

Azerbaijan - United Kingdom relations

Brief information on diplomatic relations:

The United Kingdom recognized the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 26 December 1991. The diplomatic relations between two countries were established on 11 March 1992. The British Embassy was opened in Baku in September 1993 and the Azerbaijani Embassy in London in January 1994.

Since 1992 the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom benefit from close bilateral partnership relations and cooperation in the framework of international organizations such as the United Nations, OSCE, Council of Europe, NATO etc. The bilateral relations have spread to cover a wide range of issues from high-level political dialogue to growing trade and investments links, as well as strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties.

High-level mutual visits:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 19-23 February 1994 | - visit by President Heydar Aliyev |
| 19-24 July 1998 | - visit by President Heydar Aliyev |
| 13-14 December 2004 | - The official visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev |
| 13-15 July 2009 | - The official visits of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev |
| 6-7 August 2012 | - a working visit by President Ilham Aliyev to the United Kingdom to attend 2012 London Olympic Games and hold meeting with Prime Minister David Cameron |

Ministerial visits from the United Kingdom to Azerbaijan:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| May 2008 | - Jim Murphy, Minister of State for Europe |
| June 2008 | - Lord Digby Jones, Minister for Trade and Investment Europe |
| September 2009 | - Lord Hunt, Minister of State for Energy |

- October 2010 - David Lidington, Minister of State for Europe
- September 2011 - Charles Hendry, Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change
- November 2013 - Charles Hendry, Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Azerbaijan
- December 2013 - William Hague, Foreign Secretary

Ministerial visits from Azerbaijan to the United Kingdom:

- September 2013 - Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- November 2012 - Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism
- November 2012 - Elshad Iskandarov, Chairman of the State Committee on Religious Associations
- April 2012 - Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- January 2012 - Misir Mardanov, Minister of Education
- May 2010 - Vagif Sadigov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- January 2010 - Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- December 2009 - Natig Aliyev, Minister of Industry and Energy
- March 2009 - Araz Azimov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- October 2008 - Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- June 2008 - Khalaf Khalafov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- February 2008 - Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism
- October 2007 - Kamaladdin Heydarov, Minister of Emergency Situations

Inter-parliamentary relations:

There is Azerbaijan-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group in Azerbaijani Parliament (the Milli Majlis). The Parliamentary Group which consists of 13 members, is chaired by Chingiz Asadullayev, MP.

The Azerbaijan All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in the UK Parliament has 20 members and its chairman is Christopher Pincher MP.

Bilateral political relations:

The basis of the current state of political relations between two countries was laid during the visits of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev to the United Kingdom in 1994 and 1998. The official visits of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to the United Kingdom in 2004, 2009 and 2012, contributed to strengthening the high-level political dialogue and further development of bilateral relations. The two countries are interested in the advancement of political dialogue and cooperation between their executive and legislative institutions.

The United Kingdom supports the peaceful and lasting resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the basis of universally accepted principles and norms of international law. The United Kingdom recognizes the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and expresses its support to the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group to assist in finding a lasting solution to the conflict.

Azerbaijan and United Kingdom cooperates effectively in the frame of many international organisations, including two-year non-permanent membership of Azerbaijan at the UN Security Council. The two countries also work together in Afghanistan towards bringing lasting and durable peace and stability to the country.

Bilateral economic relations:

The bilateral economic cooperation, especially in the energy sector, between the two countries constitutes the core of bilateral relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom. Azerbaijan cooperates with the United Kingdom in the field of exploration and transportation of oil and natural gas from the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. BP as a leading oil company has been active in Azerbaijan since 1992 and participates in the main production sharing agreements such as the “Contract of Century” (Azeri-Chirag-Guneshli) and the Shah Deniz project. BP is also main technical operator and key player in the implementation of Shah Deniz-2 project. The Signing Ceremony on Final Investment Decision on Shah Deniz-2 project took place in Baku, attended by Foreign Secretary William Hague, among high level dignitaries of many other countries.

In 2011 the United Kingdom was the 15th largest trade partner of Azerbaijan (the 4th largest in the EU) with the trade turnover of more than 501 million USD. The United Kingdom remains the largest foreign investor in Azerbaijan with about 300 British

companies operating in the country. According to the official figures of the State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2012 the British investments accounted for 51.7% of all foreign investment (AZN 1,683bn).

Britain – Azerbaijan Business Council (BABC) was established in September 2009 with a view to expanding business cooperation between the two countries and deepen their trade and investment ties. The Council regularly organises trade missions of British companies to Azerbaijan and holds business events in London to highlight trade and investment opportunities in Azerbaijan.

Bilateral humanitarian relations:

The development of political and economic relations gave further impetus to the establishment of cultural and humanitarian relations between the two countries. During the last five years the number of Azerbaijani organizations in the United Kingdom has significantly increased.

The Anglo-Azerbaijani Society, established in 1997, is the pioneer which actively contributed to the development of humanitarian relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom. Currently, the co-chairs of the Anglo-Azerbaijani Society are Professor Nargiz Pashayeva and acting co-chair Ken Forest. The Society helps promote Azerbaijani culture and arts in Britain, organising fundraising and charity events and helping educate young, talented Azerbaijani musicians in Britain.

The United Kingdom is a major destination for the Azerbaijani students who wish to continue their education abroad. According to the recent figures, 1842 students have studied in 27 different countries in the framework of Education Abroad State Scholarship Scheme for Azerbaijani Youth. 419 of them have taken the advantage of studying in British universities.

The English language is also increasingly popular with Azerbaijani youth and hundreds of students from Azerbaijan travel to the UK to attend language courses to improve their English proficiency.

UK-based Azerbaijani organisations and student societies:

- The European Azerbaijan Society (TEAS);
- Azerbaijan House;
- London Azerbaijan Sunday School (Caspian Khazri);
- SOAS-Azerbaijan Student Society;
- Exeter-Azerbaijan Student Society;
- UCL-Azerbaijan Society;

- Cambridge Azerbaijan Society;
- Manchester Azerbaijan Society;
- Sheffield Azerbaijan Society;
- Aberdeen Azerbaijan Society;
- Oxford Azerbaijan Society..

Contractual-legal basis:

There were signed 12 documents between The United Kingdom and The Republic of Azerbaijan.

Updated: 14.02.2014