

# Country Policy Communique

## News from Central Asia and the Eastern Neighbourhood

November 2021

**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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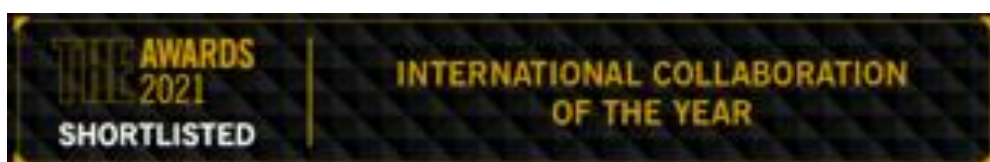
***COMPASS Country Policy Communique (COMPASS CPC) is a platform where the project provides regular updates about policy developments in the region. The content of this policy communique is taken from respective government news and other official channels and reports.***

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The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) COMPASS project was shortlisted for the International Collaboration of the Year at the Times Higher Education (THE) Awards 2021, widely known as 'the Oscars of Higher Education'. On 25 November 2021, at the awards ceremony, the GCRF COMPASS project was **Highly Commended** under the category of international collaboration, selected out of five hundred submitted and five shortlisted projects.

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# Azerbaijan

## Azerbaijan-Iran tension highlights Karabakh's energy supplies

05.11.2021

Source: [Eurasianet](#)

In mid-September, Azerbaijani border guards detained two Iranian truck drivers on the road connecting the southern Armenian cities of Goris and Kapan. The arrests spiralled into a deep crisis between Baku and Tehran, including demonstrative military exercises and unprecedentedly aggressive rhetoric from both sides. Iranian supplies of fuel and other goods to Nagorno-Karabakh have long been a thorn in Baku's side, as it considers entry into the Armenian-administered territory to be a violation of its border. Ultimately, Iran's Roads and Transportation Agency issued a ban on the country's trucks traveling to Nagorno-Karabakh.

The isolated enclave gets all of its energy supplies, in the form of natural gas, from neighbouring Armenia. Channelled through a single pipeline that runs parallel to the Lachin Corridor, the road that connects Armenia with Karabakh, the latter imports over 50 million cubic meters of gas per year, according to Karabakh's Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure. The security of the pipeline is guaranteed by the Russian peacekeeping forces. "Because a monopoly 90 percent of the gas supplied to Armenia comes from Russia, so is the gas that is transported to Karabakh," the head of the central dispatching service of Gazprom Armenia, Artur Karakhanyan, told Eurasianet. The rest of the gas supplied to Armenia – 365 million cubic meters of the total 2.5 billion imported in 2020 – comes from Iran, via the 194-kilometer Iran-Armenia gas pipeline. (The Armenian portion of that pipeline also is Russian-owned.) Armenia uses that gas to produce electricity that is then transferred back to Iran in the framework of a 2004 gas-for-electricity agreement between the two countries.

Private trade with Karabakh, however, is another matter. Oil by-products like petrol, diesel and asphalt for road construction are imported to Karabakh through private companies in Armenia that ship their products with privately operated trucks, de facto Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure Levon Gabrielyan told Eurasianet. So far in 2021, the region has sourced over 7 billion Armenian drams (\$15.5 million) in petroleum from Armenia, though it is unclear how much is of Iranian origin. Overall, in 2020 Armenia satisfied just under a quarter of all its needs for petrol, diesel and the like through Iran, according to data published by the Armenian State Revenue Committee.

In a recent interview with the Russian news website REGNUM, Karabakh's de facto Minister of State Artak Beglaryan boasted that the new ban on Iranian trucks entering Karabakh "doesn't mean that Iranian-made goods cannot be imported by our trading companies." The minister did not specify what products these businesses were bringing into the region. Echoing the private businesses, a source with the local police who requested anonymity for security purposes told Eurasianet that they hadn't registered any Iranian oil tankers entering the enclave.

Azerbaijanis claim otherwise. In a September 12 letter to the Russian Defense Ministry and the peacekeeping contingent stationed in Karabakh, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry complained about the entry of "legal entities and individuals of other countries and their vehicles" into the territory, which it called "a violation of the laws of our country." The ministry also claimed that the transit violated the trilateral agreement signed with Russia and Armenia to stop the fighting in November 2020. President



Ilham Aliyev later claimed that in a one-month period in August and September, Azerbaijanis had detected 60 Iranian trucks that had “illegally entered Karabakh.”

In an interview with Armenian media, Karabakh’s de facto Minister of Foreign Affairs Davit Babayan said Azerbaijan’s attempts to cut off Iranian trade with Karabakh were motivated by Baku’s policy of “isolation and ethnic cleansing” and intimidating the territory’s Armenian population into leaving.

Azerbaijan released the two Iranian truckers on October 21, citing “the principles of humanism, mutual respect and good neighborliness,” the country’s State Customs Committee announced. Meanwhile, Iran has promised to support Armenia’s construction of a new road through southern Armenia, via Tatev and Kapan. The new road will avoid crossing into Azerbaijani territory; the current road now crisscrosses the boundary with Armenia several times, and following the transfer of territories after last year’s war Azerbaijan regained control over some sections of the road. In August it set up checkpoints on the road and started charging border entry fees to Iranian vehicles. annual plan of military cooperation between Russia and Armenia.

### **Azerbaijan marks Karabakh victory, calls for regional cooperation**

08.11.2021

Source: [Daily Sabah](#)

As Azerbaijan on Monday, November 8, marked the first anniversary of its victory liberating the Armenian-occupied territories in the Karabakh region, its foreign ministry released a statement saying new realities have emerged in the South Caucasus region, and Armenia has to choose between regional cooperation and illegal and unfounded territorial claims against its neighbors. The statement recalled that, as a result of last year’s 44-day Karabakh war that started on Sept. 27, 2020, against the increasing attacks and provocations of Armenia, Azerbaijan liberated its lands from occupation. It was noted that the right to live in the ancestral homeland of approximately 1 million Azerbaijani migrants was ensured. Reiterating that more than 300 settlements were liberated in the war, the statement added that with the tripartite declaration signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan, Russia and Armenia on Nov. 10, 2020, Armenia accepted its defeat, and the problem was solved by military and political means. The statement emphasized that not only Azerbaijan but also friendly and brotherly countries played a role in the process, which requires time, money and serious effort. It also underlined that the return of the displaced to their homes will be realized in the coming years.

