

Country Policy Communique

News from Central Asia and the Eastern Neighbourhood

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GCRF COMPASS: Comprehensive Capacity-Building in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia: research integration, impact governance & sustainable communities (ES/P010849/1)



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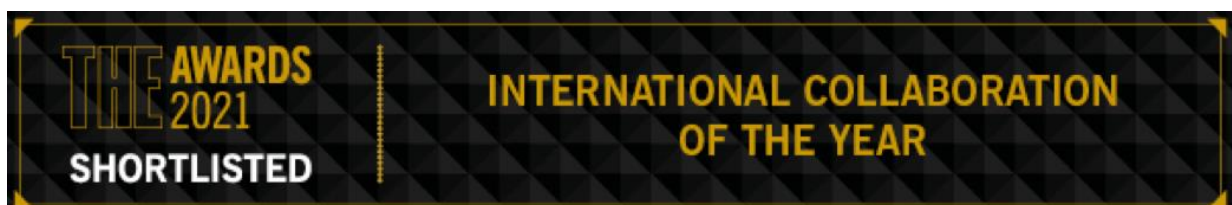
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Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's focus to future: Restoration of liberated lands

07.10.2021

Source: [Azernews](#)

With a peace deal now in place and restoration of territorial integrity, Azerbaijan has shifted its focus to the future. Rebuilding communities, restoring prosperity, and preserving the region's rich cultural heritage is the cornerstone of the country's current policy.

Nowadays, the process of restoration of Azerbaijani territories liberated from the Armenian occupation is proceeding at a rapid pace. The restoration of these territories means building the infrastructure of a modern state and its economy from scratch: demining the territory, the restoration of transport infrastructure, the construction of houses and industrial buildings, etc.

Speaking about the scale of destructions on Azerbaijani liberated territories, President Ilham Aliyev said in an interview with Igor Korotchenko, editor-in-chief of Russia's influential *Natsionalnaya Oborona* (National Defence) magazine, that "we will have to build, equip an area equal to the territory of a country that is not the smallest in the world – Lebanon".

The main source of funds for the reconstruction is the national budget. The Azerbaijani government has allocated \$1.3bn for the reconstruction of the liberated territories in 2021. In particular, these funds will be used to restore the infrastructure (electricity, gas, water, communications, roads, education, health, etc), as well as cultural and historical monuments.

Azerbaijan clears over 48,000 Armenian mines in Karabakh

22.10.2021

Source: [Daily Sabah](#)

Azerbaijan has destroyed more than 48,000 mines and unexploded ordnances laid by the Armenian army in the regions liberated from occupation.

The Azerbaijan Mine Action Agency (ANAMA) and the engineering unit of the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, with support from the Emergency Situations Ministry, Border Services Command and Special Mine Clearance teams of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), continue to clear the mines in the Karabakh region and surrounding provinces. Since November 10, 2020, a total of 18,302 hectares (45,225 acres) of land has been swept by demining experts. As many as 22,230 unexploded ordinances, 17,426 anti-personnel mines and 8,755 anti-tank mines had been detected and destroyed by Oct. 15, 2021.

Stating that demining efforts are continuous in the region, ANAMA Chairperson Vugar Suleymanov told Anadolu Agency (AA) that highways, railways and areas of facilities or settlements are a priority in mine clearance efforts. "We exchange experience with Turkish organizations and will expand cooperation with Turkey in the field of demining," said Suleymanov.

As many as 33 Azerbaijani citizens, including seven soldiers and 26 civilians, were killed and 139 injured due to the mines laid by Armenia during their occupation.

Unnamed sources claim Armenia and Azerbaijan close signing a new agreement

25.10.2021

Source: [Open Caucasus Media](#)

Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Russia are reportedly close to signing a new agreement on the demarcation and delimitation of borders and the opening of transport links. According to Russian and Armenian news outlets, the agreement is set to be announced on the anniversary of the Russia-brokered ceasefire.

Russian state-run RIA Novosti wrote on Saturday that the trilateral meeting will be held in the first ten days of November. According to an unnamed source 'familiar with the matter', at this meeting, Russia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan will sign a new agreement.

On October 22, Armenian news outlet Aliq Media, citing unnamed 'reliable diplomatic sources' reported that the three countries will sign two new documents in early November. The first will concern border delimitation and demarcation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, according to which 'Yerevan and Baku will recognise each other's borders and territorial integrity, based on the maps of the General Staff of the Soviet Defense Ministry of the 1920s'. The second will reportedly secure an opening of transport links between Armenia and Azerbaijan, specifically, allowing for a transport link between Azerbaijan's western regions and Nakhchivan through southern Armenia, as well as giving Armenia a connection to Iran and Russia through Azerbaijan.

The possibility of a transport connection between Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan's western regions has been a point of contention between Armenia and Azerbaijan in recent months, with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev demanding a 'corridor', which he also threatened to establish by military force. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has previously denied that such a transport connection would constitute a 'corridor'.

No official confirmation of any of these claims has yet been forthcoming from any of the three countries. However, speaking with RIA Novosti, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that if an agreement on a trilateral meeting is reached 'the Kremlin will report on it in due time'.

Earlier this autumn, both Pashinyan and Aliyev made comments stating that they were ready to meet.

