

***“Ambiguity of the Effectiveness of the European Union’s
Development Aid towards Central Asia”***

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in European Studies at the American University in Central Asia

By
Regina Molchanova

Supervisor: Mr. Beimenbetov Serik (MA),
Head of the European Studies’ Department

American University of Central Asia
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
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List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union
EC	European Commission
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
IFS	Initiative for Stability
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DCI	Development Cooperative Initiative
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
BOMCA	Border Management in Central Asia
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
CA	Central Asia (or Central Asian)

Abstract

“AMBIGUITY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION’S DEVELOPMENT AID TOWARDS CENTRAL ASIA”

By Regina Molchanova

A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in European Studies at the American University of Central Asia, 2010.

Thesis Supervisor: Mr. Beimenbetov Serik (MA), Head of the European Studies Department at AUCA.

The European Union has engaged into cooperation with the Central Asian countries since the states became sovereign in 1991. Relations among the two regions started to evolve by concluding Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with each state and gradually grew into the strengthened and comprehensive approach – “EU – Central Asia Strategy,” adopted in 2007. One of the main aims of EU’s engagement in Central Asian region is democracy promotion. However, after several years of granting development aid to this region, the effectiveness of EU’s assistance has started to be questioned.

This paper refers to the effectiveness of the development aid of EU to Central Asia as being ambiguous. Five factors, compounding this ambiguity are scrutinized throughout the paper, using Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as country case studies in view of their economic, political and geographical similarities, while differences of both states are by no means excluded from consideration.

First, political development of Central Asian countries since their independence is considered when speaking about democracy promotion. It is discussed whether Central Asian political elites chose the democratic path or were rather developing autocracies. Second, the role of economic interest of the EU in Central Asia is examined. The matter of EU’s interest in natural and energy resources of CA is considered as a possible factor hindering the effectiveness of the initial goal

of democracy promotion. Third, cultural factor, consisting of communist ideology of politicians and soviet mentality of people is scrutinized in terms of difficulty in perception of democratic values in the ex-Soviet republics. Fourth, the complex geopolitical situation of Central Asia could arguably be considered as an impediment due to the multivector foreign politics of each CA state and diverse interests and political directions given by the US, Russia, EU and China. Finally yet importantly is the importance of economic development as a precondition of democratization. Economic underdevelopment of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan could be viewed both as a hindrance and as a driving factor towards democratization.

In view of these factors, my hypothesis is that the EU is gradually contributing to the improvement of democratic standards in CA, but should prioritize its assistance and direct it specifically to the development of democratic impulses in the region by means of building a strong civil society, investing into independent democratic institutions and increasing the level of education.

The examples of successful EU projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are presented to demonstrate how the EU finances its democracy building projects. My argument is that despite the low level of economic development and poor democratic performance in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the EU has a larger playing field for conducting democratic reforms if the aid would become more selective, conditional on good governance and more civil society- oriented.

There is a positive outlook into the future cooperation between the EU and Central Asia in terms of advancing democracy in this region. My hypothesis proves to be correct based on the conducted research, but the effectiveness of the EU's development aid remains to be subject of a slight reformation, mentioned above. Future research might concentrate on the possible ways of engaging civil society,

democratic institutions and NGOs into the process of advancing democracies by means of close cooperation with the European Commission in the region.

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“Ambiguity of the Effectiveness of the European Union’s Development Aid towards Central Asia”

Introduction:

Development Aid: does it promote democracy?

Granting foreign assistance to the developing world started to evolve many decades ago. There were different aims of granting foreign assistance such as restoration the ruined economies worldwide, improving living conditions and advancing democratic systems abroad to win allies round and insure security worldwide. Later on, the world powers realized the need in concentrating their efforts more on democracy promotion. Advancing democracies abroad became urgent on the foreign policy agendas of the United States, European Union and other international donors especially after the collapse of communism. Democracy promotion is not a fixed process; it rather requires individual approach towards each country and effectiveness of it is difficult to measure.

Donor countries and organizations started to cooperate in undertake certain measures for the sake of achieving greater effectiveness of their development assistance to the developing world. The Millennium Development Goals of 2000 agreed by 192 countries set the target of eradicating world poverty by 2015. Since that time, each world donor sticks to these goals when structuring its development assistance. In 2003, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) organized a High Level Forum on Harmonization in Rome, calling upon the representatives of donor states and organizations to coordinate their activities on a country level when allocating the development assistance. This Forum was followed by the 2005 meeting in Paris, as an outcome of which, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was created. The Paris Declaration emphasized the primacy of donors’ partnership in their efforts of advancing democracies abroad: making their policies more coherent, harmonizing activities, adapting these towards each partner country specifically and cooperating in assessing progress in the partner countries. Partner countries (donor recipients) are responsible in their turn for effective results of the development policies and commitment thereto.¹ All these could be referred as the “basic Paris formula: country ownership of development efforts + aid alignment + aid

¹ Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008);

harmonization + managing for results + mutual accountability.’² The Third High Level Forum took place in Accra, Ghana in September 2008 to estimate the progress achieved after the adoption of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and to agree on a common agenda in order to speed up the process of making development aid more effective by cooperating at the international level. Noteworthy is the fact that all five Central Asian states have signed the Paris Declaration as partner countries.

In such a way, it is evident that international community is undertaking many efforts to make the development aid more effective. European Union, represented by the European Commission and its member states, is part of this Paris Declaration as an aid donor.

The notion of ‘Effectiveness’

To make it clear in the beginning, the notion of ‘effectiveness’ should be explained. The general understanding of ‘effectiveness’, based on the common knowledge, is ‘achieving the intended goals set or initial purposes, strived for in the beginning of the project. The EU sets goals in the framework of its ‘EU-Central Asia Strategy’, achievement of which and effectiveness of the policies’ implementation would be regarded as effectiveness. However, the so-called Paris formula, described above and the main aim of achieving effectiveness under the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness will be used as a threshold in the framework of this paper.

Generosity in terms of aid provided by the European Union is not questionable; however, its effectiveness has recently started to be touched upon due to some failed, but also successful lessons learned during its long history. The question, of whether development aid helps to achieve its original goals of sustainable democratic governance and economic development, is brought forward. An assumption exists that development assistance rather promotes corruption and enrichment of small elites without bringing positive changes to the developing countries. For instance, after thirty years of granting development and humanitarian aid to the African countries, this experience and expectations of the EU revealed to be distressing. 200 billion US Dollars have been granted to Africa since 1980 in development aid, not including the funds, allocated to finance international conferences raising the issue of ‘African crisis.’ The majority of African states appeared to be poorer today than at their independence: economic situations in mostly

² David Booth. “Aid effectiveness after Accra: How to reform the ‘Paris Agenda’.” Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Briefing Paper 39: July 2008;

all African countries remain devastating and stagnating, poor political performance and restricted freedoms lead to the ongoing civil and military conflicts, which affects the right of people for worthy living. The assistance, which has been granted produced only very insignificant outcome, without bringing any long-term results due to the rigidity of the political systems and failure to act by the governments. Because of that the concept of 'legitimacy crisis' has come into place, according to which the effectiveness of the development aid is being questioned.³ Despite the joint efforts of international community of making development assistance effective, this remains an issue for the European Union.

Throughout this paper, the role of the European Union in Central Asia and the impact of its development assistance will be considered. The purpose of this research is, however, not to measure the effectiveness of the development aid in the region as such, but rather to examine the factors, which make this effectiveness ambiguous and to point out the ways on how the EU's assistance could become more efficient for the sake of advancing democracy in Central Asia.

My hypothesis is that the European Union is gradually contributing to the improvement of democratic standards in Central Asia. However, against the backdrop of poor democratic performance and the long run of sustainable democratization process, the EU's development assistance should prioritize and be directed specifically to the development of democratic impulses in the region by means of building a strong civil society, investing into independent democratic institutions and increasing the level of education. For the sake of achieving development aid's effectiveness, the EU should try negotiating with the Kyrgyz and Tajik governments on prioritizing the development of civil society sector and democracy building programs in the region, despite the previously expressed will to receive budget support for improving the level of their economic development.

PART I - Theoretical Part

The European Union became an important donor worldwide aside to World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and others, which has close relations with most of the regions and countries of the world today. Being an economic giant, the Union is capable of maintaining its political

³ Nicolas Van de Walle. "Aid's Crisis of Legitimacy: Current Proposals and Future Prospects;" African Affairs, Vol. 98, No. 392, Oxford University Press: July, 1999, pp. 337-352;

status on the world stage and remaining influential among the other great powers. The European Union is known for being a civilian power, which promotes peace and stability in different regions of the world by means of diplomacy, cooperation and development aid. This feature contributes to its unique structure and distinguishes it from the other great powers.

One of the main values of the European Union is respect for human rights and democratic values. The Union is “founded on the principles of liberty, democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and seeks to develop and consolidate commitment to these values in partner countries and regions through dialogue and cooperation.”⁴ Therefore, it is very important for the EU to develop and improve democracy not only within its borders, but also promote it in the other regions of the world. Moreover, the EU undertakes many efforts to promote democratic values and standards in the developing countries for the sake of peace, stability and economic prosperity in the future. The third-world countries are looked at as the potential partners of the EU, with which it would be much easier to cooperate with the help of democratic standards and common values. All of these efforts are included into one policy area of the EU - development aid. It is an important part of the Union’s external relations. In fact, the Union is the world’s biggest provider of the development and humanitarian aid and constitutes the biggest market for goods from the third countries. In such a way, the philosophy of the development aid of the EU is that the more stability in a country, the higher the democratic standards and respect for human rights, the easier and better it is for economic development, cooperation and political dialogue. Thus, the political stability of a country is essential for its economic development. One of the principles of the Community in terms of supporting third countries is to create “[a] political environment which guarantees peace and stability, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, democratic principles, the rule of law, good governance and gender equality is fundamental to long-term development.”⁵ Political stability of a country, gained by means of economic aid of the EU, is potentially beneficial for the Union. Therefore, successful democratic development of the third-world countries is the expectation of the EU, which strives to achieve it by means of its development policy.

