

# EUCAM WATCH

EU-CENTRAL ASIA MONITORING

Newsletter

## *Spain and Kazakhstan in the chair*

2010 promises to be an interesting year for relations between Europe and Central Asia. The EU, guided by the Spanish Presidency, plans to initiate a review of the Strategy for Central Asia and is likely to build further on the political foundations that have been laid over the last two years. The OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) welcomes Kazakhstan as its first Central Asian chair and hopes that Astana can construct bridges between the 'eastern' and 'western' members that have been at odds over the last few years resulting in a weakened organisation. Both Spain and Kazakhstan acknowledge the importance of closely coordinating their leading positions next year and have held consultations to prepare well. Not only because Madrid and Astana maintain strong and friendly ties but also because it was during Spain's OSCE Chairmanship in 2007 that a long-disputed decision was taken over which countries would lead the OSCE from 2009 to 2011.

Spain stated that Central Asia is a foreign policy priority. The 2007 OSCE Chairmanship was a turning point since it aroused increased Spanish interests in largely unexploited territories for Spain; the Caucasus and Central Asia. Foreign Minister Moratinos has visited all five Central Asian countries although Spain's interests have since 2008 mostly focused on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Spanish King Juan Carlos and Kazakh President Nazarbaev have developed a close friendship (they are said to go hunting together). The last occasion was Nazarbaev's visit to the International Expo in Zaragoza. Relations with Uzbekistan are likely to also grow substantially over the coming years (the lifting of remaining sanctions on Uzbekistan has surely helped) with a second Spanish Embassy in Central Asia planned in Tashkent and an Uzbek ambassador in Madrid to be appointed soon. Rumour has it that the new Uzbek envoy will be a person with substantial political weight, able to get things done with the regime in Tashkent.

Spain's low-key approach towards pressing countries on democracy and human rights and its policy of open communication and participation produced results when the country was at the helm of the OSCE in 2007 and succeeded in boosting OSCE activity in the region, for instance

in Tajikistan. But national economic interest has played a role too. Spanish involvement and strengthened relations with Central Asia's main two powers has created opportunities for Spanish companies. Still, Spain's economic activities in Central Asia are dwarfed by those of Russia and China and are also much less substantial than for instance Germany's. The energy company Repsol is participating with a 25% share in the Kazakh offshore field of Zhambay, together with Russian Lukoil and the Kazakh KazMunaiGaz, while it is investigating additional options with Turkmenistan. The Spanish train builder Talgo established a connection between Almaty and Astana and between Almaty and Shymkent while plans are made for a Talgo role in the overall modernisation of the Kazakh railway sector. Uzbekistan has recently signed the contract for two high-speed trains of Talgo for the Tashkent-Samarkand connection. Meanwhile the information technology company Indra is also working in Central Asia, including inter alia on defence systems.

Whereas interest and relations are on the rise and Spain recognises the importance of Central Asia for Europe, the overall presence in and knowledge about the region remain limited. Under these circumstances, it is unclear whether Spain will be able to take implementation of the EU Strategy forward and initiate a review process or if its engagement will remain confined to the coincidence of the Presidency with Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship. Among the most pressing issues would be establishing good energy relations with Turkmenistan; (re-)building productive links with Uzbekistan; looking at ways to link Kazakhstan more closely to the Council of Europe and the EU's Eastern Partnership and working on the effectiveness of EU aid in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Whereas the OSCE is a less high-profile organisation than the EU, the challenge in leading the largest regional organisation in the world will be substantial for Kazakhstan. If Astana gives substantial attention to the human dimension and support to the OSCE's election watchdog, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) based in Warsaw, it might strain relations with Russia, but silence on democracy and human rights and the pursuit of



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further institutionalisation of the OSCE and increased consensus decision-making would anger EU countries and the US. Kazakhstan will need to add its own flavour to the organisation and in that way head off likely criticism. Although these priorities have not yet been officially confirmed, it is expected that Kazakhstan will give priority to discussions on stabilising Afghanistan and containing the proliferation of weapons (having set the good example in the early 1990s of swiftly dismantling all nuclear warheads on its territory with foreign assistance). Kazakhstan's chairmanship is likely to lean heavy on the politico-military dimension, also incorporating border control and anti-terrorism. With regard to the human dimension, Astana's focus is likely to be directed towards tolerance and multi-ethnic societies; issues that also ranked high on the Spanish priority list in 2007 and are less sensitive than democracy related topics.

