



Monthly News Bulletin

January – February 2013

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AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan's economy grew by 2.2% in 2012

January 16 (AzerTAc). In 2012, GDP growth in Azerbaijan was entirely provided by the non-oil sector and was at 2.2 percent, Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev said. The growth of non-oil sector last year was at 9.7 percent, its share in GDP rose to 52.7 percent. "The volume of information and communication services grew by 15.9 percent, transportation - by 3.5 percent, including the non-oil cargo - by 3.5 percent, retail trade - by 9.6 percent. Inflation rate was at 1.1 percent", the minister said.

Azerbaijan to render financial assistance to Afghanistan

January 17 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has provided \$150 000 financial aid to Afghanistan within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Baku office told. The funds allocated by the Azerbaijani government will be used for application of e-governance methods as a pilot. "The future of Afghanistan has a special importance for both global security and stability; Azerbaijan actively supports the fraternal-Afghan people in solution of the country's problems," said UN Baku office.

President of Azerbaijan signs decree to declare 2013 the "Year of ICT"

January 17 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev signed a decree to declare 2013 the year of Information and Communication Technologies. According to the decree, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technologies in cooperation with the National Academy of Science of the country is empowered to prepare and submit a plan of measures on this issue to the head of state. The Cabinet of Ministers is empowered to settle all issues emanating from this decree.

"Opening of Khojaly airport will harm the peace process of Nagorno Karabakh conflict," Matthew Bryza

January 18 (AzerTAc). "Opening of Khojaly airport will harm the peace talks on Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno Karabakh conflict", said former U.S Ambassador to Azerbaijan, ex-co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, Director of the International Centre for Defence Studies (ICDS) in Estonia Matthew Bryza. U.S diplomat underlined that Azerbaijan has the right to defend its territorial integrity, noting flights between Armenia and Azerbaijan's Nagorno Karabakh region may harm the ongoing peace talks. Bryza also touched upon the upcoming presidential elections in Azerbaijan and expressed confidence that it would be fair and transparent process.

Azerbaijan sets up Organizing Committee for 2015 Baku European Olympic Games

January 18 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has signed an executive order on establishing the Organizing Committee for the first European Olympic Games to be held in Baku in 2015. Under the presidential order, president of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, member of Executive Committee of Azerbaijan National Olympic Committee, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Mehriban Aliyeva was appointed chairperson of the Organizing Committee. Members of the Organizing Committee include chiefs of appropriate government agencies, leadership of the National Olympic Committees as well as Olympic

champions. Under the order, Azerbaijan's Youth and Sport Ministry together with Baku Mayor's Office and National Olympic Committee must prepare a plan of special measures for holding the 1st European Olympic Games and submit it to the Organizing Committee.

EU welcomes signing of TANAP by Shahdeniz-2 and Nabucco consortiums

January 18 (AzerTAc). Günther Oettinger, the European Union commissioner for energy has welcomed signing of the agreement between Shahdeniz-2 and Nabucco consortiums on Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP). The European Union commissioner stated this in Brussels estimating this as a new step for realization of the "South Corridor". At his words, ratification by Azerbaijan and Turkey of the TANAP agreement will enable to create a specialized infrastructure to transport Azerbaijani gas to Europe.

President Ilham Aliyev approves agreement between Azerbaijan and Turkey on TANAP project

January 18 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today approved an agreement on Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline Project (TANAP) between Azerbaijan and Turkey. The document was signed on June 26, 2012 in Istanbul. The construction of TANAP is planned to start in 2013 and to be completed by 2017-2018. The planned capacity of the pipeline would be 16 billion cubic metres of natural gas per year at the initial stage and would be increased later up to 23 billion cubic metres by 2023, and 31 billion cubic metres by 2026. The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan SOCAR (80%), Turkey (20%) are the founding members of the consortium.

Nationwide commemoration of 23rd anniversary of Bloody January tragedy President Ilham Aliyev pays tribute to martyrs

January 20 (AzerTAc). Today marks 23 years since the Black January events when the Soviet army invaded Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, killing and injuring hundreds of innocent and defenseless people. The 20th of January, 1990 entered into the modern history of Azerbaijan as one of the most tragic days, and at the same time as a heroic page. The terror act committed by the Soviet empire against innocent people who took to streets in protest against the biased policy of the empire's criminal leadership, overtly supporting Armenia's territorial claims against Azerbaijan, will remain forever in the history of mankind as one of the worst crimes against humanity. Despite it has been 23 years since the Soviet Army's bloody invasion of Baku, people in Azerbaijan continue to live with pain of that tragic night in their hearts, and express their hatred for those who committed that inhuman deed.

The Black January was nothing but a state's massacre of its people. It was a vast violation of the constitutions of the former USSR and the Azerbaijan Soviet Republic. By sending troops against peaceful people the Soviet Union – led by Mikhail Gorbachev – roughly violated international legal norms, including the United Nations' Charter and the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights of 1966.

Agricultural production up 5.8 percent in Azerbaijan

January 20 (AzerTAc). Agricultural output has grown 5.8 per cent in Azerbaijan last year in comparison with 2011. According to the State Statistical Committee, agricultural production made 4.76 million manats in the country in 2012.

Khojaly tragedy once again recognized as genocide on international level

January 22 (AzerTAc). The eighth session of the OIC Parliamentary Union held in Khartoum, Sudan has ended, according to the Istanbul headquarters of the OIC Youth Forum. The organization includes parliaments of 51 OIC member-states and holds its sessions once in two years in one of the countries of Africa, Asia and Arab region. According to the headquarters of the OIC Youth Forum, as part of the initiative launched by the OIC Youth forum and the adopted resolution "Cooperation between the OIC PU

and OIC YF", in line with the paragraph devoted to the campaign "Justice for Khojaly", the Khojaly tragedy is recognized as an "act of genocide" committed by the armed forces of Armenia against Azerbaijani civilians, and called a "crime against humanity." The document, according to which the OIC PU also demands "to bring to justice the perpetrators of the Khojaly massacre", appreciates the activities of the international campaign "Justice for Khojaly", initiated by the General Coordinator of the OIC Leyla Aliyeva. The resolution adopted unanimously by the speakers and members of the national parliaments of the OIC Member States, calls for support for the campaign and a proper legal assessment of the tragedy at the national level. It should be noted that a resolution recognizing the Khojaly tragedy as "an act of genocide and a crime against humanity" was adopted at the 39th session of the OIC Foreign Ministers held on the initiative of the OIC YF in Djibouti in November of the last year. Under the Sudanese resolution, the OIC PU also expressed its support for the international program "OIC Model", implemented by the Youth Forum of OIC. In particular, the participants noted the importance of mutual cooperation regarding national models of young parliamentarians within the program.

SOCAR plans three more filling stations in Romania`s North – East region

January 23 (AzerTAc). The State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Socar, which recently opened a new gas station at Targu Neamt, in Northern Romania, plans to add three more stations, at Bacau, Focsani and Roman, all in the Moldova region of Romania. The recent opening came following a EUR 800,000 investment, and brings Socar`s network in the Moldova region to 14 stations, said its CEO for Romania Hamza Karimov. SOCAR will continue to invest in the North – East region of Romania. "2013 will be a new year of investments for Socar in Romania, after which the company will become an important mark on the oil and gas market in Romania," said Karimov. Company representatives previously said capital Bucharest is among the expansion targets for SOCAR. SOCAR, the state -owned oil company from Azerbaijan, entered the Romanian market by buying local filling stations from Romtranspetrol and re-branding them. The company owns gas stations in Azerbaijan, Switzerland, Georgia and Ukraine. It has representative offices in Georgia, Turkey, Romania, Austria, Switzerland, Kazakhstan, Great Britain, Iran, Germany and Ukraine and trading companies in Switzerland, Singapore, Vietnam, Nigeria, and other countries.

Chairman of Azerbaijan State Customs Committee meets Secretary General of Cooperation Council of Turkish Speaking Countries

January 23 (AzerTAc). Chairman of the State Customs Committee, customs service Lieutenant General Aydin Aliyev has today met Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkish Speaking Countries Halil Akinci. Mr. Aliyev stressed the importance of cooperation among the Turkish speaking countries, as well as expansion of the relations in the economical-trade and customs spheres. On the restoration of the Silk Road initiated by national leader Heydar Aliyev, the Azeri Chairman said that this project gave a stimulus to the development of the economic-trade relations among the Turkish Speaking countries. On role of the customs bodies, on the development relations among the Turkish speaking countries, Halil Akinci stressed the importance of the expansion of bilateral cooperation.

All international organizations warned against illegal use of Azerbaijani airspace

January 24 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijani Civil Aviation Administration has officially informed all international organizations on measures to be taken in case of violation of the Azerbaijani airspace. According to the Head of the Azerbaijani Civil Aviation Administration Arif Mammadov, recently the Cabinet of Ministers confirmed the "Rule on the use of the airspace of Azerbaijan Republic". "The rules prepared in line with the law on aviation, Convention on International Civil Aviation Association (ICAO) (Chicago Convention December 7, 1944) and its appendixes, cover air traffic security, use of the country's airspace. The "Umbrella" signal envisaging immediate landing or leaving the area (except planes involved in fighting against aircrafts violating the rules and those exercising rescue functions) is also stipulated in the "Rule on the use of the airspace of Azerbaijan Republic"

He said: "This document was sent on January 18 to all international organizations including the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), its European branch, and CIS Interstate Council on Aviation and Air Space Use." "Azerbaijan has banned the use of the airspace of Nagorno-Karabakh occupied by Armenia, since no one can guarantee flight safety in the area". According to the Head of the Azerbaijani Civil Aviation Administration Arif Mammadov, Armenia's steps aimed at exploiting the airport in Khankendi are the violation of international legal norms. "This air space belongs to Azerbaijan, so its use by Armenia is impossible." "Therefore we, in accordance with international rules of air navigation, declared air space closed. Our decision has been accepted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). If Armenians illegally invade the air space of Azerbaijan, it will mean that they violate international norms," the administration head said.

Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States starts in Baku

January 24 (AzerTAc). First meeting of the heads of state agencies responsible for the Diaspora affairs of the Cooperation Council of Turkic-speaking states (CCTS) started today in the capital of Azerbaijan, bringing together participants from Turkey, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and the host country. The key goal of the forum is strengthening of cooperation among the Diaspora structures of the Turkic states, consolidation of the efforts to implement the ideas of unity of the Turkic world and define the future strategy. Within the forum, it will be set up an Advisory Council of Diaspora structures, held the First Forum of the heads of Diaspora organizations, prepare the joint activity strategy and create a Coordination Council.

Turkic Council Secretary General delivers report in Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy

January 25 (AzerTAc). Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS) Halil Akinci on Thursday made a report in the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. According to ADA, Halil Akinci briefed students on the CCTS activity. "The Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (CCTS) was established in 2009 as a new intergovernmental organization with the overarching aim of promoting comprehensive cooperation among Turkic Speaking States. The four founding and current Member States are Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey." Touching upon the common roots of the Turkic speaking countries, the diplomat spoke of members of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States. Halil Akinci also shared his views on the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Azerbaijan on top list of Georgia`s foreign trade partners

January 25 (AzerTAc). According to the National Statistics Office (GeoStat), Turkey, Azerbaijan and Ukraine are in the top list of foreign trade partners of Georgia. Turkey with a turnover of \$1,535,700,000, Azerbaijan with AZN 1,260,400,000 and Ukraine with \$764,115,900 are in the top list of foreign trade partners of Georgia. These countries occupied the first three positions among the foreign trade partner of the country in 2011.

Over \$431 million spent on construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway in 2007-2012

January 27 (AzerTAc). Construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway cost more than \$431 million in 2007-2012. Azerbaijan allocated a total of \$151.5 million in loans for construction of the Georgian section of the line last year, according to Azerbaijan`s Transport Ministry.

Some 12.4 mln tons of cargo transported via sea in Azerbaijan in 2012

January 28 (AzerTAc). Some 12.4 mln tons of cargo was transported via sea in Azerbaijan in 2012. According to the State Statistical Committee, 60.5% of this amount was oil, while 39.5% was dry cargo and all transportations were realized on foreign links. Some 11.9 mln tons of shipping and unshipping works were conducted during the accounting period, up 0.4% from previous year. International transit cargos rose 1.8%, while the amount of import cargos decreased 11%.

Senate of New Mexico recognizes Khojaly Massacre

January 30 (AzerTAc). On January 28, New Mexico Senate formally recognized Khojaly Massacre. The resolution recognizing the mass killings of Azerbaijani civilians was introduced to the upper chamber of the state legislature by Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino (D). The document speaks about the nature of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and presents details of the massacre of peaceful Azerbaijani civilians, committed by the Armenian armed forces on February 25-26, 1992 after occupation of Khojaly and killing of more than 600 people, including children, women and elderly. The author underlines that "...many civilians bodies found in Khojaly after the fight were disfigured and mutilated, making this one of the most inhumane and barbaric battles of the war". The state issued document points out that 20 percent of the territory of Azerbaijan, including its Nagorno-Karabakh region and 7 adjacent districts, is under occupation of Armenian armed forces, despite the UN Security Council resolutions condemning occupation of Azerbaijani territories. The resolution of New Mexico Senate recognizing the Khojaly Massacre was unanimously passed by 35 senators who voted in favor.

Baku, Tbilisi discuss accelerating of construction of BTK railway's Georgian section

January 30 (AzerTAc). Issues of accelerating of the construction of the Georgian Marabda-Kartsakhi section of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway discussed in the Ministry of Economy of Georgia. Georgian minister Irakli Kvirikashvili therefore met with Marabda-Kartsakhi bilateral coordination council chairman, head of Azeryolservis JSC of Ministry of Transport of Azerbaijan Javid Gurbanov. As explained in the ministry, the parties discussed and agreed on plans for future activities to accelerate work on the Georgian section of the building. Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway is being constructed on the basis of the Georgian-Azerbaijani-Turkish inter-state agreement. Azerbaijan allocated a loan worth \$775 million to construct the Georgian section. The State Oil Fund finances this project in accordance with the presidential decree on 'Implementation of measures within Baku-Tbilisi-Kars project', dating February 21, 2007. The State Oil Fund has allocated \$403.3 million since the beginning of financing the project and until October 1, 2012. It is planned to construct a new 105-kilometre railway section as part of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars project. Moreover, the section of the Akhalkalaki-Tbilisi-Marabda railway will be reconstructed in Georgia which will increase its capacity to 15 million tons of cargo per year. It is planned to build a centre in Akhalkalaki for the transition of trains from the existing train tracks in Georgia to the European one. Peak capacity of the corridor will be 17 million tons of cargo. This figure will be at the level of one million passengers and 6.5 million tons of cargo in the initial stages.

French senators object to operating flights to and from Khojaly airport

January 31 (AzerTAc). A group of French senators have sent a letter to state news agency AzerTAc, expressing their objection to operating flights to and from Khojaly airport. "We, senators of France, are very concerned about opening of Khojaly airport", the letter says. "Armenian President Serj Sakisyan's announcement about opening of Khojaly airport just on eve of presidential elections is not casual", they note. French senators say: "The town of Khojaly, which was exposed to pains and sufferings of the 1992 war, is internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan. This information aims to draw people of Azerbaijan into the enmity, as well as, is understood as an attempt to violation of international law. It also impedes the activity of the OSCE Minsk group and slows down peace process". In their letter, members of the French Senate expressed their regret over such information "which is further straining already tense relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia." The letter was signed by Nathalie Goulet, senator from Orne, Vice-president of France-Caucuses group, Jean-Marie Bockel, senator of Haut-Rhin, former Minister, André Reichardt senator from Bas-Rhin and Jeanny Lorgeoux, senator from Loire-et-Cher.

Turkish FM: "Peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem can be only found on withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied Azerbaijani territories"

February 4 (AzerTAc). "A peaceful solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh problem, can be only found on withdrawal of Armenia from the occupied Azerbaijani territories and restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity", said Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Ministerial Meeting Preparatory to the Twelfth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference in Cairo. In his statement, Davutoglu said Turkey's vision towards the South Caucasus aims at the establishment of a long-lasting, comprehensive and sustainable peace and stability in the whole region. The minister said his country will play active role in settlement of regional problems, including the Nagorno-Karabakh one.

Azerbaijan's FM attends meeting of foreign ministers of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States

February 6 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmar Mammadyarov attended the meeting of foreign ministers of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States on the sideline of the 12th Summit of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Secretary General of the organisation Halil Akinci talked about the issues on the agenda of the organization and highlighted the works done to achieve observer status at international organisations, upcoming ministerial meeting of economy and transport as well as the meeting of Diaspora organizations of Turkic speaking countries in Baku. Ministers agreed to further strengthen activities of the organization and implement joint social projects in the region, particularly in Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister also held meetings with his counterparts from Pakistan and Kyrgyz Republic. They discussed the state of bilateral relationship and exchanged views about cooperation within international organisations.

Araz Azimov: "Azerbaijan has agreed to be as a transit country in the withdrawal of NATO cargo from Afghanistan"

February 6 (AzerTAc). "ISAF troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, a part of cargo will be withdrawn through transit corridor provided by Azerbaijan and delivered to Europe and other countries," Azerbaijan's Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told journalists. Araz Azimov said currently, the cargo delivery is still being continued to Afghanistan through Azerbaijan within the ISAF operation. He noted that Azerbaijan offered this opportunity to NATO as its contribution: "NATO member countries and partner countries are using these transit opportunities. However, ISAF troops will be withdrawn from Afghanistan by the end of 2014, a part of cargo will be withdrawn through transit corridor provided by Azerbaijan and delivered to Europe and other countries. At present this opportunity is being used. But large-size cargo withdrawal will start in the second half of 2013, because within a year - in 2014, all the troops are to be withdrawn in a prearranged manner. It is impossible to withdraw all cargo at once, because ISAF must remain in Afghanistan by end of this year and gradually hand over its mission to the local government. The government of Afghanistan has mobilized efforts to ensure its sovereign control in the country and to independently exercise control over security. This process is still underway and almost 90 percent has been implemented. We are cooperating with Afghanistan in all spheres and are ready to continue the cooperation."

