

## 8. CENTRAL ASIAN VECTOR OF EUROPEAN DIPLOMACY

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### 8.1 The problem of the nuclear potential of the post-Soviet countries

Since the collapse of the USSR, the Republics of Central Asia have not been a separate aspect of the EU / EU foreign policy in the initial stage of forming relations with the new independent states. Russia and its socio-economic and political development was of particular importance for Europe at that time. According to the EU, Moscow was considered the guarantor of security in the former Soviet republics. Based on a study conducted by the European Commission of the economic situation in the USSR and the course of economic reform, the European Council identified five sectors within which technical assistance was carried out: management training for the public and private sectors, financial services, energy, transport and food distribution.

*Figure 5*



*In the early 90s of the XX-th century Central Asia was associated with five former Soviet republics.*

The documents of the EEC, then the EU regarding the newly independent countries clearly state the support of these countries to strengthen their independence. In this regard, at the Rome meeting, the European Council decided to finance emergency aid with food and medicine, technical assistance to reforms in the former Soviet republics. In monetary terms, the amount of aid was very significant - 353 million ECU in the form of loan guarantees and loans for the purchase of food and medicine. This decision testified that the member states of the European Community supported changes and reforms in the USSR, moreover, this made it possible to assert the beginning of the formation of a common Community strategy in the eastern direction.

At the beginning of October 1992, the general approach to the CIS countries was finally approved by the Council. It was decided to include all new republics in international governmental institutions, including the European CSCE, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, the European Bank for Development and Reconstruction (EBRD), the European Energy Charter.

The collapse of the USSR gave rise to a huge number of political, ethnic, economic, military and other various problems. The West was most worried about the security problem, among which, foremost, was the problem of the nuclear heritage of the post-Soviet republics. The European Union, in general, the West, saw the threat from four sources: strategic weapons, tactical nuclear weapons, the danger of the transfer of Soviet nuclear scientists to the service of dictators of the third world, control over fissile materials. In those years, the nuclear issue occupied a large part of the publications of experts in the European press on the situation in the CIS countries and was the main topic of the initial negotiations between the leaders of Western European countries and post-Soviet states.

The general position of the European Community on nuclear non-proliferation was clarified in the declaration of December 31, 1991. Then the countries of the European Economic Community (EEC) stated that: «All the republics participating together with Russia in the Commonwealth of Independent States on whose territory nuclear weapons were placed will join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as states that do not possess nuclear weapons». Thus, clear political support was provided to the joint efforts of Washington, which recognized "special responsibility" among the Western countries in the nuclear sphere, and Moscow, which was considered the most important factor of world and regional security, to remove nuclear weapons from the territory of the republics to Russia and to secure latest status of the only nuclear successor of the USSR. The priority of the topic of control over the Soviet nuclear complex predetermined the initial increased interest of the Community to the three former Soviet republics: Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, including Russia, on whose territory by December 1991 were located not only tactical, but also strategic nuclear weapons.

The intensification of socio-political instability in the republics after the collapse of the USSR accelerated the elaboration of a western strategy in this area and it was adopted in July 1992 at the summit of the G-7 countries chaired by Germany in Munich. The strategy included a set of "urgent measures" covering the

issues of “improving operational safety”, “short-term technical improvements” of a nuclear power plant (NPP), “strengthening regulatory regimes” and a long-term program aimed at “replacing less secure stations through the development of alternative energy sources and more efficient use of energy and modernization of stations built on more modern projects.

Kazakhstan inherited a rich military nuclear past, in addition, being legally a nuclear-free power, it actually owned the nuclear-fuel cycle enterprises, three research and one industrial nuclear reactor, uranium mines and the Eastern region where nuclear tests were conducted. All of these objects could become potentially dangerous sources of unauthorized use of dual-use materials.

The main task was the transportation of nuclear arsenal in accordance with the initiatives of September-October 1991, in the spring of 1992, withdrawal of tactical warheads from Ukraine and Kazakhstan, and further withdrawal of warheads of strategic carriers from three countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine). In the field of nuclear non-proliferation, the objectives were to maintain the current control of armaments by "responsible and reliable governments" and the export of all nuclear weapons to Russia from the territory of other republics; the accession of the latter to the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear states and the implementation of the 1991 American-Soviet Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms; prevent the leakage of nuclear technologies, materials and specialists. In the field of peaceful use of atomic energy, in the short term, goals were set to improve the operational and technical safety of existing nuclear reactors, facilities for processing nuclear fuel and waste, to strengthen regulatory bodies, in the medium and long term to improve the design performance of new nuclear power plants.

British Prime Minister M. Thatcher during her short-term visit to the Kazakh SSR at the end of 1990 expressed her concern about the fate of the country's nuclear potential. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas insisted that Kazakhstan should abandon nuclear weapons. On May 23, 1992, in Lisbon, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and the US Secretary of State signed a protocol to the Soviet-American Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, specifying the responsibilities of the parties. In the Lisbon Protocol, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine committed themselves to acceding “as soon as possible to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear-weapon States Parties”. On December 13, 1993, the Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan voted to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. On December 5, 1994, at the OSCE summit in Budapest, the heads of Russia, the United States and Great Britain signed a Memorandum on security assurances to the countries that signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This Memorandum meant the recognition by the international community of Kazakhstan’s fulfillment of its obligations to export nuclear weapons. Later, Kazakhstan received security guarantees from France and China. These international obligations of the leading powers, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, guaranteed the security and territorial integrity of

Kazakhstan. In 1994, Kazakhstan became a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). By May 1995, nuclear weapons had been removed from the territory of Kazakhstan, and rocket launchers had been eliminated. Within the framework of the IAEA, a plan was implemented to provide technical assistance to Kazakhstan in the control and accounting of nuclear materials, the use of nuclear power plants, and the organization of the state system for the physical protection of nuclear materials. The plan participants were the United Kingdom, USA, Sweden and Japan.

## **8.2 The initial contours of the EU Central Asian policy**

The security interests defined the main objectives of the European Union policy in the CIS countries and in Kazakhstan in the initial period. In this direction, Europe pursued a coordinated policy towards new states, including the countries of the Central Asian Region. The republics of the region were the source of the spread of "unconventional risks" for European security in the context of expansion to the East. At the same time, the European community understood that Central Asia is an unstable enclave in connection with drug trafficking and other threats. Trafficking of narcotic substances from Afghanistan and Pakistan passed through the region and thus it is involved in international criminal activities in the production of hashish, opium and heroin, which are sent to various regions of the world. The trend of the 1990s to an increase in flows, it was associated with a weakening of border controls and with the expansion of drug production in Afghanistan, which in the context of the civil war became the main source of income for the opposing factions.

