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Synopsis of Reviews of "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership"

Andrew Campbell, Jan van der Lingen, Aline Medow and Julian Plottka

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This second paper in the Policy Papers on Eastern Europe and Central Asia series provides a synopsis of reviews of the document "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership", divided into six chapters each covering one of the priorities areas laid out in the Central Asia strategy: promotion of democracy, human rights, rule of law and good governance; investing in the future: youth and education; promotion of economic development, trade and investment; strengthening energy and transport links; environmental sustainability and water; combating common threats and challenges. The authors then go on to discuss the question, whether a regional approach or a country specific approach to EU-CA relations is potentially more fruitful with respect to each of the aforementioned priority areas.

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Synopsis of Reviews of "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership"

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1. Introduction

The following document is as synopsis of reviews of "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership" (CA strategy) by a number of authors (see below) published before January 2015. After a complementary summary of the CA strategy objectives, the synopsis is divided into six chapters representing six of the seven priorities areas outlined in the CA strategy: promotion of democracy, human rights, rule of law and good governance; investing in the future: youth and education; promotion of economic development, trade and investment; strengthening energy and transport links; environmental sustainability and water; combating common threats and challenges. Due to limited activities in the field of inter-cultural dialogue, this field was left out. Each chapter has the following structure:

- Policy objectives;
- Strengths of strategy implementation;
- Weaknesses of strategy implementation;
- Institutions;
- Challenges.

Finally, based on the synopsis of the reviews of the CA strategy, the document addresses the question, whether a regional approach or a country specific approach to EU-CA relations is potentially more fruitful. This question is discussed with regard to each of the policy fields covered before.

The main documents used for this synopsis are the following, additional literature is mentioned in the bibliography at the end:

- Michael Emerson/Jos Boonstra: Intro Eurasia: Monitoring the EU's Central Asia Strategy. Brussels 2010.
- European Council: The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a new Partnership. Brussels, June 2007.
- European Court of Auditors: EU development
- Assistance to Central Asia. Brussels 2013.
- European External Action Service: Progress Report on the implementation of the EU Strategy for CA Relations. Brussels 2012.
- Alexander Warkotsch: The European Union and Central Asia. London 2011.

2. Policy Objectives of the CA Strategy

In June 2007 the European Council launched "The EU and Central Asia: A Strategy for a New Partnership" in which a clear set of policy objectives and a range of instruments with which these objectives should be obtained were defined. These objectives, based on common interests of the EU and the Central Asia states (CAS), cover the following policy fields:

- Security and stability;
- "Human rights, rule of law, good governance, democratization";
- "Promotion of economic development, trade and investment";
- "Strengthening energy and transport links";
- "Environmental sustainability and water";
- "Combating common threats and challenges";
- "Inter-cultural dialogue" (European Council2007).

As can be seen, this is very a inclusive list of objectives and the strategy should be considered an attempt to improve the situation in the CAS along the lines of EU-values. Nonetheless explicit mention is made of goals that are clearly economic in nature and certain elements like rule of law and good governance that are important to protect EU-investments in Central Asia (CA). In the wording of the original document, although well hidden, lies the clear desire to improve ties with this region to diversify energy resources and transport routes as an alternative to Russia.

Jan van der Lingen

3. Promotion of Democracy, Human Rights, Rule of Law and Good Governance

Objectives and Instruments

The objectives in the policy field of democracy promotion are instrumental of character in regards to the EU strategic interests of security and stability in CA as well as to its objective of economic prosperity. Reforms in this field are considered as being essential "to bring the partnership between the European Union and CAS to full fruition" (European Council 2007).

The objectives in this field include (all quotes from European Council 2007):

- **"development and consolidation of stable, just and open societies";**
  - good governance;
- **adhering to international norms:**
  - "human rights";
  - "fundamental freedoms";
  - "rule of law";
  - independent judiciary;
  - accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- **democratisation:**
  - "transparent political structures";
  - "active involvement of civil society";
  - "independent media";
- **social development:**
  - "implementation of ILO norms and conventions".

The instruments in this field include (all quotes from European Council 2007):

- **sharing experiences and expertise:**
  - "second judicial and administrative experts to" CAS;
  - "training opportunities to experts from" CAS;
  - "specialized conferences";
  - "technical assistance";
- **EU Rule of Law Initiative:**
  - supporting CAS in legal reforms;
- **Human Rights Dialogue:**
  - "discussing questions of mutual interest";
  - "enhancing cooperation on human rights";
  - "raising the concerns felt by the EU";
  - "information gathering";
  - starting "initiatives to improve the […] human rights situation";
- **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR):**
  - "financial and technical cooperation and specific projects";
- **cooperation with:**
  - Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
  - Council of Europe (esp. Venice Commission);
  - United Nations (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), General Assembly or the Human Rights Council);
  - coordination of Commission's and MS' projects;
  - "promote enhanced exchanges in civil society".

Strengths of Strategy Implementation

Human Rights Dialogue processes have been established with all five CAS and annual meetings on the official level take place. Before the dialogue sessions, EU officials meet with CA civil society organisations (CSO) and following the sessions briefings of EU CSOs take place. Since 2011, the EU has defined human rights strategies for all CAS for internal use only (Boonstra/Tsertsvadze/ Axyonova 2014: 14). In the cases of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan the process works in a constructive way (EUCAM 2010: 71). The EU was able to establish a process of building mutual trust for future, more result oriented projects in the field of human rights.

The Human Rights Dialogue is complemented by civil society seminars on human rights in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which work on detailed recommendations to improve the human rights situation in CA. Kyrgyz and Tajik governments agreed to participate in a dialogue with CSOs and legislation followed from the given recommendations (Boonstra/ Tsertsvadze/ Axyonova 2014: 14-15). In Uzbekistan one civil society seminar has taken place, but the Uzbek NGOs represented were just those NGOs organised by the government (EUCAM 2010: 68).

The Rule of Law Initiative has been established on two levels: high-level political dialogue (ministerial, regional and national level) and technical assistance programs. It focuses on judicial courts reforms in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, on penal reforms in Tajikistan and training programs in Turkmenistan (EUCAM 2010: 72). As France and Germany (which are co-founders with the Commission) have taken the responsibility to implement the initiative, which builds on a number of previous projects, it is a good example of using synergy effects and coherent EU activities. The initiative co-operates with the Venice Commission of which Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are MS.

Respect for democracy, international law and human rights are mentioned in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA), which have been concluded with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (all 1999) as well as Tajiskistan (2009). Just the Tajik and Uzbek PCAs link these topics with Cooperation Council meetings, which function as a bilateral steering committee for EU-CA relations, but hardly discuss such sensitive topics (Warkotsch 2011: 104-105) as they are not the best suited forum as long as conditionality is not applied to EU-CA relations. The ratification of the PCA with Turkmenistan has been suspended by the European and national parliaments for more than 10 years with regard to the human rights situation in the country.

In all five CAS, the Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) funds projects, which address good governance, on the local and national level. It focuses on judicial and parliamentary reform as well as human rights promotion on a rather technical level (Boonstra/ Tsertsvadze/Axyonova 2014: 26). In 2008 and following the 2010 crisis, the Instrument for Stability (IfS) funded projects in Kyrgyzstan.