Politicians across Europe condemn Armenian plans to reopen airport

February 7 (AzerTAc). AzerTAc reports with reference to the European Azerbaijan Society that a threat by Armenia to reopen Khojaly Airport in the occupied Azerbaijani region of Nagorno-Karabakh has unleashed a wave of protest from politicians across Europe and the political spectrum. French Senators, members of the German Bundestag, British Parliamentarians and members of the European Parliament have warned that the Armenian move is provocative, illegal, and threatens the already fragile peace process in the South Caucasus. Their protests follow statements from the French, Russian and American Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group, underlining Armenia's international isolation. Espen Barth Eide, Norwegian Foreign Minister, who recently visited the

region, said that: " Norway condemns carrying out flights from this airport. Armenia must not resort to provocative action." The European politicians are united in their opposition to statements made in the run-up to this month's Armenian Presidential election by President Serzh Sargsyan, suggesting that Armenia will reopen Khojaly Airport in Nagorno-Karabakh, which is an internationally recognized part of the territory of Azerbaijan. The airport has remained closed since the Armenian occupation in 1992. Armenia's plans have provoked swift and broad opposition from key politicians in France, Germany, the UK and the European Parliament: In France, four members of the Senate – Nathalie Goulet (Orne), Jean-Marie Bockel (Haut-Rhin), Andre Reichardt (Bas-Rhin) and Jeanny Lorgeoux (Loir-et-Cher) – have issued statements of concern. In Germany, six members of the Bundestag – Axel Fischer, Marco Wanderwitz, Olav Gutting, Michael Glos, Florian Hahn and State Secretary, Katherina Reiche – have also raised concerns. In the UK, politicians from all three main parties, both Houses of Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly – Christopher Pincher MP (Conservative), Mark Field MP (Conservative), Chris Heaton-Harris MP (Conservative), Stephen Hepburn MP (Labour), Lord German (Liberal Democrat), Lord Laird and Michael Copeland (Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly) – have criticized Armenia. In the European Parliament, Kristiina Ojuland Liberal MEP has issued a strong condemnation, whilst three other MEPs – Evgeni Kirilov (Socialist), Ivo Vajgl (Liberal) and Norica Nicolai (Liberal) have tabled an urgent question on the subject. Lionel Zetter, Director, The European Azerbaijan Society, said that the wave of opposition to Armenia's threat from across Western Europe should act as a wake-up call to governments that there was a real danger of a rapid escalation of tension in the area, caused by an unravelling of efforts by the international community to peacefully resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. He added that the Armenian moves demonstrated particular insensitivity, coming just weeks before the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly Massacre, when 613 of the local population were murdered by invading Armenian armed forces.

Azerbaijan successfully launches first communications satellite Azerspace-1, President Ilham Aliyev watches the launch from Azercosmos headquarters

February 8 (AzerTAc). February 8 marked one of the most remarkable events in Azerbaijan's independence history as the country put its first communications satellite, Azerspace-1, into orbit. In 2008, a presidential decree set up a national space program. The spacecraft was put into orbit from Guiana Space Center near Kourou in French Guiana at 01.36 Baku time. Azerspace-1 blasted off aboard Ariane 5 rocket made by French Arianespace company. Arianespace was founded in 1980 as the world's first commercial satellite launch company. Its shareholders include the French space agency CNES, Astrium and all European space companies, representing 10 European countries. As of October 1, 2012, the company had 315 employees, at its corporate headquarters in Evry, at the Guiana Space Center (CSG) – launch site for Ariane 5, Soyuz and Vega – and at local offices in Washington, D.C., Singapore and Tokyo. Since its creation, Arianespace has signed contracts with 80 customers worldwide carrying out 211 Ariane launches, 29 Soyuz launches (four at CSG and 25 at Baikonur via its subsidiary, Starsem) and the first launch of Vega. More than half of the commercial satellites in service today were launched by Arianespace. Based on impressive launch performance and a large backlog of orders, Arianespace is the world's leading launch company, capturing much more than 50 percent of the commercial satellite launch market year after year. With an anticipated service life of 15 years, Azerspace/Africasat-1a is based on Orbital's flight-proven GEOStar-2 platform.

Khojaly tragedy recognized as act of genocide at session of Islamic Summit Conference

February 8 (AzerTAc). Khojaly tragedy was recognized as an act of genocide and crime against humanity at the 12th session of the Islamic Summit Conference, the highest body of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, held with the participation of OIC Heads of State in Cairo, the capital of Egypt. Representative of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC) Elmaddin Mehdiyev attending the Cairo Summit said the above-mentioned decision was included into the Final Communiqué of the Summit by consensus of all member states. "Justice for Khojaly" international campaign established by ICYF-DC Chief Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue Leyla Aliyeva was welcomed by the leaders of 57 countries on the above-mentioned Communiqué's paragraph titled "Humanitarian issues". This paragraph calls "The massacre committed by Armenia's military forces in

Khojaly town in February, 1992 as a genocide and crime against humanity". The above-mentioned paragraph calls on the member-states to participate actively in the campaign's activities and make efforts to recognize this genocide on the national and international levels. "Justice for Khojaly" International Awareness Campaign was initiated by Leyla Aliyeva, ICYF-DC Chief Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue on May 8, 2008, the day when Shusha was occupied.

Americans support USAN's petition to U.S. President Barack Obama on Khojaly massacre

February 12 (AzerTAc). Two weeks earlier the U.S. Azeris Network (USAN) initiated a petition on the White House's website for commemorating and recognizing the war crime of the Khojaly Massacre, and its victims. The USAN has petitioned the Obama administration for making a statement condemning the Khojaly Massacre - the biggest war crime in ex-USSR in the second part of the 20th century, committed by the Armenian armed forces. The idea of presenting a petition, announced in 2011, was simple: to engage the public on a range of issues by creating an online platform to petition the White House. Any petition garnering 25,000 signatures within 30 days would get an official review and response, the White House said. Dubbed "We the People," the program was touted as an outgrowth of the "unprecedented level of openness in government" Obama vowed to create in a presidential memorandum issued on his first full day in office in 2009.

Now, the threshold for responding to Americans' petitions was increased from 25,000 signatures to 100,000, a reminder that government by the people can sometimes have unintended consequences. Any citizen or of the United States can announce a petition campaign and start calling Americans to support it. On the first day of posting the petition USAN through various channels called on the citizens of the United States to support the campaign, and appealed to Azeris around the world to help promote the petition. Social networks like Facebook, Tweeter, LinkedIn, members of the Justice for Khojaly movement, Azeri diaspora, youth, non-governmental organizations as well as individuals were actively involved in this campaign. The Azerbaijan State Telegraph Agency (AzerTAc) made an invaluable contribution, promoting the petition abroad. The last 18 days have shown real unity and solidarity of Azerbaijanis of the world. They also showed that average Americans - both within the country and abroad - are not indifferent to the mass killing of Azerbaijanis, which was committed 21 years ago. A large part of signatures fell on American citizens who were visiting Azerbaijan. Most of them have sent emails thanking for the information about the Khojaly tragedy and relevant petition. Some 100,000 electronic signatures were required to be collected in accordance with the petition under the "We the people" campaign, for President Barack Obama to issue a statement on the tragedy in Khojaly. According to the U.S. Constitution, following the collection of the required number of signatures the White House has to make a statement that reflects the interests of the signatories. The initiator of the campaign, co-founder of USAN Adil Bagirov, posted a message on his Facebook page thanking all Americans for taking part in this dramatic marathon and congratulating the compatriots in Azerbaijan, who actively supported the campaign. AzerTAc also congratulates the Azerbaijani people, and hopes that the U.S. President will fulfill his promises and make a historical statement condemning the Khojaly genocide committed 21 years ago by the Armenian armed forces.

Book on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict published in U.S.

February 15 (AzerTAc). A book on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been published in the United States. Titled the Right to Self-Determination in the South Caucasus: Nagorno-Karabakh in Context, was written Bahruz Balayev, an Azerbaijani living in New York. A preface to the book is written by Thomas Goltz, a professor at the University of Montana and the author of Azerbaijan Diary book, and Law Professor Siegfried Wiessner.

The book reviewed the notions of self-determination and territorial integrity in the context of the Caucasus region. The author analyzes the legal status of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and draws attention to the Soviet psychology and the legal consequences of Armenia's aggression policy.

'Turkey-Armenia borders can not be opened until the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is solved'

February 18 (AzerTAc). Turkey-Armenia borders can not be opened until the Nagorno-Karabakh problem is settled, said head of Turkish Kars municipality Nevzat Bozkus in a meeting with Azerbaijani parliamentarian Aydin Mirzazadeh. Bozkus said Turkey will open its borders only after Armenia withdraws its troops from Azerbaijan's lands.

On Turkish-Azerbaijani relations, Bozkus praised joint projects initiated by the two countries, saying Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will open huge opportunities for progress of the Kars region. In his turn, Mirzazadeh, who embarked on a visit in Kars to attend a commemorative event on the Khojaly genocide, thanked Bozkus for his support and contribution to organizing the event. The Azerbaijani MP praised the bilateral relations, describing them as "intensively developing in all fields". On the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly massacre, Kars hosted an event which gathered public figures, officials and MPs from Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Official Moscow announces settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as one of its main foreign policy priorities

February 19 (AzerTAc). Official Moscow has announced that finding a solution to the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh will be one of key priorities of the foreign policy conception. The development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation with CIS countries is the regional priority of the Russian Federation's foreign policy, says "Foreign policy conception of the Russian Federation", which has been approved by Russia's President and posted on the Foreign Ministry's website. The conception says that Russia will continue to extend cooperation with the CIS member states in ensuring mutual security, including joint efforts to combat common threats and challenges, especially international terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, transnational crime and illegal migration: "The priorities are to neutralize the threats emanating from Afghanistan and prevent the destabilization in Central Asia and the Caucasus." The conception says that Russia will continue playing an active role in the socio-diplomatic resolution of the conflicts in CIS, especially supporting the solution of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict basing on the principles shown in the joint statements issued by the Russian, French and US presidents in 2009-2011.

Petition to U.S. President Barack Obama on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict collects more than 100,000 signatures

February 19 (AzerTAc). On January 23, a petition was posted on the White House's website to pay close attention to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and recognize the occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territories. More than 100,000 had already voted for the petition on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on "We the People" page. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict became known as one of the most tragic conflicts in the 20th century and affected the destiny of millions of Azerbaijanis. As a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict 20 percent of Azerbaijan's lands, including Nagorno-Karabakh and 7 adjacent regions were occupied by Armenian military forces and more than one million Azerbaijanis IDPs. The UN Security Council ratified four resolutions (No 822, 853, 874, 884) on the Armenia's withdrawal from Azerbaijan lands. But Armenians have not yet fulfilled the resolutions. The signing date for the petition expires on February 22, but signatures are still coming. Some 100,000 electronic signatures were required to be collected in accordance with the petition under the "We the people" campaign, for President Barack Obama to issue a statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. According to the U.S. Constitution, following the collection of the required number of signatures the White House has to make a statement that reflects the interests of the signatories. AzerTAc also congratulates the Azerbaijani people, and hopes that the U.S. President will make a historical statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Czech Parliament Adopts Resolution Condemning Armenia for Committing Crime Against Humanity

February 19 (AzerTAc). The Czech Republic has become the first EU member-state to have officially condemned Armenia for the massacre of civilians in Khojaly, and have recognized this as a crime against humanity. On February 7, the Foreign Relations Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Parliament unanimously adopted a document condemning Armenia for the brutal killing of 613 defenseless civilians by the Armenian military in the occupied town of Khojaly 21 years ago. The resolution says: *"The massacre was reported by numerous news organizations and has been declared by Human Rights Watch/Helsinki to be a violation by Armenian military units of customary law regarding the treatment of civilians in war zones. It was a crime against humanity condemned by numerous governments around the world." "However, the UN Security Council resolutions 822 (1993), 853 (1993), 874 (1993) and 884 (1993), which call on Armenian military units to cease the occupation of the territory of Azerbaijan, remain unfulfilled. The UN General Assembly, the European Parliament, Council of Europe and the OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies by their respective resolutions supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, including Nagorno Karabakh."*

The last paragraph of the document says: *"The Foreign Relations Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic condemns all instances of ethnic cleansing, massacre and genocide against defenseless civilians, regardless of their place and time of their perpetration. We appeal to fulfill accepted resolutions which condemn all such kind of acts. In this context we still recognize the Khojaly massacre as a crime against humanity, which we condemn and repudiate. Hereby, we commemorate the 21st anniversary of this tragic event and offer our sincere sympathy to the people of Azerbaijan."*

Another U.S. Senator condemns Khojaly massacre

February 22 (AzerTAc). U.S. Senator for Pennsylvania, Pat Toomey, has joined some of his colleagues in condemning the Khojaly massacre. In his reply letter to US Azeris Network, Senator Toomey said hundreds of ethnic Azerbaijani civilians were killed by Armenian forces on February 25-26, 1992. "According to Human Rights Watch, the Khojaly Massacre was one of the largest losses of civilian life during the Nagorno-Karabakh War. I strongly condemn the targeted killing of unarmed civilians during war. Specifically, I understand the need in commemoration of the Khojaly Massacre," he said.

'Azerbaijan is an important member of IOTA'

February 22 (AzerTAc). "Azerbaijan is an important member of the Intra-European Organization of Tax Administrations (IOTA). I am confident that cooperation between Azerbaijan and IOTA will deepen, as we are interested in boosting it," Samuel Tannerç president of IOTA, has told AzerTAc. Tanner noted he highly appreciated Baku's hosting the 19th forum of Principal Contact Persons of the Intra-European Organization of Tax Administrations. "We discussed at the Forum plans and events for 2014, mechanisms for implementation of the strategy for 2012-2017. I hope that such events will often be held in Baku." The IOTA president praised innovations carried out by Azerbaijan's Ministry of Taxes. He added even the Tax Administration of Switzerland could learn more from the experience of Azerbaijan's Ministry of Taxes.

Baku hosts 16th meeting of CIS Information Council

February 25 (AzerTAc). The Council of Heads of State News Agencies of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS Information Council) has convened in Baku for its 16th meeting. The event was attended by heads of state news agencies of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan and Ukraine, as well as representatives of the CIS Executive Committee. Addressing the meeting director general of Azerbaijan State Telegraph Agency (AzerTAc) Aslan Aslanov said the role and importance of the CIS Information Council increases at the time of the formation of information society. He

hailed the activities of the Council, saying it plays a pivotal role in building a common information space between Europe and Asia, coordinating the work of national news agencies, and strengthening the experience exchange.

President Ilham Aliyev attends ceremony to commemorate Khojaly tragedy victims

February 26 (AzerTAc). President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev has today attended a commemorative ceremony on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. A guard of honor was lined up near the Khojaly memorial. President Ilham Aliyev put a wreath at the monument. Prime Minister Artur Rasizade, Milli Majlis Speaker Ogtay Asadov, Head of the Presidential Administration Ramiz Mehdiyev and first lady, President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Mehriban Aliyeva laid flowers at the memorial. The commemorative ceremony was attended by state and government officials, MPs, ministers, heads of committees and companies, leaders of religious confessions, as well as Khojaly massacre survivors.

Serbian Parliament includes discussion of draft resolution on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in agenda

February 26 (AzerTAc). Discussion of a draft "Resolution on observance of the international law and peaceful settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" has been included in the agenda of the Serbian Parliament. Chairman of Serbian Parliament's Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs, head of the Serbia-Azerbaijan parliamentary friendship group Vladimir Cvijan put forward a proposal to include the draft resolution in the agenda of the parliament. The resolution says that 20% of Azerbaijani territories were occupied, about 30,000 Azerbaijanis were killed, about 50,000 people were injured, about 1 million people became refugees and internally displaced persons, Nagorno Karabakh and 7 adjacent regions were occupied as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The document also covered Khojaly genocide committed on the night of February 25 to 26.

House of Peoples of Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopts resolution on recognition and respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of Republic of Azerbaijan

February 27 (AzerTAc). An official document on the aggression of Armenia against Azerbaijan and Khojaly genocide - resolution on "recognition and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan" - was adopted by an overwhelming majority at the House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on February 26, 2013, the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. This resolution has become the first document of this type in the history of the parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, diplomatic mission of Azerbaijan to the country said. This success was achieved due to not only patriots, professional diplomats but also every Azerbaijani, a logical result of the foreign policy, concrete, forward-looking and humanity policy of President Ilham Aliyev. Recognition of the Khojaly genocide is part of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation's Justice for Khojaly campaign. The Azerbaijan-Bosnia and Herzegovina relations are seriously developing in all directions including in political, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields. Both countries have the rich history of cultural ties. Discovery of manuscripts of Nizami Ganjavi and Muhammed Fuzuli in the library of Gazi Khosrov in Sarajevo is an evidence of this. As an indicator of bilateral friendly ties, reconstruction and restoration work was carried out at the initiative and instruction of President Ilham Aliyev in the Baku street in Sarajevo and the street was inaugurated on November 8, 2011.

