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## **Eurasian Media Forum Remains Important Platform for East-West Debates** (Almaty hosted the 9<sup>th</sup> annual conference on April 27-28, focusing on OSCE, Iran)

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## **Eurasian Media Forum Remains Important Platform for East-West Debates**

Senior representatives of the OSCE, leaders of the world media community, think tanks and influential international organizations gathered in Almaty on April 27-28 to engage in frank discussions on important international issues, including Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the OSCE, nuclear security, political culture of Iran, as well as the role of the mass media in coverage of global processes.

The Eurasian Media Forum (EAMF) is a unique international initiative and a non-political organization founded in Kazakhstan to promote East-West understanding through dialogue.

This year's list of invitees was as impressive as before and included OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatovic, the first U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan William Courtney, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs David Merkel, as well as leading experts and journalists from Russia, Turkey, Austria and other countries.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev launched the forum with a speech, presenting his vision on Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship. He also spoke about the initiatives voiced at the Washington nuclear summit, focused on various aspects of regional and global security, and discussed the situation in Kyrgyzstan.



The President Nursultan Nazarbayev delivers a speech at the opening of the Ninth Annual Eurasian Media Forum held in Almaty on 27-28 April, 2010.

Photo by Akorda.kz  
(Segrey Bondarenko and Bolat Otarbayev)

“The Organization, stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok, should play an active role in shaping the new architecture of European security, and to this end Kazakhstan offers to host an OSCE summit in Astana. The event has not been held for more than ten years, and it could revive the “Helsinki Spirit” in the new historical conditions as this would enable the OSCE successfully adapt to challenging conditions of the twenty-first century,” the President said.



The Eurasian Media Forum, a unique annual event, has brought together the world’s leading media players, political figures, academics and experts from East and West for professional dialogue, business contacts and social interaction.

Photo by Vesti.kz (Pyotr Kondrashov)

from a military one,” the Kazakh leader said.

Repeating his call for the establishment of nuclear-free zones, similar to the one in Central Asia and elsewhere, President Nazarbayev stressed the need to reassure the non-nuclear countries that might agree to take part. “It is important for the world’s nuclear nations to give all states participating in such zones solid guarantees of security and support in developing peaceful nuclear programs,” he said.

Turning to the Central Asian region, the President deplored the recent bloodshed in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and described events there as “a power struggle” between the elite groups there, not a genuine revolution.

According to Paul Fritch, Director of the Office of the OSCE Secretary General, Kazakhstan’s presidency deserves praise for having properly responded to this situation and prevented the threat of widespread civil conflict.

The second session of the Eurasian Media Forum was devoted to the problem of Iran’s special place in the contemporary world. It has drawn the most heated debates in two days of the forum. A special assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran Ramin Mehmanparast said that the threat of the U.S. and the West against Iran are useless. Outlining Iran’s policy in the sphere of nuclear energy, he said no one should use nuclear weapons, but everyone needs peaceful nuclear technology.

The key theme of the Forum’s second day concerned the possibilities of regulating information on the Internet, as well as the issues of political PR.

Closing the conference, the EAMF’s organizing committee chairman Dariga Nazarbayeva noted that these two days were filled with thoughtful and useful discussions. “Out of all the nine conferences, this one was the most effective,” she added.

The next year the 10<sup>th</sup> “jubilee” edition of the Eurasian Media Forum is to take place, where experts will once again have a chance to engage in interesting discussions on the latest up-to-date topics.

Over the last nine years the Forum has gained a solid reputation. The international media and expert community’s growing interest in the event shows that a broad discussion on important political and media topics really helps strengthen understanding in Eurasia and beyond.

Further, Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world faces new threats and challenges, such as growing poverty and conflicts, uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons. He stressed no country can cope with them alone and called upon various international bodies to consolidate efforts in promoting global security as there is no alternative to international cooperation.

In this regard, he stressed the importance of the recent Global nuclear security summit in Washington and called for an extended international cooperation on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, setting the scene for a lively panel discussion. “We believe all countries have an equal right to carry out atomic power research. At the same time, no one should cross the line separating a peaceful nuclear program

## Kazakhstan, EU Hold Talks on Expanding Ties



Kanat Saudabayev (R), Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, and Miguel Moratinos, Spain's Foreign Minister met in Brussels to discuss a number of important issues and agreed to promote further close interaction between Kazakhstan and the European Union, where Spain currently holds the rotating presidency.

