

Messages from Central Asia for the High Representative

The EU's new High Representative for foreign policy, Catherine Ashton, is understandably on a steep learning curve in her new job. So many dossiers to get to know so fast. Central Asia is just one of many, and not at the top of the list. However a new monitoring study evaluating the EU's Central Asia 'Strategy', just published, serves to illustrate a number of points of wider significance for the EU's foreign policy¹.

Ashton's first task is to get the European External Action Service up and running, with the former Delegations (or embassies) of the Commission now to represent the European Union as a whole for all its competences. As regards Central Asia, if the EU is to have a credible 'strategy' there, it needs fully fledged Delegations in all five states. Its Delegation to Kazakhstan is well established, those to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are currently being upgraded, but there is nothing yet on the horizon for Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan. Other more innovative developments could be envisaged. Given that not many EU member states are represented in several of the central Asian states, the EU could organise common diplomatic and consular services on behalf of all. Common political reporting is one easy possibility, but more interesting for the people of Central Asia would be a common consular service for the issue of visas, at least for the 25 Schengen states. Other parts of the world would be candidates for the same developments also, but why not start with Central Asia experimentally? On the management of the Commission's aid programmes the monitoring study deplores the absence of published analysis of their impact and effectiveness, which the European Parliament might reasonably request together with publication of the Commission's own internal monitoring reports.

On the substance of the Central Asia 'strategy', the monitoring study observes a very wide ranging number of so-called priorities or focal points (political dialogue, human rights, rule of law, education, economic development, energy and transport links, water, common threats such as drug trafficking and terrorism etc.), but none of these seem to achieve yet striking results. There are many policy dialogues, but where's the beef? The monitoring study makes proposals: for the human rights dialogue to be carefully upgraded; for the transport programmes to be updated in the light of new links being developed between the region and China and Afghanistan; for the water initiative to get to grips with the major issues of confrontation between upstream and downstream

states; for the education initiative to be better adapted to Central Asian realities; for the energy dialogues to translate into clear proposals for linking gas from Turkmenistan to the Nabucco project, etc. The common theme running through these various elements is one that concerns EU foreign policies across the word: that of sketching a vast agenda for cooperation, but leaving implementation to tools that have insufficient capacity to achieve real results. This endemic problem for the EU's foreign policy is now exposed to brutal comparison, certainly in Central Asia but not only there, with China's massive interventions. For example, while the EU has been talking about the Nabucco gas pipeline for many years, China has built and now opened a trans-Central Asia gas pipeline linking it with Turkmenistan in half the time.

There are further issues raised by Central Asia for the multiple regional dimensions of the EU's foreign policy in the Eurasian space, i.e. its Eastern Partnership, its Strategic Partnerships with Russia, China and India, and its recently published Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy. It is commendable that the EU seeks to facilitate intra-Central Asian regional cooperation, even while this proves extremely difficult (for example the recent breakup of the regional electricity grid is a step in the contrary direction). But the EU should also work more explicitly on cooperative links between its projects in Central Asia with this region's own neighbours. Up to a point this is attempted through several links between the Eastern Partnership and Central Asia (e.g. transport and energy corridors), and here a further step would be to invite Kazakhstan to join the multilateral working groups of the Eastern Partnership. The EU apparently discusses Central Asia with Russia, China and India in its strategic partnerships with each of these three major powers, but the time comes here again to translate dialogues into actions, with transport, energy, drug trafficking and terrorism evident as matters of common interest. The truly strategic objective here should be to channel the current wave of multipolarity discourses, which in itself look dangerous for the stability of the world, into more structured cooperative actions. Central Asia is unique in the world in being bordered at each point of the compass by the major powers of the Eurasian landmass - by Russia and China to the north and east, and with the EU and India not far away to the west and south. There will be other much more difficult theatres of foreign policy action than Central Asia where these powers will face each other, so better search for a cooperative multipolarity here, especially since the states of the region themselves want 'multi-vectoral' foreign policies.

¹ «Into EurAsia - Monitoring the EU's Central Asia Strategy», CEPS and FRIDE, February 2010.

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European Neighbourhood Watch Index

«The challenges for Europe in a changing world»

Address by H. Van Rompuy, President of the European Council at the College of Europe
Brugge, 25 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

A lot has been achieved, especially since 1999, when the Union appointed the first High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana. The same year a start was made with the development of a capacity to respond to international crises. Today, the Union has missions on the ground with thousands of people involved – soldiers, policemen, marines adjudges – from Afghanistan to Chad, from Kosovo to Somalia. It is a remarkable achievement.

We have developed European instruments for real foreign policy. For instruments to work optimally, one needs to link them to a common strategic vision. Where do we go? Who are our partners? Where do we want to be in ten or twenty years time ahead? I will give an example.

President Obama took several months to elaborate a new strategy for Afghanistan. Why are we only able to react instead of developing a strategy together?

