

XVI BRICS Summit in Kazan. The main results of transport issues consideration

XVI саммит БРИКС в Казани. Основные итоги



General photo of the BRICS summit participants in Kazan¹

On October 22–24, 2024, the XVI BRICS Summit was held in Kazan as part of the Russian presidency of the BRICS in 2024, which had the motto “Strengthening multilateralism for equitable global development and security”.

The summit was attended by most of the leaders (heads) of the BRICS member states: Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Egyptian President Abdul Fatah al-Sisi, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali and UAE President Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Out of the nine² BRICS members, two states were not represented at the summit by their top officials: Brazil was represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs Mauro Vieira (arrived instead of Brazilian President Lulla da Silva, who was injured shortly before the summit and participated in the summit via video link), the Iranian delegation was represented by President Masoud Peseshkian. Saudi Arabia was represented at the summit by Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, according to whom the Saudi side attended the meeting as an invited country³. Despite this, the organizers accepted Saudi Arabia as if it were a full member of the

¹ URL: <https://rossaprimavera.ru/news/74bb6f23>

² Ushakov: 13 countries are applying for BRICS partner status. Kommersant. URL: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/7248901>

³ RPT Saudi's MbS will not attend Russia's BRICS summit URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/saudis-mbs-will-not-attend-russias-brics-summit-2024-10-10/>

alliance, and the flag of Saudi Arabia was installed at the sites of the summit in Kazan along with the flags of other BRICS member states.

In total, representatives of 36 countries and six international organizations took part in the summit in Kazan. In addition to the delegations of the BRICS member countries, delegations from Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bolivia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Mauritania, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nicaragua, the Republic of the Congo, Republika Srpska, Serbia, Sri Lanka, the State of Palestine, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Vietnam arrived in Kazan. The summit was attended by SCO Secretary General Zhang Ming, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, President of the New BRICS Development Bank Dilma Rousseff.

Special emphasis at the meetings and negotiations of the summit was placed on the intensification of economic cooperation and joint development in this area, to enhance the role of the BRICS countries in the international monetary and financial system and the development of independent interbank cooperation, in particular, through the expansion of settlements in national currencies. Considerable attention was paid to deepening cooperation in the fields of medicine, culture, science, education, sustainable development, artificial intelligence and digitalization. The summit participants paid great attention to the development of the transport industry.

The results of negotiations, conferences, and collective work at the summit were expressed in the BRICS declaration, a document adopted on behalf of the participating countries, which summarized the achieved⁴. According to the name of the host city, the declaration was named Kazan one.

At a press conference after the summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin described the document as follows: *"In our opinion, it turned out to be a comprehensive conceptual document with a positive agenda looking to the future. It is important that it confirms the commitment of all our states to building a more democratic, inclusive and multipolar world order based on international law and the UN Charter, and establishes a common determination to counteract the practice of applying illegitimate sanctions and attempts to undermine traditional moral values"*⁵.

Thus, in the 83rd point of the Kazan Declaration, the participating countries reject unilateral discriminatory

measures that do not comply with international law and purposefully destroy global production and logistics chains. Continuing this topic, the document separately notes the effectiveness of the special economic zones (SEZs) of the BRICS countries. They are an important well-established mechanism for trade and industrial cooperation and promotion of the development of the manufacturing sector, including high-tech sectors of the economy, information technology and services using them, tourism, as well as, in particular, port and transport infrastructure. In this regard, the creation of a Forum for Cooperation in the BRICS SEZ region was announced, as well as the launch of events aimed at exchanging practices and implementing standards and management techniques for these zones.

Among the main topics of the forum's discussions were the formation of a "green" economy issues. This has also been confirmed in the transport sector, namely in the discussion of ways to switch to environmentally friendly fuels. The 81st point of the Declaration states that the signatories declare the need to take into account the peculiarities of developing countries, whose economies largely depend on the sale or consumption of fossil fuels and related energy-intensive products. Otherwise, achieving a fair energy transition is impossible.

Chinese President Xi Jinping focused on environmental issues in his speech, noting: *"It is important to promote the BRICS green agenda in the name of sustainable development. Green development is the call of the times, and all BRICS member countries should actively integrate into the global trend of green and low — carbon transformation"*⁶.