Photo by the Foreign Ministry

Kazakh counterpart after their meeting.

“The EU has been working in cooperation with Kazakhstan, both through our Special Representative Ambassador Pierre Morel on the ground, and with my friend [Kazakh Foreign Minister] on the phone. Today, we have agreed that even though the situation in Kyrgyzstan remains fragile, we need to reinforce our cooperation in order to bring stability to that country,” Moratinos added.

“You were quite right to note a key role Nursultan Nazarbayev as a head of state chairing the OSCE has played in defusing the crisis. It was indeed the joint efforts of the presidents of Kazakhstan, the United States and Russia, that helped prevent further escalation of tensions and even avert a possible civil war in Kyrgyzstan,” Saudabayev stressed. “We do indeed need to continue working closely to help Kyrgyzstan return quicker to the legal framework, ensure the rule of law and embark on a path of further constitutional development.”

As the interim authorities in Kyrgyzstan move with constitutional reform, including holding a referendum in June and election in October, Kazakhstan, as OSCE chairman, and the EU have agreed to coordinate their activities closely.

Saudabayev and Moratinos also discussed the preparations for an informal OSCE foreign ministers meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on July 16 and 17, as well as plans for an OSCE summit at the end of this year.

“I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Spain for its firm and consistent support of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE, especially as far as the issue of holding an OSCE summit this year is concerned,” Saudabayev told reporters. “That initiative was put forward by President Nazarbayev out of understanding that after a lapse of 11 years since the previous summit, new challenges and threats to security in the vast space from Vancouver to Vladivostok urgently require consolidated reaction by the OSCE leaders. With every passing day we have more optimism that such a summit will not only take place but will help strengthen security and cooperation for our peoples.”

Switching to bilateral issues, Moratinos said Spain was working hard to get a mandate from EU member states for the European Commission to start negotiations with Kazakhstan over a new basic agreement between Kazakhstan and the EU. Moratinos hopes such a mandate will be received before the term of the Spanish EU presidency expires on July 1.

Kazakhstan and the European Union will work to expand ties in political and economic areas, and seek to use Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to strengthen the cooperation between international organizations in security matters, including the stabilization of Kyrgyzstan after recent upheavals there.

Such was the main gist of discussions between Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Minister of Foreign Affairs Kanat Saudabayev and Miguel Angel Moratinos, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain which holds the EU presidency now, which took place in Brussels on April 28.

The situation in Kyrgyzstan was one of the top subjects on the agenda for talks.

“I want to really express gratitude to Kazakhstan, as OSCE chairing country, to its President Nazarbayev and Foreign Minister Saudabayev for their role in finding solution to the crisis in Kyrgyzstan,” Moratinos told reporters at a joint press availability with the

Noting a “strong impetus” given by Spain to strengthening the cooperation with Kazakhstan, Saudabayev said such an agreement will help move the cooperation to a new level of strategic partnership.

“As the first EU President Herman van Rompoy and the Kazakh President agreed during their recent [April 10] meeting in Brussels, it is exactly this level of cooperation which will best meet the interests of the people in Europe and Kazakhstan,” Saudabayev noted.

Another issue on the agenda was a request from Kazakhstan to simplify visa procedures for its citizens to visit the European Union. In recent years, Kazakhstan itself has significantly simplified its own visa procedures for EU citizens and has now requested reciprocal steps.

“We will seriously review this request in order to speed up technical work over these issues,” Moratinos announced after the meeting.

The two foreign ministers also discussed issues such as Kazakhstan’s negotiations on WTO accession, the request from Kazakhstan to be granted a market economy country by the EU, as well as the potential for expanding cooperation with Kazakhstan in energy.

### **Kazakh Economy’s Post-Crisis Recovery Faster than Expected**

Just like many other countries, Kazakhstan has experienced the tough effects of the latest global financial crisis. Despite rather gloomy negative predictions, the country’s economy has clearly entered the trajectory of growth. The first quarter of 2010 showed the positive trend in almost all sectors of the economy, including agriculture to industry.

