

HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE EU-KYRGYZSTAN COOPERATION UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EU'S STRATEGY TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA (2007-2013 Y.Y.)

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Abstract. This article examines the historical development of cooperation between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia during 2007–2013. It traces the evolution of EU–Kyrgyz relations from the establishment of bilateral ties in the early 1990s and the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to the adoption of a more comprehensive regional approach in 2007. The study analyses the principal objectives, mechanisms, and priority areas of cooperation within the Strategy, including human rights, the rule of law, good governance and democratisation, education, economic development and trade, energy and transport, environmental sustainability and water management, regional security, border management, and intercultural dialogue. Particular attention is given to EU assistance programmes and instruments, including TACIS, the Development Cooperation Instrument, BOMCA, CADAP, TRACECA, and INOGATE, as well as financial support provided to Kyrgyzstan.

The article argues that the 2007 Strategy marked an important transformation in EU–Kyrgyz relations by gradually shifting their interaction from a predominantly donor–recipient model towards a broader partnership framework. At the same time, it identifies limitations affecting the effectiveness of cooperation, particularly insufficient coordination, bureaucracy, corruption, and the lack of effective mechanisms for assessing practical results. The study concludes that sustainable EU–Kyrgyz cooperation depends on continued political dialogue, democratic and economic reforms, effective coordination of joint initiatives, and stronger regional cooperation aimed at addressing common security, economic, environmental, and development challenges.

Key words: European Union, Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia, EU strategy, international cooperation, regional security.

Introduction

Since gaining independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has sought to establish and strengthen relations with a wide range of international actors as part of its multi-vector foreign policy. In this context, cooperation with the European Union has gradually emerged as an important component of Kyrgyzstan's external relations. The EU has not only provided substantial financial and technical assistance to the country but has also supported political and economic reforms, democratic development, good governance, the rule of law, education, regional security, and socioeconomic modernisation.

EU–Kyrgyz relations began to develop systematically in the early 1990s and acquired a more institutionalised character following the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in 1995 and its entry into force in 1999. During the subsequent years, various European assistance programmes, particularly TACIS, TRACECA and INOGATE, contributed to the expansion of cooperation in institutional reform, transport, energy, agriculture, education, and other areas. Nevertheless, prior to 2007, the European Union lacked a comprehensive and differentiated policy framework specifically designed for Central Asia.

A significant turning point was the adoption of the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia in 2007. The Strategy reflected the growing geopolitical and economic importance of Central Asia and provided a broader framework for EU engagement with the countries of the region. It identified a number of priority areas, including human rights and democratisation, education, economic development and trade, energy and transport, environmental protection and water management, common security threats, and intercultural dialogue. For Kyrgyzstan, the Strategy was particularly significant because it contributed to transforming relations with the EU from a predominantly donor–recipient model towards a more comprehensive partnership. Against this background, the present article examines the historical development and major stages of cooperation

between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the EU Strategy towards Central Asia during 2007–2013. It analyses the principal mechanisms, programmes, priority areas, and financial instruments of EU engagement in Kyrgyzstan and assesses their contribution to the development of bilateral relations. Particular attention is also paid to the achievements and limitations of the Strategy and its role in strengthening political dialogue, socioeconomic development, democratic reforms, regional security, and cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and the European Union.

Materials and methods of research

The study is based on a qualitative historical and political analysis of the development of cooperation between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia during 2007–2013. The source base of the research comprises official documents of the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic, bilateral agreements, strategic and policy documents, reports of international organisations, statistical materials, and relevant academic literature on EU–Central Asia relations.

Particular attention is given to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Kyrgyz Republic, the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia adopted in 2007, and official documents of the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, and the EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic. Materials concerning major EU assistance and regional cooperation programmes, including TACIS, BOMCA, CADAP, TRACECA, INOGATE, and the Development Cooperation Instrument, are also examined. These sources make it possible to identify the institutional, political, economic, and financial dimensions of EU–Kyrgyz cooperation and to trace changes in its priorities over time.

The methodological framework combines the historical method, document analysis, comparative analysis, and a systematic approach. The historical method is used to reconstruct the principal stages in the development of EU–Kyrgyz relations from the establishment of diplomatic cooperation in the early 1990s to the implementation of the 2007–2013 Strategy. Document analysis is employed to examine the objectives, priorities, instruments, and mechanisms formulated in official agreements, strategies, programmes, and institutional reports. Comparative analysis allows the study to identify changes between the pre-2007 model of cooperation and the partnership framework established following the adoption of the EU Strategy for Central Asia. The systematic approach is applied to consider political dialogue, democratic reforms, economic development, education, regional security, border management, energy, transport, and environmental cooperation as interconnected dimensions of EU–Kyrgyz relations. The combination of these methods enables an assessment of the evolution, principal achievements, and limitations of EU–Kyrgyz cooperation and provides a basis for evaluating the significance of the 2007–2013 Strategy in the broader historical development of relations between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Results and its discussion

Kyrgyzstan is a small land-locked country in Central Asia, whose natural riches are difficult to access. Kyrgyzstan finds itself en route in between Europe and Asia and as such represents both a transit area and an important market. The country's geopolitical disposition is such that it is surrounded by large states, which compete for the regional power status in Central Asia, and with states that do not have sufficient might to compete with other pretenders.

