



Expansion of Tourism Interaction of Uzbekistan with Countries Participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

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Abstract

In order to effectively address national, regional and global problems, Uzbekistan is actively developing multi-vector relations with all interested countries and international organizations, and the highest level of cooperation in the process of regional cooperation is with almost all Central Asian countries, within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The article examines the main documents signed at the main summits of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as meetings of SCO leaders. The development of tourism among the participating countries is analyzed as a priority area of cooperation.

Keywords: *International Organization; Foreign Policy; Tourism, UNESCO; Historical and Cultural Heritage*

Introduction

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a large international association and a broad political and economic community, is developing rapidly. Today, there is no doubt that the SCO has established itself as a new type of international regional organization. It has good results in the security sector as well as in the economic, political and cultural spheres. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization was created as a collective security league and was initially aimed at humanitarian cooperation. The declaration on its creation was signed on July 15, 2001 [1]. The first document of the SCO was the “Convention on the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism.” Initially, the priority within the organization was given to cooperation in the field of security, including the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking, etc. A regional anti-terrorist structure (RATS) was established with headquarters in Tashkent. Gradually, however, trade and economic interaction began to come to the fore.

The interdisciplinary nature of the problem under study required the study of the works of Russian, Chinese, foreign authors on a wide range of topics related to the processes in the Central Asian region. Of the works, one way or another affecting this region, it is worth noting research. In particular, the book by A. Kasymov and I. Vaskin [2] reveals the historical significance of the formation of the republic and the features of its foreign policy ties with leading international organizations and regional unions⁴. R. Alimov’s work [3] shows the role of international and regional organizations (UN, NATO,

OSCE, SCO, CSTO, etc.) and leading countries of the world (USA, Russia, China, etc.) in ensuring regional security, as well as geopolitical the importance of Central Asia in the system of international relations. The monograph by M. Rakhimov [4] examines the history of international relations, the formation and development of relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries with the leading states, as well as with various structures of multilateral cooperation in the context of ensuring stability and sustainable development of the region.

For example, the book by Frederick Starr and Svante Cornell “Uzbekistan’s New Face” [5] describes the reforms taking place in Uzbekistan in recent years in such important aspects of state policy as international relations, the economy, the social sphere and legal system, as well as initiatives of the head of the republic Sh. Mirziyoyev to strengthen peace and stability in Central Asia.

Discussion

The sources and literature on which the author relied are official documents of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, official documents and speeches of leaders, diplomats and politicians of the SCO member states and other states, documents of ministries and departments of the respective countries; documents of other international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, statistical collections, monographs by Russian and foreign authors, articles “in collections of scientific papers, publications in print and electronic media”.

A key factor in establishing mutual trust, friendly and good-neighborly relations between the SCO member states is their cooperation in the cultural, educational and scientific spheres. The established permanent cultural dialogue between the SCO countries contributes to the study and enrichment of the cultural experience of each other, which ultimately leads to an increase in the level of mutual understanding and the development of the tourism industry.

The rich historical and cultural heritage of the peoples of the SCO countries is embodied in cultural sites, which currently make up 20% of the UNESCO World Heritage List [6]. Acquaintance with these sights provides a unique opportunity to get acquainted with the vibrant history of the Eurasian region, enjoy the diverse palette of its unique national and cultural attributes and better understand the mentality and worldview of the people living there.

Expanding broad tourism cooperation in the SCO region is strengthening mutual understanding between its peoples. These important goals can be achieved through the organization of international exhibitions, festivals and competitions, through the expansion of cultural exchanges, cooperation between countries and continuing scientific activities to study the cultural and natural heritage of the region.

In 2003, the heads of government of the SCO member states signed the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation for 20 years. In September 2004, at the Council of Heads of Government of the SCO in Bishkek, an action plan was approved, which included over 100 specific projects, topics and areas of cooperation, and also provided mechanisms for their implementation [7]. The focus was on the following areas - transport communications, energy, telecommunications, agriculture, water management, nature conservation and tourism.

After the summit in Russia in Ufa, the participating countries adopted the SCO Development Strategy until 2025 [8]. The main directions of the program were cooperation in strengthening finances, trade cooperation for 10 years.

Upon completion of the SCO Ufa summit, the chairmanship in the Organization in 2015-2016 passed to the Republic of Uzbekistan. At the 15th annual summit in Tashkent (2016), for the first time in history, a joint program for the development of tourism relations was adopted [9].

