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EU – Central Asia Economic Forum: bringing regions closer

Today, the European Union – Central Asia Economic Forum took place in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic. This high-level gathering is the first in a series of events taking place in Central Asian countries in the coming years, within the framework of the [EU Strategy on Central Asia](#) adopted in 2019. Strengthening economic ties between the European Union and Central Asia is one of the priorities of the strategy.

The Forum offered an opportunity to exchange views on priority areas for the Central Asia region in respect of sustainable economic development, with the aim of generating beneficial outcomes for all sides. The three main areas of the Forum were green recovery, digitalisation, and a better business environment.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, recorded a [video message](#) for the participants at the opening of the Forum, during which she underlined how EU-Central Asia cooperation can help economic recovery. The President added that *"it can make Central Asian economies stronger, fairer and more sustainable in the long run. This is exactly what we are pushing for in Europe, too."*

The Forum was led on the EU side by Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade Valdis **Dombrovskis** and gathered Prime Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers of Central Asian countries as well as Ministers and high-level officials from more than 15 EU Member States, representatives of the EU and Central Asia private sector, international financial institutions, international organisations and representative from civil society.

Executive Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade, Valdis **Dombrovskis** said: *"With the right environment to attract investment and support business, greater diversification and resilience is achievable for the economies of Central Asia. But this is not all: Central Asia countries also have an opportunity to promote a post-Covid recovery that is sustainable, digital and inclusive. The European Union will continue to be Central Asia's trusted partner. Today's forum is a very important milestone in our region-to-region cooperation. It showed very clearly that we share the ambition to deepen our partnership, and the forum outcomes gives us a solid foundation for taking forward this work."*

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In a joint press statement [link here](#) participants confirmed their commitment to strengthen EU-Central Asia cooperation to support the transformation of Central Asian economies into diversified and competitive private-sector driven economies. This transformation will stimulate job creation, better integration in regional and global value chains, while providing opportunities and a level-playing field for all economic actors, as well as helping Central Asian states build back better.

Background

This new regional platform for economic dialogue between the EU and Central Asian partners was launched in December 2020 to support green and resilient recovery from the socio-economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and build back better. It aims to accelerate further diversification of the Central Asian economies, boosting trade, reinforcing the rule of law and modernisation of regulatory framework. The Forum serves as a platform for intra and inter-regional dialogue that will help translate goals of the EU Strategy on Central Asia into action.

For More Information

[Factsheet on EU-Central Asia relations](#)

[Factsheet on EU-Kazakhstan relations](#)

[Factsheet on EU-Tajikistan relations](#)

[Factsheet on EU-Uzbekistan relations](#)

[Factsheet on EU-Kyrgyz Republic relations](#)

[Factsheet on EU-Turkmenistan relations](#)