

# Newsletter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

**Astana is Powerful Symbol  
of Unity, Driving Force for  
Economic Growth**

**High-Level OSCE Conference in  
Astana Seeks Ways to Strengthen  
Tolerance**

**OSCE foreign ministers to discuss  
European security, support for  
Kyrgyzstan at Almaty informal meeting**

**Almaty, Story of Ever-Changing Metropolis**

## In Focus

### Astana is Powerful Symbol of Unity, Driving Force for Economic Growth

**Astana belongs to one of the most unique cities in the world. As one of the few metropolises built chiefly in the 21st century, it is also among the world's youngest capitals. However, on 6 July this year, the Kazakh capital was celebrating its 12th anniversary.**

When President Nazarbayev came up with an idea to move the capital closer to its geographical centre, he also clearly had a vision that creating a new visible centre for the nation's life could provide a strong symbol which would be appealing to all groups of the Kazakh people. And it was his clear determination in the correctness of such a bold proposal that persuaded the members of Parliament to overcome their natural initial scepticism (stirred by economic hardships at the time) and narrowly vote in favour of the centrally located town of Aqmola as the nation's future capital. The historical choice was made on 6 July 1994, which was President Nazarbayev's 54th birthday. It took another three years for the transfer to actually take place, as the seat of government moved in the frosty December of 1997, and the official presentation of the new capital with a new name took place the following June. When the decision came to develop Astana as a new city, the best city planners and architects were

invited to develop a concept for that. They finally suggested to the President to turn the left bank of the slow rolling Yessil River into the main area for construction, which would turn the formerly sleepy provincial backwater of 280,000 into a dynamic capital with a unique face that it is today.

As part of the attempt to attract businesses to the capital, the government has set up "Astana New City", a 6,000-hectare special economic zone on the left bank of the Yessil River. Following the success of the first decade of the successful implementation of the city development plans, further incentives to invest in Astana are likely to come from Kazakhstan's Business Development Roadmap 2020, which will set the country's priorities for improving the business climate.

Astana's population has tripled since the move, to over 700,000, and is es-



The skyline of Kazakhstan's new capital  
Astana, as amazing as it is fastly changing.

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timated to top one million in a decade or two. Astana is a magnet for young professionals seeking to build a career here, as well as for thousands of skilled builders and workers.

Yet, it is not only the city's outward appearance that has changed so dramatically in the last decade. Astana's role within Kazakhstan's economy has done so too. Over the last ten years, the GDP of Astana has increased more than fiftyfold and now accounts for 10% of the country's total GDP. At the same time, the industrial output has increased sevenfold, and investment flows are 22 times higher than in 2000.

Today, the young capital is growing rapidly as the key administrative and a major business centre of Kazakhstan, with over 200 joint ventures and foreign companies in operation. In addition, Astana is turning into one of the main business centres of the country. All but a few governmental organisations, diplomatic missions of 44 countries, and 113 joint ventures and foreign businesses are located here. Almost half of all construction work in Kazakhstan is taking place in Astana as the government and investors press on with erecting the flagship city of the country.

Every year, the city hosts various international industrial exhibitions, conferences, musical contests and festivals. In 1999, by the decision of UNESCO, Astana was awarded the title of the City of the World.

One of Astana's most famous buildings is the pyramid-shaped Palace of Peace and Harmony which is the venue for the triennial Congresses of the Leaders of the World and Traditional Religions and which recently hosted the OSCE Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination.

## Astana Day Celebrations

In 2008, the Parliament chose to celebrate the Astana Day on 6 July, the day of the original decision to transfer the capital back in 1994. This day coincides with the birthday of President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who will be 70 this year.

This year, the festivities, which began on 4 July with the hoisting of a huge flag of Kazakhstan over a sunny Astana, included concerts by popular singers and ballet dancers from around the world, street fairs and store promotions, folk concerts, exhibits, and fireworks.

The key event, however, was the unveiling of the giant Norman Foster-designed Khan Shatyr commercial and entertainment centre with Andrea Bocelli giving a special concert in front of thousands of Astana residents and foreign dignitaries on 5 July. They included Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, and Armenian President Serge Sargsyan, who came to Astana to participate in the summit of the Eurasian Economic Community, as well as King Abdullah II of Jordan, Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan of the UAE, and Turkish President Abdullah Gul, among others.

## OSCE Photo Contest

During the High-level Conference, an award ceremony for winners of the OSCE Photo Contest 2010 "Tolerance, trust, tradition, transparency" also took place on 29 June. More than a hundred photographers from 35 OSCE participating states and partners for cooperation submitted around 300 pictures to the contest, initiated and financed by the Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship.

The winners – Eric Gourlan, a photographer residing in the Netherlands with many years of experience in Central Asian region ("Tolerance alive"); Rudi Dawia Kaufman, a graduate student of the Photography School in Wuerzburg, Germany ("Black and white re-



lationship"); Andrey Liankevich, a photographer from Belarus ("He has a female name"); Vitaliy Ovsyannikov from Kharkiv, Ukraine ("Sincere emotions"); and Ilya Rozenbaum from Belgium ("Hallelujah") – received a trip to Astana, where they attended the award ceremony.

