

East Meets West - Reorienting the EU's Central Asia Strategy

The European Union approved its first Central Asia strategy document in June 2007 for the period 2007-2013. From the EU's perspective, the Central Asia Strategy (CAS) rounded out the strategic approach towards its Eastern neighbours, which includes its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), its Eastern Partnership (EaP) and its bilateral relationship with Russia enshrined in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which is currently subject to negotiation for a successor agreement. The CAS represents significant progress in focusing explicit attention on Central Asia as a region of significance for Europe, and in spelling out the key objectives and instrumentalities.

While representing progress in the EU's thinking about and approach to Central Asia, the CAS suffers from a serious weakness by presenting Central Asia in effect as the end of the eastern horizon of the EU. It makes no mention of the important bridging role that Central Asia has between Asia and Europe. It does not once mention the role of China, let alone India, and even does not even address how the EU will relate to Russia in implementing the strategy. Why does this matter?

First, with the opening-up of China to the world in the 1980s and with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the barriers of the Iron and Bamboo Curtains – which previously had prevented cross-continental economic links from developing alongside the trans-oceanic links during the 20th century – fell away and a rapid process of trans-continental integration has since taken off. Eurasia now represents a huge economic space that connects some of the largest and most dynamic economies of the world.

Second, Central Asia lies at the core of the Eurasian supercontinent. It represents a critical land bridge between the two land masses that permits – or hinders, as the case may be – the transcontinental integration process. Many of the key east-west and north-south overland connections run or could run through Central Asia. If Central Asia develops into a stable and prosperous region with good infrastructure and a well-educated and healthy population, this will significantly enhance Eurasian integration and thus benefit not only Central Asians, but the entire super-continent. However, this requires that the region is effectively connected internally

and with its neighbours in all directions of the compass.

Third, as the CAS recognises, the region has significant energy resources, which are of great interest to the EU in its quest to diversify its energy supplies. However, there are other neighbours with a similar interest, especially China and India. China has invested heavily in Kazakhstan's energy production and transport infrastructure and has started the construction of a gas pipeline eastward from Turkmenistan. Other projects are under consideration, including for the long term the construction of pipelines between China and the Middle East.

Fourth, Central Asia is an essential land bridge also to Afghanistan. With the ongoing efforts by NATO and EU members to stabilise that country militarily and economically, and with the traditional access routes through Pakistan increasingly at risk, Central Asia has become of major significance to the European countries in assuring access to their personnel in Afghanistan.

Finally, China and Russia, and increasingly India, have an intense interest in what happens in Central Asia. Russia is deeply engaged in the region because of its historical links, its concern to maintain a monopoly over the energy export routes and its need to ensure a stable southern flank. China also wants a stable back yard, wants to ensure that no support is given to separatist movements in its Western provinces and wants privileged access to Central Asia's energy resources. India also has an interest in Central Asian energy and recognises that a stable Central Asia is also in its long-term national interest. The financial engagement of China and Russia from official and private sources far exceeds that envisaged under the CAS. Therefore, the ability of the EU to implement the CAS successfully depends not only on EU actions in relation to Central Asia, but also very much on what the other neighbours of Central Asia do in and for the region.

For all these reasons, the EU should see Central Asia not as the end of the eastern horizon, but instead as a key link to major players in the Eurasian super-continent and as a major factor in the broader geopolitical context in which the EU operates.

What does this mean in practical terms? Once



the perspective is shifted, the implications for the CAS are clear:

First, the EU should give greater attention than it has so far to the extension of the Trans-European transport network (TEN) to and through Central Asia. This means more investments in transport infrastructure in the Eastern Partnership countries as well as in Central Asia proper. It also means much more attention to agreements with these countries on transit facilitation measures, including improvements in border crossings, which reduce the cost and time of transcontinental travel.

Second, the EU needs to explicitly factor into its energy plans the fact that it will be competing with China and India for the significant, but limited energy supplies of the Caspian basin. While projects like the Nabucco gas pipeline are an important potential source of EU energy supply, their potential will be severely constrained if, as is already evident, Asian countries successfully compete for access to Central Asian energy.

Third, the EU should consult with Russia and China on their approaches to the economic and political development of the region and where possible harmonise and coordinate its engagement in Central Asian countries with these key players. Given the EU's limited financial engagement envisaged in the region, the EU as far as possible needs to leverage its resources by coordinating rather than competing with the assistance of the other neighbours, whether in infrastructure, education, health or other fields.

Fourth, where there are risks of regional instability and possible conflict, as currently in connection with an intensifying competition between upstream and downstream countries over Central Asia's water resources, the EU should consult with China, Russia and the US to seek common approaches in limiting the risks of conflict and where possible find long-term solutions to the tensions.