Since 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has made significant achievements in strengthening and developing bilateral cooperation with near and far nations. However, under the current circumstances, it should be noted that bilateral diplomacy does not ensure efficient implementation of foreign policy objectives. In this regard, the most suitable option is multi-vector foreign policy. In the field of developing multi-vector foreign policy, Kyrgyzstan continues paying a special attention to the pursuit of new forms of interaction and partnership under the framework of global, multi-faceted, region and narrow-focused international organisations to ensure the protection of its national interests. Thus, multi-vector foreign policy has the capacity to meet the contemporary requirements of globalisation processes and gives the country an opportunity to actively participate in multi-dimensional

international politics.

Kyrgyzstan goes through initial stages of its democratic development and is looking for most efficient ways to get integrated into the international community. Kyrgyzstan seeks to ensure full equality for its place in the international community and this requires significant international experience. In the course of the years after independence the Kyrgyz Republic has become a member of various international organisations. The membership in international organisations is a fundamental factor of the integration into the globalisation process. In 1992, Kyrgyzstan joined the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); in 1998, Kyrgyzstan became an official member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The cooperation with the European Union (EU) is a top foreign policy priority for Kyrgyzstan. The prioritisation of the relations with the EU is due to the fact that the EU member states have established partnership relations with Kyrgyzstan in various areas and provided donor assistance and other support in the form of grants and investment. The cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and the EU member states can be traced back to the beginning of the 1990's, when they established bilateral relations. However, up until 2007, the EU has not have a targeted tailored strategy towards the Central Asian republics including Kyrgyzstan. The EU-Central Asian relations prior to 2007 have predominantly revolved around bilateral relations.

The EU-Kyrgyz Cooperation Prior To The Adoption Of EU's Strategy towards Central Asia In 2007. Since the establishment of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1991, the EU has been providing assistance with political and economic reforms and the EU and Kyrgyzstan demonstrated mutual interest in consolidating bilateral relations. During his visit to Bishkek in April 1992, European Commissioner for Trade, Competition, and Agriculture Frans Andriessen participated in laying down the fundament for the EU-Kyrgyz bilateral cooperation. On April 03, 1992, the parties signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the European Commission. From this moment, the official interaction between Kyrgyzstan and the European Communities in the face of the Commission has become regular and systematic. The development of bilateral relations between Kyrgyzstan and the European Union took place within a context of mutual agreements signed by the leadership of the parties. The key cooperation document is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and the Kyrgyz Republic (PCA). Kyrgyzstan was one of the first countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) where the European Communities sought to start negotiations on the PCA. The PCA is an international treaty signed by the European Communities and their Member States. The PCA was signed for 10 years with subsequent automatic prolongation up until the moment, when one of the parties declares denunciation. The European Communities/European Union signed similar partnership and cooperation agreements with all CIS countries - except for Tajikistan (PCA was eventually signed in 2004 and is in force since 2010), Belarus, and Turkmenistan (the ratification was suspended due to the human rights violations in this country). The first prototype agreement was the EU-Russian PCA signed in 1994. The contents and the text of these agreements are virtually identical. For this reason, it is possible to call this agreement a uniform treaty. Nevertheless, each PCA is unique as it legally fixes specific areas of cooperation, takes into consideration the peculiarities of bilateral relations of each CIS country with the EU, and identifies key priority areas and interests.

In the second half of the 1990's, the EU has been implementing a new initiative in Central Asia – economic and technical assistance to the region's countries. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was developed to assist the countries in the region with the transition. Officially, SPECA was implemented under the aegis of two regional UN commissions – the European Economic Commission (EEC) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). However, in reality, the Programme entailed an increasing European influence over the Central Asian region. SPECA has become a new regional initiative of the European countries that were interested in spreading the geostrategic influence of the European Communities in Central Asia. Even before the SPECA's establishment, the EEC regional policy was quite active in Central Asia: all five regional states became EEC members in the first half of the 1990's. In addition, the EEC conducted a range of social and economic initiatives in the Central

Asian countries before SPECA. The SPECA's area of activities included specific projects in social and economic areas of development [1].

European Commissioner Hans van den Broek visited Kyrgyzstan on August 30-September 01, 1996 [2]. His visit became a significant one for the development of bilateral cooperation between the European Communities and the Kyrgyz Republic. In the course of his meetings with the Kyrgyz leadership, the parties agreed on the necessity to develop and consolidate foreign policy and economic relations. In order to implement the declared objectives of bilateral cooperation, it was resolved to establish a joint Kyrgyzstan-EU Committee that would serve as a working bodies to address the cooperation issues. These plans started getting implemented on November 21, 1996, when the Joint Kyrgyzstan-EC Committee held their first meeting that covered a broad range of bilateral cooperation issues, as well as the implementation of the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, a temporary agreement on trade and trade measures was signed [3]. The second meeting of the Joint Committee took place in Bishkek on May 07- 08, 1998. At this meeting, the parties discussed the state of affairs and prospects for bilateral cooperation and the implementation progress of the previous committee meeting. Soon afterwards, the Joint Committee was terminated due to the PCA entering in force. In compliance with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the EU and Kyrgyzstan established permanent bodies of bilateral cooperation: the Cooperation Council, the Cooperation Committee, and the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee.

