



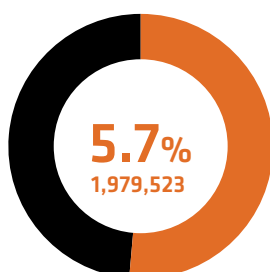
# Diaspora engagement mapping

## UZBEKISTAN

### Facts & figures

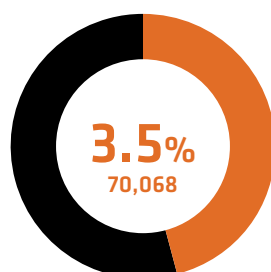
#### Emigration

% of emigrants in total population<sup>1</sup>



♂ 51.6%  
♀ 48.4%

% of which in the EU



♂ 45.9%  
♀ 54.1%



Remittances as a share of GDP: **12.1%**  
Remittances inflow (USD billion): **6,989**



#### Top countries of destination<sup>2</sup>

Russia <sup>3</sup>	1,146,535
Kazakhstan <sup>4</sup>	294,395
Ukraine	222,012
Turkmenistan	67,075
United States	66,093



#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>5</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>6</sup>



Voting from abroad:<sup>7</sup>

At embassies/consulates



**Uzbekistan does not have a diaspora engagement policy.**

1 There is a significant difference in numbers related to Uzbekistan's population. No population censuses have been conducted in Uzbekistan since 1991. A population census is planned for 2022. According to the [State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan](#) as July 1, 2020, the population is 34,262,792 people (rather than 32,981,715 according to UN data) and the biggest group of emigrants are circular labour migrants who leave Uzbekistan for Russia and Kazakhstan.

2 It is important to mention the 'old' Uzbek community of approx. 2.5 million people resides in Afghanistan. Uzbeks seem to have appeared in Afghanistan in 1920-30s. The Uzbek community in Afghanistan has kept their Uzbek language with their own Turkish dialect. The Constitution of Afghanistan recognized the Uzbek language as the 'third official language' along with some other minority languages. The Uzbek community is also recognized as an ethnic group in Afghanistan. <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/uzbeks-and-turkmens/>  
3 According to the statistics of the [MIA of Russia](#), there were 2,188,835 migrants from Uzbekistan registered in Russia in 2019; 2,017,830 in 2018, 1,923,388 in 2017.

4 According to the statistics of Kazakhstan, approx. 1 mil of Uzbek nationals crossed the border in 2019, albeit 500,000 of them were temporary labour workers. See [KazInform](#) (2019).

5 Art 25 of the Law On Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan of 2020.

6 Citizens of Uzbekistan residing abroad can vote only in person at embassies/consulates. When the Uzbek embassy covers more than one country (for example, the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Berlin is in charge of 10 regions of Germany, the Czech Republic, Swiss Confederation and Sweden), the embassy staff and/or staff of the voting station visit each country on a specific date to arrange votes. Also, Art. 10 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulates the rules of how election constituencies and polling stations have to be formed.

7 Art. 10 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that "polling stations can be established at diplomatic and other representations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in foreign states [...] The issue of allocating polling stations located outside the Republic of Uzbekistan to polling districts is decided by the Central Election Commission."

Terminology: National lawmakers operate with the undefined term 'diaspora', but a clearly defined term of 'compatriot'. The term compatriot included two groups of individuals:

- People who were born or previously resided in the territory of Uzbekistan (and their direct descendants) who are currently not citizens of Uzbekistan and reside outside of Uzbekistan;<sup>8</sup>
- Foreign citizens or stateless persons living abroad who identify themselves as Uzbeks or Karakalpaks due to a sense of spiritual and cultural involvement in their historical Motherland, or on the basis of ethnic and linguistic affiliations, and who wish to maintain full communication with Uzbekistan.<sup>9</sup>

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



**2018** ● **Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of October 25, 2018 No. PP-3982 on “measures for further enhancement of state policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the sphere of cooperation with compatriots living abroad”** [amended by Presidential decree 10.12.2019 No. UP-5892] sets the main objectives of state policy in the sphere of cooperation with compatriots as:

- Rendering assistance in the realization of the rights and freedoms of compatriots residing abroad;
- Supporting activities dedicated to the circulation of the cultural, scientific and spiritual heritage of Uzbekistan, preservation and development of Uzbek language, culture and traditions in the host countries of compatriots;
- Developing and strengthening ties with compatriots and their organizations to increase the social and economic potential of Uzbekistan and to promote building mutually beneficial and friendly relations with foreign states;
- Implementing legal, social and economic conditions to increase the interest of compatriots in business and investment in scientific, educational and cultural activities.