On October 22, Armenia and Russia started joint military exercises in the province of Syunik, near the border with Azerbaijan. The exercises have the participation of 'almost all military units' of the Armenian armed forces as well as Russian forces from the 102nd military base in Gyumri. According to Tigran Parvanyan, the commander of joint Russian-Armenian forces, the exercises are part of an annual plan of military cooperation between Russia and Armenia.

Azerbaijan to allocate \$1.2bn to reconstruct liberated lands in 2022

27.10.2021

Source: [Azernews](#)

According to the 2022 draft state budget, AZN 2.2 billion are envisaged for financing reconstruction measures in the liberated territories.

Moreover, the country's state budget expenditures for defence and security in 2022 are expected to reach AZN 4.4 billion (\$2.6bn).

According to the official forecasts, state budget revenues in 2022 will amount to AZN 26.8 billion (\$15.7bn), with an increase by 5.4 percent compared to 2021. Meanwhile, state budget expenditures are planned to reach AZN 29.8 billion (\$17.5bn), which is an increase by 4.7 percent compared to this year.

It should be noted that the main source of funds for the reconstruction is the national budget. The Azerbaijani government has allocated \$1.3bn for the reconstruction of the liberated territories in 2021. In particular, these funds will be used to restore the infrastructure (electricity, gas, water, communications, roads, education, health, etc), as well as cultural and historical monuments.

Tensions with Azerbaijan reveal Iran's loss of influence in the Caucasus

28.10.2021

Source: [The Arab Weekly](#)

One year after the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh, another conflict in the Caucasus is brewing. This time tensions have risen between Iran and Azerbaijan, following Baku's arrest of Iranian truck drivers and its joint military drills with Turkey and Pakistan. While a full-scale confrontation between the two nations remains unlikely, the flare-up demonstrates the deep underlying tensions in the region. Iran lost influence as a result of last year's conflict, while its arch enemy Israel and rival power Turkey strengthened their positions. The complex ethnic make-up, abundance of energy resources and an intersection of expanding global trade routes means the scramble to hold sway in the Caucasus will continue.

On October 1, Iran conducted massive military exercises on its northern border with Azerbaijan. Thousands of troops, dozens of tanks, artillery guns and helicopters were deployed in the largest drills since the 1990s. Azerbaijan responded by flexing its military muscles together with its ally Turkey. The Caucasus nation has also deployed anti-aircraft systems near the capital Baku, which is not surprising given that Mohammad Bagheri, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps military commander and Iran's chief of staff, said that in case the conflict escalates, "IRGC will attack Azerbaijan with 4,000 missiles, which will completely destroy Baku." Moreover, the head of the forces of the IRGC in Tabriz, Col. Hossein Pursmail said that "the repetition of Israel's threats against Iran through the mouth of the Republic of Azerbaijan is not only not in the interests of Baku, but is also a threat to its very existence."

Israel played an important role during the war in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 by supplying Azerbaijan with sophisticated weapons, including so-called kamikaze drones. However, the Jewish state and the energy-rich former Soviet republic have been strategic partners for many years. Tehran now accuses Baku of also hosting Turkey-backed Syrian fighters on its territory, although some reports suggest they were already there during the 44-day war. But why did Iran remain silent for more than a year about these concerns?

After last year's war, the Islamic Republic lost much of its influence in the Caucasus, and Turkey significantly improved its positions. Even Pakistan managed to increase its standing in the region. In September, troops from Pakistan, Turkey, and Azerbaijan held military drills near Baku, despite protests from Tehran. More importantly, as a result of the 2020 conflict, Azerbaijan captured most of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding regions, which means that transport routes from Iran to Armenia now go through Azerbaijan, and not through the territory that was controlled by ethnic Armenians for more than two decades.

That, however, does not mean that the Islamic Republic is ready to launch an attack on its northern neighbour. After the presidents of Azerbaijan and Turkey, Ilham Aliyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan, signed the Shusha Declaration in June, the two countries became close military allies. According to the document, the parties pledged to jointly act in response to military threats. Iranian leaders are quite aware that Baku is not on its own. A war against Azerbaijan would also mean a war against Turkey, and it is almost certain that Pakistan and Israel would provide military assistance to the Caucasus nation. Thus, Tehran is unlikely to choose to get involved in such a risky adventure.

For Iran, however, the southern Armenian province of Syunik, which the Azerbaijanis call Zangezur, is a weak point. This strategically important region separates the main territory of Azerbaijan from its isolated exclave – the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. Given that Baku and Yerevan have gradually started to normalise their relations, it is a matter of time before the two nations build a land corridor that will connect Baku not only with Nakhchivan, but also with Turkey. The Nakhchivan corridor would become part of a global trade route from China to Europe through the Caspian Sea, and would bypass Iran.

Iran's options are, therefore, rather limited. Hypothetically, Tehran could take a chance and fight a war against Azerbaijan, but in that case millions of Azerbaijanis living in Iran could support a guerrilla war against the Islamic Republic. Azerbaijan's victory in the 44-day war against Armenia resulted in the growth of national pride among Iranian Azerbaijanis, which means that Tehran will have to think twice before engaging in confrontation against its northern neighbour.

There have been signs of de-escalation with the arrested Iranian truck drivers now free and the countries' foreign ministers pledging to resolve differences through dialogue.

