

## THE HISTORY OF UZBEKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

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*This article analyzes the history of relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation. It notes that since gaining independence, comprehensive cooperation between the two states has developed in the fields of diplomacy, economy, military, culture, and education. In particular, the article highlights the strategic partnership level of relations, mutual investment projects, migration policy, and ongoing efforts in education and culture. The article also outlines the prospects for the future development of bilateral relations.*

**INTRODUCTION.** The Republic of Uzbekistan was recognized by the Russian Federation on March 20, 1992, and from that day forward, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established. Relations between Russia and Uzbekistan are based on close neighborhood ties and centuries-old traditions of affinity. These relations were preserved and developed even after the dissolution of the USSR.

As stated by the President of Uzbekistan at the first session of the second convocation of the Oliy Majlis, "The historically established economic, cultural, and friendly ties with Russia have always been of great importance for Uzbekistan and, moreover, for our entire region. I would like to emphasize that today there are new opportunities arising to strengthen the multifaceted cooperation and strategic partnership between the two states, based on equality and mutual interest, which meets the interests of both parties — Russia and Uzbekistan," said I. Karimov[1].

Expressing their desire to expand friendly relations between the peoples of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan, and to promote closer acquaintance with each other's life, history, and cultural heritage, and acting in accordance with the **Treaty on the**

**Foundations of Interstate Relations, Friendship and Cooperation** between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan dated **May 30, 1992**, the **Government of the Russian Federation** and the **Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan** signed the **Agreement on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Science and Technology, Education, Healthcare, Information, Sports and Tourism** on **March 19, 1993**, as well as other international agreements between the two states[2].

Relations between the two states are based on the following key documents:

- Treaty on Allied Relations between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan (November 14, 2005);
- Treaty on Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Uzbekistan (June 16, 2004);
- Treaty on Deepening Economic Cooperation for 1998–2007 (signed on October 12, 1998).

From 1991 to 2004, 171 international treaties and more than 33 other official documents were signed between the two countries.

On October 11–12, 1998, at the invitation of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, the President of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin, paid a state visit to Uzbekistan. The heads of state reaffirmed that the multifaceted cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia is built upon the principles of equality, mutual trust, and respect for national sovereignty, in accordance with the Treaty on the Foundations of Interstate Relations, Friendship and Cooperation (May 30, 1992) and the Declaration on the Deepening of Comprehensive Cooperation (March 2, 1994) [3].

Since 2004, bilateral relations began to develop rapidly. During the working visit of the First President of Uzbekistan, **Islam Karimov**, to Russia on **April 15–16, 2004**, an open and sincere dialogue took place on bilateral relations and pressing international issues.

On **June 16, 2004**, during the **Tashkent Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization**, a bilateral meeting was held between the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, **I.A. Karimov**, and **V.V. Putin**, during which the **Treaty on Strategic Partnership** was signed.

High-level dialogue between Uzbekistan and Russia continued during Islam Karimov's state visit to Russia on **July 2–3, 2004**, as well as at the **CIS Heads of State Council** meeting held on **September 16, 2004**, in **Astana**, and the **Summit of the Central Asian Cooperation Organization** held in **Dushanbe** on **October 18, 2004**, where the Russian delegation led by President **V.V. Putin** participated as a full member for the first time.

In subsequent years, processes of strengthening cooperation in the field of agricultural product processing became noticeable. At that time, **nine joint ventures** were operating in cooperation with well-known Russian companies such as **Baltimore**, **Cherkizovo**, and others. The company **Bim Bill Dann** signed an agreement to purchase **77% of the shares of**

**Tashkentsut** and planned to invest **\$20 million** in the production of dairy products and fruit juices [4].

The opening of the “Uzbekistan” Trade House in the Russian Federation marked an important step toward strengthening trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. On December 19, 2005, the opening ceremony of the Russian Trade House was held in Tashkent.

Currently, 676 schools in Uzbekistan offer instruction in Russian, with around 250,000 students studying in these schools.

