

## **Signing of statement formalises Regional Network of National Trade Facilitation Committees in Central Asia**

**Date: April 25 -26, 2023**

**Place: Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

**The 9<sup>th</sup> regional meeting of National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) of Central Asian countries was held in Tashkent on 25-26 of April 2023**

Representatives of the public and private sectors from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, international experts, development partners and representatives of international organizations discussed progress on the realization of measures aimed at making cross-border trade easier ("trade facilitation") and further plans and priorities of regional cooperation. Special attention was given to the initiatives on digitalization of trade procedures and improvement access to information for private sector.

A key component of the event was the signing ceremony of the "Statement on cooperation between the National Trade Facilitation Committees of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in the field of trade facilitation". This will take cooperation between NTFCs to the next level, helping to enhance information exchange and consultation. It also provides for joint implementation of measures to promote and facilitate regional trade. The signing of the Statement is the next step after the creation of the Network of NTFCs in 2019 and is a strong reminder of the growth of trust and spirit of cooperation between the member countries.

National Trade Facilitation Committees are important platforms for stakeholders' consultation with balanced private and public sector participation and serve to coordinate the planning and implementation of trade facilitation reforms. They coordinate the planning and implementation of trade facilitation reforms. Moreover, the regional dialogue between the Committees is very important for regional reforms and removal of barriers to trade development.

In the practical part of the event, participants visited the Yallama customs post on the Uzbek-Kazakh border and were introduced to innovations that help reduce the time and cost of trade procedures.

A delegation from Turkmenistan joined the meeting as observers. The country is not part of the regional network but has expressed interest in cooperation. The initiative for regional cooperation between the National Committees for Trade Facilitation is supported by the GIZ Project "Trade Facilitation in Central Asia".

***The regional GIZ project "Trade Facilitation in Central Asia" is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented in four Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The main objective of the project is to improve implementation of trade facilitation measures in the region by providing technical assistance on how to make border crossing and transit faster, more efficient, and transparent.***



Signing of the Statement. Seated from left to right: Vice Minister Zhanel Kushukova (Ministry of Trade and Integration of the RK), Deputy Minister Iskender Asylkulov (Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the KR) and Deputy Minister Badriddin Abidov (Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade of RUz)



Group picture of the delegations after signing the Statement.





From left to right: Dr. Wimmer (head of development cooperation of the German Embassy), Deputy Minister Iskender Asylkulov (Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the KR), Vice Minister Zhanel Kushukova (Ministry of Trade and Integration of the RK), Mr Riepma (Head of EU Delegation in Uzbekistan), Deputy Minister Badriddin Abidov (Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade of RUz), Mr Fritz (GIZ Country Director for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), Ms Siek (Head of the Trade Facilitation Central Asia Project)



Statements from delegates at the opening of the 9<sup>th</sup> Regional meeting of NTFCs

