



Kazakhstan- EU Weekly Briefing

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KAZAKHSTAN-EU
GATEWAY



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Transport, logistics and connectivity

UNECE-backed committee sets next steps for Eurasian transport corridors (8 June, [UNECE](#))

United Nations Economic Commission For Europe (UNECE) reported progress by the Coordination Committee created in 2022 by countries along the Trans-Caspian and Almaty–Tehran–Istanbul corridors, including Kazakhstan. At its High-Level Session in Istanbul, the committee reviewed its work over the past three years and agreed in principle on a 2027–2028 Programme of Work. The planned activities focus on infrastructure and connectivity gaps, digital transport documents, more reliable operations, border-crossing efficiency, and stronger resilience and environmental performance.

Why it matters:

For Kazakhstan, the article is relevant because it moves the corridor discussion from general political support to more technical coordination. The focus on digitalisation, border procedures, tariffs, timetables and infrastructure gaps is directly linked to whether Kazakhstan can make its transit role more reliable and competitive.

What to watch:

Watch whether the 2027–2028 work programme turns into concrete projects and measurable performance targets. The key signs will be progress on digital documents, faster border crossings, better coordination with neighbouring countries, and improvements in rail, port and terminal capacity.

Critical Raw Materials

Astana Mining & Metallurgy Congress highlights mining modernisation and geological exploration investment (11 June, [Qazinform](#))

The 16th Astana Mining & Metallurgy Congress brought together more than 1,500 delegates from 16 countries and showcased 70 companies from 15 countries, including several EU member states. Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov said Kazakhstan plans to invest around \$470 million in geological exploration in 2026–2028, with geological surveys expected to exceed 2 million square kilometres.

Why it matters:

The congress strengthens Kazakhstan's positioning as a resource and processing



partner for Europe. The emphasis on geological knowledge, digital tools, environmental and industrial safety, processing and engineering services is relevant to EU efforts to diversify critical raw materials supply chains beyond simple extraction.

What to watch:

Watch whether the new geological investment programme attracts European technology providers, survey companies and processing partners. A useful signal would be the conversion of congress-level interest into bankable projects in mapping, mineral processing, industrial safety and high-value manufacturing.

Kazakhstan-France working group advances Critical Raw Materials cooperation (19 June, [Qazinform](#))

Kazakhstan and France convened the first meeting of their Working Group on Critical Raw Materials. The discussion covered geological mapping, data exchange, laboratory research, exploration, subsoil use, mining modernisation and business-to-business contacts. Kazakhstan noted that it extracts and processes 21 of the 34 critical raw materials included in the EU list.

Why it matters:

Although formally bilateral, the meeting directly supports the EU-Kazakhstan critical raw materials agenda. France is an important EU industrial actor, and the working group moves cooperation from political declarations towards technical areas such as mapping, laboratory capacity, exploration and processing.

What to watch:

Follow whether the working group produces specific joint projects, particularly in titanium, geological exploration and raw-materials processing. The credibility of the partnership will depend on whether it links resource access with technology transfer, ESG standards and downstream value creation in Kazakhstan.

Digitalisation, AI and innovation

Kazakhstan signed landmark agreement with AI companies (19 June, [Vlast](#))

Kazakhstan signed a \$10 billion agreement with U.S.-based, Nvidia and Firebird to develop AI cloud and data-centre infrastructure, while authorities also reported dismantling an international network suspected of stealing and trading personal



data. The week's developments also included plans for a single QR payment system, higher household gas prices, political party reshuffling, and renewed pressure for stricter reporting by foreign-funded NGOs.

Why it matters:

The week underlined Kazakhstan's attempt to build itself into a regional digital and infrastructure hub, while also exposing the governance risks that come with rapid digitalisation, from data security to tighter oversight of civil society and online platforms.

What to watch:

Watch whether the Firebird agreement turns into real data-centre investment in Ekibastuz, how the single QR payment rollout affects banks and payment providers, and whether the personal-data case leads to stronger cybersecurity rules or broader state control over digital services.

Kazakhstan obtains observer status at Council of Europe Convention 108 Committee (11 June, [Qazinform](#))

Kazakhstan obtained observer status at the Committee of the Council of Europe Convention 108 on the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data. The decision followed the Committee's 50th plenary session in Strasbourg, attended by Vice Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development Doszhan Musaliyev.

Why it matters:

While not an EU mechanism, Convention 108 is a core European reference point for data protection and privacy standards. Observer status supports Kazakhstan's efforts to align its digital governance with international norms, which matters for trust, digital trade, artificial intelligence regulation and data-intensive cooperation with European partners.

What to watch:

The next signal will be whether Kazakhstan uses observer status to deepen legal and technical convergence on personal data protection. This could become relevant for future cooperation on artificial intelligence, digital services, e-government and cross-border data flows with European institutions and companies.



Trade and investment

AIFC review places Kazakhstan among the region's stronger capital markets (18 June, [AIFC](#))

The Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) Insights published its first review of capital markets in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan. The report presents Kazakhstan as one of the more developed markets in the group, with large sovereign savings, a more established market infrastructure and growing interest from retail investors. It also points to the role of AIFC and the Astana International Exchange in giving Kazakhstan, and the wider region, better access to international investors.

Why it matters:

For Kazakhstan, the review is useful because it shows where the country stands in the region. Kazakhstan has made more progress than some neighbours, but it is still a frontier market. The next challenge is to make the market deeper and easier to use, not only better designed on paper.

What to watch:

Watch whether Kazakhstan can turn stronger institutions and more retail activity into a more active market. More company listings, stronger participation from pension funds and other large investors, and easier access for foreign investors would be important signs of progress.

Report assesses Kazakhstan's readiness for EU carbon border rules CBAM (9 June, [EEAS](#))

The International Trade Centre and QazTrade presented a new EU-funded report on how ready Kazakhstan's aluminium, iron and steel exporters are for the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism. The report says exporters will need to improve emissions monitoring, use real emissions data instead of default values, accredit local verifiers, and invest in cleaner production if they want to limit future CBAM costs. It also notes that default values could make compliance much more expensive for Kazakh exporters.

Why it matters:

The EU is an important market for Kazakhstan's industrial exports, including steel and aluminium. As CBAM becomes stricter, access to the EU market will depend not only on price and quality, but also on whether companies can prove the



carbon footprint of their products. For Kazakhstan, this is both a trade issue and a test of how quickly its heavy industry can adjust to greener rules.

What to watch:

Watch whether Kazakh companies move from default CBAM values to verified emissions data, and whether Kazakhstan develops enough local capacity for emissions verification and reporting. It will also matter whether the report leads to real upgrades at production sites, such as better monitoring systems, lower emissions, and clearer rules for exporters.

Kazakhstan and the Netherlands agree on joint projects worth EUR160 million (12 June, [Ministry of Agriculture of the Netherlands](#))

Kazakhstan and the Netherlands reached agreements on joint projects worth EUR160 million during the Kazakhstan–Netherlands Business Forum in Amsterdam. The forum took place on the sidelines of GreenTech Amsterdam 2026 and gathered companies from agriculture, food processing and logistics. Bilateral trade reached \$970 million in January–February 2026, up 57.9% year-on-year. On June 9 Kazakh Trade and Integration Minister Arman Shakkaliyev's visited the Netherlands.

Why it matters:

This is relevant for EU–Kazakhstan cooperation because the Netherlands is one of Kazakhstan's key EU trade partners and a gateway to European supply chains. The agenda also connected agri-food sector, the food industry and the logistics sector, certification, traceability and shipbuilding cooperation, including the Port of Rotterdam and Damen Shipyards Group.

What to watch:

Monitor whether the EUR160 million package leads to signed contracts and implementation schedules. Specific indicators include progress on the proposed shipbuilding and ship-repair cluster in Mangystau, new logistics links through Rotterdam, and Dutch participation in agricultural technology and certification projects.

EIB opens Central Asia regional office in Tashkent (18 June, [EIB](#))

The European Investment Bank opened a new regional representation in Tashkent to expand its work across Central Asia. The EIB says its project pipeline in the region is approaching €3 billion, with planned support for transport links, climate and energy projects, water, digital connectivity, healthcare supply chains and



critical raw materials. In Uzbekistan, potential operations under discussion could reach around €1 billion.

Why it matters:

The announcement is not about Kazakhstan specifically, but it is still relevant because the office covers Central Asia as a region. Kazakhstan is already part of the EIB's regional activity and is directly linked to several priorities mentioned in the release, especially the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, energy infrastructure, digital connectivity and critical raw materials.

What to watch:

Watch whether the stronger EIB presence in Tashkent leads to faster financing for regional projects that include Kazakhstan. The main signals will be concrete EIB-backed projects on the Trans-Caspian route, cross-border infrastructure, green energy, digital links and critical raw materials value chains.

People-to-people connections

Kazakhstan and EU move to a new stage in visa facilitation and readmission talks (12 June, [Kazakhstan Today](#))

Kazakhstan and the EU held another round of negotiations on the draft Visa Facilitation Agreement and Readmission Agreement. Discussions focused on aligning key provisions, including application processing times, the issuance of multiple-entry visas, supporting documentation requirements and other practical measures to facilitate mobility for Kazakh citizens.

Why it matters:

Visa facilitation is one of the most concrete people-to-people deliverables in the EU-Kazakhstan agenda. If concluded, it could reduce administrative friction for students, researchers, business travellers and civil society actors, while the readmission track gives the EU a parallel migration-management framework.

What to watch:

The main indicator will be whether the talks move from technical convergence to a clear timeline for signature. It will also be important to monitor which categories



of applicants benefit first, including students, researchers, business representatives and frequent travellers.

Policy and diplomacy

Tokayev to visit Brussels for talks with EU leaders (21 June, [Qazinform](#))

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is scheduled to visit Brussels on 22–23 June at the invitation of European Council President Antonio Costa. The programme includes talks with Costa and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, a meeting with Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever, and a Kazakhstan–EU roundtable with major European companies.

Why it matters:

The visit is the main follow-up to several technical and political developments recorded during the reporting period. It is likely to consolidate the agenda around enhanced partnership, investment, trade, critical raw materials, connectivity, visa facilitation and wider international issues.

What to watch:

The key deliverable to watch is whether the Brussels meetings produce new announcements on visa facilitation, the Horizontal Air Services Agreement, critical raw materials projects, Global Gateway connectivity or investment commitments by European companies.

Kazakhstan–EU dialogue platform focuses on regulatory alignment, investment climate and strategic sectors (11 June, [Qazinform](#))

Prime Minister Olzhas Bektenov chaired the 19th meeting of the Kazakhstan–EU dialogue platform with heads of diplomatic missions, foreign business associations and companies. Discussions covered the investment climate, harmonisation of technical standards, customs administration, critical raw materials, the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and visa regime simplification.

Why it matters:

The meeting shows that EU–Kazakhstan cooperation is increasingly shaped by



practical regulatory issues. Technical standards, customs administration, intellectual property protection and conformity assessment are less visible than high-level summits, but they directly affect European companies operating in Kazakhstan and Kazakh exporters targeting EU markets.

What to watch:

The next indicator will be whether proposals from European business associations lead to concrete regulatory adjustments. Areas to monitor include customs digitalisation, product identification procedures, pharmaceutical data protection, technical regulation and critical raw materials project development.

European Parliament roundtable discusses Kazakhstan political modernisation and strategic partnership with the EU (11 June, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#))

The European Parliament hosted a roundtable entitled “Kazakhstan’s New Political Modernization and the Future of the Kazakhstan–EU Strategic Partnership”. Around 70 participants, including Members of the European Parliament, diplomats, experts and media representatives, discussed Kazakhstan’s constitutional reforms and cooperation with the EU in transport, energy, research, Horizon Europe, critical raw materials and people-to-people contacts.

Why it matters:

The event demonstrates sustained interest in Kazakhstan within European political and expert circles. It also links domestic reform narratives with strategic cooperation files, including connectivity, critical raw materials, higher education and visa facilitation. This reflects how political modernisation is being presented as part of the wider partnership framework.

What to watch:

Monitor how the new Constitution, due to enter into force on 1 July, is received by EU institutions and Member States. The key question is whether reform messaging translates into deeper parliamentary engagement, civil society dialogue and progress on mobility-related files.

Kazakhstan hosts high-level visits from Germany, Poland, Spain (16–19 June, [Senate of Kazakhstan](#), [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#))

Kazakhstan held the eighth round of political consultations with Spain on 16 June and received Polish Senate Marshal Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska during her visit



on 18–20 June. With Spain, the talks covered political dialogue, trade and investment, culture, education, regional issues and cooperation in international organizations. The sides also pointed to possible cooperation in transport and logistics, renewable energy, agriculture, digitalization, tourism and education. With Poland, Senate Speaker Maulen Ashimbayev discussed inter-parliamentary cooperation, trade, investment, cultural ties and Kazakhstan's reform agenda. A further visit is expected on 29–30 June from Germany's Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy, Katherina Reiche, with talks set to focus on trade, investment, energy, industrial cooperation and critical raw materials.

Why it matters:

The meetings show Kazakhstan keeping up high-level contacts with several EU member states at the same time. Spain and Poland are mainly linked in the articles to political dialogue, trade and inter-parliamentary ties, while the upcoming German visit is especially relevant for energy, industry and critical raw materials.

What to watch:

Watch whether these visits lead to concrete follow-up, especially in trade, investment, logistics, renewable energy, education and parliamentary cooperation. The German visit will be the main one to watch next, because the agenda includes industrial projects and critical raw materials, where Kazakhstan is trying to build deeper partnerships with European countries.

Other Developments

Kazakhstan and France advance Lake Balkhash preservation plan (11 June, [Times of Central Asia](#))

Kazakhstan and France are working on a master plan to protect the Lake Balkhash ecosystem. The project brings together Kazakhstan's Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, the French Development Agency and France's Bureau of Geological and Mining Research. Experts are reviewing water use, glacier runoff, groundwater, agriculture and climate risks, with the final version of the plan expected by the end of 2026.



Why it matters:

Lake Balkhash is one of Kazakhstan's most important water resources, and its future is tied to climate change, river flows and water use across the wider basin. The plan is relevant because it aims to move decisions on the lake from case-by-case responses to a more scientific and long-term approach.

What to watch:

Watch whether the master plan leads to practical decisions on water allocation, monitoring and basin management. It will also matter how the plan is used as Kazakhstan moves ahead with major infrastructure projects in the region, including the planned nuclear power plant near Ulken.