The European Council as a whole is entrusted to take the decisions on the Union's "strategic interests and objectives" in external affairs. According to the Treaty, these decisions relate to both "the foreign and security policy" and to "other areas of the external action of the Union" [art. 22§1EU]. The decisions may concern a specific country. They may also be thematic in approach, for instance relating to energy. The job of the permanent President of the European Council is to find consensus on all such external matters. Essentially, his task is to establish a shared sense of direction.

[...]

How do I now propose to advance? We have the main elements in place. A global power shift. Economic strength as a necessary condition for political power. Our Union, united in diversity. A need to be patient, even in times of urgency. It is also clear what we have to do. We must channel the tide of globalisation.

In terms of foreign policy, the European Union has, in my view, two tasks ahead. Two tracks.

The first track: we should further develop global economic governance. The foundation of the G20 by the EU was a great step. It is massively important to get key players around the same table. For the Member States of the Union, this requires a stronger coordination of foreign economic policy. It's the external side of the "gouvernement économique" which we are now developing internally.

This would be a good starting point for two reasons. The first is that internal economic policy coordination without a common external position will not work. In our globalising world, the inside and the outside are more and more intertwined. Banking regulation cannot be just an internal affair, it is an international affair. Energy policy touches demands of households, but also

relations with energy producers worldwide. The euro area needs to reflect on how to step up its external representation in institutions like the International Monetary Fund. This can't be a taboo topic between members of the euro area.

The other reason I would start here is that the economic side of foreign affairs would lead more fluidly than other subjects to a common stance, to a common policy. We have seen this in the past with trade, where there is only one negotiator on behalf of the Union. The field of foreign economic relations is the most promising vector for Europe to speak with one voice in the world.

With the G20 we now have an appropriate forum to develop this. The European Council is well placed to prepare common European positions; the individual Member States and the Brussels institutions - the Commission and the European Council - are sitting at the table at the highest-level. That's why at the March and June European Councils we will prepare the Toronto G20 Summit which will take place in late June this year.

The second track: we need to review and strengthen our relationship with key partners. I am above all thinking about the United States, Canada, Russia, China, Japan, India, Brazil.

At the Copenhagen Summit we experienced that Europe can no longer shine by the "force of its example" only. You need more than the conviction that your proposal is the best, to win them over. To get in the deal-making game, the Union needs to assert itself politically. The first step is to carefully choose our allies, to reflect about what we can do together with them. The European Council will take up the issue of climate politics at its March meeting.

The most appropriate partner in many fields remains the United States. I am convinced that the United States is also examining its place in the world after the financial crisis. The attachment four American friends to good transatlantic relations will remain. In spite of current impressions, it will only get stronger the coming years.

With other partners we need to have a fair and transparent dialogue. Neither naivety nor superfluous confrontation. We should send out consistent signals from the European Union; it is the only way to be reliable and efficient. All world actors should acknowledge, however, that participating in the "global governance" entails not only rights and advantages but also obligations. We should avoid that the UN Climate Conference, the DOHA-round in trade, or the reforms within the international monetary and financial system grind to a halt.

This requires continuous reflection at the level of Heads of State or Government on the common strategic direction which the European Union takes.

Results of Presidential Elections in Ukraine

Official results of the second round
Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine
Kyiv, 7 February 2010.

V. Yanukovich	48.95 %
Y. Tymoshenko	45.47 %

ODIHR preliminary conclusions on Ukraine elections

International Election Observation Mission
Ukraine, 7 February 2010. [Link](#)

The second round of the presidential election in Ukraine confirmed the assessment of the first round that most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments were met. This election consolidated progress achieved since 2004. The lack of confidence and the deficient legal framework were at the root of most problems encountered during this election, and constitute an immediate challenge for the new leadership. The professional, transparent and honest voting and counting should serve as a solid foundation for a peaceful transition of power.

The candidates were able to campaign freely in a competitive, yet polarized election environment. The campaign atmosphere was negatively affected by mutual accusations of fraud, last minute amendments to the election law and attempts to remove the heads of key institutions for partisan purposes. The misuse of administrative resources continued and the intertwining of political and economic interests persisted.

Any democratic election depends not only on the conduct of the election process, but also on an adequate, clear and stable legal framework being in place. Therefore, a unified election code should be adopted before holding the next elections. As stated following the first round, amending the election law between two rounds is inappropriate. Newly adopted amendments were presented as a reaction to allegations that one of the candidates would withdraw their members from commissions, thus depriving them of a quorum and disrupting the election. Both candidates used the amendments by either claiming that they would destroy any chance of holding a democratic election or, on the contrary, that they would preserve the process. However, the last minute amendments did not impact the conduct of election day.

Despite shortcomings, the existing legal framework can still provide a basis for holding democratic elections, as confirmed by the first round. However, the provisions in the election law concerning the second round leave important aspects unaddressed and others open to varying interpretations. Legal provisions on transparent campaign financing are necessary.

Notwithstanding the rising political tension, the Central Election Commission continued to operate mostly in a non-partisan manner, and was efficient in organizing the second round. However, it did not clarify the application of important aspects of the law. Some of its actions again lacked transparency.

