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ARGENTINA AND KAZAKHSTAN RELATIONS

Abstract

During the last two decades, the bilateral relations between Argentina and Kazakhstan were sporadic and limited to formal contacts. At this moment we are witnessing a growing interest of Kazakhstan towards Latin America and, at the same time, an Argentinean interest on Central Asia. This process has opened the door to many possibilities that can be analysed on three main issues: political-diplomatic, economic and cultural.

Key words: bilateral relations, Argentina, Kazakhstan, Latin America, Central Asia, Politico-diplomatic, cultural, economic.

Аннотация

В течение последних двух десятилетий, двусторонние отношения между Аргентиной и Казахстаном были спорадическими и ограничивались лишь официальными контактами. В этот момент мы являемся свидетелями растущего интереса Казахстана к Латинской Америке и, одновременно, Аргентины к Центральной Азии. Этот процесс распахнул двери для многих возможностей, которые можно проанализировать по трем основным направлениям: политико-дипломатическому, экономическому и культурному

Ключевые слова: двусторонние отношения, Аргентина, Казахстан, Латинская Америка, Центральная Азия, политико-дипломатический, культурный, экономический.

Аңдатпа

Екі соңғы онжылдық ішінде Аргентина мен Қазақстан арасындағы екіжақты қарым-қатынас сирек және ресми кантәтілермен ғана шектелді. Бүгінгі таңда біз Қазақстанның Латын Америкасына қызығушылығының арта түскеніне қоса, Аргентинаның Орталық Азияға қызықшылықтың арта түскеніне куәгерміз. Бұл процесс көптеген мүмкіншіліктерге есік ашты. Осы мүмкіншіліктерді саяси-дипломатиялық, мәдени, экономикалық тұрғылардан зерттеуге болады.

Тірек сөздер: екіжақты қарым-қатынас, Аргентина, Қазақстан, Латын Америкасы, Орталық Азия, саяси-дипломатиялық, мәдени, экономикалық.

Executive Summary

While there is no dearth of potential and scarcity of resources, *during the last two decades, the bilateral relations between Argentina and Kazakhstan were sporadic and limited to formal contacts. Fortunately, at this moment we are witnessing a growing interest of Kazakhstan towards Latin America and, at the same time, an Argentinean interest on Central Asia. This process has opened the door to many possibilities that can be analysed on three main issues: political-diplomatic, economic and cultural.*

According to our perspective, Kazakhstan is interested on Latin America in order to develop its multivector global foreign policy while Argentina is looking for new trade and financial partners with countries with which previous contacts were not sufficiently developed.

In this context, the authorities and the academia must take advance of this window of opportunity in order to increase the mutual knowledge of both governments and societies in order to develop well-based relations. Conceptual framework is to be done in order to develop a beneficial cooperation between the two countries .A presented potential will be analysed in the following paper.

Introduction

This policy paper takes into account the possible role of two players: 1) Governmental authorities, based on governmental development strategies 2) Business structures of Kazakhstan and Argentina. Their aspirations and potential growth analysis.

Although political cooperation of the two countries traditionally have not been very active and neither to the Argentinean foreign policy general framework Central Asia was never considered as a priority or a region of interest, nor for Kazakhstan Latin America entered to the circle of closest

strategic interests, however, countries have identical or similar positions on most of global issues.

During the most part of the XX century Central Asia was part of the Soviet Union so the political and trade relations linked Moscow with Buenos Aires. When the Soviet Union collapsed, Argentine recognized and established diplomatic relation with all the Central Asian countries.

After the establishment of the independent states of that region, the bilateral relations never reached a high level and were considered as peripheral for both actors – Argentina and Central Asian countries.

However, at the beginning of the 21st century the situation has changed dramatically. On one hand, Kazakhstan became interested on Latin American countries, mainly on Brazil but also on the region as a whole: Kazakhstan has entered the third decade of its independence as an established and stable state with a dynamically developing economy and clearly set foreign policy priorities. The increased participation of Kazakhstan in world affairs can be seen by the rising role and strengthening international reputation of the state, its increased regional weight and importance for the world financial institutions and global economy.