**2019** ● **National Concept of the State Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Field of Interethnic Relations and the Road Map on Its Implementation in 2019-2021<sup>10</sup>** includes the aim to protect the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens of Uzbekistan abroad, and to support compatriots by cooperating closely with the Uzbek diaspora abroad.

**2020** ● **Presidential Decree on Measures to Introduce a System of Safe, Orderly and Legal Labor Migration:** The system consists of six pillars, with four of particular relevance:

- International cooperation in the field of external labor migration will be developed and relations with organizations of compatriots abroad and the Uzbek diaspora will be strengthened;
- Before going to work abroad, citizens will be trained in the profession and adequate foreign languages, they will be issued international certificates confirming professional qualifications;
- Labor migrants are financially and socially supported, the practice of insuring their lives and health will be expanded, cultural and educational events will be organized for them;
- Labor migrants returning from foreign countries will receive help in their reintegration, employment, professional development and entrepreneurial initiatives. Organized labor activity abroad will be equated to self-employment, and the procedure for payment of taxes and calculation of pensions for self-employed persons will be applied to these persons.

8 Art. 3 of the Law On Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated of 28 February 2020. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5e8d89964.html> Accessed 21 July 2020

9 Art 1 Section 2 Para 1, 2 Section 1 Para 4 of the Governmental Regulation On the Procedure for Issuing An Invitation and Providing Multiple Entry Visas to the Republic of Uzbekistan for Compatriots Living Abroad and Members of Their Families, and Their Temporary Registration by the Internal Affairs Bodies; Decree of the Supreme Council of Uzbekistan On Measures to Strengthen Relations with Compatriots Abroad, dated 14 January 1992.

10 Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva (2019): National Concept of the State Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Field of Interethnic Relations. Available at: Accessed July 19, 2020.

There are a large number of legal documents<sup>11</sup> that were designed to enforce the government's approach toward protecting rights and freedoms of Uzbek labour migrants abroad and take action to reduce the various difficulties encountered by Uzbek migrant workers. The current legal framework rules the activities of the Agency for External Labour Migration which is a government body responsible to regulate the issue of Uzbek migrant workers abroad.

## Trends

In recent years (2017-2020), Uzbekistan has extended its interest to bring the expertise and experience of diaspora members back to Uzbekistan. This is an exigent and momentous task and Uzbekistan is currently working on a diaspora engagement policy. Uzbekistan has also been increasingly active in international cooperation and relationship building with foreign countries in order to strengthen interethnic relations, protect the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens in the country and abroad, and supporting close cooperation with the Uzbek diaspora abroad.

**State-diaspora cooperation & engagement:** Uzbekistan authorities have started to protect rights and freedoms of Uzbeks abroad through providing informative and administrative assistance, and evacuating vulnerable labour migrants during the coronavirus pandemic. The government and national airline, Uzbekistan Airways, evacuated Uzbek nationals from China, Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries.

**Knowledge transfer & networking:** Uzbekistan is keen to encourage compatriots living abroad to carry out entrepreneurial, investment, scientific, educational and cultural activities in Uzbekistan and for highly skilled professionals to return. In April 2017, the government outlined the procedure for issuing an invitation and providing multiple entry visas to Uzbekistan for compatriots living abroad and their family members, as well as attracting highly qualified diasporans to work in leadership positions in state and economic management bodies, local executive authorities, other state organisations of the country, or as consultants and advisers.

**Youth diaspora capacity building:** Youth diaspora members are of special interest to Uzbekistan as demonstrated through the establishment of the World Association of Youth of Uzbekistan in 2017 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Achievements

**Diaspora in the Government:** In recent years, several highly qualified professionals of Uzbek origin returned to take up middle to high-level positions in the country. Since 2018, about 130 Uzbek compatriots from abroad have taken up various positions in government bodies, up to the position of deputy ministers.

