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Master Thesis

THE EUROPEAN UNION-CENTRAL ASIA: in the light of the New Strategy

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Master Thesis

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Nurangez Abdulhamidova



To my parents

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	8
Acronyms	9
Chapter I: Introduction	10
1.1 Research Problem	10
1.2 Research Aim and Questions, Importance of the Topic	12
1.3 Structure of the Thesis	13
Chapter II: Research Methods	15
2.1 Qualitative Research Methods.....	15
2.1.1 Documents Study.....	15
2.1.2 Secondary Analysis	15
2.1.3 Case Study	16
2.1.4 Qualitative Interviewing	16
Chapter III: Theoretical Framework.....	17
3.1 Neorealism.....	17
3.2 Neoliberalism	19
3.3 Constructivism.....	21
3.4 Summary	23
Chapter IV: The EU-Central Asia	25
4.1 Central Asia.....	25
4.2 Foreign Policy of the EU	31
4.3 The EU-Central Asia: Before Adoption of the Strategy.....	33
4.4 Factors That Conditioned Adoption of the Strategy.....	36
4.5 The Strategy: Priorities, Progress, Shortcomings.....	40
4.6 The EU-Tajikistan Cooperation	44
4.7 The EU Member States	50
4.7.1 France	50
4.7.2 Germany.....	51
4.7.3 Sweden	52
4.7.4 The United Kingdom.....	52
4.8 Summary	53
Chapter V: Role of Other Regional/International Actors Engaged in Central Asia and Their Interaction With the EU.....	55
5.1 Russia	55
5.2 The United States of America	58

5.3 China	59
5.4 Iran	61
5.5 Turkey	63
5.6 Pakistan	64
5.7 India	64
5.8 Japan.....	65
5.9 Summary	67
Chapter VI: Conclusion.....	70
6.1 In the Light of the Strategy's Priorities: Progress, Problems and Solution, Prospects.....	70
6.2 Recommendations	76
6.3 Interpretation of the EU's Policy in Central Asia From Perspective of the Theories of International Relations and the Research Results.....	77
Bibliography	79
Annex I - List of the Interviewed Experts.....	88
Annex II- Interview Questions	89
Annex III-Map of Central Asia	90

Abstract

Central Asia is a region strategically located at the crossroads of the two continents: Asia and Europe. The region is represented by five states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) with different level of economic development and with the population amounting to over 60 million people. The region is rich in energy resources represented by oil, gas, coal and water resources.

The thesis analyses, assesses and scrutinises one of the topical issues of the contemporary international relations - cooperation between the European Union and Central Asian states before and after adoption in June 2007 of the 'European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership', an important political document in the history of relations between the two parties.

The new stage of cooperation is analysed more comprehensively accentuating priorities set in the Strategy. Analysis of the current state of affairs is conducted concerning some important issues of the Strategy related to regional cooperation between Central Asian states, such as integrated water management and development of hydro-energy system, issues of diversification of hydrocarbons supply routes from the region to Europe and provision of energy security, etc.

Issues of cooperation between the European Union and Tajikistan are analysed as a case study. State of affairs between the Central Asian states and the European Union Member States actively cooperating with these countries is characterised.

The thesis also scrutinises other regional/international actors engaged in cooperation with Central Asia (such as China, Russia, the US, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, etc.) and their potential for interaction with the European Union for more effective joint solution of the problems existing in the region is assessed.

In the conclusion, development of cooperation between the European Union and Central Asian states is scrutinised, the problems and their possible solutions in this regard are analysed, and the recommendations for increasing effectiveness of cooperation between the two parties are presented.

The European Union's policy in Central Asia is interpreted from perspective of the theories of international relations namely neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism in the research.

Keywords: *the European Union, Central Asia, the EU's Strategy, Tajikistan, Eurasia, cooperation, regional cooperation, regional integration, partnership, neorealism, neoliberalism, constructivism*

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BOMCA	Border Management Programme for Central Asia
CA	Central Asia
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy (of the European Union)
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
ENP	European Union Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
EU MS	European Union Member States
EURASEC	Eurasian Economic Community
INOGATE	Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe
IR	International Relations
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
The Strategy	‘European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’ of June 2007
TACIS	Technical Assistance to Commonwealth of Independent States
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US(A)	United States (of America)
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Chapter I: Introduction

*Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you have no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain.¹*

1.1 Research Problem

‘Central Asia has a centuries-old tradition of bringing Asia and Europe together. It lies at a strategically important intersection between the two continents’²- begins the Introduction chapter of ‘European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’ of June 2007.

Central Asia (CA) is a usual definition of the region consisting of five states, which in the 20th century were the part of the former Soviet Union and acquired their state independence with disintegration of the latter in 1991. Namely they are: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, CA is at the crossroads of a number of strategically important regions of Eurasia. China and the countries of the Asia-Pacific region are located to the east; to the south - Afghanistan, the countries of the Middle East, India and Pakistan; to the west and north - Caucasus, Turkey, Europe and Russia.

Central Asian region represents the huge territory rich in natural resources with a centuries-old traditions and customs of local population.

Despite the fact that Central Asian nations share considerable historical, cultural, religious and sometimes linguistic commonalities (four Central Asian nations share linguistic commonalities, except Tajikistan),³ however, *‘unlike the EU, CA is not home to a regional integrationist project with a well developed institutional structure’⁴* (at least at the present state of affairs). While belonging to a variety of regional organisations the Central Asian states do not belong to a regional organisation that consists solely of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, nor are there any supranational organisations to which these countries belong, remotely resembling the EU.⁵

Taking into consideration the strategic location of CA, any developments occurring in the

¹ Saadi (Shaykh Muslih al-Din Saadi Shirazi), prominent medieval Persian poet and Muslim humanist. This verse is inscribed on the entrance to the Hall of Nations of the UN building in New York for demonstration of interconnectedness between all nations and human beings, their interdependence, equality and unity

² Council of the European Union, *European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, European Communities, 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009,

[<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf>](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf)

³ Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbeks speak languages of Turkic language group, while Tajiks speak Tojiki – a variety of Persian language belonging to Iranian languages

⁴ D. Kimmage, ‘Security Challenges in Central Asia: Implications for the EU’s Engagement Strategy’, in N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008, p.12

⁵ *ibid.*

Central Asian countries will have the reflection not only at the regional level, but also can alter geopolitical balance of powers on the whole Eurasian continent, which is widely recognised as an axis of the contemporary global development.⁶

In this connection, it is obvious that CA is the region in which interests of a number of world powers and other international actors are more persistently being crossed. Foreign policies pursued by them are one of the important factors affecting various processes in CA. Thus, quite naturally the strategic rivalry of world powers in this region leads to emergence of contradictions on the geopolitical and economic grounds.

At present, Russia, the US, China and the EU are the most influential international actors essentially affecting formation of a geopolitical situation in CA. According to some researchers, CA is a region clearly lying within the sphere of European interests.

It should be mentioned that until recent times the policy of the EU concerning CA was cautious and constrained. The EU was significantly behind other world powers in asserting a political and economic interest in the region.⁷ But it has become inevitable that for the EU it was impossible to adhere further to such position in the region that became more expressed on a background of changes in geopolitical balance towards other world powers for the last years.

The EU has many opportunities for a privileged presence in the region. One of them is that the EU-Central Asian relations are not aggravated with ambitions of the past. This allows the Central Asian countries to develop direct relations with the EU Member States without any intermediaries. *'The EU is perceived as honest broker in the region, has the credibility to press for changes without being accused of pursuing an imperialist agenda or bringing instability to the region by supporting more colored revolutions.'*⁸

'European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership' adopted by the European Council on 21-22 June 2007 has become a principal document of the significant and decisive strengthening of the EU's policy in CA. *'The strategy represents the EU's most ambitious project in the region and signals a significant upgrading of relations. It is designed to unfold over the coming years at both the regional level and through bilateral relations.'*⁹ According to many researchers, the strategy contains many positive innovations, it is constructive and nonaggressive.

There are many reasons of the serious interest of the EU in CA, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

The EU has long-term interests in CA unlike the US. The EU is directly affected by the developments in the region. The EU has the resources, and according to the new strategy it has serious intentions to engage in CA. The EU wants *'to contribute to the transformation of the region into a secure and well-governed area, which is in the best interests of Central Asians as well, and it can offer models of political development and good governance and*

⁶ V. Paramonov, 'Geopolitika i Tsentral'naya Aziya' (Geopolitics and Central Asia), *Online Journal Polemika*, Issue No.5, 1999, The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.irex.ru/press/pub/polemika/05/par>>

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ C. Graubner, 'EU Strategy on Central Asia: Realpolitik after all', *issue of the Central Asia Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 05/14/2008, p.2, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4859>>

⁹ N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008

*patterns of cooperation that can be emulated to achieve this goal. It can provide an alternative gravitation pole for Central Asia, creating real opportunities for security and sustainable development. The strategy is the first attempt to find the coherent European policy based on clearly defined interests and guided by realistic but ambitious goals in the region.*¹⁰

Some in the region feel that their recent history as part of the Soviet Union makes them politically and culturally closer to Europe in many ways than to Asia.¹¹

Deeper partnership and intensification of cooperation between the EU and CA will be mutually beneficial and will undoubtedly promote the development in the region. But the further intensification of the partnership will depend on whether the EU can master the political will to shape and carry out its agenda in the region.

1.2 Research Aim and Questions, Importance of the Topic

In the beginning of the 21st century, under the conditions of the world globalisation, the EU is interested in establishment of qualitatively new partnership relations with the countries of the world, in particular with the Central Asian countries, with a common purpose of achievement of stability and prosperity through peaceful interaction. Adoption of **‘European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’** (the Strategy) in June 2007 – the first political instrument from the EU regarding its policy in the region became a practical step towards the implementation of this interest. The Strategy promotes development of cooperation and integration in the region in many important issues, which is highly significant and beneficial for the progress and stability of all countries of the region.

Several questions may be raised in this connection: *What factors conditioned the EU to change its policy towards CA and intensify cooperation with the countries of the region? How this cooperation may affect development in the countries of the region? Could this cooperation promote intensification of regional cooperation between the Central Asian states? What will be the future of the EU supported projects in CA? Presence of which regional and international actors in CA may affect (either positively or negatively) bilateral relations between the EU and CA? Are there any obstacles for an effective cooperation between the EU and CA? What are the prospects of development of cooperation between the EU and CA?*

Answers to these questions require a thorough analysis and assessment, and the author will try to illuminate them in the following chapters of this research.

In this connection, the aim of this research is *identification of ways of increasing effectiveness of cooperation between the European Union and Central Asian states in the light of the European Union’s new Strategy for the region.*

Accordingly the following research questions were defined:

¹⁰ N. Kassenova, ‘A View from the Region’, in N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008, p.130

¹¹ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, ICG, Asia Report, No.113, Brussels/Bishkek, 10 April 2006, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.crisisgroup.org>>

1. *To scrutinise process of development of relations between the EU and Central Asian states before adoption of the Strategy;*
2. *To identify the factors that conditioned adoption of the Strategy;*
3. *To conduct an analysis and assessment of the current state of affairs between the EU and Central Asian states, and in particular between the EU and Tajikistan (as a case study) in the light of the Strategy;*
4. *To scrutinise the role of other regional/international actors engaged in CA and their interaction with the EU;*
5. *To conduct an analysis and assessment of process of activities implementation within the Strategy's priorities;*
6. *To make recommendations for increasing effectiveness of cooperation between the EU and Central Asian states.*

Simultaneously the parallels will be drawn and the linkage between the policy pursued by the EU in CA and theories of IR will be defined and analysed in this research.

The chosen topic is relatively new in the field of IR and European Studies. At present, there are not so many significant works in the available literature dedicated to studying of mutual relations (cooperation) between the EU and Central Asian countries in chronological order beginning from the 1990s and characterisation of the new stage of cooperation started with adoption of the Strategy with assessment of the current state of affairs. In this regard, conducting of such research with simultaneous studying of the theoretical prerequisites of cooperation between the EU and Central Asian countries from the point of view of IR theories could help to the certain extent in identifying the potential for and prospects of cooperation between the two parties. Furthermore, this could allow making a prognosis regarding the possible impact of this cooperation on transformation of the region into economically and politically developed area.

Taking into consideration the abovementioned, the research topic may be regarded as highly relevant and important in the field of IR and European Studies and the research will definitely become a contribution to the existing and future studies on the issue.

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters:

Chapter I: This chapter is an introductory part of the thesis. In this chapter the research problem, aim and questions, and importance of the chosen topic are defined and discussed. The structure of the thesis is presented.

Chapter II: This chapter discusses research methods applied in the thesis. Also it is indicated which sources of data were used in the research.

Chapter III: This chapter deals with theoretical points of departure for explaining the researched phenomenon. The parallels were drawn and the linkage between the policy pursued by the EU in CA and theories of IR was defined and analysed in this section.

Chapter IV: This chapter covers all aspects of cooperation between the EU and CA: starting from provision of comprehensive information about CA, EU-CA relations before and after adoption of the Strategy, factors that conditioned its adoption, and finishing with scrutinising the role of the EU MS actively engaged in the region in development of cooperation with CA. In this chapter the cooperation between the EU and Tajikistan is analysed as a case study.

Chapter V: This chapter deals with the role of other regional/international actors (states and organisations) engaged in CA and their interaction with the EU, discussing how the involvement of certain actors in the region affects (either positively or negatively) bilateral relations between the EU and CA.

Chapter VI: This chapter is a conclusive part of the research and presents the empirical findings and summarises the work.

Chapter II: Research Methods

2.1 Qualitative Research Methods

In this research qualitative social research methods were applied. *'Qualitative research is a powerful tool for learning more about our lives and the sociohistorical context in which we live.'*¹²

Qualitative research methods have a number of advantages for this kind of a research. Qualitative methods can provide an insight into how people make sense of their experience that cannot be easily provided by other methods and they play an important role in facilitating dissemination of research findings.¹³ The research is comprised of combination of secondary data with primary data. The following qualitative social research methods were applied: documents study, secondary analysis, case study and qualitative interviewing (primary data).

2.1.1 Documents Study

Almost all research projects involve to a greater or lesser extent the use and analysis of documents. Researchers are expected to study and critically analyse the writings of other researchers, practitioners or policy-makers.¹⁴ Documentary sources may include historical records, media documents, official documents deriving from the state,¹⁵ documents from websites of international organisations, etc.

In connection with this research, official documents and materials from the EU institutions and Central Asian governments and their respective websites, documents from websites of international organisations, relevant publications in mass-media, materials from conferences, etc., were studied.

2.1.2 Secondary Analysis

Secondary analysis entails the analysis of data collected by other researchers or by various institutions in the course of their business. Secondary analysis has many advantages and it is good for non-extensive researches. It offers a prospect of having access to high-quality data.¹⁶ *'Secondary analysis can give fresh insights into data, and ready-made data sets or archives do provide extremely valuable and cost-efficient resources for researchers.'*¹⁷

In connection with this research, publications from think tanks, research centres and

¹² S.B. Merriam and Associates, *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion & Analysis*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2002, p.xv, in P. Liamputtong, and D. Ezzy, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

¹³ P. Liamputtong and D. Ezzy, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

¹⁴ L. Blaxter et al., *How to Research*, 3rd edn., Open University Press, Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd., 2008

¹⁵ A. Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Blaxter et al., *op.cit.*

institutions from the both parties, relevant publications in books and scientific journals, etc., were analysed.

2.1.3 Case Study

Case studies focus on special cases. They take as their subject one or more selected examples of a social or political entity, which are studied using a variety of data collection techniques.¹⁸

It might be an institution or organisation, or just one element of them.

Regarding this research, Tajikistan being one of the states (elements) within Central Asia was taken as a case study. Relations between the EU and Tajikistan were studied and analysed more comprehensively. The reasons why a focus was on Tajikistan particularly are presented in Chapter IV.

2.1.4 Qualitative Interviewing

In this research a method of qualitative interviewing was applied as a source for obtaining primary data. The great strength of qualitative interviewing is the validity of the data acquired. *'Individuals are interviewed in sufficient detail for the results to be taken as true, correct, complete and believable reports of their views and experiences.'*¹⁹

There are different varieties of qualitative interviews. Qualitative interviews conducted in this research may be characterised as semi-structured qualitative interviews. Semi-structured interviews are designed with a number of interviewer questions prepared in advance. But these questions are designed to be sufficiently open that the following questions of the interviewer cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in cautious and theorised way.²⁰ Semi-structured interviews are placed somewhere between surveys with their fixed questions and forced responses and the open-ended unstructured interviews with no fixed interview schedule.²¹

Interviewing gives a better insight on the issue under research.

Semi-structured interviews with the concerned experts for this research were conducted in March-April 2009 in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) and from Linköping (Sweden). For this purpose a field trip was conducted to Tajikistan in March 2009, where the author could interview competent specialists concerning the researched issue. In order to obtain unbiased and comprehensive data interviews were conducted with representatives of academic field, experts and officials from the both parties. Interviews were conducted in person, via e-mail and telephone communication. The list of the interviewed experts and interview questions are presented in the Annexes I and II.

¹⁸ C. Hakim, *Research Design: Successful designs for social and economic research*, 2nd edn., London: Routledge, 2000

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.36

²⁰ T. Wengraf, *Qualitative Research Interviewing*, London: Sage Publications, 2001

²¹ Liamputtong and Ezzy, *op.cit.*

Chapter III: Theoretical Framework

*'Theory...is always in active relation to practice: an interaction between things done, things observed and (systematic) explanation of these. This allows a necessary distinction between theory and practice, but does not require their opposition.'*²² *'Theory is useful; it enables, it helps us better to understand what we already know, intuitively, in the first place.'*²³

Application of the certain IR theories in a research depends on from which perspective or angle the topic will be elucidated. Definitely, every IR theory has both strengths and weaknesses and cannot fully explain the processes taking place between the EU and CA, but they may clarify the state of affairs to a certain extent.

Concerning this research it was decided to apply three IR theories, namely: neorealism, neoliberalism and constructivism (out of which neorealism and neoliberalism are regarded as the dominant theories in contemporary IR), because these theories are considered as the most appropriate for this research and in this case better than other IR theories may explain and illuminate the researched topic from different angles and create a contrasting and complete picture of the researched phenomenon.

3.1 Neorealism

Political realism or *Realpolitik* is the oldest theory of IR. Political realism in IR is a tradition of analysis that emphasises the imperatives states face to pursue a power politics of the national interest. Most realist work since the 1970s has been more or less rigorously structural largely as a result of influence of Kenneth Waltz, who formulated the main ideas of neorealism or structural realism.²⁴

According to neorealism, structural features of the international system are the results of interaction between great powers. Interaction between great powers and other states are not characterised as totally anarchic. Neorealists continue consider the state as a main and in fact a single international actor shaping the character of international relations.²⁵ Neorealism attempts to *'abstract from every attribute of states except their capabilities.'*²⁶ States in neorealism *'are unitary actors with a single motive-the wish to survive.'*²⁷ The first concern of states is to preserve their positions in the system.²⁸ But along with this, states strive for

²²R. Williams, *Keywords*, London: Fontana Press, 1976, p.317, in P. Liamputtong, and D. Ezzy, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

²³P. Beilharz (ed.), *Social Theory: A Guide to Central Thinkers*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991, p.1, in P. Liamputtong and D. Ezzy, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006

²⁴J. Donnelly, 'Realism', in S. Burchill et al. *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd edn., Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

²⁵K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979

²⁶*ibid.*, p.99

²⁷K. Waltz, 'International Politics Is Not Foreign Policy', *Security Studies*, 6, 1996, in S. Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd edn., Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p.41

²⁸K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, op.cit.

peaceful coexistence, peace and prosperity and they want to protect their sovereignty, autonomy and independence.²⁹

Neorealists see anarchy as placing more severe constraints on state behaviour. Self interests of autonomous states in a state of anarchy lead them to create international regimes. According to neorealists international cooperation is possible but they view it as '*harder to achieve, more difficult to maintain, and more dependent on state power*' than do neoliberals.³⁰ Neorealists emphasise relative gains in international cooperation. They agree that both national security and economic welfare are important, but they emphasise security. National interests and national security are closely connected with structure of the international system. For neorealists issues of common military security, based to considerable extent on national interests and national security are priority issues for interstate cooperation. And here they traditionally consider that power (instrument for achieving and protecting national security) and balance of powers (instrument guaranteeing international security) regulate international relations in terms of peaceful coexistence, international order and security.³¹

Furthermore, neorealism puts forward new concepts, such as interdependence of the contemporary world and new types of power.

Recently, neorealists started to consider security as an indivisible whole, explaining that decrease in security level of one party inevitably causes decrease in security level of the other one, which may be considered as a step forward. Moreover, discussing security they started to consider influence of contemporary challenges and threats on international security.

If to consider neorealism in terms of the possible application of its concepts for the theoretical substantiation of the foreign policy of the EU, and in particular of the EU's new Strategy for CA, one may notice alongside with relative correlation on certain issues, a number of essential discrepancies.

In fact, the EU is the only integration grouping in the world (international regime or institution), having common economic policy and currency, common foreign and security policy, etc., and for the last 10-15 years playing the more significant role in international relations and politics. First of all, this fact contradicts to neorealist concept regarding international actors. Even though, neorealists have to some extent softened their attitude towards this issue and consider that international regimes and institutions nevertheless do matter for interstate interactions, this is not emphasised by them as it has been done by neoliberals.