The media provided voters with an opportunity to make an informed choice. Political talk shows on TV offered voters a variety of opinions and granted the candidates more balanced coverage than the news. The State TV station failed to comply with its legal obligations to provide impartial coverage of candidates and significantly favored one candidate in its newscasts. Voters would have benefited from a debate between two candidates.

Overall, the quality of the voter lists has improved, but in order to eliminate remaining inaccuracies, further efforts are necessary. Specifically, voters added to the lists in polling stations should be included in the state voter register before the next election.

Disturbingly, in the last days of the campaign, pressure was exerted on the judiciary, when the prosecutor started to question the judges who decided election related cases.

The election day was orderly and calm. Our observers assessed the voting, counting and tabulation overwhelmingly positively. The transparency was greatly enhanced by the large presence of observers. Women were well represented in precinct commissions.

Statement of HR Catherine Ashton on Ukraine Presidential Elections

Brussels, 7 February 2010. [Link](#)

"I welcome the completion of the second round of voting in the Ukrainian presidential elections and the positive assessment given to the process by the OSCE/ODIHR-led International Election Observation Mission.

The generally calm atmosphere in which the elections were conducted, the open campaign in the media and the fact that the electorate were provided with a genuine choice represent important achievements in Ukraine's democratic development.

I should in particular like to congratulate the people of Ukraine for the high turn out in both rounds of the elections and the strong commitment demonstrated to the democratic process. The European Union remains committed to deepening the relationship with Ukraine and supporting it in implementing its reform agenda. It looks forward to working with the new President to this end.

Russian President congratulates Yanukovich on election victory

Kremlin press release
Moscow, 15 February 2010. [Link](#)

The election, which was held in accordance with world standards, confirmed Ukrainians' desire to end the historically doomed attempts to sow discord between our peoples and their sincere wish to strengthen our good-neighbourly relations. This fully reflects the Russian people's hopes too.

I hope that Russian-Ukrainian cooperation will once again become a truly constructive and productive partnership. I am sure that through our joint efforts we can give new impetus to developing mutually advantageous bilateral ties.

I take this opportunity to invite you to make a visit soon to Russia to discuss the broad range of multifaceted cooperation matters on our two countries' agenda today.

Ukraine and the Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan Customs Union

Beginning of Meeting with Director of the Federal Customs Service Andrei Belyaninov
Kremlin press release
Moscow, 19 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL CUSTOMS SERVICE ANDREI BELYANINOV: The almost 15 years of positive experience gained through the Customs Committee board of the Russian-Belarusian Union State gives us the base we need for synchronising and facilitating our work. We are examining all of the procedural issues and have learned how to make timely responses to situations so as to settle any important questions that arise as rapidly as possible. Our Kazakhstani colleagues attended the last few board meetings in 2009. We think that establishing a working body such as a Customs Union board, in which the three parties' customs services would work together, would enable us to speed up the decision-making process and be closer to each other. This is an idea we want to get across today, and the heads of the customs services in all three countries support it, because we have learned to understand each other at the technical and executive levels.

We have been following events in Ukraine these last days. We hope that change in the political climate there might create opportunities for closer ties with our Ukrainian colleagues. To give them their due, they were among the first to initiate this integration process and the idea of a Customs Union. We have maintained working contacts with our Ukrainian colleagues throughout these years, but we would like to work more closely with them, because we have a very high level of trade between our countries. We are ready, willing and able to work together.

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: It is my sincere hope too that the new Ukrainian leadership, the newly elected president of Ukraine, Mr Yanukovich, will make an effort to help strengthen relations, trade and economic ties in general, not just with Russia but with other countries too. I think this would be entirely in the interests of Ukrainian companies and consumers. This work had indeed already started, and if you can continue it, with the requisite political will from the Ukrainian leadership, of course, this would be a good thing.

As for preparations in general for getting the Customs Union actually up and running, this requires intensive and rapid work. You were right to note that we have set a very rapid pace. On the one hand, we have to be careful to avoid problems arising from being too hasty in introducing the common

customs regulations. These kinds of problems are possible, unfortunately, including at times for our companies too, companies importing goods. In this respect we need to act swiftly to settle any issues. This concerns not just the Customs Service, of course. This concerns decisions in general in this area, the decisions that the Government and the individual ministries responsible for import policy need to make.

At the same time, we realise that giving the Customs Union real substance through these decisions, and your coordinated work with your colleagues from the Belarusian and Kazakhstani customs services, and, I hope, eventually with your Ukrainian colleagues too, will create new and far more comfortable conditions for conducting business, movement of goods, performing work and providing services. We therefore need to analyse all of these issues very thoroughly and make rapid decisions where needed. If this requires intervention at presidential level, or approval of this or that decision at intergovernmental level, I would like you to inform me of this personally, and I will discuss these matters with my partners.

