



EU – UZBEKISTAN PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION AGREEMENT

14TH MEETING OF THE EU-UZBEKISTAN SUB-COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONS

25 SEPTEMBER 2019, TASHKENT

JOINT REPORT

The EU Delegation was led by DG TRADE dealing *inter alia* with neighbourhood policy and Central Asia and EEAS Central Asia Division. Participants included DG TRADE, DG DEVCO, EEAS, and the EU Delegation in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek delegation was led by Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade – “MIFT”.

This was the 14th meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan sub-committee on Economic, trade and investment relations. The meeting took place in Tashkent, back-to-back with the 3rd round of negotiation of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA). This was a relatively short meeting in a context where the main topics of trade and economic cooperation are already discussed in-depth in other ongoing fora (EPCA negotiations, GSP+ (General System of Preferences) discussions, WTO accession), but useful to take stock of these parallel positive developments.

First the EU and Uzbekistan discussed recent economic developments in Uzbekistan and in the EU, with a focus on the latest economic reforms in Uzbekistan

The EU and Uzbekistan also discussed latest trends in bilateral trade and investment flows. According to EU statistics, in 2018, the EU exported goods for a value of 2,3bn€, which represented an increase of 35% compared to 2017, and imported goods for a value of 163m€, which actually represented a decrease of 26%. The EU is Uzbekistan 4th trade partner and represents 10, 5% of its external trade (after China, Russia and Switzerland). Among the main exports from Uzbekistan to the EU, 29% of Uzbek exports are textile, and 15% are vegetables.

The EU reaffirmed its support to the WTO accession of Uzbekistan and praised the recent submission of a revised *Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime* to the WTO secretariat. The EU also mentioned the number of questions it submitted in relation with this Memorandum, alongside other WTO members, covering most fields of trade policy: trade in goods, Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), financial services, competition, rules of origin, Intellectual Property Rights

(IPR) and Geographical Indications (GIs), subsidies, etc. The EU (DG DEVCO) summarized the technical assistance provided by the EU and implemented by the ITC. Uzbekistan confirmed its strong commitment to complete the accession process and indicated that work is ongoing to provide replies to the questions raised on the Memorandum. Several high level visits are planned to Uzbekistan, among which by the chair of the WTO Working Group on Uzbekistan

As regards the GSP+ scheme, the EU summarized the latest development that occurred after the fact-finding mission from DG TRADE and EEAS in February 2018, and notably praised Uzbekistan for the ratification of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which means that only the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is pending for ratification [*nota bene: the ratification took place on 14 October 2019*].

Finally, the EU and Uzbekistan discussed the latest steps in the negotiations of an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement: after the formal launch of the EPCA negotiations in November 2018 in Brussels, and an introductory round of negotiations in Tashkent in February this year, the substantial negotiations have started in June in Brussels and the third round took place just after the Sub-Committee itself.