

CHOLPON-ATA SUMMIT: NEW PERIOD IN AZERBAIJAN'S CENTRAL ASIA INTEGRATION

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The presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan met in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan to hold the Informal Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asian Countries and Azerbaijan on 31 July 2026. The summit addressed a wide range of topics including the economy, transportation, energy, security, border management, investment, digital transformation, and education. The most notable aspect of the meeting was Azerbaijans formal inclusion as a permanent and institutional partner within the Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia. Thus, the cooperation conducted in the C5 format for many years has transformed into the C6 format.

Consultative meetings organized regularly since 2018 have aimed to foster political dialogue and regional coordination among Central Asian states. Azerbaijans invitation to the seventh meeting, held in Uzbekistan in November 2025, marked the first significant step in this process. At that meeting, it was decided that the platform would continue under the name Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia and Azerbaijan [1]. The Cholpon-Ata summit holds particular significance as the first meeting at which this decision was implemented.

Azerbaijans permanent inclusion in the mechanism does not simply mean an increase in the number of participants. This development demonstrates that the political, economic, and transportation axis linking the Caspian Basin and Central Asia has taken on a more institutionalized structure. Thus, while Azerbaijan gains a strategic bridging role between the South Caucasus and Central Asia, the integration process of the Turkic world has also

entered a new phase.

The bilateral meetings held as part of the summit were among the concrete demonstrations of this transformation. Cooperation agreements were signed between Kyrgyzstan and Azerbaijan in many areas such as energy, transportation, cybersecurity, education, financial market regulation, and the circulation of precious metals. While the parties reached an agreement on developing economic relations, increasing mutual investments and supporting joint projects, three joint projects were launched under the Azerbaijan-Kyrgyzstan Development Fund and it was decided to initiate eight new projects. These developments demonstrate that relations between the two countries have deepened not only at the political level but also in economic and institutional spheres.[2]

Another notable development at the summit was the progress made in the normalization process between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in recent years. The resolution of border disputes, which had caused various tensions between the two countries for many years, and the demarcation of borders by mutual agreement are considered important achievements for regional stability. The fact that cooperation and a shared vision for development now take priority in border regions that were once the scene of ethnic tensions demonstrate that the Central Asian states have begun to build a new regional order based on trust.[3] [ÖÖ2] In addition, key agreements aimed at institutionalizing cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in the political, economic, commercial, investment, cultural and humanitarian spheres have been signed. The Alliance Agreement signed between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, in particular, highlights the elevation of bilateral relations to the level of a strategic partnership.

At the summit, the president of Kyrgyzstan thanked the platform members for the support of their initiatives at the United Nations[4] and expressed a common will to continue cooperation in the fields of combating climate change, improving transport corridors, energy security, digital transformation and artificial intelligence. Agreement on the development of new joint projects in these areas demonstrates that regional cooperation is taking on an ever broader and more multidimensional quality.

The China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Project was one of the meetings notable economic topics. With the potential to reshape the regions geopolitical and geoeconomic balances, this project aims to transform Central Asia from merely a regional transit area into one of the key hubs of global transportation networks linking Asia and Europe. With the completion of the railway, Central Asias strategic importance in international trade corridors is expected to increase further.

With the Cholpon-Ata Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the summit, a shared commitment was expressed to develop transportation corridors, deepen cooperation in the energy sector, strengthen regional security, support digital transformation, jointly address environmental challenges, and enhance economic integration. Furthermore, the decision to hold the next Informal Consultative Meeting in the city of Turkistan demonstrates that the shared historical and cultural heritage of the Turkic world continues to be valued alongside political and economic cooperation.

The Cholpon-Ata Summit stands out as a concrete demonstration of the political, economic and strategic cooperation that has strengthened among Turkic states in recent years. Azerbaijans participation in the process as an institutional partner demonstrates that a more institutionalized integration process has begun between Central Asia and the South Caucasus and that political, cultural, economic and transportation-based integration within the Turkic world has reached an advanced stage.

*Picture: Kabar

[1] Orta Asya Devlet Başkanları 7. İstişare Toplantısı Özbekistan'da yapıldı, *Anadolu Agency*, August 4, 2026, https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/orta-asya-devlet-baskanlari-7-istisare-toplantisi-ozbekistanda-yapildi/3745133

[2] Azərbaycan və Qırğızıstan prezidentləri mətbuata bəyanatlarla çıxış ediblər, *Azertag*, August 4, 2026, https://azertag.az/xeber/azerbaycan_ve_qirgizistan_prezidentleri_metbuata_beyanatlarla_chixis_edible 4345833

[3] Kırgızistan ve Özbekistan ilişkilerinde tarihi bir dönüm noktası yaşanıyor, *TRT Avaz*, July 30, 2026, https://www.trtavaz.com.tr/haber/tur/turkistandan/kirgizistan-ve-ozbekistan-iliskilerinde-tarihi-bir-donum-noktasi-yasaniyor/6a6b2655887386633f9ecb35

[4] President Zhaparov: Cooperation in Central Asia reaches a qualitatively new level, *Kabar*, July 31, 2026, https://en.kabar.kg/news/president-zhaparov-cooperation-in-central-asia-reaches-a-qualitatively-new-level/

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