



## The youth policy of Azerbaijan and its contribution to international cooperation of youth

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In Azerbaijan, each age group of society has its own role, which is important for strengthening of a stable civil society and other purposes. YOUTH as an important category of the society has many roles depending on the perspective used. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on «Youth Policy», young people are persons aged 14-29 years old. This article reviews that the sustainable development of Azerbaijan affects to the positive changes in the society and to the development of lives of young people. The youth of Azerbaijan has an active role in socio-political, economic, cultural, international and other spheres of the country. The young people largely drawn into decision-making processes. The main purposes of the youth policy of Azerbaijan became the creation of conditions for the physical, mental and spiritual development of youth, assistance in the realization of their abilities and competences, the solution of their social problems and the guarantee of the protection of their rights.

The current stage, formed by the rapid spread of globalization and the formation of the information society, requires the improvements of implemented works towards more active participation of young people at a new level in social, economic, scientific, cultural, educational and other fields.

Therefore, there are many new opportunities becoming available that can provide different perspectives and future for today's youth that were not available to previous generations. The author analyses the role of the state policy on youth of Azerbaijan in the development of young people and the methods of its implementation, as well as the contributions of this policy to international youth cooperation. In the context of the international activity of youth from different countries and continents, the researcher focuses on the role of international events implemented in the framework of Azerbaijani youth policy in expanding and developing of international relations and cooperation of youth. That, in turn, has a positive impact on the development of the mutual understanding and international cooperation between states.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan; youth policy; international activity of youth; international youth events; international cooperation of youth; Ministry of Youth, Sports and Tourism; United Nations

### Молодіжна політика Азербайджану та її внесок у міжнародний розвиток співпраці молоді

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Кожна вікова група суспільства в Азербайджані грає свою роль, що є важливим для зміцнення стабільного громадянського суспільства та інших цілей. Молодь, як важлива категорія суспільства, має багато ролей в залежності від використаної перспективи. Відповідно до Закону Азербайджанської Республіки «Про молодіжну політику», молодими людьми вважаються особи у віці від 14 до 29 років. У статті йдеться про те, що Азербайджан стійко розвивається і змінюється, це впливає на позитивні зміни в суспільстві і на розвиток життя молоді. Таким чином, виникає багато нових можливостей, які забезпечують нинішній молоді представляти різні точки зору і майбутнє, недоступні попереднім поколінням. Автор аналізує роль державної політики щодо молоді Азербайджану в розвитку молоді і методи її реалізації, а також внесок даної політики в міжнародне молодіжне співробітництво. В контексті міжнародної діяльності молоді різних країн і континентів автор фокусується на ролі міжнародних заходів, що реалізуються в рамках молодіжної політики Азербайджану, в розширенні та розвитку міжнародних відносин і співробітництва молоді. Це, в свою чергу, робить позитивний вплив на розвиток взаєморозуміння і міжнародного співробітництва між державами.

**Ключові слова:** Азербайджан; молодіжна політика; міжнародна молодіжна діяльність; міжнародні молодіжні заходи; міжнародне молодіжне співробітництво; Міністерство Молоді, Спорту та Туризму; Організація Об'єднаних Націй

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## Молодежная политика Азербайджана и ее вклад в международное сотрудничество молодежи

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Каждая возрастная группа общества в Азербайджане играет свою роль, что является важным для укрепления стабильного гражданского общества и других целей. Молодежь, как важная категория общества, имеет много ролей в зависимости от используемой перспективы. В соответствии с Законом Азербайджанской Республики «О молодежной политике», молодыми людьми считаются лица в возрасте от 14 до 29 лет. В статье говорится о том, что Азербайджан устойчиво развивается и меняется, это влияет на позитивные изменения в обществе и на развитие жизни молодежи. Таким образом, возникает много новых возможностей, которые обеспечивают нынешней молодежи различные перспективы и будущее, недоступные предыдущим поколениям. Автор анализирует роль государственной политики в отношении молодежи Азербайджана в развитии молодежи и методы ее реализации, а также вклад данной политики в международное молодежное сотрудничество. В контексте международной деятельности молодежи разных стран и континентов автор фокусируется на роли международных мероприятий, реализуемых в рамках молодежной политики Азербайджана, в расширении и развитии международных отношений и сотрудничества молодежи. Это, в свою очередь, оказывает положительное влияние на развитие взаимопонимания и международного сотрудничества между государствами.

