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REPORT

on Uzbekistan
(2022/2195(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

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Rapporteur for the opinion of the associated committee pursuant to Rule 57 of
the Rules of Procedure:
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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on Uzbekistan
(2022/2195(INI))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 15 May 2019 entitled ‘The EU and Central Asia: New opportunities for a stronger partnership’ (JOIN(2019)0009),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 17 June 2019 on the New Strategy on Central Asia,
- having regard to the joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 19 September 2018 entitled ‘Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy’ (JOIN(2018)0031),
- having regard to the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Energy between the European Union and the Republic of Uzbekistan of 24 January 2011 and renewed in February 2017,
- having regard to the European Union/Council of Europe joint programme entitled ‘Central Asia Rule of Law Programme’ (2020-2023) signed on 28 November 2019,
- having regard to the Joint Communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 1 December 2021 entitled ‘The Global Gateway’ (JOIN(2021)30),
- having regard to the outcomes of the 18th EU-Central Asia Foreign Ministers’ meeting held on 17 November 2022 in Samarkand, which focused on finding solutions to common challenges,
- having regard to the joint press communiqué by Heads of State of Central Asia and the President of the European Council, issued following the first regional high-level meeting held in Astana on 27 October 2022,
- having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service (EEAS) of 4 July 2022 on the latest developments in Uzbekistan,
- having regard to the joint press statement on 28 October 2022 by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Charles Michel, President of the European Council,

- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, of the other part¹,
- having regard to the 18th meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement Sub-Committee on Justice and Home Affairs, Human Rights and related issues on 29 March 2022,
- having regard to the statement by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Tashkent on 15 March 2023,
- having regard to the concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Uzbekistan of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women of 1 March 2022, the third periodic report of Uzbekistan of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of February 2022 and the fifth periodic report of Uzbekistan of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of September 2022,
- having regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989,
- having regard to the concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee on the fifth periodic report of 1 May 2020 of Uzbekistan regarding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),
- having regard to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1984,
- having regard to the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism following an official visit to Uzbekistan from 29 November to 7 December 2021, published on 25 February 2022,
- having regard to Uzbekistan's 2021-2026 national strategy on countering extremism and terrorism,
- having regard to the Final Report of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR) Election Observation Mission on the 24 October 2021 presidential election published on 22 April 2022,
- having regard to the statement of preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE ODIHR Limited Referendum Observation Mission to the Republic of Uzbekistan published on 1 May 2023;
- having regard to its recommendation of 26 March 2019 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the new comprehensive agreement between the EU and Uzbekistan²,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Uzbekistan,

¹ [OJ L 229, 31.8.1999, p. 3.](#)

² [OJ C 108, 26.3.2021, p. 126.](#)

- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on International Trade,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A9-0227/2023),
- A. whereas Uzbekistan plays a key role in Central Asia, which is a region of strategic interest to the EU in terms of security, connectivity, energy diversification, conflict resolution and the defence of the multilateral rules-based international order;
 - B. whereas negotiations on the European Union-Uzbekistan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA), which modernises the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed in 1999, were formally launched on 23 November 2018 and were successfully concluded on 6 July 2022; whereas the EPCA will require Parliament's consent for it to enter into force;
 - C. whereas the Government of Uzbekistan has been making efforts to balance economic growth with environmental protection; whereas reported environmental concerns include land degradation, soil salinisation, reduced water quality and water erosion;
 - D. whereas the EU has allocated EUR 76 million for the first four years (2021-2024) of its seven-year Multi-Annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Uzbekistan, with an additional EUR 7 million earmarked for supporting human rights and civil society organisations;
 - E. whereas Central Asia is facing one of the most severe water crises on earth, which has seriously limited the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the region; whereas only more than half of the population in Uzbekistan has access to safe drinking water, with rural areas having significantly lower water security than urban areas; whereas agriculture, in particular the intensive cotton industry, consumes more than 90 % of Uzbekistan's water; whereas the water flowing through the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers, which provide much of Uzbekistan's water supply, is expected to decrease by up to 15 % by 2050;
 - F. whereas, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its disastrous agricultural policy and unitary water management system, the security and stability of the Central Asia region have been greatly affected by water disputes; notes that climate change in Central Asia has affected water resources and intense human activities have led to water overexploitation; whereas reckless water mismanagement and pollution of the main rivers to irrigate cotton fields, started by the Soviet regime and largely continued in modern times, encompassing the six countries of the region, has resulted in the almost complete disappearance of the Aral Sea and many of its sub-lakes and exposed the area's vulnerable population to disastrous health, ecological and social problems; whereas frequent water conflicts and political instability have limited unified planning and efficient allocation of transboundary rivers, leading to the ineffective exploitation and utilisation of water resources in the region;
 - G. whereas the EU has contributed over EUR 5.2 million to the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region under the European Green Deal; whereas the EU committed to planting over 27 000 trees in 2022, in cooperation with the Uzbek

Government's attempts to reclaim land from the Aralkum Desert;

- H. whereas protests erupted in the Republic of Karakalpakstan on 1 July 2022 following the publication of proposed amendments to Uzbekistan's constitution, which would have abolished its status as a sovereign republic within Uzbekistan and its right to secede; whereas at least 21 people were killed and over 270 were injured, with some detainees reporting torture and ill-treatment in the ensuing crackdown by the authorities; whereas human rights groups and activists reported that security forces used unjustifiable lethal force and other excessive responses to disperse mainly peaceful protesters; whereas 516 people were detained, including journalists, and some were held incommunicado for weeks following the protests; whereas 22 people were sentenced on 13 January 2023 for their participation in the unrest and Dauletmurat Tajimuratov, a lawyer accused of leading the unrest, was sentenced to 16 years in prison; whereas on 17 March 2023, the second trial against another 39 people charged with participating in the protests ended with lengthy prison sentences of up to 11 years being handed down;
- I. Whereas the Uzbek Government publicly claims that there are over 10 000 civil society organisations (CSOs) currently operating in Uzbekistan, while civil rights groups indicate that the majority of these organisations are in fact government-organised non-governmental organisations;
- J. whereas economic and political reforms undertaken under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev have led the country to a gradual improvement, but further efforts still need to be made, in particular the promised revision of the Criminal Code and a new non-governmental organisation (NGO) code; whereas Uzbekistan is ranked as 'not free' in Freedom House's 2023 Freedom in the World and 2022 Freedom on the Net rankings and is ranked 137th out of 180 countries in Reporters Without Borders' 2023 World Press Freedom Index, compared to being in 133rd position in 2022; whereas Uzbekistan is ranked 126th out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perception Index;
- K. whereas the OSCE stated that the 2021 presidential election lacked genuine competition and meaningful engagement between candidates and with citizens and noted significant procedural irregularities;
- L. whereas the Senate of the Oliy Majlis set 30 April 2023 as the date for a referendum on constitutional reforms after postponing it due to the 2022 crisis in Karakalpakstan; whereas the amendments presented in the referendum affect about two thirds of the constitution; whereas the amendments include a provision that would enable the president to remain in office for another two seven-year terms; whereas according to the Central Election Commission, the turnout for the referendum was 84.5 % and 90.2 % of the votes were in favour of the new constitution;
- M. whereas the OSCE ODIHR Limited Referendum Observation Mission concluded in its preliminary findings and conclusions that 'the referendum was introduced as a continuation of broader reforms implemented over the last years but took place in an environment short of genuine political pluralism and competition' and that there was 'the need to further encourage alternative views, provide opportunities for independent civil society and respect for fundamental freedoms, which continue to be restricted';

