (Qaraghandy) iron- and steelworks. He later became an economist and in 1969 began serving in Communist party posts at the local level, becoming First Secretary of the Kazakh Communist party by 1989. He was Chairman of the Kazakh Supreme Soviet between 1989 and 1990, a member of the Soviet politburo in 1990 and president of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic between 1990 and 1991. Nazarbayev has served as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan since 1991.

During his presidency Nazarbayev has made several legislative amendments to consolidate his power. The parliament voted in 2007 to allow him to stay in office for an unlimited number of terms. In 2010, he was granted the title "Leader of the Nation" and was given immunity from any prosecution. Nazarbayev has concentrated extensive powers in his own hands and is accused by the opposition of suppressing dissents. Supporters however say he preserves inter-ethnic stability in the country. Furthermore, Nazarbayev has been especially keen to raise Kazakhstan's profile internationally. Among the leaders of the former Soviet Muslim republics, he is the one closest allies of Moscow.

Nazarbayev has given his family members powerful and influential positions in the country's society. Moreover, he is believed to have transferred at least billion worth of oil revenues to his private bank accounts in other countries and his family controls many other key enterprises in Kazakhstan.

Nursultan Nazarbayev is married and has three daughters.

---

Karim Massimov



#### Prime Minister of Kazakhstan

Karim Massimov was born on 15 June 1965 in Tselinograd (now Astana). He studied at the Colombia Business School in the United States, and graduated from the Beijing Language and Culture University, the Law School of Wuhan University, and the Kazakh State Academy of Management in international law and economics. Massimov led Kazakhstan's trading operations in China, and worked in Hong Kong as the Managing Director of the Kazakh Trading House. Then he went on to becoming the director of two Kazakh banks, from 1995 to 2000.

In 2001 Massimov was appointed Minister of Transport and Communications. He served as Deputy Prime Minister from January 2006 to January 2007. He has been the incumbent Prime Minister of Kazakhstan since January 2007.

Massimov is an ethnic Uyghur who reportedly speaks Chinese, Russian, English and Arabic, which is a big advantage as China, Russia and the United States are Kazakhstan's major economic partners. Massimov is credited with being one of the architects of Kazakhstan's economic growth since he became an adviser to President Nazarbaev in 2003. He is seen as one of the most influential figures in Nazarbayev's inner circle.

---

#### Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev was born on 17 May 1953. He graduated as a Doctor of Political Science from the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Relations, the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and the Beijing Language Institute. He was the Minister of Foreign Affairs twice: from 1994 to 1999, and from 2002 to 2007. In between he served as the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan for three years. Tokayev is the current Chairman of the Kazakh Senate, a position which he has held since 2007. It is the second highest position in the government of Kazakhstan. Tokayev is presently also a member of the CIS Inter-parliamentary Assembly Council and head of the Kazakh delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

As a Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tokayev visited many countries, including the United States and Germany in 2006. The Senate Chairman has written several books and articles on international affairs. Tokayev has a diplomatic rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

---

#### Zharmakhan Aitbayuly Tuyakbay

Chairman of the All-National Social Democratic Party of Kazakhstan

Zharmarkhan Tuyakbay was born on 22 November 1947 in the South of Kazakhstan. He graduated from the Law Department of the Kazakh State University. In 1981 he became Deputy General Prosecutor of Kazakhstan. In 1990 Tuyakbay was appointed General Prosecutor of Kazakhstan. From 1995 to 1997 he served as Chairman of the State Investigatory Committee. Next, he became Chief Military Prosecutor of Kazakhstan. He is the current Chairman of the All-National Social Democratic Party. He participated in the 2005 presidential elections and is considered the most significant challenger to President Nazarbayev.

The political career of Tuyakbay began in 1999, as he won a seat in the Majilis, the Kazakh Lower House. Consequently, in December that year, he was elected Chairman of the Majilis. Several months before the parliamentary elections of September 2004, he became vice-chairman of the pro-government Otan party. Tuyakbay was the first on the election party list.

However, he renounced his mandate as member of the Majilis, condemning the violations during the elections. That year, in 2004, Tuyakbay became Chairman of the Coordinating Council of Democratic Forces of Kazakhstan, which included several parties such as the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan Party, the Ak Zhol Party and the Communist Party. From March 2005 Tuyakbay chaired the Political Movement For a Just Kazakhstan. Then in December 2005, he ran for president and came in second with 6 percent, after President Nazarbayev. In 2006 Tuyakbay founded the All-National Social Democratic Party, which has merged with the Azat Party. He is co-chairing the party together with Bulat Abilov.



**European Forum**  
*for Democracy and Solidarity*

Zharmakhan Tuyakbay is married and has three children.