A park of friendship between Azerbaijan and Bosnia-Herzegovina was laid on February 24, 2012 on the bank of the Dobrinja river at the initiative and organizational support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. A memorial complex reflecting genocides in Khojaly and Srebrenica was created in the park after official political consent of state and government bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The words In Memory of Victims of the Khojaly Genocide (Azerbaijan, 25-26 February 1992) were engraved in the monument. What both peoples have in common in historical point of view is that they suffered aggression and tragedies in Khojaly and Srebrenica. Creation of the complex at the initiative of Leyla Aliyeva in memory of Khojaly genocide victims in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina is important from political and

historical points of view. The adoption of the document will undoubtedly play an important role in shaping the single public opinion in Europe and lead to undertaking similar steps by parliaments of other countries.

White House responses to petitions on occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and Khojaly massacre

February 26 (AzerTAc). The White House has issued an official response to the petitions on occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh and the Khojaly massacre.

The response was forwarded to each of the signatories. "U.S. Committed to Lasting and Peaceful Settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh. While we will not be issuing a Presidential Proclamation, the United States deeply regrets the tragic losses of life in the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. It reminds us that there cannot be a military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and that only a lasting and peaceful settlement can bring stability, prosperity, and reconciliation to the region. As a Co-Chair of the Minsk Group, the United States remains firmly committed to working with all sides to achieve peace," the White House said. Earlier on January 23 a petition was posted on the White House's website to pay close attention to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and recognize the occupation of 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territories. More than 100,000 had voted for the petition on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict on "We the People" page. The petition on the Khojaly massacre which was posted on January 26 was proposed to gather attention of the world community to the genocide of the Azerbaijani people on February 25-26 in 1992. The petition calls on US administration to issue a proclamation on Khojaly victims' memory, and to assess the events as the war crimes.

French parliamentarians issue statement condemning beating of Azerbaijanis

February 27 (AzerTAc). A group of French parliamentarians and senators has issued a statement condemning the beating of the Azerbaijani Diaspora members in the French parliament. The statement says that Head of Paris Azerbaijan House Mirvari Fataliyeva and Azerbaijani student Vusal Huseynov were brutally beaten by Armenians yesterday at the event organized by Armenian organizations in the French National Assembly. "A young woman was beaten, while male student's rib was broken. Due to the occupation of Azerbaijan's territories by Armenian armed forces, Azerbaijan and Armenia have been at war since 1991. The question is the occupation of Azerbaijan's Nagorno Karabakh and seven adjacent regions, international organizations recognize them as the territories of Azerbaijan. The tension has been observed due to the anniversary of Khojaly genocide this week.

Azerbaijan's role in Southern Corridor discussed at US Congress

February 28 (AzerTAc). A discussion on Southern Corridor project was held at the US Congress within the group of the Congressional Research of Turkey. The discussions moderated by former US ambassador to Turkey and Azerbaijan Ross Wilson, brought together the country's ambassador to the US Elin Suleymanov, as well as Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Turkey Timur Soylemez, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy Diplomacy Amos Hochstein, and members of the U.S. Congress Cory Gardner and Donna F. Edwards. Donna F. Edwards stressed the importance of Azerbaijan's energy resources on ensuring the European energy security. Ambassador Elin Suleymanov briefed the event participants on the current state of energy projects, adding the project of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline as an example of successful implementation. The diplomat noted the transportation of gas reserves is a priority of Azerbaijan's energy policy. The ambassador also said Shah Deniz and TANAP projects were essential elements of the Southern Corridor. Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Turkey Timur Soylemez touched upon the energy policy of Turkey and its exemplary partnership with Azerbaijan in energy field. Amos Hochstein noted the US government attached great importance to projects South Corridor and TANAP, demonstrating the loyalty to policy of energy security of its European allies, adding that the US would continue its traditional strong partnership with Azerbaijan and Turkey.

Hearings on Khojaly genocide held in Turkish parliament

February 28 (AzerTAc). Hearings on the Khojaly genocide have been held in a plenary session in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. Speaking at the hearings, chairman of Turkey-Azerbaijan interparliamentary friendship group Necdet Unuvar described the Khojaly genocide as the most horrible massacre of the 20th century. He said that on February 26, 1992 the Armenian armed forces helped by 366th motor-infantry regiment of former USSR committed bloodshed against innocent people of Azerbaijan. Unuvar added as a result of the massacre committed in Khojaly 613 innocent civilians including 63 children, 106 women and 70 elderly people were killed, and 1,275 were taken hostage, while the fate of 150 still remained unknown. He also expressed regret that the international community had not given proper legal assessment to this crime. "We demand the punishment of those who committed the Khojaly genocide, and also the liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan." Member of parliament Sinan Ogan praised Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's statement on the Khojaly tragedy. He added a statement condemning the Khojaly massacre must also be adopted at the plenary session. Ogan said the Turkish parliament must give legal and political assessment to this genocide. He also pointed out the Turkish government should make vigorous efforts towards liberation of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Parliamentarian from the Nationalist Movement Party Mehmet Sandir said the Khojaly massacre was a real genocide, because this tragedy was committed by a decision of the Armenian government and today this country is headed by Sargsyan.

Member of parliament from the Republican People's Party Muharrem Ince called the Khojaly massacre the most terrible crime in human history. Other MPs at the hearings, including Mehmet Erdogan from the Justice and Development Party demanded the punishment of the perpetrators of the massacre. They said the international community must refrain from double standards and give legal assessment to the Khojaly tragedy. Mehmet Erdogan noted that "the fact that 20 percent of Azerbaijani territories was still under occupation testifies to the continuation of aggressive policy of Armenia". A press conference was also held in the Grand National Assembly where MP Resat Dogru said the Turkish parliament must recognize the Khojaly tragedy as genocide.

Indonesian MPs sign appeal on recognition of Khojaly genocide

March 2 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan's embassy to Indonesia, the world's biggest NGO Nahdlatul Ulama and the University of Indonesia co organized a ceremony on the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly genocide with participation of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation. The event was attended by Indonesian parliament speaker Marzuki Ali and MPs, religious figures, scientists, professors, Azerbaijani Diaspora representatives and ambassadors from OIC member countries. The aim of the event is to commemorate victims of the Khojaly massacre and facilitate implementation of the resolution of the OIC Parliamentary Union adopted in January 2012 in the Indonesian city of Palembang, calling for recognition of the Khojaly genocide. Speakers including speaker Ali noted that Armenia occupied the Azerbaijani land of Nagorno-Karabakh and committed genocide in Khojaly. The appeal on recognition of the Khojaly Genocide to be presented to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was first signed by Mr. Ali. The appeal was signed by Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama, Prof. Agil Sirac, over 30 MPs and others. It is expected to collect over 100 signatures.

Average annual economic growth rates to make 5.1% in Azerbaijan

March 4 (AzerTAc). "Average annual economic growth rate will make 5.1% in Azerbaijan in 2013-2017 including 8% in non-oil sector. In this period, the average annual inflation rate will make 4.4%," Azerbaijani Minister of Economic Development Shahin Mustafayev said at the meeting with IMF mission head for Azerbaijan Raja Almarzoqi.

According to the ministry, the meeting hosted discussions on economic reforms in Azerbaijan, macroeconomic situation in 2012, recent development trends and macroeconomic forecasts for 2013-2017.

The parties exchanged views on macroeconomic framework, development of non-oil and private sectors in Azerbaijan.

Oklahoma State Senate recognizes Khojaly massacre

March 5 (AzerTAc). The Senate of the State of Oklahoma has adopted a resolution recognizing the Khojaly massacre at its first session. The document highlights the Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the occupation of Khojaly by Armenian armed forces with the help of motor-infantry regiment of former USSR and the killing of over 600 innocent people of Khojaly. Taking into consideration the fact of tragic events and commemorating the 21st anniversary of the Khojaly massacre, the Oklahoma Senate decided to send the document to the U.S. Congress, State Department and U.S. Embassy to Azerbaijan. The resolution was introduced by senator Tom Ivester, representing District 26.

Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy launches Executive MBA program

March 6 (AzerTAc). The Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy has launched a first ever Executive MBA- a dual degree program in Azerbaijan in collaboration with Maastricht School of Management, the Netherlands. The launch ceremony was attended ADA Rector, Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Hafiz Pashayev and Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Azerbaijan Arjen Uijterlinde, Deputy Minister of Education Gulu Novruzov, and Director of MBA Program at ADA Janine Clarke. The ADA Executive MBA is a flexible, modular degree that can be completed over 24 months. Lectures take place through seven ten-day sessions roughly every three months. These sessions are conducted both in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Maastricht, the Netherlands. The first 6 modules cover the foundation and the core of the MBA. The final module focuses on one of the two specializations: Energy and Environment and International Business. Following on the seven modules, participants complete an Action Learning Project (ALP), wherein they apply their newly gained knowledge to address challenges in the relevant sector. Successful participants will receive a double degree from MsM and ADA.

President of European Commission: Re-opening of Khojaly airport will harm peace process

March 9 (AzerTAc). "Provocative actions should be prevented in order not to harm peace process. In relation to the Khojaly airport, the EU supports the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs' statements in April, 2011 and July, 2012. They expressed concern that the operation of this airport could lead to increased tensions. The conduct of flights would not help the peace process and the EU urges both sides to seek a negotiated solution," President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso said in his response letter to the European Azerbaijan Society's campaign. The European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS) is conducting campaign to draw awareness to the illegality of opening of the so-called Khojaly airport in occupied Azerbaijani territory by Armenia. According to the society, the TEAS wrote to various European stakeholders to stress the importance of the airport not being allowed to open in accordance with the Chicago Convention and civil aviation law which recognizes the airspace above the airport and surrounding occupied lands of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjacent regions of Azerbaijan. Barroso's letter reads that the EU calls upon both sides to act in accordance with international law and consistent with current practice for flights over their territory. The operation of this airport cannot be used to support any claim of a change in the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. Based upon these supportive statements, TEAS calls upon all EU and international actors to apply diplomatic pressure on newly-elected Armenian leader Serzh Sargsyan to ensure that Armenia honors its commitments to the OSCE Minsk Group and ICAO and does not seek to provoke Azerbaijan by opening an illegal airport in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

Baku to host WorldFood Azerbaijan 2013 exhibition

March 11 (AzerTAc). Azerbaijan International Exhibition of Food Industry WorldFood Azerbaijan 2013 will take place on May 22-24 in Baku.

Along with the WorldFood Azerbaijan 2013, the 7th AgriHort Azerbaijan and 2nd IPACK Caspian exhibitions will also be held. Companies from Azerbaijan, Turkey, Russia, India, Jordan, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Poland, Switzerland, Iran and Lithuania will participate in the exhibition. Ipack Caspian 2013 brings together specialists and businesses from many sectors, both manufacturers and consumers of packaging. The exhibition will be held simultaneously with Azerbaijan's biggest food industry exhibition – WorldFood Azerbaijan 2013. The 6th Azerbaijan International Agriculture Exhibition, AgriHort Azerbaijan 2012 includes interesting solutions from packaging companies from Holland, Moldova, Germany, Russia, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain. The exhibition covers areas including packaging machines, equipment for packaging and printing on the packaging, packaging materials, finished products and labeling products. WorldFood Azerbaijan 2013 trade show is dedicated to the food, beverage, food equipment and packing industry of the Azerbaijan Republic.

Azerbaijan food policy is considered to be of high importance for Azerbaijan government. This gives a lot of good opportunities for potential foreign investors and businessmen, who work in food sector. So, the exhibition World Food Azerbaijan 2013 is also very important event in establishing new business contacts in order to promote your business in Caspian region. WorldFood and WorldFood Tech Azerbaijan 2013 are organized by the British exhibition company ITE Group and their partner in Azerbaijan Iteca Caspian LLC.

Azerbaijan`s foreign trade hits \$3.5 billion

March 11 (AzerTAc). The Azerbaijani State Customs Committee (SCC) has announced results of foreign trade operations with 95 countries in January 2013.

According to the Azerbaijani State Customs Committee, the total volume of foreign trade turnover of Azerbaijan averaged \$3.5 billion. The share of state sector in export operations reached \$2.9 bln while import operations made up \$0.6 bln respectively. Surplus balance made \$2.3 bln. Exports of non-oil products made \$113,7 mln from January 2013, the Committee said. Some 84% of foreign trade operations were carried out with Italy, US, Russia, Turkey, Portugal, Thailand, India, Great Britain and Austria.

Ukraine offers Azerbaijan to refine oil at its refineries

March 12 (AzerTAc). Ukraine proposes Azerbaijan to refine oil at its refineries upon a toll manufacturing scheme, Energy Minister Eduard Stavitsky said at a meeting with his Azerbaijani counterpart Natiq Aliyev in Baku on Tuesday. It is planned to refine oil at the refinery in Odessa and Kremenchug. "We still have the pipeline, which works for the Kremenchug refinery and we can supply oil through it in case of an agreement," Stavitsky said. He said that at present, Ukraine's task is to fully restore the refining industry, and, in this regard, there is a need not only to supply oil, but to diversify it. Stavitsky said that Ukraine was ready to consider its participation in the development of infrastructural projects for energy supplies to Europe, in particular, in such projects as TANAP and AGRI.

Stavitsky also stressed that Ukraine was ready to consider the possibility of cooperation with Azerbaijan in the field of reconstruction of hydroelectric power stations, as the country has great experience in this field.

UK Deputy Foreign Minister: "We support the negotiations process"

March 15 (AzerTAc). "I know that Azerbaijan and Armenia have long-standing issue and it is very serious for Azerbaijan. The United Kingdom is not part of the negotiations on that we support the negotiations process which is led by the OSCE Minsk Group on this. We believe that there is a need for resolution of this disagreement based on Helsinki principles which include territorial integrity and also self-determination and non-use of force. And around these principles the different interest need to be reconciled and therefore, we would hope that the parties would find a way to engage on that. The peaceful resolution is a way to go," Permanent Under-Secretary and Head of the Diplomatic Service at the UK Foreign and

Commonwealth Office Simon Fraser said at the briefing in the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. "I am not aware of what the plans of Armenian government are regarding Khojaly airport, but I know that there is a concern about this," Fraser said that he raised this during his meeting in Yerevan. "What I think important is to avoid surprises or unforeseeable actions in the situation like this," he added.

KAZAKHSTAN

TeliaSonera boosts spectrum holdings in Kazakhstan

[Total Telecom](#), Jan 2, 2013 by Mary Lennighan

Nordic operator buys WiMAX operations, stake in fibre network operator to augment Kcell's portfolio. TeliaSonera late last year announced that two Kazakhstan deals worth US\$205 million will complete in early January, giving it access to additional mobile spectrum in the country.

The Sweden-based telco brokered a \$170 million deal to acquire the WiMAX assets of local company Alem Communications from owner Midas Telecom. Alem holds spectrum in the 2.5 Ghz-2.6 GHz bands, which will be handed over to Kcell, TeliaSonera's existing mobile operation in Kazakhstan, to be used for 4G mobile data services. Alem owns a WiMAX network in six cities.

The operator also agreed to pay \$35 million for an indirect minority stake of unspecified size in fibre-optic network provider KazTransCom. Kcell will also have access to that business on commercial terms.

TeliaSonera reduced its stake in Kcell to 61.9% following a December IPO in London and Kazakhstan; it made \$525 million from offering a stake of 25%. Kcell's shares were priced at \$10.50, giving the company a market cap of \$2.1 billion, a full \$1 billion less than the value implied when TeliaSonera upped its stake in early 2012.

Kcell had 12.7 million mobile subscribers at the end of September, which it claims is a market share of 47.7%.

HCMC-Kazakhstan air route opens

[Tuoitrenews](#), Jan 2, 2013

Air Astana, Kazakhstan's national flag carrier, on January 2 officially launched a direct route linking Almaty, the country's largest city, and Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam, with two flights a week, every Wednesday and Friday.

A 160-seat aircraft Boeing 757 will leave Tan Son Nhat International Airport in HCM City at 13:00 and arrive at Almaty International Airport at 19:50 Vietnamese time.

There are also two flights from Almaty to HCM City via Bangkok (Thailand) on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Vietway Aviation Services is Air Astana's official agent in Vietnam, in charge of ticket sales and promotion.

Air Astana is rated as the best airline of Kazakhstan and the only four-star one in Eastern Europe and among countries in the CIS community. HCM City is its third destination in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), after Bangkok (Thailand) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia).

Kazakhstan: New plant opened in Astana as part of larger PV project

[PV Magazine](#), Jan 4, 2013

A new PV (photovoltaic) module production plant has been opened in Kazakhstan's capital city of Astana. 60 MW are expected to be produced annually with an expansion up to 100 MW expected. The project is a part of the state program to create a silicon industry in Kazakhstan.

The KazPV project aims to produce photovoltaic modules based on Kazakhstan silicon.

The production capacity is expected to be reached in the first quarter of this year according to state-owned nuclear holding company Kazatomprom whose subsidiary Astana Solar operates the production plant. Kazatomprom states that the plant will operate "on the basis of 100% Kazakhstan silicon". 175 Kazakhstanis will be employed at the production facility, some of them receiving training abroad. Astana Solar has already signed several take-off contracts.

The construction of the plant in Astana is part of a large-scale project realized by Kazatomprom in partnership with a French consortium headed by the Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives, CEA.

The first project of the consortium, "KazPV", includes Kazatomprom, KazSilicon, Astana Solar and Kazakhstan Solar Silicon on the domestic side and CEA, CEIS, ECM Technologies and SEMCO Engineering on the French side. The French partners are providing technical support and know-how which has also enabled the Astana PV plant to set up modern automation.