One of the significant challenges to the security of the EU from the countries of the former USSR, in particular from Central Asia, was the potential threat of facing a huge flow of emigration from the new independent states to Europe. In the early 1990s, this opportunity was widely discussed in the European press and scientific literature. European researchers identified other transnational risks in the Central Asian region, such as illegal arms trafficking and organized crime, environmental degradation. Drug trafficking, terrorist activities, mass migration, in their opinion, had a negative impact on the social structure of states (caused damage to the economy and impeded the successful implementation of reforms, contributed to the growth of social tensions), and generally destabilized the regional and international situation and thereby threatened comprehensive security. In these conditions the EU saw the solution in strengthening the institutional and legal system of the Central Asian states and their armed forces in accordance with Western models. Economic modernization in these countries, the development of regional cooperation would open the way to the elimination of terrorism, reducing drug trafficking, migration flows and achieving general stabilization in the region.

At the turn of 1993-1994 the European Union had revised its policy on Central Asia, which was determined by newly formed factors. If at the beginning of the 1990s Russia was perceived as a guarantor of security in Central Asia, now the Kremlin's policy of strengthening its influence in the "near abroad" using political, military and economic instruments had been perceived as threatening

European strategic interests. The West responded to this challenge by more intensive assistance to new independent states to strengthen their sovereignty and greater involvement in the system of international relations. The war in Chechnya in 1994-1996, which caused Russia's military and political weakness, the expansion of NATO to the East in 1994 was painfully perceived by Moscow and worsened its strategic position. The introduction of a single European currency in 1999 and the inclusion of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the European Union meant the emergence in the world of a new geopolitical reality - a united Europe, which could seriously change the strategic balance on the planet in the long term.

Unlike the United States and NATO, the European Union welcomed the spread of European institutions to the East: strengthening the role of the OSCE as a security system for Europe and the Asian part of the CIS, creating a single European energy system to the Urals and the Caspian Sea, and gradually connecting the CIS to various European institutions.

After gaining sovereignty by the countries of Central Asia, a comprehensive assessment of the economic potential of the countries of the region, the role that it could play in ensuring the economic interests of the EU countries became urgent. Only joint exploitation of natural resources was initially considered promising in the field of economic interaction. Using the raw material potential of the region from the point of view of the interests of European states meant not only ensuring their free and uninterrupted access to the European market, but also investing, supplying equipment and providing services by European companies during the extraction and transportation of resources. For the EU it was important to expand the range of global suppliers of non-ferrous metals. (Metallurgy mainly from Kazakhstan, cotton mainly from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, gold from all republics, except Turkmenistan, uranium from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan).

The EU began to explore oil reserves in the CARs and to penetrate the sphere of hydrocarbon production. All major European companies during 1992–1993 managed to get a place in promising resource extraction projects in Kazakhstan. A number of companies have shown interest in investing in the oil and gas industry of Turkmenistan. The governments of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan concluded the first major construction contracts with Europeans aimed at upgrading transport and other types of infrastructure. The penetration of Western oil and gas transnational companies (TNC) into the countries of Central Asia created favorable conditions for increasing the export potential of states and, accordingly, diversifying energy imports by the countries of the European Union. As the Caspian states explored deposits in the political circles of the EU, confidence in the future transformation of Central Asian countries into "major suppliers" of gas to the European Union and the need to promote the development of export infrastructure in the western direction prevailed. Thus, the policy of the European Union in the Central Asian region should be viewed as a complex set of relations between member states, between European institutions, as well as the result of the search for a balance between one's own line and the desire to take into account Russia's interests. Security issues, energy interests and the value

component determined the policy of the European Union regarding the countries of Central Asia.

### **8.3 Formation of the political and legal framework**

As early as 1994 the European Commission began work on documents that in May-June 1995 were submitted to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe. For the EU it remained important to formulate a strategy towards Central Asia. This is confirmed by the fact that the document entitled "Relations with the Republics of Central Asia - the Strategy of the European Union" was adopted. The document contained a proposal to develop a "common European position" regarding the region. Motivating its proposal "the geopolitical importance of the regions for the European Union, which has interests in the energy sector here," the Commission recommended working options for a "common position". In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that in both working versions of the "common position" there was an identical formulation: "to support a fair solution of issues related to access and transit for the purpose of exporting energy carriers". At the same time, as emphasized, the "common position" did not exclude a bilateral format of relations.

As the main tool, it was proposed to use the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which the Council had been working on since 1992. Despite the recognition of the "key strategic position of the region and its enormous energy potential", there was no formulation about strengthening of the political presence in Central Asia. All political influence, aimed primarily at stabilizing and democratizing the region, was proposed to be implemented by supporting the initiatives of the United Nations and the OSCE in the area of conflict settlement; the use of national influence in the framework of the NATO "Partnership for Peace Program"; discussing regional issues in the framework of the Transatlantic Dialogue.

About three years after the joining of the Central Asian states the CSCE / OSCE by the mid-1990s the European Union and the countries of the region have begun to form the legal basis of their relations. This was reflected in the signing between the EU and each of the Central Asian countries of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). Subsequently, the national components of the TACIS program in each of the countries of the region began to be based on the principles of the PCA. At the same time, the republics of the region also sought to attract Western investments for the development of energy resources and the formation of new industries, the creation of joint stock companies (AO) and joint ventures (JV) in the region.

At the initial stage, EU contacts with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan developed intensively. In turn, the republics also put a lot of effort into building relations with the European Union. Representatives of the European Commission, who worked in the Central Asian countries before the official opening of their office, carefully monitored the current situation in the political and economic spheres. Their positive assessment allowed the EU to sign the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995. However, the political conditions that the European Union put forward for the elaboration of Partnership

and Cooperation Agreements with Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan were fulfilled later. Prior to the entry into force of the PCA, the legal basis of the EU's relations with each of the Central Asian countries formed the so-called Temporary Trade Agreement, which by its content was more related to the economic sphere, if to be more correct, only to its trade segment. At the conclusion of the PCA, the Central Asian states agreed to the adoption of conditions that implied the solution of such tasks as building a rule-of-law state, developing political freedoms, and establishing a market economy. In the period 1994-1996 the European Union concluded the PCA with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. In 1998 the PCA was signed (initialed) with Turkmenistan. The PCA was concluded with Tajikistan only in 2004. The agreements with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan entered into force in 1999 after ratification by the European Parliament. The PCA with Tajikistan entered into force in 2010, and the Agreement with Turkmenistan has not yet entered into force.

Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) has created an institutional, political and legal framework for the countries of Central Asia to facilitate all forms of bilateral cooperation with EU countries. A political dialogue was established that contributed to the creation of an open trade and investment regime between its parties, assisted the countries of Central Asia in their transition to international standards in economics, public administration, and also provided for cooperation in various fields from transport to education and from energy to combating illegal activities. At the same time, there are no fundamental differences between the ATP concluded with individual countries of Central Asia. These agreements, in fact, were standard framework documents defining general principles, objectives and partnership mechanisms.

In the opinion of the British scientist S. Rhodes, the conclusion of the PCA provided the EU with a strategy and instrumental base, in accordance with which it was possible to develop relations with the countries of the CAR. This had a significant impact on the EU's policy towards the region, creating the legal framework necessary for cooperation. Obviously, despite the mixed nature of the Agreements, their implementation and practical areas of cooperation with the states of the region were within the competence of the Union, and not of the Member States. In order to complete the negotiations on the Agreements, the Commission received more and more powers, with which the EU member states gave it the opportunity to act as the "diplomatic representative" of the EU.

As it has already been noted the decisive areas of cooperation of the Parties, according to the Agreements, were the economy and the promotion of democratization in the states in Central Asia. Political contacts envisaged the desire of the Parties to dialogue respect for the principles of democracy, protection of human rights and their observance in accordance with European standards.

Facilitating the establishment of democratic institutions and a market economy as a long-term factor in strengthening domestic political and regional stability and creating a favorable business climate has retained a fundamental role in the list of goals of the European Union in the region. On the issue of energy transit, the thesis on "ensuring fair conditions" meant overcoming the pipeline

monopoly of Moscow, diversifying supplies from the countries of the region to the European market and making a choice of specific directions of pipelines based on the principle of economic expediency. This approach was supposed to guarantee both the economic and strategic interests of the EU, helping to strengthen the economic and political foundations of the independence of the producing countries and reduce the conflict potential that has developed around the Caspian resources.

With the general course of the European Union to strengthen ties with the countries of the region, building up cooperation with Uzbekistan was seen as a paramount necessity. The significance of Tashkent in the regional policy of the European Union was determined by its anti-Russian foreign policy at the initial period, its strategic location in the region, the successful struggle against extremist forces inside the country and relative economic stability.

According to Kazakhstan researcher K. Baizakova: “The energy interests of the European Union were at the heart of forcing the existing relations with Kazakhstan. The incipient rapprochement with Turkmenistan was also determined by the interest of the European Union in access to local energy resources. Ashgabat’s potential as an oil and gas supplier was rated as “important enough” for the penetration of European business and for the development of ties with the European Union. In favor of the dialogue with Turkmenistan, its non-participation in the integration schemes built by Moscow in the post-Soviet space came out”.

Kyrgyzstan remained in the zone of EU interests in promoting political, economic and social reforms in the countries of the region. At the same time, the European Union, despite the unstable internal political situation in Tajikistan at that time, sought to cooperate with official Dushanbe.

Thus, the strategy of the European Union in Central Asia was based on the achievement of tactical political goals: stabilization of the post-Soviet space, the provision of emergency economic assistance, the promotion of pluralism, democracy and market relations. These goals were achieved both through direct economic assistance and through political pressure through international and European organizations and institutions (OSCE, Council of Europe, European Parliament, European Commission, UN Commission on Refugees, etc.). The main policy instrument of the EU was the signing of agreements on cooperation and partnership with the post-Soviet countries, which were to formulate the basis for political and economic ties with Europe.

Thus, the first half of the 90s of the XX - century was a period of formation and acquisition of clear outlines of the Central Asian policy of the European Union, aimed primarily at strengthening the independence of the countries of the region, at establishing close bilateral ties.

#### **8.4 European Central Asian Assistance Projects**

The initial foundations for the development of regional cooperation covering all five countries of Central Asia began to be laid in 1995-1996 simultaneously with the revision of the bilateral format of relations. The first European initiatives of that time dealt with the socio-economic sphere, were discussed mainly at the expert level, took the form of special TACIS assistance programs and were more



often derived from the interests and goals of the European Union in the Caucasus and Caspian Sea regions. The Technical Assistance Program for the CIS countries (TACIS), under which all the economic assistance of the European Union in the region, both at the bilateral and regional levels, was carried out, was a promising tool for implementing the EU policies in Central Asia.

The TACIS program was approved by the Council of the EEC Ministries in July 1991 as the EU Assistance Program for the Republics of the USSR, and then it was updated three times. The Program pursued two main goals: maintaining economic development and creating a market economy, as well as building a rule of law state and protecting human rights and democracy. National action programs covered 55%, the Small Projects Program counted on 15% of the TACIS budget.

The program of small projects was targeted and flexible projects that could be quickly implemented. They covered five areas of activity: political consulting, civil society, education, industry support and international standards and commitments.

Throughout the entire period of the program, the EU sought to use its financial instruments to achieve its political goals: strengthening regional cooperation and creating economic and political prerequisites. In this regard, the implementation of regional programs in the framework of TACIS has acquired particular importance. Among them, priority projects for Europe were the reconstruction of the Great Silk Road along the Europe-Black Sea-Caucasus-Central Asia-Asia line (the TRACECA program) and the construction of oil and gas pipelines to transport Caspian energy resources to the west (the INOGATE program). INOGATE (Interstate oil and gas transport to Europe) was developed by Brussels in 1993 and was introduced in 1995-1996. The first INOGATE meetings were held in Brussels in November 1995 and April 1996. They identified the forms and directions of further cooperation of the European Union with the new independent states. The main objectives of the project were also outlined: restoration, rationalization and integration of regional oil and gas pipelines systems; search for alternative transportation opportunities for hydrocarbons from Central Asia and the Caspian region to European markets; creating an institutional framework for cooperation in the region. In 1996-1999 INOGATE allocated 50 million euro to achieve its goals.