Fifth, the EU should intensify its contacts with regional organisations involving Central Asia. The most important of these organisations are the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which includes China and Russia; the Eurasian Economic Community (Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC), which is led by Russia; and the Central Asian Economic Cooperation Programme (CAECP), which involves China and is supported by the Asian Development Bank and other multilateral institutions. Such contacts are envisaged in the CAS, and some efforts are underway in this regard. However, much more could be done to explore linkages in key areas of the CAS, such as trade, transport and transit, water and energy, and in combating common threats of drugs, terrorism and conflict.

Finally, the time has come for the EU to explore the possibility of a summit of the four main Eurasian economies – China, the EU, India and China – whose cooperation will be essential for an effective integration of the continental economic space of Eurasia. A principal focus of discussion at a first such summit could and should be how these four powers can cooperate to help ensure the effective economic integration of Central Asia as part of the broader Eurasian economic integration process.

*Editorial by
Michael Emerson and Johannes Linn
CEPS and Brookings Institution*

New EUCAM Team Member

Aigerim Duimagambetova joined the EUCAM team in a position of an intern to support the daily work of the project and provide assistance in organising of the project events and other activities. She holds a Master's degree in international journalism from the Kazakh National University (Almaty, Kazakhstan) as well as an M.P.P. degree from the Erfurt School of Public Policy (Erfurt, Germany). Her areas of interest include environmental and educational policies in Central Asia and matters of regional cooperation and neighbour relations.

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EUCAM News

Energy Seminar in Prague

Seminar in Prague explores prospect of building an energy security relationship between the EU and Central Asia

The prospect of establishing cooperation between the EU and Central Asia on critical aspects of energy security within the region, including the development of hydropower as well as maintaining a balance between the EU's desire to diversify energy supplies and its commitment to democratisation and human rights, were at the heart of a seminar on "The European Union and Central Asia: Building an Energy Security Relationship" on April 16-17th in Prague. The event was jointly organised by the Institute of International Relations of the Czech Republic and EUCAM (CEPS/FRIDE) and was hosted by the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which currently holds the Presidency of the EU. This event brought together European and Central Asian energy experts to exchange views on the feasibility of the EU's objectives to gain a share in the Central Asian energy export market and to further support positive development of the region.

Some speakers expressed skepticism over the ability of the EU to become effectively engaged in the region's energy policy. Thus, in the view of Václav Bartuška, Czech Special Envoy for Energy Affairs, the capacities and commitment of the EU to implement large-scale projects such as Nabucco and to sustain them, namely, to ensure security of the pipelines, are very limited. And when combined with the ambivalence within the EU both on a national and an institutional level regarding cooperation with Central Asia, these limitations make the EU a non-competitor compared to a more committed and effective Russia or China. Other experts outlined further challenges to the EU's commercial engagement involving technical and transit difficulties, as well as external political and security risks. Special emphasis was placed on Turkmenistan and its exploration of increased energy links with EU member states.

With respect to water-related problems in Central Asia, the debates highlighted that the EU should more closely and consistently analyse local complexities and focus its technical assistance on stimulating improvement in such related areas as food security and agricultural production. The EU could also play an important role in providing a platform for regional discussions and serving as a facilitator and investor rather than as a main driving actor in solving Central Asian water disputes.

Finally, there was a debate about the extent to which Europe's energy interests support or conflict with the promotion of European values. Most participants felt that these issues needed to be separated in practice while they of course both remain part of the EU Strategy for the region.

Regional Cooperation in Central Asia: force filed analysis

Promoting regional cooperation and development in Central Asia, March 2-3, CEPS, Brussels, Conference Report by Natalia Mirimanova

EUCAM, in cooperation with Asian Development Bank, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Wolfensohn Centre for Development (Brookings Institution), organised a conference on Regional Cooperation and Development in Central Asia. The event was hosted by CEPS on March 2-3, 2009. The gathering was marked by a broad range of perspectives on the constellation of interests, capacities and motivations regarding a more integrated Central Asia. Ambassador Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia, and Jan Marinus Wiersma (MEP) weighed the relative merits of tuned reform sponsorship versus pragmatism, which stems from Europe's need to diversify its gas supplies.

The Ambassadors of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan called on the EU to give greater consideration to the countries that do not have oil and gas reserves yet advocate regional cooperation. The CAREC experience and strategic plans as regards facilitation of trade, investments and business development in Central Asia was complemented by presentations on small-scale cross-border trade projects of the World Bank and achievements and shortcomings in the EU border control reform programmes (BOMCA/CADAP). Water resource issues that largely define the relationships between the Central Asian states were discussed from various angles by Central Asian and international experts and representatives of major donor agencies (Aga Khan Development Network and UNDP).

