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## Parliamentary questions

1 April 2011

E-003160/2011

Question for written answer  
to the Commission  
Rule 117  
Peter van Dalen (ECR)

### ► Subject: Deportation of Mr Makset Dzabbarbergenov by Kazakhstan

Answer(s)

Mr Makset Dzabbarbergenov is an Uzbek minister, who is currently living in Kazakhstan under UNHCR protection. In Uzbekistan Mr Dzabbarbergenov is wanted by the authorities in connection with preaching the Christian faith, which is an offence in that country. The Kazakh Government is seeking to deport him to Uzbekistan, which is contrary to international law. In recent years Mr Dzabbarbergenov has already frequently come under pressure from the Kazakh police and been arrested and mistreated. His request to remain in Kazakhstan was recently rejected by Kazakh officials. Mr Dzabbarbergenov has now lodged an appeal with the authorities in Astana. A ruling in his case is expected shortly.

1. Is the High Representative aware of the case and situation of Mr Makset Dzabbarbergenov?
2. Has the High Representative taken action to protect Mr Dzabbarbergenov?
3. Will the High Representative draw Kazakhstan's attention to the obligations and pledges, including in the area of human rights, entered into by it under the partnership and cooperation agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan, which came into force in 1999?
4. Will the High Representative also draw Uzbekistan's attention to the obligations arising from international agreements entered into by it, including the partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees freedom of religion?

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**Legal notice**

## P6\_TA(2008)0059

### An EU Strategy for Central Asia

#### European Parliament resolution of 20 February 2008 on an EU Strategy for Central Asia (2007/2102(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Central Asia, in particular those of 26 October 2006 on Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>, of 16 March 2006 on Kazakhstan<sup>2</sup> and of 12 May 2005 on the situation in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) concluded between the EU and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, all in force since 1999, to the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters between the European Community and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the Republic of Tajikistan, of the other part<sup>4</sup>, signed on 11 October 2004, to the PCA between the EU and Tajikistan, which has not yet been ratified, and to the Commission's proposal for an Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters between the EU and Turkmenistan,
- having regard to the human rights clauses in those agreements,
- having regard to the EU's commitment to promote the achievement of the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to the European Consensus on Development<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to the adoption by the European Council on 21/22 June 2007 of an EU Strategy for a new Partnership with Central Asia,
- having regard to the European Council Action Plan (2007-2013) for an Energy Policy for Europe, adopted on 8/9 March 2007, and to the energy cooperation between the EU, the littoral states of the Black and Caspian Seas and their neighbours,
- having regard to its resolution of 26 September 2007 on towards a European foreign policy on energy<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to the Baku Initiative for the development of energy cooperation and transport between the EU and the countries of the Black Sea and Caspian region,
- having regard to the Memoranda of Understanding concluded with Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in the context of developing a foreign policy at the service of Europe's energy

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 466.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 291 E, 30.11.2006, p. 416.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 92 E, 20.4.2006, p. 390.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 340, 16.11.2004, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: 'The European Consensus' (OJ C 46, 24.2.2006, p. 1).

<sup>6</sup> *Texts Adopted*, P6\_TA(2007)0413.



interests,

- having regard to relevant Council Conclusions, including the conclusions on Uzbekistan of 23-24 May, 13 June, 18 July and 3 October 2005, 13 November 2006 and 5 March, 14-15 May and 15-16 October 2007, and to the conclusions on Central Asia of 23-24 April 2007,
  - having regard to the sanctions imposed on Uzbekistan by the EU following the Andijan massacre, in Council Regulation (EC) No 1859/2005 of 14 November 2005 imposing certain restrictive measures in respect of Uzbekistan<sup>1</sup>, which have been consecutively extended<sup>2</sup>, and to the partial lifting and conditional suspension for a period of six months of visa sanctions in May and October 2007 respectively,
  - 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,
  - having regard to the Development Cooperation Instrument ('DCI')<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the Foreign Ministerial Troika meeting with the countries of Central Asia, held in Berlin on 30 June 2007 in the presence of EU Special Representative, Pierre Morel, and the Portuguese Prime Minister, José Sócrates,
  - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Development and the Committee on International Trade (A6-0503/2007),
- A. whereas the five countries referred to collectively as Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) lie at a key intersection between Europe and Asia and whereas, historically and traditionally, they have represented an important meeting and transit point between the two continents,
- B. whereas the EU insists on the need for, and has a clear interest in seeing progress towards, greater stability and rising levels of economic, democratic and human development and human security throughout Central Asia and must always uphold its commitment to mainstream human rights in all agreements with third states and to promote democracy through coherent policies and the use of the means best suited for those purposes; whereas this will safeguard its credibility and ultimately contribute to making it an increasingly efficient player vis-à-vis the region, as well as beyond,
- C. whereas there is a global interest in stability in Central Asia since serious and prolonged instability in one of the five countries could have disastrous consequences for the entire

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 299, 16.11.2005, p. 23, amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 1791/2006 (OJ L 363, 20.12.2006, p. 1). See also Council Common Position 2005/792/CFSP of 14 November 2005 concerning restrictive measures against Uzbekistan (OJ L 299, 16.11.2005, p. 72).

<sup>2</sup> See Council Common Position 2007/734/CFSP of 13 November 2007 concerning restrictive measures against Uzbekistan (OJ L 295, 14.11.2007, p. 34).

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation (OJ L 378, 27.12.2006, p. 41).

region and could also affect the EU and its Member States in many ways,

- D. mindful of the risks involved in being dependent on imports from unstable regions and suppliers and of the need to establish reliable, accessible and viable energy channels,
- E. whereas the EU has an interest in security and stability and in respect for human rights and the rule of law in the states of Central Asia, since strategic, political and economic developments and the growing trans-regional challenges in Central Asia also have a direct or indirect impact on the interests of the European Union; whereas the states of Central Asia can contribute, with their significant energy resources and by their efforts towards diversification among trading partners and supply routes, to meeting the European Union's need for energy security and energy supply,
- F. whereas there is, on the one hand, a strong case for cooperation among the countries of the region but, on the other hand, a strong resistance to such ideas and efforts, not least from the Government of the centrally situated – and by far most populous – state of Uzbekistan,
- G. whereas isolationism tends to stem from an anxiety to maintain internal control – extreme examples of which can be seen in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – and whereas such anxiety is a given in regimes which show little interest in seeking popular consent on which to base their rule,
- H. whereas the five Central Asian republics are Official Development Assistance recipients, which means that EU assistance to those countries is regarded as development assistance,
- I. whereas it follows from the EU's security and other interests, as well as from its values and support for the MDGs, that the hardship and lack of opportunities faced by many people in this region, parts of which are affected by poverty, the threats to human security partly linked to the security problems of neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan and the risks of destabilisation and conflict must be placed at the very core of the EU's approach to Central Asia,
- J. whereas the primary objective of EU development cooperation is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including in the pursuit of the MDGs,
- K. whereas EU assistance to the region has largely taken the form of technical assistance implemented through the TACIS programme, and whereas assessments of TACIS's effectiveness have shown mixed results,
- L. whereas, according to Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to health is a human right, and whereas universal access to healthcare is essential for achieving the MDGs; whereas health conditions have deteriorated in all Central Asian republics following the break-up of the Soviet Union and health systems are in crisis; whereas the potential spill-over effects of epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and drug-resistant tuberculosis present a long-term threat to the EU; whereas the avian flu crisis has demonstrated the capacity of infectious diseases to travel rapidly across Europe; whereas the social consequences of the health crises in the various countries threaten their overall stability and development prospects, and have implications for European security,
- M. whereas energy and water are key issues for human security and inter-state relations within the region, particularly in relation to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and whereas



