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**Zentrum für internationale Entwicklungs- und Umweltforschung der
Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen**

**The European Union and Central Asia: Challenges and
Prospects of Cooperation**

by

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The European Union and Central Asia: Challenges and Prospects of Cooperation*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the 20th century of world history characterized considerable historical processes and political transformations including such negative as World War I, World War II, the creation of the Soviet Union and its dissolution, the East-West conflict, and many others. At the same time, in the second part of the last century and the beginning of the 21st century the process of globalization, regionalization, and nation building has taken place in different parts of the world. The complexity of international relations at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century is characterized by uncertainty. Contributing to this process, the globalization exerts increasingly profound influence on socioeconomic, military-political, and other spheres of life of humankind including the principles of international co-existence. During the last decades, political, economical, and regional organizations including the Europe Union (EU), North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA), Association of South-East Asian States (ASEAN), Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) and others gradually developed (cf. HAAS 1975, P123; EL-AGRAA 1999, P 442; CALLEYA 2000, PP 253; SCHIFF / WINTERS 1997, PP. 37; SEIDELMANN 2005, PP. 29-88). Central Asia (CA) represents the former Soviet Union region not only from an economic point of view. It is also rich in historical heritage and cultural diversity. During the course of many centuries, the region has been the center of trading-economic and cultural exchange between Asia and Europe. The major interlink on the ancient routs of the Great Silk Road.

The current conditions for CA are resulting from disintegration of the Soviet Union. To encourage development in CA, the EU established bilateral and multilateral partnership. Since 1991, the *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement* (PCA) has been the EU's main instrument in conducting a strategy in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The agreement has also been signed by all republics of the former Soviet Union. The European Union initiated the PCA with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in May 1996 and with Uzbekistan in June 1996. In July 1999, the agreement became fully operational after its ratification by all 15 EU member states and the European Parliament. The EU-Tajikistan bilateral trade relations are governed by an Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters. The pending ratification of the PCA with Tajikistan was signed in 2004. The PCA signed with Turkmenistan in 1998 has been ratified by the EU in 2009. All five Central Asian countries are beneficiaries of the EU's *Generalized System of Preferences*. These agreements do not extend any prospect for admission to the EU and simply serve to effect on a bilateral European interest in CA.

The European Commission (EC) has developed a representation network in CA countries. It is constituted of EC Delegations and includes the cities Almaty, Bishkek, and Dushanbe (the last two having a non-resident Head of Delegation). In addition, the Commission has established an *Europa House* in Tashkent along the lines of the one in Baku in the Caucasian region. *Europa Houses* are constituted as central point of reference and for information about, for example, the *Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States* (TACIS) and other programmes. The relations between the EU and CA include important aspects for both sides on the national, regional, and global level.

2. STAGES OF POLITICAL COOPERATION

The EU-Central Asia partnership was established in the beginning and middle of the 1990th period. Since then, the EU-CA relations have passed several stages.

2.1 First stage

In the **first stage**, Europe had no interest in the region and Europe's policies had no clear vision and strategy. At this time, the EU aimed to encourage regional integration in CA, though, the process of disintegration unequivocally developed. While the EU expected the development of democratic and market institutions, the newly independent states needed to create specific regimes to maintain internal stability as well as external security (LAMULIN 2004, P 55). In the second half of the 1990s, Europe (especially Germany) was about to understand that in the geopolitical context the EU considerably lagged behind other external players in the Caspian Sea and CA region. The most active member of the EU, Germany, was confronted with certain problems, especially, the expansion and formation of the EU by common foreign and security policy.

2.2 Second stage

The **second stage** of the EU and CA relations started when Europe began to pay more attention on CA in 2000. The tendentially growing interest of Europe in CA was caused by various threads concerning Central Asia. Those threats are drug trafficking, illegal migration, growth of social intensity, stopping democratic processes, and lowering economic collapse in some republics. Furthermore, the emergence of radical and military Islam, supported by interested forces from the outside and by internal instability and social despair, is a threat. The EU's interest in CA is part of an advancing European role in international affairs. The EU's interest in projecting its political model towards a politically and economically "emerging" actor in global affairs is an important component of the EU's global strategy (SEIDELMANN 2005, P 80). At the same time, in 2001, the biggest CA nations (Uzbekistan and