Recently Kazakhstan adopted new The Foreign Policy Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the years 2014–2020, which has been developed based on the directions, set forth in the Strategy Kazakhstan – 2050 Address to the people of Kazakhstan by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Strategy – 2050). This strategy represents a system of fundamental views on the principles, approaches, aims, priorities and tasks of foreign policy for the Republic of Kazakhstan.

According to one of the Foreign Policy Priorities “The Republic of Kazakhstan attaches great importance to cooperation with the countries of North, Central and South America. In this paper, priority is given to the development of trade – economic, investment and humanitarian ties and the promotion of common interests in the UN and other international organizations”.

On the other hand, Brazil and then Argentina, considered Central Asia and Kazakhstan specifically not only as a potential commercial partner but as a political and diplomatic one. This new situation led to a mutual ‘discovering’, which is exactly the period we are now.

Political relations

Even though after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Argentina recognized and established diplomatic relations with all the Central Asian states, this diplomatic measure was just a formal step that did not develop the bilateral contacts between Argentina and those states. The Argentinean embassy to Russia was established as the non-resident embassy to Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, while the Argentinean embassy to Pakistan took the responsibility over the relations with Tajikistan.

Table 1

Dates of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Argentina and Central Asian states	
Kirgizstan	New York, October 6 th 1992
Turkmenistan	New York, September 24 th 1992
Kazakhstan	Moscow, June 25 th 1993
Uzbekistan	Moscow, September 9 th 1993
Tajikistan	Moscow, September 14 th 2001

Regarding the Central Asian states, their mission at the United Nations were in charge of the Argentinean issues. This situation changed when in October 2013, Kazakhstan opened its first embassy in South America, in Brazil, and this diplomatic mission was accredited as the non-resident embassy to Argentina.

We can say that during the last twenty years the contacts between Argentina and Central Asia were formal rather than real. No high level visits, no important trade relations and almost non-existent academic and cultural interactions.

On August 8, 2006, the Director of special group on technology issues of Argentinean Foreign Ministry Raul Dejean visited Astana with the purpose of visit: bilateral contacts at the interagency level on agriculture, education and science.

On September 19, 2006, during participation in the 61st session of the UN General Assembly, Kazakhstani Minister of Foreign Affairs had a meeting with his Argentinean counterpart Jorge Enrique Taiana.

This situation changed on the last five years. On 2009, Argentina organized the first diplomatic

visit to the region. A delegation headed by Ambassador Eduardo Sadous, Special Representative of the Secretary of Commerce, by Ricardo Forrester, a diplomat in charge of Central Asian states, and Pedro Eugenio Mazzeo, representative of AFIP (Administración Federal de Ingresos Públicos), the institution which collects and administrates taxes in Argentina.

This delegation visited Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and then some Caucasian states on June 2009. The main objective of the visit was to have the first direct contact with officials of those countries and to establish a bilateral agenda of cooperation on the economic and political fields.

It is important to stress that the Argentinean interest on Central Asia was in part consequence of the Brazilian interest on that region. Moreover, the Brazilian interest on Central Asia was the result of the Kazakh interest on Brazil.

On September 2007, President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, had visited Brazil and during that visit, economic issues were the most important aspect of the bilateral agenda. The discussions focussed on possible partnerships in energy and agriculture, especially on the potential partnership in the production of biofuels (green fuels).

Brazilian President, Lula da Silva, paid an official visit to Kazakhstan on June 2009, at the same moment when the first Argentinean delegation was visiting Central Asia. During Lula da Silva's trip, the Brazilian President emphasized the importance of Kazakhstan to Brazil and gave the example of the establishment of the Brazilian embassy in Astana in 2006 as the result of that interest.

On December 9–10, 2011. Ambassador at Large – Director of the Department of America of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, A. Tazhiev, took part in the inauguration ceremony of re-elected President of Argentina Cristina Kirchner.

On April 2012, it took place the second Argentinean high-level visit when Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduardo Zuain, visited Kazakhstan in order to advance on the work of the bilateral agenda. In the period from 18 to 29 April 2012, Delegation of MFA RK visited Argentina within the campaign "EXPO 2017". During the visit, Kazakh delegation held meetings with the officials of Argentinean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, following the visit, Argentinean side supported the candidacy of Kazakhstan for conducting "Expo-2017".

