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Azerbaijani Government Takes Next Step on National Satellite Proposal

In an effort to secure approval for a national communications satellite, the Communications and Information Technologies Ministry of Azerbaijan has submitted a request to the government highlighting the benefits of this kind of technology.

Ministry Coordination Department Officer Gulam Abdullayev said the request package included technical information about the proposed satellite, but that it did not reflect a detailed breakdown of how much it would cost Azerbaijan. Mr. Abdullayev said the cost would be comparable to what other countries have spent on similar projects approximately \$100 million to \$160 million.

“The financial details will be examined after technical parameters are determined. Concrete proposals will be developed after the government approves the project,” he said, adding that information about technical parameters of the satellite will be submitted to the International Telecommunications Union by late September. /APA/

President Aliyev Receives Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner

On September 5, President Ilham Aliyev met with a delegation headed by Thomas Hammarberg, Council of Europe (CE) Commissioner for Human Rights. The Commissioner said that his visit to Azerbaijan was successful and he had very sincere and productive meetings in different ministries.

President Aliyev noted that this visit will enable the guests to get closely acquainted with ongoing democratic reforms in Azerbaijan. The parties exchanged views on the prospects of cooperation between Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe.

On the same day, Commissioner Hammarberg also met with Justice Minister Fikrat Mammadov. Commissioner Hammarberg remarked that he appreciated the National Action Plan on protection of human rights approved by President Aliyev last year.

Justice Minister Mammadov briefed Commissioner Hammarberg on democratic changes in the country, development of judicial bodies and improvement of the penitentiary system. The two also discussed the work done in the fight against corruption in Azerbaijan as well as the human rights situation in the country, including the conditions of detention centers, freedom of expression and the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) stemming from Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.

NATO Appoints New Coordinator to Azerbaijan

Zbignev Rebachki of Poland is the new NATO Coordinator to Azerbaijan. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer introduced the new Coordinator to Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov in a letter sent to the Minister last week. Until his recent appointment in Azerbaijan, Rebachki worked at the NATO Headquarters in Poland and in Ukraine. Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry spokesman Khazar Ibrahim says Rebachki is expected to visit Azerbaijan in the near future. /TREND/

Croatian Foreign Minister: We Recognize Territorial Integrity of Azerbaijan

During his official visit to Croatia, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov had one-on-one and larger-format meetings with Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration Colinda Grabar-Kitarovic. During the meetings, four draft agreements were considered and bilateral, regional and international issues were debated.

Ms. Grabar-Kitarovic stressed the necessity of strengthening high-level political ties by further developing economic relations. Minister Mammadyarov, in his turn, noted the significance of humanitarian relations vis-à-vis political and economic ties. The two also discussed opportunities for cooperation between the Diplomatic Academies of both countries. Following this, the Azerbaijani and Croatian foreign ministers gave a joint press conference.

At the press conference, Ms. Grabar-Kitarovic said Croatia recognizes the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and underlined that Croatia supports a peaceful solution of Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

On September 6, Minister Mammadyarov also met with Croatian President Stjepan Mesic. At the meeting, the situation in the Balkans and economic and political issues were discussed. /APA/

Azerbaijan's Diplomatic Representatives Active and Engaged Around the World

In a September 5 press conference, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Vagif Sadikhov detailed Azerbaijan's diplomatic involvement around the world. "Azerbaijan has 55 diplomatic representative offices in foreign countries. There are 46 embassies, five general consulates, four permanent representatives at international organizations," said the Deputy Foreign Minister.

The Deputy Minister said Azerbaijan will soon open six or seven more diplomatic embassies. They will be located in Mexico, Argentina, Syria and Croatia, with a consulate general in Yekaterinburg, and a representative office in Mahachkala, Russia. Azerbaijani ambassadors to Lithuania, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar and Tajikistan will assume office in a few weeks. Mr. Sadikhov attributed the increasing number of embassies to the speedy economic development in Azerbaijan.

The Deputy Minister said over 30 foreign embassies, 2 general consulates, 13 representative offices and 7 honorary consulates are operating in Azerbaijan. In addition, Qatar, Belgium, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Spain, Croatia, Switzerland and Lithuania are all planning to open their embassies in Azerbaijan by the end of 2007. /APA/