



Security and development key in new EUCAM programme

It is a pleasure to introduce a new EUCAM Watch as part of the new Europe-Central Asia Monitoring programme. Much has happened in Central Asia since February 2010 when we concluded our first EUCAM cycle, especially in the sphere of security and stability.

Most notable of course are the radical changes that took place in Kyrgyzstan which were quickly followed by an outbreak of ethnic violence in June last year. Almost a year after the violence, this small mountainous republic is slowly regaining some stability having installed a new Constitution and conducted peaceful and reasonably free and fair elections. While attention has been devoted to installing a new – more democratic and less corrupt – government in reaction to Bakiyev's ousting, the root causes of the ethnic violence need to be further addressed in a follow up to the Kiljunen report. Distrust between Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations will threaten the southwest of the country as long as no intense reconciliation process is embarked upon.

The events in Kyrgyzstan have posed a broader question of stability in Central Asia. Is ethnic violence likely to occur in other republics? While the Fergana Valley where Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan meet is a melting pot of ethnic groups and cultures and whereas Kazakhstan harbours a large Russian minority, ethnic violence does not seem to be the most imminent threat though can be a danger in connection with factors such as poverty and bad governance. Are there other threats to the stability of Central Asian republics; and moreover, can the uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East spread to Central Asia?

Of course revolutions are impossible to predict as we have again learned recently. One similarity between Central Asia and the Arab world is the authoritarian character of most states. Leaders have been in charge for long periods without showing willingness to grant increased freedoms to the population let alone embark on a democratic reform process. Meanwhile corruption is thriving and the population in energy rich countries see little of possible economic gains from the energy sector. Also regimes, in both cases, are backed up by the armed forces, militarised police and intelligence services. Regime security is their

major concern, not state security, let alone human security.

But there are also differences between the Arab world countries that rebelled and the Central Asian republics (while Central Asian states themselves differ from one another). The North Africa and Middle East revolts are often led by well-educated young people that have become disenchanted over limited career opportunities in their countries. They use the internet, foremost through Twitter and Facebook to get their message across to fellow-protesters and international media. In Central Asia, foremost Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, many young people have already left to work in Russia and elsewhere due to the low quality of education and lack of employment opportunities. Internet access is also restrained, either due to poverty or to state control.

These differences and the relative isolation of the Central Asian states do not rule out that protests could start with terrible consequences, as we have seen in Kyrgyzstan and earlier in the city of Andijan. The argument of Islamic radicalism as the only threat, so often used by Central Asian leaders, will certainly no longer satisfy external observers. The stability of Central Asian republics depends on a broad range of factors such as poverty, energy shortages, corruption and bad governance.

What can Europe do to help prevent violence and instability in Central Asia? And that in a time when attention (and probably funding) is and will be devoted elsewhere? All ingredients for useful cooperation and assistance seem to be present in the EU's Strategy for Central Asia. Taking up lessons from what we have seen so far in the Middle East and North Africa imply the need for a stronger focus on direct security matters (where Central Asian leaderships allow Europe to be involved) and connect these to a broader development strategy. Meanwhile Europe should not shy away from increasingly addressing tough issues such as democracy, human rights but also security sector reform with Central Asian leaderships. Engagement with Central Asia is crucial in this sense and should be based on a nexus of values, development and security interests.

EUCAM will closely follow these developments over the coming years and contribute through in-depth and critical research as well as through raising awareness and further expanding its network of experts and stakeholders across Europe and the region. Security and development will be central themes to our work.

This EUCAM Watch focuses on the EU's policies through the Strategy that has its fourth anniversary coming up next month. Two interviews stand central: one with EU Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre Morel and the other with International Crisis Group Vice-president (Europe) Alain Déléroz. Next to this we present our latest publication and notifications of Europe-Central Asia news and external publications. Lastly our new Advocacy Officer Tika Tsertsvadze introduces herself; an exercise we plan to continue in future newsletters so to bring the work of our new EUCAM experts and partners to your attention.