⁴ Art.3(1), Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006

⁵ Art. 251(6), Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006;

Being aware of the urgent issue, the European Union has resorted to the use of conditionality, an instrument, which is to further its attempts to promote democracy. Conditionality is one of the most important instruments to regulate the development policy and to make it more effective. Often this mechanism is also referred to as a ‘carrot and stick’ approach for there are certain provisions that make granting of the development aid to the third world countries conditional on good governance, observance of human rights, introduction of market economy and fulfillment of the agreed obligations. Conditionality can be either positive or negative. “Positive conditionality entails promising benefits to a state if it fulfills the conditions; negative conditionality involves reducing, suspending or terminating those benefits if the state in question violates the conditions.”⁶ Hence, if a third country meets certain provisions and all the necessary obligations set in the agreements with the European Union, the EU will maintain trade relations with this state and will continue granting its development aid. However, if a country fails to fulfill its obligations, negative conditionality would have to be applied. According to the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council:

“where a partner country fails to observe the principles referred to in Article 3(1), and where consultations with the partner country do not lead to a solution acceptable to both parties, or if consultations are refused or in cases of special urgency, the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from a Commission, may take appropriate measures in respect of any assistance granted to the partner country under this Regulation. Such measures may include full or partial suspension of assistance.”⁷

However, the EU applies the measures of economic sanctions and suspension of the development aid in rare instances. Instead of using the extreme measures in cases of non-compliance, the EU often decides to apply rather ‘lighter measures’ such as delaying negotiation and conclusion of agreements. These measures notwithstanding, such a conditional approach of the development aid could be criticized as being ‘a new wine in the old bottle’ since in order to achieve the goals, pursued by the Union, it takes many years and changing the often rigid governmental structures of the developing countries is a great challenge. Therefore, the efforts of the governments in this process are vital for the main responsibility to carry out reforms and contribute to the systems’ improvement lies with them. Nevertheless, throughout the paper it will be argued that conditionality in line with selectivity, civil society orientation and

⁶ Karen Smith. 2003; p.57

⁷ Art. 37, Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council. December 18, 2006;

defining education, as a priority area, are important tools to make the development aid more effective.

I. EU's Development Aid towards Central Asian countries: history and lessons

Central Asian region⁸ has always been of an interest for the EU, and has been part of its development policy. European Union is one of the major donors in the region since the development aid provided to Central Asian countries in the framework of various programs amounts to more than 1 billion Euros since 1991.⁹ Thus, the cooperation has started in the early 1990s with the conclusion of bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between Central Asian states and the European Union, which was gradually developing by means of political dialogue. In such a way, the EU assistance to Central Asia was provided in the framework of the Technical Aid to Commonwealth of Independent States Program (TACIS) until 2006, which was superseded by the Development Cooperation Instrument (one of the main global financing instruments of the European Union) in the following year. The aim of DCI is to conform to the Millennium Development Goals and overall purpose of poverty reduction, improving democratic standards, promoting good governance and rule of law. For instance, Food Security Program (FSP) and Non-State Actor/ Local Authorities Programme are the thematic programs, falling under the DCI of the EU. The Programs, which are carried out in Central Asian region, encompass a broad spectrum of areas, namely: security – BOMCA¹⁰ to control the borders and CADAP to combat the drug trafficking; education – TEMPUS¹¹; business – Central Asia Invest; INOGATE and TRACECA¹² – work in the area of energy. Besides DCI, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and the Instrument for Stability (IfS) are used in granting assistance to Central Asian region.¹³

Having in mind the core aim of the European Union of ensuring security and stability not only within its borders, but also in its neighborhood and throughout the

⁸ Five countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan belong to the Central Asian region, which will be referred to throughout this paper

⁹ [European Community]; “*Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007 – 2013*,” p.16; <http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/rsp/nip_07_10_en.pdf>

¹⁰ Border Management in Central Asia

¹¹ Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies

¹² Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia

¹³ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. “EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?” EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>>, p. 5;

world, it has realized the need for cooperation on a regional level. The previously applied individual and bilateral approach of collaboration was replaced by a structured and comprehensive one with the adoption of the “European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership” in June 2007. The preliminary step towards the creation of this Strategy was the issuing of the Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia by the European Commission and creation of the position of the Special Representative of Central Asia within the institutional framework of the EU in 2005.¹⁴ These policy advances turned out to be a firm basis and impetuses for the new 2007 Strategy.

Projects, which were being implemented in the Central Asian region prior the adoption of the Strategy were aimed at the development of various sectors of economics, politics and civil society had, however, ‘punctual character.’ Therefore, the enhanced approach of the EU – Central Asia Strategy has replaced this previous need-based one, which is often criticized as fragmented, incoherent and futile, by uniting all the programs under one well-structured umbrella.¹⁵

In such a way, the policy and approach towards the cooperation with the Central Asian region of the EU has changed, becoming more sophisticated for the sake of its effectiveness. However, the soil for its implementation has arguably not changed since violations of human rights, non-observance of international law and cases of corruption are still taking place in all Central Asian countries, in some more evident than others, which could make one doubt the effectiveness of the new policy respectively. However, after the two years since the Adoption of the Strategy, the European Commission has already been able to report about the slight positive progress, achieved by the Central Asian countries; at least the governments are inclined towards the goals of the Strategy, which should be discussed in the paper in more details.¹⁶

There are five factors, which are essential, in my opinion, when considering the effectiveness of the development aid. They compound the ambiguity of the EU’s assistance and, therefore, will be scrutinized in the course of the paper. Possible

¹⁴ [European Community]; “Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007 – 2013;” pp. 1 – 61; <http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/rsp/nip_07_10_en.pdf>

¹⁵ Andrea Schmitz. “Interessen, Instrumente, Einflussgrenzen. Die Europäische Union und Zentralasien.“ in: M. Sapper, V. Weichsel, A. Huterer (Hrsg.); Machtmosaik Zentralasien. Traditionen, Restriktionen, Aspirationen. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung; 2007, p. 332

¹⁶ Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy. <<http://www.delkaz.ec.europa.eu/joomla/images/Strategy/joint%20progress%20report%20on%20eu%20ca%20strategy.pdf>>;

suggestions on how to increase aid's effectiveness will be discussed in the second part of this paper. The five factors are political and democratic development of Central Asian countries, possibility of economic interest of the EU in the region, namely energy and natural resources, culture and mentality of people and politicians, complex geopolitical situation and economic underdevelopment.

Against the backdrop of these factors, I hypothesize that these reasons compound the ambiguity of the effectiveness of the development aid in Central Asia. These factors do not make EU's assistance ineffective, but signal of the urgency to restructure and direct it specifically to the development of democratic impulses in the region. In view of the fact, that many experts and scholars have researched separate issues regarding the development aid and its efficiency, the question of the ambiguity of its effectiveness in Central Asian region remains undiscovered. Therefore, it would be essential to conduct a research, considering the relevance of this question since the interest of the EU in Central Asia has been constantly growing and the amount of the development aid provided has been increasing after the adoption of the EU – Central Asia Strategy.

For the sake of conducting an effective research and having a closer look at the practical patterns, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be examined as country case studies. These two states will be considered since both have achieved approximate level of economic development, had certain (but each different) political instability and are geographically similar in terms of natural resources' possession. The numerous differences of the two Central Asian countries are not to be excluded as well since each country is peculiar in its own way. These states chose different paths of democratic development after gaining independence, which will be demonstrated later on in the paper.

In the course of the research, in addition to scholarly research on the subject matter such primary sources, as legislative acts of the EU institutions will be used. The importance of the experts' opinions that are active in the field is not to be underestimated. Thus, besides primary and secondary sources, interviews with the experts of the Delegation of the European Union to Kyrgyzstan and with the grantees of the projects (e.g. project managers) financed by the EU will be analyzed as a research instrument of this paper.

II. Brief history of the development of relations between the EU and Central Asia: Case Study of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

a. Partnership and Cooperation Agreements

Since the five Central Asian countries became their independence in 1991, each government has started to develop not only its statehood on the national level, but also to create ties on the international arena. Thus, cooperation with the European Union roots back to the mid 1990s, when the European Community has started to conclude Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PAC) with each Central Asian state individually. Hence, on July 1, 1999 PCA with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan entered into force, which shall end in 2009. The situation with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan revealed to be slightly different in view of the unreadiness of the governments to follow the obligations, such as human rights violations. Nevertheless, the EU concluded Partnership and Cooperation Agreements in 2004 (entering into force in 2010) with Tajikistan and in 2004 with Turkmenistan. Because of massive human rights violations in Turkmenistan, the ratification process was suspended, while only provisions on trade relations have been launched without being ratified. Tajikistan succeeded in its ratification process and PCA entered into force in May 2005.¹⁷ Partnership and Cooperation Agreements are based on three main pillars, which focus on trade liberalization and economic relations, political dialogue and cooperation in various sectors. This cooperation should be based on common values of respect for human rights, democracy and rule of law, which they should implement and improve in the course of time of collaboration. Economic convergence and restructuring, as well as closer political cooperation on the regional level for the sake of security and stability are other preconditions in the framework of this cooperation. According to Article 2 of the PCA, “[r]espect for democracy, principles of international law and human rights [...] as well as the principles of market economy [...] underpin the internal and external policies of the Parties and constitute an essential element of partnership and of this Agreement.”¹⁸

¹⁷ [European Parliament], Fact Sheets; Central Asia – Legal Basis 6.4.4; Dag SOURANDER: 02/2007; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/droi_081013_fs/DROI_081013_FSen.pdf>

