

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND CENTRAL ASIA: ANALYSIS OF NEW STRATEGY

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Annotation: Today, relations between the European Union and Central Asia are radically changing and gaining new significance. The reason for this is the opening policy of the region. This strategy is more successful than previous one. The new strategy focuses on economy, policy and culture, which wasn't paid enough attention in the old strategy. Furthermore, Aspects not previously mentioned in the old strategy adopted by the EU such as border security, cooperation in the customs service, investment in Central Asian youth through scholarships, supporting innovative technology and knowledge.

Key words: new opportunities for a stronger partnership, fast-growing relations, legitimacy, improvement of border management, investment for young people, enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement.

Relations between the European Union and Central Asia date back to the final 10 years of the 20th century. Progress of the relationship between the European Union and the republics of Central Asia can be seen on strategies that are accepted by the European Union. One of the important things that, these relations are based on mutual interest and benefits, I considered that interest is always on the top priority of any country and region, that's why it plays a crucial factor in any policy. In recent years, Central Asia countries' more open foreign policy improved connectivity between regions. EU also encouraged this policy and adopted a new strategy due to the open policy of Central Asia. Furthermore, this new strategy is the result of globalization, the world is changing so fast that cannot be avoided, as a result, it leads to establishing a new strategy by the EU in 2019. As a matter of fact, Europe did not have a certain strategy during the 2000s in Central Asia. The first strategy for a new partnership adopted on 31st May 2007, which covers the period from 2007 to 2013.

Establishing this strategy was not easy, completing this progress requires approximately 10 years, it means that the foundation of this strategy started at 90th years in the 20th century. However, this project or strategy was ineffective, as a result, it was not implemented as effective as expected countries. There might be some reasons why it was so, firstly, the EU was not so confident to establish a new strategy because of the protectionism policy of Central Asia. Secondly, Central Asia was focusing on relations mainly with the US, Russia, and China, but this situation changed completely now. If we pay attention to this old strategy, there had some advantages side like ensuring security, reducing poverty, supporting higher education, protecting human rights. The former strategy is not so useless or ineffective for all Central Asia states, in this case, Kazakhstan and EU relationships have progressed immeasurably. EU-Kazakhstan relations include more than 25 years, Kazakhstan was the first country, which started a relationship with the EU. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was a starting point for the advancement of these relations. Kazakhstan always tries to establish a friendly and strategic relationship with the EU. Kazakhstan gained independence and seek different organizations and countries so as to develop its economy, the EU was one of them. This partnership is one of the best ways for Kazakhstan to reach goals and other things. History showed us that open foreign policy always the best choice for any country. In recent years, many countries all over the world, including 5 Central Asia countries are also establishing a strong relationship with the EU because they understand and realize how it is important. In fact, Kazakhstan becomes the largest trading partner of the EU since 2002. In addition to this, Kazakhstan and France's relationships also are very strong and have progressed considerably.

Although the European Union adopted its first strategy in 2007, its new strategy in 2019 was not similar to the former one. The name of strategies is also dissimilar to each other. EU has released an update, changing from a “strategy for a new partnership” to “new opportunities for a stronger partnership”. New opportunities for a stronger partnership strategy for a new partnership adopted on 15th May 2019. This strategy emphasizes the stronger relationship with Central Asia countries. This new strategy is much more positive than the initial 2007 strategy and focus on the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan,

and Uzbekistan, includes not only general issues but also specific problems for 5 countries. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini". Resilience and prosperity will be the pillars of our cooperation with Central Asia, of our support to sustainable development and reform processes, to the benefit of our citizens. The Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica, said: "The European Union is a leading development partner for central Asia, we are supporting the region in areas such as the rule of law, environment, water, trade, and border management between 2014 and 2020 years. Through a renewed partnership, we want to strengthen our engagement with Central Asian partners to help them make the region more resilient, prosperous, and better inter-connected.