As announced by the country’s Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Kazakhstan’s GDP during this period grew by 6.6 percent. Signs of economic recovery confirm the effectiveness of anti-crisis measures pursued by Kazakhstan.

During the toughest period of the global financial crisis in late 2008 and early 2009, the Kazakh Government, the National Bank and the Agency for Financial Supervision implemented a set of anti-crisis measures. These are aimed at stabilizing the financial sector,

dealing with problems of the real estate market, extending support measures for small and midsize businesses, investing in agro-industrial complex and implementing a number of large industrial projects, as well as encouraging economic projects providing temporary employment for unskilled workers, and support for socially vulnerable categories of citizens.

Owing to these measures, Kazakhstan has prevented a recession. According to the official data, in 2009 Kazakhstan’s GDP increased by 1.2%, while industrial growth was at the level of 1.7%.

Kazakhstan is one of the few post-Soviet countries that have shown good economic performance at the height of financial crisis. Russia’s GDP, according to various estimates, declined over the past year by 6-8%, while Ukraine’s - by 14-15%.

The 6,6% growth in the Kazakh economy, as announced by Minister of Economic Development and Trade Zhanar Aytzhanova on April 26, spans virtually all major sectors of the economy compared to the corresponding period of the last year. Industry productivity and trade grew by 11,5%. Despite the off-season period, agriculture showed an increase of 2.4%. Transport showed growth of 5.2%, and the communication industry grew by 4.5%.

One of the drivers for the growth is a program of accelerated industrial development and innovation, launched in Kazakhstan in the midst of crisis.



Kazakh economy’s 6.6 percent growth Means anti-crisis measures are working, believes the country’s Economic Development and Trade Minister Zhanar Aytzhanova.

Photo by KazInform Agency

In the first quarter of 2010, Kazakhstan's foreign trade turnover showed strong positive dynamics as well. Kazakhstan's total foreign trade volume exceeded US\$ 11.6 billion, which is 25% higher compared to the corresponding period of 2009. Kazakhstan's exports grew by 60.1% (to US\$ 8.5 billion), while imports, by contrast, fell by 17.7% (to US\$ 3.1 billion). Thus, the trade surplus amounted to US\$ 5.4 billion, whereas last year it was almost four times smaller (US\$ 1.5 billion).

From the very beginning of the global financial crunch, experts have noted the high efficiency of anti-crisis measures taken by Kazakhstan. In particular, director of a Russian non-governmental organization, "Business solidarity", Vitaly Sednev said the government intervention in economic processes has been reasonable in Kazakhstan as the recession here lasted only four months. Hence, international rating agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's changed their outlook for Kazakhstan from the "negative" to "stable" quite quickly.

The success of anti-crisis measures was ensured by the effective use of finances drawn from the National Fund of Kazakhstan, in the amount of more than 10 billion dollars.

"The aggregate amount of assets of the National Fund and foreign reserves by the end of 2009 amounted to US\$ 47.6 billion. Today, the National Fund has more assets than last December despite the fact that its assets were the main source of funding for anti-crisis measures," Minister Aytzhanova said.

The social sector is no less important in analyzing a country's economy. Implementing the Strategy of regional employment and retraining, known in Kazakhstan as "The Road Map", has created nearly 400,000 jobs, thus keeping the unemployment rate within 6.3%, which is the minimum rate in recent years. The average wage amounted to 66,400 tenge (146 KZT = 1 US\$). Moreover, as of April 1, pensions and wages of public sector employees have been increased by 25%.

This is for the first time in two last years that Kazakhstan's economy shows such a positive trend, Prime Minister Karim Massimov stated at a government meeting on April 26.

## Anti-Crisis Program Positively Effects Financial Sector



Kazakhstan was one of the first to offer state support for the national economy. Last autumn, the Government presented an ambitious plan of economic assistance, focused on several areas most affected by the economic crisis. This helped to get positive results in the financial sector.