poverty reduction remains crucial to reducing social instability,

- N. whereas the EU has an interest in importing more oil and gas from Central Asia, preferably through new transportation routes, and in establishing a clear and transparent framework for the production and transportation of energy, and whereas the countries that are relevant in this context are Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan,
- O. whereas the Central Asian countries are, to varying degrees, endowed with oil, gas, mineral or hydro-power resources; whereas the exploitation of such resources should significantly facilitate economic and social development; and whereas, under the wrong conditions, unwelcome side-effects such as serious environmental degradation, reduced competitiveness of other economic sectors, massive wealth inequalities and increased political and social tensions may arise and might even outweigh the positive effects (the so-called "natural resources curse"),
- P. whereas on 10 October 2007 representatives from Ukraine, Poland, Azerbaijan and Georgia met in Lithuania to discuss a new oil transport network designed to bring crude oil from the Caspian Sea via Baku and Odessa to the Polish port of Gdansk,
- Q. whereas Russia and China tried to increase their spheres of influence in Central Asia through the establishment of the Shanghai Five in 1996, which brought together China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in a forum for managing cross-border issues and which in 2001 became the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which today is the largest regional organisation in Central Asia and now includes Uzbekistan as a full member and Pakistan, India, Iran and Mongolia as observers,
- R. whereas a number of disparate countries have had, historically or more recently, vested interests in the region; whereas not all Member States have embassies in the region and whereas there is often a lack of coordination with regard to the region between Member States,
- S. whereas the departure of United States personnel and material from the Karshi-Khanabad (K2) air base in Uzbekistan on 21 November 2005 reduced United States military facilities in Central Asia to one base in Manas, near the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek,
- T. whereas political, economic, social and other conditions differ widely among, and in some cases also within, the Central Asian states and whereas this makes it absolutely essential for the EU to differentiate its policies accordingly,
- U. whereas the countries of Central Asia are very new states, and whereas their state-building and political and economic transition efforts have led them in different directions and have prompted them to distance themselves unequally far from the earlier Soviet system; whereas addressing governance issues remains of key importance, in the case of a number of states for the sake of stability and security, and in the case of all the states for political, social and economic development,
- V. whereas EU concerns include the need to stem the flow of drug trafficking from or through Central Asia, the fight against organised crime, including human trafficking, and preventing a growth in terrorism; whereas in some cases the "fight against terrorism" is used as a cover for repressive actions against those who criticise the government, human rights defenders, religious movements and ordinary businesspeople; whereas there is

reason to believe that such persons have also been targeted in the framework of Uzbekistan's security cooperation with neighbours; whereas it is recognised that there is a migration of child labour that demands new forms of international and social partnership involving all parties interested in a comprehensive resolution of the problem,

- W. whereas the human rights situation is different in the various Central Asian republics and, overall, falls far below the standards laid down by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and whereas Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in particular systematically violate fundamental rights and lack any democratic and pluralistic progress,
- X. whereas the Central Asian republics have yet to conduct an election – presidential or parliamentary – judged wholly free and fair by the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR),
- Y. whereas all five Central Asian states are OSCE member states and, within its framework, have taken on extensive commitments regarding fundamental freedoms, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law; whereas respect for those commitments varies among the states,
- Z. whereas Kazakhstan compares favourably with most other states in the region; whereas its most recent parliamentary elections, held on 18 August 2007, show that, despite some improvements, it is not yet fully respecting its commitments or complying with OSCE and other international standards for democratic elections,
- AA. whereas civil society is particularly active in most Central Asian countries through a network of local NGOs and associations that need to be protected and valued as the expression of the willingness of citizens to be part of the democratisation and social process of their countries,
- AB. whereas political, economic and social improvements can effectively be achieved in the region through the establishment of a genuinely independent judiciary and a real fight against rampant corruption,
- AC. whereas the principles on which the EU is based include the defence of fundamental rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression and the protection of human rights activists,
- AD. whereas examples of massive repression, corruption and exploitation, and the denial of people's fundamental rights and opportunities to improve their lives, together with the absence of accepted channels for expressing grievances and participating in political processes, heighten the risks that extremism and terrorism will grow,
- AE. whereas most of the Central Asian countries suffer from human rights violations, from the lack of an appropriate judicial system, from restrictions imposed on opposition parties and independent civil society bodies, and from lack of media freedom,
- AF. whereas the EU imposed sanctions on Uzbekistan after the Andijan massacre in May 2005, but the Uzbek government keeps blocking an independent international investigation into the events and continues its repressive policies, including its persecution of human rights defenders; whereas in October 2007 the Council nevertheless decided to suspend for a period of six months a visa ban on eight persons directly responsible for the indiscriminate



use of force in Andijan; whereas the Council through this suspension seeks to stimulate the Uzbek authorities into changing their policies and whereas the ban will be automatically re-activated in April/May 2008 unless a set of criteria adopted as part of the Council decision is met,

- AG. whereas there is considerable interest in cooperation with the EU in the region in the fields of science, healthcare and education, and whereas such cooperation can contribute to intensifying civil society contacts and spreading European values of democracy, the rule of law and human rights,
- AH. whereas in varying respects both Mongolia and Afghanistan share certain common features with the five principal states of Central Asia but are not focused on in the Council's strategy paper and are themselves covered by different EU instruments,
- AI. whereas the proximity of the region to Afghanistan has made certain countries valued partners in the fight against terrorism; whereas EU Member States have also used airports or airspace in the region; whereas at the same time EU action to promote human rights in Central Asia in general and in certain countries in particular has been disappointingly weak,
- AJ. whereas Central Asia is the transit route for as much as 30% of Afghan heroin, largely for Russian markets, which leads to drug-traffic-related organised crime and corruption, as well as to addiction and related health and social problems, with major implications for regional stability,
- AK. whereas Mongolia shares a background similar to that of the Central Asian republics, having historical, cultural and economic characteristics and environmental and energy policies that must be considered in a consistent way in the framework of the EU strategy for Central Asia,
1. Welcomes the EU's increased focus on Central Asia, of which the adoption of the Central Asia strategy is a clear expression; notes, however, the slowness of implementation of the projects for the five countries of the region;
  2. Is convinced that, while the values which the EU must promote always remain the same, the EU's interests, as well as prevailing conditions and opportunities in the five countries, differ widely;
  3. Calls for the definition of clear objectives and priorities for the EU's relations with each of the five countries, drawing on the general analysis of the region and the general catalogue of EU policy objectives contained in the EU strategy adopted;
  4. Stresses the importance of the EU's promotion of fair and sustainable economic development in the region, and of its support for local initiatives for economic development, for reforms in the business regulatory framework and for the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development; stresses, with regard to the challenge posed by terrorism, that enhancing cooperation on security is important, but that any approach to combating radicalisation and extremism that does not balance security needs with human rights and good governance is self-defeating; welcomes the strengthening of political dialogue with the Central Asian countries; calls on the Council and the Commission further to promote good governance, human rights, democracy and education,

including consideration of engagement with all types of religious communities; and calls on both the Council and the Commission to ensure that human rights issues should carry equal weight with the EU's robust approach to energy, security and trade;

