

## THE PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION OF UZBEKISTAN AND FRANCE DEVELOPMENT TENDENCIES

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***Resume.** The article examines the transformations and future prospects of cooperation between Uzbekistan and France. By utilizing comparative and systematic methods, the study investigates the key areas of collaboration, as well as the shifts in foreign policy concerning trade, economy, and regional matters. The analysis demonstrates that both Uzbekistan and France are actively engaged in constructive and dynamic cooperation, driven by mutual interests. Uzbekistan's interests encompass a wide range of issues, including social modernization, economic partnership, industrial growth, regional cooperation, international engagement, and the utilization of French expertise and investments for overall development. On the other hand, France's interests primarily stem from Uzbekistan's geostrategic position, its abundant natural resources, and the potential of its transportation infrastructure. Furthermore, the study reveals that Uzbekistan, along with the rest of Central Asia, presents a fresh and untapped alternative market and a new platform for French businesses.*

*The main keywords associated with this article are Uzbekistan, France, Central Asia, international relations, foreign policy, and bilateral cooperation.*

### INTRODUCTION

France is a country of rich historical and cultural heritage, socio-political traditions and innovations. He is one of the founders of European integration, a permanent member of the UN Security Council. France is the seventh largest economy in the world and the second in the European Union by GDP per capita. Also, France

is one of the first countries to establish official diplomatic relations with all the former Union countries of Central Asia after they gained independence. However, within the framework of France's general activities in world politics and Uzbekistan's active and effective political and economic relations with global actors such as the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the United States, India, the Republic of Korea, Germany, and Japan, the Uzbek-French cooperation is not only France, but also It may not seem to be a priority and extremely important for Uzbekistan. In particular, the main problem in the evolution of cooperation was determining the priority direction: France believed that the main issue in the development of Uzbekistan should be organizational, administrative and legislative reforms. Uzbekistan considered the main topic of discussion to be investment and trade issues.

This situation made it difficult to achieve full coordination of mutual actions, especially from the first stages of cooperation. However, if we pay attention to the dynamics of the last five years of cooperation, we can see transformations both quantitatively and qualitatively. These transformations make it possible to identify promising areas and directions in Uzbek-French relations.

#### **METHODS AND METHODS OF ANALYSIS.**

Systematic, comparative and perspective assessment (forecasting) analytical methods were widely used during the research. Systematic research is used to study a specific topic (process, event, etc.) as a set of interrelated elements / components that study the relationship between the internal processes of the system and the external environment. The method of comparative analysis helps to determine the relationship between two or more phenomena by studying the current and previous state of the research object or comparing its differences and similarities with other objects. The prospective assessment (forecasting) method presents the possibility of assessing the future state of cooperation based on the study of existing data, events or concepts, in our case, the history/evolution of the Uzbek-French cooperation, modern features.

## **ANALYSIS OF LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT.**

Despite the fact that the topic of this article has not yet been comprehensively and scientifically studied, the dynamics of France's foreign policy, the characteristics, areas, problems and prospects of cooperation with the countries of Central Asia, its interests in the region and competition with other external actors in Central Asia (mainly As part of the European Union), many scientific researches have been carried out in such directions as the historical roots of the cooperation between Uzbekistan and France, the comparative analysis of the political systems of the two countries, and the foreign policy and geopolitics of Uzbekistan. In particular, Jacques Barra, Colin Ferro, Charlotte Wang, F. Bozo, F. Charillon, Armand Colin, Marie Kessler, Jacques Delor, Uber Vedrin, R. Chauvancy, Thomas Gomart, Robert Aldrich on these topics in French and foreign political sciences. , John Connell, Christian Lakesn conducted scientific research.<sup>1</sup> The scientific works of some CIS and Central Asian experts are also important for the regional analysis of Uzbekistan-France relations. Such specialists include S.M. Yun, P.P. Timofeyev, D.B. Nishanov, S.V. Zhukov, O.B. Researches of Reznikova can be highlighted.