Belarus

Criminal Code to be amended: calls to apply restrictive measures to be penalised

04.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency, National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus](#)

A new version of Article 361 of the Criminal Code has been introduced to toughen criminal responsibility for the actions aimed at causing damage to the national security of Belarus. The new article also specifies such criminogenic characteristics of this crime as calls to apply restrictive measures (sanctions) against Belarus, natural and legal persons of the country. The draft law proposes to punish the specified actions under part 1 of Article 361 of the Criminal Code with restriction of liberty for up to five years or imprisonment for up to six years, under part 2 - imprisonment from three to ten years, under part 3 - imprisonment from four to twelve years.

The draft law “On the Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus” was submitted to the House of Representatives by MP Oleg Belokonev on the instruction of the Belarusian president on September 27, 2021 and passed its first reading in the House of Representatives on October 4, 2021.

Belarus to open consulate general in Hong Kong

08.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarus will open its Consulate General in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China. The decision is envisaged in Council of Ministers’ Resolution No.565 of October 6, 2021. The Consulate General of Belarus will be opened before 31 December 2021.

New requirements on hiring employees for state bodies and organizations

12.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

On October 12, Aleksander Lukashenko signed Ordinance No. 6 concerning strengthening requirements for managers and employees of organizations. BelTA informs that the document was adopted in order to increase the personnel potential of state bodies and organizations, as well as to implement the amendments to the Labor Code.

The ordinance establishes the obligation of the heads of state bodies and organizations, when hiring citizens, to request their characteristics from previous jobs, as well as information from the unified state data bank on offenses in relation to candidates for leadership positions.

In addition, the ordinance defines clear requirements to characteristics. It will have to reflect the professional, business and moral qualities of the employee, information on the

observance of labor and performance discipline, attitude towards state and public institutions.

Violation of the procedure for hiring established by the ordinance, issuance of characteristics containing deliberately inaccurate information, as well as violation of the terms of their issuance entail bringing to responsibility established by law.

Belarus' consulate general in New York to close down on 21 October

12.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarus' consulate general in New York will stop working on 21 October 2021 at the request of the U.S. side, BelTA informs citing the website of the diplomatic mission. "After the closure of the consulate general, citizens of Belarus residing in the consular district of the consulate general (including Canada) will have to apply for consular services to the Belarusian embassy in the USA," the statement reads.

Eurasian Economic Union discusses amendments to e-commerce rules

13.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) plans to introduce amendments to rules regulating electronic commerce, so that VAT is to be paid in the country where products are consumed. This matter was discussed at a meeting of Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister Igor Petrishenko with member of the Board (Minister) for Economy and Financial Policy of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Ruslan Beketayev on October 13 in Minsk.

"At the EEC Council meeting on 5 October we discussed indirect taxes in cross-border electronic trade in goods. This topic is highly relevant. We have settled the issue related to charging VAT on services, but we also have to complete the rules regulating electronic trade in goods in our integration association in order to prevent any gray schemes" Igor Petrishenko said.

WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge visiting Minsk

14.10.2021

Source: Belarusian Telegraph Agency ([Report 1](#), [Report 2](#), [Report 3](#), [Report 4](#), [Report 5](#))

A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) in Minsk on October 13. The document was signed by WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge and Board Member (Minister) on Technical Regulation of the Eurasian Economic Commission Viktor Nazarenko.

On October 14 Hans Kluge met with Aleksandr Lukashenko. During the meeting Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed opinion that COVID-19 vaccines should become available to the

entire humankind. Hans Kluge said the WHO is interested in advancing relations with Belarus to a brand-new level. Following the meeting, WHO/Europe Director expressed hope that Belarus will join COVAX – the initiative working for global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Same day Belarus Healthcare Minister Dmitry Pinevich and WHO/Europe Director Hans Kluge signed the cooperation plan for 2022-2023 between the Healthcare Ministry of Belarus and the WHO/Europe. During the meeting at the Healthcare Ministry, which preceded the signing of the document, counterparts discussed development of healthcare system in Belarus, treatment of tuberculosis, orphan and other diseases, as well as cooperation with patient organizations, additional payments to medical workers for working in COVID-19 conditions.

Belarus suspended the readmission agreement with the EU

14.10.2021

Source: [National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus](#)

The bill “On the suspension of the agreement between the European Union and the Republic of Belarus on the readmission of persons residing without authorization” has been published. The bill was adopted by the House of Representatives and approved by the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly on October 4, 2021. Belarus President signed the document on October 12, 2021. The bill suspends the readmission agreement with the EU.

WHO Supreme Eurasian Economic Council meeting

14.10.2021

Source: Belarusian Telegraph Agency ([Report 1](#), [Report 2](#))

Supreme Eurasian Economic Council was held online as a video conference on October 14 and, apart from the leaders of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) countries, was attended by the presidents the EAEU observer countries Cuba and Uzbekistan.

The agenda included ten issues (common gas and oil products market, transport of gas from third countries for domestic consumption, global climate agenda of the EAEU, common digital space and other issues). Belarus President Aleksandr stressed that the EAEU needs to speed up the development of its integrated information system that is under development for about 10 years already with only slightly more than 20 out of nearly 90 common processes working as they should.

Meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council

15.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

The session was held as a video conference under Belarus’ chairmanship on 15 October in the run-up to the 30th anniversary of the CIS (established on December 8, 1991). Leaders of

the CIS countries discussed major achievements of multilateral cooperation within the CIS, perspectives of the Commonwealth development as well as current developments on international arena.

