



EU-TAJIKISTAN RELATIONS

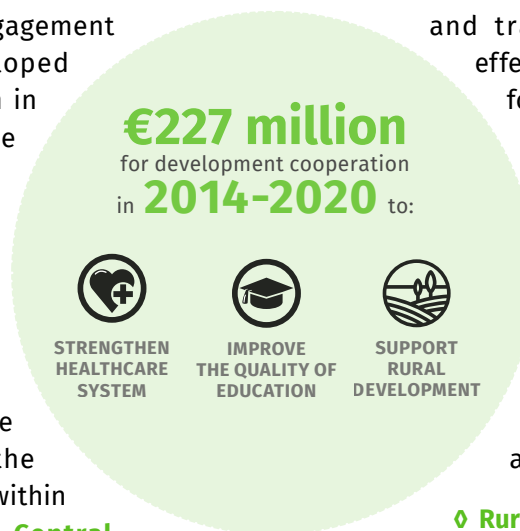
The European Union's engagement with Tajikistan has developed significantly since it began in the early 1990s, following the country's independence from the Soviet Union. The current basis for our relations is the **Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)**, in force since its ratification in 2010.

At the regional level, the Tajik Republic is one of the European Union's partners within the **European Union and Central Asia Strategy**, which outlines the overall cooperation objectives and priority fields for the EU's engagement in Central Asia. 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 also enhancing the capacity of **civil society** in the country, in partnership with local and international NGOs.

TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION THROUGH BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

EU bilateral development assistance has increased from around €20 million annually in the early 2000s to around **€33 million** today. For 2014-2020, the funds are focused on improving education, health and rural development:

- ◇ **Education** (€70 million): improving the quality and relevance of secondary education and vocational education



and training, leading to a more effective school to work transition for graduates;

- ◇ **Health** (€57 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** (€100 million): ensuring the development of rural communities through inclusive 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 Tajikistan's WTO membership and by the bilateral PCA. The agreement provides for a non-preferential agreement under which the parties grant each other '**most-favoured nation**' treatment. The agreement also envisages progressive regulatory approximation of 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 the textiles sector but also include industrial



products. EU-Tajikistan bilateral trade relations are limited, although the EU is the fifth most important trade partner for Tajikistan, importing mainly aluminium, non-ferrous metals and textiles. The EU exports machinery, motor vehicles and pharmaceuticals to Tajikistan.

REGIONAL AND THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

The multi-annual indicative regional programme for Central Asia (2014-2020) totals **€340 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), the **fight against drugs and crime**, and **education**.

Tajikistan also benefits from thematic support through the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights** for **migration and asylum**, funding channelled through global initiatives like **Global Partnership for Education**, and the Instrument for **Nuclear Safety Cooperation**. The Erasmus+ programme for Central Asia totals **€115 million** and aims to support actions in the fields of education, training, youth and sport for the period 2014-2020. 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

Human rights are a central aspect of the EU's external action, including in its bilateral relations with Tajikistan. 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 (**latest Human Rights Dialogue in October 2018**), while a yearly "**Civil Society Seminar**" brings together NGOs, academics and practitioners from the EU and Tajikistan to discuss specific questions and exchange best practice. In this framework, open discussions regarding the treatment of and the approach towards civil society organisations and political opposition parties are conducted.

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.