UZBEKISTAN AND TURKEY TOOK A NEW DIALOGUE FORMAT

On February 19, the first meeting of the Uzbek-Turkish top-level Council for strategic cooperation was held in the capital of Turkey, Ankara. This body is a new format of dialogue between the two countries and operates under the co-chairmanship of the presidents of two states. The first meeting of the Council for Strategic Cooperation is dedicated to the official visit of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Turkey.

Meetings of the Council are planned to be held annually, it will determine a joint strategy for the development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkey in politics, security and defense, economy and trade, investment, tourism, energy, transport, agriculture and forestry, culture, education, science and technology, innovation, health care and in other directions.

Sh. Mirziyoyev expressed confidence that the Council will become an important basis for the implementation of priority tasks to bring trade between countries to $5 billion in coming years.

“We highly appreciate that our relations with Uzbekistan, based on strong fraternal ties, have risen to the level of strategic partnership,” Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said following the meeting.

Recall that the Uzbek-Turkish cooperation intensified after the state visit of Shavkat Mirziyoyev to Turkey in October 2017 and the visit of Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Uzbekistan in April 2018.
Mutual trade turnover increased from almost 1.2 billion dollars in 2016 to more than 2.5 billion dollars in 2019. There are more than 1300 enterprises with the participation of Turkish investments in Uzbekistan. Investment projects worth $500 million are carried out.

The next day, on February 20, Sh. Mirziyoyev held a meeting in Ankara with the heads of leading Turkish companies and banks.

The meeting was attended by leaders of the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Exchange of Turkey, the Turkish Agency for Cooperation and Coordination (TIKA), the Gebze industrial zone, Ziraat Bank, Zorlu Holding, Coşkunöz Holding, Exachibashi, Baykar, Dünyagöz, Kanimed Saglik, Bau Global and Havelsan.

The Head of the state noted that during the talks with the President of Turkey, they agreed to fully support business contacts between the two countries.

“Uzbekistan is not the same as before. Today, a company entering our country will definitely benefit. I guarantee it. The necessary legal and institutional conditions will be created for this,” Sh. Mirziyoyev said.

During the meeting, issues on strengthening of ties between ministries and companies of two countries were discussed and specific projects on expanding the supply of products and services, on organizing hospitals and higher education institutions were considered.
PRESIDENTS OF KAZAKHSTAN
AND AZERBAIJAN HAVE MET

On February 14, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev within the framework of his working visit to Munich.

The heads of state discussed issues of bilateral cooperation in the trade, economic, transport and logistics, energy, communication and agricultural sectors. The interlocutors noted that signing of the Convention on the legal status of the Caspian gave a new impetus to strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation of neighboring countries. During the talks, topical issues of the regional and international agenda were also considered.

“Azerbaijan is the main partner of Kazakhstan in the South Caucasus and the Caspian region. Productive interaction and full mutual understanding in all areas have been established between the two countries. The basis of this cooperation was laid by our great predecessors Nursultan Nazarbayev and Heydar Aliyev. Kazakhstan highly appreciates ties with Azerbaijan,” K. Tokayev said.

Ilham Aliyev noted with pleasure the ongoing development of Kazakh-Azerbaijani relations and the steady growth of mutual trade.

“Bilateral relations between our states are developing at a high level. I am sure that our cooperation, based on the principles of brotherhood and friendship, will continue to grow stronger,” I. Aliyev said.

At the end of the meeting, K. Tokayev invited I. Aliyev to pay an official visit to Kazakhstan.
On February 19, President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Jeenbekov received Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary Péter Szijjártó. During the meeting, the sides discussed topical issues and prospects of cooperation between two countries.

The President noticed that in recent years there was a rapid development of Kyrgyz-Hungarian relations, also promoted by the first official visit of Prime Minister of Hungary Victor Orban to Kyrgyzstan in September 2018.