Since 2005 CAS are included into the EIDHR, which funds projects addressing more sensitive issues in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Warkotsch 2009: 107) and a few projects in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Boonstra/ Tsertsvadze/Axyonova 2014: 26). Further spending is dedicated to CSOs and local authorities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan under the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development (NSA-LA) and to Uzbekistan under the Institution Building and Partnership Programme (IBPP) with the aim of supporting local CSOs. The latter program is a left-over from the earlier TACIS program (Boonstra/Tsertsvadze/ Axyonova 2014: 14-15).

Weaknesses of Strategy Implementation

In a comparative perspective, there has been no progress in establishing rule of law and democracy in CAS since 2007. According to Freedom House (Habdank-Kołaczkowska 2014), Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have the worst overall assessment of all CIS states and the lowest possible grades in almost all indicators[1]. They are like Kazakhstan and Tajikistan consolidated authoritarian regimes. Having a slightly better rating with regard to democratic quality, the latter show a continuous decrease during the last years. The only exception is Kyrgyzstan, whose ratings have increased since the 2010 revolution, when the EU helped to overcome the crisis. Still, it is a semi-consolidated authoritarian regime and currently following Russia on a path of decreasing democracy. The newest example is the Russian "foreign agent" law to limit foreign aid for CSOs, which has already been implemented in Uzbekistan and is currently discussed in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (Kalybekova 2014; Parshin 2014). A 2014 review of the EU policy on the promotion of democracy and human rights in CA for the European Parliament simply concludes: "The EU has little leverage in the region"(Boonstra/ Tsertsvadze/Axyonova 2014).

These results are complemented with criticism in regards to the strategic level: Melvin (2012: 2) criticises the CA strategy for replacing "the former EU position on democracy and human rights in the region" with an effect less policy dialogue. Boonstra, Tsertsvadze and Axyonova (2014: 31) seem to agree with this, when calling for a clear definition, which reform steps the EU expects from the CAS. The strategic importance of CA for the war against terrorism in Afghanistan caused a cautious EU approach in addressing democracy and human rights problems in CA. This is especially true for the relationship between Germany and Uzbekistan, where the former uses an airbase (Warkotsch 2011: 108).

The CA strategy does not mention the principle of conditionality, while the PCAs and national indicative programs do so (Warkotsch 2011: 104). With the exception of the sanctions towards Uzbekistan (following the Adijan killings), nearly all activities are dialogue oriented and below the level of negotiations (EUCAM 2010). With regard to project implementation under the DCI and IfS, Warkotsch considers the application of conditionality "half-hearted" (Warkotsch 2011: 108).

Human Rights Dialogue processes do not function well in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. While Turkmenistan tries to avoid dialogue on human rights, Uzbekistan insists on discussing the EU human rights situation (EUCAM 2010: 68). No civil society seminars on human rights take place in Turkmenistan as there is no independent civil society, while in the case of Uzbekistan no independent CSOs are represented during the seminars.

With regard to DCI implementation Boonstra, Tsertsvadze and Axyonova (2014: 26) demand better coordination between the EEAS (strategic responsibility) and the Commission (administering DCI).

Institutions

- **Civil society seminars on human rights:** Annual seminars with about 100 participants from NGOs, human rights activists, legal experts, researchers and EU representatives to discuss detailed questions of specific human rights issues and to give recommendations on improving the situation.
  - Location: All CAS, except TKM.

1 Categories of indicators are: "electoral process, civil society, independent media, national democratic governance, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, corruption and democracy score" (Habdank-Kołaczkowska 2014: 3).

- **The European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe (Venice Commission)** provides legal advice to its MS in the following three fields: "democratic institutions and fundamental rights", "constitutional justice and ordinary justice" and "elections, referendums and political parties"
  - Location: KZH and KGZ.
- **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)**: It is an EU financing instrument designed to provide support for the promotion of democracy and human rights as well as support SCOs in nonMS. EIDHR can grant aid when the EU has no formally established development cooperation. Furthermore, it can operate without having the agreement of third country governments.
  - Location: All CAS.
- **Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)**: The DCI, its predecessor was TACIS, is a EU funding instrument for developing countries (including CAS) for regional and thematic programs, which aim at poverty reduction, sustainable development, the UN Millennium Development Goals, promotion of democracy, good governance, respect for human rights and for the rule of law. For CA there are regional and bilateral programs. Projects funded by the DCI (previous funding period) were the Rule of Law Initiative, the Education Initiative and the Environment and Water Initiative.
  - Location: All CAS.
- **Human Rights Dialogue**: Annual bilateral dialogues to discuss the human rights situation in CA on an official level. It includes meetings of EU officials with human rights activists in the CAS and the EU.
  - Location: All CAS.
- **Institution Building and Partnership Programme (IBPP)**: IBPP was an EU funding program to strengthen civil society by supporting and enabling CSO. It expired in 2011.
- **Instrument for Stability (IfS)**: IfS is one of the Commission's means to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building. It is a EU funding program, which addresses global security and development challenges in emerging crisis and post-crisis countries, when financial help cannot be provided from other EU sources in due time. Location: KGZ in 2008 and 2010.
- **Non-state actors and local authorities in development (NSA-LA)**: NSA-LA is a program funded by the EU under the DCI, which addresses CSOs and local authorities working in the fields of health, education and rural development. It aims at strengthening the actors' capacity to provide help and at facilitating cooperation on the local level.
  - Location: All CAS.
- **Rule of Law Initiative**: Co-funded (with the Commission) and implemented by France and German the initiative aims to modernize the legal sector in the CAS. It takes place on a political (ministerial, regional and national) level through technical assistance programs.
  - Location: All CAS.
- **Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)**: Initiated in 1991, TACIS was an EU funding program to support the transition process in the Soviet Union and its succeeding states (CIS states). Being three times renewed before expiring in 2006, its objectives became broader over time: Initially aiming at supporting the transition to market economy, the last regulation covered the fields institutional and legal reforms,

economic development, social consequences of transition, infrastructure, natural resources and rural economy.

- Location: All CAS.

Challenges

One problem fits all: The central challenge in promoting human rights, rule of law and democratisation in CA is that the EU does not face countries in transition, but consolidated (in the Kyrgyz case a semi-consolidated) authoritarian regimes. Breaking-up established structures isthe first step to reforms (Warkotsch 2011: 109), while the EU mainly has experiences in supporting ongoing transition in CIS states. However, Freedom House (Habdank-Kołaczkowska 2014) has identified an unequivocal trend of the CAS following the Russian model towards stable authoritarianism.

Warkotsch (2014: 111) considers neo-patrimonialism a central challenge to the EU's efforts in the field of good governance, as it is a trait of CA clan cultures that is fully incompatible to any Western standards concerning good governance and the fight against corruption.

Uncontrolled break-up of established structures could soon become a major challenge in the region, as the (semi-)consolidated authoritarian regimes run the risk of collapse in the near future. The power equilibriums are balanced around powerful (old) rulers, which poses the question of how to orderly organize power transitions? So far no succession plans seem to exist, meaning that the question of democracy promotion might soon turn into a question of system stability. Melvin (2012: 6) proposes that the EU should establish conflict resolution structures for the future.

Even though there are three general trends similar in all CAS, the measures in the field of democracy promotion, human rights, rule of law and good governance need to be tailored for each CAS individually.