whereas according to the OSCE ODIHR Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions, ‘observers noted widespread misuse of administrative resources’;

- N. whereas in the light of growing Chinese influence in the region, Uzbekistan and China have been expanding their economic cooperation in recent years; whereas the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project would make Uzbekistan a gateway to South Asia and connect the two regions while avoiding Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, but would also be a core part of the Belt and Road Initiative;
- O. whereas significant human rights issues continue to be reported in Uzbekistan, including cases of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, despite the practice being prohibited by law; whereas other reported human rights concerns include the arbitrary arrests or detention, arrests and imprisonment of political prisoners, problems with the independence of the judiciary, corruption and restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, media and speech, including on the internet; whereas defamation and insult, including insulting the president, remain criminal offences, despite President Mirziyoyev’s pledge in 2020 to decriminalise both offences; whereas blogger Sobirjon Babaniyazov was sentenced to three years in prison for insulting the president online;
- P. whereas Uzbekistan has increased its imprisonment of journalists and bloggers in recent years, including of Otabek Sattoriy, an independent blogger, investigative journalist and activist serving a six year and six-month prison sentence for his reporting on corruption; whereas a November 2022 decision by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found Sattoriy’s detention to be in violation of international law; whereas other journalists and bloggers sentenced for their reporting or expression include Miraziz Bazarov, a blogger put under house arrest in April 2021 and sentenced to three years of restricted freedom on charges of slander for exercising his right to freedom of expression, Fazilkhoja Arifkhojayev, a blogger arrested in June 2021 and sentenced to seven years and six months for reposting and commenting on religious matters on social media, and Lolagul Kallykhanova, the founder of Makan.uz, arrested in July 2022 and sentenced to eight years of restricted liberty for her alleged participation in the Karakalpakstan protests; whereas Valijon Kalonov, a government critic who called for a boycott of the 2021 presidential elections, is being held in a psychiatric hospital in the Samarkand region after a court ruled that he should undergo compulsory psychiatric treatment;
- Q. whereas in March 2020, the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which monitors compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, expressed concern about ‘continued reports of torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence and rape, by prison officials and law enforcement personnel against persons deprived of liberty, including individuals detained on what appear to be politically motivated charges’;
- R. whereas in January 2020, the UN Committee against Torture reported that ‘torture and ill-treatment continue to be routinely committed by, at the instigation of and with the consent of the State party’s law enforcement, investigative and prison officials, principally for the purpose of extracting confessions or information to be used in criminal proceedings’; whereas President Mirziyoyev’s promises to address the root causes of torture in state custody have led to the adoption of some positive measures

such as legislation stipulating that evidence obtained under torture is not admissible in court; whereas these legal safeguards are not implemented consistently and cases of torture are typically not properly investigated by the authorities; whereas detainees often refrain from lodging complaints for fear of reprisals;

- S. whereas Muslims who practice their faith outside state control continue to be targeted by the authorities with spurious criminal charges related to religious extremism; notes, for example, that Bobirjon Tukhtamurodov was sentenced to over five years in prison for participating in a banned religious organisation and other Muslims, including Oybek Khamidov, Khasan Abdirakhimov and Alimardon Sultonov, were imprisoned on extremism-related criminal charges;
- T. whereas the righting of past wrongs against individuals in Uzbekistan who were imprisoned illegally and in violation of their rights is unfinished; whereas while Uzbekistan has released dozens of former prisoners of conscience in recent years, the authorities have not taken steps to rehabilitate these individuals, who remain convicted of crimes under the law, or to repair the harm caused to them by their lengthy detentions and torture and the abuse that many endured, isolation from their family and friends and loss of work, among other impacts;
- U. whereas Uzbekistan adopted a national strategy in July 2021 to counter extremism and terrorism for the period 2021-2026; whereas the stated aim of the strategy is to pursue an effective and coordinated state policy to counter extremism and terrorism and to ensure national security and the rights and freedoms of citizens; whereas the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan heightened Uzbekistan's concerns about the potential spillover of terrorism from Afghanistan to its Central Asian neighbours, particularly by the Islamic State – Khorasan Province, as well as the Islamic Jihad Union, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Katibat al-Imam al-Bukhari and Jamaat Ansarullah; whereas Uzbekistan continues to remain an active participant in the C5+1 diplomatic platform and related counter-terrorism/countering violent extremism (CT/CVE) cooperation;
- V. whereas a recent survey conducted by the Uzbek Family and Women research institute found that one in three women experienced abuse from their husbands and one in four from their mother-in-law; whereas only 7 % of domestic violence cases reach courts; whereas most victims of domestic violence are unable to access legal support as they are financially dependent on their spouses; whereas victims of domestic violence also suffer from inadequate emergency assistance, insufficient numbers of shelters and funding for hotlines, as well as a lack of trained social workers and psychologists; whereas femicide by husbands or other relatives is a common result of the impunity for domestic violence, although no official statistics are available; whereas child marriages are still prevalent in some rural areas of Uzbekistan and hinder women's rights in the country by limiting their educational and job opportunities;
- W. whereas under Article 120 of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan, consensual same-sex conduct between men is a criminal offence punishable by up to three years in prison; whereas this law not only violates the human rights of gay and bisexual men, but also further marginalises the broader LGBTIQ community, creating a hostile and discriminatory environment, hindering their ability to access basic rights and services and making it challenging for them to live their lives freely and openly;

