

President of Uzbekistan Proposes New Initiatives to Strengthen Economic Ties with China



The second "Central Asia – China" summit, held on 17 June 2025 in Astana, marked a qualitative leap in relations between China and the countries of Central Asia.

According to Dmitry Trostyanskiy, Chief Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies (ISMI), this shift is evidenced by the impressive economic results achieved through cooperation. Over the past decade, trade turnover between Central Asia and China has tripled, reaching US\$95 billion in 2024. The number of joint ventures has exceeded 9,000, covering a wide range of sectors — from raw materials to high-tech industries.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized that this partnership has become a strategic driver of growth for the entire region.

Forecasts suggest that by the end of 2025, trade turnover will reach US\$100 billion, and the number of joint ventures will approach 10,000.

To sustain this positive momentum, structural solutions are required. In this context, President Mirziyoyev's concrete initiatives aimed at deepening regional economic cooperation have taken on particular significance.

The President proposed the expedited adoption of a New Economic Partnership Program. This initiative is intended to institutionalize trade and economic ties and create a robust architecture for long-term regional collaboration.

To support this program with actionable mechanisms and projects aimed at expanding trade and stimulating investment flows, the President proposed the establishment of an Interregional Council on Trade and Investment at the level of deputy prime ministers. This body would serve as an effective tool for

eliminating trade barriers, developing a balanced investment portfolio, and harmonizing regulatory and infrastructure frameworks.

Another key proposal was the development of a long-term strategy titled "Industrial and Infrastructure Belt: Central Asia – China", focused on building an interconnected network of clusters, technology parks, and logistics hubs powered by Chinese investment and expertise.

To expand regional export markets, the President also proposed the creation of a Regional Center for Industrial Standardization and Certification in Tashkent. This initiative aims to simplify export procedures for industrial products from Central Asia to both China and global markets.

Continuing the systemic approach to enhancing cooperation with China, President Mirziyoyev outlined a set of measures across key sectors.

In the energy sphere, he proposed the synchronization of power grids through the construction of high-voltage transmission lines and the establishment of a dedicated Development Fund to finance infrastructure projects — a particularly relevant initiative in light of the region's investment gap, which is estimated in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

Addressing collaboration in artificial intelligence and digital technologies, the President emphasized the need to create an integrated network of data banks and processing centers, as well as a cross-border Central Asia – China fiber-optic digital highway.

These initiatives, drawing on China's technological experience — where the digital economy is growing 2.5 times faster than the overall economy — aim to provide the infrastructure for AI development, e-commerce, and smart logistics, in line with the Xi'an Declaration. Ultimately, these projects will help the region overcome its technological lag and facilitate its integration into the global digital economy.

In sum, the outcomes of the "Central Asia – China" summit and the implementation of the initiatives proposed therein will serve to further energize mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation and support the achievement of sustainable development goals, both at the national level and across the broader Central Asian region.

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