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# THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CENTRAL ASIA: THE NEW PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

JUNE 2009

# The European Union and Central Asia: The New Partnership in action

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## Foreword

This brochure contains a number of documents that illustrate the recent developments in the political and security dialogue between the European Union (EU) and Central Asia. It focuses on the period after June 2007, when the European Union Central Asia Strategy for a New Partnership was adopted.

It marks an upgrade in the relations between the EU and Central Asia. The EU has been engaged with the five countries in Central Asia from the very moment they gained their independence in the early 1990s. By 2007 these relations had developed significantly and revealed closeness of values and of economic and security interests. The growing dynamics of the bilateral relations between

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*The Presidents of the five countries of Central Asia at an Aral Sea Summit, Kazakhstan, 28 April 2009. From left: the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly BERDIMUHAMEDOV, the President of Kyrgyzstan Kurmanbek BAKIEV, the President of Kazakhstan Nursultan NAZARBAYEV, the President of Tajikistan Emomali RAHMON and the President of Uzbekistan Islom KARIMOV*



the EU Member States and the countries of Central Asia also confirmed that there is a significant potential for strategic cooperation between the EU and the region. The EU Member States recognised that their bilateral relations would benefit from a coordinated, more focused common approach to the countries of Central Asia. Hence the adoption of the EU-Central Asia Strategy, which provided the necessary blend of interests and values. It also took into account the specificities of the Central Asian countries and developed individual approaches to each of them, without leaving aside the regional cooperation. As a next step, action-oriented initiatives were developed in the priority areas, identified by the Strategy, such as: common security threats, rule of law, education, environment and water. Again, they combined the regional and bilateral approaches.

The documents that follow illustrate the latest political and security instruments developed in order to implement the EU Strategy. Some of the texts included have been drafted during high level political meetings between the European Union and the Central Asia states and contain agreed formulations on such testing regional security issues as energy, water, border management and nuclear safety. Other documents outline the intended means and methods of work of the European Union only, but even they have been drafted in consultation with the partners in Central Asia, in an endeavour to guarantee the transparency of the EU's intentions and respect for the sovereign will of each country in Central Asia.

Policy towards Central Asia has become a full part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, as pursued by Dr Javier Solana, the High Representative and Secretary-General of the Council of the EU. In order to assess fully the role of the European Union in this region of great potential and growing significance, the documents in this brochure should be viewed in combination with other strategic instruments, like the EU Security Strategy adopted in 2003, the bilateral agreements between the European Community and the countries of Central Asia, the numerous assistance schemes of the EU Member States and the EU institutions. The European Union - Central Asia Strategy and its programmes provide a framework which combines all these instruments in a clear, coherent model and enables them to run in synergy.

*Brussels, June 2009*



## The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership

### I. Introduction: The EU and Central Asia

Central Asia has a centuries-old tradition of bringing Europe and Asia together. It lies at a strategically important intersection between the two continents. The Central Asia states of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have known considerable evolution in political and economic transformation since attaining independence. They have established statehood, safeguarded multi-ethnic understanding and inter-religious communication. By joining the OSCE, they subscribed to the Organization's values, standards and commitments. By signing the United Nations Millennium Declaration they set themselves ambitious goals.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the time has come for a new partnership between the EU and Central Asia states in a globalised world.

The common goal of achieving stability and prosperity by means of peaceful inter-action makes Europe and Central Asia partners for increased cooperation. The strong EU commitment towards its Eastern neighbours within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy will also bring Europe and Central Asia closer to each other, both in terms of political cooperation and economic development.

The development and consolidation of stable, just and open societies, adhering to international norms, is essential to bring the partnership between the European Union and Central Asia states to full fruition. Good governance, the rule of law, human rights, democratisation, education and training are key areas where the EU is willing to share experience and expertise. The EU can offer experience in regional integration leading to political stability and prosperity. Lessons learnt from the political and economic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe can also be offered. With their rich traditions and centuries-old exchanges, the EU and Central Asia can contribute actively to the dialogue between civilisations.

Many challenges facing the globalised world affect Europe and Central Asia alike, and warrant a common response. Security questions and regional economic development require close cooperation of the EU with each Central Asian state, taking into account their geographical location, in particular with respect to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. This applies i.a. to developments in the areas of border management, migration, the fight against organized crime and international terrorism, as well as human, drugs, and arms trafficking.

The dependency of the EU on external energy sources and the need for a diversified energy supply policy in order to increase energy security open further perspectives for cooperation between the EU and Central Asia. EU efforts to strengthen local energy markets will help to improve investment conditions, increase energy production and efficiency in Central Asia and diversify energy supply and distribution in the region.

Through this Strategy and the Commission's assistance programme for the period of 2007-2013, the EU defines the priorities for its cooperation with each Central Asian state according to its specific needs, requirements and performance, including human rights, good governance, democracy and social development. Within the new external assistance instruments based on the EU-budget 2007-2013 the EU has planned to double the financial means for assisting Central Asia states.



*Ashgabat,  
the capital of  
Turkmenistan*

Building upon and complementing the Commission's assistance programme, Member States of the EU are prepared to study specific bilateral partnership and twinning programmes with individual Central Asia states as well as programmes with a regional dimension based on an adequate and coordinated needs-assessment. Member States will support the Community's programmes to contribute to a more coherent and visible EU policy in the region.

In order to address issues of particular importance, the EU will within the framework of this Strategy:

- establish a regular regional political dialogue at Foreign Minister level;
- start an "European Education Initiative" and support Central Asian countries in the development of an "e-silk-highway";
- start an "EU Rule of Law Initiative";
- establish a regular, result-oriented "Human Rights Dialogue" with each of the Central Asia states;
- conduct a regular energy dialogue with Central Asia states.

In implementing the goals and objectives laid down in this Strategy, the EU will be guided by the principles of equal dialogue, transparency and result

orientation. It will seek close cooperation with all neighbouring countries of Central Asia.

## II. EU strategic interests: Security and stability

The EU has a strong interest in a peaceful, democratic and economically prosperous Central Asia. These aims are interrelated. The aim of the EU Strategy is therefore to actively cooperate with the Central Asia states in reaching these goals as well as to contribute to safeguarding peace and prosperity in neighbouring countries.

The Strategy builds on the progress which the Central Asia states have themselves made since attaining independence. It takes account of their common aspects as well as specific national contexts and requirements.

It also builds on the results obtained under the implementation of the various Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, EU assistance programmes and other initiatives taken by the EU to support the states of Central Asia.

The Strategy is based upon common interests of the EU and the states of Central Asia. To align expectations of Central Asian partners with those of the EU will be a mutually beneficial and reinforcing process.

The EU has an interest in security and stability as well as in adherence to human rights and the rule of law in Central Asia states because:

- strategic, political and economic developments as well as increasing trans-regional challenges in Central Asia impact directly or indirectly on EU interests;
- with EU enlargement, the inclusion of the Southern Caucasus into the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Black Sea Synergy Initiative, Central Asia and the EU are moving closer together;
- significant energy resources in Central Asia and the region's aim to diversify trade partners and supply routes can help meet EU energy security and supply needs.

The EU strongly believes that strengthening the commitment of Central Asia states to international law, the rule of law, human rights and democratic values,

as well as to a market economy will promote security and stability in Central Asia, thus making the countries of the region reliable partners for the EU with shared common interests and goals.

### III. Instruments

In order to intensify cooperation with Central Asia states, the EU will make full use of the potential of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, Commission and Member States programmes, cooperation frameworks such as the Baku Initiative and political dialogue, using the variety of CFSP instruments. Cooperation with the UN, in particular the ECE, the OSCE, the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe, NATO, international financial institutions and with other regional organisations and fora will be enhanced. The EUSR, EU Member State embassies and the European Commission delegations should seek to strengthen cooperation with the OSCE. In addition, the EU seeks to put into place, together with Central Asia states, new forms of cooperation, such as a regular bilateral human rights dialogue.

The EUSR and the Commission as well as Member States play an important role in implementing this Strategy. The EUSR shall, on behalf of the High Representative and in accordance with his mandate, together with the

Council of the European Union



*The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan NAZARBAYEV and HR/SG Javier SOLANA, Brussels, 6 December 2006*

Commission and the Presidency, and without prejudice to Community competence, monitor the implementation process, make recommendations and report to relevant Council bodies on a regular basis.

Twinning and seconding staff between EU and Central Asian administrations or companies is an essential part of EU co-operation with Central Asia in order to introduce EU-wide best practices in connection with Community legislation. This policy will be intensified based on the experience gained.

Public-private partnership initiatives as well as bilateral instruments and Member State programmes can play an important role in increasing the EU's commitment in Central Asia.

Interaction with international financial institutions will be strengthened, including the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The European Investment Bank (EIB) should play an important role in financing projects of interest to the EU in Central Asia.

#### **IV. Bilateral and regional cooperation**

The EU Strategy aims at a balanced bilateral and regional approach. The EU will balance policy approaches in Central Asia according to the differing needs of every country and to the performance of each country. The EU will foster regional cooperation among Central Asia states and between Central Asia states and other regions.

Bilateral cooperation will be of special importance. It will be strengthened to respond adequately to individual proposals brought forward by each of the five Central Asia states. It is essential to cooperate bilaterally on issues such as human rights, economic diversification, energy and other sectoral issues, including youth and education. The intensity of the cooperation will reflect the commitment to transition and reform of each country.

A regional approach is suitable for tackling common regional challenges such as organised crime, human, drugs and arms trafficking, terrorism and non-proliferation issues, inter-cultural dialogue, energy, environmental pollution, water management, migration as well as border management and transport infrastructure. In this regard the EU will cooperate with international financial institutions, multilateral and regional organisations and institutions.

The EU is prepared to enter into an open and constructive dialogue with regional organisations in Central Asia and to establish regular ad hoc contacts i.a. with EURASEC, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), CICA, CSTO, CAREC and CARICC.

## V. A strengthened EU approach

### *Human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratization*

The development of a stable political framework and of functioning economic structures are dependent on respect for the rule of law, human rights, good governance and the development of transparent, democratic political structures.

The EU and its Member States intend to step up support for the protection of human rights and for the creation and development of an independent judiciary, thus making a sustainable contribution to the establishment of structures based on the rule of law and international human rights standards. Cooperation on justice between the Central Asia states and the EU Member States will also be appropriate. The EU will cooperate closely with the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the UN and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in this field.

