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**The EU Strategy for Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan Foreign Policy**

by

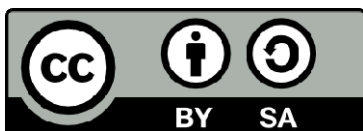
Nazira Momosheva

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Nazira Momosheva  
PhD, docent  
Kyrgyz National University  
Faculty of History and region studies  
Department of History of European and American countries





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The change of the strategic significance of Central Asia in last two decades had considerable consequences on the domestic and foreign policies in the region. The newly independent Central Asian states became a target of interplay between political and economic interests of several countries. The formation of the foreign policies in Central Asian states takes place under extremely difficult conditions and aims to balance between different powers. Historically, Central Asia has very close links with Russia. In addition, there are some other actors like United States, European Union, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, China, India and several Middle Eastern states, playing important role in the region. Their participation adds to the development of international relations in the region a comprehensive and de-facto global dimension. The primary goal of the countries in Central Asia is the closer involvement into the world integration processes, as well as solution of the intra-relationship problems, influenced by surrounding neighbors: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, China and India.

There is a highly controversial discussion among the political experts about the future of Central Asia. Some scientists believe that the region will remain the part of the Eurasian space. Some researchers consider the future prospects of the region to be limited due to factors like lack of direct access to global communications, low military capabilities, etc.

At the beginning of the third millennium it is more than ever difficult to assess the real processes in the international arena. The attempts of some traditionalist geo-politicians to create and maintain the images of evil distort peace in the world very often. Against the background of globalization and globalism the question of regional subsystems in international relations is gaining importance. During past two decades the regional level of foreign policy formed the main framework for the cooperation in the sphere of world politics. One of the most important examples in this regard is the post soviet Central Asia.

According to the terminology on the meeting of heads of States of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Alma-Ata in January 1993, Central Asia as a region encompasses the territory of five states including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. New political realities have expanded the borders of regional cooperation, involving some areas of neighboring countries. However, the five above mentioned states form the main core of south-eastern part of Eurasia. The area amounts to approximately 4 million square kilometers. The total population is more than 50 million people. The region is a blend of different cultures and civilizations.

Central Asia attracts the attention of several global and regional powers as well as international financial and economic institutions. In the 90-years a number of the cooperation initiatives were launched. There is a fierce competition among different players due to the geo-strategic significance of the region, its endowment with oil, gas and other commodities and the prospects of building a strong transportation infrastructure. The huge oil and gas reserves in the Caspian Basin and some other parts of Central Asia account for the particular relevance of the region. Turkmenistan is the third largest supplier of natural gas in the world.



The biggest part of regional oil reserves, estimated at 10-25 billion tons, is located in Kazakhstan. Although this amount is much lesser than in Persian Gulf, the importance of oil resources will increase regarding the rapidly growing demand for the energy in Southeast Asia, Indian subcontinent and China. More than half of the heroin shipped to Europe and North America is of Afghan origin. The transportation is carried out through Central Asia. Due to this fact, the volume of criminal business is nearby the same as the volume of official business. In this regards, the translational crime has a solid social base (Moldaviev, 2001).

The idea to implement the «Silk Road of 21<sup>st</sup> century», which will help to overcome the geographical isolation of Central Asian states, is gaining popularity. In contrast to the ancient caravan routes, the modern «Silk Road» must be built on three pillars: Energy, trans-continental transportation systems and telecommunications. The cornerstone of this project will be the utilization of natural resources in the region, primarily of oil and gas. The implementation of this project requires serious joint efforts and balanced consideration of global, regional and local interests. Part of the problem is already being solved in the framework of conferences and expert meetings within TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia) project. TRACECA was established in 1993 during a conference in Brussels and is made up of 13 member states. Furthermore, it is an Intergovernmental Commission with UN Basic Multilateral Agreement (CBO) on International Transport for Development of the Europe – the Caucasus – Asia Corridor. Basic Multilateral Agreement (CBO) was signed at the "Summit TRACECA - Recovery of the Historical Silk Road" in 1998 in Baku by 12 states, which, besides the Central Asian countries, includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine. The Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) was established in 2000 in Tbilisi, Georgia

The objectives of the agreement are:

development of economic relations, trade and transportation links in the regions of Europe, Black Sea, Caucasus, Caspian Sea and Asia,

facilitating access to international markets for road, air and rail transport, as well as merchant shipping,

providing international transport of goods and passengers, as well as international transportation of hydrocarbons,

Ensuring transport safety, safety of goods and environmental protection, creation of equal conditions of competition in transport operations (TRACECA online).

The capacity building on the basis of complex TRACECA would give momentum to local economy in Central Asia and guarantee the stable supply of energy. This would facilitate the integration of the region into the global system of transport and information communications. However, the bulk of the project is still at a preliminary stage of development.

