



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 1 February 2005
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**EU-UZBEKISTAN COOPERATION COUNCIL
SIXTH MEETING
Brussels, 1 February 2005**

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Uzbekistan held its sixth meeting on Tuesday 1 February 2005. The meeting was chaired by Mr Sodyq Safayev, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The EU delegation was led by Mr Jean Asselborn, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Immigration of Luxembourg. Mr Michael Leigh, Deputy Director General for External Relations, represented the Commission.

The Cooperation Council reaffirmed the desire to see EU-Uzbek relations continue to strengthen politically, economically and commercially.

The Cooperation Council was the first meeting at this level between Uzbekistan and the EU since the EU enlarged to 25 Member States on 1 May 2004. The Cooperation Council also stressed the importance of using the benefits of EU enlargement to strengthen EU-Uzbek relations.

P R E S S

The Cooperation Council discussed the main developments regarding the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Uzbekistan and the EU since its entering into force on 1 July 1999 and defined priorities for the next 5 years term of its validity.

The Cooperation Council recalled the importance of increased efforts by the Uzbek authorities to comply fully with international norms and standards, including those of OSCE, in the fields of rule of law, democracy and human rights, in particular as regards elections, freedom of the media, the ability of political parties to operate freely and the registration of NGOs with the public authorities.

The EU expressed its opposition to the death penalty, which is still applied in Uzbekistan in a restricted number of cases. The EU took note of the recent statements made by President Karimov expressing his own belief in the need to abolish the death penalty. The EU strongly encouraged Uzbekistan to take quickly the necessary steps to translate this belief into action.

The Cooperation Council welcomed Uzbekistan's efforts to develop regional integration, including the creation of Central Asian Common Market, Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre on Drugs, as well as the beginning of activities of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The Cooperation Council expressed its expectation on the continuation of cooperation in the framework of international organizations. The EU supports Uzbekistan's accession to the WTO on commercially viable terms and in full respect of WTO rules and notes that it will work with Uzbekistan to achieve this goal.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the intensification of EU-Uzbekistan dialogue on Justice and Home Affairs as well as their ongoing cooperation in the fight against terrorism, drugs and organised crime, inter alia in the framework of the Central Asia drugs action programme (CADAP) and the EU's border management programme for Central Asia (BOMCA).

The Cooperation Council underlined the importance of Uzbekistan's active involvement in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the international coalition against terrorism.

The EU took note of the priority attached by Uzbekistan to the opening of a Commission delegation in Tashkent.

Over the working breakfast the EU and Uzbek delegations had a useful exchange of views on political and regional aspects of their relations. Mr Jean Asselborn represented the EU Presidency. He was accompanied by Mr Robert Cooper, Director General for External and Politico-Military Affairs of the Council, and Ms Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy.
