

# Relations Of The United Arab Emirates With The Countries Of Central Asia: Mutually Beneficial And Equal Partnership

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the political and economic relations between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the countries of Central Asia, focusing on the development and dynamics of bilateral cooperation with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The study examines key areas of engagement, including foreign direct investment, energy cooperation, trade relations, and large-scale infrastructure projects. Particular attention is given to the strategic interests of the UAE in Central Asia, as well as the role of these partnerships in supporting regional economic diversification, sustainable development, and connectivity.

The research highlights the growing involvement of Emirati state-owned and private companies in sectors such as renewable energy, oil and gas, logistics, construction, and financial services. Through a comparative analysis of bilateral initiatives and agreements, the article demonstrates that the UAE's approach to Central Asia is characterized by pragmatic diplomacy, long-term investment strategies, and respect for national sovereignty. The findings indicate that cooperation is largely built on the principles of mutual benefit, equality, and non-interference, which has contributed to the steady expansion of political dialogue and economic ties. Overall, the study underscores the increasing significance of the UAE as a strategic partner for Central Asian states and emphasizes the role of these relations in shaping the broader geopolitical and economic landscape of the region.

**Keywords:** UAE, Central Asia, investment, energy, foreign policy, economic cooperation.

**Introduction:** The United Arab Emirates (UAE), located in the Persian Gulf region, despite its relatively short history, today occupies an important place in the global energy market and financial system. Economic development and the growth of financial potential have led to the intensification of the UAE's foreign policy, the development of separate strategies for different regions.

The Central Asian region occupies a special place in the foreign policy of the UAE. The region's rich natural resources, favorable geostrategic location, and investment needs are important factors for the UAE. At the same time, international experts attribute the UAE's activity in the region not only to economic, but also to geopolitical interests.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), a country located in the Persian Gulf region, has a large geopolitical advantage and does not have ancient traditions of

statehood. Today, the UAE, having achieved economic development, has a certain influence in the global energy market and financial system, pursues an active foreign policy, and has developed separate strategies for different regions. The Central Asian region is also of great importance in the foreign policy of the UAE.

The UAE's Central Asian policy is based on achieving economic benefits through the development of economic ties and investment in the countries of the region. Also, the Emirate's increased activity in the region in recent years encourages international observers to think that it is not only pursuing economic interests.

The UAE is showing great interest in the energy sector in relations with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. It is interested in attracting Abu Dhabi companies to projects being implemented in the Caspian Sea. At the same time, this process corresponds to the policy of the

countries of the region to attract as many foreign investments as possible and intensifies relations, increasing mutual interest.

To better understand this approach, it is necessary to consider the bilateral relations of the UAE with the countries of the region. First of all, we will talk about Kazakhstan. It should be noted that the UAE began to develop relations with Kazakhstan during the time of the founder of the state, Nursultan Nazarbayev. According to available data, in the period from 2005 to 2020, the UAE invested about \$2.4 billion in Kazakhstan, and in 2020, the volume of trade between the two countries amounted to \$474.4 million.

As a result of the growth of economic ties between the two countries, a revival of cultural ties is also observed. In particular, Kazakhstan has provided a one-month visa-free entry benefit to UAE citizens. This is the basis for the development of cooperation in the field of tourism. In recent years, official Astana has emphasized that the UAE is Kazakhstan's most important partner in the Middle East. In 2021, the two countries reached agreements on the implementation of 30 new projects. The current President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev also encourages the development of bilateral relations. In order to strengthen bilateral economic ties, the Kazakhstan-UAE Investment Forum is held annually.

The driving force of Abu Dhabi-Astana relations is the economy. In this sense, UAE investments are beneficial for Kazakhstan. At the same time, the Caspian energy basin is also very important for the UAE, and practical actions have already begun in this direction. For example, the UAE company Mubadala acquired a 24% stake in KazMunayGas, a company engaged in natural gas exploration in Kazakhstan.