5. Is convinced that certain issues can only be dealt with effectively by means of regional approaches leading to regional solutions (e.g. counter-terrorism, the eradication of human trafficking, counter-narcotics, water management) which require enhanced regional cooperation; urges the EU institutions, therefore, to provide technical help where needed, especially in spreading know-how and acting as mediator in encouraging dialogue between the Central Asian countries; points out, however, that the countries of Central Asia have differing levels of development and major political, economic and cultural differences; in this context, welcomes the fact that the Commission and the Council are seeking to adopt country-specific as well as regional approaches in planning future partnership and cooperation;
6. Calls for the differentiation in the EU's policy regarding its approach to the countries of the region to be based in particular on the human rights situation in each country, their government's respect for OSCE commitments, their development needs and their government's commitments to improving the welfare of citizens, their current and potential importance to the EU as partners in trade, cooperation on energy and in other areas, and dialogue on international issues, and the prospects for success of EU actions, including various forms of assistance;
7. Stresses the importance of cross-border cooperation, especially in understanding that this will make joint efforts to combat the trafficking of human beings and drugs more efficient; urges the EU institutions, therefore, to provide technical help where it is needed, especially in spreading know-how and acting as mediator in encouraging dialogue between the Central Asian countries;
8. Stresses the need for consistency of EU policy in Central Asia, and therefore recalls that the Strategy must be consistent with the European Consensus on Development; also stresses that all assistance delivered under the DCI needs to comply with its overarching objectives, i.e. poverty eradication and achievement of the MDGs;
9. Notes that poverty eradication is described as the main priority of European Community bilateral assistance for the period 2007-2013 in the Annex to the Strategy; calls on the Commission to provide regular and detailed information to Parliament on the way in which bilateral and regional assistance will relate to individual MDGs and on the budget planned for the health and basic education sectors;
10. Stresses that reforms of social sectors, health, food security, the fight against corruption and a focus on sustainable and fair economic development are crucial to ensuring long-term stability, security and prosperity in Central Asian countries; is of the opinion, therefore, that the process of assessing needs at the national and regional levels provides a clear opportunity for the EU to gain visibility and credibility in an open dialogue with all stakeholders, including civil society, parliaments and local authorities;
11. Believes that membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) represents an important achievement for the economic stability of the region, but that this goal can be achieved only by respecting international standards for foreign investment and by having an independent judiciary;



12. Calls on the Commission and the Council to implement all appropriate measures to encourage deeper integration of Central Asia into the world trade and economic system, in particular through WTO accession for the four countries in the region which are not yet members;
13. Considers it essential for the economic development of the countries in the region that they substantially reform their banking and insurance systems, establish an efficient micro-credit system, improve the regulation and supervision of banking activities, privatise state banks and create national financial markets that are truly competitive and open to foreign banks;
14. Urges the Council to authorise the European Investment Bank (EIB) to extend its credit support to Central Asia, in cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which is already active in the region;
15. Urges the Commission to mobilise, in coherent fashion, all the instruments at its disposal, from political dialogue and Community policies (especially those concerning trade, development, competition, research and the environment) to subsidies and loans, including those granted by the EIB, the EBRD and other international financial institutions, with a view to accelerating the realisation of these projects;
16. Encourages the States in the region to provide better protection for foreign direct investment;
17. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take all possible measures to make it easier for the countries of Central Asia to use the EU's Generalized System of Preferences, and to foster the development of intra-regional trade;
18. Calls on the Commission and the Council to supply the states in the region with qualified economic and administrative technical assistance, in order to strengthen local public structures, establish a more efficient and diversified economic base and improve the penetration of local products into foreign markets, and into the EU in particular;
19. Considers the strategy to be insufficiently ambitious with regard to bilateral cooperation on human rights, the rule of law, good governance and democratisation;
20. Considers that, when assessing the human rights situation, the EU should pay special attention to the existence – or absence – of a credible commitment on the part of the government concerned to improving that situation, focusing on demonstrable progress, the climate for human rights defenders and the level of cooperation with UN special rapporteurs and mechanisms, as well as with other relevant international players;
21. In this regard, calls on the Council and the Commission to maintain a consistent and united front on human rights issues and, with a view to making democracy, good governance, the rule of law and human rights an integral part of the Central Asia strategy, to set clear benchmarks, indicators and targets in these areas, in consultation with the Central Asian partner countries, as has been done in the other fields; calls on the Council and the Commission to pay particular attention to the release of political prisoners and to the independence of the media;
22. Condemns the persecution of human rights defenders in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan;

calls on the Council and the Commission to make every effort to protect their activities and physical integrity, and calls on the relevant governments to immediately release all human rights defenders imprisoned or compulsorily detained in psychiatric hospitals for political reasons;

23. Emphasises that EU contacts with security structures or EU support for security cooperation involving highly repressive states should be minimised, and that any such contacts should always be conducted transparently;
24. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to offer special assistance for reform and improvement of the judiciary in the region, in order to enable it to work with greater independence and effectiveness, including in the fight against corruption;
25. Calls on the Council and the Commission to cooperate closely with Central Asian countries in the implementation of educational reforms and to encourage those countries to detach a citizen's civil and social rights from property ownership by reforming the housing registration system (whereby an individual receives a housing registration stamp in his or her passport when becoming a citizen);
26. Takes the view that developing and supporting a genuine civil society is a prerequisite for any progress; deplores the difficult situation of NGOs in some Central Asian states, whose activities are continuously hampered by governments; stresses that the EU must continue to support civil society, both through financial assistance and by ensuring visibility (via fora and consultation), which would help to build up a participatory democracy; is of the opinion that the EU should regard civil society as a partner in contributing to sustainable societies, social stability and the promotion of the EU's values and standards;
27. Notes that the EU policy towards Central Asia should be based on in-depth debates and exchanges with all stakeholders; therefore calls on the EU to engage in an inclusive political dialogue, involving parliaments, civil society and local authorities in the implementation and monitoring of the strategy and the programmes;
28. Draws attention to the widespread abuse of women in a number of regions throughout Central Asia (examples of this being forced marriages, trafficking for sexual exploitation, rape, etc.), and calls on the governments of the countries of Central Asia to implement the existing laws to protect the rights of women, and on the Commission to include relevant actions in assistance programmes;
29. Calls on Central Asian governments to strengthen existing laws on women's rights and to improve their implementation of these laws; urges the Commission to continue to support human rights and democracy projects relating to the specific role of women; urges the EU to support the full implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and to use it as a benchmark for deeper cooperation; underlines that the plight of women is deteriorating in many parts of Central Asia due to unequal access to education, health and employment, and stresses that MDG 3 of promoting gender equality and empowering women should become a priority to be mainstreamed in the EU's related activities;
30. Welcomes the support for the implementation of the International Labour Organization's norms and conventions for decent work, and stresses that these standards must play an integral role in economic cooperation, investment and trade relations; notes that child



labour is still a cause for grave concern, especially in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and stresses the need to support the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

