



## THE EU'S GLOBAL GATEWAY STRATEGY AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR UZBEKISTAN.

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### **Abstract.**

The European Union's Global Gateway strategy was adopted in 2021 to promote sustainable, reliable and high-standard global infrastructure and connectivity. This strategy aims to expand cooperation in priority areas such as digital technologies, energy, transport, healthcare, and education.<sup>1</sup> In this context, Central Asia, and Uzbekistan in particular, which is considered a geostrategically important region, is taking an important place in the new foreign economic and investment policy of the European Union. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the main directions of the Global Gateway strategy and assess its economic and strategic capabilities for Uzbekistan. The study used document analysis and comparative analysis techniques based on the quality method.

**Key words:** Global Gateway, European Union, Uzbekistan, Central Asia, Connectivity, Sustainable Development,

### **Introduction**

In the 21st century, the development of economic, transport, and digital ties between countries is becoming increasingly important in international relations. In the context of globalization, digital transformation and geopolitical change, infrastructure and connectivity have become one of the main factors determining the economic competitiveness of states.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, large international partners are actively using the means of infrastructure diplomacy in their foreign policy. This approach will not only contribute to the development of transport and logistics networks, but also attract investment, ensure sustainable economic growth, and strengthen interregional cooperation.

In recent years, the geostrategic importance of Central Asia has increased significantly. The region attracts the attention of the international community with its important transport corridors connecting Europe and Asia, rich natural resources and developing market potential. In particular, Uzbekistan's open and pragmatic foreign policy, economic reforms, and initiatives aimed at developing regional cooperation are making the country one of the European Union's reliable

<sup>1</sup> European Commission. (2024) *Global Gateway*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/_en)

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. (2021) *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank The Global Gateway*. EU Publications office.



partners.<sup>3</sup> This is creating new opportunities for Uzbekistan in the areas of transport and logistics, green energy, digital transformation, and investment attraction within the framework of the Global Gateway strategy.

The aim of the study is to analyze the main directions of the European Union's Global Gateway strategy in this thesis and to assess its potential for Uzbekistan in the areas of transport, energy, digital infrastructure and investment.

### **Main Part: The EU's Global Gateway Strategy.**

The Global Gateway (GG) is the European Union's leading initiative designed to enhance its global presence through strategic investment collaborations. Launched in 2021, this strategy seeks to establish the EU as a prominent global player in sustainable, high-quality infrastructure and secure connectivity, with an aim to mobilise €300 billion by 2027. After recent declarations by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the Global Gateway Forum, the EU has already exceeded its initial target, achieving €306 billion in investment mobilisation by October 2025. The strategy is now set to increase its target to €400 billion by 2027.<sup>4</sup> The Global Gateway fundamentally seeks to integrate external investment, development cooperation, and economic diplomacy into one cohesive strategic plan. The goal is to surpass conventional development financing by establishing enduring partnerships that are advantageous for both partner nations and European interests, aligning with their respective priorities. This signifies a wider transformation in the EU's external policy, moving from a focus predominantly on development to a more strategic application of investment instruments.

According to the President of the European Commission this project focuses on five sectors: digital, climate and energy, transport, health, education and research. The President has also mentioned that project aims to mobilise investment with the help of Team Europe approach and this team consists of the EU and EU members, and their implementing agencies, public development banks such as EIB (European Investment Bank) and EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development).<sup>5</sup>

### **Opportunities for Uzbekistan**

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<sup>3</sup> EU Delegation to Uzbekistan. (2025) *Global Gateway: 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-Central Asia Economic Forum*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/uzbekistan/global-gateway-3rd-eu-central-asia-economic-forum-key-deliverables\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/uzbekistan/global-gateway-3rd-eu-central-asia-economic-forum-key-deliverables_en)

<sup>4</sup> S.Bilal (2025). *The Global Gateway in context*. Foundation for European Progressive studies. Available at: <https://fepe-europe.eu/the-global-gateway-in-context/>

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2025). *The Global Gateway Strategy*. Publications office of the European Union. Available at: <file:///C:/Users/hp/Downloads/The-Global-Gateway-Strategy-Booklet.pdf>