Editorial by Jos Boonstra, EUCAM Head of Programme

Exclusive interviews

Part I: EUCAM interview with Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia

The recent report of the International Crisis Group 'Central Asia: Decay and Decline' presents a grim look on the state of Central Asian infrastructure, healthcare, education, energy and transport. The report argues that international donors should re-think the assistance programmes. If you had complete control over the allocation of funds how would you distribute assistance?

The report has a harsh title and gives a gloomy impression. The economic crisis had its impact on the region. The EU started with addressing poverty a long time ago and this was the right choice. We often hear that energy is our sole interest in Central Asia, but this simplification is wrong. Over the last decade, many people in Kyrgyzstan have been receiving systematic EU assistance, which goes way beyond its energy interests. We will have to continue to address poverty because it is connected to stability. Indeed, education is very important, as is healthcare. But let's not forget other programmes, such as EU's "Regional initiative on rule of law", which addresses inter alia conditions of people in prisons and support for an uncorrupted judiciary system. It is also important to stimulate the capacity of those countries to cope with their own needs, rather than just saying, there is a problem and we have a special programme for that. These are young countries, wanting to be able to master their own development and we should acknowledge it, rather than coming from outside and deciding what needs to be done.

What should be a priority in engaging with Tajikistan? Is it water, security or poverty alleviation? Where should the EU focus on?

It is difficult to highlight one priority: there has been recently a rise in food prices but, at the same time, there has been improvement in production of agricultural goods – moving from cotton production to food production. We have supported the reinforcement of Tajikistan's agriculture capacity. Concerning water and energy, we have programmes and we have to address the very sensitive topic of hydropower. A balance needs to be found. A key question concerns the envisaged Roghun dam, which we could consider if

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the ongoing independent technical studies under the aegis of the World Bank review the plans positively. Furthermore, Tajikistan faces many threats as a neighbour of Afghanistan due to terrorist groups and drug trafficking which, of course, also remains a priority.

How do you assess the capacity of the Kyrgyz government to deal with questions of minorities and ethnic conflict? What is the EU's stance on the way Kyrgyzstan has been handling developments so far?

First and foremost, there was a need to investigate what precisely happened in June 2010. This has been done by several Kyrgyz commissions as a first step, which has been followed by the recent "Kiljunen report" prepared by an international inquiry commission. The establishment of facts is indispensable, because it is the only way to resume dialogue between communities and to start a process of reconciliation. This process is fully supported by the EU.

How would you justify the decision to upgrade relations with Kazakhstan in the light of the controversy around the recent elections? Various sources have observed undemocratic practices, yet EU High Representative Catherine Ashton congratulated the people of Kazakhstan on exercising their right to vote?

The line of the EU on elections has always been to follow ODIHR/OSCE reports. The observations of ODIHR during the previous parliamentary and presidential elections should be taken on board in renewed legislation. We have then expressed the balanced evaluation of the EU. At the same time, let's have a wider view: after all, this early presidential election has been a welcomed correction of the initial idea to hold a referendum with a 10-year prolongation of the mandate of President Nazarbaev. This was something on which we immediately expressed our concerns. The idea was abandoned after a clear negative position expressed by the Constitutional Court of Kazakhstan. The constitution has been respected in a way which is quite remarkable.

President Karimov recently visited Brussels, which was accompanied by harsh media coverage. What is the outcome of that visit? Soon after the visit the Human Rights Watch office was shut down. What is your view on this?

Up to now, Human Rights Watch bureau has not been closed

down, but its head had to leave. We have addressed these issues repeatedly at highest levels and we continue to do so with the authorities in Tashkent. One of the results of president Karimov's visit was the decision to open the EU delegation, which was long overdue. We all know the comments on the president's visit, but if the EU wants to have an impact in this country, it has to be present on the ground. The other outcome of the visit was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on energy cooperation. Uzbekistan is interested in diversifying its exports and therefore it seeks a long-term partnership with the EU; this enlarges the opportunity for Central Asian countries to get access to the European market.