The agenda of the summit also included cooperation on the issues of biological security, migration, protection of the voting power and guarantees of electoral sovereignty of the CIS member states, new regulations on counteracting money laundering, formation of the CIS Council of Heads of Supreme (Superior) Courts.

Lukashenko demands greater efficiency from foreign intelligence service

18.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

The KGB should raise the efficiency of the foreign intelligence service, Aleksandr Lukashenko said as he made new appointments in the state security system. “Increasing the efficiency of the foreign intelligence service will boost the capacity of the KGB. The service needs to be transformed into a unit capable of addressing strategic tasks; it is necessary to enhance its offensive nature, to build up the capacity of secret intelligence and other methods and forms that you know about,” the head of state said. According to him, identifying and suppressing attempts of foreign special services to get access to classified information of government bodies and enterprises remain a priority task. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that it is vital to keep up with opponents and expand the use of modern technologies in operational activities, increase the efficiency of the KGB technical unit, radio-electronic intelligence, and boost scientific potential

New justice minister appointed in Belarus

18.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Aleksandr Lukashenko appointed Sergei Khomenko Belarus’ justice minister. Previously Sergei Khomenko worked as Belarus’ deputy minister of internal affairs.

According to the head of state, there are many good lawyers in the Justice Ministry, and they have been working in the field for a long time. “There are good, highly qualified lawyers in Belarus. We need very strong organizers and administrators because they will have to handle many organizational issues,” the president said. “There will be many events in the Justice Ministry, first of all, organizational ones. I will not conceal that we need loyal, well-organized and proactive people there. We do not have time to count to 20, to ten or even to three there. We need to make decisions and implement them. People will see it in the near future”.

Constitution of Belarus amended to introduce single voting day

25.10.2021

Source: [National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus](#), [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

The law amending Constitution of Belarus came into force on October 25, 2021.

The second reading in the House of representatives and hearing in the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus were held on October 4, 2021. The law was signed by Aleksandr Lukashenko on October 12 and published on October 14.

As Sergei Sivets, Chairman of the Legislation and State Building Commission of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, said, “the initiative to introduce amendments was expressed as the parliament’s inquiry sent to the head of state to outline the need to amend the existing Constitution by introducing the single voting day. This initiative had been prompted by dialogue platforms and by queries sent by citizens”.

On May 27, 2021 the Belarus president forwarded the bill on amending the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus to the lower chamber of the Belarusian parliament. In his words, the introduction of the single voting day is convenient for voters and for the state from the financial point of view. “Because any election campaign costs money,” the senator noted. “The president backed the initiative of the parliament. The initiative was formalized during the spring session. A bill on amending the Constitution was adopted on 25 June. The bill introduces the single voting day and respectively extends the term of office of municipal councils of deputies until the next elections to the parliament. That is till late 2023.”

Belarus sets up national personal data protection centre

30.10.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#), [National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus](#)

National Personal Data Protection Center is established in Belarus. The decision is stipulated by Decree No. 422 “On Measures to Improve Personal Data Protection”, which Aleksandr Lukashenko signed on October 28, 2021.

The document is issued to follow up on law No. 99-3 of 7 May 2021 “On Personal Data Protection” (comes into force November 15, 2021).

The decree invests the national center with the status of an authorized body to protect the rights of the subjects of personal data. The document defines its main rights, tasks, functions and powers. In particular, the center is empowered to verify compliance with personal data legislation, to make written demands (prescriptions) to eliminate identified violations, to demand termination of personal data processing if other ways cannot ensure protection of the rights of personal data subjects. In addition, the decree establishes additional measures related to personal data protection. These include, for example, the need to undergo special training for individuals whose duties include personal data protection and the obligation to keep records of personal data to be processed by state agencies and other organizations.

Tajikistan

Meeting with World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia

01.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon received the World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Anna Bjerde.

President Rahmon noted that over the past 28 years of partnership the WB has financed the implementation of more than 110 projects of vital importance in Tajikistan totaling \$2.2 billion in the form of grants, soft loans and trust funds.

Anna Bierde mentioned Tajikistan's significant opportunities in the production and export of clean and renewable energy, and reaffirmed the support of the World Bank to Tajikistan's contribution to the global agenda related to climate change. The World Bank is currently financing 23 projects totaling \$ 1.2 billion. Bierde stressed that the World Bank remains committed to supporting Tajikistan, as its leadership and the government strive to improve the lives of the people and meet the needs of young and growing population.

Parties also exchanged their views on the direct impact of the political situation in Afghanistan on the economic and trade security of the region.

Telephone conversation between the President of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan

02.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

At the initiative of the Pakistani side, a telephone conversation was held between the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan. During the talks, during the dialogue, which began in Dushanbe, they discussed a range of topical issues related to regional security. In this context, a special emphasis was made on the situation in Afghanistan.

In this regard, Emomali Rahmon noted that the establishment of a wide-ranging dialogue between the countries is an important factor in the establishment of peace and stability in the country. The readiness of Tajikistan to constructive cooperation with all interested parties in the context of this process in the framework of the existing opportunities was expressed once more time.

Meeting of the Tajikistan MFA Minister with the UN Secretary-General

02.10.2021

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On October 1, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin within the framework of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly met

with Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the UN in New York. The sides discussed a wide range of aspects of cooperation between Tajikistan and the United Nations in various fields, including political, socio-economic, humanitarian, security and environmental.

