

# Cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - the embodiment of the historical closeness of the two peoples



Recently, the Head of our state paid an official visit to the brotherly land of Tajikistan. It is safe to say that the current visit of Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the neighboring country opened a new page in the history of Uzbek-Tajik relations.

The visit took place in an atmosphere of friendship, good neighborliness and mutual trust. Following the talks, held in a spirit of openness and mutual respect, the Presidents signed a Joint Statement and 35 bilateral documents, which will undoubtedly serve as the basis for further building up and deepening multifaceted mutually beneficial cooperation and strategic partnership between the two countries.

Unprecedented agreements were reached in the field of energy, transport, automotive, electrical engineering, mining and light industry, science, education, sports and other areas of interstate cooperation.

As the Head of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized, the current negotiations once again showed a serious and decisive disposition of the parties to strengthen relations of centuries-old friendship, trust, good neighborliness and strategic partnership. Our joint efforts are aimed at achieving concrete, tangible results of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan for the further prosperity of the two fraternal peoples.

In turn, the Leader of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon noted that thanks to the political will of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, friendship and mutual trust between our countries have become stronger. Today, there are no unresolved issues between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, an atmosphere of mutual trust has been established.

In general, the results of the visit indicate that Tashkent and Dushanbe today are implementing a comprehensive agenda that covers all spheres of interstate relations.

At the same time, cultural and humanitarian cooperation occupies a key place in building friendly and trusting relations. Another evidence of this is the signing of an agreement on cultural and humanitarian cooperation during the visit of the President of Uzbekistan, which provides for a number of projects aimed at strengthening the spiritual connection of our peoples and rallying our youth around common interests.

In particular, the parties agreed to implement the Program of joint cultural events timed to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, as well as organize the Festival of youth of the two countries, publish anthology books of modern Uzbek and Tajik literature.

It must be admitted that recently cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian sphere has acquired a multifaceted and multi-level character, has risen to a qualitatively new level. During this period, "Days of Uzbek Culture" were held twice in Tajikistan (May 2017, November 2019), as well as "Days of Tajik Culture" were organized once in Uzbekistan (October 2017). As part of the "Days of Culture" in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, art exhibitions of works by famous artists and craftsmen, concert programs and film festivals with the participation of representatives of culture were held and the arts of both states, which were received by the local public with great enthusiasm and interest. The holding of the next "Days of Culture" of Tajikistan in our country is planned this year, taking into account the sanitary and epidemiological situation.

Bilateral ties in the field of theatrical art have been strengthened. In the period 2016-2020, more than 15 tours of theaters of the two countries were organized.

In addition, representatives of Tajikistan regularly take part in the International Makom and Bakhshi Arts Festivals, Boysun Bahori, Sharq Taronalari, the Istedod International Competition, the Joy of Tashkent Children's Biennale, and others held in Uzbekistan. Ensemble "Shashmakom" of Tajikistan was awarded the Grand Prix of the International Maqom Art Festival in 2018. This year, the Tajik delegation is expected to participate in the second International Festival of Bakhshi Art in Nukus.

It has become a good tradition to organize, during the visits of the top leadership of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, concerts with the participation of masters of culture and art from the two countries. Thus, within the framework of the state visit of President E. Rahmon to Tashkent in August 2018, a large "Friendship Concert" was held with the participation of Uzbek and Tajik creative groups.

During the current visit of Sh. Mirziyoyev to Dushanbe, a concert was also organized at the Kokhi Borbad Palace of Arts with the participation of art masters from the two countries. A significant event of the event was the solemn presentation by E. Rakhmon to the President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev of the high state award of Tajikistan - the Order "Zarrintoch" ("Golden Crown") of the first degree for outstanding services in the development of cooperation between our countries.

As a token of gratitude, the Head of our state noted that such a high award is an expression of great respect and trust, recognition and assessment of common efforts to strengthen the centuries-old ties of brotherhood and good-neighborliness between our peoples.

The parties attach particular importance and importance to the intensification of cultural and humanitarian interaction of the border regions. In particular, concerts of pop artists are regularly held.

So, in honor of the opening of the checkpoint between Sughd region. (Tajikistan) and Namangan region (Uzbekistan) in 2018 and Gissar region (Tajikistan) and Surkhandarya region (Uzbekistan) in 2019, joint cultural and entertainment events were organized. In addition, representatives of the administrations of the border regions take part in events dedicated to the national holidays of both countries.