European Commission President Barroso and Energy Commissioner Oettinger paid a visit to Turkmenistan last January to persuade the Turkmen leader to export gas to Europe. How do imports of Turkmen gas fit with the EU's normative vocation?

Europe does not have to persuade Turkmenistan, they want to export gas themselves and they have stated this very clearly. The question is now the Trans-Caspian corridor: the framework principles have been elaborated during the last two years, but it takes time to create a new up-and-running energy corridor of continental dimension. In Europe, we started importing gas forty years ago from the North Sea. Later a corridor emerged from the USSR to Europe and then one from Northern Africa through the Mediterranean Sea. We are now building energy infrastructures to the South-East of Europe through the Caspian and Caucasus regions. Concerning the Caspian Sea, we work now through a tripartite body where the EU, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan meet on a monthly basis in order to shape a fully-fledged agreement. Meanwhile, our partnership covers many other dimensions: we have a Human Rights Dialogue with each Central Asian country, where we can address all matters of concern in a concrete way.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is becoming an influential regional actor in Central Asia. Does the EU intend to establish a formal relationship with the SCO?

I started this mandate four and a half years ago, and very early on I had meetings with the SCO Secretary General. After some high-level contacts, the idea of a memorandum was discussed, but we gave priority to a real dialogue and to consultations on issues of common interest, instead of just signing a paper without a concrete follow up. I was recently in Shanghai and Beijing in order to meet my usual interlocutors in the Foreign Ministry and the people working on Central Asia in the research centres as well as with the SCO Secretary General. We discussed a variety of Central Asian issues in a very positive atmosphere. A regular dialogue between the SCO and the EU is now in place.

What are the main achievements you have experienced as a EUSR in the region? What would you do differently on hindsight?

This is a typical EUCAM question! It has been a collective enterprise. I would not like to answer on a personal base; this I do in front of the member states through my reports. In 2006, it was high time for the EU to engage fully in Central Asia; not for the sake of making a difference per se, but because of the region's growing importance. There is now a lot of good work being done in Central Asia and I think that we have taken a rather coherent line over the last five years. At the same time, there are limitations to what we can do. One of the present debates is to get the priorities and funding right, while convincing all European capitals

that Central Asia matters. Another challenge is the importance of the EU becoming more visible in Central Asia, including through conveying the main priorities to a wider public.

Part II: EUCAM interview with the Vice President (Europe) of ICG, Mr. Alain Déléroz

How do you assess the impact and implementation of the EU strategy over the last 3-4 years?

It was very good that the German presidency decided to have the European Strategy for Central Asia but it lacked two aspects. First, it was regionally oriented, in a place where differences between the five countries are harsh and where governments do not seek regional cooperation. Instead of having specific goals for the two weakest countries in the region – Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – the EU wanted to do a little bit of everything everywhere. Second, the goals set by the strategy are extremely wide: education, judiciary reforms, security, energy and so on. This is probably the reason why this strategy is not perceived very well by the people in Central Asia. The strategy is not understood in Europe either, except by the few people who work in the European Institutions.

Regional cooperation, which is so crucial in the field of energy and water supply, is still weak. How could the EU facilitate this process in a beneficial way?

On water management there is a need to build on what already exists. The engineers working on watering systems in Central Asia are the people who know best but they are constantly constrained by political rather than technical considerations. De-linking politics with technical affairs should be the first step. The second big problem is the state of the water infrastructure. Rebuilding this infrastructure cannot be done by the EU alone. It should be done through a common approach by the EU, governments of the countries in the region and by other regional donors – mainly the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank. However, the banks and donors are not in a rush because many do not trust how the money will be managed by the Central Asian republics.

The 2010 unrest in Kyrgyzstan was partially sparked by a decline in basic services. The installing of the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia might bring increased stability. What is ICG's assessment of the situation?