A relative linkage between neorealism and the EU's foreign policy (in particular 'European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership', adopted in June 2007 by the European Council - the first important political document in the history of relationship between the EU and CA, as one of its expressions) may be found during interpretation of the content and priorities of the interstate cooperation. For neorealists, these are first of all issues of common military security (recently, economics [as a source of power], finance, etc., have been also included) based on national interests and security. Besides, neorealists started to

²⁹ K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, op.cit.

³⁰ J. Grieco, 'Understanding the Problem of International Cooperation: The Limits of Neoliberal Institutionalism and the Future of Realist Theory', in D. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p.302

³¹ D. Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993

consider security with impact of contemporary challenges and threats on it. One of the interests of the EU towards CA is in provision of security and stability (Chapter II of the Strategy: 'EU strategic interests: Security and stability').

Another argument for presence of neorealist elements in the EU's foreign policy towards CA is that the planning stage of the Strategy was marked by a controversy between proponents of an interest-based approach focusing on energy and security, led by Germany and supporters of a value-based approach that emphasised the importance of human rights and democratisation, led by the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden. Thus, the Strategy paper represented the minimal consensus among the EU MS. Today there are opinions that in spite of rhetoric, it has become clearer that in the implementation stage of the Strategy the proponents of *Realpolitik* have prevailed.³² Some EU officials also have added to the impression that human rights and rule of law are not a top priority in the EU-CA relations naming as most pressing issues terrorism, extremism, water distribution and climate change (some of these issues might be regarded as a direct challenge and threat to the EU's security), acknowledging that progress in the areas of human rights and rule of law is difficult to achieve in the region due to a different situation in this regard in each Central Asian state.³³

3.2 Neoliberalism

End of the Cold War and disappearance of the bipolar world order became an impulse for revival of liberalism and first of all neoliberalism, a contemporary theory in IR, which emerged on the basis of the latter. Neoliberalism essentially differs from its predecessor. Neoliberalism considers and reflects all processes and phenomena occurring in the contemporary world. It takes into account new non-traditional threats to security, new problems, new challenges, clashes and conflicts emerging on the background of economic globalisation and spread of pluralist democracy. Neoliberalism provides an overall consistent argument for more peaceful and cooperative international relations.³⁴

Neoliberalism that arose to meet the realist challenge is also known as pluralism. Neoliberalism emphasises a plurality of actors in the international system. The neoliberalist contribution constituted a challenge for realism because there was no place within the latter to account for important non-state factors.³⁵

The main concept of neoliberalism is a security issue. Adherents of neoliberalism present a new understanding of security through assertion that a state is not the only and sometimes not the main actor on the international scene. Neoliberals share traditional liberal ideas about the possibility of progress and change, but they disclaim idealism. According to neoliberals expanding cross-border activities helped to create common values and identities among people from different states and paved the way for peaceful, cooperative relations by making

³² C. Graubner, 'EU Strategy on Central Asia: Realpolitik after all', *issue of the Central Asia Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 05/14/2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4859>>

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ R. Jackson and G. Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: theories and approaches*, 3rd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007

³⁵ S. Lawson, *International Relations*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003

war increasingly costly and hence more unlikely. Under the conditions of interdependence among states, they set up international institutions promoting cooperation across international boundaries.³⁶

Neoliberals put forward the concept of cooperative security, which is regarded by them as the only way for solving security issues through establishment and strengthening of international institutions, improvement of norms of international law, observance of generally accepted moral norms.

Secondly neoliberalism focuses its attention on economic issues. Neoliberals favour the free play of 'market forces' and a minimal role for the state in economic life. According to neoliberals only free trade can maximise economic growth and engender the competition that will promote the most efficient use of resources, people and capital.³⁷ Extension and intensification of international cooperation, especially in the economic sphere allows every participant to benefit from international exchanges. Neoliberals assert '*that states are concerned with maximising their 'absolute gains' – an assessment of their own welfare independent of their rivals (what will gain me the most?).*'³⁸ It is possible to obtain mutual benefits out of cooperation '*because states are not always preoccupied with relative gains.*'³⁹

And thirdly neoliberalism emphasises moral norms as a force, basis and criterion for regulative actions in the international politics. Neoliberals believe that democratic states have peaceful relations based on a common moral foundation between them. They consider it their responsibility to promote democracy worldwide for promoting peace.⁴⁰ '*The legal protection of civil rights within liberal democracies is extended to the promotion of human rights across the world.*'⁴¹

Foreign relations of the liberal states are the result of their political orders based on democratic principles and institutions. Liberal democracies are committed to the rule of law, individual rights and equality before the law, their representative governments are based on a popular consent.⁴²

If to consider neoliberal concepts from the practical point of view, in particular its assertion that a state is not only, but sometimes even not the main actor on the international scene, this can be observed in example of existence and sufficiently successful functioning of the EU – the largest and most developed integration grouping in the world, playing an important role in the contemporary international relations. The initiation of regional economic integration in Europe was inspired by the belief that by creating common interests in trade and economic collaboration among members of the same geographical region the probability of conflict between states would be diminished. '*The European Union is the best example of economic integration engendering closer economic and political cooperation in a region historically bedevilled by national conflicts.*'⁴³

³⁶ Jackson and Sørensen, op.cit.

³⁷ S. Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd edn., Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

³⁸ ibid., p.65

³⁹ ibid.

⁴⁰ Jackson and Sørensen, op.cit.

⁴¹ Burchill et al., op.cit., p.81

⁴² M. Doyle, 'Liberalism and World Politics', *American Political Science Review*, 80, 1986, in S. Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd edn., Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

⁴³ Burchill et al., op.cit., p. 64

Neoliberal policies and ideas became persistent through pursuing policies aiming at the promotion of economic, monetary and political unity among the EU Member States. *'These states seem actually to have declared that the process of European integration has as a prerequisite the implementation and maintenance of neoliberal strategies.'*⁴⁴

The EU according to the goals and objectives of its foreign policy strives for establishment of effective cooperation with the countries in various regions of the world for achieving security, stability and economic development.

Scrutinising the EU's policy towards CA in the light of the Strategy, it is easy to draw parallels between this policy and neoliberal ideas. Issues of security and regional economic development were highly emphasised in the Strategy. Combating common threats and challenges (organised crime, human and drug trafficking, etc.) are one of the priorities highlighted in the Strategy. Issues of the rule of law, human rights and development of transparent democratic political structures received a strengthened approach in the document.⁴⁵

Continuing this practical and theoretical comparison, it is possible to see the close connection between the priority issues set in the Strategy (as promotion of security and economic development in the region [assistance in development of market economy structures and accession to WTO], the rule of law, protection of human rights and democratisation of society) and neoliberal concepts (as security, economic issues [market economy and free trade], and moral norms in the form of promotion of democracy and human rights).

Analysing the abovementioned, it can be concluded that neoliberalism was and is one of the core theoretical substantiations of the formation and functioning of the EU and implementation of its foreign policy, and the Strategy is one of the recent significant practical achievements of the EU's foreign policy reflecting the neoliberal concepts and ideas.

3.3 Constructivism

The end of the Cold War also conditioned the development of constructivism to a considerable extent. A basic assertion of contemporary constructivist theory is that global politics has an inherently social character.⁴⁶ Constructivism focuses on interconnection between state interests and identities. One of the peculiarities of constructivism is its concept of systemic approach towards IR.

Constructivism emphasises social character of IR. This includes processes of interaction between agents (actors) creating the social reality. International system is produced, reproduced and transformed only through interaction of the agents.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ J. Milios, 'European Integration as a Vehicle of Neoliberal Hegemony', in A. Saad-Filho and D. Johnston (eds.), *Neoliberalism: a Critical Reader*, London: Pluto Press, 2005, p. 208

⁴⁵ Council of the European Union, *European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, European Communities, 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009,

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf>

⁴⁶ Lawson, op.cit.

⁴⁷ A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

Constructivism highlights conditionality of agents and structure in the social process. Structure is a social not a material phenomenon, *'the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures.'*⁴⁸

Constructivism is characterised by an emphasis on the significance of normative or ideational as well as material structures, on the role of identity in shaping political action and on the mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures. Structures shape the behaviour of social and political actors. Normative structures shape the social identities of political actors. Actors are inherently and deeply social, their identities and interests are socially constructed and are products of intersubjective social structures. Identities form interests and they in turn form actions.⁴⁹

Identity and interest define the state behaviour and state interest is formed by ideas and social interaction.⁵⁰ Knowledge about other actors of international relations is connected with the concept of interests. Presence of interests in one actor means that it will try to establish relations with another one, for example in the field of security or economy.

Social interaction between states can lead to more benign and friendly cultures of anarchy.⁵¹

Systems of shared ideas, beliefs and values also have structural characteristics and they exercise a powerful influence on social and political action. Identities of actors are constituted by the institutionalised norms, values and ideas of the social environment in which they act. Institutionalised norms and ideas function as rationalisations and condition what actors regard as necessary and possible, in both practical and ethical terms. According to constructivists power is also constituted by non-material factors, in particular legitimacy. Constructivists emphasise the significance of culture and identity, as expressed in social norms, rules and understandings, *'but culture is inherently socially constructed and not rooted in blood and soil.'*⁵²

According to constructivism there are no interests based exclusively on economic or security interests. Interests always assume establishment of relations with the certain states. States interact with each other according to their identities.

Relating the chosen theory to the research topic, it should be mentioned that the EU is considered by constructivists as a man-made social and political construct. Accordingly European institutions are crucial for the dissemination of norms via social learning and socialisation and they *'provide a locus for formulation of policy options that, given certain conditions at the nation-state level, can help to transform identities, interests and preferences.'*⁵³ Constructivists point out that European integration is connected to intersubjective ideas and social institutions. As a transformative process European integration

⁴⁸ A. Wendt, op.cit., p.20

⁴⁹ C. Reus-Smit, 'Constructivism', in S. Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd edn., Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

⁵⁰ Jackson and Sørensen, op.cit.

⁵¹ ibid.

⁵² Reus-Smit, op.cit., p.211

⁵³ J. Checkel, 'Social Construction and Integration', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6 (4), 1999, in J. Friedrichs, *European Approaches to International Relations Theory: a house with many mansions*, London: Routledge, 2004, p.112

reshapes the identities, interests and behaviour of the EU MS and their citizens. It is possible to analyse European integration as a complex process of social change. The EU goes beyond the traditional practices and concepts of territorial statehood and it can be considered as a possible alternative to the modern state.⁵⁴

Comparing between constructivist theory and the foreign policy of the EU, in particular the adopted Strategy, which is being implemented, it is possible to reveal many points in common, which explain roles of agents of this international interaction. To the greater extent, it is the social dimension in the structure of mutual relations and commonality of actors' ideas being a part of the structure reflected in the Strategy (the common goal –achievement of stability and prosperity through peaceful mutually beneficial interaction). It is possible to find many common points between constructivism and the EU's Strategy towards CA concerning the issue of identity (the EU's willingness to share its system of ideas and values, in particular adherence to human rights and rule of law, the EU's adherence to promote integration processes among Central Asian countries) and interests (provision of security and stability in the region, joint solution of problems connected with contemporary threats and challenges, settlement of interregional problems directly or indirectly affecting the EU's interests, the EU's interest towards energy resources of CA and diversification of energy supply routes, etc.) as well.

It is stated in the Chapter II of the Strategy that the document is based upon the common interests of the EU and Central Asian states and alignment of expectations of the EU and CA would be a mutually beneficial and reinforcing process.⁵⁵ Taking into consideration the abovementioned, it can be concluded that certain concepts of constructivism have been applied in the Strategy, where the EU's policy towards CA is elucidated and where issues of interests and identities of actors are emphasised. It should be mentioned that the further development of cooperation between the EU and CA will demonstrate how much successful the applied constructivist approach will be in this international interaction.

3.4 Summary

As it was mentioned above, each of the existing IR theories have both strong and weak sides and one cannot explain and analyse a certain phenomenon of the international life through application of only one IR theory. But being used in complex they can present a complete picture of the phenomenon. Moreover, before application of a certain IR theory in a research, it is essential to consider which aspect of the phenomenon is being studied and from which perspective the research is being conducted.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned, it was decided to apply three, according to the author's opinion, most relevant and appropriate IR theories for conducting a research on this particular subject.

⁵⁴ T. Diez, 'Postmoderne und europäische Integration: die Dominanz des Staatsmodells, die Verantwortung gegenüber dem Anderen und die Konstruktion eines alternativen Horizonts', *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen* 3 (2), 1996, in J. Friedrichs, *European Approaches to International Relations Theory: a house with many mansions*, London: Routledge, 2004

⁵⁵ Council of the European Union, *European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, op.cit.

As it was scrutinised above, the problem under research contains both elements of neorealist, neoliberalist and constructivist theories of IR and in fact they mutually supplement each other and elucidate the researched issue from different perspectives.

In the summary of the following chapters the parallels between the researched issues and abovementioned IR theories will be drawn.

Chapter IV: The EU-Central Asia

This chapter covers all aspects of cooperation between the EU and CA: starting from information about CA, EU-CA relations before and after adoption of the Strategy, factors that conditioned its adoption, and finishing with scrutinising the role of the EU MS actively engaged in the region in development of cooperation with CA. In this chapter the cooperation between the EU and Tajikistan is analysed as a case study.

4.1 Central Asia

The region defined nowadays as Central Asia comprises Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which in the 20th century were a part of the former USSR. The total area of CA is 4,003,400 square kilometers, which includes some of the most sparsely populated regions in the world. Its population is over 60 million people.⁵⁶

In the past the Central Asian region was located at the crossroads of the well-known Great Silk Road – an important trade route linking Asia with Europe. CA was the meeting place of peoples and cultures long before the beginning of the Christian era. Being an ancient centre of trading crossroad of cultivated lands and glamorous cities, it has been the prize for conquerors from immemorial times.⁵⁷ For many centuries the region suffered from various foreign invasions and conquests.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries CA became an enduring arena of competition, confrontation and indirect conflict among the great powers of those days and the pivot connecting the western and eastern parts of the contemporary international system.⁵⁸

The Russian conquest of CA started in the 1860s. By the 1880s Russians had already formed their sphere of influence in the region and in the 1880s and 1890s they together with Britain negotiated a demarcation line between their respective spheres of influence.⁵⁹ The Russian-British rivalry on the establishment of their spheres of influence in the region and beyond it is well-known in the history as the Great Game. Russia was engaged in consolidating its position annexing the Central Asian states, while Britain was preoccupied with safeguarding India.⁶⁰

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 and formation of the USSR, firm and inviolable borders were established for the Central Asian states within the Union and an iron curtain

⁵⁶ J. Linn et al., *Central Asia Human Development Report Bringing down barriers: Regional cooperation for human development and human security*, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, 2005, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.europeandcis.undp.org/poverty/show/301A44C5-F203-1EE9-B2E001AFF98B054B>>

⁵⁷ T. Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: the case of Tadzhikistan*, Baltimore: the John Hopkins Press, 1970

⁵⁸ Y. Shi, 'Great Power Politics in Central Asia Today: a Chinese Assessment', in E. Van Wie Davis and R. Azizian (eds.), *Islam, Oil, and Geopolitics: Central Asia after September 11*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007

⁵⁹ Rakowska-Harmstone, op.cit.

⁶⁰ T. Shaumian, 'Foreign Policy Perspectives of the Central Asian States', in T. Atabaki and J. O'Kane (eds.), *Post-Soviet Central Asia*, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998

separated them from their other neighbours.⁶¹ In the 1920s Soviet Central Asia was divided into five union republics in conformity with the so-called national principle. It was an attempt to establish a correspondence between ethnic and political borders, the consequences of this experiment made themselves felt since the Central Asian states became independent. In fact, the administratively drawn boundaries within Soviet Central Asian republics did not coincide with the geographical, ethnical or other dividing lines between the republics and their populations, which later caused the increase in interstate and interethnic contradictions over land and water resources between these states.⁶²

In 1991 after disintegration of the USSR, the Central Asian republics proclaimed their independence. Ostensibly, the Central Asian republics were ill-prepared for sudden and unexpected independence.⁶³ They had to learn to cope with the sudden breakdown of the previous political-ideological order and essential economic links.⁶⁴ The economic dependency was one of the reasons of Russia's preserving predominant influence in the post-Soviet Central Asia.⁶⁵

CA was developed mostly as a base for agricultural produce and raw materials. That includes cotton in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and grain and livestock in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Mineral resources were developed in all the Central Asian states, oil and gas resources were developed in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, and hydropower projects were launched in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.⁶⁶ By the 1950s and 1960s living standards in the Central Asian republics would seem to have been significantly higher than those in neighbouring non-Soviet countries. The increased living standards and provision of healthcare led to a dramatic growth in population in the Central Asian states. But by the end of 1980s conditions had obviously deteriorated and Soviet development appeared to have lost its momentum. By that time the Central Asian republics started to face an eventual economic decline, profound environmental degradation and evidences of unrest.⁶⁷

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the countries of the region faced an enormous challenge to establish and develop institutions required for transition to a market economy. Unpreparedness among the political leaders and economic agents of CA made this transition a great challenge for all states of the region.⁶⁸

The break off of supply connections for industry and agriculture, termination of subsidies from Moscow, and disappearance of the Soviet central administrative apparatus led to a dramatic economic collapse in the regional states. This resulted in a significant increase in

⁶¹ Shaumian, op.cit.

⁶² T. Ismagambetov, 'Some Geopolitical Peculiarities of Central Asia, Past and Present', in S. Cummings (ed.), *Oil, Transition and Security in Central Asia*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003

⁶³ B. Olcott, 'Central Asia's Catapult to Independence', *Foreign Affairs* 71, No.3, 1992, pp.108-30, in V. Belokrenitsky, *Russia and Former Soviet Central Asia: The Attitude Towards Regional Integrity*, in T. Atabaki and J. O'Kane (eds.), *Post-Soviet Central Asia*, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998

⁶⁴ Shaumian, op.cit.

⁶⁵ Ismagambetov, op.cit.

⁶⁶ A. Stringer, 'Soviet Development in Central Asia: the classic colonial syndrome?', in T. Everett-Heath (ed.), *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003

⁶⁷ *ibid.*

⁶⁸ O. Myadar, 'The Legacy of Sovietism in Central Asia and Mongolia', in E. Van Wie Davis and R. Azizian (eds.), *Islam, Oil, and Geopolitics: Central Asia after September 11*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007

poverty, severely weakening the region's human development and human security.⁶⁹ All this brought up severe hardships to the Central Asian countries and majority of their population.

Nevertheless, the disintegration of the USSR also led to the opening of Central Asia's previously closed borders with China, Iran and eventually Afghanistan. This held the potential for resuming the historic trade routes through CA, for exporting the region's rich energy resources to world markets, and for establishing dynamic trade and communication links between the region and the international community.⁷⁰

Quite soon after acquiring independence Central Asian countries realised that in order to advance and protect their interests they need to enhance the regional links. They initiated the process of cooperation with their neighbours by setting up regional organisations.⁷¹ Soon after independence in 1991 Central Asian states joined the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC) followed, with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as current member states beside Belarus and Russia. Another regional initiative Central Asian Cooperation Organisation (CACO) with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as members later merged into EURASEC. Military cooperation among the regional states was enhanced through establishment of Collective Treaty Security Organisation (CSTO) with Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan as current members. CSTO is closely related to EURASEC. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a regional security organisation involving China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. All Central Asian states namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), which is a large regional organisation including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey as well.

Central Asian states except Turkmenistan along with Azerbaijan, China and Mongolia, together with the multilateral institutions led by the Asian Development Bank, have formed the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme (CAREC).⁷²

As it might be observed from the abovementioned, Russia is a member state almost in all aforementioned regional organisations, where it plays a significant role. From Central Asian republics Turkmenistan is an associate member of CIS and a member-state in ECO, but it did not join other abovementioned regional groupings. And it also might be observed that five Central Asian states do not belong to a regional organisation comprising only Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It is an evident indicator that Central Asian states face a number of political obstacles to cooperation and integration, despite the fact that closer cooperation and integration could serve as a tool for stability, prosperity and progress in the entire region.

In 1990s there were several initiatives to seek integration among Central Asian states. For example, in 1994 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan established joint institutions for the new Central Asian Union (CAU).⁷³ Kazakhstan was a leading force proposing establishment of CAU. But unfortunately, due to a sense of competition and distrust persistent among the

⁶⁹ Linn et al., *Central Asia Human Development Report*, op.cit.

⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² *ibid.*

⁷³ Shaumian, op.cit.

countries' leaders⁷⁴ this project was not implemented, though supported by Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, but utterly rejected by Uzbekistan. If these ambitious policies were implemented, in few years the regional states might well become independent of Russia for supplies of oil products, ferrous metals and construction materials,⁷⁵ among other apparent benefits provided by closer cooperation and integration among the regional states. The EU is often mentioned as an important example of successful regional integration, one that CA could follow.⁷⁶ As it is highlighted in the Strategy, the EU would strive to promote regional integration in CA. Intensification of cooperation between the EU and CA may facilitate the regional integration between Central Asian countries.