The PCA entering in force has become an exceptionally significant milestone. The cooperation with a large political, trade, and economic partner and a global actor corresponds with the strategic foreign policy objectives of Kyrgyzstan and fits into its deliberate efforts to get engaged with the leading political, financial, trade, and economic international organisations. The PCA was in force up until 2009. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Kyrgyzstan was signed on February 09, 1995, and entered in force on July 01, 1999, after having been ratified at the Kyrgyz Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh), the European Parliament and all national parliaments of the European Union Member States. [4]. On July 19-20, 1999, the first meeting of the EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Council took place in Brussels. Kyrgyz Prime Minister Muraliev and the European Commission's Director General for External Relations Günter Burghardt co-chaired the meeting. The European delegation to Kyrgyzstan included heads of various directorates general of the European Commission and representatives of the 15 EU Member States [5]. The Cooperation Council meetings became regular at ministerial, parliamentary and governmental levels. On March 2000, the first meeting of the EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Committee took place in Brussels. In the course of the meeting, the parties discussed prospective directions of the PCA implementation and progress on the implementation of the Cooperation Council's recommendations. Simultaneously, the parties discussed the issues of further development under the TACIS framework the Indicative Programme and the Action Programme for Kyrgyzstan for the years ahead: INOGATE (Interstate Oil and Gas Transportation to Europe), TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia), TEMPUS, and other supplementary programmes that included cooperation in science and statistics. Under the PCA framework, a sub-committee was established. The sub-committee dealt with the issues that represented mutual cooperation interest for the two cooperating parties [6]. Further meetings of the Cooperation Council and Cooperation in 2000-2002 confirmed the necessity to have these bodies. This necessity was under the spotlight of the Fifth Meeting of the EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Council on July 23-24, 2003 in Brussels [7]. The head of the EU delegation at the meeting was the Deputy State Secretary at the Italian Foreign Ministry, Roberto Antonioni; Deputy Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Kanybek Osmonov headed the Kyrgyz delegation. In the course of the Cooperation Council meeting, the parties discussed a broad range of issues that concerned the current state of affairs and prospects for further development of bilateral relations in the areas of politics, trade, economics, and democratisation under the PCA framework. Both parties paid special attention to the issues of democratisation and human rights that represent an important area of international cooperation and affect the prospects of the trade and economic development and investment climate in the Kyrgyz Republic. The EU representatives noted that Kyrgyzstan is one of the countries that the

EU sees as priority partners. They welcomed the Kyrgyz efforts on democratic development and continuous process of structural amendments in governance of the Kyrgyz Republic. At the same time, the EU expressed its concerns about specific cases of human rights violations and mass media freedom in Kyrgyzstan. Afterwards, the meeting attendees discussed upcoming events that aimed to develop cooperation in the area of regional security, including combatting international terrorism and addressing transnational threats and issues. In order to assist Kyrgyzstan with solving these issues, the EU allocated funds to implement a border management project in Central Asia – BOMCA.

The European Union provides funds for the implementation of the declared objectives under the TACIS framework. TACIS was established by the EU's decision in December 1990. In compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, dated April 03, 1992, the TACIS Coordination Bureau was established in Kyrgyzstan. The first phase of TACIS was approved by the European Parliament on April 19, 1996. It was scheduled for the period from January 01, 1996, to December 2001, and has ended now. The major components of TACIS include structural and institutional reforms, democratic consolidation, governance reforms, reforms and support of enterprises, trade, financial sector, agriculture, processing industry, energy, transport, and communications. From 1992 to 2002, 63 Million € were allocated to these areas. By 2005, TACIS planned to implement such projects as the transport sector support in Kyrgyzstan, vocational training and re-training for unemployed population and vulnerable social groups, and small and medium size business development [8]. Under the TACIS framework, INOGATE(Interstate Oil and GAs Transportation to Europe) and TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) were being implemented in Kyrgyzstan. In August 1998, the parties signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the first investment project of TACIS in Kyrgyzstan that was implemented under the TRACECA framework. The Kyrgyz Government coordinated the project and the Kyrgyz Railroad Directorate was the primary beneficiary. In compliance with the Memorandum of Understanding, Bishkek-1 train station received train station equipment that cost 0.5 Million European Currency Units (ECU) [9] . The Kyrgyzstan programme likewise consists of projects in three target areas: structural and institutional reform, agriculture and the agri-foodstuff industry, and basic infrastructure. Again, the aim is to speed up the country's transition to a market economy and the projects will draw on previous action programmes carried out between 1993 and 1996 (28 Million ECU). The programme will be funded by a 10.7 Million ECU grant [10]. In addition, the EU provided support through the Food Security Programme. In total, from 1997 to 1999, the EU allocated 26 Million € to the Food Security Programme. In 2000, the grant amount was 8 Million € [11]. The Food Security Programme's key objective was to support to maintain balance of payments, to promote some key reforms, to assist with developing agricultural and social policy strategies and to improve overall situation with the food provision in the Kyrgyz Republic. In the course of the European Commission's mission visit to Kyrgyzstan in March 2001, the parties signed a memorandum to continue the Food Security Programme with addition 9.5 Million €. In compliance with the protocol on the first transaction, signed on July 12, 2001, in July 2001 the first 5 Million € arrived. The second transaction of 4.5 Million € was allocated in December 2001 [12].

