



Resolution 2616 (2025)¹

The Parliamentary Assembly should support Kazakhstan in continuing its democratic reforms

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 1506 \(2006\)](#) “External relations of the Council of Europe” and reiterates its commitment to enhancing the role of the Council of Europe in promoting democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights beyond its borders, in particular in neighbouring regions, as an essential contribution to security, stability and development.
2. The Assembly recalls its [Resolutions 1526 \(2006\)](#) “Situation in Kazakhstan and relations with the Council of Europe” and 2193 (2017) “The relations of the Council of Europe with Kazakhstan” and reiterates its view of Kazakhstan as one of the pillars of stability in the Euro-Asian region. This role has gained particular relevance in the increasingly strained geopolitical environment that has emerged following the Russian Federation’s unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. It further notes Kazakhstan’s growing international profile, supported by its strategic geographic location and balanced foreign policy, and welcomes Kazakhstan’s contributions to international diplomacy.
3. The Assembly reiterates its commitment to the 2004 Co-operation Agreement with the Parliament of Kazakhstan, which, over the past two decades, has served as a cornerstone for enhancing interparliamentary dialogue and fostering mutual understanding between the Council of Europe and Kazakhstan. It welcomes the commitment by the Parliament of Kazakhstan to uphold and further develop the structured dialogue with the Assembly, as underscored in the joint declaration by the President of the Assembly and the Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the agreement.
4. The Assembly further welcomes the commitment of Kazakhstan’s political leadership to the democratic transformation of the country and takes positive note of the constitutional and legislative reforms undertaken since 2019. It particularly commends Kazakhstan for the abolition of the death penalty in 2022, which has been one of the Assembly’s key demands since the outset of its relations with the Parliament of Kazakhstan. At the same time, the Assembly deplores credible reports that Kazakhstan has recently acquired and deployed commercial-scale internet censorship and surveillance infrastructure from China, severely restricting free expression and digital rights. These systems reportedly include deep packet inspection, real-time subscriber monitoring, website and application filtering, regional traffic control, internet throttling and blackouts, virtual private network (VPN) detection and the ability to target individuals based on online activity – capabilities which researchers have characterised as “terrifying” and far in excess of any legitimate lawful interception framework.
5. The Assembly welcomes the comprehensive co-operation between Kazakhstan and the Council of Europe within the framework of the Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities, which have served as a valuable instrument for aligning Kazakh legislation with the Council of Europe’s standards. At the same time, the Assembly expects tangible progress in justice reform, anti-corruption measures, promotion of human rights and support for democratic governance, *inter alia* through co-operation with the Assembly, in particular: releasing 39 political prisoners, individuals targeted for their involvement in peaceful protests, civil society and anti-corruption activities, social media publications or their support of peaceful opposition movements; and

1. *Assembly debate* on 30 September 2025 (31st sitting) (see [Doc. 16245](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Zsolt Németh). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 30 September 2025 (31st sitting).



fulfilling obligations to ensure freedom of political association and to stop the domestic and transnational persecution of representatives of the peaceful political opposition movements “Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan”, “Koshe Partiyasy” and “Alga Kazakhstan”, as recalled in the European Parliament resolutions of 20 January 2022 on the situation in Kazakhstan and of 17 January 2024 on the EU strategy on Central Asia.

6. The Assembly highly appreciates the fact that Kazakhstan is party to a growing number of Council of Europe conventions and instruments and has requested to accede to a number of others. The Assembly has particularly taken note of Kazakhstan’s request for a two-year extension of the invitation to accede to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (CETS No. 210, “Istanbul Convention”), with the expressed aim of continuing to align its legislation and acceding to the convention thereafter. The Assembly is determined to follow up on this issue in due course.