OSCE/Mikhail Evstafiev



*Independent media as a key indicator of democratization. Newspapers on sale in the street of the Tajik capital Dushanbe, December 2008*



The EU is engaged in human rights dialogues with a number of countries. Those dialogues are an instrument of the Union's external policy. Human rights dialogues constitute an essential part of the EU's overall strategy aimed at promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, sustainable development, peace and stability.

Against this background and on the basis of the relevant EU guidelines, the EU will raise human rights issues with each Central Asian state through an appropriate channel for discussion, inter alia by entering into a structured, regular and results-oriented human rights dialogue. The form and the modalities of such dialogue will be defined individually and at a future stage.

The objectives of a human rights dialogue with each of the countries of Central Asia should include:

- discussing questions of mutual interest and enhancing cooperation on human rights, inter alia in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the OSCE;
- raising the concerns felt by the EU as regards the human rights situation in the countries concerned, information gathering and initiatives to improve the relevant human rights situation.

In addition, human rights dialogues contribute to supporting practical steps aimed at meeting human rights objectives at national level, in particular through financial and technical cooperation and specific projects to be funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.

The EU will respond to suggestions put forward by the Central Asia states and will further intensify cooperation on matters pertaining to the rule of law, good governance and combating corruption. To this end, the EU will develop a Rule of Law Initiative which addresses the specific priorities identified by each country. EU Member States and the Commission will coordinate their projects closely. Within the framework of this Rule of Law Initiative, the EU will support the Central Asia states in core legal reforms, including reform of the judiciary, and in drawing up effective legislation, for example in the fields of administrative and commercial law.

In promoting the consolidation of peace and international justice, the EU and its Member States are determined to share, with the Central Asia states their experience in the adoption of the necessary legal adjustments required

to accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and in combating international crime in accordance with international law.

The EU and Member States will aim to:

- allocate adequate funds to this Rule of Law Initiative;
- second judicial and administrative experts to Central Asia states on both short-term and long-term assignments;
- provide training opportunities to experts from Central Asia states;
- support the transparent implementation of legal reform;
- offer the possibility of international exchanges by organizing and sponsoring specialized conferences;
- facilitate cooperation by Central Asia states with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe;
- encourage implementation of ILO norms and conventions for decent work;
- coordinate closely with existing activities of OSCE field missions, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), bilateral programmes as well as the UN and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- and provide technical assistance and establish close cooperation aimed at making the legislative and constitutional amendments required for accession to and implementation of the Rome Statute.

The task of sustaining a culture of human rights and making democracy work for its citizens calls for the active involvement of civil society. A developed and active civil society and independent media are vital for the development of a pluralistic society. The EU will cooperate with the Central Asia states to this end and promote enhanced exchanges in civil society.

The EU will also pursue its objectives of ensuring the promotion and protection of human rights throughout the world, as well as in Central Asia states, through international bodies such as the General Assembly or the Human Rights Council as appropriate. The EU is willing to cooperate with Central Asia states in these international fora to achieve this common aim.



*Secondary education is among the areas supported by the European Education Initiative for Central Asia*

### ***Investing in the future: youth and education***

Central Asia's future will be shaped by its young people. The majority of Central Asia's population is under the age of 25, providing enormous potential for development. Good education is essential in order to open up this potential for the younger generation.

The EU and Member States will therefore set up a European Education Initiative for Central Asia in order to contribute to the adaptation of the education systems of Central Asia states to the needs of the globalised world. It is willing to cooperate with major international partners and donors supporting educational programmes and institutions.

Under the European Education Initiative, the EU and Member States will in particular offer support in the fields of:

- primary school education;
- secondary school education;
- vocational education and training;

- higher education cooperation, academic and student exchanges, for instance under the new Erasmus Mundus facility and TEMPUS and bilaterally.

The EU will support the development of regional education centres and cooperate closely with the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The EU stands ready to open European Studies Institutes in the region. The EU is prepared to grant scholarships for students from Central Asian countries to European universities.

The EU will also support the continuation of the activities performed by the European Training Foundation in the field of vocational education and training in Central Asia.

Furthermore, the EU stands ready to support Central Asia states in linking with the EU e-network through the development of an 'e-silk-highway' and to promote long distance learning. It is our aim to link Central Asia to global Internet-based communication networks and to enable Central Asian students, teachers, academics, and scientists to participate in modern forms of life-long learning.

### ***Promotion of economic development, trade and investment***

The EU supports the removal of trade barriers between the Central Asia states and it will continue to support WTO accession for the four Central Asia states which are not yet WTO members on commercially viable terms and in full compliance with WTO requirements. WTO accession is key for wider economic reforms and diversification and better integration of the countries into the international trade and economic system. The EU will promote the creation of regulatory and institutional frameworks for an improved business and investment environment and further support economic diversification. The EU will continue to cooperate with Central Asia states in order to improve access for Central Asian products to EU markets. In this regard the renewed EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP – 2006/2015) offers the best ever preferential framework aimed at encouraging exports and economic diversification in these countries. Equally, it will be an incentive for diversifying their economies on the basis of the market access advantages offered by the EU.

*The President  
of Tajikistan,  
Emomali RAHMON  
and HR/SG  
Javier SOLANA,  
Brussels,  
10 February 2009*



Under INOGATE (Baku Initiative) and TRACECA (funded through DCI and ENPI), the EU will promote the development and expansion of the regional infrastructure in the fields of transport, energy and trade in order to make better use of Central Asia's economic potential, not least through improved regional cooperation. As an important trade corridor between East and South Asia and Europe, Central Asia can benefit from increasing trade.

The EU will continue to support the development of market economy structures in Central Asia. In this connection, the EU will cooperate with interested companies from the EU in a public-private partnership to promote the market economy. It will offer training and assistance programmes for Central Asian partners. The EU will support the aspirations and actions of the Central Asia states towards market economy structures.

The EU will:

- support deeper integration of Central Asia into the world trade and economic system, in particular through the WTO accession process and eventual membership;
- support economic diversification with a view to promoting sustainable development by improving local skills and potential (science and technology, innovation, tourism), promotion of SMEs, development of basic infrastructure (road, rail, telecom, IT);

- support substantial reforms of the financial systems which are needed in most countries, especially in the banking and micro credit sector; improved banking regulation, supervision and enforcement; privatisation of state banks; increased competition among banks and easier entrance for foreign banks are key steps which Central Asia states need to take;
- study further possible options to enhance the Central Asia states' ability to make better use of the available GSP and encourage regional trade;
- develop the necessary systems, including with regard to regulatory approximation to the EC acquis, to allow a practical better access to the EU market for Central Asian products;
- continue to support the efforts of the Central Asia states to fully implement the trade and economic provisions of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreements;
- extend trade-related technical assistance and policy advice to facilitate the creation of legislative and institutional frameworks conducive to better business environments and to attracting foreign direct investment;
- help the countries of the region to work out strategies to improve their individual credit ratings in order to qualify for future lending programmes;
- support these countries in enforcing best customs practices as set by the World Customs Organisation;
- support initiatives for know-how transfer and capacity building.

### ***Strengthening energy and transport links***

The EU and Central Asia share a paramount interest in enhancing Energy Security as an important aspect of global security. There is a common interest in diversifying export routes, demand and supply structures and energy sources.

Besides oil, gas and electricity, water management is a decisive aspect of energy cooperation with Central Asia. Hydro-power production and distribution are crucial to promoting stability and prosperity in Central Asia and beyond, including Afghanistan and Pakistan. Its potential has not been sufficiently addressed.

The development of resources in oil and gas has significantly increased the role of Central Asia states as energy producers and transit countries. Increasing oil and gas exploitation will contribute to better world market supplies and will be conducive to diversification. Gas deliveries from the region are of special importance to the EU.

The key elements for a long-term partnership based on common interests and reciprocity can therefore be established in the years to come: the exploitation of the energy resources of Central Asia states calls for substantial and sustained investment as well as for comprehensive policies addressing all the components of their energy sectors and facilitating access to most developed markets. The EU, for its part, is ready to consider all options for the development and transportation of these resources, in cooperation with other interested partners.

A market-based approach to investment and procurement and transparent, stable and non-discriminatory regulatory frameworks guarantee, for all sources of energy, the best prices and increased opportunities for all stake-holders.



*The port of Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan*

Against this background, the EU will conduct an enhanced regular energy dialogue with Central Asia states in the framework of the Baku Initiative. EU activities will also be based on the Energy Charter and bilateral MoUs on Energy issues.

The EU will support the exploration of new oil, gas and hydro-power resources and the upgrading of the existing energy infrastructure. To enhance EU security of energy supply, the EU will also support the development of additional pipeline routes and energy transportation networks. It will also contribute to regional energy security and cooperation, and widen export markets for Central Asian producers. The EU will lend political support and assistance to Central Asian countries in developing a new Caspian Sea - Black Sea – EU energy transport corridor.

The EU will promote the creation of an integrated Central Asian energy market and will support public-private partnerships which encourage EU investment.

Based on the objectives laid down in the Baku Initiative the EU will focus cooperation with Central Asia states in particular on the following matters:

- converging of energy markets on the basis of the EU internal energy market principles taking into account the particularities of the partner countries;
- enhancing energy security by addressing the issues of energy exports/ imports, supply diversification, energy transit and energy demand;
- transparency and capacity-building in statistics and in the governance of the energy sector;
- supporting and enhancing technological cooperation between the EU and the Central Asia states in the energy sector;
- supporting sustainable energy development, including the development of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and demand side management;
- attracting investment towards energy projects of common and regional interest;



- supporting the rehabilitation of existing pipelines and the construction of new pipelines and electricity transportation networks inside the region and towards Europe;
- supporting the development of comprehensive action programmes aiming at the promotion of energy saving, energy efficiency and renewable energy, notably with a view to meeting commitments in the framework of the Kyoto protocol;
- supporting the 'Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund' initiative;
- encouraging the countries to take initiatives similar to those taken by the EU in the Action Plan for an Energy Policy for Europe (European Council of March 2007).

In addition, the EU will continue to promote the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative within the Central Asian region as a means to contributing to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

### ***Environmental sustainability and water***

Fair access to water resources will be a major challenge for the world in the 21st century. Most major environmental issues in Central Asia are related to the allocation, use and protection of the quality of water resources. With the region connected through cross-boundary rivers, lakes and seas, a regional approach to protecting these resources is essential. Linked to this is the need to improve forestry management. There is a need to have an integrated water management policy (upstream and downstream solidarity).

