



## The Eurasia Center/EBC Brief

# Central Asia: US promotes Digital Trade

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Image of Digital Banking Photo Credit Central Banking

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Just last month, senior officials from the United States and Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan met in order to discuss trade amongst the region and US, as well as amongst themselves. Trade was the overall topic, although there was a strong focus on digital trade.



Central Asia: Photo Credit The Quint

The U.S.- Central Asia Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) made a clear point on the importance of digital trade for growth and innovation, specifically the open flow of information between the regions. This would include transparency and open competition that would help with economic growth. There was also a strong point made about other actors joining in more, such as women, medium enterprise and other stakeholders, as they would be important for creating new policies.

The next meeting has been planned for 2022 in Central Asia and the public statement made was on the importance of TIFA for strengthening trade and investment as a whole. Other countries, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan were invited as observers, as a special note of increasing ties between Central Asia and South Asia was made. Participants also remembered the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), from 2010, an agreement that the countries have an interest in negotiating.



Digital Refinery Project – Central Asia

Another major topic was the expired trade waiver program, U.S. Generalized system of preferences (GSP), that had ended last year. The U.S.-side officials presented the new Biden Administration's view on trade and various policies, with a focus on labor, environment and climate, as well as appropriate distributions to underserved communities. Digital trade became such an important discussion that a working group was discussed to be set up, as an addition.

