

Regional Imperatives Of The Multilateral Diplomacy Of Uzbekistan With The European Union

Sherzod E. Ziyoyev

Research Fellow, Tashkent State University Of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

Received: 27 April 2025; **Accepted:** 14 May 2025; **Published:** 29 June 2025

Abstract: In this article, the author focuses on the priority aspects of cooperation with the European Union in the current geopolitical and geoeconomic processes in Central Asia. The author of the article focuses on a separate assessment of Uzbekistan's position in such issues as regional integration, political cooperation, and green technologies. The author also emphasizes the role of the new Uzbekistan's cooperation relations with the European Union in solving the problems of the region, and puts forward a number of theoretical considerations and practical proposals.

Keywords: Central Asia, multilateral diplomacy, the European Union, Uzbekistan's perspectives, constructivism, regional factor, transport-logistics hub, inter-regional dialogue.

Introduction: First of all, the contemporary Central Asia held many complex events, attracting local and international participants. These relations are shaped by the geographical importance, resource security and historical circumstances of the area. The post-state republics of the United States have been able to establish and maintain their own objective and subjective relations with the European Union. In the period after the Soviet Union, new states appeared and the development of local dynamics was strengthened by the constant efforts to liberalize the self-government and to improve the general conditions.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the countries of Central Asia found themselves in a particularly difficult situation. Within the USSR, the union republics had a high level of economic interdependence. The disintegration of these economic ties created serious problems. However, the level of development of the newly independent states in Central Asia was much lower than that of the republics in the European part of the post-Soviet space. Therefore, it was more difficult for them to overcome the consequences of the collapse of the centralized system. In addition, the countries of Central Asia were isolated from world markets due to their remoteness from the world ocean. Therefore, they had to work

together to overcome the crisis in all respects. Many open problems that needed to be resolved by finding a common language were among the issues awaiting a solution - primarily border problems, ecology (the Aral Sea problem), economic and social problems, security, water and energy, and other areas.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the latest studies on foreign policy and diplomatic relations conducted in our country on this issue, in the work of historian and political scientist D.Sayfullayev, we find the following observations: "It is known that in the world political and socio-economic development of the early 1990s, there was a certain general upsurge associated with the collapse of the socialist camp. During this period, liberal ideology remained an active and leading ideology in the system of foreign policy doctrines for a certain period. It began to be used as a common source of progressive ideas, especially for developing countries. According to the "sponsors" of these ideas, this ideology could answer questions about what a new world order should be like, which path to take, including what newly independent states should do for the safe and economic development of the world. However, the recommendations given turned out to be somewhat more complicated than expected. Even a number of

developed countries were faced with the challenge of creating a new geopolitical and economic situation” .

The American expert and statesman H.Kissinger, who analyzed these processes, expressed the following thoughts: “... Not a single leading country that has embarked on the creation of a new world order has the slightest experience of existing within the framework of the emerging multi-state system. Never before has a new world order been created on the basis of such diverse visions, on such a global scale. Never before has there been an order that combines the symbols of a universal democratic mindset, as well as rapidly developing modern technologies, and historical systems of balance”.

D.Sayfullayev noted that the foreign policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, its participation in the system of international relations, and its practice in the fields of national diplomacy, including cultural diplomacy, have gone through two periods:

- 1) From 1991 to 2015;
- 2) From 2017 till nowadays.

METHODOLOGY

However, the approach to the study of the issue, based on traditional paradigms, hinders the correct understanding of the problem and finding a practical solution. The theoretical and methodological basis for the study of the foreign policy relations of the Central Asian states is formed by history, political science, scientific theories used in the study of modern international relations - neorealism, neo-liberalism, globalism, regionalism, multilateralism, institutionalism, constructivism, intergovernmentalism, etc. In the study of the political relations of modern Central Asia with the European Union, various methods are widely used - mainly systematic analysis, historical-comparative analysis, document analysis, quantitative and qualitative analysis methods, content analysis, etc.