The joint-project also aims to develop production lines in Ust-Kamenogorsk, in northeastern Kazakhstan. The project implementation period is up to 2028. Kazatomprom states that with this endeavour it enters into long-term strategic commitment to invest via Astana Solar into renewable energy sources and clean technologies as part of its business diversification program.

Jupiter Energy secures A\$2.85M loan to fund Kazakhstan oil well

[*Proactive Investors*](#), Jan 7, 2013 by Bevis Yeo

Jupiter Energy (ASX: JPR, AIM: JPRL) has entered into a new US\$3 million (A\$2.85 million) unsecured loan agreement with Mobile Energy to fund drilling of the J-59 well in Kazakhstan.

The loan consists of three promissory notes, each with exactly the same terms and each with a face value of \$US1 million.

These have a coupon of 15% per annum, payable quarterly in arrears, and are repayable on 31 December 2013 or at such time that Jupiter raises additional funding of at least \$20 million via debt, equity or other funding.

The J-59 well was spudded on 31 December 2012 and is mapped as up-dip and about 4 kilometres southeast of the J-58 well that is poised to undergo production testing.

Mapping is not definitive as to whether the J-59 structure is separate to, or an extension of, the J-58 structure but prospectivity of J-59 has been enhanced by the results of the logs from J-58 and the Company believes it has the potential to add a further 10 million barrels of oil.

Proactive Investors Australia is the market leader in producing news, articles and research reports on ASX "Small and Mid-cap" stocks with distribution in Australia, UK, North America and Hong Kong / China.

Largest power plant in northern Kazakhstan due for upgrade

[*Trend*](#), Jan 8, 2013 by D.Mukhtarov

The Ekibastuz-2 hydropower station JSC and Kazakh Industry and New Technologies Ministry have signed an agreement on the fulfilment of investment obligations according to which the station has to invest 46.534 billion tenge (\$1-150 tenge) in development projects in 2013 without VAT, a report of Ekibastuz-2 press service said.

'The bulk of these investments will be spent on the project 'Expansion and reconstruction of Ekibastuz-2 hydropower station with installation of power unit N3' which is worth 34.082.9 million tenge. Its implementation began in September 2012 when financing of construction work was launched by

Vnesheconombank and the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) and will end in 2015', the report said. The general construction contractor is a consortium including QUARTZ KZ LLC (consortium leader), Amur Sirius Power Equipment Corporation and Astana - Specmontazh companies.

Some 12, 451.1 million tenge will be spent on the further implementation of the reconstruction and modernisation programme of existing assets.

Samruk-Energo JSC and the Russian INTER RAO UES are the shareholders of the Ekibastuz-2 hydropower plant.

University of Northampton agrees Kazakhstan deal

[*Northampton Chronicles and Echo*](#) Jan 8, 2013 by Callum Jones

The University of Northampton's School of Education has signed a teacher training agreement with an institution in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

As part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Abay Kazakh National Pedagogical University, the oldest institution in the world's ninth largest country, academics will receive training in Northampton.

The first six Kazakh academics are expected to arrive in Northampton in January to undertake a six-month EFL programme through Northampton Business School, with a second visit in September for a further term of intensive training in contemporary methods of teaching, learning and assessment in higher education.

The University of Northampton has also earned recognition from the Kazakhstan government for its Bolashak Scholarship scheme for training higher education staff.

Scholarships have been awarded to two academics from Kazakhstan who will come to Northampton in February.

Starwood to debut in Kazakhstan

[*Business Traveler*](#), Jan 9, 2013 by Mark Caswell

Starwood Hotels and Resorts has announced its first property in Kazakhstan, with the 177-room Sheraton Aktobe scheduled to open in early 2014.

The new-build hotel will feature all-day dining and signature restaurants, as well as two bars, a ballroom, a Sheraton Shine Spa and indoor swimming pool.

The property will be located in central Aktobe, the administrative centre of Kazakhstan's province of the same name, located around 600 miles west of the capital Astana, and close to the border with Russia.

Ritz-Carlton recently announced plans to open its first property in Kazakhstan, with the 147-room Ritz-Carlton Almaty scheduled to open in late 2013 (see online news December 5, 2012).

For more information visit starwoodhotels.com.

Rixos Hotel Group opens third Kazakhstan hotel

[*Hotelier Middle East*](#), Jan 9, 2013

200-room Rixos Lake Borovoe to be first five-star hotel in the region.

Turkish luxury hotel chain Rixos has opened its third property in Kazakhstan, the 200-key Rixos Lake Borovoe.

Said to be the first five-star hotel in Borovoe, Rixos Lake Borovoe was launched by Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, president of Kazakhstan and Fettah Tamince, chairman of Rixos Group.

It comprises 37 junior suites, four presidential suites and one luxurious penthouse suite.

"We are inspired by the Kazakh nation and the culture and are very proud to have our third hotel in the country," said Rixos Hotels chairman Fettah Tamince.

"We will certainly grow a future in this country and are always ready to provide luxurious comfort, exclusive stays and unforgettable memories to all our guests offering our true Rixos hospitality," he added.

Rixos Lake Borovoe overlooks the Lake Shuchie and offers guests Turkish and Italian cuisine restaurants, a dedicated kid's club, a 2200m² wellness & spa centre and five meeting rooms with a maximum capacity of 400 people.

Business Road Map 2020 - Three - Year Review

[Foreign Ministry](#), Jan 11, 2013

Focus on entrepreneurship and job creation

In a recent interview with Prime Minister Serik Akhmetov, the Managing Director of the Damu Entrepreneurship Development Fund, Gabit Lesbekov, provided an update on the achievements of the Business Roadmap 2020 programme, which was set up in 2010 to support the stable growth of regional businesses in Kazakhstan's non-energy sector.

Established at the height of the global economic crisis, the Business Roadmap has, over its first three years, succeeded in creating 31,000 jobs and saving another 136,000, Mr Lesbekov said. Recent figures showing an increase in national business activity can in part be attributed to the success of the program in encouraging and funding entrepreneurial activity, he added.

To date, the Entrepreneurship Development Fund has paid out KZT 24.6 billion (USD 162 million) across three funding categories. The New Business Support fund has provided support to 2,136 projects, while the Reduction of Currency Risk fund has supported 183 projects; and under a new funding category created last December, Improvement of the Entrepreneurial Sector, 223 applications for funding have already been approved. The Fund has also provided subsidy agreements on 2,067 projects and credit guarantees on a further 105 projects.

Now that the Roadmap is well established, the Entrepreneurship Development Fund has defined ambitious new goals for the next stage. Mr Lesbekov said that an important new target is to raise the culture of entrepreneurship to an international level by encouraging domestic businesses to look to export markets.

Education and training was another area highlighted by Mr Lesbekov, who described the drive to develop the competency and proficiency of Kazakhstani business people, both in the financial and non-financial arenas. Educational opportunities include the senior SME management program at Nazarbayev University and the "Business Contacts" program which offers both domestic and international internship opportunities as well as support and advice to companies on forming strategic alliances and joint ventures.

Regional development remains a key priority of the Fund, which last year joined forces with the program for single-industry towns in financing 12 new entrepreneurship support centers in remote, single-industry regions. The Fund also developed a mobile business support unit, which brought consultants and Kazakh business people to the remote regions of the country, to offer free advice to local entrepreneurs. Mr Lesbekov said that the success of this service led to the launch of 15 similar mobile units in the closing weeks of 2012, which will, over the course of 2013, bring the consultancy service to the regions of Pavlodar, Kostanay, Karaganda, South Kazakhstan and Zhambyl.

Africa Eco Race-2013 Kazakhstan crews bound for Almaty

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 11, 2013

The T2 winners of Africa Eco Race-2013 and other members of Astana team will arrive to Almaty airport early in the morning on January 12, Vesti.kz reports citing the press-service of the team.

A red carpet welcome will be arranged for the winners at the VIP entrance of the International Almaty Airport at 06:00 a.m. Astana team's crew Kanat Shagirov and Aleksander Moroz driving MEBAR M440 won the Africa Eco Race-2013 race in T2 class.

Kazakhstan crews Kanat Shagirov - Aleksander Moroz and Yury Sazonov - Arslan Sakhimov were ranked 11th and 18th correspondingly in their Auto category.

Famous France's racing driver Jean Louis Schlesser became the winner of the race for the fifth time in a row in Auto category. He drove a buggy of his own making.

Sonangol Africa Eco Race-2013 rally raid started on December 27 in the French city of Saint Cyprien where the teams passed a technical certification. The participants of the rally overcame 11 stages across the territory of Morocco, Mauritania and Senegal. They finished the race at Rose Lake in Dakar.

Kazakhstan upgrades the section of road from Europe to China

[The Financial](#), Jan 12, 2013

The FINANCIAL -- The EBRD is providing US\$ 196.5 million to Kazakhstan for reconstruction and upgrading of a 62-km section of the road connecting the city of Shymkent and the Uzbek border.

As the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development said, the project is part of the upgrading of the Western Europe - Western China international transport corridor linking Europe with China. Once completed, this road will become the shortest road transport link from the Central Asian countries to Europe. The whole corridor project is being financed by several IFIs including the EBRD, the World Bank, ADB (Asian Development Bank) and IDB (Islamic Development Bank).

The overall length of the road between the Kazakh city of Shymkent and the border with Uzbekistan is 99 km. The EBRD will finance reconstruction of the 62 km southerly section of this road connecting with the Uzbek border and the remaining 37 km section to the outskirts of the city of Shymkent will be financed by the ADB.

The EBRD loan will be provided to the Government of Kazakhstan. The works will be implemented by the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country in the world, so roads are extremely important for the country. Economy, trade and integration depend on good road links.

"The EBRD has funded a number of transport projects in Kazakhstan to help the country modernize its infrastructure in line with the growing economy. But the road from Shymkent to Uzbek border also has a symbolic and regional meaning. For the last three thousand years merchants from Europe to China travelled through Kazakhstan along the Silk Road. Today, the country aims to modernise the same routes to improve trade and regional integration," said Thomas Maier, EBRD Managing Director for Infrastructure.

Jackie Chan may be starring in Olympians Kazakhstan TV series

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 14, 2013

Famous Hollywood actor Jackie Chan might be starring in Kazakhstan TV series Olympians, Tengrinews.kz reports, referring to Peter Berman, director of the project.

The TV series will feature a story of three friends: Ilya, Sasha and Serik. Kazakhstan Olympic champions Ilya Ilyin, Alexandre Vinokourov and Serik Sapiyev are Berman's inspiration for three friends. Only Ilya Ilyin has agreed to be filmed in the movie. "He is a very serious guy and he said that he would take some acting lessons before the shooting," Berman added. It is likely that one of Alexandre Vinokourov's sons might be playing his father in the first series of the movie.

The director hopes that two or three famous world actors will participate in the Kazakhstan series. According to Berman, he is negotiating with Jackie Chan at present; however, it comes expensive to invite him to the movie and the authors of the series are looking for sponsors.

According to the plot of the series all three characters are sport boarding school boys. Berman promised to show Vinokourov's story (he will appear as Vinogradov in the movie) as he won his first race being a child.

Serik Sapiyev's story will be a fiction tale about the future champion who was injured in a street fight and became disabled. His grandmother, who was a healer, cured him and passed some powers to him.

According to the plot Sapiyev was learning martial arts from a Chinese master, and it is expected that Jackie Chan will play this master.

The shooting is due to start in 2013. Earlier Berman said that George Clooney and Gerard Depardieu might participate in the movie as well. However, the negotiations with the actors were unsuccessful.

Kazakhstan significantly increases funding for NGOs

[Trend](#), Jan 15, 2013 by D.Mukhtarov

Financing NGOs from the republican and local budgets increased by more than 20 times in Kazakhstan during the years of independence, the Kazakh president's adviser Yermukhamet Yertysbayev said today.

"Financing NGOs from the republican and local budgets increased by more than 20 times in Kazakhstan during the years of independence," Yertysbayev said at the first organizational meeting of the Working Group on the Human Dimension, held in the Foreign Ministry today.

Funding has increased from \$500,000 to \$10 million since 2006, Yertysbayev told Trend over phone today.

He stressed that the number of NGOs registered in Kazakhstan has been recently increased. This testifies to the continued strengthening and qualitative development of the civil society in our country. The relevance of human rights issues, as well as the positive experience of the OSCE Advisory Council on the Human Dimension's activity under the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, operating during the year of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the organization, caused establishing a working group of the Human Dimension as a platform for dialogue between the government bodies and civil society.

The working group's activity could also help Kazakhstan as part of the UN Human Rights Council, which has begun since January 1, 2013

The representatives of the Kazakh state agencies, parliament and political parties, Kazakh NGOs and international human rights organizations, accredited in Kazakhstan, attended today's meeting.

Kazakhstan's investments abroad exceeded \$155.3 billion

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 15, 2013

Based on the data provided by the National Bank of Kazakhstan, Kapital.kz presented information on major investor countries and Kazakh investments destinations.

As of September 30, 2012, the Netherlands were responsible for 1/3 of all the investments into the Kazakh economy (\$49 billion), followed by the UK (\$24.7 billion) and China (\$18.2 billion). The top ten also includes the USA (\$17.9 billion), France (\$8.6 billion), Virgin Islands (\$6.3 billion), Russia (\$5.3 billion), Japan (\$5.1 billion), Switzerland (\$3.9 billion) and Austria (\$2.5 billion).

The overall investments into the Kazakh economy as of the end of September 2012 stood at \$177.7 billion.

As for Kazakhstan's investments abroad, over 29% (\$45.6 billion) has been injected into the USA, with \$16.8 billion invested into the UK, \$16.2 billion into the Netherlands, \$8 billion into Russia, \$7.6 billion into Germany, \$6.3 billion into France, \$5.3 billion into Japan, \$3.4 billion into Austria, \$3.3 billion into Switzerland, and \$3.1 billion into Canada.

As of the end of September 2012, the overall Kazakhstan's investments abroad exceeded \$155.3 billion.

Kazakhstan to launch a State-run Company to manage EXPO-2017

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 15, 2013

Kazakhstan will launch a special State-run Company to manage the EXPO-2017, a Tengrinews.kz journalist reports.

"Today we are considering a draft legislation on a special national company to manage the event (...) the company will be responsible for all the prep works", Erbolat Dossayev, the country's Minister for Economic Development and Trade, said when speaking at a government sitting January 15.

According to him, the major goal of the planned company among other things would be regulation of the actual design and construction processes.

Besides, he informed that the Astana Mayor Office would launch a special Council to oversee infrastructure development in the city.

According to him, the special Fund to Support EXPO-2017 requires 5 million Euro to have the tasks accomplished. The figure has been coordinated with the country's Foreign Ministry.

The Minister reminded that after Astana won the bid for hosting EXPO-2017 back in November 2011, Kazakhstan launched a State Committee for Preparations for the Exhibition presided over by the country's PM Serik Akhmetov.

Following the presentation, the Government passed the draft legislation.

In his turn, PM Serik Akhmetov said that a number of specific suggestions on defining land plots for the exhibition facilities would be presented to President Nazarbayev shortly.

Expo 2017 is the next scheduled International Exposition after Expo 2015 and will be the first of its type since Expo 2012. The expos in 2010, 2015, 2020 and every 5 years thereafter are considered "universal expos" by the Bureau of International Expositions (BIE) and the 2017 event will be one of the "recognized" expos with a specialized theme that alternate with the "universal expos" (Kazakhstan's theme will be future energy).

Tengrinews.kz reported earlier, citing Ms. Gaukhar Beisseyeva, Vice Head of the Foreign Ministry's External Economic Policy Department, that Kazakhstan plans to earmark \$1.5 billion to construct facilities accommodating the EXPO-2017.

Kazakhstan initiates Green Bridge programme

[Kazakh TV](#), Jan 15, 2013

The Austrian Vice Minister of Economy Christian Schonbauer believes that the Kazakhstan-2050 strategy is very important for a systematic preparation for the introduction of new green technologies.

He says that when humanity faces pollution and climate change, it is necessary to undertake urgent measures to decrease the influence of industrial production on the economy, and at the same time, decrease greenhouse gas emissions. The Austrian politician emphasized that the green economy should be based on energy saving and new alternative energy sources.

At the end of 2012, Vienna hosted the Global South-South Development international conference designed to unite the innovative solutions of developing countries. The Minister of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan Nurlan Kapparov was one of the participants in the forum, organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. In his speech he noted the relevance of green development for Kazakhstan as the only alternative to the depletion of ecological systems and mitigation of climate change. The green bridge initiative is aimed at uniting the efforts of different states, international organizations and businesses.

Nurlan KAPPAROV, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF KAZAKHSTAN:

-The green bridge initiative announced by our President at the 66th session of the UN General Assembly was supported by the Rio +20 summit and was included into its final document. Additionally, the President announced that it was high time Kazakhstan had switched to the green economy. Therefore, he asked the government to develop a strategy of shifting to it. This strategy will involve logical steps we are undertaking now to switch to the green economy both in Kazakhstan and in the whole region.

European politicians and heads of international organizations, in particular, the UNIDO General Director Kandeh Yumkella, supported the forward-looking solution of the President of Kazakhstan proposing switching to the green economy. He also confirmed their readiness to be partners in the Green Bridge programme.

German politicians about Kazakhstan-2050 strategy

[Kazakh TV](#), Jan 17, 2013

German diplomats are discussing the Kazakhstan-2050 development strategy presented by the Kazakhstan president in his address to the nation.