President Sooronbay Jeenbekov emphasized that enhancing cooperation with Hungary would also strengthen cooperation with the institutions of the European Union (EU), and expressed readiness for solid cooperation with Hungary in all priority areas.

In turn, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary Mr. Szijjártó said that Hungary attaches great importance to the development of relations with Central Asian countries, including
Kyrgyzstan. He has noted that he looks forward to the official visit of the President of Kyrgyz Republic to Hungary scheduled for April 2020.

Péter Szijjártó expressed confidence that the planned visit would raise bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership. According to him, they are preparing bilateral documents jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic that will be signed during the visit of the President of Kyrgyzstan to Hungary.

Representatives of more than 30 large companies arrived in the Hungarian delegation to study the possibility of investment cooperation.
TURKIC CULTURE AND HERITAGE FOUNDATION SIGNED AN IMPORTANT MEMORANDUM

On February 14, the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS), with the support of the Society for Central Asian Studies and the Institute of Archaeological Research at the University of Bern, held the 22nd meeting of the IICAS Academic Council and a conference on the “Culture of Relations - Central Asia as a Center for Trade, Cultural Exchange and Conduit of knowledge”.

The event was attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Swiss Confederation Hanym Ibragimova, as well as the President of the International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation Gunay Efendiyeva.

In her speech, G. Efendiyeva spoke in details about the foundation and its goals, the need to promote the history, customs, and culture of Turkic-speaking peoples and to conduct research in this area, as well as the importance of strengthening cultural dialogue between countries.

Opening the event, IICAS Director Dmitry Voyakin emphasized the importance of the work carried out by the International Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation to protect historical and cultural heritage of Turkic peoples, and noted that he attached great importance to cooperation with the Foundation.

At the end of the event, a Memorandum of Understanding between the two parties was signed. The purpose of the memorandum is cooperation between organizations in the field of culture, history, archeology, geography, literature and linguistics, as well as joint research related to the Great Silk Road.
WESTMINSTER INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN TASHKENT WILL OPEN NEW DIRECTIONS OF TRAINING

On February 19, Westminster International University in Tashkent (WIUT) announced the opening of new areas of study in undergraduate and graduate programs.

This became known after negotiations held between the vice-chancellor of Westminster University Dr. Peter Bonfield and the rector of the International Westminster University in Tashkent Komiljon Karimov.

Following the meeting, an agreement aimed at developing strategic partnership between the two universities in the field of personnel training based on ensuring standards of quality education was signed.

In particular, the document provides for the introduction of new bachelor's degree programs in financial technologies, business management and marketing, as well as master's courses in human resource management and data analysis at the WIUT.

In order to develop concrete measures for the practical implementation of provisions of the agreement this year, Vice-Rector of University of Westminster for Global Interaction Professor Alexandra Hayes will visit Uzbekistan in early March and Peter Bonfield in November.

Agreements with the leadership of University of Westminster on joint conducting a series of events in London to familiarize the British public with rich cultural and historical heritage, tourist and investment potential of Uzbekistan were also reached.
ISTANBUL MARKED THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF TURKMENISTAN'S NEUTRALITY

On February 18, a round table was held in Istanbul (Turkey) as part of a program to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the neutral status of Turkmenistan under the motto “Turkmenistan is the Homeland of Neutrality”. The round table was organized by the General Consulate of Turkmenistan in the Republic of Turkey with the assistance of the administration of Istanbul.

The event was held in the administrative building of the Topkapi Istanbul Culture Park, attended by representatives of the Consulate General of Turkmenistan, the Cultural Center, public and scientific community, and the media.

During the round table, the creative and constructive nature of Turkmenistan's foreign policy strategy, based on a neutral legal status and an “open door” policy, was noted. Turkmenistan's contribution to strengthening of peace and stability in the region, development of multi-format international cooperation, and the successful implementation of large-scale projects were highlighted.

Significant achievements of the country in various fields and the growth of its international prestige were highlighted.