Recommendations on the improvement of the EU regional cooperation promotion strategy presented by Victor Andres-Maldonado, who heads the Central Asian Unit in the European Commission concerned a greater focus on the sub-state and supra-state dimensions, de-bureaucratisation of the EU assistance to the civil society in Central Asia and comprehensive stakeholder analysis with the aim to craft tailored strategies.

EU Inter-Institutional Debates over Central Asia

European idealism versus European pragmatism vis-à-vis the prospects for regional cooperation within and around Central Asia

Dialogue between Ambassador Pierre Morel, Special EU Representative for Central Asia, European Council, and Jan Marinus Wiersma, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Socialist Group, European Parliament, at the Regional Cooperation and Development conference, March 2, 2009, CEPS, Brussels

Ambassador Pierre Morel

The common values have been the foundation of the EU's involvement with Central Asia. In the post-Cold War Eurasia, democracy is the best guarantee for peace and stability: from the EU standpoint, this principle remains the main link with the region, with full realisation that we would progress with the needed adaptations and steps. We are ready for a pragmatic approach, but the common values are fundamental.

How does regional cooperation correspond to the EU Strategy for Central Asia? The key word here is differentiation. It needs to be noted that the EU had been engaged in Central Asia as a region from the very start. Quite naturally, it made sense for the EU to look at Central Asia as a region, because we *ab initio* value regional integration. There is a tendency to project our regional approach and to try to compose countries in some sort of a regional network, which is a priori the *raison d'être* for a partnership to be built. After 15 years of experience in Central Asia, we had to reflect upon this

approach and to take into account its limitations. We had to re-discover the specific needs of individual Central Asian countries in their own capacity, with their own identity.

After adopting the Strategy in 2007, we therefore developed this differentiated approach: for each Central Asian country, there is now a bilateral translation of the Strategy. These "National Priority Papers" show what the Strategy means for each individual Central Asian country in terms of operations, credits and specific contributions, including the role of the EU member states. In parallel, we have developed three "EU regional initiatives": one is on education; the second area is on the rule of law, which now complements the bilateral human rights dialogues launched by the EU with each of the five; and the third is water and environment, linked with energy.

The EU does not come with an established model, but sees its role as facilitator, in order to stimulate and support the understanding of interdependence between the key challenges in Central Asia, which obviously call for intensified regional cooperation.

Jan Marinus Wiersma, MEP

I think there is a general feeling among the countries in Central Asia to go their own way and to be an independent factor and choose their options not having to rely on links with Moscow, Beijing or Brussels exclusively. This may stimulate cooperation, but it may as well be an obstacle for strengthened links with the European Union. I think, compared to Moscow and China, we are late in developing relations with these new independent countries. Secondly, it is not easy to develop relations with countries that have a common past of having been a part of the Soviet Union and before that of the Tzarist empire. Political, economic, social life in these countries is still marked by a contest between tradition and modernity. There is a substantial re-orientation of some of these countries towards the EU for several reasons – we are an important trading partner, but also there are strata in the society that want to modernise and look at the European example and the way we have organised our lives and the economy. But there is also a strategic orientation towards Moscow; this is where the links are. Russian language is still a common denominator, there are old economic connections, all the pipelines go via Russia. The type of leadership in Central Asia is closer to the type of leadership we see in Moscow than to the mode of government we see in Brussels. This is a symbolic expression of their strategic links with Moscow.

These countries still need to establish their independence. I am in favour of the EU helping them to solve a number of problems in various spheres, energy foremost. Should they have a common stand on the energy issues, they would get more money for their gas and oil than they are currently receiving within the existing bilateral agreements on energy supply with Russia. Besides, alternative energy routes bypassing Russia could be established. In this way their gas would be directly supplied to Europe. There obviously is ground for the cooperation. The question is – what model of cooperation to adopt? The European integration model would be fairly far fetched for the countries of Central Asia. But other models have been applied with some success, for instance the Black Sea Cooperation, in which EU plays a role, and the idea of the Stability Pact for the South Caucasus. The most successful regional model in the last 15 years was Stability Pact for the Former Yugoslavia.

I am convinced that one can not apply the Copenhagen Criteria for EU membership, including the high human rights and other standards, to the Central Asian countries, unlike some of my colleagues at the European Parliament have suggested. We should have a more pragmatic attitude towards these countries and also define our strategic interest in the region. Of course, human rights and European values are important, but we need to carefully balance promoting human rights with our pragmatic interests, including our energy interests and security and stability

in the region, which are directly linked to the Afghanistan issue. Stability and economic cooperation are imperative. What we can achieve in the area of human rights in significant ways depends on those.