**Ключевые слова:** Азербайджан; молодежная политика; международная молодежная деятельность; международные молодежные мероприятия; международное молодежное сотрудничество; Министерство Молодежи, Спорта и Туризма; Организация Объединенных Наций

Youth policy is one of the main priorities of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The care for youth that makes 2.6 million or 26.3 percent of the country population is the important issue of the state policy. Azerbaijan is one of the youngest states in Europe, with 70.4 percent of the total population under the age of 35 [7].

The youth of Azerbaijan has an active role in socio-political, economic, cultural, international and other spheres of the country. The young people largely drawn into decision-making processes. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, post-soviet youth work came to the end. The new youth policy started its implementation gradually and in a difficult context. Like in any post-Soviet transition societies, Azerbaijani youth has faced with a number of problems. The early years of Azerbaijan's renewed independence were a very challenging time with instability and various crises in the country and a war with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh territory that is internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan by a number of pivotal institutions such as United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization of Islamic Conference, OSCE etc. After national leader Heydar Aliyev's political comeback, socio-political stability was established and conditions for democratic development, as well as political and economic reforms have been provided. As result of these processes, favourable environment for the development and better opportunities of young people have been created and the government has commenced to pay more attention on implementation of proper policy concerning youth problems. The problems of youth policy formation and implementation were solving under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.Aliyev. Decree of the President on establishing the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan» of July 26, 1994, the Law on «Youth policy», state programs for youth and other normative legal acts on the youth policy have determined

the mechanisms for implementation and the legal framework of the scope of works with youth. The opportunities have created the necessary condition for the active participation of youth in the country's socio-political life. Due to the state care, the rights of the youth and their organizations providing their participation in state youth policy expanded. The youth policy conducted by the national leader was the system of measures directed to create socio-political, organizational and legal conditions and guarantees by the state in order to provide all-round development of the youth, their active participation in the social life. The said policy embraced a wide range of fields, education, health, intellectual and moral development of the youth, aspects of leisure time organization, youth problems solution, youth rights protection. All these efforts helped Azerbaijani youth to develop new principles, moral values, and a system of new outlooks on life, the purposes, principles, directions, legal organizational basis of the Youth Policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The main purposes of the youth policy of Azerbaijan became the creation of conditions for the physical, mental and spiritual development of youth, assistance in the realization of their abilities and competences, the solution of their social problems and the guarantee of the protection of their rights. The Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted on May 6, 2002, defined the goals, principles, and directions, legal grounds of the Youth Policy, regulating the relations in this sphere and coordinating the cooperation between youth institutions. Main principles stated in this document are the bringing up of the youth in the spirit of respect for the history, cultural heritage, customs and traditions, state language and symbols, for the national-moral and universal human values under the basis of the principles of patriotism, statehood, nationality. In addition, the ensuring of active participation of youth and the mobilization of their creative potential for the development of

the country and the solution to the national problems, as well as the inadmissibility of restricting youth rights and freedoms are considered as the main principles of the youth policy [8, p. 16-18]. The issue of youth has always been under the special attention of the Government of Azerbaijan. To ensure youth policy and the regulations related to youth issues, the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism was established as a central state body. Then it has called the Ministry of Youth and Sport since 2006. As a responsible body for youth affairs, the ministry improves youth policy by conducting different events, projects and programs, supports the initiatives and the participation of Azerbaijani youth in international events, coordinates the work of the youth organizations and finances their projects. In addition, the ministry focuses on the promotion of healthy lifestyles among young people and the prevention of smoking, drug abuse, alcoholism and the implementation of social programs for youth and employment assistance, supports the organizations working with young people in difficult circumstances. Working with creative and gifted young people and organizing leisure for young people, propagating patriotic ideas with providing more information about history, national and traditional values, and promoting citizenship ideas also apply to the functions of the ministry [3]. Youth policy became an important element in the process of implementing the political course of the state and in the development of mechanisms functioning of public institutions. This statement is due to strengthening attention from the leading elites to the development of youth policy and to attracting young people staff in the political institutions of the state [9].