With regards to the strategic and administrative level of EU support for CAS in the discussed field, Boonstra, Tsertsvadze and Axyonova (2014: 32) recommend a reduction of priority areas, a stronger emphasis on monitoring and evaluation and a better coordination between the EU institutions. They propose that the Council's Working Party on Human Rights could do the formal assessment of the Human Rights Dialogue (Boonstra/Tsertsvadze/Axyonova 2014: 14). In its 2012 progress report, the EU agrees with the need for a strong result-orientation of the Human Rights Dialogue.

Country Specific challenges: So far the activities in the field of human rights have focussed on building mutual trust. As this functioned well in the cases of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the EU's human rights promotion activities should become more result oriented. EUCAM (2010: 71) proposed to use the civil society seminar recommendations as bench-marks to measure progress and the participants for monitoring. Boonstra, Tsertsvadze and Axyonova (2014: 14) propose further to link the Human Rights Dialogue to the political dialogues on a higher (ministerial) level. With regard to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan it is necessary to continue in building trust. In the case of Uzbekistan, EUCAM proposes to fulfil Uzbekistan's request for a symmetrical dialogue and discuss the EU human rights situation to give best practice examples.

Some authors question whether a (to be defined) minimum implementation of human rights and a functioning legal system are prerequisites, which have to be fulfilled, before democracy promotion can be addressed in EUCA relations (EUCAM 2010). Others argue that focussing on good governance keeps the door open for reforms, while insistence on democracy would slam the door at once (Warkotsch 2011: 110). Accordingly, the 2012 progress report defines institutional capacity building as one of the future key action points. But it also defines the goal of supporting

national democratic reform agendas, especially with regards to constitutional reforms and electoral legislation. This raises the question, whether there are national reform agendas that can be supported? However, in order to achieve short-term progress, EU actions and measures have to be tailored to country-specific needs, when addressing CA state institutions.

The future focus of enhancing the support for civil society development (following the examples of the Eastern Partnership and EURussian relations), as announced in the 2012 progress report and supported by Boonstra, Tsertsvadze and Axyonova (2014: 32), could become counterproductive, as Freedom House (Habdank-Kołaczkowska 2014) points out that some CAS started following the example of Russia's "foreign agents" law. Thus, foreign aid for CSOs could do more harm to the development of civil society than good. As it is impossible to organise civil society seminars in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Boonstra, Tsertsvadze and Axyonova (2014: 31) propose to invite representatives to forums outside their home country.

Reforming the legal sector is a long term task, which barely produces short term results, and needs continuous EU activities in the region. The EU commits itself to this engagement in the

2012 progress report, especially with regard to independent judiciaries, modernising professional qualifications, penal systems, the fight against corruption and implementing international conventions.

Julian Plottka

4. Investing in the Future: Youth and Education

Objectives

The young population constitutes a significant share of the population in CA region. Half of the region's population is under 30 years (Warkotsch

2011: 115). Therefore the region needs to open up chances for this young generation by providing good education to support political, economic and social progress.

Because "Central Asia's future will be shaped by its young people" (European Council 2007) the EU "set up the 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" (European Council 2007).

Therefor the EU offers support in the following fields:

- Primary and secondary school education;
- vocational education and training;
- higher education cooperation, e.g. academic and student exchanges, scholarships;
- development of regional education centres, open European Studies Institutes;
- establishing an "e-silk-highway", which links CA researchers and students with the EU e-network;
- promoting long distance learning (European Council 2007).

Strengths of Strategy implementation

Since the declaration of its CA strategy in 2007, the EU put a lot of effort in enhancing local education and thereby focused on high education and vocational education, trainings, higher education cooperation as well as exchange programs.

The European Education Initiative for CA relies on existing activities and national as well as regional support by the EU and coordinates with other international donors. The Initiative is subdivided into 3 parts but the main dimensions are part 1 and 2 (Emerson/Boonstra 2010: 69, 70, 74):

- **1.** EU-Central Asia Education Platform;
- **2.** practical programs;
- **3.** information and communication actions.

The EU-Central Asia Education Platform organizes meetings at high as well as technical level with CAS (Emerson/Boonstra 2010: 74) for analyzing and identifying important issues on education. The platform also informs national authorities of existing funding opportunities and gives advices for developing and implementing programs. There exist three levels of dialogue (European Council 2007):

- Meetings of the ministers of education: Commission, EU Presidency and ministerial representatives of CAS discuss the development of education.
- Technical working groups at regional level: CAS chair these meetings, give recommendations for the coordination of regional programs of common interests and lead discussion about how to pool EU MS and Commission resources.
- National level dialogues about modernizing education: These dialogues provide information about funding opportunities, programs etc. to national authorities.

A range of operational programs diversifies the offer of education opportunities. These programs are: Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies (TEMPUS), Erasmus Mundus, European Training Foundation, Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREN) and further programs by EU MS.

The TEMPUS program (funded by DCI) supports the modernization of higher education and cooperates with countries surrounding the EU. It focuses on two kinds of action in CAS: the joint projects, which are for cooperation between higher education institutions from the EU and CAS to reform curricula, teaching methods, materials and also to improve the policy and management. Structural measures assist the modernization of higher education institutions and systems to improve the quality in CAS. The analysis of TEMPUS shows that it contributes most to CA educational sector reforms in countries, which are open to international influence (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan). Especially Kazakhstan shows a very positive development under TEMPUS according to latest evaluations. The assessment of Tajikistan's progress underlines that the country shows a mildly positive development and wait-and-see reaction.

Erasmus Mundus is a European cooperation and mobility program, which not only offers its programs for EU students but also for CA students and scholars through its exchange program (Warkotsch 2011: 120). It is a subset from the Erasmus program and aims to promote a cultural dialog and to support higher education. It is subdivided into six groups. Three of them are led by Eindhoven University of Technology and three by Erasmushogeschool of Brussels. Each group consists of about 8 European and 6-10 CA universities. The idea of Erasmus Mundus is a mobility scheme for individuals. Three quarters are Central Asians spending time at EU universities and one quarter are Europeans spending time in CA. In the last years the funding was doubled from €5 million to €10 million (Emerson/Boonstra 2010:75). An independent evaluation underlines the success of this program, but the program could not exist without continuous EU funding (Osborn 2010).

The Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window's (ECW) aim is to achieve a better mutual understanding by promoting partnerships and institutional exchange

between EU and third country higher education institutions. As labour mobility is an aim of the Bologna Process, it imports students from CA to the EU and exports the Bologna Process to CA (Warkotsch 2011: 120, 121).

The European Training Foundation (ETF) "helps transition and developing countries to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems" (ETF 2014). In the field of education it focuses on activities for reducing poverty. Vocational Education Training (VET) is a project where ETF cooperates with youths and adults in local schools and community training centres for social support. ETF also supports the project "Skills Development for Poverty Reduction" on school level (Warkotsch 2011: 121, 122).

Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREN) installed a high speed broadband network for students and researchers from around 200 CA universities and research institutes linking them with the EU. It was financially supported with €5 million from the EU during 2009-2011 (Emerson/ Boonstra 2010: 75). Some authors described CAREN as one of the most successful projects of the European Education Initiative (Warkotsch 2011: 123).

