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UKRAINE'S RECOVERY AND AZERBAIJAN: successes, challenges, and opportunities

— Ukraine highly appreciates Azerbaijan's comprehensive humanitarian support, which encompasses crucial areas such as energy assistance, child rehabilitation, humanitarian demining, and the reconstruction of social infrastructure. Last year, in your interview, you provided a detailed overview of these initiatives. Your Excellency, what new projects have been implemented or launched over the past year? What role does the Embassy play in coordinating these initiatives?

— You are correct in saying that delivering humanitarian aid to Ukraine remains a top priority for Azerbaijan. So far, the volume of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid to Ukraine has already reached 42 million US dollars, and we stand ready to continue our humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine. We continue to help Ukraine with different types of humanitarian assistance, and, looking back, we have managed to increase its scale in specific directions. For example, as you rightly mentioned, Azerbaijan is among a few countries that consistently and systematically help Ukraine with children's rehabilitation.

So far, we have managed to organise the trips of 270 Ukrainian children deprived of parental care to Azerbaijan, where they underwent medical or psychological rehabilitation. In 2024, we increased the annual number of such groups of children from two to three. The latest group, consisting of 30 children and several accompanying adults, visited our country in the spring of 2025, and we will continue helping Ukraine in the field of children's rehabilitation. I have already received preliminary information from Baku that in 2025, we will once again increase the yearly number of groups so that even more children will benefit from this programme, which the Government of Azerbaijan fully covers.

We are also continuing to support Ukraine's energy security. From day one, Azerbaijan has been very steadfast in helping Ukraine by delivering different types of electric equipment, transformers, generators, and more. In February 2025, President Aliyev signed a decree allocating one million dollars to purchase and deliver the equipment that Ukraine needs now. In March, we delivered everything that we promised under that decree. This is in addition to 7.6 million US dollars that were allocated in 2023.



Реабілітаційна програма для українських дітей, яку організував Азербайджан
Ukrainian children's rehabilitation programme covered by Azerbaijan

We have also had successes and witnessed results in Azerbaijan's active participation in Ukraine's recovery. During the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London in 2023, Azerbaijan pledged to assist Ukraine in rebuilding the infrastructure in Irpin. We continue focusing on that city, and this year, thanks to the support of the Government of Azerbaijan and the funding from SOCAR Ukraine, we completed the renovation of the local polyclinic. It is a rather big polyclinic that covers not only the residents of the city of Irpin, but also the whole Bucha district of the Kyiv region. The project was a big success, and we are very happy that during the opening of the restored polyclinic at the end of April 2025, we were honoured with the presence of high-ranking Ukrainian officials, including Deputy Prime Minister for Restoration Oleksii Kuleba

and Deputy Chair of the Verkhovna Rada Olena Kondratiuk. I think the high presence of Ukrainian authorities during the inauguration of the polyclinic after its full reconstruction was a very good sign that spoke to the importance that Ukraine attaches to its cooperation with Azerbaijan. And let me just reiterate that this approach is also totally reciprocal on the part of Azerbaijan.

In February of this year, we also unveiled the safe recreation space for children at the National Library of Ukraine for Children in Kyiv, which was renovated with the support of the Government of Azerbaijan.



Відреставрована Ірпінська поліклініка
The restored Irpin polyclinic

Azerbaijan's participation in Ukraine's recovery will not stop at the projects we have already finished in Irpin. Our first project was restoring a local school, and the polyclinic was the second, but there is more to come. Ahead of us are four even bigger infrastructure projects in Irpin, and we hope to start implementing them in 2025. The first project involves restoring a cultural centre that was significantly damaged during active combat around Kyiv and the Kyiv region. The second project involves reconstructing the children's youth sports complex, which was also considerably damaged. Under the third project, we will construct a brand-new children's art centre. Before the war, there was no such centre in Irpin. The modern art

centre we'll build will be a gift from Azerbaijan to the city's children. Finally, we aim to build a residential building as the fourth project in our plans.

President Aliyev has stated on many occasions that Azerbaijan stands ready to continue helping Ukraine in the humanitarian dimension. The governmental budgetary resources will be allocated to the realisation of the upcoming four projects in Irpin. However, it's not just the government that is active this way; SOCAR Ukraine is also very helpful. The company plays an important role in Ukraine's energy market and actively engages in charity activities, such as funding the restoration of the polyclinic or secondary school in Irpin.

