

# EUCAM WATCH

EU-CENTRAL ASIA MONITORING

## *EUCAM tour de Central Asia*

### *The EU Central Asia Strategy @ 5*

Newsletter

The EU Strategy for Central Asia is five years old. Much has been accomplished in over half a decade of building relations, but even so, there is little reason to celebrate. The EU is in crisis as a result of the ever-deepening economic and debt crisis. Meanwhile, Central Asia is less stable than it was five years ago while the human rights situation has not improved and the democratisation process has yet to take off. In late June, the EU Council adopted a review of the strategy and presented its conclusions, noting ten points for attention. The conclusions highlight four main interests of the EU in Central Asia: energy, security, (economic) development and promotion of values.

On energy, the EU will continue to work towards an agreement with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan on building a Trans-Caspian pipeline to bring Turkmen gas to Europe. So far, the project's prospects do not seem hopeful, at least in the short term. It remains to be seen whether Turkmenistan will be a reliable exporter to Europe. It is also uncertain whether it can meet demand, in view of its limited production capacity and the increased volumes it plans to supply to China.

The development of the EU's strategy five years ago was spurred in large part by energy interests. But today, Brussels's foremost concern is security. The EU's main worry is Afghanistan post-2014 and its primary approach is based on encouraging regional cooperation. An EU-Central Asia High Level Security Dialogue was organised in 2008 and 2009 and the Council's review suggests that this engagement might be further institutionalised. The EU is seen as an impartial partner by the Central Asian leaders, but amongst themselves, the Central Asian leaders have many differences and much personal resentment. With the best of will, the EU is unlikely to succeed in brokering comprehensive deals on sensitive water management issues or on post-2014 Afghanistan. Trying to bring Central Asian leaders around the table and talking about 'common threats' is useful, but the EU needs to start thinking about how it will react if destabilising circumstances arise. These circumstances

could include tensions between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan turning violent; the outbreak of new ethnic violence in the region; or, in the event of the death of one of the presidents, turmoil due to the lack of established succession mechanisms.

The emphasis on regional cooperation and on Afghanistan takes attention away from more immediate concerns that are national in character. Central Asian states are unstable as a result of poverty and a lack of opportunity for new generations. They are threatened by home-grown radical islamisation, harsh autocratic rule, weak governance and widespread corruption. These problems are more pressing than uncertainties over Afghanistan's impact on the region, but they are not addressed directly by the EU. These concerns seem to form part of a broader development-security-values approach, which apparently plays some role in EU action, but is not elaborated or defined. The EU is not involved in hard security matters in Central Asia outside of high-level talk shops and the EU's Border Management Programme in Central Asia, BOMCA, which is implemented by UNDP. It would make sense to present an underlying philosophy of human security, which could incorporate existing initiatives on, for example, the rule of law and good governance. At the same time, the EU could argue that the stability of Central Asian states largely depends on their level of development and on the security that the state can offer to the people.

The review highlights the EU's interest in promoting human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance. The EU argues that it will need to 'continue to make the bilateral human rights dialogues more results-orientated taking into account best practices [and] encourage democratic reforms and the development of national democratic reform agendas and support implementation by sharing EU experiences.' Making human rights dialogues results-oriented and moving from an exchange of views to concrete outcomes would indeed represent a step forward. The EU must also make sure that the



process is not separated from high-level political dialogues and sectoral policy processes. The fact remains that the human rights situation in Central Asia has not improved over the last five years. No country has a reform agenda focused on democracy, apart from Kyrgyzstan to some extent. Does the EU intend to bet on Kyrgyz democratic development or does it plan to work also on democracy with the other four republics, which are all authoritarian and show no intention of seeking democratic reform? Confronting these regimes on democratic reform will be difficult and it would need to be backed up with a more forthright approach towards Central Asian regimes.

The world has changed over the last five years, including in Europe and Central Asia. But the EU believes its strategy is still valid. Concrete new initiatives are few, and there have been neither substantial readjustments nor efforts to link specific strategy objectives to available funding. This is a missed opportunity. The EU has built relations and is working with and in Central Asia. But it will have to rethink what tangible achievements it hopes to obtain in the fields of energy, security and development, including its normative approach.

