

British-Kazakh relations

By **RUPERT GOODMAN**

CHAIRMAN OF THE BRITISH KAZAKH SOCIETY AND FIRST



RUPERT GOODMAN was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He is the Founder of FIRST and Chairman of the Board. He sits on a variety of boards and Trusts. He is a Vice-President of FFI, and a Founder Trustee of the British-Kazakh Society to which he was elected Chairman in 2013. He is a member of the Development Board of Artes Mundi and founded the Responsible Capitalism Programme in 2000. He was appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Greater London in 2012 and received a London Metropolitan Police Commissioner's Commendation in 2013. He has edited a number of books including co-editing (with Lord Cormack) *Responsible Capitalism*.

Rupert Goodman,
Rt Hon David Cameron MP,
Prime Minister,
and President
Nursultan Nazarbayev

The British-Kazakh Society is delighted to welcome Prime Minister Karim Massimov and his high level delegation to the United Kingdom. This historic visit is particularly timely and will help focus the attention of international business leaders, financiers and policy makers on the many trade and investment opportunities that exist in Kazakhstan.

The British-Kazakh Society aims to play an important role in promoting the best of relations between the UK and Kazakhstan. This includes highlighting trade and investment opportunities as well as promoting cooperation and understanding between government and industry, at all levels.

With its strategic geographic location and dominant position in Central Asia, Kazakhstan has developed an important international role and offers the international investment community significant opportunities. Over the past fifteen years, the Kazakh economy has grown at around 7 per cent per annum. GDP has increased 16 fold in the past twenty years and GDP per capita is more than US\$12,000. In 1993 it was just US\$700. Between 1993 and 2013, Kazakhstan attracted over US\$170 billion of foreign direct investment. Kazakhstan expects to export some 100 million tonnes of oil per year requiring billions of US dollars of investment. Kazakhstan's economic transition has been underpinned by its natural resource wealth but there is now a focus on economic diversification.

Major investment opportunities exist in the non oil/gas sector, stimulated by the government's desire for greater economic diversification. Priority sectors include construction, engineering, infrastructure development, the chemical industry, pharmaceuticals/medical equipment, mining/the extractive sector and knowledge based industries.

I first visited Kazakhstan shortly after independence, and have had a chance to witness the country's many significant changes and achievements over the past twenty or so years. Kazakhstan's transformation has been extraordinary. The country's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 was considered a great success and the launch of the Strategic Partnership between the UK and Kazakhstan provides important opportunities especially in bilateral trade and investment. Kazakhstan will host both Expo 2017 in Astana as well as the World Student Games in the same year. There is also

Kazakhstan's possible accession to the WTO.

The British-Kazakh relationship is flourishing and we are fortunate in having two very distinguished Ambassadors in Erzhan Kazykhanov and Carolyn Browne. Both of whom are doing much to strengthen further the bilateral relationship.

Following the success of David Cameron's visit to Kazakhstan in June 2013, President Nazarbayev's subsequent private visit to the UK and the excellent opportunities afforded by HE Karim Massimov's current visit - we at the British-Kazakh Society are ready to redouble our efforts in promoting cooperation and understanding with government and industry in Kazakhstan. We also place a strong emphasis on promoting cultural and educational exchange.

The prospects for British Kazakh relations are therefore very exciting and the British-Kazakh Society will seek to play its part in further developing the bilateral relationship in cooperation with our patrons, who include His Excellency President Nazarbayev.

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, stated in the official report of his visit to Kazakhstan "I believe that Britain and Kazakhstan can, by working together on new and ambitious joint projects in the future, help each other succeed in the global race." All those connected with British-Kazakh relations will, I am certain, take up the Prime Minister's challenge and work hard to promote the best of relations between our two countries. The British-Kazakh Society stands ready to play its part in this important endeavour. **■**