The Kazakhstan embassy in Germany has hosted scientific conference, which involved over 100 guests, including public and political figures, representatives of business circles of Germany and members of the Kazakh expatriate community.

Lothar THEODOR LEMPER, PRESIDENT, OTTO BENECKE FOUNDATION, says:

- Constant development makes Kazakhstan the country with the respected and exemplary state model, which is manifested in the economic and social integration. Kazakhstan is compared favourably with other states due to the spirit of optimism. The speech of the president demonstrates assurance in overcoming existing problems. His speech is the example of bravery. I have visited Kazakhstan for several times and felt the pride of the population for achievements of the country, which gave brilliant effect. Efforts in the area of education, science and culture have been recognized at the global level. It is an example of the high state art.

The political course of Kazakhstan, defined by its president Nursultan Nazarbayev is the ideal formula, when the right management and weighted politics proves economic stability and allows the country gaining global recognition. The fact that Astana will host the EXPO-2017 international exhibition proves it.

Friedhelm GEHRMANN, DIRECTOR, STEINBEIS UNIVERSITY BERLIN, says:

- It is obvious that this global event will assist in the further modernization of the country, especially as the «Energy of the future» will become the main topic of this exhibition. In the foreign policy of the president Nazarbayev Kazakhstan is the country free from nuclear weapon and in its domestic policy Kazakhstan is the guarantee of peace and stability conditioned by the wise integration policy. The president of Kazakhstan creates all conditions for the growth in the wellbeing of the population and boosts the accelerated industrial and innovative development programme. I support the aspiration of Kazakhstan to enter list of 30 most industrially developed countries and I am sure they will succeed.

After the end of the conference German guests expressed friendly support to Kazakhstan in implementation of tasks announced in the address of the president to the nation.

Kazakhstan may join WTO this year: WTO chief Lamy

[Reuters](#), Jan 17, 2013

MOSCOW, (Reuters) - Kazakhstan may join the World Trade Organisation this year, WTO director general Pascal Lamy said on Thursday.

"Kazakhstan is at an advanced stage of its accession negotiation. My guess is that this could be doable this year," he told reporters on the sidelines of the Gaidar Forum, an economic conference in Moscow.

Kazakhstan applied to join the WTO in 1996. The oil-rich Central Asian state is one of the few countries in the world that remains outside the international trading club. Membership is expected to boost the Kazakh economy by opening it to foreign investors.

Kazakhstan's neighbor Russia was admitted to the WTO last August after 18 years of negotiations.

Lamy played down suggestions that Russia's WTO membership was not proceeding smoothly, following signs over recent months of possible trade disputes with the European Union, Russia's major trading partner.

"We don't judge results of a WTO accession that lasted 18 years in six months. Time will say whether or not it worked," he said.

(Reporting by Maya Dyakina; Writing by Jason Bush; Editing by Robin Pomeroy)

EXPO-2017: Kazakhstan to Emerge as Favorite Destination for World Tourists and Entrepreneurs

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 17, 2013

Kazakhstan Ministry of Environmental Protection will become the main body for coordination of the EXPO-2017 operations, Tengrinews.kz reports referring to Kazakhstan President's official website citing Nursultan Nazarbayev as saying this at the meeting with Kazakhstan Environmental Protection Minister Nurlan Kapparov.

"Kazakhstan President stressed that the Ministry has to become one of the main player coordinating, identifying and attracting the interested parties into generation of suggestions for implementation the EXPO-2017 ideas," the message states.

The Minister suggested to build all kinds of green economy facilities in the exhibition area: smart power networks and buildings with renewable energy sources. The platform will be equipped with electric cars and other important elements complying with the EXPO's subject - The Energy of Future - to achieve a greater effect for the use of green economy.

President Nazarbayev stressed the importance of working out a single concept of holding and promotion of the global fair.

"Construction of such a unique highly-technological project is a good opportunity to make a big jump in the technological development of the country. The territory of the global fair will become an achievements platform of the whole Kazakhstan," Nursultan Nazarbayev said.

Kazakhstan to Become One of the 30 Most Developed Countries in the World

[Foreign Ministry](#), Jan 18, 2013

On January 18 President Nazarbayev held his annual meeting with Heads of foreign diplomatic missions accredited in Kazakhstan.

In his remarks, the President noted that 2012 was one of the most successful years in the foreign policy history of Kazakhstan. The country significantly strengthened its positions in the region and in the world, he said. At the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit Kazakhstan was de-facto recognized as the leader of the non-proliferation movement. The Customs Union and the Single Economic Space worked to full effect.

2012 also marked the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's diplomatic relations with most countries in the world and gave a new impulse to the development of bilateral cooperation with many international partners.

Summing up the results of Kazakhstan's foreign policy activities in 2012, the President said that he had made almost 20 foreign visits while almost 15 leaders had visited Kazakhstan. He met with the leaders of the US, China, Russia, France, Britain, Germany, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates and a number of other countries.

The President emphasized that Kazakhstan's foreign policy successes would be inconceivable without peace and harmony in the country's society as well as economic growth and the improvement of living standards.

He went on to outline the aims and context of Strategy 2050, noting that it reflects a completely different type of challenges and threats compared to those at the turn of the century. It will be implemented on innovative economic and social principles of development, he said. He drew attention to the ambitious goal he had set for Kazakhstan to become one of the 30 most developed countries in the world.

Describing the strategic goals and tasks for the coming decades, the President spoke about the start of work to create a Regional Center for Multilateral Diplomacy in Almaty. He noted the involvement already of 16 organizations, including specialized UN structures, with regional and sub-regional status. He also spoke about the work to create Kazakhstan's International Development Agency (KAZAID). It will provide technical assistance to Kazakhstan's neighbours and other states.

The President went on to describe Kazakhstan's vision of a new format for global dialogue, the G-Global. He noted that it has five principles for structuring today's world: evolution and renunciation of revolutionary change; fairness, equality and consensus; global tolerance and trust: global transparency and constructive multipolarity. On this basis, it will be possible to find solutions to most global problems, the President said. He also referred to his initiative to convene an anti-crisis conference to draw up a UN global anti-crisis plan in response to the global financial crisis.

President Nazarbayev called on all heads of diplomatic missions to bring to the attention of world leaders his appeal to unify efforts to create a just world order free from wars and mutual suspicion.

Russian Ambassador, Mikhail Bocharnikov, the longest-serving foreign Ambassador to Kazakhstan, replied on behalf of the foreign heads of mission. "Looking back on 2012, it is impossible not to see the important stages in Kazakhstan's life and its achievements that are a source of pleasure for the whole of Kazakhstan's society and have also strengthened the country's international prestige. A clear example of Kazakhstan's success was the securing of the right to host the specialized exhibition EXPO-2017. For diplomats it is clear that despite the complicated financial-economic situation in the world, Kazakhstan's significant positive dynamic of development has been preserved", he said.

Concluding the meeting, President Nazarbayev said that the dynamic for the development of bilateral relations with each country and international organizations depended on the quality and activeness of the work of foreign missions, and wished them luck in their work.

Airbus Military delivers first two C295s to Kazakhstan

[Airbus Military Press Release](#) Jan 18, 2013

Kazakhstan has taken delivery of the first two C295 transport aircraft that it ordered last year, marking Airbus Military's entry into the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) regional market.

The aircraft, the first two on firm contract and a further six on options to be progressively confirmed in the coming years, were formally handed over in Sevilla before the ferry flights, via Astana, to Almaty, where they will be based.

They were earlier technically accepted in Seville by a combined team of Kazspetsexport, the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defence, and the Kazakhstan Air Forces.

Both aircraft will be used in support of transport missions throughout the nation's vast territory. The purchase contract additionally covers the related service support package for spare parts and ground support equipment.

Airbus Military senior vice-president commercial, Antonio Rodríguez-Barberán, said: "We greatly appreciate the high level of professionalism and strong commitment shown by the relevant Kazakh institutions in ensuring the smooth and mutually rewarding execution of this agreement. It is a great pleasure to welcome the Air Forces of Kazakhstan into the worldwide family of C295 operators and we are committed to providing the required level of support for our new customer for many years to come..."

Reshuffle Marks Transition to Gradual Change

[Astana Times](#), Jan 18, 2013 by Daniyar Ashimbayev

First, it should be noted that the current reorganization of the government and related personnel changes demonstrate the new style of presidential politics. Its essence lies in the rejection of the "revolutionary change" and demonstrates the transition to a gradual restructuring of the governmental apparatus.

The change of government in Kazakhstan in the fall of 2012 was surprisingly smooth and was not accompanied by an upheaval of ministries and their responsibilities. It was obvious that the new prime minister, Serik Akhmetov, with the support of the head of state, chose to work some time with the old structure and team in order to understand shortcomings and to find a new formula. This is what happened now.

A new Ministry of Regional Development was established, which aims to strengthen the control of the centre for the implementation of economic and administrative reforms in the country. As is known, for various reasons, 14 Kazakh regions are at quite different levels of economic and social development. For comparison, according to the government, the difference in per capita income between certain regions is almost four times!

Coordination of the work aimed at addressing these and other issues will be conducted by a new ministry headed by experienced civil servant Bakhytzhan Sagintayev, who will also hold the rank of the first deputy prime minister of the country. Powers of the Ministry of Economy (Minister – Yerbolat Dossayev) and the Ministry of the Environment (minister – Nurlan Kapparov) were strengthened. Both officials are experienced managers, with know-how both in government and in the business.

The appointment of Marat Tazhin as Secretary of State seems to be to strengthen the level of implementation of the new state programme “Kazakhstan-2050”. Tazhin repeatedly served as Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration and Secretary of the Security Council. Nevertheless, he is known primarily as a leading strategist of the presidential team. Moreover, his new role suggests that Nursultan Nazarbayev intends to seriously raise the level of implementation of his recently announced programme.

With regards to the former Deputy Prime Minister Krymbek Kusherbayev and former Secretary of State Mukhtar Kul-Muhammed, their new positions can be considered a demotion in name only. Kusherbayev now heads the Kyzyl Orda region, a region with great potential, including a major oil production, but one which is in the doldrums, and Kul-Muhammed again became Minister of Culture and Information, which has an important role in the implementation of the new political course. It comes as a new model for the formation of Kazakhstan patriotism, and also the transfer of the Kazakh language to the Latin script. It appears that President Nursultan Nazarbayev has dropped and threw his old allies on a new front, where their expertise will be extremely demanded.

The author is a political scientist and the editor and publisher of Who Is Who in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan's Emir Baigazin movie got Berlinale World Cinema Fund prize

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 18, 2013

Kazakhstan-made movie Harmony Lessons directed by Emir Baigazin won a Berlinale World Cinema Fund Prize, Tengrinews.kz reports, citing Kazakhfilm press-service.

The project was selected out of 122 applications from 43 countries and became the first Kazakhstan's project to be supported by the Fund. Emir Baigazin, scriptwriter and director of the movie, is a participant of the Asian Film Academy (Busan International Film Festival) and Berlinale Talent Campus (International Berlinale Film Festival). His shorts won different prizes in International Film Festivals.

Berlinale World Cinema Fund Award is not the first international award that was received by the movie. Harmony Lessons got the main prize of the Work-in-Progress program at the 18th International Sarajevo Film Festival when it was only at production stage. Post Republic company, a leader in German postproduction, undertook part of the movie's expenses at its cutting and editing stage and invited filmmaker Emir Baigazin and chief cameraman Aziz Zhambakiyev to continue their work in Berlin.

Berlinale World Cinema Fund was established in 2004 by Berlinale Film Festival to support the films that stand out with an unconventional aesthetic approach, that tell powerful stories and transmit an authentic image of their cultural roots. The Fund awards several projects that are in the stage of production with money prizes annually. The movies from all over the world that were awarded in famous International Film Festivals got the prizes over last years. They were Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives, directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul that got The Palme d'Or of the Cannes Film Festival in 2010 and The Milk of Sorrow by Claudia Llosa that got The Golden Bear of the Berlinale Film Festival in 2009.

Kazakhstan to establish Agency for International Development

[Trend](#), Jan 21, 2013 by D.Mukhtarov

An Agency for International Development (KAZAID) will be established by a decision of President Nursultan Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan, website of Akorda reported.

"Now work is underway to establish an agency for international development (KAZAID). It will provide technical assistance to our neighbors and other countries," President Nazarbayev said.

He also said that Kazakhstan launched formation of Regional Center of Multilateral Diplomacy in Almaty. Sixteen representatives of organizations, programs, funds and specialized agencies of the UN with regional and sub-regional status will function in the center.

Kazakhstan will use German technologies to build wind power plants

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 21, 2013

Samruk Green Energy and KazAgroFinance signed an agreement on joint sales of small wind generators, Tengrinews.kz reports citing the company's press-service.

"On January 10, 2013, Samruk Green Energy (100-percent owned by Samruk-Energy) and KazAgroFinance signed an agreement on intentions of joint sales of small wind generators to be produced by Samruk Green Energy jointly with German company KD Stahl- und Maschinenbau in Innovative Technologies Park free economic zone," the message states.

The wind generators will have different capacities: from 300W to 7kW. Their main advantage lays in production of energy at small wind speeds (from 2m/sec), regardless of its direction.

Samruk-Energy was established in May 2007. It is part of Samruk-Kazyna National Welfare Fund. The company's activities include production, distribution and sales of electric and heat energy, as well as production of power-generating coal.

The total capacity of the company's power stations is 7,970.9MW or 40.3 percent of the total capacity of the power stations of Kazakhstan's Common Energy System.

Japanese Ministop brand taps into Kazakhstan, the regional economic hub

[Tengrinews](#), Jan 23, 2013

International network of combo stores under Ministop Japanese brand has entered the Kazakhstan market, Tengrinews.kz reports. The first combo store opened in Almaty on January 18.

In 2012 Kazakhstan company RTS Ltd and two Japanese companies established a joint venture. The partners signed an franchising agreement to Ministop brand to Kazakhstan.

According to chairman of RTS-MINISTOP Bayan Kospenbetova, the company has long-term plans. Another 15 combo-stores will open in Almaty before the end of 2013 and their number will reach 500 stores in Kazakhstan in 15 years. Astana will be the next city to get the stores.

According to Ministop President Nobuyuki Abe, Kazakhstan is the most promising country for development of combo-stores in Central Asia. "Kazakhstan citizens have quite good average earnings. The country has a bright future, both economically and politically," Abe said.

He added that the brand may spill into other Central Asian countries, possibly to Uzbekistan. "But we chose Kazakhstan as a "testing ground" for business development. 100 stores will appear in Almaty in 2-3 years," Abe said.

Kospenbetova said that the total investments related to the project made around \$10 million. "The costs are quite high. Around 300 million tenge (\$2 million) have already been invested so far. The company now has 25 full-time and 20 part-time employees, as well as around 10 consultants from Japan," she said.

Ministop stores will consist of an office, kitchen for fast food, cafeteria and toilet. The store will be equipped with ATM machines and terminals for utility and other payments. The store will sell food, tobacco, household items, magazines and newspapers. They will also have a Japanese goods corner.

There are currently over 4,000 Ministop stores around the world. Around a half of them are located in Japan. The company has branches in South Korea, China, Philippines and Vietnam.

Kazakhstan ready to host next round of Iran-P5+1 talks: FM

[Press TV](#), Jan 26, 2013

We said long ago that we were ready to contribute to a peaceful solution to the Iranian crisis."

Kazakh Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov expresses his country's readiness to host the next round of talks between Iran and six major world powers (P5+1) over outstanding issues pertaining to Tehran's nuclear energy program.

"We said long ago that we were ready to contribute to a peaceful solution to the Iranian crisis," Idrissov said on Friday.

The Kazakh minister, who is on an official two-day visit to Moscow, emphasized that his country opposes an escalation of tension between Iran and the P5+1 - Russia, China, France, Britain, the US and Germany.

He noted that Kazakhstan is ready to host nuclear talks in the cities of Astana and Almaty.

On Friday, European Union deputy foreign policy chief Helga Schmid, who represents the P5+1, called for the postponement of talks with Iran to February, saying the six major world powers are not ready to negotiate with the Islamic Republic this month.

Iran and the P5+1 have held several rounds of talks with a focus on Iran's nuclear energy program. The last round of negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 was held in Moscow in June 2012.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies have repeatedly accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran rejects the allegations, arguing that as a committed signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is entitled to develop and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Foreign drug companies enter Kazakhstan

[New Europe Online](#), Feb 3, 2013

Noting the growing increase on multinationals in the Kazakh pharmaceuticals sector, Kazakh officials were recently seen holding consultations with foreign firms to persuade them to set up in the country and further expedite the process of soaring multinationals, Gazeta.kz reported. As noted, in final months of 2012 several new pharmaceutical sector deals were signed off entailing more international companies to a market where three of the top five firms are now under the charge of foreign investors.

It was recalled that during an October visit of Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev to the Czech Republic, Prague-based Favea Europe signed an agreement with Romat, one of Kazakhstan's largest drug makers. Romat plans to build two new modern pharmaceutical production facilities in the northern towns of Pavlodar and Semey with an investment of €37 million.

Last 2012 Alma Pharma and Turkey's Abdi Ibrahim Global Pharm announced plans to build a \$60 million pharmaceuticals factory in the country. In September 2011, a deal was signed which was considered as the most important one. In the aforesaid year, Poland's Polpharma acquired Kazakhstan's largest pharmaceuticals company Chimpharm, and announced plans to invest \$85 million in the Shymkent-based company that included the construction of a new factory. Chimpharm and Nobel, two of Kazakhstan's top six drug companies together account for up to 90% of all pharmaceuticals produced in the country.

