

An Emerging Vector: The Evolving Azerbaijan-Greece Relationship

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“We must free ourselves of the hope that the sea will ever rest. We must learn to sail in high winds.” - Aristophanes

Azerbaijan and Greece, though geographically distant and culturally distinct, have cultivated a multifaceted and increasingly strategic relationship since the early 1990s. Tied together by shared geopolitical interests, especially in the field of energy, the two nations have built a cooperative partnership that continues to grow amid evolving regional and global dynamics.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Hellenic Republic were officially established on April 2, 1992, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Azerbaijan's emergence as an independent state. Ever since, both nations demonstrated interest in fostering a constructive bilateral relationship based on mutual respect and shared interests. In the years that followed, political dialogue and official exchanges have been instrumental in shaping ties. Greece was among the first EU nations to open an embassy in Baku, and Azerbaijan in turn is represented by its embassy in Athens. These diplomatic channels have allowed both countries to maintain regular communication, shorten the geographical distance and explore projects of mutual interest.

Today, the political relationship between Azerbaijan and Greece is characterized by mutual respect, support of each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Both countries base their foreign policy on diplomacy, dialogue and peaceful resolution of disputes, principles embedded in international law. High-level visits and inter-parliamentary cooperation have reinforced trust and facilitated bilateral agreements in various fields. Moreover, Greece's membership in the European Union has provided Azerbaijan with a gateway for engaging EU institutions, particularly on energy policy and connectivity initiatives like the EU Eastern Partnership.

Economic and Energy Cooperation

The cornerstone of Azerbaijan-Greece economic relations is their collaboration in the energy sector, particularly in transportation of natural gas. The most prominent symbol of this partnership is the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP), - a vital component of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC). Operating since 2020, TAP transports natural gas from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz Caspian Sea field through Greece, Albania and into Italy via the Adriatic Sea. This pipeline has enhanced Europe's energy diversification potential with Greece playing a critical transit and hub role reducing dependency on its traditional suppliers, such as Russia.



Southern Gas Corridor¹

Apart from energy, bilateral trade between Azerbaijan and Greece includes machinery, chemicals, agricultural products, and foodstuffs. According to Trading Economics, in March 2026, Azerbaijan's exports to Greece amounted to approximately \$829.69 million, with crude oil and natural gas leading the list of delivered products². As for the main exports of Greece to Azerbaijan, here the value stood at around \$39.41 million with products, such inorganic chemicals, precious metal compound, and isotope comprising the top exports³.

While trade volumes remain modest compared to major regional players such as Türkiye or Italy, there is significant potential yet to be realized, especially in sectors such as tourism, construction, shipping, and renewable energy. Recently active dialogues have been ongoing, with both sides expressing interest in expanding mutual investments, particularly in logistics and infrastructure projects linked to the SGC.

Additionally, the summer season of 2025 opened a new chapter of cooperation for Azerbaijan and Greece with Azerbaijani Tourism Company Pasha Travel, its Tour Operator Pasha Holidays and Azerbaijan Airlines AZAL announcing the start of charter flights from Baku to Heraklion, Crete. The flights are carried out from 7th of June till 6th of September, once a week, offering both economy and business class options⁴. This initiative can be regarded as the beginning of a comprehensive cooperation in the tourism sector between the two countries and allows the possibility of opening new destinations in the future.

¹ Southern Gas Corridor. Found at: <https://blacksea-caspia.eu/en/greece-bolsters-gas-imports-azerbaijan-eu-shares-latest-data>; Last accessed: 06/04/2025

² Azerbaijan's exports to Greece. Found at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/azerbaijan/exports/greece/mineral-fuels-oils-distillation-products>; Last accessed: 10/03/2026

³ Azerbaijan's imports from Greece. Found at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/azerbaijan/imports/greece>; Last accessed: 10/03/2026

⁴ Pasha Travel – Greece Destination. Found at: <https://www.pashatravel.az/greece>; Last accessed: 06/04/2025

Cultural and Educational Initiatives

Beyond economics, Azerbaijan and Greece are committed to nurturing public diplomacy and educational cooperation. Cultural weeks, exhibitions, concerts, and academic conferences have been held in both countries to promote cultural heritage and mutual understanding. There is a growing interest in academic exchange, with students and scholars participating in programs that encourage research in history, international relations, and language studies. Azerbaijan has shown interest in Greek studies and Orthodox Christian heritage, while Greece has demonstrated academic interest in Azerbaijani multiculturalism and secularism in a predominantly Muslim society. Small diaspora communities and professionals residing in both countries further contribute to public-level exchange and dialogue.

