

CENTRAL ASIA: COOPERATION TOWARDS A COMMON LABOUR MARKET AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

On 15–16 November 2025, Tashkent hosted the 7th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia - an event marking a new stage in deepening regional cooperation and strengthening strategic partnership.

The agenda covers not only issues of economic integration, environmental sustainability and transport connectivity, but also one of the key priorities — cooperation in the labour market and the development of human capital.

A Common Labour Space in Central Asia — a Key to Sustainable Development

One of the most significant factors uniting the countries of Central Asia is human potential. The region's labour resources represent a vast economic opportunity, and their effective utilisation remains a top priority for all states.

Building a common labour space through a harmonised approach to labour market regulation, legal management of labour mobility, and the exchange of skilled professionals is an urgent task of our time.

In this context, Uzbekistan's policy of promoting “**legal, safe, and orderly labour migration**” has become an essential element of regional cooperation.

Uzbekistan's Modern Approach to Labour Migration Management

Established just a year ago, Uzbekistan's new **Migration Agency** is fundamentally changing the way the country manages labour mobility — from temporary employment abroad to the professional reintegration of returning citizens.

Created under the Cabinet of Ministers on the initiative of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the Agency coordinates state policy in the field of external labour migration, protects citizens' rights abroad, and builds new bridges for their employment in qualified positions.

Today, Uzbekistan is implementing official labour agreements with a number of countries, including the Republic of Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Slovenia, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, and others.

Systematic efforts in this direction not only create new employment opportunities for citizens but also strengthen their legal protection abroad.

Regional Cooperation — a Strategic Direction for Human Capital Development

Cooperation among Central Asian countries in the fields of labour and education contributes not only to economic growth but also to social and cultural rapprochement.

Uzbekistan actively participates in this process by promoting specific initiatives for

professional training, information exchange on labour markets, and harmonisation of qualification recognition systems.

Regional collaboration is particularly important in areas such as the digitalisation of migration processes, the creation of unified information platforms, and the legalisation of labour activities.

Developing Human Capital — the Foundation of Future Progress

As President Shavkat Mirziyoyev has emphasised: *“Human capital is the greatest wealth of the country and the foundation of its future development.”*

Guided by this principle, Uzbekistan is carrying out large-scale reforms to align its vocational education system with international standards, prepare young people for overseas employment, and ensure recognition of their qualifications.

The preparatory centres established under the Migration Agency, educational programmes in high-demand professions abroad, as well as psychological and legal counselling services, represent practical steps toward effective human capital development.

Conclusion

The ongoing Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia in Tashkent represents a step towards an open, partnership-based, and human-centred future for the region.

Uzbekistan continues to play an active and proactive role in this process, consistently pursuing policies aimed at developing a common labour market, enhancing human capital, and protecting the interests of its citizens.