

DOI:10.29013/EJA-26-1-102-106



SOCIO-CULTURAL IMAGE OF THE NEW UZBEKISTAN AND CULTURAL TOURISM

*Murodjon Madjidov*¹

¹ Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Uzbekistan,
Ministry of Culture of The Republic of Uzbekistan

Cite: Madjidov M. (2026). *Socio-Cultural Image of the New Uzbekistan and Cultural Tourism*. *European Journal of Arts 2026, No 1*. <https://doi.org/10.29013/EJA-26-1-102-106>

Abstract

Purpose of the study: This article comprehensively analyzes the significance of the large-scale reforms being implemented in the process of building a New Uzbekistan in shaping and strengthening the socio-cultural image of the country. In particular, the new Constitution adopted in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the democratic principles, the primacy of human rights and freedoms, and the development of civil society institutions established in it are considered as important factors in the renewal of the socio-cultural sphere.

Results: The role of Uzbekistan's peaceful, open and constructive foreign policy, efforts to expand mutually beneficial relations with foreign countries and international organizations in enhancing the country's positive socio-cultural image in the international arena was highlighted. The opportunities for developing cultural cooperation with foreign countries: the organization of international festivals, forums, exhibitions and joint cultural projects, and the widespread promotion of Uzbekistan's culture and spiritual heritage to the world community were analyzed.

Scientific novelty: Systematic study of cultural tourism will allow for a deeper study and scientific forecasting of the prospects for the development of the socio-cultural image of this New Uzbekistan.

Practical significance: At the same time, the development of cultural tourism was studied as an important strategic direction in strengthening the socio-cultural image of New Uzbekistan. It was determined that the role of the rich historical and cultural heritage of Uzbekistan, including cities and monuments included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, pilgrimage tourism sites, ethnographic diversity, unique natural landscapes, as well as national cuisine and gastronomic traditions in the rapid development of cultural tourism is also a new area of scientific research that needs to be studied.

Methods: comparative analysis, art studies analysis, document analysis, statistics analysis methods were used.

Keywords: *socio-cultural image, cultural tourism, constitutional reforms, cultural environment, pilgrimage tourism, gastronomy*

Introduction

The rapid development of tourism, including cultural tourism, in the world is closely related to a positive environment formed on the basis of political stability, socio-economic development, rich historical and cultural heritage, and favorable natural factors. Also, the development of road and transport infrastructure, accommodation facilities, and the level of provision of qualified personnel in the field are of decisive importance for the effective functioning of the tourism industry. The political and social stability, economic and investment development, systematic reforms aimed at the consistent development of tourism infrastructure, and the expanding geography of air, rail, and road transport networks in the Republic of Uzbekistan create broad opportunities for strengthening the country's tourism potential. These factors serve to position Uzbekistan as a competitive destination in the international tourism market. The country's centuries-old cultural life, objects of tangible culture preserved throughout its existence, and examples of intangible culture passed down from generation to generation for a total of thousands of years, serve as a solid foundation for the development and quality of one of the promising areas of cultural tourism.

Materials and methods

Scientific study of cultural heritage objects located in ancient cities included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, and Shahrisabz, as well as their conservation, repair, and restoration, as well as the creation of favorable conditions for tourists, including persons with disabilities, have a positive effect on the further development of tourism in the country. At the same time, the unique customs, traditions, and rituals preserved among the population in the regions of the republic, especially in remote and rural areas, are of great interest not only to foreign tourists, but also to local tourists from different regions of the country. This indicates the growing importance of cultural tourism in the development of domestic tourism. As a result of the state's rational policy aimed at developing cultural tourism, it is possible to effectively use the opportunities of this direction. In this regard, the im-

plementation of new services and products related to cultural tourism based on mutually beneficial cooperation between business entities, cultural institutions, artistic groups, artists and performers operating in the field is an urgent task.

Result and discussion

Important and effective reforms are being implemented to enhance Uzbekistan's position and role as an equal subject of international relations, strengthen its international prestige, and develop cultural and humanitarian ties. In particular, an architecture of multifaceted cooperation is being formed in Central Asia at the initiative of Uzbekistan. The Action Plan for the Development of Industrial Cooperation for 2025–2027, approved by the countries of the region, is becoming an important tool for cooperation. Cross-border trade zones and international industrial cooperation centers that promote the growth of small and medium-sized businesses are actively developing. In the humanitarian sphere, ties have also been strengthened in recent years. The Dialogue of Leading Women of Central Asia and the Youth Platform have been established, since 2022, rectors' and scientists' forums have been held, and mutual cultural years, exhibitions, concerts, and sports events are regularly held. The opening of new checkpoints, the establishment of air, rail and bus routes have allowed for a significant increase in mutual travel and the expansion of cultural and humanitarian ties. The share of domestic regional tourism in the total tourist flow of the countries of the region has exceeded 80 percent. Freedom of movement, mutual respect, closeness, and trust, which until recently seemed like a dream, are today becoming a practical reality (Mirziyoyev Sh., 2025, 2).

