

The role of strategic partnership in ensuring Uzbekistan's security and sustainable development

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46382/MJBAS.2025.9306>

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Article Received: 03 June 2025

Article Accepted: 13 August 2025

Article Published: 22 August 2025



ABSTRACT

In the current rapidly developing era, Uzbekistan is establishing cooperation with many international organizations in order to strengthen its position in the international arena, actively participate in global processes, and achieve sustainable development. Strategies are being developed to create new economic and political stability in the Central Asian region through Uzbekistan's ongoing cooperation with the European Union. As a result of these partnerships, Uzbekistan is implementing strategies aimed at further strengthening its position as a reliable and leading partner in the international arena. This article discusses Uzbekistan's efforts towards security and sustainable economic development, as well as its cooperation with the European Union and Central Asian countries.

Keywords: International Community; Integration; Pragmatic Policy; Resolution; Foreign Policy; Development; Peace; Strategy; Civilization; Political Dialogue; Relations.

1. Introduction

In our developing century, our country is establishing active cooperation with many international organizations in order to further enhance our country's reputation in the international arena, take a worthy place in global political and economic processes, as well as ensure national security and achieve sustainable development. This cooperation is strengthening not only in the political and economic spheres, but also in many areas such as education, healthcare, ecology, and culture. Through this, our country is being recognized as a reliable and stable partner in the international community.

This was stated by the Head of our country, the Honorable Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in an interview with Euronews before the first Central Asia - European Union summit in Samarkand. "We have a historic opportunity to transform our region into not only a stable but also a prosperous place". "The Central Asia - European Union" format is a unique cooperation platform, unparalleled in terms of size and institutional scope. The European Union, which unites 27 countries, including three G7 countries, is the largest integration structure that has established systematic cooperation with Central Asia at the interregional level. "Cooperation with the European Union covers a wide range of areas, from economy and investment to sustainable development, security and digital transformation, and is based on long-term strategic priorities," they acknowledged [1].

1.1. Research Objectives

Based on the background that has been described, the following two objectives have been identified:

1. First of all, to analyze the strategic role of Uzbekistan's partnerships especially with the European Union and neighboring Central Asian countries in strengthening national and regional security.
2. Secondly, to evaluate the effectiveness of Uzbekistan's foreign policy principles in promoting peace, neutrality, and sustainable development without military alignments.

3. Thirdly, to examine the socio-political and economic outcomes of high-level regional cooperation initiatives, including summits and strategic roadmaps.

4. Fourthly, to assess the impact of historical and cultural ties on the modern development of diplomatic relations and regional identity.

2. Materials and Methods

The article uses scientific methods of knowledge such as analysis and synthesis, retrospective, comparative analysis, generalization, as well as dialectical and synergetic approaches. The theoretical basis of the study is Uzbekistan's efforts to strengthen security and the ideas of sustainable development and progress. In addition, the works and monographs of prominent scientists who have studied this area in our country also served as an important theoretical and methodological source for the study.

3. Results and Discussion

Uzbekistan has always been committed to pursuing an open, friendly, and pragmatic policy in relations with its close neighbours. He believes that all pressing political, economic, and environmental problems in the region should be resolved based on mutual interests, practical dialogue, and international law.

Uzbekistan also firmly advocates that the existing problems in Central Asia should be resolved directly by the countries of the region, without the intervention of external forces. It should be noted that the adoption of a number of resolutions of the UN General Assembly in recent years, including the resolution “On strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in Central Asia”, is an international recognition of the efforts of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Today, the world community views the new Uzbekistan as a stable and rapidly developing state of democratic change, a country of great opportunities and practical work [2].

The principled position of the new Uzbekistan's foreign policy is based on the following: not to associate with any military-political blocs, not to allow the location of military bases and facilities of other countries on the territory of our country, not to allow Uzbek military personnel to participate in military operations abroad, and to remain committed to resolving all conflicts and disputes exclusively through political means. Uzbekistan, without being a member of any military blocs, seeks to conduct an open dialogue and develop practical cooperation with all its international partners for the sake of stability, development, and prosperity.

The fundamental essay of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, “The Present and the New Uzbekistan”, provides an in-depth analysis of the new image of our country on the path of modern development, its role and influence in the international arena, its active participation in global socio-political processes, and the current initiatives it is promoting. The ideas presented in this work are based on clear evidence, sound reasoning, and extensive analysis.

In recent years, high-level political dialogue and cooperation between the European Union and the countries of Central Asia have intensified significantly. Meetings at the level of leaders of the two regions were organized in

Kazakhstan in October 2022, as well as in Kyrgyzstan in June 2023, where the parties' discussed issues of expanding strategic cooperation in areas of mutual interest. In addition, several meetings were held at the level of foreign ministers during this period. On October 23, 2023, a "Joint Roadmap" was adopted to strengthen dialogue and further strengthen practical cooperation between the European Union and Central Asia. This document set out the directions of long-term strategic cooperation between the two regions. The 20th meeting of the European Union-Central Asian Foreign Ministers, held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on March 27, 2025, laid a solid foundation for the first Central Asia-European Union Summit, which was held in Samarkand.

