

## Uzbekistan – Turkey: a new stage of cooperation

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**On October 25, 2017, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev arrived in Turkey with a state visit at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan.**

Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey Bekir Bozdag and other officials met the Head of our state at Esenboga international airport.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited the memorial complex Anitkabir, paid tribute to the memory of the first President of the Republic of Turkey Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

The main events of the visit were held at the Palace of the President of the Republic of Turkey. After the ceremony of the official meeting, Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Recep Tayyip Erdogan held a meeting in a narrow format. During the negotiations, issues of development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey in political, trade-economic, investment, transport-communication and other spheres were discussed, views were exchanged on regional and international issues.

The Republic of Turkey was the first to recognize the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In 1996, the Treaty on eternal friendship and cooperation was signed between our countries.

Cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey is mutually beneficial for both sides. The market of our country, liberalization of the economy, a favorable investment climate arouses interest of Turkey. The developed industry, transport communications, sea routes, agriculture and tourism potential of this country also arouses interest of Uzbekistan.

The visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to our country, in November 2016, demonstrated Turkey's interest in strengthening cooperation with Uzbekistan. The heads of states held negotiations within the framework of "One Belt, One Road" forum on May 14 this year, and the summit on science and technology of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held on September 10 in Astana. As well as, in September, a meeting was held within the framework of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Activation of mutual visits at various levels between our countries is being observed. Only this year, delegations led by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Turkey visited Uzbekistan,

and the delegation of our country led by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense visited Turkey. A number of joint events and forums were held. Promising areas of mutually beneficial relations were defined at the regular meeting of the Intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Turkey, held on May 25 in Tashkent, business forums held on September 30 in Tashkent, and on October 6 in Turkey.

Presidents continued negotiations with participation of official delegations of the two countries. Issues of development of cooperation in trade, industry, agriculture, transport, tourism, science and other spheres were discussed.

Turkey is one of the important trade partners of Uzbekistan. In 2016, the trade turnover amounted to 1,2 billion US dollars. For 9 months of this year, the indicators of mutual trade increased by 29 percent. There are about 500 Turkish companies in our country. Only this year, more than 20 enterprises with participation of Turkey's investments have been organized, 53 companies have been accredited in Uzbekistan.

During the negotiations, it was noted that there are still unused opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation, that this visit will give a new impetus to the development of contacts between ministries and departments, businessmen of the two countries.

Common opinion of the sides on the steady increase and diversification of the volume of mutual trade by supplying demanded products with high added value and developing long-term investment cooperation was expressed. In particular, Uzbekistan can export a wide range of industrial products, transformers, cables and other electrical goods, polymers, copper and copper products, mineral fertilizers, yarn, fruit and vegetable, processed food and other products. To this end, the importance of regular conduction of meetings of the Intergovernmental commission on trade and economic cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Turkey was emphasized.

In Uzbekistan, implementation of joint investment projects with participation of leading Turkish companies, first of all, the organization of production in free economic and small industrial zones of products with high added value on the basis of deep processing of mineral resources and raw materials is encouraged.

Proposals on studying the possibilities of cooperation and exchange of experience in the spheres of energy and minerals, energy saving, in particular, the use of renewable energy are supported.

Special attention is also paid to the issues of transport and logistics. It was emphasized that expansion of transport corridors connecting our countries with each other will serve as an important factor in development of trade and economic relations. It was decided to

optimize transit tariffs and provide preferences in order to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of international transport corridors passing through the territory of our countries.

The heads of states noted with satisfaction the agreement on direct air services between the cities of Samarkand and Istanbul, confirmed readiness for the consistent development of cooperation in the sphere of civil aviation, increasing in frequency of regular flights.

Both Uzbekistan and Turkey have tremendous opportunities in the field of tourism. Full use of this potential, increasing the tourism exchange will have a huge economic effect.

The recently adopted resolution of the President of our country on simplifying visa procedures for citizens of the Republic of Turkey became an important step in this direction. In accordance with this document, visas will be provided quickly and in a simplified manner for citizens of Turkey intending to visit Uzbekistan for business and tourism purposes.

Cooperation in the spheres of healthcare and medical education, the exchange of experience between leading research centers and training of professional personnel is also important.

Our countries are fruitfully cooperating within the framework of such international structures as the UN, the SCO, the CIS, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Positions of the sides on issues of regional and international importance are same or close.

Presidents emphasized their commitment to strengthening peace, security and stability at the regional and international levels, expressed their desire to expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation within the framework of multilateral structures.

The sides noted the importance of further development of struggling against international terrorism, religious extremism, illegal migration, illicit drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, as well as other threats and challenges of our time, within the framework of bilateral and multilateral structures.

Readiness was expressed for the exchange of experience on development of forestry, effective management of water resources, combating land degradation and desertification.

Special attention was also paid to the development of cooperation in the field of science, education, and culture.

Turkey highly appreciates the initiatives and practical activities implemented in Uzbekistan on studying the heritage of great scientists and thinkers, the measures of combating ignorance through enlightenment. In this regard, Imam Bukhari International Research Center that is being established in Samarkand and Center for Islamic Civilization in Tashkent are of great importance. Relations between scientists and scientific centers, joint projects aimed at studying the spiritual and cultural heritage will serve as a contribution to further strengthening of friendship between our people.

As a result of the negotiations, more than 20 documents on various spheres of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey were signed.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a Joint Statement of the heads of states.

A significant package of documents was also signed on development of cooperation in the spheres of trade, industry, banking and finance, investment, tourism, cargo transportation, healthcare, training, defense and others.

At the meeting with mass media representatives, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan noted that the negotiations were held in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect, and the signed documents will further strengthen the long-term cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Turkey.

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