The current stage, formed by the rapid spread of globalization and the formation of the information society, requires the improvements of implemented works towards more active participation of young people at a new level in social, economic, scientific, cultural, educational and other fields. Proceeding from this, there have been implemented the programs «Azerbaijan Youth in (2005-2009)» and «Azerbaijan Youth in 2011-2015».

«Azerbaijani Youth in (2005-2009)» is the first program approved by the order of the President of Azerbaijan Republic on August 30, 2005. The program was an important activity document for the implementation of the state youth policy. In connection with the implementation of this Program, successful changes have taken place in the priority areas of the youth policy and progresses were made. In the field of patriotic education of youth sustainable works were carried out, the state support for the creative youth has been expanded. The activities based on international practice and youth initiatives in this sphere were developed. As well as the measures have been taken to address employment problems and stimulate the activities of young people in the regions [1, p. 215-216]. Thus, necessary conditions for the active participation of youth in the country's socio-political life and youth representatives in international events were created. The youth has gotten opportunities to show their initiatives, desires and to implement ideas and its continuous activity inside and beyond the country, and to contribute to international youth cooperation. The implementation of the State Program «Azerbaijani

Youth in 2011-2015» was necessary in order to ensure the next stage in the development of young people. The main goal of the state program was further development of youth policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan, to create favourable conditions for the active participation of youth in the field of management, employment of young specialists and to ensure the solutions of other socio-economic problems. Within the framework of this program, a number of activities were carried out to support the participation of young people in international exchange and intercultural dialogue, as well as to increase the participation of young people in diaspora organization and lobbying [6].

Strategic development of young people and improvement of their potential meeting modern requirements are one of the focused points of the state policy. In this regard, Azerbaijan has developed the Youth Development Strategy. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has signed an executive order approving the «Strategy for the Development of Youth of Azerbaijan 2015-2025», which aims to stimulate the intellectual, physical and moral development of young people and encourage their active involvement in the country's socio-economic, public and political life. In international field, the «Youth Development Strategy of Azerbaijan in 2015-2025» is aimed at developing relations with the youth of priority countries for Azerbaijan, supporting international cooperation, coordinating the activities of Azerbaijani youth who live and study abroad, spreading the truths of the Azerbaijani people in the world. Providing consultative, organizational and logistical support to youth work, expanding the ranks of young friends of Azerbaijan. As can be seen, this Strategy covers broader prospects for the development of international activities [4]. The significance of all these legal documents relating to youth testifies to the high appreciation of youth in the country. More than 20 legal documents (laws, governmental programs, etc.) regulating a youth policy both directed to development and protection of the rights of young citizens have been adopted since 1994. Decrees of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on «State assistance to the talented youth», on «Providing special scholarships for the talented youth», on «Enhancement of the patriotism and civil feelings of the youth», the Program «Young family», «National Program on solution of social, economic problems of talented adolescent and creative young people, helping to develop their abilities», «Occupancy of the young people dismissed from the army» acts to strengthen the work of physical, mental and ethical, patriotic education of the youth and the solution of their social-economic problems [3, p. 239]. One of the key subjects of the state youth policy are youth organizations. The youth organization is the main factor conditioned the participation of the youth in the development of the civil society. The activities of youth organizations in Azerbaijan cover almost all sectors, including the education (in increasing the quality of education, in applying the best non-formal education methods based on international practise and etc.), the social sector (in unemployment issues, in enhancement of competitiveness of young specialists, in support to vulnerable groups and etc.). The youth organizations encourage volunteer-