The relations between Uzbekistan and France in our country are mainly focused on the general analysis of the foreign policy of Uzbekistan, the issues of the political and legal systems of the two countries, their similarities and differences, and the historical foundations of cooperation and cultural dialogue. Among the researchers, we can single out R.Farmonov, K.Zhorayev, A.Ayrapetov, L.Tereshenko, E.Nuritdinov, M.Rahimov, S.Saidolimov, S.Usmanov and others.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

We can divide the current changes in Uzbek-French cooperation into the following directions: 1. In the issue of determining the priority directions of cooperation. The main problem in the evolution of Uzbek-French cooperation was the issue of priority setting: while France believed that the main emphasis should be placed on organizational, administrative and legislative reforms in the development of Uzbekistan, the main topic of negotiation for Uzbekistan were investment and trade

issues. This made it possible to achieve full coordination of mutual actions from the first stages of cooperation.

However, the tactical policy of the French government towards the whole of Central Asia is being reshaped in recent years. In particular, 2020 is the year of the French government's Central Asia ideal partner for: we are completely neutral in domestic politics, but we can give a lot for your countries. Unlike many of our neighbors, I repeat, we do not interfere in your internal affairs, we respect your independence and simply respond to your requests and try to satisfy your needs" [3]. Therefore, instead of political and social modernization, democratization, and internal changes, French official circles actively use the concept of "neutral partner" when entering into mutual relations with the countries of the Central Asian region. 2. Regarding trade and economic cooperation. If you pay attention to the partnership relations between France and Uzbekistan in the field of trade and investment, you can witness some unexpected indicators. For example, as of the end of 2019, France is the 4th partner of Uzbekistan in terms of public external debt (in terms of capitalized investments) - the first in Europe (after China, Japan, Korea) - 345.8 million \$. However, France is not among the top five trading partners of Uzbekistan, it is Uzbekistan's 20th foreign trade partner by the end of 2020 (7th among European countries, 6th among EU member countries).

For France, Uzbekistan is the 120th trading partner, 106th place in terms of imports from France, 146th place in terms of exports [5]: One of the areas of the transformed bilateral cooperation is the French business structures. is to enter Uzbekistan. Since 1992, the French-Uzbekistan working council has been operating in MEDEF International 4, a French association of entrepreneurs, but only by 2015, this council became active in Uzbekistan. In the same year, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between MEDEF and the Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan [6], which paved the way for many French companies to enter Uzbekistan over the next 5 years. If, until 2019, the French companies Alstom transport, CNH France S.A., Euromedex, Laboratoire innotech

international, Legrand SNC, Sanofi-aventisgroupe, Thales international operated in Uzbekistan, and the main part of these enterprises are agricultural and pharmaceutical in the field of Orexloisirs, Compagne des Alpes, Geode, Egis (architecture, tourism) only in 2019-2020; Orano (uranium); As system (energy management); Total Eren (electricity); Suez (water supply); Semmaris (agrologistics); More than 10 large French companies, such as Carrefour (trade), have started operations in Uzbekistan. Most of the new French companies entering this Uzbek market operate in the fields of financial and economic expertise and consulting/design and business development.

In particular, on December 9, 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan and the French company RungisSemmaris, which has an annual turnover of 9 billion euros, signed an "Agreement on the establishment of fruit and vegetable wholesale market networks". According to it, 8 agro-logistics centers and 3 wholesale markets will be established in Uzbekistan, first in Tashkent, Samarkand and Andijan. This project will serve to structural reform of Uzbekistan's agriculture and reduce the amount of fruits and vegetables lost annually due to improper harvest and storage up to 30%. It is planned to create 10,000 new jobs through the project[7]. Another important project is being implemented between the Suez company of France and the Tashkent city government, the Ministry of Housing and Communal Economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The seven-year project (2020-2027) and the cost of 142 million euros is aimed at the modernization of water supply networks of the city of Tashkent and the optimization of the management system of these networks in accordance with international standards. The project includes measures related to the establishment of the "Uzbekistan water academy" (Uzbekistan water academy), which is considered the only one in Central Asia, which is engaged in consulting and personnel training in addition to water supply management, construction and installation works. The French companies held in the Republic of Uzbekistan began to establish comprehensive cooperation with the government of Uzbekistan in the field of energy. 2019 Launch of Solar Power Plant with Total Iran Company;

