

EU strategy for Central Asia

European Parliament resolution of 15 December 2011 on the state of implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia (2011/2008(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on the European Union and in particular Article 21 thereof,
- having regard to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) concluded between the EU and Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, to the Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters between the European Communities and Turkmenistan and to the PCA between the EU and Turkmenistan, signed on 25 May 1998, which has not yet been ratified,
- having regard to the EU Strategy for a new Partnership with Central Asia, adopted by the European Council on 21-22 June 2007¹, and to the joint progress reports by the Commission and the Council of 24 June 2008² and 28 June 2010³,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on Central Asia, in particular those of 20 February 2008 on an EU Strategy for Central Asia⁴, of 6 May 2010⁵ and 8 July 2010⁶ on the situation in Kyrgyzstan, of 11 November 2010 on strengthening the OSCE – a role for the EU⁷, of 25 November 2010 entitled ‘Towards a new Energy Strategy for Europe 2011-2020’⁸, of 16 December 2010 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2009 and the European Union’s policy on the matter⁹ and of 7 July 2011 on EU external policies in favour of democratisation¹⁰,
- having regard to the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights, launched in 2003 with the aim of promoting human rights and supporting penal reform, democracy, good governance, media freedom, the rule of law, security structures (police/armed forces) and conflict prevention, and to the subsequent European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (Regulation (EC) No 1889/2006)¹¹,
- having regard to the biannual EU-Central Asia Ministerial meetings held since 2007 and the EU-Central Asia Ministerial Conferences on security issues held in 2008 and 2009,
- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf

² http://eeas.europa.eu/central_asia/docs/progress_report_0609_en.pdf

³ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st11/st11402.en10.pdf>

⁴ OJ C 184 E, 6.8.2009, p. 49.

⁵ OJ C 81 E, 15.3.2011, p. 80.

⁶ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0283.

⁷ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0399.

⁸ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0441.

⁹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0489.

¹⁰ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0334.

¹¹ OJ L 386, 29.12.2006, p. 1.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Development and the Committee on International Trade (A7-0338/2011),
- A. whereas the sustainable development of any country presupposes that protection of human rights, establishing and implementing democratic values and institutions, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as good governance and a strong civil society, are ensured,
- B. whereas serious deficits are found regarding democracy, human rights and rule of law and fundamental freedoms in Central Asian states,
- C. whereas an enhanced cooperation between the EU and the five countries of Central Asia is of mutual strategic interest in order to diversify and deepen the political, social and economic relations and make full use of the potential the partnership agreements offer,
- D. whereas Central Asia holds significant importance for the European Union in terms of trade potential and energetic security and whereas the region has been affected by the recent global financial and economic crisis,
- E. whereas some Member States have strong bilateral relations with the Central Asian states, being leading sources of investment and trade and whereas the EU needs a concerted and coherent approach towards the region in order to avoid misunderstandings, duplication of tasks and most importantly, sending mixed signals,
- F. whereas some Central Asian states took first steps in a long process of democratisation in which continuous and serious efforts in governance and regional cooperation are necessary conditions for overcoming persisting shortcomings which have so far prevented them from fully realising their political, social and economic development potential,
- G. whereas SMEs are an embodiment of entrepreneurship and the free-market spirit, and are a powerful force in the establishment of democracies,
- H. whereas the lack of mutual trust exacerbates tensions over the sharing of natural resources, undermines regional cooperation and increases risks of confrontation; whereas, however, the problems of availability of water stem more from mismanagement and wasting of water resources than from a quantitative deficit,
- I. whereas the EU and the countries of Central Asia share a common interest in diversifying export routes and in cooperating on energy and environmental sustainability,
- J. whereas concerns about security and stability in the region should include not only state security, but also the security of the populations through, inter alia, respect for human rights, livelihoods, the environment and access to basic public services,

EU commitment

1. Underlines the strong political and economic interest of the EU in strengthening its bi- and multilateral relations with Central Asian countries in all areas of cooperation, such as stability, security and sustainable development of the region, trade and economic relations, energy and transport links, reinforcement of dialogue on universal values such as democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, and common challenges and

threats, including border management and combating drug and human trafficking;