- X. whereas Uzbekistan suffered serious and unprecedented energy shortages during the winter of 2022-2023, which left large parts of the country without heating and electricity and contributed to the decreasing public confidence in the state's administration;
- Y. whereas Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs visited Uzbekistan on 23 and 24 February 2022; whereas its Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan, EU-Uzbekistan and EU-Tajikistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and for relations with Turkmenistan and Mongolia has regularly visited Uzbekistan;
- Z. whereas Uzbekistan withdrew from the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organization in 2018; whereas since Russia launched its unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression on Ukraine, Uzbekistan has taken a neutral stance and called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict; whereas on 17 March 2022, former Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov stated that Uzbekistan would not recognise the separatists states of Donetsk and Luhansk in Ukraine;

EU-Uzbekistan relations

1. Welcomes the completion of negotiations on the EU-Uzbekistan EPCA, which creates a new, modern and ambitious framework for deepening bilateral relations; reiterates that the agreement puts a strong emphasis on shared values, democracy and the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and sustainable development; notes that it also lays the groundwork for enhanced cooperation in foreign and security policy, including on issues such as regional stability, digital connectivity, international cooperation and conflict prevention; underlines the importance of increased EU-Uzbekistan cooperation, in particular in the light of recent geopolitical events, such as Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine;
2. Calls for a swift completion of the necessary legal and technical procedures and for the signing of the EPCA, which would open the way for Parliament to exercise its prerogative regarding the ratification of the agreement; underlines the importance of Parliament's close involvement in monitoring the implementation of all parts of the EPCA once it enters into force;
3. Notes the ambitious reforms planned under the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026, which is aimed at achieving genuine change in the country in terms of socioeconomic development, efficient administration, a more independent judicial system and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; welcomes measures to improve the anti-corruption system and calls on the authorities to continue and reinforce their efforts in this regard, taking into account the conclusions of the Second International Tashkent Anti-Corruption Forum; calls for the inclusion in the reforms agenda of guarantees for religious and press freedoms, including access to free and open internet and media; stresses that the constitutional reform is an opportunity to strengthen the rule of law and to give the reforms a solid legal foundation; calls on the authorities of Uzbekistan to continue this process in consultation with citizens, civil society and stakeholders, including the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, based on international norms and best practices;
4. Takes note of the results of the constitutional referendum in Uzbekistan held on

30 April 2023, which approved the new constitution that aims to bring significant changes to the country's legal framework; is, however, concerned about the provisions that allow the President to extend his time in office; regrets that the government changed the limits of the term in a non-transparent and non-democratic manner and urges the government to follow the principles of democracy and the rule of law; underlines that the process of Uzbekistan's democratisation should be accelerated;

5. Welcomes the fact that the OSCE ODIHR deployed a limited referendum observation mission on 28 March 2023 in order to assess the way in which the referendum was conducted; calls on the Uzbek authorities to take careful note of the findings and conclusions of the Limited Referendum Observation Mission and to implement the recommendations from the ODIHR 2021 Election Observation Mission Final Report, including to revise legislative and administrative requirements for the registration of political parties and to establish a clear separation between state and party, along with effective sanctions against the misuse of administrative resources; calls on the authorities to further reform the electoral legal framework in order to allow the participation of all democratic candidates in future elections and to create a genuinely pluralistic political environment;

Regional cooperation, international relations and global challenges

6. Considers Central Asia to be a region of strategic interest for the EU in terms of security, connectivity, energy diversification, conflict resolution and the defence of the multilateral rules-based international order; notes that Uzbekistan is uniquely positioned to be the driving force for regional cooperation that would help Central Asia become a more resilient, prosperous and more closely interconnected economic and political space; welcomes Uzbekistan's engagement on the C5+1 platform; encourages the EU to intensify its political, economic and security engagements with Central Asia in line with its geostrategic importance and in keeping with the values of democracy, human rights and rule of law that underpin EU external action;
7. Underlines the great potential of mutually beneficial cooperation on sustainable and digital connectivity, in particular through its Global Gateway initiative on energy, water and security, but also through a multi-faceted approach to diversify trade routes, foster greater private investment, enhance cooperation in science and technology, health care, industrial production and capacity building, provide job training and education, and foster people-to-people contacts; underlines, in this respect, the importance of the EU's cooperation and dialogue programmes such as Border Management in Central Asia, Central Asia Drug Action Programme and Law Enforcement in Central Asia, which are instrumental to cooperation in these policy areas;
8. Considers that the EU's 2019 Strategy on Central Asia needs to be updated further in order to reflect the consequences of multiple recent geopolitical crises, including Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the global ambitions of China and political changes in neighbouring countries;
9. Recognises that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its implications present both challenges and opportunities for Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, which have traditionally maintained close relations with Russia; regrets that Uzbekistan has

not condemned Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and encourages the authorities to clearly do so in line with the international community; welcomes former Foreign Minister Kamilov's statement of 17 March 2022 in which he asks for an immediate stop to hostilities in Ukraine while acknowledging Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; notes at the same time that the Uzbek authorities have not recognised the independence of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk republics; deplores the fact that Uzbekistan abstained in the votes on the UN General Assembly resolutions on Ukraine, in particular those of 2 March 2022, 24 March 2022 and 23 February 2023 demanding an end to the Russian offensive and immediate withdrawal from Ukraine; regrets that Uzbekistan opposed the expulsion of Russia from the UN Human Rights Council on 7 April 2022; regrets the appearance of the President of Uzbekistan at the 9 May 2023 Victory Parade in Moscow;

