



## THE SIXTH CICA SUMMIT: ASIAN VISION OF THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

The political situation in the Eurasian countries is one of the frequently discussed issues given the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which led to unprecedented sanctions from the Western countries on Russia. This invasion brought food security risks, especially in low-income countries, an energy crisis in Europe, disruption of supply chains, and a surge in inflation. Sanctions on Russia affected all its strategic partners in many sensitive issues, including transportation and transit. As economic and political ties between Russia and the Western world are being deteriorated, the importance of Asian countries has increased substantially. Russia views Asia as an alternative market, source of technology, and investment source and partners. Therefore, the sixth summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was the opportunity for all participating countries to express their vision of future cooperation. President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev chaired the summit. Head of States of Central Asian republics, Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia, Türkiye, Belarus, the Emir of Qatar, Vice Presidents of Vietnam and China, and about 50 delegations attended it. This summit saw the adoption of the Astana Statement, which officially marked the transformation of the CICA into an international organization. Moreover, Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the organization was extended for another two years [Freund, 2022].

In his speech, the President of Kazakhstan stated that the CICA has become a platform for multilateral cooperation and an international institution of modern diplomacy. He separately welcomed Kuwait, which joined the CICA. President Tokayev called the current situation in global politics and economy a "global dysfunction", and noted the rising importance of the Asian countries and the diminishing role of the Western economies. The President of Kazakhstan also devoted his speech to several important issues, including economic integration, the formation of efficient transit-transport corridors, and climate change. He emphasized that by 2050, the possible damage to Asian economies from such natural disasters could be up to 26% of their GDP [Akorda, 2022].

Contrary to expectations, the President of Russia Vladimir Putin's speech was mainly economic, rather than political. He mentioned the key role of Asia in a truly multipolar world and global economic growth. He also noted a

dynamic development of regional organizations, in particular, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Eurasian Economic Union. According to Putin, the increasing volatility of global energy and food prices remains a real threat to low-income countries and Russia is ready to address these issues. One of the proposals of the Russian President was a reconsideration of the global financial system and more active use of national currencies in mutual trade. In terms of security and politics, Putin mentioned the importance of stabilization of Afghanistan through economic recovery [Kremlin.ru, 2022].

President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that new geopolitical realities directly affect the states of Central Asia and hinder their efforts to deepen economic integration. He also noted that special attention should be paid to the situation in Afghanistan. President Mirziyoyev proposed his economic agenda, which consisted of several important initiatives. He highlighted the importance of escaping protectionism and new barriers, which destabilize global markets, to strengthen interconnectedness in the Asian region, primarily through the creation of production and logistics chains and transport corridors that effectively connect Central Asia with South and East Asia, as well as the Middle East. The President of Uzbekistan also proposed new approaches to address food security issues, which include the formation of sustainable plans for food production and optimal food distribution chains, harmonization of technical regulations for the growth of intra-regional trade, creation of an integrated system for monitoring food security in Asia [UzReport, 2022].

The situation in Ukraine was mentioned only in the speech of Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who emphasized the regional and global impact of the crisis in Ukraine and called to stop the war as soon as possible [Lillis, 2022]. This time, during the visit of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to Astana, the fourth meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between Türkiye and Kazakhstan was held, and a mutual agreement was reached that the annual trade volume exceeding \$5 billion would reach \$10 billion in a short term. The parties mentioned the key role of the Middle Corridor in the diversification of export routes and trade intensification. "Table tennis diplomacy", which began in Ankara and symbolized the sincerity of the two leaders, continued in Astana.

In addition, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev awarded the President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan with the first-degree Order of Dostyk [Tomar, 2022]. It is worth noting that President Erdoğan also emphasized that Türkiye would continue to support the stability, peace, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of brotherly Kazakhstan. The Turkish leader also met with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan defended Ankara's booming trade ties with Moscow, during his fourth meeting with Vladimir Putin in three months. Since the beginning of the Ukrainian conflict, Ankara has offered to mediate between the two sides and host peace talks. Türkiye supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, at the same time opposing international sanctions designed to isolate Moscow. Through Türkiye's mediation, the United Nations, Russia, and Ukraine reached an agreement in Istanbul to reopen certain Ukrainian ports to release grain that had been stuck for months because of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. This agreement was crucial to address the growing global food crisis [Daily Sabah, 2022]. During this meeting, the Presidents also discussed grain supplies.

The sixth CICA summit was historical due to the following reasons. Firstly, the CICA was transformed into an international organization, which can be considered a success of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan and personally of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. For instance, the fifth CICA summit, which was held on June 15, 2019, in Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe, was mainly focused on security and the environment and took place in very different geopolitical conditions. The summit adopted the declaration "Common Vision for a Safer and More Prosperous CICA Region". The Declaration reflected the position and views of the CICA members on such important issues of security and cooperation in Asia as terrorism, disarmament, food and energy security, as well as the situation in Afghanistan and the Middle East [CICA, 2022]. Secondly, the summit demonstrated a changing balance of power in Asian and in general Eurasia region, where Türkiye will play one of the key roles as energy, trade, and transit hub with rising political influence. This will lead to the growing importance of the alliances with Türkiye's participation. Therefore, Central Asian republics should use this opportunity to diversify their exports through new corridors and develop infrastructure for penetration of the Asian markets.

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