

## **Factsheet on the celebrations of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate**

### **Background to the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate**

- The Kazakh Khanate was founded by Ghengisid Sultans (Princes) Kerey and Zhanibek in 1465.
- The Khanate was located roughly on the territory of present-day Kazakhstan and was the first separate state of the Kazakhs, a Turkic-speaking, formerly nomadic people inhabiting the vast Eurasian steppe plains between Altai mountains in the east and the Caspian sea in the west, Siberian taiga in the north and Tian Shan mountains in the south.
- The formation of the independent Kazakh Khanate began when several tribes under the rule of Sultans Kerey and Zhanibek departed from the Khanate of Abu'l-Khayr Khan. The sultans led their people toward Mogolistan, eventually settling in the area between rivers Chu and Talas in modern-day southeastern Kazakhstan and founding an independent state.
- The Kazakh Khanate became known in Western Europe around 1562. It appeared as “Cassackia” on a map drawn by Anthony Jenkinson, an English diplomat and traveller, to fill in the area between “Tashkent” and “Siberia”.
- The Kazakh Khanate existed until 18<sup>th</sup> century until it broke into three parts that were subsequently incorporated into the Russian Empire.

### **Why is Kazakhstan celebrating the anniversary?**

- It is an opportunity for the Kazakh population to learn about their roots.
- It will be a moment to acknowledge the rich history and culture of Kazakhstan.
- The celebrations are aimed at further uniting the multi-ethnic population of Kazakhstan.
- The celebrations are aimed at strengthening the identity and unity of the Kazakh people.
- President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted the importance of knowing the nation's own history and passing this knowledge to the younger generations.

### **Celebration throughout the year**

- Numerous events are being held to mark the occasion, including exhibitions, historical performances and the filming of TV series.
- A total of around 100 different events have been planned around the country for 2015
- More details on the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary can be found here: <http://550kazakhan.kz/?lang=en>

### **Major events taking place to celebrate the anniversary in September and October**

- 11 September:
  - a) A grand meeting to mark the occasion and to feature the speech by President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the Palace of Independence
  - b) The Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking Nations at the Akorda Presidential Residence. While the summit is not directly related to the celebration of the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate, it is nevertheless significant that it brings together leaders of the Turkic-speaking world and is taking place on the day the country holds these celebrations.
    - The Council was established in 2009 as an international intergovernmental organization, with the overarching aim of promoting comprehensive cooperation among Turkic speaking states. Its four founding member States are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey.

- The Summit will be attended by Presidents of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, Azerbaijan -- Ilham Aliyev, and Kyrgyzstan – Almazbek Atambayev, as well as the Chairman of the Great National Assembly of Turkey Ismet Yilmaz.
  - c) An international academic conference that will discuss the topic of Kazakh Khanate at the Nazarbayev University and will feature scholars from 20 countries whose academic works relate to the history of the Kazakh Khanate.
  - d) A large-scale theatrical show at the newly built Barys Ice Palace. The show, set to last 1.5 hours, will trace the history of Kazakhstan from before the establishment of the Kazakh Khanate to today's independent nation. Delegates of the Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking Nations will attend the event.
- 11-13 September: Festive events – celebrations will take place on the Independence Square and the streets of Astana
    - The events will include art exhibitions and concerts dedicated to the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh Khanate
    - The celebrations will end with a big gala concert.
  - 8-9 October: Celebrations in the Zhambyl region – An outdoor show will take place in Taraz, the capital of the Zhambyl region in the southern part of Kazakhstan
    - The Zhambyl region is the site of the declaration of the Kazakh Khanate in 1465.
    - The celebrations will also include the unveiling of a monument dedicated to the 550<sup>th</sup> anniversary, theatrical performances, historical re-enactments and other exhibitions.

### **Kazakhstan Today**

- Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world, as well as the world's largest landlocked country. Its population is around 17 million.
- The country's size means its natural landscape includes mountain tops, glaciers, large forests, huge rocky canyons, as well as mountain lakes and rivers.
- Astana has been the capital of Kazakhstan since 10 December 1997.
- The city offers many attractions for tourists, including the Baiterek Tower, Palace of Peace & Harmony, as well as many other buildings designed by famous British architect Norman Foster, including the Khan Shatyr Entertainment Centre.
- Almaty is the largest city in the country and is located in the mountainous area of southern Kazakhstan. Despite losing its status as the capital to Astana, Almaty remains the major commercial and cultural centre of Kazakhstan
- Its attractions include the Medeo, which has one of the largest and unique speed skating rinks in the world. Almaty also features Chimbulak (a skiing resort), and the nearby Charyn canyon and the Big Almaty Lake.
- The citizens of the following countries can travel to Kazakhstan without a visa for a period of 15 days: Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UAE, the UK and the U.S.
- Kazakhstan also offers a visa-free regime for up to 90 days to citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Russia and Ukraine. Citizens of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Argentina, South Korea and Turkey are allowed visa-free entry for up to 30 days.