The political and diplomatic relations of the Central Asian countries with the European Union are one of the most pressing issues in the recent history of the region. Approaching the issue more from the perspective of political and diplomatic relations between the parties, it is necessary to familiarize ourselves with the many approaches and theories that have been and are being expressed in this regard. In particular, in studying the history of the region at the modern stage, various theories are often used - neoliberalism, democratism, the theory of the “democratic world”, as well as concepts such as “Ideal Politics”, “Real Politics”, “New Great Game”, “New Silk Road projects”. In this regard, in the process of conducting an interdisciplinary

analysis of these issues, we will try to use the concepts of “multilateralism”, “interconnectedness”, “sustainable development”, “inclusive policy” (in the sense of “policy that includes all aspects”). At the same time, theoretical approaches such as globalization and regionalization, inclusive development, are today equally relevant not only to global historical events, but also to political, socio-cultural processes taking place in the region. For example, the above approaches and theories help to understand the activities of external forces in the region and the processes related to the foreign policy of young independent republics .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A lot of scientific research has been conducted on the topic of political relations between Central Asia and the European Union over a period of more than 30 years. Scientific works on this topic can be divided into different groups based on their direction and content, and even the region in which they were carried out. First of all, it should be noted that the share of scientific works carried out on this issue is more in Western countries. Among them, the research of European regionalists and historians is especially distinguished by its scope. Also, a number of specialists in this field have emerged in the post-Soviet countries, in particular, in the Central Asian republics.

It is precisely the open official publications that are more or less related to the topic of our research that were initially popularized in the form of report materials consisting of project results by international organizations. A number of studies have been carried out in Western academic circles on the issue of EU-Central Asia relations. A number of Western experts have emerged in this area. They study the region in general terms and, approaching it from a geopolitical perspective, clearly express the Western position on this issue. Western Central Asian experts have analyzed the EU's global policy and relations with Central Asia, including P.Jonas, N.Melvin, M.Emerson, Y.Bonstra, S.Peyrozy, M.Erika, B.Yarabik, D.Kimmeyj, M.Denison, M.Hall, M.Fumagalli, O.Spaiser, and others, who have expressed positive and negative opinions on the current state of relations between the EU and the countries of Central Asia .

Among these researchers, one of the experts who conducted a detailed analysis of the implementation of the European Union's strategy in Central Asia, N.Melvin, in his monograph “Into Central Asia. A New Strategy for the European Union in the Heart of Eurasia” writes that the Union should take a rational approach in the region, taking into account the internal characteristics of the countries, focus on socio-economic development, reforms, and the primacy of

the state in it. He also continues his thoughts, saying that “Kazakhstan wants to participate in the European Neighborhood Policy. In this, it will have a preferential relationship with the EU. This situation is emphasized by European Commissioner Benetta Ferrero-Volner, who emphasizes the need to develop a unique and differentiated approach to each of the Central Asian countries, without isolating them.” Melvin also mentions some negative aspects of the EU's policy in the region. He writes: “If Kazakhstan is a prominent candidate for regional leadership and the most reliable partner for the EU, it is because of Uzbekistan's failure. In fact, Uzbekistan has an even stronger potential for regional leadership. For example, Uzbekistan has great potential in terms of the diversity of its economic infrastructure and human resources. Unfortunately, Uzbekistan's resistance to I. Karimov's open reforms has led to a systemic social crisis and even came under sensational pressure in the Andijan events of 2005 ”. This situation has made Uzbekistan a long-term threat to regional stability. In comparison, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have open political systems, have high poverty rates, lack of governance capacity, and are dependent on external donor assistance”.

If we look at Uzbekistan's recent past, the situation that arose in Eurasia in the early 1990s also aroused interest in Central Asia and hopes for mutual cooperation in Europe. If earlier the removal of the “iron curtain” that “blocked” this region from Europe marked a fundamental change in the attitude of European countries towards Central Asia, today, almost 30 years later, the intensification of practical actions has become the main topic of the agenda of negotiations between the parties. The growing interest in this region in Europe is reflected in various political and economic aspects and processes. In particular, the strategic attitude of the European Union towards Central Asia can be studied as one of these processes. In turn, for the Central Asian countries, after they gained their state independence, establishing and developing relations with Europe became a particularly important factor. In this regard, the political, economic and military potential of European countries, their geographical location and role in international transport and communication networks, and the advanced technologies of science observed in them are among the main factors attracting the attention of the Central Asian countries. In particular, President I.A. Karimov emphasized that the European direction of Uzbekistan's foreign policy plays an important role and is one of the most important factors in increasing the pace and effectiveness of its transformation processes in our country. .