## 2. THE EU STRATEGY FOR CENTRAL ASIA

The relations with the European Union (EU) are of utmost importance for Central Asian states (including Kyrgyzstan) and one of the main priorities of their foreign policies. In order to manage the difficult transformation, Central Asian states need to learn from the experience of European Union with regards to integration processes, development of the political institutions and mechanisms of their functioning.

The neighbors of the Central Asian countries attract growing attention of all major global political players with regard to international security and terrorist threat. In addition to the geopolitical situation, the significance of the region is explained by the rich endowment with energy resources. Furthermore, potential conflicts including the unresolved territorial issues and the allocation of water resources could possibly become a catalyst for the negative developments in the region. The intensification of these potential conflicts could turn Central Asia into the situation of confrontation, where the profit of one are often perceived as an automatic loss of another.

The European Union plays a significant role in Central Asia. EU provides considerable support to the region, which is specified in various agreements of the Partnership and Cooperation (PCA). They involve a lot of interesting projects such as TRACECA, INOGATE, «The process of Baku» and BOMCA.

It should also be noted, that the European Union is concerned about the state of regional security in Central Asia, in particular, the continuing threat posed by international terrorism, illegal drug trafficking and weapons. In 2001 was launched a «Program of the European Union on the fight against drugs in Central Asia» (CADAP), which aims to combat the illicit traffic of narcotic drugs through Central Asia. The program CADAP supports law enforcement agencies in Central Asian countries, which are responsible for the control of drug smuggling. From 2002 to 2003 program's budget amounted to around 3 million Euros.

After the tragic events in the United States on 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 and the ensuing anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan, the European Union raised awareness about the need to link the Afghan problem with the problems of the whole region. As a result, EU has revised its policy towards the countries of Central Asia and sharply (two times) increased the aid within TACIS program. The continuation of cooperation in the regional projects on energy and transport are for both sides very important.

Since 1991 almost all European states have established diplomatic relations with countries in the region. Furthermore, the European Commission began a number of significant programs in the critical areas for the region: energy, transport, security and poverty reduction. However, there was no comprehensive policy and these initiatives, albeit well accepted and long-term, were just first steps and needed to be integrated into the overall strategy. The European Union acknowledged that the previous approach in Central Asia, including some TACIS projects, was too monotonous and generalized for the region. Despite some common traits, Central Asian states are quite different from each other. There are big and small countries. Some state maintained nomadic traditions until recently, while the others were sedentary

tribes over a long period of time. Some of the countries have Persian cultural heritage, the others – Turkish. Natural resources are also unevenly distributed: some countries have huge reserves of oil, gas and mineral resources, while others, such as Kyrgyzstan, are «water power» with great potential to export electricity, produce agricultural goods and develop high-quality tourism.

The new EU strategy towards Central Asia for the years 2007-2013 has been approved by the Heads of the EU States within the framework of the European Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2007. For the first time, the strategy defined the policy guidelines for more active cooperation with Central Asia. The appointment of an EU Special Representative for Central Asia in July 2005 increased the political visibility of the EU in the region. The EU political criteria have openly and clearly defined European interests and objectives in Central Asia and elaborated specific areas for more intensive cooperation. The strategy identifies three main areas of long-term partnership: security, stability and development. In the course of extensive consultations with the authorities in all five countries the cooperation initiatives have been introduced in following areas: human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratization; investment in youth and education, promotion of economic development, trade and investment; strengthening of energy and transport links; protection of environment and ensuring of water supply, combating of common threats and challenges. Being aware of the specific characteristics of each of Central Asian country the European Union stipulated that three-quarters of the projects should focus on bilateral cooperation. The rest of the projects are designed for activities with necessity to work together on the regional level, in particular to combat the illicit trade, to develop transport and to ensure environmental protection.

According to the former German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the EU and Central Asia have a real chance to develop a new, comprehensive cooperation at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Talking with the reporters, Steinmeier emphasized, that he was pleased by the fact, that by means of European efforts a new perspective for Central Asia could be developed. In his opinion, the countries of the region would give their consent to this statement. The traditions of the cooperation between the EU and Central Asia exist from immemorial time, first of all regarding the Great Silk Road. However, the history of memories would be an inadequate factor to meet the challenges of global peace. On 28<sup>th</sup> of March 2007 during the meeting of the so-called EU Triad with foreign ministers of five Central Asian states in Astana, the specific projects and programs were elaborated, which became the basis to strengthen the cooperation. In the first place the collaboration in the educational area was accented. In addition, the EU aims to help the Central Asian countries to modernize the state and public structures as well as to boost the economic exchanges, particularly in the energy sector. EU and Central Asian states agreed to hold a regular dialogue on this subject in order to discuss improvement strategies of the energy supply infrastructure from Central Asia to Europe across the Caspian and Black Seas. The project of construction of an additional energy transport corridor would contribute to the diversification of energy supply in Europe and would be in line with common interests in Central Asia and Europe.

