

'Central Asia - Germany': new mechanisms for cooperation in the field of ecology and environmental protection



In recent years, there has been a significant intensification of water and climate diplomacy by the Central Asian countries. This trend affects not only the country and intra-regional levels, but also the relations of the Central Asian states with extra-regional actors.

This is confirmed by the results of the talks between the head of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz (September 15-16, Samarkand), as well as the Second Summit "Central Asia - Germany" (September 17, Astana), where special attention was paid to the issues of water resources, climate change and environmental protection.

In particular, Uzbekistan and Germany signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in the Field of Climate Change within the framework of the Paris Agreement and an intergovernmental Declaration on Cooperation in the Field of Sustainable Use of Water Resources within the framework of the Green Central Asia initiative. An agreement was also concluded on the implementation of two projects - "Political Dialogue and Knowledge Management on Climate Protection Strategies" (DIAPOL-CE) and "Green Central Asia Phase II".

The implementation of the agreements reached will contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of the Strategy "Uzbekistan-2030" and other conceptual documents, such as the Concept of Environmental Protection, the Concept of Water Management Development, the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture, the State Program "Green Economy" until 2030.

In general, the signed agreements are aimed at expanding Uzbek-German cooperation in the field of climate change and security within the framework of the UN, the EU-Central Asia Strategy, as well as the Regional Program for Adaptation and Mitigation of Climate Change.

In turn, the priority of climate issues in the agenda "Central Asia - Germany" is confirmed by the provisions

of the Joint Statement adopted following the summit. Thus, the leaders of the countries, highly appreciating the importance of the "Green Central Asia" initiative and Germany's support in regional projects, expressed interest in further cooperation on climate change and the environment, rational use of water resources.

In this context, the exchange of experience and technology with Germany is of great practical importance.

Firstly, since the late 1990s, Germany has been the first country to actively implement and support renewable energy sources. As a result of the measures taken, which were called the "Energiewende" ("energy turn"), the share of renewable energy sources in the total volume of electricity consumed has increased from 3.4% to over 50% over 30 years. Germany also has experience in collecting and recycling solar panels, electric vehicle batteries and wind turbines. Given the current pace and scale of renewable energy implementation and the growing number of electric cars in Central Asia, Germany's policy in this area can serve as a model for countries in the region when solving similar problems.

Secondly, over the past 10 years, Germany has reduced its primary energy consumption by 17%, and a 50% reduction is expected by 2050. This is due to the fact that the country is taking measures to stimulate the introduction of energy-efficient technologies and energy-saving equipment. In this regard, the countries of Central Asia can benefit from Germany's experience in reducing the energy and carbon intensity of the industrial, energy, and housing and utilities sectors.

Thirdly, Germany is one of the leading countries in terms of effective management, rational and high-quality use of water resources. According to the UN, 100% of the population of Germany is covered by safe drinking water supply, while in the Central Asian region this figure is 79%. In Germany, 99% of wastewater undergoes safe treatment, while in the region this figure is 30%. The degree of implementation of integrated water resources management in the country reaches 88%, in the Central Asian region - just over 50%. In addition, the efficiency of water use in Germany is 40 times higher than in the countries of the region.

Taking this into account, it is important for the Central Asian states to adapt and apply Germany's positive experience in the field of renewable energy, energy and water resources management. This will contribute to achieving the goals and objectives of sustainable "green" development in the face of the growing impact of climate change.

Thus, the agreements reached during the bilateral negotiations and following the second summit "Central Asia - Germany" expand the possibilities for cooperation between Berlin and the countries of the region on issues of water, environmental and climate security.

Lobar Umarova,

Chief Researcher at the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of
Uzbekistan