2. Points out that the EU Strategy for Central Asia identifies seven priorities but provides only a low level of resources; notes accordingly that EU assistance funds are too limited to allow the EU to have an impact in all policy areas; urges the EU to develop a collective vision and to define and articulate its priorities better; points out that development cooperation with the Central Asian states can yield results only if these states comply with international standards of democracy, governance, the rule of law and human rights; points out likewise that EU development cooperation must not be subordinated to economic, energy or security interests;
3. Considers that the EU needs to maintain a high level of engagement in Central Asia, tailoring its strategies to the progress of the states in the region; underlines the fact that the level and nature of the EU's engagement must be differentiated and conditional, depending on measurable progress in the fields of democratisation, human rights, good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, the rule of law and the fight against corruption, offering its assistance where needed to help foster this progress, following lines similar to the principles of the EU's neighbourhood policy (i.e. 'more for more');
4. Underlines the need to explain and promote the EU concept of security and stability in the event that it differs from theirs; stresses that the EU is duty-bound to be critical of governments that violate the fundamental rights of their citizens in the name of national security;
5. Believes that the future EU-Central Asia strategy should learn lessons from the reform of the European Neighbourhood policy, in terms of differentiation, people-to-people contact and paying increased attention to democracy and human rights, and should also take into account the broader geopolitical context;
6. Acknowledges the importance of the EU Special Representative's continuous work in the field in ensuring a high level of political dialogue with the Central Asian states; recalls that his mandate also provides for engagement with local civil society and that this is necessary for increased EU visibility; calls for political dialogue to be based on an assessment of compliance by Central Asian states with their commitments as OSCE members;
7. Considers that the revision of the Central Asia Strategy needs to take into account the need to back its objectives with sufficient financial resources and to establish appropriate distribution patterns that reflect the realities of every country in the region; considers that, given the financial constraints, the focus should be placed on those medium- and long-term programmes that can have the biggest impact on the development of the region, notably youth and education, technical assistance on economic development and promotion of small and medium-sized businesses, as well as water security and combating drug trafficking;
8. Asks the Commission to integrate visibly, or at least reconcile, its normative, technical and interest-based agendas for Central Asia; also recalls the obligations on policy coherence for development enshrined in Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
9. Points out that implementation of the strategy can be enhanced, on the one hand, through intensified internal EU coordination and, on the other, through intensified engagement with other international donors and regional stakeholders;

10. Suggests that the regional approach be streamlined via relationships with China and Russia, as the main economic actors in the region; takes the view that the approach to the issue of fossil energy should be linked to EU programming in the Caucasus and Black Sea Region and with Turkey;
11. Calls on the Commission strictly to respect the distinction between programmes and activities eligible for financing under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and those to be funded under other financial instruments such as the Instrument for Stability (IfS) or the European Democracy Initiative (EIDHR), particularly as regards border management and the fight against organised crime, improved application of the rule of law and human rights protection;
12. Stresses the continuous need for regular human rights dialogues with all five countries, regrets that the overall progress on the ground has been scant and that in some instances regression can be observed; considers that the existence of the human rights dialogues should not be used as an excuse for excluding human-rights-related questions arising in other fields of cooperation or for not engaging in further actions; calls for the systematic involvement of NGOs and civil society actors in the preparation of these dialogues and for the outcome of these dialogues to be made public so as to allow for an assessment of their effectiveness and of the commitment of the parties;
13. Reiterates the importance of not overlooking middle-income countries, such as those of Central Asia, in the context of overall EU development policy and efforts to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), since development efforts – especially in the context of cutbacks in development assistance due to the global financial and economic crisis – are frequently focused on the least developed countries thereby neglecting the Central Asian region;
14. Considers that limited resources and the region's many needs require the EU to rigorously target and prioritise its assistance, also taking into consideration the effects of deep-seated corruption and insufficient administrative expertise on the effectiveness of its aid; calls for steady levels of agreed development aid with greater flexibility in allocation, and supports an emphasis on aid to be delivered to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have the greatest needs in this respect;
15. Expresses, however, its doubt about the use of budget support in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, especially given the widespread corruption there; calls on the Commission to present a report on the use of budget support in these countries;
16. Strongly supports the opening of fully fledged EU delegations in all the countries of Central Asia as a means of increasing the presence and visibility of the EU in the region and long-term cooperation and engagement with all sectors of society and of fostering progress towards better understanding and the emergence of the rule of law and respect for human rights; is convinced that the presence of such delegations will greatly contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the strategy and EU interests in the region; insists on proper staffing of these missions with political affairs and economy and trade specialists in order to achieve maximum results and provide effective assistance;
17. Recommends that in the future the TAIEX, Twinning and SIGMA instruments are opened to Central Asian countries in order to support the improvement of standards and the necessary reforms;

