



# Kazakhstan- EU Weekly Briefing

**Issue 2 | November  
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# EU-Centric Trends: Brussel's Point of View

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## 1. Sanctions Diplomacy: EU Sends Signals of Continued Engagement with Astana

Media report that David O'Sullivan, EU's International Special Envoy for the Implementation of Sanctions, is due to visit Kazakhstan on November 18-19.

**Trend Analysis:** While the visit itself falls just after the week covered by this briefing, the announcement is of great significance. This will be the fifth visit in roughly three years by the Envoy. It underlines the fact that sanctions compliance has become a high-priority, long-term pillar of the EU-Kazakhstan dialogue as Brussels works to prevent sanctions circumvention.

**Why it matters:** This trend underlines the sensitive geopolitical balancing act that faces Kazakhstan. Proactive cooperation is an indispensable link to retain EU institutions' and investors' confidence in its standing as a reliable and transparent jurisdiction.

**What to Watch:** Official statements following the visit next week will be important to monitor. Any new commitments on the part of Kazakhstan or new technical assistance offered by the EU will signal the future direction of this compliance relationship.

## 2. Regional Security: EU, Central Asia aligned on Afghanistan

The European External Action Service has confirmed the 7th high-level meeting of EU and Central Asia Special Representatives and Special Envoys for Afghanistan took place in Brussels on November 12.

**Trend Analysis:** While the EU is solidifying its place as a key coordinator on regional security in Central Asia, by fostering this formal dialogue platform, Brussels seeks to create a stable, unified front vis-à-vis possible instability from Afghanistan in order to position itself as one of the important security partners for the region.

**Why it Matters:** This formal dialogue represents a shared EU-Central Asia position on regional security. Such stability is the first and most necessary condition for all further cooperation, including big transport and energy projects.

**What to Watch:** Look for any joint statements or new funding announcements on border management or humanitarian projects, which would signal a deepening of this security-focused partnership.

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# Kazakhstan-Centric Trends: Developments on the Ground

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## 1. The Middle Corridor: High-Level Push Meets On-the-Ground Hurdles

The key development during the week was a consolidated high-level push from Kazakhstan's government, with Prime Minister Bektenov and other senior officials urging European businesses to scale up participation and use the country as a major transport hub.

**Trend Analysis:** The emphasis is very clear, moving away from top-level agreements toward solving very specific on-the-ground problems. The government reporting this week emphasised concrete measures to remove bottlenecks in ports, customs, and digital documents. This proactive stance is exactly what European partners, who pledged billions through Global Gateway, would want to see.

**Why it Matters:** While high-level political will is strong, a new, more practical challenge is emerging. The rapid expansion of the corridor is creating a large skills gap—an issue that featured prominently at an expert forum this week.

**What to Watch:** The most immediate challenge is no longer just infrastructure, but human capital. Watch for new government or university programs aimed at rapidly training the logisticians, engineers, and transport managers who are needed to operate this expanding sector.



Credit: Kazakhstan's Prime Minister's Press Service

## 2. Digital Transformation: Kazakhstan Secures Major Tech Partnership

Press coverage on November 12-13 confirmed a new partnership between the Government of Kazakhstan and American company Oracle to accelerate cloud adoption and develop local IT skills.



# Kazakhstan-Centric Trends: Developments on the Ground

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**Trend Analysis:** This marks a significant stride towards Kazakhstan's digital transformation agenda. In alliance with a global tech giant, Kazakhstan is signaling its intent to build a secure, "sovereign cloud" digital infrastructure, a process that duly supports the ambition of turning itself into a "digital bridge" between Europe and Asia.

**Why it matters:** For companies in Europe, that means a more secure and modern digital landscape in which to invest. It also is in line with the EU's "Global Gateway" objectives on digital connectivity and creates the basis for cooperation in high-tech sectors.

**What to Watch:** The official rollout details, such as the opening of new data centres or Oracle-certified training programs within Kazakh universities, will be indicative of how substantive the implementation will be.

## News sources

- 1) EU sanctions envoy plans another compliance-focused visit to Kazakhstan ([Caspian Post](#))
- 2) EU and Central Asia coordinate positions on Afghanistan's situation ([EEAS](#))
- 3) PM urges European businesses to expand and localize in Kazakhstan ([Astana Times](#))
- 4) Kazakhstan MFA reports progress in EU cooperation talks ([MFA Kazakhstan](#))
- 5) Kazakhstan calls on EU to fix Middle Corridor bottlenecks ([MENAFN](#))
- 6) EU highlights urgent need for skills development in the Middle Corridor ([Astana Times](#))
- 7) Kazakhstan partners with Oracle to boost cloud and AI capabilities ([Eureporter](#))