Overall, the four elements of our humanitarian aid, where Azerbaijan can be much more helpful than in other directions, are energy security, humanitarian demining, rehabilitation, and Ukraine's recovery; we very much look forward to continuing our work on these tracks. You also asked me about the role of the Embassy in coordination. Our primary task in Kyiv is to coordinate all those activities and identify the needs here: in Kyiv, the Kyiv region, and other regions. We also coordinate further actions by Azerbaijan in Ukraine with Baku.

— Both Azerbaijan and Ukraine are interested in deepening their trade and economic cooperation. This is evidenced by the fact that in 2024, Ukraine's Export Credit Agency supported exports to Azerbaijan worth over 830 million hryvnias, exceeded only by those to Poland and the UAE. In your view, which sectors of bilateral trade hold the greatest growth potential? Are there any new routes or logistical solutions under consideration to facilitate transport between our countries?

— You are absolutely right that both Azerbaijan and Ukraine are very much interested in further deepening and strengthening their trade and economic cooperation. Unfortunately, the war significantly affected this field of our bilateral relations. I would just like to bring some figures to give a better glimpse of understanding.

Before the war, the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Ukraine was over one billion American dollars. During President Aliyev's visit in 2022, just a couple of weeks before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, and his negotiations with President Zelenskyy, it was agreed that both countries would spare no effort to double the figures in the trade turnover. So, if it was at one billion, we were instructed by our leaders to bring this figure to at least two billion. Unfortunately, we couldn't reach such figures with the start of the war here.

In 2024, we observed a slight increase in bilateral trade turnover, reaching around 460 million US dollars. In any case, that's not enough. It does not meet our expectations, nor the potential that Azerbaijan and Ukraine possess in their capacities to increase the volume of trade.

Now, we are doing our best as the Embassy, together with our friends from Ukraine's competent authorities, to search for ways to move forward, even under Ukraine's currently challenging security situation. First and foremost, we decided to revive the Azerbaijan-Ukraine Business Council, because if we fail to bring the business sectors of both countries to cooperate, it will be very difficult to reach the goals we established for ourselves. But this isn't to say that business sectors don't want to cooperate; Azerbaijani business is very interested in continuing its cooperation in Ukraine. The actual challenge for us is the current lack of proper transport and logistical routes. If we wish to bring back trade cooperation and turnover, at least to the pre-war levels, we have to think seriously about securing robust transport and logistical routes.

There is a specific dynamic in this field. In April, Ukrainian authorities launched cargo ferries from the ports of Odesa to Georgia that are then linked with Azerbaijan. This is a good first step in the right direction. But we are still at the beginning of this process and don't know how effective it will be, if at all, and whether the possibility of using the cargo ferries across the Black Sea from Odesa to Georgia and then to Azerbaijan will be beneficial or advantageous for the businesses. I think Ukraine and Azerbaijan need to look at this issue and do their best to promote this new possibility of transport between Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

There is a big potential for deepening the economic trade relations between Azerbaijan and Ukraine. I can name many sectors with good prospects for developing this cooperation. Of course, the main ones are agriculture and energy. There are others as well, but these two are where we see the biggest opportunities for developing cooperation.

Another essential dimension with good potential for both countries is the transport corridors. Both Azerbaijan and Ukraine have favourable geographical locations. Azerbaijan invests heavily in developing trans-regional connectivity, with the middle corridor being our top priority. I think Ukraine could also benefit from the transport routes and transport corridors that are developing in our part of

the world. Ukraine is also trying, even now, in this very difficult situation, to expand its exports to different parts of the world: not only to Europe, but also to Africa, Asia, etc. Azerbaijan has well-developed transport routes, infrastructure, and railways in the South Caucasus that go across the Caspian Sea to Central Asia, which could be very beneficial to Ukraine to use for exporting its own goods and products to different regions: China, the Middle East, India, the Gulf of Persia, etc. We are very happy to continue the discussions and deliberations with our Ukrainian friends on possible work together in this field.

Trade is important in any interstate relations. Our countries enjoy excellent, traditionally strong bilateral ties. Ukraine and Azerbaijan have a good political dialogue, so there are no obstacles to continuing trading with each other. However, the war brought security challenges that affected all our aspirations. And believe me when I say that nowadays, one of the most challenging things for me as the Ambassador is to convince the business sector to continue doing business here, because their immediate questions are about security and safety. I understand their concerns and know the situation, but in any case, I think Ukraine offers excellent opportunities even now. Great opportunities for investments, continuing trade relations, and establishing good partnerships between small and medium enterprises. And as the Embassy, we continue to encourage and promote those things.

