

# European Union to strengthen educational assistance to Uzbekistan

On 16 July 2020, an expert videoconference **“The Human Dimension in the Relations between the European Union and Uzbekistan: Youth, Exchanges and a Better Life”** took place.

✖ The meeting of experts from the Institute for Strategic and Interregional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the University of World Economy and Diplomacy with European colleagues continued the series of brainstorming sessions organized with the support of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Kingdom of Belgium.

On the part of the European Union, the conference was attended by members of the European Parliament, representatives of the European External Action Service, experts from the European Council on the affairs of neighboring countries, as well as analysts from leading European countries, including Germany, which is now performing the functions of the EU presidency.

In the format of online communication, such issues as the perception of the citizens of Uzbekistan, and especially young people, of the concept of a “good life” and the constituent “ingredients” for achieving it, as well as the directions of development of Uzbek-European cooperation that are in demand in this regard, were considered.

Opening the event, the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Benelux countries **Dilyor Khakimov** emphasized that youth policy is the basis of plans for reforming and further development of Uzbekistan. In recent years, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev initiated and implemented deep structural changes in this direction, covering both external and internal aspects of the policy of the new Uzbekistan.

✖✖ The efforts undertaken by Tashkent are not ignored in Europe, said **Samuel Westerbier**, director of the European Council for Neighboring Countries. He noted that Uzbekistan is currently going through an important stage of reforms begun in 2016. In his opinion, the new Agreement on Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan should become a very important milestone in the cooperation of the parties. In this regard, the expansion of relations between civil societies, exchange programs aimed at developing human potential, will unlock the potential of both concluded trade relations and better relationships between all segments of the population.

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In this context, Deputy Director of ISMI **Sanjar Valiev** outlined the key aspects of responsible social policy in Uzbekistan in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the government’s strategic vision for post-crisis recovery, taking into account the use of the potential of youth.

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In particular, the expert outlined a whole set of proposals for projects in the field of education and vocational training of Uzbek youth for joint efforts in which the EU’s potential can play the most useful role.

Referring to the topic of the videoconference, the deputy head of the ISMI proposed to derive a formula for the perception of a “better life” based on the achievement of indicators of 17 UN global sustainable development goals adopted for the period until 2030. He especially emphasized that the updated EU Strategy for Central Asia and the Cooperation Agreement with Uzbekistan had gone through a deep study, acquired a comprehensive character, taking into account the needs of the steadily continuing reforms of the President of Uzbekistan. In this regard, the parties need to move to the systematic implementation of these agreements, focusing existing and additional resources on the development of human capital.

The readiness of the European Union to support Uzbekistan in every possible way on the path of reforms was voiced by a member of the European Parliament, **Ilkhan Kuchuk**. As Special Rapporteur to the

European Legislature on Uzbekistan, he highlighted Brussels' goals in Central Asia, which are also designed to ensure better understanding between people. In his words, the consistent implementation of the declared transformations in Uzbekistan contributes to the perception of the country in the European Union as a "growing partner".



As the parliamentarian stressed, Europe is well aware that the complex reforms carried out by Uzbekistan provide not only opportunities, but also full of challenges. In encouraging these changes, Brussels stands ready to firmly support Tashkent. The European Union also holds that people and their potential are the key to success in solving emerging problems.

Focusing on the policy of external openness and the importance of participation of the young generation in the implementation of reforms, Vice-Rector of the University of International Economics and Diplomacy **Gulnoza Ismailova** stressed that youth is not just the future, but the already come day of Uzbekistan.



The representative of the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission, **Maciei Madalinskiy**, noted the start of a new program "In Search of Common Understanding" aimed at youth participation in decision-making processes.



As a result of the conference, the parties came to the need to organize speeches of representatives of expert and public circles of Uzbekistan in the European Parliament in the coming months. They also discussed the development of a draft "road map" by specialists for expanding cooperation in the field of education and professional training.

**Source**