For the EU water cooperation is of particular interest, especially in view of achieving by 2015 the Millennium Development Goals on clean drinking water and good sanitation facilities.

Promoting cooperation on water management can at the same time foster regional security and stability and support economic development.

An EU-Central Asia dialogue on the environment was launched in Spring 2006 and will provide the basis for joint cooperation efforts.

© EC/ECHO / P. Taylor



*Transboundary rivers in Central Asia: a challenge and an opportunity*

Environmental issues related to the extraction and transport of energy resources as well as vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters are also matters of major concern. Questions pertaining to the protection of the environment should be taken into account in regional dialogue at all levels.

The EU will therefore:

- support the implementation of the EECCA (Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia) component of the EU Water Initiative (EUWI-EECCA) for safe water supply and sanitation and integrated water resources management.
- promote transboundary river basin management as well as regional cooperation under the Caspian Sea Environmental Convention;
- give particular support to the integrated management of surface and underground trans-boundary water resources, including the introduction of techniques for a more efficient water use (irrigation and other techniques);

- enhance cooperation for appropriate frameworks for facilitating the financing of water related infrastructure projects, including through attracting IFI's and public-private partnership funds;
- support regional capacity building on integrated water management and production of hydropower;
- cooperate with Central Asian countries on climate change including support for the introduction and further implementation of the Kyoto Protocol mechanisms at regional level;
- cooperate with Central Asian countries in combating desertification and safeguarding bio-diversity including support for the implementation of the UN Conventions on Biological Biodiversity and to combat Desertification;
- improve sustainable management of forests and other natural resources in Central Asia, providing assistance for regional aspects of the indicative actions under the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial process (FLEG);
- encourage increased environmental awareness and the development of environmental civil society including through cooperation with the Central Asia Regional Environment Centre (CAREC).

In the context of the above priorities, the EU will also give attention to related issues:

- support Central Asia states in developing policies for pollution prevention and control;
- upgrade natural disaster preparedness and assessment capability in Central Asia;
- Intensify cooperation with EnvSec Initiative.



*Drug trafficking:  
among the biggest  
common threats for  
the EU and  
Central Asia*

### **Combating common threats and challenges**

Modern border management creating open and secure borders could facilitate trade and exchange in the region and help combat regional criminal activity, especially the international drug trade.

Assistance in fighting organised crime will be one of the priorities of the EU in the region aiming at a reduction of non-conventional threats to security.

Migration is one of the major global challenges of the 21st century. The impact of migration, both positive and negative, can be felt in all countries, including in Central Asia. The EU seeks to enhance dialogue and cooperation on migration with regions of transit, origin and destination through the EU's Global Approach to Migration. As part of the Global Approach the EU proposes to launch a close dialogue on migration with the eastern and south-eastern neighbouring regions.

The EU will step up its support for the development of modern border management in the region of Central Asia, including the borders with Afghanistan. Afghanistan's cooperation with its neighbours should be strengthened. Through BOMCA, the EU will seek a multilateral and regional approach.

The EU will broaden BOMCA activities and seek synergy with projects under implementation to reform customs services. The EU will seek better coordination and explore possibilities of close cooperation between BOMCA, the OSCE and other border projects from Member States and third countries.

The EU will:

- continue to introduce the basic principles of integrated border management in border guard services and other relevant services;
- work on specific border crossing points;
- provide organisational assistance to support transformation of border guards from a conscript to a professional service; to support transition from a purely military system to a more police-style law enforcement agency and to support efforts to strengthen control mechanisms;
- Seek increased involvement of customs services to facilitate trade;
- update the legal framework in accordance with international law in the field of combating organised crime (e.g.: UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols), with a focus on illegal migration, trafficking in human beings, preventing and countering drugs and precursors trafficking; improve institutional capacity of law enforcement agencies, and strengthen regional cooperation in fighting trans-national organised crime.

At the same time, the EU will continue to offer its assistance to help the interested Central Asia states – both at national and at regional level - to manage migration in a more balanced manner, which implies setting up well functioning systems to match labour demand and supply, facilitating integration of legal migrants and providing international protection to asylum seekers and refugees and other vulnerable persons.

The EU will give greater support to the fight against corruption, the drug trade, human trafficking, illegal trade of weapons from and to Afghanistan and organised crime in Central Asia. It will step up cooperation with the Central Asia states to combat international terrorism. The EU will strengthen the fight against drugs with a specific EU presence in Dushanbe. It will support the rapid installation of the regional anti-drug centre (CARICC) in Almaty and intensify

cooperation with UNODC also with a view to tracking chemical precursors of heroin production. Cooperation with China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on drug-trafficking will be strengthened.

The Ferghana Valley best embodies the challenges and possible perspectives of Central Asia. The EU is therefore prepared to lend assistance to Central Asian countries sharing borders in the Ferghana Valley in promoting projects which are designed to bring stability, prosperity and sustainable development to that region. The EU will dedicate special attention to programmes which address questions of border management, intra-regional trade and free movement of goods and persons.

### ***Building bridges: inter-cultural dialogue***

The diversity of religions and centuries-old traditions of peace and tolerance constitute a valuable heritage in Central Asia. Moderate and tolerant Islamic thinking respecting the constitutional secular principle is a hall-mark of the Central Asian countries. The EU highly values the peaceful multi-ethnic and multi-cultural coexistence of various creeds in Central Asia.

OSCE/Alex Nitzsche



*Registan Square  
in Samarkand,  
Uzbekistan*

Building on this, the EU will promote dialogue within civil society and respect for freedom of religion.

## **VI. The EU and Central Asia in the future**

This EU Strategy for Central Asia serves as an overall framework for the EU policies in the region of Central Asia. The EU sees a mutual interest in sustained dialogue and cooperation with the five Central Asia states respecting their differences and fostering closer cooperation among them on regional issues.

The EU is willing to contribute substantially to security, stability and prosperity in Central Asia. To this end the EU is committed to opening Commission delegations in all five Central Asian countries. Member States will consider expanding the network of embassies in Central Asia.

The EU will ensure coherence between this Central Asia Strategy and other EU regional initiatives, including the Black Sea Synergy Initiative. It will support intraregional trade and cooperation. It will also support active integration/participation of Central Asia in the WTO in order to ensure better integration of these countries in the world trade and economic system.

With this Strategy, the EU invites Central Asia to establish an enhanced political dialogue, including regular meetings at Foreign Ministers' level with the EU troika. The EU will hold annual meetings of its Heads of Mission in the region.

Based on the principles of this Strategy, the EU will work with each of the Central Asian countries to develop individual approaches to implementation, according to the specific needs and performance of each country, building on existing and future agreements, including PCAs.

The progress made on implementing the Strategy will be reviewed by the Council in June 2008 and at least every two years thereafter.

*Brussels, 27 May 2007*



*Ak-Jol crossing point at the Kyrgyz-Kazakh border, built with EU assistance*

## ANNEX

### ***EC 2007-2013 regional assistance strategy for Central Asia***

The EC's 2007-2013 Assistance Strategy for Central Asia is conceived as a tool to support strengthening of political dialogue with the Central Asia states at regional and national level and to pursue the objectives defined above. In order to reflect greater EU engagement in the region, the EC assistance budget to Central Asia will be significantly increased under the new financial perspectives 2007-2013 to a total 750 million EUR, with the average annual allocation to the region under the development cooperation instrument increasing from 58 million EUR in 2007 to 139 million EUR in 2013.

The bulk of EC assistance to Central Asia – 70% – will be directed at the bilateral assistance programmes, taking into account the policy agenda of the individual Central Asia countries and their distinct political and social realities.

With more than 50% of the rural population living below the poverty line, poverty reduction through social sector reforms and schemes, including education, to increase living standards especially in rural areas, will continue to be the key priority for EC bilateral assistance. Implementation of Poverty



Reduction Strategy Papers or similar policy documents to which the Central Asian governments have committed themselves will serve as guiding framework for such programmes. The second focus of bilateral assistance will be promotion of good governance and democratic processes and the strengthening of public institutions coupled with implementation of core investment and trade policy reforms. The content of the programmes will be defined in agreement with the authorities and tailored to the specific needs of each country.

Given its importance for the sustainable development of Central Asia, 30% of assistance will be dedicated to facilitating closer inter-state cooperation both within Central Asia and between Central Asia, South Caucasus and the EU, particularly in the energy, transport, environmental and education sectors. In these domains, the alignment of regional cooperation priorities and programmes for Central Asia with the regional strategy for EU Eastern neighbours lies at the heart of future assistance policy.

Closely linking the focus of EU regional cooperation with Central Asia with that of the ENPI regional programmes will enable Central Asian countries to benefit effectively from the relevant inter-state energy, transport, environment and education initiatives and strengthened programmes set up under the ENPI East, facilitating their anchoring to Eastern Europe and access to global markets.



# Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU-Central Asia Strategy

## Introduction

This joint Progress Report takes stock of the progress made towards implementation of the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia, which was adopted by the European Council on 21–22 June 2007 in recognition of the increasing importance of Central Asia for EU interests in terms of security, stability, governance and energy diversification.

The Strategy provides an overall framework for EU relations with Central Asia and builds on the results in the implementation of various agreements, EU assistance programmes and other initiatives taken by the EU to engage with countries of Central Asia.

The Strategy defines EU priorities for its cooperation with the region as a whole, including in the fields of human rights, rule of law, good governance and democracy, education, economic development, trade and investment, energy and transport, environmental policies, common threats and inter-cultural dialogue, but states that implementation of these should be tailored to the specific requirements and performance of each Central Asian country. The Strategy also calls for intensification of political dialogue with all five countries of Central Asia, including holding of regular meetings at Foreign Minister level and convening annual meetings of EU Heads of Mission in the region.

The European Council asked the Council and the Commission to regularly review progress in implementing this Strategy and to submit a first progress report to the European Council by the middle of 2008.

## Overall Assessment

This progress report is not a routine exercise. It reflects an unprecedented approach. For the first time in the history of EU relations with Central Asia, an ambitious framework combining strategic political goals with a joint working programme is in place, transforming strategic aims into operational working tasks. Its sustainable and consistent implementation will be a key indicator for the EU's and Central Asia's political resolve to upgrade their relations. The EU is fully engaged in implementing the Strategy, building on a broad array of assistance programmes and other initiatives taken by the EU to engage with countries of Central Asia. The implementation of the Strategy is a long term endeavour that requires patience and sustained efforts by both the EU and Central Asia states.