But I think we should not promote the divisions between by singling out those countries that are favourable to cooperation while ignoring the countries that are not, since they remain very important for the region. This has been the dynamic in Europe – the idea of integration did not come from outside, it came from within. I think we can be helpful and promote the idea. But it is not something we can force or demand.

Ambassador Pierre Morel

The life of the region speaks for itself, with so many supra-regional organizations. This question came very early on and we had two options: that of being in or being out. From the EU's perspective, it is therefore crucial that all the Central Asian states are members of the OSCE.

Most of supra-regional organisations, such as SCO or Eurasec have seen the expansion of the circle of participating Central Asian countries over time. Some kind of flexibility as regards some countries position on regional cooperation can be observed. However, it is an important factor for all five Central Asian states to participate in the EU Strategy for Central Asia. It was a clear choice from the very start for the European Union to convince all five Central Asian countries to come onboard in spite of different degrees of commitment or preferences. There have been differences and even divergences among the five countries, but the EU could always use its formula of political meetings, always with the participation of all five countries. And this will continue to be so.

When we come to more specific and sensitive issues, like security, with other organisations, freedom of option has to be respected. In the case of issues of global concerns such as water and energy, the EU should make every effort to bring every country on board. When dealing with broad common issues like energy or customs and border control, all five should be involved; otherwise something is wrong from the very beginning.

Water and Energy Disputes: in search of regional solution?

Regional cooperation and its alternatives as solution paths for the water and energy disputes in Central Asia by Natalia Mirimanova

Water and energy resources are not limited in Central Asia, contrary to recent suggestions by some commentators both from within and outside the region¹. Fuel-rich Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have a non-water energy source, but need water from the Syrdarya and Amudarya rivers that rise in the mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and from the Amudarya in Afghanistan and Tajikistan for irrigation.

A clear case for regional cooperation, one would suggest. A classic win-win 'orange' case from the "Getting to Yes" bestseller: one sister needs just a peel to make a cake, while the other needs to squeeze juice, and they can have all they want. In the case of the Central Asian water-energy puzzle, all it should take to arrive at a mutually beneficial solution is to negotiate the solution. However, today the water and energy distribution conflict is predominantly being treated by Central Asian states as a zero-sum game. In the end, everybody loses.

Are there objective criteria that could facilitate the parties' cooperation on the water distribution matters that would be cost-effective? In other words, is there a law that prescribes what the parties should do in this kind of situation?

Stephen Hodgson, consultant in environmental law and policy from Brussels explains why one should not pin too much hope on international law in this regard. Since becoming independent, the five Central Asian states have signed several inter-state agreements, not to mention numerous external interventions that were crowned with most international agreements on the water use and distribution matters. However the trend of going around in circles with no breakthrough clearly presents itself. There is no global framework agreement for fresh water resources. EU water law is concerned with water quality issues: the EC has no competence over water quantity or water rights. This means that the water relations of the Central Asian States ought to be governed by customary international law. However the requirements that 'watercourse states' must use an international water course on their own territory *in an equitable and reasonable manner* or must take *all appropriate measures* to avoid causing significant harm to other watercourse states. And the states have general duties to cooperate, to exchange data and information, and to consult on planned measures and if such consultations do not reach a satisfactory outcome, *to negotiate in a meaningful way*. Should the states in question have polar positions, hostile relations of a lack of will to negotiate, the existing laws are of little help to encourage them to cooperate? The requirements on the negotiation in a meaningful way and equitable and reasonable manner of water use and water flow management leave quite a lot of room for interpretation. Key to water disputes in Central Asia are sustained, effective, institutionalised and principled negotiations. But this is exactly the challenge, because the search for solutions to water use and distribution problems ought to be happening outside the domain of rigidly and narrowly conceived national sovereignty. In sum, regional cooperation cannot be effectively promoted through international water law, and the EU cannot do much within the legal framework to alleviate water and hydropower contests in Central Asia.

