



NEWSLETTER

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Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan Negotiations

On May 19-20 Turkmen President Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov paid an official visit to Azerbaijan. It was first summit between the two countries for the last twelve years. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and his Turkmen counterpart Gurbanguli Berdymukhamedov said that their first talks resulted in several deals, including one on energy, transport corridor, and an agreement to resolve border disputes in the Caspian Sea. Analysts say that this negotiation raises hope for building Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, a project backed by the European Union and the United States. The cooperation in the fuel and energy sector will become a strategic direction of further interstate partnerships between Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan, the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhammedov, stated in Baky.

Azerbaijan-Ukraine Summit

On May 22 President Ilham Aliyev paid an official visit to Ukraine. Mr. Aliyev and his Ukrainian counterpart Viktor Yushchenko have discussed a wide range of bilateral issues as well as regional energy projects. In a statement during his press-conference, the Ukrainian President said much work has been done in the last few years to expand bilateral relations that he characterized as highly dynamic. On the energy cooperation between the two countries, Viktor Yushchenko pointed out the importance of both realization of the Odessa-Brody-Plotsk-Gdansk oil pipeline project and processing of Caspian oil in Ukraine. The President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev highly valued the talks he had with his Ukrainian counterpart, noting that close and friendly ties established between the two countries since both regained independence, now have reached a qualitatively new level. "It is confirmed by the documents we have signed today, and first of all,

the Declaration of Friendship and Strategic Partnership, which reflects the character and spirit of our relationships" he said. "I express gratitude to Ukraine and personally to President Victor Yushchenko for their support to UNGA resolution on the occupied territory of Azerbaijan".

Eastern European Energy Summit in Kiev

After bilateral meetings in Kiev President Aliyev took part in the Eastern European Summit on energy security. Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the representatives of the EU Commission held discussion on the transportation of Caspian oil through Odessa-Brody pipeline to Europe, as well as the establishment of common energy market of GUAM countries. Mr. Aliyev highlighted that Azerbaijan is interested in ensuring energy security. "Today we are speaking about cooperation and energy corridors in Baltic and Caspian-Black sea regions. Azerbaijan is pursuing a diversification policy in energy sphere. As an oil and gas producer, we are interested in maintenance of several pipeline infrastructures".

Boost for Enterprises in Azerbaijan

The European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has announced a plan to loan funds to two local Azerbaijani banks - Azerigazbank and Azerdemiryolbank to support small and medium businesses. The EBRD credit lines will allow the recipient banks to further grow their lending and expand into remoter areas of the country. Kurt Geiger, EBRD Business Group Director Financial Institutions, said that the new projects would lead to a further deepening of the already strong involvement of the EBRD with the private banking sector in the country.