Photo by RFCA

The Government's persistent economic recovery actions over the past several quarters have ensured real economic growth in Kazakhstan, helping lower the inflation and prevent unemployment from skyrocketing.

The effects of the global financial and economic crisis, which started to influence Kazakhstan as early as 2007, have by now been largely overcome as the country posted a 6.6 percent economic growth in the first quarter of 2010. Still, the situation requires watchfulness and does not leave any room for complacency, as this year issues such as stability of the banking sector remain front and center in the consideration of policy makers.

To discuss these trends and goals for the immediate future, President Nursultan Nazarbayev gathered representatives of the country's major financial regulators on April 26 in Almaty, including Kazakhstan's National Bank, the Agency on Regulation and Supervision of

Financial Markets and Financial Organizations, and the Agency on Regulation of the Regional Financial Center in Almaty (RFCA).

Chairman of the National Bank Grigory Marchenko, CEO of the National Welfare Fund *Samruk-Kazyna* Kairat Kelimbetov and heads of the two Agencies Yelena Bakhmutova and Arken Arystanov spoke at the meeting.

President Nazarbayev said much work has been done by financial regulators over the last year. Today, the money allocated within the state anti-crisis program by the National Welfare Fund for key

economic sectors have been almost entirely used on adequate and timely programs, which allowed stabilizing the country's financial system.

"We managed to lower inflation rate, bring down the level of unemployment, and, most importantly, sustained the real growth of Kazakhstan's economy," Nazarbayev stressed.

As officials gave a detailed and thorough report on their agencies' activities, President Nazarbayev praised results of the last year's activity of the national monetary and financial institutions and posed a number of new tasks for the further development of financial sector and monetary policy of the state.

In 2009, Kazakhstan's banking sector has increased its deposit base, including the growth of population's deposits by nearly 28.5 %. The external debt of the country's banking sector will be eased by positive restructuring of bank liabilities, assisted by the National Welfare Fund *Samruk Kazyna*.

President Nazarbayev drew particular attention to the necessity of implementing a recently adopted Convention on the country's financial sector development during the post-crisis period. He said the country's economy should be ready for future financial challenges, having the advanced and modern early response system, as well as a strong institutional macro and micro-prudential regulation.

During the meeting the participants noted that successful post-crisis development of Kazakhstan's economy and realization of a five-year industrialization plan will depend on the state's ability to mobilize the required financial resources, and to ensure their efficient use.

Working to build a new business environment, aimed at the high-margin production development, the evolvement of stock market and other alternative sourcing mechanisms gain special significance. For their part, the financial system and state regulators should promote the intensified economic diversification, which will remain a key priority for the Government and all financial institutions in Kazakhstan in the near future.

On the whole, the country's economic development in 2010 has seen a continuous increase. Following the results of the first quarter of a year, the country's GDP has grown by 6.6%, while the industry and trade went up by 11.5% and 10.5% accordingly. At the same time, during the first two months of 2010 the country's export has increased by 60% compared to the same period in 2009. While these increases can be attributed to a much better situation on world energy markets, real production volumes have in fact also gone up.

## **Kazakhstan, Iran Announce Plans to Complete Railway Link in 2011**



A new railway link between Kazakhstan and Iran will increase trade volume and overall level of economic cooperation between the two states.

Photo by Kursiv.kz

Kazakhstan and Iran are determined to expand their long-lasting practical cooperation, as was confirmed at the 11<sup>th</sup> joint Kazakh-Iran Intergovernmental Committee meeting last week in Tehran. The Kazakh delegation, with Minister of Transport and Communications Abalgazy Kussainov at the head, met their Iranian counterparts, led by Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki.

Representatives of ministries, state agencies and business community of Kazakhstan and Iran discussed the issues of trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation. They also reviewed a wide range of problems in the spheres of agriculture, industry, oil and mineral resources, workforce potential, transport and communications, law, tourism, scientific research and healthcare.

Addressing the agenda, the Committee expressed satisfaction with the pace of cooperation between the two states. Participants signed a number of memoranda of understanding in economic,

commercial, industrial and mining, transportation, tourism, sports, education and communications areas.

Abalgazy Kussainov also announced the Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan railroad will become operational in 2011.

