



NEWSLETTER

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December 14, 2005

№ 25

Perspectives of the Settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in 2006

Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Araz Azimov commented on recent talks between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Armenia on the sideline of the OSCE Ministerial Meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia and on the prospect of the resolution of the conflict. Mr. Azimov pointed to several factors which are favorable for the resolution process in 2006. There will be no election in both countries; construction of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline will be completed; Azerbaijan's successful development. "The new political situation can positively affect the process of settlement of the conflict," Azimov said. He refuted information on the preparation of new proposals by mediators. "There are no new proposals, and nine elements worked out in 2004-2005 within the frameworks of the "Prague process" are on the agenda," Azimov said. The OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, dealing with the resolution of the conflict, are to visit the region on December 14-17.

Parliament of Azerbaijan Expands Its Authority

Milli Mejlis (Parliament) of Azerbaijan adopted amendments to the national legislation which empowered it to appoint members of Central Election Commission, partially elect members of the Council of State Service, as well as members of the Commission for the Fight against Corruption. Additionally, the Parliament will appoint members of the Judicial-Legal Council, as well as members of the Council of Public TV Broadcasting.

Azerbaijan and EU Start Negotiation on New Neighborhood Policy

The delegation of the European Union arrived in Baky on December 12 to start negotiation in the framework of EU New Neighborhood Policy.

At the same time in Brussels the EU hosted Ministerial Troika Meetings with Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. "The Ministerial Troika Meetings welcomed the start of technical consultations with the three countries on the individual Action Plans," a press release issued by the EU Council reads. "These documents will provide a good framework for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to pursue the political and economic reforms in order to foster a closer relationship with the EU," the press release adds.

Azerbaijan Improves its East-West Road Link

The Government of Azerbaijan signed a loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank to improve country's East-West Highway. "The project will expand traffic, trade and investment in the project areas, creating new job and income opportunities and improving access of local communities to markets and social services," says Hong Wang, an ADB Project Economist. "It will also promote regional cooperation by improving the last two sections of a highway that has the potential to become an important route for transit transport between Asia and Europe."

UN General Committee Rejected GUAM's Proposal on Frozen Conflicts

The UN General Committee rejected a request by member-states of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova) on inclusion of the issue of the frozen conflicts in the Black Sea-South Caucasus region in the agenda of UN General Assembly. The proposal gained support of 3 of 28 members of the General Committee – Azerbaijan the UK and the United States, while 5 countries - Russia, Armenia, Angola, Myanmar and Venezuela were against. The rest abstained.