At the fourth meeting of INOGATE December 4-5, 1997 representatives of the European Commission said that it plays a crucial role in ensuring the energy security of the European Union. As a result of the implementation of the Program, the EU hoped to liberalize the gas market.

The use of economic cooperation as a condition for solving political problems formed the basis for another regional program that most clearly represented the evolution of the concept of concerted action by the European Union in the southern belt of the former USSR. The TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) program was documented in May 1993 and received the unofficial name "Revival of the Great Silk Road". It covered 13 countries, such as Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

In April 1997 the European Union held a joint conference “TRACECA - Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation” in Tbilisi (Georgia) to explore the possibility of linking the TRACECA route with trans-European communications. In the period of 1996-1998 Ukraine, Mongolia and Moldova joined the program. However, TRACECA received its legal status only in 1998 when all the participating countries (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkey) signed a fundamental multilateral agreement “On development of the international transport corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia. The main objectives of this program were to maintain the political and economic independence of the republics by providing access to European and world markets through new transport routes; development of further regional cooperation; attraction of financial institutions, private investors; connecting the TRACECA route with a system of pan-European transport corridors. It covered the scope of rail, road, air and sea transports. The task of TRACECA, in addition to connecting the trade routes of the European Union and China, was to deepen economic and regional cooperation between the countries that joined the project, as well as to reduce the transport dependence of the former Soviet republics on Russia.

The implementation of the program allowed changing the geography of traffic flows in the region. If during the existence of the Soviet national economic complex, all cargo flows went along the north-south axis, then with the collapse of the USSR, the desire of all countries of the region to overcome one-sided dependence on Russia and diversify international cooperation was clearly manifested. The European Union has contributed to strengthening this trend. The implementation of TRACECA was generally evaluated as successful. Since its inception, 64 projects have been implemented.

Along with the obvious results of TACIS projects, in the opinion of a number of researchers, the standardized and inflexible mechanism for implementing programs, the insufficient degree of coordination of national projects made it difficult to achieve the stated goals.

Also in 1991 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development began its work in the region. The EBRD was most active in Kazakhstan. It is known that during the 1990-s the EBRD allocated over 3 billion euro to the Central Asian countries (mainly loans), including about 2 billion euro to Kazakhstan, 165 million euro to Kyrgyzstan, 96 million euro to Tajikistan, 123 million euro to Turkmenistan, and about 145 million euro to Uzbekistan. The European Union provided about 62% of the capital of the EBRD.

Almost simultaneously with the launch of the TACIS program, European countries received ample opportunities for active, albeit indirect, political interaction with the Central Asian states in the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, from January 1995 - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE). In 1998 the OSCE Centers in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan began to operate. According to some data, on

average, the EU accounted for about 70% of the volume of funding for OSCE activities in Central Asia.

Nevertheless, despite the activities in Central Asia of the EBRD, as well as a number of European programs, the EU's economic interest in Central Asia became noticeable only by the end of the 1990s. This was reflected in the significant intensification of trade relations, the strengthening of the project and investment presence of European companies (mainly in the oil and gas industry of Kazakhstan and to a lesser extent in the oil and gas industry of Turkmenistan).

If until December 2006, European projects in Central Asia were implemented mainly under the auspices of the TACIS program, then from January 2007 they began to be carried out mainly within the framework of the new program - Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) that replaced it. At the same time in the program DCI in the opinion of a number of European experts some changes were also implied. So, if TACIS basically supported the "transition of Central Asia to a full-fledged market economy and democracy", then the DCI's efforts began to focus on "reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in Central Asia, while not forgetting issues of democracy, good governance, legal norms and human rights".

### **8.5 EU security policy in the CAR: common vision**

The EU is seriously concerned about the threats that directly affect the security of European countries. In particular, as a direct threat to their own internal security, emanating from the Central Asian region, the EU member states are considering drug trafficking. The Central Asian region is one of the largest transit routes, the so-called "northern route" of drug trafficking, by which drugs are transported from Afghanistan to Russia and further to the countries of the European Union. According to estimates of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, most of the Central Asian drug traffic passes through the territory of Tajikistan, after which the drugs enter Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and then they are forwarded to Russia and the EU. In addition, drug trafficking is also carried out through the territory of Uzbekistan. In the period from 1997 to 2002 EU efforts were directed towards the development of a regional anti-drug action plan.

The geopolitical situation changed dramatically after the terrorist events of September 11, 2001. The problem of ensuring security from external threats has become a fundamental issue on the agenda of the entire international community. These events served as a catalyst for the revision of policies regarding the Central Asian states, as countries in close proximity to Afghanistan, a source of terrorist danger. Namely in that period the EU began to realize the importance of closer interaction with the Central Asian states on issues of regional security and countering transnational threats.

*Figure 6*



*Central Asia in the twenty-first century: Central Asia+ Afghanistan*

The EU responded to the terrorist attacks of 2001 by adopting the first Action Plan on Combating Terrorism, which defined the tasks of improving operational cooperation of the police and intelligence services of EU countries and third countries, combating the financial basis of terrorist groups and interaction with the United States in this area. At an extraordinary ministerial meeting on October 17, 2001 an EU action plan was adopted in response to the start of the military operation in Afghanistan.

When planning the EU's anti-terrorism policy, the EU countries declared the need to take into account the "regional dimension of stabilization of Afghanistan," including the Central Asian direction. At the end of 2001 the Working Group on Eastern Europe and Central Asia the EU Council submitted for approval the draft "Short-term directions of the EU policy in Central Asia". The list of main areas included the expansion of the political dialogue with the countries of Central Asia

on the support of the international antiterrorist coalition, the “post-Taliban” regime, the transit of humanitarian goods to Afghanistan, as well as the reduction of factors promoting extremism.

The implementation of these policies prompted the EU to strengthen its interaction with Central Asian countries, especially those bordering Afghanistan, on a bilateral and multilateral basis. In addition, ensuring the interests of the EU in the fight against terrorism in the region included such tasks as helping to strengthen the security services of the countries of Central Asia and reduce poverty in the republics of the region. Activities aimed at supporting security forces were of great importance not only in the fight against terrorism, but also in deterring illegal drug trafficking from Afghanistan. The EU viewed poverty reduction as an important direction in terms of narrowing the social base of terrorism and extremism.

