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On July 8, 2020, French-Azerbaijani University (UFAZ) under Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (ASOIU) organized its first-ever Graduation Ceremony online. The first UFAZ students, admitted in the 2016/2017 academic year, are graduating this year.

The ceremony, organized online via the Microsoft Teams platform, was simultaneously streamed live on Facebook. Amongst others, the Minister of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov, French Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Zakari Gross, Azerbaijani Ambassador to France, Rahman Mustafayev, Vice-Chairperson for International Relations of University of Strasbourg, Irini Tsamadou-Jacoberger, ASOIU Rector, Professor Mustafa Babanli, UFAZ Executive Director, Vazeh Askerov, Secretary General, Charlotte Payen, local and foreign faculty, alumni, students and staff participated at the event.

The Minister of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov:

"Past six years might seem long enough to get the first harvest of joint efforts with our French colleagues, but the impact of this cooperation will be long term. Long term in nurturing better people to people context in Azerbaijan and France, long term in developing Azerbaijani human capital. Today, I can proudly say that UFAZ has become a success story in bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and France."

Ambassador of France to Azerbaijan, HE Zakari Gross:

"I congratulate all UFAZ students very sincerely for the graduation. I am very happy with the high success rates among graduates. It shows the efforts you put into your studies and you should be proud of these results. I wish that one of you or several will perhaps have the idea and energy to create an association of alumni and that French Embassy will wish to remain in contact with all the alumni so that we gradually constitute a growing community of French-Azerbaijani researchers, workers, engineers, and academics."

Ambassador of Azerbaijan to France, HE Rahman Mustafayev:

"UFAZ is a very important, strong and healthy symbol of our strategic partnership. It is also important that we are now in the process of integration and adaptation of standards to European ones and this university serves as an example of how European, in particular French standards of high education can contribute to the improvement of our educational professional capacities."

Rector of Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University, Mustafa Babanli:

"ASOIU is celebrating its 100-year-anniversary and we are proud that we are also having the first graduates of UFAZ this year. UFAZ prepares its students for life outside of the scientific knowledge and professional skills it provides. I congratulate not only UFAZ students, but also staff, faculty and all colleagues for their work."

The Vice-chair for International Affairs of University of Strasbourg, Irene Jacobberger:

"This ceremony marks a major moment in your life. It celebrates all your hard work, your efforts, your achievements and projects you have put into the future. This ceremony is also an opportunity for us to recall that you epitomize the success of this ambitious project setup thanks to the commitment of two presidents of Azerbaijani and French Republic. It was an ambitious gamble that is now coming true thanks to the very important investment by both parties."

UFAZ Secretary General Charlotte Payen recalled warm and touching memories from the last four years, expressed her gratitude to all staff members and faculty who supported the project from the very beginning. She also underlined that students contributed to the reputation of UFAZ with their successful achievements.

Later in a video clip covering 4 years of UFAZ noteworthy memories and students' success stories, was displayed for the guests.

During the event, Irada Bunyatova, Suleyman Gafarli and Maryam Ismayilova, students who are graduating with honors in their specialties, also shared their impressions about UFAZ.

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The event was moderated by UFAZ director Dr. Vazeh Askerov.

To recall:

? 125 out of 141 students who were admitted to UFAZ in 2016 are going to graduate this year.

??47 of 80 students who have been admitted to the UFAZ Master's Degree Programs for the academic year 2020/2021 are UFAZ students.

?10 UFAZ students had received an opportunity to continue their education in the top universities of France with TOTAL scholarship. (link).

? More than 10 students were admitted to the various universities abroad as a graduate student.

? Currently, 17 UFAZ students have already been recruited in relevant jobs.

Established in 2016, UFAZ is a unique ongoing project initiated by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and France. UFAZ undergraduates receive diplomas from both ASOIU and Strasbourg University (Renn 1 University for Oil and Gas Engineering). UFAZ launched its first Master's Degree Programs starting from 2020/2021 academic year that also provides two diplomas.