

**Conference on  
“WORKING TOGETHER-STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN  
NEIGHBOURHOOD”**

Statement by H.E. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
the Republic of Azerbaijan

Dear Ministers, Commissioners  
Ladies, Gentlemen,

The Government of Azerbaijan considers the integration process to the European Union as a matter of priority and it has been following actively and consistently this policy.

Therefore, I feel particularly pleased and privileged to be here today and to address such an honourable audience.

Being committed to the shared values of peace and security, sustainable economic and social development, democracy, protection of human rights and rule of law, Azerbaijani side is convinced that deepening of European integration will boost up and expand reform processes in my country, bringing consequently more stability and security, reinforcement of open and free society, rising economic and social prosperity of our people.

On June 14, 2004 the inclusion of Azerbaijan into the ENP was announced. The intensive negotiations on the ENP Action Plan were launched in autumn 2005 and completed by the end of the last year.

Definitely the ENP Action Plan is a step forward in our relations with EU. We consider the AP as an advanced instrument of cooperation which we highly appreciate. Azerbaijan perceives this policy framework as a promising opportunity to strengthen its competitiveness both economically, socially, politically, and by doing so to come closer with the EU.

Action Plan is envisaged for 5 years. That is a proper timeframe for including “implementable” tasks that will best match the most accurate needs of the economy. We believe that the ENP is a good chance to strengthen our trade capacity, especially by replacing the dominating role of mineral resources by those of the non-oil sector. We know that development of trade with EU is mostly matter of applying norms and standards that are in line with EU legislation. Bringing those standards and their enforcement are a massive work and we hope that the ENP will be helpful in this.

It is noteworthy to mention the significance of the energy security questions for Azerbaijan and EU. Simultaneously with the process of preparation of the ENP Action Plan the mutual willingness to deepen the cooperation between Azerbaijan and EU embodied in the signing Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership. In this context, the outcomes of quadrilateral EU-Azerbaijan- Georgia-Kazakhstan meeting

held in Baku back-to-back to the last Azerbaijan-EU subcommittee on Transport and Energy will ensure the perspectives of the implementation of this document.

At the same time ENP envisaged gradual opening of certain community programmes based on mutual interest and available resources. Areas to be explored for increased cooperation with EU Member States include education, research, youth training, environment and culture.

We attach importance to the matters of democratization, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and using this opportunity I would like to bring to your attention the proposal of my Government to establish within the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement the third Azerbaijan-EU Sub Committee on Justice, Liberties and Security.

Another practical way of how we can enhance the ENP is the using the opportunities offered by Secondment Programmes to enable ENP countries to send their officials to relevant Commission structures. The similar experience is already being practiced in some Brussels based international organizations such as the NATO and Energy Charter and offered as an incentive.

Introducing such a practice for ENP countries could substantially enhance and complement the benefits that we are already gaining from Twinning and TAIEX. It could be specifically instrumental in helping to understand EU mechanism from inside and subsequently, by virtue of acquired experience, knowledge and professional contacts will largely enrich partner countries good governance capacities and considerably increase effectiveness and efficiency of relations with EU.

Despite of enormous potential of cooperation in our region, I feel obliged to mention the unresolved conflicts, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, drug trafficking, proliferation. These threats detract so much needed resources, distort economic rational, prevent all-inclusive cooperation and disadvantage our region. Ensuring regional security and stability, fight against terrorism and aggressive separatism, solution of the protracted conflicts with full respect to the principle of territorial integrity of the states and internationally recognized borders are vitally important for the region. In this context, ENP countries, EU and the whole international community should be more decisive and resolute in addressing these challenges.

It is for sure that those countries who want to share European practice should also share European code of conduct, in which there are no place for such notorious practices as occupation and ethnic cleansing from which my country, Azerbaijan, has suffered severely.

At the end, again, thank you for inviting and giving opportunity to express Azerbaijani point of view on how we can strengthen ENP. I believe that that kind of Conferences should be routinely ones.

Thank you.