In this issue of EUCAM Watch, expectations attached to the Spanish and Kazakh chairmanships stand central: Nicolas de Pedro conducts an interview on the Spanish Presidency with Luis Felipe Fernández de la Peña, of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation; EUCAM expert Nargis Kassenova writes about expectations of the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship and CEPS expert Piotr Kaczyński shares his views on the impact of the Lisbon Treaty on EU-Central Asian relations.

*Editorial by Jos Boonstra, EUCAM Co-chair  
and Nicolas de Pedro, EUCAM Expert*

## EUCAM News

### *Security issues in Central Asia and the Swedish EU presidency*

*By Nafisa Hasanova, EUCAM Coordinator, CEPS, Brussels*

On November 5<sup>th</sup> the EU Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM) project, in cooperation with the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP), organised a roundtable discussion in Stockholm entitled "Security Issues in Central Asia and the Swedish EU Presidency". The central question addressed by participants at this working meeting was how effectively was the Swedish Presidency coping with the security challenges facing Central Asia during its tenure in the second half of 2009.

This event brought together Swedish experts, journalists and policy-makers in Stockholm to discuss with EUCAM experts and EU officials the manifold security challenges facing Central Asia today and how the Swedish presidency has been dealing with the region during its term. Thomas Frellesen, Deputy Head of the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia Unit, Directorate General for External Relations of the European Commission, and Audrone Perkauskienė, Human Rights Desk officer from the Council Secretariat, gave a briefing on the progress made during the Swedish Presidency. A panel of EUCAM experts, consisting of Sebastien Peyrouse, Matteo Fumagalli, Michael Denison, Nicolas de Pedro and Marlene Laruelle, presented a range of security issues that EU policy for Central Asia needs to address.

In his opening speech, Michael Emerson called for a more proactive EU, especially on the big issues related to commercialisation of energy relations and investment in big hydro-power plants in the region's upstream counties. The EU representatives highlighted the achievements of the Swedish Presidency: although Sweden

## Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
EUCAM News.....	2
Stockholm event November 2009 .....	2
Stories from the Region .....	2
Destruction of Central Asian electricity grid .....	2
Kazakhstan on the eve of the OSCE chairmanship .....	4
EU and Central Asia .....	5
The Lisbon treaty: what's in it for Central Asia? .....	5
The Spanish EU presidency and Central Asia.....	6
EUCAM Publications .....	7

doesn't have diplomatic presence in Central Asia, the level of cooperation during the six-month tenure remained high, with no less than five Troika meetings having taken place. The EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting on 15 September attracted over 70 diplomats and ministers in Brussels, to discuss EU-Central Asia relations along with the issues related to Afghanistan, Iran, environment and water. Three rounds of Human Rights dialogues (in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan) and a civil society seminar (in Tajikistan) were held under the Swedish Presidency. The speakers, however, expressed the opinion that annual dialogues were insufficient. Heads of Mission on the ground should be more involved in pursuing this dialogue with the national governments and the representatives of civil society on a more regular basis.

The panel of experts identified issues such as drug trafficking, corruption, energy and food insecurity and growing illiteracy as posing a threat to security and stability in the region. As Matteo Fumagalli stressed, the energy focus is legitimate but it overshadows the concerns that Central Asians face on a daily, namely food security, which is directly linked to water and agriculture and hence goes beyond the borders of the poorer countries of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Central Asia is the world's fifth largest transit route for Afghan opium. This fact, along with the endemic growth of corruption, is weakening the already fragile governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Participants suggested looking for solutions in Europe, countries of 'demand' rather than 'supply'. And finally, the failing education system, in particular primary education and growing illiteracy, were mentioned as serious destabilising factors and a challenge for the EU in the near future.

## Stories from the region ...

### *Destruction of Central Asian Electricity Grid: Causes and Implications*

*By Gulnura Toralieva, EUCAM Expert, Kyrgyzstan*

The destruction of the Central Asia-wide electricity grid has not only demonstrated the fragility of energy arrangements in the region but also the lack of political co-operation among regional states in general.

Kazakhstan's and Uzbekistan's recent decisions to withdraw from the Central Asian electricity grid may deprive almost all the countries in the region of access to the common power system uniting all the energy resources. This may lead to a severe energy crisis in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, to failures in the work of separate energy systems, to a revision of agreements on sharing of water and consequently to political, social and economic instability in the region.

The Soviet Union created a common power system for Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan which worked as long as these countries were part of the Soviet Union. But the system began to fray at the edges after 1991, as the newly independent countries began to assert competing interests.

