

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH NATIONAL-CULTURAL CENTERS IN BUKHARA, SAMARKAND AND NAVAI REGIONS

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**Abstract:** *This article analyzes the work carried out by the Republic of Uzbekistan to expand international cooperation and ensure internal interethnic harmony after its independence. In particular, the importance of diplomatic, cultural and social ties developed through national-cultural centers and “twin cities” in Bukhara, Samarkand and Navoi regions is revealed. The article shows that through these centers and forms of cooperation, the cultural needs of the local population are being satisfied, interethnic relations are being strengthened, and friendly relations in the international arena are being strengthened.*

**Keywords:** *National-cultural centers, twin cities, people's diplomacy, interethnic harmony, cultural cooperation, Bukhara, Samarkand, Navoi, multinational society, external relations, cultural exchange.*

Since Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, extensive work has been carried out to expand foreign relations, establish friendly relations with different countries and peoples, and preserve national cultures. In particular, in regions such as Bukhara, Navoi, and Samarkand, which are considered historical and cultural centers, one of the important areas of foreign relations is international cooperation through national cultural centers and sister cities.

National cultural centers are an important tool for preserving and developing the language, customs, traditions, and culture of representatives of various nationalities and ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan, as well as strengthening cultural and diplomatic ties with countries related to their history and culture. Russian, Tajik, Tatar, Karakalpak, Kurash, Armenian, Korean, and other national cultural centers in Samarkand, Bukhara, and Navoi regions have made a significant contribution not only to ensuring internal social stability, but also to international cultural exchange.

At the same time, these regions have implemented effective cooperation in the economic, scientific, educational and cultural spheres by establishing “Twin Cities” relations with a number of international cities. Such forms of cooperation — through city diplomacy — have created an opportunity to conduct foreign policy at the local level.

During 1991–2025, national-cultural events, international festivals, projects and trips implemented through twin cities in the regions served to introduce the multinational society of Uzbekistan to the world and build bridges of friendship between peoples. In this process, each region actively participated in foreign relations with its unique cultural heritage and strategic position.

The regions of the Zarafshan oasis are multinational, with representatives of about 80 nationalities and ethnic groups living in the regions. In particular, in 1989, a total of 2,281,872 citizens lived in Samarkand region, of which 1,764,872 were Uzbeks, 113,522 were Russians, 35,044 were Tatars, 3,368 were Crimean Tatars, 6,504 were Koreans, 14,226 were Ukrainians, and 1,895 were Turks. In 1990, in the regional center of Bukhara, there were about 170,000 Uzbeks, 33,000 Russians, 14.3 thousand Tatars, 5.1 thousand Jews, and 1.4 thousand Tajiks. Along with these, there were also large numbers of nationalities such as Germans, Armenians, Koreans, Azerbaijanis, Turkmen, and Turks. Ten national cultural centers operated in Samarkand, seven in Navoi region, and eleven in Bukhara. In Bukhara, there were: the Korean National Cultural Center, the German National Cultural Center, the Azerbaijani National Cultural Center, the Polish National Cultural Center “Svetlisa Polska”, the Russian National Cultural Center “Kelishuv va mer-shavat”, the Tatar-Bashkir Cultural Center, the Tajik-Persian National Cultural Center “Oftobi Sudiyona”, the Turkish National Cultural Center, the Turkmen National Cultural Center, the Bukhara Jewish National Cultural Center “Shamol”, and the Kazakh National Cultural Centers.

In Navoi region (2005), the total population was 810,194 people, of which 39,490 were Russians, 2,984 Ukrainians, 318 Belarusians, 640,941 Uzbeks, 66,761 Kazakhs, 223 Georgians, 4,324 Azerbaijanis, 50 Lithuanians, 60 Moldovans, 11 Latvians, 696 Kyrgyz, 12,347 Tajiks, 703 Armenians, 522 Turkmen, 30 Estonians, 10,782 Tatars and Koreans, and 10,787 representatives of other nationalities. The main population of the Konimekh, Tomdi, and Uchkuduk districts of the region is Kazakh, while the majority of the population of Nurota district is Tajik. The “Tolerance” Foundation and 7 national-cultural centers operate in the region. They are the Russian National-Cultural Center, the Jewish National-Cultural Center, the Tatar-Bashkir National-Cultural Center, the Korean National-Cultural Center, the Turkish National-Cultural Center, the Karakalpak National-Cultural Center, and the Kazakh National-Cultural Center. By 2013, the number of national-cultural centers in the region had increased by 2, totaling 9.

Speaking of national-cultural centers in Samarkand region, currently there are 11 national-cultural centers in Samarkand: “Luys” Armenian National-Cultural Center, “German” National-Cultural Center, “Russian” National-Cultural Center, “Azerbaijani” National-Cultural Center, “Jewish” National-Cultural Center, “Tatar-Bashkir” National-Cultural Center, “Korean” National-Cultural Center, “Turkish” National-Cultural Center,

“Tajik” National-Cultural Center, “Polonaise” Polish National-Cultural Center, and “Arab” National-Cultural Center of Samarkand region.

Since 1989, the first national-cultural centers have been established in Bukhara and Samarkand regions. In this regard, the Government of Uzbekistan provided practical assistance to national cultural centers in the republic, reviewed interethnic and interlingual conflicts in Samarkand, Bukhara, Uchkuduk and other cities. The implementation of the requirements of the law "On the State Language" in the public education system was checked. The activities and development of national cultural centers of the republic have become widespread since 1992. At the same time, the activities of national cultural centers in Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions began to develop.

Thus, international cooperation through national-cultural centers and “twin cities” in Bukhara, Samarkand and Navoi regions plays an important role not only in cultural exchange, but also in ensuring the country’s foreign policy image and internal social stability. These two mechanisms serve as effective tools for uniting a multinational society on the basis of common values, creating a platform for dialogue between different cultures and increasing Uzbekistan’s global prestige. In the future, further support for the activities of these centers, bringing “twin cities” relations to a new level and integrating them into global cultural cooperation will serve the country’s strategic interests.

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