



OSCE Summit in 2010 to Take Place in Astana, Informal Ministerial Decides (Almaty meeting backs Corfu Process, Police Advisory Mission to Kyrgyzstan)

Saudabayev Urges Expanding Engagement between OSCE and Afghanistan (OSCE CiO speaks at the International Conference in Kabul, holds important talks)

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OSCE Summit in 2010 to Take Place in Astana, Informal Ministerial Decides



“We will be very glad to see you at the OSCE summit in Astana at the end of this year”, said the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev addressing the press conference following the Informal ministerial meeting in the Almaty region on July 17, 2010.

Photo by the OSCE/Velimir Alic

Saudabayev noted.

Formal decisions by the OSCE Permanent Council, including in relation to the dates of the proposed summit, will need to follow the foreign ministers' agreement.

According to Saudabayev, a key topic for the summit will be the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian community – “shaping a united and indivisible security space, free of dividing lines and different levels of security.”

Other topics include reconfirming States' commitments; reinforcing the OSCE's institutional foundation and its transformation into a full-fledged international organization; strengthening arms control; enhancing the OSCE toolbox in all three dimensions on early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation; joint development of ways to peacefully settle protracted conflicts; and increased attention to countering trans-national threats.

He also said that boosting OSCE engagement, within its mandate, in international efforts to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan, countering economic challenges in the post-crisis period,

strengthening the OSCE's potential to counteract challenges in the human dimension and enhancing OSCE institutions' ability to monitor implementation would also be discussed.

In his statement to the Ministers of the 56 OSCE participating States, Saudabayev said that the Organization's ability "to effectively react and resolve existing and new challenges, including the need to stabilize the situation in Kyrgyzstan, will be a test of the OSCE's vitality."

"The OSCE is to play a key role in rendering assistance to Kyrgyzstan, including through the enhancement of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and the proposed Police Advisory Group, an initiative which was supported by the participating States," he said. "In addition, assistance from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights should be given for the upcoming parliamentary elections."

Security problems in the OSCE area, including Kyrgyzstan, dealing with current challenges through the Corfu Process and a decision on an OSCE summit were on the agenda of the Informal Ministerial.

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, addressing the meeting, said: "The OSCE must prove that it was effective not only in times of the Cold War but that it remains an actively developing body, closely woven into the life of the modern global political and economic system."

"Conducting an OSCE summit in 2010, the year of the 35th anniversary of the Helsinki Final Act, will give a unique chance to demonstrate to the world community the evolution of the Organization from Helsinki to Astana."

Nazarbayev said a summit would promote a common vision "for Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian and world communities based on shared principles and values," help shape the post-crisis financial and economic system, foster tolerance and non-discrimination in the OSCE area, and enhance the international community's engagement with Afghanistan.

President Nazarbayev also announced Kazakhstan would give ten million dollars worth of emergency assistance to Kyrgyzstan, including materials for rebuilding houses and fuel.

The OSCE Chairperson-in-Office statement followed the Kazakh leader's remarks. Saudabayev informed the meeting participants about the efforts of the OSCE Chairmanship to stabilize the situation in Kyrgyzstan in close co-ordination with international community, including "the process of agreeing on deploying a Police Advisory Group to Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, on the request of Kyrgyzstan, in the nearest future."

The President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Petros Efthymiou, stressed the importance of the contribution that OSCE Parliamentarians can play in crisis situations, such as that in Kyrgyzstan. "The Corfu Process was an excellent start to bringing relevance back to the OSCE through dialogue. It is very important that focus has rightly moved toward strengthening the Organization's capacity for early reaction to evolving crisis situations," he said.

The Corfu Process is an OSCE-anchored dialogue on the future of the European security that was launched at the OSCE's first informal ministerial meeting, held last June on the Greek island of Corfu.