Frankly, investing is a challenging issue, but we're also trying to work on it. In 2024, one of the biggest holdings in Azerbaijan, the NEQSOL Holding, which owns Vodafone Ukraine, also invested in a pretty big titanium project in Ukraine. This is good for our trade relations and for expanding our economic ties, but if we're speaking from a political point of view, it's also crucial that, even now, Azerbaijan supports Ukraine's economy by investing in it. Yes, we're trying to be helpful with humanitarian aid, but the support through investments is how Azerbaijan backs up Ukraine's economy. This way, we also try to be an example for other countries and big investors, allowing them to see that yes, there are risks, but there are also opportunities. It's a message: 'Please continue to support Ukraine's economy even now'.

To summarise, we are working hard to deepen our trade and economic relations. Our number one priority is to achieve at least pre-war dynamics in our bilateral cooperation and solve the pressing challenges to achieve a totally different dynamic.

— In 2024, Azerbaijan hosted the 29th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29). What were the key achievements of the summit? Did this event open new opportunities for environmental cooperation between Azerbaijan and Ukraine?

— Yes, in November 2024, Azerbaijan had the privilege to host the 29th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Baku, which went down in history as one of the remarkable COPs. The summit not only marked a significant milestone in global climate diplomacy with its breakthrough decisions that will positively impact climate action for years to come, but also underscored Azerbaijan's commitment to fostering sustainable development and environmental stewardship. As President Aliyev emphasised, Azerbaijan spared no effort during the COP29 in Baku to build bridges between developing and developed countries, achieve consensus, and turn COP29 into a success story.

Azerbaijan's success at COP29 is a testament to its strategic diplomacy and strong commitment to multilateralism. It was indeed a historic event for Azerbaijan, first and foremost thanks to the breakthrough decisions. We're also delighted that Azerbaijan became the first country in our region to host COP, one of the largest UN events.

Speaking of its historic success, the decisions adopted during COP29 had been awaiting their resolutions for many years — Azerbaijan managed to leave behind such a legacy. I would like to mention three crucial decisions that were adopted during COP29. The most important milestone of this summit was the achievement of consensus on the new collective quantified goal on climate finance. This decision called for increasing climate finance for developing countries from all public and private sources to 1.3 trillion dollars per year until 2035. In addition, the target of at least 300 billion dollars of annual financial support for developing countries was set to be reached by 2035. Notably, this figure is three times higher than the 100-million-dollar climate finance goal set in 2009. In COP29, we reached a consensus between all stakeholders to increase this figure threefold to 300 billion dollars.

Another success of COP29 is the full operationalisation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement on international carbon markets. This issue had remained unresolved for 10 years.

Third important breakthrough element is the adoption of a decision to fully operationalise the Loss and Damage Fund, which developing countries, including small island nations and least developed African

states, had been eagerly awaiting. This aligns with President Aliyev's determination to address the problems of the small island states, which, as you know, are most affected by the negative impacts of climate change in the world. This particular issue was identified as a priority for the COP29 Azerbaijani presidency.

These were the three biggest decisions, breakthrough decisions that were adopted and which will have a positive impact on global climate action in the years to come. However, COP29 will also be remembered as the forum that adopted other important decisions, including the adoption of the Baku Adaptation Roadmap and the agreement to hold the Baku high-level dialogue on adaptation at all future COPs on an annual basis. Another example is the launch of the technology implementation programme, or the approval of the Baku Workplan of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform for 2025-2027. All these essential decisions adopted in the COP29 were officially branded by the UN as the Baku Climate Unity Pact.

Therefore, it was a huge success story for both the UN and Azerbaijan. We brought the parties together, built bridges between different, convergent views, and achieved consensus.

Approaching the second part of your question on the bilateral opportunities that COP29 opened for Azerbaijan and Ukraine, I would first like to appreciate the active participation of the Ukrainian representatives. In COP29, the Ukrainian delegation was led by the Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources, Svitlana Hrynychuk. Ukraine was also well represented by a very nice pavilion that I had a chance to visit during my short trip to Baku to attend the COP29. We decided that we could benefit from the active participation of Ukrainian Environment Minister Hrynychuk in Baku to advance our bilateral cooperation. During the COP29, we signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine. It now sets a framework for the practical cooperation between the two ministries on many issues: climate change, environmental protection, exchange of expertise in the preservation of biodiversity, etc.

