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On 31 October 2018, AHK Azerbaijan organised the next AHK-Impuls event for its member companies at Hyatt Meeting & Conference Centre. The topic of the current AHK-Impuls was dedicated to the ongoing reforms and recent developments in Azerbaijan's customs field. The honorary guest speaker of the event, Mr Safar Mehdiyev, Chief of State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, delivered a speech on "Customs reforms for trade facilitation".

Providing information about major reforms in the customs system, Mr. Mehdiyev mentioned the increase in imports as a result of ensuring transparency and anti-corruption measures. Mr. Mehdiyev also talked about the measures taken to study international experience, introduction of EU customs systems model in Azerbaijan within the framework of cooperation with the European Union and noted that innovations in world trade are taken into account in the customs reforms in Azerbaijan.

In particular, it was noted that Azerbaijan's accession to the Common Transit Convention will play a special role in simplifying customs procedures and reducing paperwork. The Chief noted that a working group was established in this regard and the initial phase of the project was successfully implemented. Commenting on the introduction of modern and simple procedures, the SCC chairman informed the participants about the work implemented for improving the green corridor system and increasing the level of customs services and stressed the significance of introducing the principle of voluntary payment of customs duties.

Touching upon the organisational structure and personnel reforms, Mr. Mehdiyev stated that the work is underway in changing the management and implementing structural reforms in the Committee. It was noted that the new Customs Code and normative documents were adopted taking into consideration the comments and recommendations of international experts, and the European standards were applied in the structure of the customs system. Furthermore, it was pointed out that minimising physical contact between customs officers and citizens is one of the priorities of the Committee, and the work is being conducted to improve the quality and quantity of e-services in this sphere as well as the integration of statistical information into the government portal.

Mr. Mehdiyev concluded his speech by underscoring the importance of such meetings in contributing to the successful continuation of the measures taken in the customs sphere and stated that the remarks and suggestions made by business representatives at the event will be considered while drafting future reforms.

Following the Q&A session on the enquiries of the AHK Azerbaijan members about customs, Mr. Yunis Salayev, Managing Partner of BDO Azerbaijan LLC and Mr. Sabit Abdullayev, Director of the Legal Services department of BDO Azerbaijan LLC delivered a presentation on supporting the implementation of the roadmap for beneficial ownership disclosure in the extractive industries in Azerbaijan.

GRATA Azerbaijan was represented by Sabina Gasimova (Business Development Manager).

## Байршил

АЗЕРБАЙЖАН