



THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR ASIAN STUDIES (EIAS)  
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Central Asia: New Economic and Political Dynamics  
Friday, 25 May 2018

Welcome Address by Moderator,  
Frédéric Carlier, EIAS Senior Associate

Your Excellency Mr Dilyor Khakimov,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Friends of Uzbekistan and Central Asia,

On behalf of the European Institute for Asian Studies, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you all and to host this roundtable. Today, our discussion will centre on the new economic and political dynamics, and Uzbekistan's role in steering this change in Central Asia. We would like to thank the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Brussels for the continuous close collaboration with our Institute, and representatives from other Central Asian Embassies present today.

As many of you are well aware, Uzbekistan is at a turning point in its young history, proving its ability to develop and strive for the sake of a better future for its citizens. Within a relatively short

timeframe the Uzbek leadership has created a solid basis to open a dialogue to solve the outstanding issues the country has been facing for years since its independence. These positive trends increase the interest in Uzbekistan and strengthen the country's position in the region and in the international arena. Uzbekistan is, indeed, punching above its weight.

Since 2016 onwards, Uzbekistan, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has embarked upon a number of unprecedented large-scale transformations coupled with an eye to facilitate bilateral and multilateral cooperation with neighbourhood states. The modernisation of the economy and diversification of intra-regional connectivity have become the key focus of the country's development agenda.

As a result of the multiple high-level meetings held in 2017 and the first five months of 2018, a number of important agreements have been signed. Within the framework of foreign policy, strategic partnerships and mutually beneficial agreements have been built upon the historical Central Asian Leaders' Summit in Astana, the Tashkent Conference on Afghanistan, the settling down of border issues with Kyrgyzstan, and resumption of talks on the construction of the Rogun dam with Tajikistan. New political realities based on the principles of good neighbourliness bring enormous potential to make a real breakthrough in the development of the country.

As Axel Goethals mentioned, the EU recognizes the potential and growing importance of Central Asia. We hope to hear today from Mr Boris Iarochevitch on the new priorities and areas for cooperation in the new EU-Central Asia Strategy to be announced in 2019.

To discuss all this, we are pleased to welcome back to our Institute His Excellency Ambassador Dilyor Khakimov. After the Ambassador's keynote remarks, we will briefly hear from our panellists, Alberto Turkstra from our Institute; Pierre Emmanuel Thomann from Eurocontinent, who has visited Uzbekistan about ten times, if I am not mistaken; and lastly, Boris Iarochevitch, Head of the Central Asia Division at the European External Action Service, before opening the floor for discussion.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to fruitful and meaningful discussions on the new dynamics in Uzbekistan and Central Asia at large.

Ambassador Khakimov, you have the floor!

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