Can I be a bit tough on that one? When you have a corrupt government, it doesn't matter if there is a presidential or a parliamentary system. The system should not stand central in the debate but the fight against corruption should be taken on. The Bakiyev clan plundered the country. One of our suggestions to the government of Kyrgyzstan is to have a strong legal approach to try and get this money back. Our view is that Kyrgyzstan is still fragile and potentially explosive. It is unclear if the current leadership will hold together.

What is expected of Kyrgyzstan's WTO membership (the first among the Central Asian republics)?

WTO opens the country to new investments and should give increased guarantees on trade. But Kyrgyzstan has little to export. I think this should be seen as an encouragement for the country and hopefully it will help to spur economic activity.

Tajikistan is confronted by many threats to its stability (its border

with Afghanistan, wide-spread poverty, failing infrastructure, rampant corruption). What should be the EU's role in assistance?

President Rahmon has one idea: The Roghun Hydropower Plant. Not only does all the energy of the government go on that but last year he obliged people to buy shares. I think Brussels should be very clear with him, in saying that for the EU it is not a priority. The EU should devise a package on renewing the existing energy systems while asking the government to make a re-assessment of its priorities. Concerning security: The negotiations on a deal with the Russian border guards are quite important. Some serious patrolling needs to be done in Tajikistan which has a hard time controlling its borders properly. Russian border guards will help guarantee some more stability. At the time when Russian border guards were still there we (ICG) drafted a report in which we analysed their work; they were funded partly by the UN programme. Our recommendation to the UN was to carry on funding the Russian border guards on the Tajik-Afghan border.

What would be your advice to the EU concerning relations with Uzbekistan? How to balance isolation vs. engagement?

With Uzbekistan engagement clearly is not working. But I am not in favour of isolation either. I would argue for a policy that is measured on the balance between what you give and what you get in return. Recently I have taken part in a discussion in the German Bundestag. I was a bit tough by saying 'what I do not understand is that any negotiation usually is give and take. The way Germany has negotiated with Uzbekistan is: you [Germany] give everything Karimov wants and they do not give anything in return.' Thanks to Berlin, the sanctions that were installed after the Andijan massacre were lifted while not a single condition was met by the Uzbek government. This was a major mistake. The EU only asked for an independent inquiry, a few human rights conditions including some space for NGOs to work and freedom of speech. None of those conditions were met.

European Commission President Barroso and Energy Commissioner Oettinger paid a visit to Turkmenistan last January to persuade the Turkmen leader to export gas to Europe. How do imports of Turkmen gas fit in with the EU's normative vocation?

The engagement with these kinds of countries should be dealt with at the ambassadorial level rather than at the top level. With the Turkmen gas there are several substantial questions, one of them being the size of Turkmen gas reserves which is unclear. Will there be enough for Nabucco or will, by that time, most have been sold to China and Russia? Berdymukhamedov has made some important changes when he arrived in power. He corrected, as we have put it in one of our reports, Niyazov's most harmful policies, in education and the healthcare system. But the Niyazov's Rukhmana book is still taught in schools! It is a waste of energy and time. Unfortunately the new President is now building his own personality cult.

What is your view on Kazakhstan's recent presidential elections?

The opposition was poorly organised because the government was not ready to give more freedom to the opposition while it was clear through the polls that Nazarbayev would win by a landslide. It is a lost opportunity for Kazakhstan. Considering Kazakhstan's rising international profile and the 'Kazakhstan 2030' plan, it would have been great to see Kazakhstan really rise to the occasion by allowing free and fair elections. After all they want to develop the country to a European level.

News on Europe – Central Asia

European Union presents a tool aimed at bringing Kazakhstan's businesses closer to the EU market

"ASTANA, 6 May 2011 – European consumers are interested in Kazakhstani products and Kazakhstan's businesses are interested in selling on the EU market. To facilitate this process, the European Union Delegation in Kazakhstan presented the Export Helpdesk at the Astana Economic Forum (3-4 May 2011).