The joint struggle against terrorism and extremism, as well as the effective response to the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and its impact on water resources, were the main topics of discussion. The interlocutors paid special attention to the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to the population of Afghanistan and the strengthening of international cooperation to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in this country.

President of Tajikistan meets with top EU officials – Charles Michel and Josep Borrell

11.10.2021

Source: Official Site of the President of Tajikistan ([Report 1](#), [Report 2](#))

On October 11, within the framework of his working visit to Brussels President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with President of the European Council Charles Michel. Variety of topics were discussed, including in industry, mining, infrastructure, hydropower, energy, water resources, climate change and mitigation, agriculture and tourism, as well as the development of the EU-Tajikistan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that will be to the benefit of both parties. The targeted implementation of the new EU Strategy for Central Asia and the role of the Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 were considered important. While discussing boosting ties in education, the parties also touched upon bilateral collaboration in the field of security, with an emphasis on the situation linked with the developments in Afghanistan. President Rahmon invited Charles Michel to pay an official visit to Tajikistan.

On the same day President Rahmon met with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission Josep Borrell. President Rahmon stressed that the European Union is an important partner in the international arena. A number of forward-looking topics on the bilateral cooperation agenda were also discussed, including issues pertaining to economy, trade, as well as the implementation of beneficial projects in various humanitarian and cultural fields, in particular education, health, and local development. The sides stressed that the comprehensive development of economic cooperation is one of the most important aspects of relations between Tajikistan and the European Union. Another item on the agenda was the concerned efforts against the coronavirus infection, efficient use of water resources, climate change, mitigation thereof, and protection of glaciers. Borrell praised the important role of Tajikistan in addressing water issues and mitigating the effects of climate change. He also noted that the EU is interested in strengthening regional ties, and these issues will be the focus of talks at the upcoming G5 + 1 meeting of Foreign Ministers in Dushanbe. While exchanging opinions on security issues, the sides focused on strengthening security and stability in the entire Central Asian region and especially Afghanistan. The strengthening of the protection of Tajikistan's border with Afghanistan through the implementation of BOMCA and CADAP programs were also touched upon.

Meeting with EU Special Representative for Central Asia Terhi Hakala

12.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with the EU Special Representative for Central Asia Terhi Hakala in Brussels.

The discussions focused on the development of bilateral relations with an emphasis on politics, economy, and culture. President Rahmon expressed satisfaction with the fruitful cooperation in key areas of international and regional politics, regular high-level political dialogue, and cooperation in the field of security.

The interlocutors noted that the contacts within the framework of the High-Level Dialogue on Policy and Security, as well as the upcoming meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Central Asia and the European Union in Dushanbe, can give a new impetus to strengthening cooperation. Reviewing the expansion of bilateral ties between Tajikistan and the EU, President Rahmon noted that Tajikistan is ready for close cooperation with EU in the field of trade and industrial production, digital economy and innovation, as well as ensuring food and energy security. Considering the common roots and historical ties of Central Asian nations, priority must be placed on further developing cooperation within the region.

Meeting with President of Chamber of Representatives of Belgian Federal Parliament Eliane Tillieux

11.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with the President of the Chamber of Representatives of the Belgian Federal Parliament Eliane Tillieux.

The inter-parliamentary ties and exchange of experiences between the legislative bodies of Tajikistan and Belgium were reviewed in depth. President Rahmon expressed his satisfaction with the good level of political and inter-parliamentary ties, and noted the necessity of further expanding the activities of the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group. The discussion also focused on strengthening cooperation in the field of economy, trade, investment, culture, and tourism. Likewise, they noted their interest in continuing to expand cooperation in energy, industry, science, culture, education, and health care. The discussion also touched upon combating modern security threats.

President Rahmon invited the President of the Chamber of Representatives of the Belgian Federal Parliament Eliane Tillieux to visit Tajikistan.

Meeting with King Philippe of Belgium

12.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with King Philippe of Belgium in Brussels.

The discussion focused on prospects for expanding Tajik-Belgian relations and its multilateral ties within the European Union.

The officials discussed strengthening cooperation in the promising spheres of the bilateral agenda, including in energy, industry, and technology that drive economic growth.

During the discussion of security issues, the sides exchanged views on security issues in Central Asia, especially the establishment of peace and stability in Afghanistan and the creation of favorable conditions for its development. It was especially emphasized that the security of the Central Asian countries is directly linked to the security of the world and stability in Afghanistan. It was noted that Tajikistan supports the rapid restoration of peace and stability in this neighboring country, and the Organization of the United Nations should play a key role in promoting this process.

Supporting each other's efforts in addressing global issues, Tajikistan has nominated Belgium for the position of non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2019-2020 and the Kingdom of Belgium, in turn, supported international initiatives of Tajikistan related to water issues and climate change.

President Rahmon invited the King of Belgium His Majesty Philippe to pay an official visit to Tajikistan.

Meeting with Secretary General of the World Customs Organization Kunio Mikuriya

12.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with the Secretary General of the World Customs Organization Kunio Mikuriya in Brussels, Belgium.

The discussion focused on current state and prospects of Tajikistan's partnership with the World Customs Organization. The sides discussed improving the customs administration, automating its information system with modern technology, modernization of customs infrastructure, and development of human resources in the field of customs. At the same time, they noted the necessity of intensifying cooperation with the World Customs Organization to increase the professional capacity of Tajik customs officials.

