



***AZƏRBAYCAN RESPUBLİKASININ BAŞ KONSULLUĞU***  
***CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN***

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**AZERBAIJAN'S INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATED IN LOS ANGELES**

**Los Angeles, CA – October 19, 2006** – the Consulate General of Azerbaijan hosted a reception to mark fifteen years of Azerbaijan's independence at the Regency Club in Los Angeles. This is the first time the National Independence Day of Azerbaijan is officially celebrated on the West Coast bringing together the community and friends of Azerbaijan, among them members of the Los Angeles Consular Corps and representatives of the federal, state and local governments. The event also featured cultural performance by masters of Azerbaijani music and dance.

Speaking at the reception, Consul General Elin Suleymanov highlighted Azerbaijan's remarkable achievements since declaring its independence on October 18, 1991. "With annual GDP growth exceeding 30% and increasing profile in the international community, Azerbaijan is America's reliable partner in the strategically important Caspian region," said Mr. Suleymanov.

Official greetings from California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger as well as from the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, from the County of Orange Board of Supervisors and the Office of Protocol and Mayor of the City of Los Angeles Antonio R. Villaraigosa were formally presented at the event. The Consulate General also received greetings from Governors Brian Schweitzer of the State of Montana, Bill Richardson of the State of New Mexico and Christine O. Grigoire of the State of Washington.

"I am privileged to join with the Azerbaijani-American community on this day of celebration," wrote Governor Schwarzenegger. This sentiment was seconded by Governor Gregoire, who described the National Independence Day as "a wonderful opportunity to rejoice in the freedom and sovereignty of Azerbaijan, as well reflect on the journey and sacrifice leading up to Azerbaijan's declaration of independence." In turn, Governor Richardson stressed that "like New Mexico, Azerbaijan numbers diverse and beautiful landscapes among its great treasures" and Governor Schweitzer recognized that Azerbaijan "has contributed greatly to the region and world."