The European Union's Global Gateway strategy provides significant opportunities for Uzbekistan in economic development, modernization of transport infrastructure and strengthening regional integration. The country's geostrategic location in Central Asia could make it one of the important transit hubs between Europe and Asia. Therefore, the projects implemented within the framework of the Global Gateway are an important factor in strengthening Uzbekistan's position in international transport corridors and attracting foreign investment. One of the most promising areas within the Global Gateway strategy is Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor. This corridor connects Central Asia with European markets via the Caspian Sea, the South Caucasus, and Turkey. The development of this transport corridor will help reduce freight transit times, reduce logistics costs, and ensure faster and safer delivery of Uzbek export products to European markets. In 2024, the European Union and international financial institutions launched an initiative to mobilize up to €10 billion<sup>6</sup> in investments to develop this corridor.

Another important area is initiatives related to the ecological and socio-economic restoration of the Aral Sea region. Within the framework of the Global Gateway, it is planned to support projects aimed at developing sustainable agriculture, effective water resource management, introducing the principles of a green economy, and increasing the resilience of local populations to climate change in the Aral Sea region. The ARAL SEA afforestation initiative aims to restore degraded lands in the Lower Aral Sea Basin, emphasizing environmental recovery, socio-economic renewal, and sustainable land management. The EU is providing EUR 8.8 million, while the EIB and AFD will each offer loans of EUR 20 million.<sup>7</sup> These initiatives can contribute to the ecological recovery of the Aral Sea region, the creation of new jobs, and the strengthening of the region's socio-economic stability.

## Challenges

While the Global Gateway strategy presents great opportunities for Uzbekistan, there are a number of factors that affect its effective implementation. First and foremost, the implementation of large infrastructure projects requires long-term financing, modern technologies, and effective institutional

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<sup>6</sup>European Commission (2024). *Global Gateway: EU and Central Asian countries agree on building blocks to develop the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor*. [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-and-central-asian-countries-agree-building-blocks-develop-trans-caspian-transport-2024-01-30\\_en?prefLang=ga&utm](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-and-central-asian-countries-agree-building-blocks-develop-trans-caspian-transport-2024-01-30_en?prefLang=ga&utm)

<sup>7</sup> EU Delegation to Uzbekistan. (2025) *Global Gateway: 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-Central Asia Economic Forum*. Available at: [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/uzbekistan/global-gateway-3rd-eu-central-asia-economic-forum-key-deliverables\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/uzbekistan/global-gateway-3rd-eu-central-asia-economic-forum-key-deliverables_en)





management. Therefore, the success of investment projects depends not only on external financial support, but also on the consistent continuation of national reforms.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, Central Asia is a geopolitically important region where the interests of major powers intersect. The competition between the European Union, China, Russia, and other international partners' economic initiatives in the region, while creating new opportunities for Uzbekistan, also creates the need to maintain a balance in foreign policy.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, it is important for the country to continue its multi-vector foreign policy and develop mutually beneficial relations with all partners.

## Conclusion

The European Union's Global Gateway strategy is an important platform for taking economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and the European Union to a new level. The strategy can serve to develop Uzbekistan's economic potential and strengthen its regional and international connectivity in priority areas such as transport, green energy, digital transformation, education, and investment. In particular, the development of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor, the implementation of environmental projects in the Aral Sea region, and cooperation in the field of green energy are expected to significantly contribute to Uzbekistan's sustainable economic development. However, fully utilizing these opportunities requires continued institutional reforms, further improvement of the investment climate, and strengthening regional cooperation.

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<sup>8</sup> European Commission (2021). *Global Gateway*. Available at: [https://commission.europa.eu/topics/international-partnerships/global-gateway\\_en?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://commission.europa.eu/topics/international-partnerships/global-gateway_en?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>9</sup> European Parliament. (n.d) *Central Asia*. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/178/centralasia>





4.S.Bilal (2025). The Global Gateway in context. Foundation for European Progressive studies. Available at: <https://feps-europe.eu/the-global-gateway-in-context/>

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6.European Commission (2024). Global Gateway: EU and Central Asian countries agree on building blocks to develop the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor. [https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-and-central-asian-countries-agree-building-blocks-develop-trans-caspian-transport-2024-01-30\\_en?prefLang=ga&utm](https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/global-gateway-eu-and-central-asian-countries-agree-building-blocks-develop-trans-caspian-transport-2024-01-30_en?prefLang=ga&utm)

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