

New Horizons of Cooperation: Results of Shavkat Mirziyoyev's Visit to Paris



On March 13, the three-day state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to France concluded, marking a historic milestone in bilateral relations. This visit, unprecedented in scale and significance, signified a qualitative transition to a new stage of cooperation between the two nations. As part of the visit, over 20 agreements and contracts were signed, covering a broad range of sectors, including politics, the green economy, agriculture, energy, healthcare, education, and culture.

Experts emphasize that this event opened a new chapter in cooperation between Uzbekistan and France and laid a strong foundation for long-term partnerships between Central Asia and Europe. Several key aspects characterize the significance of this visit.

First, political interaction has been rapidly expanding in recent years. The dialogue between the two countries has reached a new level, with high-level visits reaching a historic peak. Since 2018, this has been the fourth summit, alongside regular political consultations between foreign ministries and the active development of interparliamentary ties.

A key outcome of this process was the signing of a landmark document - the Declaration on the Establishment of Strategic Partnership between the two countries. This agreement defines long-term cooperation priorities and aims to intensify collaboration across all sectors, aligning with Tashkent's and Paris's vital interests.

This agreement also reflects Uzbekistan's growing role in international relations. The country is strengthening its position on the global stage and becoming an increasingly sought-after partner. Due to its strategic location in Central Asia, Uzbekistan is crucial in building bridges between East and West, fostering closer cooperation with France.

At the same time, France, with its strong influence in global politics, is actively contributing to developing these ties. The country has historically been a key player in international law and humanitarian cooperation. Paris is home to the Headquarters of UNESCO, while Strasbourg hosts the European Court of Human Rights. Additionally, France plays an active role in major international alliances such as the G7 and G20, further strengthening its engagement in global affairs.

The high level of protocol events during the visit also deserves special attention, serving as a trip highlight. The President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, was awarded the Order of the Legion of Honour - the highest distinction of the French Republic. The ceremonial presentation of this prestigious award by President Emmanuel Macron underscored the deep respect for the Uzbekistan Leader.

This recognition is a formality and a testament to the depth of trust and strong ties between the two

nations. It also confirms the effectiveness of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's foreign policy and Uzbekistan's growing international standing.

Second, economic cooperation is entering a new phase, transitioning from traditional sectors to more technologically advanced areas.

A significant step in this direction was the adoption of the Innovation and Industrial Partnership Program, finalized during the visit. The program supports long-term economic cooperation by implementing strategically significant projects for both countries.

Key focus areas include extracting and processing critical mineral resources, energy, infrastructure, transport, and other industries. The total investment volume will reach €6.5 billion, bringing the combined project portfolio to €12 billion.

The financing of these projects will be secured by leading French banks and investment funds. This highlights the high level of trust from the European business community and demonstrates France's commitment to contributing to the modernization of Uzbekistan's key industries, job creation, and the transfer of advanced technologies.

Energy sector agreements deserve special attention. Uzbekistan is actively diversifying its energy balance, prioritizing the development of renewable energy sources (RES). With its advanced technologies and expertise, France is well-positioned to play a key role in this process. According to the Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (RECAI), France ranks high among the global leaders in renewable energy innovation due to its ambitious targets and well-developed infrastructure.

French companies, such as Total and Voltalia, are already implementing large-scale projects in Uzbekistan's energy sector. Notably, the country's first solar power plant was built with the support of French partners.

This visit led to new contracts, further strengthening this partnership. In August this year, a 500-kilowatt agrivoltaic project will be launched in Tashkent region. This cooperation in renewable energy helps achieve sustainable development goals and demonstrates Uzbekistan's firm commitment to its energy transition.

Third, the cultural and humanitarian sphere is integral to developing bilateral relations and represents another key element of the strategic partnership.

The agreement to establish the Uzbekistan – France University is a clear testament to this. This initiative will strengthen academic exchanges and youth ties between the two countries. The university will offer educational programs involving top specialists from France, providing students with unique opportunities to obtain internationally recognized diplomas.

Further reinforcing this initiative are the agreements on expanding French language education in Uzbekistan and student and professional mobility programs. France, whose universities consistently rank among the world's most prestigious institutions (as seen in the QS World University Rankings and THE World University Rankings), remains a global leader in higher education.

Moreover, during the visit, approval was granted for an exhibition in Paris featuring works from the collection of the Nukus Museum named after I. Savitsky, a treasure of Central Asian avant-garde art. An agreement was also reached to open a representative office of the French National Institute of Cultural Heritage in Uzbekistan, aimed at cooperation in preserving and restoring historical monuments.

These initiatives highlight the growing interest of the French public in Uzbekistan's cultural heritage. A systematic cultural dialogue strengthens mutual understanding between nations and enhances bilateral partnerships.

A particularly significant milestone is the signed partnership program with the French Development

Agency (AFD) until 2030. Since 2016, AFD has been actively involved in implementing projects focused on economic diversification, sustainable development, and improving the quality of life for citizens.

Thus, the agreements signed during the visit lay a solid foundation for long-term cooperation with France. To coordinate and effectively implement these agreements, the two countries will establish a Strategic Planning Group led by the foreign ministries, with the participation of economic agencies.

Overall, it is safe to say that President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's visit to Paris demonstrated growing trust between Uzbekistan and France and a significant step toward sustainable development and prosperity for both nations. This visit also highlights the commitment of both sides to strengthening bilateral relations, addressing global challenges together, and unlocking new opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

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