31. Emphasises the widespread use of child labour in several Central Asian states, especially in the cotton harvesting, tobacco cultivation, coal mining and handicrafts sectors, and calls on the respective governments to implement more effectively existing measures to combat this, to draw up a consistent national policy on child labour and fully to support and take part in projects for the elimination of child labour launched by international organisations and NGOs; urges the Commission to set up a special programme within the framework of the DCI in relation to this matter;
32. Urges the Commission to develop active cooperation on migration leading to real and participatory dialogue in which the root causes of migration are addressed through specific local economic development programmes, tackling, for example, the lack of economic prospects in rural areas so as to mitigate the consequent increases in urban poverty;
33. Urges the Council and the Commission to make full use of their experience and best practice in promoting human rights protection for migrants, especially for asylum seekers and refugees; condemns the forced extradition of asylum seekers, and in particular Uzbek refugees, by the governments of Central Asian countries, and calls on the Council and the Commission to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in defending and supporting political refugees;
34. Draws attention to the fact that a large number of Uighurs have been extradited from Central Asia to China at China's request, reflecting growing pressure by China on governments in the region, and notes that refugees are at risk of serious human rights violations;
35. Considers that, given the strong increase in infectious diseases such as HIV in the region, health and public sector health reform should be a key priority for the donor community, including the Commission;
36. Strongly encourages EU support for education and training, thereby offering greater possibilities for Central Asian students to study in the EU, and for exchanges with students from EU universities;
37. Highlights the geopolitical situation of Central Asia and the growing interest of economic and political powers, such as Russia, the United States, China and Turkey, in the region; considers, therefore, that close cooperation with those countries in respect of Central Asia is very important where interests coincide without conflicting with human rights concerns; urges the Council and the Commission to find ways to improve the coordination of the individual actions and policies of EU Member States in the region, as well as between the EU and other interested states; stresses, in this regard, the key role of Turkey as an EU candidate country in Central Asia, and calls on the Council and the Commission to make the most of Turkey's historical, economic and cultural relations with certain countries in the region, fully involving that EU candidate country in the development and implementation of the strategy;
38. Emphasises the importance of further developing inter-regional cooperation, in particular with the countries of the Black Sea region;

39. Regrets the fact that, in the Council's strategy on Central Asia, Mongolia is not included among the countries referred to collectively as Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), especially in view of the substantial progress made by Mongolia in establishing a state based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the region; calls on the Council and the Commission to seek a resolution at EU level and to prepare a statement about Mongolia's development;
40. Urges the Council and Commission to ensure that all sectors of society in each country are integrated in the political dialogue and partnership with the EU, and to involve a broader range of actors in its policy, particularly parliaments and civil society;
41. Welcomes the appointment of an EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Pierre Morel, and calls on the Council to strengthen his mandate and better to define his role, including by contributing to improved coordination of Member States' policies in the region;
42. Urges the Commission to proceed without further delay to set up full delegations in all Central Asian countries where the circumstances so permit, as a full presence on the ground is a precondition for effective EU action; notes plans to set up a full delegation in Bishkek and Dushanbe in 2008, which will significantly increase the EU's visibility in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and should lead to a strengthening of cooperation;
43. Welcomes the Council's decision to review the progress made in implementing the strategy in June 2008 and at least every two years thereafter; takes the view that this review will be the occasion to link the Central Asia strategy more closely to the European Neighbourhood Policy;

#### ***Kazakhstan***

44. Notes that Kazakhstan is a key ally and strategic partner in the fight against international terrorism, drug trafficking and religious extremism; recognises Kazakhstan's tradition of racial and religious harmony in a country which is home to more than 100 different ethnic groups and 45 different religions; calls on the Council and the Commission to prioritise support for the Government of Kazakhstan as well as its civil society with a view to consolidating the rule of law and to the further promotion of democratic elections in the future;
45. Stresses Kazakhstan's importance for the EU's trade in energy, as its main trading partner in Central Asia; recalls the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding focused on promoting cooperation with the EU with a view to developing safe energy and industrial cooperation; notes – recalling that Kazakhstan has the world's third largest uranium reserves – that this memorandum has been supplemented by an agreement on energy cooperation and a declaration on the peaceful use of nuclear energy by Euratom and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
46. Welcomes Kazakhstan's interest in strengthening cooperation with the European Union, and recognises the mutual importance of strengthened political and economic relations between the EU and Kazakhstan; considers that the EU should continue its approach of positive engagement towards Kazakhstan but emphasises that the development of EU-Kazakhstan relations cannot be disconnected from Kazakhstan's efforts to honour its international and OSCE obligations in the field of human rights, fundamental freedoms



and democracy;

47. Stresses that the last parliamentary elections, held on 18 August 2007, failed, despite some improvements, to meet OSCE and other international standards; expresses its concern that all the seats in the parliament were taken by the ruling, pro-presidential party, which could lead to monopolisation of power on the part of President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his supporters; calls upon the Kazakh Government to abolish all disproportionate restrictions on the registration of new political parties, for example the unrealistic number of members (50 000) necessary to form a political party;
48. Supports the decision to let Kazakhstan assume the Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010, made possible by Kazakhstan's pledges to defend the current mandate of the ODIHR and to democratise and liberalise the political system in Kazakhstan; in the latter connection, notes the pledges to ease the registration requirements both for political parties and for media outlets and to amend the Law on Elections, all of which should be done in 2008, as well as the pledges to amend the Media Law in a way which reflects OSCE recommendations and to reduce criminal liability for defamation; welcomes the close link that Kazakhstan itself makes between these issues and its future Chairmanship of the OSCE and looks forward to the timely and convincing translation of the reform pledges into concrete measures; strongly encourages Kazakhstan to grasp this opportunity to take a decisive step towards a fully democratic system and thereby to prepare for a truly successful OSCE Chairmanship;
49. Urges the government to move more determinedly towards a democratic institutional system, recalling the continuous progress that has been made since Kazakhstan declared independence in 1991;
50. Underlines the absence of any real freedom of the press, and expresses concern about presidential control of the major media and the prosecution of opposition journalists; furthermore, expresses concern over the new draft media law which would render journalists liable for disseminating disparaging information and strengthen the criminalisation of defamation and insulting the dignity of others, and under which suit may be brought against any journalist for publishing information concerning a public figure's private life; notes that the existing laws provide sufficient protection against unethical journalists;
51. Welcomes the signing by Kazakhstan of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UN Convention against Torture), and calls for its speedy ratification and implementation;

### ***Kyrgyzstan***

52. Takes the view that all efforts should be made to consolidate and support the fragile democratic institutions in Kyrgyzstan; believes that this country has the potential to become an example for all the other Central Asian states in the areas of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; calls on the Council and the Commission to step up assistance to this country so as to help to ensure that it undertakes and successfully implements the promised reforms;
53. Strongly supports Kyrgyzstan's progress in press and media freedom as well as the efforts of politicians and civil society to enact constitutional reform; calls upon the Kyrgyz

Government to ensure the safety of the country's journalists, to complete the promised media and anti-corruption reforms and to make greater progress in political and budgetary decentralisation;

