



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union to the
Republic of Tajikistan

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PRESS RELEASE

THIRD MEETING OF THE COOPERATION COUNCIL BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

The Cooperation Council between the European Union (EU) and the Republic of Tajikistan held its third meeting on 1 October 2013. The meeting was chaired by Mr Linas LINKEVICIUS, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, as the head of the EU delegation. The delegation of Tajikistan was led by Mr Hamrokhon ZARIFI, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Cooperation Council reaffirmed the commitment of both parties to strengthen relations in a number of cooperation areas and took stock of the progress made since the second Cooperation Council between the EU and the Republic of Tajikistan in February 2012.

The Cooperation Council reiterated the importance of a comprehensive implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia both on a regional and national basis and welcomed Tajikistan's active engagement in the EU regional initiatives for Central Asia. Developments were discussed as regards concrete flagship initiatives, such as on the Rule of Law, Education and Environment.

The Cooperation Council also discussed a number of issues of importance to both parties, notably political and administrative reforms, rule of law and human rights, trade and economic relations. The EU called upon the necessity for ensuring inclusive and transparent presidential elections, including pre-electoral phase, and for long term political stability in the country.

The Cooperation Council emphasised the importance for Tajikistan to further integrate into the world economy. The EU welcomed Tajikistan's recent accession to the WTO and expressed its readiness to provide support in the implementation of the WTO regulations. Also potential for increasing EU-Tajikistan bilateral trade were discussed, including the necessity to improve the business and investment climate and to take forward economic reforms.

The Cooperation Council discussed regional and international issues, including situation in Afghanistan. The Cooperation Council underlined the importance of regional cooperation in Central Asia and with neighboring Afghanistan. The EU appreciated Tajikistan's role in the regional cooperation, notably in the areas of border management, customs, trade facilitation and counter narcotics.

The Cooperation Council called on the Central Asian partners to search for a sustainable settlement regarding to energy, water management and environment issues in the region, underling the need for an integrated approach to water resource management taking into account the interest of all Central Asian people.

The European Union, composed of 28 Member States, is the world's biggest aid donor. Tajikistan gets the main share of bilateral assistance in the Central Asian region (€66 million for 2007-2010 and 62 million for 2011-2013) in support to sector programmes, technical assistance and grants. It focuses on social protection, health and private sector development, underpinned by public finance management. Tajikistan also receives regional and thematic assistance in areas like border management and drug

control (BOMCA/CADAP), education (TEMPUS, Erasmus Mundus), water / environment, migration, human rights and democracy (EIDHR), non-State actors (NSA) and SME development (CA-Invest). The EU is active in Tajikistan since 1992 and provides approximately EUR 25 million annually in development assistance.

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