

### Kazakhstan



#### **President signed the law “On amendments to the Customs Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan”**

The law “On amendments to the Customs Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan” has come into force. It was finally signed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan on November 27. In early November the Senate of the Kazakh Parliament has adopted this law during its plenary session. The draft of this law was initiated by a group of the Majilis members.

The amendments are aimed at simplifying the customs procedures for the participants of the external economic activity during registration of the imported goods and delivery of documents for confirmation of the declared customs value. It provides with the exclusion of some articles from the Code such as Article 383 which required provision of export declaration. - *Source: Kazinform, APK-Inform; Translated by: usapeec.kz*

#### **Meat imports to Kazakhstan increased in 2007**

According to the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, meat imports increased by 19.4% in comparison with January-August '06 and constituted 121,000 MT.

The import of pork increased by 2.7 times - to 3,300 MT, beef by 1.6 times - to 11,700 MT, poultry meat by 14.4% - to 106,000 MT.

At the same time local agricultural production increased by 8.5% during January-October, in comparison with the same period of last year.

As of November 1 cattle and poultry livestock increased by 2.9%. 1124.8 thousand MT of meat

(1078.3 thousand MT in Jan-Oct 2006), 4500.4 thousand MT of milk (4374.1 thousand MT in Jan-Oct 2006) and 2231/4 million eggs (2129.9 million) were produced during the year 2007. - *Source: Interfax Kazakhstan; meatinfo.ru; Translated by: usapeec.kz*

#### **Kazakhstan Prime Minister met US Assistant State Secretary**

The meeting of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Karim Masimov with the USA Assistant State Secretary for Central Asia Evan A. Feigenbaum took place in Ukimet Uiy.

K. Masimov noted Kazakhstan as the largest trading and investment partner of USA in Central Asia will continue to adhere to the principles of valuable, open and constructive partner cooperation,” the press service informs.

E. Feigenbaum estimated cooperation between Kazakhstan and the USA as “strong, multivariate relations. We cooperate in many aspects: safety, economic, investment and many other spheres.” “The participants of the meeting ascertained the progress of the relations between Kazakhstan and the USA and expressed confidence in their further development,” the text states. - *Source: Kazakhstan Today*

#### **Kazakh president asked domestic producers to display initiative**

During an awarding ceremony for presidential premium in Astana, President Nazarbayev called for domestic producers to improve quality of their goods.

“When we enter the World Trade Organization (WTO), we become a part of the world market, he told participants of the event. Kazakhstan has to produce its own goods. We depend on market fluctuations in other countries because we do not produce enough agricultural products”.

We have created favorable conditions and cut down the taxes but you do not display initiative, he said. - *Source: Kazinform Agency*

## Kyrgyzstan



### Kyrgyz import, export rates to decrease in 2008

Kyrgyz import and export rates are expected to decrease in 2008, the CIS interstate statistics committee has reported. In 2008 the import growth rates will reach 35%. By the end of 2007 these rates are expected to reach 55%, which is highest in CIS.

The export growth is also expected to reach highest rates in 2008. By the end of 2007 it will be about 30%, which is 13% more than the CIS average rate. According to the committee's forecasts Kyrgyzstan will take the second among CIS states place on export growth, after Ukraine (32%).

In 2008 the Kyrgyz export growth will reach 20%, as well as in Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine. The average CIS export growth will total 8 percent, the committee reported. - *Source: 24.kg Agency*

## Uzbekistan



### New US Ambassador, new policy?

Signs coming out of Uzbekistan indicate that Tashkent and Washington are probing for ways to improve relations. The catalyst for the attempted rapprochement is the new US ambassador in Tashkent, Richard Norland.

Norland presented his credentials to Uzbek President Islam Karimov in late September. Since then, he has been perhaps more active than any US diplomat since the May 2005 Andijan events, which caused US-Uzbek relations to rupture. In published accounts of his travels and meetings, Norland has used decidedly conciliatory rhetoric.

On November 1, the US envoy met with Uzbekistan's parliament-appointed human rights ombudsman, Saiora Rashidova. A report on the meeting posted on the UzReport.com website portrayed Norland as voicing a desire to foster a new bilateral relationship, and to find "common language" on humanitarian issues, including human rights. In the aftermath of Andijan, the United States was outspoken in its criticism of the Karimov administration's human rights violations, especially the crackdown on freedom of expression. During his meeting with the ombudsman, however, Norland reportedly acknowledged US rights abuses associated with the Abu Grahیب prison in Iraq and the Guantanamo military base in Cuba. "He recognized the fact that no country has a monopoly" on good human rights behavior.

In late October, Norland gave a speech in Tashkent to the American Chamber in which he sought to rekindle investor interest in Uzbekistan. He praised entrepreneurs attending the event as "adventure capitalists," according to a US Embassy statement, going on to outline three steps for improved relations; "to rebuild trust, to create greater transparency, and to galvanize the reform process." The statement lacked any specific reference to a need for Uzbekistan to improve its human rights performance.

Norland paid a diplomatic visit to Samarkand in mid October. Under normal circumstances, such trips are not especially noteworthy. But after the chill in US-Uzbek relations set in, Norland's predecessor, Jon Purnell, rarely ventured out of Tashkent. The new ambassador's itinerary included visits to the Center for State Sanitary and Epidemiological Surveillance, described by the US Embassy as a facility "for identifying dangerous pathogens." The second stop was the Central Asia Seed Company, which processes raw cotton.

Local political analysts suggest that the two site visits offer clues into possible areas of US-Uzbek cooperation, if a thaw comes about. The fact that Norland visited cultural sites and local museums in Samarkand, but the embassy did not mention any meetings with local non-governmental organization activists, could be interpreted as a goodwill gesture made to the Uzbek government. - *Source: Eurasianet*