“Some 470 km of this railroad pass through Turkmenistan, and we expect the project in this country to be completed in the near future in co-operation with Iranian companies. The total length of Uzun-Atrani-Gorgan railroad is 670 km. A small portion of this railroad is in Iran, while some 138 km of the railroad is in Kazakhstan,” he said.

“We started constructing the railroad last year, and we will complete it by the declared deadline in 2011,” Kussainov added at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki after the meeting.

According to the project, the railroad will extend from Berekat to Atrak and will reach the borders of Iran. It will link Persian Gulf region to northern European countries, also connecting Central Asian states to the Chinese and Southeast Asia railroad.

Kussainov stressed bilateral economic ties between Kazakhstan and Iran keep growing.

“At a trade conference in Kazakhstan last year, 86 Kazakh and 106 Iranian companies demonstrated a strong potential and will to intensify their interaction. During the event, the need for bolstering the two-way cooperation in economic sector was clarified more than before,” he noted. The Kazakh minister also expressed hope the first flight between Iran and Kazakhstan will be launched on May 27, providing a service from Almaty to Tehran,

Addressing the press conference in Tehran, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki of Iran reaffirmed his country’s desire to expand ties with Kazakhstan. According to him, today Kazakhstan imports technical and engineering services in the field of road and home building. Mottaki said negotiations are underway to export services in oil and gas industries.

“Annual trade between the two states is currently around US\$ 2 billion, but Iranian and Kazakh presidents have stressed the need to increase the two-way trade to US\$ 10 billion. The promotion of relations necessitates the expansion of ties in banking, joint ventures, and transportation sectors and easing the issuance of visas for businessmen of the two countries,” he concluded.

The Iranian foreign minister noted swapping Kazakh oil via Iran continues, and Iran intends to improve this swapping by ship through the Caspian Sea and using a pipeline system.

Kazakhstan and Iran established diplomatic relations between in 1992, and later opened their respective embassies in Tehran and Almaty.

In 2008, the trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Iran amounted to US\$ 989.4 million and is growing further. As of today, more than 60 intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements and official documents have been signed, creating a basis for development of mutual relations.

### **Also in the News:**

- Kazakhstan hopes Iran would prove to the international community its nuclear program is entirely peaceful, President Nazarbayev stated as he received credentials from a newly appointed Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Gorban Seifi on April 29. “Kazakhstan pays serious attention to traditional friendship and partnership with Iran”, the President added. Kazakhstan also looks forward to enhancing dynamics of bilateral political contacts with Great Britain and hopes to expand further the cooperation in trade and economy, President Nazarbayev said as he received credentials from David John Moran, a newly appointed Ambassador of the UK to Kazakhstan. “We hope that the incoming parliamentary elections in Great Britain and shaping of a new government would boost the Kazakh-British relations”, he said. On the same day, the President received credentials from newly appointed ambassadors Valery Brylev of the Republic of Belarus and Magtymguly Akmyradov of Turkmenistan. The Kazakh leader stressed he looked forward to a return visit by his Belarusian colleague Alexander Lukashenko to Astana and keeping positive interaction within the Customs Union, EurAsEc, CSTO, and a few other organizations, as well as expanding further mutually advantageous cooperation with Turkmenistan in economy, trade, transport, and culture.
- The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan’s State Secretary – Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev of Kazakhstan held a number of telephone talks with his counterparts this week,

including Foreign Ministers Elmar Mamadyarov of Azerbaijan, Edward Nalbandyan of Armenia, Michael Spindelegger of Austria, and Franco Frattini of Italy. All conversations featured exchange of views on Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE, the agenda for the upcoming Informal Council of Foreign Ministers of the organization's member states and a Summit proposed by President Nazarbayev. The talks also included discussion of Kazakh OSCE chairmanship's contribution to the peaceful settlement of the latest political crisis in Kyrgyzstan. Armenian and Azerbaijani sides agreed to consider carefully Astana's proposal to hold direct talks between their presidents in Astana on the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh.

