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## FACT SHEET

### EU-Tajikistan relations

The EU began its engagement with Tajikistan in the early 1990s, following the country's independence from the Soviet Union. In 1992, a TACIS programme office was opened in Dushanbe. Due to the Tajik civil war, the programme office was largely non-operational until 2000, when direct project funding began in earnest. In 2001, the first annual EU-Tajikistan Joint Committee meeting was held in Brussels. In 2004, Commissioner Patten visited Dushanbe, and a **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement** (PCA) was signed by President Rahmon in Luxembourg; it entered into force following ratification in 2010. EU-Tajikistan relations today are conducted within the framework of the **EU Central Asia Strategy** 2014-2020. Cooperation under the PCA is comprehensive and includes the facilitation of economic transition for Tajikistan, and the promotion of inclusive, sustainable human and economic development. The EU is assisting the government of Tajikistan with its structural reform process, notably through providing around one third of its assistance through budget support. The EU is also enhancing the capacity of **civil society** in the country, and does so in partnership with local and international NGOs.

#### Technical and financial cooperation through bilateral development assistance

EU bilateral development assistance has increased from around EUR 20 million annually in the early 2000s to a figure of around **EUR 35 million** today. For 2014-2020, the funds are focused on improving education, health and rural development:

- **Education** (€75 million): improving the quality and relevance of secondary education and initial Vocational Education and Training, leading to a more effective school to work transition for graduates;

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- **Health** (€62 million): strengthening governance and leadership in the health system; improving the availability, affordability and quality of health services, especially for vulnerable populations and at primary health care level.
- **Rural Development** (€110 million): ensuring the development of rural communities through inclusive on- and off-farm wealth creation while encouraging a sustainable use and management of natural resources and ecosystems and improving resilience to extreme climatic conditions.

## Trade relations

Trade and economic relations between the EU and Tajikistan are governed by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The agreement provides for a non-preferential agreement under which the parties grant each other '**most-favoured nation**' (MFN) treatment. The agreement also envisages progressive regulatory approximation of the national legislation and practices to the most important EU trade-related standards. This should lead to better practical access to the EU markets for goods originating in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan is also a beneficiary of the EU's **Generalised System of Preferences**. Preferential imports from Tajikistan are heavily concentrated in one sector only (**textiles**) but also include industrial products. EU-Tajikistan bilateral trade relations are limited but have been growing in recent years. The EU is Tajikistan's **third largest trade partner**, after Russia and China and its main imports were aluminium, agricultural products, and textiles. The main EU exports to Tajikistan were machinery, transport equipment, agricultural products and chemical products.

## Regional and thematic development support

The new multi-annual indicative regional programme for Central Asia (2014-2020) totals EUR 360 million and foresees the continuation of cooperation at regional level in the fields of **energy, environment and socio-economic development, border management** (most notably with Afghanistan), **fight against drugs and crime**, and **education**. Tajikistan also benefits from thematic support through the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, migration and asylum** and funding channelled through global initiatives like **Global Partnership for Education**, and the Instrument for **Nuclear Safety Cooperation**. Tajikistan will continue to benefit, under the Instrument for Stability and Peace, from support to address narcotics and the fight against organised crime.

## Human rights

The European Union believes that democracy and human rights are universal values that should be vigorously promoted around the world. In this regard, human rights are a central aspect of the EU's external action, including in its bilateral relations with third countries. The EU and Tajikistan entered into an **enhanced dialogue on human rights** in October 2008. This

dialogue offers a platform for discussion on questions of mutual interest, and serves to enhance cooperation on human rights in multilateral fora such as the OSCE and the United Nations. Officials from the European Union meet their counterparts from Tajikistan's government on a **yearly basis** to address concerns in the field of human rights, while a yearly "**Civil Society Seminar**" brings together NGOs, academics and practitioners from the EU and Tajikistan to discuss specific questions and exchange best practices. In this framework, open discussions regarding the treatment of and the approach towards civil society organisations and political opposition parties are had.

### **Humanitarian aid and civil protection**

Given Central Asia's proneness to natural hazards, including earthquakes, floods and landslides, as well as its vulnerability the effects of climate change, EU humanitarian action in the region is largely focussed on improving the capacity of national institutions and local communities to **prepare for and respond to disaster**. Through its disaster preparedness programme, the Commission is funding **community-based initiatives** to increase the resilience of local populations in Tajikistan and across Central Asia. Since 1994, the Commission has provided **over €222 million in humanitarian funding** to Central Asia. In Tajikistan, EU humanitarian operations were in place in response to the civil war in 1994, whilst more recently, the Disaster Preparedness Programme's action plans have improved disaster risk reduction models, facilitated coordination between development partners and government agencies, and supported the **safety of schools**, hospital preparedness and mitigation of disaster risks in urban areas.