

Kazakhstan: agreement on organising an OSCE summit

On 16-17 July, at an informal meeting (closed to the press) of the OSCE's foreign ministers in Almaty, it was agreed that the first in 11 years summit of the heads of states of the OSCE members will take place in Kazakhstan later this year. The agreement to organise the summit is the main result of this meeting, and a success for Kazakhstan.

Organising a summit of the OSCE member states' leaders was one of Kazakhstan's main political aims over the last year. The final agreement of the U.S., which until the last moment had been alone in keeping its distance from this project, is thus an undoubted diplomatic success for Astana. Moreover, a result of the meeting is the decision to increase OSCE support for Kyrgyzstan, including sending a group of policemen to that country (52 persons for four months); their task will be to train and assist Kyrgyzstan's police force. The question of sending international police forces to Kyrgyzstan was discussed, but no agreement was reached on the matter. However, the OSCE summit became a pretext for Kazakhstan to demonstrate its readiness to give Kyrgyzstan economic aid (Astana took the opportunity to recall its previous initiatives, including an aid grant of US\$10m).

In recent weeks Astana has intensified (both within the forum of the OSCE and at a bilateral level) its activities aimed at aiding reconstruction in Kyrgyzstan. The meeting, which was organised on Kazakhstan's initiative, was an attempt to activate the OSCE, which had been criticised for its lack of action in the conflict situation in Kyrgyzstan. <wol>