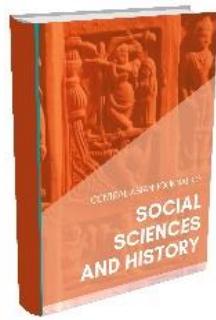




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## **Uzbekistan-France: Mutual Friendship and Strong Cooperation**

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### **Abstract:**

In this scientific article, the friendship between Uzbekistan and France, interest in economic and political relations, the visit of First President I. Karimov to France in 1993 and 1996, the visit of French President F. Mitterrand to Uzbekistan in 1994, information about the visit of the President of Uzbekistan Sh. Mirziyoyev to France in 2018 and 2022 and the visit of the President of France Emmanuel Macron to our country in November 2023, as well as information about the historical significance of the relations between Uzbekistan and France.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Friendly relations between Uzbekistan, which has its rightful place in the Central Asian region, and France in Western Europe have been going on for almost a thousand years. Political, economic and cultural relations have been established between the peoples of the two countries, and after the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, mutual relations between the two sides have further developed. Today, there is an embassy of the French side in Tashkent. Also, the French consulate is located in Samarkand. There is also an embassy of Uzbekistan in Paris. Diplomatic relations between independent Uzbekistan and France were established in March 1992.



## LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

France recognized independent Uzbekistan in January 1992. The history of relations between independent Uzbekistan and France can be divided into two periods:

I period: 1992-2016;

II period: the period from 2016 to the present day.[1]

Since 2016, the relationship between the two countries has reached its peak. After this period, Uzbekistan's policy of openness opened a wide way for relations between the two sides. If we look at the relations between the two countries, strong relations have been established several centuries ago from the times of Sahibgiron Amir Temur and the French King Charles VI. Embassy and diplomatic relations have also been established between the two countries. In the first stage of the period of relations between Uzbekistan and France: in 1992-2016, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, visited France in 1993 and 1996, [1] and the state visit of French President François Mitterrand to Uzbekistan in 1994. strengthened by the arrival. In 1995, the Embassy of Uzbekistan was opened in France. The high-level state visits of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to France in 2018 and 2022, as well as the visit of the President of France Emmanuel Macron to the Republic of Uzbekistan in November 2023, are proof that the relations between the two countries have reached a new level.

The visit of French President Mitterrand to Uzbekistan in 1994 was one of the most discussed events even at that time due to certain political reasons, and it is still one of the notable events among interested people. Mitterrand's visit to Uzbekistan is one of the last trips in his life, and he will visit this "insignificant" country despite the opposition of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and human rights organizations. After the visit, the people who came with him to Uzbekistan and who took him on a trip on behalf of Uzbekistan say that the old Mitterrand dreamed of visiting Uzbekistan at least once before his death.[2] In 2004, Jean-Pierre Thibaut, a journalist of the "Liberation" newspaper who came to Uzbekistan with Francois Mitterrand, wrote an article entitled "Mitterrand saw Samarkand and died only after that".[3]

28 years ago, on October 27-29, 1993, Islam Karimov, the first president of the Republic of Uzbekistan, paid his first official visit to France. After Uzbekistan gained independence on August 31, 1991, France was one of the first European countries to receive the President of Uzbekistan. This visit, which took place a year after the signing of the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and Uzbekistan (March 1, 1992), is an important step in the expansion of cooperation between the two countries. At the meeting between the heads of state, many important agreements

were signed, in particular, the Friendship and Cooperation Agreement was signed on October 27, 1993. French President Francois Mitterrand greeted his Uzbek counterpart with the following words: "I hope that the people you meet and what you see in Paris will tell you about France, the close relationship between Uzbekistan and France that I know of." and with your desire to maintain strong relationships, allows for a clearer vision.[4]

