
ESTONIA, AZERBAIJAN MAY EXPAND PORTS COOPERATION

-

23.05.2019

AzerNews (23 May 2019)

The crucial infrastructure projects implemented by Azerbaijan in the region open up great opportunities for foreign countries to transport their goods from West to the Eastern markets and vice versa.

Estonia and Azerbaijan can discuss opportunities to expand cooperation in the port industry, Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu told Trend.

There are opportunities to expand cooperation in the port industry that can bring benefits to both countries, said the minister, noting that preliminary negotiations and meetings have been held.

He added that if both countries show interest, this issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission, which will be held in Estonia at the end of 2019.

Reinsalu also touched upon the prospects for the development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Estonia in the field of tourism. The total number of tourists still has potential for growth, and we must do more to mutually popularize our countries.

He noted that Estonian travel agency Germalo organizes regular tours to Azerbaijan, stressing that the number of visas issued to Azerbaijani citizens to visit Estonia has remained the same for the last couple of years.

In his words, expansion of contacts between people as well as cultural and business ties can help attract tourists.

The minister further added that Estonia is interested in diversification of areas of cooperation with Azerbaijan.

Bilateral relations between Estonia and Azerbaijan are stable. In recent years, we have made progress in strengthening political cooperation through high-level meetings, he said. We have established very good contacts between our parliaments. I am glad that our vice speaker visited Baku in October 2018.

He added that an Estonian-Azerbaijani parliamentary group has also been formed in the Estonian parliament, and good contacts will certainly continue. We are interested in intensifying political dialogue and diversifying areas of cooperation.

Reinsalu stressed that the parties are already cooperating excellently in the field of ICT and education, but there is great potential for the further development of economic relations and increasing trade flows.

The minister went on to note that the Estonian government appreciates the cooperation with all the countries of the Eastern Partnership and actively promotes this initiative in the European Union. The EU is an important partner for Azerbaijan, and we welcome the positive dynamics in relations between the EU and Azerbaijan.

The Minister recalled that the EU foreign ministers and their colleagues from the six Eastern Partnership countries met in Brussels on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Eastern Partnership on May 13, 2019, to confirm the importance of this initiative, note its successes and also think about the future of strategic partnership.

I am glad that I met with my Azerbaijani counterpart in Brussels, and I look forward to establishing good and productive working relations with him, said the minister.

Diplomatic relations between Estonia and Azerbaijan were established in 1992. Both countries are full members of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Azerbaijan is an ally of Estonia in the South Caucasus.

About 15 agreements have been signed between the countries, and 22 Estonian companies operate in Azerbaijan. Approximately 2,500 Azerbaijanis live in Estonia.

The economic relations between Azerbaijan and Estonia have gradually increased in recent years. The intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Estonia was established in 2011.

There is a great potential for the development of ties. Azerbaijan is interested in cooperation in the field of food industry, energy supply, textile, furniture and wood industry, tourism, while the Estonian side is interested in sharing their experience particularly in ICT and e-government.

Estonia considers Azerbaijan as a possible corridor to the markets of Iran, Middle East and India. Estonian railway companies and sea ports have good relations with Azerbaijan Railways and Baku International Sea Trade Port. Estonia is currently working on opening a transit corridor between Scandinavia, Middle East and Central Asia.

The trade turnover with Estonia amounted to \$5 million in 2018, according to State Statistical Committee. Estonian exports reached \$3.7 million, while Azerbaijani exports made up \$1.3 million.

The main goods of export from Estonia to Azerbaijan were machinery (68 percent), timber and wood production, paper and cardboard. At the same time, Estonia mainly imported foodstuffs, such as nut, juice and water, from Azerbaijan.

<https://www.azernews.az/business/151080.html>