CA is one of the pivotal regions of the world. Being located at the core of the Eurasian continental space, CA represents a critical connection between the large and dynamic continental economies such as China, the EU, India, Japan and Russia.⁷⁷ In the 21st century the importance of CA for world politics became too obvious. After the events of 11 September 2001, the Central Asian states found themselves on the front line of combating terrorism⁷⁸ due to their proximity to Afghanistan. These events profoundly altered not only the foreign policy of the US, but also substantially changed and influenced many spheres of the EU's foreign policy, including its relations with the countries of CA.⁷⁹

Today CA is the focus of intense international attention due to its geopolitical and economic significance, its natural and human resources, its transit potential for transcontinental trade and transport.⁸⁰

Any events happening in CA will find their reflection not only at the regional level, but also may cause changes in the geopolitical power balance in the whole Eurasian continent, which is recognised as an axis of the contemporary global development.⁸¹

Central Asian states are not homogenous in their development. But in general, the political system of the Central Asian states is characterised by weak institutes of power and authoritarian regimes. In spite of Central Asian states' official declaration and commitment to build and develop democracy, in constitutional-legal context these countries represent still poorly developed democracy characterised with poorly developed legislation. Central Asian states are facing many challenges and the most burning of them are the omnipresent corruption, drug trafficking, extensive poverty, unstable and problematic energy distribution, environmental problems, and unstable economies based largely on the export of natural resources, foreign aid or remittances from labour migrants from Central Asian states mainly working in Russia.⁸²

⁷⁴ Linn et al., *Central Asia Human Development Report*, op.cit.

⁷⁵ Shaumian, op.cit.

⁷⁶ Linn et al., *Central Asia Human Development Report*, op.cit.

⁷⁷ J. Linn, 'Central Asia-National Interests and Regional Prospects', *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 5, No.3 (2007), pp.5-12

⁷⁸ Ismagambetov, op.cit.

⁷⁹ M. Laumulin, 'Central Asia and the European Union', in B. Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: a Gathering Storm?*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002

⁸⁰ Linn et al., *Central Asia Human Development Report*, op.cit.

⁸¹ V. Paramonov, 'Geopolitika i Tsentral'naya Aziya' (Geopolitics and Central Asia), *Online Journal Polemika*, Issue No.5, 1999, The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.irex.ru/press/pub/polemika/05/par>>

⁸² C. Graubner, 'EU Strategy on Central Asia: Realpolitik after all', *issue of the Central Asia Caucasus Institute Analyst*, 05/14/2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/4859>>

Moreover, as it was mentioned above, there are certain confrontations among Central Asian states, in particular disputes over borders, transboundary rivers and water resources (confrontation between upstream and downstream countries with involvement of third countries resulting in freezing prospective energy projects in the region), energy issues, etc., which seriously affect cooperation between these countries and their development.

Here, it was deemed necessary to provide a brief presentation of the four Central Asian states (Tajikistan will be discussed further as a case study).

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan possesses extensive hydrocarbon reserves (oil reserves in global top ten and gas in the top fifteen)⁸³ and is the most developed country among all Central Asian republics. Enjoying increasing oil wealth, the country faces the problems of an extraction-based economy, and has embarked on limited democratic reforms.⁸⁴ At present, the country is playing the leading role in CA and taking into consideration its continued economic growth, its position as a regional leader will be further strengthened. Kazakhstan advocates for closer ties and integration with its Central Asian neighbours.

Kazakhstan is the largest trade partner of the EU in CA. The EU's bilateral trade with Kazakhstan exceeds in volume the organisation's combined trade with the four other Central Asian republics.⁸⁵

Kazakhstan strives more than other Central Asian countries to intensify its cooperation with the EU. In recent years, Kazakhstan has expressed interest in a closer relationship to the EU's European Neighbourhood Programme, intensification of cooperation with the Council of Europe and after considerable lobbying by Astana, Kazakhstan will become chairman-in-office of the OSCE in 2010.⁸⁶

From Central Asian republics, Kazakhstan is the only country that developed a special programme for cooperation with the EU. In 2008, Kazakh president launched a state programme 'The Path to Europe' for 2009-2011. The main objective of the document is development and intensification of the cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European countries covering broad range of areas. At the same time, according to the programme Kazakhstan intends to improve its institutional-legal framework with application of the positive European experience. The expected results from implementation of the programme include improvement of national legislation taking into consideration the European norms and promotion of the Kazakh interests in the European continent. Implementation of the

⁸³ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, ICG, Asia Report, No.113, Brussels/Bishkek, 10 April 2006, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.crisisgroup.org>>

⁸⁴ D. Kimmage, 'Security Challenges in Central Asia: Implications for the EU's Engagement Strategy', in N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008

⁸⁵ R. Weitz, *Kazakhstan and the New International Politics of Eurasia, Silk Road Paper*, July 2008, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program

⁸⁶ N. Melvin and J. Boonstra, *The EU Strategy on Central Asia @ Year One, EU-Central Asia Monitoring*, No.1 - October 2008, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE), Spain and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Belgium, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.eucentralasia.eu>>

programme will significantly increase the country's economic competitiveness, foster growth in population's wellbeing and provide sustainable development of the country.⁸⁷

Being close to Russia but also pursuing its own independent multivector policy, Kazakhstan may be able to build consensus and promote new agendas that would be difficult for countries from the west.⁸⁸

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a country rich in water resources. Its hydro-energy potential amounts to 142 billion kWh (total 21% of the Central Asian region).⁸⁹

The country had been experiencing political instability which resulted in change of its government. Kyrgyzstan advocates Kazakhstan's efforts to foster regional integration. Kyrgyzstan is the only WTO member state from all Central Asian countries, though joining the organisation did not affect its economy to a considerable extent.

Kyrgyzstan could develop a vibrant civil society and a pluralist form of politics. In recent years, the country has experienced an increasing political crisis that has threatened to roll back the pluralist politics established during the first decade and half of its independence.⁹⁰ During this period, the influence of Russia in the country has increased.

Positive assessments of the EU Strategy are expressed regarding the EU officials' offer to consult Kyrgyz officials on energy sector development in the next few years. At the same time experts point out that the EU pays more attention to hydrocarbon energy rich countries leaving aside smaller Central Asian countries like Kyrgyzstan,⁹¹ while the country needs considerable international assistance.

Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan is among the energy rich countries in CA. According to the experts it has large, unexplored gas reserves.⁹² In recent years, Turkmenistan has begun gradually to exchange its former isolationist and extreme authoritarian leadership for a milder version of the former regime, becoming more open to international community.⁹³ In 2008 the Europe House was opened in the country. The energy cooperation remains a priority in the EU-

⁸⁷ *Gosudarstvennaya Programma 'Put' v Evropu' na 2009-2011 gody (State Programme 'The Path to Europe' for 2009-2011)*, Astana, 2008

⁸⁸ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

⁸⁹ G. Rahmatullina, 'Sovremennoe sostoyanie mezhgosudarstvennykh svyazey v sfere vodnykh resursov v Tsentral'noy Azii' (Present State of Affairs of Interstate Relations in Field of Water Resources in Central Asia) in *Sovremennoe sostoyanie i perspektivy ispol'zovaniya vodnykh resursov v Tsentral'noy Azii, analiticheskiy doklad (Present State of Affairs and Prospects of Water Resources Use in Central Asia, Analytical Report)*, 2008, Asia Strategy: Foundation for Strategic Studies of the Central Asian Region, retrieved 24 May 2009, < http://www.asiastrategy.ru/?press&press_id=5&PHPSESSID=f5da72f00d421c981680781da6cacf32>

⁹⁰ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

⁹¹ E. Marat, *EU Strategy in Central Asia: Problems, Prospects and Potential*, draft version, May 2009

⁹² International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

⁹³ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

Turkmen relations.⁹⁴ Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Turkmenistan was signed in 1998, but still it is not in force as it should be ratified by the EU MS and the European Parliament.

Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is considered as having one of the most authoritarian regimes in the world. In 2005, Uzbek authorities violently suppressed an uprising where hundreds of civilians were killed. The EU imposed sanctions on Uzbekistan in this regard. As a result, relations of Uzbekistan with the West have significantly cooled, while getting warmer with Russia and China. Despite the presence of extensive resources, Uzbekistan did not see much development.

Uzbekistan was always against integrationist efforts of Kazakhstan in the region. Having borders with all four Central Asian states, Uzbekistan has strained relations with its neighbours (e.g. the Tajik-Uzbek border mined by Uzbekistan, causing casualties among civilians from the both sides).

During elaboration of the Strategy the EU did not officially prioritise relations with one or other states of the region. But according to the experts, unofficially due to Germany's strong interest in promoting engagement with Tashkent, the EU pursued a policy of prioritising Uzbekistan. But the European civil society and a considerable number of the EU MS do not see a sense to engage with a country least amenable to opening to the EU. Furthermore, experts are skeptical about the delivery of the Uzbek gas to the EU bypassing Russia. There is no political or at least economic foundation to engage with Uzbekistan. The EU should pay more serious attention to other countries of the region where there are real prospects and potential of encouraging the reformist dynamic.⁹⁵

4.2 Foreign Policy of the EU

At present, the EU is the biggest trader and the biggest provider of aid to developing countries in the world. It has established a more pro-active foreign and security policy with the capacity to carry out crisis-management and peacekeeping missions within Europe and far beyond its borders. The EU has added new tools to the traditional instruments of foreign policy.⁹⁶

The EU conducts economic and political relations with nearly every country in the world and is a major player in international trade negotiations.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ 'Exclusive interview: Ambassador Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia', *News Central Asia*, 20 January 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.newscentralasia.net/Regional-News/395.html>>

⁹⁵ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

⁹⁶ European Commission, Directorate General for Communication, *The EU in the world: the foreign policy of the European Union*, 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.ec.europa.eu/publications/booklets/move/67/index_en.htm>

⁹⁷ K. Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006

The scope of the EU's foreign policy is rather broad. Such areas as trade, proactive foreign and security policy, development cooperation, humanitarian aid, issues of global warming and climate change, issues of energy security, a coherent neighbourhood policy are among the areas tackled by the EU's foreign policy. Besides developing and strengthening bilateral ties, the EU is intensifying relations with international organisations (the UN, NATO, OSCE, the Council of Europe) and regional groupings around the world.⁹⁸

The EU pursues five particular foreign policy objectives, such as the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance, the prevention of violent conflict and the fight against international crime.⁹⁹

The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy pillar apparently concerns foreign policy, but foreign policy is not just the product of the CFSP pillar.¹⁰⁰ The principle of the CFSP was formalised in the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. There, types of diplomatic and political activities the EU could undertake in conflict prevention and resolution were defined. Later on, a specific European Security and Defence Policy was incorporated into the overall framework of the CFSP.¹⁰¹

Certain foreign policy instruments fall to the greater or lesser extent under the European Community and Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters pillars of the EU.

The EU's foreign policy has always been implemented through the EU's various institutional and procedural channels, using instruments provided by both Community and intergovernmental pillars of the European construction.¹⁰²

The EU applies mainly diplomatic and economic instruments in its foreign policy. As for military instruments the EU carries out peacekeeping, humanitarian and crisis management operations.¹⁰³

Among the EU's unique foreign policy instruments are the emphasis on conducting agreements with third countries, the granting trade preferences, the inclusion of the human-rights clause in agreements, the conditional offer of the EU membership (where applicable), and political dialogue with regional groupings. Another distinguishing feature of the EU's foreign policy is that the EU is inclined to rely on persuasion and positive incentives rather than use of force, although non-violent coercion is used as well, but supposed to be applied according to the legal rules.¹⁰⁴

Promotion of regional cooperation is the oldest objectives of the EU's foreign policy. The EU's encouragement of regional cooperation that originates directly from its own internal identity includes two practices: classifying neighbouring countries together under regional strategies and supporting regional groupings. *'The EU prefers to deal with third countries collectively: it lays out regional strategies, sets up aid programmes on a regional basis, and concludes specific kinds of agreements with countries in a particular region.'*¹⁰⁵ It then strongly encourages the countries of the region to cooperate with each other. At the same

⁹⁸ European Commission, *The EU in the world*, op.cit.

⁹⁹ K. Smith, op.cit.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ European Commission, *The EU in the world*, op.cit.

¹⁰² H. Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy: What it Is and What it Does*, London: Pluto Press, 2002

¹⁰³ K. Smith, op.cit.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.69

time, the EU has important bilateral relationships as well, but, mainly its cooperation with third countries is grouped according to regions. The sound reason for doing this is that neighbouring countries are highly interdependent as a rule, and promoting the awareness of this interdependence may lead to intensification of regional cooperation and further integration.¹⁰⁶

The EU's fostering regional cooperation stems from the belief, born of its own experience, that it provides the foundation for peace, economic development and prosperity. But the EU's model cannot be exported easily and usually the EU does not strive for forcing its model on others and instead, it promotes such cooperation schemes as the parties have themselves set up. However, the EU has other interests in promoting regional cooperation, among them is facilitating trade and investment by EU economic actors.¹⁰⁷

The EU applies three main instruments to foster regional cooperation: economic assistance for cross-border projects, cooperation agreements with regional groupings, and economic and political dialogue with groupings.¹⁰⁸

By trying to form strong regional groupings, the EU is efficiently pursuing a strategy, which in the long run may correct the power imbalances between it and other regions. But there may be external obstacles to the EU's strategy, and one of them is the lack of willingness of third countries to cooperate with each other.¹⁰⁹

One of the recent practical applications of the EU's foreign policy has been its strengthening and intensification of cooperation with the countries of Central Asian region, after adoption of the special regional Strategy, which reflects the EU's increased interest in the Central Asian region.

4.3 The EU-Central Asia: Before Adoption of the Strategy

Examining EU-Central Asia relationship, it should be mentioned that unlike in the case of many other regions there was no real history of interaction between the EU and its Member States and the states of CA. The Central Asian states are equally clearly considered not to be potential member states in the EU.¹¹⁰

Before adoption of the Strategy in 2007, the EU did not have a unified strategy towards the region.

European states did not show much interest towards CA, after the countries of the region gained independence in 1991. The larger EU MS, such as France and the United Kingdom opened their diplomatic representations in almost all Central Asian states and only Germany was represented in all five republics. As a result of this cautious approach political ties were

¹⁰⁶ K. Smith, op.cit.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ N. MacFarlane, 'The Caucasus and Central Asia: Towards a non-strategy', in R. Dannreuther, *European Union Foreign and Security Policy: Towards a Neighbourhood Strategy*, London: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005

developing rather slowly and economic cooperation was relatively modest for most of the 1990s.

The EU's engagement in the region was especially cautious. The EU initially opened its delegation in Kazakhstan in 1994, and two sub-offices followed later in Bishkek and Dushanbe. As a result, most of the region was left without any substantial EU presence.¹¹¹

During the first years after independence in CA, the EU started to deploy its instrument of humanitarian assistance launching programme of the European Commission Humanitarian Office in the region. During that period, the EU started to implement its other programmes such as TACIS intended for post-Soviet republics.¹¹²

In the end of the 1990s, the EU concluded Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with a number of the regional states, except Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.¹¹³

The great bulk of the agreements was devoted to technical measures to be taken by the EU partner states to facilitate economic exchange in the Central Asian states. Discussion of the political and other objectives was minimal in the documents.¹¹⁴

TRASECA regional cooperation programme was launched by the EU in the 1990s and its principal activity was provision of technical assistance in planning for infrastructural development of transport (pipelines, roads, railways, ports, border crossing facilities) and communications, linking the states of the region (Caucasus and CA) on an east-west axis from CA to the Black Sea.¹¹⁵

By the end of the 1990s the signs of destabilisation of situation emerged in the region. The situation with drug trafficking started to deteriorate. Tension in the social sphere in the most of the Central Asian states increased. During that period the EU started to reassess the significance of CA for the European security and stability.¹¹⁶

Tragic events of 11 September 2001 increased the significance of CA for the international community and in particular for the EU, due to the region's proximity to the theatre of military operations. For the first time, the countries of the region acquired the presence of western military facilities, such as the US airbases established in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the German presence in Uzbekistan and the French support operation in Tajikistan.¹¹⁷

During the period from 2000-2007 the EU started to pay a more serious attention to the region. The EU's Strategy Paper 2002-2006 for CA was adopted. The EU's interest towards development of hydrocarbon resources of Caspian-Caucasian region had increased, which promoted resumption of works on TRASECA project. INOGATE initiatives were supported in CA in 2005-2006, which included a technical audit of oil and gas pipelines, reconstruction

¹¹¹ N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008

¹¹² MacFarlane, op.cit.

¹¹³ PCAs with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan were signed in 2004 and 1998 respectively, but they still await ratification by the EU MS, source: <<http://www.ec.europa.eu>>, retrieved 24 May 2009

¹¹⁴ MacFarlane, op.cit.

¹¹⁵ ibid.

¹¹⁶ N. Omarov, 'Zachem Evrope Tsentral'naya Aziya? Byvshie sovetskie respubliki v svete novoy strategii sotrudnichestva s ES' (Why Does Europe Need Central Asia? Former Soviet Republics in the Light of the New Cooperation Strategy With the EU), *Nezavisimaya Gazeta (online)*, 30 June 2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.ng.ru/courier/2008-06-30/17_asia.html>

¹¹⁷ Melvin (ed.), op.cit.

of gas transport systems and coordination of national energy policies in the region.¹¹⁸ TRASECA and INOGATE are projects involving both Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus.

US\$ 375 million were allocated for implementation of the Strategy Paper 2002-2006.

During these years the EU continued to render assistance to the Central Asian countries including through TACIS programme, the Food Security Programme, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).¹¹⁹

Taking into consideration that CA is a vulnerable region being strategically located at the centre of global narcotics flows being transported from Afghanistan to CA and then further on to Russia and the EU, the latter launched CADAP programme for supporting anti-trafficking efforts in the Central Asian countries and later on BOMCA programme intended to strengthen border management and facilitating legal trade and transit. These two programmes were merged in 2004. BOMCA/CADAP programmes became popular with Central Asian governments.¹²⁰ They are being implemented in coordination with the UN Office for Drugs and Crime, OSCE and other actors in border management.¹²¹ The total budget of BOMCA programme for 2002-2010 amounts to approximately €25.7 million and CADAP programme's budget for 2001-2010 amounts to €16 million.¹²²

Regarding environmental and sustainable development issues it should be mentioned that the European Commission along with all Central Asian countries and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a founder of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) with the goal to introduce the new approaches to environmental management in CA, further implement the Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development and support the 'Environment for Europe' process.¹²³

For the first 15 years of its activity in the region (1992-2007), the EU provided financial assistance to the Central Asian countries amounting to over €1.4 billion.¹²⁴

An indicator of the EU's strengthened interest in CA became the establishment of the post of European Union Special Representative for Central Asia (EUSRCA) with a mandate to enhance relations with the five Central Asian states in July 2005. Nevertheless, a broader initiative emerged only in 2007, when the German Presidency of the EU sought to form the EU's comprehensive approach to CA, being part of a larger effort to reshape relations between the EU and its neighbouring eastern regions. This initiative resulted in adoption of the EU and Central Asia: the Strategy for a New Partnership in June 2007 by the European Council, which upgraded the EU-Central Asia relations to a considerable extent.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

¹¹⁹ Omarov, op.cit.

¹²⁰ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

¹²¹ The European Union's Central Asia Drug Action Programme, Newsletter No.21, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.cadap.eu-bomca.kg/en/toppage>>

¹²² Omarov, op.cit.

¹²³ CAREC-the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.carecnet.org>>

¹²⁴ Omarov, op.cit.

¹²⁵ Melvin (ed.), op.cit.

4.4 Factors That Conditioned Adoption of the Strategy

As it was mentioned above, in spite of implementation of various programmes and projects, and rendering assistance to the countries of the region, for the first 15 years of its engagement in CA the EU did not have a (coherent) strategy in CA. The EU was recognised by the regional actors as a bit player. One of the reasons was that the EU MS showed little interest in policy coordination in CA and there was no any strong member-based lobby for the intensification of the EU's policy in the region.¹²⁶

Another reason that the EU has lagged significantly behind other world powers in asserting a political and economic interest in the region was the persistent presence of the US and Russia in CA.¹²⁷

The EU was criticised for having an inconsistent strategy in CA. In particular, critics considered the EU's policy in CA as a peculiar continuation of the US policy in the region without its own view of strategy and interests in the region. According to them the EU would be unable to realise an obvious importance of CA in the EU's joint anti-terrorism campaign in Afghanistan.¹²⁸

The EU's engagement in CA was restricted by several factors. In particular, most of the EU MS were indifferent towards CA and regarded it too remote for being paid a serious attention, since the EU prioritised its relations with other regions, especially the Caucasus and Russia. Comparatively small range of the EU's activities in CA contrasted to those it had pursued in the neighbouring South Caucasus region.

In June 2004, the EU decided to bring Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia into the organisation's European Neighbourhood Policy, while continuing to exclude the Central Asian states. Except the abovementioned post-Soviet countries, the ENP encompasses the non-member countries of Eastern Europe and even North Africa.¹²⁹ Among Central Asian states, the Kazakh government actively lobbied to enter the ENP.¹³⁰ From all Central Asian states, Kazakhstan was mostly interested and seeking for closer cooperation with the EU. Thus, particularly being interested to intensify business ties with the EU, the Kazakh officials actively lobbied the EU's Strategy of 2007 through their influential lobby groups in Germany and the UK.¹³¹

As it was mentioned above, appointment of the EU's Special Representative for Central Asia in July 2005 signalled the EU's increased interest in CA. One of the factors, which promoted this decision, was that after 2004, when 10 new members joined the EU, CA

¹²⁶ MacFarlane, op.cit.

¹²⁷ 'GUS-Barometer', *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik*, no.25 (November 2000), in M. Laumulin, 'Central Asia and the European Union', in B. Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: a Gathering Storm?*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002

¹²⁸ Marat, op.cit.

¹²⁹ Weitz, op.cit.