OSCE Secretary General Marc Perrin de Brichambaut said the Almaty meeting and the proposed summit were opportunities to renew the participating States' shared ownership of OSCE commitments, to address problems dividing states, including protracted conflicts and arms control, and to act on common challenges such as transnational threats, the situation in Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan.

"The participating States, under the guidance of Kazakhstan, have worked hard to identify problems and gaps of understanding. Steps have been taken to restore a sense of trust. The time has come to move to concrete action and step up the pace," he said.

Ambassador Herbert Salber, the Director of the OSCE Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Centre, announced the news on the informal meeting's first day on July 16 that the OSCE and Kyrgyzstan have agreed on principles and modalities for an OSCE Police Advisory Group that is to be sent to Kyrgyzstan pending a decision on deployment. He said the agreement marked a major step forward toward the deployment of the OSCE Police Advisory Group. A consensus decision by the OSCE Permanent Council, which comprises ambassadors from the 56 participating States, is needed before the deployment can take place. The agreement said the group would comprise 52 police officers with the possibility to send an additional 50 officers at a later stage. The group would be in Kyrgyzstan for four months, with a possibility to extend as needed and agreed.

"The task of this mission is first of all advising the Kyrgyz police. The Police Advisory Group will have contact with all parts of the population in southern Kyrgyzstan," Salber said. "They will be

assisting and also monitoring the Kyrgyz police. They will accompany them in their work with the communities there with the objective of strengthening the confidence in this area, in particular between the police and the population.”

The Ak Bulak resort in 35 km from Almaty, where the informal meeting’s key discussions took place on July 17, also hosted the meeting of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia Elmar Mamediarov and Eduard Nalbandyan with the heads of delegations of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of France Bernard Kouchner, and Deputy Secretary of State of the United States James Steinberg. Following the meeting behind the closed doors the three co-chairs released their statement, in which they reminded Azerbaijan and Armenia of their commitment to seek a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, deplored recent developments which have increased tension in the region, including the serious armed incident of June 18-19, and inflammatory public statements. The heads of delegations of the Co-Chair countries renewed their commitment to support the sides in reaching a peace agreement, but reiterated that the primary responsibility to put an end to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still remains with Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders.

Saudabayev Urges Expanding Engagement between OSCE and Afghanistan



Supporting the idea of an OSCE Summit in Astana and the inclusion of issue of Afghanistan in its agenda, President Hamid Karzai expressed his willingness to take part in the summit during the talks with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office Kanat Saudabayev.

Photo by Ilyas Omarov

At the International Conference on Afghanistan, held on July 20 in Kabul, Kazakhstan put forward the strategy prioritizing the rehabilitation and post-conflict restoration of Afghanistan with strengthening the humanitarian component in the assistance from the international community. The visit and participation of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Secretary of State-Minister of Foreign Affairs Kanat Saudabayev of Kazakhstan are viewed as an important step towards development of the

Kazakh-Afghan cooperation and promotion of priorities of Kazakhstan’s OSCE Chairmanship.

President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai opened the conference with a welcome address followed by the speeches of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Afghan Foreign Minister Zalmay Rasul, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and UN Special Representative for Afghanistan Staffan De Mistura.

Commending the Afghan government’s work for the conference organization, Minister Saudabayev expressed a strong determination in the need of the international community’s supporting the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy in order to build a stable, democratic, and prosperous Afghan state.

“We are convinced of the need to strengthen the cooperation of multilateral structures in the settlement of the Afghan issue with the leading role of the United Nations and taking into account the position of the Afghan Government,” he said.

Speaking of the enhancing of the security in the country Saudabayev reminded of the concrete proposals on the training of Afghan border officials and police personnel at training centers in Kazakhstan.

As for the combating drug trafficking and related threats, Saudabayev stressed: “Kazakhstan considers it necessary to make use to the maximum extent possible of the opportunities provided by the UN Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) for combating illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors and to share information between the OSCE Action against Terrorism Unit and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization”.