EU policy in the field of counter-terrorism in Central Asia in the period 2002–2004 focused on providing support for EU action in Afghanistan, helping to reduce poverty in countries in the region. In this regard, it was planned to increase the volume of EU assistance to the region under the TACIS program. The set of directions and instruments of EU policy in the sphere of combating terrorism in the region have been expanded.

At the same time, against the background of a weakening of the destabilizing effect of the Afghan factor, the region of Central Asia continued to be a zone of terrorist and extremist activity. The countries of Central Asia became objects of extremist organizations as early as 1999–2001, when the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan invaded the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and also conducted a series of terrorist attacks in the capital of Uzbekistan. The activities of radical groups in the region became more active by 2005, terrorist acts were committed in a number of Central Asian countries, and the largest attacks of extremists occurred in Uzbekistan. The aggravation of the threat of extremism and terrorism in Central Asia has become one of the determining factors in the development of a new regional strategy of the European Union.

### **8.6 Security Policy Implementation Tools**

The main instruments for implementing the EU's security policy in Central Asia are the BOMCA and CADAP programs, which have been implemented since 2003. These programs are evidence that in the new century the regional approach has become increasingly important in the Central Asian strategy of the European Union. The adoption and implementation of these programs meant the concentration of EU efforts in Central Asia in the area of politics and “soft” security.

The Border Management Program in Central Asia (BOMCA) is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of border management, as well as strengthening security, stability and development in Central Asia. BOMCA became one of the largest assistance programs of the European Union in Central Asia: the cumulative budget of the BOMCA Program from 2003 to 2014 amounted to 36,295,405 euro.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) co-finances the Program in the amount of 2.74 million euro.

The main strategy of the BOMCA Program is to promote the stability and security of the Central Asian countries through integrated border management and regional cooperation. In the period from 2011 to 2015, the eighth phase of the BOMCA program (BOMCA 8) was implemented, which focused on the following components:

- The first component of the BOMCA program was the promotion of institutional reform and the adoption by the governments of the countries of Central Asia the European best practices in the field of integrated border management (IGC). In Kyrgyzstan, BOMCA supported the process of adopting an EGC Strategy on the European model and Action Plan. These two documents were signed by the Government in March 2012. In Tajikistan, BOMCA maintains close contacts with the OSCE in order to implement the institutional reform components of the Government's Border Management Action Plan, funded by the OSCE. The program also provides legal advice on the institutionalization of interdepartmental work on the IGC border agencies, as well as specific assistance in supporting the efforts of states to facilitate the implementation of the single window concept in all countries of Central Asia.

- The second component of the program was the improvement of professional skills of border control servants. It was proposed to create a consortium of training centers within BOMCA, including key educational institutions in Central Asia - many of which were previously supported by the BOMCA Program - and similar institutions in the European Union. BOMCA contributes to the creation of institutions that can take the lead in consistently training national trainers in areas such as border security, the use of dogs at borders, document security, the fight against drugs, and the fight against corruption.

- Strengthening anti-drug capabilities at border agencies is the third component of the program. BOMCA supported countries in setting up drug profiling teams (GPNs) as a way to institutionalize inter-agency drug cooperation (information sharing, joint risk analysis, joint operations, etc.) at the national and regional levels. In addition to further supporting capacity building in each country through providing training, as well as providing equipment and renovating premises in accordance with the requirements in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

- Checkpoints and border outposts. As part of the implementation of this component, some financial resources have been allocated for minor repairs to existing facilities. In total, it is planned to repair 3 border posts in Tajikistan. In addition, equipment was provided for 17 border guard units and border outposts in Kyrgyzstan and 4 border outposts in Tajikistan.

Since 2015 the ninth stage of the BOMCA implementation has begun. As part of the BOMCA assistance program, a large number of border crossings have been modernized, some of which are still being in the process of renewing. In addition, an additional 20 border points were equipped, while many border posts located along the "green border" between the border points were, or will be modernized in the near future. The BOMCA program also upgraded training centers for border

guards, developed the potential for the effective use of guard dogs, and modernized dog centers in Central Asia. About 1,500 Central Asian border guards and customs officials participated in numerous trainings on Integrated Border Control.

In 2010 the EU launched the Border Management Northern Afghanistan (BOMNAF) Border Management Northern Afghanistan Facilitation Project aimed at improving security in the border areas of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The drug prevention program in Central Asia (CADAP / CADAP), realizing the EU since 2003, has set itself the task of “strengthening the capacity of Central Asian countries to counter drugs in the region in a full, integrative and sustainable measure in accordance with the European Drug Action Plan standards and existing experience, as well as with the EU Strategy against Drugs (2013-2020) and the EU Action Plan to Prevent the Spread of Drugs in Central Asia for 2014-2020. All program activities under the Program are aimed at building capacity, both at the national and at the regional level, through the provision of policy advice, technical assistance, drug situation monitoring, prevention, drug treatment and harm reduction”. Since April 2015, CADAP has been carrying out the sixth phase of its activities in the region. The budget of the sixth phase is € 9,057,333, the fourth part of which is financed by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Development. The regional office of the program is located in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).

CADAP consists of the following elements:

- OCAN is responsible for overall project coordination. To ensure a coherent strategy, inter-ethnic exchanges in the field of drug policies and strategies between the countries of Central Asia and regional donor organizations should be ensured. Measures include an assessment of the structure and mechanisms of drug policies and the interaction of this program with existing international and national standards.

- DAMOS– Data collection and development of a database on drug epidemiology.

- TREAT– Treatment Methodologies.

- MEDISSA– Strategies for working with the media and disseminating information.

In addition to the above programs, the European Union participates in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia. This initiative is aimed at addressing the conditions conducive to terrorist activities, building capacity to prevent and suppress terrorist activities at the national and regional levels. This initiative was announced during public events in Brussels, Belgium, in June 2010 and in New York, United States, in September 2010. The first expert meeting on component I and VI of the Strategy was held in Bratislava (2010), the second expert meeting on component II of the Strategy was held in Dushanbe (March 2011), the third expert meeting on component III of the Strategy was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan (2011 d), the final ministerial meeting was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (2011).

From 2008 to 2010 The EU and Interpol, together with CARICC (Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Center), have implemented the EU-

Interpol: Interpol Support in Central Asia project. The program was aimed at enhancing the capacity of CARICC law enforcement agencies for the purpose of regional and international cooperation, more effectively combating domestic and international crime. As part of the project, more than 50 locations in Central Asia were connected to the global communication system I-24/7 in order to gain direct access to protected databases and the Interpol network.