¹³⁰ A. Rettman, 'EU Gas Needs Pull Kazakhstan Closer to Brussels', *EUobserver.com*, May 16, 2006, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.wennberg.newsvine.com/news/2006/05/16/198527-eu-gas-needs-pullkazakhstan-closer-to-brussels>> in R. Weitz, *Kazakhstan and the New International Politics of Eurasia*, Silk Road Paper, July 2008, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program

¹³¹ Interview conducted by the author with Dr. Erica Marat, Ph.D., Research Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, Washington D.C. Office, 15 April 2009

became a 'neighbour of neighbours'.¹³² With enlargement of the EU to the East and subsequent extension of its borders, the Central Asian countries became closer to the EU. The Central Asian states became immediate neighbours of the countries encompassed in the European Neighbourhood Policy, thus becoming 'friends of friends'.¹³³

Relations between the EU and Central Asian countries were developing under the three main factors: 1. The EU's enlargement to the East. 2. Extension of the EU's influence on the post-Soviet Eastern European countries. 3. Common European policy in the field of security. In this regard, intensification of the EU's interest in CA was envisaged.¹³⁴

The EU's policy towards CA entered its active phase from the beginning of 2007, with German Presidency of the EU. Issue of reconsideration and reshaping of the EU's policy towards CA became one of the main objectives of its agenda.¹³⁵

The new Strategy was presented by the German Council Presidency in June 2007 and consequently adopted by the European Council. The Strategy is regarded by the German government as one of the 'greatest shared successes' of the Council Presidency.¹³⁶

Germany was one of the most active EU MS in the region establishing its diplomatic representation in all five Central Asian republics. Its cooperation with the region included a wide array of grants and loans from the German federal and state governments. Germany had an intention to make CA a foreign policy priority during its EU Presidency in 2007.¹³⁷

Germany played a crucial role in adoption of the new Strategy for CA in 2007 and intensification of the cooperation between the EU and Central Asian republics. German researchers elaborated papers regarding cooperation with CA and the significance of the region yet in 2005 and these papers served as foundation for adoption of the Strategy in 2007.¹³⁸

Three general factions among members of the European Parliament (MEP) and Commission debated for different strategies within the Strategy, inside the EU. The first faction encompassed business oriented MEPs who strongly promoted the EU's energy interests in the region and anti-terrorist activities in CA, but put little emphasis on the poor human rights record in the region.

The second faction emphasised the issue of human rights and the rule of law in CA and the importance of the EU's engagement in preventing instability in the region and alleviating poverty. The third faction being less significant represented MEPs who insisted on importance of an all-inclusive approach to the region that would encompass energy, human rights and

¹³²Marat, op.cit.

¹³³Interview conducted by the author with Marc Fumagalli, Political and Economic Officer, Delegation of the European Commission to Tajikistan, 19 March 2009

¹³⁴A. Burhanov, 'Strategiya Evropeiskogo Soyuza v Tsentral'noy Azii: uspekhi i neudachi' (The EU's Strategy in Central Asia: Successes and Failures), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.3(51), 2007, pp.18-29

¹³⁵N. Norling, 'Politika Evropeiskogo Soyuza v Tsentral'noy Azii: prinyatie novogo strategicheskogo dokumenta na 2007-2013 gody' (EU's Central Asia Policy: the Adoption of a Strategy Paper 2007-2013), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.3(51), 2007, pp.7-17

¹³⁶F.W. Steinmeier, 'Die Seidenstraße neu beleben', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 30, 2007, p.10, in A. Schmitz, "Efficiency and Its Costs: The 'Strategy for a New Partnership' with Central Asia", in D. Kietz and V. Perthes (eds.), *The Potential of the Council Presidency: An Analysis of Germany's Chairmanship of the EU, 2007*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, January 2008

¹³⁷International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

¹³⁸Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

democracy reform and security issues and regard them as equally important. In particular, France and the UK's support of the EU's policy in CA, was mainly motivated by the business elite and individual MEPs.¹³⁹

There was also a divergence of opinion regarding issue of sanctions on Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁰ While the UK, Sweden, Ireland, and the Netherlands insisted on extension of sanctions, Germany and France supported dialogue with the Uzbek government with considerable weakening of the sanctions. France and Germany also supported the initiative of promoting the rule of law in CA, while Italy took the issue of education together with the Commission.¹⁴¹

In the context of this controversy between interests and values, the initially strong emphasis on the energy and security aspects of the EU's relations with CA increasingly fell into the background as the Presidency progressed and consequently the central role was given to the 'the results-oriented human rights dialogue' with the Rule of Law Initiative forming a main focus of the document.¹⁴²

Several factors conditioned Central Asia's acquisition of a prominent place on the EU's agenda and the subsequent adoption of the Strategy.

Excessive dependence of the EU on the Russian hydrocarbons and deliveries of the Central Asian hydrocarbons through the Russian territory, the continuous tension between the EU and Russia over energy issues¹⁴³ and in this regard intentions to diversify energy supply routes by the EU¹⁴⁴ (through importing oil and natural gas from the Central Asian countries) served one of the factors increasing the EU's interest towards CA.

In the first years of the 21st century, the EU was showing only interest, not accompanied with concrete actions to the Central Asian energy resources. However the subsequent events in the form of reduction of supplies of the Russian gas to Ukraine, demonstrated once again the energy dependence of the EU and its vulnerability (Russia constitutes 25% of the EU's total natural gas imports and 30% of its total oil imports)¹⁴⁵ and the short-sightedness of the EU's policy regarding this issue up to 2006-2007. Outbreak of the new gas crisis, in winter 2008-2009 and 'the gas conflict' between Ukraine and Russia painfully struck a number of the EU countries highlighting the problem once again and demonstrating the necessity to accelerate diversification of sources of energy supply.

CA is a region of choice and one of the alternative sources for the EU's activity in this

¹³⁹ Marat, op.cit.

¹⁴⁰ Sanctions were imposed on Uzbekistan after the massacre in Andijon (eastern Uzbek city) in May 2005

¹⁴¹ Marat, op.cit.

¹⁴² A. Schmitz, "Efficiency and Its Costs: The 'Strategy for a New Partnership' with Central Asia", in D. Kietz and V. Perthes (eds.), *The Potential of the Council Presidency: An Analysis of Germany's Chairmanship of the EU, 2007*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, January 2008

¹⁴³ Interview conducted by the author with Rashid Ghani Abdullo, political scientist, independent political expert from Tajikistan, 16 March 2009

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

¹⁴⁵ N. de Pedro, 'The EU in Central Asia: Incentives and Constraints for Greater Engagement', in M. Esteban, and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

regard.¹⁴⁶ In this connection, the EU and Central Asian states have complementary energy security needs and interests.¹⁴⁷

The second factor is the region's strategic location and proximity to Afghanistan and the involvement of the NATO troops there. Due to its geographic location, CA has become an international platform for combating international terrorism and drug trafficking.¹⁴⁸

The region is in the sphere of the EU's interests also for promoting democratic values such as human rights, rule of law, economic liberalisation, etc., and subsequent promoting of implementation of reforms in this regard.¹⁴⁹

The fourth factor, as it was mentioned above, was Germany's active engagement and interest in CA and Kazakhstan's efforts to enhance its cooperation with the EU. Both countries first of all were motivated by commercial interests.

Increase in trade interaction through such EU projects as TRASECA, will boost economies in the Central Asian countries, when they will start to receive income from transiting goods with simultaneous development of infrastructure.¹⁵⁰

And the last factor, as it was mentioned above, was the EU's expansion to the East along with development of its ENP policy.

Analysing the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the primary factors causing the EU to revise its policy towards CA and subsequently adopt the Strategy identifying its interests in the region are as follows:

1. The EU's awareness of necessity to strengthen cooperation with each of the Central Asian countries in security issues taking into consideration their geographical location and direct threats and challenges to the EU's security and stability;
2. The EU's awareness of necessity to increase its energy security in connection with the serious problems emerged for the last years regarding the issues of gas supply from Russia to the EU;
3. The EU's comprehension of its more significant role and engagement in CA against the background of growing activity and influence of such powers as the US, Russia and China in the region.

The Strategy became the first-ever EU strategy developed for CA and it marked a real breakthrough and opened a new stage in the relations between European and Central Asian countries.¹⁵¹

The Central Asian states were consulted in the development of the strategy paper. In the course of the EU's Troika¹⁵² meeting with the foreign ministers of the Central Asian states in

¹⁴⁶ Interview conducted by the author with Parviz Mullojonov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Democratic Processes, Tajikistan, independent political expert, 17 March 2009

¹⁴⁷ N. Kassenova, 'A View from the Region', in N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008

¹⁴⁸ Interview conducted by the author with Abdughani Mamadazimov, Ph.D., Chairman of the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan, 30 March 2009

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Norling, *op.cit.*

¹⁵¹ Kassenova, *op.cit.*

¹⁵² According to the Treaty of Amsterdam, the EU Troika is represented by: the Foreign Affairs Minister of the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the Secretary-General/High Representative for CFSP and the European Commissioner in charge of external relations and ENP, see <http://www.europa.eu>

March 2007, these states presented their own priorities, which were taken into consideration during the development of the Strategy. The EU Special Representative for Central Asia Pierre Morel played a central and highly active role in relaying the German Presidency's agenda regarding CA both to the Council and the Parliament, as well as in communicating it externally.¹⁵³

4.5 The Strategy: Priorities, Progress, Shortcomings

Priorities and Progress

The Strategy highlights the following areas, where the EU had intended to apply a strengthened approach in the region: human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation, youth and education, promotion of economic development, trade and investment, strengthening energy and transport links, environmental sustainability and water, combating common threats and challenges and inter-cultural dialogue.¹⁵⁴ Achievement of the Strategy's extensive goals is to be supported by the European Commission's assistance programme for 2007-13. During this period, the Commission will provide double assistance, compared with the previous period, to CA with some €750 million allocated for 2007-13 under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The existing Commission delegations in the region are planned to be upgraded.¹⁵⁵

All of the abovementioned priorities are important in their own right. Security issues are of great importance due to the geopolitical importance of the region and its proximity to Afghanistan. Economic reforms are urgent, taking into consideration the global financial crisis and the fact that it also has affected Central Asian countries with full force. Energy, environment and water resources are interconnected and their importance is steadily growing in the region. Rule of law and human rights are still areas of main concern in the entire region, and education is crucial, not least taking into account the demographic situation in the region having large population of young people. The EU's strengthened approach in these areas reflects the needs of the region.¹⁵⁶

Experts from the region named issues of rational water resources use, economic reforms,¹⁵⁷ and socio-economic issues¹⁵⁸ as the most urgent in CA. Furthermore, it was pointed out that taking into consideration the diversity of the Central Asian republics, each of them can have their own priorities. For example, investments, especially for development of the energy

¹⁵³ Schmitz, *Efficiency and Its Costs*, op.cit.

¹⁵⁴ Council of the European Union, *European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*, European Communities, 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf>

¹⁵⁵ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

¹⁵⁶ Interview conducted by the author with Henrik Norberg, Desk Officer, Department for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 21 April 2009

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Abdughani Mamadazimov, 30 March 2009

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Parviz Mullojonov, 17 March 2009

system, transport channels independent from Uzbekistan, border maintenance, are priority issues for Tajikistan.¹⁵⁹

After almost two years since adoption of the Strategy, the cooperation between the EU and CA has considerably intensified reaching a qualitatively new level.

During the first year of the Strategy's implementation, the EU's engagement was given further substance in the form of a set of bilateral Priority Papers agreed between the EU and the individual Central Asian governments in the first half of 2008. The priority documents provide detailed information about the range of projects to be conducted within the framework of the Strategy, and also those supported by individual EU MS.¹⁶⁰

One year after adoption of the Strategy, the Council and the European Commission issued an official assessment of the Strategy's achievements during the first 12 months in the form of a joint progress report.¹⁶¹

According to the report '*a new quality of cooperation has evolved between Central Asia and the EU.*'¹⁶² One of the achievements of the Strategy is that all Central Asian countries agreed to engage in or continue a structured Human Rights Dialogue with the EU. Intensification of high-level political dialogue may be observed. A number of high-level meetings and visits took place between the two parties. All Central Asian countries have nominated national coordinators for implementation of the Strategy.¹⁶³ Cooperation in all priority areas set in the Strategy has been intensified.

In 2008, the cooperation between the EU and CA entered a stage of full implementation. The first of its kind EU-Central Asia Security Forum was held in Paris, where the ministers of foreign affairs of all Central Asian countries met with their colleagues from the twenty seven EU MS. There the parties had an in-depth discussion of the current security matters. Later the French Presidency of the EU organised a more specific event on Afghanistan, between the EU and Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours, including the Central Asian ones. Regarding security issues, there are lot of opportunities for the two parties to cooperate within multilateral organisations like UN and OSCE, of which both the Central Asian countries and the EU countries are members. Cooperation with other international organisations, in particular the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) can open new opportunities in this regard.¹⁶⁴

The EU also continues implementation of its well-established programmes BOMCA and CADAP, which are intended to reduce both the demand and the supply of the drugs abuse in CA. Regional initiatives were launched in 2008, in particular the EU Rule of Law Initiative, the Environment and Water Initiative, and the EU Education Initiative for CA. In a bilateral context, the EU and each Central Asian country have held dialogues on human rights.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹Interview with Rashid Ghani Abdullo, 16 March 2009

¹⁶⁰Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

¹⁶¹ibid.

¹⁶²European Commission, External Relations, *Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy*, 24.06.08, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/docs/progress_report_0608_en.pdf>

¹⁶³ibid.

¹⁶⁴'Exclusive interview: Ambassador Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia', op.cit.

¹⁶⁵ibid.

In the next five years, the EU intends to promote activities on the fuller integration of the Central Asian economies in the globalised world markets with simultaneous introduction of appropriate back up mechanisms to guarantee financial security and to protect the citizens against sudden fluctuations on the world markets. The EU's experience regarding tackling environmental and sensitive water issues in the region, as well as integration of the Central Asian economies in the globalised world markets can be helpful, if adjusted carefully to the specifics of CA.¹⁶⁶

Regional dialogue on energy security was intensified through the Baku Initiative.¹⁶⁷ INOGATE programme is the main tool for promoting cooperation on the energy projects. The prospects of such programmes and projects dealing with energy and transport issues as Nabucco project and TRASECA programme were also highlighted in the progress report.¹⁶⁸

Shortcomings

In spite of a positive picture presented in the report and the EU's firm commitment to implement the priorities set in the Strategy and real steps taken in this regard, some shortcomings are implicitly acknowledged.

There is a common concern that in developing a new relationship with CA the EU has mainly neglected its usual comprehensive approach to security issues in favour of a policy of *Realpolitik*. The planning stage of the Strategy was marked by the controversy between supporters of interest-based and value-based approaches. As a result, in the implementation stage of the strategy proponents of *Realpolitik* have prevailed.¹⁶⁹ Consequently, the EU prioritised energy and security, while other issues have been downgraded. Prioritisation of energy and security interests marginalised traditional EU concerns related to democracy and human rights. In adopting state-centric notions of security for the region, the EU may ultimately weaken its position in CA. One of the main challenges to stability and security in CA is the corrupt and authoritarian regimes of the region. Criticism of human rights abuses in the region by the EU officials has been mild and the human rights dialogues do not offer enough incentives to the Central Asian leaderships.¹⁷⁰

The meaning of the 'structured, regular and results-oriented' human rights dialogue is not clearly presented, the goals of this dialogue are set vaguely, and the form and modalities are not covered at all in the Strategy.¹⁷¹

Another shortcoming of the Strategy is that its implementation is an exclusive, elite-driven process. Involving expert institutions in Germany in the process of developing the Strategy, the wider European civil society and expert community, and national and the European

¹⁶⁶Exclusive interview: Ambassador Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia', op.cit.

¹⁶⁷Energy Cooperation between the EU, the Littoral States of the Black and Caspian Seas and their Neighbouring Countries, launched at the Energy Ministerial conference held in Baku in November 2004, see <http://www.ec.europa.eu>

¹⁶⁸Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy, op.cit.

¹⁶⁹Graubner, op.cit.

¹⁷⁰Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

¹⁷¹Schmitz, *Efficiency and Its Costs*, op.cit.

parliaments did not play a significant role in the drafting process.¹⁷² At the same time, members of civil society organisations, think tanks or academics in CA have not been consulted on any of the issues related to the Strategy either by the EU or by their respective governments. But the EU officials explain this fact pointing out that the Strategy is in the implementation stage and continue meeting with regional elites behind closed doors.¹⁷³

In its policy in the region, the EU as usual, traditionally emphasises contacts at high level, first of all with the regional governmental circles, at the same time, as during the previous times, issues of civil society development are regarded as of secondary importance.¹⁷⁴

The EU has failed to engage profoundly with civil society. When officials pay visit to the region they should organise more meetings with representatives of civil society. Also they should use an opportunity to benefit from the expertise, views and skills of independent thinking. Without engaging and consulting with civil society in CA, the EU risks to create policies, in particular in education or rule of law that are not in concordance with reality and may even be counter-productive.¹⁷⁵

Shortcomings regarding secondary role of the civil society were acknowledged in the progress report, identifying the necessity to work more closely with civil society, parliament, local authorities and other actors interested in the Strategy.¹⁷⁶

Another problem is that the EU (whether it concerns the Strategy, its implementation or the EU's policy) is still underrepresented in the Central Asian countries. Meanwhile the region remains significantly orientated towards and dependent upon Russia. Being an issue of communication, it is also fundamentally a question of participation. It is necessary to raise awareness about the Strategy and its implementation among general public and civil organisations.¹⁷⁷ Actually the local public does not have almost any knowledge about the Strategy and its contents and the EU's policy in the region.

The EU needs to engage directly with wider society and to build a network of contacts between various institutions, organisations and communities in Europe and CA.¹⁷⁸

There is also a problem of transparency as all the documents and papers developed in close consultation with the Central Asian governments most likely will be shared amongst them themselves – but without wider discussion within Europe or CA. None of these documents and papers is currently available to the public.

According to the experts the Strategy lacks a geopolitical context in analysing the interests and actions of other external actors involved in the region, which raises doubts about the viability of the document. The lack of the cohesive policy remains the biggest weakness of the EU's approach towards the region. In this connection, the EU must clearly define its position in CA within its own foreign policy and, more importantly, within the broader international political context. This is necessary for ensuring the effectiveness of the EU's comprehensive approach and achieving its main goals.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷² Schmitz, *Efficiency and Its Costs*, op.cit.

¹⁷³ Graubner, op.cit.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Parviz Mullojonov, 17 March 2009

¹⁷⁵ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ De Pedro, op.cit.

The prospects of implementation of priority issues highlighted in the Strategy, and the EU's programmes and projects being implemented in the region are discussed in the final chapter of this research.

4.6 The EU-Tajikistan Cooperation

From all Central Asian states Tajikistan has been selected as a case study due to several reasons. Tajikistan received relatively less attention from the EU compared with other Central Asian countries rich in hydrocarbon energy resources. Whereas, from security perspective Tajikistan is crucially important for both the EU and international community due to its direct proximity to Afghanistan and consequent problems of drug trafficking. Issues of security and stability in CA and situation in Afghanistan are directly interlinked.

At the same time, Tajikistan is the country with abundant hydro-resources but its potential in this regard was not fully applied and developed. If the water potential of Tajikistan, which possesses 4% of the world hydropower reserves¹⁸⁰ (Tajikistan's hydropower potential amounts to 527 billion kWh, total 70% of the Central Asian region)¹⁸¹ were fully used, the country alone could provide with hydroelectricity the territory twice as big as the territory of CA. Water resources formed in the mountains of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are used not only for hydroelectricity generation, but also for irrigation of hundreds of thousands of hectares of land in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.¹⁸²

According to the specialists, the country also possesses gas reserves, which according to prognosis could provide Tajikistan with gas and secure the country from fuel dependence, but its extraction will require huge efforts and financial means.¹⁸³

From the Central Asian states, landlocked mountainous Tajikistan was the only country that experienced civil war and remains one of the poorest countries among them with high level of external labour migration.

The territory of the present Tajikistan was once part of the ancient Persian Empire. For several centuries its territory was part of the famous Great Silk Road. For many centuries Tajikistan's present territory suffered from various foreign invasions and conquests. Since the 11th century, after the collapse of the Persian/Tajik Samanid Empire, Tajiks never had their statehood again until the creation of the separate republic within the USSR.

In 1929 Tajikistan was created as a constituent republic within the USSR as the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic. Different portions of territory were assembled to form present Tajikistan. Historical centres of Persian/Tajik culture - the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, were assigned to the Uzbek SSR. This artificial division of the region and border delimitation

¹⁸⁰ Address by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon at the Session dedicated to the Aral Sea Basin at the 1st Asia-Pacific Water Summit, 3-4 December 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.cawater-info.net/int_org/apwf/address_rakhmonov.htm>

¹⁸¹ Rahmatullina, op.cit.

¹⁸² ibid.

¹⁸³ L.Gaisina, 'Zemlya obetovannaya, naidet li 'Gazprom' tadzhikskiy gaz?' (The Promised Land, Will 'Gazprom' Find the Tajik Gas?), *ASIA-Plus*, 26 February 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.asiaplus.tj/articles/94/3121.html>>

left many in Tajikistan with strong sense of historical injustice and deprivation in terms of the loss of the 'heartland' of Tajik culture and history and the creation of a large number of co-ethnics concentrated in Uzbekistan.¹⁸⁴

Tajikistan acquired its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Shortly after that Tajikistan was involved in a civil war which lasted from 1992 to 1997. Civil war devastatingly affected many spheres of the country's development. As a result of this conflict, over 50,000 people died and hundreds thousands of people were displaced.

