



The presidency of Uzbekistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

As one of the founding countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Uzbekistan along with other Member States defines the development strategy of the SCO. Since its establishment in 2001 SCO has been becoming significant international organization in Asia. The Uzbek presidency in SCO this year coincides with the 15-year anniversary of this organization. It is expected that the before coming SCO summit in Tashkent in June will be one of the most important.

Uzbekistan supports strict compliance with the goals, objectives and principles established in the Charter of the SCO which aimed at ensuring the safety and stability, improving the socio-economic well-being of the region, increasing the performance and international prestige of the organization. ***Particular attention is attached to strengthening the openness of the structure that excludes confrontational or bloc orientation.***

During the first presidency of Uzbekistan in the SCO (in 2003-2004, the second time the country led the association in 2009-2010) important documents in terms of the institutional establishment of the organization have been signed: **Regulations on the status of observer at the SCO and Order of SCO interaction with observers**. As a result, in 2004, Mongolia gained observer status, and in 2005 India, Pakistan and Iran. In addition, a significant event was the signing of the **Agreement on cooperation in fight against illegal trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their precursors**, which created a legal framework for multilateral cooperation to counter the threat of drugs.

Furthermore, since **January 2004** the **Executive Committee of the Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) of the SCO** started functioning in Tashkent. This permanent body has become an effective tool and platform for combining efforts and practical cooperation between law enforcement bodies and special services of the SCO member states in the fight against radical, violent extremism and separatism, organized crime.

On **8 April** 2016 Tashkent hosted the 28th Meeting of RATS Council during which the results for the implementation of the Cooperation Program of SCO member states and other acts were discussed in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism for 2013-2015.

In 2004, the **Institute of Meetings of Security Councils Secretaries** was created on the initiative of the Uzbekistan, which is a coordinating and consultative mechanism for security cooperation in the SCO framework. The first meeting in this format was held in Tashkent in June of the same year. Since then, they are conducted yearly and play an important role in the study, analysis and evaluation of the security situation, the coordination of efforts of the SCO countries to stand together against the challenges and threats. The negotiations within the framework of such meetings contribute to the development of common approaches in timely response to traditional and new threats, and thereby increase the practical

effectiveness of the organization's activities in the field of ensuring peace and sustainable progress.

In 2010 (during the second presidency of Uzbekistan in the SCO) it was also signed substantial package of documents aimed at further development of cooperation, expanding external contacts of the organization, an effective solution to problems of peace, tranquility and steady progress in the vast region. In April 2010 during the visit of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, a **Joint Declaration on Cooperation between the Secretariats of the UN and the SCO** has been signed in Tashkent. This document marked the beginning of official cooperation between the two associations.

The Declaration is essential for strengthening the legal framework, enhancing the SCO's international prestige and development of its contacts with UN agencies.

The approval of the Regulations on procedure for admitting new members to the SCO was a significant event and Uzbekistan's active work on achievement of consensus and consolidated approaches by all member states contributed to its adoption. The document, representing a significant step in creating the legal framework for the SCO's further expansion, established the basic criteria to be met by the state, which is aimed at to obtain full membership of the organization. Thus, the open nature of the organization, which is becoming more attractive to many countries, has been once again confirmed.

The adoption of the SCO Rules of procedure in 2010, which was developed at the initiative and with the active participation of Uzbekistan, **served to further development of the organization and improving the legal framework of its activities**. No uniform rules of governing the initiation, development, approval and adoption of regulatory legal acts were within the organization before the document's adoption. One of its main achievements was the consolidation of the SCO basic principle in it - decision-making within an organization only by consensus.

The Republic of Uzbekistan has once again assumed the responsible mission presidency of the SCO in 2015-2016, which coincided with the 15th anniversary of the organization's establishment.

Such tasks as the development of measures to strengthen the joint struggle with the challenges of security, development of cooperation in the area, ensuring orderly progress of the member states, further expansion of the organization's international relations remain the focus of attention during this period.

Concrete results in key areas of the SCO activity are achieved over the past year. Thus, Memorandum on granting the Kingdom of Cambodia the status of dialogue partner was signed in September 2015. Similar documents were signed with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Nepal this year. ***Negotiations on the jointing the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan - the largest countries in South Asia in the SCO are continuing.***

A meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers will be held in late May. The meeting of culture ministries, as well as the meeting of the Council and the Interbank Association of the SCO Business Council is scheduled in June. The main event will be the Heads of State Council's meeting. The summit will adopt a number of important documents which will determine the main directions of the organization's development in the medium and long term.

The outcome of the current, third presidency of Uzbekistan in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will serve to further capacity building of the structure in addressing identified problems, strengthening of the legal framework for the organization's activity and increasing its prestige on the world stage.