This newsletter seeks to explore the link between security and development. During our *tour de* Central Asia last May, we asked five experts affiliated with EUCAM to discuss how they see the link between security and development in Central Asia, and this issue includes short interviews with our experts. It also presents accounts of the three seminars we organised in Almaty, Dushanbe and Bishkek as part of the EUCAM-SD project, funded through the Wider Europe Initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland.

*Editorial by Jos Boonstra, Head EUCAM programme*

## Interview

### Interviews – Experts’ views on linking security to development.

*Anna Matveeva, Honorary University Fellow, Department of Politics, University of Exeter, United Kingdom*

#### 1. How do you see the relationship between security and development?

This is a very big question, because the two should be interlinked. However, in reality, this linkage has proved to be difficult. The development agendas of national and international actors are very different and they also view security in different terms. The EU and the international community at large want to see security more in holistic terms, taking in community security and safety, participation, and giving people a stake in security. This developmental approach to security is not always accepted by the recipient states. The states in Central Asia are looking at very immediate security threats. It is understandable that they are concerned with immediate threats. They want to boost security agencies *per se*, rather than looking at bigger questions of reform, participation and inclusion.

For instance, the BOMCA border management programme was supposed to connect community development across the border

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with hard security matters of stopping criminals. But that link was only conceptual; implementation proved the difficulty of linking the two aspects. On the border with Afghanistan, the idea was to have more trade and positive interaction, which would improve the security situation. But in reality, national actors’ attitudes conflicted with this idea. They wanted to secure the border first and neglected trade and development because they feared that this interaction was more likely to increase insecurity than to foster development.

#### 2. How should European donors approach the security-development nexus in Central Asia?

If they are serious about linking security and development, they should be well prepared in Central Asia before they start carrying out projects. They need to think about which instruments linking the two issues are useful. They should develop a toolbox of proven instruments that have worked in other regions, such as the Balkans and Georgia, and adapt these instruments to a Central Asia context.

#### 3. What is the relation of universal values to security and development in Central Asia?

I think there is always a relation to universal values since peace and security are universal values. The problem arises when security provision become a threat in itself. So, the values discourse would centre on how to make everybody see common stakes in security. For example, both security actors and the community agree that peace is a universal good. However, if communities see security actors, such as police and national security agencies, as working against communities and making communities insecure, this provokes a resentful response. From the security actors’ point of view, they see communities as having a lack of trust and lack of will to cooperate, even when civilians come across alarming situations.

*Erica Marat, American University and New York University; Fellow at the Central Asia Program at George Washington University, United States*

#### 1. How do you see the relationship between security and development?

I understand development overall as meaning you have basic elements of human security; human rights are not violated; people have access to water and to safe living conditions; people receive at least some basic services from the government, including protection by law enforcement agencies; and an educational infrastructure is in place. In Central Asia, the majority of the population lives in rural areas. The infrastructure left from the Soviet period is collapsing

and the current national governments are neither able nor willing to sustain this infrastructure or to invest in new infrastructure.

In some areas in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, there are severe electricity shortages and no schooling. In this situation, local communities often organise themselves. There are some successful examples of good use of land in Tajikistan and water sharing in Kyrgyzstan. In the absence of security provided by state structures, local communities organise themselves, or international communities substitute for the state.

## **2. How should European donors approach the security-development nexus in Central Asia?**

Central Asia is not a primary neighbourhood for western donors but I think more attention could be devoted to organising local governments, as well as local, non-institutional civil society at village association (Makhala) level. Those organisations actually know what the problems on the ground are and how to solve them.

In neighbouring villages of Tajikistan, for example, there are issues surrounding water shortage and use of land. These problems have been successfully solved by the local community. Donors should take this kind of example of successful resolution of security and development issues and share these best practices across the region. But instead, donors often take models that they use in other countries and regions and try to apply them to Central Asia. Successful cases from within the region should be used more widely.

## **3. What is the relation of universal values to security and development in Central Asia?**

Values like human rights and democracy should always be in consideration in security and development projects. Resources should not only be allocated for the sake of stability or for conflict resolution. For instance, it could be difficult to help develop local, non-institutionalised civil society, like Makhalas or courts of elders. Donors have to make sure that leaders and members understand the rights of women and children and have a basic knowledge of human rights overall. It is important to incorporate these abstract ideas in this local civil society that cares about all community members. In a way, this would modernise these local civil society organisations, which are generally very traditional. This would also help to prevent these traditional civil society organisations from becoming oppressive to some members of the community.

