



# Waste and Chemicals in Azerbaijan

A Visual Synthesis

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This publication is based on official country information submitted to the Basel Convention, Stockholm Convention, Rotterdam Convention, Montreal Protocol, state of the environment reports, scientific papers and news reports.



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The publication aims to catalyse remedial action on environmental legacies and responsible approaches to waste and chemical management by sharing information and improving public awareness of situations and trends in relation to waste and chemicals, the main areas of concern and notable responses.

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**Cover page:** Azerbaijan national flag square built at a rehabilitated brownfield site

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# Foreword

A rapidly growing economy and a good quality of life are indicative of the progress Azerbaijan has made in recent years. The country was once the leading producer of pesticides for the Soviet economy and its agricultural sector used chemicals extensively. Azerbaijan was also once a key producer of air conditioners, compressors and refrigerators that relied on ozone-depleting substances. The country was best known for its oil production and the associated pollution of land and the shores of the Caspian Sea.

Political attention and the wealth accumulated from oil and gas income over the past decade have enabled Azerbaijan to tackle the pollution problems of the past and pave the way for sound waste and chemical management in the present and future. The clean-up effort has been underway for some time, however, in September 2006, a Presidential Decree launched the Environment State Program of Azerbaijan, which established a comprehensive plan for clean-up and remediation, improvement of hazardous and non-hazardous waste management, and the upgrading of environmental laws, regulations and institutions. Azerbaijan declared 2010 as the “Year of the Environment”, further advancing countrywide environmental measures and awareness. Over the past five to seven years the results of this programme have become visible, prompting returning visitors to remark on the “new” Azerbaijan. Many countries have developed environmental action plans and programmes over the same period, however not many have actually invested in environmental improvements and the implementation of planned actions. Hence, Azerbaijan is justifiably proud of its achievements.

For Switzerland the sustainable management of waste and chemicals is a key priority not only at national and regional levels, but also internationally. Switzerland is host to the main international institutions and conventions relating to chemical and waste management, has an important international chemicals industry, and is prominent in related research. Based on this expertise and responsibility, Switzerland has been assisting Azerbaijan and the countries of Central Asia in the development of national chemical profiles and environmental performance reviews, and by demonstrating hazardous waste management approaches and mercury risk reduction measures.

Further enhancing the cooperation and coordination among all relevant actors in the sustainable management of chemicals and waste is another key priority for Switzerland. Hence we look forward to improved synergies between the international, regional and national instruments in the implementation and further development of all relevant instruments and processes, including the four chemical and waste-related international agreements (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions), and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

Switzerland, Azerbaijan and the five Central Asia countries are all members of the same Global Environment Facility constituency, and, with its history of assistance to Central Asia and Azerbaijan on waste and chemical management issues, Switzerland supports this publication to promote the exchange of experience between Azerbaijan and the countries of Central Asia. In particular, Azerbaijan's successes may provide a model for Central Asia in the clean-up of waste and chemicals and the exchange of experience may help to strengthen cooperation between Azerbaijan and the countries of Central Asia.

Bern and Geneva

29 November 2013

**Franz Perrez**

Ambassador, Head of International Affairs Division  
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**Otto Simonett**

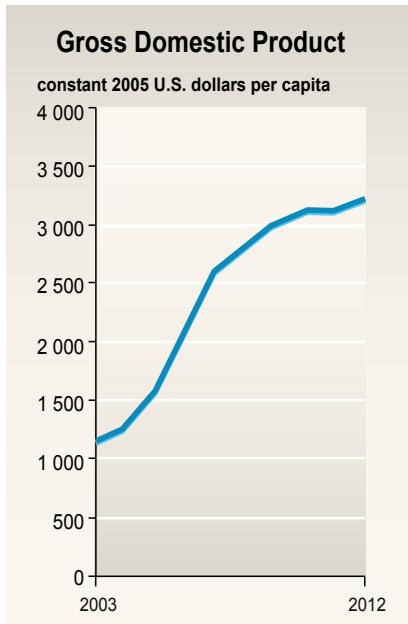
Director  
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# Introduction

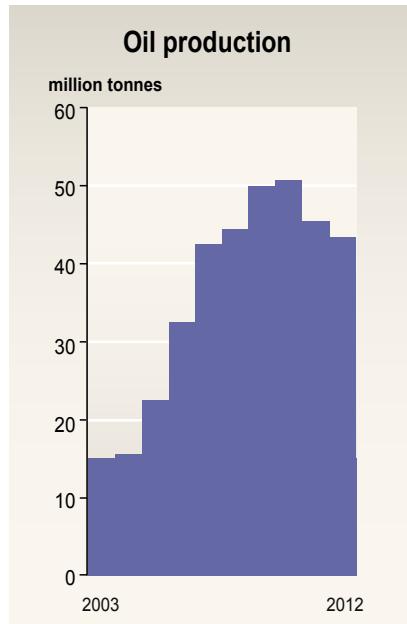
While Azerbaijan and Central Asia share no common land borders, they are separated – and united – by the Caspian Sea, an historical trade route between the Caucasus and Central Asia. The countries also share a Soviet history with some of the features and legacies of Soviet industrialization.