In general, frequent contacts between representatives of culture and art contribute not only to the familiarization of the peoples of the two countries with the cultural and spiritual heritage, but also to the formation of a new atmosphere of community, friendship and good neighborliness.

Cooperation in the scientific and educational sphere is deepening.

As a result of the establishment of direct contacts between the higher educational institutions of our countries, the number of Tajik students studying at the universities of Uzbekistan has grown almost 7 times since 2016 - from 16 to 110 people.

In addition, there is an agreement between some universities, according to which students of two countries can receive a bachelor's degree in one country and a master's degree in another. In addition, on the eve of Sh. Mirziyoyev's visit to Dushanbe, an agreement was reached between the governments of the two countries on the admission of Tajik citizens to military universities of Uzbekistan.

An invaluable contribution to the development of science and education is made by regular interaction of scientific and academic circles. So, in August 2018, Tashkent and Samarkand hosted a "Round Table" with the participation of a delegation of Tajik scientists-academics on the topic "Prospects for cultural and humanitarian relations between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan."

In September 2020, scientists and experts from the Academies of Sciences, leading research institutes and think tanks of the two states took part in a scientific and practical conference: "The contribution of the leaders of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to strengthening friendship, good-neighborliness and trust, opening a new page of the Tajik-Uzbek strategic partnership" (Dushanbe city).

In addition, joint research is currently underway between the Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. Thus, the Institute of

Chemistry of Plant Substances of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan cooperates with the Research Institute of Tajikistan in the field of phytochemical study of medicinal plants to create new drugs.

In September 2020, the Navoi branch of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Institute of Geology, Earthquake Resistant Construction and Seismology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan in the development and implementation of innovative technologies in the fields of prospecting and studying minerals, renewable energy, energy conservation and ecology. Also, cooperation has been established between the Astronomical Institute of Uzbekistan and the Institute of Astrophysics of Tajikistan in the field of astronomy and personnel training.

Significant is also the intensification of cooperation between the analytical and think tanks of the two countries.

In particular, in 2018, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Center for Strategic Research (CSR) under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

So, on the eve of the visit of the head of Uzbekistan to Tajikistan on June 3, 2021, the leading analytical structures of the two countries in Dushanbe organized a conference on the topic "New points of growth" for further expansion and strengthening of cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan ", as well as a ceremony the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation between the International Institute of Central Asia and the Center for Contemporary Art under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Undoubtedly, cooperation between academic and expert-analytical circles will contribute not only to the timely solution of fundamental problems, but also to the development of mutually beneficial practical proposals for the development and strengthening of bilateral cooperation.

At the same time, there is an increase in the mutual flow of tourists. So, as a result of the abolition of the visa regime in 2018 and the opening of all 17 checkpoints on the Uzbek-Tajik border, Uzbekistan in 2018 was visited by 1.1 million Tajiks. In 2019, this figure increased by almost 40% and amounted to 1.5 million. In 2020, taking into account the established restrictive measures, the number of Tajik tourists amounted to 337 thousand people. - more than 22% of the total number of foreign guests. Meanwhile, from 300 thousand to 800 thousand citizens of Uzbekistan annually visit the neighboring republic.

Another positive moment in this direction was the signing during the visit of a bilateral Agreement on simplifying the conditions for the stay of citizens of the two countries in the territories of both states. According to the new procedure, citizens of both countries upon arrival in Tajikistan or Uzbekistan will be exempted from temporary registration and residence registration within ten days from the moment of crossing the border.

However, the parties do not intend to be satisfied with what has already been achieved. Thus, Tashkent and Dushanbe agreed to work together to promote the Silk Road tourism brand and implement projects to develop Ziyorat tourism (pilgrim tourism). In addition, the resumption of bus service between such large cities of the two states as Tashkent, Samarkand, Termez, Dushanbe, Khujand, Penjikent and others, suspended due to the pandemic, is being considered.

It should be emphasized that both states have reached an understanding that in order to turn Central Asia into a single tourist destination, it is advisable to jointly promote tourism products and develop combined tourist routes.

