



Kazakhstan-EU September Briefing

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Overview

- Kazakhstan and EU review Global Gateway cooperation on sidelines of UN General Assembly (24 September, [*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan*](#))
- Kazakhstan and China seek to strengthen connectivity along the Middle Corridor (24 September, [*The Astana Times*](#))
- Kazakhstan and China deepen cooperation on critical minerals and industrial value chains (25 September, [*The Astana Times*](#))
- EU-backed programme advances digital freight integration across Central Asia (24 September, [*EU Delegation to Kazakhstan*](#))
- Kazakhstan and the Port of Antwerp-Bruges explore new cooperation in trade, ports and logistics (22 September, [*Embassy of Kazakhstan in Belgium*](#))
- Kazakh higher-education experts join SPHERE and Bologna Process discussions in Bucharest (21 September, [*Erasmus+ Kazakhstan*](#))



Policy and diplomacy

Kazakhstan and EU discuss Global Gateway implementation on sidelines of UN General Assembly (24 September, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan](#))

Kazakh Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi met European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jozef Síkela in New York during the 81st UN General Assembly. They reviewed follow-up to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's June visit to Brussels and discussed cooperation in transport and logistics, energy, digitalisation and investment. Particular attention went to the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and projects under the EU's Global Gateway initiative.

Relevance: The meeting shows that the agreements reached during Tokayev's Brussels visit are moving into follow-up discussions. Global Gateway and the Middle Corridor remain central to the practical EU–Kazakhstan agenda.

Kazakhstan strengthens dialogue with several EU member states during UNGA meetings (22 September, [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan](#))

On the first day of UNGA High-Level Week, Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi held bilateral meetings with the foreign ministers of Hungary, Poland and Slovenia, alongside Moldova, Ukraine and El Salvador. Discussions with the various counterparts addressed political dialogue, bilateral cooperation, trade and economic ties, and regional and international issues. gov.kz

Relevance: The meetings complement Kazakhstan's institutional relationship with Brussels through direct engagement with individual EU member states. Maintaining these bilateral channels is important for building support around connectivity, investment and broader EU–Central Asia cooperation.



Transport, logistics and connectivity

Kazakhstan and China Push for Greater Middle Corridor Connectivity (24 September, [The Astana Times](#))

Kazakhstan and China reaffirmed their commitment to expanding the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), as a safe, efficient and competitive transport link between Asia and Europe during the Global Sustainable Transport Forum in Beijing, which brought together around **1,000 representatives** of governments, international organisations, diplomatic missions, businesses and expert communities. Kazakhstan identified the Middle Corridor as a key priority of its transport policy and emphasised infrastructure upgrades, multimodal transport services and greater coordination along the route. China proposed strengthening infrastructure connectivity, harmonising cross-border transport and customs procedures, developing a **digital platform for multimodal transportation**, and expanding financing opportunities along the corridor.

Relevance: Although the discussions were held within Kazakhstan–China cooperation, improvements on the eastern section of the Middle Corridor directly affect EU–Central Asia connectivity. Measures to increase corridor capacity, streamline customs procedures and introduce digital multimodal solutions could strengthen the overall Trans-Caspian route supported by the EU under Global Gateway.

Critical Raw Materials

Kazakhstan and China Expand Cooperation in Critical Minerals and Industrial Value Chains (25 September, [The Astana Times](#))

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev identified critical minerals and rare-earth metals as priority areas for deeper Kazakhstan–China economic cooperation during the Kazakhstan–China Investment Forum in Almaty. Chinese investment in Kazakhstan has exceeded **\$29 billion**, while the bilateral industrial portfolio includes **260 major joint projects worth more than \$62 billion**. Tokayev called for



cooperation to shift from individual investment projects towards integrated production ecosystems, including mining, metallurgy and higher-value manufacturing.

Relevance: Growing Chinese involvement in Kazakhstan's mineral and processing sectors is important for the EU's Global Gateway strategy, as the EU is simultaneously seeking to build resilient critical raw material supply chains with Kazakhstan. The development highlights the importance of European investment in processing, technology transfer and value-added production.

