



Kazakhstan-EU September Briefing

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KAZAKHSTAN EU
GATEWAY



Overview

- Kazakhstan and France reaffirm commitment to enhanced strategic partnership and cooperation in energy, water, industry and digital technologies (8–9 September, [Kazakhstan Embassy in France](#))
- Kazakhstan and Greece deepen political and interparliamentary dialogue (9–10 September, [Kazakhstan Embassy in Greece](#))
- Embassy of Kazakhstan advances Middle Corridor infrastructure as freight volumes rise 22% (9 September, [Ministry of Transport of Kazakhstan](#))
- French Carester advances rare-earth processing project in Kazakhstan, strengthening EU–Kazakhstan critical minerals cooperation (10 September, [The Astana Times](#))
- EU and Kazakhstan strengthen cooperation in space technologies, Earth observation and AI (8 September, [The Astana Times](#))
- EBRD provides €194 million for Kazakhstan’s electricity-grid modernisation and smart-grid development (7 September, [EBRD](#))
- Kazakhstan and Czechia expand cooperation on water supply, sanitation and wastewater infrastructure (11 September, [Qazinform](#))
- Kazakhstan prepares new Electronic Travel Authorization system for visa-free visitors (7 September, [Times of Central Asia](#))
- Kazakhstan records around seven million foreign visitors in the first half of 2026 as international tourism continues to grow (7 September, [Government of Kazakhstan](#))



Policy and diplomacy

Kazakhstan and France reaffirm commitment to enhanced strategic partnership (8–9 September 2026, [Kazakhstan Embassy in France](#))

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to France Gulsara Arystankulova met Arnaud Guillois, the newly appointed Director for Continental Europe at the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The sides reaffirmed the momentum of the Kazakhstan-France enhanced strategic partnership and discussed Kazakhstan's political reforms and international agenda. They also identified further potential for cooperation in energy, water management, industry, digital technologies and tourism.

Relevance: France remains one of Kazakhstan's most important political and economic partners within the EU, making sustained bilateral dialogue relevant to the wider Kazakhstan-EU relationship. The meeting did not produce a new agreement, but it maintained political continuity while linking diplomatic cooperation to sectors that feature prominently in the EU-Kazakhstan agenda, including energy, industry, water and digitalisation.

Kazakhstan and Greece deepen political and interparliamentary dialogue (9–10 September 2026, [Kazakhstan Embassy in Greece](#))

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Greece Timur Sultangozhin held consecutive meetings with the Greek Foreign Ministry and Parliament. Discussions with Eleni Triantafyllou, Director of the A5 Political Directorate, covered political dialogue, forthcoming high-level contacts, cooperation in international organisations and the bilateral legal framework. A subsequent meeting with MP Evangelos Syrigos focused on strengthening contacts between the two countries' parliaments and cooperation in international parliamentary bodies.

Relevance: The meetings broaden Kazakhstan's political engagement across EU member states beyond its largest established European partners. Stronger bilateral and parliamentary ties can help build a wider base of political contacts supporting Kazakhstan-EU cooperation, while also providing channels for



discussing Kazakhstan's institutional reforms and regional and international issues with EU policymakers at national level.

Transport, logistics and connectivity

Kazakhstan Advances Middle Corridor Infrastructure as Freight Volumes Rise 22% (9 September, [Ministry of Transport of Kazakhstan](#))

Kazakhstan continues to strengthen the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), also known as the Middle Corridor, as a key link between Central Asia and Europe. Speaking at the Georgian International Maritime Forum in Batumi on 7–8 September, Kazakhstan's Vice Minister of Transport Zhanibek Taizhanov highlighted the development of international transport corridors, integration of maritime, rail and port infrastructure, and the digitalisation of transport processes. According to Kazakhstan's Ministry of Transport, cargo volumes along the Middle Corridor increased by 22% during the first eight months of 2026. The discussions also focused on improving the resilience and efficiency of international supply chains and strengthening transport links between Europe and Asia.

Relevance: The continued growth of Middle Corridor traffic strengthens Kazakhstan's role as a key transit partner for the EU and supports the EU's efforts to diversify trade routes between Europe and Asia. The focus on digitalisation and multimodal infrastructure is particularly relevant to the development of the EU's Global Gateway connectivity agenda

Critical Raw Materials

French Company Carester Advances Rare-Earth Processing Project in Kazakhstan (10 September, [The Astana Times](#))

French rare-earth specialist Carester, Australian critical-minerals company Lindian Resources and Australian engineering company Tetra Tech Coffey are



advancing plans for a rare-earth oxide separation facility in Stepnogorsk, Kazakhstan. The planned facility is expected to have a processing capacity of 8,000 tonnes per year and produce separated rare-earth oxides including neodymium and praseodymium, as well as a mixed heavy rare-earth compound containing dysprosium, terbium and yttrium. A definitive feasibility study is targeted for completion in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Relevance: The project directly supports the EU–Kazakhstan strategic partnership on critical raw materials and illustrates the shift from exporting raw mineral resources towards processing and higher-value production. Cooperation with a French company is particularly relevant to the EU’s objective of diversifying supplies of critical minerals and strengthening resilient European supply chains.