18. Notes with concern the difficulties encountered by the EU in engaging with independent civil society in the areas of human rights and good governance, and the continued harassment of NGOs in the region; calls for greater transparency in the allocation of EU and Member States' development cooperation funding and its recipients and for EU delegations and Member States' embassies to support genuinely independent non-governmental partners so as to help them play an effective role in the development and consolidation of civil society; takes the view that the continued promotion by the EU of programmes targeted at the Central Asian countries is an important trans-border tool for fostering understanding and cooperation among the states of the region;
19. Stresses the importance of freely operating opposition parties in the region and urges the governments of all the countries of Central Asia to guarantee political freedom;
20. Approves the holding of regular regional EU-Central Asia summits and calls for consideration to be given to the possible future establishment of an EU-Central Asia ad hoc parliamentary forum in the framework of the existing Parliamentary Cooperation Committees and interparliamentary meetings with Central Asian countries as a means of assessing, and contributing to the contents of, the summit talks; underlines the importance of regular bilateral and multilateral parliamentary cooperation; regards the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements as the institutional basis for an enhanced exchange among parliamentarians, providing mutual understanding and respect; therefore supports PCAs with all five Central Asian countries; stresses the importance of the European Parliament's more active engagement in monitoring negotiations on partnership agreements with the Central Asian countries and in the implementation of the existing ones;
21. Calls on the European Union to continue supporting public sector reform in the countries of Central Asia through adequate technical and financial assistance in order to achieve stable, reformed and modernised administrative structures in all the countries concerned;

Democratisation, human rights and rule of law

22. Notes that, although some positive constitutional or legal changes have taken place in the region, (efforts to abolish the death penalty, establishment of ombudsmen, some judicial procedure reforms, etc.), the overall situation in the fields of human rights and the rule of law remains worrying;
23. Supports the conclusions of the OECD Central Asia Competitiveness Outlook of January 2011 and is especially concerned about the human rights and labour rights situation and the lack of support for civil society in Central Asian countries, and about the educational system, SMEs, landownership reforms and the region's investment policies, which need to be better spread across the economy, being centred at present on the energy and mining sectors;
24. Calls for a strengthening of the human rights dialogues in order to make them more effective and result-oriented; calls in this regard for broad involvement of the European Parliament in monitoring these dialogues; urges the Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to assess the impact of the previous dialogues, to take account of benchmarks in cooperation with the European Parliament on the progress made by the states of the region in the field of human rights and the rule of law, and to assess the effectiveness of EU assistance projects in working towards this aim;

25. Condemns any use of torture and severe restriction of the media and of freedom of expression, assembly and association; urges the EU and its HR/VP to raise publicly the cases of political prisoners, imprisoned human rights defenders and journalists and to call for their immediate release;
26. Highly appreciates the work of political foundations providing practical cooperation in the democratisation process through their long-term presence on the ground;
27. Regards the Rule of Law Initiative as a key component of cooperation with the states of Central Asia, and approves of the exemplary interaction between the EU and its Member States in implementing assistance projects; notes that there has been little interaction between the projects and local civil society and that greater interaction with civil society and improved access to information about the initiative for local civil society actors would enhance the visibility, transparency and accountability of its activities in line with the EU's broader objectives for improving the Central Asia Strategy outlined in the joint progress report; underlines the need for the Rule of Law Platform project to include clear objectives and a transparent assessment of its implementation and results, while avoiding any reinforcement of the repressive components of security forces; stresses that proper implementation of the Initiative must be one of the key criteria in allocating aid and budgetary support;