Overall, progress on implementing the EU Central Asia Strategy has been encouraging. After the lapse of only a year, a new quality of cooperation has evolved between Central Asia and the EU. The EU–Central Asia new partnership for the 21st century is making a difference. On the side of the Central Asian countries there is a strongly increased interest in enhanced cooperation with the EU at all levels and in practically all areas.

Concrete actions have been mutually agreed upon and are being implemented or are under preparation, both bilaterally with the five Central Asian republics, and with all on key regional issues as education, Rule of Law, water and environment. All Central Asia states have agreed to engage in or continue a structured Human Rights Dialogue with the EU. National Coordinators for the Strategy have been appointed by all Central Asia states, demonstrating that Central Asian partners assume ownership and fully engage in cooperation. High-level political dialogue has visibly intensified. All actors, especially the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the German, Portuguese, Slovenian, and upcoming French Presidencies as well as Member States have contributed to keeping up the momentum of the EU Strategy. Among them, lead coordinators have been identified for the regional initiatives.

The EU remains committed to continue and strengthen its current efforts to implement visible and ambitious projects exercising a sustainable impact on key areas of cooperation.

### Intensified political dialogue

In line with the Strategy, political dialogue with the countries of Central Asia has intensified significantly over the last year, which in turn has contributed positively to practical cooperation with these countries, especially as regards implementation of the Strategy on the ground.

A number of high-level meetings and visits took place in the course of the year, including those in the context of agreements between the EU and the countries of Central Asia and bilateral consultations in international fora. Two regional political dialogue meetings took place at Foreign Minister level between the EU Troika and the five countries of Central Asia: on 30 June 2007 in Berlin, at the close of the German Presidency, and on 9–10 April 2008 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, during the Slovenian Presidency. These meetings provided for high-level exchanges on international as well as regional issues of mutual concern, as well as Strategy implementation, which is indispensable to fostering the Strategy's ownership in the region and to encouraging its smooth implementation on the ground.



*The President of Kyrgyzstan, Kurmanbek BAKIEV and HR/SG Javier SOLANA during their meeting in Kyrgyzstan on 9 October 2007*

In order to foster political dialogue at the highest level, and to lend his support for the swift implementation of the Strategy, High Representative Javier Solana visited Turkmenistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan on 8-10 October 2007.

Commissioner Ferrero–Waldner paid a first official visit to Tajikistan on 8th April 2008 in order to emphasise EU solidarity with Tajikistan after the very harsh winter which led to a humanitarian crisis, to stress the necessity of reforms, and to visit an EC–funded border management training centre (BOMCA).

Dialogue has also been enhanced by the EU Senior Officials Troika visits to all countries, begun during the Portuguese Presidency in autumn 2007, and the regular visits to all countries in the region by the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Ambassador Pierre Morel.

These consultations confirmed the readiness of the EU to contribute to the security of the Central Asian countries as well as to developing their energy potential, but also highlighted the growing problem of rational water management use in the region and the importance of engaging in structured human rights dialogues.

All Central Asian countries have nominated a National Coordinator for Strategy implementation. The Slovenian Presidency convened the first meeting between the EU Senior Officials Troika and the Central Asian National coordinators for

*The President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly BERDIMUHAMEDOV, and the President of the European Commission, José Manuel BARROSO, Brussels, 5 November 2007*



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Strategy implementation on 10 March in Brussels for discussions on Strategy implementation and devising priority activity areas for each country. The first meeting confirmed the usefulness of this format as the appropriate body for the joint EU–Central Asia follow-up on Strategy implementation.

As indicated by the Strategy, the EU will hold an annual meeting of its Heads of Mission in Central Asia in Tashkent in July 2008.

The EU continued close cooperation on Central Asia with international partners and organisations which are active in the region, in particular the UN and the OSCE, and pursued an open and constructive dialogue with regional organisations in Central Asia, including EURASEC, the SCO, CICA, CSTO, CAREC and CARICC. The efforts of the EUSR for Central Asia were particularly important in that regard. Beyond the regular consultations with the main actors in the region, the EUSR has also pursued exchanges on Central Asia with India, Pakistan, and South Korea.

### **Dual approach: bilateral and regional**

Efforts have been undertaken over the past year to give concrete emphasis to bilateral and regional aspects of the Strategy. The EU Senior Officials Troika visited all five countries, beginning in autumn 2007 by the Portuguese Presidency and finishing in spring 2008 by the Slovenian Presidency, to discuss Strategy implementation. In addition to that, the meetings held with each country under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or the Trade and Cooperation Agreements were used to discuss bilateral priorities. These discussions paved the way for the elaboration of the five “bilateral priorities papers” which combine Commission and Member States’ programmes, and will guide the implementation of bilateral aspects of the Strategy in particular.

As Central Asia is a region facing significant regional challenges which require cross-border cooperation, the need for a regional approach has been duly taken into account while implementing the Strategy in such areas as combating drug trafficking, modernising border management, dealing with environmental problems, including in particular water management, and fostering energy and transport links. In line with the Strategy, two regional initiatives are being developed: a European Education Initiative for Central Asia, and a European Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia. Efforts are also underway in order to coordinate closer the EU activities in the region as regards the environment and water management.

The Strategy puts particular emphasis on the need for increased coordination between EC and Member State instruments and assistance. Part of the implementation effort over the past year has included two assistance coordination meetings organized by the Commission with Member States, in December 2007 and March 2008, to help further mobilisation and ensure synergy of EC and Member State assistance to Central Asia. These meetings contributed to elaboration of the bilateral priorities papers and allowed for a comprehensive overview of ongoing and planned assistance and policy dialogue initiatives. In addition, Germany and Italy organised high level meetings on EU–CA cooperation on economic cooperation (Rome, 10 September 2007; Berlin, 11 November 2007) and on water management (Berlin, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008).

### **Human rights, rule of law, good governance, and democratization**

The Strategy recognises that human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation underpin long-term political stability and economic development of Central Asia.

The EU is working on establishing or upgrading Human Rights dialogues with all Central Asian countries. Human rights issues were systematically raised in all the political meetings, including the meeting of National Coordinators on 10 March in Brussels and the ministerial meeting in Ashgabat in April 2008.

The Human Rights dialogue with Uzbekistan was the first to be formally agreed, as indicated in the GAERC conclusions of 16 November 2006, and is held in the framework of the Sub-Committee on Justice and Home Affairs, Human Rights and related issues under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. A second round is planned for June 2008. An ad hoc Human Rights dialogue with Turkmenistan has been held since 2005 in the margins of the Joint Committee meeting under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement in force; it was agreed to expand this dialogue with the first such expanded meeting taking place in June 2008. The EU – Central Asia Ministerial in Ashgabad in April 2008 marked an agreement to begin such dialogues with Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic by the end of this year.

In the context of the Strategy, a specific initiative – the EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia – is being developed to support reforms and the sharing of experiences between the EU and Central Asia in the area of legal and judicial



*Parliamentary  
elections in  
Uzbekistan,  
December 2004*

reforms, which is recognised by Central Asian countries as particularly needed. France and Germany are the lead coordinators on the EU side in developing this Initiative and a first concept paper was agreed within the EU and shared with Central Asian partners at the Ministerial meeting in Ashgabat. The Initiative includes intensified policy dialogue at all levels and more resources for judicial reform programmes by the EC and EU Member States. A Ministerial level meeting during the forthcoming French Presidency will launch the initiative.

Cooperation in the areas of human rights, rule of law, good governance, and democratisation is supported by assistance projects, both those of the EC and Member States, which aim to promote reform efforts. EC assistance includes projects under thematic budget lines such as the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Non-State Actors Programme, as well as the Institution Building Partnership Programme (IBPP), which also support civil society development, so crucial for ensuring citizen participation in transformation and reform efforts. Bilateral EC and Member State assistance programmes are also devised to give emphasis to this area.



## Youth and education

Education is a key priority for all five Central Asian countries – 2008 has been designated the “Year of Youth in Uzbekistan” – and it is an area where they see many potential benefits from cooperation with the EU. EC programmes, such as Tempus, and bilateral exchange programmes by Member States are well-established in the region.

As indicated in the Strategy, a specific initiative – the European Educational Initiative for Central Asia – is being developed in this area to respond to Central Asian requests. It was agreed that the EC would take the lead in coordinating the elaboration of this Education Initiative and a first concept paper was agreed within the EU and shared with Central Asian partners at the Ministerial meeting in Ashgabat in April. The proposals include increased education policy dialogues, at all levels, increased resources for exchange programmes, and increased awareness-raising in Central Asia of study and education exchange opportunities in the EU.

Concrete steps have already been taken to strengthen EU engagement in the area of education. The first regional meeting with the Central Asia partners took place on 8 May 2008 in Cairo, in a side meeting to the Tempus conference on quality in higher education. Academic and ministerial representatives from all 5 countries proposed and discussed priority themes on higher education, vocational educational training and education sector development. These themes will be further developed by regional working groups, with technical support from the EC, the European Training Foundation and interested EU Member States.

The EC is also taking the necessary steps to increase resources which will allow the doubling of the number of available scholarships for Central Asian students and teachers. The Commission’s Directorate-General for Education and Culture undertook visits to all five Central Asian countries in autumn 2007 and spring 2008 to inform of EC education programmes, an effort that will be followed by the publication of a compendium of EC and Member States education and exchange programmes this summer. In the margins of the next Tempus Ministerial meeting, to be held in Brussels, a special meeting with Central Asian partners will be set up to discuss cooperation activities.

One of the priorities under the new strategy is the setting up of an electronic highway for distance learning and life long and e-learning. The EC co-funded

network would complement the currently running Virtual Silk Highway. Preparations for this project are well under way but for implementation to go ahead successfully the political commitment of the Central Asian countries is needed, including the nomination of one focal organisation that would represent the research and education community of their country in the project and the readiness to consider co-financing of the project in order to secure the longer-term viability of the project. The regional network will be implemented gradually, based on the preparedness of each country to join. A Senior Officials Meeting on the Central Asian Research and Education Network was held in Brussels on 9–10 June 2008 with participants from all Central Asian countries to continue preparations of the project.