In 1997 the peace agreement was signed between representatives of the government and opposition forces.

Since independence, Tajikistan has had to rely on the economy that was built during the Soviet rule. The Soviet government invested heavily in Tajikistan's industrial sector, development of the modern infrastructure, and agrarian sector. The extensive social welfare system and the well-developed education system resulted in that Tajikistan's literacy rate was close to 98% in 1991 (it was 99.6% according to the 2007 census).¹⁸⁵ In 1990, Tajikistan was ranked 31 in the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) with the GDP per capita of US\$ 1060, ahead of many developing countries. However, Tajikistan's economy was uncompetitive in the world market due to extensive control of economic management and economic stagnation of the 1980s. By 1991 the country's unreformed agricultural sector began to fall into crisis and its industrial sector collapsed when the state subsidies ceased.¹⁸⁶

In 2000-2004 Tajikistan had one of the highest rates of economic growth in the CIS amounting from 8.3% to 10.6%. But in the following years the growth rates decreased.¹⁸⁷

Nowadays, Tajik economy is highly dependent on labour migrants' remittances (mostly working in Russia) and international aid.

After events of 9/11 Tajikistan instantly became a central player in the US-led war against international terrorism and started to gain significance for the international community.¹⁸⁸

At present, Tajikistan pursues a multivector foreign policy based on the principle of 'open doors'. Tajikistan intends to pursue broad, effective and constructive cooperation with all concerned countries of the world. The country strives for increasing investments from Russia, the US, Europe, Arab countries and other states, advocating the development of firm bilateral and multilateral relations based on economic pragmatism and mutual understanding.¹⁸⁹

The strategic objectives of the Tajik foreign policy are to achieve the energy independence, to develop transport and communication links and to provide food security.

The EU is one of the main aid donors rendering Tajikistan assistance in its socio-economic development. Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed between the EU and Tajikistan in 1989 was a legal framework for the relationship between the two parties. Later

¹⁸⁴ M. Fumagalli, 'Tajikistan and the EU: from Post-conflict Reconstruction to Critical Engagement', in N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008

¹⁸⁵ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2009 (Statistical annex)*, <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Indicators.pdf>

¹⁸⁶ R. Abazov, 'Independent Tajikistan: ten years lost', in S. Cummings (ed.), *Oil, Transition and Security in Central Asia*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003

¹⁸⁷ International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook*, April 2007

¹⁸⁸ Abazov, op.cit.

¹⁸⁹ Address by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to Majlisi Oli (Parliament) of Tajikistan, 15 April 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.president.tj/habarho_150409c.html>

on TCA was replaced by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and Tajikistan signed in 2004 and at present it is to be ratified by the EU member state, and already ratified by Tajikistan. Pending ratification of PCA, an Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters is being implemented since May 2005.¹⁹⁰

The EU has been rendering assistance to Tajikistan through the following instruments: TACIS, Food Security Programme (FSP), Exceptional Financial Assistance (EFA), EIDHR and humanitarian assistance within ECHO.

Starting from 1992 the EU allocated more than €500 millions of aid to Tajikistan.¹⁹¹

Alongside with the abovementioned, for the last few years Tajikistan is a beneficiary of the EU's BOMCA and CADAP regional programmes with national components. Other instruments are applied to support activities in areas such as mine action, migration, prevention and combating HIV/AIDS, TB (tuberculosis) and malaria in cooperation with other relevant international organisations.¹⁹²

Within the Strategy the EU plans to cooperate with Tajikistan within the EU's Initiatives, on issues of good governance, transparency, in fostering economic development (including private sector development, development of targeted regions, social protection, budget support on health, agricultural reforms), etc., including in cooperation with donor countries and relevant international organisations.¹⁹³

Tajikistan's problem of land mines at borders with Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, as well as drug trafficking are outlined as the country's most burning problems in the Strategy. In this regard, the Strategy links security and development in Tajikistan to Uzbek government's cooperation in identification of minefields for facilitating the EU's de-mining efforts.¹⁹⁴

According to Central Asia Indicative Programme 2007-2010, a total European Commission's grant of €314 million is planned for CA under DCI regional CA programme, with an average annual budget of €78.5 million per year. Out of this amount €94.2 million, i.e. 30% of resources will be allocated for *Promotion of Central Asian regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations* and €219.8 million, i.e. 70% of resources will be allocated for *Assistance programmes at country level* with the following proportion: Kazakhstan: €44 million (20%), Kyrgyzstan: €55 million (25%), Tajikistan: €66 million (30%), Turkmenistan: €22 million (10%) and Uzbekistan: €32.8 million (15%). Focal sectors of assistance to Tajikistan include: poverty reduction both through assistance schemes directly in the field to the rural populations and through support to sector wide approach to reforms in social protection, agricultural sector and land reform, good governance and public finance management, promotion of Central Asian regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations, including through environmental, security and education cooperation between Tajikistan, its neighbours and EU operational structures.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰European Commission, External Relations: Tajikistan, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.ec.europa.eu/external_relations/tajikistan/index_en.htm>

¹⁹¹ASIA-Plus-Information Agency, 07 April 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.asiaplus.tj/news>>

¹⁹²The European Commission's Delegation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.delkaz.ec.europa.eu/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=38>

¹⁹³Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

¹⁹⁴Marat, op.cit.

¹⁹⁵European Commission, DG External Relations E/3, *Central Asia Indicative Programme 2007-2010*, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/rsp/nip_07_10_en.pdf>

€66 million allocated for Tajikistan for 2007-2010 is intended mainly for public health, education, rural development and capacity building areas.

Relations between the EU and Tajikistan will further strengthen and will become more concrete after the PCA between the EU and Tajikistan is ratified by all EU MS.¹⁹⁶ Ratification of the PCA with Tajikistan will promote increase in political dialogues between the EU and Tajikistan¹⁹⁷ and could foster improvement of the socio-economic situation in Tajikistan.¹⁹⁸

Adoption of the Strategy positively affected bilateral relations between the EU and Tajikistan, leading to increase in high-level visits between the two parties. The EC delegation in Tajikistan is planned to be upgraded to a fully-fledged EC delegation with appointment of the head of delegation.¹⁹⁹

One of the indicators of intensification of bilateral cooperation was the official visit of president of Tajikistan to Belgium and his meetings with the EU's leadership there in February 2009. In the course of the meetings, development of hydropower sector, establishment of regional integrated energy network, enhancement of transport and communication infrastructure and increasing transit capacities of Central Asian states, including Tajikistan, promoting stability and security in Afghanistan and in the region as a whole, including through strengthening border control instruments and combating drug trafficking, were highlighted as priority issues of cooperation between Tajikistan and the EU.²⁰⁰ After the visit of the president of Tajikistan to Brussels, cooperation with the EU became a priority direction in the foreign policy of Tajikistan.²⁰¹

The next meeting between the EU Troika and ministers of foreign affairs of CA is to be conducted in Dushanbe on 29-30 May 2009 within the framework of the regional political dialogue.

Trade relations between the EU and Tajikistan do not cover all possible opportunities. The EU MS mostly import aluminium, cotton and textiles from Tajikistan. The EU's export to Tajikistan mainly includes machinery, agricultural products, transport equipment and chemical products. The EU is one of the main Tajikistan's trade partners (followed by Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Switzerland and Iran).²⁰²

Experts from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan often note that while the most attention is drawn towards Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan due to their oil and gas reserves, smaller countries, such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – are at the fringes of the Strategy.²⁰³ Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are rich in water resources and the development of the hydropower sector in these two countries could positively affect both development of these countries and the region as a whole.

¹⁹⁶ 'Exclusive interview with Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner', 9 April 2008, Dushanbe, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.stan.kg/news>>

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

¹⁹⁸ Marat, op.cit.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²⁰⁰ Official Visit of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to the Kingdom of Belgium, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.president.tj/habarho_140209c.html>

²⁰¹ Interview with Abdughani Mamadazimov, 30 March 2009

²⁰² 'Tajikistan-EU bilateral relations', Embassy of Tajikistan to the Kingdom of Belgium, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.taj-emb.be/eu.html>>

²⁰³ Marat, op.cit.

After the devastating civil war and establishment of peace, Tajikistan unlike some of its neighbours has experienced a relative stability, and as a result there is now a possibility to concentrate on fostering reform. Whereas, a relative progress has been made in such areas as security/stability and economic development, in the area of political reform the country is lagging behind. One of the biggest challenges for development in Tajikistan is the problem of corruption. The emphasis of the Strategy on the crucial role of rule of law, human rights, good governance and the presence of transparent political institutions for the country's development is to be welcomed, and a strategy of critical engagement should help shape reform. At the same time, taking into consideration the role of informal institutions in the political and economic developments in the country, local community leaders should be given a stake in the reform process as well. The steps should be taken in alleviating pressure on the local and international NGOs and the media, and development of civil society.²⁰⁴

There is a huge potential for development of the civil society in Tajikistan. The EU should initiate cooperation with local NGOs in some areas and gradually expand into other areas.²⁰⁵

Regarding the human rights issues attention should be paid to conditions of Tajik migrants in Russia and other countries. In this connection the EU could work in concert with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).²⁰⁶

Regarding security aspects and protection of human rights the EU could train or assist in training of the country's police forces for dealing with civilians for avoiding tragic incidents, as it was done by the OSCE in Kyrgyzstan.²⁰⁷

For viable development of the Tajik economy, it is of crucial importance to develop Tajikistan's energy sector. Some foreign companies (notably of Russia and Iran) have already started investing in reconstructing and upgrading existing hydropower plants. The EU should work in concert with other actors to foster the development of Tajikistan's unfulfilled potential in hydroelectric power in the region. At the same time, the EU should facilitate bilateral and multilateral approaches for reaching an agreement in disputes over water use and management as well as to develop water infrastructure. The EU could also help to Tajikistan to upgrade its transport infrastructure.²⁰⁸

Tajikistan has chosen intensification and extension of development of its hydropower resources as one of the priority directions of its national development and the country is ready to cooperate with any interested party in order to achieve its energy security. The EU with its financial and technical possibilities could become a reliable partner in implementation of this sector crucial for the country's development.²⁰⁹

At the same time experts are skeptical about the EU's capability to invest in macro-energy projects in Tajikistan. The EU can render technical assistance first of all in development of micro-energy projects and alternative energy sources.²¹⁰

²⁰⁴ Fumagalli, op.cit.

²⁰⁵ Marat, op.cit.

²⁰⁶ Fumagalli, op.cit.

²⁰⁷ Interview with Dr. Erica Marat, 15 April 2009

²⁰⁸ Fumagalli, op.cit.

²⁰⁹ Interview with Abdughani Mamadazimov, 30 March 2009

²¹⁰ Interview with Parviz Mullojonov, 17 March 2009

Tajik experts consider that the EU's determination to assist in improvement of the quality of education in the country is important.²¹¹ European Education Initiative in CA mentioned in the Strategy is an important measure in this regard. But at the same time the concern is expressed over the EU's conditionality in reduction of hours for social science subjects in favour of increase in technical ones in the Tajik higher education institutions.²¹²

The EU has played and playing an important role in development of many areas in Tajikistan. Definitely the EU's presence in Tajikistan is beneficial and will positively affect the socio-economic development in the country. But the problem is that the EU's presence in the country is often remains invisible and mainly the general public is not aware of its activities. The visibility can be enhanced in the form of strengthening the EU's diplomatic representation (upgrading of the EC delegation in the country is envisaged in the near future) and developing closer relations with the national parliament,²¹³ and as it was mentioned above through closer engagement with civil society groups, representatives of the academic field and community leaders.

The EU is considered as a neutral actor and mainly technical partner in the region, including in Tajikistan. The EU is perceived as an inactive actor in the region pursuing only economic interests.²¹⁴ Experts point out a number of obstacles for an effective cooperation between the EU and Tajikistan.

First, there is no a special programme or a unified document for cooperation with the EU from Tajikistan with clearly formulated foreign policy and interests concerning the EU. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are passive partners difficult to deal with during the negotiations with the EU representatives, unlike Kazakhstan actively cooperating with the EU representatives.²¹⁵ *'While Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan government officials are the most confident and are able to channel their interests at bilateral meetings with the EU, their Kyrgyz and Tajik counterparts are often passive observers of cooperation initiatives by the EU. Kazakh and Uzbek representatives will 'play with you' and will cooperate only if they are interested, but Kyrgyz and Tajik officials usually agree to any initiative proposed.'*²¹⁶

Secondly, the lack of political will on behalf of the Tajik officials to reform the relevant structures impeding development in the country, reforms related to issues of good governance and transparency, etc., is considered as one of the obstacles for effective cooperation between the EU and Tajikistan.²¹⁷

Thirdly, according to the experts despite the fact that Tajikistan will receive larger part of financial assistance from the EU than other Central Asian states according to the EC's Central Asia Indicative Programme 2007-2010 and assistance within other EU programmes and projects, the amount of the financial assistance to be allocated is relatively small. The EU's approach towards Tajikistan is not serious, especially taking into consideration the Chinese

²¹¹ Marat, op.cit.

²¹² Interview conducted by the author with Hakim Abdulloh Rahnomo, Ph.D., Leading Expert, the Strategic Research Centre at the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, 20 March 2009

²¹³ Fumagalli, op.cit.

²¹⁴ Interview with Hakim Abdulloh Rahnomo, 20 March 2009

²¹⁵ Interview with Dr. Erica Marat, 15 April 2009

²¹⁶ Marat, op.cit., p. 26

²¹⁷ Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

engagement and financial support, when the assistance is allocated without any unrealistic conditions.²¹⁸

But China, providing assistance to Tajikistan might have unuttered interests in the country, while the EU applies a pragmatic approach indicating its interests in the region, including in Tajikistan.²¹⁹

Finally, Tajikistan is under strong influence of Russia due to certain factors. Tajik labour migration conditioned by harsh economic situation in Tajikistan mainly to Russia (despite frequent brutal abuses of their rights there and severe conditions), takes place not only because of proximity of the latter to Tajikistan, but also because of existence of the certain subculture (including the linguistic factor), common mentality due to the relatively recent common history. It will take a long time for Tajik people to transform to another subculture. In fact, the strong Russian presence in the country is an important factor that should be taken into consideration.²²⁰

However, the new approach of the EU to CA offers the opportunity to reengage Tajikistan at a vital stage in its post-independence history and, in particular introduce new policies that can foster the development of the country.²²¹

4.7 The EU Member States

Simultaneously with the EU, certain EU MS, mainly ‘old’ ones play a significant role in rendering assistance and cooperating with the Central Asian countries. New EU MS have also an important potential to engage in cooperation with CA and develop relations between the EU and CA. Relations with CA, were not by and large, a priority for the EU MS. But few of them were active in the region to a certain extent.²²²

4.7.1 France

France was among the first Western countries to recognise independence of the Central Asian countries in 1991. Currently France has embassies in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, being represented in Kyrgyzstan by its ambassador to Kazakhstan.

Involvement of France in Afghanistan caused its greater engagement in the region. French troops were stationed in Kyrgyzstan in 2002. France has an air detachment in Tajikistan and is actively cooperating with this country. Kazakhstan is the main trade partner of France in the region.²²³

²¹⁸ Interview with Rashid Ghani Abdullo, 16 March 2009

²¹⁹ Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²²⁰ Interview with Hakim Abdulloh Rahnamo, 20 March 2009

²²¹ Fumagalli, op.cit.

²²² International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

²²³ ‘France and Central Asia’, France Diplomatie, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files_156/central-asia_1964/index.html>

France and Germany were the lead coordinators in developing the EU Rule of Law Initiative for CA in the context of the Strategy.²²⁴

France actively supports BOMCA/CADAP projects in the region and supported OSCE's pilot project in Kyrgyzstan for training police forces.²²⁵

Besides, France is actively engaged in the region through its NGOs, in particular ACTED.

During its EU Presidency in the second half of 2008, France rather followed a broader framework of the EU's strategic interests in CA. For France, the Mediterranean Union was of a far greater importance. Issues concerning CA were rather placed along with other developing countries and regions.²²⁶

4.7.2 Germany

As it was pointed out above, Germany played a crucial role in adoption of the Strategy during its EU Presidency in 2007. Germany was the main initiator of elaboration of the Strategy long before its Presidency in the EU.

Germany is the only EU member state having its embassies in all five Central Asian states and maintaining good relations with all of them. The EU Presidency for Germany was an opportunity to enhance and systematise the political dialogue with its Central Asian partners.²²⁷

From the EU MS, Germany is the largest bilateral donor country in CA and the most important partner in issues of development cooperation.

The following German organisations are actively engaged in providing assistance in various areas in CA: GTZ (German Technical Assistance Association), KfW (German Development Bank), DED (The German Development Service), DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), DWHH/GAA (German Agro Action), etc.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are the main trade partners of Germany in the region. According to the experts, German politics in CA is an attempt to counterbalance France's influence in the Mediterranean region.²²⁸ Part of its interest is driven by existence of a small ethnic German community²²⁹ in Central Asian countries.²³⁰ Since the early 1990s, approximately 90% of the total 2 million Germans living in CA moved to Germany.²³¹

Another factor rousing German interest in the region was issue of energy security.²³²

²²⁴ *Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy*, op.cit.

²²⁵ 'France and Central Asia', op.cit.

²²⁶ Marat, op.cit.

²²⁷ A. Schmitz, 'A Political Strategy for Central Asia', in V. Perthes and S. Mair (eds.), *European Foreign and Security Policy: Challenges and Opportunities for the German EU Presidency*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, October 2006

²²⁸ Marat, op.cit.

²²⁹ Ethnic Germans in the USSR were deported to Central Asia during the World War II

²³⁰ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

²³¹ Marat, op.cit.

²³² A. Asrorov, 'Tsentrāl'no-aziatskiy pas'yans [Chto daet Tsentrāl'noy Azii strategiya Evrosoyuzal]' (Central Asian Patience, What Does the EU's Strategy Give to Central Asia), *Analitika, Central Asia*, 17 July 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.easttime.ru/analitic/1/68.html>>

4.7.3 Sweden

Swedish development cooperation with CA started in 1996, when Sweden took part in a project for the Aral Sea that was being led by the World Bank. Since then Sweden has been an active provider of humanitarian aid to CA, largely through the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Sweden also supported a regional programme through the UNDP to promote democracy, human rights and private organisations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.²³³

Development cooperation with CA is planned to be phased out. The phase-out strategy will cover the period 2008–2010 and cooperation is mainly envisaged with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

During this period Swedish development cooperation with CA will be targeted towards democratic governance, economic development and health. In Tajikistan, the focus will be on good governance and human rights, the agricultural sector and primary health care and in Kyrgyzstan, public financial management and gender equality, the agricultural sector and health reforms are important parts of the Swedish programme. The Strategy is central to Sweden's support to the region and Sweden will continue to contribute to the EU's activity in CA even after the phase-out.²³⁴

According to the experts Sweden's EU Presidency in the second half of 2009 will be likely to revive some of the EU's interest in the region owing to the country's fairly intensive engagement in CA in the past. It is expected that Sweden will focus more on the human rights situation, poverty alleviation and democratisation processes during its EU Presidency.²³⁵

'During the Swedish presidency, the momentum of development of the EU relations with Central Asia will be maintained through implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia. Special attention will be paid to energy cooperation, border management, drug issues, and promotion of political dialogue, including good governance and human rights, education and rule of law initiatives and cooperation on the environment/water.'

*During the Swedish presidency, there will also be quite a few important meetings between EU and the countries of Central Asia. At Foreign Ministers' level, Sweden will chair co-operation councils with the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan. There will also be Human Rights dialogues with the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. It is likely that, in the nearest future, the cooperation with Central Asia will be conducted mostly within the framework of the EU's engagement in the region.'*²³⁶

4.7.4 The United Kingdom

The UK has embassies in all Central Asian countries, but Kyrgyzstan. For the UK, CA was identified as important region due to a number of factors, in particular combating

²³³ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.sida.se>>

²³⁴ Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, *Phase-out strategy for bilateral development cooperation with Central Asia 2008-2010* (Memorandum), 2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/03/42/24/2a00ab02.pdf>>

²³⁵ Marat, op.cit.

²³⁶ Interview with Henrik Norberg, 21 April 2009

international terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, international crime, the promotion of sustainable development through democracy, good governance and human rights, and enhancing energy security. The UK has been an important donor for BOMCA/CADAP projects. The UK provided bilateral aid to the countries of the region (except Turkmenistan) mainly through the Department for International Development (DFID).²³⁷

Currently DFID operates in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan prioritising such issues as health care (in particular combating HIV/AIDS), poverty reduction, governance, sustained economic growth, water and sanitation and aid effectiveness.²³⁸

From other EU MS, notably *the Netherlands* has been funding human rights and media projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and has been contributing to a number of UNDP and OSCE projects. It has been also implementing project for combating TB in prisons.²³⁹

4.8 Summary

New partnership between the EU and CA has been to the greater extent conditioned by the problems emerged and increasing during the world globalisation equally affecting the both parties and requiring the joint solution. On the other hand it is the EU's dependence on external energy resources (mainly of Russia) and searches for alternative partners for diversification of its energy supply routes and corresponding enhancement of its energy security.

And finally, issues of security and regional economic development, taking into consideration the geographic location of the Central Asian countries in relation to the countries located southwards (Afghanistan and others), fostered new partnership between the EU and CA.