The PCA between the EU and the Kyrgyz Republic was in force until 2009. At the moment, the EU-Kyrgyz relations mostly revolve around technical and other assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic. Prior to the adoption of the EU Strategy towards Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan received about 250 Million € to implement a variety of projects and programmes. In order to improve the EU policy towards the region, the EU adopted a strategy towards Central Asia. The EU Strategy for new partnership has become a logical continuation of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

The EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Under The Framework Of The EU's Strategy Towards Central Asia (2007-2013). The geographic proximity of Central Asia to the regions that are sources of such international security threats as terrorism put the Central Asian region under the spotlight of the global actors, including Russia, the United States, the European Union, Iran, India, and China. In addition to the strategically important geopolitical location, the region has high energy resources potential, which represents some interest for both regional and international actors. Increasing geopolitical rivalry and the conflict potential due to the unregulated territorial claims and water

resources turn Central Asia into an area of competition, where various powers pursue their interests.

Starting from 1991, virtually all European states have established dynamic relations with the Central Asian republic. However, there are no signs of a unified policy towards region. The European Commission launched several significant programmes that cover the areas of strategic interests of the local actors: energy sector, transport, security, and poverty alleviation. While these initiatives were positively accepted and scheduled for long term, they were still just the initial steps that needed to be unified under one strategic framework. The European Union had to amend its regional policy because it acknowledged that its earlier approach, e.g. TACIS events, were too uniform and unspecific. The Central Asian countries do share some traits, but they also have significant differences. The differences include territory, demographic potential, natural resources availability, and development potential. For example, Kyrgyzstan has a rich energy potential – a side advantage of having rich water resources, but has very limited oil and gas reserves. In addition, Kyrgyzstan is a mountainous country, where the most of territory is covered with mountains and the population is engaged in cattle herding. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan is interested in the projects that focus on the use of water resources and agricultural reforms. Nevertheless, security, border management, and poverty alleviation are urgent for all countries in the region.

On June 22, 2007, in the course of the Council of the EU's session with the participation of all EU Member State leaders, the EU's Strategy towards Central Asia 2007-2013 was adopted. The strategy was developed by the initiative of Germany, which chaired the Council of the EU at the time. In compliance with the adopted strategy, the EU was going to allocate 750 Million € to sponsor partnership with the Central Asian republics in 2007-2013. The adoption of the new partnership strategy happened against the background of the increasing influence of the regional political and economic development and transnational regional threats on the EU. With the EU enlargement, the formerly Soviet Baltic states joined the EU. South Caucasus became an Eastern Neighbourhood partners in the Black Sea area. As an outcome, Central Asia and the EU became closer to each other.

Under the framework of the EU's Strategy towards Central Asia, the EU defined its political provisions that aimed to ensure an intensified EU involvement in the Central Asian region. For the first time, the EU developed political criteria that openly and clearly identified the European interests in the region and outlined specific areas of cooperation. The Strategy's objective was the establishment of a new broad cooperation that aimed to ensure dialogue and transparency. The EU's Strategy towards Central Asia covers both bilateral and regional dimensions of cooperation. Such policy has two aims: to acknowledge the unique nature of each country and to develop regional projects to ensure the regional integration linkages. Bilateral cooperation included such issues as human rights, economic diversification, energy sector, youth and education, and other affairs. At the regional level, the issues of concern include organised crime, human trafficking, drugs and weapons trade, terrorism, nuclear weapons, dialogue of cultures, energy, environmental pollution, water resources management, migration, border management, and transport infrastructure.

The strategy's specific feature is the use of an intensified approach in a range of cooperation areas, starting from democratisation and finishing with environmental protection. Under the framework of such approach, the EU commits to ensuring development, promotion and support of specific tasks, including creation of a unified energy system in the region. Another specific feature of the strategy is its lack of aggression. The strategy views Central Asia as an area where the interests of various international and regional actors cross. It is evident that under such circumstances, the EU states prefer cooperation over rivalry. This can be seen in the EU's intentions to establish communication with such regional organisations as Eurasian Economic Community, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. In addition, the EU views Central Asia as an element of its security arrangement. In this regard, the EU prefers to have a united, integrated, and loyal Central Asia that shares European values and principles at the border of the West and the East. The increasing influence of the region and its geostrategic location finds its reflection in the EU interests as well.

Due to the unilateral dynamics of the strategy, its primary objective is to pursue the interests of the EU. For Central Asia the strategy has secondary meaning. The strategy in fact represents a

