

# Uzbekistan – Germany: a wide range of cooperation



The official visit of the President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Germany in January 2019 can be considered as one of the key foreign policy events of this year in terms of further enhancement of Uzbekistan's multifaceted relations on the international area. The negotiations in Berlin are a significant step within Uzbek diplomacy towards Europe.

Germany is one of the main trade and economic partners of Uzbekistan in Europe. At the end of last year, the trade turnover between the countries amounted at \$ 772 million with an increase of 24.5 percent in comparison to 2017. Additionally, Germany is one of the countries that provide significant support to Uzbekistan. With financial and technical assistance of the German government, Uzbekistan has implemented a number of important projects which amount at 320 million euro in total. Within the framework of the UN, OSCE and the European Union, Uzbekistan and Germany carried out constructive cooperation on the global and regional agenda in a multilateral format. Tashkent and Berlin hold similar or coinciding positions on many issues, including the fight against terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking which benefits the fruitful interaction of the two countries on the international area.

In designating Central Asia as a region of «strategic importance», Berlin invariably emphasizes the importance of this direction of foreign policy at the national and European levels. Germany traditionally positioned itself as the leading European country in Central Asia, which has managed to establish close partnerships with all countries in the region. It should be noted that, Germany became the first European country to open its diplomatic missions in all Central Asian capitals was the main initiator of the «EU Strategy» on Central Asia. Currently, German diplomacy is actively involved in the preparation of an updated version of this document, the adoption of which is scheduled for 2019.

Of particular interest to Uzbekistan in Germany has risen sharply due to the large-scale reforms of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to liberalize and democratize the state. According to Eckhart Franz, a representative of the Ministry of Economy and Energy of Germany, two years ago it was «absolutely impossible to imagine the current recovery in bilateral economic relations».

During his speech at the international Uzbek-German round table held in September 2018 in Tashkent, Niels Annen who is Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office stated that Germany fully supports the achievement of Tashkent in «opening its borders and including Afghanistan in regional cooperation».

The further deepening and expansion of multidimensional relations both at the bilateral and multilateral levels with one of the leading states of Europe will make an important contribution to the sustainable development of not only Uzbekistan, but also of the entire Central Asian region. The development of in-depth political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian relations with one of the largest industrial and technologically developed economies, not only in Europe but also in the world will allow Uzbekistan to significantly increase its potential during the period of dynamic reforms and modernization of the country. The influx of high-quality investments and advanced technologies from Germany will ensure the growth of the industrial sector of the Uzbek economy and help to increase the export of competitive products to nearby markets in South and East Asia. The strategic level of the Uzbek-German relations will be one of the key factors in ensuring the security and development of Central Asia.

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**POSTED ON 8TH MAY 2019**

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