



# NEWSLETTER

Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

275 Slater Street, Suite 904. Ottawa ON K1P 5H9 Canada

Tel: (613) 288 0497 Fax: (613) 230 8089

E-Mail: [azerbaijan@azembassy.ca](mailto:azerbaijan@azembassy.ca)

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## **Israeli Parliament Marks Azerbaijan Republic Day**

Israeli Parliament (Knesset) hosted a ceremony on May 28 Republic Day of Azerbaijan May 24. Israeli Knesset's speaker and acting Israeli President Dalia Itzik made an opening speech at the ceremony organized by newly-established Israeli-Azerbaijan International Association. She praised Azerbaijan-Israel relations and stated that those moved from Azerbaijan have made significant contributions to the development of the Israeli society. President of Israeli-Azerbaijan International Association, Israeli Knesset member, Israeli-Azerbaijan Interparliamentary Friendship Group's Chairman Iosif Shagal said that Azerbaijani Republic Day is marked in Knesset for the first time. "I could never believe that I will be Knesset member while leaving Azerbaijan 17 years ago and celebrate Azerbaijan Republic Day," he said.

## **French President Sarkozy to visit Azerbaijan**

President of France Nicolas Sarkozy will pay an official visit to Azerbaijan. The French Embassy in Baky has not called a certain date for arrival of the president. The French Embassy's spokesperson said that Mr. Sarkozy's visit will be a response to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Paris in January 2007.

## **OSCE Minsk Group Co-chairs Meet Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov**

Yuri Merzliakov, Russian Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group and his French colleague Bernard Fassier together with OSCE Chairman-in-Office's personal representative Andrzej Kasprzyk met Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov. The discussions focused on the core principles of the settlement of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict

and a meeting between Azerbaijani and Armenian Presidents scheduled for June 10.

## **Arsons on the Occupied Territories**

Occurrence of fires in Armenian-occupied Azerbaijani territories again this year demonstrate that we were right last year appealing to the UN and other bodies on this problem, Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov told journalists. This issue was raised in the UN last year, and the UN adopted a special resolution regarding this problem. OSCE assessment commission visited the region.

## **Azerbaijan and Ukraine Negotiate For Establishing GUAM Peacekeeping Forces**

Azerbaijan and Ukraine have started negotiations over establishment of joint military contingent within GUAM, an organization comprising four countries – Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. Azerbaijani and Ukrainian Defense Ministers Safar Abiyev and Anatoly Gritsenko discussed establishing of joint peacekeeping forces during a meeting at the defense industry fair in Turkey

## **Azerbaijan Begins Talks with EU on WTO**

Azerbaijan has launched talks with the European Union in Brussels on accession to the WTO. The talks will focus on strengthening controls on imports and exports. The working party for Azerbaijan's WTO accession was set up in 1997, and held its first meeting in June 2002. Bilateral negotiations on market access are currently underway, on the basis of revised offers in goods and services. Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Mahmud Mammed-Quliyev said that the country is expected to join the body by 2010, if talks go smoothly.