The compound crisis in October 2008 provoked by the concerns of the downstream countries that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan might operate Toktogul and Nurek in full hydropower mode pushed the five countries to pledge renewed effort to cooperate on the hydro-energy issues. Does this mean that the situation needs to get really bad in order for the Central Asian states to actually move towards regional cooperation on water and energy? One sensible way to get out of the vicious circle of mistrust and fear could be to foster each party's own, internally driven energy security so that each country could re-enter the regional cooperation discussion having strengthened their water-energy base. Alfiya Akhrorova, Head of the Renewable Energy Sources from the Tajik Technical University in Dushanbe, proposes national solutions to the regional hydropower contest that are long-term and development-minded. This requires a paradigm shift away from the present short-term profit-driven strategies in this sector. Her suggestions fall into two clusters: energy and water saving, and development of renewable sources of energy. She proposes to concentrate on water and energy-saving policies and strategies, such as revision of agricultural patterns, modernisation of the existing irrigation systems and, most importantly, changing people's habits as regards the use of water. Renewable sources of energy – solar and wind – can be easily and successfully developed in all Central Asian countries. Decentralisation of energy supply that renewable energy sources provide for is the way to the energy security, suggests Ms. Akhrorova. What is important is that this approach strengthens water-energy autonomy of each country but not at the expense of others (Kazakhstan, for example, has the best wind energy sector development potential; while Uzbekistan's potential solar energy technical capacity is 10 times greater than that of

¹ Kyrgyzstan possesses 54% of the region's hydropower resources, but utilises only 14% of its capacity. These corresponding figures for Tajikistan are 26 and 11.

hydropower). The first steps and proposals that were developed in cooperation between academic institutes and universities from Central Asia (Tajikistan and Kazakhstan) and Europe (Greece, Sweden and Finland) include a strategy for the creation of market incentives to develop renewable energy, new relevant legislation, training for the new cadre and scientific research.

Aly Nazerali, European and Multilateral Representative and COE of the Aga Khan Development Network in London proposed to focus on the water and energy needs of individual families and livelihoods and to go local and supply those at the geographic, economic and political periphery with small yet reliable hydropower mini-plants and local water systems. Grand regional cooperation or national energy and water issues take a long time to be agreed upon and even more time to attract investments and actually start producing electricity, while people's well-being, health and development, especially of the millions in rural and mountainous areas, are being harmed on a daily basis. Those who are systematically deprived of access to electricity and water are the focal point for the Aga Khan Development Fund assistance programmes. UNDP supports the small-scale and local focus of work on energy and water security, as well as on the promotion of renewable energy sources. But it stresses that without radical reform of the energy sectors, most importantly breaking the monopolies and introducing competition on the supply side and introducing energy-saving and metering programmes on the consumer side, long-term sustainable solution to the permanent crises will not be reached. From the UNDP perspective, which was presented by Ben Slay, Senior Economist, UNDP Bureau for Europe and CIS, Bratislava, while the most important elements of the response to water, energy and food insecurities in Central Asia should have a national character, the regional focus should be continued, to provide joint and continual monitoring of, and early warning concerning hydrological trends in the reservoirs and rivers of regional importance, economic developments, environmental and climate forecast, etc. among other cooperative measures.

This array of views on the prospects for the resolution of water-energy issues across Central Asia through regional cooperation, national and local efforts presents the EU with a menu to select entry points and develop strategies on a regional response to regional, national and local challenges in the water and energy sectors in Central Asia.

European Parliament approves the Interim Trade Agreement

On the 22nd of April, the European Parliament voted in favour of the Interim Trade Agreement between the EU and Turkmenistan thus having put to an end 11 years of debates within the Parliament on this matter. Currently the relations between the EU and Turkmenistan are guided by the Agreement on Trade and Commercial and Economic cooperation between the Communities and the USSR of 1989. As noted in the explanatory statement of the EP, "the lack of economic integration between the EU and Turkmenistan during recent years has not contributed to improving the situation for the people of Turkmenistan. The signing of the Interim Agreement should be seen as a step by the EU towards Turkmenistan and an attempt to increase the welfare of the population through trade." Also, although the MEPs admitted that there was no major improvement to be seen in Turkmenistan with respect to human rights and democracy, as outlined in the explanatory statement, "there is the impression that there is a willingness to negotiate these issues".

Source: European Parliament official web-site
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2006-0085&language=EN#title4>

EU Statement on Tajik Law 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations

Permanent Council No.757

EU draft statement on Tajik law 'On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations'

The European Union takes note that, on 25 March, Tajik President Rakhmon signed into law draft legislation on freedom of conscience and religious associations, after it had passed both Houses of Parliament on 5 and 12 March respectively.

The EU notes that some, but not all, of the recommendations formulated by the ODIHR's Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief, which considered late last year the draft law at the request of the Tajik Government have been taken into account.

Particular concerns have also been expressed by other observers, including by the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom, about the special role of Hanafi Islam, registration restrictions placed on minority religious communities, the tightening of literary censorship, constraints on children's religious activity and education, possible political interference in the activities of mosques and appointment of imams, and requirements for state permission for contact with foreign co-believers.