Kazakhstan) accepted a more active European policy. During President Karimov's¹ and President Nazarbayev's² visits to Germany, several agreements for cooperation with Germany were signed. On the other hand, the year 2001 became critical for Germany's policy concerning CA as well as mutual relations between the states of the region and Germany. The meeting of the German government, under the presidency chancellor G. Schroeder, which was held in November of 2001, has called all interested departments "to turn face to Central Asia". This means that the Afghani policy of Germany and the EU should consider the context of European's concern at security of the CA region. Therefore, the region is of strategic and geopolitical interests of the EU. After September 11th, 2001, a serious search for alternative energy sources has been initiated. The 2001 crisis brought the issue of stopping Europe's dependence on Arab oil to the European agenda. Caspian oil seems to be good alternative in these respects. This fact will determine the development of relations between CA nations (especially Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan), certain European states as well as with the EU in general, as a political and economic entity. On November 13th, 2004 at the 1st *EU, Caspian and Black Sea countries Energy Ministerial Conference* in Baku, Azerbaijan, the "Baku Initiative" ,an enhanced energy and transport cooperation between the EU, Black Sea and Caspian region was agreed. On November 30th, 2006 at the 2nd Energy Ministerial meeting in Astana, Kazakhstan a new Energy Road Map was agreed. Its implementation will pave the way for a comprehensive legal and regulatory governing and integrated EU-Black Sea-Caspian Sea common energy market based on the EU Community *acquis*³. The road map was agreed by the European Commission and governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Russian Federation (to act as an observer). In October 2006, the EU Commissioner for External relations B. Ferrero-Waldner held a speech at the Eurasian National University in Kazakhstan. He mentioned that energy cooperation is one of the priorities of the EU relations with CA. In December 2006, during President Nazarbayev's visit to Brussels, a memorandum on strategic energy cooperation between the EU and Kazakhstan was signed.

¹ Islam Karimov is the president of Uzbekistan. In March 1990, he was elected by the then Supreme Soviet (CIA WORLD FACTBOOK 2009A).

² Nursultan A. Nazarbayev is the president of Kazakhstan. He was chairman of the Supreme Soviet from 22 February 1990 and elected president 1 December 1991 (CIA WORLD FACTBOOK 2009B)

³ The Community *acquis* is the body of common rights and obligations which binds all the Member States together within the European Union (EUROPA GLOSSARY 2009).

2.3 Third stage

The **third stage** in the EU and CA relations started in 2007. At the EU presidency program 2007, Germany initiated a new program to intensify political partnerships with CA. The program was accepted as new EU strategy for the CA region for the period from 2007 to 2013. It emphasizes the increasing political and economic partnership and was welcomed by CA nations (EU 2007; SCHMITZ 2007, PP 329-332). The strategy provides an overall framework for the EU relations with CA and is based on results of various implemented agreements, EU assistance programs, and other initiatives of the EU. The strategy defines the EU priorities for its cooperation with the entire CA region, including the fields of human rights, rule of law, good governance and democracy, education, economic development, trade and investment, energy and transport, environmental policies, common threats, and inter-cultural dialogue. Furthermore, the program predicated that its implementation should comply with the specific requirements and performance of each CA country. The strategy also calls for intensification of political dialogue with all five countries of CA. This includes regular meetings at Foreign Minister level and convening annual meetings of the EU Heads of Mission in the region.

Overall, progress on implementing the EU CA Strategy had been encouraged. After only one year, a new quality of cooperation had evolved between CA and the EU. The new EU-Central Asian partnership for the 21st century was making the difference compared to the past. On side of the CA countries, there was a strongly increased interest in enhanced cooperation with the EU in all levels and areas. Concrete actions have been mutually agreed upon. They have been implemented (or are under preparation) bilaterally with the five CA republics as well as with the entire CA region, especially, in terms of regional key issues such as education, Rule of Law, water, and environment. All CA states agreed to engage in, or to continue with a structured Human Rights Dialogue with the EU. All CA states appointed National Coordinators for the strategy. This demonstrated that Central Asian partners assume responsibility and are fully engage in cooperation. High-level political dialogue had visibly intensified. In the following years, the European priority strategies toward CA were changing. For instance, the Czech Presidency and French program did not define CA as a key interest. However, each presidency did organize at least one or two key events to bolster the growing ties. On September 18, 2008, for example, the French Presidency convened the *EU Central Asia Forum on Security Issues* in Paris. The aim of the *Paris Security Forum* was to reaffirm the EU's commitment to strengthening relations between the EU and CA as well as to establish lasting cooperation on security issues between the two regions. The meeting was attended by many politicians and officials, including the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the five CA countries, the European Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, Benita Ferrero Waldner, and the Council Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for CFSP, Javier Solana. The discussions focused on three main issues: terrorist threats (with Afghanistan at the top of the agenda), the fight against

