

09 Oct 2026 -10:00

Belgium and Kazakhstan: a strengthened partnership to tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow

From 11 to 14 October 2026, Their Majesties the King and Queen will pay a state visit to Kazakhstan, stopping in the capital, Astana, and Almaty.

They will be accompanied by a delegation of 110 people, including 25 CEOs and 10 university rectors, as well as the Federal Minister of Mobility, Climate, and Ecological Transition, responsible for Sustainable Development, Jean-Luc CRUCKE; the Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region, Boris DILLIËS; Flemish Minister for Brussels and Media, Cielkje VAN ACHTER; as well as Anne-Catherine DALCQ, Walloon Minister for Agriculture and Rural Affairs, responsible for Forestry, Nature, Hunting and Fisheries.

As we approach the 35th anniversary of the establishment of our diplomatic relations and the 20th anniversary of the opening of our Embassy, the state visit by Their Majesties the King and Queen will further strengthen the ties between Belgium and Kazakhstan. This will be His Majesty's first visit to Kazakhstan – and, more broadly, to Central Asia – in his capacity as Head of State. He had previously visited the country as Crown Prince in 2002, 2009 and 2010.

In the face of current geopolitical challenges, Belgium intends to diversify its partnerships and strengthen its presence in a region that offers significant strategic opportunities. It wishes to deepen its cooperation with Kazakhstan, in order to build a more sustainable, resilient and prosperous future together. The signing of a 2026-2029 Roadmap between the Belgian and Kazakh foreign ministries will demonstrate this commitment, as will the various agreements to be concluded in the academic and economic spheres.

Strong economic relations with growth potential

Trade between Belgium and Kazakhstan has more than tripled in less than a decade, rising from €220 million in 2016 to €765 million in 2025. Belgium is now the sixth-largest source of foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan. Over a hundred Belgian companies are already operating there, in sectors such as chemicals, biopharma and energy. Many of these companies are members of the Benelux Chamber of Commerce in Astana.

The 4th edition of the *Kazakh-Belgian Business Council*, which was launched in 2023, will be held during the State Visit. It will provide an opportunity to highlight success stories and explore new forms of cooperation in logistics and agriculture, two areas in which Belgium and Kazakhstan already enjoy close collaboration. The development of the Trans-Caspian transport corridor, in which Kazakhstan plays a central role and in which several Belgian companies are already actively involved, is strategically important in this regard.

Critical minerals: towards new partnerships

Kazakhstan is a key player in the field of critical minerals, of which it possesses significant deposits. Its mining sector is experiencing sustained growth, driven in particular by government policies, foreign investment, and ongoing exploration activities. Belgium, for its part, has extensive expertise in the processing and recycling of these raw materials. The state visit will provide an opportunity to explore new partnerships across the entire value chain, particularly in the areas of innovation, industry and technical

expertise.

Moving forward together in the age of artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already transforming our daily lives. While it opens up numerous opportunities, it also raises questions that require answers. The academic and research communities, which are directly involved in the development of new technologies, are particularly well-placed to address these challenges.

Kazakhstan, which has declared 2026 the Year of Artificial Intelligence, intends to strengthen its position in this field. This ambition has notably led to the creation of Alem.AI, an innovative centre dedicated specifically to artificial intelligence and located in Astana. Their Majesties will visit this centre ahead of a dialogue between Kazakh and Belgian authorities and rectors from our two countries.

Two like-minded nations at the forefront of medical innovation

Belgium and Kazakhstan are united in their belief that innovation should serve the public good. Both countries are investing in medical research and life sciences to stimulate economic growth and improve their citizens' quality of life, as well as strengthen their healthcare systems.

This shared ambition is already being realised through concrete cooperation. In nuclear medicine, for instance, several partnerships have been formed between the Institute of Nuclear Physics in Almaty and Belgian partners. A visit to the National Centre for Children's Rehabilitation in Astana will further illustrate the potential for enhanced Belgian-Kazakh cooperation in paediatrics.

Two crossroads, rich in history and culture

Kazakhstan is renowned for its remarkable cultural diversity and vibrant arts scene, which blends ancestral traditions with contemporary art. The cultural programme for the state visit will reflect this connection between the past and the present, with visits to the National Museum of Kazakhstan in Astana and the Almaty Museum of Arts.

Belgium will also highlight the interplay between heritage and modernity through an exhibition dedicated to James Ensor in Astana and a contemporary dance performance in Almaty created by Ula Sickle, a former student of the Brussels dance school P.A.R.T.S, commissioned by the Brussels-based cultural institution KANAL.

FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development
Cooperation - Press service (P&C/P)
Rue des Petits Carmes 15
1000 Brussels
Belgium
+32 2 501 81 11
<http://diplomatie.belgium.be>

Maxime Ramon
Spokesperson
+32 2 501 85 97
+32 471 44 06 04
maxime.ramon@diplobel.fed.be

Florinda Baleci
Spokesperson
+32 2 501 84 29
+32 478 92 09 37
florinda.baleci@diplobel.fed.be