A march was also held in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Karabakh victory. As part of the “Victory Day” celebrations, military high school students, cavalry units of the Border Services Command, Karabakh War veterans and citizens participated in the march, which started from Baku's Azneft Square.

In September, Azerbaijan filed a case against Armenia saying that Yerevan engaged in “ethnic cleansing and cultural erasure” at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The case was lodged a week after Armenia filed suit against Azerbaijan at the ICJ, accusing Baku of a “state-sponsored policy of Armenian hatred”. Both cases focus on the two countries’ decades-long territorial dispute that erupted into armed conflict again last year. Azerbaijan last month also applied to the ICJ to order neighboring Armenia to hand over maps showing the location of land mines in the Karabakh territories liberated by Azerbaijani forces from the nearly three-decade Armenian occupation last year, while the judges are also considering tit-for-tat claims that the other side violated an anti-discrimination treaty. Azerbaijan

accused rival Armenia at the U.N.'s top court of laying land mines as part of a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" despite the end of last year's war.

Recently, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said that Azerbaijan offered to resolve border disputes and reach a permanent peace deal with Armenia but hasn't received any reply so far. Speaking at the opening of the 8th Global Baku Forum, Aliyev said that Azerbaijan and Armenia are in the post-conflict era now, and Baku is ready to make a peace deal with Yerevan. Armenia must cease its territorial claims that go against Azerbaijan and pursue a peaceful agenda in the South Caucasus, Hikmet Hajiyev, an aide to Aliyev, also told Daily Sabah last week.

Turkey on Monday marked the anniversary of Azerbaijan's victory in Karabakh, expressing everlasting solidarity with the brotherly country. "I sincerely congratulate the Victory Day of Azerbaijan and this glorious day that heralds the liberation of the lands of Karabakh," President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on Twitter. He also commemorated with gratitude those "heroes who fought unblinkingly" for the homeland and fell in battle, as well as brave veterans. Turkey and Azerbaijan signed the Shusha Declaration on June 15, a pact that focuses on defense cooperation and establishing new transportation routes. Turkey was a key backer of Azerbaijan during last year's 44-day Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Also, Defense Minister Hulusi Akar on Monday arrived in Azerbaijan with top military officers to participate in the country's first anniversary of the Karabakh war victory celebrations.

### **Azerbaijan starts execution of Amnesty Act announced in connection with Victory Day**

10.11.2021

Source: [Azernews](#)

On Azerbaijan has started the execution of the Amnesty Act, announced in connection with November 8 - Victory Day, the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan told Trend.

According to the ministry, a round table on the topic "Another manifestation of the state's humane policy dedicated to the Amnesty Act" with the participation of media representatives will be organized in the administrative building of the Ministry of Justice on November 11.

The Milli Mejlis (parliament) approved a bill on the declaration of amnesty in connection with the Victory Day on November 5. The document will cover a total of 16,000 people, including 3,000 people who will be released from the unserved part of the sentence.

Institutions for serving sentences, bodies of inquiry, or preliminary investigation were ordered to ensure the application of the amnesty within four months from the date of entry into force of the document.

### **A year after the agreement between Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia: Uncertainty lingers**

18.11.2021

Source: [Modern Diplomacy](#)

Following last year's deadly clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia that lasted 44 days, a trilateral agreement was signed with the mediation of Russia. Although the agreement signed in consequence of the war was evaluated as a possible settlement of the conflict which has been a threat to regional security and development, there are still some barriers on the way to make a firm and final resolution. Unwilling

to accept new realities and consider practical options for the region's long-term prosperity, Armenia delays fulfillment of Article 4 and Article 9 of the agreement.

According to Article 4 in the trilateral agreement, the withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces should have been completed in parallel with the deployment of the Russian peacekeeping contingent. Until this day, illegal Armenian armed detachments occasionally try to commit provocations and affect the demarcation process. In addition to revengeful motives of Armenian forces, misguided activities of the Russian peacekeeping troops impose another barrier to the successful implementation of the clause. Deviating from its core mission, the peacekeepers were recorded to hold military drills and training, as well as allow entrance of vehicles carrying illegal Armenian soldiers through the Lachin corridor. Following numerous cases of shootings and provocations along the border, Azerbaijani Ministry of Defense sent an official letter of discontent, stating the need to comply with requirements, to the Russian Ministry of Defense and the Command of the Peacekeeping Forces on September 12, 2021, leaving tensions at higher levels.

By the same token, several problems are noticed in the implementation of Article 9 emphasizing the restoration of all economic and transport links in the region. Deriving from the acrimonious attitude towards Turkey and Azerbaijan and the fear of being dependent on two Turkic states, the Armenian government strives to prevent the establishment of the Zangezur corridor necessary for connecting the western regions of Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan exclave and Turkey. Failing to adequately evaluate the importance of the corridor and transport routes for the development and security of the region, Armenia demonstrates more of an obstructing perspective. In this regard, it ignores the opportunity of leaving the blockade as proposed by Turkey and applauded by neighbouring countries after years of encountering economic difficulties.

