

Highlights

The UN General Assembly elected 18 UN Economic and Social Council members for 2013-2015, with Turkmenistan representing the Asian states.

The regular December meeting of CIS heads of states in Ashgabat summarized the outcomes of Turkmenistan's presidency in 2012.

The international conference 'Neutrality and Preventive Diplomacy - Foundation for Peace and Security' was dedicated to the 5th anniversary of the opening the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia in Ashgabat and the 17th anniversary of Turkmenistan's neutrality. Today Turkmenistan has diplomatic relations with 129 countries and is a member of 42 international organizations.

Foreign and international policy

The visit of the delegation from the Netherlands headed by Ronald Keller, ambassador to Turkmenistan, was the most visible international event. Priority areas for partnership in fuel and energy as well as in agriculture sectors, transport and communications, cultural and scientific exchange became the main focus of their

meeting with government officials and the foreign affairs ministry.

The fifth meeting of the Turkmen-Austrian joint commission was attended by Franz Vessig, general director of the department for external economic policy and European integration at the ministry of economy, family and youth.

Cooperation in oil and gas industry, health, food and agriculture industries and water resources was the main issue negotiated at the meeting with the delegation headed by Heinz Walter, director of CIS countries department of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

The Turkmen-Austrian business forum in Ashgabat became the next step in further developing trade and economic relations between the two countries. The Austrian delegation included the heads of government agencies for business development and representatives of Austrian companies: WOMA GmbH, Schoeller Bleckmann AG, Unger Stahlbau GmbH, Schrack Seconet AG, Oswelt GmbH, AME International, Landhof.

The Austrian ambassador Wolfgang Banyai had a number of meetings and talks in the



Mejlis (Turkmen parliament), and in certain ministries and departments.

The Day of German Economy was held in Ashgabat, with the German delegation comprising representatives of leading German companies discussing Turkmenistan's potential in the investment sector and prospects for cooperation in energy and financial and banking sectors, the sphere of new technologies and supplies of German equipment and machinery to Turkmenistan. Within the forum framework, Turkmen ministry officials and German business representatives held bilateral talks.

During the meeting with President Berdimuhamedov, Dieter Durringer, the president of CLAAS Global Sales GmbH sales in CIS, and Sergey Potemin, the regional director for Central Asia and the Caucasus, expressed their willingness to continue supplying modern equipment and machinery for Turkmenistan's agro-industrial complex. At the meeting with Aivis Ronis, Latvia's transport minister, the Turkmen President stated his country's readiness to consider Latvian partners' proposals for the large-scale project on the 'North-South' transnational transport corridor construction.

The delegation of representatives from large Romanian companies arrived in Ashgabat to participate in the Turkmen-Romanian business forum. Bilateral meetings and talks between the leaders of the Romanian companies and representatives of Turkmen ministries and business organizations were held within the forum framework. President Berdimuhamedov approved the international agreement between Turkmenistan and Romania on setting up a joint working group

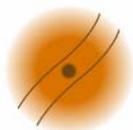
to draw up the recommendations for the best route of the Black Sea–Caspian Sea commodity-transport corridor running via the ports of Constanta and Turkmenbashi. The *Mejlis* chairman received credentials from Oke Peterson, Sweden's ambassador to Turkmenistan, and Hynek Peiho, the Czech ambassador. The sides discussed priority areas for cooperation in trade and economy, science, education, culture, ecology and tourism.

At a regular government meeting Yazmyrat Seryaev, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Turkmenistan to the United Kingdom, was also appointed ambassador to Finland.

CIS countries

A regular meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of State chaired by Turkmenistan was held in Ashgabat. During the official meeting with the president of Turkmenistan, Sergei Lebedev, the chairman of the Executive Committee and CIS executive secretary, praised Turkmenistan's presidency saying that the country had made a significant contribution to the development of fruitful cooperation within CIS countries.

Before the session, the Turkmen leader held bilateral meetings with the presidents of Tajikistan, Armenia, Ukraine, Belarus Republic, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the prime ministers of Moldova and Azerbaijan, and with the first deputy prime minister of Kyrgyzstan. Transport and communication infrastructure, agriculture, environment, trade and economic relations were highlighted as priority areas for cooperation within CIS states.



