

Development of Relations Between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union

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TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN, March 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The relationship between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union (EU) is characterized by diverse cooperation in political, economic, and cultural areas. Since diplomatic relations were established in the early 1990s, both parties have worked to strengthen their ties, reflecting shared interests and objectives.

1. Historical Context

Official relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union (EU) were established on April 15, 1992, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. In 1994, Uzbekistan opened its embassy in Brussels, which marked a significant step towards closer interaction. In the years that followed, many high-level visits occurred, including meetings between the President of Uzbekistan and the leaders of the European Council, highlighting the importance of political dialogue.

2. Political Dialogue

The political dialogue between Uzbekistan and the EU encompasses a broad range of topics, including security, human rights, democratic reforms, and sustainable development. A significant



milestone in this relationship was the initialing of the Agreement on Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation in 2022, which aims to strengthen collaboration in various areas.

High-Level Visits

Recent high-level meetings have played a crucial role in strengthening relations between nations. For example, in 2023, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited Brussels, where he met with European Council President Charles Michel. During their meeting, they discussed important topics including trade, investment, and security.



3. Economic Cooperation

Trade

Trade relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union are rapidly advancing. In 2024, trade turnover reached \$5.8 billion, reflecting a 15% increase compared to the previous year. It is anticipated to grow to \$6.4 billion in 2025. The primary exports from Uzbekistan to the EU include cotton, textiles, gold, and agricultural products. In contrast, Uzbekistan imports machinery, equipment, and chemical products from the EU.

Investments

Uzbekistan has emerged as an appealing destination for European investments. Currently, there are more than 1,000 enterprises with European capital operating in the country. For instance, in 2022, direct foreign investments from EU countries reached approximately \$1.2 billion, reflecting a 20% increase compared to 2021. The main sectors attracting investment include energy, agriculture, and infrastructure.

4. Financial and Technical Assistance

The European Union actively supports Uzbekistan through various financial and technical programs. Between 2020 and 2025, the EU allocated over €300 million to projects focused on civil society development, human rights, and sustainable development. Programs such as "Tempus" and "Erasmus+" help improve educational infrastructure. In 2024, more than 800 students from Uzbekistan participated in these initiatives.

Support for Reforms

EU financial assistance includes support for reforms to modernize the economy and enhance living conditions for the population. In 2023, €50 million was allocated to programs aimed at improving healthcare and education systems in Uzbekistan.

5. Cultural Cooperation

Cultural exchanges and educational programs play a crucial role in relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union. In 2022, more than 300 students from Uzbekistan had the opportunity to study at universities across EU countries through the "Erasmus+" program. Furthermore, various cultural events, including exhibitions, festivals, and concerts, help foster mutual understanding between the two regions.

Conclusion

So, in recent years, cooperation between Uzbekistan and the European Union (EU) has significantly advanced, establishing Uzbekistan as a key player in the Central Asia – EU dialogue. At the same time, countries like Italy, Germany, Spain, and France have been actively engaged in EU initiatives focused on Central Asia, emphasizing the enhancement of trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian ties with the region.

For instance, in 2023, a new strategic cooperation program was signed between the Government of Uzbekistan and the French Development Agency, extending until 2025. The total budget for this program exceeded 1 billion euros and focused on several key areas: agriculture, energy, green economy, urban development, water supply, the banking and financial sector, and transport. The initiative aimed to implement specific projects in these sectors to strengthen bilateral cooperation and support the sustainable development of Uzbekistan.

Besides, 54 of all joint ventures currently operating in Uzbekistan are with Italian capital, with 35 of these being fully owned by Italian investors. These companies primarily engage in the production of non-alcoholic beverages, wine, perfumery, knitwear, cotton waste recycling, and various trade activities. By the end of 2023, trade between Uzbekistan and Italy reached \$381.1 million, which included \$51.3 million in exports and \$329.8 million in imports. This marked an increase of \$157.5 million compared to the previous year.

Between 2016 and 2023, the trade volume between Uzbekistan and Germany doubled. Specifically, the trade turnover increased from \$529.1 million in 2016 to \$1,072.3 million in 2023. Export volumes rose 2.4 times, going from \$36.9 million to \$87 million, while imports doubled, climbing from \$492.2 million to \$986 million. Germany is one of Uzbekistan's leading trade partners, ranking 7th in overall trade turnover, 19th in exports, and 6th in imports.

Under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Uzbekistan and the European Union, Uzbekistan has granted most-favored-nation (MFN) treatment in trade relations with

Spain. As of the end of 2019, bilateral trade between Uzbekistan and Spain reached nearly \$80 million. Spain is also a significant importer of Uzbek services, locally produced cotton fiber, and fruit and vegetable products. At present, there are 16 enterprises with Spanish participation operating in Uzbekistan, consisting of 8 joint ventures and 8 companies established with 100% Spanish capital.

Relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union are progressing well. This partnership not only enhances bilateral ties but also aids in Uzbekistan's development as a significant player in Central Asia. In light of global challenges and changes, strengthening relations with the EU paves the way for new opportunities for Uzbekistan, supporting its integration into the international community.

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