The Republic of Azerbaijan has a land area of 86 600 km<sup>2</sup>, roughly two times that of Switzerland, and half of its territory is mountainous: a few summits of the Caucasus Mountains exceed 4 000 metres. Azerbaijan borders Russia, Iran, Turkey, Armenia and Georgia and shares its marine borders

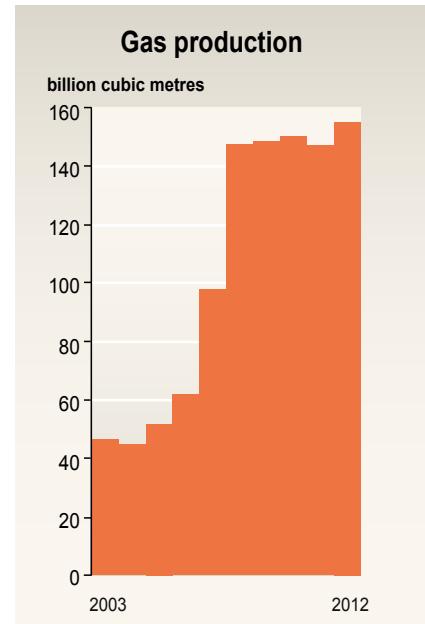
in the Caspian with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The population of Azerbaijan is 9.5 million people. The average population density is about 110 persons per km<sup>2</sup> and about half of the population is rural. The greater Baku area is the most densely populated – an estimated 3.5 million residents and density of almost 1 000 persons per km<sup>2</sup>. The construction and launch of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline in 2005 gave Azerbaijan access to Mediterranean and global oil and gas markets, and a sharp increase in oil and gas production has been a major factor in fostering economic growth. With the economic boom, the percentage of people living in poverty declined from 45 to less than 10.



Source: World Bank development indicators



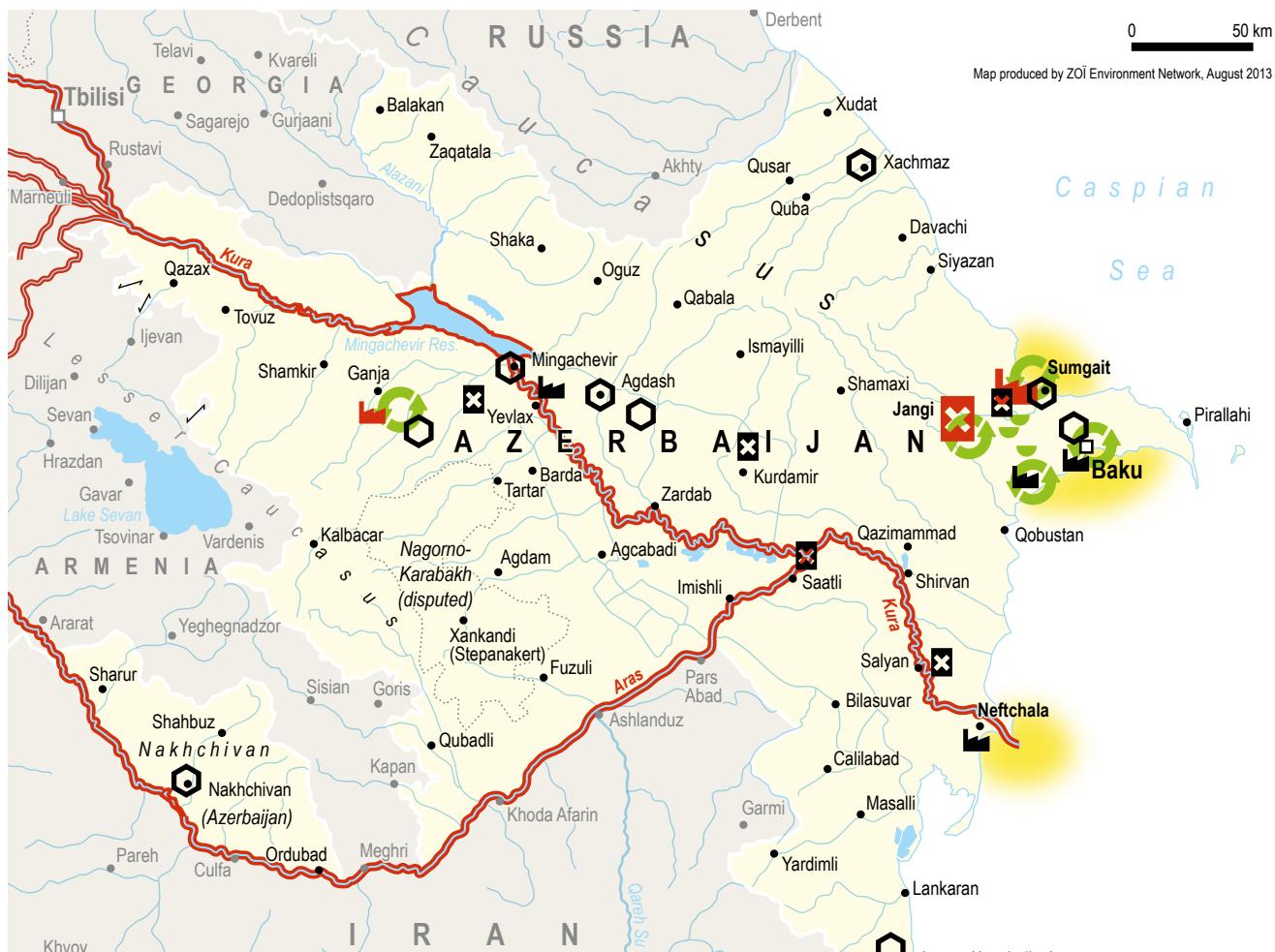
Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2013



Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2013



When the Kura and Aras rivers, the two main sources of water for drinking and irrigation, enter Azerbaijan from neighbouring countries, they are already contaminated by municipal and industrial wastewater. This and other water quality and water security issues are Azerbaijan's environmental priorities, as is sound waste and chemical management. Through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other global and regional environmental agreements, Switzerland has promoted cooperation between the regions on opposite coasts of the Caspian Sea for many years.



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