54. Expresses its concern that the new draft of the Constitution, voted on in the referendum of 21 October 2007, could significantly alter the balance of power; expresses its concern that the Kyrgyz authorities did not engage in a wide-ranging public debate, involving all sections of Kyrgyz society, on this delicate matter; urges the Kyrgyz authorities to safeguard the appropriate checks and balances;
55. Regrets that the pre-term parliamentary elections held on 16 December 2007 failed to meet a number of OSCE commitments; stresses that, according to the OSCE, the elections, overall, represented a missed opportunity and a step backward compared to the 2005 elections, and fell short of public expectations for further consolidation of the election process; expresses its concern, in particular, at the double-threshold mechanism that kept out of the new parliament the strongest opposition party, thus giving President Bakiyev's party an overwhelming majority; calls on the Kyrgyz authorities, in this regard, to take the necessary measures in order to restore a fully-fledged political pluralism; deplores the crackdown and the arrest by the police of NGO and human rights activists who were peacefully demonstrating against the shortcomings of the election process;

### *Tajikistan*

56. Having welcomed the positive development of a multi-party and power-sharing system in Tajikistan after the civil war ended in 1997, notes that Tajikistan has been living in a state of precarious stability since then, with a President who, although apparently enjoying genuine popular support, has systematically repressed all opposition and imposed strict controls on the print media and broadcasting; regrets the absence of any genuine civil society in the country, which will undermine future democratic development, and stresses the need for further significant reform and respect for human rights; in this field, calls for the adoption of all necessary measures to respect the UN Convention against Torture, in particular by bringing to justice officials responsible for degrading treatment or ill-treatment, and also calls for the abolition of the death penalty;
57. Expresses concern over the new draft religious law that will, if adopted, include restrictive provisions concerning the legal status of religious communities, especially as regards the gaining of legal status by non-Muslim communities; notes that several provisions of this law violate Tajikistan's Constitution and international norms that Tajikistan has signed; also expresses concern that mosque leaders will be subject to religious tests in Tajikistan and calls upon the Tajik government to respect the beliefs and existence of religious minorities;
58. Notes that Tajikistan, which lacks natural resources such as oil and gas, is one of the 20 poorest countries in the world, and that there are very serious concerns about the level of exploitation there, as well as in Uzbekistan, of women and children in pursuit of what is effectively a cotton monoculture;
59. Encourages those Member States which have yet to ratify the PCA with Tajikistan to do so as soon as possible, as unnecessary delays could send discouraging and unhelpful signals to Tajikistan; will, itself, aim to give its approval to the PCA in the near future;



60. Draws attention to the existence of unexploded cluster bombs in Tajikistan, urges that funding for their clearance be increased, and stresses the need for an international treaty banning cluster bombs; draws attention also to the existence of minefields on the borders with Afghanistan and Uzbekistan; calls on the Uzbek authorities to cooperate fully in the identification of those minefields and on the Commission to support the necessary de-mining programmes;
61. Given Tajikistan's role as a transit country for drugs from neighbouring Afghanistan, encourages the EU to further strengthen its support for measures to counter these activities in Tajikistan, without undermining cross-border trade, which is vital for the economic development of the border regions;

### ***Turkmenistan***

62. Notes as a positive, albeit still very limited, sign of change in Turkmenistan the ambition of the new President, Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov, to carry out major reforms of the education system; believes that the EU is right in responding to Turkmenistan's receptiveness to cooperation in this field;
63. Welcomes the decision of President Berdymukhammedov to grant amnesty to eleven political prisoners sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for their opposition to the policies of the late President Saparmurat Niyazov; encourages the taking of further steps towards the release of all political prisoners in the country;
64. Stresses, however, that Turkmenistan must make progress in key areas in order for the EU to be able to move ahead with the Interim Agreement, *inter alia* by allowing the International Committee of the Red Cross free and unfettered access, by unconditionally releasing all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, by abolishing all government impediments to travel, and by allowing all NGOs and human rights bodies to operate freely in the country;
65. Draws attention to the urgent need for improvement as regards the dire human rights situation, especially in view of the grave position of small, unregistered religious communities and their leaders and other minorities, and insists that any further development in EU-Turkmenistan relations, including the possible conclusion of the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters, as well as, later, the fully-fledged PCA, must be closely linked to clear evidence that a process of significant improvement in this area is under way, as well as genuine signs that it will continue;
66. Expresses its deep concern at the recent outbreak in Turkmenistan of an influenza-like disease which is very probably linked to cotton cultivation and harvesting; calls on the Commission, within the DCI framework, to offer assistance to the Turkmen Ministry of Health in order to investigate the nature of the illness and its causes and find the most effective remedies; urges the Commission to assist the Central Asia countries so as to reduce the use of pesticides in the cultivation of cotton and introduce environmentally friendly techniques;

### ***Uzbekistan***

67. Confirms its support for the sanctions against Uzbekistan imposed by the EU after the Andijan massacre; regrets the very limited progress made in relation to the set criteria for

assessing the general development of the human rights situation; notes the Council's decision of 15 October 2007 to extend the arms embargo for another 12 months and conditionally suspend the visa restrictions for an initial period of 6 months (Common Position 2007/734/CFSP); urgently calls on the Uzbek authorities to take advantage of this window of opportunity in order to take concrete steps to improve the human rights situation, honour the country's commitments to international obligations in this area and satisfy the conditions set by the EU;

68. Supports the establishment of a human rights dialogue between the EU and Uzbekistan; notes the great difficulties which this involves, and stresses that expectations should be kept at a realistic level; rejects every tendency to use the mere existence of this dialogue as an excuse for lifting sanctions and for portraying human rights issues as now being properly dealt with; reaffirms that it is only results that count, and underlines that the Uzbek commitment to ensure justice and accountability for the Andijan massacre is an essential element in any further cooperation with the EU;
69. Urges the Commission to lay down concrete obligations and establish more efficient monitoring mechanisms in addition to the human rights clause and EU sanctions in order to achieve a real improvement in the human rights situation in Uzbekistan;
70. Welcomes, as a positive step towards reform of the criminal justice system in Uzbekistan, the approval by the Uzbek Parliament of the laws on the abolition of the death penalty and the authorisation of courts to issue arrest warrants; calls for a comprehensive overhaul of the criminal justice system that would effectively promote the implementation of these reforms;
71. Deplores the fact that the presidential elections held on 23 December 2007 failed once again to meet many OSCE commitments for democratic elections and that, according to the ODIHR, the poll took place in a strictly controlled political environment, leaving no room for real opposition; takes note of the presidential amnesty issued on 2 January 2008 pardoning over 500 convicts and reducing the prison sentence of another 900 prisoners, and regrets that only very few political prisoners have benefited from this amnesty;

#### *Addressing State fragility*

72. Urges the EU to honour its commitment to improve its response to difficult partnerships and fragile states and to support the prevention of state fragility through governance reforms, the rule of law, anti-corruption measures and the building of viable state institutions in order to help those states fulfil a range of basic functions and meet the needs of their citizens, which include education, health and all basic services;
73. Notes that the EU has committed itself to support disaster prevention and preparedness in countries vulnerable to natural disasters, climate change, environmental degradation and external economic shocks; therefore, considering the present situation in Central Asian countries, stresses that these commitments need to be fully taken into account in the EU strategy;