- Kazakhstan formed a second battalion of the "Kazbrig" peacekeeping brigade on the basis of a military unit in Almaty, the Defence Ministry's officials announced at the meeting with Robert Simmons, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Central Asia and Caucasus. "I believe Kazakhstan has made a big step forward by creating one more Kazbrig battalion. This is an important moment in relations between Kazakhstan and the United States," Simmons said referring to the fact that the U.S. has helped finance the training of a new battalion. According to him, this battalion can replace the existing squad if the latter is busy in other peacekeeping operations. The new battalion was formed out of 500 officers and soldiers. The first peacekeeping unit of Kazbat was created in the early 2000s. It carried out its mission in Iraq from 2003 to 2008.
- The capital cities of Kazakhstan and Turkey have agreed to further enhance bilateral cooperation and increase share of investment projects. This was announced during a meeting of Mayors Imanali Tasmagambetov of Astana and Melih Gokchek of Ankara. This was Gokchek's fourth visit to the capital of Kazakhstan. Astana and Ankara are twin cities.
- Estimated free liquidity of Kazkommertsbank, the nation's largest credit institution, amounts to US\$ three billion, and the bank does not need additional investment from the government, the bank chairman Nina Zhussupova stated at a press conference in Almaty this week. She also noted this year Kazakh companies can once again start borrowing from foreign markets. The main shareholders of Kazkommertsbank are JSC "Central Asian Investment Company", Alnair Capital Holding, the SamrukKazyna national welfare fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- The Atyrau oil refinery will start producing Euro-4 standard gasoline soon, its general director Talgat Baitaz stated this week. Within the next four years, about US\$ 2.3 billion will be invested in the reconstruction of the Atyrau refinery. This year they will start construction of facilities for the production of aromatic hydrocarbons which improves the quality of fuel. Since 2013, the plant will start production of Euro-4 standard gasoline.
- Czech Airlines will open a direct regular flight Astana - Prague - Astana as of June 2. Flights will be carried out twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, using Airbus-319, air carrier reports. Since 2008 Czech Airlines has operated direct flights from Almaty to Prague.
- Education and Science Minister Andrei Fursenko of Russia supported the initiative of Minister of Education and Science Zhanseit Tuimebayev of Kazakhstan on the expansion of educational opportunities in the Kazakh language in Russia. "We should be given every opportunity in Russia for the establishment of schools, where in addition to Russian language students will study Kazakh and other languages of the peoples living in Russia," he said at the First Congress of Teachers in Astana. Currently there are more than a million ethnic Kazakhs living in Russia. In Novosibirsk, which is Russia's third largest city, there are schools where teaching is conducted entirely in Kazakh language. In total, more than 10,000 children study Kazakh language in Russia.
- The United Nations Development Program presented in Astana its new project called "Development of inclusive markets in Eastern Europe and CIS project", which is part of a global initiative to attract private sector in addressing poverty issues. Inclusive markets are those ones that involve vulnerable populations such as small entrepreneurs, employees and distributors and

consumers of affordable goods and services. According to UNDP, inclusive projects benefit both business and low-income population.

- As part of the celebration of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in the Great Patriotic War, JSC Kazakhtelecom congratulates all veterans, and gives them a possibility to call their brother-soldiers or relatives around the world free of charge. In addition, from May 7 to May 9 Kazakhtelecom provides all subscribers discounts on long distance calls within Kazakhstan.

### **Things to Watch:**

- Kazakhstan will take part in the World Exhibition EXPO-2010 in Shanghai from May 1 to October 31. The national pavilion labeled “Astana, the Heart of Eurasia” will promote one of the youngest and fastest growing capital cities of the modern world. It will be located in the “Asia” zone next to the pavilions of Japan and South Korea.
- Kazakhstan’s Ministry of Transport and Communications organizes an air marathon dedicated to the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Victory in Great Patriotic War. It aims to pay tribute to veterans, as well as advertise a pilot’s profession among the young people. In this marathon, six ultra-light aircrafts are involved, which are planning to fly through almost the whole country. The route includes Semey, Taldykorgan, Almaty, Shymkent, Kyzylorda, Aktobe, Atyrau, Uralsk, and Petropavlovsk. The end point, as well as the starting point, will be Astana, where they will land on May 4. The total length of the planned route is 8,500 km.

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