Electricity-generating capacity is distributed unevenly in Central Asia. Mountainous Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have close to 80% of the region's water resources, allowing them to build and benefit from hydroelectric power stations, whereas Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have substantial oil and gas deposits but depend on their smaller neighbours for water.

Disputes arise whenever Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan store up water for the winter, the season when they need it most for electricity production. The three lowland states want the water to flow downstream in spring and summer to provide irrigation during the growing season.

Uzbekistan exports natural gas to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It has been supplying electricity to Tajikistan directly, and also has served as a transit country for Kyrgyz and Turkmen electricity.

Currently no country with an interest in regional stability will benefit from leaving and destroying the common energy grid. The destruction of the regional distribution network may have drastic consequences for all the countries in the region.

First. One of the consequences would be to increase the number of outages due to accidents, as there would be no central mechanism for mitigating the effects of power surges by switching supplies from one country to another. For instance, if Uzbekistan, centrally located with the four other states around it, were to leave, everyone else's national grid would be placed under severe strain.

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan would be the worst hit, despite existing hydroelectric schemes and plans to build more.

Soghd province in the north of Tajikistan depends on Uzbek electricity coming from the common energy grid. Soghd's power plant at Kairakkum provides only 20% of the energy consumed there. If Uzbekistan leaves, two million people in Soghd region will be left without power.

Central and southern Tajikistan will also lose out as they will no longer receive power generated in Turkmenistan and transferred through Uzbekistan.

Kyrgyzstan, too, will suffer from the loss of electricity coming from or via Uzbekistan. However, the northern regions of the country would probably struggle through, by keeping a power station in the southern Jambyl region in Kazakhstan running continuously.

Second. The larger states will face significant problems just as smaller Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will. Neither Uzbekistan nor Kazakhstan are currently in a position to assure a constant,

uninterrupted flow of power.

Kazakhstan might leave, but it will mean additional costs, including the expense of building the infrastructure that will be required. If Uzbekistan goes, it will have supply problems at peak periods in the morning and evening. Without the Nurek power plant in Tajikistan, it will be technically problematic and costly for Uzbekistan to meet this peak consumption. The Uzbek energy grid also needs Kyrgyz power in order to regulate a constant current.

Third. Aside from periodic electricity shortages, the breakdown of regional energy arrangements will have wider implications including the problems of water sharing.

For one thing, neither the Tajiks nor the Kyrgyz will have much of an incentive to honour the already loose arrangements for opening up the dam sluices in spring to let water down the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, so that their neighbours have enough to irrigate their fields. Their natural reaction will be to hold as much water back until late autumn, when they need to begin generating more power by releasing water.

Within the Soviet Union, water and fuel were exchanged between republics as free, shared commodities. But in the post-1991 world, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have become increasingly annoyed that their neighbours charge them for gas, oil and coal, yet their own natural resource – water – still has no monetary value placed on it.

For instance, Tajikistan stores up the waters of the Syr Darya river in its Kairakkum reservoir for release to Uzbekistan and southern Kazakhstan when they need it "virtually for nothing".

It will be difficult to reach a water agreement on previous terms after the Uzbek power supply to Soghd region has been interrupted this winter.

Fourth. The disputes over water and energy which are inextricably linked with the political differences between the Central Asian states may lead to escalation of internal political and social instability in the countries of the region.

There is a risk that the situation may worsen, and the most affected would be ordinary people, with shortages of power and water and limits on freedom of movement that may lead to deteriorating conditions along borders and inter-ethnic tensions.

Uzbekistan's unhappiness with the current electricity arrangements forms part of a wider pattern of disagreements with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, over their plans to complete major new hydropower schemes.

The Roghun and Kambarata power plants would bring Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, respectively, a lot closer to self-sufficiency in energy. But Uzbekistan worries that the new dams would block off water from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, and is insisting on an international study on the possible effects of the projects before they are completed.

Russia's role in the region is an added complicating factor. Uzbeks are concerned about talks of Moscow investing in both the Roghun and Kambarata schemes, and also about plans for a new Russian military base in southern Kyrgyzstan, not far from their border.

Movement towards fully independent power networks and building separate infrastructure is becoming the only possible solution

for all the regional states after the destruction of common power network and under the prevailing political conditions, although it goes against the international trend towards greater cooperation and efficiency through economies of scale.

The Central Asian states are already taking steps to forge new one-to-one arrangements with one another while strengthening their own national grids.

The Kazaks, Kyrgyz, Tajiks and Uzbeks are currently working towards bilateral and trilateral deals on infrastructure and supply, bypassing the regional level at which agreement seems too difficult.