The principle of technological neutrality was supported at the forum. It involves the use of all available fuels, energy sources and technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including fossil fuels using emission reduction and capture technologies, biofuels, natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas, nuclear and renewable energy and hydrogen with its derivatives, including ammonia.

Point 92 is devoted to the development of transport, which notes: *"Developed transport infrastructure, safe, reliable and cost-effective international transport routes, innovative technologies and standards will contribute to the development of trade flows and cross-border movement of people, we recognize the importance of integrated use of various modes of transport to cre-*

⁴ Kazan Declaration of BRICS. 2024. URL: https://cdn.brics-russia2024.ru/upload/docs/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F_%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F.pdf?1729693488382423

⁵ Press conference following the XVI BRICS summit. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/75385>

⁶ Full text of Xi Jinping's speech at the 16th BRICS Leaders' Meeting on October 23, 2024. URL: <https://russian.cgtn.com/news/2024-10-23/1849071761764814849/index.html>

ate an efficient and sustainable transport system in the BRICS countries". Further, the participants refer to the first meeting of BRICS transport ministers, which took place in early summer of this year in St. Petersburg. The experience gained is planned to be used to further develop the transport dialogue between the BRICS countries, and most importantly, to create a logistics platform for coordinating and improving transport services in order to ensure multimodal logistics within the association.

The work of the BRICS Business Forum was noted in a separate, 129th point of the Kazan Declaration. In applied terms, it is engaged in the development of co-operation between large businesses, as well as small and medium-sized companies, including in the field of transport. Russian President Vladimir Putin mentioned this industry as very promising, explaining that increasing transport connectivity between the participating countries provides additional opportunities for growth and diversification of mutual trade. In this regard, a regular BRICS dialogue on this topic was launched this year, and subgroups on transport and logistics were formed within the framework of the Business Council. *"Promising projects such as the formation of a permanent BRICS logistics platform, the compilation of a review of transport routes, the opening of an electronic communication platform for transport, the establishment of a reinsurance pool are being discussed"*, the Russian leader added⁷.

Sergei Katyrin, Chairman of the BRICS Business Council, President of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, spoke in more detail about the work of the Business Council within the framework of the forum: *"The main results of the forum and the proposals developed by the BRICS Business Council formed the basis of the annual report as the main result of our work for the year. In this document, we have included 46 recommendations for the further development of co-operation in the context of the main directions"*⁸.

Transport and logistics were named among the first among them, since the great importance of transport development for the expansion of international trade is taken into account — the most important priority of the BRICS at the current stage. Sergei Katyrin clarified that serious attention in the work of the council was paid to the issues of strengthening transport and logis-

tics interconnection, the development of international transport corridors, the development of modern intermodal logistics solutions and the creation of a seamless transport infrastructure.

Throughout 2024, during the BRICS presidency of the Russian Federation, hard work was carried out at various meetings and in the correspondence format of representatives of the BRICS transport community. They developed proposals to the leaders of the BRICS member countries on the development of the transport industry. As noted above, this work took place within the framework of the BRICS Business Council, with an organizational role during the presidency of the BRICS of the Russian Federation, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. Within the framework of the working group on infrastructure of the BRICS Business Council, there was a subgroup on transport and logistics, coordinated by Russian Railways⁹. O.V. Belozerov, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Russian Railways, is the representative of the Russian Federation in the BRICS Business Council for 2022–2024¹⁰.

The subgroup on Transport and Logistics met regularly, almost monthly, in the correspondence format of videoconferences, submitting for discussion of the various transport organizations of the BRICS countries the topical issues related to the development of transport cooperation.