EP President, Jerzy Buzek on Belarus

European Parliament press release
Brussels, 6 February 2010. [Link](#)

I learned of the detention of Bielsat TV journalist Iwana Szulhy by the Belarusian police in Minsk with grave disquiet. Mr Szulhy's arrest, in all likelihood under a false pretext, and her subsequent holding at an unknown location throughout the night constitute an unacceptable breach of media freedoms and human rights. Neither we Members of the European Parliament nor any of our fellow citizens can countenance such behaviour.

What is still more alarming is the fact that, almost at the same time, a court in Grodno fined the Polonika company USD 25 000 for engaging in unlawful charity work. The size of the fine will force the company to close down. I believe it to be no coincidence that the firm is run by Andzelika Borys, the head of the Union of Poles in Belarus, which the Belarusian authorities refuse to recognise. It is unacceptable for courts in Belarus to rule without having heard any witnesses for the defence.

Both these events are yet another serious body blow to the dialogue that the European Union has been conducting with Belarus over recent times and are totally at odds with the spirit in which that dialogue was engaged.

I strongly urge the Belarusian authorities to comply with democratic standards and show full respect for journalists' rights. This is an absolute prerequisite for further cooperation between the EU Member States and Belarus.

Statement of HR Catherine Ashton on Belarus

EU press release
Brussels, 16 February 2010. [Link](#)

I am disappointed by the recent arrests of 40 members of the Union of Poles and other civil society representatives in Belarus, including that of the democratically elected chairperson of the Union of Poles, Ms Angelika Borys. I am also deeply concerned over the recent high fine imposed on Ms Borys. I condemn police action against the Union of Poles and what appear to be attempts by the authorities to impose a new leadership on the Polish community.

The European Union has demonstrated considerable openness to engagement with Belarus, seen also in Belarus' inclusion in the Eastern Partnership. The success of this engagement is conditional on steps towards democratisation and upholding human rights, including minority rights, taken by the government of Belarus. In this context, it is of utmost importance that Belarus abides by its OSCE and international commitments in terms of the protection and promotion of the rights of its minorities. These developments undermine our efforts to strengthen relations between the European Union and Belarus.

I will continue to follow the situation in Belarus closely.

Belarus MFA on the conflict of the Union of Poles in Belarus

Belarus MFA press release
Minsk, 22 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

The Union of Poles in Belarus (UPB) is a public association of the Polish minority that has been functioning in Belarus since 1990. It unites 72 grassroots organizations and administers 16 Polish Houses (Dom Polski).

In March 2005 the 6th Congress of the UPB took place. According to the decision of this Congress Ms. Andzelika Boris was elected a new Chairperson. However, a few days later the group of UPB members lodged an appeal with the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus asserting that the UPB Statute was violated at the stage of preparation and holding of the Congress. The ensuing legal expert evaluation revealed a number of grave violations that made it possible for the Ministry of Justice to qualify the 6th Congress of UPB as not legitimate and nullify its results. In August 2005 the repeated Congress of the UPB elected Mr. Josef Luchnik a new Chairman. Despite this fact A.Boris and a group of her supporters refused to accept the repeated Congress results and up to date have been positioning themselves as alternative leaders of the UPB, laying challenge to Union's property and baffling its activity on a regular basis.

A conflict inside UPB, which had initially resulted from power struggle between two groups of leaders, has led to strained relations among the members of the public association, as well as between the Boris group and state authorities.

On the developments in Ivenets

By the beginning of 2010 a conflict situation has developed in the UPB section in Ivenets. The leader of the UPB branch in Ivenets, Ms. Tereza Sobol, was in parallel a member of «governing bodies» of the Boris group since 2005. Being a member of the legitimate UPB, T.Sobol has been actively counteracting the process of preparation to the 7th UPB Congress (took place on 12 September 2009) and refusing to comply with the decisions of the UPB's Chief Council. In this connection and in compliance with the UPB Statute the Chief Council (main leading body) at its meeting on 9 January 2010 expelled T.Sobol from UPB members, of which she was notified in writing. In accordance with the Statute Ms. Sobol who was expelled from the Union for actions running counter to its rules and being harmful to the organization may re-apply for the UPB membership not earlier than one year from the date of expulsion.

[...]

All the actions over the Polish House in Ivenets were treated by Belarus' authorities in strict compliance with the legislation in force. Neither T.Sobol nor her supporters were treated in a violent manner - quite contrary to what is alleged by certain mass media. The Polish house in Ivenets remains the property of the Poles residing in Belarus. It is neither handed over to the state nor to any private persons. As before, it could be used by the Union of Poles in Belarus for its activity in accordance with the Statute, including cultural and educational purposes. The Government of Belarus is not interested in conflict escalation, which may lead to a further separation of the organization and destabilization of the whole Polish minority.

The UPB leadership has many times attempted on its own and through the mediation of the authorities to overcome contradictions and settle this internal conflict. However dozens of relevant proposals, initiatives and appeals either to the separated wing of the UPB or the Polish official authorities, who support «unofficial» Boris Group, and representatives of the international structures have remained unattended. Moreover the members of the UPB have faced a number of sanctions: hundreds of Belarusian Poles, including veterans and disabled persons, who bear state awards of the Republic of Poland, have been denied entry to the territory of Poland. They are not received in the Polish Embassy or by the Polish consular authorities.