At the same time, consistent joint work is being carried out in the field of health care. Due to the abolition of the visa regime, as well as the creation of favorable conditions for receiving medical services for citizens of Tajikistan, the number of Tajik medical tourists in Uzbekistan has significantly increased.

So, if in 2016 only 229 people visited our country for treatment and recovery, then in 2019 this figure was about 6 thousand.

During the coronavirus pandemic, despite the closure of state borders, Dushanbe and Tashkent jointly fought the spread of COVID-19. In 2020, Uzbekistan sent 18 railway carriages with medicines and food to its neighbors. In addition, a group of doctors visited Tajikistan to assist Tajik colleagues in the fight against coronavirus infection. The UzAuto Motors company sent to Tajikistan a batch of ambulances designed to transport patients and equipped with personal protective equipment for doctors from coronavirus infection.

During the last visit, the official opening ceremony of the medical complex in the Kubodiyon district of the Khatlon region, built by Uzbekistan, took place. The complex includes a modern multidisciplinary hospital with 250 beds, designed to serve up to 7.5 thousand patients per year and a polyclinic to serve 300 patients in one shift and over 219 thousand people per year.

In general, healthcare professionals in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan have significantly increased interaction, especially in the context of a pandemic. This facilitated an active exchange of knowledge and innovative approaches in the fight against coronavirus and its consequences.

The parties also interact intensively in the field of physical culture and sports. Over the past two years, 182 athletes from Tajikistan have taken part in 14 sports events in Uzbekistan, including the Tashkent 2019 International Men's Volleyball Tournament. In 2021, Tajik athletes competed in the open international archery tournament "Alpomish" and "Barchinoy", as well as the Grand Slam in judo, organized in Tashkent.

In addition, in April of this year, a partnership agreement was signed between the Olympic Committees of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. According to experts, cooperation in this direction will allow jointly organize training camps and prepare athletes for the Olympic and Asian Games.

Along with strengthening bilateral cooperation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also pay special attention to creating conditions for the preservation and development of the national culture of the peoples of the two countries and its identity on their territory.

Thus, the Republican Tajik National Center is successfully functioning in Uzbekistan, uniting 15 Tajik cultural centers throughout the republic. There are 255 schools (69 thousand students) operating in the country with the Tajik language of instruction.

Samarkand, Termez and Fergana universities have groups with Tajik language of instruction. In the current academic year, admission to these areas has doubled. Four periodicals are published in the Tajik language, five television programs and 30 radio programs are broadcast.

At the same time, within the framework of strengthening cooperation on the basis of "people's diplomacy" in 2019, the initiative group created the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan Friendship Society. In recent years, more than 130 of our fellow citizens of Tajik nationality have been awarded high state awards of Uzbekistan.

An invaluable contribution to the creation of favorable conditions for representatives of the Tajik people of Uzbekistan was the opening of a comprehensive school for 640 students in the Urgut district of the Samarkand region. The three-storey building has 26 classrooms, a gym, an assembly hall, a canteen, a library, labor and specialized classes. The educational institution is equipped with computer equipment and laboratory instruments.

In Tajikistan today there are about 20 national communities, including the Uzbek community. The Regional Center of Uzbek Spirituality and Education and the Regional Uzbek Society function in the Sughd Region of Tajikistan. On the territory of the neighboring republic, about 10 printed publications, including newspapers and magazines, are published in the Uzbek language, and one private TV channel broadcasts. In addition, in the Spitamen district of the Sughd region there is a Theater named after M. Sh Burkhonova is the only one in the republic that includes a repertoire in Uzbek.

Thus, both states create conditions for the preservation of the identity, culture and traditions of the representatives of the two peoples.

In general, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan demonstrate a decisive commitment to the consistent development and strengthening of a multifaceted partnership, including the cultural and humanitarian sphere. Thanks to regular contacts and exchange at all levels, a trusting relationship is formed, new mechanisms of interaction are being established. In fact, cultural and humanitarian cooperation today seems to be one of the pillars of Uzbek-Tajik relations.

At the same time, the interaction of the two states in such areas as the joint implementation of projects to study and the publication of collective works on the history of our countries, strengthening cooperation in the field of training scientific and pedagogical personnel, as well as intensification of contacts between representatives of culture and art, theater and cinematography, as well as the media, will serve not only to strengthen bilateral relations, but also to cultural mutual enrichment and rapprochement of peoples.

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**Source**