Tajikistan-France summit talks

13.10.2021

Source: Official Site of the President of Tajikistan ([Report 1](#), [Report 2](#))

On October 13, the Elysee Palace has hosted talks between President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and President of France Emmanuel Macron.

Following the official welcoming ceremony, the counterparts had a tête-à-tête discussion. Later the talks continued in an expanded format.

President Rahmon expressed his satisfaction with the political relations between Tajikistan and France, which are constantly expanding in the spirit of respect and consideration of national interests of both countries. Topics on the agenda included the development of bilateral cooperation in trade, economy, investment, as well as major international and regional issues. In addition, the interlocutors discussed priority areas of their multi-dimensional cooperation in various areas, such as energy, metallurgy, light and chemical industries, mechanical engineering and mining. They also touched upon cooperation in logistics transport, telecommunications, electronics, agriculture, and tourism infrastructure development. Both leaders also reviewed bilateral relations and efforts to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a negative impact on the development of cooperation.

President Rahmon stressed that Tajikistan is interested in the implementation of infrastructure and industrial projects, as well as the attraction of modern technology, and the establishment of joint ventures. He also noted his appreciation for the active participation of the French side in different development projects. President Rahmon also noted Tajikistan's interest in the participation of the French side in the implementation of reforms toward improving financial system efficiency and the banking system of Tajikistan.

The parties noted that the opening of a representative office of the French Development Agency in Tajikistan can promote broad cooperation and facilitate the process of effective implementation of development goals. The officials noted the importance of the development of the Roadmap for the expansion of cooperation between the two countries for the period up to 2026.

Another item on the agenda was expanding interaction in the humanitarian field, as well as culture, science, and education.

President Rahmon invited President Macron to pay an official visit to Tajikistan.

President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon has started his official visit to French Republic on October 12. During the visit he was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Assistant to the President for Foreign Policy Issues, Director of the Agency for State Material Resources, and other officials.

Meeting with President of the Senate of France Gerard Larcher

13.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

Within the framework of his official visit to France, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with Gerard Larcher, President of the Senate of France.

The discussion focussed on Tajik-French cooperation, including on the parliamentary level. The sides expressed satisfaction with the current level of cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to further develop friendly relations and win-win cooperation between the two nations.

Given the special place of inter-parliamentary ties, they proposed the intensification of the work of the France-Central Asia Friendship Group and contacts between the legislators to contribute to further building trust, and strengthening and expanding bilateral ties.

A detailed exchange of opinions also focused on the situation in Afghanistan.

Emomali Rahmon invited the President of the French Senate Gerard Larcher to visit Tajikistan.

Meeting with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay

14.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

Within the framework of his official visit to France, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon met with UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay.

Expressing his satisfaction with the joint efforts of Tajikistan and UNESCO over the years of cooperation, President Rahmon noted that the ancient city of Sarazm, the national music Shashmaqom, the international holiday Navruz, the national dish Oshi palov, and the Chakan art of embroidery are outstanding examples of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Tajik people, recognized by the UNESCO and included in the World Heritage List. Currently Hulbuk, the capital of ancient Khatlon, is included in UNESCO's tentative list.

The interlocutors noted the importance of the implementation of the UNESCO and the European Union joint project "Silk Road Heritage Corridors in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iran – International Dimension of the European Year of Cultural Heritage."

Recalling Tajikistan's global initiatives in addressing water issues, they stressed that the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (UNESCO/IHP) is one of the important partners of Tajikistan in promoting water and climate issues.

The officials also exchanged views on the current aspect of the bilateral agenda in a follow-up to the Day of Culture of Tajikistan in UNESCO and the opening of the Tajik Art Exhibition entitled "Tajikistan - the Land of Golden Rivers" with the participation of the Presidents of Tajikistan and France.

President Rahmon invited the Director-General of UNESCO Audrey Azoulay to pay a visit to Tajikistan.

Participation of President Rahmon in the meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council

15.10.2021

Source: [Official Site of the President of Tajikistan](#)

President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon took part in the meeting of the CIS Heads of State Council via videoconference.

The event was chaired by the President of Belarus, and focused on the current state of and prospects for developing cooperation within the CIS. The officials exchanged opinions on important international and regional matters, in particular within the CIS space.

Offering his congratulation commemorating the 30th anniversary of the CIS President Rahmon wished success to the heads of participating states for constructive co-operation for the benefit of the further prosperity of the member nations. A proposal was made to pay closer attention to strengthening the coordination of joint efforts to counter the coronavirus pandemic and its negative impact to national economies and other global challenges. The importance of further boosting cooperation in trade, manufacturing, transport, energy, finance, investment, agriculture, and innovation were likewise noted.

During the discussion of security issues, President Rahmon noted the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Center, which is an appropriate mechanism for collaboration within the CIS. He expressed confidence that Tajikistan's prior suggestion to develop a single list of terrorist and extremist organizations banned in the territory of the CIS member nations will be implemented jointly. At the same time, special emphasis was placed on ensuring the protection of CIS' information space.

When discussing climate change, the Tajik side proposed to declare 2025 the Year of Glacier Protection and to establish a special International Fund for Protection of Glaciers.

Meeting of the foreign ministers of Afghanistan's neighbouring countries in 6+1 format

28.10.2021

Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On October 27, the second meeting of the foreign ministers of the neighboring countries of Afghanistan was held in the 6 + 1 format with the participation of Russia in the city of Tehran, where the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Mukhriddin took part and gave a speech.