The countries in the region are making great efforts to ensure energy security by making their own grids more autonomous and developing new capacity. The destruction of a common energy system only strengthened their desire for energy independence.

Despite the steps taken by the countries in the region to ensure their own energy security, the need for regional co-operation and the political will and ability to reach agreements remains the important condition for political, social and economic stability in Central Asia.

More rapid conflicts on energy and water issues in the region urgently require transition of the regional energy system to market relations in line with the international practice. Energy resources, meanwhile, must stop being the tools for economic and political pressure.

### *Kazakhstan on the eve of OSCE chairmanship: Madrid commitments and domestic political landscape*

*By Nargis Kassenova, EUCAM Expert, Kazakhstan*

The prospect of Kazakhstan's chairmanship of OSCE was controversial due to the country's poor human rights record. None of the parliamentary or presidential elections conducted over the last decade was assessed as "free and fair" by the OSCE observers. The problematic situation with freedom of assembly, freedom of association and restrictions on media raised serious doubts whether the country was fit to chair the organization. Besides, there were concerns that Kazakhstan could become a "Trojan horse" and use its OSCE chairmanship to promote the agenda of a number of states (first of all, Russia) unhappy with what they see as unbalanced and biased activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

To dissipate these doubts, in November 2007 at the OSCE ministerial meeting in Madrid, Kazakhstan's foreign minister Marat Tajin made promises to protect the current mandate of ODIHR and push ahead with political modernization by amending legislation on elections, political parties, media and self-governance. These commitments helped Kazakhstan to receive the 2010 chairmanship.

One year later, Kazakhstan's Parliament passed the amendments to the laws on elections, political parties, media, and self-governance. Political parties, NGOs and media representatives were disappointed by the amendments and criticized them as "cosmetic" and failing to meet the commitments made by Kazakhstan to OSCE. The party registration procedure was modified but the government retained freedom of maneuver. The number of members necessary for registration was brought down from 50,000 to 40,000 (600 in

each province and the cities of Almaty and Astana). The 7% barrier necessary to get seats in the Parliament was not lowered (opposition parties were proposing a 3% barrier), but a mechanism was created to let the second party into the Parliament in case only one party overcomes it. In a similar way, the amended law on media contained only minor improvements, and law on self-governance did not provide for any autonomous body from the state government system.

In 2009 the political reform record has been mixed at best. The government adopted the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009-2012, developed with the help of UNDP, which gives hope for improvements in a number of key areas including freedom of assembly and freedom of association; the Legal Policy Concept for 2010-2020 focusing on judicial reform, criminal and administrative justice, and law-enforcement bodies practices and powers; and the Path to Europe program that aims at approximating Kazakhstani technical, environmental, social welfare and political standards to European ones. The Parliament passed the laws on gender equality and on refugees (the latter had been «shelved» for many years).

The same year the Government prepared and the Parliament adopted the law on information and communication networks and law on protection of privacy, criticized by journalists, human rights activists and opposition parties for limiting freedom of the Internet and traditional media (the EU made a statement expressing regret and emphasizing that it violates Kazakhstan's OSCE commitments). Overall, independent media have been under attack. Major opposition newspapers Respublika and Taszhargan lost "defamation" cases in court and were forced to close down.

Another worrying trend in the political life of the country has been the growing personality cult. The university named after President Nazarbayev (Nazarbayev University) to open in 2010 and his bronze statue mounted in Astana broke the previous informal ban on such veneration. In September deputy chairman of the ruling Nur Otan party (Nur being a reference to Nazarbayev's first name Nursultan) proposed adopting a law on the national leader that would make Nazarbayev life-long president.<sup>1</sup> The initiative triggered controversy among pro-presidential forces and predictably caused strong negative reaction among the opposition.

Overall, the current political landscape in Kazakhstan cannot bring satisfaction to those who hoped that the upcoming chairmanship would stimulate political reforms. Changes were minimal and introduced minor improvements, while bigger ones (like those contained in the Human Rights Action Plan) remain at the level of promises. In areas where the regime felt threatened, it did not hesitate to adopt measures that are in breach with Kazakhstan's OSCE commitments. It is defensive with the regard to outside challenges, and there are signs that it is undergoing an internal crisis. Influential groups struggle for power, which is expressed in the ongoing "war" among law-enforcement bodies (interior ministry, financial police and security services) and arrests of a number of prominent officials and executives. As a result, the bureaucratic and business communities are demoralized. At the same time, the protest potential is growing due to the economic crisis, but the government is too inept to deal with the challenge, while the opposition parties are too weak and lacking institutionalized channels for this energy to offer viable alternatives.