Calling upon the OSCE countries to actively involve in resolving the Afghan issue, Saudabayev emphasized the importance of changing the very paradigm of combating challenges, emanating from Afghanistan, from military means to eradication of sources of these challenges.

Kazakhstan actively promotes the Afghan agenda during ongoing events held under the auspices of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in the OSCE. On July 8 and 9 this year, an International Conference on Combating the Threat of Illicit Drugs and Strengthening Control of Precursor Chemicals took place under our auspices in Vienna. The Afghan issue will also be taken up at the planned OSCE Conference on combating terrorism on 20 and 21 October this year in Astana.



Secretary Clinton said she was pleased with a consensus reached at the recent OSCE informal ministerial in Astana regarding holding the OSCE summit in Astana this year.

Photo by Ilyas Omarov

which will be directed to Afghanistan's reconstruction efforts.

The year of 2010 will see the start of the Kazakh-Afghan intergovernmental agreement on providing vocational training for one thousand Afghans at the Kazakh universities, and for this purpose Astana has allocated US\$ 50 million.

As part of his visit to Kabul, Saudabayev held talks with President Hamid Karzai on the issues of cooperation in the multilateral and bilateral formats.

President Karzai commended the results of a recent informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers in Almaty, including the consensus on holding the OSCE summit in Kazakhstan this year.

Afghanistan firmly supports Kazakhstan's efforts as OSCE Chairman and the initiative of President Nursultan Nazarbayev to hold the OSCE Summit, one of the key themes of which may be increasing the assistance to Afghanistan by the OSCE countries, Karzai stressed.

During the meeting with the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon the sides noted the importance of proper celebration of August 29 as the UN-recognized International Day Against Nuclear Tests. Ban Ki-moon and Saudabayev agreed to continue regular consultations on the situation in Central Asia and other important international issues.

Saudabayev also held talks with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, where they discussed bilateral issues and the cooperation within the OSCE.

Secretary Clinton thanked Kazakhstan for the recent ratification of an agreement for land transit of special cargoes through Kazakhstan onto Afghanistan, which is an important element in the overall efforts to bring stability to Afghanistan.

She said she was pleased with a consensus reached at the recent OSCE informal ministerial in Astana regarding holding the OSCE summit this year, and said the United States is looking forward to finalizing the exact dates for such a meeting later this year. Secretary Clinton also expressed satisfaction with the understanding reached by the OSCE foreign ministers that the OSCE is to send a Police Advisory Group to Kyrgyzstan shortly. She thanked Kazakhstan for President Nursultan Nazarbayev's 'essential' leadership in helping resolve the crisis in Kyrgyzstan.

The OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna is to make a formal decision on both the deployment of the Police Advisory Group and the dates of the summit later this year.

"Helping the Afghans move from the military conflict to a constructive track is a main objective of both the OSCE and international coalition," Saudabayev stressed. "On behalf of the OSCE, I would like to express our readiness to assist in the electoral reform and our hope that the upcoming parliamentary election of September 18 will contribute to the establishment of the full-fledged legislative and executive branches of the government and, ultimately, to building a stable and democratic state in Afghanistan." [For the full text of the speech, please visit www.mfa.kz]

Realizing the Afghan problems could not be solved only militarily, Kazakhstan on the bilateral basis takes active part in the processes of rehabilitating Afghanistan.

Over recent years, Kazakhstan has allocated some US\$ 4 million to rebuilding schools, hospitals and roads in

Afghanistan. Astana has also delivered to Afghanistan about three thousand tons of wheat, transferred US\$ 1 million to the Special Fund for Islamic solidarity of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the part of

While in Kabul, Saudabayev also conferred with a number of colleagues including Zalmai Rasoul of Afghanistan, Sergei Lavrov of Russia, Guido Westerwelle of Germany, Ahmet Davutoğlu of Turkey, Audronius Azubalis of Lithuania, Hamrokhon Zarifi of Tajikistan, as well as EU High Representative for foreign policy Baroness Catherine Ashton.