Six months later the Kazakh Minister of Foreign Affairs, Erlan Idrissov, visited Brazil, Argentina and Chile.

The main purpose of the visit was the opening ceremony of the first Kazakh embassy in Latin America, which was established in Brazil. To choose Brazil seemed logical from the Kazakh perspective. First, Brazil opened, as we said, an embassy in Astana in 2006 and on the second place, because Brazil is the main trade partner of Kazakhstan in Latin America.

During the visit of Mr. Idrissov to Argentina, a number of bilateral agreements were signed: A memorandum of Understanding on political consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Argentina and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and an agreement on the exemption of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, officials and service passports.

Political Agenda

The main question is what is about the interest of Argentina on Kazakhstan. We believe that Argentina is interested on Kazakhstan itself but also interested on the geopolitical position of this country.

Among Central Asian states, Kazakhstan is the largest by far, both in terms of geography and economics. The economic growth Kazakhstan has undergone, as well as the potential it possesses for even further development, makes its study a worthwhile endeavor. GDP growth from 2000 until the 2008 financial crisis was above 8.5% in all years, and was generally closer to 10%. Since 2010 it has recovered such that reported GDP growth was 5% in 2012, compared to the US which had only 2.8% growth (GDP Growth (annual %)). As the 14th largest exporter of oil and possessor of some of the largest oil fields in reserve Kazakhstan's growth via oil (and gas) exports is significant and shows no signs of decline. As an example, the Kashagan oil field, which only began production in September of 2013, is the largest oil field outside of the Middle East, and the fifth largest in the world (Kazakhstan).

Kazakhstan is a country full of opportunities for some Argentinean technologies. That is the main reason behind the interest of Argentina on the inclusion of Kazakhstan on the World Trade Organization¹ and the agreement signed by the two countries on Genève on March 2012.

At the same time, Kazakhstan represents the entrance of the Argentinean products to the Customs

¹ "Argentina y Kazajstán firmaron un acuerdo de comercio" available on <http://www.mercojuris.com/2842/argentina-y-kazajstan-firmaron-un-acuerdo-de-comercio/>

Union and the Common Economic Space. By entering the Customs Union, Kazakhstan creates for investors a more attractive market of 170 million people and opens up additional possibilities for effective investment projects. This is particularly important in a moment where the need to open new markets is one of the top economic priorities of the present government. Three out of four BRIC countries are located near Kazakhstan: Russia, China and India. Last but not the least Kazakhstan government is completely focused on economic diversification.

From the Argentinean perspective, Kazakhstan's interest on Latin America is related to the implementation of the 'Concept of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2014–2020'. In this regard, our region can be conceptualized as the part of the world where Kazakhstan was absent in the past but should be present in the future.

On the other hand, Argentina understands that the main partner in our region is Brazil, the most important country in terms of economy and a leading regional player, which intends to be a global one. The early interest of Brazil on Kazakhstan is also a factor that should be considered on this general analysis.

Brazil and Argentina, together, represent another interest for Kazakhstan. On one hand both countries are members of the G-20 a very influential forum which got the attention of Astana. As it is recognized on "Kazakhstan – 2050" strategy, which was unveiled by President Nazarbayev in December 2012, one of the objectives is to draw the country closer to the world's 30 most advanced economies. This is the reason why the G-20 countries are becoming so important to Kazakhstan.

On the other hand, Argentina and Brazil are members of MERCOSUR, one of the most important regional commercial organizations in the region. Commercially speaking Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay and Venezuela are part of the same system, which represents a great opportunity for any company entering on one of those markets.

Finally, on the multilateral level, Argentina and Brazil are especially interested on the experience of Kazakhstan on the establishment of a Central Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. This initiative matches with the Latin America Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (Tlatelolco Treaty) and the bilateral non-proliferation regime between Argentina and Brazil (the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials – ABACC). The efforts towards regional and global non-proliferation regimens is a shared concern between Argentina, Brazil and Kazakhstan.

