

GUAM: Great Expectations

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- Summit of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development-GUAM Took Place in Baku on June 18-19.

The Summit is actually the second meeting of the Council of Heads of Member-States after GUAM has acquired the status of international regional organization (during Kyiv Summit in May, 2006). Its purpose was to specify the content of GUAM's activity in economic and security areas and intensify sectoral cooperation. Besides the presidents of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine and Prime Minister of Moldova, the Summit was attended by the presidents of Poland, Romania, Lithuania, and over 30 delegations from other countries and international organizations. The CIS countries were represented at the Summit by the delegation of Kazakhstan

The Summit's doubtless accomplishment was the interest demonstrated to GUAM by the wide range of international participants, that corresponds to Member States' striving for the attraction of the largest possible attention from the world community and its engagement into cooperation with GUAM in various forms. That was the subject to discussion during the meetings GUAM-Poland, GUAM-USA and GUAM-Japan. In the same time it's worth mentioning, that high international attention to GUAM is rather situational, partly due to the recent chill between Russia and West because of the aggravated situation with the AMD elements placement in Eastern Europe.

Odessa-Brody-Plozk pipeline project, to which Ukraine attaches special attention, was discussed in quite optimistic terms during the meeting GUAM-Poland, that took place in continuation of Krakow energy summit. Also the parties "touched upon the topic of forming the common space for energy transit". It's noteworthy that many Ukrainian energy experts do not share the optimism of politicians as to this project implementation in the mid-term perspective. And while the negotiations continue, Ukraine only partly uses the pipeline capacities in reverse mode.

Parties also discussed the perspectives of realization of the railroad and ferry route construction to connect Baku, Tbilisi, Poti and Kerch, and agreed to establish the joint peacemaking contingent that will participate in the peacemaking missions under the auspices of the UN and the OSCE. GUAM peacemakers may possibly replace Russian contingents in the areas of "frozen conflicts". Therefore Ukraine (the armed forces of which will constitute the majority of peacemaking battalion) will have to approach this situation in a weighed manner and to ensure the support of the international organizations (the UN, the OSCE and the EU), in order that advantages from regional peace initiatives were gained without losses in Russian direction.

Ukraine in the person of President Victor Yushenko attaches special attention to GUAM as regional organization which opens before Ukraine the perspectives of strengthening itself in the position of regional leader. However, one should recognize once again that GUAM's current activity is mainly declarative, what is typical almost for all the integration projects in the territory of former Soviet Union – when high-flown joint statements and ambitious intentions are not confirmed by real steps and actions.