The International Conference on Afghanistan in Kabul was designed as an event summing up the results of intensive work and thorough discussion of the policy priorities of the Afghan Government, which are implemented through national programs aimed at promoting economic growth and job creation. Based on the commitments made at the London Conference (January 2010), this conference in Kabul is organized to support the Afghan authorities to establish a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Germany, Kazakhstan Advance Business Cooperation, Political Contacts



The common positions on a number of fundamental issues on the international agenda made it possible to find common ground during the bilateral negotiations. Astana and Berlin look in the same direction on the way to today's prospects and challenges.

Photo by Sergey Bondarenko / Bolatbek Otarbayev

Astana and Berlin are eager to keep the good dynamic of their political contacts, economic cooperation, and humanitarian ties. This was confirmed by a first visit paid to Kazakhstan by German Chancellor Angela Merkel on July 18, which was marked by fruitful talks with President Nazarbayev and the signing of a range of agreements and contracts advancing ties between

government agencies and leading businesses of the two nations.

Following the official welcome ceremony in the Akorda presidential palace, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Angela Merkel held bilateral talks to discuss prospects for expanding Kazakh-German trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

The counterparts emphasized that the two countries maintain a high-level and intensive political dialogue.

“This is our fifth meeting in three years which speaks of the strength and growth of our bilateral relations,” President Nazarbayev said at a joint press conference following the talks.

A solid contractual and legal framework has been established between Kazakhstan and Germany. The volume of mutual trade has steadily increased. Joint investment projects are actively under way. The cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian spheres is being expanded. In particular, the Year of Kazakhstan in Germany in 2009, the first large-scale presentation of Kazakhstan in western European countries, was successful. The Year of Germany in Kazakhstan 2010 is being conducted this year.

Despite the effects of the global recession, since last year the volume of mutual trade turnover exceeded US\$ 2.9 billion and accounted for US\$ 1.5 billion in the first six months of 2010. There are 800 Kazakh-German companies currently working in Kazakhstan. The inflow of German investment to Kazakhstan's economy reached about US\$ 3 billion. In turn, Kazakhstan invested more than US\$ 4 billion in the German economy.

“Given the economic growth in Germany in the first half of this year, and given the growth of 8 percent in Kazakhstan in the first six months of this year, we see a great potential for cooperation,” President Nazarbayev said. “Our trade volume amounts to 3 billion dollars annually, and we will seek to expand this to 10 billion dollars in the next few years.”

The opportunities on enhancing involvement of German companies in the state programme from Accelerated Industrial Development were discussed in the course of the talks. Agreements on the development of mutually beneficial collaboration in metallurgy industry, engineering, agriculture, transport, telecommunications, research and peaceful use of outer space, retraining of top economic managers have been achieved.

Nursultan Nazarbayev and Angela Merkel also discussed the stabilization of the situation in Kyrgyzstan, the rehabilitation of Afghanistan as well as the topical issues on international security and regional stability. The two leaders noted Astana and Berlin share similar positions on current pressing problems of global politics.

Germany considers Kazakhstan as an anchor of stability and development in the region and supports Kazakhstan's initiatives in the framework of Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship and in forging inter-religious and inter-confessional dialogue.

In turn, Kazakhstan considers Germany a key partner in the realization of the state programme, the "The Path to Europe." The main objective is to transfer the collaboration between Kazakhstan and the EU to a new level of strategic partnership, and to attract European modern technologies and management experience.

The sides signed nine intergovernmental and interagency agreements, while 34 contracts concerned projects worth of above 2 billion Euros.

Following the talks and overseeing signing some of the agreements, Nazarbayev and Merkel held a joint press conference. Among other things the Kazakh President expressed his hope that the good relations between Kazakhstan and Germany would be beneficial for elaborating a new Kazakh-EU agreement on partnership, while Merkel reminded her government had always supported the Kazakh chairmanship of the OSCE and said she would try her best to attend the upcoming summit later this year in Astana.

