

During a press briefing at the 2025 Astana International Forum (AIF), Kazakhstan’s Deputy Foreign Minister, Roman Vassilenko, reaffirmed the country’s pivotal role as a regional power and global advocate for dialogue, cooperation, and democratic reform.

The Astana International Forum, now a rapidly growing global platform, hosts approximately 3,000 participants this year, including heads of state, government officials, representatives of international organizations, CEOs, and leading experts.

“The Forum’s expanded agenda reflects today’s interconnected global challenges — from energy security and climate crisis to technological innovation, sustainable development, and geopolitical cooperation,” said Vassilenko. *“It offers a valuable opportunity to seek collective solutions to issues that transcend borders.”*

The Forum, which opened on May 29 with remarks from President Tokayev, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda, President Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova of North Macedonia, and Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset, underscores Kazakhstan’s growing influence in global diplomacy.

“One of the Forum’s main objectives is to amplify the voices of countries calling for greater unity and collaboration in addressing these issues,” stated Vassilenko.

Kazakhstan’s remarkable domestic transformation over recent years was a key highlight of the briefing. Vassilenko detailed the country’s comprehensive political and socio-economic reforms:

“The last few years have been a remarkable transformative period for Kazakhstan. We have implemented wide ranging political and socio-economic reforms, held parliamentary and local elections, and modernized our system of governance.”

He continued:

“The President’s mandate, at President Tokayev’s own initiative, has been limited to a single seven-year term without the right to re-election; changes have been made to the parliamentary election system; the Constitutional Court was re-established, and measures to simplify the registration of new political parties have led to the emergence of new parties, some of which are now represented in Parliament. In addition to its democratic development initiatives, Kazakhstan is actively implementing reforms aimed at protecting human rights and strengthening the rule of law. While pursuing our domestic reforms is always a key priority, we remain steadfast in our international commitments.”

On the international stage, Kazakhstan has emerged as a leader in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, advocating for a world free of nuclear weapons and hosting critical initiatives such as the IAEA Low-Enriched Uranium Bank. Kazakhstan has emerged as a global voice for disarmament. One of the Soviet Union’s two major nuclear test sites was located at Semipalatinsk, where at least 460 nuclear tests took place. Kazakhstan initiated a UN General Assembly resolution calling for an International Day Against Nuclear Tests, inaugurated in 2010.

“Kazakhstan continues to lead on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As the first country to voluntarily renounce one of the world’s largest nuclear arsenals, we remain a tireless advocate for a world free of nuclear weapons,” Vassilenko affirmed.

Now increasingly seen as a middle power, Kazakhstan plays a crucial bridging role between Europe and Asia. Kazakhstan is emerging as a key transit and connectivity hub — particularly through its promotion of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, or the Middle Corridor. This relatively new trade artery traverses Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Türkiye, connecting the Caspian and Black Seas.

On this point, Vassilenko remarked:

“In a time of geopolitical uncertainty, economic fragmentation and growing mistrust, we believe the middle powers can play a unique role in fostering peace and shaping a more cooperative inclusive global order.

Kazakhstan is one such aspiring middle power. Long regarded as a crossroads of cultures and civilizations, Kazakhstan is ready to embrace this role with purpose and determination. Being the largest landmass and economic powerhouse in Central Asia, Kazakhstan is deeply committed to promoting multilateralism and meaningful dialogue.”

Kazakhstan’s strategic partnerships with the European Union and other global players are growing stronger, particularly in areas of trade, infrastructure, and the supply of critical raw materials essential for the green and digital transition.

Kazakhstan’s relevance is also strategic for Europe’s energy and climate agenda. France, for instance, heavily relies on uranium for its nuclear-powered electricity system.

“Kazakhstan’s contributions to Europe’s economic resilience can extend far beyond logistics. Kazakhstan is home to vast reserves of critical raw materials that are essential for the technologies shaping our modern world, including electric vehicles, renewable energy

systems, and artificial intelligence. The country already supplies more than 40% of the world's uranium, essential for fueling nuclear power plants, and produces over half of the 34 critical raw materials deemed vital by the international markets.

Last July, Kazakhstan joined the Minerals Security Partnership Forum, setting the stage for greater collaboration. The German company HMS Bergbau is implementing a joint project on developing lithium deposits in East Kazakhstan region." said Roman Vassilenko.

Vassilenko concluded by reminding the press of Kazakhstan's unparalleled investment potential:

"As Central Asia's largest economy - accounting for 60 percent of the region's foreign investment and growing by 5.1 percent in 2024 and by 6 percent in the first four months of 2025 - Kazakhstan remains a leading destination for trade and capital. Since 1993, our country has attracted about \$450 billion in FDI."

Derya Soysal