Confrontations inside the government of Armenia and snap elections of June 20 substantially affected the implementation of clauses of the agreement which Armenians find humiliating. The negative reputation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan after the defeat in the war compelled him to demonstrate a more rigorous attitude in his approach to the process to diminish risks of being overhauled by his rivals gaining popularity at the time. Nevertheless, after the victory in June elections, Pashinyan conveyed more positive messages with regard to bringing peace in the region and stability for people. On October 15, he voiced interest in building peaceful relations and (re)opening transport routes in his speech during the meeting of the Commonwealth of Independent States, even though in June he voiced his absolute rejection of the idea.

During his speech at Global Baku Forum President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev reiterated Azerbaijan's peaceful stance and intention for opening all transportation links in the region. Although back in spring he stressed the necessity of opening the Zangezur corridor regardless of Armenia's position on the issue, changing dynamics implies possibility of a peaceful resolution.

The failure to resolve the conflict dating back 30 years peacefully in such a geopolitically volatile and important region jeopardizes stability and economic development for the next few years. By demonstrating harsh attitude and hostile policies towards each other, both Azerbaijan and Armenia make a new round of war inevitable, hence canceling out plans for future cooperation. In this context, most will depend on Armenia's commitment to fulfill the articles of the November 10 agreement.



## **Armenia says 6 soldiers killed in recent clashes with Azerbaijan**

19.11.2021

Source: [Daily Sabah](#)

On Tuesday, clashes between Armenian and Azerbaijan took place in the worst fighting since last year's war over the long-disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. Azerbaijan reported seven deaths.

Armenia's Defense Ministry announced on Friday that six soldiers were killed in border clashes with Azerbaijan, Russia's Interfax news agency reported.

Baku accused Yerevan of a "large-scale military provocation". The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry on Thursday said that the Armenian armed forces again attacked the Azerbaijan Army positions in the direction of the Tovuz region. "For no apparent reason, on Nov. 18 starting from 2:10 p.m. GMT, the Armenian armed forces units from the positions in the direction of the Chinarli village of the Shamshaddin region using small arms once again subjected to intensive fire the Azerbaijan Army positions in the direction of the Kokhanebi village of the Tovuz region", the Ministry said in a written statement. "The opposing side was suppressed by retaliation fire", it added.

Tuesday's fighting ended in the evening after mediation by Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed on Tuesday to a cease-fire at their border, the Armenian Defense Ministry said, after Russia urged them to step back from the confrontation following the deadliest clash since the war last year.

Armenia appealed to its Russian ally for military support under the Collective Security Treaty Organization pact, which obliges Moscow to protect it in the event of a foreign invasion. The same day, Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the situation with Pashinian, the Kremlin said in a statement and agreed to "continue contacts" on the matter.

Before the cease-fire was announced, the European Union and the United Nations called on both sides to cease hostilities.

Since last year's war, both Armenia and Azerbaijan have reported occasional cross-border firing.

## **Iran Calls for Expansion of Economic Ties with Azerbaijan**

22.11.2021

Source: [Caspian News](#)

Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian has called for expansion of economic ties and resumption of flights between Iran and Azerbaijan following the heightened tensions between the two Caspian littoral states.

As part of a meeting with Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev in Tehran, Amir-Abdollahian expressed his satisfaction over the upward trend in trade relations between the two countries and the deep ties between the two nations, the official website of the Iranian Foreign Ministry reported on November 21.

Amir-Abdollahian described the liberation of the territories of Azerbaijan as the basis for the beginning of a new chapter in the economic relations between the two countries and voiced the readiness of Iranian companies to participate in the reconstruction of the liberated Azerbaijani lands.

He also stressed the need to use the two sides' economic potential in the fields of trade, transport, energy, and tourism and called for the resumption of flights between Tehran and Baku.

For his part, the Azerbaijani Deputy Prime Minister expressed his satisfaction over "constructive discussions" he had with Iran's oil and roads ministers during his one-day visit to Tehran. He further added that the two countries are about to sign agreements in the energy field. While referring to the 22 percent rise in trade between the two countries amid the pandemic, Mustafayev said it was a sign of friendly relations and economic capacities of the sides.

He also praised "the constructive role" of the two countries' foreign ministers in overcoming the recent tensions between Iran and Azerbaijan. According to Mustafayev, a meeting of the Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation will be held in early 2022.

On the same day, Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister held a meeting with Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji, where the two sides agreed to swap gas supplies to Azerbaijan from neighboring countries, including Turkmenistan. Following the meeting, the Iranian oil minister said that preliminary negotiations had also been held with the Azerbaijani delegation on the exploitation of oil and gas deposits in the Caspian Sea. He expressed his hope that a "good agreement" would be reached in this regard within the next few weeks.

For his part, Mustafayev praised "successful cooperation" between Azerbaijan and Iran in all fields, including in the energy sphere. "We talked about a number of new projects in the energy field. I am confident that our discussions will lead to the signing of new documents in the near future," he added.

Mustafayev's visit was the first high-ranking visit by an Azerbaijani official to Iran following the tensions that have risen in the past several months over illegal trips of Iranian lorries to certain parts of Azerbaijan's Karabakh (Garabagh) region, where the Russian peacekeeping forces are temporarily deployed.

On August 11, Iran's ambassador to Azerbaijan received a Note Verbal from the foreign ministry in addition to an earlier verbal notification about Baku's dissatisfaction with the illegal transit of goods to the Karabakh region. However, the verbal notification and Note Verbal were ineffective in settling the controversy. From August 11 to September 11, around 60 Iranian trucks illegally travelled to the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The trucks moved from Iran to Armenia, then to the Karabakh region via the Lachin corridor.

