

# Press release: UK Minister for Europe on first visit to Azerbaijan

On Thursday 14 September Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, will visit Azerbaijan.

The Minister will attend the signing ceremony to celebrate the renewal of a BP led consortium's contract with the Azerbaijan State Oil Company, SOCAR. Since the original contract was signed, the resulting investments of tens of billions of dollars have brought more than 3 billion barrels of oil to world markets. This new contract will create thousands of jobs for both countries.

The Minister will meet President Ilham Aliyev and Deputy Foreign Minister Khalaf Khalafov for discussions on mutual foreign policy interests and democratic and economic reform.

The Minister will also meet civil society representatives as part of the UK's support for human rights and democracy.

Ahead of his visit, the Minister said:

The UK's relationship with Azerbaijan goes far beyond our 25 years of diplomatic relations. From the Azerbaijani students studying in the UK, to British business investing in Baku, to our cooperation against international terrorism, our relationship is going from strength to strength.

As the largest foreign investor in Azerbaijan, the UK is uniquely placed to support Azerbaijan's development. I'm proud that the extension of BP's contract means that UK technology and expertise will help Azerbaijan's prosperity and security for many years to come.

Reform, transparency and human rights are essential to a successful and prosperous society. I look forward to my conversations with the Azerbaijani government and civil society, to understand how the UK can support Azerbaijan further.

## **Further information**