According to the minister, the current situation in the neighboring country is a problem not only for the Afghan people, but also one of the most acute regional problems. It was noted that Tajikistan strongly condemns all forms of lawlessness, murder, robbery and persecution of the Afghan people.

The concern was expressed about the situation in the Panjshir province, as well as the lack of democratic foundations, the violation of human rights, in particular the rights of women. The Foreign Minister once again called on the international community to take urgent measures to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan and stabilize the difficult political situation through negotiations. Following the meeting, a joint statement was adopted.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan delegation meets with the U.S. Congress members

01.10.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

The parliamentary delegation of Uzbekistan led by the First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis Sodik Safoyev met with American congressmen in the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress, Uzbekistan MFA reports.

During the talks, U.S. lawmakers were informed about the current transformations in Uzbekistan, the course of economic liberalization, the country's new foreign policy, including the policy of good neighborliness in the Central Asian region, as well as the Uzbek side's vision of the state and prospects of cooperation with the United States.

Congressmen were also provided with detailed information about the preparations for the upcoming Presidential Elections. Efforts to organize and conduct voting under generally recognized democratic standards to ensure transparency, fairness and equality in the electoral process were noted.

Meeting with the EU Special Representative for Central Asia

03.10.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

On October 3, 2021, Special Representative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan Ismatulla Irgashev met with the Special Representative of the European Union for Central Asia, Terhi Hakala, Uzbekistan MFA reports.

The parties discussed the current state and prospects of relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union in the Afghan direction.

The Ambassador stressed the significant role of Uzbekistan in establishing long-term and sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

The European side was informed about Uzbekistan's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and economic assistance to Afghanistan.

Presidents of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan discuss issues of strengthening strategic partnership

05.10.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

The official welcoming ceremony of the President of Turkmenistan was held at Kuksaroy Residence.

“Each of our meetings is a historic and significant event. All the agreements reached have been implemented and serve our peoples. Today we will have a good opportunity to discuss in

detail the current issues of our partnership and identify new growth points for the long term. Your visit will enhance cooperation on regional and international platforms”, Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

The President of Turkmenistan, thanking for the hospitality, stressed the high level of relations between the two countries. “Uzbekistan is our close neighbor and strategic partner. Our cooperation has been developing dynamically in recent years. It is reflected in politics, trade-economic and cultural-humanitarian spheres. We support each other on regional and international issues. Since our goals are the same”, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov noted.

At the meeting, the Heads of state highly appreciated the current level of bilateral relations based on the principles of centuries-old friendship, good neighborliness, strategic partnership, mutual trust and support. The leaders discussed the full range of Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan’s multifaceted cooperation, paying special attention to strengthening constructive political dialogue, enhancing trade-economic and investment partnership, deepening cultural-humanitarian ties.

Over the past four years, mutual trade has tripled and exceeded \$400 million. Since the beginning of the year, the trade turnover has increased by another 25%.

A high assessment was given to cooperation in the water sector. The parties welcomed the successful holding of the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Water Management Issues on September 13 in the city of Tashkent.

Views on the regional and international agenda were also exchanged. The importance of holding regular Consultative meetings of the Heads of Central Asian states and the implementation of the agreements reached during the last meeting in Avaza on August 6 this year was emphasized.

The negotiations in Tashkent have become another confirmation of mutual understanding and unity of two countries and peoples.

Uzbekistan delegation visits Afghanistan

07.10.2021

Source: [UzA - Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

On October 7, Uzbekistan delegation led by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov held talks with representatives of the interim government of Afghanistan, led by the Deputy Head of the Interim Government of Afghanistan for Political Issues, Mullah Abdul Kabir, Uzbekistan MFA reports.

Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs A. Hanafi, Ministers of Transport and Civil Aviation, Energy and Water Resources of Afghanistan also took part in the negotiations.

Members of the interim government of Afghanistan expressed their sincere gratitude to the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev for the attention rendered to the people of Afghanistan and invaluable humanitarian assistance. The policy of the President of Uzbekistan to build a constructive and mutually acceptable dialogue with the new

government of Afghanistan and the initiative to unfreeze Afghanistan's assets abroad were highly appreciated. Gratitude was also expressed for assistance in restoring the activities of the Mazar-i-Sharif International Airport, the uninterrupted functioning of Uzbekistan – Afghanistan border, through which food and other essential goods are constantly delivered to the country.

The parties agreed to hold negotiations in Termez soon to discuss trade and economic issues, including the implementation of projects for the construction of the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri power transmission line and the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway.

The readiness of the Afghan side was expressed to ensure the safety of Uzbekistan specialists involved in the implementation of these projects.

Official Kabul also firmly stated that there would never be any security threat to Uzbekistan from the territory of Afghanistan.

Talks were also held with the Acting Foreign Minister Mawlavi Amir Khan Muttaqi. The parties discussed the situation in the country, the implementation of large infrastructure projects in energy and transport on the territory of the country.

Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan and the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee of the US Congress discussed the development of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as the humanitarian situation in this country

11.10.2021

Source: [Dunyo Information Agency](#)

On 11 October 2021, Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, Ismatulla Irgashev, met with a delegation of the House of Representatives of the US Congress led by the Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Gregory Meeks.

According to Uzbekistan MFA, the current state and prospects for further development of cooperation in priority areas of the bilateral agenda were discussed at the meeting.

