



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

---

*Committee on Foreign Affairs*

---

**2011/2008(INI)**

12.08.2011

# **DRAFT REPORT**

on the state of implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia  
(2011/2008(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Nicole Kiil-Nielsen

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION .....	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	9

## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on the state of implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia (2011/2008(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on the European Union and in particular Article 21 thereof,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) concluded between the EU and Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, to the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters between the European Communities and Turkmenistan and to the PCA between the EU and Turkmenistan, signed on 25 May 1998, which has not yet been ratified,
- having regard to the EU Strategy for a new Partnership with Central Asia, adopted by the European Council on 21-22 June 2007<sup>1</sup>, and to the joint progress reports by the Commission and the Council of 24 June 2008<sup>2</sup> and 28 June 2010<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Central Asia, in particular those of 20 February 2008 on an EU Strategy for Central Asia<sup>4</sup>, of 6 May 2010<sup>5</sup> and 8 July 2010<sup>6</sup> on the situation in Kyrgyzstan, of 11 November 2010 on strengthening the OSCE – a role for the EU<sup>7</sup>, of 25 November 2010 entitled ‘Towards a new Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020’<sup>8</sup>, of 16 December 2010 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and the European Union’s policy on the matter<sup>9</sup> and of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratisation<sup>10</sup>,
- having regard to the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, launched in 2003 with the aim of promoting human rights and supporting penal reform, democracy, good governance, media freedom, the rule of law, security structures (police/armed forces) and conflict prevention, and to the subsequent European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006)<sup>11</sup>,
- having regard to the biannual EU-Central Asia Ministerial meetings held since 2007 and the EU-Central Asia Ministerial Conferences on security issues held in 2008 and 2009,
- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/librairie/PDF/EU\\_CtrlAsia\\_EN-RU.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://eas.europa.eu/central\\_asia/docs/progress\\_report\\_0609\\_en.pdf](http://eas.europa.eu/central_asia/docs/progress_report_0609_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st11/st11402.en10.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 184E/2009, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C 81E/2011, p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0283.

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0399.

<sup>8</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0441.

<sup>9</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0489.

<sup>10</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2011)0334.

<sup>11</sup> OJ L 386, 29.12.2006, p. 1.

Committee on Development and the Committee on International Trade (A7-0000/2011),

- A. whereas the sustainable development of any country is possible only if democratic institutions, the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, as well as a strong civil society, are ensured,
- B. whereas the poor records of Central Asian states in governance and regional cooperation are important reasons for their bleak political, social and economic situation and for the limited achievements of development cooperation,
- C. whereas the lack of mutual trust exacerbates tensions over the sharing of natural resources, undermines regional cooperation and increases risks of confrontation; whereas, however, the problems of availability of water stem more from mismanagement and wasting of water resources than from a quantitative deficit,

### ***EU commitment***

1. Considers that the level and nature of the EU's engagement must be differentiated and conditional, depending on measurable progress in the fields of human rights, good governance, sustainable development, the rule of law and the fight against corruption, following lines similar to the principles of the EU's neighbourhood policy;
2. Acknowledges the importance of the EU Special Representative's continuous work in the field in ensuring a high level of political dialogue with the Central Asian states; calls for political dialogue to be based on an assessment of compliance by Central Asian states with their commitments as OSCE members;
3. Welcomes the existence of regular human rights dialogues with all five countries, even though overall progress on the ground has been scarce and in some instances regression can be observed; considers that the existence of human rights dialogues should not be used as an excuse for excluding human-rights-related questions arising in other fields of cooperation or for not engaging in further actions; calls for the systematic involvement of NGOs and civil-society actors in the preparation of these dialogues and for the outcome of these dialogues to be made public so as to allow for an assessment of their effectiveness and of the commitment of the parties;
4. Supports the opening of fully-fledged EU delegations in all the countries of Central Asia as a means of increasing the presence and visibility of the EU in the region and long-term cooperation and engagement with all sectors of society and fostering progress towards better understanding and the emergence of the rule of law and respect for human rights;
5. Deplores the difficulty encountered by the EU in engaging with independent civil society in the area of human rights and good governance in the context of the continued harassment of NGOs in the region; calls for support for genuinely independent NGOs so as to help them play an effective role in the development and consolidation of civil society;
6. Approves the holding of regular regional EU-Central Asia summits and calls for an EU-Central Asia parliamentary forum to be established as a means of assessing and

