



## **UZBEKISTAN'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS WITH FRANCE AND GERMANY**

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**Annotation:** This article analyzes the international relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan with France and Germany. It explores areas of cooperation in the fields of politics, economy, culture, education, and science. France and Germany are considered key strategic partners of Uzbekistan in Europe. The article presents information on major investment projects, cultural exchanges, educational programs, and technical assistance initiatives implemented in collaboration with these countries. It also discusses official state visits, bilateral agreements, and prospective directions for future cooperation.

**Keywords:** Uzbekistan, France, Germany, international relations, strategic partnership, investment, education, culture, science, diplomatic relations, European Union, GIZ, KfW, Veolia, Airbus, Sh. Mirziyoyev.

France is one of Uzbekistan's most important partners in Europe. Uzbek-French relations have a long history. During the state visit of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, to France on October 28–30, 1993, the signing of the Paris Charter by the Uzbek head of state laid the foundation for economic relations between the two countries.

An agreement was signed between the National Bank of Uzbekistan and the major French bank Crédit Commercial de France, which provided financial support for a project to build an oil refinery in Bukhara. Agreements were also reached with the well-known Elf Aquitaine petrochemical concern, the Technip company, and others to construct the refinery. As a result, the plant was officially launched on August 22, 1997. It began producing gasoline, kerosene, liquefied gas, diesel fuel, and other products. A total of USD 262 million was invested during the construction of the facility[1].

Parliamentary relations are also developing rapidly. Since 1996, delegations from the French Parliament have visited Uzbekistan on several occasions — in September 1997, October 2000, April 2001, September 2003, May 2004, October–November 2007, and September 2008. A delegation from the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan paid an official visit to France in 2010. Notably, an Oliy Majlis delegation also made an official visit to France in November 2007.

Working groups on inter-parliamentary cooperation such as “France and Central Asia” and “France–Uzbekistan” were established within the French National Assembly and the French Senate. On March 26, 2008, a parliamentary group for cooperation with the French Senate was formed under the Senate of Uzbekistan. In June 2010, a similar group was established under the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis[2].

In June 2008, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Ombudsman of Uzbekistan and the French Human Rights Defender (Défenseur des droits). In France, associations such as “The Art and History of the Timurid Era” and “Avicenna-France” are actively engaged in promoting academic and cultural understanding. In addition, twin-city relations have been established between Samarkand and Lyon, Khiva and Versailles, and Bukhara and Rueil-Malmaison, strengthening cultural and municipal-level cooperation.

The foundations for bilateral relations were laid during the state visit of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, to France from October 28 to 30, 1993. Subsequently, in April 1994, former French President François Mitterrand became the first among the leaders

of the G7 countries to pay a state visit to Uzbekistan. The second visit of President Islam Karimov to France in April 1996, as well as his meetings with President Jacques Chirac during the EU Summit in Florence in June 1996, and the NATO summit in Prague in 2002, significantly contributed to the enhancement of bilateral relations.

The April 21–24, 1996 visit by President Karimov marked a new stage in Uzbekistan–France relations. During his meeting with President Jacques Chirac, prospects for further development of economic, political, and cultural ties were discussed. As part of the visit, President Karimov attended the exhibition titled “Development of Science, Culture and Education during the Timurid Era” organized at the UNESCO headquarters. These meetings and the agreements, conventions, and financial protocols signed during them laid the groundwork for the expansion of economic, scientific, and cultural cooperation between the two countries[3].

In France, associations such as “The Art and History of the Timurid Era” and “Avicenna-France” are actively engaged in scholarly and cultural activities. Furthermore, twin-city partnerships have been established between Samarkand and Lyon, Khiva and Versailles, and Bukhara and Rueil-Malmaison, fostering municipal and cultural exchange.

The French Research Center is exploring opportunities for cooperation in various fields, particularly in animal husbandry, viticulture, rare metals, the development of new plant-based medicines, and petroleum and gas products. A cooperation agreement between Tashkent Technical University and the University of Paris laid the foundation for a Franco-Uzbek scientific center that studies agricultural satellite imagery.