The European Union (EU) is the world's largest single market. Besides, Kazakhstan's businesses enjoy preferential conditions to export to the EU that reduce significantly the import duties when entering the EU market. Speaking at the IV Astana Economic Forum, the Head of the European Union Delegation to Kazakhstan, Ambassador Norbert Josten stressed that "Kazakhstan is an important partner of the EU, and the EU offers various preferential treatments to Kazakhstan," adding that "We are pleased to see that both the EU and Kazakhstan put great emphasis in strengthening the economic and trade relationship both today and in the long term."

Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/documents/press_corner/20110605_02_en.pdf

Statement by the HR Catherine Ashton on the report into the June events in Kyrgyzstan

In Brussels, 5 May 2011 - Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made today the following statement:

[...]

"I take note of the publication on 3 May 2011 of the report of the independent international commission of inquiry into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan. I commend the authorities of Kyrgyzstan for the far-sighted decision to invite an international independent and impartial commission to inquire into the inter-ethnic violence that occurred in the south of the country in June 2010. The EU welcomed the establishment of that commission, which conducted its investigation and did its report as an entirely independent, self-standing body. This is the first ever report of this nature in the region. I see this report as a contribution to the dialogue between the communities in Kyrgyzstan after the tragic events of June 2010. I call upon the Kyrgyz authorities to implement the recommendations put forward by the commission, which aim at conflict prevention, reconciliation, accountability and preventing impunity. Some of the recommendations meet priorities of the EU assistance programmes, especially on reform of the judiciary. The EU stands ready to continue to support necessary reforms in the country."

Source: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121877.pdf

First Human Rights Resource Centre opens in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

On 4 May 2011, First Human Rights Resource Centre opens in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

"Turkmenistan's first-ever human rights resource centre has been opened at the Turkmen National Institute for Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan. This resource centre, which was officially launched on 2 May 2011, is financed by the European Union (EU) and supported jointly by the EU, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) within the framework of the project "Strengthening the National Capacity of Turkmenistan to Promote and Protect Human Rights."

The launch event was attended by officials from various government institutions and representatives from the Europa House in Turkmenistan and UNDP, including UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, who visited Ashgabat on 1-2 May. Ambassadors of the European countries accredited in Turkmenistan such as Ambassador of France Pierre Lebovics, Ambassador of Germany Reiner Morell, Ambassador of Poland Stefan Radomski, Ambassador of Romania Radu Liviu Horumba and Ambassador of the UK Keith Allan also participated.

Source: <http://www.europahouse-tm.eu/on-4-may-2011-first-human-rights-resource-centre-opens-in-ashgabat-turkmenistan,1311.html>

Joint Press release following the European Union – Central Asia Ministerial Meeting in Tashkent, April 7, 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.”

Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20110414_01_en.htm

Statement by the High Representative on presidential elections in Kazakhstan

5 April 2011 in Brussels following the 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.”

Source: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/121294.pdf

Central Asian Border Security Issues Discussed in Dushanbe

Dushanbe (Tajikistan), 15 March 2011 - A two-day conference of the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI) convened to discuss border security and cross-border cooperation in Central Asia commenced today at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

[...]

“The conference brought together national counterparts from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, EU Member states’ representatives, high-level representatives of the European Commission, European Union Delegations’ Heads in Central Asia, members of the international donor community and agencies involved in border security technical assistance, such as the OSCE, UNODC, IOM, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, China, Japan and other stakeholders to share best practices and coordinate efforts. Amongst other important issues, participants discussed cooperation of Central Asian states with international partners, trade facilitation in Central Asia, as well as procedures and standards in border management implementation.”