declaration of principles and intentions. However, for Kyrgyzstan, this strategy is very important because it transfers the EU-Kyrgyz relations from the donor-recipient dimension into a totally different dimension, where the Central Asian nations are the EU partners. The Strategy identifies three key areas of the long-term partnership: security, stability, and development. These areas correspond to the general EU interests in the region. In the course of broad consultations with the leadership of the five Central Asian nations, the following seven cooperation areas have been identified: human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation; youth and education; economic development, trade and investment; energy and transport links; environmental sustainability and water; common threats and challenges; and, intercultural dialogue. Acknowledging the unique nature of each Central Asian state and their legitimate concerns about their independence, the strategy is structured in a way that three quarters of the projects are devoted to bilateral cooperation. The rest represent region-wide project activities that require joint efforts, e.g. combatting illegal trade, regulating transport and environmental protection. The key priorities of the EU Strategy include the following: 1. Human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation represent European norms and values and incorporate the expansion of the area of freedom, democracy and rule of law to new regions. 2. Youth and education: the strategy declares its support to regional educational centres and close cooperation with the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The European Education Initiative foresees activities in the area of basic secondary, full secondary, and higher education, as well as the establishment of the Centres of Excellence in Central Asia. The E-Silk Road programme, another initiative, is intended to connect corresponding research and university centres in Europe and in Central Asia. However, in the recent years, the youth and education policy mostly revolved around reforming the old education system and introducing Bologna process. 3. Promotion of economic development and trade. The EU supports the removal of trade barriers between Central Asia and promotes membership in the WTO for three Central Asian countries, which are not yet WTO members. The latter is a very complex process because of the poor state of affairs in Central Asia and the fact that some Central Asian countries have not joined the World Trade Organisation. At the moment, only Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are WTO members; Kazakhstan is in the process of negotiating its membership. The EU supports the establishment of legislative and organisational basis for improved business and investment climate and encourages economic diversity. The expansion of regional transport, energy and trade infrastructure will help making the most of the Central Asian economic potential through regional cooperation. However, the EU offers most favoured nation treatment system, but the trade between the regional countries is not sufficient for this. 4. Energy and transport links: the promotion of the Baku Initiative was an important feature of the strategy. The Baku Initiative combines the contents of the Treaty on Energy with the norms and provisions of market liberalisation. The Baku Initiative provides a unified platform for energy producers, transmission companies and the end users of energy ensuring rational energy use and higher safety standard at the transmission stage. This is one of the top priorities in the list of the EU's realpolitik interests in Central Asia. The Baku Initiative implies creation of energy resources transportation channels from Central Asia, predominantly from the Caspian Sea to the European markets with the purpose of decreasing the EU's energy dependency from Russia. However, these issues are closely interlinked with the geopolitical processes in the region and this poses a challenge. The interests of other countries, like Russia, are under the question and this is an issue. Moreover, the energy dimension of the Strategy is a clear priority. INOGATE and TRACECA are main mechanisms of influence of the European Union in the field. Ideally, the use of raw materials potential of Central Asia on the basis of the complex dynamism of the TRACECA will give local economies and major energy importers to ensure stable supply of raw materials. It will promote integration of the region into global systems of transport and information communications. However, the main part of the project is still on preliminary stage of development. 5. Environmental sustainability and water include the EU's cooperation suggestions in the field of environmental protection, forest protection, water management policies in the region, and support to creating a unified energy system in Central Asia. The most beneficial proposal is the suggestion about an integrated policy of water resources management. Provided mutually beneficial implementation of the proposal along with creation of

common energy system will be achieved, it may solve several obstacles of effective integration of the region. However, very deep contradictions between countries of the region and lack of a unified approach make it impossible move successfully in this direction. Meanwhile, cooperation is realized within the framework of EU - Central Asia Dialogue on Environment and the Working Group of the EU - CA about water [13]. 6. Common threats and challenges include extremism, drug trafficking, regional security, and border management in Central Asia. This program supports fighting against extremism and drug trafficking, promotion of overall security in the region, and developing of modern border management in Central Asia. The sixth sphere of priorities is the most important for Central Asia. Regulation of border disputes, joint struggle against extremism and drug trafficking provision of general security in the region are necessary for economic prosperity of Central Asian countries. A stable Central Asia is useful for the European Union. However, for effective involvement in the region the EU should establish links with regional security organizations as the SCO and the CSTO, with which the EU has no formal relations. 7. Intercultural dialogue: Religious and cultural diversity and tolerance represent an invaluable legacy of the Central Asian peoples. On the basis of this legacy, the EU will support civil society dialogue and respect of the freedom to believe [14].

The strategy's key function is to improve the structure and the direction of the EU-Central Asian cooperation. In order to achieve the EU strategy's objectives, the EU used the existing partnership and cooperation agreements, as well as opening new permanent representations. The EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic was opened in 2010 [15].

Out of 750 Million € allocated to implement the strategy, Kyrgyzstan received 171 Million € in the period 2007-2013, including the following support: 1. Project development – 110 Million €: - Poverty alleviation – 44 Million €; - Education – 25 Million €; - Agricultural development – 15 Million €; - Good governance – 26 Million €; 2. Budgetsupport- 61 Million € [16].

This budget does not include the bilateral programme funded and implemented by the EU Member-States, non-governmental organisations, as well as the EU contributions to various international organisations, which work in Central Asia. For example, the EU contributes 70% to the OSCE activities in the region and the EU and its member-states provide 62% of the allocated funds to the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development. Outside the oil and gas sector, the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development is the largest multilateral investor in Central Asia with a direct investment of 3 Billion €; in Kyrgyzstan, EBRD is implementing 120 projects worth 535 Million € [17]. But the strategy has its flaws - for example, the lack of conditions on providing any practical results. It only mentions that the Council of the European Union will discuss the strategy's implementation progress once in two years. It is possible that the strategy would have been more efficient if the allocation of development assistance funds would have been dependent upon the strategy's implementation. In this regard, the EU Strategy towards Central Asia provides an opportunity to consolidate partnership with the EU and to start the regional integration process for the regional nations. As to Kyrgyzstan, it is possible to focus the efforts on the following: 1. Developing a national strategy on the partnership with the EU or a more practical action plan on the implementation of the EU Strategy towards Kyrgyzstan from the part of Kyrgyzstan. 2. Overall coordination of the cooperation with the EU including donor contributions. The separation of the EU cooperation areas between various state bodies without much coordination leads to less than successful outcomes and duplication of efforts. Under such circumstances, it is necessary to appoint a special representative on the cooperation with the EU in Kyrgyzstan. An EU Representative to Kyrgyzstan position exists since 2010; a similar position should be established in Kyrgyzstan. 3. Consultations on the EU cooperation between the Central Asian states at the regional level: such format of consultations can become a constructive basis for the attempts of regional integration and the launching of the negotiations on establishing a unified energy and water networks in Central Asia. These consultations could have been inspired with the EU integration history, where the founding six nations established the European Steel and Coal Community in 1951 with the purpose of joint use of the coal resources and the steel industry to revive the post-World War II economy in Europe.