About the visit of the First President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov to France in 1996, Jean-Claude Richard, the ambassador of France to Uzbekistan at that time, says the following: During the time I was working in your country, I witnessed many bright situations. Among them is the official visit of First President Islam Karimov to France in April 1996 and his meeting with President Jacques Chirac, which took place in a very warm atmosphere. At that time, the head of our state quietly asked me when the opening of the exhibition about Amir Temur in Paris with the participation of Islam Karimov is planned. And in the evening, although his participation was not planned, Jacques Chirac came to this event and said that the leader of Uzbekistan made a very good impression on him. The First President of Uzbekistan awarded me with the Order of "Friendship". I am always grateful to him for his support of our work with our Uzbek colleagues to develop cooperation and strengthen mutual understanding between the two countries.[5]

The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to this country on October 8-9, 2018 at the invitation of his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron. At the meeting between the Presidents of the two countries, views were exchanged on the further development of Uzbekistan-France relations, regional and international issues of interest to the parties, and important documents were signed in various fields. Agreements were reached in trade-economic, tourism, cultural-humanitarian areas. The details of this historic visit were widely reported in the French media.[6] On October 5, 2018, in connection with the official visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to France, MEDEF International and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan jointly organized a Business Forum. The forum was held on October 5 in Paris. French and Uzbek enterprises operating in various fields such as energy, construction, aviation, agriculture, food industry, chemical technology participated in this forum. During the forum, representatives of a number of enterprises and state organizations of France and Uzbekistan signed agreements, exchanged views on the economic reforms being carried out in Uzbekistan, investment and cooperation prospects.[6]

President Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to Paris on November 21-22, 2022 at the invitation of the President of the Republic. During the visit, 12 agreements on cooperation in the fields of civil service, fight against corruption, education, science, cultural heritage and civil aviation were signed. During the visit, many economic agreements were signed with French companies in the fields of energy, water resources management, transport and tourism.[10]

In connection with the official visit of the President of the Republic of France to the Republic of Uzbekistan on November 1-2, 2023, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the President of the Republic of France in order to further develop cooperation in order to raise the relations between the two countries to the level of strategic partnership in the future. accepted the joint statement. [7] This visit, which became the peak of our bilateral relations, made it possible to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between France and Uzbekistan.[4] During this visit, a number of agreements and memorandums were signed. Further development of mutual relations between the two sides was decided.

### **As a result of the visit, the following was achieved:**

- The French leader fully supported the program of irreversible reforms implemented in New Uzbekistan.
- The leaders discussed in detail the issues of further development of comprehensive cooperation between France and Uzbekistan and agreed to raise bilateral relations to the level of strategic partnership.
- It was noted that in the following years, multifaceted Uzbek-French relations are rapidly developing in all directions.
- It was noted with satisfaction that the number of trade and joint ventures has doubled. The portfolio of current and prospective projects has exceeded 10 billion euros.
- A 1 billion euro Strategic Cooperation Program is being implemented with the French Development Agency.
- Measures for the promotion of new large-scale projects in "green" energy, mining and processing of raw resources, innovative agriculture, water supply, logistics, infrastructure development, tourism and other areas were discussed.
- France will continue to support Uzbekistan's efforts to build confidence in Central Asia, as well as our country's accession to the WTO and the signing of the Extended Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union as soon as possible. It was noted that it is ready.
- It was noted the importance of continuing political dialogue, strengthening cooperation in the field of security, effective fight against emerging threats and risks.
- It was noted with pleasure that the agenda of cultural-humanitarian cooperation is rich. It was said that interest in learning the French language is increasing in Uzbekistan. In this regard, the parties welcomed the opening of the branch of the French alliance in Samarkand.
- It was agreed to speed up the opening of the Uzbek-French higher education institution in Tashkent and to expand cooperation in the training of French language teachers.
- The heads of state also exchanged views on current issues of international and regional importance.[9]

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we can say that the relations between the two nations, which have a long history of mutual friendship, reached their peak after 2016. Relations between the two countries have developed rapidly in all aspects: political, economic, cultural, and educational. In particular, the state visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to Uzbekistan on November 1-2, 2023 was a historic event. The adoption of this Joint Statement by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the President of the Republic of France for the further development of cooperation in order to raise the relations between the two countries to the level of strategic partnership in the future indicates the further development of relations between the two countries.

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