Since 2013, in Central Asia, the heads of foreign ministries of five countries in the region have been holding regular meetings with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in the framework of the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Political Affairs and Security of the EU – Central Asia.

The effective implementation of the objectives highlighted in the EU Central Asia strategy is hampered by a number of factors. EU structures failed to develop real mechanisms to counter the production of drugs in Afghanistan and subsequent export to the countries of Central Asia. The BOMCA meetings, trainings of border services and officials did not bring practical results. Border conflicts and incidents also occurred between the countries of the region (an incident on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in the Sokh enclave).

### **8.7 "The strategy of the new partnership between the EU and Central Asia"**

At the beginning of the 21st century the European Union proposed a strategy for the countries of Central Asia and its supplementary documents as the “Regional Strategy for Supporting Central Asia for a Term of 2007-2013” and “The Program of Main Directions for a Term 2001-2012”. The adoption of such important documents was connected not only with the interest of the European Union in ensuring the security of the countries of Central Asia. The energy factor also played a significant role. As it noted in one of the Western studies: “The European Union intends to establish business relations in the energy sector with Central Asia. The main goal is to reduce the dependence of the EU member states on gas supplies from Russia”. The EU’s dependence on energy resources, the triple price increase for them, the gas conflict between Russia and Ukraine have led the EU to concentrate on finding new alternative ways to provide energy resources. The shortage of energy resources has led to an increase in the importance of the Central Asian market.

All these factors led to the intensification of various kinds of political consultations and significantly accelerated the development in the European Union of a certain strategic vision of Central Asia. An important indicator of this was that, since 2004, the political dialogue with the Central Asian countries began to be held at the multilateral level in the format of the “EU Three” - Central Asian States. (“The EU Three” - the format of relations in the European Union, in which representatives of the member states of the previous, present and future European Council presidents jointly participate in the decision-making process). Along with the intensification of multilateral consultations, already in 2005, the post of the Special Representative of the European Union for the countries of Central Asia was established. During the period from 2005 to 2012, this position was held by a



prominent French diplomat Pierre Morel, who made a significant contribution to strengthening European-Central Asian contacts. In June 2012, Patricia Flor (German diplomat) was appointed EU Special Representative for Central Asia. Her mandate initially operated until 30 June 2013, but was extended until April 2014. P.Flor replaced by Janos Herman (Hungarian diplomat), who held the position until April 2015. Then Peter Burian (Slovak diplomat) was appointed on the post of the European representative for CAR).

“The strategy of the new partnership between the EU and Central Asia”, adopted in 2007, outlined the position and interests of the EU in the region at the present stage and marked the transition to a qualitatively new level of partnership. Central Asia was officially declared as a region of EU strategic interests in terms of security, stability, governance, and diversification of energy resources. The EU strategy itself is a conceptual vision of the EU policy in Central Asia for the coming years. It sets out the principles and tools for implementing this policy, which covers various areas, including various aspects of security, bilateral and regional cooperation, human rights, education, etc.

According to the strategy for solving especially important problems, the following goals were defined:

- to establish a permanent regional political dialogue at the level of foreign ministers;
- launching the European Education Initiative and supporting the development of the e-Silk Road in the countries of Central Asia;
- implementation of the “EU Rule of Law Initiatives”;
- establishment of a permanent “dialogue on human rights” with each Central Asian state aimed at obtaining concrete results;
- the introduction of an “energy dialogue” with the countries of Central Asia.

The strategy covered the period from 2007 to 2013 and provided for an interstate and regional level of cooperation. In general, the document identified the following main areas of cooperation:

The first is cooperation in the field of security, which includes the fight against drug trafficking and the sale of weapons, peaceful destruction of border issues.

The second is economic reforms that provided an opportunity to use the funds of the European Investment Bank and the investment fund for the implementation of projects in Central Asia.

The third is the development of energy cooperation, access to energy resources of the countries of the Central Asian region and the search for new ways of delivering energy to the EU.

The fourth is the environmental sphere of cooperation, in particular the protection of the environment and the focus on significant issues related to the Caspian and Aral seas.

The fifth is the development of the most sensitive topics in relations between the countries of Western Europe and Central Asia, such as the observance of human rights, the construction of a legal and democratic state.

The sixth is the reform of the standards of the three levels of the education system and the inclusion of the countries of Central Asia in the Bologna system.

To implement the strategy on the basis of the budget of the European Union, it planned to double the funding support for the countries of Central Asia, which amounted to 750 million euro. "The strategy of the new partnership between the EU and Central Asia" demonstrated the EU's intention to strengthen its position in the Central Asian region, which was also supplemented by practical actions.

An important role in the strategy is related to the security aspect: the European Union has assumed the role of coordinator of programs aimed at combating drugs, cross-border crime and enhancing border control in Central Asia. At the same time, special attention was paid to the threat of Islamic radicalism, stressing the task of strengthening law enforcement agencies and reforming the security system of the countries of the region.

The text of the European Union's strategy for 2007-2013 outlined a number of tasks in the context of strengthening security in the states of the region, in particular:

- creation of conditions ensuring border security;
- combating regional crime, especially in the field of international drug trafficking;
- promotion of cooperation in the fight against illegal migration, drug trafficking, organized crime.

The thesis "...The EU will provide enhanced support in the fight against corruption, drug and human trafficking, the illegal arms trade with Afghanistan and organized crime in Central Asia. The EU will expand cooperation with the countries of Central Asia in the fight against international terrorism" became decisive by that time. The main focus in the direction of EU security was to ensure the security of the state borders of Central Asian countries as an important condition for countering transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, illegal migration, human trafficking, etc.

The second phase of the implementation of the Strategy takes place during a sharp change of the political climate in Central Asia. Security issues in the region have not lost their significance. Governments in Central Asia were concerned about the possibility of spreading instability from Afghanistan. The European Union needed to find ways to maintain security in Afghanistan through the Central Asian assistance programs in the absence of a European military contingent on Afghan territory. For this the EU should have linked its activities in Afghanistan with projects in Central Asia, for example, in the field of water management.

In the opinion of Kazakhstan researcher K. Syroezhkin the main flaw in the strategy and practical implementation of the EU policy in Central Asia is in the absence at the conceptual level of a single European approach and a coordinated uniform EU policy, at least at the level of major powers. Instead, there are sporadic attempts by Berlin to formalize the strategic interests of the EU and to work out a kind of uniform policy, but Germany does this on the basis of its own interests, which it claims to be common European.