10. Notes the commitment of the political leadership of Uzbekistan not to allow the circumvention of sanctions imposed on Russia and Belarus and expresses hope that they will stick to this commitment; calls on the Commission to ensure that the 11th package of sanctions against Russia addresses sanction circumvention via Central Asia, as the sharp rise in trade between the countries in this region and the Russian Federation since last year indicates that it could be a transshipment point to Russia and Belarus of goods and technologies under sanction; calls for the EU to closely engage with the authorities on this matter;
11. Welcomes the fact that the Government and the people of Uzbekistan have stepped up to provide food and medical assistance to Ukraine and invites them to continue providing assistance to Ukraine in the face of Russia's war of aggression; welcomes, in the light of Russia's conscription and crackdown on fundamental freedoms, Uzbekistan's positive role in welcoming a great number of Russian citizens fleeing Russia for various political reasons; welcomes the statement of Uzbekistan's Embassy in Moscow that any form of participation in military activities on the territory of foreign countries is considered to be a mercenary activity, made in response to calls for some Uzbek citizens residing in Russia to join Russia's ongoing, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine;
12. Recognises Uzbek foreign policy principles of abstention from military alliances, refusal to deploy troops beyond its national territories or to host foreign military bases, and non-intervention in the internal affairs of foreign countries; commends Uzbekistan's role on multilateral platforms, including its important initiatives in the framework of the UN and other international organisations for addressing contemporary regional and global issues;
13. Welcomes Uzbekistan's 2021-2026 national strategy to counter extremism and terrorism and calls for the EU and the Member States to explore closer counter-terrorism cooperation, especially in ensuring that there is no spillover of terrorism from Afghanistan to the wider region;
14. Acknowledges that there are serious challenges to regional engagement in the current geopolitical and security climate, particularly with the global non-recognition of the Taliban government in Afghanistan and the impact of international sanctions on economic plans and connectivity initiatives;

15. Notes Uzbekistan's long-standing and close relations with Afghanistan, which have continued since the takeover by the Taliban; commends its efforts to mitigate the severe humanitarian crisis in the country through the provision of electricity and humanitarian aid, in particular to Afghan women and girls, and through the establishment in October 2021 of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Humanitarian Logistics Hub in Termez near the Uzbek-Afghan border;
16. Invites Uzbekistan to use its contacts with the Taliban in a constructive manner to insist on the rights and humanity of women and girls to be respected and more generally to call for respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Afghans, including minorities and persons with disabilities, which are essential conditions for greater international engagement with Afghanistan, including through connectivity to support human rights and preventing the effects of regional radicalisation and conflict-induced migration; reiterates its strong condemnation of the Taliban's decisions to ban women and girls from attending secondary and university education and to prohibit the employment of women by NGOs and the United Nations; deplores the fact that persons with disabilities continue to face discrimination, limited services and a lack of a legislative or institutional framework to ensure that their fundamental rights in Afghanistan are respected;
17. Commends Uzbekistan for hosting refugees from Afghanistan and for the annual international meetings on Afghanistan since 2019, which have seen participation from a diverse range of actors and provided a forum for constructive discussions on regional stability; notes, however, that Uzbekistan is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention, which creates difficulties for a long-term solution for Afghans in Uzbekistan; urges the Uzbek Government to sign and ratify the Convention and allow more Afghan refugees to seek refuge or to transit through the country;
18. Welcomes the collaboration between the EU and Uzbekistan on providing children, young people and families who have been forced to flee Afghanistan with UNICEF support, including through inclusive education, social services and legal aid; calls on the Member States and the EEAS to engage with Uzbekistan on assisting women who try to flee Afghanistan;
19. Welcomes the historic agreement of 27 January 2023 between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on the delimitation of the border between the two countries, which settles the outstanding issues between the two sides and completes a process that lasted three decades; welcomes also the signing of the declaration of comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries; welcomes the fact that these agreements will also contribute to deepening further bilateral relations and cooperation, including in the trade and energy sectors; equally welcomes the agreement of 22 December 2022 between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the demarcation of the Kazakh-Uzbek state border, which is the result of 19 years of negotiations; commends Uzbekistan for being able to settle complex issues of water use, delimitation and border disputes with its neighbours, such as Tajikistan; acknowledges Uzbekistan's instrumental role in fostering closer ties with neighbouring countries, including Kazakhstan, through a range of connectivity projects; emphasises the importance of regional stability and urges all parties to engage in constructive dialogue to resolve any potential conflict in a peaceful and diplomatic manner;

20. Welcomes the Uzbek government's adoption of the 2020-2030 water sector development strategy and its efforts to mobilise international support to tackle the consequences of the desiccation and salinisation of the Aral Sea and the collapse of its entire ecosystem; encourages further regional and global cooperation to find potential solutions, such as the recently announced Aral Culture Summit project, which will bring together the local and international community and promote sustainable agriculture; welcomes the fact that the EU and other organisations are involved in improving the environmental and socioeconomic situation in the Aral Sea region;
21. Welcomes Uzbekistan's growing role in regional water diplomacy and calls on the Commission and the EEAS to assist Uzbekistan in its cooperation with its neighbouring countries, particularly with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, as well as to provide Uzbekistan and its relevant neighbours with the technical and financial assistance needed for restoring the collapsed ecosystems of the Aral Sea and its basin by increasing water flow in order to decrease salinity, improving irrigation canals and helping to introduce crops requiring less water and fewer toxic products, among other measures; stresses the importance of improving regional relations in the context of water, as research has shown that the water crisis in Central Asia is not caused by a shortage of total water resources but by water allocation practices; highlights the fact that reconciling conflicts, including those concerning water distribution, is crucial for achieving long-term regional stability and the SDGs;

Human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law and civil society

22. Condemns the repression and violence against the Karakalpak people and regrets the loss of life during protests in the Republic of Karakalpakstan on 1 and 2 July 2022; urges the authorities of Uzbekistan to refrain from using disproportionate force against peaceful protesters and to establish a genuinely independent, impartial and effective investigation into the events, including into the deaths and severe injuries that occurred and into the actions taken by the security forces, including the weapons they used; notes the efforts by the Uzbek authorities to open these trials to the public and media, but underlines the importance of transparent judicial trials based on respecting the rights of defendants and adhering to good international practice; welcomes the Uzbek authorities' commitment to maintaining the current constitutional status of Karakalpakstan;
23. Reiterates the importance of people's right to freedom of assembly, the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom of speech; calls for an independent investigation into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment reported by defendants during the trials linked to the protests and by activist and lawyer Dauletmurat Tazhimuratov, as well as into the death of Polat Shamshetov who died days after being convicted; calls upon the Uzbek authorities to ensure that detainees and prisoners are held in conditions consistent with respect for their human dignity; calls for convictions for plotting to seize power by disruption of the constitutional order to be overturned, since the protesters were calling for the constitution to be upheld; regrets that Karakalpak protesters have been convicted and sentenced to long prison terms and calls for the release of all political prisoners, including those arrested during the Karakalpakstan protests, as well as the thousands of others in prison on politically motivated charges;
24. Expresses concern about reports of transnational repression by Uzbekistan targeting

Karakalpaks from the diaspora in the aftermath of the July 2022 protests, as Karakalpak activists have been arrested in or forcibly deported from other countries;