The public association «The Union of Poles in Belarus» has for the last five years initiated numerous appeals to the Polish authorities referring to the refusals to the UPB activists to enter Poland.

In September 2009 the 7th Congress of the UPB adopted an appeal to the Poles of the world. It was stated therein that Poland isolated the Poles of Belarus by denying the UPB activists entry into the country. In December 2009 the leadership of the UPB forwarded the appeals to the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Speakers of the Sejm and Senate of Poland.

These appeals have remained unanswered. At the same time information about further possible extension by official Warsaw of the entry ban list of ethnic Poles from Belarus to its historic homeland is published in Polish and some Belarusian mass-media.

Main points of new Russian Military Doctrine

Source: Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 7 Issue: 27

«New Russian Military Doctrine Opposes NATO Enlargement», by Roger Mc Dermott
9 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

The doctrine lists multiple potential threats to Russian security, ranging from states building up their military deployments in close proximity to Russia and attempts to use violence to change the constitutional order in the country, or violate its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Reference is made to illegal armed groups operating on its territory (in the North Caucasus) while the potential for regional conflict is highlighted. Some of Russia's neighbors are described, without identifying them, who apparently demonstrate military force capabilities during exercises close to the Russian border, and other states with either partial or full mobilization. The implication is that Russia is surrounded by potentially hostile powers and its leadership is aware of the risk posed by "frozen conflicts," where some actors might choose to use force to resolve these disputes. "The existing international security structure, including its international law mechanism, does not provide equal security for all states," clearly underscoring the need for other states to take seriously Medvedev's European security initiative (www.kremlin.ru, February 5).

[...]

The new doctrine declares Russia's right to use military force beyond its borders "for the purpose of the protection of the interests of the Russian Federation and its citizens, as well as the maintenance of international peace and security." Downplaying the provision, which President Medvedev had previously signed into law, Pukhov stressed that the US and France also reserve the right to protect their citizens abroad, and asked, "why should Russia not do the same?"

Moreover, the doctrine prioritizes Russian international military cooperation, and lists these in order of importance:

1. Belarus: promoting interoperability and the Union State.
2. CSTO: consolidating collective defense and strengthening joint military forces.
3. CIS: ensuring regional and international security, with an emphasis on peacekeeping operations.
4. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): consolidating efforts to confront emerging threats.
5. United Nations and other international, including regional, organizations: mainly in relation to peacekeeping (www.kremlin.ru, February 5).

Related Document:
Military Doctrine of Russia (5 February 2010). *In Russian*.
[Access here.](#)

Russian President on new Russian Military Doctrine

Interview to the French Magazine Paris Match
Gorki, Moscow Region, 18 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

OLIVIER ROYANT: During your visit to Paris, do you plan to negotiate the purchase of a Mistral-class warship?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: Russia has always been a major player in the military equipment market, and arms we can offer range from Kalashnikovs to S300 antimissile defence systems. Nevertheless, there are areas where we are interested in buying new technologies. Our defence industry should be open to a fair competition. This applies to warships.

[...]

OLIVIER ROYANT: The crisis was a hard challenge for Russia which has been largely dependent on exports of hydrocarbons. Unlike Asia, Russia does not show any signs of economic recovery. Are you concerned with a prospect that Russia may find itself behind other BRIC [Brazil, Russia, India and China] nations?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: The lessons to be learned are clear. First, the weakness of our economy and its dependence on raw materials. We had been aware of that, yet we were to a great extent taken by surprise.

Second, the fact that it is impossible to overcome such crisis on one's own, as we all are too much interdependent. We must finally learn to speak the same language. That is the way President Nicolas Sarkozy and I cooperate at G8 and G20 summits designing a new global architecture.

Even though hydrocarbons continue generating significant profits, we should diversify our economy and seriously invest in advanced technologies. For this purpose, a special Presidential Commission was set. I am personally involved with the subject as well

[...]

OLIVIER ROYANT: Russia's new military doctrine envisages, among other things, military operations outside the country to counter a possible aggression, and views NATO as a major threat to its security. Do you think that we are sliding back to the Cold War era?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: No, I certainly don't think so. It is not about our military doctrine, but about the never-ending enlargement of NATO through absorbing the countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union or happen to be our closest neighbours, such as Romania and Bulgaria. This is the threat.

NATO is a military alliance which has expanded itself right to our borders. Our Armed Forces should therefore be ready to accomplish their missions in light of the changes we have seen. It does not mean that we are sliding back to the Cold War, but we must take this new situation into consideration.

In this regard, I would like to note that major European nations and France in particular, have taken a well-balanced position. Russia and NATO will also need to jointly meet multiple challenges such as nuclear proliferation, terrorism and drug trafficking.