*Michael Denison, Research Director, Control Risks, United Kingdom*

## **1. How do you see the relationship between security and development?**

The link derives from a broader conceptualisation of security, focusing on human security. For example, development improves energy security, which reduces fuel poverty. Development can mean fair wages – so, security as it meets a community's daily needs. Developing the economic base then leads to broader social empowerment. I think the question is: security for whom? Too often, we look at security through the lens of regime elites and their conception of political stability and national security.

## **2. How should European donors approach the security-development nexus in Central Asia?**

The EU needs to be more confident in its abilities and more strategic in its intentions. It has a degree of convening power, the ability to bring parties and divergent interests together. Notwithstanding the Eurozone crisis, it does have economic muscle and it represents a huge single market for exporters from the Central Asian countries. However, these positive structural attributes are often not harnessed effectively.

It is often said that the EU has no strategic interest in Central Asia. It is true that Central Asia is not at the same rank as the Middle East, the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood or the BRICs, but I think there is almost an advantage in that. The EU can be perceived as a neutral actor. It can provide technical assistance, where other countries do not have the capacity to do so. And it can help on intra-regional issues as they relate to security and resources. It has the skills and capacity to develop a human capital resource base. And certainly it can take the lead in areas such as climate change and industrial innovation. So there is a whole range of issues on which the EU can be quite effective as a partner. It should bring those issues together, assessing where it can make the most impact and adopting a more strategic outlook towards the region.

## **3. What is the relation of universal values to security and development in Central Asia?**

The EU is nothing if it is not a normative actor. It was founded on normative principles to deliver peace inside Western Europe. It achieved that. It created a degree of economic integration and some political integration, and certainly market integration. Although it is going through a troubling period at the moment, as a European project, it still has a major set of concrete achievements and resources to resolve issues peacefully through the framework of law. I think if it were to abandon its role as a normative actor in Central Asia, then it would become just another geopolitical actor – similar to Russia, China or even the U.S.

The EU does a good job in the region, to some degree, with its technical programmes. But it is not promoting values as strongly as it has done in the past. Issues such as security – particularly in Afghanistan – and energy have become more prominent. But it can actually improve the normative environment and develop universal values through technical assistance. For example, if we look at training, such as in the Rule of Law Initiative: if the EU trains judges, law enforcement agencies and prison services to operate more humanly, professionally and competently, I think that can trickle down into society. If the EU can work with mayors and municipal authorities to improve energy efficiency in urban areas, then there is a positive environmental impact. Technical assistance can improve the way in which society is organised, a large component of which involves developing capacities to operate more effectively and more competently.

Other areas where the EU can have an impact are in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. A good analogy would be in EU-Russia relations, where after the problems over gas supplies with Ukraine and Belarus in the past, an early warning mechanism was established between the EU and Russia. I think this is an example of conflict prevention that can make a real impact on the ground.

*Parviz Mullojanov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Development, Tajikistan*

### **1. How do you see the relationship between security and development?**

In Central Asia, political developments are defined by economic characteristics, and vice versa. So, both development and security are seen through the political-economic lens of the interests of the elites rather than for the benefit of the populations.

### **2. How should European donors approach the security-development nexus in Central Asia?**

The approach should be comprehensive but targeted and it should take into account the characteristics of the countries involved. This calls for a careful balance between what donors do regionally and how they work bilaterally with countries in the Central Asian region. In fostering development that could lead to enhanced security, donors would do well to prioritise economic issues. What is needed in Central Asia now is promotion of small and medium size enterprises so as to create a middle class.

### **3. What is the relation of universal values to security and development in Central Asia?**

Universal values are mostly observed and advertised by Western countries. Other influential actors such as China and Russia avoid values-driven approaches because they have severe shortcomings in these areas themselves. They primarily seek to work with governments in Central Asia that have a firm hold on power and are loyal to their interests. Certainly, European actors have an advantage in offering more through values-based policies. But these actors can also tend to shy away from promoting human rights and democracy out of perceived pragmatism in meeting geopolitical interests.

