

## AZERBAIJAN–UAE CEPA

The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates on 9 July 2025. This marks Azerbaijan’s first CEPA.

Bilateral non-oil trade rose 43 percent year-on-year to reach USD2.4 billion in 2024. The UAE remains Azerbaijan’s leading Arab investor, with cumulative investments exceeding USD1 billion, and accounts for nearly half of Azerbaijan’s total trade with the GCC. The agreement is projected to contribute approximately USD680 million to the UAE’s GDP and USD300 million to Azerbaijan’s economy by 2031.

The CEPA encompasses trade in goods and services, investment, simplified customs procedures, government procurement, digital trade, intellectual property, SME support, and dispute settlement mechanisms and covers industries, such as renewable energy, agriculture, and services, such as finance, logistics, tourism, and construction. It provides for tariff reduction or elimination, rules of origin, trade facilitation, and the alignment of technical and sanitary-phytosanitary measures with international standards. The agreement also includes provisions for investment protection and promotion, as well as reciprocal market access in public procurement.

The CEPA was ratified by the Milli Maclis on 17 October 2025. It is currently pending ratification in the UAE, expected later this year. The full text of the CEPA has not yet been released publicly.

### ADMINISTRATIVE INTERIM RELIEF PROCEDURE

On 7 October 2025, the Plenum of Azerbaijan’s Supreme Court adopted Decision No. 18, amending its 4 October 2023 Decision No. 14 regarding the application of temporary protective measures in administrative court proceedings, including the suspension of administrative acts, stays of enforcement, injunctions, and preservation of the *status quo*.

Under the revised approach, interim relief, including both the suspension of an administrative act and other forms of provisional protection, requires two cumulative conditions: (1) the necessity for urgent provisional regulation, and (2) a likelihood that the underlying claim will succeed. Previously, courts applied a more relaxed standard, often granting temporary relief based primarily on procedural convenience or preliminary assessments of harm, without systematically requiring both urgency and probable success.

The Plenum emphasizes that the burden of demonstrating urgency rests with the applicant. Courts must evaluate whether the applicant faces a credible and probable risk of harm that would make later judicial relief impossible or significantly more difficult. This inquiry is specific to the applicant – judges must consider whether restoring the *status quo* would be unfeasible or materially burdensome if interim measures are denied.

In assessing urgency, courts should require clear, fact-linked evidence showing that the threat is sufficiently serious and probable to justify pre-judgment intervention.

Further, the Plenum introduces stricter procedural safeguards for urgency claims. An interim relief application filed without any justification for urgency must be dismissed, even if the court assists the applicant with procedural requirements. If some evidence or reasoning is presented, but the court, following an objective review, finds that urgency is not established, the application must still be refused.

Additionally, it reinforces legal certainty and the stability of judicial acts: the new standards apply to applications filed after the adoption date, as well as to applications filed earlier pending at that time. Ongoing appeals and cassations are unaffected and cannot be annulled or modified solely on the basis of these new interpretations. The updated legal test is to be applied only to appeals and cassations submitted after 7 October 2025.

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\*Information does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice

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