#### *Environment*

74. Notes that large parts of the region are rich in natural resources which have, however, been industrially exploited and processed for decades in the past, resulting in severe



environmental pollution, degraded land and dramatic shrinkages of rivers and lakes such as the Aral Sea; welcomes the fact that Kazakhstan has, since it declared its sovereignty in 1990, prohibited nuclear testing on its territory, but draws attention to the need for concerted action to deal with the problem of poorly maintained radioactive waste storage sites in the region;

75. Notes that a large part of the region uses a high number of water sources for irrigation in agriculture, but not in a sophisticated way, and that this creates huge problems for rivers, lakes (such as the Aral Sea) and further development, not only in the agriculture sector; recommends, therefore, the implementation of new techniques and methods in order to improve water management in the agriculture sector, for example by better stemming of irrigation canals;
76. Welcomes the impressive efforts being made by Kyrgyzstan in the field of environmental protection, particularly the numerous bilateral cooperation projects it is involved in, which are bringing considerable benefits to Kyrgyzstan;
77. Supports the proposal to establish in Bishkek a so-called "Water and Energy Academy" for all the Central Asia countries with the aim of achieving proper sustainable water use and the generation of hydro-power, improving transmission technology, protecting biodiversity and improving agriculture and irrigation techniques;
78. Notes that Tajikistan's only abundant raw material is water, and that, as environmentally friendly hydroelectric power projects require sizeable capital investment, increased foreign investment would help Tajikistan to diversify its economy away from its cotton monoculture, with its associated environmental, health and child labour costs, bringing greater economic, welfare and environmental benefits; calls on the government of Tajikistan to work to strengthen its legislative and fiscal framework and its public administration, and to remedy its lack of basic infrastructure, as well as to tackle endemic levels of corruption, in order to encourage investment in the country;
79. Encourages open and efficient dialogue with all the countries of Central Asia in the field of the environment and efficient use of resources, and calls for its practical realisation;

### *Energy*

80. Believes that the EU must speak with one voice on energy policy, in view of the presence in the region of projects of major interest to Europe in terms of energy supply;
81. Considers that cooperation on the EU's external energy policy is of the greatest importance in the context of its Central Asia strategy; supports, therefore, efforts by the European Union to boost gas and oil imports from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and to diversify transit routes; calls for active EU energy cooperation with the region, especially with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and, if possible, Uzbekistan, in order to address energy problems of particular importance to their huge human and economic development needs, difficult inter-state relations and precarious security of supply;
82. Believes that further strengthened cooperation between Central Asia and the Black Sea region in the fields of energy and transportation is essential for the accomplishment of the above-mentioned goals of the EU; takes the view that this should include investing in the development of alternative energy sources, energy efficiency and energy saving, and new

infrastructures in the energy sector with modernisation of the existing ones; recognises the important role of Kazakhstan as a strong economic actor in Central Asia, where the EU is the number one trading partner, and where Kazakhstan pursues a strategy of advanced social, economic and political modernisation;

83. Considers that the EU should encourage responsible and sustainable use of the region's natural resources, including through promoting revenue transparency via support for state participation and the participation of NGOs in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, where relevant;
84. Asks that special attention be given to projects connecting oil and gas fields and the distribution system of Central Asia to pipelines connecting with the European Union, including to future projects such as the Nabucco pipeline;

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85. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the OSCE and the presidents, governments and parliaments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.



## European Parliament resolution on Kazakhstan

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Kazakhstan,
  - having regard to the European Union's Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Kazakhstan, which was signed on 23 January 1995 and entered into force on 1 July 1999,
  - having regard to the EU statement of 16 February 2006 on the death of Mr Altynbek Sarsenbayev in Kazakhstan,
  - having regard to the Commission's Central Asia Strategy Paper 2002-2006,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the fourth meeting of the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council,
  - having regard to the official results of the presidential elections of 4 December 2005,
  - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Mr Altynbek Sarsenbayev, a prominent politician and the co-chairman of the 'true Ak Zhol' opposition party, was brutally murdered on 13 February 2006, together with his bodyguard and driver,
- B. whereas on 12 November 2005 another opposition leader, Nurkadirov Zamanbek, was killed under unclear circumstances after he had accused the government of corruption; whereas the official investigation concluded that he had committed suicide,
- C. whereas Askhat Sharipzhanov, a famous journalist, and Oksana Nikitina, the daughter of an opposition activist, have also been killed,
- D. whereas twelve opposition activists, as well as a number of journalists, were jailed for five to fifteen days or fined for holding a rally on February 26 in memory of the slain opposition leader Altynbek Sarsenbayev,
- E. whereas the Secretary-General of the Senate was arrested for the killing of Mr Sarsenbayev, together with five members of the state security services, and charged with kidnapping and killing, prompting the resignation of the head of the state security agency,
- F. whereas, according to the OSCE, the presidential elections of 4 December 2005, which once again confirmed Nazarbayev in power; failed to meet international standards,
- G. whereas Kazakhstan is a key ally in the fight against international terrorism and religious fundamentalism, and whereas it wishes to chair the OSCE from 2009,

- H. stressing that respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is a fundamental element of the EU-Kazakhstan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, upon which the development of future relations will be based,
1. Condemns the murder of Mr Altynbek Sarsenbayev and the other politically motivated killings, and extends its condolences to the families of the victims;
  2. Expresses its great concern at the fact that within a time-frame of three months two prominent opposition politicians were killed and at the degeneration of the political environment in Kazakhstan, where human rights activists, independent journalists and opposition members are increasingly subject to violence and harassment, while opposition political parties, in particular True Ak Zhol and Alga, have not yet been fully registered;
  3. Calls on the Kazakhstan authorities to carry out the ongoing investigation into the circumstances of the death of Mr Altynbek Sarsenbayev and the two persons who accompanied him in a full, independent and transparent manner, and to refrain from restricting the independent media and international observers from freely contributing to the clarification of the circumstances of the murder;
  4. Welcomes President Nazarbayev's statement of 21 February condemning the murders and promising severe punishment for those involved;
  5. Welcomes the release of Mr Galymzhan Zhakianov from his internal exile;
  6. Condemns the jailing of opposition activists and journalists for five to fifteen days for taking part in the peaceful rally following the death of Mr Altynbek Sarsenbayev;
  7. Urges the Kazakhstan government to honour its commitments under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, in particular to respect for democracy, the principles of international law and human rights, and to move towards democratisation, guarantees of greater freedom for citizens, and liberalisation; reiterates the importance it places on cooperation between Kazakhstan and the EU in the economic, political and cultural fields;
  8. Calls on the Council and Commission to place the issue of respect for human rights at the core of the next Cooperation Council meeting, linking progress in this field to the further implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and to strengthen the TACIS democracy programmes for Kazakhstan, aiming, in particular, at strengthening and developing democratic institutions, independent media and the fight against corruption; calls for the inclusion of these topics on the agenda for the next meeting of the EU-Kazakhstan Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, which is due to take place on 29 and 30 March;
  9. Stresses that respect for the principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, as clearly laid down in the PCA, is a prerequisite if Kazakhstan is to chair the OSCE as it intends from 2009;



10. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the UN Secretary-General, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the Government and President of Kazakhstan.

