

Workshop
Socio-economic aspects of the energy corridor linking
the Caspian Sea Region with EU

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Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to greet you, wish successful and fruitful work and express my gratitude for the excellent organization of this event.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the beginning of my speech I would like to note that today the cooperation between EU and BSEC and the initiatives for deepening of this cooperation in all directions are very topical. In this context, “The EU-BSEC Energy and Climate Policy Network” project is one of the successful samples of EU-BSEC interaction and this Workshop which is being held in Baku in the framework of this project assumes particular importance.

As you know, Azerbaijan is an active member of Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization. On the other hand, integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions, as well as strengthening the relations and cooperation with the European Union is one of the major priorities of Azerbaijan’s foreign policy.

We are actively integrating to the European cooperation system and the borders of EU are getting closer to our region now. Azerbaijan was included into the European Neighborhood Policy and to achieve the objectives of this Policy the Action Plan between EU and Azerbaijan which covers a timeframe of five years was adopted. On the other hand, the Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the field of energy signed during the visit of the President of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev to Brussels on November last year, creates new opportunities in this direction.

The main objectives of this MoU are the diversification and security of energy supplies of EU, as well as the development and modernisation of energy infrastructures of Azerbaijan, energy efficiency, energy savings and the use of renewable energy sources.

Beyond doubts in the coming years Azerbaijan will retain its role as an important supplier and transit country for hydrocarbon resources to consumers in the region and entire Europe. The country will further obtain political and economic influence in the region and being independent from the energy supply point of view will be able to assist the development of our neighbours and partners.

The energy resources originating from the Caspian Sea are currently transported to international markets via different pipelines. Of course, the pipelines diversification policy is crucial for us in order to develop the regional cooperation. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, with capacity of 1 million barrel per day, is the main export route for the oil resources of Azerbaijan and Caspian region.

Azerbaijan also attaches high importance to the exploitation and further export of its gas fields. The transport of Shah-Deniz gas to the Europe assumes particular significance in ensuring the diversification and security of energy supply of EU. In the context of the development of the South-East Europe gas grid system, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) pipeline, may supply the Azerbaijani gas from Shah-Deniz field to Black Sea region and EU consumers. Upon the connection of the gas transport systems of Turkey-Greece and Greece-Italy, the export of Azerbaijani gas to the European markets will be possible.

Azerbaijan may both take part directly, as well as a transit country in the transport of natural gas to the Europe via Nabucco pipeline, which involves Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria. In this context, the transport of the hydrocarbon resources of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan through Azerbaijan will be helpful in the successful implementation of Nabucco project.

In the long-term cooperation perspective we look forward to the construction of a Trans-Caspian Gas connection, allowing additional large volumes of gas from the Central Asian countries to Europe via Azerbaijan. Our transport possibilities, oil and gas pipelines create absolutely new situation in the region. The role of Azerbaijan and Central Asia region in the energy supply is increasing.

Azerbaijan is an active participant of the “Baku Process” which was initiated during the Ministerial Conference in Baku in 2004 and aims the cooperation between EU, the littoral states of the Black and Caspian Sea and their neighboring countries in the fields of energy and transport. We welcome the activities on continuation of this Process.

I would like to note that, the construction of a railway route Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, which has parallel purposes and serves the same criteria and principles like the BTC oil pipeline and BTE gas pipeline will contribute towards integration of Caspian, Black Sea and EU markets and the overall economic development in this region.

Distinguished participants,

The production and exploitation of vast oil and gas resources of Azerbaijan and Central Asia countries and their transfer via East-West Energy Corridor will contribute to the sustainable development of the region as well as to the diversification and security of energy supplies of European countries.

Our region has a great potential. Enhancement of this cooperation will serve for the socio-economic development of our countries and welfare of our people.

Thank you for your attention.