Steinmeier suggested to continue the successful forum in form of the meeting with Foreign Ministers started in Astana and to organize it annually (Gazeta.kz, 2007). He emphasized, that the policy agenda of the EU towards Central Asia during the German presidency was broadly supported by the other member countries. The EU planned to double the funds allocated for the cooperation with Central Asia for the period up to 2013. He pointed out, that in the age of globalization, there were many common challenges like terrorism and extremism, organized crime, drug trafficking, environmental threats as well as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. According to Steinmeier, the establishment of peace in Afghanistan would be impossible without stability in Central Asia. He stated that the EU was going to strengthen its presence in Central Asia. The European Commission announced its intention to open new offices in Central Asia. The cooperation between EU and Central Asia has a basis of common values and principles within the United Nation (UN) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

### **3. FOREIGN POLICY OF KYRGYZSTAN: MAIN CHARACTERISTICS, PRIORITIES AND PROBLEMS**

Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) is a state in Central Asia. The Capital city is Bishkek. The total area amounts to 199,900 square kilometers. 61.6% of the total population (5.3 million) is Kyrgyz, 15% - Russian and 14% - Uzbek. There are also German, Tatar, Ukrainian, Dungan, Uighur and Korean minorities living in Kyrgyzstan. The country has common borders with Kazakhstan, China, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. As the successor state of former Soviet Union, Kyrgyzstan became independent on 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1991. It is a secular state with presidential political system. At present, the Kyrgyz Republic maintains diplomatic relations with more than 120 countries around the world and is member of many international organizations. During the years of independence a solid contractual-legal basis for bilateral and multi-lateral relations has been established. Kyrgyzstan is a land-locked country with small area. It has a relatively complicated access to natural resources. The borders of Kyrgyzstan are the important transshipment points on the way from Europe to Asia. Geopolitically the country is surrounded by large countries, aspiring the role of regional leaders. At present, Kyrgyzstan is a transition country undergoing the process of economic and social reforms. The country has external debt amounting to \$ 2 billion. Since independence, Kyrgyzstan is moving from one sphere of influence to another. The choice of the partners, however, cannot be constant and should more or less adequately meet the «national» interests of the country.

According to Western experts, Kyrgyzstan offers a promising program of economic reforms and democratization among the states of Central Asia. These are the reasons, why developed world and international economic organizations invest big funds in a variety of Kyrgyz industries such as infrastructure, agriculture and services.

Since independence Kyrgyzstan faced the important task to identify the main priorities in its relations with other states in the world. First of all, it refers to the countries such as USA, Germany and Japan, because they are the major donors. Kyrgyzstan is highly dependent on

foreign investments. The economic dependence inevitably leads to a political dependence. Under such circumstances a well-aligned foreign policy is very important.

In the period from 1991 to 1995 the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan was mainly oriented to Western countries. Since 1995, besides the further steps to develop and strengthen relations with the Western world, the political relations with Asian states have been also intensified. Over the last years, Kyrgyzstan made significant strides in developing of bilateral cooperation. However, it should be noted, that the bilateral diplomacy at this stage cannot fully ensure the foreign policy objectives. The best option in this regard is the transition to multilateral foreign policy. Kyrgyzstan aims to continue the search for new forms of collaboration and partnerships within the framework of global, universal, regional and specialized organizations in order to promote its national interests.

Based on the criteria of a fully fledged independence, it is hard to define Kyrgyz foreign policy as completely independent. These criteria assume high military and strategic capabilities, which can safeguard national security and sufficient protection against external threats. Such foreign policy can be provided only with adequate resources. Its success is a continuation of the internal political stability.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union a wide range of issues related to different spheres of society has been identified in Kyrgyzstan, demanding a quick resolution. Kyrgyz society is trying to solve the problem in its own way. The instability and imbalance of the transformation make it difficult to forecast the events and to determine the results of reformation processes. The nature and pace of reforms in Kyrgyzstan are directly dependent on the solutions of major public controversies. In addition, there are some problems, which Kyrgyzstan has in common with other transition countries. As a result of the collapse of the old ideals and values, there is the crisis of identity, which makes people search for new spiritual guide to understand their place in society and their relations with the state. The changes in living standards and modes of consumption based on increased social claims of citizens cause the crisis of distribution of cultural and material benefits. The ruling force and the supreme bodies of state power are unable to fully implement the solutions in all spheres of public life. The mismatch of goals of the ruling regime on the one hand and the large part of the citizens on the other hand with regards to the necessary forms and means of political regulation, standards of government honesty and other values of the mass consciousness, imply the a crisis of legitimacy. Furthermore, there are an increased number of citizens, which are willing to participate in political processes in order to create a new balance of political forces.

The prevailing power crisis in Kyrgyzstan has led to a revolutionary situation on 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2005. The changes in the internal politics have caused changes in the external as well, although it should be noted, the new leadership demonstrated the readiness to follow the earlier agreements and treaties.