Several other international drug giants were also seen opening offices in Kazakhstan. Last year, GlaxoSmithKline, signed a cooperation agreement with the government that will involve the local production of the company's vaccines and drugs. The steep increase in demand for pharmaceuticals due to the growing middle class and increasingly sophisticated medical system, has led to a corresponding rise in imports. Astana launched a new strategy for the sector, aimed at increasing domestic production to supply 50% of the drugs consumed within Kazakhstan by 2014.

This is part of the government's general policy of diversifying the economy, but also plans to prevent state healthcare costs from spiraling, since the state accounts for around 45% of pharmaceutical purchases. It was reported that the aim of government to boost domestic pharmaceutical production to 50% of total demand by 2014 seemed bit unrealistic and over-ambitious. Research from Kazakhstan's agency for competition protection, which was released in December showed that Kazakhstan has various obstacles to competition in pharmaceutical and medical markets.

The agency is defining proposals for removing barriers to entry in the pharmaceuticals and related sectors. Kavita Rainova, an analyst at HIS said that in late 2012 domestic production in Kazakhstan is estimated to account for around 15% of the market in value terms." Rainova said that the figure stands below the 50% domestic share target by 2014, which may potentially lead the government to consider revising the timeframe.

Iran says it will resume nuclear talks in Kazakhstan

[CNN](#), Feb 4, 2013 From Atika Shubert - Hopeful news for Iranian nuclear talks

Munich, Germany (CNN) -- Iran will give "positive consideration" to a renewed prospect of one-on-one talks with the United States on its nuclear program, its foreign minister said Sunday.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said a new round of talks between Iran and the five permanent U.N. Security Council members, plus Germany, would be held February 25 in Kazakhstan. Salehi spoke on the last day of the 49th Munich Security Conference, a day after U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said the Obama administration remains willing to hold direct talks with the Islamic Republic.

"That offer stands, but it must be real and tangible, and there has to be an agenda that they're prepared to speak to," Biden said. "We are not just prepared to do it for the exercise."

The United States and Iran haven't had diplomatic relations since 1980. But U.S. and Iranian diplomats had occasional talks in Baghdad during the eight-year American war in Iraq, and U.S. President Barack Obama held out the prospect of talks with Iran when he came into office in 2009.

Salehi noted Sunday that both Biden and the new secretary of state, John Kerry, have mentioned the possibility of talks with Iran in recent days, and "We take these statements with positive consideration."

Salehi said Iran has "no red line" for bilateral talks and is ready for negotiations over its nuclear program. But he added, "We have to make sure this time -- and this I think is very fair of us -- to make sure the other side this time comes with an authentic intention, with a fair and real intention, to resolve the issue." "

Iran has defied international demands that it halt its production of enriched uranium, which it insists is to be used for civilian nuclear power and research reactors. But the United States and Israel have accused Iran of seeking the capability to produce nuclear weapons, and the International Atomic Energy Agency says it can no longer verify that Iran's nuclear program is strictly peaceful.

Iran's refusal to shut down its uranium enrichment plants has led to tougher and tougher economic sanctions that have crippled its economy. An oil embargo and banking restrictions have crashed the Iranian currency, the rial. New U.S. sanctions imposed in January targeted a handful of companies and individuals that Washington says are providing materials and technology to Tehran's nuclear program.

Biden said Saturday that U.S. policy "is to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon," and said the clerical leadership in Tehran "need not sentence their people to economic deprivation and international isolation."

"There is still time, there is still space for diplomacy -- backed by pressure -- to succeed," he said. "The ball is in the government of Iran's court, and it's well past time for Tehran to adopt a serious, good-faith approach to negotiations with the P-5 plus 1."

During his confirmation hearing last week, Kerry told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that if Iran can prove its nuclear work is peaceful, "That's what we're seeking."

And Obama's nominee for secretary of defense, Chuck Hagel, has in the past called for direct talks with Iran. It was a point of contention during his confirmation hearing, with some Republicans accusing him of being too soft on Iran.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, has urged the United States -- his country's leading ally -- to set a "red line" for nuclear development and make clear that if Iran crosses that line, it would risk war. Netanyahu, who won a new mandate in January, said Sunday that the job of preventing a nuclear-armed Iran "is becoming more complex, since Iran is equipping itself with cutting-edge centrifuges that shorten the time of enrichment. We must not accept this process."

CNN's Chelsea J. Carter and Mariano Castillo contributed to this report.

Government of Kazakhstan targets 1,040MW of renewable energy by 2020

[PV Tech](#), Feb 6, 2013 by Julia Chan

The government of Kazakhstan has set a target to generate 1,040 MW of renewable energy by 2020.

The government has revealed that it will reach this target by developing four solar plants, 13 wind power plants and 14 hydropower plants. Although no further details were unveiled by the government, media reports suggest the solar plants would have a total capacity of 77MW.

The renewable energy target is part of the government's 2012-2013 action plan on the development of alternative and renewable energy sources.

Commenting on the development of Kazakhstan's "green economy", Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industry and New technologies of Kazakhstan Asset Issekeshev said: "This task requires some specific measures taking into account environmental, economic and social aspects. In this regard, some measures have already been developed and some measures on substantial development of the fuel and energy complex of Kazakhstan still have to be developed."

Issekeshev also revealed that 450 million kWh of renewable energy was produced in 2012 in Kazakhstan which was up by 6% compared with the previous year.

At the 12th OIC Summit, Kazakhstan Calls for Peace, Progress and Dialogue

[Kazakh Foreign Ministry](#), Feb 7, 2013

On February 6-7, Kazakhstan's delegation led by Erlan Idrissov, Minister of Foreign Affairs, attended the 12th Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Cairo, Egypt.

At working sessions of the Summit, participants discussed a wide range of topical issues for the Islamic world. Special attention was drawn towards the Palestinian issue, conflicts in the OIC countries, especially in Mali and Syria, and related humanitarian situation in these regions. The forum participants also looked at increasing the involvement of the OIC countries within scientific, technological, economic, educational, cultural and social spheres in order to accomplish 10 years-long OIC Action Plan, which was adopted in 2005.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Erlan Idrissov delivered his speech, stating Kazakhstan's position on a number of relevant issues in the Islamic world. According to the Minister, the Islamic community needs to resolve the fundamental problems related to the sustaining peace, progress and satisfying the needs of ordinary people.

Erlan Idrissov emphasized that the basic condition of creating a new development strategy is stability. In this context, he highlighted the importance of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's initiative to

convene the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. The Conference has become a significant dialogue platform, which has united 24 countries with total population of more than 3 billion.

Regarding Kazakhstan's development and modernization prospects, Foreign Minister said that President Nazarbayev's new political course, stated in the "Kazakhstan 2050" Strategy sets a goal to join 30 most developed countries in the world and reflects Kazakhstan's intention to address the new challenges and opportunities.

In his speech, the Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out that Kazakhstan considers the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as a common collective voice of the Muslim world, and one of the key mechanisms of international security and cooperation. In this regard, he reconfirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to the consistent development of a multilateral cooperation with the brotherly Muslim countries.

Concluding the Summit, the participants adopted the final communiqué. The document has reflected support for adoption of the Universal Declaration of a Nuclear-Free World, creation of zones free of nuclear weapons in Central Asia, establishment and headquartering the OIC Food Security Institution in Astana, the Action Plan for the OIC cooperation with the Central Asian region, and the 10th anniversary of the Congress of World and Traditional Religions.

In addition, the Summit participants called for institutionalization of the OIC participation in G-20, VI Astana Economic Forum, and active participation of the OIC Member States in the EXPO-2017 in Astana.

Kazakhstan's participation in this major international forum reflects the consistent policy aimed at extending and diversification of its cooperation with the Islamic world. This was highlighted in a dynamic and successful chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the OIC in 2011-2012. As a result of the chairmanship Kazakhstan has become generally recognized and strengthened its credibility in the Islamic world. It is no accident that in the Cairo Summit, participants repeatedly referred to the OIC decision taken during Kazakhstan's chairmanship.

During the Summit, the Kazakh Foreign Minister held a number of bilateral meetings, including his meeting with the Secretary General of the OIC Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the foreign ministers of Egypt, Afghanistan, Iran, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, as well as with the Minister for Religious Affairs of Egypt, during which they discussed topical issues of international relations and bilateral cooperation.

Toyota to open assembly plant in Kazakhstan

[BNews](#), Feb 8, 2013

The Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and Toyota Motor Corporation will sign the memorandum of understanding next week in Astana which will start the project "Toyota. Made in Kazakhstan".

The Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Industry and New Technologies Aset Isekeshev and the senior managing director will participate in the press conference Toyota Motor Corporation, the President and CEO Toyota Motor Europe Didier Leroy.

According to Forbes, project details are not disclosed yet, however it is known that production will be located in the free economic zone near Karaganda.

Best Western opens first hotel in Kazakhstan

[Breaking Travel News](#), Feb 11, 2013

Best Western is continuing its global expansion with the addition of the brand's first hotel in Kazakhstan, the BEST WESTERN PLUS Atakent Park Hotel, in the country's largest city, Almaty.

The four-star BEST WESTERN PLUS Atakent Park Hotel features 196 rooms with 23 suites and conference and meeting space to accommodate up to 500. Hotel amenities include climate control rooms, mini-bar, safe, international direct dial telephone, free Wi-Fi and a gym and spa.

Guests will enjoy dining in the hotel's full service restaurant Bastau, serving a menu of traditional Kazakh and European cuisines for breakfast, lunch and dinner, or relaxing in the Nomad Lobby Bar.

"We are happy to announce the opening of the BEST WESTERN PLUS Atakent Park Hotel in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Whether our guests are staying with us for business or leisure, we look forward to providing a superior guest experience and exceeding our guests expectations with our Four-star hotel, service and amenities," said the hotel's owner, Mr. Talgat Abdullayev .

"This hotel represents a significant move forward in our development efforts in the CIS. We are both delighted and proud of the BEST WESTERN PLUS Atakent Park Hotel as our entry into Kazakhstan and look forward to establishing the brand further throughout the country and region," added Best Western's Vice President of International Operations Suzi Yoder .

The BEST WESTERN PLUS Atakent Park Hotel is located in the center of Almaty, close to the business and financial districts, 30 minutes from Almaty International Airport and 10 minutes from the Republic Square. The hotel is part of the biggest exhibition complex in Almaty—Atakent Exhibition Centre.

KYRGYZSTAN

PACE Chairman Mevlut Cavusoglu to pay working visit to Kyrgyzstan

15/01-2013 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAEV

Chairman of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) Mevlut Cavusoglu will pay a working visit to Kyrgyzstan, January 15-18. Nurzhigit Kadyrbekov, Press-Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan said at today briefing.

According to him, the expert will arrive in Kyrgyzstan by request of the Parliament for Partner for Democracy status. "As part of the upcoming visit, he plans to meet with President Almazbek Atambayev, Prime Minister Zhantoro Satybaldiyev, and deputies," said Nurzhigit Kadyrbekov.

Some Kyrgyz villages near Sokh enclave imposed emergency rule

15/01-2013 08:03, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

"Some Kyrgyz villages near Sokh enclave imposed emergency rule," head of the region Zhenish Razakov told 24.kg news agency.

According to him, such decision was made because Uzbekistan has blocked strategic route between isolated Kyrgyz villages near Sokh enclave and the center. "These villages are suffering interruption of food and medication supply. Therefore, the government decided to impose emergency rule in these villages. But no confrontations between these villagers have been recorded," Zhenish Razakov added.

Chairman of the Frontier Service of Kyrgyzstan, Zakhir Tilenov told 24.kg news agency that the situation in the frontier with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan remains stable.

Recall, the current strain was caused by the recent conflict border conflict. Hushyar villagers on January entered Charbak village in the bordering area, and took several people hostages. Sooner they were set free.

Trade turnover between Kyrgyzstan and the United States has increased by 9.3 percent in 2012 – Nurzhigit Kadyrbekov

15/01-2013 11:50, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Shavkat TURGAYEV

Trade turnover between Kyrgyzstan and the United States has increased by 9.3 percent in 2012. Press Secretary of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs Nurzhigit Kadyrbekov stated at today's briefing.

According to him, in 2011, bilateral trade was \$211 million. "Following the results of 6 month of 2012, the figure is 127 million. Exports grew by 4.7 times, imports - by 8.3 times," Nurzhigit Kadyrbekov said.

Uzbekistan wants to return to reality of 1924 to address the issue with enclaves, including Sokh – Salamat Alamanov

16/01-2013 07:55, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Uzbekistan wants to return to reality of 1924 to address the issue with enclaves, including Sokh. Well-known Kyrgyz expert on border issues Salamat Alamanov said in an interview with Radio Ozodlik (Radio Liberty in Uzbekistan).

Recall, earlier Salamat Alamanov headed the Kyrgyz-Uzbek Intergovernmental Commission on State Border Delimitation and Demarcation.

According to him, the issue of Sokh enclave was on the agenda even during the Soviet era.

"In the Soviet times there were several state parity commissions. Their specialists proposed solutions that met the needs of both parties. But the then Supreme Council of Uzbekistan did not accept these proposals, and solutions did not come into force. In my opinion those proposals were the best. We should return to them. However, it is outside the competence of delegations from the two parties. The issue must be decided at the highest level. Then specialists defined the borders of the enclave. We could come to an agreement on the basis of those documents. Today, the issue of borders is not clear, so it is impossible to reach a consensus," Ozodlik cites Mr Alamanov.

"In 1995, a great job was done. Parity commissions were established after again and again. But they returned to the same results and considered them right. However, the republic's political leadership didn't take these conclusions into account and insisted on returning to the state of 1924. At that times Sokh wasn't an enclave and was the continuation of Uzbekistan (to the southern border of Sokh) and was connected to the remaining territory," the expert added.

Salamat Alamanov noted, Uzbekistan did not accept a treaty version proposed by Kyrgyzstan. "Their position is that they don't want to see enclaves as enclaves, but want to return to 1924. Only this decision suits Tashkent," he specified.

In the expert's opinion Kyrgyzstan "proposed people to go through the enclave's territory as well as through ours freely and prepared an agreement. According to the Uzbek specialists, the draft agreement is a right decision. However, Uzbekistan's political leadership doesn't accept it because, as they said, the Sokh issue should be decided in terms of Tashkent's position".

"But we can not agree to this, as in this case many Kyrgyz settlements belonging to Kyrgyzstan for 90 years will become the territory of Uzbekistan. We will never agree," Salamat Alamanov stressed.

Asian Development Banks grants \$1 million for reconstruction of Bishkek-Osh road

17/01-2013 11:52, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

"Asian Development Banks has granted \$1 million for reconstruction of Bishkek-Osh road," Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications Maksatbek Dyikanov said today at press-conference.

According to him, reconstruction is needed on Bishkek-Kara-Balta and Madaniyat-Jalal-Abad roads require rehabilitation.

“Soon we will put out tender for feasibility studies. I think the whole project will be financed by the Asian Development Bank,” said Maksatbek Dyikanov.

He noted that reconstruction of the road starts 2014.

Recall, approximate cost of the project is \$100 million.

Kyrgyzstan completing rehabilitation of Osh - Batken – Isfana highway

17/01-2013 09:47, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

Kyrgyzstan is completing the rehabilitation of Osh - Batken – Isfana highway. Official Secretary for the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kyrgyzstan Maksatbek Dyikanov said at today's press conference.

According to him, asphalt coat was laid at the section of Pulgon – Alga from 123 to 155 kilometers. The construction of the bridge has been completed. The construction of engineering structures is being finished at the section of Alga – Batken (155-220 kilometers).

He added the project is financed by the World Bank. As of October 1, 2012, \$20 million have been drawn.

Kyrgyzstan solves water supply problem in villages bordering Sokh enclave

23/01-2013 09:54, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

“Kyrgyzstan has solved the problem with water supply of the villages bordering the Uzbek enclave Sokh,” Batken province authorities told 24.kg news agency.

According to officials, water to the settlements, in particular Charbak village, where there was a border conflict on January 5, is delivered by cars going on the bypass road as the main road through Sokh was closed. “State of emergency still remains in the villages. But on the whole the situation is stable. Local authorities transfer a day salary to the fund to help villagers,” the press secretary for the province's head, Mamadzhan Berdishev, said.

Recall, the state of emergency will remain in 7 border villages of Batken province until a bypass road is not constructed and independent water supply system and power transmission line are not laid. According to First Vice Prime Minister Dzhoormart Otorbayev, 15 million soms are needed for this.

Alexander Zelichenko: Afghan heroin amounting to \$65 billion passes through Kyrgyzstan annually

25/01-2013 15:59, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Munara BOROMBAEVA

“Afghan heroin amounting to \$65 billion passes through our republic annually,” CADAP (Central Asia Drug Action Programme) National Coordinator Alexander Zelichenko told today at public hearing of the Concept of the State Anti-Drug Strategy of Kyrgyzstan project.

According to him, our fields are full of cannabis. But its population has decreased over time, and now there are many who specially raise it. It's a very terrible fact.

The expert noted customs control at our borders should be toughened. Our citizens are crossing our borders without any problems, but the same citizens are arrested in Kazakhstan for drugs, for instance. And it has something to do with corruption. Such factors hamper Kyrgyzstan's economic growth,” he said.

World Bank will allocate £ 871, 600 thousand for the project Rural Water Supply and Sanitation – Olga Lavrova

28/01-2013 08:59, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Kaliya DUISHEBAYEVA

“The World Bank will allocate £ 871, 600 thousand for the project Rural Water Supply and Sanitation,” Minister of Finance Olga Lavrova said at today’s session of a parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs.