We are pleased that COP29 was such a success story for us and left a positive mark on the dynamics of our bilateral cooperation. Now, we have a bilateral document that will help advance this cooperation in the months and years to come.

— Energy cooperation is an important aspect of relations between Ukraine and Azerbaijan. Recently, increasing attention has been paid to the potential transit of Azerbaijani gas to Europe via Ukraine, and the presidents of both states reaffirmed their mutual interest in bringing this idea to fruition. What economic benefits might it bring to the parties? Are there currently any specific initiatives or projects that could be implemented in the near future?

— Azerbaijan continues playing an important role in global energy security and has been a reliable partner for European countries and the European Union itself in this field. We highly appreciate the European Commission's recognition of Azerbaijan's pivotal role in energy security on the European continent.

Azerbaijan is a pan-European gas supplier, and the geography of our gas supply is rapidly growing. Today, Azerbaijan supplies natural gas to twelve countries, ten of which are European, and eight are members of the European Union. Since 2023, five additional European countries have become recipients of natural gas from Azerbaijan. And the geography of our gas supply in Europe will only continue to grow because we are already involved in creating gas distribution networks in European countries, some of which do not yet have those networks. Some others do, but need to expand them. As investors, we plan to invest in creating and expanding such gas distribution networks.

Everyone — even in Ukraine, I'm pretty sure — believes Azerbaijan is mainly an oil and gas exporting country. This is true. But that is not the only dimension in our energy policy, whether domestically or in our global partnerships. We are now developing international cooperation in the field of renewable energy. The Memorandum on Strategic Partnership between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Field of Energy not only covers the gas supply to the European Union, but also identifies the cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union in renewable energy.

For example, Azerbaijan currently possesses substantial wind energy resources in the Caspian Sea sector. We have also embarked upon the landmark transregional Black Sea Submarine Cable Project with partner countries like Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, and Romania. Steadily and slowly, Azerbaijan is moving towards becoming an exporter of green electricity to the European markets. We see a great opportunity in this project, and Azerbaijan will continue to play an essential role in the development of the Caspian Green Energy Corridor with the

Central Asian countries, and together with the countries I mentioned — Georgia, Hungary, Romania, and recently also Bulgaria — in realising the Black Sea Submarine Cable Project. It's one of the essential elements of our cooperation with the European Union.

Cooperation in the energy field also plays a vital role in our bilateral relations with Ukraine. The SOCAR has been well-represented in Ukraine for many years. We invested enough in the energy sector of Ukraine, and now SOCAR Ukraine has almost 60 gas stations around the country — nice, comfortable stations, I believe. Hopefully, SOCAR will keep expanding its activities here.



Зустріч Президента України Володимира Зеленського та Президента Азербайджану Ільхама Алієва в Давосі. 21 січня 2025 року

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy and President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met at Davos. 21 January 2025

The future of energy security in Ukraine also brings me back to the question of trade and economic cooperation. Before the war, we exported oil and oil products to Ukraine through the Black Sea. Now this transport corridor is closed. With the outbreak of the war, we could no longer export oil to Ukraine. So, we also see these adverse effects of the war on our cooperation in the energy field. But, in general, we're pleased that SOCAR continues to operate here. This is very important because SOCAR is a big company, renowned not only in Ukraine and Europe but also in many parts of the world. It supports Ukraine, the Ukrainian energy

sector, and the economy by continuing its functioning and commercial activities here. Working in this difficult safety situation is not easy, but we're very pleased to see that SOCAR remains well represented in the local market. It's also important from a political point of view.

I think the field of energy will continue to be one of the critical elements in our bilateral cooperation. This issue is also discussed quite frequently during our political dialogue. It was also the topic of the bilateral negotiations and a bilateral meeting that President Aliyev and President Zelenskyy held in Davos in 2025. So, let's see how it will evolve and continue developing.

— The closure of russian media offices in Azerbaijan demonstrates your country's firm stance against external information influence. At the same time, Ukraine faces large-scale challenges in the information sphere. Mr Ambassador, how could our countries work together to counter disinformation and hybrid threats?