### **Economic development, trade and investment**

The EU is already one of the major trading partners for Central Asia, but there is still much scope for further intensifying trade and economic ties. The EU supports, including through assistance programmes, WTO membership of all Central Asian countries (currently only Kyrgyzstan is a WTO member), as WTO membership is the main way for a country to achieve a better and deeper integration into the international trade and economic system. The EU expects that ongoing bilateral negotiations with Kazakhstan will conclude soon and will continue to support also other Central Asia countries in their efforts to join the WTO.

The EU has over the past year continued to encourage Central Asian partners to make better use of the EU Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) and to increase and diversify their economic production and exports. The gradual approximation of the countries' legislation and practices to the main EU trade related acquis as foreseen in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements should support this process and the EU is ready to continue providing the partners with its technical assistance in this respect. EU assistance programmes have put specific emphasis on supporting reform efforts in the area of improving the investment climate in Central Asia, as it is essential for attracting more investments into the region.

The Central Asia Invest programme was launched by the EC in November 2007 with the aim to promote the development of SMEs in Central Asia, including by institution building actions for business intermediary organizations.

## Energy and transport

Enhancing energy security is an important shared interest between the EU and Central Asia and there is a common interest in diversifying export routes, demand and supply structures and energy sources. Regional dialogue is intensifying in the framework of the Baku Initiative ; at the bilateral level, cooperation is strengthening via bilateral Memoranda of Understanding, already in place with Kazakhstan and recently signed with Turkmenistan. The INOGATE programme remains the main tool in continuing to support cooperation on energy projects of mutual interest and in collaboration with international lending institutions. The next Energy Ministerial Conference of the Baku Initiative will be held in November 2008.

Work on exploring the possibilities for a trans-Caspian energy corridor intensified over the past year, technical studies on practical options were finalised and the results are being discussed with partners. A high-level meeting is expected to be held later in 2008 to discuss best ways forward.

The EU remains committed to the success of the Nabucco project and welcomes the progress achieved in the last six months. The EU supports the further steps needed in order to implement the project as scheduled. An intergovernmental agreement between the concerned states should be completed as soon as possible.

In the field of energy, issues related to energy efficiency, energy saving and renewables remain of key importance. Hydro-energy is high on the agenda as well. A number of EU projects are under way in these areas. During the Ashgabat Foreign Ministers Meeting, the European Union showed readiness to study the upstream and downstream impact of planned hydropower stations on an objective basis in order to facilitate cooperation between Central Asian countries.

Transport is a long-established area of cooperation between the EU and the Central Asia countries, as the extension of the trans-European transport networks and the approximation of transport regulations would facilitate transport and trade flows between the EU and the Central Asia countries. Moreover, Central Asia has a potential to eventually become a transit region for the increasing traffic flows between the EU and Far East.

Regional cooperation on transport has been established under the “Baku Initiative” and the TRACECA programme on the implementation of a transport corridor.

In December 2007 the 6th Annual meeting of the TRACECA Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) was held in Astana, and the first 2-year Action plan was approved to implement the Strategy for the corridor. It was also agreed for the TRACECA Summit to take place in Baku by the end of 2008 on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the TRACECA Multilateral Agreement.

### Environment and water

A joint report by High Representative Solana and Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner on the impact of climate change and international security submitted to the March 2008 European Council highlighted Central Asia as a region significantly affected by climate change.

The most important environmental challenges in Central Asia, notably water supply and management, water sanitation and climate change, are regional, and regional cooperation is therefore essential to tackle them efficiently. Water management is the most sensitive environmental issue in Central Asia, which, if

OSCE/Sautius Smalys



*Lake Iskanderkul  
in Sughd province,  
Tajikistan*

not addressed, could develop into a serious security threat for the entire region in the medium term. EU-Central Asia consultations have confirmed the need to modernise the approach to water management in the region, to address closer the growing tension between the upstream and downstream countries and to strengthen the assistance coordination among the international actors. Central Asian countries are confronted with the urgent need to combine energy efficiency with water efficiency.

Italy has offered to be the lead coordinator on the EU side in the field of the environment and water management and a first coordination meeting was held in Rome on 30 May 2008.

Cooperation between the EU and Central Asian countries in the field of environment has intensified. The EC and Member States implement various regional and bilateral environmental projects, including support for water governance, the Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre, and implementation of the Kyoto protocol and Aarhus Convention.

The EU–Central Asia Environmental Dialogue and the EU–Central Asia Working Group on Water, based on EU Water Initiative principles, were established to address water–related issues in Central Asia and specific cooperation proposals in that area, notably integrated water resources management systems at regional level. As a consequence, in January 2008, it was agreed to launch National Water Policy Dialogues in Central Asia, beginning with Kyrgyzstan in 2008. These dialogues will support capacity building in the area of water management. This activity is being carried out in parallel to the continued EU Water Initiative EECCA (Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia) process, including the annual EECCA Component Working Group, held on 12-13 May 2008 in Bucharest under the new Chairmanship of Romania.

Working as appropriate with international and regional organisations engaged in this area, the EU will continue to support a political process engaging both upstream and downstream countries as a key factor in tackling the increasing economic, environmental and security challenges of this issue. The EU welcomes the conference organised by UNECE on integrated water resource management in Central Asia, to be held in November 2008, which will build on the water management conference organised by Germany in Berlin on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

## Common threats and challenges

The EU and Central Asia states are attributing increasing importance to “common threats and challenges” as a cornerstone of intensified relations. In order to consolidate the shared awareness of common threats and challenges, the incoming French Presidency will launch a periodic EU–Central Asia Ministerial Forum on Security Challenges in Paris on 18 September 2008, which will address political and military threats, border management and fight against trafficking, as well as energy and environmental security.

Increased drug trafficking and drug use in Central Asian countries as well as lack of efficient border management remain key challenges in the region. The introduction of modern border management practices, creating open but at the same time secure borders would facilitate trade and economic exchanges in the region and help combat drug trafficking. BOMCA (Border Management in Central Asia) and CADAP (Central Asia Drug Action Programme) are two main EU programmes in that area and their implementation has continued successfully. A number of border crossing points (BCPs) were or are currently being modernized with BOMCA assistance. About 20 additional BCPs received equipment, while a number of border outposts (BOs) along the “green border”

EU-BOMCA/CADAP



*Regional training facility for drug detecting dogs, in the town of Osh on the Tajik-Uzbek border, built in 2006 with EU assistance*

between BCPs were or are soon to be upgraded. In addition, BOMCA supported the refurbishment of training centres for border guards and the more effective use of sniffer dog capacities, as well as the upgrading of the infrastructure of canine centres in Central Asian countries. Numerous training sessions on Integrated Border Management for approx. 1500 Central Asian border guards and customs officers have been carried out.

CADAP has increasingly focused on demand reduction measures and activities, which logically complement BOMCA in the area of drug prevention. Operations include support to the adoption of annual drug reports by the governments, introduction of modern drug treatment methodologies in one pilot prison in each country and an awareness raising campaign on the danger of using drugs. Furthermore, support will continue to the setting up of Drug Profiling Units (DPU) at Central Asian airports and railway stations with a particular focus on providing training on precursor detection skills.

An important new project to combat drug trafficking in the region has been launched in the framework of the Instrument for Stability to support combating drugs and precursors trafficking and organized crime, and includes the setting up of a secured network of national intelligence units in the countries members of CARICC (Central Asia Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre) and cross border cooperation with Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan.

The increasing activities of a substantial number of stakeholders in this field, most notably the OSCE, are raising the necessity of coordination, including at political level. In addition to existing coordination mechanisms on operational matters of assistance provided, notably to Tajikistan, France as EU Presidency, the European Commission with UNDP through BOMCA, Finland as OSCE Chairman, and Germany, will co-sponsor an international conference on border management and drug control organised by the OSCE and UNODC in Dushanbe in October 2008.

### **Conclusion: the way forward**

Implementation of the Central Asia Strategy is well under way. The past year has seen a significant intensification of political dialogue and practical cooperation between the EU and Central Asia in all the priority areas indicated in the Strategy. With high expectations in Central Asia and increasing relevance of Strategy priority areas such as energy diversification, the fight against drugs,

Credit: EU-BOMCA/CADAP



*Concerted action between international organisations is indispensable for efficient assistance to the Central Asian countries in their fight against contemporary security threats. The implementation of the EU's BOMCA programme by UNDP is one example of such action. On the picture: training of Drug Profiling Units in Kazakhstan*

or the impact of climate change on the environment, it is crucial that the current pace of implementation be maintained. New EU Member States have an important potential to contribute to EU-Central Asia relations given their own transformation experiences, like in the field of Rule of Law.

The EC is doubling its assistance to the region with 750 million EUR 2007–2013 under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), when compared with the previous period. A number of Member States are also actively engaging and are providing significant levels of assistance for the countries of Central Asia. Nevertheless, to support the realization of larger-scale projects of interest to the EU and Central Asia, increasing the scope of financing of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is important. Engagement with IFIs on Central Asia should therefore continue to develop. In that context and in line with the Strategy, the European Commission adopted the proposal for a Council decision to expand the mandate of the European Investment Bank to cover Central Asia.

Strengthening relations between the EU and Central Asia requires an active EU presence in the region. EUSR Morel is travelling to the region regularly. Beyond official meetings, he extends his contacts with civil society and the media. In line with the indications given in the Strategy, the European Commission is proceeding with the opening and upgrading of EC Delegations in the Central



Asian countries while the Member States are expanding their network of embassies in Central Asia. In April, Commissioner Ferrero–Waldner opened the Europa House in Ashgabat. Preparations have also been launched with Uzbekistan for the opening of a Delegation in Tashkent in 2008. Preparations will then begin for the upgrading of the regionalised Delegations in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The opening of a Delegation in Ashgabat will also be considered.

The most important challenge in the years to come will be maintaining the political momentum created over the last year, namely through reinforced coordination between the EU institutions and Member States, greater EU visibility in the region, increased financial resources and active involvement as well as contributions from Central Asian countries that are all essential for delivering on the ambitious goals of the Strategy.

The EU is aiming to make further substantial progress in all priority areas of the Strategy.