25. Underlines the important role that civil society can play in supporting effective and inclusive reforms and good governance; regrets the significant barriers to NGO registration as several independent CSOs have repeatedly been denied registration on grounds that appear to be politically motivated; regrets the obligations imposed on NGOs receiving foreign funding by the Regulation on Coordination Between Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organisations and Public Authorities in the Implementation of International Grant Projects approved by Decree No 328 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan on 13 June 2022, which shrink the space for civil society activities and impede the exercise of the freedom of association; underlines that the barrier to NGO registration may also affect EU-Uzbekistan business relations, since EU and Member States' due diligence legislation may require NGO monitoring capacity;
26. Calls on the Government of Uzbekistan to allow independent human rights organisations, including international human rights groups, to register in the country and to carry out their activities without undue state interference, as well as to adopt an NGO code in line with international standards;
27. Calls on the Uzbek authorities to continue to make progress in their compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles);
28. Expresses deep concern over Uzbekistan's poor record on democracy, media freedom, human rights and the rule of law, as reported by international human rights organisations; regrets that opposition parties are practically not allowed to function inside the country and that ethnic and religious minorities are often underrepresented in state structures and discriminated against; calls on the Uzbek Government to respect the freedom of association both for NGOs and political parties; regrets that despite some improvements in the fight against corruption, bribery, nepotism and extortion are still widespread throughout the public administration;
29. Calls on the Uzbek Government to restart the reform of the Criminal Code in line with international human rights standards and the recommendations of UN treaty bodies, in particular to amend the articles related to overly broad definitions of offences against the state and extremism, to repeal articles allowing for the arbitrary extension of sentences of political prisoners, to decriminalise 'defamation' and 'insult', including online criticism of the President, and to amend the definition of torture in accordance with the UN Convention Against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; regrets the lack of human rights conditionality and stresses that EU funding should be conditional on the improvement of the human rights situation;
30. Underlines the importance of strengthening the role and work of the Oliy Majlis in order to improve parliamentary oversight; calls for improvements to interparliamentary cooperation between the European Parliament, in particular the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, and the Uzbek Parliament on issues of shared interest, such as improving democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental

freedoms;

31. Condemns the reported ongoing use of torture, cruel and inhuman treatment in detention and prisons in Uzbekistan and calls for legal safeguards to be implemented consistently and for proper investigations into all reports of torture;
32. Welcomes progress made towards the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and encourages the authorities to complete this process as soon as possible;
33. Deplores the lack of pluralism of the media in Uzbekistan; calls for the financial sustainability and independence of media outlets to be ensured in order to eliminate political influence; calls for greater transparency on media ownership with a view to enhancing media independence and pluralism; notes the need to strengthen the resilience of the Uzbek media against propaganda and disinformation through the promotion of Uzbek language media and digital training programmes, including the provision of information about the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and Digital Services Act;
34. Condemns any threats against journalists and bloggers and calls on the authorities to ensure respect for the rights of journalists, independent bloggers, content producers and human rights defenders and their protection against violence harassment, unfounded detention, pressure, threats against them and their families and torture and to investigate any attacks against them;
35. Condemns the recent arrests and persecution of journalists accused of participating in the July 2022 protests and the sentencing of Dauletmurat Tajimuratov; calls for the release of journalists, independent bloggers, government critics and human rights defenders, including those from Karakalpakstan, who have been prosecuted for their work; notes, in this regard, the specific cases of bloggers Otobek Sattoriv, Miraziz Bazarov and Fazilhoja Arifhojaev, as well as Karakalpak journalist Lolagul Kallykhanova and others, including Sobirjon Babaniyazov and Valijon Kalonov;
36. Strongly condemns the draft information code proposed by Uzbekistan's Information and Mass Communications Agency and published in mid-December 2022, which, if adopted, poses a serious threat to freedom of expression and human rights in the country, and calls for its withdrawal; reminds the authorities of the importance of upholding the freedom of expression, both online and offline, the freedom of assembly, the freedom of association and the independence of the media;
37. Stresses the importance of refraining from limiting or blocking websites and calls on the government to ensure that any restrictions are strictly limited to cases where such limitation is in line with international standards, is based on objective and transparent criteria defined in law, and is content-specific, while making sure that the public is duly informed;
38. Calls on the government to protect the right to freedom of religion and to amend the 2021 Religion Law in accordance with recommendations issued by the former UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief in a report of 29 March 2023, which notes that the definitions of extremism and terrorism are vague and overbroad,

leading to arbitrary detention and undue restrictions to the right of freedom of religion or belief; recommends that the related legal provisions are narrowly and precisely drafted; deplores religious persecution and calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Bobirjon Tukhtamurodov, Oybek Khamidov, Khasan Abdirakhimov and Alimardon Sultonov; urges the Uzbek authorities to protect Christian converts who are at risk of physical assault, kidnapping and forced marriage by their families and community;

39. Urges the Uzbek authorities to take steps to rehabilitate victims of wrongful detention and repair the harm caused to them, including by overturning their convictions, acknowledging and compensating them for the harm done and providing assistance such as medical and psychological care;
40. Notes that despite the adoption of previous laws, including the 2019 Law on the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence, gender-based violence against women remains widespread; welcomes the bill on gender-based violence, which also covers domestic violence and the sexual abuse of minors, adopted by the Uzbek Senate on 6 April 2023 and signed by President Mirziyoyev on 11 April 2023, as a significant step towards the complete criminalisation of domestic violence in accordance with international standards; recognises, in this regard, the years of advocacy conducted by Uzbek women's rights activists; calls for all laws concerning gender-based violence to be effectively implemented and enforced by the authorities in all regions of Uzbekistan;
41. Calls on the authorities to continue taking measures to bring Uzbekistan fully into line with its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as indicated in the concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Uzbekistan by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; calls on the Uzbek authorities to continue working with local and international civil society organisations and partners to address these issues; expects the Uzbek authorities to promote gender equality in the education sector, in the workplace and in the whole public administration;
42. Emphasises that women's active participation in public and political life, especially at the senior and decision-making levels, should be facilitated by means of comprehensive legal, institutional and educational initiatives and that political parties should be encouraged to facilitate women's political advancement, increase the visibility of women during electoral campaigns and integrate gender issues into their platforms;
43. Encourages the authorities to step up efforts to stop child marriage in Uzbekistan and calls on the Government of Uzbekistan to do more to end its practice in the country and protect the rights of girls and boys, including the right to education for girls and women; expects the Uzbek authorities to ensure equal opportunities and access to education for all students in Uzbekistan, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status;
44. Condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the fact that consensual same-sex sexual relations between men are still criminalised and is deeply worried about the prevalence of intimidation, harassment, violence and stigma against LGBTIQ people in the country; urges the authorities of Uzbekistan to decriminalise same-sex sexual conduct by repealing Article 120 of the Criminal Code, in line with the ICCPR, to ensure the

security, privacy and non-discrimination of LGBTIQ people in Uzbekistan and to adopt a comprehensive anti-discrimination law that includes sexual orientation and gender identity as protected grounds; calls on the government to revise the plans for a new by-law, proposed in August 2022, requiring compulsory medical examinations of so-called dangerous groups, namely men who have sex with men, sex workers and drug users, in order to test for HIV;