— First and foremost, I would like to emphasise that it's not all about the closure of certain media offices in Azerbaijan. Media agencies of any country that wish to establish their offices in Azerbaijan have to comply with the national legislation of Azerbaijan and the provisions of the international documents to which Azerbaijan is a party. We have observed that this rule has not been respected in some instances by the offices of some media agencies of foreign countries. We approached not only the media agencies you mentioned, but also several other media agencies that have offices in Azerbaijan.

This decision, adopted by the Azerbaijani authorities, does not relate to the correspondence offices. Those agencies can continue to operate their correspondence offices in Azerbaijan. There is no discriminatory approach from our side. All media agencies should abide by the provisions of our country's national legislation.

Now, regarding your question about countering disinformation and how Azerbaijan and Ukraine can work together, disinformation is a problem that all countries encounter, and Ukraine itself is facing large-scale challenges in the information sphere. I think we could exchange expertise in this field. This could be one of the good opportunities to work together to counter the disinformation campaigns, etc. You have, I believe, enough experience and good practices in this field. We have experience of our own. By exchanging this expertise, we would become better positioned to counter the different types of disinformation campaigns or hybrid attacks.

— How does Baku envision its role in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus and the broader Black Sea region? Are there prospects for co-operation between Ukraine and Azerbaijan in the field of security?

— With the liberation of our occupied territories and the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognised borders following the 30-year-long Armenian occupation, an absolutely new reality has been established in the region of the South Caucasus. Now, securing a lasting, durable peace in the region is our top priority. De facto peace is already in place. What we need to do now is translate this de facto peace in the region into de jure peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

For us, President Aliyev's peace agenda is the basis for a prosperous and secure future for our entire region. At the same time, the recent progress achieved as a result of the direct bilateral negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the completion of the negotiations on the draft peace treaty between the two countries, inspires hope for the long-awaited, sustainable, and lasting peace in the region.

We are very much committed to normalising our relations with Armenia and signing the peace treaty. However, the finalisation of this whole process will depend on the actual implementation of Armenia's declared commitment to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, including by removing the territorial claims that are still embedded in Armenia's constitution and other legislative acts.

We firmly believe that it's high time to seize this historic opportunity, following this 30-year-long bloody conflict between the two nations, and not to miss this chance to establish good neighbourly relations and coexist side by side in peace as two sovereign states within the internationally recognised territories.

We have never been so close to securing lasting peace in our region. The South Caucasus is our home. We believe only countries within the region can address all these challenges without any external influence or intervention. We know our own problems better than anyone sitting far away. It's up to the regional countries themselves to discuss and search for ways to address the issues of mutual interest.

As to the perspectives of our cooperation in the field of security, Azerbaijan and Ukraine are strategic partners, so issues related to peace and security remain prominent in our bilateral political dialogue. For example, in February 2025, we convened political

consultations between our ministries of foreign affairs at the level of deputy foreign ministers in Baku. This issue was also discussed.

As strategic partners, Ukraine and Azerbaijan communicate well on many regional and global issues, cooperate well within multilateral platforms and international organisations, and hold the same or similar positions on many issues related to global and regional security.

Supporting each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty remains a cornerstone of our bilateral cooperation. I would say that the holy principle in our bilateral cooperation with Ukraine is that we support Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognised borders, and we are very grateful to Ukraine for the same support to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We actively cooperate within international organisations, global organisations like the United Nations, and regional organisations like the OSCE, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation, or GUAM. These actions are our joint steps or combined efforts to ensure peace and security in our parts of the world.

— You have made a number of working visits to various regions of Ukraine — in particular Odesa, Lviv, Poltava, and Chernihiv — meeting with local authorities and members of the Azerbaijani diaspora. Mr Ambassador, could you elaborate on the partnership opportunities between the cities and regions of our countries discussed in these meetings?

— Yes, it's true. I very much like visiting the regions, and I'm trying to be as active as I can to keep doing that. In 2025, I have already visited two regions: Cherkasy and Chernihiv. I already have plans to visit several other areas in the coming months.

Azerbaijan and Ukraine have excellent inter-regional cooperation. Partnerships exist between different cities and regions, such as Baku and Kyiv, Cherkasy and Sumgait, and Odesa and Ganja. Most recently, the city of Irpin also established a sister city partnership with the city of Lachin. Strengthening and deepening interregional cooperation is one of the important elements of the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Ukraine. By visiting the regions of Ukraine, we are trying to boost and expand it.