As communication and information actions, the EU holds events and publishes information material about EU support for modernizing the education system and exchange programs for students (European Council 2007):

- information days about the European Education Initiative;
- a summary about education and training opportunities in the EU;
- web links at headquarters' and EU Delegations' level, which provide information on EU projects and exchange programs for CAS.

Weaknesses of Strategy Implementations

Some authors criticize that the CA strategy is more a range of programs than a policy towards youth and education (Warkotsch 2011: 123). It is successful in academic exchange programs and enhancing exchange of knowledge by installing high speed broadband network, but the fundamental concerns are merely touched (Warkotsch 2011: 124).

Warkotsch criticizes that EU's basic objectives in CA – creating more security and stability – should be implemented through more specific and direct projects and a clearer focus on structural change for tackling instability. In contrary, programs like ECW focus on education which is a private good and support only people who have already advantages e.g. private capital, knowledge of foreign languages (Warkotsch 2011: 121). He argues that education can play an important role in stabilising the CAS and the youth can participate actively (Warkotsch 2011: 124).

Warkotsch states that the CA strategy does not address the need of the CAS, but those of the "globalized world". All these programs are "export-driven". They spread the EU's idea of "modernizing" respectively Europeanising CA education systems (Warkotsch 2011: 127).

Due to the lack of an assessment of the educational needs in CA there is no differentiation and specification between the CAS. For example the needs in very poor Tajikistan are different to those in gas-rich Turkmenistan. Warkotsch criticizes that TEMPUS as well as Erasmus Mundus programs do not differ enough among their local programs. The only exception is ETF, which focuses on poverty reduction and therefore made efforts in analysing the situation in all CAS.

In countries which are less open (Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) the TEMPUS program focuses more on basic supply and on what is possible e.g. energy

technology, IT, agriculture. Turkmenistan has in the last few years reintroduced its five years diploma after the two years of higher education under the previous president Niyazov (Executive Agency 2009): But the TEMPUS program had a significant impact on the modernization of universities even though the Bologna process has not been implemented (Warkotsch 2011: 119).

Institutions

- EU Central Asia Education Platform: political dialog platform, which organizes meetings at high-level as well as technical working groups with CAS.
  - Location: KZH, KGZ, TJK, TKM, UZB.
- Erasmus Mundus: European cooperation and mobility program for EU as well as CA students and scholars. It is a subset from the Erasmus program and is subdivided into six groups, which consist of 8 EU and 6-10 CA universities. Three groups are led by Eindhoven University of Technology and three by the Erasmushogeschool of Brussels.
  - Locations: Almaty (KZH), Bishkek (KGZ), Dushanbe (TJK), Ashkhabad (TKM), Tashkent (UZB).
- European Training Foundation: The ETF concentrates on activities for reducing poverty. Location: Turin (ITA).

Challenges

One problem fits all: Independent universities play a crucial role because the standards of education in CA state universities are low and corruption is very common (Emerson/Boonstra 2010: 76). Concerning the Erasmus Mundus program, some critical voices argument that it is not yet sufficiently adapted to CAS' circumstances (Emerson/Boonstra 2010: 75).

Aline Medow

5. Promotion of Economic Development, Trade and Investment

Policy Objectives

The objectives in this field include:

- removal of trade barriers;
- support of accession of CAS to the World Trade Organisation (WTO);
- establishing regulatory and institutional frameworks, which improve the environment for business and investment in the CAS;
- improve access of CA products to the EU common market;
- improving the CA transport, energy and trade infrastructure;
- establishing of market economy structures.

Strengths of Strategy Implementation

The foundations have been laid for more advanced economic cooperation between the EU and CAS in the future. This mainly means that the EU-presence in CA has been increased and that important institutions are better represented, a list of which can be found on the next page. The EU is now seen as an important economic partner by all the CAS which was not necessarily the case before the implementation of the CA strategy.

Kyrgyzstan (1998) and Tajiskistan (2013) have joined the WTO. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have observer status. Kazakhstan is now in an advanced stage of accession negotiations with the WTO, partly due to help from the EU. It has also offered assistance to Turkmenistan once they indicate that it wishes to join the WTO.

After PCAs with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have already been in force since 1999; one new PCA with Tajikistan came into force in 2010. The

negotiations on an enhanced PCA with Kazakhstan have been successfully completed in 2014. Agreement on another PCA has been reached with Turkmenistan, yet ratification is still outstanding, as certain EU MS and the European Parliament stopped the ratification.

The mandate for the European Investment Bank (EIB) has been expanded to cover CA and this has already led to a large amount of EU funded programs in CA. Furthermore the Investment Facility for Central Asia (IFCA) has been founded which will help European investors in CA.

The General System of Preferences for 2014 is the best yet at benefitting CAS and promoting their exports to the EU as well as diversifying these. Preferential treatment has been allowed for the poorest countries (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan) in the region to help promote economic growth.

The EU is the largest trade and investment partner of Kazakhstan and this relationship is developing healthily. Negotiations on an enhanced PCA have been concluded, which will strengthen the relationship even more.

Weaknesses of Strategy Implementation

On all levels of implementation, corruption has delivered setbacks and leads to efficiency problems. This can only be countered by strengthening civil society and the rule of law, projects are underway.

Despite the institutional framework being developed, major problems remain in improving economic ties; EU investment in CAS has remained low and as a result economic ties between the regions have not increased by much. This is closely linked to the uncertainty for private partners due to the unreliable legal structures in CAS.

Institutions

- **Central Asia Invest (CAI)**: CAI focuses on attracting EU investments and reinforcing business intermediary organizations working with small and medium enterprises. CAI is part of EuropeAid.
  - Location: Brussels (BEL).
- **Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)**: The DCI is an EU funding instrument for projects in CA that are in line with the EU policy objectives for CA (grants).
- **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**: EBRD finances a multitude of different projects that are in line with the EU policy objectives for CA (loans).
  - Locations: representations in KZH, KGZ, TJK, TKM.
- **European Investment Bank (EIB)**: EIB finances projects in the energy, transport and environmental sectors since 2008 (loans).
  - Location: Luxembourg (LUX).
- **Investment Facility for Central Asia (IFCA)**: The IFCA is a new organization that helps and attempts to attract potential investors in CA.
  - Location: Astana (KZH).

Challenges

One problem fits all: With the exception of Kazakhstan all CAS still have strong protectionist measures in place that were introduced in the 1990's (although many have already been reduced). Removing these measures has been and will be a difficult process as they help the ruling elites stay in power and they are generally popular with the people. However they also prevent these countries from WTO accession, as the countries themselves are reluctant to agree with the WTO principles. All CAS need help to diversify their exports as every country currently has a very limited spectrum of products, most of which are primary resources. For this they will need large-scale technical assistance over an extended amount of time.

Country-specific: It is as of yet unclear what the expansion of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia into an internal market will mean for EU-Kazakh economic relations. There are fears that Turkmenistan uses increased EU-relations only to gain leverage on Russia, but that real cooperation in the sense that the EU hopes for will never be established. This would mean that investment and cooperation would not lead to improved economic ties in the future (Warkotsch

2011: 59). Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan seem to see the EU mainly as an assistance provider and less as an economic partner. Their current economic state means that poverty-reduction is the first priority in these countries, while economic integration with the EU could even be harmful for these nations. The lack of proper infrastructure and the resulting relative isolation of these countries will also have to be properly addressed before real advances can be made.