¹⁸ “Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a Partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Kyrgyz Republic, of the other part,” L 196/48; Official Journal of the European Communities, 28.7.1999. <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2004/july/tradoc_116742.pdf>;

b. TACIS Program and its contribution to democracy

Launching the TACIS Program (Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States) in 2000 with the Council's Regulation 99/2000 was another significant step in EU – Central Asia relations. This program was launched as a sequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union for six years with the aim of stimulating the transition of Eastern European and Central Asian countries to market economies, reinforcing democracy and strengthening the rule of law. TACIS Program is based on the provisions specified in the PACs with individual Central Asian states and democratic values and principles of the European Community. The core projects, supported and financed in the framework of this Program are those, aiming at assistance of administrative, legal and institutional reforms, supporting the development of economic sectors, namely developing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), private entrepreneurs, etc. TACIS Programs were also maintaining the newly independent states in their attempts of social restructuring, infrastructure development, such as telecommunication and transport networks, furthering rural economic development (e.g. distribution of land), natural resources management and environmental protection. Taking over the provision of the PCAs of interregional cooperation, TACIS Program has expanded this stipulation, including a condition of cross-border cooperation not only between Central Asian states, but also between the EU and partner states of Central and Eastern Europe. Fighting drug trafficking, managing border, asylum and migration issues and reducing crime rates have been some of the priority areas under TACIS' cross-border cooperation project. Hence, this was an important condition to include since it was aiming to assist countries in their attempts to overcome particular transitional problems and accelerate this process through their internal and external cooperation with border regions, to reduce the risks of transboundary pollution and environmental destruction.¹⁹

Besides TACIS Program, the EU provided macro-financial assistance to the realization of projects within the region. European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (2000-2006) (EIDHR), a thematic budget line of the European Union, aimed at providing support in promotion of human rights and democracy in non-EU countries was launched. Humanitarian assistance and activities for potential disaster

¹⁹ "TACIS Programme (2000-2006)." Regulation (EC) No 99/2000; Official Journal of the European Union OJ L 12 of 18.1.2000.
<http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/external_relations/relations_with_third_countries/eastern_europe_and_central_asia/r17003_en.htm>;

management were provided under the EC Directorate General for Humanitarian aid (ECHO). Food Security Program (FSP) with the aim of poverty reduction, provided food security and information about it, supporting the management of public expenditure and reformation of social protection system were an essential part of the need-based approach of the European Union in its development policy towards the region of Central Asia.²⁰

c. European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

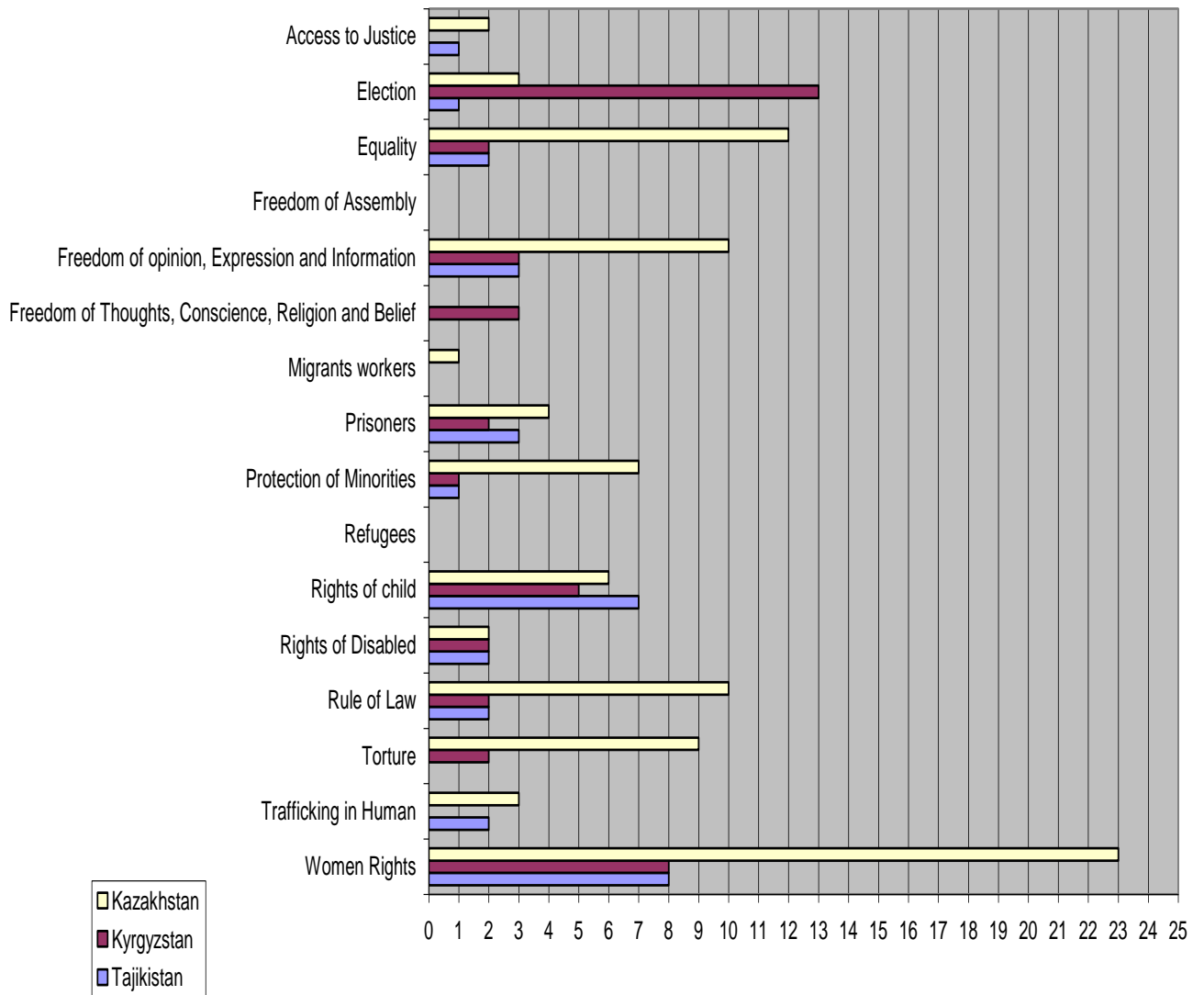
In 2007, the EU introduced a new legal instrument for promoting democracy and human rights and closer cooperation with civil society – European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, EIDHR (previously European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights). In my view, this is a significant step, because within the framework of EIDHR the challenges faced in each Central Asian country regarding poor democratic performance and non-observance of human rights are taken into consideration. The following chart (chart #1)²¹ on page 20 demonstrates the challenges to be improved in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan chosen by the EC based on the research and experience with the previous assistance granted. Referring to these problematic areas, the EC tries to manage its development assistance in order to tackle the existing drawbacks and improve the democratic standards in Central Asia.

Priority areas for improvement under EIDHR in Kyrgyzstan lie in elections, women rights, rights of child, freedom of opinion, expression and information, rule of law and prisoners (note: descending ordering). Challenges revealed by the EC in Tajikistan are women rights, rights of child, prisoners, freedom of opinion, expression and information and rule of law (descending ordering as well). Based on the chart #1 it is apparent that challenges, which Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are facing, are more or less similar and have just a slight difference.

²⁰ [European Community]; “Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007 – 2013;” pp. 1 – 61

²¹ [ECORYS Nederland BV] “*Democracy Building in Central Asia (1996-2006)*.” Evaluation of the European Commission’s democracy building programme in Central Asia; Draft Report; pp. 1 – 103; Rotterdam, April 7th, 2010;

Fundamental Human Rights addressed by the Projects funded by EIDHR



*Chart #1: ECORYS Nederland BV,
Draft Report for the EU Delegation in Kyrgyzstan*

d. Special Representative for Central Asia

In July 2005, the position of the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia was created. Mr. Pierre Morel was appointed to this position in October 2006 and is currently acting in accordance with his responsibilities of maintaining political dialogue between the EU and Central Asia. Visiting the capitals of each of these countries and working closely with the Council's General Secretariat and European Commission belong to his duties. The task of the Special Representative is also to cooperate with other major actors, such as Russia, China, USA and important international organizations, e.g. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).²² His mission should not be underestimated, considering its practical relevance and availability in the region, as Mr. Morel has emphasized, “[b]y accurately assessing the issues at stake as well as its own capacities, the EU can meet their expectations by constructing a long-term partnership founded on security, the rule of law and development.”²³

Hereby, from the above listed programs launched and conducted by the EU in Central Asia, it is obvious that despite the wide range of the sectors that are embraced in its foreign policy towards this region, they possessed a very ‘punctual character’. Diverse projects, which previously the EU carried out, were arguably of one-sided nature rather leading to imbalance in the development policy. Thereupon, the Union became conscious of the need in restructuring its approach towards development aid in this region in order to make it more effective and comprehensive.

e. Central Asia Strategy

For this purpose, the punctual approach has gradually started to grow into a more structured and coherent policy, which was reflected in the Central Asia Strategy, being introduced for the period of 2002-2006 for the sake of interregional cooperation. During the five years covered by the Country Strategy Paper the allocation of funds was as follows: 26% for regional cooperation, 54% for bilateral programs and 25% for poverty reduction. To be more precise 142 million Euro has been allocated to bilateral assistance for Central Asian countries under the above mentioned programs, 200 million Euro was committed under ECHO as humanitarian and disaster preparedness assistance, with more than half being granted to Tajikistan. Despite its rather regional approach of cooperation with Central Asian countries,

²² [European Parliament], Fact Sheets; Central Asia – Legal Basis 6.4.4; Dag SOURANDER: 02/2007

²³ Pierre Morel. “Mission Statement of Pierre Morel for Central Asia.” European Council, Council of the European Union, <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/showPage.aspx?id=1153&lang=En>>;

under the Central Asia Strategy the majority of funds were allocated on the individual basis on a country level.²⁴

III. Overview of the EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership

a. Motives for Creation of the Strategy

In such a way, it is obvious that collaboration between the EU and Central Asia prior 2007 has been based on the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between the EU and individual Central Asian states. Realizing the need for a more effective external cooperation, as well as integration and stabilization of the Central Asian region internally as a whole brought the Union to the point of creating a new policy towards this region.

