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## FACT SHEET

### EU-Kyrgyzstan relations

The European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic have been partners since the country's independence in 1991, sharing a political and economic dialogue which has continually expanded. The **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)**, signed in 1995 and having entered into force in 1999, outlines three main pillars of cooperation: political dialogue, economic relations and cooperation in a variety of sectors, such as social, finance, science, technology or culture.

At the regional level, the Kyrgyz Republic is one of the EU's partners within the **European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership**. The latest review adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 22 June 2015 highlights the strategic importance of Central Asia for the EU, calling for establishing and developing a strong, durable and stable relationship with Central Asian countries, based on the principles of responsibility and ownership and aimed at fostering the stable, secure and sustainable development of the region.

#### EU-Kyrgyz political and economic relations

The political dialogue element of the EU-Kyrgyz Republic PCA aims at strengthening the links between the Kyrgyz Republic, the EU and its Member States. Dialogue takes place on many levels, in different formats and on different issues:

- The Cooperation Council at ministerial level
- Cooperation Committee at senior civil servant level
- Subcommittee on Trade and Investment
- Human Rights Dialogue
- Parliamentary Cooperation Committee

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Three EU-Central Asia regional platforms aim at enhancing cooperation on common issues: the Rule of Law Platform, the Education Platform and the Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation.

Economic relations between the EU and the Kyrgyz Republic are growing, with yearly trade currently at c.EUR 478 million. The Kyrgyz Republic has been a member of the WTO since 1998 and benefits from the EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) - a preferential access to the EU market in favour of developing countries. The Kyrgyz application for GSP+, which would grant the full removal of tariffs on essentially the same product categories as those covered by the general arrangement, is currently under assessment by the EU.

### **The EU and the Kyrgyz Republic: Partnership for Development**

The EU is one of the main donors in the Kyrgyz Republic. For the timeframe 2014-2020, the EU allocates **EUR 184 million of bilateral aid** to the Kyrgyz Republic in grants in the frame of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). This is a 74% increase compared to 2007-2013.

This DCI aid is primarily directed at three focal sectors and support measures:

- **Integrated rural development** (39% of aid)
- **Education** (39%)
- **Rule of law** (20%)

Additionally, the EU is allocating **EUR 245 million to regional cooperation projects** in Central Asia in 2014-2020. Under this framework the EU provides support in areas related to security, notably through long-standing border management, water security and drug prevention programmes. On the economic side, the Investment Facility for Central Asia adds EU grants to loans provided by Financial Institutions, for example the **European Investment Bank** (EUR 200 to EUR 300 million per year for Central Asia) and the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development** (EUR 447 million).

The generous financial contribution is further completed by macro-financial assistance (EUR 30 million - 50% in grants and 50% in loans) and by the use of the EU's thematic instruments: the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, and **Erasmus +**.

### **EU support to democratic transition in the Kyrgyz Republic**

Actions supporting the **consolidation of democracy** and helping to **preserve and build peace**, prevent and overcome conflict form a core part of the EU's external action. In the aftermath of the ethnic clashes of 2010, the EU quickly mobilised funds for support of institutional reform and democracy consolidation, and has remained engaged in this area

ever since. The EU supported the Constitutional Council in preparing the **new Constitution**, as well as the alignment of legal frameworks, justice sector reform and the establishment and work of the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court. Support to democratic elections as the cornerstone of any democratic system has been provided since 2010, and a new programme for democratisation through electoral reform is foreseen to become operational in 2016. In addition, the EU provided support to people affected by the violence and financed a large number of projects aiming at **increasing human security, building trust and preventing future conflicts**. EUR 18.5 million has been committed for stabilisation and democratisation support.

### **EU humanitarian operations and support to crisis response**

EU humanitarian operations have been used to support the impact of outbreaks of violence in Central Asia, most recently assisting those affected during inter-ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan in 2010. In 2013-14, small-scale support was provided to address a health emergency. In November 2015 the European Commission allocated €75,000 in humanitarian funding to the **Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan** to assist the families most affected by the earthquake in Osh province.

Central Asia as a region, and Kyrgyzstan in particular, is prone to natural hazards, including earthquakes, floods and landslides. Kyrgyzstan, along with its neighbour Tajikistan, is most at risk from the impact of climate change, which has the potential to intensify the vulnerabilities and exposure to hazards in the coming years. The EU is committed to improving the capacity of national institutions and local communities to **prepare for and respond to disaster**. Through its current Disaster Preparedness Programme, the Commission is funding community-based initiatives to increase the resilience of populations to recurrent disaster. Between 1994-2015 EU **humanitarian funding** to Central Asia has been in excess of EUR 222 million.