Economic Agenda

The year 2010 became an important stage in the economic development of Kazakhstan. A new industrial program has started, which has at its main objective to develop a gradual transition to more high-technology products. There has been a Customs Union formed under which there are additional possibilities for investors, who implement their projects in Kazakhstan, to reach the developed Russian and Belorussian markets.

Economic geography of Kazakhstan consists of five large economic regions:

North Kazakhstan – efficient grain economy, extraction of iron ore and coal, mechanical engineering, production of oil products and ferroalloys, and energy.

East Kazakhstan – efficient nonferrous industry, energy, mechanical engineering and forestry products.

West Kazakhstan is one of the largest oil and gas extraction regions.

Central Kazakhstan – efficient ferrous and nonferrous industries, mechanical engineering, and cattle breeding.

South Kazakhstan – cotton, rice, wool, grain, fruits, vegetables, grapes; efficient nonferrous industry, instrument manufacturing, light manufacturing, food production, fish farming, and forestry products.

The main business partners are the CIS and Baltic countries. Russia is the largest business partner. Kazakhstan has effective trade relations with Germany, Turkey, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Italy, China, the U.S.A, Great Britain, South Korea, etc. As it is seen, Argentina never played a main role in foreign trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

To date, in the Republic of Kazakhstan investment projects occupy an important role in the economic development of the country. At present many programs are submitted, considered, implemented in different areas of various investment projects. But, of course, not all of them produce the same effect that was expected.

Currently, the following major programs include a variety of projects: "The State Program on Forced Industrial – Innovative Development of Kazakhstan

for 2010–2014”, “Productivity – 2020”, “Road Map for Business – 2020”, etc. Central to the projects is the financing of the investment projects, in which the justification strategy involves selecting methods of financing, identifying sources of investment financing and structure.

The main donors in Kazakhstan are “Entrepreneurship Development Fund” JSC, “Investment Fund of Kazakhstan” JSC, “Development Bank of Kazakhstan” JSC, “Samruk – Kazyna” JSC, “National Agency for Export and Investment “KAZNEX INVEST” JSC and etc.

The main methods of financing investment projects are self-financing, corporatization, and other forms of equity financing; loan financing (investment bank loans, bond issuance); leasing; government funding; mixed funding (through various combinations of these methods); project financing.

Kazakhstan gains a considerable share of profit from the export of oil and other mineral resources, moreover, economic policy of Kazakhstan is focused on shifting away from increasing mined deposits, extraction volumes, and the export of raw materials and to more output of finished products with high value added.

Since the opening of the embassy of Kazakhstan in the region, Kazakh ambassador to Brasil, Bakytzhan Ordabayev, who is the non-resident ambassador to Argentina visited Buenos Aires a couple of times in order to increase the bilateral contacts and to advance on the negotiation of several agreements: An agreements on economic and trade cooperation, a Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural cooperation and an agreement of cooperation on customs issues.

We should also recognize that although Kazakhstan is not an important trade partner to Argentina. In 2013 it was the 82nd export market (It was the 91st in 2012) and the 87th import market (it was the 115th in 2012).

Table 2 ¹

ARGENTINEAN EXPORTS TO KAZAKHSTAN (thousands of US\$)				
PRODUCTS	2012	2013	Variation (%)	%
Silver minerals	0	29.786	---	65%
Beef	5.332	4.402	-17%	10%
Seamless steel tubes	19.186	3.385	-82%	7%
Horsemeat	461	2.796	506%	6%
Gas compressor	0	1.554	---	3%
Other	9.550	1.849	-81%	10%
Total	35.200	45.883	30%	100%

Regarding the Argentinean imports from Kazakhstan, by large the main product is diesel oil, which represented 95% of those imports during 2013. Anyway, this situation is the consequence of the energy crisis of Argentina and since the government is taking measures to overcome this problem it is not sure if those imports will continue on the future. It will depend mainly not on the Kazakh offer but on the Argentinean demand.