Source: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/tajikistan/press_corner/all_news/news/2011/20110315_01_en.htm

Statement by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council on the meeting with the Kyrgyz President, Roza Otunbayeva

In Brussels, 1 March 2011 – President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, made a statement following his meeting with the Kyrgyz President, Roza Otunbayeva.

[...]

I welcome today in Brussels the President of Kyrgyzstan, Roza Otunbaeva, and her delegation. I have commended the President for her leadership and her commitment to advancing an ambitious reform agenda for the stabilisation and democratisation of her country, in a challenging context. In our meeting we have discussed the political and security processes in Kyrgyzstan after the change of presidential power in April 2010 and the consequent dramatic events of June 2010. The European Union has welcomed Kyrgyzstan’s commitment to the reestablishment of constitutional order and further democratic consolidation. In particular through the constitutional referendum in June 2010, the parliamentary elections in October 2010 - perceived by international observers as free and fair, to the benefit also to the region -, and the formation of a coalition government in December 2010. The EU looks forward to a rapid adoption of the legislation foreseen in the Constitution, and to the next major step of the Presidential elections at the end of 2011. Our talks focused today also on areas where development is instrumental for the continued commitment of Kyrgyzstan to democracy: Rule of Law, human rights, reform of the judiciary and security services, economic and social development, and, above all, inter-ethnic dialogue and recovery of the broken links between the communities in the country.

Source: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/119533.pdf

Statement of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso following his meeting with the President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov

Brussels, 24 January 2011 - The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, received the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, for a working meeting. Both President Barroso and President Karimov underlined their willingness to develop comprehensive relations.

[...]

“The European Union follows a policy of critical, conditional and comprehensive engagement with Uzbekistan. I have raised all key concerns of Europe, notably regarding human rights and fundamental freedoms, which stand at the heart of EU foreign policy. I believe it is through such a robust eye to eye dialogue, and not an empty-chair policy, that we can further the EU’s unanimously agreed policy of engagement most effectively.”

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/40&format=HTML&aged=0&language=en&guiLanguage=en>

EUCAM News

Tika Tsertsvadze – EUCAM Programme Manager / Advocacy Officer

It is my pleasure to join the Europe-Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM) team as a programme manager/advocacy officer. In 2006 I obtained an MA degree in Political and International relations from the University of Georgia, with my master’s thesis on European Neighbourhood Policy (East), which was quite a novelty then. My interests lay in the EU’s engagement in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

I started to work on Central Asia during my internship with the Open Society Institute in Brussels and developed a keen interest especially in the issues of human rights and more specifically child labour. Next to that my interests also stretch to the effectiveness of EU’s financial assistance to the Eastern Neighbourhood. I believe independent and vocal civil society is essential for building democratic and independent societies in the partner countries.

In my capacity as a programme manager and advocacy officer, I am developing and maintaining relevant contacts in Brussels with the European External Action Service, European Parliament, and Member States as well as Brussels based civil society organisations and civil society in Central Asia.

Upcoming events

CEPS, in coordination with FRIDE, will be hosting a EUCAM seminar ‘The EU-Central Asia Strategy @ 4’ on 9 June in Brussels. Four years have passed since the EU Strategy for Central Asia was launched. Since that time the EU has made progress in building institutionalised political relations with the five Central Asian republics as well as establishing a structure of assistance programmes and regional initiatives. The challenges for the EU to implement the Strategy’s priorities remain pressing however.

This seminar seeks to: assess the implementation of the EU

Strategy four years after its initiation; devote particular attention to aspects of security and of promotion of human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance; introduce the new EUCAM programme; and present and discuss two new policy briefs on EU-Central Asia relations.

If you are interested in participating, please send an email to Tika Tsertsvadze on tsertsvadze@fride.org.es

EUCAM on Facebook

EUCAM is pleased to announce its presence on Facebook. Join us to keep updated and to discuss the most recent issues: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Europe-Central-Asia-Monitoring-EUCAM/197919560227431>

The EUCAM website – www.eucentralasia.eu - has undergone substantial changes. Please visit us and send your comments

EUCAM Publications

Policy Briefs

Is the EU Central Asia Strategy running out of steam?