According to former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyz Republic Ednan Karabaev "The EU's Cooperation Strategy towards the Central Asian region confirms that, after having passed the

period of conceptualisation and preventive projects, the EU-Central Asian and the EU-Kyrgyz cooperation have reached the level of strategic partnership” [18]. Kyrgyzstan is interested in the continuation of active cooperation with the EU. It is also ready to launch mutually beneficial pilot projects, which take into consideration the specific features of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Under the strategy’s framework, the following areas represent top priority for Kyrgyzstan: education, BOMCA and CADAP programmes, and the rule of law.

The EU is concerned about the state of the regional security in Central Asia. Areas of concern include international terrorism, drug trafficking, and weapon trade. Taking this into consideration, the EU has been funding the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP), which combats illegal drugs trafficking through the region. The CADAP supported the law enforcement bodies and agencies of the Central Asian countries, which participated in anti-drug trafficking. The CADAP’s budget for 2002-2003 was 3 Million €. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) implemented the CADAP. In addition, after 9/11 and the subsequent anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan, the EU acknowledged the need to relate the Afghan problem with the Central Asian problems in the wider context and reviewed the policy towards Central Asia in order to increase the attention to the needs of the region. As a result, the assistance provided through TACIS doubled. In 2003, the European Commission signed an agreement with the UNDP to coordinate and implement the TACIS BOMCA programme, which has become a continuation of the CADAP. The Programme’s objectives included the support of harmonised and coordinated contemporary mechanisms of border management at the regional level, as well as the improvement of the border management cooperation and support of the legal trade and transit through the Central Asian borders. BOMCA represents a multi-faceted programme, which introduces the complex border management by the Central Asian governments with the use of the European practices. The Programme employs the following instruments that facilitate the application of the European experience in the Central Asian republics: - Political consultation and assistance with drafting key policy documents in the area of border management that are drafted with the help of European experts; - Support with the infrastructure and equipment modernisation, consultations and organisation of educational centres: This area of activities is implemented through educational centres and include training of trainers, study tours to the European educational institutions, cynological training and detective data collection and risk analysis methods; - Coordination of the activities and joint partnership of all Central Asian states under one programme and increasing the potential of combating drug trafficking at Central Asian borders.

From 2003 to 2007 the BOMCA budget amounted to 33 Million € [19]. From 2004 to 2011, the BOMCA constructed, repaired, and equipped 52 border posts, 6 training centres for border service personnel, 4 dormitories at the training centres, 3 cynological centres and 3 cynological departments in all five Central Asian republics. More than 2.000 officers of border service and customs service participated in the study tours to the EU countries [20].

Opening the EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010 became an element of enforcing the EU’s Strategy in Kyrgyzstan. The first Head of the Mission was Ambassador Mrs Chantal Ebberecht; afterwards, it was headed by Ambassador Mr Cesare de Montis (since September 2013). The key assistance programmes that the European Commission uses in the Kyrgyz Republic are the Development and Cooperation Instrument, the Instrument for Stability, the European Institute on Democracy and Human Rights, as well as the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO): - The Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) is the mechanism that has replaced the TACIS as the key instrument of the EU on providing assistance to Central Asia since 2007. The key objectives of the cooperation under the framework of the DCI is poverty alleviation in the partner countries and regions through sustainable development, as well as support to democracy, good governance, human rights, and rule of law. The Regional Strategy Paper of the EU for Central Asia establishes the basis for the DCI implementation in the Kyrgyz Republic for the six years [21]; - The Instrument for Stability (IfS) is a strategic mechanism that was developed to address the global security and development issues. The IfS entered into its force on January 01, 2007. The IfS replaces several mechanisms of combatting drug trafficking, mine lifting, support to refugees, crisis management, rehabilitation and reconstruction [22]; - The European Institute on

Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is a programme that aims to support human rights, assist criminal legislation reform, ensure protection of prisoners, support of democracy and good governance, freedom of mass media, the rule of law and law enforcement bodies reforming, as well as conflict prevention. The EIDHR organises competitions for local non-commercial and non-governmental organisations to implement projects on the indicated topics. These competitions are regularly organised by the EU Delegation in Bishkek [23]; - The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) provides funding for emergencies assistance in the cases of natural or man-made disasters, as well as helps in the cases of conflict to save people. The ECHO funds European humanitarian organisations, the UN agencies, and the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Society. The humanitarian aid is provided in the form of medical professionals and equipment, medicines, tents, food, various expendables, equipment, generators and fuel for humanitarian missions [24]. Thus, after the June 2010 clashes in the South of Kyrgyzstan, the EU provided 5 Million € under the framework of humanitarian aid during emergencies.

The EU's grant programme on supporting vocational education and training in Kyrgyzstan was first announced in April 2011. The programme's objective is to assist Kyrgyzstan with establishing an efficient vocational education and training system, which could offer good quality services and would meet the local economic and societal needs. Under the framework of the programme, the EU allocated 3 Million € to fund 5 educational projects, which aim to support the vocational education training.