In recent years, economic and cultural ties between Uzbekistan and France have continued to grow. At the invitation of President Emmanuel Macron, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, paid an official visit to France on October 8–9, 2018.

During the talks between Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Emmanuel Macron, both sides exchanged views on further development of Uzbekistan–France relations, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The heads of state emphasized the importance of developing new forms of regional and international cooperation and jointly combating threats and challenges. They also reaffirmed that stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan is a key condition for ensuring peace and stability in the region. The leaders stressed that the only viable solution to the Afghan issue is the establishment of direct political dialogue without any preconditions[4].

Кейинги йилларда сиёсий мулоқот фаоллашгани ва бундан буён мунтазамлик касб этиши лозимлиги таъкидланди.

Regular dialogue is being conducted at the level of governments and ministries. Political consultations are held between the foreign ministries of both countries, and inter-parliamentary relations are steadily developing.

In accordance with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union, the most-favored-nation (MFN) regime has been established in mutual trade. In addition, a Convention on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and other bilateral documents have been signed[5].

In particular, a cooperation program was signed with the French Development Agency (AFD) for the implementation of infrastructure projects worth approximately €600 million.

Agreements were reached on joint project implementation with several major French companies, including Airbus, Total, Vinci, Orano, Total Eren, Veolia, Fives Stein, Bouygues, Rungis, and others.

There is a growing interest in learning the French language in Uzbekistan. A Center for French Language and Culture has been established in Tashkent to support this interest[6].

Between 2019 and 2020, a total of 10 intergovernmental and interagency documents were adopted between Uzbekistan and France. These included a cooperation program between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, an agreement between the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Ecology and Environmental Protection and the French Ministry for the Ecological Transition on environmental protection and sustainable development, and a

memorandum of understanding between the Uzbek Ministry of Culture, the Foundation for the Development of Culture and Art under the Ministry of Culture, and the Louvre Museum. These documents were exchanged at the conclusion of negotiations.

Although Uzbekistan and Germany are located on different continents, both countries have deep-rooted civilizations. Uzbekistan is one of the cradles of ancient human civilization, while Germany has played a central role in the history of Western civilization. Official diplomatic relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Federal Republic of Germany were established in 1992, but ties between the two nations date back much earlier.

Political dialogue between the two countries has been maintained at the highest level. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, there have been five high-level state visits. These include official visits by Islam Karimov, the First President of Uzbekistan, in 1993, 1995, and 2001, as well as visits to Uzbekistan by President Roman Herzog of Germany in 1995 and Federal Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in 2002. The state visit of Islam Karimov to Germany on April 2–5, 2001, and the reciprocal visit by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder to Uzbekistan on May 9–10, 2002, elevated Uzbekistan–Germany relations to a new level of mutually beneficial cooperation.

During the visit to Germany, 14 documents were signed, covering cooperation in areas such as finance, tourism, scientific and technical development, and combating drug trafficking[7].

Several joint ventures are currently operating in areas such as light industry, cotton and cotton by-product processing, medical and pharmaceutical production, agricultural product processing, cargo and passenger transportation, auto services, scientific research, and trade.

In addition, 40 representative offices of German firms and companies have been officially registered under the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Among them are world-renowned corporations such as Daimler-Benz, Siemens, Alcatel, Thyssen, Lufthansa, BASF, and Salamander.

Joint ventures such as Layadtechnik-Tashkent, Chekom, Uzbekistan–Winkler, Grasso, TashVirt, Intermed Ecosan, Nambum, and others are engaged in the production of agricultural equipment, farm and road machinery, maintenance of telephone networks, installation of bakery workshops, delivery of medical supplies, and production of meat, fat products, and paper.

Uzbekistan–Germany cooperation extends beyond economics to encompass social and cultural spheres as well, including the partnership between the cities of Tashkent and Berlin. After Germany's capital was moved from Bonn to Berlin, the new building of the Embassy of Uzbekistan was officially opened in Berlin on April 3, 2001, with the participation of the First President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov.

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel sent a congratulatory message to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of the Republic of Uzbekistan. At the invitation of Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany from January 20 to 22, 2019

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