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On July 14, at the Ministry of Education took place a meeting devoted to the results of visits recently made by Education Minister Misir Mardanov and employees of the education system to some foreign countries. The meeting, in which was given a presentation on three trips, was attended by the management, head of departments of the Ministry, directors of lyceums and gymnasiums directly subordinated to the Ministry of Education.

Speaking at the opening event Education Minister Misir Mardanov welcomed attendees and gave information on a training trip made by the delegation led by him to the Kingdom of Sweden and Finland from June 20-29. First, he gave a presentation on a trip made to Sweden. Noting the Kingdom of Sweden is one of the most democratic and developed countries of the world, the Minister gave information on some statistical numbers and on the education system of

this country.

It was noted that the first stage of the Swedish education system is preschool education. This stage of education is encompassed 1-5 year olds and lasts four years. There 20,732 kindergartens in Sweden and more than 800,000 children are involved in preschool education. At the country operates one-year preschool preparation classes for 6-year olds. There are 3,843 preschool preparation classes throughout the country. 95 percent of 1-6-year-old children are involved in education in Sweden. What is more, in spite of kindergartens, there are operating Day Care and leisure centres as well.

The next stage after preschool education is the nine-year comprehensive school for children between the ages of seven and sixteen. 960,000 children are study at the comprehensive schools of the country. The upper secondary education for children between the ages of 16-19 lasts 3 years. The vast majorities of Swedish students are continuing their studies into upper secondary education. The Minister noted that there two types of gymnasiums in Sweden (upper secondary education and vocational education). According to him, the upper secondary schools are operated separately and, currently, there are 1015 gymnasiums in the country. The upper secondary education level consists of 17 national programs, in which 13 is vocational education (program with special assignment), and 4 is the higher-education training programme.

390 pupils are studying, and 38,500 teachers are working at gymnasiums. The teacher-pupil ratio of 1:10. Annual spending per pupil is 9-10 thousand euros.

The Minister also gave information on the higher-education system of Sweden noting that it includes three-year Bachelor, two-year Master and 4 year PhD degree levels. He also gave information on the number of personnel of HEI and students. It was noted that the education in Sweden is free. 17 state and 3 private universities, 11 state and 8 private university colleges, 5 state and 2 private art colleges are operated in the country. 343,000 students are studying at universities. 17,200 people study at the doctoral level. Approximately 37-40 thousand of international students are currently studying at universities of Sweden, and 24-25 thousand Swedes are studying abroad. The Minister underlined these numbers are very high compare to our country, although the number of population of Sweden is equal to ours.

Furthermore, the Minister gave information on management of Swedish education system, National Education Agency, specialties, work admission programmes, the situation concerning the acceptance for work, and comparisons with the education system of Azerbaijan.

Next, the Minister talked about the trip to Finland. He noted that the education system and structure of Finland nearly the same as Sweden. The higher executive body over education policy is Ministry of Culture and Education of Finland. The profession of teacher is the most respectful profession in the country. The big contest for admission to universities held in teacher specialties. The salary received by newly employed teachers is 2000 Euros. This indicator is increasing up to 4000-4500 Euros along with the rise of degrees. 100 percent of children are involved in pre-school education.

Noting they are visited two schools and one nursery during their trip to Finland, the Minister highlighted the existence of high logistical base at these establishments, as well as the provision of children by hot food three times a day. The Minister underlined that both countries are interested in the

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cooperation with us. He also noted that the pre-school preparation classes are free in Finland, average density at schools is 13 people and about 600, 000 pupils are studying at schools of the country.

Moreover, there was given information on the vocational education and higher education systems of Finland. It was noted that at Finland, where the population approximately two times less than in Azerbaijan, 146 thousand children (10 times more than in Azerbaijan) are studying at vocational education establishments.

At the end, the Minister noted the existence of cooperation with both countries in the education field.

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The next presentation was given by Deputy Education Minister, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Prof. Irada Huseynova. She gave information on the trip to the UK. According to her, from 19 to 21 June of 2011 at Oxford University (UK) was held European Summit of Leaders, where she represented Azerbaijan. She noted the importance of the summit for our country in terms of opportunity to demonstrate the prestige, especially intellectual and scientific potential of Azerbaijan to the world. According to her, the programme of the summit was interesting and various. Moreover, the summit was attended by the Lady Mayor of Oxford Elise Benjamin, Member of European Parliament Derek Clark, director general of Europe Business Assembly John Netting, President of the Club of the Rectors of Europe Will Goodhair, President of International Club of Leaders Paul Briggs, Mayor of Samsun (Turkey) Yusuf Zif Yilmaz, diplomatic missions of the countries participated in the summit to the Great Britain, as well as scientific and business representatives of 37 countries of the world.

Noting at the meeting of the Rectors of Europe a first speech was made by her, Deputy Minister said that she gave a presentation on problems regarding implementation of innovations in the fields of science and education, and development of these areas in Azerbaijan. Head of British Immigration Service Kevan Jones, rectors of colleges of Oxford Andy Thomson and Sally Dicketts, as well as Cyprus, Nigeria and Macedonia universities and others made a speech as well. The programme of the summit included a meeting with the Lady Mayor of Oxford Elise Benjamin. At the meeting were discussed issues concerning strategy of science and higher education.

I. Huseynova noted that 48th awarding ceremony of International Socrates Award of 2011 was held at the summit. Having said she was awarded this prestigious award for the contribution made by her to the intellectual development of modern society, Deputy Minister emphasized the award is an appreciation of not just her merits, as well as science and education of Azerbaijan. Next, there was demonstrated a short video of the award ceremony.

Education Minister Misir Mardanov and meeting attendees have congratulated I. Huseynova on awarding with this esteemed prize.

At the presentation was talked about meetings made within the summit.

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At the meeting was given a presentation of Gultekin Huseynova, Director of Department for Science of the Ministry, and head of educational delegation, which visited the USA to participate in the

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Intel ISEF International Contest from 9 to 13 May of 2011.

G.H. Huseynova gave information on the contest. She said that Intel ISEF (Intel International Science and Engineering Fair) is a scientific research project competition of pupils held once every year in the USA.

Noting the prestigious of competition held over 60 years, G.H. Huseynova underlined that more than 20 winners of the contest have become a laureate of Nobel Prize, and three winners were awarded Fields Prizes in mathematics.

She said that, the next 62nd competition was held in Los Angeles, California, from 9 to 13 May of this year. More than 1500 pupils who have won 443 selection competition held in 65 countries took part in the final. She noted that in spite of finalists, Intel's employees, and scientists from different countries, 7 Nobel Prize laureates have participated in the contest as well.

Next, G.H. Huseynova gave information on Open Door Day held at the Los Angeles Convention Centre on May 12 within the contest programme.

She noted that the estimation of projects was held in 17 categories, and about 1000 scientists over the world were involved in this process as a judge.

She also gave information on conditions and prizes of the competition.

Next, G.H. Huseynova talked on Intel Training Academy operating during the contest each year. She noted that countries, which first time participated in the contest, were acquainted on preparation and conduction of national competitions. And based on these recommendations, there was prepared an action plan for Azerbaijan. She informed attendees with some articles of this plan.