A greater effort should be made to promote human rights and democratisation and to ensure active involvement of civil society, Parliaments, local authorities and other actors in the monitoring and implementation of the Strategy. The EU will continue work on establishing or upgrading Human Rights dialogues with all Central Asian countries. In the field of education, the Central Asia Research and Education Network (E–Silk–Highway) should get underway, a regular political dialogue should be maintained, supported by a broad exchange between European and Central Asian educational institutions. In the field of Rule of Law, solid cooperation should be established addressing key areas of legislation and the judicial system. In the field of environment and water, the EU should be supporting a dynamic political process with the aim of putting an integrated regional resource management system in place. In the field of common challenges, the EU should continue to play an active role in stakeholder coordination on drugs and borders and contribute to reaching tangible results on reducing drug trafficking and enhancing border management in Central Asia.

Finally, the EU will also have to develop further the dialogue started with other regional organisations active in the region, with an aim for its part to engage in concrete cooperation on Central Asia, especially in the fields of border and water management, as well as the fight against drug trafficking and trans-border crime.



## **Joint Declaration of the Participants in the EU-Central Asia Forum on Security Issues in Paris**

Driven by a shared commitment to developing and organising our long-term partnership on the basis of common objectives and undertakings to strengthen peace and stability in Central Asia, respect for human rights and the development of the rule of law and democracy, we met on the occasion of the First European Union-Central Asia Forum on Security Issues in Paris on 18 September 2008.

With the contribution of the international and regional organisations concerned, we have analysed security issues in Central Asia and defined concrete policy lines for our joint action in the following areas: combating illicit trafficking in arms, sensitive material, narcotics and human beings; combating terrorism and extremism; and cooperation in energy and the environment.



*EU-Central Asia Security Forum in Paris, September 2008. From left: the EU Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre MOREL, French Foreign Minister Bernard KOUCHNER, representing the EU Presidency, the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Hamrohon ZARIFI, the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Marat TAZHIN and the Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Ednan KARABAEV*

In line with the European Union's Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia and on the basis of documents on the bilateral priorities of cooperation and of the regional initiatives, we agreed on the following points:

### **1. Strengthening political dialogue in all its forms**

Convinced that socio-economic development, human rights, stability, peace and security are inseparable and mutually reinforcing, we intend to examine together the principal factors of tension and their consequences in the world today. It is our responsibility to create, through our exchanges and our joint initiatives, the conditions required to develop the potential of Central Asian countries. Political dialogue helps to lay the foundations for future action and shared work with a view to ensuring the political and socio-economic security and stability of the countries in the region.

We underline the importance of the EU Rule of Law Initiative in Central Asia. We will continue the dialogue on human rights with the EU, as well as in the framework of bilateral relations and multilateral organisations such as the UN and the OSCE, of which Kazakhstan will hold the chairmanship in 2010.

## 2. Strengthening regional stability

Broadening cooperation among the region's countries, particularly on border security, is key to regional stability and security in Central Asia and to setting up cooperative management of regional risks and threats.

Our joint efforts will help to combat new risks and threats more effectively.

It is essential to reinforce regular exchanges of information and analyses to take into account possible risks of a political and military nature, especially through collaboration between analysis and research centres working on security, strategy and international relations issues in the Central Asian countries and in the EU.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery represents a particular threat to peace and international stability. We reaffirm our support for the multilateral treaties and agreements as well as international initiatives on non-proliferation, and we agree to step up our efforts with a view to their full implementation. The commitment of the Central Asian countries to non-proliferation and disarmament was confirmed by the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 8 September 2006 in Semipalatinsk.

The creation of a nuclear weapon free zone will help to maintain and strengthen peace and stability internationally and regionally and promote non-proliferation in all its aspects.

We intend to pool our experience and cooperate in establishing effective export control systems, including conventional arms exports, strengthening border controls and securing sensitive facilities and sources of nuclear, radioactive, biological and chemical material, in order to prevent any risk of proliferation and procurement by terrorist groups.

We express our grave concern about growing nuclear proliferation crises and the risk of destabilisation to the non-proliferation regime, and we are in favour of compliance with international non-proliferation obligations, particularly the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and those issued by IAEA Board of Governors.

We underline the importance of boosting the role of the IAEA in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

### 3. Stepping up the fight against terrorism

Combating terrorism in all its forms and expressions must be conducted within the framework of the international treaties and relevant United Nations Resolutions while respecting human rights, which guarantees its effectiveness.



OSCE © Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior/Mamed Faradjiev

*Kyrgyz police officers at an OSCE training course on handwriting analysis, December 2008*

We agree to continuously fight the financing of terrorism, in accordance with the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

We consider that enhanced cooperation at all levels among the countries concerned, in both Central Asia and Europe, is a condition necessary to the successful achievement of our objective.

We believe it important to adopt measures to prevent the action of terrorist organisations that are engaged in illicit activities and that are banned by Central Asian and EU countries.

#### **4. Developing cooperation between Central Asia and the European Union in rebuilding Afghanistan and stabilising its situation**

We are mindful of the stabilisation and development of Afghanistan, factors which contribute to consolidating regional and global security. In referring to the conclusions of the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan held in Paris on 12 June 2008, we reaffirm our determination to actively contributing to their implementation, particularly by reinforcing our political exchanges and economic cooperation with this country, as well as our cooperation with the relevant international organisations, especially the United Nations and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

#### **5. Joining forces to fight illicit trafficking in arms, sensitive materials, narcotics and human beings**

The EU will increase cooperation with Central Asian countries to strengthen and implement legal measures to more effectively combat all forms of illicit trafficking: arms, sensitive materials, narcotics, psychotropic substances and their precursors, and human beings. The adoption of national strategies on integrated border management could be an effective means of ensuring internal stability in Central Asia. The Dushanbe Conference on 21 and 22 October 2008 will review the mechanisms for enhancing international coordination.

Concerned by persistently high drug production levels in Afghanistan and by the development of opium-to-heroin conversion activities, we welcome the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1817 on the

fight against the trade in precursors. We are committed to implementing its provisions, particularly those aimed at increasing international control of precursors. We undertake to enhance cooperation within the framework of the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the Paris Pact Initiative. A meeting of experts based on an enlarged troika format is planned on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008 in Brussels and will help to strengthen the control of these products at a regional level. On this occasion, discussion focusing on updating the drug action plan will begin.

We believe that it is essential to develop and implement projects/programmes to improve, in their fight against narcotics trafficking, the law enforcement capacities of the countries bordering Afghanistan which are most at risk from the trafficking in narcotics originating from Afghanistan.

We are thoroughly convinced that the development of cooperation among Central Asian countries, with the participation of international organisations and donor countries, will ensure the adoption of effective measures to fight this common scourge. In this connection, we welcome the creation of the Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) for the fight against narcotics trafficking.

## **6. Strengthening cooperation in energy, the use of natural resources and the environment**

We will reinforce our cooperation in energy without prejudice to current cooperation.

We consider that the harmonisation of the interests of energy consumers and suppliers, transit states and transnational companies is a guarantee of international energy stability. Energy security in Central Asia and the EU presupposes common rules and a reasoned choice of new transport options involving all the countries concerned. We reaffirm the importance of active cooperation in the development of different hydrocarbon transport corridors that aim to ensure a guaranteed and reliable supply for European markets and other international markets.

In light of the conclusions of the energy ministers' conference in Baku in November 2004, our cooperation will focus on the development of

regional energy markets and strengthening the financing capacities for new infrastructure; implementation of open, forward-looking and proactive energy policies; setting up an investor-friendly environment by according an appropriate role to market mechanisms; and lastly improving energy efficiency in the various uses of primary energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lessen the cost to economic growth and free up additional capacity.

We also note the necessity of enhancing our cooperation in renewable and alternative energies as well as in reliable, sustainable, low-carbon technologies. We will achieve this by comparing energy scenarios and ensuring cooperation among energy industries, particularly upstream and downstream of the hydrocarbons industry.

We are in favour of developing cooperation to jointly exploit hydro-energy resources, taking the interests of all the region's countries into consideration.

The European Union will provide support to the development of hydraulic energy in Central Asia that will also help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions without prejudice to the region's environmental security.

Conscious of the security implications of climate change, we are in favour of adopting long-term strategies to prevent the climate effects of human activities and in favour of the accession to multilateral instruments related thereto. We suggest that a dialogue be launched on how to address the threats posed by climate change in Central Asia in order to strengthen EU and Central Asian cooperation on this issue.

The European Union will pay particular attention to regional cooperation in Central Asia on the rational, efficient and sustainable use of hydraulic, hydro-energy and fuel resources and the environment.

The EU is ready to use its study and cooperation capabilities to facilitate the implementation of best practices, availability of drinking water and sanitation, as well as fighting climate change, inter alia, by increasing energy and hydraulic efficiency while safeguarding the ecological balance in the region.

We support the European Union's Water Initiative (EUWI).





## 7. Helping to prepare a comprehensive approach to security in Central Asia

In a world marked by recurrent instability, we will strengthen our partnership and encourage the efforts of countries and regional organisations that can help to create a genuine area of cooperative security in Central Asia.

In this respect, we welcome the creation of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

*18 September 2008*

A group of border guards in camouflage uniforms and caps are walking on a paved path. Some are holding leashes for dogs. The background shows a white fence and greenery under a bright sky.

## Partnership Declaration of the Ministerial Conference on Border Management and Drug Control in Central Asia<sup>(1)</sup>

United in their desire to fight illicit trafficking in narcotics, psychotropic substances, chemical precursors, weapons, hazardous materials, human beings, and trans-border crime and international terrorism, whilst promoting the legal movement of goods and people across borders in Central Asia, and upholding international human rights agreements, Ministers, high level officials and representatives of relevant agencies of Central Asia states and of the international community met in Dushanbe on 21- 22 October 2008 to discuss issues related to border management and drug control in the region.

Recognizing that the successful fight against these threats is dependent upon the enhancement of border security and management, we, the participants of this Conference:

- **reaffirm** our commitment to reinforce regional and international cooperation to provide better border management and drug control, forge closer collaboration between regional and international

(1) This declaration remains open to delegations which were not in a position to endorse it during the conference.