The Strategy contains common interests of both the EU and CA. Among them for the first party (the EU) – achievement of security and stability in the region, energy security and promotion of human rights and rule of law issues, and for the second party (CA) - sustainable economic development, provision of security both inside and outside the region.

This interpretation of the issue explains the theoretical background of the Strategy concerning the content and sources or reasons of such international cooperation. First come issues of security and stability, and as a result of cooperation acquirement of economic benefits (content) and provision of economic prosperity (sources).

In the light of the aforementioned, it may be concluded that correlation between the EU's policy in the region and all three theories of IR discussed in the Chapter III may be found.

According to the experts the EU's policy is focused on securing access to the region's energy supplies and to ensuring that the Central Asian states assist western countries involved

²³⁷ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

²³⁸ Department for International Development, retrieved 24 May 2009,

<<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Where-we-work/Asia-Central/>>

²³⁹ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: What Role of the European Union?*, op.cit.

in the conflict in Afghanistan rather than promoting genuine long-term stability built on the emergence of civil society, rule of law and forms of democratic politics. This conviction is reinforced by the EU officials' public statements that appear to employ narrow notions of security and stability and the definitions of threats promoted by regimes of the region.²⁴⁰

Besides, as it was elucidated above, it was Germany that initiated the process of elaboration and consequent adoption of the Strategy during its EU Presidency. Some EU MS perceived that the Strategy was primarily a German concern, motivated by the interests of national actors, not interests of all EU MS.²⁴¹ Hence, the role of the state in pursuing the organisation's policy may be observed. And again, the divergence emerged between the value-based and interest-based approaches and prevailing of the latter in the implementation stage of the Strategy. This all demonstrates presence of elements of *neorealism* in the EU's policy.

At the same time it is possible to observe elements of *neoliberalism* in the EU's policy to a considerable extent in the form of economic interests, intensification of cooperation, value-based approach of the certain EU MS, etc. The objectives of the EU's foreign policy mentioned above are in clear correlation with the ideas of *neoliberalism*.

Furthermore, it is easy to draw parallels between the EU's policy and concepts of *constructivism*. Social orientation in the structure of mutual relations (international structure or structure of international system) visibly outlined in the Strategy and commonality of ideas of actors as a part of the structure (common goal – to achieve stability and prosperity through peaceful interaction) closely correlate with *constructivism*. For example, the EU's encouragement of regional cooperation originating directly from its own internal identity and including two practices: classifying neighbouring countries together under regional strategies and supporting regional groupings, possesses elements of *constructivism*.

Hence, it can be concluded that the EU's policy in the region is a complex policy encompassing elements of all three aforementioned theories of IR. Its complexity causing emergence of contradictions and sometimes lack of coordination among the actors has roots in diversity of the actors within the EU and accordingly the approaches they apply and interests they pursue.

²⁴⁰ Melvin and Boonstra, op.cit.

²⁴¹ A. Schmitz, *Efficiency and Its Costs*, op.cit.

Chapter V: Role of Other Regional/International Actors Engaged in Central Asia and Their Interaction With the EU

This chapter deals with the role of other regional/international actors (states and organisations) engaged in CA and their interaction with the EU, discussing how the involvement of certain actors in the region affects (either positively or negatively) bilateral relations between the EU and CA.

As it was pointed out above, the Strategy does not take into consideration the regional geopolitical context, which is extremely complex and dynamic due to convergence of the interests and actions of the major global actors in CA.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, several external actors each having their own agenda demonstrated their growing interest in the region. This convergence of interests has resulted in emergence of a competition among influential powers, especially concerning energy resources. In this regard, the incorporation of CA into world politics has been often labelled as the 'new great game'.²⁴²

What roles play other external actors in CA at present and how this affects the countries of the region in the context of the EU's Strategy? This is discussed below.

5.1 Russia

Russia has a strong influence on the countries of the region. Russia continues to be considered by the majority of the Central Asian politicians as a main strategic partner.²⁴³

According to the experts the following three issues are on the agenda between Russia and the Central Asian states: the so called 'soft power' (influence of culture and presence of language), issues of Russian and Russian-speaking diaspora, and migration issue. Majority of the Russian political groupings despite ideological divergences consider the presence of Russia beneficial and crucial.²⁴⁴

Issues of energy sector are on the foreground of trade-economic relations between Russia and the Central Asian states. Nearly all of the hydrocarbon production of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (these countries are the most important for Russia due to the obvious reasons) is exported through the Russian pipeline system to the Black Sea and Europe. Russia takes advantage from absence of alternative routes paying extremely low

²⁴²N. de Pedro, 'The EU in Central Asia: Incentives and Constraints for Greater Engagement', in M. Esteban and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

²⁴³B. Beshimov, 'Kto risuet kartinu novoy geopolitiki v Tsentral'noy Azii?' (Who Draws the Picture of the New Geopolitics in Central Asia?), *Central Asian news*, 26 December 2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.ca-news.org/>>

²⁴⁴M. Laruelle, 'Russia's Central Asia Policy and the Role of Russian Nationalism', *Silk Road Paper*, April 2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.isdp.eu/files/publications/srp/08/ml08russiacentral.pdf>>

prices for the Central Asian hydrocarbons while reselling it at international prices in European markets. CA continues to be perceived as a supplier of raw materials.²⁴⁵

In this connection, the construction of alternative routes would be beneficial for both the EU and CA making both parties less dependent on Russia. Russia's activity is especially evident in Kazakhstan.

It is widely perceived that the Energy Summit of Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan conducted in May 2007 became a crucial moment in confrontation over issues of the Central Asian gas between Russia and the EU. This summit strengthened role of Russia as the main transit corridor for transporting Central Asian hydrocarbons to Europe. It was decided to construct a new Caspian Pipeline capable of 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) and modernise and extend the pipelines already existing on the territory of these Central Asian states.²⁴⁶

This project is considered as a rival to the EU's Trans-Caspian project and is highly undesirable for the EU, as its implementation will strengthen the Russian monopoly as the main supplier of hydrocarbons to Europe providing Russia with the right to regulate prices not excluding the situation of cutting off 'the pipeline' in case if the EU does not agree with the offered prices. The EU's concern over the Russian gas monopoly is also shared by the US.²⁴⁷

On the other hand, the EU's Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline project²⁴⁸ is perhaps undesirable for Russia. Though the planned 30 bcm of gas per year are not detrimental for Russia. Currently already around 170-180 bcm per year of the Russian gas transported to Europe and in prospects Nord Stream gas pipeline would significantly increase the amount of the gas transported from Russia.²⁴⁹

During signing the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation for construction of the pipeline for transiting natural gas through the Hungarian territory (South Stream project) in February 2008 between Russia and Hungary, the both parties stated that Nabucco and South Stream projects would not have a negative impact on each other.²⁵⁰

However, Trans-Caspian and consequently Nabucco gas pipeline projects are almost the only matter of great concern for Russia concerning relationship between the EU and CA.²⁵¹

Nabucco gas pipeline project has become a political issue due to the Russian opposition. The EU supports this project applying a pragmatic approach. The EU must be more unified over this issue for the project's successful realisation. This project became a long-term prospective due to presence of objective political obstacles, for example, in connection with

²⁴⁵ De Pedro, op.cit.

²⁴⁶ E. Madinov, 'Sovremennaya 'bitva titanov', ili priroda energeticheskoy geopolitiki v Tsentral'noy Azii' (The Contemporary 'Fight of Titans', or Character of the Energy Geopolitics in Central Asia), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.6(54), 2007, pp. 77-88

²⁴⁷ Y. Morozov, 'Rossiya, Zapad i strany SHOS v energeticheskikh proyektakh Tsentral'noy Azii' (Russia, the West and SCO Member Countries in Energy Projects of Central Asia), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.5(59), 2008

²⁴⁸ Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline if constructed would transport natural gas from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to the Central and Western Europe bypassing Russia. Planned capacity of the pipeline is 30 bcm of natural gas per year, and estimated cost is around US\$5 billion. In Baku it would connect with the South Caucasus Pipeline (Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum pipeline), and through this with the planned Nabucco Pipeline (Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary-Austria pipeline), see E. Madinov, op.cit. and <http://www.caspiananalys.se>

²⁴⁹ I. Velizade, "'Nabucco'- gazovaya strakhovka dlya Evropi" ('Nabucco'- a Gas Guarantee for Europe), *RIANOVOSTI*, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.rian.ru/analitics/20080117/>>

²⁵⁰ RIANOVOSTI, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.rian.ru/economy/20080228/>>

²⁵¹ Interview conducted by the author with Dr. Erica Marat, Ph.D., Research Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, Washington D.C. Office, 15 April 2009

the recent agreement between Russia and Hungary on a joint construction of a pipeline within South Stream project.²⁵²

Indication that Nabucco project is a long-term prospective due to the political obstacles is supported by the results of the EU Southern Corridor 'New Silk Road' Summit held on 8 May 2009 in Prague. Signing of declaration on construction of the new gas pipelines bypassing Russia was planned during this Summit. But, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – the main gas suppliers from Central Asian part did not sign the declaration. Due to the Turkmenistan's refusal to sign the declaration, the issue of sources of filling the main alternative route –Nabucco, remains unresolved. According to the experts the main reason of this state of affairs are political agreements between Turkmenistan and Russia.²⁵³

Results of the abovementioned summit demonstrate the primary geopolitical orientation of majority of the Central Asian countries towards Russia once again.

Such orientation has a constraining impact on development of relations between the countries of the region and other states, including the EU MS.²⁵⁴

Strong presence of Russia in the region is a certain impediment for rapprochement between the EU and Central Asian states.²⁵⁵

Russia continues to remain a strong actor in the region.²⁵⁶ And this fact should be taken into consideration. For the effective implementation of the Strategy it is expedient for the EU to establish a constructive cooperation with Russia.²⁵⁷

The two economically less developed countries of the region not possessing hydrocarbon resources stand apart from these grandiose plans of Russia and three other Central Asian republics. These countries are Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have resources and in abundance, but currently insufficiently used – hydropower resources. Until recent times, Russia did not take a concrete position regarding the issues of a large-scale development of cooperation with these countries in hydropower sector, except its statement to allocate US\$ 1.7 billion to Kyrgyzstan as an investment in construction of Kambar-Ata hydropower plants.²⁵⁸ Russia holds ¾ shares of Sangtuda-1 hydropower plant (medium capacity) in Tajikistan.

Alongside with the intensive development of its cooperation with Central Asian republics in energy and transport-communication areas (primarily with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), Russia accentuates its participation in the defence and military area. A number of bilateral and multilateral agreements have been signed between Russia and Central Asian

²⁵²Interview conducted by the author with Marc Fumagalli, Political and Economic Officer, Delegation of the European Commission to Tajikistan, 19 March 2009

²⁵³E. Kravchenko and E. Mazneva, 'Ni vashim ni nashim' (Neither to your side nor to ours), *Vedomosti*, No.84, 12 May 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.vedomosti.ru/newspaper/article.shtml?2009/05/12/>>

²⁵⁴Interview conducted by the author with Parviz Mullojonov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Democratic Processes, Tajikistan, independent political expert, 17 March 2009

²⁵⁵Interview conducted by the author with Hakim Abdulloh Rahnamo, Ph.D., Leading Expert, the Strategic Research Centre at the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, 20 March 2009

²⁵⁶Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²⁵⁷Interview conducted by the author with Rashid Ghani Abdullo, political scientist, independent political expert from Tajikistan, 16 March 2009

²⁵⁸OKMOTPRESS, 17 December 2008, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.rus.gov.kg/>>

states. Russia remains a 'key player' in CSTO and EURASEC. Its influence is increasing in SCO.²⁵⁹ Russia has permanent military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Undoubtedly, Russia is the traditional patron for Central Asian republics. They feel relatively comfortable dealing with it and are used to it. Russia has an array of instruments for maintaining its influence in the region, such as security guarantees, cheap arms, economic projects and investments, etc. However, Russia is not capable to solve the aggravating problems of the region like poverty, poor governance, corruption and potential instability. Russia itself is on the way of development and does not possess enough resources, and most importantly does not provide a good example of how to cope with these problems.²⁶⁰

5.2 The United States of America

The present US strategy for CA includes the following elements: creation of Greater Central Asia for incorporating the region into the US strategic designs in Afghanistan, South Asia, and the Middle East; the 'containment' policy in relation to Russia (and probably China) in CA; much more intensive confrontation with Iran; intensified American involvement in the Caspian; enhancing NATO's role in CA, etc. The US strategy in CA is determined, primarily, by geopolitical factors. There are some negative elements of this strategy, such as while expanding military political contacts with the Central Asian states, which forms a core of cooperation between Washington and countries of this region, the US neglects issues of providing support in agrarian reforms, high-tech development, expansion of humanitarian aid, which are crucial for the countries of the region at the moment.²⁶¹ Despite poor democratic and human rights record in the Central Asian countries, the US steadily continued pursuing its strategic interests in the region.²⁶²

The US pursues its foreign policy in CA mainly taking into consideration its presence in Afghanistan. However there are other factors affecting its foreign policy in the region. One of them is SCO and its strengthened influence for the recent few years. Washington is concerned with intentions of Iran to become a full member of the organisation.²⁶³

The US is also seriously concerned with the growing influence of China in the region, especially in Kazakhstan.²⁶⁴

²⁵⁹A. Grozin, 'Postsovetskaya Tsentral'naya Aziya: novye geopoliticheskie tendentsii i rossiyskie interesy' (Post-Soviet Central Asia: New Geopolitical Tendencies and Russian Interests), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.5(53), 2007, pp.53-66

²⁶⁰N. Kassenova, 'A View from the Region', in N.J. Melvin (ed.), *Engaging Central Asia: The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008

²⁶¹M. Laumulin, 'The US Geopolitical Experience in Central Asia: Success or Failure?', in M. Esteban and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

²⁶²E. Marat, *EU Strategy in Central Asia: Problems, Prospects and Potential*, draft version, May 2009

²⁶³M. Laumulin, 'Geopoliticheskie orientiry stran Tsentral'noy Azii na sovremennom etape' (Geopolitical Guiding Lines for the Central Asian States at the Contemporary Stage), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.5(59), 2008, pp.19-35

²⁶⁴A. Cohen, 'After the G-8 Summit: China and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization', *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 4, No.3, February 2006, pp. 51-64

Moreover, the US started to focus more on the Central Asian energy resources. One of the examples of the increased US interest towards Central Asian hydrocarbons is the lobbying of construction of Trans-Caspian pipeline by the US. The Trans-Caspian pipeline according to the US plan should transport gas from Kazakhstan to Turkmenistan and further to Azerbaijan, where it will connect with South Caucasus pipeline and through it to the planned Nabucco gas pipeline (its construction was planned to be completed first in 2010 and now according to the prognosis in 2011) and where gas would be transported to Europe bypassing Russia, without Russian 'Gazprom', which is increasing its control over the energy supply routes to Europe.²⁶⁵ It is in accordance with the EU's intentions to diversify energy supply routes from CA highlighted in the Strategy.

But, one cannot say that it is done exceptionally for the sake of Europe, i.e. there are no interests from the US part. In case the project is implemented, gas will be transported through territories (Caucasus, Turkey) which are under strong US influence.²⁶⁶

The EU and the US share common values but different ways of implementation. They have common position regarding stationing of coalition troops in Afghanistan, issues of human rights, democratisation, etc.²⁶⁷

At the same time, regarding the issues of development of transport communication links, while the EU supports to develop the East-West corridor, the US accentuates development of North-South route with access to South Asia for extending energy supplies in a long term, backed by donor countries and financial institutions like ADB and World Bank²⁶⁸ and in line with the US 'southern strategy' aiming to provide Central Asian energy producers with access to South Asian ports and energy markets and linking the security of Afghanistan with that of CA.²⁶⁹

According to the EU policy makers the value-based approach makes the EU different from the US, which focuses more on strategic goals such as security and continuity of its military presence.

The EU analysts point out that due to the difference in perception of the geopolitical role of Russia, the EU's regional approach in CA is divergent from the one followed by the US being often in a subtle competition with Russia. Both the US and Russia have been applying a set of instruments to achieve their strategic interests, promoting at the same time their political agenda in the region.²⁷⁰

5.3 China

China's interests in CA are dictated by the following factors: to maintain stability in its Western provinces, to secure supplies of energy and other strategic natural resources, to break

²⁶⁵Madinov, op.cit.

²⁶⁶I. Safranchuk, "'Evroproyekt' dlya Tsentral'noy Azii" ('Euro-Project' for Central Asia), *'Unity for Russia' Foundation*, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.fondedin.ru/sr/new/fullnews>>

²⁶⁷Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²⁶⁸ibid.

²⁶⁹E. Feigenbaum, 'Central Asian Economic Integration: An American Perspective', presentation at the W.P. Carey Forums Hosted by CACI, John Hopkins University, February 6, 2007, in Linn, J., 'Central Asia-National Interests and Regional Prospects', *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 5, No.3 (2007), pp.5-12

²⁷⁰Marat, op.cit.

the US and NATO encirclement, geopolitical domination of CA could advance Chinese influence in the Middle East, South Asia, the Caucasus, and Afghanistan, and finally through stronger position in the region China may get access to new markets for its products and new access routes to European markets.²⁷¹

Being an emergent trading partner for CA, China is also a prominent investor.

Besides, China grants soft loans to the Central Asian countries for developing their transport and communication infrastructures, their extractive sector, their hydropower capacity, etc.

By now, Kazakhstan is the main energy partner of China in CA. China also demonstrates interest in the gas reserves of CA. In August 2007 the construction of a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China through the territory of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan to transport those Central Asian natural gas imports into China was started.²⁷²

Through realisation of its investments in the region, China engages the countries of the region in its 'national projects'. Construction of new transport highways is one of the examples of this activity.²⁷³

By 2010 Beijing plans to complete construction of the railway China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan. According to the experts implementation of this project will be economically beneficial for these countries, and will also promote development of the region as a whole and intensification of economic cooperation with South Asian and European countries.²⁷⁴

China plans to construct railway the Trans-Asian Railroad (TAR) line that would connect the Pacific Ocean Ports of China (Lianyungang, Qingdao, Tianjin) with Turkey. Goods exported through this railway line would arrive to Europe in 11-12 days.²⁷⁵

China is actively investing in transport infrastructure of Tajikistan. China was one of the sponsors in construction of high motorway connecting it with Tajikistan, reconstruction of the motorway linking the centre of the country with its northern part, it is constructing tunnels, it financed construction of the high-voltage electricity transmission line 'Lolazor-Khatlon', etc. China is active in Tajikistan in field of telecommunication development as well.

Obviously economic presence of China in CA is steadily growing and certainly it has a negative impact as well. There are concerns in the countries of the region that their markets might be overflowed by the Chinese import simultaneously supplanting their domestic production. Another matter of concern is intensification of Chinese legal and illegal labour migration to the adjacent countries and growth of Chinese diaspora in the Central Asian countries.²⁷⁶

²⁷¹ A. Kaukenov, 'Chinese Diplomacy in Central Asia: a Critical Assessment', in M. Esteban and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

²⁷² *ibid.*

²⁷³ O. Sidorov, 'Kitay v XXI veke nachinaet postepenno vovlekat' v svoi natsional'niye proekty respubliki Tsentral'noy Azii' (China in the 21st Century Starts to Gradually Involve the Central Asian Republics in Its National Projects), *GAZETA.KZ*, 17 July 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.gazeta.kz/>>

²⁷⁴ N. Omarov and E. Usabaliyev, 'Vliyaniye regional'nikh tsentrov sily na Tsentral'nuyu Aziyu: konflikt interesov-sotrudnichestvo idey-konflikt strategiy?' (Impact of the Regional Centres of Power on Central Asia: Conflict of Interests-Cooperation of Ideas-Conflict of Strategies?), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.1(55), 2008

²⁷⁵ Kaukenov, *op.cit.*

²⁷⁶ Omarov and Usabaliyev, *op.cit.*

Traditional donor-countries operating in the Central Asian countries usually have their conditionality. While, non-traditional donor-countries as China do not have conditions but might have hidden motives. The EU on the contrary does not conceal its interests in the region.²⁷⁷

According to the experts, taking into consideration the abovementioned, it is expedient for the EU to cooperate with China for the effective implementation of the Strategy as well.²⁷⁸

Despite overlapping of the energy interests of the EU and China, European involvement in the region is welcomed by China due to Beijing's perception that the EU could contribute to end the Russian monopoly in the Central Asian energy sector.

Furthermore, there is a shared interest between the EU and China to develop the local energy sector as another step for ensuring Central Asian stability and development. In this connection, the establishment of a dialogue on energy issues with China would be reasonable, since the EU cannot avoid Chinese involvement in the region and there are grounds for cooperation between the two parties.²⁷⁹

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is among the most important diplomatic mechanisms employed by China in the CA by far. SCO allows China to exert its influence in CA.²⁸⁰ Taking into consideration the impact of SCO in the region, in order to effectively implement the Strategy the EU needs to coordinate its activity with this regional organisation.²⁸¹

On these grounds, the EU Special Representative for CA has regular meetings with representatives of SCO.²⁸²

Summarising the aforementioned, it may be assumed that intensive economic and political cooperation between China and Central Asian countries will continue and China already in a middle-term prospective has extensive opportunities to become their dominant external partner.²⁸³ However, China cannot offer proper models for transforming Central Asian countries into well-functioning polities, because its present Communist party-controlled system is a political 'yesterday' for former Soviet republics.²⁸⁴

5.4 Iran

Policy of Iran towards CA has been security-driven. Its highest priority has been to safeguard its security and in particular its territorial integrity.²⁸⁵

²⁷⁷Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²⁷⁸Interview with Rashid Ghani Abdullo, 16 March 2009

²⁷⁹Kaukenov, op.cit.

