Kazakhstan and the European Union: Cooperation in Regional Security

Kuralay Baizakova* , Gulnaz Yergeshkyzy b

* Department of  International Relations  Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, The European Documentation Center, Al-Farabi ave. 71, Almaty 050040 Kazakhstan
b Phd Student, Department of  International Relations  Al-Farabi Kazakh National University , Al-Farabi ave. 71, Almaty 050040 Kazakhstan

Abstract

This paper examines the bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and the EU. The authors state that Kazakhstan’s continuing socio-economic and political stability is a formal commitment to the political one. The paper evaluates to what degree Kazakh-EU cooperation on regional cooperation, security and energy matters is compatible with EU expectations on Central Asian democratization and political reforms.

Keywords: Kazakhstan, European Union, Central Asia, security

1. Introduction

European direction is one of the most important in Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. The prospect and the need to develop relations with the European Union for Kazakhstan are determined by the role and place of the European Union in the European and world politics, economics and culture.

At the beginning of the formation the political and economic course of independent Kazakhstan the country's leadership existed a clear awareness of the fact that Western Europe, the institutions of the European Union are the political and economic power, which should be considered while developing the strategy for the young state.

During the years of independence, Kazakhstan has become a full member of the international community and its initiatives have almost always received widespread support and exercised in practice. At the same time Kazakhstan has sought to establish and strengthen relationships with the leading countries of the world, participate in international political, military and economic organizations for the needs of its economic development. Protocol on establishing diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and the EU was signed in 1992.

On the basis of current experience of international contract practice, Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian republics, conducting the foreign policy activities tend to adopt a package of documents covering all aspects of bilateral cooperation. Conclusion of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) was on the agenda.

*Corresponding author: Kuralay Baizakova Tel.: +7-701-710-6337 (cell)
E-mail address: kbaizakova@mail.ru

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On the first stage there was intensive development of contacts with Kazakhstan. In the base of European strategy lied important political and economic interests of the EU in the region. It was declared in the official documents of the Commission. Kazakhstan has also made great efforts to elevate its relations with the EU on the high level. Due to the positive assessment of the relations in 1995 it was signed an Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation (APC) with Kazakhstan. The process of ratification of the PCA had completed by 1999, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Kazakhstan, came into effect on July 1, 1999.

2. The EU's role in foreign policy of Kazakhstan

Conclusion of Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation (APC) has actually created an opportunity to move to the next stage in the relationship between Kazakhstan and the EU - the signing of sectoral (narrow field) contracts. In 2006 an Agreement on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and Memorandum of Understanding on energy matters signed between Kazakhstan and the European Union.

2007 the first “European Union Strategy Paper for developing cooperation with Central Asia” is approved by EU. The main office of the Delegation of the European Commission moves to Astana. A session of the Troika EU-Central Asia at Ministers’ of Foreign Affairs level is held for the first time in Astana

Six priorities defined by the EU Strategy to Central Asia:

- Combating common threats and challenges;
- Environmental sustainability and water;
- Strengthening the energy and transport links;
- Human Rights, Rule of Law, Good Governance and Democratization;
- Investing in the Future: Youth and Education;
- Promotion of Economical Development, Trade, Investment, and Social Development.

In 2008 High Representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana came for an official visit to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The second experimental satellite of the European space project GALILEO is launched from Baykonur.

With the Lisbon Treaty entering into force, the Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Kazakhstan is transformed into the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Kazakhstan

For the sovereign Republic of Kazakhstan which focuses on participation in regional integration in the process of development and improving its political structure it is very important to consider the underlying trends, such as integration and the experience of leading foreign countries.

President N.A. Nazarbayev, in the early years of the country's foreign policy formation conceptually outlined his vision of relations between Kazakhstan and the EU. He stressed that the CIS countries should follow the example of the European Union, which is based on four freedoms: the movement of goods, labor, services and capital. "We see in the EU - said the President of Kazakhstan - a worthy example to follow, a sample of the main, the most promising and effective direction of economic and political integration, facing the XXI Century".

Energy factor, in our opinion, could be the beginning of integration, rather than discord and conflict in Central Asia, who need a reliable common security - regional and European security structures.

Kazakhstan's cooperation with European countries developed both bilaterally and multilaterally in cooperation with the European Union.

Kazakhstan attracts Europe by its multi dimensional policy. And in Kazakh politics multi dimensional policy Europe tends to consider both political and economic aspects.

On August 29, 2008 in the light of decision on Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in OSCE and in accordance with commission of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev the national program "Path to Europe" for 2009-2011 has been elaborated. It was aimed at creating a new basis for comprehensive cooperation between Kazakhstan and European countries.