Creation of new networks of electricity production, transportation and distribution with the Assystem enterprise; Agreements were reached with the Orano company on the creation of a joint venture for uranium mining (51% Orano, 49% Ecological Committee) [9]. Therefore, the cooperation between France and Uzbekistan in the real sectors of the economy is carried out on the basis of "public-private partnership": from France, private companies participate as the main investors and initiators, and from Uzbekistan, government agencies (ministries, agencies, hokimitas, etc.) participate; Uzbekistan-France trade and economic cooperation cannot be built on the basis of the traditional scheme of "donor-recipient" cooperation between developed and underdeveloped countries. Cooperation is based on long-term projects aimed at the improvement of socio-economic infrastructure in strategic areas for Uzbekistan (agriculture, logistics, energy, tourism, land reclamation, etc.), delivery of advanced knowledge and experience, and standardization. is being built. French companies are always fully involved in project development, coordination and management. The main thing is that among the many foreign companies operating in Uzbekistan, French enterprises and organizations are trying to occupy the Uzbek national market by providing expertise of large projects and providing consulting services. 3. Regional foundations of cooperation. If the above two changes were mainly related to the change in the attitude of the French government and business circles towards Uzbekistan and the whole of Central Asia, then the changes in the regional issues of the Uzbek-French cooperation in Uzbekistan It reflects the desire to strengthen cooperation with the European Union (EU). In fact, development of mutual communication and partnership relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union, promotion of trade, investment and financial cooperation, transfer of high technologies, development in the fields of science, technology, education, ecology, health, and culture. believes that mutually beneficial relations and strengthening of regional cooperation are important areas of cooperation [10].

Also, during the meeting of the President of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev with European experts in March 2021, European experts led by the former president of

Poland Alexander Kwasniewski and the former Chancellor of Austria Alfred Guzenbauer will be involved in order to expand Uzbekistan's relations with the European Union [11 ], means that the government and official representatives of Uzbekistan are interested in expanding relations with the EU. In the future, due to the fact that the trade relations between Uzbekistan and the European Union have entered a new stage, there is a high probability of an increase in trade indicators between Uzbekistan and France. From April 10, 2021, Uzbekistan was admitted to this program of preferences. As a GSP+ participant, Uzbekistan receives more additional economic benefits than the standard GSP scheme. That is, tariffs on 2/3 of the Standard GSP line of products will be canceled. Today, our country exports 3,000 types of products to the European Union without customs tariffs and 3,200 types of products on the basis of reduced payments [12], now Uzbekistan, as a participant of GSP+, has obtained the right to export 6,200 types of products to the territory of the EU without customs duties. Currently, 9 countries are using the GSP+ scheme, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan are also beneficiaries of the CIS countries. The GSP+ scheme also imposes a number of obligations. For example, the country undertakes to effectively implement 27 international conventions on human rights, ecology, labor rights, effective management.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, the relationship between Uzbekistan and France is built on the basis of mutually beneficial cooperation, has a positive significance in the socio-political development of Uzbekistan, affecting the development trend in the future and the transformation of Central Asia into an arena of cooperation or competition. France is still in the process of reforming its foreign policy in Central Asia. Today, it focuses on developing bilateral partnerships with five countries in the region. But, with a high probability, it will continue to use EU mechanisms to realize its national interests in Central Asia in the medium term. The most promising direction of cooperation is trade and economic relations. The large-scale inflow of French capital into Uzbekistan, the increase in the participation of French companies in the economic sectors of our country, and the inclusion of Uzbekistan in the GSP+ mechanism are highly likely to

increase the volume of mutual trade between the two countries. Despite geographical barriers, bilateral structures, cooperation mechanisms, a very small number of permanent official dialogues in various fields, and the delay in Uzbekistan's integration into the world market, Uzbek-French cooperation has maintained growth dynamics in some areas, in particular, trade-economic and investment ratios. However, the two countries are still at the stage of determining the main directions of cooperation, and have not yet reached the stage of full diversification of partnership relations.

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