²⁸⁰ibid.

²⁸¹Interview conducted by the author with Abdughani Mamadazimov, Ph.D., Chairman of the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan, 30 March 2009

²⁸²Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²⁸³Omarov and Usubaliyev, op.cit.

²⁸⁴Kassenova, *A View from the Region*, op.cit.

²⁸⁵Sh. Hunter, 'Iran, Turkey and Central Asia: The Islamic Connection', in E. Van Wie Davis and R. Azizian (eds.), *Islam, Oil, and Geopolitics: Central Asia after September 11*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007

Iran concentrated mainly on three tasks: to establish and develop economic cooperation, to create joint transportation routes, and to resolve issues involving the Caspian Sea. Through fulfillment of these goals, Iran could resolve its most essential problem, to break out of international isolation. For this purpose Iran has taken and is taking initiatives to promote integration. Iran's advantageous geographic location provided the country with the good opportunity to transport energy resources of the region to the world markets. The existing tendency of formation of partnership relations between Iran and Russia, the European countries, China and India might guarantee the possible strengthening of the country's influence on CA.²⁸⁶

Iran was pursuing its policy in the region also through activities of Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO). ECO was established by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey in the 1960s for enhancing economic cooperation between the countries of the region. All five Central Asian countries are members of this organisation. But membership of Central Asian states in both ECO and CIS hindered them from acting with complete commitment to ECO. As a result, ECO was not able to act as an effective economic organisation.²⁸⁷

The present level of political and economic cooperation between Iran and Central Asian countries allows considering this country as one of the key players in the region.

Iran has been involved in planning and implementing several joint projects with a number of Central Asian countries.²⁸⁸

Iran was the first country to recognise Tajikistan's sovereignty and already in the beginning of 1992 opened its embassy in Dushanbe. Iran for Tajikistan is more than a neighbour, both these countries are linked with linguistic, historical, cultural and religious commonalities.

At present Iran takes the second place in terms of investments in Tajikistan's economy after China. In Tajikistan, Iran implements construction of hydropower plant 'Sangtuda-2', tunnel 'Istiqlol', finances projects for development of transport infrastructure, etc. Iran plans to take part in construction of a number of other hydropower plants and other economic sites. Iran actively supports Tajikistan in combating poverty.²⁸⁹

Assistance rendered by Iran to Central Asian states, in particular to Tajikistan is undoubtedly a positive moment. The EU supports investments of Iran in Tajikistan's economy.²⁹⁰

In general, relations between Iran and Central Asian states, in particular in economic sphere are steadily developing. Currently Iran has an observer status in SCO having applied for a full membership in 2008. In CA, Iran is considered as a state that may have a positive impact on establishment of stability and security in Afghanistan. Iran may become an important strategic partner in the cause of providing security in the region.²⁹¹

²⁸⁶ K. Syroezhkin, 'Central Asia between the Gravitational Poles of Russia and China', in B. Rumer (ed.), *Central Asia: a Gathering Storm?*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002

²⁸⁷ T. Pahlevan, 'Iran and Central Asia', in T. Atabaki and J. O'Kane (eds.), *Post-Soviet Central Asia*, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998

²⁸⁸ Hunter, op.cit.

²⁸⁹ F. Jani, 'Iran i Tsentral'naya Aziya: kratkiy obzor vzaimootnosheniy' (Iran and Central Asia: a Brief Review of Relationship), *Information Agency Fergana.Ru*, 11 April 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.fergana.ru>>

²⁹⁰ Interview with Marc Fumagalli, 19 March 2009

²⁹¹ Jani, op.cit.

In this connection, according to the experts it would be expedient for the EU to establish cooperation with Iran for implementation of objectives set in the Strategy, especially concerning the issues of stability and security in CA.²⁹²

5.5 Turkey

Turkey opened embassies in all five Central Asian republics, after they acquired independence. In the very beginning of its cooperation with newly independent states, Turkey launched an active cooperation initiative among the Turkic-speaking countries, including Turkey, the four Turkic Central Asian states, and Azerbaijan.²⁹³ Turkey's policy towards CA was influenced by a mild and mainly cultural form of pan-Turkism.²⁹⁴ But, Turkey did not succeed in its efforts of regional supremacy, so it was economy, rather than politics or social affairs that became the sole field of success for enthusiastic Turkish endeavours.²⁹⁵

Due to the efforts by the Turkish government and the Turkish private sector, Turkey's economic relations with Central Asian republics have significantly expanded.²⁹⁶

Turkish businessmen have invested in various construction projects in CA. Much was done in cultural and educational fields.²⁹⁷ Turkish cultural centres, schools and universities have been established in CA. Plenty of students from CA graduated from higher institutions of Turkey since the beginning of cooperation.

The present Turkish policy towards CA accentuates pragmatic approaches aiming at its own economic benefits and the Caspian energy resources are one of its main pillars.²⁹⁸

Construction of a pipeline through Turkey to Europe is essentially important for the country. While becoming the sole stable route for oil and gas transportation for the landlocked Central Asian countries, this pipeline would make Turkey the major energy outlet to Europe and provide the country with economic gains through transportation and service fees.

Turkey's presence in the region in the future may be even more efficient, as Turkey could build positive balanced relations based mainly on economic cooperation with all regional powers, including Russia, China, Iran, India, Pakistan, as well as with major international actors like the EU and the US, and this would, definitely, strengthen its position as an important trade partner and an alternative route for regional energy resources regarding CA.²⁹⁹

²⁹² Interview with Rashid Ghani Abdullo, 16 March 2009

²⁹³ Zh. Zardykhan, 'Turkey and Central Asia: From Fraternity to Partnership', in M. Esteban and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

²⁹⁴ Hunter, op.cit.

²⁹⁵ Zardykhan, op.cit.

²⁹⁶ Hunter, op.cit.

²⁹⁷ G. Winrow, 'Turkish Policy in Central Asia', in T. Atabaki and J. O'Kane (eds.), *Post-Soviet Central Asia*, New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1998

²⁹⁸ Zardykhan, op.cit.

²⁹⁹ *ibid.*

Taking into account that the main foreign policy objective of Turkey is to secure Turkey's full admission to the EU, Turkey may be considered as a reliable partner of the EU in the region.

5.6 Pakistan

Pakistan pays a great attention to the Central Asian countries, mainly for balancing its strategic confrontation with India.

Pakistan has both political and economic interests in CA. Through strengthening its position in the region Pakistan could not only enhance its status regarding regional competitors like Iran and Turkey, but also provide an additional trump card in its confrontation with India. Primary objective of Pakistan is to see that the transportation routes linking CA with South Asia and the open sea pass through its own territory.³⁰⁰

Pakistan has an observer-status in SCO. It has been lobbying for a full membership in the organisation.

Central Asian countries were primarily interested to develop economic cooperation with Pakistan. Taking this into consideration Pakistan has significantly improved its economic relations with the countries of the region.³⁰¹

New approaches used by Pakistan for developing its cooperation with Central Asian countries, based mostly on trade-economic relations, may definitely bring positive results, but most likely in a long-term prospective. For achieving this Pakistan needs to develop transport-communication links in the region. This will provide landlocked Central Asian countries with access to sea ports.³⁰²

As it was mentioned above, the US and some donor countries and organisations in the region are actively supporting the development of North-South trade corridor linking CA with South Asia.

5.7 India

The past Indian-Soviet cooperation allowed India and CA to build up a significant potential of good-neighbourly relations. After disintegration of the USSR, there was a power vacuum and many actors in the region rushed at filling it, including Pakistan. This became one of the factors of India's increased interest towards the region. It was an aspiration not to

³⁰⁰Syroezhkin, op.cit.

³⁰¹A. Priego, 'Pakistan mezhdru regional'nimi kompleksami bezopasnosti Tsentral'noy i Yuzhnoy Azii' (Pakistan Between Regional Security Complexes of Central and South Asia), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.6(60), 2008

³⁰²B.Narbaev, 'Islamskaya Respublika Pakistan v kontekste razvitiya geopoliticheskikh protsessov v Tsentral'noy Azii' (The Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the Context of Development of Geopolitical Processes in Central Asia), The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, 14 February 2006, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.kisi.kz/site>>

allow a unilateral expansion of Pakistan's influence on the region, also taking into account the continuing Chinese-Pakistani cooperation.

India has concluded agreements with Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on cooperation in combating terrorism providing for establishment of joint anti-terrorist groups, conducting joint military exercises and training military personnel of Central Asian states in India.³⁰³

There were continuous reports in Indian media about intentions of India to launch its airbase in Aini aerodrome located in Tajikistan, always being refuted by Tajik military officials.

India has an observer-status in SCO, but was not striving to become its full member.

Recently, development may be observed in cooperation between India and Central Asian countries in field of energy.

According to the experts, as the pace of political and economic cooperation development between India and CA demonstrates, it would be hard for Delhi to play a greater role in the region in the short-term prospective.³⁰⁴

5.8 Japan

Japan is scrutinised the last in the line of the most significant actors engaged in the region due to its comparative remoteness from CA and lesser degree of involvement, if to compare for instance with the US.

In spite of this, the role of Japan in rendering development assistance to Central Asian states is significant. Besides, Japan can be an important source of modernisation and development for Central Asian countries.

By 2006 Japan's Official Development Aid (ODA) to CA amounted to more than US\$2.5 billion. Assistance was rendered mainly on projects helping the transition to a market economy, the building of socio-economic infrastructure, investments in healthcare and education, environmental protection and many other areas. Japan contributed to the conflict-resolution process during the civil war in Tajikistan and provided assistance to the peace process afterwards.³⁰⁵

Japan has its diplomatic representations in all five Central Asian states.

CA has acquired its importance in Japanese foreign policy due to the two factors: its rich energy resources and the geostrategic location.

CA has become important as a significant additional source of energy, in particular oil and gas. Energy interests of Japan in CA are strategically important. Japan expects that Caspian

³⁰³ I. Komissina, 'Stanet li India polnopravnym uchastnikom 'Bol'shoy igry' v Tsentral'noy Azii?' (Will India Become a Full Participant of the 'Great Game' in Central Asia?), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, No.1(55), 2008, pp.68-80

³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

³⁰⁵ N. Kassenova, 'Japan's Hesitant Embrace of Central Asia: Will There Be a strategy?', in M. Esteban and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

oil will contribute, even if indirectly, to reduce the oil crisis in the market by injecting a new supply of oil and gas. Japan makes efforts to locate CA within the framework of supply and demand of oil in the world market and thus to get positive results indirectly from CA and the Caucasus. Japan does not expect to import oil and gas from CA due to the geographical remoteness, but it does not exclude the possibility of swapping oil in the Gulf with oil in the Caspian region under the favourable conditions.³⁰⁶

Beside oil and gas, Japan is interested in Central Asian uranium. Japan has negotiated cooperation with Uzbekistan in the uranium development sector. Kazakhstan, which holds about 19% of the world uranium reserves, is particularly important for Japan. Being one of the main producers of nuclear energy Japan plans to cover up to 40% of its uranium needs with imports from Kazakhstan.³⁰⁷

The increasing role and influence of SCO in the region, an organisation that mostly promotes China's interests in CA is a matter of concern for Japan and currently it is considering a proper policy regarding this organisation.

Japan is interested in developing the aforementioned North-South trade corridor from CA to Afghanistan and the seas of South Asia, considering it as one of the elements of bringing stability and progress to the region.

Japan intends to strengthen its cooperation with both the EU and NATO. Japan considers the EU as a natural ally and Eurasia is framed as an area of joint responsibility between them. Hence, it is appropriate to consider the possibility of a partnership between Japan and the EU in CA.³⁰⁸

Though their approaches and accents vary, both the EU and Japan have democratisation, promotion of the rule of law and human rights, market reforms, and fostering regional cooperation on their agenda, they both are main promoters of sustainable development, and they both support multilateralism and not isolationist approach in pursuing their policies.³⁰⁹

The EU and Japan can also counterbalance the influence of China and Russia in the region.

It should be mentioned that the EU and Japan have an institutional base for such a partnership in CA on the basis of bilateral relations and within the framework of OSCE. Since 2005 the EU and Japan have been holding regular Strategic Dialogues on CA. The EU and Japan cooperate within the framework of multilateral donors and donor coordination arrangements. Japan is an OSCE Partner for Cooperation in Asia.³¹⁰

For Central Asian republics both Japan and the EU are very attractive partners. Central Asian economies can definitely benefit from Japanese investments and technologies.

The EU and Japan, especially if they cooperate and combine their efforts, can become valuable sources of modernisation and progress in CA.³¹¹

³⁰⁶ M. Shimizu, 'Central Asia's Energy Resources: Japan's Energy Interests', in E. Van Wie Davis and R. Azizian (eds.), *Islam, Oil, and Geopolitics: Central Asia after September 11*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007

³⁰⁷ Kassenova, *Japan's Hesitant Embrace of Central Asia*, op.cit.

³⁰⁸ *ibid.*

³⁰⁹ *ibid.*

³¹⁰ *ibid.*

³¹¹ *ibid.*

In addition to the mentioned regional and international actors, *international organisations - UN agencies and International Financial Institutions - IFIs (e.g. the ADB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the International Monetary Fund, the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, etc.), international NGOs (e.g. the Aga Khan Development Network, the Open Society Institute, etc.), and industrialised countries such as Switzerland, etc.*, are also actively engaged in the region with the long-term goals. All of them are rendering development assistance to the countries of the region through their various projects, programmes and strategies, including in collaboration with each other and with other regional and international actors.

Prominent examples of their joint activities in the region are CAREC forum, preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs), their support of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), their joint country strategies, their collaborative projects and analytical efforts.³¹²

5.9 Summary

Analysis of the aforementioned makes it evident that for the successful implementation of its Strategy, the EU needs to establish and expand a constructive cooperation with all abovementioned states and organisations.

Rather than configuring its policies geopolitically, which would increase the competition for resources in CA and consequently destabilise the region, the EU should focus on cooperative approach accepting the interdependencies and seek for opportunities to involve the most important external actors in the region (especially Russia, China and Japan) in the political dialogue expanding it to governance issues.³¹³

All actors mentioned in this chapter, in particular Russia, China, the US and Japan are interested in stable, secure and peaceful CA.

At the same time these actors may have divergent understanding of security and divergent approaches for its guaranteeing in the region.

For example, neither China nor Russia is interested in the democratisation of the region. China and Russia position themselves as key security-providers for CA through organisations like CSTO and SCO. However, their narrow approach to security can make counterproductive their engagement in these issues.³¹⁴

China and Russia are strong advocates of *status quo* of authoritarian regimes in the region, while the US and especially the EU, consider that it is crucial to introduce reforms to guarantee medium and long-term stability. For China and Russia, a democratic CA might result in a stronger orientation towards the West and a distancing in relations with its closer neighbours. This prospect is not an attractive alternative for these states.

³¹² J. Linn, 'Central Asia-National Interests and Regional Prospects', *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, vol. 5, No.3 (2007), pp.5-12

³¹³ A. Schmitz, 'A Political Strategy for Central Asia', in V. Perthes and S. Mair (eds.), *European Foreign and Security Policy: Challenges and Opportunities for the German EU Presidency*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin, October 2006

³¹⁴ Kassenova, *A View from the Region*, op.cit.

In this connection, the EU should strive for including Russia and China into its comprehensive approach regarding providing security and progress in the region. The EU should convince Russia and China that its democratising approach may become the most effective mechanism to ensure the stability and development in CA.³¹⁵

Regarding the US, the EU should take into consideration the implications of the Greater Central Asia Partnership project encompassing beside five Central Asian republics Afghanistan and Pakistan as well.³¹⁶ Moreover, in its cooperation with the US, taking into consideration that the latter steadily continued pursuing its strategic interests in the region despite poor democratic and human rights record in Central Asian states,³¹⁷ the EU should not neglect its values in favour of interests.

Assessing and comparing the strategic approaches (goals and objectives) of the aforementioned actors engaged in CA and their attitudes towards certain concepts with theories of IR the following can be mentioned:

For example, regarding the issue of ‘goals’, combination of *neorealist* and *neoliberalist* approaches may be observed among almost all actors. This is manifested through their aspirations to protect their national interests, security, economic interests, etc. However, the role of providing international or regional security as one of the essential factors in achievement of their national security is not neglected. The only difference is that elements of *neorealism* or *neoliberalism* prevail in one actor to a greater or lesser extent than in others. As for instance the US that is inclined to see the world as a monopolar structure, has more elements of *neorealism* rather than *neoliberalism* in its policy in the region.

Elements of *constructivism* may also be observed in activities of these actors, when the issues of sovereignty, security and defence are being considered through lenses of culture in a broad meaning of this concept. They understand that international regimes, norms and rules, issues of economic interdependence (e.g. through cooperative approach regarding management of energy [hydrocarbon] resources) may regulate relations between the states. The most important is that these issues of interdependence should be solved on an equal footing.

Regarding the issue of ‘means’ the concerned actors from the theoretical point of view are more inclined to *neorealism* that considers power and alliances as means for influencing on international political processes for maintaining the power balance. SCO – one of the influential regional actors in CA may be considered as an example.

But interests cannot be solely constructed on economic benefits or provision of security. Interests that assume establishment of relations with the particular states demonstrate elements of *constructivism*. For example, this may be observed in case of cooperation between Iran and Tajikistan, where the issues of identity (linguistic, cultural commonalities) play their role. The same could be said in case of Turkey in the very beginning of its cooperation with Central Asian states (its emphasis to have a closer cooperation with Turkic states of the region), but which later chose a pragmatic approach in dealing with the countries of the region.

³¹⁵ De Pedro, op.cit.

³¹⁶ *ibid.*

³¹⁷ Marat, op.cit.

In conclusion, it should be mentioned that whatever theoretical backgrounds would steer the continuing cooperation between the mentioned actors and Central Asian countries, the most important is that the activity of these actors in interaction with the EU could bring stability and prosperity to the region and improvement of living standards of over 60 million people residing there. As it is known, this is the main goal of the EU's Strategy for Central Asian countries.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

Almost two years have passed since adoption of the new EU's policy document 'European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership'. The Joint Progress Report on the implementation of the Strategy was published in June 2008.

The report emphasises that the progress is going on at a proper level. Analysing the implementation process of the priority objectives of the new stage of cooperation between the EU and CA and assessing the activities conducted within the implementation of the Strategy after the report's publication, it is possible to say that definitely a positive development may be observed regarding many issues of bilateral and some issues of regional cooperation. But, at the same time the analysis shows that there is little or no success in some issues of primary importance, in particular concerning regional cooperation.

In this chapter, the Strategy's priorities with indication of their progress, problems and their possible solution, and prospects of their implementation are elucidated. In the end, recommendations for increasing effectiveness of cooperation between the EU and Central Asian states are presented and the EU's policy is interpreted from perspective of the theories of IR.

6.1 In the Light of the Strategy's Priorities: Progress, Problems and Solution, Prospects

Human Rights, Rule of Law, Good Governance and Democratisation

There is a close interdependency and interconnectedness between issues of human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation and socio-economic development, security and stability. Emphasis on these issues and positive reforms will definitely contribute to development of countries of the region. Certainly, the Strategy will not crucially change socio-political and economic indices in the countries of the region, but it may become a positive impetus for achieving visible results in the aforementioned spheres. In particular, regarding the issues of rule of law, human rights, youth and education the EU may serve as a good model³¹⁸ in case if it does not neglect its values in favour of interests.

The Swedish EU Presidency in the second half of 2009 will likely focus more on the human rights situation, poverty alleviation and democratisation processes in CA.³¹⁹

Promotion of Economic Development, Trade and Investment

The EU renders assistance to Central Asian countries for their accession to WTO and implementation of economic reforms in their respective countries. However, according to the

³¹⁸Interview conducted by the author with Parviz Mullojonov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Democratic Processes, Tajikistan, independent political expert, 17 March 2009

³¹⁹Interview conducted by the author with Dr. Erica Marat, Ph.D., Research Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, Washington D.C. Office, 15 April 2009

experts, currently only Kazakhstan meets the criteria for joining this organisation taking into consideration the level of its economic and industrial development. But Kazakhstan itself postpones its accession.

Membership in WTO, if implemented correctly will likely contribute to growth in the Central Asian economies.³²⁰

In the long-term prospective accession to WTO can contribute to development of Central Asian republics. It is a good incentive for carrying out the relevant reforms in the countries and enhancing regional trade among them. There are still certain obstacles for implementation of reforms such as: bureaucracy, corruption, inefficient customs system, etc.³²¹

Accession to WTO is not beneficial for countries with underdeveloped economies and industries. Opening their borders for foreign production, the developing countries will not be able to develop their own industries.³²² Accession to WTO will be important for Tajikistan's accession to the world economy, but this accession must be a gradual process taking into consideration opportunities and specifications of the country's economy. The EU's assistance and experience will be important for developing competitiveness of Tajik economy.³²³

Speaking about the investments of the EU MS, it should be mentioned that mostly they go to raw material sectors of the economies of the countries of the region. For instance, about 50% of investments in Kazakhstan are 'functioning' in the oil-and-gas sector and metallurgy industry, which may lead to transforming the country to a mere raw material supplier. The same is observed in other countries of the region.