Thus, on the eve of its chairmanship, Kazakhstan seems to be

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the 2007 constitutional amendment already allows Nazarbayev as the first president run for more than two terms.

entering a systemic crisis. The old development paradigm does not work anymore. Internal problems have accumulated and are challenging the current status quo. How will that affect the country's performance in OSCE? It is likely that the gap between how Kazakhstan wants to present itself and reality will be growing and more difficult to conceal. Considering also the geopolitical factor, that it will continue to be pulled in different directions by different actors (Russia, EU, US), it is reasonable to expect that the year 2010 is going to be difficult both for Kazakhstan and OSCE at large.

## EU and Central Asia

### *The Lisbon Treaty's 'rolling revolution': What's in it for Central Asia?*

By Aigerim Duimagambetova, EUCAM junior coordinator, Brussels

*People in Central Asia, especially in the capitals, are growing increasingly knowledgeable about world politics, as a result of the very high level of attention foreign mass media attach to big global events. And, because in Central Asia it is often easier to access reports on international affairs than to find reliable information on domestic events, locals often know more about the presidential campaign in the United States or Israel-Palestinian tensions than what is going on in their own countries. This is true, regardless of the fact that the relevance of these top world stories to the local context is often limited. The last dramatic story attracting a great deal of curiosity was the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. As this long-lasting saga has happily ended and given that the EU is one of the most important partners of the region, a new, more practical, question arises: what impact if any might the provisions of the new treaty have on the foreign policy of the EU, especially, when Central Asia is concerned?*

According to CEPS' in-house expert on EU politics and institutions, Piotr Maciej Kaczyński, with whom EUCAM has widely consulted on the Lisbon Treaty, three major institutional transformations are envisaged with the coming into force of this document. First of all, it is the post of the President of the European Council (recently filled by Herman van Rompuy) that will, unlike the rotating presidency now in practice, chair the Council meetings for two and a half years. Another important amendment affected the position of the High Representative of the EU for foreign and security policy (to which Catherine Ashton was recently appointed), which received larger competences than those exercised by Javier Solana in his capacity as HR for Common and Security Policy. Also, the Lisbon Treaty will establish the European External Action Service, a new EU diplomatic corps. Beyond rearrangements in Brussels, 'European Commission Delegations' have now received the status of 'European Union Delegations', or embassies, with a new task to act in lieu of the presidencies in coordinating the work of the embassies of the member states on the ground. These missions will be integrated into the new External Action Service which will be composed of representatives of both the EU institutions and national foreign ministries. In theory, all these innovations are designed to turn the EU into a more coherent strategic global actor, comparable to the United States or Russia, able to pursue a sound foreign policy expressed by two key figures. So, unlike Henry Kissinger's dilemma of many years ago, one should now know whom to call to speak to Europe: Van Rompuy or Ashton, depending on the subject.

The basic intention is entirely laudable: to reduce confusion and

make the EU stronger and more visible externally, including for Central Asia. But the reality so far is quite different and our colleague Piotr Kaczyński assures us that considerable confusion and even procedural chaos will reign within the EU over the coming months due to highly complex rearrangements within the Brussels bureaucracy. The details of how this will work out are still being refined, and the full deployment and settling down of the External Action Service might go on for quite a while before the EU machinery has fully shifted to the new *modus operandi*. Moreover, the extent to which the introduced changes will turn out to be revolutionary will depend on personalities: so the game of 'tug of war' between the EU institutions and the member states has yet to be played out. Further, citing Kaczyński, for the time being, it is unclear who will form the Troika or who will mediate on behalf of the EU once a conflict, such as the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008, breaks out.

The 'Lisbon' wave is unlikely to quickly reach Central Asia for other reasons as well. Given the fact that Central Asia is not high on the agenda of the EU, all such transformations will evolve rather slowly. For instance, the Strategy of the EU towards Central Asia, adopted more than two years ago, has yet to start to deliver on many of its promises. Being located quite some distance from Brussels, the existing representations to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are still awaiting important changes established by the Strategy: the Delegations in Dushanbe and Bishkek should be transformed into full-fledged EU embassies with the consequential expansion of staff. This was supposed to happen in summer 2009, but the appointment of new ambassadors is still in the pipeline.