According to her, funds will be used for the implementation of B and C project components. “The money will be spent on sanitary and hygienic education and institutional development, in particular, on the supply of equipment for water supply servicing, as well as training and conducting of workshops,” she added.

Professor from Kyrgyzstan becomes International Socrates Award winner

29/01-2013 08:55, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Olzhobay SHAKIR

A well-known Kyrgyz scientist, Professor Altay Borubayev became the International Socrates Award winner. The Spokesperson for the Highest Attestation Commission of Kyrgyzstan told 24.kg news agency.

Recall, the rewarding of outstanding contemporaries from different countries for achievements in their professional activities in 2012 will be held in the principal residence of the Institute of Directors (IoD) in the United Kingdom on April 11, 2013. Academician Altay Borubayev is among the other names listed. He became a holder of the honorary title ‘The Name in Science’. Altay Borubayev will be presented with a certificate and a sign ‘For Contribution to the World Science’ on a blue ribbon, and his name will be included into the World Register of Outstanding Scientists.

Note of 24.kg news agency. Previously a well-known Kyrgyz public figure, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Political Sciences Zhumagul Saadanbekov became the International Socrates Award laureate.

First Center for Delimitation and Demarcation of Borders opened in Osh

01/02-2013 15:01, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Julia KOSTENKO

First Center for Delimitation and Demarcation of Borders was opened in Osh city, press service of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe reported.

According to its information, OSCE office in Bishkek has provided equipment for the center which will serve as office for members of government delegation of Kyrgyzstan on delimitation and demarcation of the state border. It is planned to open the second similar center in Bishkek this year.

As it was noted, members of the commission will be able to conduct study of such technical border aspects as map-making and international legislation.

Kyrgyz Economy Ministry allots 20M soms for researches in 2013

01/02-2013 08:55, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

The Economy Ministry of Kyrgyzstan allots 20 million soms for conduction of various researches in 2013, Sanzhar Mukanbetov, Deputy Head of the Ministry, told today, speaking at an International Conference on Consulting Development in Bishkek.

According to Mr Mukanbetov, about 12 million soms has been spent on researches in 2012.

Note, this is the second international conference on consulting. It attracted over 100 participants from the Central Asia, Mongolia, Russia, Ukraine, Europe and the U.S. Business consultants will discuss aspects of private business development in the Kyrgyz Republic and countries with developing economy along with possible cooperation of independent consulting and business.

Volume of drawn to Kyrgyzstan credits grows 610 times for 20 years

02/02-2013 09:12, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

Volume of drawn to Kyrgyzstan credits has grown 610 times for 20 years, Chinara Aitbayeva, head of Nash Vek non-governmental organization, said at today's panel discussion on external debt problem.

According to her, \$572 of the country's external debt accounts for each Kyrgyzstani. "External debt- GDP- budget revenue ratio increases annually. If in 2008 the external debt amounted to 6 percent of budget revenues, in 2009 it was already 7 percent and in 2011 it grew up to 7.3 percent," Chinara Aitbayeva said.

The ratio of the state debt to GDP reached 55.9 percent in 2010, and in 2012 it was reduced up to 47 percent thanks to the fact that Russia has written off Kyrgyzstan almost \$ 500 million.

China to build tiles plant in Kyrgyzstan

05/02-2013 13:12, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

China will build a tiles plant in Kyrgyzstan. Vice Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Taiyrbek Sarpashev told journalist talking about the results of his visit to China.

According to him, the Chinese investors will build the plant in Isyk-Ata. "The plant will be built in two phases: in the first it will use partially local raw materials, and partially Chinese, but within a year it should use only local raw materials," Taiyrbek Sarpashev said.

He noted Kyrgyzstan has all necessary components. The volume of production will be 3 million square meters per year. Production launch is scheduled for the end of August 2013. In autumn the plant should reach full capacity.

Recall, earlier the Chinese investors built a paper mill in Chui province which has not worked for three years and was closed

China to allot Kyrgyzstan \$20 million for launch of sunflower oil plant

05/02-2013 12:47, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

China will allot Kyrgyzstan \$20 million for launch of a new sunflower oil plant, Vice Prime Minister Taiyrbek Sarpashev told journalists summarizing the results of his visit to P.R.C.

"A plant was built 4 years ago in Suzak district. We have brought German equipment. But the enterprise is at a standstill due to lack of circulating funds," said he.

According to the Vice Prime Minister, new plant will yield Kyrgyz budget 100 million soms in form of tax deductions

In 2013, Kyrgyzstan to keep on implementing 100 Innovative Schools Project

05/02-2013 11:50, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia BENGARD

In 2013, Kyrgyzstan will keep on implementing 100 Innovative Schools Project, the press service of the Ministry of Education and Science reported.

Recall, the program was developed in 2012 to improve the technical equipment of 100 schools of the republic and the quality of education. It was planned to equip laboratories for mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry in these educational institutions, as well as to equip them with computers and interactive whiteboards. However, the funds for its implementation were sequestered. "The government included the money for these purposes into the budget for 2013," the Ministry of Education noted

Kyrgyzstan to get humanitarian aid amounting to \$ 17 M for health care

06/02-2013 07:57, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia BENGARD

Kyrgyzstan will get humanitarian aid amounting to \$ 17 million for health care. Humanitarian Program Manager of HOPE Project Gulmira Sydykova said.

According to her, about 19,000 patients with cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and diabetes will be able to get quality drugs, including plavix, avapro, metformin. Medicines will be distributed among 11 medical establishments in the city of Bishkek, as well as of Chui, Talas, Issyk-Kul, Jalal-Abad and Batken provinces.

As noted, the aid comes in the framework of Operation Hope Program of the U.S. Department of State.

Russia confirms its interest in opening of large logistics center at Manas international airport

07/02-2013 07:47, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Russia confirms its interest in opening of a large logistics center at Manas international airport. The Transport and Communications Ministry of Kyrgyzstan reported with reference to the head of the Ministry Kalykbek Sultanov and the Deputy Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation Valery Okulov.

According to the Ministry, delegation of Russian specialists has arrived in Bishkek again to continue negotiations on the topic. "Kyrgyzstan and Russia are strategic partners," press service of Kalykbek Sultanov quoted its head.

"We assign high priority to creation of logistics center on the base of Manas International Airport JSC," press service quoted Valery Okulov.

According to Valery Okulov, Manas international logistics center "will increase the flow of freight traffic in future and, therefore, we can go to South-East Asia through the airport." He also stressed that Russia attaches great importance to development of the business plan of the project."

This visit, as Valery Okulov pointed, was interim in nature, and in the future is planned to hold a bilateral meeting in Moscow.

Yesterday the Kyrgyz and Russian experts met to discuss the issue of establishing a logistics center at Manas.

Recall, on December 26-27, 2012 Bishkek hosted a meeting of Kyrgyz and Russian delegations, where experts discussed opening of a new logistics center.

Also recall that earlier the President Almazbek Atambayev has repeatedly stated that in 2014 the U.S. Transit Center at Manas would have to cease its work at the airport.

Washington does not conceal its hopes to continue negotiations and achieve review of the decision of the Kyrgyz authorities.

In 2013, foreign tourists to be able to apply for electronic visa to Kyrgyzstan

15/02-2013 12:21, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Irina DUDKA

In 2013, foreign tourists will be able to apply for an electronic visa to Kyrgyzstan. Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, director of Tourism Department, Daniyar Kazakov, said.

"A person from all over the world will be able to get online application form, fill it up and send to Kyrgyzstan. Here the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and security agencies will process it and send it back. There a tourist will be able to print the document by himself and go to Kyrgyzstan," he explained.

According to Daniyar Kazakov, equipment for electronic visas processing will appear at 15 border checkpoints of Kyrgyzstan by the summer of 2013.

About 135M soms of Turkish grant to be spent on construction of 10 schools in Kyrgyzstan

18/02-2013 14:24, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Zhazgul MASALIEVA

About 135 million soms of the Turkish grant will be allocated for construction of 10 schools in Kyrgyzstan, Kanybek Narbayev, Director of the State Agency on Construction and Regional Development informed.

According to him, “construction of schools has already started or planned but the process was suspended due to lack of finances. “ List of schools had been drawn up by the Education and Finance Ministries,” Kanybek Narbayev said.

He also noted that a tender would be announced in the nearest future. In course of the session Olga Lavrova, the Minister of Finance, noted that Kyrgyzstan had received only the first 10 million soms tranche of the promised \$100 million Turkish loan.

“About 3 millions soms of the sum we had already spent on creation of laboratories for agricultural sector and other needs,” Kanybek Narbayev added.

Kyrgyz Foreign Minister acknowledges situation in Central Asia to remain complex in 2013

18/02-2013 12:07, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Foreign Affairs Minister of Kyrgyzstan Erlan Abdyldaev admitted situation in Central Asia in 2013 will remain complex. He said it at a session of the parliament Committee for Foreign Affairs.

According to him, the tension is caused by withdrawal of troops of an international coalition from Afghanistan. “Besides, relations with Uzbekistan are still clouded. However, we expect to improve them in 2013. For this purpose we are considering appointment of a new ambassador to Uzbekistan. Delimitation of borders issue is moving to a new stage. Special attention is given to the situation with Sokh, an Uzbek enclave in Batken province,” Erlan Abdyldaev noted.

He added relations of Kyrgyzstan and Russia are developing dynamically, in particular regarding the issue of entry of Kyrgyzstan to the Customs Union. “China remains our main economic partner in the region. Cooperation with P.R.C. is deepening, in particular regarding power and transport,” Erlan Abdyldaev said.

The Minister pointed out that interrelations with Kazakhstan remain at a high level. The governments are considering liberalization of trade and export of some foodstuff to Kazakhstan and ease of some checkpoints on the borders of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. “It’s regarding relations with cross-border countries. A new stage of development is ahead of Kyrgyzstan’s relations with Gulf States, Japan and South Korea. Visits on the highest level are expected,” Erlan Abdyldaev concluded.

Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan sign agreement on mutual assistance in tax law compliance

18/02-2013 11:41, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan have signed an agreement on mutual assistance in tax law compliance. The draft document has been prepared on March 30, 2012 between the governments of both states.

According to the agreement, facilitated taxation scheme for trade sphere is introduced in the states as a part of the economic bilateral cooperation.

Birth rate steadily grows in Kyrgyzstan

18/02-2013 09:20, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Anastasia BENGARD

Birth rate is steadily growing in Kyrgyzstan. Marat Kaliyev, Deputy Head of the Health Care Ministry voiced the information today at the meeting of the ministry’s board.

According to him, it made up 27.7 per thousand people, results of 2012 showed. For comparison, the 2011 rate was 26.8 in Kyrgyzstan, in Russia - 12.4, in Kazakhstan - 22.5 and among CIS countries - 14.7. Natural increase of the population is also growing. However, overall mortality rate has not practically changed and amounted to 6.5 per 100,000 people. As of January 1, 2013 number of resident population hit 5, 663, 6 million people.

"The main causes of mortality are cardiovascular diseases (51.5 percent), external causes (9.5 percent), neoplasm (9.2 percent), respiratory diseases (7 percent), digestive system diseases (6.8 percent), and also infectious and parasitic diseases (2.6 percent)," Marat Kaliyev said.

Kyrgyzstan returns governorship institution

19/02-2013 14:40, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Darya PODOLSKAYA

Kyrgyzstan returns governorship institution. The decision was made at today's session of the Committee on Constitutional Legislation, State Structure and Human Rights after short debates.

The Ministry of Justice was the initiator. The Prime Minister will appoint a governor, but with the Parliament's approval.

According to the committee member, Abdymanap Kutushev, the procedure can be preserved and the word "governor" can be returned without inventing other terms.

Japan government allocates \$2.2M to strengthen response capacity and disaster risk assessment in Kyrgyzstan

21/02-2013 09:57, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Ivan MARCHENKO

The government of Japan has allocated \$2.2 million (204 million yen) grant to strengthen response capacity and disaster risk assessment in Kyrgyzstan. It was stated today at a press conference.

As it was noted, the project will operate in four key areas, in particular, should contribute to strengthening of cooperation between the countries of Central Asia in the field of disasters risk reduction. Finances are allocated by UNDP to support the Emergency Situations Ministry of Kyrgyzstan in implementation of the Country program for 2012-2016, signed by the government of the republic and UNDP.

Note, after presentation of speakers, among whom were the head of Emergency Ministry of Kyrgyzstan Kubatbek Boronov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Kyrgyz Republic Takayuki Koike, Permanent Representative of Japan International Cooperation Agency in Kyrgyzstan Takayuki Oyama and Acting UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Kyrgyzstan Pradeep Sharma, the ceremony of signing the exchange notes and grant agreement has taken place.

Kyrgyz Interior Ministry: Tajikistan –Russia drug trafficking route suppressed

22/02-2013 12:56, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency

Officers of the Main Drug Trafficking Control Department of the Interior Ministry of Kyrgyzstan have suppressed a drug trafficking route from Tajikistan to Russia through Kyrgyzstan, the law enforcement ministry reported. More than 11 kg of heroin have been reportedly confiscated from a citizen of the Russian Federation.

The day before BMW-520 car was stopped on suspicion of illegal storage, transportation and sale of narcotic substances at about 11.20 p.m. at Ibraimova - Moscow Streets corner in Bishkek. The passenger of the car, citizen of Russia, had two plastic bags with drugs. Heroin packages had stamps and markings, indicating its quality and origin - Afghanistan. According to intelligence data, seized drugs were intended for

further transportation to one of the federal districts of Russia. The total weight of the confiscated substance was 11kg 560 g.

A criminal case under Article 247 (illegal manufacturing, purchase, storage, transportation, transfer with intent to sell, and the illegal production or distribution of drugs on a large scale) of the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic has been initiated.

The arrested was placed in the temporary detention facility. Investigation and operational measures are ongoing.

Kyrgyzstan to become international hub of passenger transportation - Ilgar Alptekin

28/02-2013 11:13, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Makhinur NIYAZOVA

“Kyrgyzstan will become an international hub of passenger transportation,” Director General of Air Manas Air Company LLC under the brand name Pegasus Asia, Ilgar Alptekin, stated at today’s press conference in 24.kg news agency.

According to him, the company plans to launch the first flights on an Istanbul route this spring. “We planed the first flight for March 21, on Nooruz Day symbolizing a new life,” Ilgar Alptekin said.

“We guarantee the lowest possible cost of air tickets and high frequency of flights - 7 days a week. We want to apply a new concept, which will allow all citizens to use air services regardless of financial status. In the autumn-winter of 2013/2014 we plan to turn Bishkek into an international hub connecting air traffic in all directions,” he added.

As noted, it is possible to fly to all European cities, as well as to eastern direction from Istanbul. Pegasus Company is a member of the International Air Transport Association.

Kyrgyz armed forces receive military assistance from Turkey

28/02-2013 10:38, Bishkek – 24.kg news agency , by Rinat SHAMSUTDINOV

A solemn handing of military and technical assistance from the Republic of Turkey to the Kyrgyz armed forces was held at the base of the National Guard in Bishkek. New offroaders, mine detection systems, communications equipment will be distributed among several agencies - the Ministry of Defense, Frontier Service and Interior Ministry in the nearest future. A solemn ceremony was attended by Turkish military attaché Nebi Gazneli and the first Deputy Minister of Defense of kyrgyzstan, Zamir Suerkulov.

According to Nebi Gazneli, the Turkish Army is armed with such communications equipment and cars. Zamir Suerkulov noted in his turn that “national armed forces need time to be upgraded”.

TURKEY

KRG Vice President visits Davutoğlu

In the 14th of February, Kosrat Rasul and his committee visited Ahmet Davutoglu in Ankara. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Deputy Secretary General and Iraq Kurdish Regional Government Vice President Rasul and Davutoglu discussed regional problems and cooperation during the launch.

Based on the press release made by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the talks were focused on Kirkuk. Both parties expressed the importance of maintaining peace in Kirkuk as it contains all the ethnicities in Iraq such like Turks, Kurds and Arabs. Underlining their happiness on improving relationships between Turkey and KRG, Rasul mentioned that they seek to cooperate with Turkey in all areas.

Furthermore, he indicated his appreciations on Turkey's reforms in the last few years and claimed that Turkey has its own particular position in the region thanks to his democracy.

The Governor of Kirkuk, Necmettin Kerim, also participated to launch and informed the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the health of Talabani. He said that he talked with Talabani's doctors in Germany and added that his situation is improving. 15/2/2013

Turkish President Gül approves bill on terror financing

Turkish President Abdullah Gül approved a bill to prevent terrorism financing today, giving assent to a motion that was passed by Parliament last week after a number of heated debates and tense sessions. The law will enter into force on Feb. 16.

The reform will allow Turkey to avoid a possible demotion on Feb. 22 to the black list of the Financial Action Task force, an inter-governmental action group established to combat international money laundering and terrorism financing. According to the new law, those who finance or collect money for terrorist groups or people who are involved with such groups will be sentenced to between five and 10 years in prison.

The bill had been on Parliament's agenda since the government submitted it to the legislature's Justice Commission on Oct. 21, 2011. All opposition parties strongly resisted the bill, arguing that the commission to be established would be able to freeze the financial assets of dissident media outlets, associations, companies and labor unions. Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek, however, rejected assertions that the bill aimed to put pressure on public opposition.

Another law approved by Gül foresees the creation of the Selahaddin Eyyubi University, a private university owned by a foundation in the southeastern province of Diyarbakir. The project also includes the establishment of a local languages institute. 15/2/2013

Blast takes place at Turkish-Syrian border gate

Number of casualties rises to 10

HATAY -- The number of casualties at the blast in Cilvegözü Border Gate on Monday rose to 10.