The European Union's Central Asia Strategy was first adopted in 2007 and updated in 2019 to take into account modern geopolitical and economic conditions. This strategic document emphasizes the growing geostrategic importance of Central Asia and is aimed at deepening comprehensive and all-round cooperation with the countries of the region. The main goal of the strategy is to transform Central Asia into a politically stable, socio-economically prosperous region, resilient to external threats, and internally and regionally interconnected. The first Central Asia - European Union summit was held in Samarkand on April 3-4, 2025. This historically significant meeting was chaired by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. This high-level international event was attended by the President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, as well as the Presidents of the Central Asian countries - Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Sadyr Japarov of the Kyrgyz Republic, Emomali Rahmon of the Republic of Tajikistan, and Serdar Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan. The summit was also attended by the leadership of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank.

The need to continue practical cooperation within the framework of BOMCA (Border Management and Coordination for Central Asia) and CADAP (Central Asia Counter-Narcotics Program), as well as to conduct regular consultations on issues aimed at ensuring peace and sustainable development in Afghanistan, was also emphasized. Continuing dialogue in these areas was recognized as an important tool for strengthening regional security and stability. On April 4, 2025, at the first "European Union - Central Asia" summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, the leaders of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and the European Union reached important conclusions on issues of ensuring regional and global security and stability.

Education, Science and Innovation Issue 4, 2025 Opening the summit, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan noted with satisfaction that the relations between Central Asia and Europe, which have deep historical roots, are consistently developing and increasingly strengthening in the current period: "For centuries, this glorious city, located at the crossroads of the main routes of the Great Silk Road, has been a centre of dialogue between civilizations and an important centre of diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange between East and West."

There is a lot of historical evidence for this. For example, Amir Temur, the ruler of Transoxiana, established active dialogue with European rulers in order to ensure free and secure trade on this very land more than six centuries ago. We cannot fail to note that our great scholars and thinkers, Muhammad Khorezm, Ahmad Ferghani, Abu Rayhan Beruni, Ibn Sina, Mirza Ulugbek, and other great scholars and thinkers, made an incomparable contribution to the

development of world, including European, science and philosophy. Today, I would like to note with pleasure that our relations, which have deep historical roots, are rapidly developing in the current conditions [3].

The openness of our country's foreign policy and its focus on strengthening friendly relations with neighbouring countries have created favourable conditions for the formation of a healthy political environment in the region. This has become an important factor in bringing interstate relations and cooperation to a new level in a multilateral, consistent, and qualitatively new way.

The regular holding of consultative meetings of the heads of Central Asian states and their transformation into an effective platform for high-level regional dialogues have been an important event for the development of the entire region. In order to further deepen cooperation in the political sphere, the parties have established a forum of parliamentarians, meetings of the Secretaries of the Security Councils, cross-sectoral cooperation formats, international expert events, and other important initiatives.

The regular holding of consultative meetings and the establishment of active cooperation within the framework of the five-party platforms, as well as the concrete and effective results of such cooperation, clearly demonstrate the desire of the participating countries within the framework of the Central Asian "Five" to seriously and purposefully develop mutual relations. These efforts served to radically change the situation in Central Asia in a short period of time.

First of all, it was possible to resolve the complex and sensitive issues related to border issues. In particular, Uzbekistan has fully completed the legal formalization of the state border with Kazakhstan, and has successfully implemented delimitation processes with Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Dozens of border crossing points have resumed operations, significantly facilitating the free movement of citizens between countries.

Today, the border lines between Uzbekistan and the countries of Central Asia can rightfully be called a strong bridge of friendship and good neighbourliness. As a clear example of this, it is worth noting that from September 1, 2023, citizens will be able to freely cross the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border on the basis of an ID card or internal document. It is noteworthy that a similar favourable project has also been discussed with Kazakhstan.

At the Astana summit, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed mutual recognition of national ID cards in Central Asia and the development of mass tourism products based on the principle of "One tour for the whole region."

At the same time, we are seeing significant positive changes in the delineation of the Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan border. Today, an agreement has been reached on more than 90 percent of the total length of the border. In other words, all of this demonstrates that, despite various conflicts, sensitive and complex issues can be resolved if the parties adhere to the principles of mutual trust and readiness for acceptable agreements, taking into account each other's interests.

The "restarting processes" mechanism that took place in our region was beneficial and useful for everyone. Thanks to this merger, the region's economy is developing further. The level of cooperation and trade within the region has increased significantly, and relations with foreign partners have expanded [4].

