



EU-UZBEKISTAN RELATIONS

Relations between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan were established following its independence in 1991 and since then they have grown steadily. The 2019 **EU Strategy on Central Asia** provides the overall regional framework for this engagement.

A **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)** between the EU and the Republic of Uzbekistan has been in place since 1999 which forms the basis for a broad relationship, including:

political dialogue

cooperation on matters related to good governance

trade

justice and home affairs

democracy and human rights

business and investment relations

economic and financial cooperation

technical assistance

In July 2022, the EU and Uzbekistan concluded negotiations on an **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA)** which considerably advances this relationship, extending it into new areas of cooperation and significantly upgrading the regulatory framework for trade and economic relations. The necessary procedures are ongoing to allow for a swift signature of the agreement.

AREAS OF COOPERATION

Uzbekistan is pursuing an ambitious **reform programme**, launched in 2016, aimed in particular at integrating the country into the global economy, and improving:

business climate

judicial system and security services

labour conditions

administrative accountability and efficiency

human rights and good governance in general

The European Union supports this reform agenda through technical and financial assistance, and regularly engages the Uzbek authorities on human rights, media freedom, and issues of good governance. The EU has emphasised the importance of public consultation on the reform process, and on following international norms and best practice.

Uzbekistan actively works with its neighbours to develop economic cooperation, defuse former tensions, and enhance regional cooperation, in particular with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on border and water management issues. **Uzbekistan is an advocate of greater connectivity** within Central Asia and between Central Asia and other parts of the world, including Europe.

Since 2017, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have been operational in Uzbekistan and the number and volume of ongoing projects continues to increase significantly.

In the current programming period (2021-2027), the EU's priority areas for cooperation with Uzbekistan are support to democratic governance and digital transformation; inclusive, digital, and green growth; and the development of a smart and eco-friendly agro-food sector. The bilateral Team Europe initiative: 'Support to a modern and sustainable agri-food sector and resilient livelihoods' builds synergies across all priority areas.

The EU is also providing technical assistance for Uzbekistan's application to join the World Trade Organisation. In April 2021, Uzbekistan joined the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences plus (GSP+) which gives duty-free access to the EU market for the majority of tariff lines.

€76 million for bilateral cooperation in **2021 – 2024** for:



EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



INCLUSIVE, DIGITAL,
AND GREEN GROWTH



DEVELOPMENT OF A SMART,
ECO-FRIENDLY AGRI-FOOD SECTOR