Regarding the issue of development of trade between the EU and Central Asian countries, in spite of the recent progress, the process cannot proceed due to the restrictive measures taken by the EU MS for protecting their internal markets. Absence of a unified strategy of the trade and investments diversification between the EU MS and Central Asian countries impedes development of effective cooperation between the EU and CA.³²⁴

Protectionism in the European countries regarding the issues of import from CA, in particular of agricultural products on one hand, and abundance of their own domestic products in the European markets on the other hand are hindering development of trade between the regions.³²⁵

In this regard, in order to assist in achievement of a tangible economic progress in the region, the EU should take measures for promoting economic diversification in CA and assist to countries of the region in overcoming the problem of being a mere resource supplier. At the same time, it is of crucial importance to enhance regional cooperation, in particular in areas of

³²⁰Interview conducted by the author with Henrik Norberg, Desk Officer, Department for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden, 21 April 2009

³²¹Interview conducted by the author with Marc Fumagalli, Political and Economic Officer, Delegation of the European Commission to Tajikistan, 19 March 2009

³²²Interview with Parviz Mullojonov, 17 March 2009

³²³Interview conducted by the author with Abdughani Mamadazimov, Ph.D., Chairman of the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan, 30 March 2009

³²⁴G. Rahmatullina, 'Sotrudnichestvo gosudarstv Tsentral'noy Azii s mezhdunarodnym donorskim soobshchestvom i Evrosoyuzom: osnovnye problemy i perspektivy' (Cooperation of the Central Asian States With International Donor Community and the EU: Main Problems and Prospects), The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, 03 February 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, < <http://www.kisi.kz/site/> >

³²⁵L. Ormonbekova and Zh. Ormonbekov, 'Strategiya Evropeiskogo Soyuza dlya Tsentral'noy Azii: pro et contra' (The EU's Strategy for Central Asia: pro et contra), *PRAVO.tazar.kg*, 25 September 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, < <http://www.tazar.kg/analitica.org> >

trade and economy, but this does not depend solely on the EU's aspiration but willingness of the countries of the region as well.

Environmental Sustainability and Water

Promotion of cooperation on water management is highlighted in the Strategy as a key factor for stability and prosperity in CA. It is indicated in the Joint Progress report that the EU demonstrated its readiness to study impact of the planned construction of hydropower plants in upstream and downstream countries of the region on the objective grounds for promoting cooperation between the Central Asian countries.

However, no concrete measures were taken in this regard for the last year. Undoubtedly, delaying this important issue and not taking preventive measures in this regard aggravates the situation and increases the conflict potential in the region.

Hydro-energy problem of the region (first of all regarding construction of the large hydropower plants, in particular Roghun in Tajikistan) has been critically shaped once again in April 2009, during the Almaty Summit of heads of states founders of International Fund of Saving Aral Sea.³²⁶

Annually CA loses US\$ 1.75 billion due to the inefficient water management.³²⁷ While the main flows of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya rivers originate in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan respectively (the main part of water resources of the region is formed in Tajikistan-45.6% and Kyrgyzstan-27.2%)³²⁸, there are significant water losses in their downstream area during irrigation. The reason is the existent archaic land management system. According to the specialists by applying modern agricultural technologies and rational water use it is possible to save half of flow of these transboundary rivers annually.³²⁹

Experts are skeptical about the prospects of regional integration in a short or even middle-term prospective,³³⁰ in particular regarding water management and hydro-energy (creation of unified water and energy networks) due to the excessive ambitiousness of this project being at the same time chimerical.³³¹

Tajikistan is an active supporter of regional cooperation and integrated water management and generation, and is always putting forward positive initiatives regarding these issues. The country's foremost concern is to develop its hydro-energy resources. The EU could become a reliable partner in realisation of Tajikistan's plans in this regard.³³² According to the experts the EU could render a technical assistance to Tajikistan, first of all in development of micro

³²⁶ "Sosedni 'razley voda'" (Neighbours Torn Apart), *ASIA-Plus*, No.17, 29 April 2009

³²⁷ J. Linn et al., *Central Asia Human Development Report Bringing down barriers: Regional cooperation for human development and human security*, UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, 2005, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://europeandcis.undp.org/poverty/show/301A44C5-F203-1EE9-B2E001AFF98B054B>>

³²⁸ T. Diykanbaeva in *Sovremennoe sostoyaniye i perspektivy ispol'zovaniya vodnykh resursov v Tsentral'noy Azii, analiticheskiy doklad* (Present State of Affairs and Prospects of Water Resources Use in Central Asia, Analytical Report), 2008, Asia Strategy: Foundation for Strategic Studies of the Central Asian Region, retrieved 24 May 2009, <http://www.asiastrategy.ru/?press&press_id=5&PHPSESSID=f5da72f00d421c981680781da6cacf32>

³²⁹ K. Kirsanov and D. Kim, 'Tsentral'naya Aziya: bitva za vodu 2007' (Central Asia: Struggle for Water 2007), *Eurasia Heritage Foundation*, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.fundeh.org/publications/articles/68/>>

³³⁰ Interview with Dr. Erica Marat, 15 April 2009

³³¹ Interviews with Parviz Mullojonov and Rashid Ghani Abdullo, political experts from Tajikistan, March 2009

³³² Interview with Abdughani Mamadazimov, 30 March 2009

and alternative energy supply sources. They are skeptical that the EU could invest in macro-energy projects in CA, in particular in Tajikistan.³³³

Divergences between the upstream (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and downstream (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) countries are becoming more evident. According to the experts one of the solutions of this problem might be application of the experience of joint use of the Rhine water flow between the European states in relation to CA. This and other examples of successful joint use of transboundary rivers in Europe might serve as good models for joint use of these rivers in CA. But this requires a political will from the leadership of the countries of the region³³⁴ and certainly assistance from the international community, in particular the EU, taking into consideration its positive experience in dealing with issues of transboundary rivers on its own territory.

The EU is the only external actor in CA that strongly supports regional cooperation and integration among the countries of the region. The EU is confident that a strong and autonomous Central Asian region forms part of its own strategic interest.³³⁵

Strengthening Energy and Transport Links

Trans-Caspian and Nabucco Gas Pipeline Projects

No much progress is observed regarding this important issue either. This is the issue of diversification of energy supply routes from CA to Europe. And first of all this concerns the issue of construction of Trans-Caspian and Nabucco gas pipelines.

Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan did not sign a declaration on construction of new gas pipelines bypassing Russia in the course of the EU Southern Corridor 'New Silk Road' Summit held in May 2009 in Prague. The issue of sources of filling the main alternative route –Nabucco, remains unresolved. According to the experts the main reason of this state of affairs are political agreements between Turkmenistan and Russia.

Not long before the adoption of the Strategy, Russia preventively concluded agreement between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on construction of the Caspian pipeline with capacity of 30 bcm and modernisation and expansion of other pipelines in the territory of CA.³³⁶ Russia further continued lobbying its energy (gas) projects in Europe. As a result, Italy, following Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia joined the Russian gas pipeline project 'South Stream'. Moreover, Russia is already discussing issues of construction of the pipeline 'Blue Stream2' from Russia to Turkey.³³⁷

The abovementioned facts indicate that concerning issues of foreign policy, including its

³³³ Interview with Parviz Mullojonov, 17 March 2009

³³⁴ Interview with Abdughani Mamadazimov, 30 March 2009

³³⁵ N. de Pedro, 'The EU in Central Asia: Incentives and Constraints for Greater Engagement', in M. Esteban and N. de Pedro (eds.), *Great Powers and Regional Integration in Central Asia: a local perspective*, Madrid: Exlibris Ediciones S.L., 2009, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.falternativas.org/la-fundacion/documentos/libros-e-informes/great-powers-and-regional-integration-in-central-asia-a-local-perspective>>

³³⁶ E. Madinov, 'Sovremennaya 'bitva titanov', ili priroda energeticheskoy geopolitiki v Tsentral'noy Azii' (The Contemporary 'Fight of Titans', or Character of the Energy Geopolitics in Central Asia), *Tsentral'naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and Caucasus)*, 2007, No.6(54), pp. 77-88

³³⁷ 'Putin i Berlusconi pereigrali SSHA' (Putin and Berlusconi Overplayed the US), *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 20-26 May, 2009

economic component, the EU and its MS are facing problems of a structural character. The EU could become an independent player if it represented a unified organism.

*'The EU has its own internal constraints that pose difficulties for any attempts to define a clear and unified agenda. A clear example is the place that Central Asia holds in the different foreign policies of the various Member States which has resulted in an inconsistency of action as a consequence of the EU's six-month presidency cycle. This lack of a unified action is coupled with a lack of specific mechanisms and policies to achieve the strategy's goals.'*³³⁸

Many experts agree that the strong influence of Russia in CA is one of the reasons constraining cooperation between the EU and Central Asian countries, including issue of construction of alternative gas pipelines.³³⁹

Nabucco project is almost the only issue related to cooperation between the EU and CA raising concerns of Russia.³⁴⁰ The EU should take this into consideration and establish a constructive dialogue with Russia, in particular regarding energy issues.

TRASECA

Due to presence of many states participating in this project and pursuing their own interests sometimes contradicting to the interests of this transport corridor, the project is very vulnerable. Besides, a project of highway from China to Europe through Kazakhstan and Russia may become a real alternative to this project.³⁴¹

TRASECA could be revived with a serious political commitment and serious financial resources.³⁴² There are relatively small prospects for TRASECA due to administrative, customs and border problems, and bureaucratic systems of the countries-participants of this project.³⁴³ But formation of a new transport infrastructure would undoubtedly positively affect the economies of the region.³⁴⁴

Combating Common Threats and Challenges

Practical implementation of the Strategy in the context of the regional cooperation is successfully carried out through BOMCA and CADAP programmes aimed at combating

³³⁸ De Pedro, op.cit.

³³⁹ Interviews with experts Hakim Abdulloh Rahnomo, Rashid Ghani Abdullo, Erica Marat, Parviz Mullojonov, March-April 2009

³⁴⁰ Interview with Dr. Erica Marat, 15 April 2009

³⁴¹ A. Asrorov, 'Tsentral'no-aziatiskiy pas'yans [Chto daet Tsentral'noy Azii strategiya Evrosoyuz] (Central Asian Patience, What Does the EU's Strategy Give to Central Asia), *Analitika, Central Asia*, 17 July 2007, retrieved 24 May 2009, <<http://www.easttime.ru/analitic/1/68.html>>

³⁴² S. Cornell et al., *The Wider Black Sea Region: an emerging Hub in European Security, Silk Road Paper*, December 2006, Sweden: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Silk Road Studies Program

³⁴³ Interviews with Marc Fumagalli, Political and Economic Officer, Delegation of the European Commission to Tajikistan, and Parviz Mullojonov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Democratic Processes, Tajikistan, independent political expert, March 2009

³⁴⁴ Interview with Abdughani Mamadazimov, 30 March 2009

common threats and challenges. According to the prognoses by experts, there are good prospects for cooperation in security issues within the Strategy.³⁴⁵

The EU MS may positively affect the solution of some issues related to security and drug trafficking. The efforts concerning other areas might be hindered by a number of unfavourable conditions and factors present in the region such as corruption, unpreparedness and unwillingness of the local regimes for introducing actual reforms, counteraction of geopolitical actors in the region, etc.³⁴⁶

Investing in the Future: Youth and Education

Definitely, the EU's determination to assist in raising the quality of education and supporting this field in CA is more than welcomed in the countries of the region. Taking into consideration the young age of the majority of the Central Asian population the EU's Initiative in this field is rather expedient. Exchanges of scholars, teachers and students will bring these two regions closer and contribute to Central Asia's development. In this connection, promotion of learning of European languages in the countries of the region could open up new opportunities for Central Asian population and allow them not to be solely oriented towards Russia, which is also conditioned by the linguistic factor.

Building Bridges: Inter-Cultural Dialogue

Inter-cultural dialogue is very important for intensification of cooperation between the two actors. Inter-cultural dialogues could provide its participants with an opportunity to learn from each other lessons of tolerance, open-mindedness, mutual respect towards and understanding of different cultures and religions. Definitely, presence of these qualities guarantees peace, prosperity and progress for nations possessing them.

As it is fairly mentioned in the Strategy, Central Asian region being a region with centuries-old traditions and history was always known as a region where peacefully coexisted peoples of different creeds and ethnicities. It is the region with centuries-old traditions of multiculturalism, one of the topical and the most discussed issues in contemporary Europe.

In this connection, it would be highly beneficial for the both actors to expand inter-cultural dialogue and exchanges.

Bilateral Cooperation Between the EU MS and Central Asian States

Cooperation between the EU MS and Central Asian countries is one of the positive and successfully implemented elements of the Strategy. But, mostly it concerns bilateral relations. Regional cooperation remains without any progress due to the factors mentioned above.

³⁴⁵Interviews with Dr. Erica Marat, Ph.D., Research Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, Washington D.C. Office, and Parviz Mullojonov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Democratic Processes, Tajikistan, independent political expert, March-April 2009

³⁴⁶Interview with Parviz Mullojonov, 17 March 2009

Prospects of Further Cooperation

In spite of the factors impeding development of cooperation, in particular such as the EU's internal constraints and lack of a unified agenda towards CA, existence of a number of problems in the Central Asian region, and in spite of the criticism the Strategy has received, in general, experts agree that mutual relations between the EU and Central Asian countries are steadily developing and will be further strengthened.

Since adoption of the Strategy in 2007, the prospects of cooperation are quite good. The relations are likely to develop positively in case if all partners adhere to their respective commitments.³⁴⁷

6.2 Recommendations

1. The two-level character of the EU's policy (*bilateral and regional approaches*) emphasised in the Strategy is a constructive element. However, proportion of distribution of the allocated resources, approximately 4 to 1 (bilateral and regional approaches respectively) in the author's opinion is initially insufficient for the fruitful solution of a number of burning problems in the region. Experts also pointed out insufficiency of the allocated financial resources as a whole (€750 million, according to the EC 2007-2013 Regional Assistance Strategy for CA).
Taking into consideration the significance of cooperation among Central Asian states in such areas as combating common threats and challenges, energy, environmental pollution, water management, migration, border management, development of transport infrastructure, etc., it is expedient to pay more attention to funding of these important issues of *regional interaction*.
2. Taking into consideration the significant development of *migration processes in CA*, which are one of the challenges to the contemporary world, it is expedient that the EU extends and increases its assistance to the countries of the region in a positive solution of many issues related to this problem.
3. *Within implementation of the 'strengthening energy and transport links' priority*, taking into consideration the role of Russia in the region, it is expedient that the EU establishes a constructive dialogue with this country, in particular for solution of issues concerning hydrocarbons transportation from CA.
4. *Within implementation of the 'environmental sustainability and water' priority* (issue of integrated water management [transboundary rivers] and closely related issue of development of hydro-energy sector in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), it is expedient that the EU renders assistance to CA in establishment of an International hydro-energy consortium and in its effective operation for supporting the region in positive solution of these issues. In this connection, the EU should closely cooperate with the UN, Russia, the US, China and other concerned states and organisations.

³⁴⁷ Interview with Henrik Norberg, 21 April 2009

5. *Within implementation of the 'promotion of economic development, trade and investment' priority*, in order to achieve progress in this issue, it is topical to carry out elaboration and adoption of a Common strategy of diversification of the economic, trade and investment ties between the EU and Central Asian states.
6. *Within implementation of the 'investing in the future: youth and education' priority*, along with the planned activities, it is recommended to promote learning of foreign/European languages, to assist in organisation of short-term courses of some highly demanded professions for unemployed youth, to assist in reforming education system in the region, in equipping schools, etc.
7. For promoting *inter-cultural dialogue*, it is expedient for the EU to engage with civil societies and representatives of academic field in the Central Asian states, expand and enhance academic exchanges between the two parties, and to raise awareness about the EU's policy, its projects and programmes, the Strategy and its implementation among general public and civil organisations.

6.3 Interpretation of the EU's Policy in Central Asia From Perspective of the Theories of International Relations and the Research Results

If an approach is applied when states are the source of morality, and when politicians are altruists motivated by justice and they are respecting norms, this approach will demolish all ruling concepts of the international system. There appears an opportunity to resolve the security dilemma, to construct the international politics in a new way and also to transform it.³⁴⁸

The EU as a bright example of an influential international actor (integration grouping), prioritises in its cooperation with Central Asian countries issues of security and stability, and afterwards economic development, social progress, moral and legal norms, which are mostly correspond to the concepts of *neoliberalism*.

Social predisposition of the EU's Strategy, commonality of interests and expectations between the EU and Central Asian countries are close to the concepts of *constructivism*. Altruistic approach towards a number of issues of cooperation, the two-level character of relations (bilateral and regional approaches) between the EU and Central Asian countries along with establishment of cooperation taking into consideration needs of these countries (particularly in bilateral relations) also make it evident.

Issues of national interests (interests of the EU MS) and security within the framework of cooperation with CA play a serious role in the foreign policy of the EU and its Member States. This is reflected in large investments by the EU MS or their plans to invest in raw material sector (oil, gas) of Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) aiming at the further diversification of hydrocarbons transit bypassing Russia and thus guaranteeing the EU Member States' energy security (the Strategy's pragmatism). On the other hand, these are practical activities of the certain EU MS to independently promote their

³⁴⁸ P. Vennesson, 'Les relations internationales dans la science politique aux États-Unis', *Politix*, No.41, 1998, pp.176-194

national interests regarding hydrocarbons supply routes by means of establishing cooperation with Russia that indicates the lack of unity within the EU. These activities of the EU and its Member States are close to the concepts of *neorealism*.

One of the elements of the abovementioned diversification of hydrocarbons supply routes from CA to Europe (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) also corresponds to the concept of *neorealism*. This element is negatively connected with the human rights issue in these countries. This material factor as a pragmatic feature of the EU's foreign policy comes into confrontation with idealistic objectives of promotion of democratisation in the countries of the region (according to *neoliberalism*) widely declared in the Strategy.

The results of analysis show that the EU's policy in the region is a complex policy encompassing elements of all three aforementioned theories of IR. Its complexity causing emergence of contradictions and sometimes lack of coordination among the actors has roots in diversity of the actors within the EU and accordingly the approaches they apply and interests they pursue. Experts emphasise the lack of unity and coherence between the EU MS within this powerful integration grouping on a number of cooperation issues, which might hinder intensification of cooperation between the EU and Central Asian states.

According to the results obtained during this research, experts from the region in general have a positive attitude towards the Strategy.

Undoubtedly intensification of the cooperation between the EU and Central Asian states after adoption of the Strategy is a positive step and its further progress will be mutually beneficial for the both parties. The Strategy has a significant importance for the countries of the region, and in particular for Tajikistan.

The Strategy provides the Central Asian states with opportunity to strengthen and further develop their cooperation with the EU, which may serve as a model in terms of initiating the process of the required and long-expected regional integration. Furthermore, the EU's intensified presence in CA may become a determining factor for modernisation and sustainable development in the region. Therefore, a harmonised constructive policy of the EU will definitely have a future in the Central Asian region.

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Annex I

List of the Interviewed Experts

Rashid Ghani Abdullo, political scientist, independent political expert from Tajikistan

Marc Fumagalli, Political and Economic Officer, Delegation of the European Commission to Tajikistan

Abdughani Mamadazimov, Ph.D., Chairman of the National Association of Political Scientists of Tajikistan

Dr. Erica Marat, Ph.D., Research Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program Joint Center, Washington D.C. Office

Parviz Mullojonov, Executive Director, Public Committee for Democratic Processes, Tajikistan, independent political expert

Henrik Norberg, Desk Officer, Department for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

Hakim Abdulloh Rahnamo, Ph.D., Leading Expert, the Strategic Research Centre at the President of the Republic of Tajikistan

Annex II

Interview Questions (collective)

1. What is your opinion regarding ‘European Union-Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’ (the Strategy)?
2. What factors conditioned adoption of the Strategy by the European Union (the EU) in 2007?
3. What priorities reflected in the Strategy are more important for the Central Asian states, in particular Tajikistan?
4. What results are expected to be obtained in the course of implementation of the Strategy for the both Parties?
5. What are the prospects of the planned regional integration for solution of issues of distribution (use) of water resources and energy issues in Central Asia within implementation of the Strategy?
6. The EU expressed its intention to assist to Central Asian countries non-members of WTO in joining this organisation. **How, in your opinion this can affect development of economies of these countries?**
7. **Is there a reciprocal national strategy for partnership with the EU or a corresponding governmental plan of actions on cooperation with the EU within the framework of the Strategy, worked out in the Central Asian states and in particular in Tajikistan?**
8. What are, in your opinion, prospects of implementation of the EU’s programme TRACECA?
9. What are, in your opinion, prospects of implementation of the Trans-Caspian and Nabucco gas pipeline projects?
10. At the moment a number of international and regional actors (certain states and organisations) are cooperating with the Central Asian states. **How this fact affects (positively or negatively) development of bilateral relations between the EU and Central Asian states?**
11. **With what states and organisations can the EU cooperate on priority basis for the effective solution of objectives set in the Strategy?**
12. **Are there nowadays any obstacles for the effective cooperation between the Central Asian states and the EU?**
13. **Which of the EU Member States are more interested in development of bilateral relations with the Central Asian states, in particular with Tajikistan?**
14. **In your opinion, what are the prospects of cooperation between the EU and Central Asia? How the relations will develop?**
15. **How will you assess and characterise bilateral relations between the EU and Tajikistan and what are the prospects of their further development?**

Annex III

Map of Central Asia