During the years of independence, libraries across the country have been enriched with new literature. Every year, 40 to 45 types of textbooks and teaching aids in Russian are published in 1.0 to 1.2 million copies. In addition, 85 newspapers and 52 magazines in Russian are regularly published in Uzbekistan.

In March 2004, at the initiative of cultural, scientific, and public figures from both countries, a presentation of the “Foundation for the Culture and Art of Uzbekistan” was held in Moscow. The foundation was created to promote the rich cultural and historical heritage of the Uzbek people. Meetings between prominent cultural and artistic figures of both nations, tours of national theaters, and exhibitions of artists are held on a regular basis[5].

At the invitation of President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, paid a state visit to Russia on April 4–5, 2017.

During the closed-door meeting between the two presidents, discussions focused on further developing cooperation between Uzbekistan and Russia, strengthening peace and security, and addressing regional and international issues of mutual interest. The leaders exchanged views on the current state and prospects of cooperation in political, trade-economic, investment, scientific-technical, and cultural-humanitarian spheres. The negotiations emphasized enhancing collaboration in trade and economy, oil and chemical industry, transport communications, agriculture, culture, tourism, and improving conditions for labor migrants, among other areas[6].

Uzbekistan and Russia have consistently supported each other on the international stage. Regular consultations are being held between the two countries’ ministries of foreign affairs, foreign trade, and defense. Both states also maintain effective cooperation within international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

In Uzbekistan, there are currently 961 joint ventures operating in collaboration with Russian entrepreneurs. Furthermore, 64 representative offices of Russian firms and companies have been established in the country. In the Russian Federation, 569 business entities have been formed in partnership with Uzbek counterparts, all of which are actively functioning. The volume of mutual trade turnover has been steadily increasing — particularly in agriculture, where this indicator has doubled in recent times.

The negotiations, held in an open and friendly spirit, included exchanges of ideas on further expanding cooperation and raising it to a new level.

In 2017, Uzbekistan and Russia celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The cooperation between the two countries rests on a solid legal foundation. Bilateral relations have been consistently developed within the framework of the Treaty on Strategic Partnership signed on June 16, 2004, and the Treaty on Allied Relations signed on November 14, 2005.

Both countries also possess tremendous potential in the fuel and energy sector, which plays a key role in bilateral cooperation. Russian companies such as Lukoil and Gazprom actively participate in exploration and development of hydrocarbon fields in Uzbekistan. Gazprom, one of the world's leading energy companies, is engaged in large-scale projects in Uzbekistan, including geological exploration, development of promising hydrocarbon fields, and natural gas exports. As a result of geological research conducted in the Ustyurt region, the Zhel gas condensate field was discovered.

In the cultural sphere, a monument to the great Uzbek poet and thinker Alisher Navoi was erected in Moscow, while the square with the monument to A.S. Pushkin in Tashkent has become one of the favorite places for the capital's residents and visitors.

As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized: “Russia has been and will remain a reliable strategic partner and ally that has stood the test of time. We will never forget our shared history, our common interests, and the unity of our spiritual and cultural roots.”[7].

On October 19, 2018, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to Uzbekistan. During the meeting, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and President Vladimir Putin signed a Joint Statement.

Within the framework of the visit, several important agreements were exchanged, including the Program for Economic Cooperation for 2019–2024, the Program for Cooperation in Cultural and Humanitarian Spheres for 2019–2021, the Roadmap for the Establishment of the International Radio Astronomy Observatory “Suffa”, the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of Branches of Leading Russian Higher Education Institutions in Uzbekistan, and the Agreement on Cooperation in the Textile Industry.

A total of 20 documents aimed at developing cooperation in various fields were signed during the visit. Russian investments in Uzbekistan’s economy exceeded \$8.5 billion. In addition, new investment agreements and trade contracts with leading Russian companies and banks were prepared, with a total value of approximately \$25 billion.

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