



EU-UZBEKISTAN RELATIONS

Relations between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan have been developing steadily since its independence in 1991. The regularly reviewed **EU and Central Asia Strategy** outlines the overall cooperation objectives, policy responses and priority fields for the EU's engagement in Central Asia.

A **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)** between the EU and the Republic of Uzbekistan, which has been in force since 1999, paved the way for a broader bilateral relationship. Political dialogue; trade in goods; business and investment; intellectual, industrial and commercial property protection; legislative cooperation; economic cooperation; cooperation on matters related to democracy and human rights; cooperation on prevention of illegal activities; cultural cooperation and financial cooperation in the field of technical assistance are all covered in the PCA.

On 16 July 2018, the Council adopted the negotiating mandate for the opening of negotiations between the EU and Uzbekistan for an upgraded **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA)**. This sends a strong signal from the EU and Uzbekistan of their common interest in strengthening relations. By responding positively to this request, the EU recognises the significant efforts undertaken by the Uzbek authorities to reform the country, to respect human rights, to improve cooperation

with neighbours and international partners, and to promote stability and security in the region. The EPCA should reinforce the status of the EU as an important partner of Uzbekistan.

The EU's budget for 2014-2020 has earmarked **€168 million for support to rural development** in Uzbekistan.

In December 2016 the European Parliament lifted its suspension of the 'Textile Protocol' to the PCA, as Uzbekistan had taken effective measures against child and forced labour during the cotton harvest.

Since late 2016, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has triggered **numerous ambitious reforms**, in particular to improve the business climate, the judicial system and security services, labour conditions, and administrative accountability and efficiency. The new leadership has also **actively engaged with neighbouring countries to defuse tensions**, in particular with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on border and water management issues (Rogun and Farkhad Dams in Tajikistan, Kambarata Dam in Kyrgyzstan), and border demarcation. Uzbekistan has also assumed an active role in the peace process in Afghanistan.

On 10 November 2017, Uzbekistan hosted in Samarkand the **EU – Central Asia meeting of Foreign Ministers**. The annual ministerial meeting is an opportunity to address economic, political, connectivity, security, rule of law and regional

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**SUSTAIN
NATURAL
RESOURCES**



**IMPROVE
LIVING
STANDARDS**



**CREATE JOBS
IN RURAL
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issues. The next Ministerial meeting will take place on 23 November 2018 in Brussels.

On 26-27 March 2018, Tashkent hosted the Conference on **Afghanistan**: «Peace process, security cooperation and regional connectivity» where the EU High Representative Mogherini gave an opening speech. The event brought together Afghanistan, the five Central Asian countries, the United Nations and other stakeholders to support peace-making efforts in Afghanistan, as well as local and regional development.

The **EIB and EBRD are currently re engaging with Uzbekistan** – a new EIB-Uzbekistan framework agreement was signed mid-October 2017, while the EBRD reopened its office in Tashkent in November 2017 and issued new strategy on Uzbekistan in September 2018.