



INCREASING THE PLACE AND STATUS OF UZBEKISTAN IN  
THE CIS

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**Abstract:** *This article analyzes the role of the Republic of Uzbekistan within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), its foreign policy activity, and its rising status within the organization. It highlights initiatives proposed by Uzbekistan in recent years regarding economic, transport-logistics, and humanitarian sectors, as well as their impact on stability across the CIS region. Through specific statistical data and analysis of strategic projects, the article substantiates Uzbekistan's role in regional leadership.*

**Keywords:** *Uzbekistan, CIS, foreign policy, regional integration, trade and economic cooperation, transport corridors, free trade zone, humanitarian diplomacy.*

**Introduction** Since the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Uzbekistan has been an active participant in the structure. However, starting from 2017, Uzbekistan's policy within the CIS has ascended to a qualitatively new level. The country's principle of "open and constructive" foreign policy has become a driver for accelerating cooperation within the CIS space. Today, Uzbekistan views the CIS not merely as a dialogue forum, but as an economic cooperation platform focused on concrete, practical results.

1. Growth of Economic Cooperation and Trade Volume

The primary indicator of Uzbekistan's rising status in the CIS is economic integration. Uzbekistan is a proponent of the full implementation of all provisions of the CIS Free Trade Zone Agreement.

**Examples and Indicators:**



- Uzbekistan's total foreign trade turnover with CIS countries has been growing steadily in recent years. For instance, trade volume with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan has increased several times over.
- By the end of 2023, approximately 30-35% of Uzbekistan's foreign trade was accounted for by CIS member states.
- Within the framework of industrial cooperation, joint ventures are being established with CIS countries for the production of automobiles, textiles, and agricultural machinery (e.g., assembly plants for Uzbek vehicles in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan).

The adoption of more than 70 significant multilateral documents dedicated to strengthening the legal framework of cooperation demonstrates the effective activity of the CIS during this period.



## МУСТАҚИЛ ДАВЛАТЛАР ҲАМДЎСТЛИГИ ДАВЛАТ РАҲБАРЛАРИ КЕНГАШИ МАЖЛИСИ

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Developing mutual cooperation with CIS member states is one of the priority directions of our country's foreign policy. In this regard, the year 2020 left a



significant mark on our history. In that year, Uzbekistan assumed the responsible task of chairing the CIS for the first time.

It is worth noting that Uzbekistan's chairmanship of the CIS coincided with the fight against the pandemic and its negative consequences. Most of the planned events took place under new, unusual conditions and in online formats. Nevertheless, despite the acute situation, Uzbekistan demonstrated its unique potential in fulfilling international obligations under any circumstances. The adoption of more than 70 important multilateral documents dedicated to strengthening the legal foundations of cooperation testifies to the effective activity of the CIS during this period. At the same time, most of the documents adopted during this year were characterized by their programmatic nature. That is, they were adopted in the form of programs, strategies, and "roadmaps" with clearly specified planned measures.

Another aspect is that Uzbekistan's trade with individual partners within the framework of trade-economic relations increased by more than 20 percent this year. The effectiveness of Uzbekistan's activities within the CIS is also confirmed by high assessments from experts.

During this period, Uzbekistan joined two major agreements within the CIS framework. These are:

1. **The Agreement on the Council for Humanitarian Cooperation** of the CIS member states, signed on November 28, 2006, at the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State in Minsk;

2. **The Agreement on the Council for Interregional and Border Cooperation** of the CIS member states, signed on October 10, 2008, at the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State in Bishkek. Joining these new agreements within the CIS serves to strengthen regional cooperation.

Furthermore, on March 20, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a decree on Uzbekistan's accession to the **Agreement on Cooperation of CIS Member States in the Field of Work with Youth**. As is well known, Uzbekistan put forward the initiative to adopt the Convention on the Rights



of Youth at the 72nd session of the UN. This year, the Samarkand Web Forum on Youth Rights was held, dedicated to the discussion of this draft convention. Accession to the CIS agreement on youth cooperation is a logical continuation of our state's efforts to ensure youth rights.

The most important result of this period was the adoption of the **Economic Development Strategy of the CIS for the period up to 2030**. On May 29, a meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government was held via videoconference. Within the framework of the meeting, the draft Economic Development Strategy of the CIS until 2030 was discussed and subsequently approved by the heads of government.