In fact, several events have impelled the European Union to create ‘the EU – Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’.

Firstly, its two most recent enlargements of 2004 and 2007 led to the expansion of the Union’s territory and borders, increasing the scope of the European Neighborhood Policy. Regions, such as Southern Caucasus, became closer to EU and, therefore, turned out to be the so-called neighbors of the neighbors.²⁵ Consequently, providing stability, ensuring security and promoting democracy for the sake of friendly neighborly relations is essential for the EU.

Secondly, just as many countries of the world, the EU became more cautious about potential threat of terrorist attacks after the attack of September 11, 2001 in the United States. Assistance of the Union towards the Central Asian region has significantly increased to reduce the danger of terrorist assassinations in the future. The EU has reconsidered and evaluated the significance of good governance, the rule of law, poverty reduction in its neighborhood and close periphery. In order to fight terrorism effectively, while being a civilian power “root causes of terrorism” should be eradicated.²⁶

Thirdly, dependency of the Union on the imported energy resources played a vital role in stimulating the adoption of the Strategy. The EU’s will to diversify the sources of its energy resources was another reason leading towards the creation of the EU – Central Asia Strategy. In the framework of the Strategy, Turkmenistan and

²⁴ [European Community]; “Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007 – 2013,” pp. 16 - 19

²⁵ [European Parliament], Fact Sheets; Central Asia – Legal Basis 6.4.4; Dag SOURANDER: 02/2007

²⁶ Ibid;

Kazakhstan are called upon active cooperation in the area of energy to boost the imports of gas and oil from these two states and diversify its energy routes in such a way.

Governmental change, disrespect of international law and massive human rights violations in some states of Central Asia were the cause of the Union's response to stimulate the regional integration and create a more coherent policy of its development aid. For instance, the March revolution of 2005 in Kyrgyzstan, the massacre of demonstrators in the Andijan city, Uzbekistan in the same year, Kazakhstan's failure to effectively follow the commitments under OSCE, in regard of the fact that 2010 will be the year of its chairmanship in the Organization. These events were also decisive when adopting the EU-Central Asia Strategy.²⁷

Moreover, the geographic location of the Central Asian countries makes the region a crossroad for the movement of illegal opium producers to export illegal drugs to the markets of Europe and Russia. These states are bordering Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, which are considered 'Golden Crescent' countries, and having a state frontier with China allows having access to Burma, Laos and Thailand, the world leading producers of illegal opiates. Hence, this makes the Central Asian region a major international centre for drug trafficking.²⁸

b. Development Cooperation Instrument – availability of funds

In such a way, the German Presidency in the European Council has initiated the creation of the Political Strategy of the European Union towards Central Asia, which was adopted in June 2007. European Council adopted the Strategy, upon which all five Central Asian states agreed for the period of 2007 – 2013. This Strategy has compounded all the previous programs and projects under the development aid of the European Union towards Central Asia into one coherent policy, replacing the 'punctual approach' by a rather 'enhanced' one. Development aid provided in the framework of the 2007 Strategy falls under the financing through Development Cooperation Instrument. In fact, 719 million Euros are available for Central Asia in the framework of DCI for the period of seven years. This time embraces 2006 – 2013

²⁷ [European Parliament], Fact Sheets; Central Asia – Legal Basis 6.4.4; Dag SOURANDER: 02/2007 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/droi_081013_fs/DROI_081013_FSen.pdf>

²⁸ [European Community]; "Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007 – 2013" p. 5;

since financing was directed to bilateral and indicative programs prior to the EU – CA Strategy’s adoption.²⁹

Meanwhile, this amount should be distributed gradually by particular amounts of sums, increasing respectively with the year, from 58 million Euros in 2007 to 139 Euros in 2013. Seventy per cent of the development aid in the framework of the Strategy should be dedicated to the bilateral assistance programs with the consideration of individual political and social peculiarities of individual states. Thirty per cent the EU decided to direct for the simplification of close cooperation among the five states within Central Asia, as well as between Central Asia, South Caucasus and the EU, focusing on the fields of transport, energy, environment and education.³⁰ Eradication of poverty and reformation of social security systems are the priority areas of cooperation defined by the Strategy with 40-45 per cent of available funds directed into this area. The second most important area to be supported with 30-35 per cent is support for regional programs. Projects, stimulating regional cooperation within the Central Asian region, as well as externally - with Caucasus, European Neighborhood region and the EU itself for the sake of eradication of common security threats and political cooperation in energy sector, prioritizing the development of transport infrastructure are supported within this area of the Strategy. Programs promoting democracy, stabilizing public institutions and supporting economic, political and trade reforms are to be financed by the 20-25 per cent of the available fund.

Partnership and Cooperation Agreements are still going to be the basis of the bilateral cooperation for they have emphasized the priority areas for each Central Asian country and addressed to the challenges to be responded.³¹

c. Aims of the Strategy

Within the framework of the EU and Central Asia Strategy, the Union undertakes to:

- establish a regular regional political dialogue at Foreign Minister level;

²⁹ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. “EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?” EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>>

³⁰ “European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership.” Council of the European Union, General Secretariat. Brussels: October, 2007

³¹ Andrea Schmitz. “Interessen, Instrumente, Einflussgrenzen. Die Europäische Union und Zentralasien.“ Pp. 331-332; in: Machtmosaik Zentralasien. Traditionen. Restriktionen. Aspirationen. M. Sapper, V. Weichsel, A. Huterer (Hrsg.); Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung; Bonn: 2007;

- start an ‘European Education Initiative’ and support Central Asian countries in the development of an ‘e-silk-highway’;
- start an ‘EU Rule of Law Initiative’;
- establish a regular, result-oriented ‘Human Rights Dialogue’ with each of the Central Asian States;
- conduct a regular energy dialogue with Central Asian States.³²

The Strategy is based on the five major pillars, namely:

- Human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratization;
- Investing in the future: youth and education;
- Promotion of economic development, trade and investment;
- Strengthening energy and transport links;
- Environmental sustainability and water.³³

Significantly, in the framework of the EU - Central Asia Strategy cooperation with other international actors in the region, such as OSCE and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is foreseen. Thus, the programs in the context of the Strategy are to be complementary to the projects carried out by the other donors and actors. Moreover, the programs and projects within the 2007-2013 Strategy have to be in coherence with the other most significant policy areas of the EU, namely Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), border management and migration, including drug policy, trade, energy, transport and transboundary environmental threats.³⁴

d. Punctual vs. comprehensive characters of the EU’s development aid

As it gets obvious, the aims of the ‘EU-Central Asia Strategy’ are very broad and strive towards making improvements in various areas of the state development as well as regional cooperation. When arguing that the Strategy established a comprehensive approach, I mean the inclusion of many aims and actions into one structured legal document, striving towards economic, legal, democratic and social development of Central Asian countries. Michael Emerson and Jos Boonstra, EUCAM reporters, refer to the ‘EU-Central Asia Strategy’ as “a wide and comprehensive approach, [which identifies] a considerable number of priority actions (political dialogue, human rights

³² “European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership.” Council of the European Union, General Secretariat. Brussels: October, 2007

³³ Ibid

³⁴ [European Community]; “Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007 – 2013,” pp. 1 – 61;

and the rule of law, education, economic development, energy and transport links, environmental sustainability and water, common threats such as drug trafficking.”³⁵

In such a way, many previous programs, which were resorted to by the EU before, were included into one comprehensive approach, under one umbrella. Comprehensive approach includes a number of priority aims, in order to achieve which, a number of actions are applied.

e. Appointment of the National Coordinators – EC Delegations to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Because of the adoption of the ‘EU - Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’, European Commission Delegations (since December 1, 2009, EU Delegations) to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in these countries’ respective capitals were created. These Delegations play an important role in conducting dialogue with other donors that are active in the countries, such as OSCE, state governments and serving as the links between the Commission and national governments. Besides, in the framework of the Strategy National Coordinators on the legal basis of the Strategy were appointed in each Central Asian country, being responsible for annual meetings with EU representatives and contribution to the effective implementation of the provisions of the Strategy.

In such a way, it is clear that the “EU – Central Asia Strategy” has brought about significant changes in the development policy of the EU towards Central Asian region, replacing the previous punctual and imbalanced approach by a comprehensive structure and strengthened approach, focusing on a region integrally. Regional cooperation is at the heart of the Strategy, which is based on maintaining bilateral cooperation “to respond adequately to individual proposals brought forward by each of the five Central Asian States.”³⁶ This testifies the growing interest of the EU in Central Asia as a whole and its belief in the region’s long-term development capacity.

f. Official progress report of the European Commission and its findings on democracy promotion after the Strategy’s adoption

Although only two years have passed since the adoption of the Strategy, the European Commission has emphasized its satisfaction in the slight progress that has already been achieved despite the numerous challenges faced by the EU. Thus, the

³⁵ Michael Emerson and Jos Boonstra. “Into EurAsia Monitoring the EU’s Central Asia Strategy. Executive Summary and Recommendations.” p.1. EUCAM Policy Brief No. 13 – February 2010

³⁶ “European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership.” Council of the European Union, General Secretariat. Brussels: October, 2007;

effectiveness of the development aid provided in the context of the Strategy is rather complex to be measured today since the goals set are long-term and challenging; the Commission has stressed the significance of the correct way that all Central Asian countries have started to follow to the provisions of the Strategy and to achieve its main goals. Indeed, political dialogue has intensified: several meetings took place in Central Asia and the EU (Brussels and Berlin); this has contributed to the awareness of political leaders of what the national governments should strive to achieve. Hence, Assistance Programs on education, rule of law, human rights and environment are in the process of elaboration.³⁷

At any rate, it becomes evident that the new approach of the Union is aimed at improving the democratic standards in Central Asian countries by contributing to the rule of law, good governance, adherence to human rights and economic reforms. Meanwhile, the question could be raised on how feasible it is to measure democracy and in which way the efforts of the EU in the given region should become evident. Such a question is not a new issue, arising in the course of this research since many scholars have been struggling to find various ways of measuring democratic development and creating theories on measuring the effectiveness of the development aid. For the sake of finding an effective solution for the presented hypothesis of the present research, this issue will be considered and discussed later in chapter VI. However, in order to have a supporting point in measuring democratic development of Central Asian countries, the current situation should be scrutinized. With this intention the region's democratic development since the year 2004, based on the Freedom House report, should be presented.