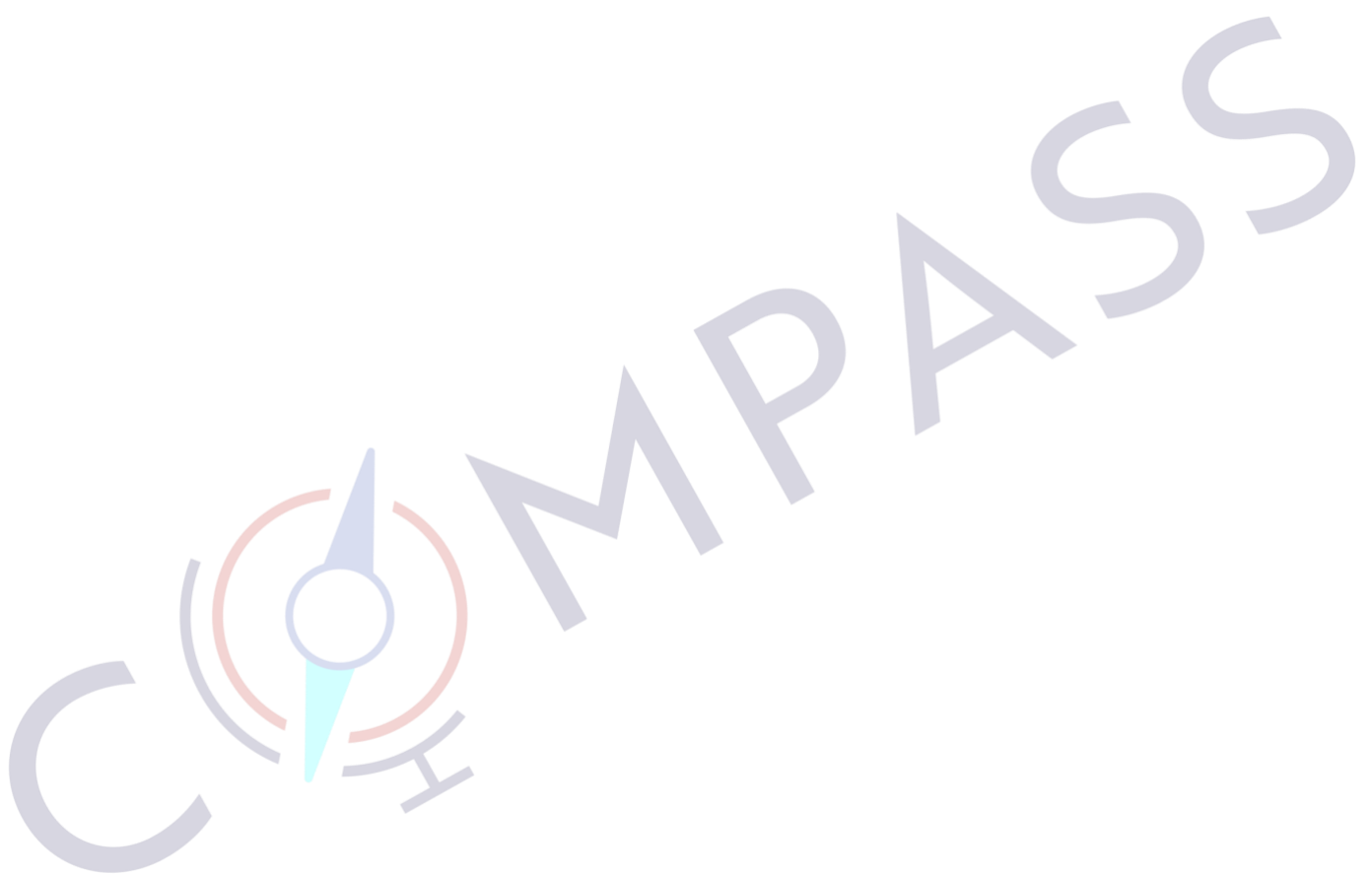
In early September, Azerbaijan's customs officials began to collect fees from Iranian cargo lorries to use the Azerbaijani section of the road between Armenia's towns of Gafan and Gorus. On September 15, Azerbaijani border guards detained two Iranian drivers for illegally crossing into Azerbaijan from Armenia. The drivers were later handed over to Iran after Iran's transportation authorities warned logistics companies against illegally entering Azerbaijan's Karabakh region.

Amid these events, Tehran accused Baku of allowing Israeli forces on Azerbaijani soil and then conducted large-scale military drills close to its border with Azerbaijan. However, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev described the allegations about the presence of the Israeli forces in the country's territories as "baseless."

On November 22, Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh said during his weekly news conference that "the visit by the deputy prime minister of Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani head of the joint committee of the two countries to Iran - after we overcame some unwanted and unnecessary media

tensions thanks to the wisdom of both sides - was planned and was carried out so that the two countries can enter a new phase.”

He added that some “good news” is expected in Tehran-Baku relations, adding that the two sides followed up on the progress of several projects and that more visits are to be held in the coming weeks on various levels.



# Belarus

## Belarus to create and produce own COVID-19 vaccine

03.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko has signed a decree to implement an investment project to produce Belarus' own COVID-19 vaccine on the premises of the BelVitunipharm company, BelTA learned from the press service of the Belarusian leader.

This investment project provides for the construction of a vaccine production plant in the village of Dolzha, Vitebsk Oblast (with the upgrade of the existing production facility). The BelVitunipharm premises were chosen by the government, because the company has the necessary infrastructure and competencies to produce a vaccine. In addition to that, it is a promising site to develop a biotechnological cluster.

The work on the vaccine is being done by organizations subordinate to the Healthcare Ministry and the National Academy of Sciences. A series of a prototype vaccines has already been developed.

The decree provides for the exemption of technological equipment, raw materials and materials imported for the implementation of the project from customs duties and the value added tax.

## Supreme State Council of the Union State approves detailed plans of integration

04.11.2021

Source: Belarusian Telegraph Agency ([Report 1](#), [Report 2](#), [Report 3](#), [Report 4](#)); [Official website of the Standing Committee of Union state](#)

On November 4, meeting of the Supreme State Council of the Union State of Belarus and Russia was held in a video-conference mode.