The full list of the contest winners and finalists, and a gallery of their photos, can be found on the contest page at

<http://www.osce.org/item/43109.html>

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## Success story

### High-Level OSCE Conference in Astana Seeks Ways to Strengthen Tolerance

The High-Level Conference on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination was hosted by the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship in the Palace of Peace and Accord (the Pyramid) in Astana on 29-30 June 2010. The conference brought together senior government officials, politicians and public figures from 56 OSCE participating states aiming to contribute to further strengthening the interaction between different cultures and civilisations and to implement the related OSCE commitments and values.

Heads of key OSCE institutions - the Director of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Janez Lenarcic, High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek, three personal representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on tolerance and non-discrimination, as well as Ministers from Turkey, Montenegro, Israel, and other officials and public figures participated in the event. Opening the forum on Tuesday, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev noted "Central Asia is a region of a complicated ethnic pattern where different nations and various religions co-exist with each other. The bitterest consequence of the recent conflict in Kyrgyzstan is that the seeds of mistrust can be sown between other peoples of the region. This represents a significant challenge to stability in the region and a threat to all OSCE participating states".

Speaking on Kazakhstan's initiative to hold an OSCE summit in Astana, the Kazakh leader offered to include the problems of tolerance into the agenda. "I suppose we should work together over generalising some serious changes in the policy of tolerance which have taken place over the last few years and elaborate a single document, which I would call the 'OSCE and tolerance in the new decade'. We suggest including the issue into the OSCE summit's agenda", Nazarbayev underscored.

#### **Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Janez Lenarcic:**

"The provision of human rights is a precondition for notions of respect and mutual understanding to unfold their essence. To put it bluntly: it is not an achievement to 'tolerate' members of our society who do not have the right to freely speak their mind or enjoy the panoply of other rights that should be available in a democratic society."



#### **UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations**

##### **Jorge Sampaio:**

"I will be glad to provide a number of recommendations and concrete measures, which we offer to our member states, in order to implement them in the nearest future, including national and regional strategies as the directions of our joint priority actions."

#### **Mevlyut Cavusoglu, President of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly:**

"We are grateful to President Nazarbayev who makes every effort to resolve the conflict situation."

#### **OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek:**

"If we want to create and safeguard cohesive societies, tolerance has to be more than just acceptance of differences. We need to strive for positive tolerance founded on respect for each individual."

The two-day event was preceded by a preparatory meeting of non-governmental organisations on 28 June, which addressed the ways to combat intolerance and discrimination against Muslims, Christians and representatives of other religions. More than 600 participants discussed the role of legislation, law enforcement, education systems, and the media, including online media, in addressing public manifestations of intolerance and promoting understanding through open dialogue.

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## Coming Event

### OSCE foreign ministers to discuss European security, support for Kyrgyzstan at Almaty informal meeting

ASTANA, 14 July 2010 - The future of European security, support for Kyrgyzstan, engagement with Afghanistan, and possible topics for an OSCE summit top the agenda of an informal meeting of foreign ministers in Almaty on 16-17 July.

#### Quick facts

- Foreign ministers and high-level representatives from the 56 OSCE participating states will attend the informal meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- The ministers will discuss the future of European security, support for Kyrgyzstan, engagement with Afghanistan, and possible topics for an OSCE summit.
- The Almaty Informal offers the foreign ministers of the OSCE - the world's biggest regional security organisation which includes the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas - the opportunity to engage in frank dialogue about the region's most pressing security challenges in an informal setting.
- The Almaty event follows on the first informal meeting of OSCE foreign ministers on the Greek island of Corfu in June 2009.
- The "Corfu Process" was launched at that meeting with the aim of restoring confidence and taking the dialogue on wider European security forward.
- Kazakhstan's 2010 OSCE Chairmanship has proposed holding a summit this year. The last summit took place in Istanbul in 1999.
- A decision on holding a summit and an agenda must be taken by consensus by the 56 participating states.



#### Quotes

President of Kazakhstan, **Nursultan Nazarbayev**: "As Chair of the OSCE in 2010, Kazakhstan has invited OSCE foreign ministers to Almaty to discuss substantive issues such as transnational threats, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan, and questions of tolerance and non-discrimination, that could form the basis for a decision on an OSCE summit later this year."

OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Kazakhstan's Secretary of State and Foreign Minister, **Kanat Saudabayev**: "Our discussions will build on the Corfu Process launched last year to reinvigorate the dialogue on security in the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. The recent events in Kyrgyzstan, where the OSCE under Kazakhstan's chairmanship has played an important role in responding to the political crisis, show how urgent and relevant this is."

OSCE Secretary General **Marc Perrin de Brichambaut**: "This meeting gives ministers from the OSCE - the world's biggest regional security organisation which includes the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian areas - the opportunity to exchange views frankly and openly in order to agree on concrete steps for action on the common threats that we are facing in our regions."