*Nargis Kassenova, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations and Regional Studies, KIMEP University, Kazakhstan*

### **1. How do you see the relationship between security and development?**

It is a very close relationship but I believe security is also a basis for development. Some key questions are: Who defines security? How is it constructed? And to whose benefit and at whose expense? Even if a state can be argued to be secure, marginalised groups within it can feel insecure.

### **2. How should European donors approach the security-development nexus in Central Asia?**

European donors and assistance providers should become less ambitious and more ambitious at the same time. They should be less ambitious in the sense that they need to make sure their objectives and goals are feasible within the Central Asian context. And they should be more ambitious in making sure that their objectives and goals are met. It is good to have a vision, but it is also important to be realistic.

### **3. What is the relation of universal values to security and development in Central Asia?**

Values are one of Europe's strongest points. The EU is built on a well-developed set of values backed by historical experience and a rich tradition of political thinking. Europe has something to offer, but the question is how best to do so. Mentoring others is not the way to go; instead, Europe should raise the appeal of European values through building more knowledge about Europe in Central Asia. The population of Central Asia shows a clear attraction to Europe, but they know very little about Europe. People see Europe as a luxury tourist destination and respect the high living standards there. But they are not familiar with European history, nor with the political and social models that are used in Europe and why they are used. There are many models in Europe and there is no one 'best practice'. Opening a European Studies programme would be one way of expanding knowledge among young people. Europe still has an appeal within the societies of all Central Asian countries and this should be exploited. The EU should not impose its values, but instead, try to help people learn about these values and their history.

## *EUCAM-Security and Development events*

### **Almaty – 11 May**

EUCAM and KIMEP University joined forces to organise the seminar, *Kazakhstan and Europe: Linking Security and Stability to Democratic Development*, in Almaty. The event brought together over 40 participants from policy, expert and academic communities. The ambassadors of the EU, Germany and Finland participated in discussions on EU-Kazakhstan relations, regional security and democratic development. Two matters in particular stood out in the debate. The first concerned the €750 million of EU funds allocated to Central Asia between 2007 and 2013. Participants discussed whether it is too little funding to be divided over seven years and five countries, or whether it can be seen as substantial if spent wisely on tangible development issues. The second matter was Kazakhstan's lack of progress in democratic development. Participants continued debating this topic well past the scheduled end time of the session, into the early evening.

### **Dushanbe – 16 May**

In Dushanbe, EUCAM organised the seminar, *Tajikistan and Europe: A Relationship Built on Securing Development?* The meeting was attended by more than 40 local experts, civil society representatives and international agency and embassy officials. The debates focused on security challenges for Tajikistan, such as its relationship with Afghanistan after NATO forces withdraw in 2014. Participants also discussed internal development and security issues such as the lack of opportunities for new generations, migration and weak governance. Specific attention was devoted to the role of Tajik civil society, with Tajik speakers outlining challenges and potential solutions for strengthened civil society, in general and in the specific case of the Gorno-Badakhshan region.

The one-day seminar was followed by a regional conference organised by the Central Asia Program (CAP) of the George Washington University, partnered by EUCAM, on *Afghanistan's Stability and Regional Security Implications for Central Asia*. Meanwhile several EUCAM staff members also lectured at a training week held at the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.

**Bishkek – 23 May**

In Bishkek, EUCAM enjoyed the hospitality and cooperation of the American Central Asia University (AUCA) in organising the seminar, *Kyrgyzstan and Europe: A Relationship Built on Securing Development*. The event brought together international and local experts as well as a number of AUCA students. Alongside debates on security and development, particular attention was given to migration, covering both internal migration within Kyrgyzstan and labour migration to Russia. Discussions were centred on the social implications of this phenomenon, which has a significant impact on Kyrgyz society. At the seminar, EUCAM presented its first EUCAM-SD working paper: *The EU compared to China and Russia*, and HelpAge International presented their report, *Portrayal of Absence. Households of Migrants in Kyrgyzstan*.

**EUCAM Publications****Working Papers****Security and development in Central Asia. The EU compared to China and Russia**

Sébastien Peyrouse, Jos Boonstra and Marlène Laruelle, EUCAM Working Paper No. 11, May 2012

China and Russia are the most influential external actors in Central Asia, while the EU has substantially increased its activity and presence in the region since 2007. How do the security interests and development activities of these three actors compare? Is there any scope for cooperation and coordination or can their policies be boiled down to zero-sum geo-political competition?