On February 21-22, 2012, the Eighth Meeting of the EU-Kyrgyz Parliamentary Cooperation Committee took place in Bishkek. A long suspension period preceded this meeting: the Seventh meeting took place in 2009 in Brussels. The European delegation was headed by Mr Paolo Bartolozzi [25]. The key issues discussed at the meeting included trade and economic relations, anti-terrorism cooperation, combatting organised crime and drug trafficking in Central Asia, democratisation and constitutional amendments, including pluralism, the role of the legislative power and the mass media freedoms. The adopted resolution highlighted the role of the EU's Strategy towards Central Asia as the platform for closer bilateral and multilateral cooperation. It was agreed that the strategy shall assist the existing efforts on developing an effective and result oriented approach to such issues as water and energy resources management, trade and investment, as well as combatting drug and human trafficking, religious extremism, and indicates the necessity to have the national parliaments contributing to the achievement of these aims. In the final resolution, it was noted that it is important to increase the cooperation in the consolidation of the healthcare system in the Kyrgyz Republic and environmental protection (in particular, addressing the dumping tails problem) as these problems have transnational character, as well as reform of the law enforcement bodies, judiciary reform, and penitentiary reform. In addition, upon the results of this meeting, the EU will allocate 20 Million € to support education [26].

Joint implementation of transnational regional projects in Central Asia occupies a significant part of developing the EU-Kyrgyz relations. These projects aim to increase the integration potential of the regional countries and to ensure joint resolution of the most pressing regional issues. The EU activities in Kyrgyzstan cover virtually all possible sectors: youth oriented programmes, hydropower, unemployment, counter-terrorism measures, drug trafficking, healthcare projects, and reforming the penitentiary system. However, not all programmes are efficient due to the corruption and bureaucracy in the country. Thus, the strategy provides the EU with a platform to cooperation with the governments of the countries, which accept the EU support to modernise, reform and stabilise countries in the region and strengthen regional cooperation. The Strategy facilitates higher degrees of harmonisations and creates an EU-Central Asian cooperation platform. In addition, it helps mobilising other cooperation resources and increasing the political dialogue: since the adoption of the Strategy, the number of top level visits has increased. The strategy also helps the EU to articulate its expectations with regard to democratic reforms and shape the obligations of partnercountries. The EU cooperates with non-governmental organisations to consolidate civil society. In sum, the Kyrgyz cooperation with the EU bases itself on the growing mutual interest in furthering the cooperation. The key to the long-term cooperation between the EU and Kyrgyzstan is resolution of such urgent issues

as democratic and economic transformation reforms, as well as the establishment of the regional security system, which takes into consideration the interests of all Eurasian states. In addition to the economic assistance in the course of the last 30 years, the EU and Kyrgyzstan have made some achievements in the area of promoting human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance in Kyrgyzstan.

Conclusion

The analysis of the historical development of EU–Kyrgyz cooperation demonstrates that relations between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic have gradually evolved from predominantly technical and financial assistance towards a more comprehensive and institutionalised partnership. Since the establishment of bilateral relations in the early 1990s, the EU has played an important role in supporting Kyrgyzstan’s political, economic, and social transformation. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, together with EU assistance programmes such as TACIS, TRACECA, INOGATE, BOMCA, and CADAP, provided an institutional and practical foundation for the subsequent expansion of bilateral cooperation.

The adoption of the EU Strategy for Central Asia in 2007 represented a significant stage in this process. It introduced a broader strategic framework and contributed to transforming EU–Kyrgyz relations from a largely donor–recipient model into a partnership based on a wider range of common interests. During 2007–2013, cooperation encompassed human rights, the rule of law, good governance and democratisation, education, economic development, trade and investment, energy and transport, environmental sustainability and water management, border security, and responses to common regional threats. The opening of the EU Delegation to the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010 further strengthened the institutional basis for political dialogue and practical cooperation.

At the same time, the implementation of the Strategy revealed a number of limitations. Insufficient coordination among national institutions, bureaucracy, corruption, and the absence of effective mechanisms linking financial assistance to concrete implementation results reduced the effectiveness of certain initiatives. Furthermore, complex regional challenges, particularly those related to water and energy resources, border management, security, and differing national interests, constrained the development of deeper regional cooperation.

Nevertheless, the EU Strategy for Central Asia created important opportunities for strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation beyond traditional development assistance. For Kyrgyzstan, cooperation with the EU provided not only financial and technical support but also opportunities to advance institutional reforms, education, regional security, and socioeconomic development. For the European Union, a stable and cooperative Kyrgyzstan constituted an important element of its broader engagement with Central Asia.

Overall, the experience of 2007–2013 demonstrates that the sustainability of EU–Kyrgyz cooperation depends on the combination of mutual interests, effective institutional coordination, consistent political dialogue, and the practical implementation of agreed priorities. Further development of the partnership requires continued attention to democratic and economic reforms, the rule of law, good governance, education, regional security, and cross-border cooperation. Strengthening these areas may provide a solid foundation for a long-term and mutually beneficial partnership between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic and contribute to greater stability and cooperation in Central Asia.

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ЕУРОПАЛЫҚ ОДАҚТЫҢ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯҒА ҚАТЫСТЫ СТРАТЕГИЯСЫ АЯСЫНДАҒЫ ЕО МЕН ҚЫРҒЫЗСТАН ЫНТЫМАҚТАСТЫҒЫНЫҢ ТАРИХИ АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ (2007–2013 ЖЖ.)