Sectoral cooperation

45. Welcomes Uzbekistan's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and encourages the country, as the leading electricity producer in Central Asia, to prioritise sustainable energy solutions for the region's long-term benefit; calls on Uzbekistan to continue and step up its green transition programmes in line with the Paris Climate Agreement, to which Uzbekistan is a party;
46. Takes note of the potential of Uzbekistan's natural resources in the EU's energy diversification in the context of sustainable partnerships, while at the same time recognises the crucial role of the EU in financing Uzbekistan's sectoral reforms, improving its energy efficiency and reducing its greenhouse gas emissions; considers that, on the basis of the EU-Uzbekistan Memorandum of Understanding and the bilateral consultations, both parties are striving to enhance their energy and environmental security; regrets, in this regard, the advantages given to Russian state companies and Russian political insiders benefiting from the gas sector in Uzbekistan and Russian attempts to gain political advantages through the provision of gas;
47. Calls on the Commission and the EEAS to increase efforts to contribute to the development of renewable energy sources in Uzbekistan in line with the SDGs and in order to prevent future crises caused by shortages of fossil fuels; welcomes successful UN Development Programme projects that have developed energy-efficient and low-carbon housing in Uzbekistan that have withstood the energy crisis and calls on the Uzbek authorities to contribute to expanding these efforts and extend them also to existing housing stock;
48. Calls on the Commission to finalise the study on sustainable transport corridors connecting Europe with Central Asia, which was launched at the end of 2021 and is being implemented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and which aims to identify the most sustainable transport corridors and propose key actions for corridor development;
49. Commends ERASMUS+ and the Youth Action Plan in EU external action and highlights the importance of people-to-people contacts, particularly between young people during their education, and calls on the EU and Uzbekistan to make more effort in and provide support for the expansion of these contacts and exchanges between the EU and Uzbekistan, to the benefit of both sides;

Trade relations

50. Welcomes the successful completion of negotiations on the EU-Uzbekistan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and expects that this agreement will contribute to Uzbekistan integrating further into the multilateral trading system, strengthen market

economy mechanisms and increase foreign investors' confidence; believes that the agreement will ensure a better regulatory environment for economic operators in areas such as trade in goods and services, state-owned enterprises, procurement and intellectual property rights; recalls that the rule of law, good governance, the implementation of shared values and the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms and human and social rights are the core basis for the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Uzbekistan, which shapes bilateral relations;

51. Recognises the efforts made by Uzbekistan in implementing International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, in particular as regards eliminating child labour and forced labour in the cotton sector; underlines the need for continued efforts in this regard; urges the Uzbek Government to work towards ensuring fair wages for cotton workers; recognises the adoption of Uzbekistan's new Labour Code, which came into force on 30 April 2023 and introduces innovations in labour relations and dispute resolution; urges the Uzbek Government to make data on child labour more transparent for all stakeholders and to allow the registration of non-governmental organisations working on the issues of forced labour, child labour and exploitation; calls on Uzbekistan to introduce broader reforms to empower civil society and develop effective institutions in order to ensure transparency and accountability and consolidate progress across all parts of the cotton sector;
52. Recognises the growing strategic importance of Central Asia and the key role that Uzbekistan plays in regional cooperation and connectivity, in particular as part of the Global Gateway Initiative; believes that, under the Commission's policy of open strategic autonomy, the resilience of the supply chain will be strengthened by establishing a network of trusted stakeholders based on sustainable and mutually beneficial economic activity, as well as on regular diplomatic exchanges;
53. Stresses that the EU and Uzbekistan should use their economic and commercial cooperation to actively diversify Uzbekistan's industries in order to support an accelerated transition to renewable energy and increase efforts to guarantee energy efficiency under the Paris Agreement and to enhance the integration of energy markets in Central Asia with those of neighbouring countries and the EU by creating synergies between various energy policy strategies and infrastructure projects in the region, in line with the negotiations at the World Trade Organization on establishing rules and criteria for linking trade, climate and the environment; recalls that this should benefit citizens by mitigating energy poverty, guaranteeing a just transition towards zero emissions by 2050 and establishing a Central Asian climate-neutral region by that date;
54. Acknowledges the challenges that Uzbekistan is facing in the light of the current geopolitical situation, as its government attempts to diversify its economic and trade dependencies on Russia and seeks to encourage greater cooperation with its European partners;
55. Stresses that connectivity and cooperation in the region should support reinvigorated efforts under the EU-Central Asia Platform on Environment and Water Cooperation in a complex and comprehensive manner; emphasises, in this context, the importance of the principles of social and environmental sustainability in the course of extracting or

processing natural resources; reiterates that reinvesting revenue from natural resources is therefore crucial for the socioeconomic development of Uzbekistan and for ensuring that the country and its neighbours become resilient in the face of future global and regional challenges, by enabling the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals; believes that this is crucial for contributing to establishing sustainable circular economies in the country and the region;

