



# FROM THE HISTORY OF COOPERATION BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND THE COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM

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Tourism is one of the leading and most dynamic industries in the world economy. For its rapid growth, it is recognized as the economic phenomenon of the century. Tourism is one of the few dynamically developing types of domestic business [1].

The tourism industry in Uzbekistan began its development with the formation in 1992 of the National Company "Uzbektourism". In 1993, the National Company "Uzbektourism" as a full member was admitted to the World Tourism Organization. This gave ample opportunities for establishing close contacts with travel companies in many countries of the world, and raised their interaction to a qualitatively new level. At the same time, Uzbekistan, like many other countries of the world, has become a permanent participant in the International Tourism Fair (ITB) annually organized by the World Tourism Organization [2].

Thus, the creation of the necessary tourism infrastructure in the country laid the foundation for the implementation and development of a wide network of cooperation with travel companies and firms of foreign countries. At the same time, the close cooperation of the tourism industry of Uzbekistan, carried out with the countries of Central Asia, and in particular, with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, is no exception.

It is noteworthy that the Central Asian region is distinguished by its uniqueness, both in terms of geographical location with contrasting natural and climatic features, its flora and fauna, and unique historical and cultural monuments of antiquity and modern achievements of the socio-economic, cultural and spiritual life of peoples. In this regard, over the years of independence between the republics of Central Asia at a qualitatively new level, an active relationship has been established in the field of tourism, which makes it possible to maintain and further develop the close interaction between their

peoples that existed for centuries. This form of interaction and cultural and spiritual mutual enrichment of the peoples of Central Asia is most clearly manifested between the republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Attaching great importance to the development of tourist relations between the republics of Central Asia, the leadership of Uzbekistan initiated the need to form its legislative base. This initiative found mutual support from the governments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. As a result of a unified approach and views on the development and strengthening of tourist ties, in January 1994, an Agreement was signed between representatives of the governments of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan. It provided for a wide range of cultural and spiritual interaction between the peoples of the two countries, including deepening cooperation in the fields of culture, health care, science, education, tourism and sports. A similar document was also signed in January 1994 between the governments of the Republics of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan [3].

Based on the high interest of the parties in the development of mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of tourism, in December 1997 in the city of Tashkent an Agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the field of tourism [4].

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan were established on October 22, 1992. Tajikistan also pays special attention to the development of bilateral relations with the countries of Central Asia. Analyzing the results achieved in this direction, we can say that in the absence of regional consensus and mutual understanding, it is bilateral relations that remain the most optimal format for the development of interstate relations in Central Asia. When studying



the issues of regional cooperation and integration, an important issue is the awareness and real assessment of the role and contribution of each republic or the potential capabilities of each participant in regional structures for the development of the regional economy. As the analysis of bilateral and multilateral relations in the region shows, the Republic of Tajikistan, in turn, makes a significant contribution to the development of the economy and national economy of the Central Asian countries [5].

International tourism continues to show strong and unrelenting growth, exceeding that of the global economy, with no significant signs of abating given that global arrivals are expected to grow 3.3% from 2010 to 2030, and will reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to the UNWTO long-term forecast report *Tourism on the road to 2030*. Between 2010 and 2030, tourist arrivals in developing countries (+ 4.4% per year) are expected to grow at a double rate of that of developed economies (+ 2.2% pa). With the exception of Afghanistan, the Chinese Autonomous Regions of Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, and Turkmenistan, cumulative international tourist arrivals in the CAREC region in 2018 are estimated by the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTC) at just under 20 million, with growth projected ten years to 2028, almost 5%. Despite this, considered in a global context, the aggregate share of CAREC countries (excluding the People's Republic of China) is less than 2% of world tourism [6].

The Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan was signed on January 16, 1996, the Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on friendship, confidence-building and development of cooperation was signed on November 19, 2004, the Agreement on the further strengthening of friendly relations and all-round cooperation between The Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan on October 18, 2007 laid the legal basis for cooperation between states and strengthening friendly relations between the peoples of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan [7].

In order to further deepen and expand tourist cooperation, as well as to include additional services in this area, another Agreement was signed in the city of Astana on June 8, 2000. It was achieved between the governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, which focused on cooperation in the development of sanatorium, health and tourism institutions and organizations. , for a period of 5 years [8]. The peculiarity of this Agreement was that it laid the foundation for the expansion of cooperation in the development of sanatorium, health and tourism institutions and organizations in order to create in them the most

favorable conditions for strengthening the health of citizens of their states. , a deeper acquaintance with the culture, nature and sights, as well as with historical monuments and national traditions of the peoples of neighboring countries. In addition, this document helped organizations create joint ventures and implement investment projects in the field of organizing health resort treatment, health and recreation of citizens.

According to the interstate agreements of cooperation in the field of tourism, great responsibility for its implementation was assigned to the activities of cultural and tourist institutions. In particular, on the basis of the Agreements reached, the National Company "Uzbektourism" together with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan began to develop an action plan and implement a joint tourism business. It included several directions of tourist activities, each of which was distinguished by the originality and uniqueness of the routes. So, for example, the first of the directions provided for a wide acquaintance of citizens of both states with the achievements in the field of economy, social development, culture, with nature, remarkable historical monuments, as well as with the traditions of the peoples of both countries. The second direction provided for the organization of joint tourist routes: along the Great Silk Road. The third direction is the organization of air routes through the capitals of the Central Asian republics. The fourth direction is inter-republican bus routes through the cities of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. And finally, the fifth direction - mutual tourist and excursion service - routes on tourist trains. [nine].

