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## EVOLUTION OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC POLICY BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: BASED ON TREATIES BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS

### Abstract

China and Kyrgyzstan have always maintained economic and trade relations for several years since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Currently, within the framework of the One Belt and One Road Initiative, China-Kyrgyzstan trade and economic cooperation continues to be deepened. The basis for establishing trade and economic relations between the two countries is mutually beneficial cooperation. Based on a study of agreements between the two countries, the article discusses the main points related to the development of trade and economic cooperation, and analyzes the problems and prospects of economic and trade policies between the two countries.

The trade and economic policy of the two countries is mainly divided into three stages: 1992-2001 is the preparation period during which the countries created the legal framework; 2002-2012 is a period of development when the two countries continue to expand relevant cooperation and solve emerging problems in new areas, and a specific content of cooperation is planned; from 2013 to the present is a period of strengthening cooperation between the two countries in various fields related to the economy and trade.

**Keywords:** China; Kyrgyzstan; trade; economic policy

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## ҚХР МЕН ҚЫРҒЫЗСТАН АРАСЫНДАҒЫ САУДА-ЭКОНОМИКАЛЫҚ САЯСАТТЫҢ ЭВОЛЮЦИЯСЫ: ҮКІМЕТТЕР АРАСЫНДАҒЫ КЕЛІСІМДЕР НЕГІЗІНДЕ

Қытай мен Қырғызстан дипломатиялық қатынастар орнағаннан бері бірнеше жыл бойы экономикалық және сауда қатынастарын сақтап келеді. Қазіргі уақытта «Бір белдеу, бір жол» бастамасы аясында қытай-қырғыз сауда-экономикалық ынтымақтастығы тереңдей түсуде. Екі ел арасындағы сауда-экономикалық қатынастардың негізі өзара тиімді әріптестік болып табылады. Екі ел арасындағы уағдаластықтарды зерделей отырып, мақалада сауда-экономикалық ынтымақтастықты дамытудың негізгі аспектілері талқыланып, екі ел арасындағы экономикалық және сауда саясатының проблемалары мен болашағы талданады.

Екі елдің сауда-экономикалық саясаты негізінен үш кезеңге бөлінеді: 1992-2001 жылдар - бұл елдердің құқықтық негізін құрған дайындық кезеңі; 2002-2012 жылдар - бұл екі ел тиісті ынтымақтастықты кеңейтуді және жаңа салалардағы туындаған проблемаларды шешуді жалғастыратын және ынтымақтастықтың нақты мазмұны жоспарланған даму кезеңі; 2013 жылдан бастап қазіргі уақытқа дейін екі ел арасындағы экономика мен саудаға қатысты түрлі салалардағы ынтымақтастықты нығайту кезеңі болып келді.

**Түйінді сөздер:** Қытай; Қырғызстан; сауда; экономикалық саясат

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## ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ ТОРГОВО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ ПОЛИТИКИ МЕЖДУ КНР И КЫРГЫЗСТАН: НА ОСНОВЕ ДОГОВОРОВ МЕЖДУ ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВАМИ

### Аннотация

Китай и Кыргызстан на протяжении ряда лет с момента установления дипломатических отношений всегда поддерживали экономические и торговые отношения. В настоящее время в рамках Инициативы «Один Пояс и Один Путь» китайско-кыргызское торгово-экономическое сотрудничество продолжает углубляться. Основой установления торгово-экономических отношений между двумя странами является взаимовыгодное сотрудничество. На основе исследования договоров между двумя странами в статье рассматриваются основные моменты, связанные с развитием торгово-экономического сотрудничества, и анализируются проблемы и перспективы экономической и торговой политики между двумя странами.

Торгово-экономическая политика двух стран в основном разделена на три этапа: 1992-2001 годы - период подготовки, в течение которого страны создавали нормативно-правовую базу; 2002-2012 годы - это период развития, когда две страны продолжают расширять соответствующее сотрудничество и решать возникающие проблемы в новых областях, и планируется конкретное содержание сотрудничества; с 2013 года по настоящее время - период укрепления сотрудничества между двумя странами в различных областях, связанных с экономикой и торговлей.

**Ключевые слова:** Китай; Кыргызстан; торговля; экономическая политика

China and Kyrgyzstan are traditional trading partners, and the ancient Silk Road has linked the two countries together. Since the late 1980s, relations between China and the USSR began to formalize, as the Chinese government resumed relations with the USSR government, trade between the two countries was restored and began to develop. Currently, over almost 30 years of Kyrgyz-Chinese cooperation a stable regulatory framework has been created for the further development of trade and economic relations. As Rome is not built in one day, the trade and economic cooperation is a long-term process. Based on the treaties signed between the two countries, the article studies the documents related to economic and trade cooperation and summarizes the characteristics of the economic and trade policies between the two countries.