Education, children and people-to-people exchange

28. Underlines the fact that education is the foundation for the democratic development of society; calls therefore for a continuation of efforts to modernise the public education sector, including business education, and to make it free and accessible, and for an intensification of the Education Initiative, particularly international academic exchanges of students and teachers, within the wider context of supporting the build-up of a civil society based on stable human and labour rights in all countries in the region; stresses that it is also essential to promote processes to ensure participation by women and their access to the job market;
29. Notes that the EU work on education and human rights should be complemented by actions and programmes focused on youth, as the most vulnerable group in these societies; in this context calls for increased EU support for youth initiatives in the region, particularly for those that may reduce growing radicalisation and promote tolerance among young people in these countries;
30. Calls on the EU to continue supporting people-to-people contacts and exchange programmes in science, business and education; in this context, notes the shortcomings in the organisation and implementation of the EU-Central Asia Education Initiative and urges the EU Commission to address them in close cooperation with education specialists and the Central Asia partners;
31. Underlines its continued concern over the situation of children, in particular the prevalence of forced child labour in different forms and degrees, and the need for all countries in the region to implement on the ground their international commitments, particularly those under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO Minimum Age Convention and the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour;

Economic integration and sustainable development

32. Emphasises that the rule of law and economic progress are interconnected; reaffirms its support for the economic diversification of the countries of Central Asia, the development of a sustainable energy sector and improved transportation links connecting Caspian resources to the European market as a way to achieve economic development and steady GDP growth; calls on the EU to foster the creation of a climate of economic stability through a secure and stable legal framework, and by combating corruption and nepotism, which is crucial to attracting foreign investments, fostering innovation and stimulating true private entrepreneurship, including microcredits for projects set up by independent women, in compliance with international social, labour and environmental standards;
33. Stresses the need for the governments of the countries of Central Asia to promote and support the proliferation of SMEs as one of the elements needed for the development of the countries concerned, and emphasises that the EU should give this higher priority in its assistance to SMEs under the EIB's mandate for Central Asia and relax visa requirements for people travelling from Central Asia on business and higher education, while promoting international labour, environmental and corporate social responsibility standards; considers also that practices which discriminate against European industries should be avoided, including in the key sector of public procurement, and calls on the EU to facilitate cooperation between SMEs from the EU and SMEs from Central Asia;
34. Supports firmer integration in the world economy of the Central Asian countries, in particular through international cooperation with, and accession to, the WTO; believes that structural reforms aimed at a market economy and accession to the WTO are vital to the economic development of the countries and the region and for integration of the region into the world economy;
35. Underlines the fact that international economic integration and regional economic cooperation are complementary approaches and should therefore be genuinely pursued in Central Asia;
36. Is aware of the fact that regional integration among the countries of Central Asia is weak; calls on the Commission to design differentiated trade strategies for each of the five Central Asia countries, according to their specific needs, and to foster intra-regional integration;

Energy, water and the environment

37. Highlights the importance of diversification of supply of energy and raw materials, especially rare earths, for the EU and of export markets, technologies and know-how for Central Asia; regards it as being of the utmost importance that energy cooperation projects include long-term supply agreements, enshrining the principles of environmental sustainability and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); calls for the EU to promote the EITI and other such initiatives in all the states of the region that have significant extractive resources;
38. Stresses the importance of energy in relations with Central Asian countries, given that it constitutes a major source of revenue for the states and a potential source of energy security for the EU;
39. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to continue supporting energy projects and fostering communication towards important goals such as the trans-Caspian route; welcomes the participation of all the Central Asian countries in the Baku Initiative;