Foreign policy is a work of the state in the international arena, regulating relations with other actors like states and international organizations. It is based on economic, demographic, military, scientific and cultural potential of the state. Foreign policy implies a hierarchy of priori-

ties in the formulation and implementation of the goals. It can be considered as successful, if it is in compliance with a reasonable balance between objectives and capabilities of a state. With regards to the setting of goals and choosing the means, the foreign policy reflects the internal political situation in a country. Therefore, it is sometimes defined as secondary in comparison with the internal one. The foreign policy mirrors the national interests and focuses on promotion and protection of state sovereignty as well as on formation of a favorable external environment for economic and political transformation.

The foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic is based on the provisions of the Declaration on State Independence (1991), the Constitution, the basic norms of international law as well as on the principles of the UN. The conceptual basis of the contemporary foreign policy of the country is the new Concept of Foreign Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, which was approved by the decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2007. It reflects the main priorities and the methodology of their implementation in the new environment. The conception consists of the space of the foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, which constitutes the engagement on the regional, continental (Eurasian) and the global level and principles and priorities of the foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. The main priorities in this document include the strengthening of the national security, creation of the environment for national development priorities, strengthening of the international image of the Kyrgyz Republic and creation of an effective system of foreign policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, 2007).

The Kyrgyz Republic is trying to conduct its foreign policy on the basis of its geopolitical situation, the existing capacities and national interests. This was announced and released in September 2006 in article «On the national development strategy and immediate tasks», which was addressed to population of Kyrgyzstan by the President of the K. Bakiev. Together with the Foreign Policy Concept, this is the only public document, which specifically defines the foreign policy priorities and directions of post-revolutionary Kyrgyzstan (President of Kyrgyzstan, 2006).

At the present stage it is difficult to define national interests for the future, as there are an increasing number of activities, which significantly broaden the range of political actors with different, sometimes antagonistic interests. «National interests», resulting from the basic interests of power structures do not always exactly represent the interests of the society and the state as a whole. National interests are a combination of balanced interests on individual, social and state levels in the political, economic, social, international, informational, military, territorial, ecological and other spheres. The national interests of the Kyrgyz Republic should be defined for the long-term perspective, identify key objectives and build up strategic and tactical objectives of domestic and foreign policies.

The main parameters of the national security of Kyrgyzstan are protection of vital national interests of the society, ensuring the stability of major existence basis, facilitating of progressive development and building up of the necessary capacity to protect the country against external and internal threats. The main threats are potential ethnic and religious conflicts,

unresolved claims in the boundary and territorial issues, water use problems and the lack of precise legal registration of state borders with neighboring countries.

In order to enhance national security through foreign policy it is necessary to integrate the national security of Kyrgyzstan into the regional and global security systems and at the same time to maintain the independent decision-making, strengthen cooperation with regional and international organizations, develop foreign relations with the world community, harmonize the efforts within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty and settle the territorial and water disputes in the region.

Basically, the contacts of sovereign Kyrgyzstan with other countries are maintained on following levels: first – the relationship with the countries of Central Asia, second – the relationship within the Commonwealth of Independent States, third – the relationship with the countries of Asia, fourth – the relationship with the countries of Europe and the United States. These levels are to some extent conditional, as they reflect relations of Kyrgyzstan with other countries only at the present stage, but can be adjusted in the future. The only thing that will be unchanged in the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the chosen policy of «intersection» between different poles of influence, which seems to be the best option for the country. The relations with Central Asian States have priority, first of all referring to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, despite some unresolved border and territorial issues.

The active and steady development of bilateral relations with Russia, USA and China is of a great importance. The economic components play a notable role in the relations. Russia took 5<sup>th</sup> place in terms of investments in the economy of Kyrgyzstan after United States, Canada, Turkey and Kazakhstan. The major projects are carried out by Russian enterprises like RAO UES and Gazprom. An important example of Russian presence in Kyrgyzstan is the military base in Kant, which, although called as the «air forces of the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) rapid deployment», in essence is Russian. Kyrgyzstan is working with Russia, China and the Central Asian states also in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is a block with great prospects. Kyrgyzstan has not only confirmed its previous agreement, but showed the willingness to reach the higher level of cooperation by organizing the summit of Heads of States of SCO in Bishkek in August 2007. The trade turnover of Kyrgyzstan with China rose significantly in the recent years. The presence of the United States in Kyrgyzstan covers economic and political-military aspects, in particular the US air force base «coalition air forces to combat international terrorism» placed at the airport «Manas».

