

EU and Central Asia Cooperation: Reality Checks, Lessons Learned and Ways Ahead

A conference organised jointly by the Latvian EU Presidency, the Institute for European Politics (Berlin) and the EU Institute for Security Studies (Paris)

Friday, 30 January 2015

Martin's Brussels EU hotel

Boulevard Charlemagne 80, B-1000 Brussels

Programme

The three sessions will assess the complicated geopolitical environment that currently affects the Central Asia region, analyse challenges and developments which persist at the regional level, strengths and weaknesses of implementation of the EU Strategy, and will discuss future priority areas and cooperation frameworks.

8:30-9:00 Registration

9:00-9:30 Opening remarks by the Latvian EU Presidency, Andrejs Pildegovičs, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia

Introductory remarks by Luis Felipe Fernández de la Peña, Managing Director, Europe and Central Asia, EEAS

9:30-11:15 **Session 1: The Greater Geopolitical Game**

The broader geopolitical environment: how the Central Asian countries navigate in the midst of intertwining interests and the presence of various actors in the region – China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, as well as the EU, US, and international organizations (the UN, SCO, the Eurasian Economic Union)? Should the EU and China investigate possibilities to coordinate and possibly even join efforts under the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative? How can the US engagement be sustained in the Central Asia region in the aftermath of the ISAF withdrawal?

Chair: Andris Sprūds, Director, Latvian Institute for International Affairs

Speakers:

Svante Cornell, Director of Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, Johns Hopkins University

Nicu Popescu, Senior Analyst, EU Institute for Security Studies

Mirzokhid Rakhimov, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Respondents:

Pierre Morel, Ambassador (retired), EU Special Representative for Central Asia 2006-2012

Niklas Lindqvist, Ambassador to Central Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland

Discussion

Coffee break

11:30-13:15 Session 2: The Regional Challenges

Inter-regional developments: the Central Asian states face challenges related to the “water-energy nexus”, political developments, counter terrorism and narcotics, sensitive borders, the rule of law, ethnic conflicts and socio-economic disparities. The five states that we call a region are actually weakly integrated among themselves and prefer the bilateral format of dialogues to the pan-regional one. What are the opportunities to mitigate risks of potential conflicts? What is the role of international organizations?

Chair: Antonio Missiroli, Director, EU Institute for Security Studies

Speakers:

Jos Boonstra, Senior Researcher/Head of EUCAM Programme, FRIDE

Miroslav Jenca, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

Nargis Kassenova, KIMEP (University of Management, economy and law of Kazakhstan), Director of Central Asian study centre

Deirdre Tynan, Central Asia Project Director, International Crisis Group

Respondents:

Craig Fulton, Deputy Head of Department, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom

Adam Eberhardt, Deputy Director, Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Warsaw

Discussion

Lunch break

14:00-15:45 Session 3: Reviewing the EU's Central Asia Strategy: Lessons Learned and Ways Ahead

How successful has the implementation of the Strategy been? What are the main achievements since the 2012 review? What are the views of the main EU stakeholders- the EU member states? Did the EU manage to engage Central Asian governments and societies into mutually beneficial cooperation? Have there been any limitations?

How can the EU engagement be more efficient in Central Asia? What are the priority areas for cooperation that would trigger positive changes in a wider context and in a more comprehensive manner (security, economy, education)? Is the EU's "offer" attractive enough and competitive? Does the EU possess the right toolbox? (e.g. development cooperation, visa facilitation, trade)?

Chair: Mathias Jopp, Director, IEP Berlin

Introduction: Gunnar Wiegand, Director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE, EEAS

Respondents:

Cord Meier-Klodt, Special Envoy for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia at the German Foreign Office

Eric Fournier, Director of the Continental Europe Department, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Åke Peterson, Ambassador to Central Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden

Short interventions by Ambassadors of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

15.45-16:00 Wrap Up: Eva Gross, EU Institute for Security Studies and Katrin Böttger, Institute for European Politics

Closing Remarks: Andris Sprūds, Director, Latvian Institute for International Affairs