contributing to the contents of the summit talks; underlines the importance of the regular bilateral parliamentary cooperation in the framework of the existing Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and interparliamentary meetings with the Central Asian countries;

***Human security, good governance, human rights and democratisation***

7. Regrets that, although some positive developments have taken place in the region (abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan, some constitutional and judicial procedure reforms, etc.), the overall situation in the fields of human rights and the rule of law remains worrying;
8. Calls for a strengthening of the human rights dialogues in order to make them more effective and result-oriented; urges the Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to issue benchmarks for the progress made by the states of the region in the field of human rights and the rule of law, and of the effectiveness of EU measures and assistance projects towards this aim;
9. Is concerned about the continued use of torture and the severe restriction of the media and of freedom of expression, assembly and association; urges the EU and its HR/VP to raise publicly the cases of political prisoners, imprisoned human rights defenders and journalists and call for their immediate release;
10. Regards the Rule of Law Initiative as a key component of cooperation with the states of Central Asia, and approves of the exemplary interaction between the EU and its Member States in implementing assistance projects; expects the Rule of Law Platform project to include clear objectives and a transparent assessment of its implementation and results while avoiding any reinforcement of the repressive components of security forces;

***Energy, water and the environment***

11. Regards it as of the utmost importance that energy cooperation projects include long-term supply agreements, enshrining the principles of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative;
12. Takes the view that reform of the agriculture sector is of the utmost importance with regard, in particular, to diversifying production, reducing dependence on the cultivation of cotton rather than other crops and introducing advanced practices and techniques of water management, water conservation and irrigation;
13. Stresses that water issues in the region remain one of the main sources of tension and potential conflict; calls in this regard on all countries of the region to sign and ratify without further delay the Espoo and Århus Conventions and to foster involvement of local actors in decision-making;
14. Highlights the necessity to set up a credible and effective permanent framework in which downstream and upstream countries can discuss and decide together the measures to adopt in order to tackle and solve the water problems in the region;

15. Welcomes the increased engagement of the European development banks in the region, and especially, the extension of the mandate of the EIB to Central Asia focusing on environmental and water issues;
16. Considers that its expertise in managing transnational water resources and its existing involvement in bilateral cooperation with a view to integrated national water management plans and multilateral cooperation in the regional Water Governance project and the International Fund for the Aral Sea create an opportunity for the EU to profile itself as a mediator and a facilitator in the sharing of water resources between upstream and downstream states (including Northern Afghanistan), a role that no other international actor is willing or able to fulfil despite calls by the countries concerned;

### ***Security/border management***

17. Reaffirms its support for actions aimed at fostering regional cooperation as the only way to address the many cross-border security, resource management, ethnic, environmental and development problems of the states concerned;
18. Takes note of the accession of Kazakhstan to the customs union with Russia and Belarus and hopes that the development of this entity will be conducted in an inclusive manner towards those Central Asian states that are not part of it;
19. Calls for the inclusion of cross-border cooperation with Afghanistan, in particular with its border provinces, in transport, energy, trade and development actions and programmes;

### ***Kazakhstan***

20. Calls on the HR/VP to keep up the pressure on the Kazakh authorities to fulfil the promises to improve elections and media freedom which they announced in the run-up to their 2010 OSCE chairmanship, in accordance with the core commitments of OSCE member states and with the National Plan for Human Rights adopted in 2009 by the Kazakh Government;
21. Welcomes the aspirations of Kazakhstan towards closer and enhanced relations with the EU and takes note of the recent launching of negotiations on a new enhanced EU-Kazakhstan PCA but stresses that economic cooperation must go hand in hand with political cooperation and be based on the political will to implement common values; looks forward, in this context, to tangible progress in the fields of freedom of the media, freedom of association and assembly, and to improvements in the conduct of the electoral process in the upcoming legislative elections in 2012;