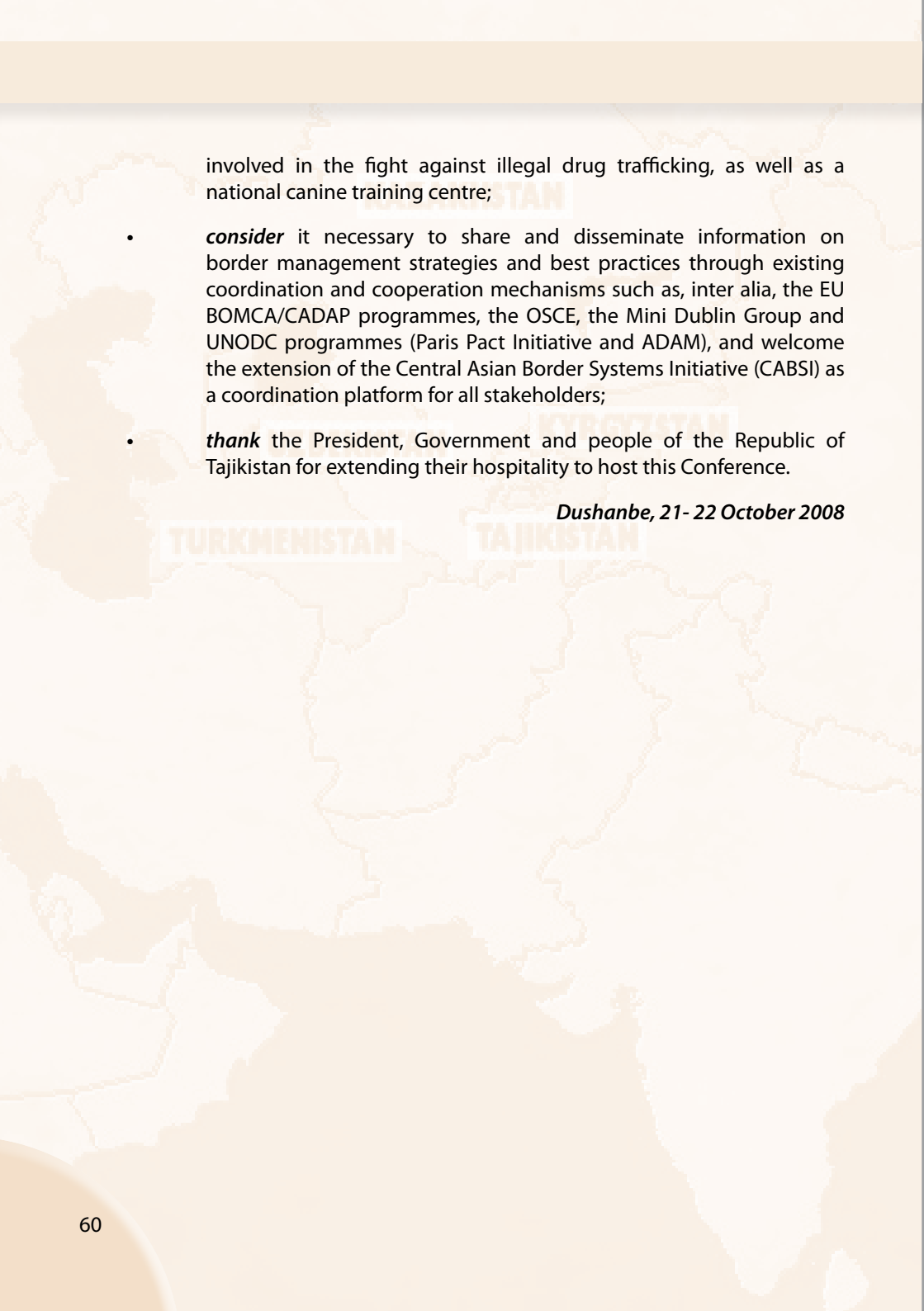


*Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, Alexander STUBB in his capacity as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE, with the President of Uzbekistan, Isлом KARIMOV. The EU, UNODC and OSCE are key donors of international assistance for border management in Central Asia and closely coordinate their strategies for the region*

organizations, and support focused assistance on on-going and future efforts in this field;

- **encourage** and support all international, regional and bilateral initiatives to strengthen border security and drug control in Central Asia building on international partnerships, such as, inter alia, the EU Strategy on Central Asia, UNODC's Regional Strategy on Securing Central Asia's Borders with Afghanistan, as well as activities within the framework of the OSCE, CSTO, CIS, and the SCO;
- **encourage** the international community to continue its support, assistance and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in its resolve to fight against narcotics and the illegal inflow of precursors for their production;


- **encourage** and support cross border cooperation between Central Asia states and their border agencies to provide more effective border security in the region;
- **recognize** our responsibility to uphold relevant international commitments and employ best practices in the fields of border security and management and counter-narcotics;
- **call** on donors to strengthen coordination of assistance in the field of border management and drug control with a view to creating synergies and avoiding duplications of activities including at the national and regional levels, thus enabling donor cooperation in the early planning stage;
- **recognize** that there is a requirement for developing and implementing national border management and national drug strategies that incorporate objectives, priorities and action plans, as well as mechanisms for cross border cooperation, and express readiness to work with one another and with the international community to this end;
- **agree** on the establishment of, whenever necessary a national coordination structure and the nomination of a national coordinator in the fields of border management and drug control for interaction with national and regional structures and international organizations;
- **recognize** the importance of the establishment of the Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Centre (CARICC) for the fight against the illegal transport of narcotics, psychotropic substances and precursors welcome the ratification of the agreement on the establishment of the CARICC by two parties and call on the remaining parties to follow their example;
- **welcome** the planned establishment of the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe;
- **note** the interest of the Republic of Tajikistan to establish in Dushanbe a specialized training centre for the preparation and professional development of law enforcement officers of Tajikistan and Afghanistan



involved in the fight against illegal drug trafficking, as well as a national canine training centre;

- **consider** it necessary to share and disseminate information on border management strategies and best practices through existing coordination and cooperation mechanisms such as, inter alia, the EU BOMCA/CADAP programmes, the OSCE, the Mini Dublin Group and UNODC programmes (Paris Pact Initiative and ADAM), and welcome the extension of the Central Asian Border Systems Initiative (CABSI) as a coordination platform for all stakeholders;
- **thank** the President, Government and people of the Republic of Tajikistan for extending their hospitality to host this Conference.

*Dushanbe, 21- 22 October 2008*



## Conclusions of the EU-Central Asia High Level Meeting Platform for Environment and Water Cooperation

A High Level Meeting, co-chaired by Italy, as the EU Coordinator, with the support of the European Commission and kindly hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan, was held in Ashgabat on 3 December 2008 with representatives of the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and EU Member States.

Participants considered and discussed the draft document “Enhanced regional cooperation EU-CA on environment and water resources issues” and agreed in the shortest possible time to coordinate the platform of cooperation.

Participants agreed that the impact of environmental factors on human health should be assessed and considered as a necessary component of agreed cooperation activities within the framework of cooperation.

Participants agreed on conducting regular high level meetings to promote realization and analysis of environment and water resources issues, including transboundary waters, within the framework of EU strategy for Central Asia.

*Improving the quality and quantity of safe drinking water with the assistance of ECHO*



In the discussions, participants underlined the necessity to strengthen the regional approach for dealing with environmental transboundary issues, and reinforce cooperation for mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

Participants agreed that the EU-Central Asia Joint Expert Working Group will serve as the key mechanism for facilitation of the Environment and Water pillar of the Strategy. To this aim, its Terms of Reference will be amended as necessary.

*Ashgabat , 3 December 2008*



## European Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia

The Rule of Law is an essential condition for the development of a stable political framework and of functioning economic structures in Central Asia. The European Union welcomes the active efforts undertaken by Central Asia states since independence in strengthening the rule of law. It is crucial for an effective protection of human rights, for socio-economic development, as well as for trade and investment links with Europe. This reform process will underpin the common values to which all Central Asian and EU Member States have subscribed in the framework of the OSCE. The EU is in a unique position to make a contribution in this field thanks to the legal traditions it shares with Central Asia. All Central Asian countries have expressed their interest in cooperation and exchange of experience with the European Union in further developing their legal systems, including the transformation experience of new EU Member States. European assistance provided during over a decade has proven to be effective and built mutual trust. To ensure long term sustainability, complementary cooperation on policy formulation and implementation is required.



The European Rule of Law Initiative is a joint undertaking of the Commission and Member States. It aims at a concerted regional approach, taking into account national situations. Core challenges such as the development of the judicial system, law enforcement, modernisation of commercial legislation or accountability of the administration are similar for all Central Asia states. Trans-national issues such as trade, environment, or migration call for regional solutions and compatible legal systems. By promoting regional exchange and focusing on issues which play an equally important role in all Central Asia states, reforms can be facilitated through knowledge transfer and thus create an open region growing in unison.



OSCE/Ruslan Izmaylov

*Police explains their work to Kyrgyz citizens at an OSCE workshop in Bishkek, January 2009. The European Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia builds on existing activities and EU national and regional support and coordinates with other international donors and organisations, especially OSCE*

The European Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia sets up a coordination mechanism among EU institutions and Member States to further support the ongoing modernisation of the legal sector, as part of a more comprehensive strategy to foster and consolidate stability, prosperity and respect for human rights in Central Asian countries. The Initiative relies on existing activities and EU national and regional support and will coordinate with other international donors and organisations, especially OSCE. Germany and France, in close cooperation with the European Commission, will lead the coordination of EU activities by acting as focal countries. Specific contact persons for the Rule of Law initiative should be designated from both EU and CA countries.

The Initiative envisages two kinds of actions: an EU-Central Asia Rule of Law Platform and specific long-term projects.

The objectives of the EU-Central Asia Rule of Law Platform are to step up the policy dialogue with Central Asia states on priority themes to be identified with Central Asian countries at a joint Ministerial Meeting which will launch the initiative. The Platform will also inform national authorities on existing funding opportunities and provide them with inputs for programme development and implementation. Three levels of dialogue are foreseen:

- Rule of Law Initiative meetings on ministerial level. The Commission, the EU Presidency, involved EU Member States, and ministerial representatives of Central Asian countries, will discuss and review policy developments in legal reform, including legislation and the basic and further training systems for the legal professions.
- Technical working groups at regional level for the identified priority areas. Central Asian countries will chair these meetings, which will review the legal sector in the region, recommend the coordination of donor resources, identify regional programmes of common interest areas and give input to discussions at national level.
- National level dialogue on legal reform. It will support national authorities with information on existing funding opportunities, inputs for the development of work programmes, mechanisms for implementation and financing of activities. Besides line ministries, it will involve practitioners and institutions such as courts, public prosecutors, lawyers' associations, or police academies.

