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## **AZERBAIJAN'S ACCESSION TO WTO ON AGENDA**

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The next talks on Azerbaijan's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) will be held in Geneva next week.

Negotiations will depend on both commodities and services. At present, the process of joining the WTO is slowly going on. There are still many things to do in the legislation, commodities and services. A number of laws should be adopted, Deputy Foreign Minister Mahmud Mammadgulyev told Report.

Azerbaijan launched negotiations with the WTO member states in 2004. Azerbaijan submitted to the organization 400 documents, including 300 legislative acts, and also answered more than 2,000 questions of WTO member countries.

As of today, the country has completed negotiations and signed protocols with Turkey, Oman, the UAE, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Azerbaijan is at the stage of signing protocols with China and Moldova. Presently, the country is in talks with 13 countries.

Azerbaijan has had an observer status in the WTO since 1997.

The World Trade Organization was established in 1995. The headquarters of the organization is located in Geneva, Switzerland. The WTO, one of the youngest international organizations, is a continuation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), established in 1947.

As many as 98 percent of world trade belongs to the member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Azerbaijan has been negotiating 20 years to join this organization, but no results have been achieved so far.

Joining the World Trade Organization could help increase Azerbaijan's non-oil exports.

The regulatory framework of the organization is multilateral trade agreements. These agreements govern the trade and service trade, intellectual property, trade policy oversight and conflict resolution issues. The WTO's main goal is to maximize liberalization of international trade and its solid foundation, thereby increasing economic growth and improving people's living standards.

The last, 14th meeting on Azerbaijan's accession to the World Trade Organization was held in Geneva on July 28, 2017.

At the meeting, the Azerbaijani side requested the Working Group members to make the concessions including 10 percent minimis (from the value of goods produced in the agricultural sector); global Support Indicator Capacity of \$ 1 billion (all sources of subsidies); additional support for the restoration of agricultural lands after the return of occupied territories (Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding districts); the possibility of allocating subsidies in accordance with Article 6.2 of the WTO Agricultural Agreement.

The last bilateral talks in the process of joining the WTO, were held in July 2017 with the EU, U.S., Switzerland, Japan, India, the Russian Federation and Thailand.

EU funded project The Support and Strengthening Capacity of the Trade Policy and WTO Department of the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the WTO Accession Negotiations covering the period from 2018 to 2020, has as an overall objective to strengthen the trade policy of the Government of Azerbaijan and to provide support to the ongoing WTO accession negotiations.

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