

## Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey brought to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership level



At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in our country on an official visit on March 29.

As part of the talks, the heads of the two states signed a Joint Statement, which enshrined the development of cooperation between the two countries to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership level.

Today it can be noted with confidence that this kind of partnership between countries is already being implemented in practice and this is supported by the following factors.

First, political relations between Uzbekistan and Turkey based on mutual trust are progressively developing and strengthening. The heads of the two states are determined to personally promote all-round mutually beneficial ties between the countries. This is a very important aspect that guarantees the constant filling of the cooperation agenda with new “breakthrough” areas.

Over the past three years, the presidents of Uzbekistan and Turkey have met 7 times. During meetings and negotiations at the highest level, the prospects for the development of Uzbek-Turkish multifaceted cooperation were discussed. This is reflected in many important areas of bilateral cooperation, such as creating favorable conditions for the business circles of both countries, improving the investment climate,

implementing cooperation projects, cultural and humanitarian exchanges.

Secondly, the multifaceted contractual and legal base of bilateral relations on a wide range of issues is being significantly expanded. The legal basis of the Uzbek-Turkish cooperation is the Treaty of Eternal Friendship and Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey, as well as 123 agreements aimed at expanding multifaceted bilateral cooperation.

In addition, today a whole range of new bilateral mechanisms of interaction has been created between the states – the Supreme Council for Strategic Partnership chaired by the Heads of State, the Joint Strategic Planning Group at the level of Foreign Ministers, as well as Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Groups.

Thirdly, the dynamics of trade and economic cooperation have increased. Turkey has become one of the largest trade and economic partners of Uzbekistan (4th place after Russia, China and Kazakhstan). This suggests that there is potential and, most importantly, high interest in increasing these indicators by several times. Plans have been outlined to bring the volume of bilateral trade up to \$5 billion in the coming years. It reached \$3.388 billion in 2021, up \$1.5 billion (72%) from 2020. Interregional ties have become intense. There is practical cooperation between Tashkent and Ankara, Samarkand and Istanbul.

Cooperation with Turkey in the investment sphere is expanding. The volume of Turkish investments in Uzbekistan has increased 70 times. The number of joint Uzbek-Turkish enterprises in our country has increased 5 times.

Fourthly, flagship projects with the participation of the Turkish side have been agreed upon and are being implemented, which will be able to pull the development of entire sectors of the economy of Uzbekistan. Multifaceted bilateral strategic cooperation is intensively advancing in education, medicine, construction, textile industry, automotive industry, energy, science, technology, culture, digital economy, and security.

Particular attention should be paid to the participation of the Turkish side in the construction. Over the past 3 years, the Turkish construction business has launched huge projects in our country. Together with partners from Turkey, 3 projects have been implemented for the production of building materials (\$17.5 million), residential complexes are being built in Andijan (\$200 million), aerated concrete production project is being carried out in Navoi and Tashkent (\$30 million), construction of multi-storey car park is being completed in the capital of the country (\$6 million), which represents only a small part of the Turkish-Uzbek strategic cooperation in this industry.

In the textile industry, together with Turkish investors, 10 projects worth more than \$156 million are being implemented: sewing, knitting, dyeing production in Tashkent and Khorezm regions; a textile complex for the production of clothing is being created by SUR Corporate wear (\$56 million) and several other projects important for the development of the Uzbek textile industry are being implemented.

Fifthly, active cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey in the creation of new transport and logistics hubs and routes. In particular, the parties are interested in promoting the Asia-Pacific region – China – Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan – Turkmenistan – Azerbaijan – Georgia – Turkey – Europe multimodal transport corridor.

Its implementation will allow our countries to significantly increase their foreign trade potential on a mutually beneficial basis. In turn, this will contribute to the achievement of the task of bringing the volume of transit transportation of goods through the territory of Uzbekistan from the current 7 million tons to 23 million tons in 2030.

In addition, Turkey is actively promoting the Middle Corridor infrastructure project, which runs through the territories of Turkey, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, and Central Asia to China. According to experts, the “Middle Corridor” compared to the “Northern Corridor”, through which goods are exported from the Central Asian countries, is more economical – shorter by 2 thousand km. Accordingly, it reduces the time of movement of goods by a factor of three. With its effective use, the countries of Central Asia will be able

to benefit from the Chinese-European trade, which is estimated at 600 billion dollars annually.

The widespread use of this route will open up huge opportunities for the exporters of our country, which will significantly affect the trade and economic activity of Uzbek manufacturers in world markets.

Sixth, a solid foundation has been created for the development of cultural and humanitarian ties between the two peoples. The expansion and deepening of cooperation in this direction contribute to the mutual enrichment of cultures and the formation of a common cultural and humanitarian space.

Turkish representatives regularly take part in the Sharq Taronalari International Music Festival in Samarkand.

Within the framework of the international program “Khiva - the cultural capital of the Turkic world”, a statue of Muhammad al-Khwarizmi was installed in Turkey and a complex of monuments “Khiva Bobo” was opened.

A joint faculty was established at the Bukhara State Medical Institute together with the Turkish University of Medical Sciences, and a branch of the Turkish University of Economics and Technology was opened in Tashkent.

Bilateral cooperation in cinematography is actively developing. So, the shooting has already finished and the first part of the historical series “Mendirman Jaloliddin” co-produced by Uzbekistan and Turkey has been presented.

In the coming years, Turkish filmmakers also intend to implement several film projects about the life and work of the great Uzbek commander Amir Timur.

One of the incentives for strengthening foreign economic, cultural and humanitarian ties is the tourism sector, which is considered in Tashkent and Ankara as a reliable driver for ensuring stable growth of the two economies. Thus, Turkish specialists are involved in the development of pilgrimage tourism in Uzbekistan. Among the population of Muslim states, Turkish citizens show the highest interest in the cultural and historical sites and sights of Uzbekistan. In 2019-2020, the number of Turkish tourists visiting Uzbekistan exceeded 85 thousand people.

The opening of the Consulate General of Turkey in Samarkand was a positive signal of strengthening interstate relations and implementing the principles of a comprehensive strategic partnership. As a result, the Republic of Turkey became the first non-regional country to have a diplomatic mission in this historic city.

It is noteworthy that the countries intend to build not only bilateral relations, but also expand the formats of multilateral cooperation.

At the same time, it is necessary to separately note the development of cooperation within the framework of international and regional organizations.

Among them, most notably the UN, the Organization of Turkic States, the OSCE, the Organization for Economic Cooperation, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

As can be seen from the above, cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey has a huge potential. Ankara and Tashkent are firmly committed to further expanding and deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership to fill the ties between the two states and peoples with new content and practical deeds.

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## Source