Jan van der Lingen

6. Strengthening Energy and Transport Links

Policy Objectives

The objectives in these fields include:

- promote the development and expansion of regional infrastructure for both transport and energy; both to improve CAS' economic potential and to make it into an important transport-corridor;
- encourage policy reform in the area of transport to increase security and compatibility with the EU;
- provide energy security to create stability in CA and to diversify the EU's energy supply and supply-routes;
- promote the creation of an integrated CA energy market, that converges with EU Single Market principles;
- support public-private cooperation to attract EU investments in CAS;
- support the development of the CA energy market by providing assistance in capacitybuilding and governance of energy as well as enhanced technological cooperation;
- support the development of sustainable energy sources as well as promote energy-saving and efficiency;
- create an enhanced regular energy dialogue under the Baku initiative (Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation Europe, INOGATE).

Strengths of Strategy implementation

The development of cooperation and coordination in the energy fields under the Baku-initiative is responsible for regular meetings on a ministerial level in the fields of energy and transport.

European involvement in the CA energy sector is in regards to EU standards of transparency, social responsibility and accountability a big improvement on the existing Soviet fuelindustries.

INOGATE has promoted policy reform in the energy field, resulting in policy convergence with the EU in the fields of energy legislation, energy standards and energy regulation as well as energy market integration and sustainable energy.

Negotiations are underway for a legally binding treaty to be signed between the EU and Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan respectively to build a Trans-Caspian pipeline. If this pipeline comes into use, it will connect the EU and the CA markets faster and more directly. It also means that gas will no longer have to travel through Russia, providing enhanced energy security for the EU. The South-East Pan-European Corridor through the Caspian sea has been strengthened and

improved upon. Most importantly the ports in Aktau and Turkmenbashi have been developed further with EU aid, improving transport ties from CA to Baku. This is in line with the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Central Asia (TRACECA) project and objectives, aiming to increase transport capacities between the two regions. The project provides the co-operation framework.

The EU has increased and deepened bilateral co-operation with the three major energy producers: Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. A MoU on future cooperation in the field of energy was signed in 2012 with Turkmenistan, giving the green light for enhanced cooperation in the exploitation of Turkmenistan's considerable fossil resources.

Weaknesses of Strategy Implementation

The TRACECA project mainly aims at establishing transport routes from Europe to CA, by financing and coordinating local or national infrastructure projects. However local support for Eurocentric routes is not as high as expected and thus work is often slow. The importance of Western China-EU transport routes or routes connecting CA to the Indian Ocean, which could possibly have a larger positive effect for the region, have been neglected. The lack of EU-initiative and action, which is leading to other players taking over the construction of infrastructure, and the lack of coordination with other players might lead to three transport corridors that do not converge. Cooperation would save both costs and increase efficiency, while obtaining the same objectives (EUCAM 2010).

The idea of the CA strategy is among others to reduce EU dependence on Russian gas. This includes construction of new pipelines and modes of transportation. It is, however, not certain that the countries that will be connected to the EU will be able to supply enough gas in the coming years to really make a difference as a lot of their production still has to be developed (Warkotsch 2011).

Despite years of talking about a southern energy corridor and INOGATE involvement of CAS, there is still no direct pipeline running between Europe and the region that does not cross through Russia.

Meanwhile China opened a pipeline in 2009 that was completed in record-time. The EU wants more cooperation in this field, but little is actually being accomplished.

Institutions

- **European Investment Bank (EIB)**: The EIB finances projects in the energy, transport and environmental sectors since 2008 (loans).
  - Location: Luxembourg (LUX).
- **European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI):** The ENPI is an EU instrument for assistance to CAS and other developingstates; it aims among other objectives for achieving INOGATE objectives.
- **Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation Europe (INOGATE)**: The aims of INOGATE are the convergence of the CA energy market along European internal market principles, improving energy security and expanding sustainable energy initiatives.
  - Location: Tashkent (UZB).
- **Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Central Asia (TRACECA)**: TRACECA coordinates and develops infrastructure in CA and the Caucasus to better connect Europe with the region.
  - Location: Represented by government officials in all countries but TKM.

Challenges

One problem fits all: All CAS suffer from a low level of energy-efficiency, an excessive style of energy consumption and a low degree of renewables. All countries in the region have low levels of infrastructure in both the energy and transport sectors and

need considerable investments there. A lot of the infrastructure are the remains from Soviet times and needs to be modernised.

Country-specific: Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are net-importers of energy, while Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are exporters. This creates big differences in the approach needed to deal with these countries. Another difference is that Uzbekistan's energy resources are nearing depletion, while those of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have only been developed to a small extent. Turkmenistan is still reluctant to accept foreign influence, despite agreements on expanded technical cooperation that have been signed. Turkmenistan's fears that the EU will meddle with internal affairs might lead them to look in other directions for their exports, although nominally they are open to exporting to all sides.

Jan van der Lingen

7. Environmental Sustainability and Water

Policy Objectives

The policy objectives in this field include:

- implementation of the Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) component of the EU Water Initiative (EUWIEECCA) that deals with the tasks of water supply, sanitation and integrated water resources management;
- trans-boundary management of water resources in river basins;
- regional cooperation under the Caspian SeaEnvironmental Convention;
- integrated management of multi-country water resources (surface and underground), incl. the promotion new techniques for a more efficient use of water;
- cooperation to finance infrastructure andprojects related to water;
- capacity building in the fields of integrated water management and hydro-power;
- cooperation with CAS on climate change (incl. the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol);
- cooperation with CAS to stop desertification and to safeguarde biodiversity (incl. the implementation of the UN Convention on Biological Biodiversity and the UN Convention on Combating Desertification);
- sustainable management of natural resources (including forests), by providing assistance for the indicative action sunder the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Process (FLEG);
- increased awareness for the protection of the environment;
- development of civil society active in the field of environment protection (incl. cooperation with the Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre (CAREC).

Strengths of Strategy Implementation

Concerning the areas of water management and environment, the strengths of the CA strategy lie mostly in fostering cooperation in research and science and encouraging trans-boundary governance.

The EU-CA Joint Expert Working Group established in 2007 serves as the key architect for implementing the water and environmental aspects of the CA strategy. In terms of increasing cooperation between CAS, the Commission supports with a sum of €15 million the projects of the EUWI but also the development of an international convention on the Ili-BalkhashBasin between Kazakhstan and China, and transboundary water management of the Syr Darya between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The first progress report on the implementation in 2008 reports several concrete actions including: the training of government officials on small hydropower plants and renewable

energy, the Aarhus convention and the Caspian Environmental Protection Convention, support of activities in implementing the Kyoto Protocols, and the support of CAREC.

Another contribution of the CA strategy which has led to strengthened cooperation and transference of knowledge is the so called 'Berlin Process'. Outlined in 2008, the Berlin process has realized a new regional research network Water in Central Asia (CAWa) under the leadership of the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ), the main partner in CA being Central-Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences (CAIAG).

Therefore it can be concluded that the CA strategy has enabled, if limited, cooperation on a regional level as well as the bilateral (between EU and CAS).

Weaknesses of Strategy Implementation

Although EU engagement in the region has intensified dialogue on water issues between the EU and CAS and amongst CA governments, no comprehensive efforts exist to solve the problems of water scarcity, pollution, and addressing the water-energy nexus.