OLIVIER ROYANT: START Treaty expired last December, but Barack Obama dreams about a nuclear-free world. Is this your goal too?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: I applaud him. It is necessary though, that other countries, including France, agree with this initiative.

[...]

OLIVIER ROYANT: How would you describe your relations, your tandem with Vladimir Putin, who once said that you are "people of the same blood"? Currently, none of you rules out running for presidency in 2012.

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: True, I did find out recently that Mr Putin and myself have the same blood type.

No one can really tell the future. We are both responsible individuals capable of making a joint decision of what is best for our country. So far we have an effectively functioning alliance. It is evidently always very good when President and Prime Minister have good relations.

[...]

OLIVIER ROYANT: Do you feel disappointed when Russia is often portrayed negatively because of the conflict in Georgia, unrest in Caucasus and human rights issues?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: Sometimes I do, and it makes me feel bad. But these problems are our reality, something to be carefully addressed.

OLIVIER ROYANT: Do you think that the G20 leaders are successful in meeting present-day and prospect challenges?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: I would not say a word of criticism about my colleagues [Laughing], but being serious, could you imagine twenty years ago the leaders of the Soviet Union, the United States, China and France sitting around the same table? Yet, this is what we have today, and there are many more partners involved as well. We no longer limit our activities to merely making declarations and we take essential decisions instead.

This way, we create a common language for our joint future.

Russian-Abkhazian Summit

News Conference

Moscow, 17 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

The official part of the President of Abkhazia's visit to Russia is over. It might sound like a commonplace thing to say, but this visit really does mark a new milestone in Russian-Abkhazian relations. The documents we have just signed are evidence.

There are a number of them and they cover practically all areas of our cooperation – the economy, in particular the transport sector, migration, defence. I hope that these agreements will serve as a base for even more intensive development of our economic ties.

We were not idle last year, but signed a substantial package of 25 bilateral agreements that laid the legal foundations for cooperation between our countries. Our political dialogue is underway very intensively. Last year, Mr Bagapsh and myself had a whole series of meetings in Moscow, Sochi, and at various international events. The recent presidential inauguration ceremony in Abkhazia was attended by a number of our colleagues. We thus have a full-fledged and substantive political dimension in our relations.

[...]

Today, when we were discussing what steps we need to take, I made a point of saying to our Abkhazian friends that we should make a priority of state cooperation in order to help get Abkhazia's economy on its feet, supply the means, products and technology essential for economic development, help to establish basic economic and social programmes, boost cooperation in the banking sector, help Abkhazia's banking sector to develop, and form the base that can then be used to secure an inflow of private investment.

If we build up our cooperation along these lines I am sure that Abkhazia will develop the economic independence it needs to bolster its political independence.

Of course, we spoke today about political issues, international issues, regional security issues. Russia and Abkhazia have an agreement on military cooperation. Today, we signed an agreement on a Russian military base in Abkhazia. This agreement fully reflects our vision for developing cooperation with Abkhazia, and complies with our international obligations. Most important, this agreement lays the base for Abkhazia's peaceful development as an independent country.

We are developing our cooperation on the international stage too. Our foreign ministries are in ongoing contact as part of the Geneva talks. These talks are not an easy process but provide the only good direct forum today for contacts between our Abkhazian friends and Western partners and international organisations. Ultimately, all of this will help to improve the social and economic situation in the republic, and help to bring about Abkhazia's universal recognition as an independent state in the eyes of international law.

Concluding these opening remarks, I want to say that this year has particular significance, and it is symbolic that the President of Abkhazia's visit falls precisely at this time, because almost exactly 200 years ago, Alexander I signed the decree bringing the Abkhazian principality under Russia's protection, thus resolving a number of serious problems the Abkhazian people faced at that moment.

EU Council Conclusions on Moldova/Transnistria

EU Foreign Affairs Council

22 February 2010. [Link](#)

1. The Council welcomes the cautious positive developments in the Transnistrian settlement process in recent months. It notes in particular an increased openness of the new government of the Republic of Moldova and the de facto Transnistrian leadership to engage in dialogue. The Council also welcomes the Moldovan government's efforts to address the Transnistrian issue, its expression of a firm commitment to the 5+2 process and its support of confidencebuilding measures.

2. At the same time, the Council regrets the fact that no substantial progress has been made towards a political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict; that the situation of some Latin-script Moldovan schools in the Transnistrian region remains problematic and that the de facto Transnistrian authorities continue to place obstacles on the free movement of persons.

3. The Council has therefore decided to extend the restrictive measures (provided for by Common Position 2008/160/CFSP and extended by Common Position 2009/139/CFSP) against certain members of the de facto Transnistrian authorities for a further period of 12 months. However, in order to encourage progress, the Council has decided at the same time to suspend the implementation of the restrictive measures until the end of September 2010. The Council has also decided that it is appropriate to delete 3 names from the list of targeted persons. The Council calls on the de facto Transnistrian authorities strongly to engage in constructive efforts to reach a political settlement to the Transnistrian conflict, to address the remaining problems of the Latin-script schools, and to restore free movement of persons.