Table 3 ²

ARGENTINEAN IMPORTS FROM KAZAKHSTAN (Thousands of US\$)				
PRODUCTS	2012	2013	Variation (%)	(%)
Diesel Oil	0	4.301	---	95%
Ferrochrome (carbon > 4%)	232	165	-29%	4%
Other Ferrochrome	164	0	---	---
Chromium trioxide	0	67	---	1%
Other products	4	0	-100%	0%
Total	400	4.533	1033%	100%

During 2013 Argentina had a strong trade surplus (41, 4 million US\$) that represented 90% of the bilateral trade. Anyway, and based in the data provided by the Ministry of Economy (Secretary of Foreign Trade) we cannot affirm that there is a steadily grow or decrease: It reached a peak in 2009 and after falling in 2010 there was a significant increase of the trade on the following years. The reason behind those variations is the lack of a strategy supported by the state institutions to

¹ <http://www.datosmacro.com/paises/comparar/argentina/kazajistan>. Comparar economía países: Argentina vs Kazajistán

² <http://www.datosmacro.com/paises/comparar/argentina/kazajistan>. Comparar economía países: Argentina vs Kazajistán.

increase the knowledge and the opportunities on those markets.

Another issue is the composition of the trade. Argentinean exports are mainly minerals and meat. Even though those are products important to Argentina, it could be necessary to implement an economic diversification program with a special focus on innovative technologies. This represents a priority for both countries, Argentina and Kazakhstan.

Table 4¹

ARGENTINA – KAZAKHSTAN TRADE (in millions US\$)						
Period	Exports FOB	Variation % Annual Exports	Imports CIF	Var. % Annual Imports	Balance	Total trade
2000	1,20	385,0%	7,64	2176,3%	-6,43	8,84
2001	2,61	117,1%	1,51	-80,3%	1,11	4,12
2002	3,7	42,4%	1,7	13,1%	2,0	5,4
2003	0,1	-98,6%	1,6	-6,2%	-1,5	1,6
2004	1,5	2789,5%	14,0	777,0%	-12,5	15,5
2005	3,3	117,5%	20,5	46,5%	-17,3	23,8
2006	16,9	420,5%	18,1	-11,6%	-1,2	35,1
2007	16,0	-5,6%	10,7	-41,0%	5,3	26,7
2008	31,9	99,6%	13,7	28,1%	18,2	45,6
2009	42,1	32,0%	22,7	65,7%	19,4	64,8
2010	10,2	-75,7%	16,5	-27,5%	-6,2	26,7
2011	18,5	81,2%	10,0	-39,1%	8,5	28,5
2012	35,2	90,2%	0,4	-96,0%	34,8	35,6
2013	45,9	30,4%	4,5	1032,6%	41,4	50,4

No matter the present situation, there are many economic possibilities on other fields that are at this moment out of this trade. Argentinean technologies (satellite, agricultural, pharmaceutical) should be considered among the most important sector which can have good opportunities on the Kazakh market. On October 2013, during Minister Idrissov visit to Buenos Aires, he said that the priorities will be the "exchange of technologies in the natural gas processing as well as cooperation in oil and gas sector"².

From kazakhstani point of view non-developped bilateral economic and trade relations of Kazakhstan with Argentina are reflected in terms of trade. During the first half of 2013. turnover amounted to 22.7 million (6.5 thousand export, import 22.7 million) in 2012 – 42.9 million (187.3 thousand export, import 42.8 million), in 2011 – 41.3 million (10.8 million exports and imports 30.5 million), in 2010 – 69.8 million (exports – 13.6 million, import – 56.2 million); in 2009 – 60.7 million (exports – 20.3 million, import – 40.4 million). To date, the number of main products imported from Argentina to Kazakhstan include sugar, sucrose, ferrous metal pipes, meat cattle. Kazakhstan exports to Argentina products of animal and vegetable origin, food and metals, and articles thereof.

Kazakhstan is of interest to the development of cooperation with Argentina in the field of agriculture, mining, refining, petrochemical, metallurgical and food industries.

In October 16, 2006. The Program for Effective Development of Agroindustrial Complex of Kazakhstan, prepared by the National Institute of Agricultural Technology of Argentina (INTA) at the request of the Investment Fund of Kazakhstan, was presented the Ministry of Agriculture with the participation of Deputy Minister L. Musina and Chairman of the "Investment Fund of Kazakhstan" Z.Kakimzhanov.

