

FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT EU-AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS



The European Union's relations with Azerbaijan are based on the **EU-Azerbaijan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement** in force since 1999. In February 2017, the EU and Azerbaijan began negotiations on a new framework agreement designed to enhance the political dialogue, trade and mutually beneficial cooperation. **Azerbaijan is a strategic energy partner for the EU** and plays a pivotal role in bringing Caspian energy resources to the EU market. In 2018, the EU and Azerbaijan endorsed joint **Partnership Priorities**, along the four Eastern Partnership priorities that guide our political dialogue and cooperation.

ECONOMY

- ✓ The EU is Azerbaijan's **first trading partner** and **biggest export and import market**.
- ✓ The EU supports Azerbaijan's **economic diversification** through the negotiation of the **new agreement** with Azerbaijan and the accession process to the WTO.
- ✓ EU assistance complements policy dialogue and Azerbaijan's **economic modernisation**, supporting notably **youth education, entrepreneurship and regional development**. The EU also supports the government in improving the country's **business and investment climate**.
- ✓ The EU has assisted **13,000 companies** with funding, training, and export support to new markets through the **EU4Business** initiative, contributing to the creation of over **3,300 new jobs**.

ENVIRONMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

- ✓ Azerbaijan is a **strategic energy partner** for the EU, currently supplying around 5% of the EU's oil imports. The **Southern Gas Corridor** is a strategic initiative to bring gas from the Caspian Sea to the European markets, and is a key tool for enhancing the **security of energy supplies** in Europe. First gas from Azerbaijan is expected to reach the EU by the end of 2020.
- ✓ In 2019, Azerbaijan joined the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership (E5P), and further EU support in the energy sector including energy efficiency is provided through the **EU4Energy** initiative.
- ✓ Cooperation on **environment and climate goals** has been strengthened. In 2019, the EU helped Azerbaijan to detect industrial chemicals and pesticides in water through modernised laboratories. Thirty companies, mostly from food and construction materials sectors, received training on circular economy.
- ✓ **Transport** dialogue and cooperation are very high on the EU and Azerbaijan agenda. Azerbaijan benefits from a **favourable location** at the crossroads of transport connections linking North and South, and East and West. It has invested in important infrastructure projects such as the **Port of Baku** and the **Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway**. The most important road, railway connections, ports and airports are part of the extended indicative **Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)**. The EU provides technical expertise to the Port of Baku.

GOVERNANCE

- ✓ Better access to justice for citizens and businesses, via **legal aid, alternative dispute resolution** and the **fight against corruption** are priority areas of EU support.
- ✓ Azerbaijan actively cooperates with the EU via Twinning projects, which bring together public sector expertise from EU Member States and the beneficiary country. In the past 10 years, **over 25 ministries and public institutions** in Azerbaijan have participated in almost **50 Twinning projects**. Upgraded air quality monitoring and introduction of a mandatory health insurance are examples of **successful EU and Azerbaijan cooperation**.
- ✓ The EU also continues to stress the importance of **defending human rights and an enabling environment for civil society**, while ensuring **freedom of media, expression and assembly** in Azerbaijan. The EU sees this as an essential part of EU-Azerbaijan relations.

SOCIETY

- ✓ The EU-Azerbaijan **Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements** entered into force in 2014, making it easier and cheaper for citizens of Azerbaijan, in particular frequent travellers, to acquire short-term Schengen visas that allow them to travel throughout most EU countries. In addition, for example, **visas for Erasmus+ students are cost-free**.
- ✓ Supporting **skills development** is a priority for EU assistance to Azerbaijan, with a particular focus on vocational education and training, helping the country to have a better match between the skills of the labour force and the needs of employers.
- ✓ The EU's **Erasmus+ programme** has given almost **1,600 students** and academic staff from Azerbaijan the opportunity to study or teach in EU countries, and nearly 900 EU nationals the chance to go to Azerbaijan between 2015 and 2019. In addition, **over 3,300 young people** and youth workers from Azerbaijan took part in short-term exchanges, mobility, training and volunteering projects.

EU STANDS BY AZERBAIJAN DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The EU reacted fast and responded to the urgent needs of countries in the Eastern Partnership during the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of Team Europe, the EU has mobilised an ambitious support package totalling over €980 million to help tackle immediate needs, such as support to the health sector and vulnerable communities, as well as short-term needs to support the social and economic recovery of the six countries.

As part of this, a tailor-made COVID-19 response package for Azerbaijan worth about **€31.6 million** is being mobilised using a mix of existing and new funds to deliver concrete support to people.

✓ SUPPORT TO THE HEALTH SECTOR AND EMERGENCY NEEDS:

- Working with the WHO to supply medical devices, testing kits, masks, goggles, safety suits, gowns and other equipment. Training of medical and laboratory staff.
- The EU will continue to support the State Mandatory Health Insurance Agency and TEBIB (its subordinated Medical Territorial Units Management) to help effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Azerbaijan.

✓ SUPPORT TO CIVIL SOCIETY:

- Emergency grants to support vulnerable citizens in the regions.

✓ SUPPORT TO SMEs AND TO SMALL FARMS:

- Through the **EU4Business** Initiative, SMEs and the self-employed can access grants, loans and business advice to withstand the crisis.

✓ SUPPORT TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

- The EU will increase support to Azerbaijan's national administration in order to implement the government's COVID-19 action plan in particular its socio-economic strands; ensure Azerbaijani citizens have access to social support to cope with the negative effects of the COVID-19 outbreak; and support the economic recovery of businesses.

IN FOCUS:

examples of what has already been delivered

Over
700
vulnerable families
received emergency food items and humanitarian aid packages.

With support from an EU programme addressing rural communities in **Samukh region**,
masks were made locally
to prevent COVID-19 infections in accordance with community needs.

Vocational education and training lessons

are being aired on the national TV Culture Channel. These **online lessons** on design, barber, furniture, and others have been produced as part of the VET project funded by the EU.

IN FIGURES

The EU is Azerbaijan's first trading partner making up

41.7%

of Azerbaijan's total trade in 2018.

Since 2009,
€227 million

of EU-backed loans have been provided for **12,500** Azerbaijani companies.

Over
3,300

young people and youth workers from Azerbaijan took part in short-term exchanges, mobility, training and volunteering projects.

The EU's Erasmus+ programme gave almost

1,600

students and academic staff from Azerbaijan the opportunity to study or teach in the EU countries and nearly 900 EU nationals the chance to go to Azerbaijan between 2015 and 2019.

50
Twinning projects

in 10 years: 40 completed, 6 ongoing, 4 in preparation.

An offshore gas field in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea, Shah Deniz II, will provide

10 billion

cubic metres of gas per year to the EU by the end of 2020.

SECURITY & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains an obstacle to stability and prosperity in the region. The EU, including through its Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, supports and complements the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group to facilitate the resolution of the conflict. The EU also promotes confidence and peace-building civil society activities in support of the official peace process and aimed at bridging the conflict divide.

In 2018, the EU and Azerbaijan started an **annual high-level security Dialogue** to contribute to enhancing the exchange of information and cooperation.