EU - UZBEKISTAN RELATIONS

Relations between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan were established following its independence in 1991, and have been intensifying particularly since 2016. The 2019 **EU Strategy on Central Asia** provides the overall regional framework for this engagement, building on the previous Strategy from 2007.

A **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)** between the EU and the Republic of Uzbekistan has been in place since 1999. It forms the basis for a broad relationship, including political dialogue, cooperation on matters related to good governance, justice and home affairs, democracy and human rights, trade, business and investment relations, economic and financial cooperation as well as technical assistance.

The European Parliament also holds regular meetings with their counterparts in Uzbekistan.

Since late 2018, the EU and Uzbekistan have been negotiating **an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA)**. This ambitious undertaking reflects the evolution of EU's competences since the signature of the first agreement. It also reflects a shared interest in strengthening relations with and supporting ongoing reforms in Uzbekistan, including in the area of trade.

AREAS OF COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Since first taking office in 2016, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has been pursuing **an ambitious reform programme**, in particular to integrate the country in the world economy, improve the business climate, the judicial system and security services, labour conditions, administrative accountability and efficiency as well as human rights and good governance in general.

The European Union supports this reform agenda through technical and financial assistance, and regularly engages with the Uzbek authorities on all areas of concern, including human rights, media and issues of good governance.

Uzbekistan is actively engaging 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 (cooperation on hydropower plants, border demarcation), as well as trade and travel facilitation across the region.

Since 2017, the **European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development** have re-engaged with Uzbekistan, and the number and volume of ongoing projects have increased significantly. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU delivered **€168 million for support to rural development** in Uzbekistan.

€168 million
For rural development
In **2014 – 2020** to:

SUSTAIN NATURAL RESOURCES

SUPPORT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

ASSIST IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING

This support has included projects on the sustainable management of water resources and irrigation, horticulture, livestock, vocational training, and local administrative reform. For the next programming period (2021-2027), the EU's priority areas for cooperation with Uzbekistan will be 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 EU is also providing technical assistance for Uzbekistan's application to accede to the **World Trade Organisation**. In April 2021, Uzbekistan joined the EU's **Generalised Scheme of Preferences plus** (GSP+), giving the country duty-free access to the EU market for the majority of tariff lines.

Uzbekistan's ambitious reform programme, clear willingness to upgrade EU-Uzbekistan relations, and the EU's **Europe-Asia Connectivity Strategy** offer new opportunities to reap the full potential of cooperation.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In 2020, in response to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, €37.91 million of support was channelled to Uzbekistan through the EU's "Team Europe" package to meet the immediate needs of population and mitigate the short- and long-term consequences of the pandemic. 2,256,000 vaccine doses have been allocated to Uzbekistan through the COVAX mechanism, to which the EU contributes (as of November 2021, 900,00 doses have been shared with Uzbekistan by the EU.

In "Team Europe" package
€37.91 million
For response to COVID-19
In **Uzbekistan**