### Preparation period (1992-2001): defining the basic legal framework

On January 5, 1992, Minister of Economy and Trade of China Li Lanqing and Deputy Foreign Minister Tian Zengpei led the Chinese government delegation that visited Kyrgyzstan. A joint Communiqué was signed between the governments of the countries in Bishkek, in which the countries expressed their intention to develop international cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit. At the same time, the two countries have established diplomatic relationship at the ambassadorial level from January 5, 1992 [1]. In order to develop trade and economic relation between two countries, the *Economic and Trade Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic* was signed. In the agreement, the two countries specified the tariffs and prices of commodities, investment and other economic activities. By the treaty the two sides have established the legal basis in order to develop economic and trade relations between the two countries and more effectively stimulate the vitality of their economic and trade relations [2].

From then on, the relevant documents for trade and economic cooperation have signed as basic legal framework.

On May 12-16 of the same year President of Kyrgyzstan A. Akayev paid an official visit to China. The Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the CPC, Jiang Zemin, the Chairman of China Yang Shangkun and Chinese Premier Li Peng held meetings and negotiations with him. Both sides issued a joint communiqué [3] and signed a series of cooperation documents, including the *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on*

cooperation in the field of tourism[4], and the *Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the promotion and mutual protection of investments*[5]. These two documents provide basic provisions for investment and tourism activities, and are important achievements in implementing the Economic and Trade Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

On April 22-25, 1994, at the invitation of the President of Kyrgyzstan A. Akayev, Chinese Premier Li Peng paid an official visit to Kyrgyzstan. This is the first official visit of the Chinese leader after gaining independence of Kyrgyzstan. Premier Li Peng held talks with Kyrgyz President Akayev. During the visit both sides signed six documents, including the *Agreement on the establishment of the intergovernmental committee on trade and economic cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the PRC*[6]. This organization as an important mechanism for economic and trade cooperation between the two countries has made important contribution to trade and economic cooperation.

On June 4, 1994, the *Agreement on Automobile Transport between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic* was signed. According to this agreement, regular and non-scheduled passenger and cargo transportation between the two countries was carried out through frontier port and roads that are open to each other[7].

On October 23-27, 1995, at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Peng, the Prime Minister of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, Apas Jumagulov paid an official visit to China. President Jiang Zemin and Premier Li Peng held separate meetings with them. Leaders of both countries signed a series of documents, like the *Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of China on guarantees of quality of import-export products*[8].

On April 26-30, 1998, at the invitation of Chinese Chairman Jiang Zemin, Kyrgyz President Akayev paid a state visit to China. The two sides signed the *Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of China on trade and economic cooperation*[9]. This agreement is based on the *Economic and Trade Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic* in 1992 with minor changes, and in the newest agreement the first Economy and Trade Agreement was abolished. The working procedures and the rights and responsibilities of the two sides have been redefined in order to promote the sustainable and stable development of economic and trade relations between the two countries and encourage businesses of the two countries to carry out various forms of trade, such as: spot trade, barter trade, compensation trade, etc.

The above documents are the basic legal framework for economic and trade cooperation between the two countries. With the foundation, the enterprises or individuals can carry out basic economic activities such as trade, transportation, tourism, and investment. Therefore, during this period, the economic and trade policies of the two countries are in the preparation stage, and all documents are just to determine a permitted scope for related economic activities and provide a legal basis.

### **Development period (2002-2012): solution in new fields of cooperation**

In the ten years since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two sides have established a legal framework. Then through practice the two countries have continuously solved new problems arising in new situations and new fields in subsequent agreements.

On June 23-25, 2002, President of Kyrgyzstan A. Akayev paid a visit to China. During the visit, the leaders of two countries signed several documents, including the *Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income*[10].

In February 2003, the two countries signed the *Cooperation Agreement between the Social Fund of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the People's Republic of China*[11], which is a new area of economic cooperation between which provides more guarantees for further labor cooperation between the two countries.

The two agreements mentioned above are a constantly improving policy system in the fields of taxation and labor-force, and provide a better policy environment for economic and trade development.

