



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on Uzbekistan

*2971st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 27 October 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council notes that since the adoption of the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia in May 2007, the dialogue and cooperation between the EU and Uzbekistan have acquired a new scope and quality. The EU reiterates its readiness to continue to engage comprehensively with Uzbekistan and recalls its position to that effect as set out in previous Council Conclusions. At the same time, the EU remains seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, and encourages the Uzbek authorities to implement fully its international obligations in this area.

2. The Council recalls that restrictive measures were originally imposed on Uzbekistan following the Andijan events of May 2005. Bearing in mind its Conclusions of 13 October 2008, the Council urges Uzbekistan to release all imprisoned human rights defenders and prisoners of conscience, to allow unimpeded operation of non-governmental organisations in the country, including Human Rights Watch, to cooperate fully with all relevant UN Special Rapporteurs, to guarantee freedom of speech and of the media, to proceed with the implementation of conventions against child labour, and to fully align its election processes with OSCE commitments, ODIHR recommendations and other international standards for democratic elections, especially with a view to the Parliamentary elections on 23 December 2009.

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3. The Council welcomes the commitment of Uzbekistan to work with the EU on a range of questions relating to human rights and the rule of law, and notes the positive steps taken in Uzbekistan over the last years. These include the release of some human rights defenders, the resumption of ICRC prison visits, the abolition of the death penalty, efforts to improve detention conditions, the introduction of *habeas corpus*, the ratification of conventions against child labour, progress in the implementation of certain OSCE commitments as well as Uzbekistan's stated willingness to work more closely with that organization, continuation of judicial reform, the active participation of Uzbekistan in the EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia and the consolidation of the dialogue on human rights between the EU and Uzbekistan.
4. The Council encourages Uzbekistan to continue its reforms in the fields of human rights, democratisation and the rule of law, and remains ready to assist the Uzbek authorities in their efforts through cooperation programmes and dialogue, in particular in the framework of the Cooperation Council, the dialogue on human rights and the Rule of Law Initiative.
5. With a view to encourage the Uzbek authorities to take further substantive steps to improve the rule of law and the human rights situation on the ground, and taking into account their commitments, the Council decides not to renew the remaining restrictive measures set out in the Common Position 2008/843/CFSP.
6. The Council will closely and continuously observe the human rights situation in Uzbekistan. Within a year, the External Relations Council will discuss and assess progress made by the Uzbek authorities and the effectiveness of EU-Uzbek cooperation. While reaffirming the EU's readiness to strengthen its relations with Uzbekistan, the Council notes that the depth and quality of the dialogue and cooperation will depend on Uzbek reforms and progress in the areas mentioned above."