The EU would ask the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan to convey to his authorities our disappointment at the precipitate way in which this law has been passed, despite the concerns expressed by a number of members of the Tajik Parliament and representatives of religious groups, including minority religious communities

We would also encourage the Tajik authorities to take advantage of the offer of the Head of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan, Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin, to assist the government and civil society on this issue as well as the expertise provided by the ODIHR on this and other legislative matters.

Source: http://www.delvie.ec.europa.eu/en/eu_osce/eu_statements/2009/April/PC%20no.757%20-%20EU%20on%20religious%20freedom%20in%20TAJ.pdf

Water related Events

- On April 17th, the UNRCCA organised a meeting in Almaty on "Enhanced Coordination and Mutual Assistance between Regional and International Organisations on Water and Energy Issues in Central Asia".
- A seminar on "International Water Law and Negotiation of Mutually Beneficial Multilateral Water Agreements in Central Asia", organised by the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) in close cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) took place on April 19th-21st in Almaty. It brought together representatives of the five Central Asian states and Afghanistan to focus on International Water Conventions and Interstate Agreements and to review best practices in negotiating successful trans-boundary water agreements.
- On April 28th Almaty welcomed a summit of the heads of state-founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. The summit focused on the issues of further institutionalisation of IFAS and measures to activate regional cooperation. The founders of the ISAF Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan established this fund in 1993 to develop and support joint actions and programmes targeting Aral conservation and ecological improvement of the Aral Sea basin.

Russia and SCO confirm their commitment to cooperate with NATO on Afghanistan

At the conference of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation held in Moscow on March 27th, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed his country's commitment to assist in returning normalcy to life in Afghanistan. Russia has already opened a corridor for the transport of the non-military NATO cargo for the alliance forces in Afghanistan and is receptive to other constructive initiatives. The Minister also proposed to create a belt of anti-drug, anti-terror and financial security in Afghanistan. China, in its turn, will channel \$7.5 billion of aid to Afghanistan over five years and forgave Afghanistan's debt.

The conference was attended by the EU Special Representative in Central Asia Ambassador Pierre Morel and the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and representatives of NATO, OSCE, CSTO, OIC and various UN agencies.

Sources: Information Agency Interfax, Radio Station Echo Moskvi

NATO Parliamentary Assembly delegation makes maiden visit to Tajikistan

April 2009 marked Dushanbe on the world map as a hot route for top-ranking international delegations. On April 6th the Troika for the common policy and security policy together with Pierre Morel, Special Representative of the EU in Central Asia, landed in Dushanbe to hold talks with the top representatives of the Tajik government. On the following days, the European Parliament delegation also visited Tajikistan to participate in the IV EU-Central Asia inter-parliamentary meeting and to hold talks with key Tajik officials. Finally, a NATO Parliamentary Assembly paid its first-ever visit to Tajikistan on April 20-22nd. The delegation of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security of the NATO was led by Vitalino Canas (Portugal), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, and David Hobbs, Secretary General of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. NATO parliamentarians met with the highest parliamentary and governmental authorities in the country as well as with representatives of embassies and international organisations. Discussions covered a variety of topics ranging from the impact of the situation in Afghanistan on Tajikistan, and Tajikistan's potential contribution to stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan to Tajikistan's relations with Russia, China, Iran, and NATO; the challenges posed by drug trafficking; and water and energy issues in Central Asia.

Source: NATO Parliamentary Assembly official web-site
<http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?CAT2=1705&CAT1=23&CAT0=2&COM=1817&MOD=0&SMD=0&SSMD=0&STA=&ID=0&PAR=0&PRINT=1>

Key EU Central Asia Events for the Period of April-May 2009

Updated calendar of EU events in Central Asia are to be found on the Commission's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/docs/calendar_en.pdf

▪ **6-9th April.** A delegation from the European Parliament headed by Ms. Ona JUKNEVIČIENĖ, the chairwoman of

the Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan and EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia European Parliament delegation, visited Tajikistan. During the visit, the delegation participated in the 4th EU-Central Asia interparliamentary meeting and met with the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, heads of the upper and the lower chambers of the Tajik parliament and the ministry of foreign affairs of Tajikistan.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan
<http://www.mid.tj/index.php?node=news&id=1089>

▪ **6-9 April.** The Troika delegation and Pierre Morel, the Special Representative of the EU in Central Asia, paid a three-day visit to Tajikistan. During their stay in Dushanbe, representatives of the European Union held talks with high-rank Tajik officials and exchanged opinions on a broad range of topics related to the country and region in general. In particular, Mr. Pierre Morel commented on water issues in Central Asia during a press conference given at the German embassy in Tajikistan. He expressed hopes that Central Asian states would in the near future abandon old system of relationships in order to build the new one and solve issue of joint use of water resources. According to the Special Representative, under the present conditions it is necessary to abandon construction of huge dams as they are dangerous for the environment and to develop establish small hydropower plants that require fewer investments and are constructed much quicker.