The agenda of the meeting (announced on November 2) covered a wide range of issues of Belarusian-Russian cooperation, including: the main areas of implementation of the provisions of the treaty establishing the Union State for 2021-2023; the results of cooperation in commerce and economy in 2020 and January-June 2021; the Union State migration policy concept; the Union State Science and Technology Prize in 2021 and other issues.

Alexander Lukashenko, currently chairing the Supreme State Council has signed the ordinance of the Supreme State Council "On the Guidelines to Implement the Union State Treaty in 2021-2023" (the ordinance was preliminary agreed with Vladimir Putin). Set of 28 Union Programs were developed and approved to serve a basis for deepening integration between two nations. The list of approved documents includes following Union Programs:

1. on convergence of the macroeconomic policies of the states participating in the Treaty on the creation of the Union State (US) of December 8, 1999
2. on harmonization of monetary policy and macroprudential regulation
3. on harmonization of foreign exchange regulation and foreign exchange control
4. on harmonization of requirements in the field of information security in the financial sector (in terms of the competence of the Bank of Russia and the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus)

5. on harmonization of the regulation of credit and non-credit financial organizations, as well as the financial market in general, including ensuring the creation of uniform principles of deposit insurance
6. on harmonization of AML / CFT requirements for the financial sector
7. on integration of payment systems in the field of national payment card systems, systems for the transmission of financial messages and settlements, the implementation of the international standard for financial messages ISO 20022, the system of fast payments, the development of finance
8. on harmonization of requirements in the field of protecting the rights of consumers of financial services and investors, as well as preventing unfair practices in the financial market
9. on integration of information systems of state regulatory bodies on the traceability of goods
10. on integration of information systems for the goods labeling
11. on harmonization of tax and customs legislation of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation and cooperation in the customs sphere
12. on integration of information systems of state regulatory bodies in terms of veterinary and quarantine phytosanitary control
13. on integration of information systems of transport control of state regulatory authorities
14. on unification of the regulation of the transport market of the states participating in the Treaty on the creation of the Union State of December 8, 1999
15. on formation of a unified gas market of the Union State
16. on formation of the united markets of oil and oil products of the Union State
17. on formation of the unified electricity market of the Union State
18. on development of nuclear energy
19. on formation of a unified agrarian policy of the Union State
20. on formation of a unified industrial policy of the Union State
21. on introduction of uniform rules for access to government orders and government purchases in the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation
22. on development and approval of uniform rules in the field of consumers rights protection of the states participating in the Treaty on the creation of the Union State of December 8, 1999
23. in the field of uniform competition rules
24. on unification of requirements for the organization and running of trading activities
25. on formation of uniform principles for the functioning of a single communications and informatization market in order to implement the provisions of the Treaty on the creation of the Union State of December 8, 1999
26. on unification of legislation in the field of tourism activities
27. on implementation of a coordinated policy in the social and labor sphere
28. on unification of regulation of accounting and preparation of accounting (financial) records

Following the meeting, Belarus and Russia intend to conclude an intergovernmental agreement on common principles of taxation. Moreover, a decision on the approval of a new military doctrine for the Union State has been taken. This will improve the coherence of defense policy and allow the special agencies to adapt their tasks in a timely manner to the changing political and military situation in the region.

### **Telephone conversations between the Presidents of Russia and Belarus**

09.11.2021

Source: Portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus ([Report 1](#), [Report 2](#), [Report 3](#))



On 9 November, Presidents Alexander Lukashenka and Vladimir Putin had a telephone conversation. The conversation focused on the situation on the Belarusian-Polish border and the brutal actions of the Polish side towards civilians. At that, it was stressed, the facts of the pulling of Polish regular troops to the border is of particular concern.

November 16, Presidents of Belarus and Russia Alexander Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin held a telephone conversation. During their conversation, the leaders primarily discussed the situation on the Belarusian-Polish border and joint actions to defend the borders of the Union State.

Another topic of the conversation was the situation in Ukraine and unscheduled exercises of Ukraine and the United States near the borders of the Russian Federation and in the Black Sea.

On 19 November, President Alexander Lukashenka had a telephone conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The presidents discussed the development of bilateral relations. Particularly, they discussed the implementation of 28 Union State programmes. The Presidents also exchanged opinions on the general situation in Belarus and Russia.

### **Holding of a Joint Board of the Foreign Ministers of Belarus and Russia**

10.11.2021

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

Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei took part in a joint session of the collegiums of the Foreign Ministries of Belarus and Russia in Moscow.

Following the joint meeting of the collegiums of the Foreign Ministries of the two countries, Belarus and Russia signed the Program for Foreign Policy Coordinated Action of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Union State for 2022-2023.

### **Foreign Ministry reacts to UN Security Council consultations on Belarus**

12.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

The Belarusian Foreign Ministry commented on the UN Security Council closed consultations on the issue of refugees on the western borders of Belarus.

On the previous day, at the initiative of France, Estonia and Ireland, closed consultations of the UN Security Council members on the agenda item "Other issues" concerning the situation around the accumulation of refugees near the western borders of Belarus were held.

The Belarusian Foreign Ministry described these consultations as another attempt to create an information led to accuse Belarus.

### **Belarus is ready for dialogue on the situation of migrants at the border**

12.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei stated that Belarus is open for dialogue and is ready to show everyone the situation at the border.

Moreover, Vladimir Makei stressed that Belarus had also invited representatives of the UNHCR, International Organization for Migration to familiarize themselves with the situation at the border.

### **Makei and Borrell have had a telephone conversation**

14.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarusian Foreign Minister Vladimir Makiej and Josep Borrell, Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, held a telephone conversation on the issue of refugees at the EU-Belarus border.

The Belarusian side reaffirmed its principal willingness to have an equal and mutually respected dialogue with the European Union. The futility of sanctions and counterproductivity of sanctions for the development of Belarus-EU relations were emphasized.