By the end of September 2010, the Council will review the suspension of the restrictive measures and the visa ban list in the light of the developments, notably in the areas mentioned above. The Council may decide to re-apply or lift the travel restrictions at any time.

4. The Council reaffirms the commitment of the European Union to the Transnistrian settlement efforts, notably by participation in the 5+2 process and by supporting confidence-building measures. The Council recalls the importance of resuming the 5+2 talks as soon as possible in order to achieve a sustainable settlement to the Transnistrian conflict, in full respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova.

5. The Council reaffirms its firm commitment to continue strengthening the political association and economic integration of the Republic of Moldova with the EU. In this context, the Council recalls the joint statement of the Cooperation Council between the EU and the Republic of Moldova on 21 December 2009, and welcomes the start of negotiations on an Association Agreement on 12 January 2010.

EU-Moldova Human Rights Dialogue established

EU Council Conclusions

15 February 2010. [Link](#)

1. The Council recalls its conclusions on the Republic of Moldova from 15 June 2009, in which the Council reiterated its commitment

to further deepening the relations between the EU and the Republic of Moldova, on the basis of shared values and principles. The Council also recalls the EU-Republic of Moldova Cooperation Council meeting on 21 December 2009, in which both sides welcomed recent positive steps in the field of human rights, democratisation and the rule of law in Moldova and the commitment of the Moldovan authorities to address outstanding human rights issues. Moreover, the EU welcomed Moldova's readiness to set up a regular dialogue on Human Rights.

2. The Council notes that the objectives of the Human Rights dialogue with the Republic of Moldova are on the one hand to raise human rights issues, including individual cases, in the Republic of Moldova and in the European Union in a more in-depth manner with the view toward achieving concrete results and, on the other hand, to enhance dialogue on human rights topics in multilateral fora. The respect for human rights and democratic principles remains an integral part of a broader political dialogue between the European Union and the Republic of Moldova.

3. The Council therefore decides to launch a Human Rights Dialogue with the Republic of Moldova. The dialogue should be held at least once per year, with meetings held, in principle, alternately in the Republic of Moldova and in the European Union. The dialogue will integrate a civil society component and, on an ad hoc basis, include exchanges with relevant international and regional organisations such as the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Budapest Energy Security Summit Declaration

Budapest V4+ Energy Security Summit
24 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extract]

Driven by the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, and encouraged by the objectives of EU energy policy as outlined in the Treaty of Lisbon,

The Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland, as Member States of the Visegrad Group as well as the Republic of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Slovenia and Romania

- Express their support to strengthen cooperation in further integrating their gas networks and diversifying routes and sources of supplies:

- By promoting the North-South interconnections through all V4 countries, between the planned Croatian and Polish Liquefied Natural Gas terminals and also

- By further promoting and implementing the Nabucco and the NETS projects,

- By supporting the Constanta LNG terminal and other LNG and CNG projects in the wider Black Sea Region,

- Expect urgent political agreement with the European Parliament as regards the regulation on security of gas supplies which should ensure in particular the effective EU reaction in cases where the EU gas market is no longer able to respond to the gas supply disruption

autonomously. Due to this the European Commission should coordinate measures predefined in national and EU emergency plans in order to restore the functioning of the internal gas market,

- Strongly favour that immediate acknowledgement of common regional interests should be made in the process of the establishment of the Second Action Plan for EU Energy Policy (2010-2014), inter alia on the architecture and the budget of the new EU Energy Security and Infrastructure Instrument,

- Are determined to strengthen the region's energy security with a strong and uniform demand to secure the EU cohesion policy funding for common energy projects within the EU as well as to continue their concerted efforts to support the energy projects in the Energy Community countries within the framework of the EU external policy financial instruments. The proposals to this effect will be prepared by the established working groups.

- Declare their willingness to provide support and joint efforts for a higher allocation of EU financial resources notably from the EU cohesion policy to all infrastructure projects aimed at increasing the energy security of the region.

- Encourage closer cooperation of the energy companies of the region operating critical elements of the energy value chain to enhance synergies and energy supply security.

- Intend to hold regular high level meetings in order to further discuss the ways of improving the energy security of their countries and the EU as well as to adopt the necessary measures which may help mitigate any possible disruption of supply in the future.

- Have agreed to set up "ad hoc" working groups at expert level on different projects such as the North-South interconnections and other regional interconnectors, oil supply in the region, etc. The main task of the working groups should be to prepare concrete proposals for implementation and to better coordinate their cooperation in these fields, notably in the EU decision making process.

Kosovo President speech on independence anniversary

Speech to the Kosovo assembly by President Fatmir Sejdiu on the second anniversary of the declaration of independence

Pristina, 17 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

Honorable Members of Parliament,
Honorable participants,

65 democracies around the world have recognized Kosovo's independence. Our country has established bilateral relations with many countries of the world. We have opened 21 embassies and 10 consular missions in recognizing countries and we can say that, as a start, we have managed to create a solid diplomatic network, which is decently representing our country abroad.