IV. Stagnant democracies of Central Asian states: overview of the region's democratic development since 2004

Having obtained their independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, each Central Asian country has started its own way of sovereign political development. Hence, every newly independent state has chosen the democratic path of nation building and self-determination process on the international arena. Although Central Asian states were trying to build their democracies for nineteen years, many of their attempts appeared to be vain and not corresponding to the international

³⁷ Joint Progress Report by the Council and the European Commission to the European Council on the implementation of the EU Central Asia Strategy.
<<http://www.delkaz.ec.europa.eu/joomla/images/Strategy/joint%20progress%20report%20on%20eu%20ca%20strategy.pdf>>;

standards. One can draw such a conclusion from the annual Freedom House report of *Nations in Transit* 2009, which yearly conducts a comprehensive and comparative study of democratic development of transitional countries. Resorting to the statistical information of the World Bank, Freedom House uses seven main criteria to evaluate democratic performance and its development of a particular country. Namely, these are electoral process, civil society, independent media, national democratic governance, local democratic governance, judicial framework, independence, and corruption. On the grading scale from one to seven, where the first is the best indicator, while the latter refers to the worse sign, democratic performance of the countries in transit can be comparatively presented on the annual basis. Generally, 2009 is referred to as the *Dark Year* of Democracy since all Five Central Asian countries have demonstrated poor democratic performance because of the various circumstances.³⁸

It is to underline that all five Central Asian states turned out to be placed in the category of '*consolidated authoritarian regimes*,' constituting the "Authoritarian Eight." One should take into account that this year the Kyrgyz Republic found itself in this category for the first time since thirteen-year conduct of this study, which distinguishes the country from its neighboring 'peers.' The "Authoritarian Eight" has moved from 6.15 in 2005 to 6.41 in 2009 towards an autocratic regime. In all the seven main criteria, Central Asian countries have either remained on the same level or deteriorated in their performance, with the only exception of Kazakhstan, which has improved in the sphere of *independent media* and *judicial framework and independence*. Kyrgyzstan has demonstrated declines in the spheres of civil society, independent media and national democratic governance. Tajikistan, in its turn, has deteriorated in its performance in areas of civil society and judicial framework and independence. As regards, Uzbekistan, its indicators went down only in one area – judicial framework and independence. All other indicators have remained the same for the rest of the countries during the period of 2005-2009.³⁹ Hence, factors such as issuing new laws and decrees, changes in constitutional and governmental structures in favor of the executive, sophisticating the work, diminishing the rights of NGOs, and weakening of the civil society have contributed to the stagnating democracies of Central Asian states.

³⁸ Vladimir D. Shkolnikov. "Nations in Transit 2009: Democracy's Dark Year." Freedom House: 2009; <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/nit/2009/Overview-WEB.pdf>>

³⁹ Ibid;

In order to evaluate the democratic performance of the countries comparatively, each state's general democracy score should be reviewed. Thus, Turkmenistan remains the most authoritarian state among its Central Asian neighbors with the indicator of 6.93, followed by Uzbekistan with the slight difference, making up 6.89; rather as autocratic could be referred Kazakhstan with the score of 6.32, while Tajikistan has attained a higher position among its neighbors in terms of democratic development, which score constitutes 6.14. Hence, despite having numerous drawbacks, the Kyrgyz Republic appeared to be a leading country in terms of democracy within Central Asia, reaching the score of 6.04.⁴⁰

Indeed, it is obvious that the above presented indicators of democratic development of each Central Asian country remain extremely low, in view of the fact that they have exceeded the last boundary to seven, which equals to full autocratic regime. Apparently, these post-Soviet countries have not demonstrated significant achievements, rather ending up in the regress of their development by 2009. Corruptive and often incompetent governments, weaknesses in local infrastructure and other reasons given above prove to be the signs of poor democratic performance. This fact, consequently, might put at risk the effectiveness of the development aid. On one hand, such poor performance and regression touch upon the issue of reasonability of continuation of granting the development assistance to this region. *Ex facte*, it seems very irrational to invest into the region, which has been stagnating in its development in the past 19 years despite the expressed intentions. On the other hand, however, poor democratic performance of these countries is a fact, which corroborates an urgent need to support them in these attempts since otherwise the development assistance would not be on the European Union's agenda and states' successful democratic and economic development of the Union's concern. There could be a potential risk that CA countries may fall into the influence of antidemocratic regimes of Afghanistan, China and Iran.

The EU-Central Asia Strategy is a fine commencement in the direction towards a restructured and comprehensive approach. However, in view of its extensive sectors of action, development assistance should become more selective, conditional and civil society-oriented. The issue of the need in reforming the EU's development aid will be scrutinized in more details in the third part of this paper.

⁴⁰ Vladimir D. Shkolnikov. "Nations in Transit 2009: Democracy's Dark Year." Freedom House: 2009. <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/nit/2009/Overview-WEB.pdf>>;

V. Factors, compounding the ambiguity of the effectiveness of the development aid

Certainly, there should be reasons, which impel one to think about the effectiveness of the development aid as being ambiguous. As has been presented above, these include the historical past of Central Asian countries, the EU's interest in natural and energy resources, Soviet culture and mentality of people, complex geopolitical situation and possibility of the economic development as a precondition for democratic development of a state. Charles Buxton characterized Central Asia as “a region undergoing a painful transition from the Soviet period and having a civil society much affected by geopolitical interests.”⁴¹ Namely, the region is facing the obstacles of political transition, which has much been affected throughout the historical events: being subordinated to the centralized Soviet regime at the outset and suddenly being granted independence, having this as a task to choose its own way of development and to decide which world powers to follow. In such a way, these factors should be regarded as those, contributing to the ambiguity of the effectiveness of the European Union's assistance.

a. Political development of Central Asian countries: developing democracy or autocracy?

One of the main features, which hold Central Asian states together and make them similar and united to some extent, is the common historical past that they possess. All five countries were part of the historically significant Soviet Union, a strong political power, which left a significant impact on the future development of these states. Looking back at the history, one could argue that there was not enough time for these Central Asian countries to develop national identity and a sense of cultural unity, which could be considered quite essential when speaking about democracy building, before the region found itself under the Russian rule. Centralized Soviet State, constantly striving for communism, state controlled economy and strictly limited freedoms of people made the whole system very authoritarian. The ruling authority of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), which was extremely interested in retaining their powers and protecting their interests, has shaped the communist ideology of the Central Asian political leaders since its presence used to be found in each Soviet Republic. Moreover, the way citizens were treated and

⁴¹ Charles Buxton. “NGO networks in Central Asia and global civil society: potentials and limitations.” *Central Asian Survey*; 28:1, 43-58, 2009; <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634930902775129>>, p. 44;

“raised” has developed the so-called *Soviet mentality* of people. Consequently, the majority of currently active politicians in Central Asia descend from the Soviet political world, which testifies of the fact that their mentality remains the same despite the regime changes. Thus, “[i]n large part, the origins of the current weakness of democratic processes are the result of developments during the final decades of Soviet power.”⁴² Although each Central Asian state is very peculiar in terms of geographical location, natural resources and economic capacities, all of the five countries were developing in a more or less similar way during the time of the USSR. An explanation for this phenomenon is the same political structure, centralized economy and regulated social structures upon becoming independent and sovereign, each state has chosen its way of development and self-establishment. Thus, after nineteen years each country has achieved different level of democratic development, because each leader has chosen its own path towards democratization.