### **Lukashenko and Angela Merkel have had a telephone conversation**

17.11.2021

Source: [Portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus](#)

A telephone conversation between President Alexander Lukashenko and German Chancellor Angela Merkel took place on 17 November, as previously agreed.

As you know, the conversation was about the situation on the border between Belarus and the European Union. After the detailed discussion of the refugee problem, the sides came to a clear understanding how to act and how to move forward in solving the existing issues.

President Alexander Lukashenko and Angela Merkel agreed that the entire problem should be taken up at the level of Belarus and the EU, with the relevant officials chosen by both sides to enter into negotiations with a view to resolving the existing problems. The wish of refugees to enter Germany will be addressed in the same context.

### **The Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs held meeting with representatives of UNHCR and IOM**

18.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

A regular meeting was held between Irina Velichko, Head of the Main Department for Multilateral Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, and Muluseu Mamo, the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Belarus (UNHCR) and Mahim Orazmukhammedova, the Representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Belarus.

Further interaction with the UNHCR and IOM offices was discussed in order to resolve the situation at the border as soon as possible, taking into account the best interests of asylum seekers.

### **UN Secretary General receives Makei's personal letter on refugee situation**

18.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

António Guterres was informed that Belarus was only a transit country in this case. Belarus also ensures access of representatives of all relevant international organisations and structures of the UN system to migrants.

A series of contacts between the Belarusian side and the relevant agencies at various levels was noted and the Belarusian President and the Belarusian Foreign Minister spoke about the phone conversations that had taken place.

### **Lukashenko and PM of Armenia Pashinyan hold telephone conversation**

22.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan held a telephone conversation. They informed each other about the situation in Belarus and Armenia, discussed a few topical issues on the CSTO agenda.

The prime minister of Armenia also briefed the Belarusian president about the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border and possible developments there.

### **Lukashenko and Aliyev hold phone talks**

29.11.2021

Source: [Belarusian Telegraph Agency](#)

Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko held a telephone conversation with Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev on 27 November. The two heads of state discussed the development of bilateral relations. Ilham Aliyev updated Aleksandr Lukashenko on the results of the recent trilateral meeting of the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Ilham Aliyev discussed Azerbaijan's relations with the CSTO.

# Tajikistan

## Meeting of representatives of the business delegations of Tajikistan and Austria

06.11.2021

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

On November 6, representatives of the business delegations of Tajikistan and Austria met with the participation of officials and other interested circles of the two countries to discuss issues of expanding trade, economic and investment cooperation, as well as the implementation of joint projects in priority areas.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sharaf Sheralizoda stressed the need to further strengthen constructive ties between the private sector of the two countries in the fields of renewable energy, green industrial economy, digitalization, modern technologies, pharmaceuticals, tourism and other areas of partnership of mutual interest. It was also noted that for this it is necessary to use new modern instruments for the development of economic, trade and investment cooperation, such as investor forums, business forums and joint industry exhibitions.

## Meeting with UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences

11.11.2021

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

In the city of Paris, on the sidelines of the 41st session of the General Conference of UNESCO, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Chairman of the National Commission of the Republic of Tajikistan for UNESCO Sirojiddin Muhridin met with Assistant Director-General of UNESCO for Natural Sciences Shamila Nair-Beduelle.

During the meeting, the interlocutors touched upon topical issues of the global agenda on water and climate. S. Mukhriddin noted with gratitude the productive cooperation of UNESCO in these areas. The Tajik side also called on the representative of UNESCO to assist in establishing cooperation between the organization in holding a high-level international conference on the implementation of the international decade for action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028. in 2022 in Dushanbe and promoting the initiatives of the President of Tajikistan regarding the problems of melting glaciers. In turn, Shamila Nair-Beduelle expressed gratitude for the productive cooperation of Tajikistan and highly appreciated the role of Tajikistan as an initiator country on global water issues. She also announced the readiness of this authoritative organization to support in the future all planned events related to global water issues, which are carried out at the initiative of Tajikistan.

## Working meeting to discuss Tajik-Turkish Economic Cooperation

17.11.2021

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

In Ankara, at the initiative of the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Turkey, a working meeting was held with the participation of the Deputy Minister of Industry and New Technologies of Tajikistan in

order to discuss ways to implement the agreements reached at the 11th meeting of the intergovernmental commission between the two countries on economic cooperation and to find timely and effective ways to implement the plan of joint actions. Solekhzod Umed and Deputy Minister of Industry and Technology of Turkey Cetin Ali Donmez. The meeting was also attended by officials of ministries and departments, as well as diplomatic missions of the two countries in full-time and online format.

During the meeting, the participants discussed ways to implement the relevant points of the said plan on topical issues of bilateral cooperation, including in the field of trade and investment, transport, industry, education and science, agriculture, migration, energy, healthcare, culture and tourism, as well as documents signed at the meeting of the Commission and the Industrial and Economic Forum of Tajikistan and Turkey.

### **China and Central Asian countries hold forum on Afghanistan in Dushanbe**

19.11.2021

Source: [Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan](#)

The international forum of the analytical centers of the People's Republic of China of the “five” countries of Central Asia on the theme “Security and development of Central Asia in the new situation in Afghanistan” was held yesterday in Dushanbe in face-to-face and virtual format. Forum participants, experts and analysts discussed the political situation in Afghanistan.

In the second part of the forum, the Director of the Center for Contemporary Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor Khurshed Ziyoi made a presentation on the topic “The impact of the new situation in Afghanistan on the security configuration in Central Asia” and noted that Tajikistan supports the efforts of the world community in a comprehensive solution to the problem Afghanistan and believes that the right to determine the future of Afghanistan belongs exclusively to the people of this country.

“We are supporters of an inclusive and inclusive government in Afghanistan, and this position was expressed by the Leader of the Nation, President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon at high international forums. Time has shown that Tajikistan's position on Afghanistan is correct, and other countries support and follow it”, Ziyoi said.