human and drug trafficking, and energy and environmental security. An EU-Central Asian Ministerial Conference, co-organized by the French Presidency and Germany, entitled “*Rule of Law – Cornerstone of Development*” was held in Brussels on November 27/28, 2008. This was the initial of the *EU’s Rule of Law Initiative for CA* within the framework of the *EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia*. It was adopted by the European Council on June 21, 2007. High representatives of judicial and political institutions of the EU and CA expressed their determination to strengthen the rule of law through the support of and cooperation on the following issues: modernization of constitutional courts and other legal institutes, professional training for law students and young lawyers, and overall progress in legal, judicial and administrative reforms. The participants agreed to organize regional thematic conferences in CA in the course of 2009. They also agreed to reassemble in CA in 2010, to discuss the progress and shape future steps in the development of the *EU’s Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia* (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION 2008).

The Czech government primarily devoted attention to the CA region in terms of energy security. In this context, Czech was interested to push ahead the *Nabucco Gas Transport Project*. Therefore, the EU-Central Asia monitoring (EUCAM) team and Prague held a meeting on the EU-CA relations and energy security in mid-April 2008. The meeting resulted that the EU (at this time) was guided by a pragmatic interest of mutually beneficiary economic cooperation with those states which have good economic prospects and are rich in natural resources. At the same time, many problems in the EU-CA relations could be identified. The EU criticized the bad human rights record and the slow tempo of economic reforms in CA countries. CA found fault with the absence of a clear strategy, ignorance of regional and local peculiarities, and the double standards approaches.

Although, the beginning of the 21st century indicated a heightened interest of Europe in the CA region, the EU does not have a unified strategy towards the region until now. The economical and political interests in CA differ and diverge among the biggest European states. This is caused by internal peculiarities of European politics as well as the geopolitical situation of the states, including the relations of the EU with the US and Russia. CA also needs to develop more common regional approaches in the European policy. The EU integration experience could be very useful for future regional integration in CA. In an interview and a sociological survey among experts and officials from CA republics, Russia, and the UK the majority of specialists (95%) consider the EU and ASEAN as good models for regional integration in CA but with respect to local peculiarities (RAKHIMOV 2006, P 64). Recent interviews in France and Germany supported this conclusion.

3. ECONOMIC, ENERGY, AND EDUCATIONAL RELATIONS

3.1 Economic Relations

Together with the PCA, the *Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States* (TACIS) is an important EU policy instrument in the CA region. TACIS is the main assistance instrument within the countries of Eastern Europe and CA. This policy is aimed to support the implementation of economic reforms as well as the linkage of economic and political reforms within and between partner countries. It includes national and regional programs in areas such as nuclear safety, cross-border cooperation, and regional cooperation. In October 2002, the European Commission (EC) adopted *The Strategy Paper for Central Asia* (SP) and provided a strategic framework. The assistance of the EC was defined for the period 2002 to 2006. The SP followed those guidelines set out in the framework for Country Strategy Papers. The guidelines basis has been taken from the regulation for the provision of assistance to the partner countries in Eastern Europe and CA. The SP for CA included the *TACIS Indicative Programme for Central Asia* for the years 2002 to 2004. To this day, it reviews the EU/EC cooperation with the five countries of CA (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and presents a new strategy for providing technical assistance to the region.

The EU is the main trading partner of the CA region, accounting for almost a third of its total foreign trade (29.1% in 2007) and amounting to €22.9bn in 2007. In comparison to this, bilateral trade figures of individual states, like the Russian-Central Asian trade and Sino-Central Asian trade, dwarf all other states (cf. ZVIAGELSKAIA 1995; LAUMULIN 2005; PARAMONOV / STROKOV 2007; UMAROV / PASHKUN 2006, P 4; RAKHIMOV 2008, PP. 69-73). In 2007, Russia and China dominated the foreign economic relations of CA states. Trades with Moscow and Beijing were worth \$21 billion and \$14 billion, respectively. Germany, CA's main European trading partner, came to less than €7 billion in the same year. The EU-Central Asia trade is marked by the prior position of the energy sector. About 80% of the EU's imports from Kazakhstan and 90% of imports from Turkmenistan are oil products. Although, the figure drops to 30% for imports from Uzbekistan, it still remains in the top product grouping in terms of value. As an area of special importance to the national economies, particularly the energy sector is subject to geopolitical instability which can lead to very paradoxical results in the social sphere (EC TRADE 2009).