### **3.1 The cooperation within the Commonwealth of independent States (CIS)**

Since independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan has actively supported the idea of maintaining the special relationships between the successor states of Soviet Union. Kyrgyzstan is actively advocating the strengthening of the CIS, comprehensive development of relations within this association and the intensification of the exchange between its states parties. The Govern-

ment of the Republic considers it necessary to cooperate with the closest neighbors in almost all spheres. One of the priorities of the republic is the intention to use all available capacities and experiences in order to give new impetus to the development of economic processes in the post-soviet space. Also very important is the cooperation in the political sphere and ensuring the national security of all states of the Commonwealth. The escalation of tensions and conflict situations permanently emerging in countries on the borders of the CIS demonstrates the need for the agenda of joint action to combat a variety of events that threaten stability and further development in the region. In this regard, a program has been implemented to fight international terrorism and extremism. It has been decided to establish a special anti-terrorist center of the CIS. It is important to cooperate also in the social and cultural spheres. Living for decades within one country influenced the culture and the mentality and had an impact on the attitudes of citizens of the CIS to each other. The governments must take this factor into account in their activities.

The CIS is an agreement, which managed to avoid the Yugoslav version of collapse of the state union and aims to preserve a unified defense, information and cultural space. CIS should support the formation of new economic relations and keep bilateral contacts, especially with the Russian Federation, which remains the core of integration within the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, one should not overlook that some activities of CIS significantly complicate and impede the development of the organization. During the years of the existence of this association generated a large number of documents, however, much intended activities remained on the paper.

In addition, many observers noted, that the various «integrative kernels» of CIS and the general integration process have different paces. Furthermore, several other organizations in the post soviet space sometimes contradict each other and pursue different interests. In this regard GUAM and the Eurasian Economic Community are most often mentioned. However, CIS is a major regional organization, based on historical and geographical community and on similar interests in a number of areas.

### **3.2 Cooperation within the Eurasian International Organizations**

Equally important in the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan is the active participation in the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), which was on 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2000 and, except Kyrgyzstan, includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Among the objectives of this organization is the economic security at the external borders, establishment of equal conditions for business, activities against smuggling other types of customs violations. EurAsEC aims to establish a customs union, enhance interaction in the real sector of the economy, develop the common market for capital, transport services and energy, cooperate in the field of agriculture and create equal access conditions to the markets of member states in terms of foreign investments. In the social-humanitarian sphere there is the need for joint research. The priorities of the organization are development of science, technology and culture as well as harmonization of national educational and social systems. In the legal field the conver-



gence and harmonization of national legislations and joint activities on the issues of migration are envisaged. The appropriate mechanisms should be established in order to coordinate the adoption of national laws and other regulatory acts on issues affecting the obligations within EurAsEC with the aim to create the common legal space.

Particular importance is attached to the cooperation of Kyrgyz Republic within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, formed under the original title «Shanghai Five» on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1996. Since the first meeting of this organization the issues addressed by the member countries have been constantly transformed and expanded. Kyrgyz side believes that the SCO is an important and effective tool in building mutual confidence among Member States, strengthening friendship and good neighborly relations, facilitating multilateral cooperation, maintaining peace, security and stability in the region, sharing new challenges and threats, promoting of economic growth and contributing to the social and cultural development members. In the future, the framework of cooperation of «five» is expected to expand and is showing a trend of gradual incorporation of economic, military, political and humanitarian spheres. Over years the organization has signed a number of strategic documents to facilitate the close and friendly relations among its members. The most significant of them are: «Agreement on confidence-building measures in military sphere in the border region», «Agreement on mutual reduction of armed forces in the border region», «Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China and the Kyrgyz Republic on the point of junction of the three state borders States», «The Agreement on the borders between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic», «The Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism». In connection with the anniversary of the tragic events on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 in United States, the Foreign Ministers of SCO members issued a joint statement condemning terrorism and the consolidation and the of the international community to cope with new challenges and threats within UN. In Memorandum signed by the governments of SCO on 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 in Almaty, the basic goals and directions of regional economic cooperation have been defined and the process has been launched to create favourable conditions in the field of trade and investments. Foreign trade and economic cooperation are closely linked with development of transport communications. SCO is not a military-political alliance directed against other states and regions. It adheres to the principle of openness and is ready to develop relations with other states, international and regional organizations.

In the first phase of its statehood, Kyrgyzstan, like many other CIS countries, faced the need to resolve the border issues first of all with China, since the administration of the former Soviet Union for many decades has failed to develop a positive solution of this critical issue. To address this question the only possible way has been chosen - a peaceful settlement of contentious issues on the basis of consensus by taking into account the mutual interests.