He noted that the Republic of Tajikistan is interested in protecting the territorial integrity of this friendly and neighboring state and ensuring the unity of all its political forces.

### **Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central Asian countries and the EU**

22.11.2021

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

The 17th meeting of the foreign ministers of the countries of Central Asia and the European Union was held in the city of Dushanbe.

During the meeting, the parties discussed issues of further fruitful cooperation between the Central Asian countries of the European Union, taking into account the consequences of Covid-19, as well as regional and global processes.

The ministers of the countries of Central Asia and the European Union considered the current state of relations and prospects for strengthening cooperation between the regions in the political, trade,



economic, water and energy fields, as well as in the field of security, the fight against terrorism and extremism, the environment, climate change and exchanged views on international and regional issues.

During the discussion of security issues, the parties paid special attention to the situation in Afghanistan. The fruitful joint efforts of the parties in this direction, in particular, in protecting the borders between the countries of the region and Afghanistan through the implementation of the BOMCA / CADAP programs, were emphasized.

### **Telephone conversation between the Foreign Ministers of Tajikistan and Russia**

25.11.2021

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

On November 25, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, Sirojiddin Mukhriddin, had a telephone conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov.

The interlocutors discussed in detail the incident that took place on November 12, 2021 in the Zalari village of the Zalarinsky district of the Irkutsk region of the Russian Federation, during which citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan were killed. S. Mukhriddin drew Lavrov's attention to the need for a thorough investigation of this incident and punishment of the perpetrators of the crime. The ministers agreed to take this issue under the special control of the foreign ministries of Tajikistan and Russia.

### **Meeting of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea**

29.11.2021

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

President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon received the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Jong Ui Yong, who is on an official visit to Tajikistan to participate in the forum "Central Asia - Republic of Korea".

The meeting discussed the current state of cooperation between the two countries and important issues on the international and regional agenda. During the meeting, the parties discussed the strengthening of interstate relations in the political, inter-parliamentary, economic, trade, scientific and technical, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres. It was emphasized that the further activities of the intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation and the expansion of relations within the framework of a joint business forum can become a factor in strengthening relations in this area and attracting investments between the parties.

Using the rich potential of Tajikistan's natural resources, cooperation in the banking sector, expanding cooperation in the energy sectors, especially in hydropower, various fields, including mining, agriculture, transport and communications, information technology, artificial intelligence, health, tourism and education were named as some of the main promising areas of activity to strengthen cooperation between the two countries.

### **14th Central Asia-Republic of Korea Cooperation Forum**

30.11.2021

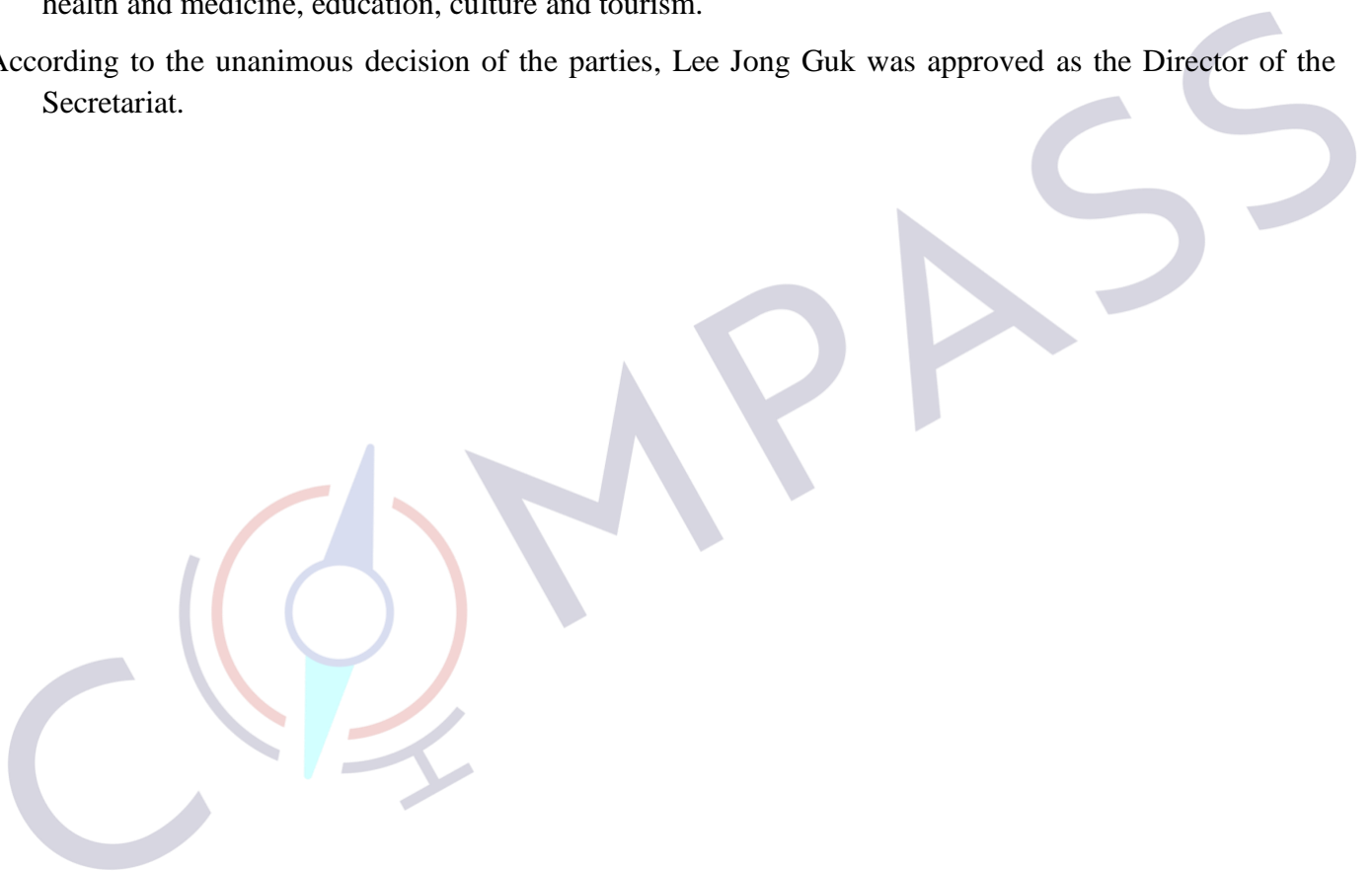
Source: [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan](#)

On November 30, the 14th meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central Asia-Republic of Korea Cooperation Forum was successfully completed in Dushanbe.