The geographical remoteness from main seaports restricts the CA's participation in world trade and is a serious disadvantage of the region. All CA republics inherited the former Soviet Union's systems of rail and road transport, communications as well as gas and oil pipelines. This infrastructure also extends through the European part of former Soviet Union. In the post-Soviet era, the development of alternative regional transport communications was considered as important for the national regional strategy by CA republics. As a result, new

transport communication to the East and South were developed and linked with the transport systems of the neighboring countries China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

At present, the CA republics Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, as well as China, Iran, Pakistan, and the Caucasian republics Georgia and Azerbaijan are involved in the process of organization and harmonization of transport arteries and communications connecting Europe and Asia, the West and the East. The famous Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) has already received sizeable support from the EU, to rebuild sea, road, and railway links. From the viewpoint of the European-, South Asia-, and North-East Asia-region, CA is an elementary area for linking interregional contacts. In Future, this can either result in division and conflict, as the Cold War and the hot conflict in Afghanistan, or in a new series of connections which allow more positive relationships.

During the last few years, the EU launched several programs in the partnership with CA nations including BOMCA⁴/CADAP⁵. At first, this program focused on restricting drug trade, nowadays, it helps to improve border management and facilitates trade. Trade facilitation is of vital importance to the economy of the two poorest and geographically most isolated countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Measures like this programs, should be embedded in cooperation with multilateral agencies, e.g. through CAREC⁶. Since the EU has a growing interest in energy partnerships with CA, CA nations try to found an alternative corridor for the export of their energy resources. Therefore, economic relations could become an important aspect of mutual cooperation in the coming years. In 2004, at the EU, Caucasus and Central Asian ministers' conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, the EU-CA cooperation focused on: the development of regional energy markets, the strengthening of financing capacities for a new infrastructure; the implementation of open, forward-looking, and proactive energy policies; the setting up of an investor-friendly environment by according an appropriate role to market mechanisms; and improving energy efficiency in the various uses of primary energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lessen the cost to economic growth and free up additional capacity.

3.2 Energy Relations

At present, the EU imports 50% of its required energy. It is estimated that the EU's dependence on energy imports will increase up to 70% in the future. Main provider of energy for the EU is Russia. However, after the *Gas War* between Russia and Ukraine, Brussels

⁴ EU Border Management Programme for Central Asia (BOMCA).

⁵ The Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP).

⁶ Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC).

tries to decrease the dependence on Russian energy deliveries and tries to find alternative sources. CA and the Caspian Sea region both have a huge potential for becoming the EU's major energy suppliers. In February 2009, the representative of the European commissionaire on energy, Taradellas Espuni, mentioned that the EU hopes that after 2013, natural gas can be exported from CA to Europe through Azerbaijan and Turkey. The EU would be ready to invest billions of Euros to decrease the dependence on Russia (GAMOVA 2009, P 1). At the Joint Declaration of the Participants in the EU Central Asia Forum on Security Issues in Paris on September 18, 2008, the importance of active cooperation in the development of different hydrocarbon transport corridors was also confirmed with the objective to ensure a guaranteed and reliable supply for European as well as international markets (EUCAM WATCH 2008, DCI - BULLETIN D'ACTUALITÉS 2008). The energy field will dominate the EU-CA partnership for the upcoming years.

3.3 Educational Relations

In the EU-CA relations, special attention has been given to educational partnership. Representatives of universities and research institutes from CA nations participated in the *EU Tempus*, *Erasmus Mundus*, *Erasmus Mundus/Outside window partnership* and other programs. The *Tempus* program has already provided substantial contribution to the development of regional cooperation. Four projects in Energy, Water Resource Management, Social Economics, and Tourism were successfully implemented together with higher education institutions and non-academic organizations from Ukraine, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Mongolia (TEMPUS IN UZBEKISTAN 2007, P 8). *Tempus* projects have contributed to the development of curricula for masters' and bachelors' programs, for example: the introduction of a two level higher education system; Renovation and development of new training materials; Restructuring management of higher education institutions; Enhancing the qualifications of teachers and administrators through new knowledge and skills, strengthening links with enterprises and the society in general; Creating sustainable academic partnerships (TEMPUS IN UZBEKISTAN 2007, P 9-10).