According to the Baku-based Hellenic Association “Argo”, the Greek diaspora in Azerbaijan comprises around 500 people mainly concentrated in Baku. The origins of the majority of its members is traced back to the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, when their ancestors, of Pontian Greek origin, migrated from the wider Black Sea area to Baku, in their effort to benefit from the economic prosperity of the city at that time⁵.

The Embassy of Greece in Baku conducts systematic work that is aimed at forging stronger ties between the members of the “Argo” Association and their historic land Greece. This work includes initiatives such as⁶:

- Greek language and folklore dance courses
- Installation of satellite antenna on the premises of the Association for receiving and displaying Greek TV channels
- Support of the community’s infrastructure
- Implementation of recreation periods in camps all over Greece for students and minorities of Greek origin, with the assistance of the General Secretariat of the Greek Diaspora.
- Occasional luncheons, bringing together members of the diaspora and providing them opportunity for socialization.

In addition, there are 2 centers in Baku offering any interested people in Azerbaijan an opportunity to study Greek language and obtain deeper knowledge about Greece overall, - a Centre for Modern Greek Language and Culture that functions within the Slavic University of Baku⁷, and Greek Studies and Culture Center operating in Azerbaijan University of Languages⁸.

⁵ Cultural Relations and Greek Community. Found at: <https://www.mfa.gr/missionsabroad/en/azerbaijan-en/bilateral-relations/cultural-relations-and-greek-community.html>; Last accessed: 06/04/2025

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Greek Studies and Culture Center. Found at: <https://adu.edu.az/en/bim/Centers/gsccl/>; Last accessed: 06/04/2025

Future Prospects

Looking ahead, the future of Azerbaijan–Greece relations appears promising, and as the Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dimitris Skalkos said on April 3rd 2025 at an official reception held in Baku on the occasion of the National Day of Greece, the two countries share common views and have great potential⁹.

The opportunities for expanded cooperation include:

- Renewable energy projects and green transition initiatives.
- Tourism development, considering both countries' rich cultural and historical heritage.
- Technology and innovation, through academic and private sector collaboration.
- Maritime transport and logistics, considering Greece's world-class shipping sector and Azerbaijan's growing Caspian port infrastructure.

Another impulse in bilateral relations was recorded during the visit of Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis to Baku, for the COP29 UN Climate Summit that took place in the capital of Azerbaijan in November 2024. Having met with the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, the Prime Minister of Greece congratulated Azerbaijani leader on the excellent organization of the event within a short timeframe. Both sides exchanged opinions on different areas of cooperation between Greece and Azerbaijan. The conversation touched topics of collaboration between two states within international organizations, cultural and tourism partnership, and the launch of direct flights between Baku and Athens¹⁰.

⁹ Sayad Hasanly, "Greek MFA Secretary General: Bilateral relations with Azerbaijan have great potential", Report News Agency, 03/04/2025. Found at: <https://report.az/en/foreign-politics/greek-mfa-secretary-general-bilateral-relations-with-azerbaijan-have-great-potential/>; Last accessed: 06/04/2025

¹⁰ Ilham Aliyev met with Prime Minister of Greece. 13/11/2024. Found at: <https://president.az/en/articles/view/67310>; Last accessed: 07/04/2025



Greek National Day Reception¹¹

To summarize, Azerbaijan and Greece have demonstrated that geographic and cultural distance can be managed by meaningful international cooperation. Tied by shared energy interests and guided by a spirit of dialogue, their bilateral relationship continues to grow stronger. As Europe and the South Caucasus face new challenges, and also new opportunities, the Azerbaijan–Greece partnership stands as a model of pragmatic diplomacy and strategic collaboration in a complex international environment.

¹¹ Greek National Day Reception. Found at: <https://azeriobserver.az/2024/04/09/greek-national-day-reception-unites-azerbaijan-and-greece/>; Last accessed: 06/04/2025