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**EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN EU
AND CENTRAL ASIA IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

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The European Union is one of the organizations that promotes democracy and human rights around the world, not only in EU countries but also around the world. The EU recognized Central Asia's strategic importance as a crossroads between Asia and Europe. Since 2007, when a new EU strategy for Central Asia was proposed, the EU and Central Asia have been collaborating in the sphere of human rights. The first human rights conversations between governments and the organization have been held since the same year. The EU's prior Central Asia policy was amended in 2019, with an emphasis on sustainability (including human rights, border security, and the environment), prosperity (with a particular focus on connectivity), and regional cooperation. In addition, the newly agreed EU policy for Central Asia allows Brussels to insist that the area adhere to human rights norms. The Strategy is based on the concept that democracy and the rule of law are required to improve public administration authorities' responsiveness to citizens' demands and responsibility to them.

To get a complete picture of the situation, it is necessary to consider the EU tools that are used for individual countries.

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan and the European Union have been partners since the republic's independence, and their cooperative discourse is growing. This discourse was initially focused on trade and investment concerns, but since 2002, it has expanded to include other critical sectors such as energy, transportation, justice, law and order, and political engagement in the realm of shared interests.

In several sectors, bilateral relations between the EU and Kazakhstan have improved since the European Council adopted the "New Partnership Strategy: The European Union and Central Asia" in June 2007. Human rights is a unique area, where the EU and Kazakhstan launched a formal engagement in October 2008. The EU-Kazakhstan Human Rights Dialogue provides a platform for discussing issues of interest to both sides and serves to strengthen cooperation on human rights with many other organizations, such as the OSCE and the UN. Officials from the European Union meet with their counterparts from the Government of Kazakhstan on an annual basis to discuss human rights, while the annual "Civil Society Seminar" gathers non-governmental organizations, academics and practitioners from the EU and Kazakhstan to discuss special issues and exchange experiences. The EU is trying to support Kazakhstan in legal reforms in the field of legal norms, offering its experience and know-how [1].

At the moment, the EU also finances various projects in Kazakhstan in order to promote human rights and strengthen the role of civil society through such thematic programs as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), where two million euros are allocated annually, Non-State Actors and Local Authorities (NSA-LA), Neighborhood Cooperation Priorities for 2019-2022 and the European Human Rights Training Program for representatives of Legal Professions (HELP) [2].

Kyrgyzstan

In 2007, the "Strategy of the New Partnership of the European Union with the countries of Central Asia" was adopted.

Within the framework of this country document, one of the priority areas of cooperation between the European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic was the issue of the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the establishment of a "Dialogue on human rights" between the Kyrgyz Republic and the EU on a bilateral basis. According to the "Strategy of the New Partnership of the European Union with the Countries of Central Asia" adopted in 2007, annual Dialogues on human Rights are held between the Kyrgyz Republic and the EU in Bishkek and Brussels, alternately.

The dialogue aims to contribute to the development of a shared understanding of human rights policy and its evolution, as well as to identify ways to improve the situation in the field of human rights protection and promotion, including the implementation of EU-funded cooperation programs and projects.

In April 2014, another official Dialogue on Human Rights between the Kyrgyz Republic and the EU was held in Bishkek. Holding and participating in such Dialogues confirms the commitment of the Kyrgyz Republic to the universal principles of democracy and human rights and contributes to the development of a common understanding of human rights policy and its development, including support and implementation of cooperation programs in this area by the EU.

It should be emphasized that protecting human rights and freedoms in Kyrgyzstan is one of the key aims of the country's social changes, which aim to enhance residents' lives by establishing adequate living circumstances, ensuring individual freedom and inviolability, and providing social security [3].

Currently, there are such programs as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), where one million euros are allocated annually, Non-State Actors and Local Authorities (NSA-LA) and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) [4].

Uzbekistan

Every year, in connection with the meeting of the PC's Justice and Home Affairs Subcommittee of the ATP Subcommittee on Justice and Internal Affairs, the EU and Uzbekistan organize a Human Rights Dialogue. The Human Rights Dialogue covers a wide range of human rights topics, including the criminal justice system, torture prevention, labor rights, civil society, freedom of association and peaceful assembly, women's rights, children's rights, non-discrimination, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion or belief.

The Justice and Internal Affairs Subcommittee gives an opportunity to examine the rule of law, good governance, and judicial reform, as well as judicial cooperation, money laundering and corruption, migration, asylum, and border management, terrorism, and violent extremism prevention.

To assist Uzbekistan in its reform and modernization efforts, the cooperation agreement presently under consideration will place an even greater focus on democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and basic freedoms [5].

Also at the moment, the EU uses such tools as EIDHR (one and a half million euros are issued under this program); the European Human Rights Training Program for Representatives of Legal Professions (HELP); Institution Building and Partnership Program — IBPP; Non-state actors and local Authorities (NSA-LA) and a tool for cooperation in order to Development (DCI).

Tajikistan

The EU-Tajikistan Human Rights Dialogues provide a venue for addressing topics of mutual concern and help to improve human rights cooperation in multilateral organizations like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations. Annual meetings between EU officials and Tajikistani to address human rights problems are held. A high-level gathering is the Human Rights Dialogue. On October 31, 2008, the first Dialogue took held in Dushanbe.

The European Union (EU) and Tajikistan convened the 12th edition of their annual Human Rights Dialogue via videoconference on November 11, 2020.

The EU supports Tajikistan in ensuring full compliance with all OSCE norms and international human rights standards. There is a need to strengthen the rule of law and improve the functioning of the legal system.

The "Rule of Law" Initiative, which is being implemented in all Central Asian nations, is another kind of human rights cooperation. A variety of events were organized in Tajikistan as part of this program, including seminars on judicial training and criminal law, as well as study visits to European nations for government workers and scientists.

The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is an important tool that the EU can use to finance and support human rights-related projects in Tajikistan and around the world. In Tajikistan, the EU pays special attention to promoting a pluralistic political system while strengthening the role of civil society. Tajikistan receives about 900,000 euros every two years under this program [6].

Turkmenistan

Human rights are an essential part of the EU-Turkmenistan bilateral relationship. Since the start of bilateral human rights dialogues with Turkmen authorities in 2008, the EU has held such meetings every year, allowing for constructive and open discussions on a variety of issues related to human rights and democratization, including prison conditions, torture, and enforced disappearances; judicial reforms and the rule of law; freedom associations, expression of opinions and beliefs; and the role of the independent Ombudsman.

The EU is also actively working on gender equality and human rights in accordance with the 3rd EU Action Plan on Gender Issues for 2021-2025 and its Implementation Plan at the country level [7].

However, it should be noted that none of the DCI, IPB initiatives apply to Turkmenistan. In addition, the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan is responsible for the management of EU-funded programs in Turkmenistan, covering public finance management, public administration reform, support for the education sector and agri-food processing and marketing [8].

In conclusion, it should be noted that the EU is actively promoting its human rights policy in Central Asia and intends to continue to support colleagues from Central Asia in ensuring justice and protection of fundamental human rights, which are important elements in ensuring security, peace and fruitful development in accordance with European and international standards. For all the time of cooperation, 2 strategies have been released, which are still being implemented by different tools. It is obvious that the EU has made a contribution in the form of expertise in the field of human rights, thereby demonstrating its ability to make timely recommendations to many partners, which is a good prerequisite for future cooperation.

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