In May 19, 2008. during the visit of the Kazakh delegation headed by the president of "KazAgroInnovation" T. Rakhimbekov to the Argentine Republic a Memorandum of Understanding between "KazAgroInnovation" JSC and the National Institute of Agricultural Technology of Argentina (INTA) was signed.

In December 9–10, 2010. Kazakhstan visited Charge d'Affaires, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of Argentina in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan (non-resident), Jose Maria Venere. In Astana, he met with the Head of the Customs Control Committee of the Ministry of

¹ *ibid*

² "Kazakhstan Foreign Minister visits Argentina", available on <http://m.mfa.gov.kz/en/article/11947>

Finance. Argentinean diplomat participated in a videoconference on "Opportunities of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Argentina in agricultural trade and innovation", organized by "Atameken Union " in conjunction with the National Institute of Agricultural Technology of Argentina «INTA». During the visit H.Venere met with the Deputy Mayor of Almaty on Culture S.Seydumanov.

In 2 March 2012 in Geneva as part of the accession to WTO bilateral talks with Argentina were held on market access for goods. from Kazakhstan side the aftertalks protocol was signed by Minister for Economic Integration Zh.Aytzhanova, from Argentina-Permanent Representative of Argentina to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva, Alberto D'Alotto. Negotiations were conducted on the list of goods for which Kazakhstan provides Argentina the right of the first negotiator.

According to the resolution of the Ministry of Economy of Argentina, from August 6, 2001., Argentine authorities initiated an anti-dumping investigation concerning imports of steel products from Kazakhstan. Since the beginning of March 2008, the Department of Commercial Policy and Management of the Ministry of Economy and Production AP decided to initiate an assessment of anti-dumping measures imposed by the resolution EhMR number 17/2003, in respect of export operations in Argentina steel products originating in the Republic of Kazakhstan. In 2009, the Resolution of the Government of Argentina to Kazakhstan approved the provisional anti-dumping duty at the rate of \$ 365.85 per ton.

The Argentinean interest in the Kazakh market is reflected on the fact that this year Kazakhstan is among the 15 top markets, in terms of priority, for the Argentinean products (Programa de Aumento y Diversificación de las Exportaciones (PADEX)).

According to PADEX calculations, export to Kazakhstan in 2013 – amounted eight thousand dollars, this year he can achieve – U.S. \$ 6.8 million, and 16.4 million in 2015. In 2014, Argentina's government plans to attract foreign investors through the active participation of Argentine companies in 252 specialized international fairs and through the activities of 70 multi-sectoral sales offices in the World.

In addition, the tool in achieving the goals to increase exports to the mentioned countries is the participation of Argentinian companies in major trade fairs, financing export and investment projects with the ability to impact on exports, compensation payments for investment projects, analysis and review of export subsidies to boost competitiveness. The main objective is to increase the bilateral trade thorough the participation of Argentinean companies in Kazakh exhibitions, the organization of trade missions and by fostering the official contacts.

Given the above, and taking into account the increased interest in the Argentine side in enhancing economic cooperation with Kazakhstan, it is appropriate to focus on encouraging the business community of Kazakhstan towards active participation in Argentina.

To reach these objectives many challenges should be overcome. The first one is to make Kazakhstan known on the Argentinean business community and at the same time to make Argentina known on the Kazakh business community. In this regard, we believe that the academic sector could play an important role by generating at least an interest on this country and to train people who intent to work on those issues.

The second challenge will be to choose a logistic option to reach Kazakhstan and to support it through governmental decisions. In this case, there are three main options: To reach this country from Argentina through Russia, through Georgia-Azerbaijan, through China.

Each of the options has its advantages and setbacks depending on the products. Grains and oil demand China and the huge ports of the Pacific Ocean, food (mainly meat) should consider Russia in order to take advance of the Customs Union (and the future Eurasian Economic Union (EEU)) between Russia and Kazakhstan and, technological and pharmaceutical products could be exported through Georgia (Poti or Batumi ports)-Azerbaijan (Baku-Aktau) in order to increase the possibilities of those products on the Georgian and Azerbaijani markets.