For achievement of the specified purpose the decision of several problems was provided. The first applies to development and deepening of cooperation between Kazakhstan and European countries in such fields as technology, energy, transport, technical regulation and metrology, small and medium businesses. Kazakhstan
political leaders recognizes a great strategic value of reserves of oil and gas for world economy and therefore energy factor are used by them in foreign policy to strengthen Kazakhstan's position in the world.

3. Cooperation of Kazakhstan and EU in the security field

Strategic direction of the European Union to establish an independent system of security and defense within the framework of international relations meets Kazakh strategy of multi dimensional cooperation.

Ensuring security in Eurasia in the interests of Kazakhstan, due to the inclusion of the Republic in global economic processes, first of all, these interests are related to ensuring security of transportation of its energy resources.

Fundamental importance for Europe has the status of Kazakhstan as a nuclear-free country.

The formation of an independent security system of the European Union is also important for the Central Asian countries, since the increased military role and responsibilities of the EU to a certain extent determines the prospects of cooperation between the West and East in the field of security.

To take into account the fact that Europe strengthens its own defense system, it seems necessary to give serious attention to developing cooperation with European organizations. In addition, the experience of Europe in strengthening European defense actually seems to be quite useful.

Nowadays, despite the fact that the formation of European security model is far from its logical conclusion, it is a very rewarding experience. For example, European countries have vast experience in dealing with such issues as combating terrorism, extremism, separatism and drug trafficking. Through recently developed the Programme of Action to combat drug trafficking European Union offers assistance to Central Asian countries in combating drug trafficking, which passes through the new routes from Afghanistan to European cities. Changing the geopolitical situation in the world requires the EU to develop new approaches to security problems. Leading European nations do not leave plans to strengthen European identity in security and defense in their own institutional framework. Persistently advancing to the creation of its own security, the EU leaves no attempts to achieve effective results.

Thus, the new Lisbon Treaty is an important step in European integration, which will help to a united Europe to meet the challenges of the XXI century and pave the way for globalization. A united Europe can speak with one voice in the international arena and become more consistent in the different directions of foreign policy, such as diplomacy, security, trade and humanitarian aid.

Energy security as a key factor of international stability is one of the most important political and economic interests of Kazakhstan.

Our country is one of the important elements of the global energy infrastructure, so essential component of Kazakhs hydrocarbon resources.

The interests of multi-vector energy and pipeline politics in Kazakhstan identify areas of cooperation with our key partners - Russia, China, USA, EU and neighbors in Central Asia.

The problem here is that none of these actors developed political, economic or energy model for regional policy. Our country actively participates in the international arena in the framework of multilateral security mechanisms, seeks to spread valuable European experience to Asia, which is a significant step forward the creation of multilateral security structures.

Speaking of strengthening the international authority of Kazakhstan, regional stability and international security, the President stressed that "Today, our country has reached a qualitatively new level of international recognition".

The role of Central Asia in the international political system increases, which is associated primarily with its geostrategic position, the potentially powerful oil and gas and other resources, a significant industrial, scientific and technical potential, the prospects of construction of transport infrastructure. These factors have turned this region into a field as broad cooperation and rivalry between different forces.

After the events of September 11 not only relations between U.S. and Central Asia, but also between the EU and regional countries had passed to a new stage. According to Western experts, region would be faced economic and political instability which were caused by internal and external threats. In this period EU and other international organizations have shown increased interest in Central Asia.
Kazakhstan can play, foremost, role of initiator of more deep discussion about European security. Giving the analysis of problems of security in the contemporary world, President N. Nazarbaev marked, «It not only potential threats of the massed military attack, resulting from the states and regular armies, but also the threats connected with possible terrorist attacks, conflicts on the basis of ethnic and confessional distinctions».

Kazakhstan attaches a great importance to developing regional cooperation in the field of combating international terrorism. Establishing close relations with different international and regional security structures corresponds to the principles of multi vector foreign policy of Kazakhstan and meets the interests of strengthening its national security.

Kazakhstan supports the initiative about prompt acceptance of the universal international Convention against international terrorism. It is necessary to build a system of counteraction to illegal transit of drugs with joint efforts. It is quite logical to set up an international structure to fight against such threats to security like illegal migration in Central Asia. EU can also play an important role in the security on the Caspian Sea. In this context Kazakhstan proposes to sign "A Pact on stability on the Caspian Sea" prohibiting the use of military force in Pre-Caspian region.

Thus, present and future dialogue between Kazakhstan and EU takes place within analysis and counter existing threats and challenges, including terrorism, organized crime, uncontrolled migration, drug trafficking and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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