Digitalisation, AI and innovation

EU and Kazakhstan Strengthen Cooperation in Space Technologies, Earth Observation and AI (8 September, [The Astana Times](#))

Space Days Kazakhstan 2026, held in Astana from 7–9 September, brought together government representatives, space agencies, international organisations, scientists, technology companies and investors to discuss satellite communications, Earth observation, artificial intelligence and new space technologies. Kazakhstan plans to establish an international Earth-observation satellite constellation of nine spacecraft by 2030, including six Kazakh satellites and satellites from Mongolia, the Republic of the Congo and Nigeria. The country is also considering expanding the constellation to 14 satellites.

The EU Ambassador to Kazakhstan, Aleška Simkić, highlighted EU cooperation with Kazakhstan in satellite infrastructure and Earth observation, noting the potential use of satellite data for agriculture and water management.

Relevance: Space technology provides a new dimension for Kazakhstan–EU digital cooperation. Joint work on satellite data, Earth observation and AI could support practical cooperation in agriculture, water management, climate monitoring and disaster response, while strengthening Kazakhstan’s position as a regional digital and technological hub.



Trade and investment

EBRD provides €194 million for Kazakhstan's electricity-grid modernisation (7 September 2026, [EBRD](#))

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) will provide a long-term loan of up to KZT 102 billion (€194 million) to Alatau Zharyk Company, which supplies electricity to around four million people in Almaty and the surrounding region. The financing will support upgrades to transmission and distribution infrastructure, automated metering, smart-grid technologies and cybersecurity. The project is expected to save around 22 GWh of electricity and reduce annual CO₂ emissions by approximately 12,000 tonnes.

Relevance: The financing expands the EBRD's already substantial investment footprint in Kazakhstan and links infrastructure modernisation with digitalisation, energy efficiency and renewable-energy integration. Reliable electricity infrastructure is also important for Kazakhstan's wider effort to attract investment into Almaty Region and the planned development of Alatau as a new smart city. The project provides a concrete example of European financial involvement in Kazakhstan's economic modernisation.

Kazakhstan and Czechia expand cooperation on water and utility infrastructure (11 September 2026, [Qazinform](#))

Kazakh Vice-Minister of Industry and Construction Kuandyk Kazhkenov met a Czech delegation led by Deputy Environment Minister Martin Weiss to discuss cooperation on water supply, sanitation and wastewater-treatment infrastructure. Czech government bodies, research organisations and specialised companies took part, presenting technologies for water monitoring, wastewater treatment, building information modelling and sewer-network diagnostics. Kazakhstan plans to modernise nearly 8,000 kilometres of water networks and implement 45 wastewater-treatment projects.

Relevance: Kazakhstan's large utility-modernisation programme creates a



potential pipeline for Czech and other European technology and engineering companies. The talks are particularly relevant because they moved beyond general bilateral cooperation towards specific areas where Czech expertise could be applied, including monitoring, treatment technologies and digital infrastructure management. This could translate Kazakhstan's infrastructure needs into new EU–Kazakhstan commercial and technical partnerships.

People-to-people connections

Kazakhstan prepares new electronic travel authorisation for visa-free visitors

(7 September 2026, [Times of Central Asia](#))

Kazakhstan is preparing to introduce an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) through its QazETA platform for citizens of countries that currently enjoy visa-free entry. The system is operating in pilot mode, with travellers advised to apply through the mobile application at least 72 hours before arrival. The authorisation is valid for 180 days and is expected to become mandatory in phases. Most EU citizens can currently visit Kazakhstan visa-free for stays of up to 30 days, meaning the new system will also affect travellers from EU member states.

Relevance: QazETA represents a significant change to the practical conditions of visa-free travel to Kazakhstan. Although EU citizens will retain visa-free access, travel will increasingly involve advance digital registration. The measure therefore directly affects tourism, business travel and other people-to-people contacts between Kazakhstan and the EU, while also forming part of Kazakhstan's broader effort to digitalise migration and border procedures.

Kazakhstan reports seven million foreign tourists in the first half of 2026 (7 September 2026, [Government of Kazakhstan](#))

Kazakhstan received around seven million foreign tourists in the first half of 2026, according to a government review of the tourism sector. The number of international visitors has risen strongly in recent years: Kazakhstan recorded 15.7



million foreign arrivals in 2025, of whom 11.1 million were classified as tourists. The government linked the growth to simplified entry procedures, expanding international air connections and increased promotion of Kazakhstan as a tourism destination.

Relevance: Rising inbound tourism increases the importance of easier travel between Kazakhstan and Europe. For EU-Kazakhstan relations, the figures provide wider context for ongoing work on visa facilitation and aviation connectivity: reducing administrative barriers and expanding direct air links could support greater two-way tourism alongside business, educational and family travel. The government's tourism strategy also increasingly treats international connectivity and simplified entry procedures as drivers of visitor growth.