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During his official visit to Armenia, President Berdimuhamedov negotiated a wide range of intergovernmental partnership issues, specified the priorities of Turkmen-Armenian cooperation and signed a number of intergovernmental agreements aimed at intensifying the development of direct contacts between the two nations including the sphere of education and scientific research. The Turkmen leader visited the National Assembly of Armenia and Yerevan State University, and met the prime minister Tigran Sargsyan.

A delegation of leading Russian companies, led by Nina Levshina, deputy chairwoman of the Russian-Turkmen business council and CEO of Russian-Turkmen Trade House business entity, flew to Ashgabat on an official visit, during which she attended a number of meetings in the ministries of trade and foreign economic relations, energy, industry and construction.

Asian countries

President Berdimuhamedov and Yoichi Kobayashi, the chairman of the Turkmen-Japanese economic cooperation committee and Itochu Corporation's executive vice-president, discussed the diversification of Turkmen-Japanese cooperation.

Turkmen officials and a Japanese delegation headed by Harada Tikhito, Japanese ambassador to Turkmenistan, considered various ways of further expanding Turkmen-Japanese cooperation.

The deputy minister of foreign affairs of China, Cheng Guoping, and Turkmen foreign ministry officials considered prospects for

further developing their mutually beneficial cooperation.

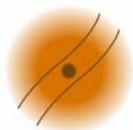
The visit of Rostam Ghasemi, Iran's petroleum minister, and Turkmen-Iranian bilateral consultations with the Iranian delegation headed by deputy foreign affairs minister Sayyed Abbas Erakchi, were among the most significant international events. At their meeting the parties discussed key aspects of cooperation in the energy, economic, social and cultural spheres as well as their joint projects.

A number of talks were held with the Iranian delegation headed by Javad Ovdzhi, deputy oil minister, chairman of the national Iranian gas company and 46 representatives of various state agencies and state-owned companies. At the meetings with government officials and Turkmen gas representatives, the delegation considered the development of Turkmen-Iranian cooperation in the energy sector.

The Turkmen President received Rifat Hisardzhiklyoglu, the chairman of the Turkish union of chambers and commodity exchange, and held a meeting with Sefa Gomdeniz, the chairman of the Turkmen-Turkish business council. The parties negotiated issues of cooperation in traditional areas of partnership such as textile industry, construction, electric power industry, fuel and energy, and in some new areas of bilateral cooperation. In 2013 Turkmenistan will open embassies in Japan and Malaysia.

Cooperation with international organizations

The Caspian Environment Forum was held in Ashgabat under UN auspices to discuss



further cooperation in the field of saving the Caspian Sea's ecological well-being. The forum was attended by delegations from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, UNEP, UNDP, the UN Economic Commission for Europe and other international organizations. The President of Turkmenistan had a number of bilateral meetings with the heads of international and regional organizations attending the conference 'Neutrality and Preventive Diplomacy - Foundation for Peace and Security'. Strengthening peace and stability in the region, developing cooperation with the UN and other international organizations were among the significant issues negotiated at the meetings.

Internal affairs

Turkmenistan has completed the general census of population and housing resources. The final results of the census will be announced in early 2014.

The international conference and exhibition 'Oil and Gas of Turkmenistan – 2012' in Ashgabat attracted the attention of 250 energy companies from 47 countries. It was announced at the conference that Turkmenistan is ready to start the second stage of developing the Galkynysh gas field - the second largest in the world- to supply natural gas to Europe and Asia.

At a meeting with foreign ministry officials during the conference, Lynne Tracy, deputy assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, underlined America's intention to support the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline project and the further progress of the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) project.

At a meeting in the foreign ministry, EU Special Representative for Central Asia Patricia Flor negotiated prospects for cooperation in the energy sector.

Finland's ambassador to Turkmenistan, Tuula Yurel, and the energy advisor to Britain's foreign affairs ministry, Angus Miller, expressed the willingness of Finnish and British business circles to expand their presence in the Turkmen market.

Economy and business enterprises

In its report on the Caucasus and Central Asia', the IMF stated that Turkmenistan leads GDP growth in Central Asia, with economic indicators showing an increase of 8% in 2012 and 7.7% in 2013 along with a low rate of inflation.

A delegation from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development headed by Werner Gruber, EBRD Director in Turkmenistan, arrived in Ashgabat for a working visit. Negotiations centred on prospective areas for partnership in the fields of energy, transport and communications, agriculture, small and medium business, construction and building materials industry, insurance, education and science.

The Turkmen president signed a decree on the opening of trade offices in Russia and China to enhance fruitful trade-economic cooperation.

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