Indeed, the preamble to the new Constitution states that one of the priorities of our country's constitutional development is Uzbekistan's aspiration to strengthen and develop friendly relations with the world community, primarily with neighboring countries, based on cooperation, peace, and harmony. In addition, the principles of the state's foreign policy in Article 17 of the Constitution were supplemented by the rule of "territorial integrity of states" and "peaceful foreign

policy” was established as its main vector. Article 18 stipulates that the Republic of Uzbekistan shall pursue a peace-loving foreign policy aimed at the comprehensive development of bilateral and multilateral relations with states and international organizations (Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2023, 8).

Renewing Uzbekistan is pursuing an open and pragmatic foreign policy. Over the past period, significant results have been achieved in the field of foreign policy in developing friendly and mutually beneficial relations with foreign countries, primarily neighboring countries (Mirziyoyev S., 2022, 172). Priority is being given to further expanding tourism relations with the Russian Federation, the People’s Republic of China, Turkey, Korea, Japan, and the European Union. There are great prospects in the tourism sector with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In 2019, the Council of the Turkic-Speaking States of Uzbekistan created a practical partnership in the field of humanitarian and organizational support for personnel management (Mirziyoyev S., 2024, 355).

Important measures are being taken to further expand multilateral cooperation in the field of tourism with the World Tourism Organization, international regional structures and financial institutions.

The rapid development of tourism in all regions of the world and its transformation into one of the drivers of the world economy, the implementation of specific projects and measures to increase the tourist attractiveness of Uzbekistan, attract investments to the sector, develop tourism infrastructure and dramatically improve the quality of services are among the priorities of our foreign policy (Kalkanatov, A., 2023, 523).

For the first time in Uzbekistan, the 25th session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization was held in Samarkand. It was attended by high-ranking delegations from more than 140 countries of the world, leading companies in the tourism sector, representatives of higher educational institutions and organizations. The investment and educational forums held within the framework of the conference became an effective platform for all tour operators, uni-

versities and large companies from all over the world to communicate with each other and fully demonstrate their rich historical and cultural potential and tourism opportunities to all regions. At the end of them, specific contracts and agreements were signed on the implementation of a number of joint programs and projects related to the field, a package of prospective investment projects was accepted. These documents and agreements make a significant contribution to the rapid development of the global, regional and national tourism industry, increasing and realizing the tourist potential of our regions. It also highlighted the most pressing issue of global tourism in Uzbekistan – ensuring a guaranteed security system for tourists, and developing a Global Safe Tourism Code. A number of the above-mentioned proposals were supported, such as declaring 2025 the “World Year of Inclusive Tourism” and establishing a Council of Historic Cities for Tourism under the World Tourism Organization.

Also, a declaration was adopted on granting Samarkand the status of “International Capital of Cultural Tourism”, a resolution on opening a Thematic Office of the World Tourism Organization with diplomatic status in Samarkand in order to transform Uzbekistan into a center of “Silk Road Tourism”.

An agreement was signed on the establishment of the International Tourism Academy. The goal of establishing this academy, which has no analogues in the world, is to create a global educational hub that will train and improve the skills of specialists in the field of tourism and make a worthy contribution to the further development of the world tourism industry (Du Cros, H., & McKercher, B., 2020, 524).

For almost 40 years, the sessions of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been held only in Paris. In 2025, the next conference of this structure was held for the first time in another city, namely in Samarkand. This event was recognized by the world community as an achievement of Uzbek diplomacy. In order to promote our unique cultural heritage in the international arena, “Days of Culture of Uzbekistan” were held at a high level in 24 foreign countries, including neighboring countries. In par-

ticular, the unique examples of our national culture demonstrated in countries such as France, Germany, China, and Saudi Arabia amazed the world community. They rediscovered Uzbekistan for themselves. Five cities of our country were recognized as cultural capitals by various international organizations. The above factors, the work carried out, and the achievements achieved serve to create a socio-cultural image of New Uzbekistan. As a result, our country will gain the trust of tourists and become more attractive to them. Historical and cultural heritage – Uzbekistan has 8,200 tangible cultural heritage sites and 993 registered examples of intangible cultural heritage, which are of interest not only to scientists but also to tourists. Historical cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Shakhrisabz, and Khiva, which are included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, are famous as centers of culture, art, science, and trade on the Great Silk Road.