The EU member states are active at national level in CA. Their involvement includes the German humanitarian foundation DAAD, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, and Goethe Institute. German universities are involved in intuitional partnership with universities, research centers and governmental institutions. Among the successful projects are several institutional projects on the EU and CA educational partnership project funded by Volkswagen-

Foundation⁷. Within and in addition to these projects, many academics, young scholars, and public service from CA have participated at joint conferences in CA and Germany. Additionally, numerous young scholars had the opportunity to visit the University of Giessen and to learn more about the history and current processes in the EU as well as about the EU-CA relations.

It is well known that the majority of CA's population represent the young generation. Their education and professional development should be a key priority of the EU-CA bilateral and multilateral partnership relations. In future, it will be important for the EU and member countries to establish active educational partnerships like Germany.

4. THE EU, THE OSCE, AND THE NATO WORKING TOGETHER IN CENTRAL ASIA

Cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have become important for CA nations. The NATO delegations of different levels repeatedly visited CA republics. For example: the Secretary General of the NATO H. Solana in 1997, Lord Robertson in 2000 and 2003, and Jaap De Hoop Scheffer in 2004. CA leaders also participated in different the NATO summits including the celebration of the NATO's 50th year jubilee in the USA 1999 and the NATO summits in Prague in November 2002. CA nations acknowledge the NATO as an international military organization, capable of ensuring peace in different regions of the world. The NATO's partnership program is strengthening the independence, sovereignty, and stability in CA. The NATO's and the US military's increasing involvement are more than conducting *Partnership for Peace* programs and exercises with states in the region. The NATO's expanding interest in CA also reflects the broader process by which the entire area has entered the European security agenda. It is absolutely clear that the NATO's possibilities in the region after September 11, 2001 basically enlarged. According to the NATO, the strengthening of cooperation with partner countries to respond to current threats and challenges facing the Euro-Atlantic region is a high priority. Crisis management, border security, and civil emergency planning are just a few examples of the wide range of activities pursued by the *Alliance with Partner countries*. Applied Research and Development (R&D) projects of the SPS Programme, more commonly referred to as "Science for Peace" (SfP) projects, foster regional cooperation in both regions. After September 11, 2001, the NATO

⁷ The projects "Security, Conflict Management, and Economic Cooperation in Central Asia" (2002-2005) and the professionalization projects for Central Asian academics "Germany, the European Union, and Central Asia (I)" (2005-2006), and "Germany, the European Union, and Central Asia (II)" (2007-2009) was conducted by Foreign Policy Studies at the Institute of Political Sciences of the Justus-Liebig-University Giessen/Germany and Within and in addition to these projects joint conferences/workshops, staff exchange, and Ph.D. projects on and with Central Asian scholars and academic institutions have been realised.

steadily increased its cooperation with CA states. The NATO and Central Asia share vital interests and the *Alliance with Partner countries* is committed to expand its cooperation with CA partners. At the Istanbul Summit, in June 2004, the NATO Heads of State and Government agreed to place a special focus on the cooperation with CA and the Caucasus. CA partners could further assist the NATO-led ISAF⁸ mission in the country. A stable and peaceful Afghanistan that does not export terror is of “vital interest” to both the NATO and CA nations.

Robert Simmons, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia, visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in March 2005. He positively assessed the alliance Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Both countries decided to develop an Individual Partnership Action Plan whereby each partner outlines specific individual goals for their relations with the NATO in areas such as defence reform, defence institution building, and interoperability. In all discussions there was a broad recognition that the NATO and the countries of the region face common threats such as terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and illegal trafficking of narcotics. The NATO can assist the countries of the CA region to develop capabilities to deal with these threats. Relations between the NATO and Uzbekistan were decreased after the Andijan events of May 2005. Since the political dialog is essential for a mutual understanding and cooperation on both sides, they need to continue their partnership based on mutual benefits and understanding.

