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By Peter Tase

Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism

In July 2016, I accepted a generous invitation from the Government of Azerbaijan to be a keynote speaker in the Baku Summer School 2016, organized by the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre. In my lecture I addressed the cultural diversities of United States and in the Republic of Paraguay, a topic that raised a significant interest among the young university students who had come from over 15 countries in Europe and Asia. Moreover, these young students, within the framework of Multiculturalism Summer School, established the prestigious Club of the Young Friends of Azerbaijan, an assembly of globally oriented bright young leaders. This Organization is currently led by two Co-Chairs, [Dimitris Asproulis](#) (Greece) and Salomeja Lukaite (Lithuania) and has over 100 members from countries including: Turkey, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Indonesia, Georgia, Kirgizstan, Italy, Switzerland, Azerbaijan, United States, Egypt, Yemen and other countries.

These two young leaders are planning to organize conferences, in their respective universities, that are focused on the influence and role of multiculturalism in the society of Azerbaijan, and its valuable assets that are worth to be studied by other

cultures and be taken as an example. In their own countries, Dimitris and Salomeja are organizing many events that foster peace and stability; such initiatives would not have been taking place without the vital support of Academician Kamal Abdulla and the hard working staff of Baku International Multiculturalism Centre.

It must be noted that the vision of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is perfectly executed by State Advisor Kamal Abdulla, who is focused particularly on the Multiculturalism assets that Azerbaijani society can offer to the world. Academician Kamal Abdulla is a well known Azerbaijani writer and scholar. He has written works on linguistics, culturology and mythology, and is the author of many volumes of poetry, essays, plays, stories and novels.

Above all, State Advisor Kamal Abdulla served for almost 14 years as the Rector of Baku Slavic University. During his tenure this Azerbaijani Institution of higher learning has experienced a tremendous progress and undergone through major proactive reforms.

Under the leadership of Kamal Abdulla, Baku Slavic University (Bakı Slavyan Universiteti) has made many accomplishments that every citizen of Azerbaijan and the world must be proud of and cherish them, some of these achievements are the establishment of: Faculty of Philology focused on Russian, Azerbaijani, English, French, German literature; Pedagogical Faculty for the middle and high school specialists of the Russian language and literature; Faculty of International Relations and Regional Studies with International Relations experts from Azerbaijan, Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Turkey, Greece and Slovakia; Translation Faculty focused in different languages (Russian-Azerbaijani, English, Polish, Ukrainian, English-Bulgarian, Czech, English-Greek); Continuous Training with new pedagogical techniques provided to faculty and university administration staff.

In 2000 the Baku Slavic University established the degree of "honorary doctorate." The President of the Russian Federation [Vladimir Putin](#), Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia [II Aleksiy](#), the chairman of the Federation Council of Russia [Sergei Mironov](#), the Presidents of Bulgaria [Jelyu Zhelev](#) (1990–1997) and [Georgi Parvanov](#), the President of Greece [KStefanopulos](#), Ukrainian President [Viktor](#)

[Yushchenko](#) and the Polish President [Lech Kaczynski](#) Honorary Doctors of Baku Slavic University.

All of these accomplishments would not have been made possible without the admirable visionary leadership of Academician Kamal Abdullayev, while ensuring a steadfast support by the National Leader of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev and the current president of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev.

Despite the current background of a growing global instability the multiculturalism and tolerance in Azerbaijan based on the coexistence of different religions and nationalities is a model for everyone. Azerbaijan believes that multiculturalism is the only way for the development of mankind in the future, because in the age of globalization, when the exchange of information and, in general, the processes of integration is active, engaging in self-isolation is simply disastrous.

Taking intercultural dialogue as one of the most pressing challenges of the contemporary world, Azerbaijan has been sponsoring World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku once every two years since 2011.

Azerbaijan hosted the 7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations from April 25 to 27, 2016. By using the UN tribune, Azerbaijan has once again demonstrated its multiculturalism traditions, and urge the world countries to fully respect principles of tolerance, intercultural and inter-civilization dialogue.

In the same vein, the Baku International Multiculturalism Centre, through the Club of Young Friends of Azerbaijan, Summer Schools and Winter Schools, will continue to foster intercultural dialogue, promote multicultural values of Azerbaijan, foster peace and stability, educate the future leaders of the world and strengthen cultural cooperation among nations.

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