In the meantime, the Delegation in Astana, together with other EU missions in Central Asia, suffer from a lack of personnel since their establishment: operations officers, responsible for managing hundreds of technical projects, are overwhelmed. With the Lisbon Treaty, people on the ground should expect more work as they will have additional political responsibilities, which up until now have been left largely to the embassies of the member states. To compare, the staff in the EU office in Bishkek numbers 12 people, while there are around 130 people working in the German embassy and development agency GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) alone. Moreover, in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, there are only so-called 'Europa Houses', which are technical assistance offices without diplomatic status. It will take several years before a full set of embassies is adequately staffed and able to fully address the issue of coherence of the policies of the EU and its member states.

There remains a big gap between the EU's technical assistance programmes and its political activities in Central Asia. In principle the new High Representative, being both the 'minister of foreign affairs' of the EU and the vice-president of the Commission, will be able to address this gap. However, it is highly improbable that Central Asia will be a first priority in streamlining the policies. And if before the foreign agenda of the EU was formulated by the rotating presidency, thanks to which procedure the Strategy of the EU was pushed forward by presiding Germany, now it will be drafted by the HR and her office. Given Ashton's unique position, knocking on her door and lobbying for the interests of the region might be the same challenging task that it was in the case of the rotating presidencies.

Nevertheless, there are grounds for sober optimism. Once the whole system has settled down and the distribution of power and tasks among the EU institutions and personalities is completed, the post-Lisbon EU might start to deliver what is expected of it:

more coherent external policies. And this will in due course affect its activities in Central Asia as well. However, in the short run, the consequences of the Lisbon Treaty on Central Asia are comparable to the effect of the outcome of a very popular European Football Cup on Central Asia, which is to say: very modest.

### ***The Spanish EU presidency and Central Asia***

*Interview with Luis Felipe Fernández de la Peña, Director General for Europe & North America, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation by Nicolás de Pedro, EUCAM expert, Madrid*

#### **Question: Will the Spanish EU Presidency in the first half of 2010 devote specific importance to Central Asia?**

The Spanish EU Presidency will pay a great deal of attention to Central Asia. That attention is fully justified by a number of factors, such as the geo-strategic importance of the region, energy security, Afghanistan, etc.

The basic priorities of the Spanish EU Presidency with respect to Central Asia are to:

- Re-energise and assess the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, which is multidisciplinary in nature,
- Devote special attention to coordination with the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship and the Uzbek SCO Chairmanship and
- Stimulate contacts with civil society in the countries of the region. In particular, one idea is to organise an encounter between European think-tanks and their counterparts from Central Asia.

#### **Question: Are there political objectives or coordinated events planned in linking the Spanish EU Presidency and the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship in 2010?**

Coordination between the OSCE Kazakh Presidency and Spain's EU Presidency began from the very moment Kazakhstan obtained the 2010 OSCE Presidency, in the Madrid OSCE Ministerial Council of November 2007. There have been frequent coordination meetings by the foreign affairs ministers of Spain and Kazakhstan regarding the two presidencies. The last of these took place this year in September in New York during the UN General Assembly. Likewise, numerous coordination meetings between permanent ambassador representatives from Spain and Kazakhstan have been held in Vienna, where the OSCE headquarters are based.

On 2 November 2009, the Vice Minister of Kazakhstan Foreign Affairs, Konstantin Zhigalov, paid an official visit to Madrid in order to continue coordination of the EU and the OSCE Presidencies with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, Kazakh Foreign Affairs Minister, Kanat Saudabayev, is expected to make an official visit in the near future for the same reason.

#### **Question: For Astana, the OSCE Chairmanship is a national priority of the highest order. What do you expect?**

Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship is going to be the first carried out by a state from the post-Soviet space. Unfortunately, it is going to take place in quite complicated economic circumstances. Nevertheless, the Kazakh government is working intensively in the preparation of its chairmanship and several EU member states are helping them in this task, including Spain.

Kazakhstan wants all three dimensions of the OSCE to be further developed during its Chairmanship. Moreover, the possibility of organising a high-level conference on tolerance and a summit of heads of state and government is being considered. Kazakhstan wants the OSCE's legal status to be formally fleshed out, and it proposes that this should be done by means of a constitutive Charter.

#### **Question: What role does Central Asia play in Spain's foreign policy?**

Central Asia occupies a very prominent place in Spanish foreign policy activity, despite the distance. There have been a number of contacts throughout history, such as Rabbi Benjamín of Tudela (from the 12<sup>th</sup> century), the first European on record to have visited Central Asia, via the Silk Route, or the famous embassy of Castilian Ruy González de Clavijo to the court of the great Timur at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the region of Central Asia became a 'centre of gravity of the Euro-Asiatic space' or a 'point of geo-strategic friction between three geo-strategic tectonic land masses'. Central Asia requires our full attention in various areas: at the geo-strategic level, concerning energy, the threat of terrorism, drug trafficking but also in terms of development, etc.