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**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



10440/11

**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

PRESSE 143  
PR CO 31

**PRESS RELEASE**

3091st Council meeting

**Foreign Affairs**

Brussels, 23 and 24 May 2011

President

**Catherine ASHTON**

High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and  
Security Policy

**P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 5183 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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## **Belarus**

The Council adopted legislation to strengthen the restrictive measures imposed on the Belarus regime, following the recent sentences on the former presidential candidate Sannikaw and on a number of members of the political opposition and civil society.

It placed a further 13 individuals on the list of designated persons subject to travel restrictions and an assets freeze, The implementing decision and the regulation, together with the list of persons subject to the measures, will be published in the Official Journal of the EU on 24 May 2011.

## **Kazakhstan**

The Council authorised the Commission to start negotiations with Kazakhstan on an enhanced partnership cooperation agreement and published the following statement to the Council Minutes:

"The adoption of the negotiating directives for an enhanced EU-Kazakhstan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement by the Council opens the way for further advancing relations and strengthening the EU and its Member States' cooperation with Kazakhstan through the conclusion of an enhanced agreement. Kazakhstan is a key economic and political partner for the EU, which continues to provide support to the implementation of reforms.

As outlined in the Joint Statement endorsed by the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council in November 2009, "closer and stronger bilateral ties must go hand in hand with adherence to the common values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights". In this context the Council is confident that the process of concluding a future enhanced agreement will provide a stimulus for Kazakhstan to make progress with regard to democratic and political reforms, notably in enhancing freedom of expression and media, freedom of association and assembly, and improvement of the conduct of electoral processes, to make them compliant with international standards. The Council emphasises that the successful conclusion of an enhanced agreement will be influenced by the advancement of reforms in these areas."

## European Union

Europa EEAS EU Delegations Kazakhstan ... 2011

The most recent EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting took place on the 7th of April 2011 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

At the meeting, delegations from the five countries of Central Asia were represented by Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr Elyor Ganiev, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Kyrgyz Republic Mr Ruslan Kazakbaev, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkmenistan Mr Rashid Meredov, Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr Hamrokhon Zarifi and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Konstantin Zhigalov.

The European Union was represented by Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Janos Martonyi (on behalf of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Catherine Ashton), European Commissioner for Development Mr Andris Piebalgs, and EU Special Representative for Central Asia Mr Pierre Morel.

During the talks, the parties discussed the state of relations between the EU and the countries of Central Asia within the framework of the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia, launched in 2007. Discussions focused on trade and economic cooperation as well as regional collaboration in the fields of energy, the environment, water resources, border management and combating drug trafficking. Views were also exchanged on the situation in Afghanistan and on other regional security issues of mutual interest.

The Tashkent ministerial meeting represented an important stage in the reinforcement and intensification of dialogue between the EU and Central Asia. During the meeting, both sides expressed a mutual understanding on a range of subjects and reaffirmed the importance of joint efforts to further develop EU – Central Asian cooperation in areas of shared concern.

The EU delegation presented its views on the state of play as regards implementation of the Central Asia Strategy, based on the findings of the Progress Report to the European Council, and underlined the growing importance of Central Asia to the European Union.

During the discussions the EU highlighted in particular the importance of developing cooperation with Central Asian states to tackle shared threats and common security challenges such as drug trafficking, terrorism, extremism and the reconstruction of Afghanistan. Officials expressed the desire to support the states of the region in addressing these challenges through intensified cooperation.

The participants of the ministerial meeting also noted the importance of constructive engagement on questions of democratisation, human rights and the rule of law. The sides recalled that the development of a strong civil society constitutes an integral part of democracy development.

During discussions on energy and the environment, the sides underlined the importance of cooperation in Central Asia on the rational, efficient and sustainable use of hydraulic, hydro-energy and fuel resources and the environmental protection and confirmed its readiness to facilitate the implementation of best practices, availability of drinking water and sanitation, as well as fighting climate change, *inter alia*, by increasing energy and hydraulic efficiency while safeguarding the ecological balance in the region.

The parties reaffirmed their mutual interest in increasing cooperation on trade, economic and investment matters. The EU delegation expressed their wish to help the countries of the region in their ongoing domestic socio-economic transformation and in their active integration into the global economy.

During their stay in Tashkent, the EU delegation had bilateral meeting with all five Heads of Central Asian Delegations to discuss issues of bilateral interest.



The delegation from the European Union expressed their gratitude to the Uzbek side for their warm welcome and for hosting the Ministerial meeting in Tashkent.

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**Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan**

62, Kosmonavtov street, 4th floor Astana, 010000, Republic of Kazakhstan	E-mail: <a href="mailto:Delegation-Kazakhstan@eeas.europa.eu">Delegation-Kazakhstan@eeas.europa.eu</a> <a href="mailto:Delegation-Kazakhstan-PIC@eeas.europa.eu">Delegation-Kazakhstan-PIC@eeas.europa.eu</a> (Political, Press and Information Section)
Telephone: + 7 7172 97 10 40	
Fax: + 7 7172 97 95 63	



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 5 April 2011  
A 135 /11

## Statement by the High Representative on presidential elections in Kazakhstan

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement:

*"I congratulate the people of Kazakhstan for exercising their democratic rights in presidential elections on April 3.*

*I take note of the preliminary findings and conclusions of the OSCE / ODIHR International Election Observation Mission on the Presidential elections in Kazakhstan, stating that while the elections were technically well administered, reforms necessary for holding genuine democratic elections have yet to materialize. OSCE /ODIHR also highlighted that although the media provided more equality in covering candidates in the news programmes, important shortcomings remain in freedom of expression and media.*

*I call on the Kazakhstani authorities to effectively address these shortcomings, as well as other restrictions and irregularities observed by the OSCE/ ODIHR. This should be done before the legislative elections in 2012, in order to ensure that they are in line with international standards.*

**P R E S S**

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FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - [Michael.Mann@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Michael.Mann@ec.europa.eu)  
Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - [Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu)  
[COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu](mailto:COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu)  
[www.ecas.europa.eu](http://www.ecas.europa.eu)

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*I also encourage the Kazakhstani authorities to enhance their efforts to honour their international commitments regarding democratic principles and human rights, particularly measures related to the registration of political parties, the decriminalization of defamation and the freedom of assembly. These are key to ensure Kazakhstan's increased compliance with accepted democratic standards, as a country that is a member of the OSCE and is committed to the common values of rule of law based democracies.*

*Kazakhstan is a key partner for the EU, and we stand ready to continue our support to the implementation of further political reforms."*

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EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 01 February 2011  
A 039/11

## **Statement by the EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the referendum on Kazakhstan**

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement today :

*“I welcome that President Nazarbayev, following the negative opinion of Kazakhstan’s Constitutional Council, has decided to put an end to the initiative for extending his term in office until 2020 through a national referendum. By honouring fundamental rights provided by the present Constitution, President Nazarbayev has acted in the best long-term interest for Kazakhstan. The announced early presidential elections, which I hope will be free and fair, should provide a further occasion for confirming Kazakhstan’s compliance with accepted democratic standards.”*

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**P R E S S**

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu

Darren Ennis +32 498 963 293 - +32 2 296 32 93 - Darren.Ennis@ec.europa.eu

[COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu](mailto:COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu)

[www.eeas.europa.eu](http://www.eeas.europa.eu)

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EUROPEAN UNION

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Brussels, 21 January 2011  
5621/11  
PRESSE 9

**Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton,  
on behalf of the European Union on Kazakhstan**

The EU has noted with serious concern that the Parliament of Kazakhstan decided, on January 14, to adopt constitutional amendments opening the way to extending, through a national referendum, the term in office of Pres. Nazarbayev for another eight years.