1. Kyrgyzstan: international linkage during Akaev’s rule – sudden governmental change

For instance, Kyrgyzstan is considered the most democratic country among its Central Asian neighbors, and has always been since it has become independent. Eugheniy Zhovtis argues that the weak economic capacities of Kyrgyzstan served as the reason for its rather successful democratic development. Obtaining very limited natural and energy resources, (namely only gold, water and tourism could become the source of potential income⁴³) prompted Askar Akaev to take a number of foreign credits and loans, by means of which the country became dependent upon foreign investors and, certainly, their positive influence in the way of democracy promotion. Thanks to these loans civil society and some political institutions emerged in the country, while the parliamentary form of government was being developed.⁴⁴ Credit should be given to the first President of the sovereign Republic, Askar Akaev, who succeeded in creating a positive image to the outside Western world. Academic career prior to the political one and scientific circles, in which he was moving, turned out to

⁴² Eugheniy Zhovtis. “Democratisation and Human Rights in Central Asia: Problems, Development Prospects and the Role of the International Community;” Neil Melvin, (Ed.) *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia* [Center for European Policy Schedule], Brussels, 2007, p. 20

⁴³ Martha Brill Olcott. “Central Asia’s New States. Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security.” United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C., 1996, p. 88

⁴⁴ Eugheniy Zhovtis. “Democratisation and Human Rights in Central Asia: Problems, Development Prospects and the Role of the International Community;” in: Neil Melvin, (Ed.) *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia* [Center for European Policy Schedule], Brussels, 2007, p. 21;

be conducive to this fact. Moreover, assistance of Chingiz Aitmatov in the beginning of Akaev's political career, his personal charm, reputation of a well-educated person and his outstanding diplomatic skills have made the country's ties closer to the West. Kyrgyz Republic was the first among the other four Central Asian states to adopt its own currency, the som, in May 1993.⁴⁵

Different outcomes of Kyrgyzstan's democratic development could be evident today if a different path would have been undertaken. Arguably, Kyrgyzstan could have demonstrated different achievements of its economic and political development if it would have chosen to become 'mature' independently from foreign investors. Martha Brill Olcott assumes that "[t]heoretically, Kyrgyzstan possesses enough mineral wealth, especially gold, to support its first difficult years of state-building, [which requires, however, relatively sophisticated skills and knowledge,] both of which seem to be in extremely short supply [in this country.]"⁴⁶ One could assume that this would be a rather calculated way for the newly independent republic to follow since it could have prevented the country from being highly indebted. Under the Soviet rule (in 1991) there was no budget deficit in the republic; after becoming independent, the budget deficit grew from 903, 3 million rubbles in 1991 to 400 million dollars in 1995.⁴⁷ The budget deficit of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2010 is 13.565 billion Som.⁴⁸ One explanation for "Kyrgyzstan's rising debt is the government's continued foreign borrowing, which seems limitless given the country's strong international support." If Mr. Akaev would not rely so much on foreign investments and credits, arguably the government would strive to use its own capacities and resources for economic development, by means of which it would avoid becoming highly indebted. Indeed, production decline and government ineffectiveness are the other reasons for high indebtedness of the state.⁴⁹ In such a way, even though one could argue that the well-built foreign linkages of Kyrgyzstan contributed to the economic debt and stagnation, they appeared to be beneficial in terms of democratic development: Kyrgyzstan became party to numerous International Conventions and

⁴⁵ Martha Brill Olcott. "Central Asia's New States. Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security." United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C., 1996, p.89

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 102

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 101

⁴⁸ Database of the official statistics on CIS countries. Available at <<http://www.cisstat.com/1base/02/10-087.htm>>

⁴⁹ Martha Brill Olcott. "Central Asia's New States. Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security." United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C., 1996, p. 101;

Declarations. This is not to state that the Kyrgyz government and judiciary are following to all of these Instruments, but the intention to do so matters.

Kyrgyz people experienced the two rapid and violent governmental changes during the last decade. The ‘Tulip Revolution’ of March 2005, which was followed by marauding, violently removed President Askar Akaev, who exceeded his authority, remaining in power for the third term, misusing the public funds and overusing his kinship on the governmental level. When Kurmanbek Bakiev came to power, there was optimism within the Kyrgyz society in the democratic and radiant future of the Republic. President Bakiev willingly cooperated with many International Organizations, signed the new Constitution on November 9, 2006, which abolished death penalty and gave greater powers to the Parliament. However, his administration expressed hostility towards civil society organizations and even intended to ban the work of foreign NGOs on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic. Bakiev refused to sign the “Law on the State TV and Radio Corporation,” which the parliament adopted in June 2006, which would make the Kyrgyz state TV and Radio Corporation a public entity and allow wider media coverage of the parliament.⁵⁰ Despite the optimistic hopes, Mr. Bakiev overstepped the mistakes of the previous president, abusing his powers, committing corruption and bringing his family members to the highest governmental and business positions.

Consequently, the second public revolt happened on April 7, 2010, during which Bakiev’s resignation was demanded. Almost one hundred deaths and nearly thousand injuries appeared to be the result of Bakiev’s unwillingness to leave his “lucrative” position. Under the pressure of international community, Bakiev had no other choice than resigning from the presidential position. No wonder that indicators of democratic performance in Kyrgyzstan fell down after Bakiev came to power. During these difficult times, people of Kyrgyzstan hope for better and real changes this times and fear the repetition of this governmental instability in the future again. Mr. McFaul noted that despite all the horror of these events, there is optimism in the future democratic development of the country. “[This Revolution could even be seen as a little opportunity to build democracy.]”⁵¹

⁵⁰ [ECORYS Nederland BV] “Democracy Building in Central Asia (1996-2006).” Evaluation of the European Commission’s democracy building programme in Central Asia; Draft Report; Rotterdam, April 7th, 2010, pp. 21-24

⁵¹ Michael McFaul. Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian and Central Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. Address “U.S. Support for Democracy in Kyrgyzstan.” AUCA: May 6, 2010. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

Each Central Asian country is of concern for the international community, which became obvious during the tour of the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon around the CA region. During his visit, Mr. Ban Ki-moon called the government leaders upon advancing the government policies on health care systems, security, eradicating poverty, fighting corruption, creating independent media and liberal civil society, which would be in accordance with international law.⁵² Visits of such high diplomatic officials, representing the international community, demonstrate the involvement of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors into international political life and active participation therein.

2. Tajikistan: civil war as a hindrance of democratic development

In comparison to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan had a slightly different way of development. Two years of political liberalization and public activism after becoming an independent state, the country found itself in a hostile situation. The civil war of 1992 broke out because of governmental opposition and public dissatisfaction. “The legacy of this conflict continues to cast a long shadow over Tajikistan today. The impact of the war has severely limited the economic development of the country and held back political liberalization.”⁵³ The Tajik population had, certainly, a bad experience of democracy during the first years of independence, which caused future economic problems. Moreover, this bloody civil war had an impact on the regional cooperation among Central Asian states – for instance, its neighboring countries as Kyrgyzstan, which were in the same boat of being newly established democracies, feared “the possibility that the civil war in neighboring Tajikistan could spill over into their republic[s].”⁵⁴ Indeed, the civil war had tremendous consequences on the future democratic development of the country, making the civil society inactive and impelling people to obey, because the 1992 internal hostilities turned out to be a lesson teaching the public “little can be gained by protesting.” An evidence for that is the fact that even when children were dying of cold in winter of 2008 due to the energy shortages, no resorting to protests could be observed.⁵⁵

⁵² [UN News Center]. “Free speech, press freedom crucial for democracy, Ban tells Kyrgyz leaders.” April 3rd, 2010; <<http://www.un.org/apps/news/printnews.asp?nid=34274>>

⁵³ Eugheniy Zhovtis. “Democratisation and Human Rights in Central Asia: Problems, Development Prospects and the Role of the International Community,” in: Neil Melvin, (Ed.) *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia* [Center for European Policy Schedule], Brussels, 2007; p. 22

⁵⁴ Martha Brill Olcott. “Central Asia’s New States. Independence, Foreign Policy, and Regional Security.” United States Institute of Peace Press; Washington D.C., 1996, p. 104

⁵⁵ Anna Matveeva. “Tajikistan: “Revolutionary situation or a Resilient state?” *EU-Central Asia Monitoring*; No. 12 – December 2009, p. 4;

President Emomali Rahmon has created the situation of partial authoritarianism within the government, manipulating political opponents and reducing the opposition only to one Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP), which has very limited space for action and is not allowed to undertake any transformative actions concerning the current order. Majority of institutions are inherited from the Soviet regime. Moreover, Tajikistan is considered “a poor country in a troublesome neighborhood.” The fact that 77 per cent of the Tajik population lives in the rural areas⁵⁶ contributes largely to the difficulty of democratic development due to several reasons. Firstly, people, living in the countryside are rather poor than those residing in the urban areas; secondly, they are not aware of their rights and freedoms; thirdly, rural population has often less access to quality education and does not, therefore, participate in the political life of a country.

Contrary to Kyrgyzstan, which is highly dependent on the flow of foreign investments, “Tajikistan is far from an aid-dependent country.”⁵⁷ This fact has obviously also had an impact on its democratization process, because the country was not striving in the same extent as Kyrgyzstan to achieve certain democratic standards.

Despite the fact that the two neighboring Central Asian states had different paths of development, they remain relatively similar in terms of their economic development and limited natural resources. This fact makes Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan similar in terms of their inclination towards closer cooperation with the European Union in view of their interest of being recipients of the EU development assistance. “In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the request for assistance is quite strong while the other (energy-rich) republics have been less eager to attract support.”⁵⁸ For instance, it is rather complicated and challenging to impose certain influence on the Kazakh government to undertake democratic reforms since it is an energy-rich and economically rapidly developing republic, which is possibly well off without foreign assistance.

b. Energy and natural resources of Central Asia amidst geostrategic and economic interests of the EU

⁵⁶ Anna Matveeva. “Tajikistan: “Revolutionary situation or a Resilient state?” EU-Central Asia Monitoring; No. 12 – December 2009 p. 2

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. “EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?” EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>> p.10;

Stability in Central Asia is one of the priority goals to be achieved with the help of the European Union's development assistance by means of stimulating good governance, rule of law and respect for human rights. Certainly, stability of the region is essential for the effective functioning of the European Union since some of the Central Asian borders are contiguous with the countries pertaining to the 'European Neighborhood.' However, this stability is also significant for the sake of diversifying its energy security. This issue has been urgent for many European countries for a long time. In fact, in the EU-Central Asia Strategy it is emphasized, "[s]ignificant energy resources in Central Asia and the region's aim to diversify its trade partners and supply routes can help meet EU energy security and supply needs."⁵⁹ Sometimes it is being argued that energy security is a priority area of this cooperation, while democratization has only a perfunctory meaning. Although not assenting to this misleading opinion, it should still be taken into consideration when trying to estimate the effectiveness of the assistance since European Union's interest in energy resources of Central Asia is still not of the least significance. This fact does contribute to the notion of ambiguity used in the framework of this research, and should be scrutinized in order to disprove the statement that the goal of the EU-CA cooperation is based solely on the EU's interest in energy resources.