A number of reforms are being carried out in our country to develop security and stability and bring social activism to a new level.

In particular, in the last five years, concepts and terms such as “Safe City”, “Safe Capital”, “Safe Neighborhood”, “Safe Street”, “Safe Apartment”, “Safe Yard”, “Safe Family” and “Safe Tourism” have been widely used in practice in our country. This indicates that the comprehensive and consistent reforms in our country are being carried out on the basis of a clearly targeted, rational approach and are aimed at ensuring the peace and tranquility of the population by improving a specific area. These reforms and approaches are being differentiated by region, sector, and industry. In this sense, the concepts of “Safe City”, “Safe Capital”, “Safe Neighborhood”, “Safe Street”, “Safe Apartment”, “Safe Courtyard” are aimed at ensuring peace and tranquility in a specific area, while “Safe Family” and “Safe Tourism” encompass a specific area or direction of society. Therefore, in this article, we will analyze the current status of the implementation of the “Safe Neighborhood” concept in the republic.

As we all know, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated February 7, 2017 “On the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan” adopted the Strategy of Actions on five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021. The main goal of the action strategy was to further enhance the effectiveness of the reforms implemented in our country, create conditions for the comprehensive and rapid development of the state and society, and implement priority areas for the modernization of our country and the liberalization of all spheres of life.

In particular, reforms are being carried out to protect the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of citizens, maintain public order, ensure the security of individuals, society, and the state, and prevent and combat crimes based on the current dangers and threats. The Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support was established by the Decree of our President No. PF-5938 dated February 18, 2020 “On measures to improve the socio-spiritual environment in society, further support the mahalla institution, and bring the system of work with families and women to a new level.” Indeed, establishing stability, peace, and tranquility in society, ensuring unconditional respect for human rights and freedoms, is an important condition for achieving the goals of the large-scale reforms being implemented to further develop the country's socio-economic situation, improve the well-being of the population, and build a democratic state based on the rule of law [5].

It should be noted that peace and tranquillity are an incomparable blessing for humanity. The peaceful life, prosperity, and fulfilment of all noble intentions and goals of humanity depend, above all, on this blessing. But just as there have always been relative forces such as good and evil, goodness and evil, there have also been disasters that have disrupted human life. One of them is terrorism, which knows no borders. In particular, today, more than 15,000 terrorist acts are committed in the world every year, causing an average of 20 billion USD in damage [6].

Today, the Strategy of Actions for the Five Priority Areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, approved by the Decree of President Sh.M. Mirziyoyev No. PF-4947 “On the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan” dated February 7, 2017, which serves as a programmatic framework in the socio-political and economic life of our country, also specifically mentions “strengthening

organizational and practical measures to combat religious extremism and terrorism, as well as other forms of organized crime” as a priority task [7].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, our country is undergoing large-scale and continuous reforms aimed at ensuring security, protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens, and strengthening peace and stability. In particular, measures are being implemented not only to ensure internal security, but also to strengthen socio-economic stability, improve the standard of living of the population, and ensure social justice in society. These reforms serve to further strengthen not only security, but also the overall development of the country. In general, based on the above factors, Uzbekistan is increasingly playing an important integration role among the Central Asian countries. As its international influence and diplomatic standing grow, it is becoming a key factor in stability and progress in regional cooperation. Now, when assessing relations between Central Asian countries, not only economic or political indicators are important, but also principles such as mutual trust, transparency, and good neighborliness are seen as key criteria. The European Union's strategic efforts to ensure transparency, achieve sustainable and continuous development in the Central Asian region, as well as strengthen the international political and legal entity of the region, are highly appreciated. In particular, the European Union's approach to shaping Central Asia as a politically and economically stable, dynamically developing, open and ready to cooperate with all stakeholders on an equal basis is fully consistent with the priority development directions of the countries of the region.

5. Future Suggestions

Firstly, promote more inclusive regional dialogues that involve civil society, youth, and academic institutions to strengthen regional understanding and cooperation.

Secondly, develop integrated infrastructure and digital connectivity projects to foster long-term economic sustainability and technological advancement across Central Asia.

Thirdly, expand strategic cooperation in environmental protection and water resource management, which are critical to the region's stability and development.

Fourthly, increase joint programs on education, innovation, and cultural exchange between Uzbekistan and European/Central Asian partners to strengthen mutual understanding and peace.

Fifthly, strengthen coordinated regional security mechanisms aimed at combating terrorism, extremism, and organized crime through joint training and intelligence-sharing frameworks.

Declarations

Source of Funding

This study did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The author declares no competing financial, professional, or personal interests.

Consent for publication

The author declares that he/she consented to the publication of this study.

Authors' contributions

Author's independent contribution.

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