



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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President of the European Commission

Statement by President Barroso following his meeting with Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan

Press point

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome President Nazarbayev once again here in Brussels at the European Commission. Over these last years our partnership has grown in strength and our contacts have intensified.

Kazakhstan is today an important partner for the EU, not only on trade and economic exchanges, but also for promoting peace and security in the wider region. And our cooperation is expanding.

The last time I met President Nazarbayev here in Brussels in 2010 – and I've met him afterwards several times - we discussed the need to upgrade our relationship through the negotiation of an enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

Today, I am pleased to announce that we have concluded these negotiations successfully. This is a major achievement and recognition of the importance of our bilateral relationship.

I want to thank you, President Nazarbayev, for your stronger political leadership to achieve that goal. I also want to congratulate all those in Kazakhstan, in the European Commission and in the European Union that have given their contribution for this to be possible.

This agreement will greatly facilitate stronger political, economic and strategic relations as well as the flow of trade, services and investment between Kazakhstan and the EU, and contribute to Kazakhstan's political, rule of law and economic reform, as well as modernisation and prosperity.

So, besides its political importance this agreement will bring tangible benefits to our people and companies:

First, by further enhancing what is already a growing economic relationship. Over the past decades, the EU has become Kazakhstan's first trade partner in the world - as well as its first foreign investor with half of total FDI in Kazakhstan. This will only increase in the future.

In this respect I would also like to announce today that with the signature of a deal on export duties by Minister Aitzhanova and by Commissioner De Gucht, Kazakhstan and the EU are concluding today their bilateral market access negotiations within the framework of Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO. The process is not over yet as Kazakhstan will have to continue negotiating with the other WTO partners but today the EU confirms that we have closed our bilateral issues with Kazakhstan and we are showing how supportive we remain of Kazakhstan's WTO accession.

The PCA and Kazakhstan's WTO accession are part and parcel of the same logic of political and economic diversification and further integration of the Kazakhstan's in global affairs.

Secondly, we look forward to using this new PCA to enhance our energy cooperation. Kazakhstan is a very important and reliable energy partner for the EU, now supplying around 5-6% of EU oil demand.

This new Agreement includes a chapter on raw materials and energy with provisions that go beyond WTO and Energy Charter Treaty commitments.

Thirdly: we share Kazakhstan's aim to improve people to people contacts. The EU Visa Code, in force since April 2010, already simplifies the issuance of short stay visas for citizens of Kazakhstan travelling to the EU. And we are happy to advance our cooperation on migration issues within the framework of the new Agreement.

And finally and equally important this agreement demonstrates that international relations are not a zero sum game. That Europe is open to build strong and solid relations with the members of Customs Union willing to do so. That is why I think today's agreement is a very important symbolic gesture. Apart from its substance, it shows that it is possible for a country of the Customs Union to develop and deepen the relationship with the European Union. I think this is important especially when you consider the situation that we have been facing in that part of Europe and also in the wider region.

In this respect I would like to praise Kazakhstan's and President Nazarbayev's balanced position regarding the situation in Ukraine, which we also discussed today. We both support a peaceful solution for the conflict in full respect of Ukraine's sovereignty. And I want to thank you, President Nazarbayev, for sharing with me the vision you have about the situation in that part of the region.

President Nazarbayev,

I am also glad that you will participate in the ASEM Summit in Milan next week. We are going to see each other again next week. Kazakhstan will be the first Central Asian country to become partner of the ASEM! We believe that Kazakhstan has a great role to play in terms of cooperation, trade and transit between Europe and Asia.

And you can always count with the European Union as your partner in promoting a vision of cooperation, inclusiveness and win-win solutions, in the European continent and beyond.

So once again thank you for your visit here to the European Commission and to Brussels and I want to express my gratitude for the quality of the exchanges that we had once again today following our very frequent political contacts in the past.

I thank you for your attention.