40. Recognises the importance of energy cooperation with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, given that it is beneficial both to those states and to the European Union Member States; welcomes, therefore, the signing of memoranda of understanding with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan that provide for the purchasing of gas, as well as the steps taken in the development of the Southern Corridor, notably in the form of the Nabucco Project; points out, however, that Turkmenistan is not yet a member of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI); re-emphasises the need to promote greater transparency in relation to income from natural resources; urges the EU accordingly, through its energy policy dialogue, to back Turkmen membership of the EITI with a view to integrating considerations of good governance into EU energy programming;
41. Given the increasing electricity shortages in Central Asia, highlights the opportunities for regional synergy, including in the promising renewable energy sector; calls on the EU to provide political support and technical assistance for initiatives in this field;
42. Notes with concern the adverse effect in Central Asia of the global financial crisis and the increasing levels of poverty; believes that the path to a healthy social and political life is tied to economic prosperity and that the EU needs to address the development of the Central Asian economies as a major part of its strategy for the region; calls for enhanced support for poverty alleviation programmes and notes the importance of EIB investment;
43. Underlines the unbalanced nature of some of the Central Asian economies, which are over-reliant on natural resources, and considers that diversification is a major goal for the medium and long term in the region; notes in this context the importance of the Central Asia Invest programme and calls for it to be applied in all the five countries;
44. Is of the opinion that ensuring coherent and comprehensive reinvestment of the national revenues from natural resources is crucial to sustainable development and achieving wide-ranging social and economic development;
45. Takes the view that reform of the agriculture sector is of the utmost importance with regard, in particular, to achieving food security, diversifying production, ensuring sustainable management of seeds and reducing dependence on the cultivation of cotton rather than other crops; underlines furthermore the need to introduce advanced practices and techniques of water management, water conservation and irrigation in order to achieve these goals; calls on the Central Asian governments to assume leadership in this approach;
46. Highlights the fact that lack of energy (e.g. for heating and electricity) is exacerbating the situation of poor people in Central Asian countries; urges the EU, in line with its commitments on climate change, to step up its assistance with the development of sustainable energy policy, including through energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources;
47. Stresses that water issues in the region remain one of the main sources of tension and potential conflict and underlines the importance of a regional approach in order to protect and properly manage shared water resources; in particular, notes that hydroelectric energy and water resource projects in the upstream states Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have led to increased regional tensions with Central Asian downstream countries; calls in this context on the countries of the region that have not yet done so to sign and ratify without further delay the Espoo and Århus Conventions and to foster involvement of local actors in decision making;

48. Highlights the necessity to set up a credible and effective permanent framework in which downstream and upstream countries can discuss and decide together the measures to adopt in order to tackle and solve the water problems in the region;
49. Welcomes the increased engagement of the European development banks in the region and, especially, the extension of the mandate of the EIB to Central Asia, focusing on environmental and water issues; urges the development banks to uphold principles established by the EBRD as regards desisting from support to state-owned enterprises in countries where there are systematic human rights violations;
50. Urges the EU, in a context of regional water scarcity, to step up its assistance in the field of water management within the ambit of the EU Environment and Water Initiative and to explore, as a way to address energy scarcity in upstream states, further options for solar and wind energy, which could help rural communities on a small scale; considers it regrettable that, to date, the EU Water Governance Project has largely focused on water quality, which is important but less relevant to the situation in Central Asia than issues of sharing and allocation of water resources;
51. Considers that its expertise in managing transnational water resources and its existing involvement in bilateral cooperation with a view to integrated national water management plans and multilateral cooperation in the regional Water Governance project and the International Fund for the Aral Sea create an opportunity for the EU to profile itself as a mediator and facilitator in the sharing of water resources between upstream and downstream states (including Northern Afghanistan) and to promote the establishment of a sustainable cooperative order for water governance, grounded in treaty-level international law, a role that no other international actor is willing or able to fulfil despite calls by the countries concerned;

