

# Expert dialogue is deepening between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan



From December 17 to 20 of this year, a research trip was organized for representatives of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS) to Tajikistan.

As part of the trip, with the assistance of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Dushanbe, a number of meetings were held with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, experts from the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Institute for the Study of Asian and European States of the National Academy of Sciences, the Center for Geopolitical Studies of the Russian-Tajik Slavonic University, and the analytical structure "Tahlil".

During the conversations, attention was focused on the current state and prospects for the development of Uzbek-Tajik cooperation.

The parties noted with satisfaction that today cooperation between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is developing in full accordance with the allied nature of bilateral relations.

A trusting dialogue has been established and is deepening at the level of the top leadership and governments of the countries. Since 2016, the leaders of the two states have met more than 30 times, which contributes to the comprehensive development of a multifaceted partnership between the countries.

A significant breakthrough has been achieved in bilateral trade. In particular, over the past 7 years, mutual trade has grown from \$197 million to \$757 million.

Experts emphasized that there is huge untapped potential between the two countries. They discussed ways to increase trade and economic cooperation and search for new directions and drivers for the development of bilateral cooperation.

The agenda of the meetings also included issues of cooperation in the area of countering challenges and threats to regional stability.

A separate topic of discussion was the discussion of regional rapprochement processes in Central Asia. Analysts acknowledged that thanks to the joint efforts of the leaders of the countries of the region, it was possible to transform Central Asia into a space of good neighborliness, mutual trust and cooperation.

The steady dynamics of regional cooperation has a positive impact on the economic growth of Central Asian countries.

Over the past decade, the Central Asian economy has grown steadily (by 6.2%), which is twice the global average (2.6%). Since 2016, the region's total GDP has increased by 60%, reaching \$450 billion by the end of 2023.

Central Asia is also becoming an increasingly important participant in global economic relations. Its foreign trade volume has more than doubled over the past seven years, reaching about \$232 billion. Intraregional trade turnover has increased 4.5 times (from \$2.4 billion to \$11 billion).

Taken together, these factors increase the interest of extra-regional partners in Central Asia. The rise of the Central Asian region as a single actor in international relations is observed. This is reflected in the created dialogue formats "CA Plus". Today, more than 10 such dialogue platforms are functioning, 6 of which were created in the last 5 years.

The parties noted the importance of further consolidation of efforts by Central Asian states in order to increase the region's resilience to internal and external challenges and to fully realize new opportunities that are opening up.

At the same time, during the talks, mutual interest was expressed in intensifying contacts and organizing joint events between the "think tanks" of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Prospects for expanding scientific interaction were outlined in order to develop proposals for deepening bilateral cooperation in all areas of allied relations.