In addition, within the framework of the above Agreements, the NC "Uzbekтуризм" on the one hand, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the other, pay great attention to the mutual participation of their representatives in events organized by both the World Tourism Organizations on a global scale, as well as in the framework of bilateral events in the field of tourism. This creates a favorable environment for establishing close contacts between travel companies and firms from different countries, to exchange views on topical problems in the tourism industry, to outline long-term plans for mutual cooperation in order to further increase the flow of tourists.

For example, in March 1996 in Berlin (Germany) the International Tourism Fair (ITB) - 96 took place. More than 170 countries of the world took part in its work, among which Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan also presented their potential in the field of tourism [10].

The delegation of Uzbekistan at ITB - 96 was represented by 8 independent and regional



divisions of the Uzbektourism National Company, the Uzbekiston Havo Yullari National Joint Stock Company and one private travel company. The main tasks assigned to the delegation were to promote the achievements of independent Uzbekistan, its internal and foreign policy, unique opportunities in the field of tourism and, of course, to attract a large number of foreign tourists to the republic [11].

It is important to note that within the framework of ITB - 96, a Bazaar was held on the theme "The Silk Road - Questions and Problems". Representatives of the Silk Road countries, in particular Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, took part in it with their stands and materials. This event provided an opportunity to discuss the problems arising from the organization of combined tours along the "Silk Road". Much attention was paid to the continuation of the previously begun joint work with the World Tourism Organization to promote the project related to the revival of the tourist route along the Great Silk Road, which directly runs through the territory of the countries of Central Asia [12].

Another important event in the convergence of the tourism potential of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan was their participation in the 30th Meeting of the WTO Commission on Europe, which was held in Germany in June 1996. Taking part in the work of the seminar-meeting, the delegations of the Central Asian countries saw the need for propaganda for the development of the "Great Silk Road" project and attracting a large influx of tourists to it as the main goal. In this regard, Deputy Secretary General of the WTO Francesco Frangialli noted that: "The annual International Tourism Fair contributes to uniting the efforts of the countries located on the Silk Road in order to more actively develop cooperation among themselves and attract foreign tourists from Europe and America to these countries" [13].

The same meetings, where a wide range of issues of international tourist exchange were discussed, were repeatedly held in the countries of Central Asia themselves. For example, in October 2004, the 10th International Tourism Fair was held in the city of Tashkent. Representatives of travel agencies of Kazakhstan took part in its work, along with companies from many countries of the world. During the fair, each participating country presented an exhibition reflecting its tourism potential. This carries a lot of information, opening up new aspects for cooperation. This is evidenced by the numerous agreements reached between travel companies and firms in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan [14].

The same global event took place in the Republic of Kazakhstan in April 2005. Here in the city of Almaty the 5th Anniversary Kazakhstan International Tourism Fair "Tourism and Travel"

KITF-2005 was held, where, along with delegates from many countries of the world, representatives from both the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan also took part. This meeting made it possible to further expand the boundaries of interaction between travel companies and firms of the Central Asian republics [15].

So, for example, such travel companies of Uzbekistan as "Uzintur", "Osieintour-business" actively cooperate with travel companies of Kazakhstan in the field of exchange of tourists and the organization of combined tours along the route of the Great Silk Road. Among the large Kazakh tourist organizations that take an active part in the exchange of tourists are such as "Nomad Travel", "Makus Silk Road Adventures" and others [16].

In order to accelerate the development of tourism in Uzbekistan, by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 2, 2016, an authorized state body, the State Committee for Tourism Development, was established to more effectively promote the national tourism potential in the domestic and foreign markets. Today, there are 795 Travel Companies in Uzbekistan and as of 2018, the tourist flow is -5 million tourists [17].

In June 2017, in the city of Astana, the National Chamber of Kazakhstan "Atameken" and the Association of Private Tourist Organizations of Uzbekistan signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of tourism.

The Center for Promotion of the National Tourism Product under the State Committee for Tourism of Uzbekistan and the National Company "Kazakh Tourism", as well as the tourist information center Ontustik Tourism Center signed memorandums of cooperation [18].

The opening of rail and road links between the countries positively contributes to the growth of tourist flow to both countries, which we can observe today. High-speed passenger train Almaty-Tashkent, Tashkent-Almaty, additional flights Astana-Tashkent are indicators of cooperation in this area, such positive dynamics is facilitated by the visa-free regime established by the two republics. Close and coordinated interaction between tourist companies and firms of the republics plays an important role in the implementation of a regular exchange of tourists.

In 2018, breakthrough events took place in the relations between the two countries of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which brought cooperation to a qualitatively new level.

On March 9-10, 2018, the first state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.Mirziyoyev to the Republic of Tajikistan took place, during which almost all unresolved issues of bilateral relations were removed. The parties removed almost all border issues, agreed to abolish



the visa regime for up to 30 days for mutual trips of citizens of the two countries, resumed full-scale activities of checkpoints on the border between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, restored bilateral transport and communication links, incl. on the Galaba-Amuzang railway section, they resolved issues in the spheres of security and defense, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, as well as the joint use of water and energy resources and the strengthening of interregional ties [19].

The legal framework of the two countries comprises almost 170 agreements and treaties signed at the interstate, intergovernmental and interdepartmental levels.

The development of bilateral trade and economic cooperation remains a priority area of Tajik-Uzbek relations.

The volume of foreign trade turnover between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in 2020 amounted to more than \$ 300 million [20].

In the conditions of independence, the mutual interest of the peoples of Uzbekistan and the states of Central Asia in cultural and historical monuments of antiquity, as well as modern sights and achievements of socio-economic transformations is not a donkey strikes and grows. This helps to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of our republics. It should be noted that this form of cultural and spiritual interaction between peoples serves as one of the most stable forms of public diplomacy in strengthening interstate cooperation.

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