At the same time, the effective implementation of the EU and its structures by the goals and objectives of the Strategy under consideration was hindered by a number of objective and subjective factors. In particular, despite the participation of most European countries under the NATO auspices in the protracted war in Afghanistan and the implementation of various aid programs by the European Union for this country, the EU and its structures fail to create serious mechanisms to counter drug production in Afghanistan and their subsequent export, primarily Central Asia. Even more serious is the lack of collective permanent mechanisms for ensuring border security among the states of Central Asia.

An expert assessment of the results, state and prospects of the European Union's policy in Central Asia is not unanimous, sometimes there are opposing views. If a number of researchers see progress and positive dynamics in the presence of the EU in a given region, then there are opinions about the failure of a united Europe policy that is not competitive compared to Chinese or Russian.

### **8.8 Diplomacy "soft power" in the field of education and science**

The EU has achieved obvious results in Central Asia in the field of education and science. The European Union-wide educational programs were launched in the region: Erasmus Mundus (Erasmus Mundus) for the exchange of students, scientific and teaching staff, and Tempus (Trans-European Mobility Program for University Studies - Tempus), aimed at reforming the national higher education system in the framework of the "Bologna Process". The latter got its name from the agreement signed by European countries in Bologna (Italy), which set the goal to "unite the European higher education area". Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Declaration in 2010; Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also joined this process.

In 2014, the Erasmus Mundus and Tempus was replaced by the EU Erasmus + (Erasmus +) program - "on educational mobility, cooperation for innovation, exchange of best practices and support for educational reforms". Another key tool for the formation of the European Higher Education Area was the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications, which entered into force in 1999. It was signed by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, which were not members of the Council of Europe, but along with three other Central Asian countries, according to the UNESCO classification, were included in the "region of Europe and Latin America". In general, a number of higher educational institutions of Central Asian countries (Nazarbayev-University, Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics and Forecasting - KIMEP and Kazakh-German University in Kazakhstan; International Westminster University in Uzbekistan, etc.) cooperating with European institutions were included in the scope of the European educational programs.

The EU's desire to increase its political presence in the Central Asian countries through its educational programs was crowned with some success, but mostly only in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, while in three other Central Asian countries, despite the efforts made by European functionaries, the EU's influence remains weak and unstable, significantly inferior to Russian and Chinese influence.

## **8.9 Kazakhstan is a strategic partner of the EU**

The EU has a special relationship with Kazakhstan, which is Europe's preferred partner in Central Asia. In this regard, attention is drawn to the adoption by Kazakhstan of the special state program "Path to Europe" for the period 2009–2011, which was focused on European experience and standards in the following areas: fuel and energy, transport, humanitarian and institutional building. According to Kazakhstani researchers, "one of the results of Astana's numerous efforts to come closer to the European Union was that in 2007 Kazakhstan was elected chairman of the OSCE and in 2010 assumed this position".

Beginning in 2014 a pilot project (until the end of 2017) operated in Kazakhstan for visa-free trips to the Republic of Kazakhstan for citizens of the following countries: Australia, Hungary, Italy, Monaco, Belgium, Spain, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, UK, USA, Germany, Finland, France, Switzerland and Japan. It is significant that of the 19 countries listed above, 13 are European. Citizens of EU member states can visit the Republic of Kazakhstan without a visa if the period of stay does not exceed 15 days. From January 1, 2017, Kazakhstan abolished the visa regime for the countries - members of the European Union.

Kazakhstan has also become the first state in the Central Asian region, with which the European Union is developing cooperation in the framework of the Agreement on Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation, covering 29 different areas in the economy, politics and security.

In the last decade, a new Agreement on Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation (AEPS) has become a fundamentally important topic on the agenda of European-Kazakhstan relations. For the first time, the need to conclude such an agreement by representatives of the EU and the Republic of Kazakhstan was announced in 2006. Nevertheless, the active stage of negotiations on the agreement fell on the period from 2011. Moreover, these negotiations were parallel to the negotiations on Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO (conducted from 1993 to 2015 - the time of joining the Organization). Concluded by Kazakhstan and the EU in Astana on December 21, 2015 and ratified by Kazakhstan on March 25, 2016 the Agreement was approved on December 13, 2017 by members of the European Parliament. Thus, the European Union has included Kazakhstan, along with Argentina, India and South Africa, to the list of the strategic partners who will be provided with special conditions for technical and financial assistance. The Agreement covers 29 areas, including economics, energy, trade, production, investment, transport and logistics cooperation, security issues (including food) and the fight against terrorism, political dialogue (justice, the development of democratic institutions, the rule of law, human rights, legal state, fundamental freedoms, protection of personal data).

