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Kazakhs to Celebrate Poet Abai's 175th Anniversary All Year



Also In The News



Cooperation Council

Kazakh FM Visits Brussels Ahead of New Kazakh-EU Agreement

NUR-SULTAN – Kazakh Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi visited Brussels for the first time as foreign minister Jan. 20 to take part in the 17th meeting of the Cooperation Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan-the European Union and hold meetings with high-level officials.

The Cooperation Council adopted the conclusion of the EU-Kazakhstan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), which was signed in 2015. The new agreement has been ratified by all member states and the European Parliament and will enter into force March 1. Kazakhstan was the first Central Asian country to sign the EPCA in 2015.

“The new EPCA, (...), opens the way to both a deepening and expansion of many ties between us at an important moment in Kazakhstan’s economic, social and political development. It is why it is an exciting time to be making my first visit to Brussels as foreign minister this week. I am determined to do all I can to build on the already strong partnership between Kazakhstan and the EU and ensure new opportunities for increased cooperation are taken,” wrote Minister Tileuberdi in an op-ed published on Euractiv ahead of the visit.

The council delegations also discussed political, trade and economic cooperation and implementation of the new EU strategy and Europe-Asia interconnectedness.

Council representatives said they are ready to partner with Kazakhstan to implement the EPCA in 29 areas of cooperation, such as international and regional security, trade, investment, infrastructure development, as well as innovation, culture, sports and tourism.

Other priority areas were energy, transport, the environment, education and science, according to a press-release by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Trade with EU countries makes up 50 percent of the foreign trade and investment in the Kazakh economy.

Between January and November 2019, Kazakh-EU trade reached \$28.7 billion (exports \$22.7 billion, imports \$6 billion).

Foreign direct investment from the EU to Kazakhstan in the first six months of 2019 was \$5.4 billion.

On the sidelines of the Cooperation Council meeting, Minister Tileuberdi met with High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell Fontelles as well as members of the European Parliament, including members of the Kazakhstan-EU Friendship Group and the Delegation of the European Parliament for Central Asia and Mongolia to discuss regional development in Central Asia and reforms that have had a positive impact on democratic changes.

The European Parliament members praised the decision of Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to accede to the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing the death penalty in the country, as well as initiatives on peaceful assemblies, decriminalising defamation and lower the threshold for creating political parties.

Tokayev is scheduled to visit Brussels in February to discuss relations between Kazakhstan and the EU.

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The Central Communications Service

Kazakhs to Celebrate Poet Abai's 175th Anniversary All Year

NUR-SULTAN – The capital city's preparations for poet Abai Kunanbayev's 175th anniversary were outlined in a Jan. 16 Central Communications Service briefing, reported the Ministry of Culture and Sport website

More than 500 regional, national and international events are scheduled in the 82-point plan was approved in 2019, noted Vice Minister Nurgisa Dauyeshov.

"We plan to hold major events dedicated to the celebration of the poet's anniversary. The budget for these events is three billion tenge (US\$8 million)," he said.

First Vice Minister of Finance Berik Sholpankulov has said the government allocated 304.7 billion tenge (US\$808 million) to develop culture and sports for 2020-2022. Of that, 120.1 billion tenge (US\$319 million) is allotted for 2020. Nearly four billion tenge (US\$10.6 million) will be spent on the Abai celebration and 1,150th anniversary of Al-Farabi, the philosopher who lived on the territory of modern Kazakhstan in the ninth and tenth centuries.

The celebrations will be held throughout the year and were launched at the Astana Opera on Jan. 21.

"The plan is that Jan. 21 the Astana Opera theatre will launch events dedicated to the poet's anniversary with the participation of national pop stars. Alibek Dnishev, Roza Rymbaeva, the Astana Opera, Astana Ballet troupes and other artists will perform at the grand opening," said Dauyeshov during the briefing.

The anniversary will include events by sports and culture organisations that will include literary readings, thematic events, national sports competitions, creative evenings, festivals, military unit and other events. Collections of Abai's works will be translated into Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish and later published.

Poets and composers will also participate in aitys (national composing competitions) starting Feb. 8. Three documentaries and a TV series about the poet's life and oeuvre will also be made.

"Today, the National Cinema Support Centre is accepting directors' applications for documentaries and short films. Three documentaries about Abai are scheduled to be released this year. In the summer, there are plans to organise a theatrical production, concerts of

traditional performers, aitys, exhibitions of rare books and masters, national sports events and various other cultural events in his native Zhidebai [village in the East Kazakhstan region]," said Dauyeshov.

Abai's home region Semei, partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), will hold the Abai's Legacy and World Spirituality scientific conference in August. The capital will host the Abai and the Problems of Modernisation of Consciousness international conference in October.

Efforts will also be made to popularise the Abai house-museum, restore Abai's Zhidebai-Burili museum-reserve and explain the historical and cultural role of his father, Kunanbai.

"There are plans to improve Abai's native land in Kaskabulak village and to build a museum in the Akshoky area," said the Central Communications Service representative.

Schoolchildren will be able to take a guided tour of the places where Abai lived and worked. Schools will hold open lessons, thematic essay competitions, exhibitions and poetry readings.

Universities plan to hold scientific conferences and symposiums, Abai readings, poetry and literary festivals, poetry evenings, seminars and competitions to offer the best information about his work. Gumilyov Eurasian National University will be establishing the Abai Academy Research Institute.

Abai (1845-1904) was a poet, composer, educator, philosopher, founder of Kazakh written literature and cultural reformer in the rapprochement spirit with Russian and European culture based on enlightened Islam.