### ***Kyrgyzstan***

22. Commends Kyrgyzstan for its efforts to pursue democratic reforms and shift to a genuine multi-party system; hopes that further progress will be accomplished in the conduct of the upcoming presidential elections scheduled later this year; points out, nevertheless, that sustained efforts are needed to develop a fully functioning democracy, and calls in this regard on the HR/VP to assist the Kyrgyz authorities in the area of institution-building, consolidation of democratic practices and the fight against corruption and the infiltration

of organised crime in Kyrgyz administration;

23. Welcomes the decision of the Kyrgyz Government to establish a Special Commission to implement and monitor the recommendations of the International Independent Commission (IIC) for investigation into the June 2010 events in South Kyrgyzstan, and calls on the Kyrgyz authorities to adopt the measures necessary to defuse interethnic tension and stabilise the situation and to promote cultural dialogue and respect for minority rights and the fight against all forms of discrimination; calls on the EU to design and implement EU assistance programmes together with the Kyrgyz authorities and NGOs aiming at conflict prevention, reconciliation and prevention of impunity;

### ***Tajikistan***

24. Expresses its concern at the inefficiency of EU development aid in the country resulting from the high level of corruption and the looming regional fragmentation fuelled by the dire economic and social conditions; calls, therefore, for an alternative approach based on human security through alternative channels of assistance;
25. Calls on the EU to promote and help, by means of feasibility studies, technical expertise and, where necessary, appropriate EIB loans, the development of smaller-scale hydroelectric plant projects distributed along the course of rivers, and of alternative renewable energies;

### ***Turkmenistan***

26. Takes note of the legislation adopted in the political, economic, social and educational field and expects words to be followed by deeds; urges, in this regard, the Council and the HR/VP to encourage the Turkmen authorities to implement fully the new legislation and to continue the process of engagement with international and regional organisations;
27. Deplores, however, the fact that none of the conditions set by the European Parliament in February 2008 in order to move ahead with the Interim Agreement have been fulfilled, in particular free and unfettered access for the International Committee of the Red Cross, the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the abolition of all government impediments to travel, and the possibility for NGOs to operate in the country;

### ***Uzbekistan***

28. Takes note of the Council Conclusions of October 2010 that put an end to all sanctions on Uzbekistan and confirmed the willingness of the EU to strengthen relations with that country in a comprehensive manner; recalls that the level of the engagement depends on progress by Uzbekistan in the fields of human rights, democratisation and the rule of law, and expects the EEAS and the Council to develop a policy of critical, conditional and coherent European engagement with Uzbekistan;
29. Deplores the recent decision of the Uzbek authorities to close down the office of Human Rights Watch in Tashkent, and calls on them to allow unhindered access and operations by national and international NGOs throughout the country;

\*  
\*      \*

30. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Central Asia's strategic importance to Europe is well known but frequently underestimated. The development of an EU strategy vis-à-vis the region in 2007 marked a new awareness and the desire for a comprehensive, structured approach.

In the four years of implementing this strategy, much has been achieved. The EU has put into action initiatives and programmes that play an important role in supporting the priorities contained in its initial document: good governance, the rule of law, human rights and democratisation; education and training; economic development, trade and investment; transport and energy; environmental sustainability and water management; facing shared threats and challenges; intercultural dialogue.

The EU has strengthened and improved the structure of its relations with the five countries, and meetings between senior officials from Europe and Central Asia have become frequent and regular. The EU has introduced regular bilateral dialogues on human rights and national water policies. The Member States are directly involved in implementing the EU strategy, the European banks (EIB, EBRD) now cover the region, and an instrument known as the Investment facility for Central Asia has recently been set up.