<sup>11</sup> An "Intergovernmental Agreement between the Governments of Uzbekistan and Russia on organized recruitment and attraction of the citizens of Uzbekistan for temporary employment in the territory of Russian Federation" of April 7, 2017  
 Presidential Decree "On the Measures for Safe Transportation of the Citizens of Uzbekistan who are Travelling Abroad for Temporary Employment" of March 5, 2018  
 Presidential Decree "On Additional Measures to Further Improve the System of External Labor Migration of the Republic of Uzbekistan" of July 5, 2018  
 Governmental Resolution № 713 of August 23, 2019 "On Additional Measures for Protecting the Rights and Legal Interests of Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan Carrying out Temporal Labour Activities Abroad"

**Uzbekistan's first sovereign Eurobond<sup>12</sup>** was launched by the Uzbek compatriot Odilbek Isakov. In 2019, Uzbekistan launched two tranches of Eurobonds with a total value of \$1 billion. In 2020, Uzbekistan plans to issue Eurobonds in the national currency to the equivalent of USD500 million. These help to finance the country's debt and to attract greater interest from investors.

## Obstacles<sup>13</sup>



- **Lack of capacity:** The state of Uzbekistan faces challenges of low productivity and fragmentation in the organization of their contacts between state bodies, diaspora organizations of compatriots abroad. As a result, it is ineffective in making the most of the potential of compatriots in the implementation of economic, social, investment, scientific, educational, cultural and other projects and programs.<sup>14</sup>
- **Lack of a long-term strategy** towards compatriots living abroad, especially activities to preserve and promote the Uzbek language, culture and traditions.<sup>15</sup>
- **Lack of communication and trust:** Before 2016, when President Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power, the number of Uzbeks fleeing the country was on the rise and the government was suspicious of Uzbeks living abroad. Building trust between the state and the diaspora is still further needed.

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices



### El-yurt umidi online platform 2020

In June 2020, the El-yurt umidi Foundation, whose name literally translates as 'the Hope of the Nation' launched an online platform for higher education institutions, research centres and other organisations in need of international scientific and practical cooperation with compatriot-fellow scientists, experienced experts and researchers living abroad.

### World Association of Youth of Uzbekistan

The World Association of Youth of Uzbekistan aims to build the spirit of patriotism, pride, as well as promoting healthy lifestyles to compatriots living abroad through the organisation of meetings, celebrations, festivals and literary evenings with celebrities. It informs young people abroad about the reforms carried out in Uzbekistan; provides assistance in the adaptation of returning compatriots to their historical homeland and assists them in finding their place in the society. However, the association's reach is quite limited as many young Uzbeks do not trust government organisations.

12 Euromoney (2018): [Uzbek expats heed president's call to return](#)

13 The Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of October 25, 2018 No. PP-3982 enumerates a number of hurdles that limit cooperation and involvement of the potential of compatriots abroad, diaspora organisation in the qualitative improvement of reforms in Uzbekistan.

14 <https://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=111088>

15 Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of October 25, 2018 No. PP-3982

## Fundraising campaigns

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Uzbek diaspora in Europe (France, UK) launched the Solidarity with Uzbekistan campaign which raised money to provide food aid to 500 families in four regions of Uzbekistan. Compatriots, such as a Russia-based tycoon of Uzbek origin Alisher Usmanov, have donated about \$20 million to the “Mercy and Health” Foundation (“Mehr-Shafkat va Salomatlik”) for the fight against the coronavirus and for restoring the Uzbek economy.<sup>16</sup>

16 <https://www.interfax.ru/world/701922>

## Annex:

# List of actors

## Diaspora related institutions

- **National institutions**
  - At ministerial level

### **President of Uzbekistan** (1991)

The President guarantees observance of the rights and freedoms of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan; outlines national strategies on inter-ethnic relations, with compatriots living abroad and diaspora engagement policy. The President appoints the chairman of the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

### **The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan** (1991)

Maintains dialogue with compatriots living abroad.

### **The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan** (1994)

Provides assistance in the developing relations and contacts with compatriots living abroad. Its branches abroad and representative offices in the international airports are responsible for communications with compatriots residing abroad, as well as for the issuance of the long-term visas to compatriots and their family members.