Kyrgyzstan participates in the activities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and contributes to the deepening of integration processes in this area. CSTO is the military-political alliance based on the Treaty of May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1992, which was transformed into an international organization on 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2002. The member countries of CSTO are Rus-

sia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The participation of the Kyrgyz Republic in this organization allowed the successful combination of the own military potential with the armed forces of other States Parties, particularly of the Russian Federation, for the security purposes in Kyrgyzstan. The actions of international terrorist gangs in Kyrgyzstan in 1999-2000 showed the need to find more effective forms and methods of cooperation. The anti-terrorist cooperation within the organization plays an increasing role. A key problem is to identify the measures for the formation of regional collective security systems and the creation of inter-state body of military administration. The justification of the creation of CSTO to cope with new geopolitical realities, with the emphasis on the anti-terrorist cooperation, has been fully confirmed. The system of operational response of the participants to threats and security challenges has been improved. In connection with new threats the Collective Security Treaty Organization has created collective rapid reaction forces. At the Summit of CSTO 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2009 Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Russia discussed the establishment of the Center for Rapid Reaction Force in the south of Kyrgyzstan. The long-term objective of the Treaty is a comprehensive system of collective security in the States Parties, which could be a part of the future international security system in Europe and Asia.

#### **4. THE EUROPEAN UNION, GERMANY AND KYRGYZSTAN**

The relations with European countries belong to the highest priorities of the Kyrgyz foreign policy. Europe is a region, which managed to overcome the results of «cold war». The European countries have experienced intensified integration processes in the last decades. The removal of ideological, political and military confrontation between East and West offers Kyrgyzstan the prospects for adaptation to emerging Europe on international political landscape. With the OSCE accession of newly independent states in Central Asia and Caucasus the organization has lost its predominantly European character and inevitably became more and more global.

Germany as one of the leading countries of Europe assists the implementation of reforms in Kyrgyzstan and supports its democratic development. However, forging the political relations, Germany does not forget about the economic interests, as Kyrgyzstan, like the other countries of the CIS, is a new potential market. Despite the fact that Kyrgyzstan is a small country, Germany pursues its specific economic interests, partly because of the German minority living in Kyrgyzstan. Protecting the rights of the German minority is one of the important conditions for the expansion of German investment in the economy of Kyrgyzstan.

Diplomatic relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany were set on 3<sup>rd</sup> of February 1992 during an official visit of President of Kyrgyz Republic A. Akayev in Germany. Since then the areas of mutual interest, in particular co-construction of the upper cascade of Naryn hydroelectric power station as well as the search for oil reserves has been defined. In April 1992, the technical cooperation agreement was signed, providing

assistance to Kyrgyzstan amounting to 11 million DM. The office of the German Society for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) was opened in Bishkek in October 1992. The bilateral agreement on cultural cooperation has been signed later, which was the basis for the days of Kyrgyz culture in Germany (Cologne) in June 1993 and the days of German culture in Bishkek in autumn 1996.

Today bilateral relations are characterized by the growing dynamic of political cooperation, high degree of openness, trust and partnership. For Kyrgyzstan it is very important that the Government of Germany has increased efforts for deepening of a constructive dialogue and further promotion of the German-Kyrgyz relations in all spheres.

Since 1992, between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany 40 bilateral agreements have been signed. The legal treaties have been implemented in the financial, technical, scientific, educational, cultural and military fields. The basic document defining the Kyrgyz-German collaboration is the «Joint Statement on the Basis of Relations between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Kyrgyzstan» from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1992. In August 1997 Kyrgyzstan and Germany signed an agreement on promotion and reciprocal protection of investments, providing of tax incentives to German investors. They will actively be involved in the implementation of national programs, particularly for the development of mining industry, agriculture and light industry (Toktomushev, 2001). In the course of the international investment conference regarding Kyrgyzstan held in April 1998 in Berlin, the intergovernmental agreements on technical and financial cooperation have been signed.

The cooperation between two states has become closer within international organizations. On major issues in the United Nations Security Council reform, Kyrgyzstan expresses its support to Germany to act as a permanent member in the UN Security Council. Germany has actively advocated the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and the European Union and supported the accession of Kyrgyzstan to World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1999.

Analyzing the existing contractual relations between Kyrgyzstan and Germany, it can be concluded, that they are mainly developed in the framework of the German development policy and include financial and technical cooperation. In particular, it relates to such areas as the realization of individual projects with the help of credits in order to support small and medium-sized businesses in the country. Since 1991 German development cooperation commitments amounted to approximately 275 million Euros. This Germany is third-largest donor of bilateral assistance after Japan and the United States (Auswärtiges Amt, 2009).

The German minority in Kyrgyzstan plays a prominently role in bilateral relations. According to census of 1989 there were approximately 102 thousand people of German origin. Since collapse of the Soviet the number has sharply fallen and continues to decline. At the end of the first national census in 1999, the German population amounted to 21 472, in 2009 to less than 10 thousand. German government, concerned about the influx of migrants from the CIS republics, takes all possible measures to improve their living conditions in their places of residence. For example, the federal government adopted the program «Help Russian Germans -

in the successor states of Soviet Union», which includes economic, political, social and cultural support to the Germans in the CIS countries.

