

## Uzbekistan – France: towards expanding and strengthening long-term mutually beneficial partnership

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**The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev held negotiations with the President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron, at Elysee Palace.**

Shavkat Mirziyoyev sincerely thanked Emmanuel Macron for the invitation to France and for the warm hospitality shown to Uzbekistan delegation. Emphasized the great importance that Uzbekistan attaches to development of cooperation with France as a reliable and long-term partner.

Noting that France is the first European country he pays an official visit, the President of Uzbekistan drew attention to historical ties of friendship and trade relations that have linked the two countries since the time of our great ancestor Sahibkiran Amir Temur and King of France Charles VI.

Emmanuel Macron expressed satisfaction to meet with the President of Uzbekistan in Paris for holding the first practical negotiations. Noted that wise policy and large-scale reforms carried out under the leadership of Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Uzbekistan plays an important role not only in improving people's welfare, but also in bringing the country to the ranks of leading countries, and ensuring sustainable peace in Central Asia.

The parties noted importance of developing new forms of regional and international cooperation, jointly combating challenges and threats.

The President of France reaffirmed his support for large-scale reforms carried out in Uzbekistan and highly appreciated the foreign policy of the leadership of Uzbekistan, based on the principles of friendship, mutually beneficial partnership and mutual consideration of interests.

Emmanuel Macron noted that approaches of the two states to solving the main international and regional problems are close.

The role of Uzbekistan in strengthening regional stability and security, developing mutually beneficial cooperation and good neighborly relations in order to ensure peaceful and sustainable development of Central Asia was emphasized.

The heads of states reaffirmed the need to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan as an important condition for peace and tranquility in the region, emphasizing the absence of

an alternative to a direct political dialogue, without prior conditions, between all parties involved in the conflict.

Intensification of political dialogue in recent years and the need for holding it regularly was noted.

Regular contacts are being held at the level of governments and ministries. Political consultations are held between foreign ministries. Inter-parliamentary relations are consistently developing.

Issues of development of trade-economic, investment, energy, technological, cultural-humanitarian cooperation were discussed in detail. The importance of increasing the trade turnover, implementation of promising investment projects in various sectors of the economy was emphasized.

In accordance with the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union, the most favored nation regime has been established in mutual trade between the countries, the Convention for avoidance of double taxation on income and other documents are signed.

It was noted with satisfaction that following the business forum, organized jointly with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and MEDEF France Entrepreneurs Movement, agreements were reached on implementation of promising projects based on advanced European experience, knowledge and technologies.

In particular, a partnership program for implementation of infrastructure projects worth almost a billion euros was signed with the French Development Agency. Agreements on financing joint projects worth 1.5 billion euros were signed with leading French banks Natixis, Credit Agricole and BPI France.

Projects for implementation were scheduled with such French companies as Airbus, Total, Vinci, Orano Mining, Total Eren, Veolia, Fives Stein, Bouygues, Rungis and many others.

Issues of expanding cooperation in the fields of culture and art, tourism, science and technology, education, healthcare and archeology were also discussed.

The President of Uzbekistan noted that France have become the first European country in respect of which a visa-free regime has been introduced for tourists visiting Uzbekistan.

More than 300 thousand schoolchildren and students are studying French in Uzbekistan.

French Language and Culture Center has been established in Tashkent.

Agreements have been reached on opening branches of the University of Strasbourg and Paris Academy of Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Uzbekistan, where Uzbekistan's students will study economics, engineering, agriculture and tourism.

In addition, cooperation agreements in training personnel were signed with the International Academy of Fashion, the universities of Toulouse, Cergy-Pontoise, INALCO and others.

Taking into account the great interest in historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, an agreement was reached on holding an exhibition on Uzbekistan's history in the Louvre Museum in 2021. This will be the first exhibition to be held in the world-famous museum and will be devoted to one of the countries in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

During the visit, 10 intergovernmental and interdepartmental documents were signed on road transportation, tourism, military-technical cooperation, space exploration, investment projects financing, culture and other spheres.

The results of fruitful negotiations of the heads of states became a clear confirmation of readiness of Uzbekistan and France to further expand and strengthen long-term mutually beneficial partnership, filling it with new practical content.

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