Source: Asia-Plus, <http://www.asiaplus.tj/en/news/48/49517.html>

▪ The European Commission is currently revising the Indicative Programme (IP) of technical assistance for Central Asia for the period 2011-2013. **On the 17th of April** the Commission held consultations with civil society on this topic in Brussels in anticipation of the field trips to the region. In May the Commission delegations are due to visit all five states of Central Asia to meet the authorities and representatives of civil society in order to further refine the content of the new IP. Current regional IP covers the period of 2007-2010. It focuses on two priority areas - poverty reduction and improvement of living standards, support for good governance and economic reform – as areas for bilateral cooperation, and promotion of regional cooperation and good neighbor relations – on the regional scale. These three areas are divided on focal priorities identified specifically for each country of the region. It is expected that the new IP would revise the existing and introduce new focal priorities of the program as a result of discussions with Central Asian governments and local population.

▪ **On the 22nd of April, 2009** took place a de-briefing on the weekly meetings with the representatives of the Civil Society and Kazakh National Authorities on human rights that the delegation of the European Commission together with the Presidency and the OSCE were hosting between December 2008 and April 2009.

▪ Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA holds a next meeting on the **25th of April, 2009** in Istanbul. The main focus of the meeting is new investment opportunities and projects of reforming the institutions of TRACECA. Another objective of the meeting is to highlight presentations from national secretaries representing 12 member states of TRACECA.

▪ 30 April – National Coordinators Meeting in Brussels. This is an internal meeting of the five Central Asian National

Coordinators for the EU Central Asia Strategy, which will serve as a preparation for the Regional Ministerial Troika Meeting scheduled for May 27-30, 2009.

- 27-30 April - Medium Term review of the EC cooperation with Government, Donors and civil society
- **On the 8th of May, 2009** Czech Presidency will host an informal summit 'Southern Corridor – New Silk Road'. This high-profile meeting is scheduled in Troika format comprising the Czech Presidency, the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council to meet representatives of the Southern Corridor countries – parties to the NABUCCO project.
- On 12-13 of May, 2003 the European Commission is organizing the first Civil Society Seminar with Tajikistan with the topic of '**Right to a fair trial and independence of judiciary**'. This seminar complements the official EU-Tajik Human Rights Dialogue, the next round of which is scheduled for October 2009. The aim of this Seminar is to open up the official human rights dialogue to the European and Tajik academic and NGO communities and create a space for constructive discussion; encourage academics and members of civil society to feed the agenda of the official dialogue with their views; and develop links between Tajik and European academics and civil society representatives specialising in international human rights.

Meet our EUCAM Experts



Anton ARTEMYEV is currently director of the Kazakhstan Revenue Watch Program (KRW) of the Soros Foundation - Kazakhstan. He is an Economics graduate of the Moscow Academy of Labor and Social Relations (2000). Since May 2008 Anton is a member of the international EITI Board.



Sabine FISCHER is a research fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies. She deals with domestic and foreign policy in Russia and the other CIS countries and EU policy towards them. Previously she was a research fellow among others at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.



Nicolás DE PEDRO is the Expert adviser on Central Asia for the Opex (Spanish Observatory on Foreign Policy) from the Fundación Alternativas. He is a PhD candidate and researcher in International Relations at the Complutense University in Madrid. In 2006 he was awarded a Diploma of Advanced Studies (DEA) in International Law and International Relations.



Matteo FUMAGALLI is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations and European Studies at Central European University in Budapest (Hungary). His current projects concern social activism in authoritarian states, transnational migration across the former Soviet Union, and on EU-Central Asia relations.



André GERRITS, historian, is professor of European Studies, University of Amsterdam, and senior research fellow at the Netherlands Institute for International Relations (Clingendael). He studied History and Slavic Studies at the Free University and the University of Amsterdam.



Nargis KASSENOVA is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Sciences of the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP). Her main areas of research are Central Asian Security, Eurasian geopolitics, EU-Central Asia relations and Kazakhstan's foreign policy.



Sébastien PEYROUSE is a Senior Research Fellow at the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute (Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies) in Washington, D.C., and an Associate Scholar at the Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS) in Paris. His research areas are political regimes in Central Asia, Islamism and religious minorities.