The problem of reconstruction and peace in Afghanistan are critical aspects for the US, Russia, China, the EU, and also for neighboring countries including CA nations. In 2008, at the summit of the NATO in Bucharest, the government of Uzbekistan suggested the rebuilding of a “6 plus 2” platform on Afghanistan and adding their NATO transform to “6 plus 3”. It is probably also necessary to include the meeting of the EU, CSTO, SCO and India (whose economy is grooving and expending) to support Afghanistan. Only a broader cooperation and active participation of CA nations can solve the problems in Afghanistan. A secure and economic stable Afghanistan is essential for CA's future.

The EU, the OSCE and the NATO declared that all have a clear interest in stable, prosperous, and democratic states in CA. Additionally, all three institutions need to cooperate with CA states in terms of security (regional and global) and energy. At the same time, the NATO and the EU are facing common challenges in their relations with these states. On the one hand, the NATO and the EU have to face the difficulty of finding a suitable balance between strategic and economic interests of their member states. On the other hand, they have to consider long-term objectives of promoting fundamental political reform in the states of the region. Furthermore, they have to reconcile regional and bilateral approaches to take

⁸ International Security Assistance Force

the highly divergent interests of very different states into account. A growing competition of actors, notably Russia, China, and emerging India, can be observed. With regard to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region, it appears particularly important for the EU and the NATO to have clear and transparent objectives in order to avoid misunderstandings or suspicions. The states of the region often perceived the West's action in this sphere as an aggressive policy which aims to bring a regime change. The EU and the NATO should avoid listing non-negotiable demands and rather place emphasis on a step-by-step, flexible approach. At the same time, they should develop a dialogue with the authorities as well as with independent groups and the civil society. It would also be useful to re-evaluate the impact of conditionality and sanctions and to adopt a coordinated and consistent policy (EUCAM Watch 2009, NATO 2008).

The Kazakhstan Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2010, will be an important event for the emerging relationship between the EU, OSCE, CIS, and CA. Kazakhstan is the first CIS country that will take on leading the organization and give perspectives on European and CA dialog. CA partnership with the EU, the NATO and other international organization is important for promoting the stability and security of CA nations as well as to assist in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. The stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan's economy are key objectives. Presently, the NATO is leading ISAF but the situation in Afghanistan is still very complicated. There are many problems among different actors on Afghanistan, including the NATO, the EU, OSCE and other international organizations due to different approaches and understandings of the situation.

5. CONCLUSION

The partnership of CA and the EU concerning political, economical, energy, transport and educational issues should be continued. The partnership will contribute the maintenance and development of peace, stability, cooperation and modernizations in the region. The EU and CA are an important and strong bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This is necessary for economic reforms and for attracting foreign aid and direct investment. Therefore, the EU and CA need to develop a concrete long-range partnership strategy. Regional cooperation in CA and Eurasia will also maintain peace and security in the region. First of all, regional organizations need to concentrate on further regional integration in CA to adequately meet the increasing processes of globalization. It is important to study the experience of the EU and ASEAN and to develop bilateral and multilateral relations with them. A well developed regional transport system in CA is essential for regional prosperity. Regional and international transport networks and substantial trade relations will facilitate foreign investment from foreign countries. CA republics consider the development of alternative regional transport communications as important for the national, regional and international

strategy. As a result, a new transport communication connection between Asia and Europe has been developed.

The EU and the NATO partnership with CA countries is important for the promotion of stability and security in CA nations. They are also needed to assist the pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in the region. At the same time, the stabilization and restoration of Afghanistan's economy are key objectives. Due to different approaches and understandings of the situation in Afghanistan, there are many problems among the different actors including the NATO, the EU, OSCE and other international organizations. In future, the cooperation between CA nations and the EU as well as other international and regional organizations should incorporate the following aspects:

Firstly, the EU and CA nations should continue their partnership on alternative transport corridors and pipelines as well as their cooperation in solving a wide range of problems, including ecological ones.

Secondly, Afghanistan is an international and regional factor of security and stabilization. Therefore, it is important for the future of CA.

Thirdly, the EU, the NATO, and OSCE need to have a regular consultation and joint projects in CA and Afghanistan.

Fourthly, international organizations are best to work together with CA republics, Pakistan, Iran, and other neighboring countries.

Fifth, the EU, the NATO, and OSCE need to have strong relations and maybe join projects on Afghanistan with Commonwealth Independent States, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Eurasian Economic Community, and Collective Treaty Security Organizations.

Globalization and security challenges require a broader partnership and cooperation. It is necessary to enlarge the Central Asian - EU relations. A future strong partnership would promote stability and economic progress in CA and Europe.

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