The bodies of two Turks and three Syrians were brought to the Reyhanlı State Hospital as sources said that the number of casualties rose to 10.

Around 50 individuals were reported to have been wounded in the blast. Wounded individuals are receiving medical treatment at the Reyhanlı State Hospital.

Meanwhile, the Governor of the southern province of Hatay, Mehmet Celalettin Lekesiz arrived at the scene of the blast to receive information.

The blast happened in a vehicle with a Syrian license plate.

Turkish PM Erdogan receives information on the blast from Interior Minister Guler

ANKARA -- Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday received information from Turkish Interior Minister Muammer Güler on a blast that took place at the Cilvegözü Border Gate in southern province of Hatay at the Syrian border which killed at least five people and wounded dozens.

Turkish Prime Ministry sources said that Erdogan was closely monitoring the developments at the Cilvegözü Border Gate.

"We received information about death of 8 people due to the blast", said Regional Director of Dept. of Customs and Trade of Eastern Mediterranean

HATAY -- Regional Director of the Department of Customs and Trade of Eastern Mediterranean, Adnan Korkmaz said on Monday that they received information about the death of 8 people due to the blast which took place at the Cilvegözü Border Gate earlier in the day.

Adnan Korkmaz stated that he was on his way to the Cilvegözü Border Gate and that the blast happened in a car parked at the Cilvegözü Border Gate.

According to Korkmaz, the blast took place in a vehicle with Syrian license plate.

"We received information that 8 people died due to the blast, 5 of them at the site of the blast. There is a high number of wounded people. Three of our colleagues were affected by the blast. There has been material damage at the site as well," Korkmaz indicated.

"The area where the blast took place is used to load aid materials to Syrian vehicles. The area has been rather very crowded in the past few days," Korkmaz added. 11/2/2013

Turkey extends the period of operation of Somalia antipiracy

Turkish Parliament has approved a resolution that extends the period of operation for the Turkish Naval Forces fighting piracy off the Somali coast. With this new resolution the government will now have the opportunity to extend operations until Feb. 10, 2014.

Naval Forces operate as part of the counter-piracy international task force CTF 151 established in January 2009 to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean after a wave of hijackings occurred in the region. It was launched by the United States as an international effort specifically for counter-piracy operations. 6/2/2013

Embassy attack has drawn US, Turkey closer: Envoy

The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) failed in its aims in attacking the U.S. Embassy in Ankara on Feb. 1, the U.S. envoy said today, underlining Washington's appreciation of Turks' sympathy in the aftermath of the assault.

"There is an ... effect drawing us closer together in a common mission of upholding the international rule of law while strengthening our collaboration that we have and really bringing our people together at all levels, including the sentimental one, so that our friendship grows deeper," Francis Ricciardone said at an international conference on "Obama's Second Term: Realism, Change & Continuity in Turkey-U.S. Relations" organized by the Ankara-based International Strategic Research Organization (USAK).

Specific operational ways of cooperation between the United States and Turkey, which are both "states of democracy," have already been strong, Ricciardone said, highlighting the significance of bilateral cooperation for strengthening the rule of law against terrorism and in the fields of intelligence, law enforcement, diplomacy, the military and cross-border relations.

DHKP/C member Ecevit Şanlı killed himself and security guard Mustafa Akarsu in a suicide attack at the U.S. mission Feb. 1. 5/2/2013

Senior Pentagon official visits Turkey

U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Ash Carter visited Ankara on 4 February 2013 for talks on "a number of core issues," including the Syrian crisis.

"Dr. Carter's visit will also provide an opportunity to reaffirm America's strong commitment to Turkey as an ally in confronting international terrorism in the wake of the Feb. 1 incident at the U.S. Embassy," said a statement from the U.S. Embassy in Ankara.

The visit comes just days after a deadly suicide blast at a security checkpoint on the perimeter of the U.S. Embassy compound in Ankara that killed the suicide bomber and a security guard. A Turkish woman was also seriously wounded in the attack.

Carter met with Defense Minister İsmet Yılmaz and other defense officials “to help advance mutual defense cooperation, including NATO-led efforts to address the potential missile threat resulting from the conflict in Syria,” according to the statement.

As part of a NATO mission, the U.S. deployed, along with Germany and the Netherlands, two U.S.-made Patriot batteries in Turkey’s south in a bid to bolster the country’s air defense systems against ballistic missiles that might be fired from Syria.

Following his meeting with the defense minister, Carter traveled to Gaziantep province, where the U.S. Patriots are deployed. 4/2/2013

Serbian President Nikolic Visits Turkey

Nikolic has been welcomed at the Çankaya presidential palace by President Abdullah Gül with ceremony. Following the bilateral meeting of the two presidents and the talks between the delegations of Turkey and Serbia, Nikolic and Gül hold a joint press conference. President Gül gave a dinner at the Çankaya presidential palace in honour of the Serbian President. Nikolic also met Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Cemil Çiçek.

The Serbian President's visit to Turkey is the reciprocation of the Turkish President's first visit to Serbia in 2009 in 23 years. 4/2/2013

Turkish FM calls Kerry, voices full solidarity against terrorism

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who has been in Germany attending the Munich Security Conference, made a phone call to the newly sworn-in U.S. secretary of state, John Kerry, today in order to express full solidarity against terrorism with the United States.

During the telephone conversation in the aftermath of a suicide bomb attack on the U.S. Embassy in Ankara on Feb. 1, both Davutoğlu and Kerry mutually expressed their sadness over the situation.

Kerry reportedly thanked Turkish authorities for their cooperation.

During the conversation, which lasted over 30 minutes, Davutoğlu stressed the intensity of the two countries’ common agenda and the two agreed to meet as soon as possible in the U.S. or Turkey. They also discussed the situation in Iraq and Syria,

Davutoğlu had the opportunity to discuss the embassy attack, bilateral relations and regional developments with U.S. Vice President Joe Biden when they both attended a dinner hosted by the minister-president of Bavaria, Horst Seehofer, on Feb. 2. 3/2/2013

Davutoglu, Clinton Underlined Commitment on Cooperation Against Terror

US State Department Spokesperson Victoria Nuland said Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton held a telephone conversation over the suicide bombing at the US Embassy in the Turkish capital, adding that the two top diplomats reiterated commitment for cooperation against terrorism.

"In the conversation with Foreign Minister Davutoglu, she obviously expressed condolences for the loss of life. Davutoglu expressed grave concern for the fact that this had happened. She also thanked him for the

absolutely excellent cooperation that we've had from Turkish law enforcement. Let me just underscore that point. Turkish national police, in particular, responded immediately and have been cooperating superbly with us," Nuland told a daily press briefing.

Nuland said Davutoglu and Clinton had committed to the strong and ongoing counterterrorism partnership between the US and Turkey.

"This incident obviously underscores the requirement that we stay very closely lashed up on all of these kinds of issues, not just the investigation of this incident, but counter-terrorism more broadly across the region," Nuland said.

Nuland said Sen. John Kerry, who is set to assume office as the next secretary of state, and his staff were briefed in real time.

The spokesperson said the US Embassy in Ankara was on a list of the US diplomatic posts to have a new embassy compound in the future.

The suicide blast Friday at a checkpoint outside the embassy compound killed the bomber and a security guard as well as seriously wounding a Turkish woman, a respected journalist.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said DHKP-C, an outlawed leftist group in Turkey, was responsible for the attack.

The group recognized as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the US and the European Union. 2/2/2012

FM Davutoğlu Meets With His Serbian Counterpart Mrkic

Speaking at a joint press conference held after talks, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu said that Turkey regards Serbia as a neighboring country even though the two countries do not share a border and a significant strategic partner in the international arena, adding that good relations between Turkey and Serbia contribute to regional stability.

Davutoğlu stressed Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic will visit Turkey next week and this high level dialogue and talks should be more dynamic.

Underlining the significance of economic cooperation developing during the economic crisis in Europe, Davutoğlu said that this is of utmost importance to overcome the crisis.

Davutoğlu said that Turkey strongly supports the negotiation process carried out between Pristina and Belgrade through Brussels and is ready to provide all kinds of support in this matter.

Davutoğlu also said that Bosnia-Herzegovina-Serbia-Turkey tripartite mechanism contributes significantly to the development of good relations in the region and Turkey will continue to provide support in this matter too.

Davutoğlu added Turkey and Serbia have a common vision for the Balkans and Southeast Europe, there shouldn't be fixed borders and prejudices in the region and instead, cities in the region should cooperate in all fields. 2/2/2013

Turkey To Launch Mini Satellite in May

Director General of Türksat Ozkan Dalbay said that the mini communication satellite that was made possible by Türksat with the support of Istanbul Technical University will be launched to space in May.

Dalbay told Anadolu Agency that a protocol regarding the satellite was signed between Istanbul Technical University and Türksat on 29 November 2010.

Dalbay said further that the satellite will be controlled by the Türksat AS's center in Golbasi district of Ankara. 1/2/2013

TNGA Speaker Çiçek Receives Kyrgyz Delegation

The speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly Cemil Çiçek received the chairperson of Kyrgyz Parliament's International relations and Inter parliamentary Cooperation Committee Kanibek Imanaliyev and a delegation accompanying him. Talks centered on the Parliamentary system. Çiçek said that Turkey closely follows developments in Kyrgyzstan and this country can benefit from Turkey's experiences in transition to parliamentary system. "We should acknowledge that maintaining the parliamentary system needs more patience, tolerance and reconciliation. This should be shown so that this system is useful for people. What currently matters for Kyrgyzstan is the institutionalization of this system" Çiçek said. Çiçek also stressed the importance of Turkey's sharing its experiences with Kyrgyzstan regarding democracy.

The chairperson of the guest delegation Kanibek Imanaliyev for his part said that the two countries are located far from one another geographically but they are close at heart. "When Kyrgyzstan was having hard times and had a budget deficit, the Republic of Turkey provided assistance" he said. 31/1/2013

Lebanese PM Meets Top Turkish Officials in Ankara

Prime Minister Najib Mikati and the Lebanese delegation accompanying him first visited Çankaya Presidential Palace, where President Abdullah Gül welcomed them.

Afterwards, Mikati met Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the Prime Ministry headquarters.

Turkish and Lebanese officials held interdelegational meetings with economic relations, transportation, security relations and the Syrian crisis on the agenda.

Latest developments about the release of nine Lebanese nationals who were kidnapped by Syrian opposition forces, were also discussed.

Meanwhile, Turkish and Lebanese officials also assessed aid efforts for Syrian refugees in Turkey and Lebanon, whose number reached 400 thousand.

Premier Erdoğan held a press briefing after his meeting with his Lebanese counterpart Mikati. Answering a question, Erdoğan said Turkey extends only humanitarian aid to Syria, that problems about Syria are related to its regime and that they don't have the tiniest issue with the Syrian people.

"Syrian people are our brothers. We provide medicine and foodstuffs for Syrian people. Deliveries other than these are not originated in Turkey. Who is supporting the Syrian regime? We have to ask this question. Who supports the Syrian administration while we extend humanitarian aid? Who is helping to this bloody regime to survive, despite the people's opposition?," Erdoğan said. 31/1/2013

PM Erdoğan Visits Qatar

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who is in Qatar for a series of contacts, first met with Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheik Hamad bin Jaber Al Thani.

Prime Minister Erdoğan also met with the emir of Qatar Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani at a working lunch

Turkey-Qatar relations were reviewed, ways to increase cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, energy and culture to strengthen close political dialogue between the two countries, the latest situation in Syria, Palestinian-Israeli conflict and developments in North Africa were taken up at talks. 29/1/2013

Erdoğan Holds Talks With Oman's Parliament Speaker

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met Parliament Speaker Sheikh Khalid bin Hilal Al Maawali of Oman in Ankara. The meeting that was held at Prime Ministry was closed to press. Erdoğan and Al Maawali discussed regional and international issues and evaluated bilateral relations between Turkey and Oman. 29/1/2013

Commemoration for the 40th year of the first victims of ASALA

The Turkish Embassy in Washington will be holding a commemoration event for the 40th anniversary of the murder of the Los Angeles Turkish Consul General, Mehmet Baydar, and Vice Consul, Bahadır Demir, on Jan. 27.

Baydar and Demir were the first two victims of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA) organization, which operated from the beginning of the 1970s until the 1990s and targeted Turkish diplomats in the U.S. and the European countries.

Meanwhile, an Islamic memorial procession will also be organized in Ankara's Maltepe mosque for the two diplomats.

Gourgen Yanikian, the perpetrator of the attack against Baydar and Demir, was convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life imprisonment on July 2, 1973 by the Supreme Court of the State of California for the County of Santa Barbara. However, he was released on parole during the tenure of former California Governor George Deukmenjian and died soon after.

To date at least 46 people have been killed as a result of ASALA attacks, 41 of whom were Turkish diplomats and their family members. In 1983, a bomb attack on the Orly Airport in Paris caused eight casualties and wounded five. The bomb had exploded inside a suitcase at the Turkish Airlines check-in desk in the airport. Four of the victims were French citizens, two were Turkish, one was American and one was Swedish. The French police arrested 51 suspected ASALA militants after the blast. 27/1/2013

Turkish cabinet shuffle announced

In a long waited cabinet reshuffle announced yesterday following a triple meeting between President Abdullah Gul, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Chief of General Staff Gen. Necdet Ozel, four ministers were change.

According to the new regulation announced by a statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Interior Minister Idris Naim Sahin was replaced by Muammer Guler, a former Istanbul governor. Omer Celik, a vice chairman of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), was appointed to replace Culture and Tourism Minister Ertugrul Gunay. As part of another change, Mehmet Muezzinoglu, a medical doctor and former AKP deputy for Edirne, was named Health Minister, while Nabi Avci, a former adviser to Erdogan and an architect of controversial school reforms last year, was appointed as the Education Minister to replace Recep Akdag and Omer Dincer respectively. 25/1/2013

Turkish FM say dignity 'most important element' of Arab Spring

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu attended a session titled "Is democracy winning?" in Davos as part of the World Economic Forum, [Trend](#) news agency reported referring to Anadolu Agency.

Speaking at the session, Davutoglu said that "yes, democracy is winning; because, it is a historical process and history will judge in the future."

"Cold war has ended in Europe, but now after two decades it is ending in our region. Democracy will win in the end," Davutoglu noted.

"If we had this meeting two years ago in Davos, nobody would think of a democracy in Tunisia or Egypt. We have to be fair to these people. In the last two years, they achieved a lot. But of course, there is a long way to go for the full implementation of democracy," Davutoglu said.

"I want to give an example from my personal life. My youngest daughter, 12 years old, came to my library and saw my old typewriter, looked at it as if it was an archeological object. I thought, I wrote my thesis with it and at that time Mubarak was in power. Afterwards, the computer came, internet came, Facebook came and Mubarak was still there. But when Twitter came, he couldn't resist. Old regimes will not come back," Davutoglu stressed.

"Dignity is the most important element of Arab Spring," Davutoglu stated.

"Democracy is the best system to the search for dignity," Davutoglu indicated.

"We should not act orientalist. We should not ask if Arabs can achieve democracy. I can assure you, Arab and Muslim societies can have the same level of democratic system," Davutoglu expressed.

Asked if Islam was a threat to democracy, Davutoglu replied "I think the basic threat to democracy in the Muslim world is not Islam, but this orientalist approach."

"The basic value of Koranic teaching is human dignity and the basic value of democracy is human dignity. They don't contrast each other," Davutoglu also said.

On the other hand, Davutoglu also held talks with various leaders on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Davutoglu met with the Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mahamud, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Algerian Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci, Australian Foreign Minister Robert John Carr, and President of the Syrian National Coalition for Opposition and Revolutionary Forces Sheikh Ahmad Moaz al-Khatib in Davos on Thursday.

Davutoglu and Secretary General Ban discussed the Cyprus problem, Syria, Iraq and Turkish-UN relations.

In his talks with Moaz al-Khatib, Davutoglu discussed the international efforts on the Syrian crisis and the situation of Syrian refugees and those displaced due to the civil war in Syria. 25/1/2013

Turkey's Sinirlioğlu Meets with Top US Officials

The undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry, Feridun Sinirlioğlu, has discussed Syria, Iran, Iraq and the Middle East peace process with his U.S. counterpart and other senior officials.

Besides U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasian Affairs Phil Gordon, Assistant Secretary for Near East Affairs Beth Jones and Special Envoy for Energy Affairs Carlos Pascual attended the meeting at the State Department in Washington.

State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said they had talked about Syria, Iraq and the importance of international solidarity in Iran and efforts to promote Middle East peace. They also discussed U.S. support for Turkey's efforts to combat terrorism and to deepen justice and rule of law in Turkey and to bolster U.S.-Turkish economic ties, according to the State Department website. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also stopped in to say hello to him during the meeting, according to Nuland.

One of the most immediate issues to be discussed between Turkish and U.S. officials was expected to be Turkish energy companies' activities in northern Iraq, as Washington fears the contacts could push Baghdad closer toward Tehran and threaten Iraq's unity.

Asked whether Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Danny Ayalon was in the building, Nuland said: "Whenever we meet with Turks, the issue of Israel usually comes up. And whenever we meet with Israelis, the issue of Turkey usually comes up." But she said she did not have anything specific on the Ayalon meeting. "But usually we are, as allies of both countries, trying to support increased dialogue and better relations between them," she added.

Ties between Turkey and Israel came to an all-time low after Israeli commandos raided a flotilla bound for Gaza and killed nine Turks on the Mavi Marmara ship in 2010. 16/1/2013