It is for these reasons that the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation has made four official visits to the Central Asia region.

#### **Question: What are Spain's main objectives in the region?**

Spain's objectives in Central Asia basically coincide with those of the European Union Strategy for Central Asia, adopted in June 2007. That Strategy aims to raise stability and prosperity levels in the region through peaceful interaction. We aim to re-energise this Strategy during the Spanish EU Presidency. The Spanish EU Presidency will further promote political dialogue between foreign ministers of the European Union and the Central Asian states.

#### **Question: Do you think Spain can improve its presence in the region?**

Owing to various factors – official visits by His Majesty the King of Spain, the 2007 Spanish OSCE Chairmanship, the 2010 EU Council Presidency, and so on – Spain has enjoyed a healthy presence in Central Asia for a number of years now and Spain's prestige is growing in the region. The question that arises now is how to go about taking advantage of the increased visibility we enjoy. Certainly we will try to increase economic cooperation.

But there is more to do. For instance by setting up a second embassy in the region (preferably in Uzbekistan) or the opening of *Aulas Cervantes* (Cervantes cultural centres) and boosting the number of grants for students from the region to study in Spain. These are steps we hope to take as soon as budgetary circumstances allow us.

In addition, in 2009, an Ambassador-at-Large for Central Asia was appointed to take on the task of ensuring proper coordination of Spanish activities in Central Asia.

#### **Question: Recently there have been rumours about a possible Spanish Royal visit to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. If true, what would be the objectives?**

For the time being, no official visit to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

has been announced. If a high level official visit were to take place later in 2010, then the objectives, as is customary, would be to strengthen personal ties with the leaders of the host countries and the continuation of bilateral cooperation in the political, economic and cultural areas. Besides, on official visits, special attention is always paid to democratisation processes and increased respect for human rights and fundamental liberties.

**Question: One of the most pressing problems in Central Asia is the absence of regional cooperation. Do you envisage Spain using its friendly relations with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as a way to build bridges in the region?**

Obtaining an excellent relationship between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan has an 'ex post' dynamic dimension rather than an 'ex ante' static dimension. It will be the ultimate outcome of a process that both Spain and the above-mentioned EU Strategy for Central Asia aim to take forward.

In Central Asia, a balance in bilateral and regional approaches needs to be applied. The regional approach is very fitting to tackle common challenges, such as organised crime, arms trade, drugs and human trafficking, terrorism, non-proliferation, inter-cultural dialogue, energy, the deterioration of the environment, control of water, migration issues, border protection or transport infrastructure. Both Spain and the EU are helping the countries of Central Asia to carry out effective regional cooperation in these areas.

**Question: Besides logistical support, do you think Central Asia has something further to offer in resolving the Afghan conflict?**

We should remember that Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have a common border with Afghanistan which is over 2,000 kilometres long. According to the UN, 21% of the opium Afghanistan produces – and it is the biggest producer in the world – crosses Central Asia via the 'northern route'. So it is important that the governments of these countries control their borders very tightly to prevent consignments from getting through. The EU is helping these governments with this task through the BOMCA programme. Around 1,500 customs officials and police officers from Central Asian countries have been trained thanks to this programme.

It may be true that the countries of Central Asia have no desire to send soldiers to Afghanistan again, after having been part of the Soviet Union effort in the 1980s. Nevertheless, they are prepared to collaborate with Afghanistan in areas such as energy and transport.

At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Madrid in November 2007, the 56 states taking part agreed to identify ways to support Afghanistan. The five Central Asian states are amongst those 56 countries. The same can be said of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which includes all of the countries of Central Asia except Turkmenistan. In the SCO conference that focused on Afghanistan held in Moscow in March 2009, it was agreed that the organisation would get more involved in Afghanistan, above all in the area of security. In this regard, it was agreed to boost cooperation in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and organised crime.