Always in coordination with our friend countries, with the United States of America, the major powers of the European Union and other friend countries, we have strived for further recognition, so that Republic of Kosovo can obtain the place it deserves within the big family of free nations. To that effect, during these years, we have maintained a regular cooperation with our friends, we have lobbied in the countries that have not recognized the independence of Kosovo yet and we have urged our friend countries to exert their influence to support Kosovo in this important process.

We remain strongly confident that these efforts will bear fruit and we expect new recognitions in due course, especially following an opinion on the legality of declaration of Kosovo's independence due to be issued by the International Court of Justice.

As you know, the ICJ has conducted a hearing on the legality of declaration of Kosovo's independence last fall and our representatives have presented reliable and incontrovertible arguments in favor of Kosovo's independence there. On this occasion, we express, one again, our gratitude to those countries that have filed their written statements and defended the right of the people of Kosovo to live in freedom and self-governance.

[...]

Serbia remains the only problem that we are facing in terms of foreign relations, as it is still conducting an aggressive politics against Kosovo. The official Belgrade is supporting the parallel structures operating in the north of our country, where still acts of a high-scale smuggling and financial crime are being committed. Serbia has invested hundreds and millions of euros to support these structures, which are keeping the Serb community living in this part of Kosovo as a hostage and preventing the members of this community from getting integrated into the institutional and social lives in Kosovo. We consider that a way out of this situation has to be found and that the people must enjoy their right to return to their homes, Serbs in the south, and Albanians and Bosnians and others in the north, where they have lived for centuries.

We have supported the strategy for the north that was developed by the Government of Kosovo and the International Civilian Office (ICO), which aims at reinstating order in this part of our country, where many individuals and gangs have been operating freely for many years now and who owe a lot to justice, because of the crimes that they have committed during wartime in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo.

We have also expressed our full support to EULEX and its efforts to foster law and order in Kosovo, in a field where a lot remains to be done.

[...]

The third year of independence finds us up against multiple challenges, but also with a clear vision for our future. The major objective of Republic of Kosovo is its speedy integration into the European Union and NATO. In order to accomplish this objective, we all need to remain committed to it, regardless of our current tasks or whereabouts. All the people of Kosovo are obliged to serve this purpose, be they in Kosovo or abroad. Accordingly, each of them must consider themselves as Kosovo ambassadors and must behave and act as representatives of Kosovo, wherever they are.

We are the youngest state in Europe and world. This is not an advantage. It is rather an obstacle in a bumpy road that entails our responsibility for the future of Kosovo.

Into EurAsia – Monitoring the EU's Central Asia Strategy

Michael Emerson and Jos Boonstra (eds)
CEPS Paperback, 22 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Abstract]

This new CEPS-FRIDE paperback offers the first assessment of the ambitious strategy to upgrade the EU's cooperation with the five states of the Central Asia region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Undertaken by independent analysts from the EU and Central Asia within the context of the EUCAM project, the book looks at the role of Russia, China, the US and others in Central Asia, as well the current state of politics and economics in the region. Coinciding as it does with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, *Into EurAsia* presents a test case of how the EU may shape up to meet its newly enhanced foreign policy responsibilities.

On Thin Ice? (Mis)interpreting Russian Policy in the High North

Roderick Kefferputz
CEPS Policy Brief, No. 205, 15 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Abstract]

Climate change in the Arctic is expected to make the region a lot busier as new strategic resources are becoming available. The Russian Federation is a key player in this context having put forth a comprehensive Arctic strategy. Russian policy towards the so-called High North, however, is oftentimes not seen in its entirety and has received a plethora of criticism in the Western media and foreign policy community. This paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of Russian actions in the High North by providing a succinct overview of Russian policies in the region and identifying the fundamental rationale behind them. The paper concludes that Russia's Arctic policy is not only a lot more nuanced but also not very different from the policies conducted by other riparian states.

The EU-Central Asia Education Initiative

Peter Jones
EUCAM Working Paper No. 9, 8 February 2010. [Link](#)

[Abstract]

The European Education Initiative was launched as part of the EU-Central Asia Strategy in 2007. By 2009, the initiative had prioritised higher and vocational education and emphasised links with the Bologna Process. Attempts were made to establish the EU-Central Asia Education Platform - a re-branding of Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes within a set of specific activities - and outline the ways in which internal EU education policy development processes could be externalised to the Central Asia region. However, the slow and uncertain pace of development of the Education Initiative, with the exception of the CAREN programme, calls for analysis of

the logic, content and practice of what has been attempted. It is also necessary to examine the political and institutional context that explains the lack of traction gained with education policy actors in the EU and Central Asia, and the prospects for a more compelling vision and concrete programme of implementation that could meet the real and urgent needs of Central Asian countries. Drawing on the evidence provided by participants in the development of the Education Initiative, this paper concludes by outlining an agenda for addressing its weaknesses.

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