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## **KAZAKHSTAN, SLOVAKIA TO STRENGTHEN INTERACTION WITHIN OSCE AND BILATERAL FORMATS**

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Within the participation in the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), held on July 8-9 in Slovakia, Kazakh Foreign Minister Beibut Atankulov held talks with OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčák, the Kazakh Foreign Ministry reported.

The sides discussed interaction within the OSCE, as well as bilateral cooperation.

The Kazakh side praised the Slovak OSCE Chairmanship, which began on January 1, 2019, noting that Bratislava has made significant contributions to addressing the challenges facing the OSCE.

One of the main topics of discussion was the Kazakh initiative to establish an OSCE thematic center in Nur-Sultan on sustainable interconnection, focused on analytic and research work. They noted the timeliness and relevance of this idea, the implementation of which would increase the effectiveness of the Organization in the second (economic and environmental) dimension, enhance its credibility and ensure a more balanced geographical representation in its institutions.

The sides discussed the situation in Afghanistan, which plays a key role in ensuring long-term stability and security in the OSCE region. In that context, the Kazakh side proposed holding a special event on Afghanistan in Nur-Sultan this autumn, during the visit of the Permanent Representatives of the OSCE participating States to Kazakhstan. Such an OSCE event would increase the Organization's involvement in resolving the situation and in post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Regarding bilateral cooperation, the sides commended the high level of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Slovakia, with last year marking the 25th anniversary of their diplomatic relations. Over the years, the countries have established a trusting and constructive dialogue, and have developed a legal and institutional framework for cooperation.

The meeting stressed the need to intensify Kazakh-Slovak economic and trade cooperation and the interest of the Kazakh side in supporting joint projects. Today, there are over 30 companies with the participation of Slovak capital in Kazakhstan.

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