"This is my first visit and the first visit to Kazakhstan. Last year's Year of Kazakhstan in Germany generated a lot of interest in Kazakhstan, and we hope this year's Year of Germany in Kazakhstan will do the same," Chancellor Merkel said. "The German diaspora in Kazakhstan and the Germans who came to Germany from Kazakhstan is a bridge which we will need to use more in the future."

Indeed, an important element in advancing ties between the two nations is the presence of German diaspora of 230,000 in Kazakhstan, with almost a million former Kazakh citizens of German ethnicity, as well as a few thousand ethnic Kazakhs living in the European Union's most populous country.

"We have always supported Kazakhstan's bid for chairmanship of the OSCE as we view this as an encouragement for the country to continue to move along the path of democratic reforms, developing freedom of the media," Merkel said. "I have always supported holding such an OSCE summit, and we note that foreign ministers have just agreed to hold such a summit. Substance needs to be developed for the summit to take place, however. Within the next 14 days, officials will be looking for an acceptable date for the summit."

Earlier during the day, Nazarbayev and Merkel attended a Kazakh-German Business Forum hosted by Hotel Rixos in the capital city.

Addressing the leading business people of both nations, Nazarbayev underlined Germany is among Kazakhstan's most reliable and key international partners. Some of the world's leading companies from Germany, such as Siemens AG, Thyssen Krupp, Knauf, Henkel, Klaas, Metro AG, and large financial institutes as Deutsche Bank, DEG, and Allianz have worked for a while in what has been one of the fastest growing markets globally. The President urged German businesses to participate in implementing innovative projects within Kazakhstan's new ambitious programme of industrialisation.

In her own speech at the forum, Chancellor Merkel voiced her positive outlook for the Kazakh-German economic cooperation.

"Kazakhstan is an economic leader in Central Asia. Our bilateral trade with Kazakhstan makes 90 percent of our total turnover with this region and 75 percent of German exports to Central Asia," she stated. "Kazakhstan remains Germany's most important economic partner in this region."

Kazakhstan and Germany have had diplomatic relations since February 11, 1992. The German Embassy in Kazakhstan opened in December 1992, and the Kazakh Embassy in Germany in September 1993. Last year, the trade turnover between the two countries fell to 3.7 billion Euros compared to 6.1 in 2008. It is, however, back on the rise this year with the data from the first five months of 2010 showing an increase of 72% compared to the same period a year ago.

Team Astana High at Tour de France: Vino Wins Stage, Contador in Yellow



Astana rider Alexander Vinokourov solos into the finish line to win the 196km stage 13 of the Tour de France on July 17, 2010 in Revel, France. The win of July 17 becomes a huge motivation for the team for the next few stages in the Pyrenees.

Photo by the Associated Press Agency

The Astana cycling team and its two leaders, Spaniard Alberto Contador and Kazakh Alexander Vinokourov, are showing their best at this year's Tour de France, the world's most prestigious cycle race.

On Monday, Contador claimed the yellow jersey of the overall leader with six stages left for the grand finish at Champs Elysees in Paris this weekend. This augurs well for the third victory for the gifted Spanish rider, following his successes in 2007 and 2009.

While working hard primarily to help Contador reach his goal, Vinokourov also produced a decent comeback to Tour de France by winning the 13th stage last Saturday and taking the 9th place in overall standings so far. This means he still has a chance of repeating his greatest success of the 3rd place he took back in 2003, which stands next to his Olympic silver medal from Sydney in 2000.

Vinokourov's victory at the Tour de France stage followed a hard day on July 16, when the Kazakh racer tried and failed to lead the stage. However, the man who is known for his tenacious riding tried his luck again, only this time he had the power to finish his attack with a victory.