In 1991 in Kyrgyzstan was set up the center of German culture. The basic aim of this center is to provide comprehensive assistance to Germans living in Kyrgyz Republic to preserve their culture, language, traditions. Furthermore, the center enables all other interested people to get acquainted with German culture and to participate in the development of relations between Kyrgyzstan and Germany. In March 199 the «Volksrat» (People's Council) was established, whose main objectives are the organization and the coordination of cultural revival of Germans, their involvement in socio-political, economic and cultural life of the republic. In 1998 «Volksrat» was included as an associate member in the Federal Union of European Nationalities and collaborates closely with other national groups and minorities in Europe. «Volksrat» organizes German courses, Sunday schools and maintains contacts with the Kyrgyz educational institutions.

In Kyrgyzstan there are a number of German organizations and foundations active in the development of cultural and humanitarian cooperation. One of them is the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the representation of which was opened in April 1994. The organization focuses on the full support and protection of human rights, democratic development and social and legal principles as well as environmental protection. The foundation undertakes various conferences and seminars, organizes exchange of experts and training of specialists, thus, supporting the reforms in Kyrgyzstan.

Representation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation opened in September 1996. The main activities of the Fund are the political education of adults, consultation of politicians and leaders of political parties. Konrad Adenauer Foundation cooperates closely with the media and trains young professionals. The foundation, which has a formal cooperation agreement with the Administration of the President, conducts seminars and conferences within the state programs, such as «Ayalzat», «Youth and Society» and implements projects like «Women and Politics» and «Local Self-Government and Democracy».

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) is also active in Kyrgyzstan. Since 1992 over 90 DAAD scholarships have been awarded to students and young researchers for training and internship at German universities. More than 1400 young Kyrgyz received DAAD support for study in Germany. In October 2008, the total number of people supported by DAAD amounted to 649. German universities are interested in cooperation with Kyrgyzstan: today there are more than 10 interuniversity cooperation. In 2004 DAAD Information Center was opened in Kyrgyzstan, where interested applicants can get free advice on matters concerning education in Germany (DAAD IC Kyrgyzstan).

The development and further deepening of relations of Kyrgyzstan with the Federal Republic of Germany offer Kyrgyzstan the way for integration into the community of developed democratic states. This area is a priority in the foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, as it becomes an important factor to contribute to the equilibrium in the emerging multi-polar world.

The development of bilateral relations between Kyrgyzstan and the European Union is currently taking place in the context of the agreements reached between both sides. The basic instrument of development cooperation is the comprehensive «Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States on the one hand, and the Kyrgyz Republic on the other side». In recognition of the achievements in terms of democratic reform Kyrgyzstan has become one of the first CIS states, with whom the EU started negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The framework for cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and the EU was founded in April 1992 during the visit of Vice-President of the European Commission of F. Andriessen, when a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the European Commission was signed. In accordance with the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the permanent working bodies of bilateral cooperation were established. The meetings of the Cooperation Council and the Cooperation Committee will be held regularly. The commencement of such a large-scale international legal instrument was a crucial political event. Between 1996-2006, 91.85 Million Euros were committed to the food security programme in Kyrgyzstan. This assistance was first of all the budget support related to a reform programme in agriculture and social protection. From 2002 -2006, about 41 million were allocated through the TACIC programs in Kyrgyzstan. The main areas covered were customs reform, education, social programs in the Ferghana valley, support to civil service reform and an institutional capacity building program (European Commission, 2007).

Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to development of bilateral cooperation with France. France, a member of «Big Eight» and a permanent member of UN Security Council is one of the leading forces in the European Union, actively influencing many decisions taken by the EU. Its high economic potential and indisputable international authority determine the priority of the foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan. France officially recognized the Kyrgyz Republic as an independent nation on 16<sup>th</sup> of January 1992. The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on February 28<sup>th</sup> 1992. The main principles of relations between the two countries were laid down in the Treaty of Understanding, Friendship and Cooperation, signed during the official visit of President A. Akayev in 1994 in France. However, the legal framework of the Kyrgyz Republic and France are not finalized yet. With the view of assistance to Kyrgyzstan France is involved mainly in the framework of multilateral cooperation in various programs of the EU. United Kingdom is certainly one of the leaders of world politics and one of its financial centers. This enables the country to take an active position in international financial institutions and pursue its national interests anywhere in the world. UK has three fundamental principles regarding its policies in Central Asia: Supporting of the independence and territorial integrity of states in the region, promotion of democratic and economic reforms and advancement of bilateral trade and investment. The cornerstone of these principles is opening of new opportunities for British business in new promising markets. Diplomatic relations between two countries were established on 27<sup>th</sup> of January 1992. However, a more dynamic relationship began only since 1999, when parliamentary delegation of Kyrgyzstan visited UK. The Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs of the House of

Commons, D. Anderson, has after the visit produced a special report with the recommendations to the British Government on the development of relations with Central Asian region.

The scientific and educational cooperation between UK and Kyrgyzstan is very promising and aims to develop direct contacts between universities of two countries. Currently, there are established links between the Russian-Kyrgyz (Slavonic) University and the University of Westminster, the International University of Kyrgyzstan and York University as well as the Academy of Management under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic and the University of North London.