"The name of Abai, his heritage, his life and his example are valuable and sacred to each Kazakh person," said Dauyeshov.

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Also In The News...

- President Tokayev receives GRECO's Executive Secretary**
 President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev received Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) Executive Secretary Gianluca Esposito to discuss Kazakhstan's accession into the organisation, as well as prospects for cooperation with the Council of Europe. Tokayev thanked the Council of Europe for supporting the country's accession and noted the importance of coordinating with the group to combat corruption. "We are very serious in getting involved in the activities of this organisation. We believe that this will be very important in giving additional impetus to our efforts in fighting corruption, as well as other things that are negatively affecting our development," he said. Esposito noted cooperation between Kazakhstan and GRECO will be mutually beneficial. "Kazakhstan's membership will not only promote the principles and mechanisms for fighting corruption, but also improve the business climate and improve the sphere of public services," he said. www.astanatimes.com
- Kazakh Ambassador to United States visits Utah**
 Yerzhan Kazykhanov, Kazakh Ambassador to the United States, visited Utah Jan. 15-17, where he met with state Governor Gary Herbert, Brigham Young University President Kevin Worthen and World Trade Centre Utah President and CEO Miles Hansen, as well as with local companies. Kazykhanov and Herbert discussed developing bilateral relations and cooperation areas. The Ambassador also met with the First Presidency (presiding body) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sharing information on Kazakhstan's work to strengthen interreligious and interfaith dialogue and the country's efforts in peacekeeping, humanitarian projects and maintaining regional and international security. Mormon community representatives were particularly interested in First President, Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev's initiative to hold a Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions. The Americans expressed their readiness to consider the possibility of church representatives participating in the VII Congress in 2021. In order to establish contacts with U.S. state companies, Hansen and Kazykhanov talked about cooperation prospects in developing the tourism industry and promoting Kazakh exports to the U.S. market. Kazykhanov also visited Brigham Young University, where he delivered a lecture to the students on the topic "Kazakhstan and the United States in 2020: New Decade of Partnership" and answered questions from the audience. www.mfa.gov.kz
- Kazakhstan-Portugal discuss trade, economic, investment cooperation**
 Kazakh Ambassador to Portugal Daulet Batrashev and Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP) President Bruno Bobone recently discussed developing bilateral economic cooperation, implementing investment projects and organising Portuguese business delegation visits. Batrashev spoke about the measures taken to protect foreign investors - introducing the investment ombudsperson, system of free economic zones and investment preferences and the activities of Kazakh Invest, the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), International Science and Technology Center (ICST), International Startup Park and other sites. Particular attention was paid to Kazakhstan's transit and transport potential and the possibility of establishing logistics and goods transportation partnerships. The representatives were enthusiastic about the potential for trade and economic cooperation between the countries. Kazakhstan currently has 25 enterprises with Portuguese capital. A number of projects are being discussed with energy and renewable energy, information and communications technology (ICT), transport and construction companies and within the agro-industrial complex. As a result of the meeting, an agreement was confirmed to hold a business mission of Portuguese companies under CCIP auspices in Almaty in the second half of February to negotiate with potential business partners. In addition, the sides agree to hold the Kazakhstan-Portuguese Trade and Investment Forum in Lisbon in the second half of the year. CCIP, Portugal's oldest business support association founded in 1834, has approximately 1,000 company members. Every year, the chamber organises more than 120 events involving 5,000 enterprises. www.mfa.gov.kz
- Kazakhstan-Japan co-produce "The Horse Thieves. Roads of Time"**
 The Kazakh-Japanese co-production "The Horse Thieves. Roads of Time" was released in Japanese cinemas Jan. 18. The movie premiered Oct. 3-12 at Asia's largest film festival, the 24th Busan



International Film Festival in Korea held at the cinema centre of the same name. It was selected as the opening film and attracted more than 5,000 visitors. The movie was also presented Oct. 27-Nov. 5 at the 32nd Tokyo International Film Festival. The main roles were performed by Kazakh actress and Cannes Film Festival winner Samal Yeslyamova, Kazakh actors Dulyga Akmoloda and Madi Menaidarov and Japanese actor Mirai Moriyama. The film, based on a true story which occurred in Kazakhstan, tells the tale of a 12-year-old boy whose father was killed by horse thieves. At the most desperate period of his family's life, a mysterious stranger suddenly appeared to help them. "I read the case in the newspaper and was sorry for those families who suddenly lost their father. I wanted to draw on my screen the feeling of emptiness, the pain of loss and the hopes they had lost," said co-director Yerlan Nurmukhambetov in an interview with the Horse Thieves film production committee. He added the film targets both the Kazakh and Japanese audiences. The production was inspired by co-director Lisa Takeba's dream of filming in Central Asia, which she envisioned after her first visit to Uzbekistan. www.astanatimes.com

- 1.5 million visit Yassawi Mausoleum in 2019**
 Approximately 1.5 million people visited the Khoja Ahmed Yassawi Mausoleum in Turkestan last year. The site is expected to attract up to five million tourists by 2025, said Deputy Governor Meirzhan Myrzaliyev at the regional communications service meeting. Turkestan currently has 168 hotels, 51 resorts and 60 recreational centres and to date, 57 travel itineraries have been mapped. This year's plans involve opening 20 additional hotels and five recreation centres. Regional authorities are building attractions such as the visitors centre, national centre of traditional Great Silk Road arts and crafts, international airport and Yassawi Mausoleum. The city presented its tourism potential in Baku, Azerbaijan, in December. Tourist company, tourist association, Baku national cultural fund and government agency representatives participated in the event. www.inform.kz