The EU takes the view that replacing the normal presidential electoral contests due in 2012 and 2017 with a plebiscite on a single presidential candidate would not be consistent with OSCE principles, reaffirmed in the recent Astana Commemorative Declaration, and would cast serious doubts on Kazakhstan's commitment to promote democracy and political pluralism.

The EU expects that an important EU partner and OSCE member such as Kazakhstan will abide by accepted international norms on democracy, according to which the political leadership should be either confirmed or replaced through regular fair and free elections, with all eligible citizens having equal opportunities to stand for office and being free to challenge the policies of the incumbent administration.

The EU confirms its serious reservations on this initiative as already expressed in the EU statements to the OSCE Permanent Council's meeting of January 13 and January 20. The EU strongly urges President Nazarbayev and the Kazakh national authorities to ensure that free and fair elections will take place according to the current Constitution and international commitments.

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**P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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**EUROPEAN COUNCIL  
THE PRESIDENT**

**Brussels, 25 October 2010**

**PCE 214/10**

**Remarks by Herman VAN ROMPUY,  
President of the European Council,  
following his meeting with Nursultan Nazarbayev  
President of Kazakhstan**

I am delighted to welcome the President of Kazakhstan, President Nazarbayev, to Brussels. We met already in April and your visit today is a sign of an increased cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Union.

Our bilateral relations have significantly increased during the last decade. We succeeded in establishing a framework for an effective bilateral political dialogue, including a regular Human Rights Dialogue, and substantial cooperation in areas ranging from trade and investment to transport, energy, environment, research, security and others.

In 2009 we also updated the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which forms the basis of our contractual relations. I am glad that the process is well under way.

Democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are the core values which need to be implemented in practise. I stressed during our meeting that closer and stronger bilateral ties go hand in hand with adherence to these values.

I welcomed Kazakhstan active discussion of WTO accession negotiation and confirm the European Union's support in this regard. Today we also discussed regional issues and challenges in Central Asia. We are working to make the relations with Central Asia stronger and deeper. Kazakhstan plays a key role in the area. We also discussed the Iranian nuclear programme. As one of the most economically advanced countries in the region, Kazakhstan has a special responsibility for promoting stability and security in its neighbourhood.

As current chairman of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Kazakhstan has also an important role to play on the international stage. We had an exchange of views on the challenges facing the organisation and the forthcoming OSCE Summit in Astana which will take place on 1-2 December.

**P R E S S**

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**FOR FURTHER DETAILS:**

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - ■ +32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19  
Jesús Carmona - Deputy Spokesperson of the President ■ +32 (0)2 281 9548 / 6319 - +32 (0)475 65 32 15  
e-mail: [press.president@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.president@consilium.europa.eu)  
internet: [www.consilium.europa.eu/vanrompuy](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/vanrompuy)

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I stressed the importance that the European Union attaches to this event, which will determine the legacy of the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE. The EU has from the outset stressed the need for a substantial agenda and a concrete outcome of the meeting. It should pave a way forward for the strengthening of the OSCE, but also give an impulse to the resolution of existing security problems in the region. In my conversation with the President I have reconfirmed the willingness of the European Union to work closely with Kazakhstan to ensure the best possible outcome of the Summit. We will see each other again in Astana at that occasion.

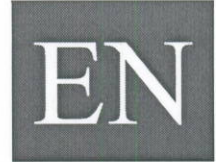
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*Video coverage of the trips and meetings will be available for download in broadcast quality from the Council TV newsroom <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>*

*Photos covering the event will be available for download in high resolution from the Council Photo Library <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/photo>*



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 17 November 2009  
16175/09 (Presse 338)

**11th Cooperation Council  
EU -Kazakhstan  
17 November 2009  
Joint statement**

The Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Kazakhstan met for the eleventh time on 17 November 2009. The meeting was chaired on the EU side by Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Frank Belfrage and, on the Kazakh side, by Deputy Prime Minister Yerbol Orynbayev.

The year 2009 marks the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the EU-Kazakhstan Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). The Cooperation Council noted that this agreement has represented a solid basis for the development of EU-Kazakhstan relations, which in the past ten years have grown in depth and intensity.

**P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>  
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On the whole, the implementation of the PCA in the past decade has been successful. The EU and Kazakhstan have established an effective bilateral political dialogue, including a regular Human Rights Dialogue. The sides note with satisfaction the substantial increase of bilateral trade and of EU companies' investments in Kazakhstan, to the point that the EU has become Kazakhstan's biggest trading partner and foreign investor. The scope of cooperation in several areas, including the domains of Justice, Freedom and Security, Transport and Energy has been considerably enlarged. The "road map for enhancing energy security" mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation in the field of energy continues to offer a solid framework for the cooperation between the two sides in this field of vital importance. Moreover, Kazakhstan is making an essential contribution to the implementation of the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia established in 2007.

The EU and Kazakhstan recognise that, in the past decade, new challenges have emerged that can only be successfully tackled through concerted joint efforts. The fight against terrorism, international crime and trafficking, addressing religious radicalism, the mitigation of climate change as well as the establishment of trans-national transport corridors represent issues of common concern, on which the EU and Kazakhstan are determined to step up their bilateral cooperation. Moreover, the EU and Kazakhstan agree that a stronger convergence of Kazakhstan toward the EU standards and regulatory system would be beneficial for further increasing trade flows and investments.

The two sides share the view that the PCA in its present form does not reflect to the full extent the mature partnership which has developed in the past years, nor Kazakhstan's growing relevance as a political and economic actor. The EU and Kazakhstan consider therefore that the time has come to proceed to a review of the 1999 PCA, with the aim of upgrading the relationship between Kazakhstan and the EU, through an early updating of the present provisions or the elaboration of a new agreement.

This process should provide an occasion for deepening the cooperation in areas such as enhanced cooperation in the energy field, in order to promote the diversification of supplies and export routes towards the EU. It could also enable the parties to develop their cooperation on economic issues and investments.

At the same time, the Cooperation Council congratulated Kazakhstan for taking over the OSCE chairmanship in January 2010, noting Kazakhstan's commitment to fulfilling its important responsibility of defending and promoting the OSCE values and principles in all three dimensions. The Cooperation Council noted the efforts of Kazakhstan for advancing the process of political reforms and welcomed Kazakhstan's intention to continue and further strengthen efforts to that end. The EU and Kazakhstan underlined that closer and stronger bilateral ties must go hand in hand with adherence to the common values of democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. In this context, the Cooperation Council also underlined the importance of an effective and successful OSCE chairmanship and the commitment of the sides to work together towards that end.