However, since 2007 major changes have taken place in the world. Against the background of the global economic and social crisis, a series of Arab revolutions has taken place. The international coalition is beginning to withdraw from Afghanistan without any clear idea of what the outcome of the war will be after ten years of military engagement. With the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union has acquired the instruments of a coherent foreign policy, and an External Action Service to put it into effect. Finally, there have been significant – and often tragic – events in Central Asia, such as the interethnic riots that erupted in Osh in June 2010, and new geostrategic configurations have emerged in the region. All of this has prompted us to look again at our policy towards Central Asia, to take stock of what has been accomplished and to suggest new approaches tailored to the needs of a region which is facing many threats that could have repercussions for Europe.

Although undeniable progress has need made, the limitations of Europe's strategy vis-à-vis Central Asia are now obvious. The EU has not succeeded in incorporating its various objectives, values and interests into programmes that are effective and suited to the realities of the region.

The impact of its projects is hard to measure, and the EU lacks visibility in Central Asia. It has only three delegations, and is having to work hard to open one in each of the other two countries. The EU is therefore lacking in personnel on the ground, and its projects are usually implemented by other international organisations.

The modest financial resources<sup>1</sup> allocated by the EU to Central Asia bear witness not only to its low level of interest in the region but also to the limited absorption capacity of the

---

<sup>1</sup> The Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI) has allocated EUR 321 million to the implementation of the strategy between 2011 and 2013, representing EUR 20 million per country per annum.

beneficiary countries. One third of the aid is earmarked for promoting regional cooperation, but it is very difficult to follow through with this essential task because of the tensions between the countries. As a result, there is a danger that these funds may be reallocated to bilateral projects, or even to other regions of the world.

The 2010 joint progress report (Council and Commission) mentions that improvements are required, but does not always specify the steps that need to be taken.

In our view, the EU must carry out a thorough reassessment of its strategy and take steps to strengthen its engagement, concentrating on those objectives and measures which will contribute most to meeting the most pressing challenges: human rights and the rule of law; water and energy; regional security.

Your rapporteur takes the view that the cornerstones of the EU's new approach to the region must be **human security** and genuine **regional cooperation**.

The EU must carry out the same thoroughgoing reassessments with regard to Central Asia as it did in the case of its immediate neighbourhood. If it wishes to retain its credibility, the EU cannot promote ethical considerations in one part of the world while failing to react to violations of its values in another. Promoting human rights and the rule of law must be the guiding principle behind all of Europe's actions and initiatives.

Governments in Central Asia are still using repressive methods to maintain the stability of personal-power regimes without taking steps to ensure the long-term security of society as a whole. The EU and its western partners have long tended to believe that this stability is valuable in its own right and have chosen to ignore both its precarious nature and its human cost.

The EU cannot continue along this path. Stability based on repression is doomed to failure in the long term. As shown by the speed with which the interethnic violence spread last year, any country in the region can erupt at any time. The EU must be in a position to respond to the political vacuum that a change following ethnic or regional conflict could create.

There is an urgent need to leave behind an operational mode that gives the highest priority to maintaining the stability of existing regimes in the name of a variety of considerations such as the remote possibility of a diversification of our gas supply or the establishment of military bases to supply the European forces in Afghanistan. The EU's financial support for the Uzbek parliament, which is anything but a democratically elected institution, or the allocation of European aid destined for NGOs to the charitable foundation controlled by the government of Uzbekistan are probably just two examples among many, but they are symptomatic. This attitude of accommodation cannot continue.

It is not our intention to suggest that the EU should disengage from the region. On the contrary, it is high time that the EU engaged with Central Asia, but in a new way.

### *Human security*

We must explain to our partners how our concept of security and stability differs from theirs. The EU is duty-bound to be critical of governments that violate the fundamental rights of their citizens in the name of national security, and to point out to them that it is just such actions that lead to extremism and radicalisation. We must put conditionality at the heart of our policies and apply the principles of ‘differentiation’ and ‘more for more’.