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Аңдатпа. Мақалада 2007–2013 жылдар аралығында Еуропалық Одақтың Орталық Азияға қатысты стратегиясының іске асырылуына баса назар аударыла отырып, Еуропалық Одақ пен Қырғыз Республикасы арасындағы ынтымақтастықтың тарихи даму үдерісі қарастырылады. ЕО мен Қырғызстан арасындағы қатынастардың 1990-жылдардың басында екіжақты байланыстардың орнауынан және Әріптестік пен ынтымақтастық туралы келісімнің жасалуынан бастап, 2007 жылы неғұрлым кешенді өңірлік тәсілдің қабылдануына дейінгі эволюциясы зерделенеді. Зерттеуде аталған Стратегия аясындағы ынтымақтастықтың негізгі мақсаттары, тетіктері мен басым бағыттары талданады. Олардың қатарында адам құқықтарын қорғау, құқық үстемдігін қамтамасыз ету, тиімді мемлекеттік басқару мен демократияландыру, білім беру, экономикалық даму мен сауда, энергетика мен көлік, экологиялық орнықтылық пен су ресурстарын басқару, өңірлік қауіпсіздік, шекараларды басқару және мәдениетаралық диалог мәселелері қамтылған. Еуропалық Одақтың TACIS, Даму саласындағы ынтымақтастық құралы (Development Cooperation Instrument – DCI), BOMCA, CADAP, TRACECA және INOGATE сияқты көмек көрсету бағдарламалары мен құралдарына, сондай-ақ Қырғызстанға көрсетілген қаржылық қолдауға ерекше назар аударылады.

Мақалада 2007 жылғы Стратегияның қабылдануы ЕО мен Қырғызстан арасындағы қатынастарды трансформациялаудың маңызды кезеңі болғаны және өзара іс-қимылды негізінен «донор–реципиент» үлгісінен неғұрлым кең ауқымды әріптестік форматына біртіндеп көшіруге ықпал еткені негізделеді. Сонымен қатар

ынтымақтастықтың тиімділігіне кері әсер еткен бірқатар шектеуші факторлар айқындалады. Олардың қатарында үйлестірудің жеткіліксіздігі, бюрократиялық кедергілер, сыбайлас жемқорлық және практикалық нәтижелерді бағалаудың тиімді тетіктерінің болмауы атап көрсетіледі. Зерттеу қорытындысында ЕО мен Қырғызстан арасындағы орнықты ынтымақтастықты одан әрі дамыту саяси диалогты жалғастыруға, демократиялық және экономикалық реформаларды дәйекті жүзеге асыруға, бірлескен бастамаларды тиімді үйлестіруге, сондай-ақ қауіпсіздік, экономика, қоршаған ортаны қорғау және даму салаларындағы ортақ мәселелерді шешуге бағытталған өңірлік ынтымақтастықты нығайтуға байланысты екендігі тұжырымдалады.

Түйін сөздер: Еуропалық Одақ, Қырғызстан, Орталық Азия, ЕО стратегиясы, халықаралық ынтымақтастық, өңірлік қауіпсіздік.

ИСТОРИЧЕСКИЕ АСПЕКТЫ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА ЕВРОПЕЙСКОГО СОЮЗА И КЫРГЫЗСТАНА В РАМКАХ СТРАТЕГИИ ЕС В ОТНОШЕНИИ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ (2007–2013 ГГ.)

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается историческое развитие сотрудничества между Европейским союзом и Кыргызской Республикой с особым вниманием к реализации Стратегии ЕС в отношении Центральной Азии в 2007–2013 гг. Прослеживается эволюция отношений между ЕС и Кыргызстаном — от установления двусторонних связей в начале 1990-х гг. и заключения Соглашения о партнерстве и сотрудничестве до перехода Европейского союза к более комплексному региональному подходу в Центральной Азии в 2007 г. Анализируются основные цели, механизмы и приоритетные направления сотрудничества, определенные Стратегией, в том числе защита прав человека, обеспечение верховенства права, совершенствование государственного управления и развитие демократических институтов, образование, экономическое развитие и торговля, энергетика и транспорт, охрана окружающей среды и управление водными ресурсами, региональная безопасность, управление границами и межкультурный диалог. Особое внимание уделяется программам и инструментам содействия Европейского союза, включая TACIS, Инструмент сотрудничества в целях развития (Development Cooperation Instrument — DCI), BOMCA, CADAP, TRACECA и INOGATE, а также финансовой помощи, предоставлявшейся Кыргызстану.

В статье показано, что принятие Стратегии в 2007 г. стало важным этапом трансформации отношений между ЕС и Кыргызстаном и способствовало постепенному переходу от преимущественно донорско-реципиентной модели взаимодействия к более широкому формату партнерского сотрудничества. Вместе с тем выявлен ряд факторов, снижавших эффективность данного взаимодействия, среди которых недостаточная координация совместных инициатив, бюрократические барьеры, коррупция и отсутствие действенных механизмов оценки практических результатов реализуемых программ. В заключении подчеркивается, что дальнейшее устойчивое развитие сотрудничества между Европейским союзом и Кыргызстаном обусловлено продолжением политического диалога, последовательным осуществлением демократических и экономических реформ, повышением эффективности координации совместных инициатив, а также укреплением регионального сотрудничества в целях решения общих проблем в сфере безопасности, экономики, охраны окружающей среды и социально-экономического развития.

Ключевые слова: Европейский союз, Кыргызстан, Центральная Азия, Стратегия ЕС, международное сотрудничество, региональная безопасность.