Firstly, it is essential to determine how rich Central Asian region actually is in terms of its energy and natural resources to be a focus for the foreign politics of the European Union. Each of the five Central Asian states possesses a certain amount of energy and natural resources. Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and to a lesser extent Uzbekistan are energy-rich, while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan's resources are insignificant.

Kazakhstan has a share of 3.2 per cent in the existing oil field worldwide with its 39.8-milliard barrels. The country is "the third largest non-OPEC supplier of energy resources to Europe."⁶⁰ Due to the large number of foreign investments, this amount has doubled since the year of 2000 and it is predicted that the number will grow by another 25 per cent by 2013.⁶¹ Besides, the Kazakh republic is rich on

⁵⁹ "European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership." Council of the European Union, General Secretariat. Brussels: October, 2007, p. 3

⁶⁰ Karim Massimov. "The core of Kazakhstan's cooperation with the EU is energy" *New Europe*, Interview with the Kazakh Prime Minister. March 28th, 2010 - Issue: 879; <<http://www.neurope.eu/articles/99934.php>>

⁶¹ Luba Azarch. "Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft." *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009. p.6* <<http://www.dgap.org/publikationen/view/1de915b7f5a48ac915b11deb90e5d04907c10fe10fe.html>>;

uranium, making it the second producer in the world. While containing 15 per cent of the world reserves with the 50 deposits of uranium, the republic produced 8.521 tonnes in 2008, (Canada's production reached 9.000 in the same year, making it a world leader). With the constant increase in production and seeing the possibility of becoming a world leader in this sphere, the Kazak authorities set the goal of reaching as much as 26.000 tonnes by 2030 and construction of its own nuclear power plant by 2020 is in the process of elaboration.⁶²

Turkmenistan is famous for its natural gas production; according to the estimations of the British experts on energy advising, it belongs to the top-five gas reserves worldwide. It is being planned to increase the production of gas up to 230 milliards cubic meters per year by 2030, which would allow Turkmenistan to export between 140 and 160 milliards cubic meters annually.⁶³

Uzbekistan also possesses some energy resources, of which natural gas and uranium are the most important ones. The country takes up the eleventh place worldwide in producing natural gas, after Turkmenistan, which is ranked on the tenth one. However, due to the limited export potential of the state, Uzbekistan remains not very attractive for the Western investors.⁶⁴ As regards the production of uranium, the country is ranked on the seventh place globally, producing 2.338 tonnes in 2008. In contrast to the difficulties connected with the export of natural gas, all uranium extracted from the seven deposits of this mineral. In view of that, this area of energy production remains of interest for the foreign investors.⁶⁵

By way of contrast to their Central Asian partners, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan cannot be distinguished as being energy-rich countries. Water resources foster hydropower production in Kyrgyzstan and gold mining works, which are carried out under the Canadian supervision, are the main resources of the country as has been mentioned in the previous chapter. Besides, nearly 10.000 tonnes of uranium between 1946 and 1967 were produced in Kyrgyzstan, originating from the eight uranium deposits, which are currently in the process of investigation.⁶⁶ Tajikistan has rather limited resources, possessing only water reserves, generating the hydropower, some

⁶² Anna Walker. "Central Asia: Going nuclear." EUCAM Commentary, No.10 – January 2010; Retrieved from <<http://www.ceps.be/book/central-asia-going-nuclear>>

⁶³ Luba Azarch. "Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft." Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009. p.8 <<http://www.dgap.org/publikationen/view/1de915b7f5a48ac915b11deb90e5d04907c10fe10fe.html>>

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.7

⁶⁵ Anna Walker. "Central Asia: Going nuclear"

⁶⁶ Ibid;

petroleum, uranium, silver and gold. Availability of all these is not sufficient, though, for the purpose of export. Having the general overview of energy and natural resources in Central Asia, it is clear that only three countries, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, could be of potential interest for the EU if one would assume that the argument of EU's sole interest in energy resources to be true. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan fall short for the comparison with these three countries, but the EU is still interested in providing them with its assistance. Furthermore, for the period of 2010 – 2013 these two countries are the top beneficiaries of the EU's development budget available for the Central Asian region.⁶⁷ This fact does not only prove that EU attempts to develop democratic values and principles in the region, but also indicates that there is more room for the EU to use its development aid for the sake of democratic development. Firstly, since Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan possess barely any energy resources, they are much poorer than the other three and should be more amenable to making democratic reforms and fulfilling the conditions set by the EU. Several issues should be taken into account to disprove an assumption of EU's sole interest in natural and energy resources of Central Asia.

First, the geopolitical situation in the energy sector should be considered as the major hindrance for EU's significant involvement since there are well-established global players in Central Asia in this sphere already. Russia, being the most significant one, controls almost 80 per cent of the Kazakh oil transport: it exports natural gas, distributing it among the European countries afterwards.⁶⁸ The Soviet infrastructure used by Russia considerably reduces the costs and does not require significant investments from its side. Kazakhstan, in its turn is also interested in cooperation with Russia - due to the lack of infrastructure, the ore of its uranium has to be enriched on the Russian territory.⁶⁹ China is another significant player in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, involved in uranium extraction and import of natural gas and oil. To be more precise, one quarter of Kazakh oil (nearly 10 million tonnes) is annually imported by China (while European Union still remains

⁶⁷ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. "EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?" EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010, <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>>

⁶⁸ Luba Azarch. "Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft." Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009, p.6

⁶⁹ Walker, Anna. "Central Asia: Going nuclear." EUCAM Commentary, No.10 – January 2010; Retrieved from <<http://www.ceps.be/book/central-asia-going-nuclear>>;

the largest importer of Kazakh oil).⁷⁰ China is currently investing in the uranium enrichment technologies to be established in Uzbekistan and is conducting research on natural gas and oil in view of the fact that energy sector is not well developed in this country yet. Canada, France (as an individual Member State) and Japan are also involved in the energy sector of Kazakhstan with their Cameco (Canadian), Areva (French) and Sumitomo (Japanese) companies,⁷¹ each having their own ambitions because of the large investments. It is clear that involvement of all these global players in the energy sector of Central Asia leaves a very limited room for the EU, making it an insignificant player. The interest of Kazakhstan to cooperate with the EU in implementation of oil and gas projects, on the efficient energy use and introduction of renewable energy sources expressed by the Kazakh Prime Minister could be questioned due to the intention of creation a Customs Union among the three CIS states: Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Project, to be launched by 2012, reminds the initial model of the EU back in 1957.⁷² This significant attempt could become an impediment for the EU – CA cooperation, because this case proves that Kazakhstan tends to be rather loyal to cooperating within the CIS zone.

Secondly, as regards the role of the EU in the Central Asian energy sector as such, it is to state that the budget available for the energy sector is very limited. Azarch Luba states that „Brussels assigns only 22 million Euros in total for the time period between 2007 and 2010 for the whole Central Asian energy sector - a sum, which is not sufficient enough for the complex expansion of production and transport infrastructure” (own translation, R.M.).⁷³ It gets rather complicated for the energy-rich Central Asian countries to follow the EU standards in terms of technological equipment - its modernization and innovation, as well as infrastructure development for the transportation of the resources. Considering the limited funds allocated thereto, the interest of Central Asian countries becomes rather limited. Russia wins in this

⁷⁰ Luba Azarch. “Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft.“ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009. p.6-8,
<<http://www.dgap.org/publikationen/view/1de915b7f5a48ac915b11deb90e5d04907c10fe10fe.html>>

⁷¹ Anna Walker. “Central Asia: Going nuclear.” EUCAM Commentary, No.10 – January 2010; Retrieved from <<http://www.ceps.be/book/central-asia-going-nuclear>>

⁷² Karim Massimov. “The core of Kazakhstan’s cooperation with the EU is energy” New Europe, Interview with the Kazakh Prime Minister. March 28th, 2010 - Issue: 879; <<http://www.neurope.eu/articles/99934.php>>

⁷³ Luba Azarch. “Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft.“ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009. p.11, („Brüssel stellt jedoch im Zeitraum zwischen 2007 und 2010 insgesamt nur 22 Millionen Euro für den gesamtzentralasiatischen Energiesektor zur Verfügung – eine Summe, die nicht zu einer komplexen Erweiterung der Produktions- und Transportinfrastruktur ausreicht“);

respect owing to the still functioning Soviet infrastructure and established partnership for many years of cooperation. The launch of the construction of Nabucco Pipeline project by the EU seems to be a reasonable response to the complex 'energy playing field,' while it would establish a firm role and find its room in this cooperation. Realization of this project would definitely allow the EU to differentiate its energy resources and decrease its dependency on Russia since the pipeline would bypass the current major energy provider of the Union. Political cooperation with the partner countries would be also strengthened, while dialogue on democracy would be intensified correspondingly. However, the estimated price of the project, constituting 7.9 Billion Euro makes its accomplishment rather difficult. Discords in the issue of Nabucco Pipeline's necessity among the EU Member States create an impediment for this process since Germany, France, Italy and Greece are not in favor of its construction.⁷⁴ In view of these facts, presumably the EU cannot count that much on becoming a main player in the sphere of energy in Central Asia.

The reciprocal interest of EU and Central Asia is worth mentioning. Cooperation in the sphere of energy on the territory of Central Asia could arguably be referred to as an "energy game." While being involved in the energy partnership with Central Asia along with the other actors, such countries as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan use the chance to profit from these actors' competition. EU's engagement increases energy-exporting countries' negotiating power concerning prices and profit. Azarch continues "[i]n reality all states of the region are trying to include the EU in their foreign policy strategies. This 'multivectoral' foreign policy allows Central Asian governments to balance the expansion of China and Russia in the region and to benefit from it to the best advantage" (own translation R.M.).⁷⁵ European Union, on the other hand, gets a chance to expand the field for its intra-political dialogue by means of negotiating with China and Russia, because the latter has also a potential danger of losing a constant "bulk buyer." In such a way, this "energy game" is about geopolitics and economic interests, which is arguably, of mutual interest for CA and EU.