Michael DENISON is Lecturer in International Security at the University of Leeds, Associate Fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House, and senior Central Asia analyst at Control Risks, a leading international investment risk consultancy. His research focuses on politics, security and economic development in Central Asia.

Anvar KAMOLIDDINOV is director of Tajik Branch of Scientific Information Centre of Interstate Commission Water Coordination of the Central Asian Countries. His research focus is regional integrated water resources management, irrigation, water supply and rural development.

Gulnura TORALIEVA has a Masters degree in International Journalism from Kyrgyz-Russian Slavonic University. She has been working as Programme Director for the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) since May 2007. Mrs. Toralieva has extensive experience in facilitating training, news reporting, writing and editing of handbooks for journalists and video film production.

New Publications

The EU Approach to the Development of Mass Media in Central Asia, Gulnura Toralieva, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 6, April 2009 (in Russian): <http://www.eucentralasia.eu/node/35>

Now available in Russian:

Kazakhstan and the South Caucasus corridor in the wake of the Georgia-Russia War, Nargis Kassenova, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 3, April 2009: <http://www.eucentralasia.eu/node/32>

Facing the Challenges of Separatism: The EU, Central Asia and the Uyghur Issue, Sebastien Peyrouse, Brief No. 4, April 2009: <http://www.eucentralasia.eu/node/33>

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About EUCAM

The Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Spain, in co-operation with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Belgium, has launched a joint project entitled "EU Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM)". The (EUCAM) initiative is an 18-month research and awareness-raising exercise supported by several EU member states and civil society organisations which aims:

- to raise the profile of the EU-Central Asia Strategy;
- to strengthen debate about the EU-Central Asia relationship and the role of the Strategy in that relationship;
- to enhance accountability through the provision of high quality information and analysis;
- to promote mutual understanding by deepening the knowledge within European and Central Asian societies about EU policy in the region; and
- to develop 'critical' capacity within the EU and Central Asia through the establishment of a network that links communities concerned with the role of the EU in Central Asia.

EUCAM focuses on four priority areas in order to find a mix between the broad political ambitions of the Strategy and the narrower practical priorities of EU institutions and member state assistance programmes:

- Democracy and Human Rights
- Security and Stability
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Education and Social Relations

EUCAM will produce the following series of publications:

- A bi-monthly newsletter on EU-Central Asia relations will be produced and distributed broadly by means of an email list server using the CEPS and FRIDE networks. The newsletter contains the latest documents on EU-Central Asia relations, up-to-date information on the EU's progress in implementing the Strategy and developments in Central Asian countries.

- Policy briefs will be written by permanent and ad hoc Working Group members. The majority of the papers examine issues related to the four core themes identified above, with other papers commissioned in response to emerging areas beyond the main themes.

- Commentaries on the evolving partnership between the EU and the states of Central Asia will be commissioned reflecting specific developments in the EU-Central Asian relationship.

- A final monitoring report of the EUCAM Expert Working Group will be produced by the project rapporteurs.

This monitoring exercise is implemented by an Expert Working Group, established by FRIDE and CEPS. The group consists of experts from the Central Asian states and the members countries of the EU. In addition to expert meetings, several public seminars will be organised for a broad audience including EU representatives, national officials and legislators, the local civil society community, media and other stakeholders.

EUCAM is sponsored by the Open Society Institute (OSI) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project is also supported by the Czech Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

About FRIDE

FRIDE is a think tank based in Madrid that aims to provide original and innovative thinking on Europe's role in the international arena. It strives to break new ground in its core research interests – peace and security, human rights, democracy promotion and development and humanitarian aid – and mould debate in governmental and nongovernmental bodies through rigorous analysis, rooted in the values of justice, equality and democracy.

As a prominent European think tank, FRIDE benefits from political independence, diversity of views and the intellectual background of its international staff. Since its establishment in 1999, FRIDE has organised or participated in the creation and development of various projects that reinforce not only FRIDE's commitment to debate and analysis, but also to progressive action and thinking.

About CEPS

Founded in Brussels in 1983, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) is among the most experienced and authoritative think tanks operating in the European Union today. CEPS serves as a leading forum for debate on EU affairs, and its most distinguishing feature lies in its strong in-house research capacity, complemented by an extensive network of partner institutes throughout the world.

CEPS aims to carry out state-of-the-art policy research leading to solutions to the challenges facing Europe today and to achieve high standards of academic excellence and maintain unqualified independence. CEPS also provides a forum for discussion among all stakeholders in the European policy process and builds collaborative networks of researchers, policy-makers and business representatives across the whole of Europe.



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