If we analyze this new strategy, the aim of this would be much clearer, the European Union is focusing on internal and external partnering chances with Central Asia, includes promoting modernize the economy, establishing a stable relationship, investing in youth for stable economic development. In addition, investing money in Central Asia also an important step in relations between countries (nowadays, except for Kazakhstan, investing money in Central Asia is not so much). If we take Uzbekistan's relationship with France as an example, we could notice strong relations. There are many French companies and enterprises in Uzbekistan. These companies create many products and it is beneficial for both sides. Nowadays, there are 16 French companies and enterprises in Uzbekistan. One of the remarkable and surprising things is investing in youth for me, when I read this new strategy, I realized that it brings concrete benefits for our young generation and it creates many opportunities for our young populations. People can change their experience, therefore, they gain more job experience through partnerships. One of the important side of this strategy- EU relations with Kazakhstan, and they signed two vital agreements, the enhanced partnership and cooperation agreement was signed in 1999 and 2005. EU is also planning to join Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan into this agreement.

New opportunities for a stronger partnership strategy is broader than the previous strategy and takes into account all aspects of life. This strategy comprises cooperation in transport, energy, digital communications, and active cooperation in the energy market and trade, these

relations are considered as leading areas. It is clear that the main aim of the EU is to develop comprehensive economic and trade relations and access to convenient and cheap strategic trade routes through Central Asia.

When we talk about the new strategy, the principle of cooperation is to address regional security issues and their solutions. At this point, the issue of peace in Afghanistan is the top priority of these countries, EU and Central Asia state always to promote peace in Afghanistan. This strategy is aiming at solving this problem with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. However, we must put words into action, Afghanistan problem did not arise yesterday or today, a whole generation has been formed along with this problem. Therefore, the strategy sets out the following to resolve the issue peacefully and jointly:

1. Coordination of relevant EU-Central Asia meetings and regional programs;
2. Support and promote more regional and trilateral cooperation projects with; EU and Central Asia states.
3. The above should be noted as a priority and put into practice.

This new strategy is considered also a Joint Statement and can be discussed in the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. High Representative Federica Mogherini presented a new strategy for Central Asia at the 15th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting on July 7, 2019, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (In fact, the 14th EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting was held in Tashkent, the capital of the Republic of Uzbekistan).

Main goals and character of the new strategy;

- The new strategy represents more opportunities in terms of cooperation and economic development;
- The strategy addresses human security;
- It probably offers greater flexibility to address new issues as well as to adapt funding to changing interests and circumstances in Central Asia;
- The old strategy was much narrower than today's open-minded document;
- The strategy introduces women's empowerment and gender equality element;
- to promote higher education.

Another important priority in this new strategy is the issue of border relations, this strategy focuses on modern integrated border management and addressing irregular migration. Investing in youth also an important point of this strategy, in this case, they are supporting the young generation by offering scholarships. New opportunities for a stronger partnership went through a period of analysis and consultation over the years before the new strategy was adopted. A regional workshop organized within the EU-funded Border Management in Central Asia program (BOMCA) held in Ashgabat focusing on using new technical and international standards in border checks. I consider that the new strategy will take EU-Central Asia relations to a new level and create many opportunities.

In this regard, the visit of the President of the European Commission Donald Tusk to Uzbekistan on May 31, 2019. He visited also a number of Central Asian countries in order to discuss the new strategy and its implementation. Donald Tusk was received by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Donald Tusk noted the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the European Union. Shavkat Mirziyoyev expressed satisfaction with the new level of EU-Uzbekistan and his full support for the new EU strategy for Central Asia.

In conclusion, I believe that the European Union's Central Asia "new opportunities for a stronger partnership" strategy will provide a strong basis for the strong partnership in the future. Despite the fact that relations with the European Union have been established for many years, the progress has been limited. Because in the past, the EU treated Central Asia as a closed region. As a result, the old strategy did not put into practice.

In addition, the new reforms being carried today are attracting the attention of many major powers that they are also trying to establish good relations with Central Asia. In particular, The French Republic is pursuing good relations with Central Asia and Russia. President Macron also emphasizes the interests of France and its interest in Central Asia, the role of France in solving the problem of Afghanistan is a clear proof of our opinion. In general, the new strategy is enriched with a new spirit like supporting the young generation by offering educational opportunities. "New opportunities for a stronger partnership" is expected to serve as a bridge between The EU and Central Asia.

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