File photos of the above are available here:

[http://www.osce.org/photos/show\\_photos.php?thumb=0&grp=532](http://www.osce.org/photos/show_photos.php?thumb=0&grp=532)



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## Coming Event



### Multimedia and social media

Live web streaming of the opening session on 17 July at 06:00 (Vienna time) / 10:00 (Almaty time) and final press conference at 17:30 (Almaty time) / 13:30 (Vienna time):

[http://www.osce.org/conferences/inf\\_min\\_2010.html?page=45203](http://www.osce.org/conferences/inf_min_2010.html?page=45203)

Live satellite transmission of the open parts of the meeting as well as the start of the Minsk Group Co-chairs' meeting at 18:00 (Almaty time) / 14:00 (Vienna time) will be available on World Feed in Europe (W3A), the Americas (Intelsat805) and Asia (Asia-sat5). Contact: Raushan Akpenova, mobile: +7 701 710 76 97

Videos of the opening session and press briefings will be posted on the OSCE's YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/osce>  
Follow the informal ministerial on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/osce> or with the hashtag #osceim

Photos and audio will be uploaded to the conference webpage and can be used by the media free of charge, crediting the OSCE: [http://www.osce.org/conferences/inf\\_min\\_2010.html](http://www.osce.org/conferences/inf_min_2010.html)

OSCE RSS news feed: <http://www.osce.org/rss/news/>

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The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 56 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

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## Special Report

### Almaty, Story of Ever-Changing Metropolis

While Astana is emerging as the main political and diplomatic centre of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, the former capital, Almaty, in the relatively mild climate of south-eastern Kazakhstan, remains the country's intellectual and commercial hub. A string of large new business and financial complexes under construction along Al-Farabi Avenue, just outside the city centre, should give Almaty the wherewithal to develop into the region's entrepreneurial heart.

Almaty also remains **home to Al-Farabi Kazakh National University**, the National Technical University named after Kanysh Satpayev (a locally renowned Kazakh geologist from Soviet times), and numerous smaller state and private academies. Overall, Almaty looks to its own well-being – as its numerous sports centres, wining and dining establishments, and nightclubs testify. For tourists travelling along the ancient Silk Route, Almaty is an important stop between the monumental cities of Uzbekistan and the trail's eastern extension into China.

#### ● First Century BC

Judging by archaeological finds, Almaty's present-day location was already occupied by human settlers as early as the first century BC. Just outside the city, there have been found standing stones resembling smaller versions of those at Stonehenge, but which are of an even earlier date. The early inhabitants are thought to have been Scythians who at that time moved into Central Asia from the north.

#### ● 6th Century

Turkic tribes arrived from Siberia, starting in the sixth century. Known as the Uysyn, ancestors of the present-day Kazakhs, they established a stronghold and trade post along the thriving Silk Route. This township was known as Almatu, meaning Apple Place. Like most towns and cities along the Silk Route, in the 13th century it was razed to the ground by the Mongols, who continued to rule the region for centuries.

#### ● 19th Century

Almaty was put back on the map by the Russians in the 19th century. In 1853, a Cossack regiment under Lieutenant Glakhyrin negotiated the establishment of a front-line against the Khanate of Kokand with the Kazakh Senior Horde, which controlled the region. The Russians did not confine themselves to military facilities, but also built palaces, mansions, marketplaces, schools, cathedrals, and workshops — especially after the surrender of Kokand to the empire 10 years later.



Peace and stability led to the incorporation of the Land of Seven Streams (Semirechye, or Zhetysu, as the area is still called) into the empire, with the status of oblast under its first governor, General Gerasim Kolpakovsky. The best-known name from those days, however, is that of Pavel Zenkov, who in 1877 was elected the first mayor of Verniy. He designed a master plan for the city centre, with broad avenues, squares and parks.

#### ● 20th Century

By the time the October Revolution took place, the number of inhabitants in Verniy already exceeded 100,000. Five months after the Bolsheviks' takeover in Petrograd, Verniy fell under their control without a shot being fired. This was mainly thanks to the workers' committees, which had been active underground until 1917 and then had come into the open. The city and its surrounding lands were spared the horrors of the Civil War that raged in the north of Kazakhstan until 1924. In 1936, the Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan was proclaimed, with Almaty, as Verniy had been renamed, as its capital. After the Soviet Union entered World War II, the city harboured tens of thousands of the exiles and refugees who were swarming into Central Asia.

After the war, the city continued to grow, mainly thanks to manufacturing and economic activity. In order to house the increasing population, residential areas were constructed. Theatres, schools, academies and universities grew in number.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union and the proclamation of the independent Republic of Kazakhstan, it was decided to move the capital to Astana in the north. To this day, however, Almaty remains the country's largest city. It is the financial centre and main trade point as well as the heart of Kazakhstan's intellectual, cultural and spiritual life.

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