On September 21-22, 2004, at the invitation of Prime Minister Nikolai Tanayev of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made an official visit to Kyrgyzstan. He met with Kyrgyz President A. Akayev and held talks with leaders such as Prime Minister N. Tanayev. Both countries signed the *Cooperation Program between the Kyrgyz Republic and the People's Republic of China for 2004-2014*[12]. The contract prescribes the comprehensive development of bilateral cooperation. In total, eight areas were identified in which Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Chinese Committee on Trade and

Economic Cooperation had to work: Politic; Trade and economy; Areas of transport, customs and border infrastructure, cross-border transit and trade; Energy sector and mineral resource development; Investment and financial sector; Tourism; Scientific and technological cooperation; Cultural and humanitarian fields. When it comes to the trade and economic field, both the countries expressed their intention to strengthen contacts at the highest level, to conduct an in-depth exchange of views on broad cooperation between the bilateral economy and trade.

On June 9-10, 2006, at the invitation of Chairman Hu Jintao, President of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek Bakiyev paid a state visit to China. Chairman Hu Jintao Premier Wen Jiabao and other Chinese leaders have met with him respectively. The Heads of two countries signed the *Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of China on cooperation in the field of intellectual property protection*[13]. This agreement is another progress in the field of trade and economic cooperation, and indicates that both countries will jointly promote national legislation in the field of intellectual property and strengthen protection of intellectual property, because the mutual protection is the necessary condition of further cooperation. Besides, it contributed to the improvement of the intellectual property system in the two countries, and created a favorable regional investment environment and promoting economic and trade development.

In December 2012, the two countries signed the *Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China*[14]. Compared to the *Economic and Trade Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic* in 1992 and the *Agreement between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of China on trade and economic cooperation* in 1998, this document repeated the similar concept to the above-mentioned agreements, but it stipulated main tasks of the two government organizations, provided directions for further expansion bilateral trade and cooperation between the two countries.

In the decade China and Kyrgyzstan have continuously signed cooperation agreements in new areas, such as taxation, labor-force, and intellectual property protection. These new documents provide a healthy policy environment for economic and trade cooperation and are conducive to business operations. At the same time, for the first time, the two countries have carried out detailed plans for cooperation in the next 10 years. By the guidance of these policies, the direction for further work is clear. Hence, this is a period of development of economic and trade policies.

### **Strengthening period (2013-): concretization of cooperation in various areas**

In 2013, Chinese Chairman Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road initiative. The initiative takes infrastructure construction as the main cooperation direction, and aims to strengthen China's link with the Western countries and seek economic development between China and countries covered by the Belt and Road initiative. In the light of the initiative, China and Kyrgyzstan have further deepened cooperation on the basis of the previous experience.

At the invitation of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Almazbek Atambayev, the Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping paid a state visit to the Kyrgyz Republic from September 10 to 12, 2013. During the visit the *Joint Declaration between the People's Republic of China and the Kyrgyz Republic on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership* was signed. In the Joint Declaration:

"The two sides will work together to improve the bilateral trade structure, create conditions for importing each other's commodities, expand the scale of trade, improve trade levels, and improve the relevant legal basis for this.

The two sides will make use of existing experience to encourage the establishment of new joint ventures and assembly plants in the territories of the two countries...

Both two sides will give full play to the role of the Xinjiang-Kyrgyzstan Working Group of the intergovernmental committee on trade and economic cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the PRC, and take advantage of the China-Asia-Europe Expo and the international trade and economic exhibition held annually in Kyrgyzstan as platforms to continuously expand and deepen Economic and Trade Cooperation between Chinese provinces and cities and Kyrgyz states." [15]

From the quotation we can see that this document has carried out a general plan for the next step in economic and trade cooperation and a new work direction determined on the basis of summing up the existing work results.

In September 2015, two countries signed the *Cooperation Program in Border Region between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the People's Republic of China (2015-2020)*. This program has planned for the development of economic and trade cooperation between the border

region. Compared with the aforementioned documents, the content is the most detailed, involving as many as 11 areas: expanding cross-border transportation and modernizing port infrastructure, agriculture, mining and manufacturing industry, energy, new industries cooperation, economic trade and investment, tourism, science and education, cultural exchanges and finance. To expand cooperation in the fields, the governments will pay attention to increase transport capacity and establish cooperation zones in border regions. These measures contribute to promote comprehensive economic and social development in the border regions and intensify pragmatic cooperation within the OBOR initiative.

The following year, at the invitation of the Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Premier Li Keqiang of the PRC an official visit to the Kyrgyz Republic from November 2 to 3, 2016. During the visit the leaders signed the *Joint Communiqué between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic*. Similar to the previous document, The Joint Communiqué planned the specific content of economic and trade cooperation again:

“The two sides will continue to work together to achieve long-term sustainable development of bilateral economic and trade cooperation. To this end, both the sides agreed as follows:

To take practical measures to increase bilateral trade volume, promote balanced development of bilateral trade, and coordinate animal and plant quarantine, customs, and other trade policies.