This was most apparent when in November 2009 two working groups, one on environmental governance and the other on climate change, were established. Commenters pointed out that the water situation risks being worsened if environmental programmes only add on water programs and are not mainstreamed in major infrastructural planning. In this way, the cross cutting character of water management and governance is neglected. Furthermore, the water-energy nexus is neglected as well, as the existing strategy does not include hydro-power regulation or any attempts to alter the energy mix of CAS.

The strategy is formulated in very general terms and recommendations are vague. Although the EUWI aims for a partnership approach involving a wide range of stakeholders, the dialogue has failed so far to integrate local non-state actors in the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) planning process such as those from the private sector (agriculture, industry, etc.) and civil society. For example, the aforementioned German initiative completely neglects the need for strengthening environmental awareness.

Institutions

- **Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia component of the EU Water Initiative (EECCA-EUWI)**: EECCA-EUWI includes representatives of all partner countries (incl. NGOs, private sector and IO). It promotes cooperation among them, monitors progress achieved and approves annual work programs.
  - Location: ARM, AZE, BLR, GEO, KZH, KGZ, MDA, RUS, TJK, TKM, UKR, UZB.
- **Central Asian Research and Education Network (CAREC)**: CAREC started operating in 2001 and aims at promoting cooperation across sectors to address environmental problems in CA on all levels (local, national and regional).
  - Location: HQ in Almaty (KZH), offices in KGZ, TJK, TKM, UZB.
- **International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)**: Supported by the CA governments, IFAS is an IO, which promotes cooperation for the Aral Sea Basin on the national as well as the international level with the aim of using water resources more efficiently, and improving the ecological as well as the socioeconomic situation.
  - Location: executive committee (EC IFAS) in Almaty (KZH).
- **Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC)**: The joint body consists of all CAS and regulates the flow of the Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers, the two largest sources of water in the Aral Sea Basin.

Challenges

One problem fits all:

- Climate change:
  - Will decrease glacial discharge and severely affect water supply for the downstream CAS, who already face shortage (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan).
  - Water demand will increase as rising temperatures will increase evaporation rates.
  - Further degradation of the small amount of arable land would severely impact the poor of CA who live at a subsistence level.
- Energy vs. agriculture interests: As the current quota system, established during the Soviet era, disadvantages upstream states, severe tension between CAS arise over water rights:
  - Upstream CAS (Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan) give priority to discharging water in the winter, to generate power, because they lack the means to create their own energy. Therefore they are seeking to build hydroelectric dams to become self-sufficient (Tajikistan seeking to complete the Rogun dam, Kyrgyzstan building the Kambarata II dam).
  - Downstream CAS (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan) give priority to discharging water in the summer for irrigation. They often face severe water shortages. Aforementioned dams will only increase water shortages and hurt the agricultural sectors, particularly in Uzbekistan.
- Lack of working management mechanisms: Though there are mechanisms in place for regional water management such as the ICWC, the reality on the ground is that these mechanisms have not facilitated adequate cooperation between CAS to ensure that water and power needs are met.
- Water mismanagement: inadequate infrastructure, outdated techniques, lack of knowledge among farmers and administration.
- Environmental degradation:
  - Decades of only planting cotton (a crop which demands a high yield of nutrients from the soil) have depleted the soil leading to salinization of the fields which leads to desertification.
  - Serious problems with water pollution, the main source of which is return-water from irrigation.

Andrew Campbell

8. Combating Common Threats and Challenges

Policy Objectives

The policy objectives in this field include:

- dialogue and cooperation on migration between the CAS and with regions involved outside CA;
- border management:
  - step up support in developing modern border management, including borders in CA and with AFG;
  - broaden Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) activities and make use of synergy effects with custom services reform projects;
  - better coordination and cooperation of BOMCA with the OSCE and other border projects;
- fight against crime:
  - assist in combating organized crime;
  - step up cooperation with CAS to combat international terrorism;
  - strengthen the fight against drug trafficking;

- cooperate with China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on combating drug-trafficking.

Strengths of Strategy implementation

The strength of the current CA strategy has been the increased cooperation between actors in CA and the material and technical assistance provided at the micro-level.

In the area of Security, the CA strategy has strengthened engagement with the CAS in the areas of counter-terrorism, border management, and drug trafficking. Through the Joint Plan of Action, all five CAS have agreed to implement the UN Global Terrorism Strategy. Furthermore, the EU has responded to the various security challenges by stepping up dialogue and cooperation in a comprehensive manner.

The 2010 Kyrgyz crisis illustrated the efficacy of the CA strategy in assisting with security situations that have cross-border ramifications. The crisis exhibited the benefits of the level of coordination achieved since 2007, namely, the EU's rapid response and assistance in crisis management, made possible through close coordination with the UN and the OSCE. To secure a response in due time, the IfS was used. The response included humanitarian assistance, reconstruction of housing, reforming the constitution, media reform, organizing a referendum, as well as preparing presidential and parliamentary elections.

Beyond deepened cooperation between the EU and CA, EU financial instruments have been successfully implemented in supporting the strategy's objectives in CA. Specifically the largest accomplishments have come in the form of technical assistance at the micro-level. The two flagship programs BOMCA and Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) remain the lynchpins of the EU's efforts in CA in the area of security. BOMCA in particular has provided equipment and training to border officials within the region as well as the borders of CA and neighbouring Afghanistan. Key milestones have been reached including the creation of joint border posts with the aim of facilitating cross-border control of the movement of people and goods. In addition, BOMCA has facilitated the creation of border management and security data base for CA. BOMCA has been described as a sound model for providing border control assistance due to its comprehensive nature (EUCAM 2010). Furthermore, the programs' work has cost the EU relatively little in terms of funding, only €50 million. The adoption of the newest iteration of CADAP by a number of MS has also provided for added visibility of the EU in the region and has facilitated the use of EU expertise and experience, particularly in the drug demand issues. Though BOMCA has reported increased drug seizure rates, it should be noted that it is unclear whether this is a result of improved border management or increased trafficking.

In addition to border crossing points, the EU is a noteworthy donor to supporting rule of law and economic development in Afghanistan, whose internal workings are of great security concern to Central Asia. Through both BOMCA and the Border Management Northern Afghanistan Programme (BOMNAF), the EU has supported integrated border management between Afghanistan and the CA states.

In the area of illegal intra and inter-regional migration, the EU supports the Central Asian Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction (CACDRRR) in Kazakhstan through the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department's Disaster Preparedness Programme (DIPECHO).

In summation the CA strategy has been successfully at providing micro-level technical assistance to promote better border management and security. In addition, the comprehensive approach of the strategy has fostered the kind of cooperation between actors which is necessary if successes are to be sustained.

Weaknesses of Strategy Implementation

Despite the aforementioned milestones in technical assistance and cooperation that have been attained, the actual impact EU-assistance has made on the ground is much more difficult to determine.

As could be expected, CA regimes have invariably paid lip service to reforms while still allowing the illegal movement of persons and drugs through their borders within CA and between CA and Afghanistan. Therefore, it can be said that the partnership between CAS and the EU in security assistance is a one-way relationship in which CA regimes feign adherence to EU objectives while insisting on a narrow definition of security that does not include liberalization and development (Czerniecka/Heathershaw 2011).