Security/border management

52. Welcomes the current implementation of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone by the five Central Asian Republics; considers that the Treaty, with its binding commitment to nuclear disarmament by countries that previously hosted nuclear weapons on their territory and that have neighbours with nuclear weapons, is a significant contribution to the efforts to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons and a powerful example of non-proliferation cooperation;
53. Recognises that the denial of basic rights and opportunities that results from the absence of democracy and the rule of law can lead to situations of insecurity;
54. Reaffirms its support for actions aimed at fostering regional cooperation as a major way to address the many cross-border security, resource management, ethnic, environmental and development problems, as well as the fight against terrorism and violent religious extremism within the states concerned; supports a continuation and deepening of the BOMCA border management and CADAP drug action programmes;
55. Emphasises that BOMCA and CADAP are not financed under the IfS, but through the DCI; points out that, as the IfS is designed to be flexible and responsive to short-term crises while working on the long-term, trans-regional security challenges, it will make sense to place these programmes under the IfS umbrella;

56. Stresses that regional security is in the interests both of the EU and of the other actors in the area, namely the Russian Federation, China and the United States, which are all concerned about growing instability and radicalisation in the region as well as porous frontiers with Afghanistan and the resulting drug-trafficking;
57. Takes note of the accession of Kazakhstan to the customs union with Russia and Belarus and hopes that the development of this entity will not create obstacles to regional cooperation and will not hamper the stepping up of bilateral relations with the EU;
58. Underlines the fact that including Afghanistan structurally in sectoral cooperation, especially regarding security/border management, human security and water management is crucial to guaranteeing stability and security in the region; calls for an intensification of cross-border cooperation with Afghanistan, and stresses the need for coherence between the EU's approach to Afghanistan and the Central Asia Strategy, in particular in relation to transport, energy, trade, and development actions and programmes;
59. Calls on the EU to focus its assistance on combating drug and human trafficking, issues which are among the main sources of instability in Central Asia that can be targeted by EU efforts; notes with concern the development of this issue throughout the region and calls for trans-border efforts to be suggested and promoted by the EU; supports the organisation of Central Asian forums for combating narco-crime;
60. Is concerned at the dual issue of rising fundamentalist views and movements as a spill-over effect from Afghanistan but also as a reaction to the problematic human rights and democratic record of the governments in the region; notes that the fight against terrorism is an important element for the EU's Central Asia strategy;
61. Calls for support for Security Sector Reform (SSR) in Central Asian countries to be put on the political agendas of meetings with Central Asian leaders, and urges that areas of Security Sector Reform that could be supported in the region alongside existing work on the rule of law and border management be investigated;
62. Stresses the need for the OSCE and UN missions to operate freely in the territories of the countries concerned, because these organisations are crucial to the provision of the much necessary assistance in security-sector reform;

Country-specific issues

63. Stresses that the following country-specific paragraphs list a number of important urgent issues, but do not seek to provide a comprehensive analysis of every country;

Kazakhstan

64. Calls on the HR/VP to keep up the pressure on the Kazakh authorities to completely fulfil the promises to improve elections and media freedom which they announced in the run-up to their 2010 OSCE chairmanship, in accordance with the core commitments of OSCE member states and with the National Plan for Human Rights adopted in 2009 by the Kazakh Government;
65. Calls on the Kazakh authorities to honour their international obligations and commitments, including those undertaken within the OSCE human dimension;

66. Welcomes the aspirations of Kazakhstan towards closer and enhanced relations with the EU, and the recent launching of negotiations on a new enhanced EU-Kazakhstan PCA, and stresses that economic cooperation must go hand in hand with political cooperation and be based on the political will to implement and uphold common values; looks forward, in this context, to tangible progress in the fields of freedom of the media, freedom of expression, and freedom of association and assembly, and to improvements in the conduct of the electoral process in the upcoming legislative elections in 2012;
67. Regrets the recent transfer of oversight of prison facilities from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of the Interior, and calls upon the Government of Kazakhstan to intensify its efforts to prevent and remedy torture and inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment;
68. Encourages Kazakhstan to demonstrate its renewed commitment to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) by removing all legal and regulatory obstacles to the successful implementation of this initiative;