The UAE also invests in Kyrgyzstan. However, this investment is considered less than the UAE's investments in the countries of the region. For example, on February 8, 2012, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Abu Dhabi Development Fund signed a Loan Agreement on the rehabilitation project of the Bishkek - Torugart highway, and thus the UAE began to provide financial support for transport projects in Kyrgyzstan. On December 7, 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding on the promotion of mutual investments was signed, after which UAE investments in Kyrgyzstan increased significantly. Another memorandum signed on the same day also achieved cooperation in the mining industry and trade.

As can be seen, relations in the direction of Abu Dhabi - Bishkek were also formed through economic cooperation. Moreover, these relations became even more dynamic, especially after Sadyr Japarov became

the President of Kyrgyzstan. One of the main UAE companies operating in Kyrgyzstan is DP World. There is also a practice of visa liberalization between the two countries. From January 17, 2017, the parties began applying visa liberalization to each other. This has a positive impact on the development of mutual cultural ties.

After the inauguration of the leader of "New Uzbekistan," Shavkat Mirziyoyev, as President of Uzbekistan, significant progress was also observed in the UAE's relations with Uzbekistan. With the initiative of Sh. Mirziyoyev, a new stage of renewal and development has begun in many spheres. Of course, these processes require enormous financial support. From this point of view, attracting investments in projects aimed at the country's development stimulates rapprochement with major donor countries, such as the UAE.

As a practical result of this convergence, the UAE invested a total of \$4.5 billion in various projects in Uzbekistan from March 2019 to August 2021. The largest volume of these investments is the first solar power plant with a capacity of 100 MW, built by Masdar in Abu Dhabi in July 2021. Currently, 107 enterprises with the participation of UAE capital operate in Uzbekistan. In addition, 28 companies based in the UAE are actively operating. In this regard, the parties agreed to increase the volume of mutual trade to \$10 billion.

It can be said that a positive atmosphere is also prevailing in the UAE's relations with Tajikistan. In March 2007, the UAE became the first Gulf country to open a consulate in Tajikistan. This situation shows how much Tajik President Emomali Rahmon values Abu Dhabi. Ma'lumotlarga ko'ra, Tojikistonga sarmoya kiritish maqsadida har yili tashkil qilinadigan yarmarkalarda BAAning 20 dan ortiq kompaniyasi muntazam ravishda ishtirok etib keladi.

According to the data, more than 20 companies from the UAE regularly participate in the annual fairs organized for the purpose of investing in Tajikistan.

The UAE's relations with Turkmenistan do not differ sharply from the other republics of the region. It should be noted that among Turkmenistan's foreign trade partners, the UAE is one of the leading countries. It can be seen that the main areas of economic relations between the two countries are energy, trade, and urban development. It is also known that UAE companies such as Petrofac, Gulf Oil, and Gas Fze are closely interested in projects in the Caspian Sea and are conducting research in Turkmenistan. The driving force or platform of Abu Dhabi-Ashgabat relations is the UAE-Turkmenistan Business Council. The Council has an

effective function in identifying investment areas in Turkmenistan and guiding UAE investors.

It is known that there are 49 bilateral agreements between the two countries. Turkmenistan imports the majority of its electronics, high technologies, trucks, cars, and other needs from the UAE.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the UAE plays a constructive role in Central Asia and, along with ensuring employment through its investments, contributes to the prosperity of the region. This situation leads to the sympathy of the countries of the region towards Abu Dhabi. Of course, the UAE's activities in the region benefit not only the countries of Central Asia, but also the UAE. The economy of Abu Dhabi is making significant profits through investment and energy projects in the region. It should be noted that relations do not create conditions for one party to exploit the other. The UAE's relations with the countries of the region are built on the basis of interdependence and mutual interest. It can be hoped that the UAE's relations with the countries of the region will develop in a positive atmosphere.

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