56. Stresses that Uzbekistan also plays a crucial role in regional security and economic stability, especially in terms of the fight against illegal immigration, organised crime, terrorism and corruption;
57. Draws attention to the potential risks of Uzbekistan's possible assistance to Russia, as it may be aiding Russia in circumventing trade sanctions imposed by the EU; calls for careful monitoring of the situation;
58. Reiterates the importance of Uzbekistan's membership of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), which contributes to economic growth and yields very positive results (exports to the EU increased by 34 % in 2021); recognises that accepting Uzbekistan as a beneficiary of the GSP+ reflects the recognition of reforms undertaken by the Uzbek Government; notes that, despite the progress that Uzbekistan has made in recent years, a number of concerns remain regarding the effective implementation of the 27 core international conventions; reiterates the need for effective implementation of the conventions, as well as compliance with reporting obligations under the GSP+ scheme; calls on the Commission to support and closely monitor the effective implementation of all 27 core international conventions under the GSP+ on human and labour rights, environmental regulations and good governance principles; calls for cooperation with Uzbekistan to develop efficient and reliable customs procedures that contribute to digitalisation and administrative simplification, which will positively contribute to increasing trade flows;
59. Stresses that, despite progress in eliminating forced labour, poor working conditions, low wages, full respect for workers' rights and the recognition of freedom of association, including the right to establish independent trade unions, remain major problems in Uzbekistan;
60. Notes that Uzbekistan can play an important role in diversifying regional and global supply chains by delivering minerals and metals to the benefit of domestic, regional and international industries, including the EU's industries, by ensuring that partnership and mutual technological cooperation are benchmarks and support for the green transition;
61. Stresses that, owing to the lack of direct access to seaports, developing infrastructure and logistics corridors, in particular the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, is crucially important for trade and for connecting Uzbekistan with the markets of potential trading partners; notes that efficient and sustainable links and networks between Europe and Central Asia through priority transport corridors, including air, sea and land transport, as well as digital, energy and interpersonal networks, will increase trade flows;
62. Welcomes the establishment of the first independent trade union in Uzbekistan in the cotton sector; calls on the Uzbek authorities, in line with the ILO conventions ratified

by Uzbekistan, to promote the establishment of independent and alternative trade unions in all sectors of the economy;

63. Calls on the Uzbek authorities to ratify ILO Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health;
64. Calls for cooperation in and EU support for green development and the further exploration of Uzbekistan's potential for building trade and economic relations with the EU.

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65. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and to the President, Government and Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Uzbekistan plays a key role in Central Asia, which is a region of strategic interest to the EU in terms of security, connectivity, energy diversification, conflict resolution and the defence of the multilateral rules-based international order. The European Parliament is closely following the social and political developments in Uzbekistan and presents its report evaluating the state of EU-Uzbekistan relations and giving recommendations for their future evolution. The report gives also an account of the potential of regional cooperation, international relations and global challenges that the country is facing. Human rights, fundamental freedoms and rule of law are the guiding principles of the EU and are, therefore, also widely tackled in the report. European Parliament is also calling for enhancing sectoral cooperation between the EU and Uzbekistan, in particular in energy diversification, sustainable transport corridors and people-to-people contacts. Last but not least, the trade aspects constitute an important part of the relationship.

25.5.2023

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on Uzbekistan
(2022/2195(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Roman Haider

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the successful completion of negotiations on the EU-Uzbekistan Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and expects that this agreement will contribute to Uzbekistan integrating further into the multilateral trading system, strengthen market economy mechanisms and increase foreign investors' confidence; believes that the agreement will ensure a better regulatory environment for economic operators in areas such as goods and services trade, state-owned enterprises, procurement and intellectual property rights; recalls that the rule of law, good governance, the implementation of shared values and the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms and human and social rights are the core basis for the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Uzbekistan, which shapes bilateral relations;
2. Recognises the efforts made by Uzbekistan in implementing International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, notably as regards eliminating child labour and forced labour in the cotton sector; underlines the need for continued efforts in this regard; urges the Uzbek Government to work towards ensuring fair wages for cotton workers; recognises the adoption of Uzbekistan's new Labour Code, which came into force on 30 April 2023 and introduces innovations in labour relations and dispute resolution; urges the Uzbek Government to make data on child labour more transparent for all stakeholders and to allow the registration of non-governmental organisations working on the issues of forced labour, child labour and exploitation; calls on Uzbekistan to introduce broader reforms to empower civil society and develop effective institutions in order to provide transparency and accountability and consolidate progress across all parts of the cotton sector;
3. Recognises the growing strategic importance of Central Asia and the key role that Uzbekistan plays in regional cooperation and connectivity, in particular as part of the

Global Gateway Initiative; believes that, under the Commission's policy of open strategic autonomy, the resilience of the supply chain will be strengthened by establishing a network of trusted stakeholders based on sustainable and mutually beneficial economic activity, as well as on regular diplomatic exchanges;

4. Stresses that the EU and Uzbekistan should use their economic and commercial cooperation to actively diversify Uzbekistan's industries to support an accelerated transition to renewable energy and increase efforts to guarantee energy efficiency under the Paris Agreement and to enhance the integration of energy markets in Central Asia with those of neighbouring countries and the EU by creating synergies between various energy policy strategies and infrastructure projects in the region, in line with the negotiations at the World Trade Organization on establishing rules and criteria for linking trade, climate and the environment; recalls that this should benefit citizens by mitigating energy poverty, guaranteeing a just transition towards zero emissions by 2050 and establishing a Central Asian climate-neutral region by that date;
5. Acknowledges the challenges that Uzbekistan is facing, in the light of the current geopolitical situation, as its government attempts to diversify its economic and trade dependencies on Russia and seeks to encourage greater cooperation with its European partners;
6. Stresses that connectivity and cooperation in the region should support reinvigorated efforts under the EU-Central Asia Platform on Environment and Water Cooperation in a complex and comprehensive manner; emphasises, in this context, the importance of the principles of social and environmental sustainability in the course of extracting or processing natural resources; reiterates that reinvesting revenue from natural resources is therefore crucial for the socioeconomic development of Uzbekistan and for ensuring that the country and its neighbours become resilient towards future global and regional challenges, by enabling the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals; believes that this is crucial to contribute to establishing sustainable circular economies in the country and the region;
7. Stresses that Uzbekistan also plays a crucial role in regional security and economic stability, especially in terms of the fight against illegal immigration, organised crime, terrorism and corruption;
8. Draws attention to the potential risks of Uzbekistan's possible assistance to Russia, as it may be aiding Russia in circumventing trade sanctions imposed by the EU; calls for careful monitoring of the situation;
9. Reiterates the importance of Uzbekistan's membership of the Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), which contributes to economic growth and yields very positive results (exports to the EU increased by 34 % in 2021); recognises that accepting Uzbekistan as a beneficiary of the GSP+ reflects the recognition of reforms undertaken by the Uzbek Government; notes that, despite the progress that Uzbekistan has made in recent years, a number of concerns remain regarding the effective implementation of the 27 core international conventions; reiterates the need for effective implementation of the conventions, as well as compliance with reporting obligations under the GSP+ scheme; calls on the Commission to support and closely monitor the effective implementation of

all 27 core international conventions under the GSP+ on human and labour rights, environmental regulations and good governance principles; calls for cooperation with Uzbekistan to develop efficient and reliable customs procedures that contribute to digitalisation and administrative simplification, which will positively contribute to increasing trade flows;