Special attention was paid to the situation in Afghanistan, in particular the humanitarian situation, as well as joint measures for the economic recovery of this country. As it was noted, Uzbekistan is interested in establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan, involving the country in regional economic processes, including through the implementation of major infrastructure projects. The congressmen stressed the active participation of Uzbekistan in organizing the evacuation of foreign citizens from Afghanistan, the implementation of humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people.

President of Uzbekistan to address the EAEU and CIS summits

14.10.2021

Source: [The Government portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

On October 14-15, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev took part in the EAEU and CIS summits via videoconference.

On October 14, the Head of the state in the status of an observer addressed an extraordinary meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council, to be chaired by the Kazakh side. It should be noted that in December last year, Uzbekistan was granted the status of an observer state in the Organization. In April this year, a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Eurasian Economic Commission and a Plan of Joint Measures for 2021-2023 were adopted. The leader of Uzbekistan in his speech outlined promising areas of practical interaction with the EAEU.

On October 15, the jubilee meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States will take place. The results of multilateral cooperation over the 30 years of the Organization's activities, as well as joint plans to further enhance partnership in trade, investment, industrial cooperation, transport, migration, cultural and humanitarian exchange, will be considered at the event chaired by the Belarusian side.

Oliy Majlis and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly strengthen cooperation

15.10.2021

Source: [Dunyo Information Agency](#)

Uzbekistan delegation led by the Chairperson of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, Tanzila Narbayeva met with the OSCE PA Vice-President Pia Kauma.

The parties exchanged views on the state and prospects of interaction, expanding contacts within the OSCE PA, as well as deepening partnership with the Parliamentary Assembly in the field of legislative process excellence and studying international best practices in parliamentary control.

Pia Kauma highly appreciated and supported the ongoing democratic transformations and socio-economic reforms in Uzbekistan, as well as the dynamically developing relations between the Oliy Majlis and the OSCE PA. She also praised the outcome of the "Mehr" humanitarian operations to return women and children from the war zone in the Middle East.

Termez hosted negotiations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan representatives

16.10.2021

Source: [Dunyo Information Agency](#)

On October 16, Termez hosted a working meeting of the delegations of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov, the Afghan side was represented by Acting Deputy Head of the Interim Government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Abdul Salam Hanafi.

Representatives of various ministries and agencies discussed issues of trade-economic cooperation, border security, cooperation in energy, international cargo transportation and

transit. Views were also exchanged on the development of ties in education and humanitarian fields.

The main attention was paid to the implementation of infrastructure projects, in particular the laying of the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri power line and the construction of the Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway.

Following the meetings, several bilateral agreements were reached on the discussed issues.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev elected President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

25.10.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

On October 24, an important political process took place in Uzbekistan – the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The preliminary results of the Presidential elections were announced at a briefing of the Central Election Commission on October 25. 16,212,343 voters out of 20,158,907 voters included in the lists, took part in the elections of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including Uzbek citizens who voted abroad. This is 80.4% of the total number of voters.

According to the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a candidate who receives more than half of the votes, that is, more than 50 percent of the votes, is considered the President-elect. Out of 5 candidates, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a candidate from the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businesspeople – the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, won a convincing victory with 80.1% of the vote and is re-elected President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

President of Uzbekistan receives the Head of the CIS Observer Mission

25.10.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received the Chairman of the Executive Committee – Executive Secretary of the CIS Sergey Lebedev, who was in Uzbekistan as the Head of the CIS Observer Mission.

The Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee sincerely congratulated the President of Uzbekistan on a convincing victory in the Presidential elections, wishing him great success in future activities in ensuring the well-being and prosperity of the country.

The noticeable progress in the development of the electoral legislation and electoral procedures in Uzbekistan was emphasized.

Issues of enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation within the CIS were also considered.

The main attention was paid to the implementation of the agreements on the results of the anniversary summit of the Organization, held this month via videoconference.

President of Uzbekistan meets with the Russian delegation

25.10.2021

Source: [The Government portal of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#)

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received the Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation Leonid Kalashnikov, who headed the Russian delegation of observers in the Presidential elections in Uzbekistan.

Leonid Kalashnikov warmly congratulated the Leader of Uzbekistan on a convincing victory in the Presidential elections and a successful election campaign.

The work carried out on the preparation and organization of election procedures in accordance with international best practices and standards was highly appreciated.

Views were exchanged on the current issues of further development of the strategic partnership and alliance, expansion of multifaceted interaction.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan meets with the President of Iran, in Tehran

26.10.2021

Source: [Dunyo Information Agency](#)

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov has met with the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi, in Tehran.

A wide range of different areas of cooperation, in particular, in security, trade-economic cooperation was discussed. The main attention was paid to the current situation in Afghanistan and the prospects for its development. The parties agreed on the importance of providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people as soon as possible to prevent a deep food crisis in the country.

Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan's Neighboring Countries

27.10.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov attended the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan's Neighboring Countries, in Tehran.

In his speech, Uzbekistan's FM noted that a completely new reality has developed in Afghanistan today. A Provisional Government has been created, which has full power and seeks to gain international recognition. It was stated that in the foreseeable future Afghanistan will remain an important factor of regional security, directly affecting the national interests of regional countries, primarily neighboring states.

It was emphasized that at the present stage it is necessary to develop a post-conflict strategy for Afghanistan to prevent the international isolation of this country.