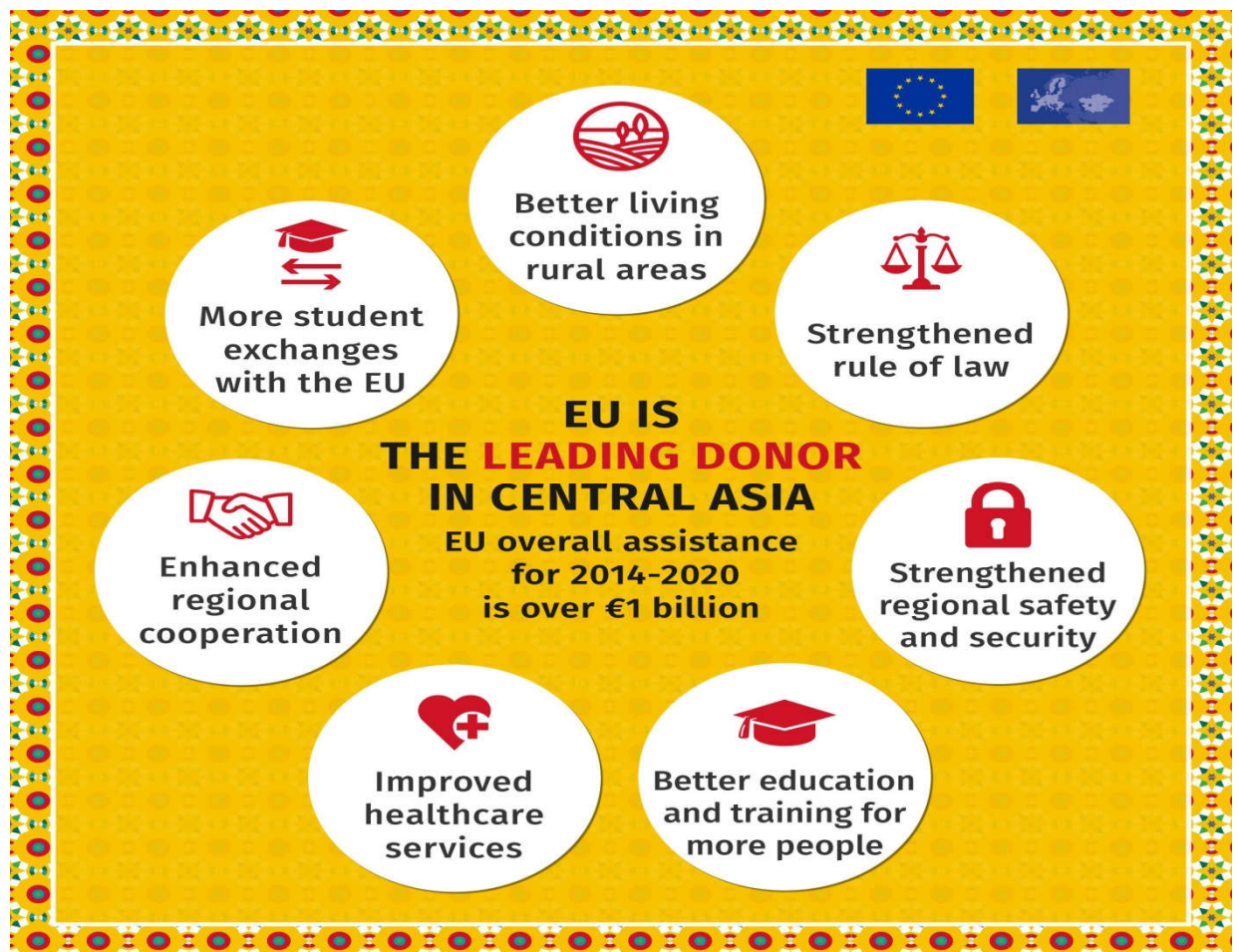
The European Union has become the largest foreign investor in Kazakhstan - the EU accounted for 49% of foreign capital attracted to the economy of Kazakhstan and more than half of Kazakhstan's foreign trade turnover. As the President N.Nazarbayev emphasizes, "the countries of Europe, taking into account

their technological level, were the key partners of Kazakhstan in the Program of Forced Industrial-Innovative Development”. Most of the investment went to the oil and gas sector, where European companies controlled up to 40% of Kazakhstan’s oil production and slightly less than 20% of uranium mined in Kazakhstan. In addition, the EU invested in agriculture, food processing, construction, finance and transport.

### **8.10 What is happening today?**

What is the current state of European Union policy in Central Asia? Does the EU see prospects for its Central Asian diplomacy? In Joint Communiqué of the 14 “European Union – Central Asia” Foreign Ministers' Meeting (Brussels, 23 November 2018) named “EU-Central Asia – Working together to build a future of inclusive growth, sustainable connectivity and stronger partnerships” says: “They agreed that reforms and the positive regional dynamics in Central Asia had created new opportunities for taking the EU-Central Asia partnership forward”. “Central Asia is a region where there is a strong and increasing demand for new, diversified partnerships, and a region that is looking for more engagement with the European Union,” said EU High Representative Federica Mogherini during the 14th EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting on 23 November 2018. “The message we have shared today is that the EU is also interested in increasing this partnership. It is in our interest that Central Asia develops as a more resilient and more closely interconnected economic and political space, and this is something we are actively supporting,” she said.

*Figure 6*



The source: [https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/uzbekistan/54425/node/54425\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/uzbekistan/54425/node/54425_en)

Assistance provided by the European Commission, combined with assistance provided by EU Member States individually, makes the European Union the number one donor in the region. The global envelope for EU assistance to Central Asia (through the Development Cooperation Instrument) rose to €1 billion for the period 2014-2020.

Current developments in the EU policy towards the countries of Central Asia are as follows:

- The EU announced a new set of regional programs for Central Asia worth €124 million to support the private sector as well as trade and investment in the region, to help protect the environment, tackle climate change, and promote the rule of law and regional cooperation.

- The EU and Uzbekistan launched negotiations for a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The future Agreement will replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which has been in force since 1999. It will focus, among others areas, on political cooperation, trade and investment relations, sustainable development and connectivity, as well as human rights and governance.

- The European Union will open a Delegation in Turkmenistan. This will allow the EU to step up political, economic and sectoral dialogue and cooperation with Turkmenistan.

- The EU and the Kyrgyz Republic are currently negotiating a modernized, comprehensive bilateral agreement, which will replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The negotiations were launched in December 2017.

- The European Union and Kazakhstan signed in December 2015 and are already implementing many aspects of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, bringing good results.

- Tajikistan has expressed interest in upgrading its existing bilateral agreement with the EU so as to step-up relations.

In June 2017, the EU Council decided to update the EU strategy in Central Asia by the first half of 2019. Now the European External Relations Service is developing a new version of the strategy. According to experts of the EU Monitoring in Central Asia (EUCAM), the following should be taken into account when developing a new strategy: “Over the past decade, the European Union has become an active foreign political force in Central Asia. He expanded the diplomatic presence, increased assistance and introduced cooperation mechanisms. But to this day, the influence of the EU in the field of security and the creation of a democratic society that respects human rights remains limited. The time has come to effectively engage the EU-created infrastructure of interaction in order to deepen ties with the region and achieve more long-term influence”.

### **Control questions and tasks for self-control:**

1. What conditions and what factors did influence the EU policy formation towards the countries of Central Asia at the beginning of the 90s of the 20th century?

2. Determine the priority areas of EU policy in Central Asia in the 90s of the XX-th century.

3. In your opinion, how effective were projects of assistance to the countries of Central Asia in the framework of TACIS?

4. How institutionalized is the policy of the European Union in Central Asia?

5. What aspects of security were relevant for the EU in Central Asia in the 90s of the 20th century?

6. Describe the tools used by the EU in the field of security in Central Asia.

7. Compare the periods in the EU policy in Central Asia: the 90s of the XX-th - century and the beginning of the XXI-th century.