The meeting participants agreed that the Central Asia-Republic of Korea Cooperation Forum is increasing its potential from year to year, reaching its goals. The parties expressed satisfaction with the exchange of views that took place in the spirit of traditional friendship, openness and pragmatism. The 14th Forum also hosted four plenary expert sessions in the areas of forestry, carbon neutrality, healthcare and digitalization.

An important step was the adoption of the Forum Secretariat's work plan for 2022 to support projects in six promising areas of cooperation in the medium and long term. They cover areas such as transport and logistics, energy, industrial modernization and diversification, climate change and the environment, health and medicine, education, culture and tourism.

According to the unanimous decision of the parties, Lee Jong Guk was approved as the Director of the Secretariat.



# Uzbekistan

## **Shavkat Mirziyoyev takes office as President of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

06.11.2021

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

A solemn ceremony of inauguration of the President-elect of the Republic of Uzbekistan took place in Tashkent at a joint meeting of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis. In accordance with Article 92 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took the oath. President delivered a speech on priority areas for the next five years. It was noted that this strategy consists of seven directions, which included the following spheres:

- building people's state through the development of a free civil society;
- strengthening justice and the rule of law, respect for the honor and dignity of a person;
- development of the national economy;
- the issue of providing quality education and upbringing;
- development of the spiritual and enlightenment sphere;
- consolidate efforts in the search for solutions to global problems;
- tasks of ensuring peace and security in the country, development of international cooperation.

## **Privatization of state facilities under discussion**

08.11.2021

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

On November 8, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev chaired a meeting on the privatization of state facilities. In 2021-2022, it is planned to reduce the number of enterprises with a state share by at least 3 times. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated that accelerating the process of transformation and privatization of state-owned enterprises will be one of the priorities of economic reforms. The Head of the state stressed that the main issue is the introduction of new methods of privatization and ensuring transparency at all stages.

The importance of increasing the financial stability and investment attractiveness of privatized enterprises was noted. To this end, the task was set to develop a strategy for the privatization of large industrial enterprises with the involvement of foreign consultants.

## **Abdulaziz Kamilov meets with Austrian FM**

08.11.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov met with the Austrian Federal Minister for European and International Affairs Michael Linhart, who arrived in Tashkent on a working visit.

The sides expressed their readiness to intensify ties in the political-diplomatic, trade-economic, cultural-humanitarian and other spheres. An agreement was reached on thorough and high-quality preparation

for the upcoming contacts at various levels and formats. Views were exchanged on the current situation in Afghanistan and its impact on regional and international stability.

A cooperation program was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria for 2022-2023.

It should be noted that this visit was the first visit of the head of the Austrian Foreign Ministry to Uzbekistan over the past 20 years.

### **The President of Uzbekistan forwards important initiatives to enhance the multifaceted cooperation of the Turkic Speaking States**

12.11.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev attended the Eighth Summit of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, which took place in Istanbul.

Issues of enhancing multifaceted cooperation in trade, investment, green economy, digital technologies, transport and communications, as well as education and culture were considered. The Leader of Uzbekistan announced several initiatives aimed at more fully utilizing the huge potential of the Council of Turkic Speaking States:

- create a Center for research of trade cooperation of the Turkic states;
- develop a “Connectivity program of the member countries of the Organization of Turkic States in the transport sector”;
- create Engineering and Technology Centers based on the specialized organizations of the member states to develop joint projects in this direction;
- create a structure for the protection of the environment of the Turkic countries in cooperation with the United Nations;
- develop a roadmap that will allow the implementation of the projects “Tourism in the Turkic world” and “Tabarruk tourism”;
- create a research center for the study of the historical, scientific and cultural heritage of the Turkic-speaking states;
- declare 2022 in the Turkic world the “Year of Supporting Youth Initiatives”.

The heads of state adopted more than 10 documents – the Final Declaration of the Summit, as well as the “Vision of the Turkic World – 2040” and other important documents included in the agenda.

### **Uzbekistan, Portugal FMs sign a Memorandum on Political Consultations**

17.11.2021

Source: [Uzbekistan National News Agency](#)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov met with Portuguese Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva, in Brussels.

The parties noted the importance of enhancing the political dialogue, including through the organization of visits at various levels, holding consultations between foreign ministries, and mutual support of the parties within the framework of international organizations. It was stated that there is a significant potential for cooperation in the textile, pharmaceutical, agricultural and tourism sectors. Following the talks, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan and Portugal on political consultations.

### **Commitment to further strengthening the strategic partnership and alliance between Uzbekistan and Russia confirmed**

19.11.2021

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

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev arrived in Russia on November 19 at the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin. It was the first foreign visit of Shavkat Mirziyoyev after the recent presidential elections in the country.

At the meeting, current issues of further strengthening the strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and Russia, enhancing multifaceted cooperation, primarily in trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres, were considered. The leaders of the two countries also exchanged views on topical issues of international politics and regional cooperation, including the situation in Afghanistan.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Vladimir Putin adopted a Joint Statement on Cooperation in the International Information Security. 18 bilateral documents were signed during the visit.