Cultural Agenda

Unfortunately, the cultural and academic contacts between our two countries were almost non-existent during the last twenty years. The establishment of the Kazakh embassy in Brasilia triggered the contacts between academic institutions of our countries. Our university, La Plata National University, is developing contacts with different Kazakh institutions: Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Institute of Diplomacy, Al Farabi Kazakh National University and L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University.

We have signed MoU with those institutions (or are about to do it) and we are quite confident that in the near future we are going to increase those contacts by fostering the exchange of professor

and students and by supporting joint research activities and joint publications.

The National Foreign Service Institute (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) of Argentina, which trains Argentinean diplomats, has shown interest on establishing MoU with its Kazakh counterpart (Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Institute of Diplomacy).

Recomendaciones

The need is to move ahead practically at strategic, institutional and operational levels. Some of the **specific policy suggestions**, to be considered at Argentinean-Kazakh level as could include the following:

- Developing a well-conceived, consensus-driven Argentinean – Kazakhstani agenda and framework aiming at enhancing the collaboration finance sector and channelizing it for the development of bilateral relations. Banks of both countries could set minimum financing limits for the banks and financial institutions, under their regulations, to finance the new projects.

- to develop mutual tourism is important to simplify visa support. As it is known, Kazakh Foreign Minister Yerlan Idrisov, on his first-ever official visit of the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Argentina, agreed with his Argentine counterpart Hector Timerman to immediately start working on the agreement on the complete abolition of the visa regime between the two countries and signing it during the visit of Timerman to Astana, so that next year the citizens of Kazakhstan could start traveling to Argentina without visas. It will no doubts encourage business contacts from both sides. Kazakhstanis are starting to feel bored in Eurasia, so the Latin America could become extremely interesting.

- Mining in Kazakhstan will be need to be developed, as subsoil use provides the country with a natural competitive advantage but now it need that new approaches to managing, producing and processing hydrocarbons need to be developed. To do this state programme of accelerated industrial and innovative development for 2016-19 will be starting.

- Kazakhstan also in the processes to invite leading transnational companies operating in major oil and gas and mining facilities to establish production facilities for their own needs and services in the country. In this field Argentina can do more in near future with Kazakhstan, as it has a very good products, services and instruments for oil and gas sectors, although the perspective is almost mythological, means of communication in order to establish Long Term Partnership in Energy and Natural Resources could be found there as well.

- Mobile and multimedia industries, nanotechnology and space technology, robotics genetics engineering, energy of the future, processing enterprises in the agricultural sector in SMEs and commercialisation of scientific research. As a bovine genetics and veterinary connoisseur Argentina can become the key country for Kazakhstan to establish a long term relationship in the future.

- The meeting with the Argentine Association of meat producers also identified significant potential for bilateral cooperation. Argentina is a global leader in the production of beef and agricultural research organizations are willing to share the latest scientific developments in this field with their Kazakh counterparts.

- Establishing Joint agricultural factories with the government promoting credit lines will encourage business structures. (Mais, wheat, soybean)

- Fishery, including trading rare types of ocean fishes.

- Develop People to People Contact through, and exchange of youth programmes, adventure and delegations

Conclusions

The growing interest of Kazakhstan and Argentina on Latin America and Central Asia respectively, is the most important political and diplomatic event on the two decades of bilateral relations.

At this moment, each of the countries and due to specific reasons is showing a will to increase the contacts on the political, economic and cultural fields. The main challenge is how to keep this interest on the long run. To reach this objective is mandatory to generate a framework of collaboration between governmental decision-makers, businesspersons and the academia. This is the best way to increase the knowledge about countries, which were almost totally absent in the cultural and political life of the other.

The following months will be crucial since the institutionalization of the bilateral relations will determine the actors that will be involved and the agenda. As we said, the academia can play a great

role on collaborating with the political and the economic sectors.

On the other hand, it should be highly desirable to work, at the same time, on a regional approach from MERCOSUR to maximize the capabilities of Brazil and Argentina, working together in collaboration, not in competition.

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