



# Kazakhstan News Bulletin

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*Say It in Kazakh:*

*Going on a picnic:  
Where is the park? ---  
Sayabaq kai zherde?*

*Do they have benches?  
--- Sayabaqta  
oryndyktar bar ma?*

*Are there barbecue  
grills? --- Sayabaqta  
shashlyk zhasaityn  
zher bar ma?*

*I will bring drinks and  
alcohol. --- Men susyn  
zhane arak sharap  
alyp keletin.*

*Will you bring food? --  
- Sen tagam alyp  
kelesin be?*

## **Kazakhstan Will Work with EU to Strengthen Ombudsman**

Kazakhstan will work with the European Commission to strengthen its Human Rights Ombudsman through a new joint project.

The project, presented in Astana on March 3, will be carried out in cooperation with human rights ombudsmen in Spain and Greece. The European Commission will provide 700,000 euros (US\$835,000) needed to complete the project.

Bolat Baikadamov, Kazakhstan's Human Rights Ombudsman said "the project will be carried out through exchange of opinion and experience between ombudsmen in Kazakhstan, Spain and Greece, as well as between other interested organizations."

Regine Rois, an official with the mission of the European Commission in Kazakhstan, said the project will set up an analytical center in the ombudsman's office, help the office streamline the procedures for accepting and reviewing complaints, and generally strengthen the relations between Kazakhstan's Ombudsman and foreign counterparts.

As part of the project, two conferences will take place analyzing foreign experience in setting up ombudsmen's offices.

The Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman in Kazakhstan was established in 2002 by presidential decree.

It receives and acts on the growing number of complaints each year as people come to appreciate its potential for addressing and redressing violations of their rights.

Last year, the Ombudsman received more than 5,000 complaints, 600 were fully investigated and in more than 200 cases the complainants' rights were restored.



**Extreme sports come to Kazakhstan. Thrill seekers are pulled along on skis across the frozen steppes of Astana behind large kites in the newest addition to the world of winter sports in Kazakhstan. "Kiting" is becoming more popular every day, especially among young people.**

## **First Green Party Edges Closer to Recognition**

The Tabigat (Nature) Party held its constituent congress in Almaty on March 4 moving the first green party in Kazakhstan closer to full status.

Mels Eleusizov, the leader of the Tabigat association, as it was known since its inception in 1991, and a former presidential candidate, presented the new party's draft charter and program. He said: "We need to establish a law and order democratic state whose main priorities are social and environmental wellbeing of a human being and the subordination of the interests of economy to the interests of the environment. With that goal in mind we will fight for environmentally safe housing and workplaces for every citizen of Kazakhstan, for clean air, water and land, for full nutrition, and the protection of the environment for future generations."

The Tabigat will work with other parties and associations to achieve its goals.

Eleusizov said "the establishment of our party is not a homage to the times, because there are plenty of other political parties. But since none of them makes saving nature the priority that it deserves to be, we take this task onto ourselves and will make it our priority."

Environmental issues in Kazakhstan are traditionally important. The country is home to two huge areas of ecological devastation. One is the former nuclear test site at Semipalatinsk, where almost 500 nuclear tests were carried out. The other is the Aral Sea which today is less than half of its original size. Oil and gas exploration and production in the offshore Caspian Sea, where most of Kazakhstan's untapped reserves are thought to be, is also shaping up as a very sensitive environmental issue.

## **Defense Minister Celebrates Women's Military Role**

Kazakhstan's Defense Minister Army Gen. Mukhtar Altynbayev used the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8 to mark the service of more than 7,000 women in Kazakhstan's military.

Gen. Altynbayev hosted a reception in honor of women in uniform, promoting some women to higher ranks and presenting flowers and gifts to others. A total of 26 servicewomen were honored, including 11 officers and 12 warrant officers.

In Kazakhstan's military, women serve in medical, communications, financial and other support and non-combat specialties.

Elsewhere, women's day was marked throughout Kazakhstan's society. Majilis Speaker Ural Mukhamedzhanov praised the work of women legislators and said more women in the lawmaking would benefit the process. Today there are eight women in the 77-member Majilis, and two in the 39-member Senate.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev congratulated the women on the occasion and said the country "is doing everything so that women feel protected and have the opportunity to pursue their business and creative initiatives." The President added, "Our society will only win if we elevate the role of our women."

The Government has promoted the role of women in the society through the National Commission on Family and Gender Issues, and by adopting a gender policy strategy. Currently, four members of the Cabinet are women, including ministers of justice, finance, education and science, and labor and social protection. There are also many women judges and local officials.

## **Lucent to Deploy Next-Generation Network for Kazakhtelecom**

Kazakhtelecom, Kazakhstan's national carrier, Lucent Technologies and Winncom Technologies announced on March 8 that they are deploying an IP-based next-generation network for Kazakhtelecom in Astana, the nation's capital, to support advanced voice and data services for business and residential subscribers.

Under a multimillion-dollar agreement, Lucent will partner with Winncom Technologies to build a multi-service broadband network featuring an IP/multiprotocol label switching core, broadband access

solutions and multimedia application platforms, which will be fully integrated with Kazakhtelecom's existing public switched telephony network.

The new network will be managed from a Network Operations Centre (NOC) supplied by Lucent and operated by Kazakhtelecom. Lucent Worldwide Services and Winncom Technologies are also providing multivendor technical support, maintenance services and network integration of the NGN into the existing Kazakh Telecom network.

### **Things to Watch:**

- Foreign Minister Kassymzhomart Tokaev is visiting London for talks with British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw and other officials on March 6 through March 10. Kazakhstan's Foreign Ministry announced after the visit that there was an official invitation for President Nursultan Nazarbayev to visit the United Kingdom later this year.
- The U.S. Embassy will formally move to Astana in September 2006, U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan John Ordway said at a March 7 news conference in Astana. As of October 2005, 17 embassies and two representative offices had relocated to Astana, Kazakhstan's capital since 1997. The remaining 42 diplomatic missions are still located in Almaty, the country's former capital.
- The traditional spring holiday, Nauryz, will take place on March 22.

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