10. Stresses that, despite progress in eliminating forced labour, poor working conditions, low wages, full respect for workers' rights and the recognition of freedom of association, including the right to establish independent trade unions, remain major problems in Uzbekistan;
11. Notes that Uzbekistan can play an important role in diversifying regional and global supply chains by delivering minerals and metals to the benefit of domestic, regional and international industries, including the EU's industries, by ensuring partnership and mutual technological cooperation as benchmarks and support for the green transition;
12. Stresses that, owing to the lack of direct access to seaports, developing infrastructure and logistics corridors, in particular the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, is crucially important for trade and for connecting Uzbekistan with the markets of potential trading partners; notes that efficient and sustainable links and networks between Europe and Central Asia through priority transport corridors, including air, sea and land transport, as well as digital, energy and interpersonal networks, will increase trade flows;
13. Welcomes the establishment of the first independent trade union in Uzbekistan in the cotton sector; calls on the Uzbek authorities, in line with the ILO conventions ratified by Uzbekistan, to promote the establishment of independent and alternative trade unions in all sectors of the economy;
14. Calls on the Uzbek authorities to ratify ILO Convention 155 on Occupational Safety and Health;
15. Calls for cooperation and EU support for green development and the further exploration of Uzbekistan's potential for building trade and economic relations with the EU.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	25.5.2023
Result of final vote	+: 17 -: 6 0: 13
Members present for the final vote	Barry Andrews, Tiziana Beghin, Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Daniel Caspary, Markéta Gregorová, Roman Haider, Christophe Hansen, Heidi Hautala, Danuta Maria Hübner, Danilo Oscar Lancini, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Gabriel Mato, Emmanuel Maurel, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó, Samira Rafaela, Catharina Rinzema, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Katarína Roth Nevedálová, Helmut Scholz, Joachim Schuster, Dominik Tarczyński, Kathleen Van Brempt, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler, Jan Zahradil
Substitutes present for the final vote	Reinhard Bütikofer, Enikő Győri, Sandra Kalniete, Seán Kelly, Liudas Mažylis, Pedro Silva Pereira, Witold Jan Waszczykowski
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Camilla Laureti, Eleni Stavrou

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

17	+
ECR	Geert Bourgeois, Dominik Tarczyński, Jan Zahradil
ID	Roman Haider, Danilo Oscar Lancini
NI	Enikő Győri
PPE	Daniel Caspary, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Sandra Kalniete, Seán Kelly, Gabriel Mato, Liudas Mažylis, Jörgen Warborn, Iuliu Winkler
Renew	Barry Andrews, Catharina Rinzema

6	-
NI	Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó
Renew	Samira Rafaela
Verts/ALE	Saskia Bricmont, Reinhard Bütikofer, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala

13	0
ECR	Witold Jan Waszczykowski
NI	Tiziana Beghin
PPE	Eleni Stavrou
S&D	Bernd Lange, Camilla Laureti, Margarida Marques, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Katarína Roth Neved'alová, Joachim Schuster, Pedro Silva Pereira, Kathleen Van Brempt
The Left	Emmanuel Maurel, Helmut Scholz

Key:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	27.6.2023
Result of final vote	+: 60 -: 2 0: 10
Members present for the final vote	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, François Alfonsi, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Anna Bonfrisco, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Susanna Ceccardi, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Katalin Cseh, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Kinga Gál, Giorgos Georgiou, Karol Karski, Dietmar Köster, Andrius Kubilius, Ilhan Kyuchyuk, Jean-Lin Lacapelle, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Nathalie Loiseau, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Jaak Madison, Thierry Mariani, Marisa Matias, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Sven Mikser, Francisco José Millán Mon, Matjaž Nemec, Demetris Papadakis, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Thijs Reuten, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Mounir Satouri, Radosław Sikorski, Jordi Solé, Harald Vilimsky, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Salima Yenbou, Tomáš Zdechovský, Bernhard Zimniok, Željana Zovko
Substitutes present for the final vote	Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Marc Botenga, Angel Dzhambazki, Markéta Gregorová, Rasa Juknevičienė, Andrey Kovatchev, Katrin Langensiepen, Karsten Lucke, Alessandra Moretti, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Christian Sagartz, László Trócsányi, Mick Wallace
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	João Albuquerque, Margrete Auken, Clare Daly, Cyrus Engerer, Hélène Fritzon, Irena Joveva, César Luena, Antonio Maria Rinaldi, Marco Zullo

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

60	+
ECR	Angel Dzhambazki, Anna Fotyga, Karol Karski, Bert-Jan Ruissen
ID	Anna Bonfrisco, Susanna Ceccardi, Antonio Maria Rinaldi
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Kinga Gál, László Trócsányi
PPE	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Traian Băsescu, Ioan-Rareș Bogdan, Michael Gahler, Rasa Juknevičienė, Andrey Kovatchev, Andrius Kubilius, David Lega, Miriam Lexmann, Antonio López-Istúriz White, David McAllister, Vangelis Meimarakis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Christian Sagartz, Radosław Sikorski, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Tomáš Zdechovský, Željana Zovko
Renew	Petras Auštrevičius, Katalin Cseh, Irena Joveva, Ilhan Kyuchuk, Nathalie Loiseau, María Soraya Rodríguez Ramos, Salima Yenbou, Marco Zullo
S&D	João Albuquerque, Maria Arena, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Cyrus Engerer, Hélène Fritz, Dietmar Köster, Karsten Lucke, César Luena, Sven Mikser, Alessandra Moretti, Matjaž Nemec, Demetris Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Thijs Reuten, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos
Verts/ALE	François Alfonsi, Margrete Auken, Markéta Gregorová, Katrin Langensiepen, Mounir Satouri, Jordi Solé, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Thomas Waitz

2	-
ID	Bernhard Zimniok
NI	Kostas Papadakis

10	0
ECR	Charlie Weimers
ID	Jean-Lin Lacapelle, Jaak Madison, Thierry Mariani, Harald Vilimsky
The Left	Marc Botenga, Clare Daly, Giorgos Georgiou, Marisa Matias, Mick Wallace

Key:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention