



Urban Agenda Platform

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# I. Innovative Social and Economic Development of the City of Kazan: Embracing Diversity

Region	Europe and Central Asia
Award Scheme	Guangzhou Award
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

## Summary

Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, is probably Russia's most multicultural and multi-ethnic city. Kazan is also a multi-religious city with mosques standing side by side with Orthodox cathedrals. The government and citizens highly appreciate this ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity and try to sustain and safeguard it as the city's cultural heritage.

## Background and Objective

With representatives of more than 115 nationalities, Kazan is one of the most multinational cities of Russia. Historically, ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity in the city of Kazan has created positive ethno-confessional relations among its citizens. Throughout centuries of a common residence, stable traits of good-neighborliness, religious tolerance, inter-ethnic harmony, friendship and cooperation between people living in Kazan have been formed. The current state of relations between ethnic groups in the city of Kazan is generally characterized by a solid stability, the spirit of peaceful coexistence among cultures and the cooperation of representatives of different nationalities and religions. The Municipal program for strengthening civil harmony is adopted every five years, in order to create a favorable atmosphere to maintain inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony in the city of Kazan. These programs are aimed at the implementation of a balanced national policy in Kazan, the preservation of the state languages and other languages of the citizens, shaping an attitude of tolerance and civil unity. The social effects of the implementation of Program are to maintain social stability, inter-ethnic and inter-faith peace and harmony, cultural identity and to meet the social and cultural needs of Kazan citizens, and expresses the following: increasing the effectiveness of the use of ethnocultural potential; preventing ethnic and religious conflicts; provision of the necessary conditions for the preservation of interfaith harmony and civil unity; shaping an attitude of tolerance and preventing xenophobia in society; provision of the necessary conditions for the preservation and development of the language and culture of the citizens; implementing a system of measures to enhance the social and cultural adaptation and integration of migrants. The House of Friendship of Nations initiative supported by the Municipal program for strengthening civil harmony definitely involves the partnership between government and local ethnic, cultural, and religious communities. The stable environment in the field of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Kazan is ensured not only by the good traditions of coherence and harmony among people, but also by the comprehensive work of the representatives of the House of Friendship of Nations, the religious organizations, ethnic diasporas, the law enforcement agencies, and all levels of government. As a state institution, the House of Friendship of Nations is financially supported by the local and regional authorities. Moreover, significant nonfinancial contributions in its numerous activities and events are made by national cultural associations and ethnic diasporas.

## Actions and Implementation

The world today faces many problems representing challenges related to conflicts on national and confessional grounds. However in Kazan, that is rightfully considered to be one of Russia's largest ethnocultural centers, 115 ethnicities and nationalities live in peace and harmony. The city believes that the experience can be extended to any other city or country. It is essential to promote the satisfaction of the ethnocultural needs of citizens, which are based on the long-standing traditions of mutual respect and good-neighborliness. The House of Friendship of Nations project implemented in Kazan instills and develops friendly relations between multinational associations of the city can be described as a best practice that can be replicated by other localities. Kazan believes that it is necessary to create friendly relationships with people of different cultures and religions. Cultural and religious diversity is the city's heritage: we are different, but we are together - this is our strength! Thus, the city is glad to participate in the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovations to share the experience and help others to enhance inter-ethnic and inter-religious peace and harmony.