The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan (1990) is a government body that supervises higher and secondary-specialized, professional education. In connection with the El-yurt umidi Foundation, the ministry has the task of awarding scholarships to the citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan who are independently enrolled in master's or doctoral programmes in foreign educational institutions and research centres that are among the 500 best in the world or the 200 best in the world for selected subjects in the ranking made by internationally recognized agencies. It also organizes targeted courses based on special programmes for teaching foreign languages.

### **The Ministry of Labour and Social Employment of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

Regulates and facilitates the recruitment of labour migrants abroad throughout its Agency for External Labour Migration (see below). In recent years, the ministry and its agency have been working on how to 'diversify' destinations for Uzbek labour migrants actively seeking job opportunities abroad, including to South Korea, Japan and Eastern European countries. Although several agreements have been reached, the number of Uzbek migrants sent as an organized labour force to these 'new destination countries' is still insignificant.

- At sub-ministerial level

### **The Committee for Inter-Ethnic and Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic Of Uzbekistan** (2017)

Under the Committee are 34 Friendship Associations and 138 national cultural centers. Among others things, the Committee is in charge of coordinating work on the establishment of friendly international relations, developing productive cooperation, and strengthening of friendship with the civil community of foreign countries, including with compatriots living abroad.



## **The Agency for External Labour Migration of the Ministry of Labour and Social Employment of Population**

Provides for the organised transfer of labour migrants abroad. The government of Uzbekistan has an intermediary charge a fee for conclusion of a contract. The resolution on July 5, 2018 “On additional measures to further improve the system of external labour migration of Uzbekistan” provides for the opening of representations of the Agency for Foreign Labour Migration Affairs in destination countries. The Agency had been the only officially designated organization in sending Uzbeks for work abroad until the government allowed private human resources agencies to enter the market in 2018. The vast majority of migrant workers find jobs in Russia, Kazakhstan, and other countries without the Agency.

### **“El-yurt umidi” Foundation** (2018)

Was created under the Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and has been assigned to strengthen contacts with compatriots with knowledge and rich practical experience, to invite them to various prestigious posts in Uzbekistan, and to help efficiently use their potential for further strengthening the positive image of Uzbekistan at international level. Since 2020, the foundation has the mandate to attract compatriots living abroad to work in government and economic administration bodies and state-owned enterprises of Uzbekistan, hold annual forums, conferences and other events. The foundation can be seen as a continuation of the previous “Umid” Foundation which operated 1997- 2014 to support the education of gifted youth abroad.

### **Buyuk Kelajak**


Meaning literally ‘A great future’) was created in 2018, with more than 240 Uzbek diaspora who are classed as experts with a collective experience of working abroad in more than 30 countries. The organization aims to assist in the implementation of reforms in the economic and social fields and to provide expert support in improving the efficiency of transformations conducted as well as in the accelerated development of the state and society.

## **Diaspora organisations in Europe**



### **British Uzbek Society (BUS)** 2002 UK

#### **☑ Integration activities**

BUS is an independent, non-political organisation that aims at supporting and helping to facilitate cultural, educational and people-to-people contacts between the UK and Uzbekistan. [  ]

### **Davra Deutsch-Usbekischer Kulturverein e.V.** 2013 Germany

#### **☑ Integration activities**

The organisation promotes close relations between nationals of Uzbekistan and Germany. It aims to increase any form of cultural, sport and scientific cooperation between the two countries.

## **Uzbekistan Italy Association**

- ☑ **Integration activities**
- ☑ **Development activities**

This non-profit organisation aims to increase cultural exchange and communication between Uzbekistan and Italy, as well as to promote economic interests via visits to Uzbekistan.

## **World association of youth of Uzbekistan** 2017

- ☑ **Integration activities**

This non-governmental organisation is under the control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The organisation has national branches and/or representatives in Germany,<sup>17</sup> Belgium, the UK, Latvia and other non EU countries.

<sup>17</sup> Facebook [page](#) of the German branch of the world association of youth of Uzbekistan Accessed on July 17, 2020.

**Written by:** Dr Olga R Gulina  
**Edited by:** EUDiF  
October 2020  
Updated September 2022



Funded by  
the European Union