ism, implement projects to solve environmental problems, organize social surveys among different groups of population and support public activities that positively affect young generation. Azerbaijani youth organizations are representing in the respectful international youth organizations of the world and Europe and promote the realities about Azerbaijan from the high tribunes. Today Azerbaijani young people actively contribute with the new initiatives in the direction of the establishment of international youth platforms. Azerbaijan's youth policy is one of the exemplary model in the world. Young people from other countries and representatives of international institutions on youth affairs coming to Azerbaijan to participate in international youth events confirm this fact. Contributions of this policy in support of the international activities of youth is large. There are held very many international events concerning youth in Azerbaijan. Over time, for the implementation of such events was accumulated a great deal of experience. Holding international youth events along with economic, sports, cultural and other spheres in Azerbaijan has already become a tradition. It should be noted that, taking into account the great experience of our country in this area, the international organizations undoubtedly chose Azerbaijan to host the events such as the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, IV Islamic Solidarity Games, 24th International Caspian Oil and Gas Conference, Formula 1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix and other international in 2017.

In the great scout spirit atmosphere, the 41st World Scout Conference of 2017 was recently organized in Azerbaijan on August 14, 2017. For the first time in the world in the history of scouts, all 169-member countries of the World Organization of the Scout Movement participated in the World Scout Conference. International events take an important place in the state youth policy. Numerous events held in Azerbaijan within the framework of cooperation with international organizations help to unite young people from different countries and develop friendship and cooperation between them. Such events contribute to the mobility and development of young people coming to Azerbaijan. Young people get the opportunities to develop their ideas, find a partner to implement their initiatives and projects. International youth events organized in Azerbaijan cover various spheres. These events are held separately for young scientists, entrepreneurs, doctors, creative youth, scouts, students and young people of other spheres, as well as with participation of all together. The main goals of the youth policy in implementation international events are to create conditions for youth to network, be part of intercultural dialogue, contribute to mutual understanding of nations, participate in youth exchanges, voluntary services, expand borders of friendship and peace. In turn, the activities, contributions, connections and relations of youth from different countries create favorable conditions for close relations and cooperation of their states. Young people, representing different cultures, customs, traditions and values, face only with tolerance in Azerbaijan. At different times, various events were organized on different topics, for promoting the tolerance - the conference «Beyond religious differences: Islam phobia and other forms of discrimination based on religion or belief:

consequences for young people and youth work responses» in 2008 in the spirit of consolidating the results of the «All Different – All Equal» European youth campaign. The conference was co-organised by the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan and in co-operation with the European Youth Forum and the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Development and Cooperation; it brought together over 100 participants from 42 countries [3].

The conference on Youth Policy development «The First Global Forum on Youth Policy» jointly organized by the Government of Azerbaijan, the UN Development Programme, and the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, UNESCO and the Council of Europe was held in 2014 in Baku. 705 government representatives, experts, heads of youth organizations and active young people from 165 countries took part in the forum. The main objective of the forum was to attract attention to the youth policy pursued in various countries, bring together the world's experts in the youth policy, analyse existing practices, and set standards of the state youth policy. These events service for creating close communication among young people from various continents, religions, languages and cultures, for establishing and developing intercultural dialogue, relations and cooperation between the youth. Azerbaijan were initiators of creation of various international youth platforms, such as the Youth Forum of the Organization of Islamic Conference «For the sake of dialogue and cooperation», the Youth forum of the countries of GUAM, Association of young lawyers of Eurasia, etc. [5]. Today's youth is the first generation in the new history, living in the conditions of not global confrontation, but integration of the world community, the generation that has improved access to knowledge, experience, technology and resources in order to direct the process of development along a rational, positive path [10]. For any development that happens in any society, the youth must be a significant part in that process of growth. This is a main reason why nowadays the nations, countries and international organizations focus more on the development of youths, because the future of such investments would be never lost.

It can be concluded that the youth policy of Azerbaijan is a one of the priority directions of the state policy. Young people are considered the future because they bring new ideas and energy to the sustainable development processes of the country. The youth policy founded by the national leader of Azerbaijani H.Aliyev is a system of measures aimed at creating social, political and legal conditions and guarantees by the state to ensure the comprehensive development of young people and their active participation in social life. In this article author focused on the fact that the Azerbaijani youth policy actively contributes in building and maintaining intercultural dialogue and international cooperation. In implementation of international youth events Azerbaijan takes into account required new approaches, effective mechanisms for ensuring additional dynamics of youth participation.

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