To take practical measures to improve the environment of mutual investment and encourage citizens, entrepreneurs and investors of countries to invest in each other's economy.

To intensify the work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the PRC, coordinate and solve problems encountered in bilateral economic and trade cooperation within the framework of the committee, and work together to promote and implement large projects of mutual interest and promising prospects for cooperation.

To promote project financing, broaden financing channels, and expand cooperation between financial institutions of both sides in the fields of finance and payments. China will give assistance to Kyrgyzstan to actively apply for financing of Silk Road Fund and other institutions in accordance with prescribed procedures.” [16]

At the invitation of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China paid a state visit to the Kyrgyz Republic from June 12 to 13, 2019. On June 13, 2019, the heads of two countries signed the *Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Kyrgyz Republic on Further Deepening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership*[17]. The statement mentioned that Kyrgyzstan supports China's Belt and Road initiative. The implementation of major cooperation projects under the Belt and Road initiative significantly promotes the development of bilateral relations and consolidation of regional cooperation. There is huge potential for cooperation between the Belt and Road initiative proposed by China and Kyrgyzstan 's National Development Strategy for 2018-2040. Moreover, the two sides will seek more points of interest and strive for common development based on the principle of mutual benefit and win-win, and make full use of the mechanism of the Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the PRC and its China-Kyrgyzstan Working Group in order to stimulate cooperation potential, further expand trade scale, optimize trade structure and procedures, then promote balanced development of bilateral trade.

Meanwhile, according to the results of negotiations between the heads as part of the state visit of Chairman Xi Jinping to Kyrgyzstan, a number of documents were signed, which comes to the trade and economic field[18]:

- Protocol between the State Inspectorate for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Safety of the Kyrgyz Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the PRC on the export of dairy products from the Kyrgyz Republic to the PRC
- Protocol between the State Inspectorate for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Safety of the Kyrgyz Republic and the General Administration of Customs of the PRC for the Export of Honey
- Amending the Protocol signed in 2017 between the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the PRC and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic on the export of cherries
- Protocol between Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the PRC and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic on phytosanitary requirements for the export of wheat flour from the Kyrgyz Republic to the PRC
- The cooperation plan in the field of agriculture between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the PRC and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Industry and Land Reclamation of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2019-2021

- Agreement on cooperation in the fight against economic crimes between the State Service for Combating Economic Crimes under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China
- Memorandum on the expansion of trade and economic cooperation between the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Agency for the Promotion and Protection of Investments of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Ministry of Commerce of the PRC on the establishment of a working group on investment and industrial cooperation

According to the Joint Statement and these documents between the governments, obviously, the relevant subjects of economic and trade policies are more specific, such as: flour, dairy products, honey, etc.; the areas of cooperation are more extensive, such as: prevention of economic crimes, investment protection; the signatories are not only the governments of the two countries, but also the scope has expanded to the ministries, which is responsible for specific work.

Since the Belt and Road Initiative was launched in 2013, the scope of cooperation between China and Kyrgyzstan has been expanding. Cooperation in the economic and trade field has also continued to deepen. The two countries have focused their cooperation on border areas, the main purpose of which is to make full use of the comparative advantages of neighboring border areas, expand cooperation areas and enhance cooperation, and expand the scale of bilateral trade and mutual investment in border regions. At the same time, plans for cooperation in economic areas such as trade, investment, finance, etc. have been continuously specified. This also shows from the side that the economic and trade policies formulated by the two countries in the early stage have met the demands of the vast number of enterprises and individuals and are conducive to the development of economic and trade relations between the two countries.

### Conclusion

For thousands of years, trade activities have been accompanied by human social life. In the current globalization context, economic activities such as trade and investment play an increasingly important role. Investigating the relevant trade and economic documents signed between China and the Kyrgyz government, we can conclude that the economic and trade policies between the two countries have developed from nothing. Then, the governments have made the policies continuously adapt to the needs of cooperation and made appropriate provisions in the corresponding fields. Finally, these policies have continued to embody in the field. Today, under the Belt and Road Initiative, China-Kyrgyzstan economic and trade cooperation has continued to deepen. In the future, maintaining existing stable dialogue mechanism between the governments and actively formulating relevant policies in the field of trade and economics will surely bring the economic and trade cooperation to a higher level and benefit the two peoples in the two countries.

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