The Strategy is a comprehensive document. It notes that the current "global economy is characterized by high turbulence and uncertainty." The Strategy provides for the consistent development of mutually beneficial cooperation between member states in more than 30 areas of economic interaction, increasing the competitiveness of national economies and the welfare of CIS citizens, and strengthening the position of member states in global economic relations. The implementation of the Strategy is divided into two stages (2021–2025 and 2026–2030) based on specific plans.

The chairmanship of the CIS not only strengthened Uzbekistan's image and prestige, demonstrating our state's high potential as a reliable international partner, but also contributed to strengthening the status of the CIS itself. In particular, it was an important step toward the adoption of a special resolution by the UN General Assembly. The special resolution on "**Cooperation between the United Nations and the Commonwealth of Independent States**" was adopted on November 23, 2020, at the UN Headquarters in New York during the 75th session. This initiative by Uzbekistan contributed not only to enhancing interaction between CIS members but also to strengthening the CIS at the global level.

On December 18, at the meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State, the head of our state summarized the results of Uzbekistan's chairmanship and put forward a series of initiatives covering all areas of future cooperation. Specifically, he proposed the following measures:



## **In the economic sphere:**

- Implementation of "green" and simplified corridor practices within the Commonwealth, launching a unified platform for the development of e-commerce, and adopting a "Roadmap";
- Development of a comprehensive program for industrial cooperation.

## **In the social sphere:**

- Formation of an effective system for monitoring and early response to emergencies of a sanitary-epidemiological nature;
- Organizing the "CIS Health Marathon" with annual mass sports and cultural events.

## **In the legal sphere:**

- Creating a unified CIS electronic platform for the exchange of legal information and developing a cooperation program in the field of de-radicalization.

## **In the field of human rights:**

- Establishing a unified mechanism for the mutual recognition of documents for labor migrants and adopting a specific program in this field.

## **In the field of culture:**

- Hosting the conference "Cultural Heritage of the Commonwealth Countries" in Tashkent in 2021. This initiative perfectly complements another initiative put forward within the UN framework at the 75th session of the UN General Assembly—holding the international forum "Central Asia at the Crossroads of World Civilizations" in Khiva in 2021, in cooperation with UNESCO. Both initiatives contribute to strengthening Uzbekistan's cultural ties on an international scale.

Thus, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Uzbekistan fully implemented its concept for the CIS chairmanship. The new initiatives put forward by Uzbekistan within the CIS framework contribute to the strengthening of regional cooperation.

## **2. Transport-Logistics and Energy Security**

As a state located at the geographical center of the CIS, Uzbekistan serves as a "hub" connecting transport corridors in the region.



## Strategic Initiatives:

- The "Termez – Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul – Peshawar" railway **project** serves to connect not only South Asia but the entire CIS space with new markets.
- Proposals put forward by Uzbekistan regarding the **digitalization of transport communications** and the introduction of "green" corridors within the CIS are being supported within the organization.
- In the **energy sector**, the restoration of the Central Asian unified energy grid and agreements on the transit of energy resources with other CIS members confirm Uzbekistan's role as a regional stabilizer.

### 3. Leadership in Politics and Security

Uzbekistan is emerging as an initiator in security issues within the CIS, particularly in the fight against terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking. Uzbekistan's position on stabilizing the situation in Afghanistan aligns with the general security strategy of the CIS.

Uzbekistan's first-ever chairmanship of the CIS in 2020 was a turning point in the organization's history. During the chairmanship, more than 60 important documents were adopted, demonstrating Uzbekistan's high diplomatic potential.

### 4. Humanitarian and Cultural Cooperation

Another sign of the rising status is cultural diplomacy. Uzbek cities are being recognized as the Cultural Capitals of the CIS.

- **Example:** The declaration of **Samarkand as the "Cultural Capital of the CIS" in 2024** and the major events held in this context enhanced the country's tourist and cultural prestige.
- In the field of **education and science**, cooperation with CIS network universities is expanding, and branches of major higher education institutions of CIS member states are opening in Uzbekistan.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's position in the CIS has risen from mere membership to the level of active strategic partnership and initiative. The country's economic potential, geographical location, and pragmatic foreign policy serve as the primary driving force for integration processes in the CIS space. Uzbekistan's initiatives are aimed not only at national interests but also at ensuring peace, stability, and economic prosperity throughout the Commonwealth. In the future, cooperation in "Industrial Cooperation" and "Digital Transport" within the CIS will further strengthen Uzbekistan's leadership role.

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