Not only can the concept of human security provide the EU with a solid conceptual framework, it can also give greater legitimacy and relevance to its political actions. Promoting security by meeting the practical day-to-day needs of the population should be the guiding principle. Greater emphasis must be placed on projects implemented jointly with local leaders and civil society, at least where the basic conditions for doing so exist.

Cooperation by the EU with each of the countries calls for a differentiated bilateral approach which is appropriate to the requirements and needs of each country: the hydrocarbon-rich countries – Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan – have a greater need for technical assistance with reform than for development aid. The very poor, vulnerable countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, on the other hand, much though they need direct financial assistance, provided that its use can be monitored in a transparent fashion, have an even greater need for targeted aid for rural communities, for primary and secondary education, and for reform and reinforcement of the judicial system.

A lot of course depends on the extent to which a given country has been opened up. If necessary, the EU could adapt its approach accordingly, while always basing its actions on the objectives of human security and sustainable development.

Many components of the EU’s current activities could be incorporated into this new framework, particularly humanitarian and development aid, and the EU’s contribution to the OSCE’s police mission to Osh – although not without a critical analysis of its real usefulness in terms of the objective of meeting the needs of the population – and the programmes aimed at the forces of order and the judiciary.

### ***Regional cooperation***

The emphasis placed by the EU strategy on promoting a regional approach is still entirely justified. The necessary cooperation among the five countries is not forthcoming, because of their mutual distrust and numerous sources of disagreement. Security, development and environmental protection issues require close cooperation between the EU and each of the countries, but will not be resolved without a willingness on the part of the countries concerned to cooperate with each other.

The factors of destabilisation are many and varied; they include organised crime, trafficking in drugs, radioactive materials and human beings, terrorism, natural and environmental disasters, the uncertain outcome of the war in Afghanistan. Infiltration by armed groups coming from Afghanistan is not likely to stop, given the porousness of the border. There are strong intra-regional tensions with countries upstream and downstream relating to sharing and control of water resources. It is not unusual for borders to be closed and trade disrupted as a

way of exerting pressure on neighbours. Some borders are still disputed, and clashes between communities are occurring more and more frequently. In the poorest countries economic and food crises combine with regional and ethnic tensions and with the insecurity engendered by endemic corruption and the absence of the rule of law.

In addition, new economic barriers are being created: the customs union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan brings fears of new barriers to trade with neighbours. It is arousing interest in some of the countries, but others remain faithful to an isolationist policy.

Climate change is having serious effects, particularly in view of the constantly growing population, which is concentrated in the small portion of the territory that is habitable. 40% of the glaciers have disappeared and the cotton monoculture supported by an obsolete irrigation system wastes a considerable amount of what water is available. The shrinking Aral Sea and desertification resulting from massive diversion of rivers for irrigation is affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Radioactive and chemical waste from the former Soviet installations in the Ferghana Valley has been abandoned near rivers and human habitations. In the Caspian Sea, dumping of industrial waste and exploitation of off-shore gas and oil with no heed for environmental standards are responsible for the destruction of wildlife and fisheries resources.

The EU must therefore aim for a role as a mediator or facilitator. It has the advantages of the neutrality that large neighbouring countries lack, of the experience gained from its own integration process, and of technical expertise. It can draw lessons from the implementation of its own regional programmes (BOMCA (border management), CADAP (drug action programme), the European Water Initiative, the Rule of Law Initiative, etc.).

As well as its cooperation with those of its Member States that are engaged in Central Asia (which is more effective and significant than elsewhere in the world, it should be emphasised) and with the other major donors, the EU should strengthen its cooperation with the region's large neighbouring countries – Russia, of course, and also China, India and Pakistan.

We also suggest that a regional interparliamentary forum be set up, something that the EU could propose to the parliaments of the five countries via the European Parliament. This would enable Europe's elected representatives to share their experience with their counterparts and, what is more, to encourage them to forge among themselves links which at present are virtually non-existent.