On June 10–11, 2024, the III Conference of the Association of Rectors of BRICS Transport Universities was held in St. Petersburg at the Emperor Alexander I St. Petersburg State Transport University (PGUPS), which was recognized as the official event of the subgroup on transport and Logistics (see "BRICS Transport". Vol. 3. Issue 2. 2024). The conference was attended by representatives of higher educational institutions of the BRICS transport complex, as well as representatives of a number of transport companies from different countries. Reports and presentations were presented, in which topical issues of the development of various types of transport and the training of specialists for the transport complex were discussed. The participants of the discussion were Oleg Valinsky, Rector of the Emperor Alexander I St. Petersburg State Transport University, Kirill Muzalevsky, Acting head of the subgroup on Transport and Logistics of the

⁷ Speech by the President of the Russian Federation V.V. Putin. The BRICS summit meeting in an expanded format was held in Kazan. URL: <https://e-cis.info/news/566/122154/>

⁸ Sergei Katyrin. *The BRICS Business Council continued to promote flagship initiatives*. URL: <https://news.tprrf.ru/ru/news/6142806/>

⁹ BRICS expansion and integration in the field of transport. URL: <https://1520international.com/en/content/2024/sentyabr-2024/brics-expansion-and-integration-in-the-field-of-transport/>

¹⁰ Order of the President of the Russian Federation dated 08.12.2021 No. 345-rp "On the appointment of representatives of the Russian Federation in the BRICS Business Council for 2022–2024". URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202112080042?index=1>

BRICS Business Council, Sergei Baryshnikov, Rector of the Admiral S.O. Makarov State University of Maritime and Inland Shipping, Valery Tanaev, Head of the Moscow Railway branch of Russian Railways, Minister of Transport of the Republic Cuba Eduardo Rodriguez Davila (via video link), Vice-President of Xi'an Jiaotong Transport University (PRC) Shan Zhiwei (via video link), Rector of the Far Eastern State Transport University Vladimir Burovtsev, Head of Marketing and Investment Department of Ethiopian Railways Gebremariam Moges Aregay, etc. The final recommendations of the conference were presented at one of the online meetings of the subgroup.

The result of the work of the subgroup was the creation of a section in the annual report of the working group on infrastructure and the subgroup on transport and logistics of the BRICS Business Council, which was discussed and approved on October 17, 2024 at a joint meeting held in Moscow in full-time and correspondence format, and submitted to the Business Council.

At the summit in Kazan, foreign participants shared their vision of the development of the transport industry within the framework of the BRICS¹¹. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted: *"We talked about agriculture, supply chains, economic reforms, and all this should consolidate our economic cooperation. The initiative to create a research network also plays an important role in logistics and supply chains between BRICS member countries"*. He shared India's achievements in the field under consideration, in particular, the creation of the GatiShakti Portal digital platform. It allows to develop quickly multimodal connections, which makes it possible to create an integrated infrastructure, helps with planning and reduces logistics costs.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa devoted a significant part of his speech to the transport sector: *"Like most countries in the world, the Republic of South Africa is making efforts to ensure the sustainability of supply chains, trade, tourism and financial flows that would not depend on external influence in a multipolar world. Working together, the BRICS family has an important role to play in addressing the key challenges of*

the Global South by building partnerships with emerging economies and markets. It is necessary to increase cooperation among the BRICS countries by launching common development programs in the field of exports, industrial cooperation and technology exchange. We call for the calibration and modification of trade routes to ensure more sustainable industrialization".

The President of the United Arab Emirates, Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan, emphasized the serious progress of his country in a number of transport sectors, in particular logistics.

Dilma Rousseff, President of the New Development Bank, made a substantive report. For 2024–2025, the institution planned to provide financing for about 40 projects in the field of infrastructure, clean electricity, clean water, digital projects and transport worth more than ten billion dollars.

Chairman of the BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism, as well as Chairman of the State Development Corporation VEB.RF Igor Shuvalov summed up one of the key areas of work of the Kazan Forum with the following phrase: *"The scale of the tasks we face to strengthen the independent financing system clearly indicates that we need to join forces to implement, first of all, cross-border projects in such areas as transport infrastructure and high-tech industry"*. It can be concluded that transport has again become one of the key areas of discussion in the context of unification for both the Russian Federation and its strategic partners this year.

Organizationally, over 30 countries of the world have expressed interest in cooperation with BRICS in one form or another, but the current members of the organization, as expected, decided to postpone further expansion. A list of BRICS partner countries was formed and in the final version included: Algeria, Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam¹².

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¹¹ Expanded meeting of the BRICS summit. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/75375>

¹² Main results of the 16th BRICS summit in Kazan, October 22–24, 2024. URL: <https://spi-cis.ru/novosti/osnovnye-itogi-16-sammita-briks-v-kazani-22-24-oktyabrya-2024-goda>