## New Publications

### EUCAM Policy Briefs

EUCAM Policy Brief No. 12 - *Tajikistan: 'Revolutionary situation' or a Resilient state?*, Anna Matveeva, December 2009: [http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Policy\\_Briefs/PB12.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Policy_Briefs/PB12.pdf)

EUCAM Policy Brief No. 11 - *Beyond the Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA)*, George Gavriliu, December 2009: [http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Policy\\_Briefs/PB11.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Policy_Briefs/PB11.pdf)

### EUCAM Working Papers

EUCAM Working Paper No. 7 - *Optimisation of Central Asian and Eurasian Trans-Continental Land Transport Corridors*, Michael Emerson and Evgeny Vinokurov, December 2009: [http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Working\\_Papers/WP7-EN.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Working_Papers/WP7-EN.pdf)

EUCAM Working Paper No. 6 - *The multiple paradoxes of the agriculture issue in Central Asia*, Sébastien Peyrouse, November 2009: [http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Working\\_Papers/WP6-EN.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Working_Papers/WP6-EN.pdf) (also available in Russian)

### EUCAM Commentaries

EUCAM Commentary No. 6 - *The growing illiteracy in Central Asia: a challenge for the EU*, Marlène Laruelle, December 2009: [http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Commentaries/EUCAM\\_commentary6\\_Laruelle.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Commentaries/EUCAM_commentary6_Laruelle.pdf)

EUCAM Commentary No. 5 - *Studying Europe in Central Asia: the case of Kyrgyzstan*, Maxim Ryabkov, December 2009: [http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/PDF/Commentaries/EUCAM\\_commentary5\\_Ryabkov.pdf](http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Commentaries/EUCAM_commentary5_Ryabkov.pdf)

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# About EUCAM

The Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Spain, in co-operation with the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Belgium, has launched a joint project entitled "EU Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM)". The (EUCAM) initiative is an 18-month research and awareness-raising exercise supported by several EU member states and civil society organisations which aims:

- to raise the profile of the EU-Central Asia Strategy;
- to strengthen debate about the EU-Central Asia relationship and the role of the Strategy in that relationship;
- to enhance accountability through the provision of high quality information and analysis;
- to promote mutual understanding by deepening the knowledge within European and Central Asian societies about EU policy in the region; and
- to develop 'critical' capacity within the EU and Central Asia through the establishment of a network that links communities concerned with the role of the EU in Central Asia.

EUCAM focuses on four priority areas in order to find a mix between the broad political ambitions of the Strategy and the narrower practical priorities of EU institutions and member state assistance programmes:

- Democracy and Human Rights
- Security and Stability
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Education and Social Relations

EUCAM will produce the following series of publications:

- A bi-monthly newsletter on EU-Central Asia relations will be produced and distributed broadly by means of an email list server using the CEPS and FRIDE networks. The newsletter contains the latest documents on EU-Central Asia relations, up-to-date information on the EU's progress in implementing the Strategy and developments in Central Asian countries.

- Policy briefs will be written by permanent and ad hoc Working Group members. The majority of the papers examine issues related to the four core themes identified above, with other papers commissioned in response to emerging areas beyond the main themes.

- Commentaries on the evolving partnership between the EU and the states of Central Asia will be commissioned reflecting specific developments in the EU-Central Asian relationship.

- A final monitoring report of the EUCAM Expert Working Group will be produced by the project rapporteurs.

This monitoring exercise is implemented by an Expert Working Group, established by FRIDE and CEPS. The group consists of experts from the Central Asian states and the members countries of the EU. In addition to expert meetings, several public seminars will be organised for a broad audience including EU representatives, national officials and legislators, the local civil society community, media and other stakeholders.

EUCAM is sponsored by the Open Society Institute (OSI) and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project is also supported by the Czech Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and the United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

## About FRIDE

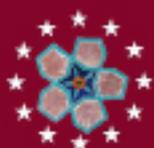
FRIDE is a think tank based in Madrid that aims to provide original and innovative thinking on Europe's role in the international arena. It strives to break new ground in its core research interests – peace and security, human rights, democracy promotion and development and humanitarian aid – and mould debate in governmental and nongovernmental bodies through rigorous analysis, rooted in the values of justice, equality and democracy.

As a prominent European think tank, FRIDE benefits from political independence, diversity of views and the intellectual background of its international staff. Since its establishment in 1999, FRIDE has organised or participated in the creation and development of various projects that reinforce not only FRIDE's commitment to debate and analysis, but also to progressive action and thinking.

## About CEPS

Founded in Brussels in 1983, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) is among the most experienced and authoritative think tanks operating in the European Union today. CEPS serves as a leading forum for debate on EU affairs, and its most distinguishing feature lies in its strong in-house research capacity, complemented by an extensive network of partner institutes throughout the world.

CEPS aims to carry out state-of-the-art policy research leading to solutions to the challenges facing Europe today and to achieve high standards of academic excellence and maintain unqualified independence. CEPS also provides a forum for discussion among all stakeholders in the European policy process and builds collaborative networks of researchers, policy-makers and business representatives across the whole of Europe.



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