
EU, KYRGYZSTAN LAUNCH TALKS ON NEW AGREEMENT

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The European Union and Kyrgyzstan have launched negotiations on a new bilateral agreement.

The EU announced on December 19 that foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini and Luc Devigne, the director of a department overseeing ties with Central Asian countries and others in the region, held talks with Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister Emil Kaikiev.

Mogherini said that during her visit to Bishkek in November, Kyrgyz officials "shared with me their ambitious reform agenda and their commitment to strengthen democracy, promote transparency and good governance, and develop new economic opportunities."

"A new, enhanced agreement will allow us to further support these aspirations, to build stronger political and economic ties, and to create more possibilities to bring benefits both in the EU and in Kyrgyzstan," she said in a statement announcing the negotiations.

The new agreement would replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement endorsed in 1999. It is to focus on political cooperation, trade and investment relations, economic cooperation in support of sustainable development, and other aspects of bilateral relations, the EU says.

During her visit to Bishkek, Mogherini expressed the EU's readiness to start negotiations on the new agreement, which she then called "ambitious."

The EU and neighboring Kazakhstan concluded a new agreement last year. Both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have close ties to Moscow and are members of the Eurasian Economic Union, a grouping of ex-Soviet republics that is dominated by founding members Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus.

Kaynak/Source: