



Washington DC, May 18, 2007

Contact: Ramil Huseynli

Azerbaijan: An Essential Partner for EU and Hungary

Azerbaijan is an essential partner for the European Union (EU) and Hungary, the Foreign Minister of Hungary, Kinga Hentz, stated on May 18, 2007 during a briefing in Baku on the results of the talks with her Azerbaijani counterpart, Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov.

According to Minister Hentz, Hungary which has been a member of EU for over 3 years can support Azerbaijan in its integration into the organization. A wide range of bilateral and regional relationships was discussed during the talks. Both parties exchanged their views on co-operation in the energy field. Hentz stated that Hungary was interested in the export of Azerbaijani gas. The matter will be discussed during negotiations with Azerbaijan which are to be held by the head of the Hungarian Oil and Gas Company, who is a member of the delegation.

The situation regarding the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was also discussed by the Ministers at the meeting. Minister Hentz invited Minister Mammadyarov to pay an official visit to Hungary.

Minister Mammadyarov reported at the briefing that Azerbaijan was interested in all-round co-operation with Hungary. "For this purpose, during the meeting we contemplated opening a Hungarian Embassy in Azerbaijan," he said. According to the Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, the turnover between the two countries has increased by 169%. "We intend to raise the level of turnover in the non-oil sector," he stated. An agreement of co-operation in promoting mutual investments was signed as a result of the talks. /Trend/

Azerbaijani President: If negotiations inefficient, war will be alternative

We are still devoted to the negotiation process for the peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno - Karabakh conflict. If negotiations turn out inefficient, war is the alternative.

Azerbaijan should be prepared for this, President Ilham Aliyev stated while addressing the public in the Mehdiabad settlement of Absaron district of Azerbaijan.

The President stated that Azerbaijan will liberate its territories in any case. "Azerbaijan will never refrain from its national interests. We should have strong army for this. Therefore, we are making all efforts to build a strong army. We have a much more developed economy than Armenia. Armenia is dependant on foreign assistance. And this is not expedient," he said. President Aliyev also said that Armenia does not demonstrate frankness regarding the negotiation process on the Nagorno-Karabakh. /APA/

President Aliyev receives Bulgaria's Justice Minister

On May 15, 2007, President Ilham Aliyev met with Bulgarian Justice Minister Georgi Petkanov. President Aliyev described Azerbaijan-Bulgaria relations as rapidly developing, adding that the two countries also effectively cooperate within international organizations. He stressed the role of reciprocal visits by Azerbaijani and Bulgarian leaders in strengthening the bilateral ties between their countries.

President Aliyev said he believes Minister Petkanov's visit will give the impetus for further enhancement of Azerbaijan-Bulgaria cooperation.

The Bulgarian Minister said his country is keen to establish cooperation with Azerbaijan in various spheres. Minister Petkanov expressed confidence that enhancement of bilateral relations between the Bulgarian and Azerbaijani justice ministries will contribute to the development of the two countries' ties.

Azerbaijan's Ministry marks World Information Society Day

Azerbaijan's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector revenues will likely reach petrodollars in 10 to 15 years, Azerbaijan's ICT Minister, Ali Abbasov, told a board meeting marking May 17, World Information Society Day. He added that proposals for establishment of innovation zones have been introduced to the president. "We have concluded an agreement with South Korea for creation of e-government," Minister Abbasov further noted.

The Deputy Minister, Iltimas Mammadov, reported that the conversion of the electronic telephone exchange system is 76.1% complete and there are more than 3 million mobile phone costumers.

May 17 marks the anniversary of the signature of the first International Telegraph Convention and the creation of the International Telecommunication Union. World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated since 1969. /APA-Economics/

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Turkey to form an information hub

Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Turkey will set up a consortium for information transit between the West and East. Azerbaijan's Communications and Information Technologies Minister Ali Abbasov said these four countries lay from China to Europe as a line and have great potential to transport information through this "line".

He also added that the World Bank will give a \$30 million loan to Azerbaijan for establishment of e-government. Azerbaijan is located on the Ancient Silk Road and at the crossroads between Europe, Middle East and Asia, and is gaining importance as a transit core. /APA-Economics/

Azerbaijan Passes OIC's Chairmanship to Pakistan

On May 15-16, the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) titled "Session of Peace, Progress and Harmony" was held in Islamabad, Pakistan. Topics of discussion covered the Arab-Israel conflict, the situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia, the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir, the peace process between India and Pakistan and the cooperation of Iran with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Delivering a speech at the Conference, Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov, who is also the outgoing chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, informed the participants on the activities implemented during Azerbaijan's chairmanship of the ICFM. The Minister reiterated the establishment of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) groups in non-OIC capitals and international organizations have been an important dimension for the chairmanship.

Minister Mammadyarov also met with his counterparts from the countries of Niger, Tunis, Iran, Croatia, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt where bilateral relations, OIC related reforms, international and regional cooperation and the new statute of the organization were each discussed. Minister Mammadyarov was awarded by the OIC Youth Forum for promotion of the OIC's international value and activities intended to raise youths' roles in the OIC countries. During the session Azerbaijan passed chairmanship of the ICFM over to Pakistan. Addressing the session, President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf gave high assessment to Azerbaijan's activity in OIC, its initiatives and actions conducted during the year.

The same day, President Pervez Musharraf received Minister Elmar Mammadyarov of Azerbaijan, who said the President of Azerbaijan attaches great importance to the relations with fraternal Pakistan. The two dignitaries discussed issues of existing problems in the OIC member countries, the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.

Three resolutions were adopted in the last day of the session. Two of them condemned Armenia's aggression against Azerbaijan and destruction of Azerbaijani historical and cultural monuments in the occupied territories. For the first time ever, a resolution by an international organization gave a political assessment of the Khojaly tragedy committed by Armenian armed forces in 1992, and qualified the massive killing of innocent Azerbaijani people as genocide.

A provision condemning occupation of Azerbaijani lands by Armenia was included in the Islamabad declaration as well. The declaration demands from Armenia unconditional liberation of Azerbaijani territories. The third resolution covered the economic sector.