Kyrgyzstan

69. Commends Kyrgyzstan for its efforts to pursue democratic reforms and shift to a genuine multi-party system; hopes that further progress will be accomplished in the conduct of the upcoming presidential elections scheduled later this year; points out that sustained efforts are needed to develop a fully functioning democracy and, noting that Kyrgyzstan is one of the pilot countries for EU democracy support, calls in this regard on the EU to assist the Kyrgyz authorities in the area of institution building, consolidation of democratic practices and the fight against corruption and the infiltration of organised crime into the Kyrgyz administration;
70. Welcomes the decision of the Kyrgyz Government to establish a Special Commission to implement and monitor the recommendations of the International Independent Commission (IIC) for investigation of the June 2010 events in South Kyrgyzstan, and calls on the Kyrgyz authorities to adopt the measures necessary to defuse interethnic tension, reduce ethno-nationalism and stabilise the situation and to promote cultural dialogue and respect for minority rights and the fight against all forms of discrimination, inter alia by instituting genuine judicial and police reform as a prerequisite for the prevention of human rights violations such as torture and other forms of police abuse; calls on the EU to design and implement EU assistance programmes, together with the Kyrgyz authorities and NGOs, aiming at conflict prevention, reconciliation and prevention of impunity;

Tajikistan

71. Expresses its concern at the inefficiency of EU development aid in the country resulting from the high level of corruption, the influence of organised crime on governance and the looming regional fragmentation fuelled by the dire economic and social conditions; calls, therefore, for an alternative approach based on human security through alternative channels of assistance;
72. Expresses concern over reports of torture in custody and the continuing lack of access of civil society monitors to places of detention; calls for ICRC and international monitors to be granted access to penitentiaries in order to increase transparency and oversight;
73. Recommends the Tajik Government, in this connection, to set as an objective the

achievement of progress in the abovementioned areas, leading to major and steady improvements in the country's rankings in transparency, governance and other relevant indexes prepared by international organisations; calls for strict conditionality for EU aid via state structures;

74. Calls on the EU to promote and help, by means of feasibility studies, technical expertise and, where necessary, appropriate EIB loans, the development of smaller-scale hydroelectric plant projects distributed along the course of rivers, and of alternative renewable energies;

Turkmenistan

75. Welcomes the legislation adopted in the political, economic, social and educational field, but stresses that comprehensive implementation measures need to follow; urges, in this connection, the Council and the HR/VP to encourage the Turkmen authorities to implement fully the new legislation and to engage more actively with international and regional organisations;
76. Asks for the entire fulfilment of the conditions set by the European Parliament in February 2008, in particular free and unfettered access for the International Committee of the Red Cross, the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, the abolition of all government impediments to travel, and the possibility for NGOs to operate in the country; considers that these conditions must be met in order for Turkmenistan to comply with the international standards it has ratified;
77. Is particularly worried that the current authorities have been systematically applying repressive policies which target all forms of opposition, independent NGOs and human rights activists; considers it especially regrettable that dialogue with civil society in Turkmenistan has proved to be impossible;

Uzbekistan

78. Takes note of the Council Conclusions of October 2009 that put an end to all sanctions on Uzbekistan and confirmed the willingness of the EU to strengthen relations with that country in a comprehensive manner; recalls that the level of the engagement depends on progress by Uzbekistan in the fields of human rights, democratisation and the rule of law and the fight against drug trafficking, and expects the EEAS and the Council to develop a policy of critical, conditional and coherent European engagement with Uzbekistan;
79. Reiterates its concern over reports of continued use of forced child labour, especially in the sphere of agriculture; (notes the worries of the ILO, workers' representatives, employers and NGOs as to the ongoing use of state-sanctioned forced child labour in Uzbekistan's cotton industry; urges the Uzbekistan authorities to engage with the ILO and grant the ILO unfettered access in order to monitor the cotton harvest on the ground and to develop, implement and monitor effective policies to eliminate permanently forced child labour; calls on the European Union to support the Government of Uzbekistan in its efforts in the area;
80. Is alarmed by the recent decision of the Uzbek authorities to close down the office of Human Rights Watch in Tashkent, reminds them of their obligations towards the OSCE and calls on them to allow unhindered access and operations by national and international NGOs and monitors throughout the country;

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81. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the EEAS, the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, and the governments and parliaments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.