Geographical location – Uzbekistan's location in the center of Central Asia makes it convenient for both entry and transit of tourists. Also, the Republic of Uzbekistan has 11 airports, the availability of flights to 97 cities in 35 countries of the world, and the extensive road and rail transport network positively contribute to the development of tourism routes. Ethnographic diversity – in almost all of them, the republic has its own folk customs and techniques, production technologies (atlas, adras, carpet weaving, carpet weaving, etc.), the presence of rich industrial and practical arts.

Pilgrimage tourism objects – pilgrimage objects, holy places in our country attract tourists. Complexes such as Imam Bukhari, Hazrat Imam, Bahauddin Naqshband, Khoja Ahrar Vali are of incomparable importance for the Islamic world, while archaeological monuments such as Qoratepa, Fayoztepa and Dalvarzintepa are places of pilgrimage tourism for representatives of the Buddhist religion. Unique nature – the presence of all four seasons in Uzbekistan, mountains, desert zones, water bodies on the territory of the republic allow the development of extreme tourism, ecotourism, sports tourism and other types of tourism. In the areas of Zamin, Chatkal, Nurota, Aydarkul, and the Aral Sea, the necessary infrastructure facilities for

tourists are being built, various international competitions, marathons and festivals are being held. Gastronomic attractiveness – the uniqueness of the national cuisine, the perfection and beauty of the preparation of various dishes, the ecological purity of the ingredients are recognized by tourists. The Uzbek people's renowned hospitality and tolerance leave a lasting impression on tourists who encounter this value. The country's safety for both residents and visitors is a magnet for tourists. The tourist attractiveness of Uzbekistan is reflected, in particular, in its cultural potential. The phenomenon of cultural tourism, a unique phenomenon at the intersection of culture, history and economy, is clearly manifested.

Interest in the history and culture, customs and traditions, lifestyle of other peoples has formed a new type of traveler – a cultural tourist, who seeks knowledge, experience and novelty. The conducted analyses show that the large-scale reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan in the political, socio-economic and cultural-educational spheres are consistently strengthening the socio-cultural image of the country.

The recognition of Uzbekistan by international organizations and foreign countries as an equal, open and sustainably developing subject of the international arena creates favorable conditions for the rapid development of the tourism sector, in particular, cultural tourism. The diversity of cultures in the country, the abundance and rarity of tangible and intangible cultural heritage objects, the uniqueness of national customs and traditions make cultural tourism an attractive direction not only for foreign but also for domestic tourists. At the same time, for the sustainable development of cultural tourism, it is necessary to effectively use the existing opportunities and eliminate some problems in the field. In this regard, it is advisable to put forward the following practical proposals and recommendations:

- further strengthening the work on the preservation, restoration and adaptation of cultural heritage sites to modern requirements for tourists based on a scientific approach;

- comprehensive development of transport, navigation, information services and

infrastructure around cultural tourism sites, including the creation of an inclusive environment for people with disabilities;

– diversification of cultural tourism products, i.e. expansion of tourist destinations through the development of ethnotourism, pilgrimage tourism, gastronomic tourism, festival and event tourism;

– improvement of the system of training and retraining of personnel working in the field of cultural tourism, stimulation of regional development by involving the local population in tourism services;

– effective promotion of the cultural tourism potential of Uzbekistan in the in-

ternational arena using modern information and communication technologies, widespread introduction of digital platforms and multimedia products;

– expanding the mechanisms of partnership in the development of the public and private sectors, investing in cultural tourism projects.

In conclusion, these proposals and recommendations will serve to further enhance the high-quality direction of the current cultural tourism strategy, strengthening the socio-cultural image of New Uzbekistan, and further increasing the country's prestige in the economic space.

References

- Mirziyoyev Sh. (2025). Central Asia on the threshold of a new era. *People's Word*, – No. 235. Sharq.
- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2023). Uzbekistan.
- Mirziyoyev S. (2022). Strategy of the New Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan.
- Mirziyoyev S. (2024). Modernity and the New Uzbekistan. Uzbekiston Publishing House.
- Kalkanatov, A. (2023). The importance of managing the participation of cultural and art institutions and organizations in cultural activities. *Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Art*, – 2. – P. 7–10.
- Du Cros, H., & Mc Kercher, B. (2020). *Cultural tourism*. – Routledge.
- Nazarbaevich, Q. A. (2025). Formation of theory and practice of creative entrepreneurship in the field of culture and art. *Shokh library*, – 1(13).
- Richards, G. (2013). Cultural tourism. In *Routledge handbook of leisure studies* (P. 483–492). – Routledge.

submitted 15.12.2025;

accepted for publication 30.01.2026;

published 31.01.2026

© Madjidov M.

Contact: madjidov@gmail.com