Digitalisation, AI and innovation

EU-Backed Programme Advances Digital Freight Transport Across Central Asia (24 September, [EU Delegation to Kazakhstan](#))

The EU Delegation to Kazakhstan reported progress towards a regional pilot for the digital exchange of road freight information involving experts from Kazakhstan and the other four Central Asian states. The initiative focuses on developing a harmonised electronic consignment note (eCMR) based on UN/CEFACT standards, allowing national transport systems to exchange freight information more efficiently. The work forms part of the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor Capacity Development Programme, implemented by GIZ and Expertise France and co-funded by the European Union, Germany and France.

Relevance: Digital interoperability is a key component of improving the competitiveness of the Middle Corridor. Harmonised freight documentation and common data standards could reduce administrative barriers, facilitate cross-border cargo movement and support the EU's broader Global Gateway objective of creating a faster and more integrated transport connection between Central Asia and Europe.



Trade and investment

Kazakhstan and Antwerp explore direct links in trade, ports, logistics and innovation (22 September, [Embassy of Kazakhstan in Belgium](#))

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Belgium Roman Vassilenko met representatives of VOKA Antwerpen-Waasland, the City of Antwerp, technology hub The Beacon and the Port of Antwerp-Bruges. Talks covered investment in petrochemicals, engineering, energy and advanced materials, as well as possible cooperation between the Port of Antwerp-Bruges and Kazakhstan's Aktau and Kuryk ports. The sides also discussed using Antwerp as a European distribution hub for Kazakh metals, critical raw materials, petrochemicals and agricultural products.

Relevance: Kazakhstan seeks to establish a concrete logistics connection with Belgium. Collaboration with the port of Antwerp-Bruges, the second-largest port in Europe, would allow greater integration of Kazakhstan into the EU market and connect the Middle Corridor to Europe.

Kazakhstan and Romania seek new momentum in trade and investment cooperation (21 September, [Embassy of Kazakhstan in Romania](#))

Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Romania A. Sainov met D. Constantin, the Chairman of the Romanian Agency for Investments and Foreign Trade, with discussions focusing on bilateral trade, investment and opportunities to expand commercial ties. The sides reviewed the structure and development of bilateral trade and possibilities for increasing business cooperation.

Relevance: Romania is strategically positioned on the EU side of emerging Trans-Caspian and Black Sea transport links. Stronger Kazakh-Romanian commercial ties could therefore support both bilateral trade and Kazakhstan's wider access to European markets.



People-to-people connections

Kazakh higher-education experts participate in SPHERE and Bologna Process discussions in Bucharest (21 September, [Erasmus+ Kazakhstan](#))

Kazakhstan's Higher Education Reform Experts Alibek Madibekov, Director of the National Center for Higher Education Development; Banu Narbekova, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs at Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University; and Rauza Mendaliyeva, Head of the MGIMO Kazakhstan branch in Astana, participated in the SPHERE Seminar and Bologna Process Symposium at POLITEHNICA Bucharest. Discussions covered skills development, digital and AI competencies, inclusion and higher-education reform within and beyond the European Higher Education Area. Kazakhstan's participation was reported by its National Erasmus+ Office, while the symposium itself was organised under the EU-supported SPHERE framework with the European University Association, OBREAL Global and POLITEHNICA Bucharest.

Relevance: Kazakhstan increasingly engages with European education systems, which promotes institutional convergence, academic cooperation and knowledge exchange under Erasmus+.

Kazakhstan Culture Days in Paris brings Kazakh culture to French audiences (21 September, [Entrevue](#))

Kazakhstan Culture Days, held in Paris from 17–19 September, brought Kazakh film, music, dance and heritage to French audiences. Reports note that the programme went beyond performances, with discussions aimed at building longer-term links between Kazakh cultural institutions and French and European cultural networks.

Relevance: Cultural diplomacy is becoming a more visible part of Kazakhstan's engagement with Europe. Sustained cooperation between museums, artists and cultural organisations can create connections that extend beyond official diplomacy.



Italian–Kazakh association expands cultural diplomacy initiative along the Silk Road (22 September, [ACIK](#))

The Italian–Kazakh Trade Association ACIK highlighted its cooperation with *Ambasciatori di Cultura lungo la Via della Seta*, an initiative linking Italy, Kazakhstan and other Silk Road countries through projects in art, music, philosophy, textiles, food and science. The partnership is intended to complement commercial ties with cultural and educational exchanges and broader civil-society contacts.

Relevance: People-to-people relations between Kazakhstan and Europe are also developing outside embassies and government ministries.