

# **Uzbekistan: EU to open negotiations on new comprehensive agreement**

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On 16 July 2018, the Council adopted negotiating directives for the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission to negotiate an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Uzbekistan. The new agreement will replace the 1999 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and further strengthen the EU-Uzbekistan relations.

The future agreement is expected to cover areas such as political dialogue and reforms, rule of law, justice, freedom and security, human rights, migration, trade, as well as economic and sustainable development. It will promote favourable business and investment environment. It will also provide for cooperation on foreign policy issues and global challenges such as climate change, corruption and the fight against terrorism.

Under its new leadership, Uzbekistan has achieved significant progress in recent years as regards reforms, to improve human rights, to develop regional cooperation with its Central Asian neighbours and international partners, and to promote security and stability in the region. Through the envisaged Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the EU is ready to step up its engagement to further support these efforts and to bring the bilateral relations to a new level in the interest of both the EU and Uzbekistan.

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