7. The Assembly recalls that the 2004 Co-operation Agreement with the Parliament of Kazakhstan commits to the principles of parliamentary democracy, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms. The Assembly expresses its grave concern at the ministry of justice’s persistent refusal to register the peaceful opposition party “Alga Kazakhstan” for the 25th time and condemns the criminalisation of fundraising for opposition campaigns and the weaponisation of financial and anti-money laundering measures to restrict critics’ access to essential services and employment. The Assembly calls for the full rehabilitation and immediate release of imprisoned opposition leaders such as Marat Zhylanbayev, Asqar Sembai, Asylbek Zhamuratov, Aidar Syzdykov, Asanali Sueubaev and journalist Duman Mukhametkarim – sentenced to terms of five to ten years for exercising their civil rights, including exposing Kazakhstan’s assistance in evading sanctions against the Russian Federation. The Assembly further condemns the absence of an independent investigation into the transnational assassination of opposition journalist and political refugee Aidos Sadykov, as well as the violent crackdown on protesters in January 2022, the unclear role of external intervention following the request by President Tokayev to President Putin and the subsequent order to shoot without warning. The Assembly calls for an end to these practices and calls for the immediate cessation of all forms of harassment and intimidation against human rights defender Bakhytzhan Toregozhina, in full respect of Kazakhstan’s international obligations regarding political participation and fundamental freedoms.

8. The Assembly remains committed to co-operation with Kazakhstan that is based on shared values and is determined to support Kazakhstan in continuing its democratic reforms. This support should be strategic and principled, encouraging Kazakhstan to continue with the implementation of reforms and exploring ways of closer co-operation.

9. Therefore, the Assembly encourages the Parliament of Kazakhstan to:

9.1. use its strengthened position within the country’s institutional framework – a positive outcome of the recent constitutional reforms – to drive forward the democratisation process in Kazakhstan;

9.2. encourage the authorities of Kazakhstan to broaden the country’s participation in the European legal space and to accede to relevant Council of Europe conventions which are open to non-member States, in particular:

9.2.1. accelerate progress towards the ratification of the Istanbul Convention;

9.2.2. consider becoming a member of the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (Pompidou Group);

9.3. increase its participation in the work of the Assembly and its committees.

10. The Assembly calls on the authorities of Kazakhstan to:

10.1. continue with their reform agenda and translate political commitments into sustained, transparent and measurable progress;

10.2. make full use of the expertise and tools available under the Council of Europe Neighbourhood Co-operation Priorities, particularly in the newly expanded fields of justice reform, anti-corruption, human rights protection and democratic governance.

11. The Assembly urges the authorities of Kazakhstan to:

11.1. acknowledge the importance of open public discourse and constructive criticism in a democratic society, foster genuine political pluralism and ensure meaningful political competition and participation;

11.2. ensure a pluralistic and independent media environment and avoid disproportionate restrictions on independent journalism and civil society, including by removing legal and administrative obstacles that hinder their operation;

11.3. align with international human rights standards by ensuring that its domestic legislation, policies and practices reflect these norms, take into account the views and recommendations of domestic and international human rights bodies, including the United Nations Human Rights Committee, and implement their recommendations in full;

11.4. advance reforms aimed at enhancing judicial independence and accountability, reinforcing access to justice and the right to a fair trial;

11.5. ensure full accountability for past human rights violations, including those linked to the January 2022 events, and strengthen safeguards against torture and ill-treatment in all places of detention.

12. The Assembly encourages the authorities of Kazakhstan to:

12.1. continue their constructive engagement with the Council of Europe and other international bodies in the field of protection of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and intensify efforts to address the concerns raised;

12.2. build on Kazakhstan's active participation in international diplomacy by supporting dialogue, regional stability and co-operation in line with international norms and Council of Europe values. This includes the steadfast commitment to preserving and strengthening fundamental principles such as respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States, the non-use of force or threats of force, and the peaceful resolution of disagreements and disputes between countries;

12.3. maintain their support for a peaceful resolution to the unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine, guided by the principles of international law, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and consider joining international efforts aimed at creating a comprehensive approach to accountability, ensuring justice for victims and reinforcing international law.

13. The Assembly should regularly assess the situation in Kazakhstan and its adherence to the values of the Council of Europe, and stresses that any positive assessment must remain conditional on measurable progress in the reform agenda.