The bilateral cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Italy began after the establishment of diplomatic relations on 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1992. The relations between these two countries are rather episodic. The contractual and legal frameworks are not finalized yet. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kyrgyzstan was supported within the framework of the EU «Mercury TACIS» program by the House of training in Italy.

Except the member states of the EU in Europe Kyrgyzstan maintains relations with Switzerland. Due to the progress in reform implementation processes, Kyrgyzstan is a «country of concentration» in the region, especially with reference to the technical cooperation. Diplomatic relations between Kyrgyzstan and Switzerland were established on 14<sup>th</sup> of February 1992. The greater part of assistance from the Swiss side is carried out in the form of grants. There are a number of a well designed and thought out projects taking into account local realities and needs. The programs in the fields of agriculture, processing, forestry and social issues for different regions are mainly implemented by three Swiss non-governmental organizations, Caritas, Helvetas and Intercoperation. For the coordination and logistics of Swiss programs in 1994 the Swiss Office of Communications was opened in Bishkek, which was converted to Swiss Coordination Bureau for Financial and Technical Cooperation in 1997. Financial cooperation is primarily implemented in the sectors of health, energy and inventory. The technical cooperation is aimed at improving the technical expertise in agriculture and forestry as well as the capacity building and development of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Kyrgyzstan seeks to develop mutually beneficial cooperation with all countries of the European Union. It seems, that the new strategy is not only wide, but the bilateral relations of Kyrgyzstan with the European states will reach a high level of cooperation and partnership.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Over the last two years the European Union has changed its attitude towards the countries of Central Asia. The EU has strengthened its relationship with the region since the adoption of “The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership” by the European Council in June 2007. The strategy aims to strengthen relations in all spheres of cooperation. The objectives of the new strategy are reinforcement of political dialogue through regular meetings of EU and Central Asian Foreign Ministers, reinforcement of dialogue on human rights, co-

operation in the areas of education, rule of law, advancement of trade and economic relations, energy, transport, environment, water as well as joint activities against common threats and challenges. The strategy is supported by a significant increase in EU assistance.

For Kyrgyzstan, as one of the Central Asian countries, the presence in world politics is only possible through the participation in the international organizations on the global and regional level. The current geopolitical situation requires a balanced relationship with countries in near and far abroad and a well-adjusted policy of between different poles of influence.

To support and advance its national interests at the sub-regional (Central Asia), regional (within the CIS, European and Asian areas) and global (via the system of international organizations) levels, Kyrgyzstan conducts targeted, multi-balanced foreign policy. The initiatives and activities commensurate with the real political and economic capabilities and the degree of involvement in international policy processes.

In recent years the importance of the economic dimension of foreign policy has increased. This is connected with the objective to contribute to reforms and economic stabilization in the country and strengthen its position in foreign markets.

The international relations of Kyrgyzstan traditionally mean close contacts with Central Asian states. The reasons are geographical neighborhood, related cultures, traditions, customs and common historical destiny, as well as the complementarities and interdependences of economies.

The analysis of Kyrgyzstan's cooperation with other CIS countries proves the necessity of these relationships. However, despite well-developed legal framework, the potential of the cooperation is not fully exhausted due to objective circumstances.

Status and prospects of Kyrgyz relations with the developed countries show, that the conclusion of bilateral agreements and intensification of the investment in Kyrgyz economy would lead to the stable development to a market economy.

The cooperation with Western countries is one of the most important foreign policy priorities of the Kyrgyz Republic. The most active relationships are maintained with such leading countries as the United States, Germany and France. However, despite the positive impact of these relations, the danger of partial or complete economic dependence cannot be ignored. Especially Kyrgyz-German relations are developing most actively, including declaratory stage and have reached the level of specific bilateral cooperation. With other Western States Kyrgyzstan has an only fragmented and unstable relation.

Due to economic and financial difficulties and poor resource potential, Kyrgyzstan could not fully develop bilateral relations with many countries, in particular, with the Asia-Pacific region. However, the enhancement of cooperation with these states has good prospects for the republic.

As a landlocked country, located on the periphery of the major routes, Kyrgyzstan seeks to create infrastructure on the basis of the alliance and partnership with Russia, Kazakhstan,

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and other CIS countries as well as through the development of transnational projects, linking the states of Eurasian continent and of the Asia-Pacific region.

Since independence, the Kyrgyz Republic became a member of the leading international organization. This is a fundamental factor for the inclusion of the country into the global processes.

Thus, in the foreign policy of the Kyrgyz Republic has already identified the priority areas, which are characterized by the principles of multilateralism. This allows the country to establish bilateral relations with many countries in the world without strict obligations due to the transitional period of development. The best option for the operation on the international arena is foreign policy, which enables the country to continue the policy of balancing between the poles of influence.



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