Closely related to the hesitant reaction of the CAS to adhere EU objective is another crucial problem in the field of security, especially with regard to border management, which is corruption. The ruling elites are able to accept the EU resources while still emphasizing its goals of resisting reforms, because they are afraid of losing revenues from corruption. One BOMCA representative noted with regard to the situation in Tajikistan that "People who are corrupt are experienced in dealing with border management […] if we remove them none will be left" (Czerniecka/ Heathershaw 2011). But there is little choice for international actors but to work through the local system, financing for infrastructure and training is outsourced by BOMCA to local (state) sources. Thus in the case of Tajikistan, the problem can be seen as stemming as much from 'the state' as much as 'the state' can be viewed as being part of the solution.

Another criticism of the EU approach has been the failure to accept a fundamental difference between EU's and the CAS' views on security; namely, that CAS view border management/ security as a being military operations as opposed to the EU view that border troops should be transformed into modern law enforcement agencies. Given that Russia and China also perceive border issues through a military lens, the SCO may push CA away from the EU civilian management model (Czerniecka/Heathershaw 2011). Following this train of thinking, the microlevel assistance that has been achieved so far by BOMCA through the current approach disregards the macro-level disagreements of security and development, thus limiting the effectiveness of EU activities.

Aside from this a number of enhancements can be made to increase the effectiveness of current EU assistance. The EU should enhance cooperation between BOMCA, the OSCE and the SCO, to avoid the EU and SCO workings towards opposite means. Also BOMCA should create synergies with international actors attempting to expand training efforts for Afghan border police and border authorities, a specific example of this being Border Management Badahkstan (BOMBAF) in Tajikistan.

Furthermore, the EU is as of now barely directly engaged in security sector reform, which could perhaps benefit from the BOMCA model being applied. The EU should support small scale civil society projects through EIDHR, NSA-LA, and MS funding.

Finally a problem with the current assistance to CAS from the EU is that by strengthening borders between CAS, legitimate economic movement and thus development and economic diversification are being hindered (something which the EU has already admitted to as early as 2002).

Institutions

- Border Management Central Asia (BOMCA): BOMCA was proposed by the Austrian Interior Ministry following 9/11 as a medium-sized programme in the Ferghana valley. It promotes the stability and security of CAS through integrated border management and regional cooperation between CAS. The largest

successes have come from the training of border guards and construction of border crossing points.

- ► Location: Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), covers KZH, KGZ, TJK, TKM, UZB.

- **Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP)**: CADAP is a partner organization to BOMCA and helps to develop better drug policies. It brings together a consortium of EU MS under the coordination of the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)[2].
- **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP**): The joint sponsor along with the EU of the CADAP and BOMCA programs, though now CADAP is supported by a number of MS.
- **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE**): The OSCE aims at enhancing border security and at facilitating legitimate border traffic, while protecting human rights. The OSCE Border Management Staff College trains border officers from OSCE MS and partner countries (incl. Afghanistan). It promotes cross-border co-operation in CA.
  - ► Location: OSCE Academy: Bishkek (KGZ); OSCE Boarder College: Dushanbe (UZB).
- **Instrument for Stability (IfS)**: IfS is one of the Commission's means to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building. It is a EU funding program, which addresses global security and development challenges in emerging crisis and post-crisis countries, when financial help cannot be provided from other EU sources in due time.
  - ► Location: KGZ in 2008 and 2010.
- **Disaster Preparedness Echo (DIPHECHO)**: EU financial instrument, which gives grants to local and regional authorities, administrations, agencies, chambers, development NGOs and non-profits organisations to ensure preparedness for risks of natural or other disasters and to create a suitable rapid earlywarning and intervention system.
- **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)**: EU financing instrument designed to provide support for the promotion of democracy and human rights as well as support SCOs in non-MS EIDHR can grant aid when the EU has no formally established development cooperation. Furthermore, it can operate without having the agreement of third country governments.
  - ► Location: All CAS.
- **Border Management Northern Afghanistan (BOMNAF)**: EU funded project that intends to improve cross border cooperation, legal trade, travel and commerce as well as to reduce crime along Afghan border with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It provides infrastructure, training and equipment to the Afghan Border Police (ABP) deployed on Afghanistan's northern frontier.
  - ► Location: Dushanbe (TJK).
- **Border Management in Badakshan (BOMBAF):** BOMBAF was implemented by the UNDP from 2007 until 2010. It rebuilt three important Tajik border crossing points and trained border officers, especially in the fight against drug trafficking.
  - ► Location: Badakshan (TJK).
- **Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI)**: CABSI was launched by the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior in 2003. It aim is "to provide a forum for coordination and discussion of programme activities and strategic objectives of the EU-funded BOMCA" (European External Action Service 2013).

2 On behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Health.

Challenges

One problem fits all:

- Border management:
  - Drug trafficking occurs across all CA borders and across CAS-Afghanistan borders, large amounts of drugs are transported (by organized crime and terrorist groups) from Afghanistan into CA.
  - There is simply not enough money for border management.
  - Military vs. Civilian mind set: CA governments (like Russia and China) tend to think of border management in military terms, whereas the EU envisions that borders be managed by police force.
- Afghanistan: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan share border with Afghanistan, however all CAS are affected on a security level by events occurring in Afghanistan, especially through drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism. A deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan would invariably worsen the security situation in CA.
- Bad Governance: High levels of corruption throughout all CA governments; especially corrupt border guards, who profit from the drug trade, undermining efforts to control trafficking and thus security.
- Development vs. Security: Strengthened border management can result in hindering legitimate economic movement and development.

Country-specific:

- Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan can all be considered quasi narco-states, meaning that every level of authority in the government receive money from the drug trade.
- Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan can be credited with attempting to wage war on the drug mafias in their respective countries.

Andrew Campbell

9. Bilateral or Regional: What Kind of Cooperation?

The EU policy for CA includes bilateral as well as regional approaches to achieve the objectives of the CA strategy. The renewed DCI earmarks funds for country-specific and for regional programs. Even though the common history and cultural heritage of the five CAS cannot be denied, they, not to speak about the wider CA region, do not think about themselves as a room for common political action. This fact poses a large question mark to attempts addressing CA problems and achieving CA strategy objectives by using a regional approach. Whether a country specific or a regional approach in EU CA policy is more promising depends on the situation in the region: Can a challenge be addressed by the policy of one CAS or is the problem unsolvable without cross-border cooperation? Do the CAS face country specific challenges or is the situation in all five CAS a like, allowing for a one size fits all approach? The external perception of the CAS as one region or common heritage and history are no sufficient justification for a regional approach in dealing with current challenges.

In the light of the previous synopsis of the CA strategy reviews, the following section tries to give a preliminary answer to the question, in which policy fields (of the CA strategy) a regional approach seems to be promising and in which fields country specific policies might be more fruitful.

Democracy Promotion

With regard to the democratic quality Western observers are used to see the CAS through the lens of (quantitative) comparative system analysis and consider them to be consolidated authoritarian regimes or semi-consolidated authoritarian regimes, as in the case of Kyrgyzstan. A closer look, which is

Table 1: Overview of the Regional Dimensions of Policy Challenges in CA

Policy Field	Wider Regional Approach	Regional Approach	Specific Approach
	EU, all CAS, RUS, PRC, AFG and IO	EU, all CAS	EU, one CAS
Democracy Promotion	-	Coordination, evaluation and monitoring	Sensitive issues
Youth and Education	-	Exchange programs	Education sector reform
Economy	-	-	Trade and investment
Energy and Transportation	Transportation	-	Exploitation
Water and Environment	Global warming	Water rights	Water-saving measures
Security	Security threats and border management	-	Security sector reforms

Source: Own table.

presented in the previous synopsis, reveals a possible ranking of three groups of CAS according to their democratic quality (table 1).

Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan form a group of the least democratic states, in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan there exist few more political liberties and Kyrgyzstan underwent some steps of democratisation. But still, all these classifications are based on highly aggregated data and do not reveal similar problems that justify a common approach. The same is true with regard to the common challenges EU CA policy faces all CAS: (1) negative influence of Russian authoritarian tendencies; (2) potential destabilization of political systems in the near future, due to unclear successor rules of current rulers. While the former trend underlines the need to include the field of democratisation in to EU-CA relations, the personal factor in the second challenge shows the need for country specific approaches in this field. There is currently no obvious element of the political systems which all five CAS have in common and which calls for a regional approach. But with regard to the activities in all five CAS the coordination, monitoring and evaluation has to be improved, which should be done under a common framework which allows for learning from best and worst practices in project implementation in the CAS.

Education

Corruption in the sector of higher education is the central challenge, which is common to all CAS. But beyond this, we mainly observe differences between CAS. Turkmenistan remains a closed country, which seems to have no interest in developing its educational system and opening it to the outer world. Uzbekistan is more open and interested in cooperation in the educational sector. Like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan has revenues from fossil fuel exploitation, but is much more interested in education as well as research cooperation and participates in the Bologna process. While EU funding is not necessary in the cases of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, but could be an incentive for them to cooperate, EU funding is neither necessary nor an incentive for cooperation in the case of Kazakhstan. Kyrgyzstan – home to most international universities in CA – and Tajikistan are far more open than Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan with regard to international cooperation in the educational sector, but being two of the poorest countries on earth, they lack the resources to develop

their educational sectors. This short overview shows that a regional approach in the field of education and research does not seem to be fruitful, even though the problem of corruption has to be addressed in all CAS. Country specific approaches seem to be much more promising, with two exceptions: 1) educational and research exchange within the region of CA is an aim in itself, which only a regional approach can achieve; 2) for academic exchange with the EU, its existing exchange programs are one of EU's most successful policies. Thus, any country specific approach to cooperation with CAS should be compatible with these structures and not create any duplication.

Economy

While Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are comparably rich countries due to their fossil fuel reserves, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are two of the poorest countries on earth. Protectionism remains a crucial problem in CA, with the exception of Kazakhstan: Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are WTO MS and Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have observer status, while Turkmenistan – most protectionist – shows hardly any interest in joining the organization. With regard to international trade, Kazakhstan constitutes a specific case among the CAS, since it is a MS of the EEU with Belarus and Russia. Although economy being a policy field genuinely demanding a regional approach, as freetrade requires cooperation, a regional approach in the EU's CA policy seems to be far away. Before considering a regional approach to trade and investment policy in CA, country specific programs are needed to work on creating a basis for such a regional approach in the future.

Energy and Transportation

Energy closely relates to the field of economy in the cases of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and to the policy field of water and environment in the cases of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Considering the fossil fuels of the three former countries a commodity the EU wants to buy, the EU needs to negotiate with each of these countries on a bilateral basis. But transporting oil and gas to Europe requires a regional approach with regard to transportation routes. This regional approach must not be limited to EU-CA cooperation, but has to include China, which currently announced to build a new silk route to Europe via CA. So far, EU and Chinese transport route projects in CA have not been coordinated, but – literally – run in parallel, just a few kilometres apart. For the necessity of a regional approach to hydro-energy generation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan see the following section on water.

Water and Environment

In the policy field of water and environment a regional approach is urgently needed. With regard to the central environmental challenges, like global warming, the CAS should be part of a global solution, demanding cooperation beyond the EU-CA relations. But with regard to water management and regional environmental problems, which often relate to the water sector, none of the CAS can pursue a unilateral policy, respectively doing so increases tensions between the CAS. Especially with regard to the water consumption any sustainable policy requires the cooperation between upstream energy producers (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and downstream consumers (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). But such a regional approach should not be limited to the question of water rights, but include the issues of sustainable water consumption and water quality. In this regard, the specific case of the Aral Sea needs to be dealt with in a cross-border approach, too. On a more technical level countryspecific programs, can contribute to solving these problems, but they will not succeed without a policy on the regional level.

Security

The need for a regional approach in the security field is even more obvious. All five CAS face the threat of destabilization caused by post-2014 Afghanistan

instability, especially drug, weapon and human trafficking, which are per definition cross-border challenges. The same is true for border management, which should not be addressed country by country, but in cooperation among the CAS. A regional approach to security policy cannot be limited to the EU and the five CAS, but has to include Afghanistan, as a source of problems, and international organisations like OSCE and SCO as well as China and Russia. Both countries have security interests in the region and offer like IO own assistance to the CAS in the security sector. These attempts should be coordinated to avoid program duplication and to reach synergies. Still, such a regional approach has to be complemented with country specific programs, as security sector reforms are a sensitive issue concerning the rule of law promotion and good governance.

Julian Plottka

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11. List of Abbreviations

ABP	Afghan Border Police
AFG	Afghanistan
ARM	Armenia
AZE	Azerbaijan
BCP	Border Crossing Points
BEL	Belgium
BLR	Belarus
BOMBAF	Border Management in Badakshan
BOMCA	Boarder Management in Central Asia
BOMNAF	Boarder Management Northern Afghanistan
CA	Central Asia
CABSI	Central Asia Border Security Initiative
CACDRRR	Central Asian Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CAI	Central Asia Invest
CAIAG	Central-Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre
CAREN	Central Asian Research and Education Network
CAS	Central Asian states
CA strategy	The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership
CAWa	Regional Research Network “Water in Central Asia”
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCI	Development and Cooperation Instrument
DG	directorate-general
DIPECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid department’s Disaster Preparedness Programme
EECCA	countries of Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

EC IFAS	Executive Committee of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea
ECW	Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUWI	European Water Initiative
EUWI-EECCA	Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asia component of the EU Water Initiative
FLEG	Forest Law Enforcement and Governance Ministerial Process
GEO	Georgia
GFZ	German Research Centre for Geosciences (Helmholtz-Zentrum Potsdam – Deutsches GeoForschungsZentrum)
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HQ	Headquarters
IBPP	Institution Building and Partnership Programme
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICWC	Interstate Commission for Water Coordination
IFAS	International Fund for saving the Aral Sea
IFCA	Investment Facility for Central Asia
IFI	international financial institutions
IfS	Instrument for Stability
ILO	International Labour Organization
incl.	including
INOGATE	Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation Europe
IO	international organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
ITA	Italy
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management

KGZ	Kyrgyzstan
KZH	Kazakhstan
LUX	Luxembourg
MDA	Moldova
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MS	member state
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSA-LA	Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreements
PRC	Peoples' Republic of China
RUS	Russia
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies
TJK	Tajikistan
TKM	Turkmenistan
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Central Asia
UKR	Ukraine
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UZB	Uzbekistan
VET	Vocational Education Training
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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