

Parliamentary question (interpellation) by National Councillor Remo Gysin on the 15th of December 2005

Supported by further 12 National Councillors

Since June 2000, approximately 130 million US-dollars from Kazakhstan are blocked on several bank accounts in Geneva. These are funds connected with a supposed case of corruption involving an oil deal between the Kazakh government and American oil companies (see question no 04.1093 by Gysin Remo in the Swiss parliament). When returning the money to its country of origin, which is a recommendation in the UN-convention against corruption, it should be guaranteed that the money is used for projects in the interest of the country and its population and will not fall into the hands of corrupt officials. This aim is shared by an initiative formed in 2004 by Kazakh citizens, including members of Parliament in opposition. In a response to a letter sent by different organisations and persons who are interested in the case, the head of the Swiss Foreign ministry, Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey, reaffirmed once again on the 23rd of September 2005, that Switzerland is interested in solving the case and that it is in contact with several parties involved.

We therefore would like to ask the Swiss government to answer the following questions:

1. Concerning this case, on what level and with whom does the Swiss government has discussions? Has there been made some progress in negotiations with Kazakh officials? Is the Swiss government in contact with US-authorities to discuss the restitution of the money?
2. How does the Federal Council assess the possibility of making some preliminary arrangements for a swift solution of this case, despite ongoing judicial investigations, and how does he assess the chance of moving the US-government to adopt the position outlined in the UN-convention on corruption?
3. Does the Federal Council share the opinion that – in view of the recent presidential election in Kazakhstan with its dubious democratic credentials – the efforts for a democratically guaranteed and transparent restitution of the funds should be intensified? How is the position of the Swiss government concerning the proposal to create a trust with Swiss involvement which would administer the returned funds democratically and in the best interest of the Kazakh people?

NB: This is not an official translation. The official wording is in German (and French).