Jos Boonstra and Michael Denison, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 17, May 2011

The EU’s Central Asia Strategy approaches its fourth anniversary. The EU policy needs a closer link between security and development underpinned by a values based approach. The momentous changes sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa have demonstrated that even the most apparently durable authoritarian regimes are vulnerable to sudden political shocks.

Download: http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Policy_Briefs/Policy_Brief_17.pdf

The EU-Central Asia Human Rights Dialogues: Making a Difference?

Vera Axyonova, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 16, April 2011

Structured human rights dialogues are held with each of the five Central Asian republics. But is improvement in human rights noticeable in the region? This policy brief reviews and evaluates the dialogues to date and provides recommendations on what could be improved with regard to planning and procedures.

Download: http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Policy_Briefs/Vera.Axyonova.PB16.April11.pdf

The 2010 OSCE Kazakhstan Chairmanship: Carrot Devoured, Results Missing?

Vladimir D. Shkolnikov, EUCAM Policy Brief No. 15, April 2011

What lessons can be learnt by the EU from the 2010 OSCE Kazakhstan chairmanship? Has the chairmanship furthered relations between the EU and Central Asia, did it result in domestic reform in Kazakhstan and what has been the effect of the chairmanship on the OSCE as an institution?

Download: http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Policy_Briefs/Vladimir.Shkolnikov.PB15.April11.pdf

Commentaries

Kazakhstan's voting enthusiasm

Vanessa Boas, EUCAM Commentary No. 11, April 2011

The Kazakhstani political landscape will not be shaken by similar tremors to those that have rocked North Africa and the Middle East in recent months. President Nazarbayev who has been at the helm of Kazakhstan's political architecture since the fall of the Soviet Union is destined to stay. This is in spite of hopes that economic development coupled with the 2010 OSCE Chairmanship would spur the democratisation of the oil-rich state and lead to the rise of a natural successor for the 70 year old leader.

Download: http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Commentaries/Commentary_11.pdf

International report on Kyrgyz June violence released

Jeremy Smith, EUCAM Commentary No. 12, May 2011

After months of delays, leaks and rumours, the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission (KIC) has finally published on 3 May its report looking into the events of 10-15 June 2010 in the Kyrgyz oblasts of Osh and Jalalabad, which led to the death of 470 people, 74 percent of them ethnic Uzbeks. The Kyrgyz authorities have reacted to this report arguing that the report's authors relied too much on accounts by Uzbeks and that the research was incomplete.

Download: http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Commentaries/Commentary_12.pdf

External Publication

- Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats, Asia Report No. 205, International Crisis Group, May 2011 (Download: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/central-asia/tajikistan/205-tajikistan-the-changing-insurgent-threats.aspx>)
- Strategic Vacuum in Central Asia - a Case for European Engagement? by Tomasz Sikorski, PISM Strategic File No. 15, April 2011 (Download: <http://www.pism.pl/index/?id=60bb8062ea8e0c7ff17bb2e484cd223a>)
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Established in 2008 as a project seeking to monitor the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, EUCAM has grown into a knowledge hub on broader Europe-Central Asia relations. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Scrutinise European policies towards Central Asia, paying specific attention to security, development and the promotion of democratic values within the context of Central Asia's position in world politics;
- Enhance knowledge of Europe's engagement with Central Asia through top-quality research and by raising awareness among European policy-makers and civil society representatives, as well as discuss European policies among Central Asian communities;
- Expand the network of experts and institutions from European countries and Central Asian states and provide a forum to debate on European-Central Asian relations.

Currently, the broader programme is coordinated by FRIDE, in partnership with the Karelian Institute and CEPS, with the support of the Open Society Institute and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main outputs of the project are a series of policy briefs and comprehensive reports on key issues facing the Europe-Central Asia relationship.

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