



**EUROPEAN UNION**

**DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN**

**Head of Delegation**

**Mrs. A. Bouchez, Ambassador, Head of the EU Delegation to  
Kazakhstan, also accredited to Turkmenistan**

## **WELCOME ADDRESS**

**IATA aviation days, “Safe and efficient air transport – key factor for  
Sustainable growth of central Asia and Caucasus”**

13 September 2012

*Dear participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am delighted to have the opportunity today to address this important conference. I would like to express my appreciation to the organisers for this excellent initiative.

Development of connections between the EU and Central Asia and Caucasus is a major vector of political and economic ties between Europe and the region. Safe and sustainable air transport plays a key role in this process. Hence the importance we attach to this is demonstrated by EU regional support projects such as TRACECA.

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The European Union and Kazakhstan have been partners since the country's independence, sharing a dialogue which has continually expanded. Today, the EU is Kazakhstan's largest trading partner with the EU accounting for almost 50% of Kazakhstan's foreign trade. The EU is also by far Kazakhstan's largest investment partner, with more than 60% of foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan coming from European companies. I believe that the ongoing negotiations for an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement will further strengthen cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan.

Given Kazakhstan geographic location as a landlocked country in Central Asia, aviation plays a crucial role. It is equally evident that the aviation relations between the EU and Kazakhstan are not yet exploited to their full potential.

The European Union and EU companies are therefore very interested in strengthening mutual aviation relations. Aviation is essential to further develop our overall trade economic and cultural ties.

The current obstacles can easily be identified. They are well known to this audience. The important task is to overcome these challenges and to prepare the foundations for a smoothly functioning aviation business that ensures good connections between Kazakhstan and the EU. This will be clearly a win-win situation for all.

Today's conference focuses on the crucial issue of aviation safety. Recognized improvements in this area are the key to move forward. Today's event, which managed to bring all important stakeholders together, is an important step in the right direction.

Let me assure you that the EU will continue its support by offering know-how and expertise, as well as assistance projects (such as TRACECA) in an enduring manner.

I wish us all a very fruitful discussion.