The program included:

- Encouraging cooperation between enterprises of the tourism industry and related industries;
- Formation of favorable conditions for attracting investments in the creation and improvement of tourist infrastructure;
- Taking measures to improve the quality of provided tourist services, create a comfortable environment for tourists;
- Development of cooperation in the protection of the legal rights and interests of tourists, ensuring the safety of tourism;
- Development between interested SCO member states of cross-border and interregional cooperation in the field of tourism;
- Promoting cooperation between vocational education institutions in the field of tourism for the joint training of qualified personnel

SCO Chief Secretary Rashid Alimov emphasized: “The signing within the framework of the Tashkent SCO summit of the Program for the Development of Cooperation in Tourism, the implementation of joint cultural and educational programs and projects will give an additional impetus to the promotion of the rich historical and cultural heritage of the SCO member states, will contribute to the deepening of cultural ties in Eurasian space”.

The issue of cooperation in the field of tourism was also touched upon in 2017 in Beijing. The SCO member countries provided information on the experience of implementing state policy and the development of national legislation in the field of tourism, as well as international tourism exhibitions and fairs organized with the support of the national tourism administrations of the SCO member states.

As a result, a draft Joint Action Plan for the implementation of the Cooperation Program of the member states of the Shanghai Tourism Cooperation Organization for 2017-2018 was developed. It was aimed at deepening cooperation between government bodies in the field of tourism, promoting a tourism product, improving the quality of tourism services provided, protecting the legitimate rights and interests of tourists, and ensuring the safety of tourism.

On May 9, 2018, a meeting of the heads of national tourism administrations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states was held in the Chinese city of Wuhan. The main goal was to promote the expansion and development of equal, mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of tourism for the formation of a common tourist space on the basis of existing cultural, historical and economic ties [10].

Summit participants suggested that SCO member states work together to promote cultural heritage such as the Silk Road and rationalize the distribution and management of tourism resources.

The heads of delegations considered and approved the draft joint action plan for the implementation of the Program for the Development of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in Tourism for 2019-2020, having decided to submit the draft of this document for signing during the SCO Summit in Qingdao. At the SCO summit in Qingdao in June 2018, the SCO member states set a goal to

streamline the infrastructure and quality of tourism services, attract investment and introduce modern information technologies in the tourism industry.

On June 13-14, 2019, a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held in Bishkek. More and more states are considering the development of multilateral cooperation in the tourism sector as a strategic opportunity for increasing competitiveness in the world market.

The SCO Secretariat, with the support of the member states of the organization, has begun a series of presentation events on the “Eight Wonders of the SCO” project, which includes one tourist site from each SCO country. The development of “smart tourism” in the space of an international organization became the paramount task [11].

Following the meeting, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the SCO secretariat and the World Tourism Organization, which can play a key role in the development of tourism in the participating countries.

It should be noted that on November 2, 2019, the heads of government of the SCO countries gathered in Tashkent, during the meeting in Uzbekistan, the SCO Public Diplomacy Center was established, which became the first among the countries of the organization.

One of the most promising areas of cooperation is the implementation of the huge tourism potential of our countries. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev noted the need to form a single, recognizable tourism brand in Central Asia with attractive regional tourism products.

Currently, 143 SCO monuments are included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, of which 5 cultural heritage sites are located in Uzbekistan [12], which effectively contributes to the development of tourism, and the SCO member states are trying to increase their number. Among the SCO countries, Uzbekistan has a huge tourism potential. Expanding equal and mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of tourism is among the best SCO Priorities. Within the framework of the SCO Development Strategy until 2025, efforts to increase mutual tourist flows and improve the quality of tourist services are the main task of the tourism industry in Uzbekistan.

Conclusion

In accordance with the Joint Action Plan of the SCO Tourism Development Program for 2019-2020, adopted to expand tourism and intercultural ties in the SCO region and beyond, the organization has cooperated and continues to work closely with UNESCO. , The World Tourism Organization and the World Federation of Tourist Cities have contributed to the development of tourism in the region broad Eurasian region.

However, the problem of tourism development in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was and remains unaware of the most attractive attractions of foreign tourists.

Despite the relatively recent development of this sector, the number of tourists in the SCO countries is growing every year. To do this, it is necessary to look for a creative approach, to involve young people in cooperation, to establish mutual advertising between the SCO member states, the SCO member states.

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