Download:[http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Working\\_Papers/WP11.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Working_Papers/WP11.pdf)

**Policy Briefs****Mongolia's quest for third neighbours. Why the European Union?**

Jargalsaikhan Mendee, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 25, July 2012

Mongolia is of growing interest to the European Union, as well as to the OSCE and NATO. The country's democratisation, its impressive economic growth and its significant contributions to peace and security have created new opportunities for Mongolia to build foreign relations beyond those with neighbouring China and Russia. The EU should consider including Mongolia in its Strategy for Central Asia.

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**Ten tasks for the new EU Special Representative to Central Asia**

Jos Boonstra (ed.), EUCAM Policy Brief No. 24, June 2012

The EU has a new Special Representative for Central Asia. The appointment of Patricia Flor from Germany was announced on 18 June. EUCAM proposes ten areas on which the new EUSR should focus, to make her mark in Central Asia.

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**Democracy in Central Asia: Sowing in unfertile fields?**

Jos Boonstra, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 23, May 2012

International support for democracy in Central Asia despite many attempts has had little impact, and has become a secondary objective after human rights monitoring and promoting rule of law reform. Central Asian regimes see democracy as a threat to their existence but try to maintain a façade of democracy for the sake of appearances. Is Central Asia a no-go area for democracy promoters - primarily the EU, but also the U.S., OSCE, UNDP and others - or are there any entry points?

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**European National Policies Series**

EUCAM has launched a new policy brief series. Even as the European Union has consolidated its approach to Central Asia, many European countries, including non-EU members, have developed national policies towards Central Asia or towards particular countries in the region. The 'European national policies series' seeks to map the policies of European states towards Central Asia in the fields of politics and democratic and human rights values; trade and energy; and security and development. The first four briefs are:

**The United Kingdom and Central Asia**

Anna Walker, EUCAM National Series Policy Brief No. 1, July 2012

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**Italy and Central Asia**

Fabio Indeo, EUCAM National Series Policy Brief No. 2, July 2012

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**Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

Natalia Shapovalova, EUCAM National Series Policy Brief No. 3, July 2012

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**The South Caucasus and Central Asia**

Tika Tsertsvadze, EUCAM National Series Policy Brief No. 4, July 2012

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Established in 2008 as a project seeking to monitor the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, EUCAM has grown into a knowledge hub on broader Europe-Central Asia relations. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Scrutinise European policies towards Central Asia, paying specific attention to security, development and the promotion of democratic values within the context of Central Asia's position in world politics;
- Enhance knowledge of Europe's engagement with Central Asia through top-quality research and by raising awareness among European policy-makers and civil society representatives, as well as discuss European policies among Central Asian communities;
- Expand the network of experts and institutions from European countries and Central Asian states and provide a forum to debate on European-Central Asian relations.

Currently, the broader programme is coordinated by FRIDE, in partnership with the Karelian Institute and CEPS, with the support of the Open Society Institute and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main outputs of the project are a series of policy briefs and comprehensive reports on key issues facing the Europe-Central Asia relationship.

Please follow our work on [www.eucentralasia.eu](http://www.eucentralasia.eu). If you have any comments or suggestions, please email us at [email.eucam@gmail.com](mailto:email.eucam@gmail.com)



FRIDE is a European think tank for global action, based in Madrid, which provides fresh and innovative thinking on Europe's role on the international stage. Our mission is to inform policy and practice in order to ensure that the EU plays a more effective role in supporting multilateralism, democratic values, security and sustainable development. We seek to engage in rigorous analysis of the difficult debates on democracy and human rights, Europe and the international system, conflict and security, and development cooperation. FRIDE benefits from political independence and the diversity of views and intellectual background of its international team.



<http://www.uef.fi/ktl/etusivu>

Founded in 1971, the Karelian Institute is a unit of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies of the University of Eastern Finland. It engages in basic and applied multi-disciplinary research, supports the supervision of postgraduate studies and researcher training, and participates in teaching. It focuses mainly on three thematic priorities: Borders and Russia; Ethnicity and Culture; and Regional and Rural Studies.



<http://www.ceps.eu>

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels is among the most experienced and authoritative think tanks operating in the European Union today. It 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 provides a forum for discussion among all stakeholders in the European policy process.