Before delving into this issue in more detail, let us

briefly analyze the agreements adopted in the framework of mutual relations and diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and the EU until 2016, their content and implementation. First of all, it should be noted that diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and the EU were established almost 31 years ago - on November 16, 1994. Over the past quarter of a century, many historically significant events have occurred in relations between Tashkent and Brussels.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, it is widely known that Uzbekistan and other Central Asian republics, located in the heart of Asia, have formed a unique region, inextricably linked with the countries of the world in political, economic, cultural-humanitarian, transport-logistics and energy terms. The common past and future of the republics of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, all of which border Uzbekistan, are based on close ties, and there are also unanimous views in their multilateral political relations with such an integration structure as the European Union.

In Central Asia-EU political relations, technical and financial assistance programs aimed at cooperation in international security, the development of democratic and market relations, the implementation of important reforms in the environment, justice, and the judicial system previously occupied a leading place. However, since 2019-2020, comprehensive cooperation between the countries of our region and the EU in trade, economic, investment, and transport and logistics based on mutual interest has been intensifying .

It should be noted that the process of cooperation between the parties in the political-diplomatic, economic, cultural-humanitarian, educational, and judicial spheres has not been uniform, and this has also been influenced by changes in the foreign policy vectors of the countries of the region and the EU member states. One of the most important events in the modern history of the region is undoubtedly the independence of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, and their recognition by the world community and the establishment of their own status, in which European countries, as well as the European Union, played an important instrumental role. Consequently, the internal problems inherent in each of the countries of the region, whether they are related to economic reforms or even human rights, require a certain degree of individual approach. In this regard, it is worth noting that the political dialogue with the European Union in the globalization of Central Asia has not been uniform.

REFERENCES

Yunusov, Khaydarali. Central Asia and the European

Union: From partnership and cooperation to the new opportunities of the enhanced cooperation (in Uzbek). – Tashkent: Institute of State and Law, 2023. – 416 p.

Киссинджер Г. Дипломатия / Пер. с англ. В. В. Львова. – М.: Ладомир, 1997. – С. 18.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism_\(international_relations\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constructivism_(international_relations))

Sinnott R. Theory and the Internationalisation of Governance: Bringing Public Opinion Back in // Final Plenary Meeting of the European Science Foundation paper: Believes in Government Project. Strasbourg, 1993.

Khanna, Parag. Bridges to Everywhere – Connectivity as Paradigm.

<https://www.cirsd.org/en/horizons/horizons-summer-2018-issue-no-12/bridges-to-everywhere>

Кўчаров Ш. Марказий Осиёнинг минтақавий интеграцион жараёни муаммолари (геосиёсий таҳлил тажрибаси) ... Б. 26;

Jonas P. EU Foreign Policy After Lisbon Will the New High Representative and the External Action Service Make a Difference? // CAP (Centre for Applied Policy) – Policy Analysis, No. 2, June 2008.

Beneta F.W. The European Union and Central Asia – building a twenty first century partnership, talk at L.N. Gumilev University. – Astana, 17 October 2006. www.europa-nu.nl

Melvin N. Engaging Central Asia ... – P. 57.

Каримов И.А. Ўзбекистон XXI аср бўсағасида: хавфсизликка таҳдид, барқарорлик шартлари, тараққиёт кафолатлари. – Т.: “Ўзбекистон, 1997. 303-б.

<https://mift.uz/uz/news/evropa-ittifoqi-va-uzbekiston-2021-2027-jillarga-mulzhallangan-amkorlikni-kengajtirish-bujicha-jangi-kup-jillik-indikativ-dasturni-ishga-tushirdi>