



DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

**Joint Press-Briefing
following
The 8th round of negotiations on a new enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
between the European Union and Kazakhstan**

TRANSCRIPT

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venue of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs RoK

SPEAKERS:

- **Mr Alexey VOLKOV**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the RK, National Coordinator for Interaction with the European Union
- **Mr Gunnar WIEGAND**, Director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service

Mr Alexey VOLKOV (*translated from Russian*):

Today we have nearly completed the negotiations on a new enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and the EU. The negotiations lasted for more than three years, being the logical continuation of the "Path to Europe" programme implementation. In a large, lengthy document, which consists of about 200 pages, all directions and all areas of cooperation between our country and the European Union are identified. It is about the development of civil society, human rights, and in the economic sector, of course, including the large scope of trade relations, export policy, trade, etc.

We hope that this document will move our relationship forward and open a new corridor for the interaction, open the access for Kazakhstan to the innovative projects, European technologies. Through this document, we solve a number of issues; we start negotiations on readmission, visa facilitation, to facilitate interaction and cooperation in the field of communications and many other issues.

Of course, the negotiations were not easy, since Kazakhstan is not the member of the European Union and is not going to join in the near future. We do not belong to the group of countries, which signed the Agreement on cooperation with the European countries, as, for example, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. Therefore, our legal frameworks vary considerably, but this Agreement will provide an opportunity to bring our legislation to a particular common ground. Hence, the political, the common part of the negotiations process is completed. We have a number of details that need to be concluded. The draft Agreement still needs to be checked through legal due diligence, and the technical issues must be settled. It is necessary, first of all, to translate the Agreement on all the European Union languages, to pass appropriate legal approbation in the parliaments, the legal services of these states, and the same goes for our country, i.e. the legal expertise is needed, technical parameters should be investigated. Well, I think that in the near future, possibly before the end of the year, we will conclude the defined, final version, which will be appropriate for consideration in the parliaments and governments of our countries.

There were many questions on the trade chapter, the talks will continue in the mode of video conferences. We will elaborate and define the proper formulations in order to make the text mutually acceptable and possible for consideration in all countries of the European Union, and of course, within the appropriate structures, state bodies of our country.

Therefore, it is a significant phase of work, which is now almost completed. In this format of large delegations, we will not hold the meetings anymore; the details will be defined in a working mode. In the short term, until the end of the year, I hope we will be ready to inform the press and the respective seniors on the completion of negotiations. In general, all the technical issues have been resolved. I want to say that on this we conclude the negotiations process. Thank you!

Mr Gunnar WIEGAND:

I would like to thank Deputy Minister Mr Volkov for these very productive negotiations, which have started in 2011. Since that time, we have held 8 negotiation rounds, the outcome of which is that we have the Agreement, which will allow us to establish new, beneficial ground for our relationship and further development. Within the new Agreement, we have significantly enhanced the partnership, which will cover 29 areas, including such important sectors as economy, trade and investments.

We do not speak about signing the Free Trade Agreement between us, of course. But we'll have significant trade and investment cooperation with a substantial update of opportunities for economic relations, as the EU companies are the largest economic investors in Kazakhstan. Moreover, the Agreement has a significant chapter on political issues, justice, which expands and enhances the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which was signed in 1995. We hope that the new PCA is something much more modern, more comprehensive, more dynamic, responds to modern Kazakhstan and provides more opportunities for business interaction. It's a signal of trust and will provide stable legal framework at the times of great tensions in the region. It's important that we can send this signal.

We've made very significant progress since the last round, and we have no deals to perform further rounds of the negotiating teams. Only few details left, which have to be finalised during the next couple of days. And, we are confident that this can be finalised in a very short time and so we can proceed to prepare for the initialling of the Agreement.

I would like to thank the Kazakh team for excellent work together, which lasted for three years, and we have reached the goal to make our Agreement more dynamic and enhance the potential for relationship development between the European Union and Kazakhstan.

Followed by Q&A

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