## Outcomes and Impacts



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With a local government support, the House of Friendship of Nations holds festivals which reflect the diversity of cultures and peculiarities of the ethnic traditions. National holidays, such as the Ukrainian popular Holiday "Ivan Kupala", Udmurt Holiday "Gyron Bydton", Chuvash Holiday "Uyav", the Mari Holiday "Semyk", the spring Holiday of the Turkic peoples "Nauruz", the Russian national Holiday "Maslenitsa", the Tatar folk Holiday "Sabantuy", Krjashen Holidays "Nadrugan", "Petrov Day", Folklore festival "Karavon", Russian Folklore and ethnographic festival "Kuzminki", Republican festival "Mosaic of Cultures", International open student competition for beauty and talent of the "Pearl of peace", the International Festival of National Rites "Millennium of Cultures" and many others are organized every year. With representatives of more than 115 nationalities, Kazan is one of the most multinational cities of Russia. All these people live in Kazan in peace and harmony. Today, in Kazan, there are 180 religious organizations: 83 - Islamic, 49 - Orthodox, 2 - the Old Believer Church, 1 - Catholic, 2 - Lutheran, 1 - the Armenian Apostolic Church, 38 - Protestant, 1 - Jewish, 1 - Bahá'í, 1 - Hare and 1 - Buddhist. In 2009, there were 155 religious communities and organizations in Kazan. Peaceful coexistence of several religions and ethnicities in Kazan results in the increased amount of marriages by people from different ethnicities and religions. For the last 10 years, the number of such cross marriages exceeded 25,000. Supported by the local government, annually the House of Friendship of Nations organizes the International Festival of National Rites "Millennium of Cultures". The national and cultural associations of the city of Kazan, as well as amateur national and folk music and dance groups willingly participate in the festival and demonstrate their cultures and traditions. The performances are made by Russians, Tatars, Kryashens, Jews, Mordvins, Chuvashes, Mari, Udmurts, Tajiks, Greeks, Africans, Koreans, Chechens, Arabs, Buryats, Azeris, Hindus, Vietnamese, Afghans, and others. The aim of the International Festival of National Rites "Millennium of Cultures" is to form a tolerant attitude to the views, beliefs, spiritual and aesthetic values of the various ethnic groups living in the city of Kazan and at the Republic of Tatarstan, to popularize their distinctive national cultures. At the Festival, participants present to the audience national rites or some of their fragments, which absorbs the national culture of each ethnicity: its culture, origins, language, costume, and, of course, its spirit. Every year, there are more than 200 participants that take part in this bright and colorful event. The International Festival of National Rites "Millennium of Cultures" shows how important it is to expand the boundaries of interethnic dialogue in today's world. The Festival allowed to expand the facets of the inter-ethnic dialog formation and to realize a unique opportunity - just in one place to see and get acquainted with the peculiarities of folk rites and traditions of the multinational city with a rich culture of representatives of different nationalities. The festival clearly demonstrated the tremulous attitude of different peoples to the traditions of their ancestors. The initiative to promote ethnocultural events, revitalization of national traditions, strengthening of inter-ethnic relations, and preservation of languages helps to retain cultural diversity, and the same time prevents of ethnic and religious conflicts. Multicultural events provide the necessary conditions for the preservation of interfaith harmony and civil unity, shape an attitude of tolerance and prevent xenophobia in society. Such initiatives also strengthen the links between local government and community.

## Sustainability and Scalability

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable Target 3: Participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management Target 4: Safeguard cultural and natural heritage Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions for all

## Initiative Contribution

The regional program "Implementation of the state national policy in the Republic of Tatarstan for 2014-2020" program aims at developing and supporting all ethnic minorities living at the region, preserving of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional peace and harmony, consolidating the all-Russian civil identity and implementation of successful socio-cultural adaptation and integration of migrants. "The Strategy of Social and Economic Development of Kazan until 2030" emphasizes the importance of safeguarding the cultural and religious diversity of the city of Kazan.

## Innovative Initiative

The initiative should be considered as evolutionary. Kazan has a centuries-old experience of coexistence of multiple ethnicities, cultures, and religions. These long-standing good traditions of coherence and harmony among peoples ensured the stable environment in the field of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in Kazan. The initiative of the creation of the House of Friendship of Nations at the city of Kazan primarily helps to implement local policies in the cultural sector. From the "Sustainable Development Goals" perspective the initiative helps to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by safeguard cultural heritage and promoting understanding. The initiative did not have substantial obstacles or did not face any resistance. Financial support to implement the initiative was primarily provided by the local and regional government throughout municipal and regional programs. Up until 2012, the House of Friendship of Nations was located in an old mansion building in the city center. Thanks to financial support from the local and regional government, in 2012, it has relocated to a new 5-floor building includes offices of the national communities, a library, an information center, an editorial office for the journal "Our home - Tatarstan", a conference room, a concert hall, and a museum.



IMPLEMENTING  
THE NEW  
URBAN AGENDA



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## Resources devoted to delivery

BASIC CITY DATA Population size: 1,243,500 Population growth rate (%): 0.95 Surface area (sq.km): 614.20 Population density (people/sq.km): 2025.00 GDP per capita (USD): 9500.00 Main source of prosperity: Industry <http://www.guangzhouaward.org/a/925.html?lang=en>