Specific activities intend to offer tools for Central Asian countries in further developing Rule of Law. Given the nature of legal reform and the special importance of mutual trust in this field, the focus should be on long-term programmes, including in particular:

- Programmes provided by Member States or by the European Commission.
- Twinning and other cooperation programs between European and Central Asian institutions, such as constitutional and regular courts and national parliaments.

Activities could cover the following fields :

1. assistance to judicial systems and legal professions, including training, support of the reform of professional legal education, and regional exchange, focusing on:

- effective protection of constitutions by Constitutional Councils or Courts or by other mechanisms;
- Function and competences of Public Prosecutors within the system of executive power;
- independence (including matters of nomination and status), professionalism, integrity, and transparency of the Judiciary (including judicial exchanges, training of judges and judicial staff, and assistance for the publication of relevant literature and court rulings);
- specialised chambers and / or special jurisdiction;
- further integration of international law (including international human rights law) into national legal systems;
- qualification, licensing, training and organization of lawyers/ advocates, notaries, bailiffs;
- access to justice (including legal aid mechanisms);



*EUSR Pierre MOREL, left, with Isan MUSTAFOEV, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Belgium and Representative of Uzbekistan to the EC and NATO at the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council, December 2008*

## 2. Advisory services and regional exchange in the field of legislation on:

- criminal law (including the fight against trafficking of drugs and chemical precursors);
- administrative law (administrative procedural law, mass media, environment, business licensing, urban and regional development);
- substantive private law (especially contract law, property law, inheritance law; company law; anti-monopoly law, investment law, family law, law of public registers, international private law);
- procedural private law (including arbitration);
- police law (legislation on law enforcement bodies).

Potential project partners are, inter alia, justice and interior ministries, judicial councils, parliamentary committees, courts, lawyers and their associations, institutions of legal training, and other civil society organizations, and international organizations, especially OSCE.

High visibility will be a crucial element of these activities in order to raise awareness for the importance of the Rule of Law and for the new partnership between Europe and Central Asia.

*Brussels, April 2008*

UZBEKISTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

TURKMENISTAN

TAJIKISTAN



## European Education Initiative for Central Asia

Education is an important development concern in Central Asia. All Central Asian countries have expressed their interest to foster cooperation with the European Union and to align their systems with higher education developments in Europe, including the Bologna process. The EU assistance provided so far has been positively evaluated, but to ensure long term sustainability, complementary cooperation on policy formulation and implementation is required.

The European Education Initiative for Central Asia sets up a coordination mechanism among EU donors to further support the modernisation of the education and vocational training sector, as parts of a more comprehensive strategy to consolidate stability and prosperity in Central Asia countries. The Initiative relies on existing activities and EU national and regional support and will coordinate with other international donors.

The Initiative envisages three kinds of actions: an EU-Central Asia Education Platform, specific activities, information and communication actions.

The objectives of the EU-Central Asia Education Platform are to step-up the policy dialogue on education with Central Asia states. With the purpose of identifying priority themes for discussion, the Commission is currently looking into the possibility to organise a side meeting within the Tempus Cairo Conference on Higher Education Quality (Cairo, 8-9 May 2008). The Platform will also inform national authorities on existing funding opportunities and provide them with inputs for programme development and implementation. Three levels of dialogue are foreseen:

- education Initiative meetings of Ministers of Education. The Commission, in cooperation with the EU Presidency and ministerial representatives of Central Asian countries, will discuss and review policy developments in higher education. Meetings are foreseen in the framework of the Tempus Conference in Cairo and the Tempus Ministerial Annual Meeting (autumn 2008);
- technical working groups at regional level. Central Asia countries will chair these meetings, which will review the education sector in the region, recommend the coordination of regional programmes of common interest areas and/or the continuation of discussions at national level, and lead to a discussion about pooling EU Member States and EC resources; a regional working group on teachers and training (VET) is foreseen in Bishkek (June 2008).
- National level dialogue on education modernisation. It will support national authorities with information on existing funding opportunities, inputs for the development of work programmes, mechanisms for implementation and financing of activities, including sector wide approaches when applicable.

Specific activities intend to diversify the offer of education opportunities and exchanges for Central Asia. They will use as much as possible the following mechanisms:

- tempus and Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window (EMECW);

- programmes provided by Member States, who will designate a national contact person for the purpose of the Education Initiative.
- research and education networking – supporting cooperation between universities and research centres using modern technologies provided by the internet network.

In the framework of specific activities, the Initiative also plans to establish a network of European Studies Centres in Central Asia, relying as much as possible on already established structures.

UZBEKISTAN


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OSCE/Eric Gourlan



*Students in front of the Bishkek Humanities University. The European Education Initiative aims to diversify the education opportunities and the exchange of students and academics between the EU and Central Asia*



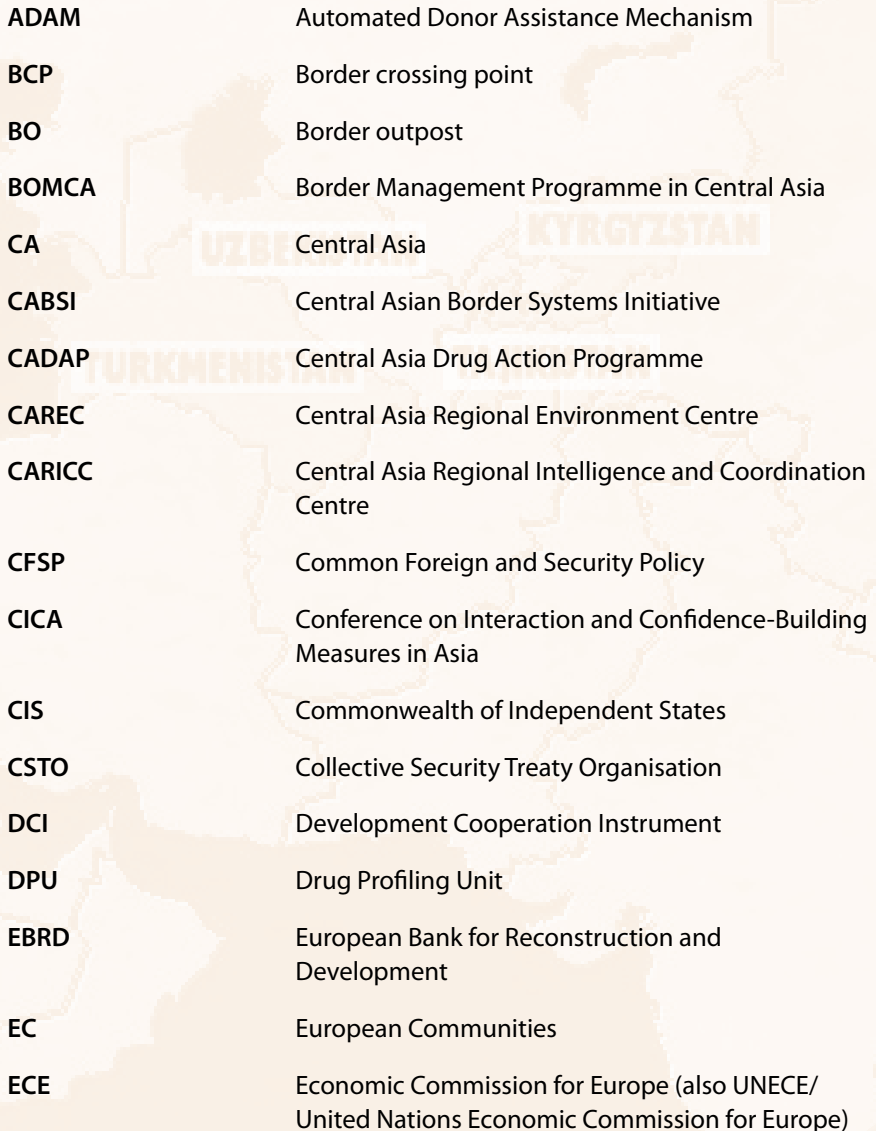


The Initiative will also hold joint events and publish joint materials to foster the information and communication on EU contribution to education modernisation and student exchange programmes:

- European Education Initiative information days;
- A compendium on education and training opportunities in the EU;
- web links at HQ and EC Delegations' level will be updated to include information on EU cooperation and exchanges opportunities for Central Asia countries.

*Brussels, April 2008*

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



<b>ADAM</b>	Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism
<b>BCP</b>	Border crossing point
<b>BO</b>	Border outpost
<b>BOMCA</b>	Border Management Programme in Central Asia
<b>CA</b>	Central Asia
<b>CABSI</b>	Central Asian Border Systems Initiative
<b>CADAP</b>	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
<b>CAREC</b>	Central Asia Regional Environment Centre
<b>CARICC</b>	Central Asia Regional Intelligence and Coordination Centre
<b>CFSP</b>	Common Foreign and Security Policy
<b>CICA</b>	Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CSTO</b>	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
<b>DCI</b>	Development Cooperation Instrument
<b>DPU</b>	Drug Profiling Unit
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>EC</b>	European Communities
<b>ECE</b>	Economic Commission for Europe (also UNECE/ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)

<b>ECHO</b>	European Commission's Directorate General for Humanitarian Assistance
<b>EECCA</b>	Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>EIDHR</b>	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
<b>EMECW</b>	Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window
<b>ENPI</b>	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
<b>EnvSec Initiative</b>	Environment and Security Initiative
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EURASEC</b>	Eurasian Economic Community
<b>EUSR</b>	European Union Special Representative
<b>EUWI</b>	European Union Water Initiative
<b>FATF</b>	Financial Action Task Force
<b>FLEG</b>	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance
<b>GAERC</b>	General Affairs and External Relations Council
<b>GSP</b>	Generalised System of Preferences
<b>HR/SG</b>	High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union/Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
<b>IAEA</b>	International Atomic Energy Agency
<b>IBPP</b>	Institution Building Partnership Programme
<b>IFI</b>	international financial institution
<b>IGC</b>	Intergovernmental Commission



<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INOGATE</b>	Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe
<b>IT</b>	information technology
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>ODIHR</b>	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
<b>OSCE</b>	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<b>PCA</b>	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
<b>SCO</b>	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
<b>SME</b>	small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>TEMPUS</b>	Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies
<b>TRACECA</b>	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAMA</b>	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (also ECE)
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization



Council of the European Union

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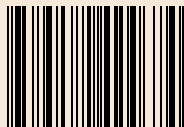
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