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Kazakhstan Set to Join WTO After 20 Years of Talks

By The Moscow Times

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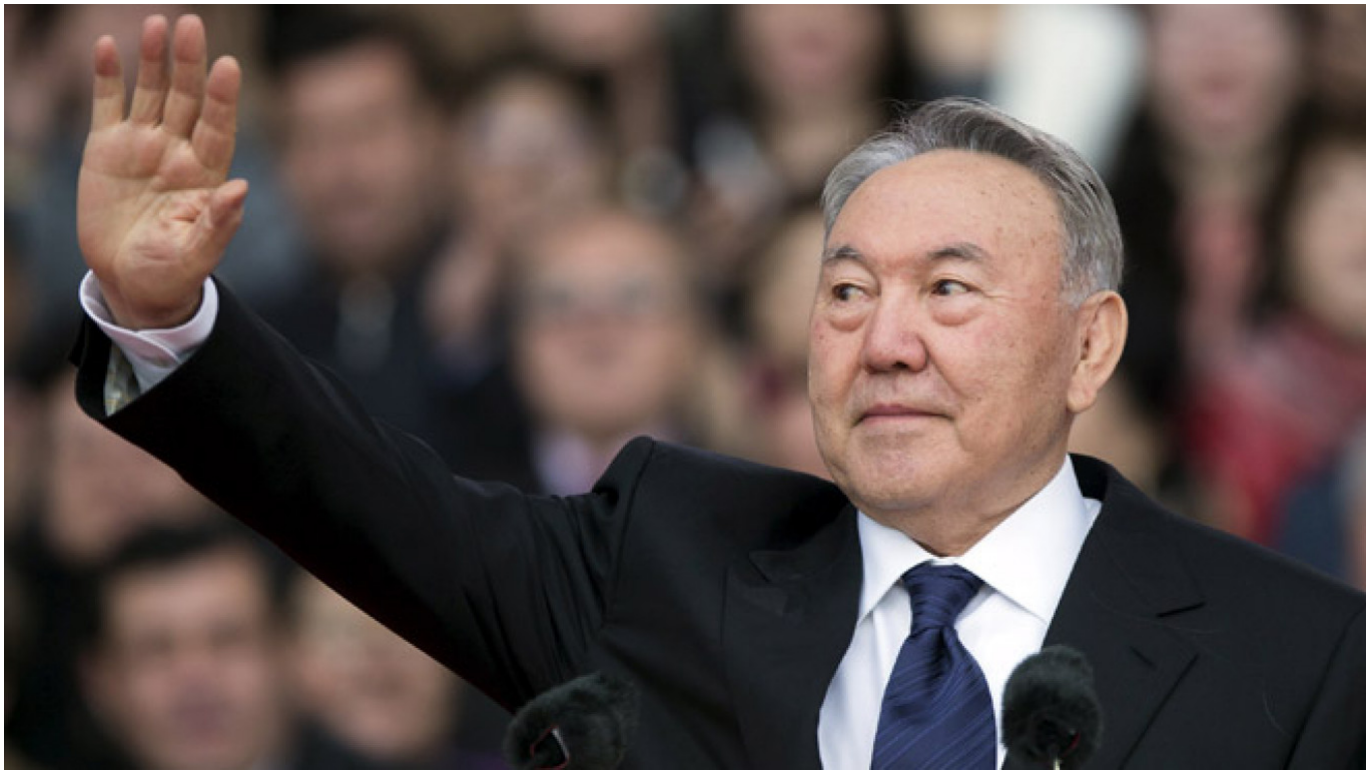

Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev

Kazakhstan has completed its negotiations on accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) after nearly two decades of talks, a statement published on the WTO website said.

"Kazakhstan finalized the negotiations of its WTO membership terms with WTO members at the Working Party meeting on Kazakhstan's accession on 10 June," the statement said.

The talks with Kazakhstan were "one of the most challenging negotiations" in the WTO's 20-year history, the statement cited Working Party members as saying.

The main difficulty was reaching agreement on tariffs, which are affected by Kazakhstan's membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), the statement said.

Kazakhstan is a founding member of the EEU, a Russia-led association meant to counterbalance the European Union, whose members also include Belarus and Armenia.

The association agreement went into force at the beginning of this year.

The documents on Kazakhstan's accession to WTO will be formally adopted by the Working Party, the group of members that determine the conditions of countries' entry to the organization, on June 22, according to the statement. It will then be forwarded to the General Council for formal adoption by each of the WTO's 161 member states.

Kazakhstan submitted its application to join the World Trade Organization on Jan. 29, 1996.

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