"It was a beautiful victory, and a beautiful reward," Vinokourov said after winning a Tour stage for the fourth time in his career. The Kazakh racer had already won a stage in the 2003 Tour and two in 2005. "My ambition on the Tour was to win a stage. For me and my family, it's exceptional."

Speaking about what he thought was the inspiration and a reason of his success, Vinokourov said: "When I saw Sanchez (of Caisse d'Epargne) and Ballan (of BMC Racing) attack, I told myself, I must try. It was not planned, but I knew it was not a finish for the sprinters with the last bump. I knew the bump, as the Tour had already been here in 2005. I realized that if I had a gap of 15 seconds before the descent it could be a stage win, so I wanted to try."

Vinokourov dashed forward from the rest at the end and was followed in a mass sprint by Mark Cavendish of Britain and Alessandro Petacchi of Italy. They finished 13 seconds behind Vinokourov.

"To participate in the Tour, for me it was already a great victory, but to win this stage, I think there are no words to describe what it represents," the 36-year old explained. "It is a very good win for my career, it is exceptional, and to win in the Tour brings with it a lot of emotion, even today, as yesterday, I heard lots of encouragement, with people on the side of the road shouting "Vino", and it is a lot of motivation, it's also why I wanted to try," he continued.

A day earlier, Vinokourov's advantage slipped away in the final after the attack of the Spaniard Joaquin Rodriguez. Nevertheless, Astana's leader Contador had followed his compatriot and was able to gain back 10 seconds for the overall on the previous yellow jersey holder, Andy Schleck of Luxembourg. The stage ended with Rodriguez taking the win, and Contador and Vinokourov taking second and third places respectively.

"Sure, yesterday could have been a beautiful team win, I wish we had won together, Alberto and me, and I was a little disappointed that neither one of us had won. It was a great opportunity for the team, and now we can say that today was a nice reward after the efforts and hard work yesterday," Vinokourov said Saturday.

"It's like a dream come true for me to win here. Today my legs felt good and I decided to try again. I knew the sprinters were coming fast behind me and I gave everything I had. Now I am content and I will work 100 percent to help Alberto win this Tour with Astana," he added.

Vinokourov also noted that the 13th Tour de France stage victory is a great comeback for the whole team. "I saw that Alberto was very pleased, I think that this victory is important psychologically for the team," he said.

After hugging his Astana teammate at the finish, Contador said: "I am happier than I would have been had I won myself."

For Vinokourov, the stage win was important because this it his first Tour since he was banned from the sport on alleged blood-doping three years ago. The Kazakh veteran, who won the Vuelta of Spain in 2006, was banned for 24 months during the 2007 Tour de France in one of the biggest scandals of the doping-marred race that year. Vinokourov always insisted his innocence and had already announced his retirement from sports. He couldn't make it too long, however, without racing, so in August 2009, he was riding on the professional level again, rejoining Astana and performing impressively in the world's most prestigious and difficult races.

Vinokourov has since said he didn't want to dwell on the past. He wanted to regain the trust of fans and prove that he can win with hard work.

"I showed I worked hard in these two years," he said Saturday. "This is the new Vino, I've already won in Liege, and it was wonderful."

The Tour de France is the best known and most prestigious of cycling's three "Grand Tours." It is a bicycle race that covers approximately 3,600 kilometres throughout France and bordering countries. This year it started on July 3 in Rotterdam and finishes traditionally in Paris on the last Sunday of July, which this year falls on July 25. The race lasts three weeks and attracts best professionals from around the world. The rider with the lowest aggregate time at the end of each day wears a yellow jersey.