While on trips to the regions, I have two important goals. First, visiting the regions gives me a better opportunity to understand how the regions continue to live in the current situation in Ukraine. Second, such visits are a good opportunity to talk to regional and municipal



Посол Сеймур Мардалієв відвідав Чернігівщину з робочим візитом. 18 березня 2025 року
Ambassador Seymur Mardaliyev paid a working visit to the Chernihiv region. 18 March 2025

authorities about the perspectives of developing bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and Azerbaijan. These visits also allow us to look for ways to cooperate, for example, in economic and trade relations.

Another element is people-to-people contacts and cultural exchange. It's an opportunity to search for ways to promote cultural exchange with those regions and promote Azerbaijani culture locally. We already see the interest of some other regions and cities. I don't want to name them at this stage, but they are also very interested in establishing partnership agreements with the cities in Azerbaijan. Those that have already established a partnership or sister city relations with the Azerbaijani cities in their region are very eager to deepen this cooperation. Our job as the Embassy here is to build bridges between Ukrainian cities, Ukrainian regions, and their counterparts in Azerbaijan. Very soon, we will achieve outstanding results in this field.

This is also a good opportunity for me to meet members of the Azerbaijani community. We have a very strong Azerbaijani community in Ukraine, one of the biggest national communities in the country. Of course, with the start of the war, the number of Azerbaijanis who lived and resided in Ukraine decreased. Some left Ukraine for European

countries, while others went back to Azerbaijan, to their homes. However, we still see quite a significant number of Azerbaijanis who currently live in Ukraine. I was very surprised and impressed during my visit to the Kharkiv region in December 2024, when representatives of the local Azerbaijani community shared their estimates, according to which approximately 17,000 Azerbaijanis still live in the Kharkiv region. So, by visiting the regions, I also meet our compatriots to talk to them to better understand how they continue living, what problems they face, if any, and how we can continue benefiting from their presence here in terms of the people-to-people contacts between Azerbaijan and Ukraine. We can continue to work together to promote Azerbaijani culture in Ukraine.

I am very interested in continuing regional visits to the different parts of the country. They are all unique and beautiful. I am very happy that we also see strong interest from Ukrainian regional authorities in continuing this cooperation. We have excellent relations and collaboration with the central Ukrainian authorities. We also see strong interest from the regional local authorities in continuing the inter-regional cooperation between Azerbaijan and Ukraine.



Зустріч Посла Азербайджану з очільником Черкаської ОВА Ігорем Табурцем. 16 квітня 2025 року
Ambassador Seymur Mardaliyev met with Head of the Cherkasy Regional Military Administration Ihor Taburets. 16 April 2025

— Recently, cultural cooperation between Ukraine and Azerbaijan has gained new momentum. The opening of the renewed Ukrainian Center in Baku in November 2024, along with the establishment of Ukrainian and Azerbaijani book sections in libraries of both countries, reflects this progress. Mr Ambassador, what other cultural initiatives have been implemented over the past year? Are there any new projects planned to strengthen cultural ties between our nations further?

— Cultural cooperation remains an important dimension in our strategic partnership. Thank you very much for mentioning a couple of examples of recent progress in deepening the cultural interaction between Azerbaijan and Ukraine. I will add one more to this list. Several days ago, we also established a friendship alley in the Natalka Park in Kyiv.

We must continue developing our bilateral cooperation in the cultural field, but it's also not easy now. It's become difficult to organise really high-quality and interesting exhibitions in Ukraine. Again, the main problem is the current lack of robust transport connections and logistics. Yes, we also have to consider security and safety issues, but believe me, they are not the number one obstacle here.

Organising good cultural events throughout the year has always been a tradition for our Embassy in Ukraine. We are trying to do our best to organise them even now. We held a couple of events at the National Library for Children in 2024. We demonstrated our culture, our history, etc. But those are small-scale events.

We are working on some ideas for 2025 with several cultural institutions in Ukraine. However, much will depend on how successfully we fix the transport connections and solve logistical issues. This is yet another example of how the war affected our bilateral cooperation.

We will also have an important cultural event at the Diplomatic Academy in a few days. So, even with relatively small events, we continue promoting cultural ties between Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

Hopefully, peace will be established very soon in Ukraine, its people will return to a peaceful and ordinary life, and we will be able to continue our cultural cooperation through good concerts and exhibitions like we used to. At the same time, we will never stop trying to identify areas where we can do something really meaningful with the ultimate goal to foster the cultural interaction between Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

Interview dated 15 May 2025