Also in the News:

- On July 19, OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakh Secretary of State and Foreign Minister Kanat Saudabayev held a telephone conversation with President of Kyrgyz Republic Roza Otunbayeva. The head of Kyrgyzstan expressed her gratitude to the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev for establishing a high-level working group and sending to the country a representative delegation headed by First Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Umirzak Shukeev. A joint meeting with the similar working group headed by the First Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Amangeldy Muraliyev established a good basis for close cooperation in future, Otunbayeva stressed. She also expressed hope for the successful holding of an international donor conference on Kyrgyzstan in Almaty in August this year. Later in the day, Saudabayev held a telephone conversation with Tajikistan Foreign Minister Hamrokhon Zarifi. In light of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the sides discussed topical issues of regional cooperation and expressed their mutual interest in deepening bilateral political and economic partnership.
- On July 19, Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov and Chairman of the Executive Board of Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) Igor Finogenov discussed the bank's participation in the state programme of accelerated industrial and innovational development (PAIID) of Kazakhstan. The parties considered the implementation of various investment projects within the programme, including those in metallurgy, chemistry, power and transport engineering. The bank is going to invest nearly US\$ 600 million into projects under Kazakhstan's programme. EDB is a multilateral financial institution established by Kazakhstan and Russia, who donated US\$ 0.5 and US\$ 1 billion to its owners' capital, with Tajikistan and Armenia joining later with smaller inputs.
- Kazakhstan has completed its bilateral negotiations with the European Union on the commodity market access carried under the Central Asian nation's accession to the World Trade Organization, the press service of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade informed on July 19. Minister Aitzhanova held a meeting with EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht last Wednesday in Brussels. During the two-day visit the Minister also held talks on Kazakhstan's export duties on commodities and access to financial services market. "The European Union, which includes 27 countries, is a major trading partner of Kazakhstan. In 2009, the total foreign trade volume reached US\$ 70 billion, while the share in trade with EU accounted for about US\$ 30 billion", she said. A day earlier, the Minister told reporters Kazakhstan will complete all bilateral negotiations aimed at the country's accession to WTO, including with the EU, the United States and Saudi Arabia. In her words, the next year Kazakhstan will start negotiations in a multilateral format.
- More than 35,000 Kazakh students will receive educational grants to study in universities of the country according to the order of the Ministry of Education and Science signed by Minister Zhanseyit Tuimebayev on June 9, 2010. According to the document, the students applying for

engineering and technology specialties will get the largest number of educational state grants for the full-time study, which accounts for 11,005. The ministry has also allocated grants for humanities, law, art, social sciences, economics, business, military affairs and security, health and welfare medicine, and other specialisations.

- On July 19, residents of Qaraghandy marked the Cucumber Day. The city's central square hosted the unconventional celebration. Organizers of the festivity brought a 35-litre barrel of cucumbers and spices, following which every guest could pickle the vegetables. In addition, the participants of the event recited poems and sang songs about cucumbers. "Qaraghandy has joined 26 cities in the Commonwealth of Independent States which celebrate the holiday annually. The campaign symbolizes the start of harvesting and end of the crisis," organizer of the show Tatyana Golubtsova said.
- The rugby players from Uruguay defeated their Kazakh opponents 44-7 on July 17 in Montevideo's Estadio Charrua and thus claimed the place in two-leg play-off, whose winner will grab the last qualification spot for the Rugby World Cup 2011 in New Zealand.

Things to Watch:

- On July 21 FC Aktobe, champions of Kazakhstan's Super League visit Georgian FC Olympia to play in the return leg of UEFA Champions League's first round of qualification. The next day FC Atyrau goes to Hungary to play local FC Djor in the return leg of the second round of Europa League qualification. The team from Aktobe won their first match 2-0, while FC Atyrau lost theirs with the same score.
- On July 30-31, the First International Livestock Forum "KazMeat & Milk 2010" will take place in Astana. The leading producers of meat and dairy products from Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Europe will gather to discuss issues of attracting investments into the industry. Representatives of the World Bank and World Food Programme are expected to partake in the event. A conference of meat producers will also be held a part of the forum.

ASTANA CALLING is a bi-weekly online publication of
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
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