⁷⁴ Luba Azarch. "Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft." Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009. p.11

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 12, (In der Tat bemühen sich alle Länder der Region, die EU in ihre außenpolitischen Strategien mit einzubeziehen. Diese »multivektorale« Außenpolitik ermöglicht den zentralasiatischen Regierungen, Chinas und Russlands Ausbreitung in der Region auszubalancieren und davon bestmöglich zu profitieren.);

Hence, these factors also prove the fact that democratization, good governance and poverty eradication for the sake of achieving stability in the region are the higher priorities for the EU rather than the pure interest in energy resources of Central Asia. The role of the European Union in the Central Asian energy sector could also be considered from a different perspective, namely from the point of view of nuclear security issue. As has been previously mentioned, Kazakhstan takes the second place on the world arena in uranium production, which makes it attractive for potential nuclear material traffickers. There would be a threat of creation a dirty bomb if uranium would not be preserved extensively enough from terrorists.⁷⁶ With this in mind, it would be just to state that EU has an interest in the energy sector of Central Asia; nevertheless, this interest is mutually beneficial, as it seems to be the case with the nuclear safety. Security is an essential point in the framework of the EU-CA cooperation, and therefore, it makes sense that the Union has an ambition to get more involved into this sector. “The EU might enunciate a more formal and developed position on the nuclear security issue by directing resources in its regional and bilateral budgets to safeguard nuclear facilities.”⁷⁷ By doing so, the EU would contribute to ensuring the security within Central Asia, and, consequently, among its Neighborhood, which seems to be a reciprocal approach in terms of this cooperation.

Given these points, it is wrong to state that EU’s increasing engagement in Central Asia is solely based on its interest in energy resources. As it is provided in the EU-CA Strategy, energy diversification is one of the core aims of EU’s engagement in the region, but for sure, it is not the only one. By becoming part of this “energy game,” the EU opens up a broader playing field for energy-rich countries, providing them a chance to raise the prices because of an increased competition. A supporting point for this argument would be Luba Azarch’s thesis in her article on the prospects of energy partnership between the EU and Central Asia that cooperation in this sector does not seem to be promising in view of the complex internal and external geopolitical situation of Central Asia and limited budget availability in Brussels for this purpose.⁷⁸ With this in mind, the importance of economic aspect of the cooperation between the EU and Central Asia should not be excluded since energy is

⁷⁶ Anna Walker. “Central Asia: Going nuclear.” EUCAM Commentary, No.10 – January 2010; Retrieved from <<http://www.ceps.be/book/central-asia-going-nuclear>>

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Luba Azarch. “Zentralasien und die EU. Aussichten einer Energiepartnerschaft.“ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik e.V. #7 Aug. 2009;

of EU's interest in the framework of the Strategy. It should be clear, though, that poverty eradication, improvement of democratic standards, establishment of rule of law and promotion of human rights are also very essential aspects of it for the sake of achieving stability in the region, which would contribute to the peaceful situation in the European Neighborhood. As has been mentioned above, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan cannot be compared with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in economic terms since the latter two are energy-rich countries, in which the EU is interested. However, my argument is that there is more room for the EU to be engaged in democratization processes of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by relocating more of its assistance into projects aimed at the improvement of democratic standards. While such players as Russia and China are significantly engaged into the energy sector of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and can through this influence the political situation and foreign policies of these countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are more likely to conduct democratic reforms. Poverty eradication programs in these countries financed by the European Union would allow the Union to stick to its original goals of democracy promotion.

c. Culture: Soviet mentality of people – communist ideology of politicians

Democracy seems to be the best and most commonly recognized form of government nowadays. Such political form is not easy to establish since it takes years to develop. United States of America and many European states are considered the role models of perfect democracies, even though they are not always ideal either. These democracies were not built in a day, taking rather centuries to develop. The process of democracy building in France, for instance, started back in 1789 with the Great French Revolution, which turned out to be the impetus for democratization once the proclamation of the main democratic principles of “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” was made; the French Constitution was drafted and stimulated the creation of the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950. Looking at this example it is obvious that democratization is an incremental process, requiring time besides other numerous other factors. In contrast to European countries, where democracy has been being built for more than two centuries, Central Asian region have started this process only two decades ago. Central Asian States, which were part of the USSR gained their independence nineteen years ago and chose to take a sovereign path of democratic development. However, the influence of the Soviet past has still its impact on the democratic development of each country and is one of the factors, compounding

ambiguity of the effectiveness of the EU's development aid in the framework of this research.

The restrictive political system during the existence of USSR was authoritarian and could even be referred to as dictatorship. Political environment, in which population is being brought up, plays a very important role in the formation of a political culture. Functioning of the only one Soviet Communist Party, participation in which was honorable and having one ruler whose authority had to be obeyed and revered. This is not to state that the system was weak or bad; it had rather many advantages in terms of stability and security, according to many representatives of the Soviet generation. People had more or less similar income, which was stable and sufficient to live on it; medicine and education were free of charge and available for all: all these contributed to the stability enjoyed by people. Moreover, many aspects of citizens' lives were controlled and decided upon by the state, leaving them no freedom of choice or action. People, making it very beneficial for the Communist political leaders in terms of power manipulation and its exercise, accepted the atmosphere of the absolute state power.

In view of the fact that historical past, which shaped the mentality of people and ideology of politicians cannot be simply erased or easily transformed, all the current efforts of democratization in Central Asian states are marked as tremendously difficult. Many current politicians of Central Asia were leaders of the Soviet Socialist Republics, belonging to the Communist Party. As Zhovtis notes, "there was no system of restraints and counterbalances, nor a real division of powers; country leaders were not replaced for one and a half decades following the collapse of Communism."⁷⁹ The current political structures have been highly influenced by the communist era since many institutions are inherited from that time. Although, the traditional democratic structure of executive, legislative and judicial branches exists, there is no real division among these three. The fourth state power of control, mass media, is not always reliable and objective due to governmental censorship and lack of freedom, slightly reminding the case of the USSR. "The system's resemblance of the Soviet institutional pattern also conveys a sense of familiarity and continuity with the past,

⁷⁹ Eugheniy Zhovtis. "Democratisation and Human Rights in Central Asia: Problems, Development Prospects and the Role of the International Community;" Neil Melvin, (Ed.) *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union's New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia* [Center for European Policy Schedule], Brussels, 2007; pp. 20 – 43;

which remind the population of stability.”⁸⁰ Therefore, people tend to believe in full governmental responsibility, not realizing that their role and participation matters significantly in a democratic form of government. “The expectation that the State will solve our problems has been preserved and has even become stronger. We have only to wait and endure a little longer. At the same time, we only hope it will not get worse!”⁸¹ This is true when analyzing the pre-election period, for example, in Kyrgyzstan: people are disappointed in the current situation and do not believe in the positive changes. Therefore, they choose to vote for the same president since “the other candidature could be even worse.” Much of this disappointment comes from the experience people had after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when many people have lost all their savings, achievements, societal positions, while plans were destroyed, making ex-Soviet citizens hopeless. All this has influenced the Soviet mentality of people, creating a negative attitude towards the new political system, namely democracy.

As the representative of the EU Delegation in Kyrgyzstan, Dr. Olaf Heidelberg noted, “Democratic ideas were not promoted in the Soviet past; there are still people who have this type of ideology [communist],” admitting that this could be one of the factors, which create a hindrance for building a democratic society in Central Asian countries.⁸² Nothing could obviously change the Soviet mentality of people and ideology of politicians in a radical manner, yet the young generation has a very different mindset due to the effects of globalization. Increasing number of various exchange programs, international conferences, summer schools and seminars, availability of internet access impel young people to move their societies forward towards positive changes in terms of creating liberal, transparent and democratic societies. Youth and people at a mature age constitute a large percentage of Central Asian population. To demonstrate vividly, 64.5% of the Kyrgyz population belongs to the age group of 15 – 64 out of the total population of 5.431.747 and 62.1% constitute

⁸⁰ Anna Matveeva. “Tajikistan: “Revolutionary situation or a Resilient state?” EU-Central Asia Monitoring; No. 12 – December 2009, <<http://www.ceps.be/book/tajikistan-revolutionary-situation-or-resilient-state>,> p.4

⁸¹ Eugheniy Zhovtis. “Democratisation and Human Rights in Central Asia: Problems, Development Prospects and the Role of the International Community,” in: Neil Melvin, (Ed.) *Engaging Central Asia. The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia* [Center for European Policy Schedule], Brussels, 2007; p. 26

⁸² Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

the same age group in Tajikistan out of 7.349.145 people (as estimated in 2009).⁸³ The mindset of these young people becomes much different from that of their parents and grandparents, but it should be directed into a right path, meaning that democratic ideas should be spread among them. Exactly for this reason, education should remain one of the priority areas in the framework of the EU's development aid towards Central Asia; allocating more investments into the educational system and youth activation programs is essential. The European Community has undertaken some steps, realizing the importance of investments into the educational sector. "Many observers, as well as several EU officials and civil society representatives, believe that the EU's most valued card in assistance and relationship building lies in the field of education. There is certainly a humanitarian and strategic need given the collapsing social infrastructure in Central Asia and poor investment in the national education systems, which have to varying degrees disintegrated since the end of the Soviet Union."⁸⁴ As Mr. Heidelberg noted, funding for such programs as TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus has doubled since 2010. Moreover, for the period of 2011-2013 of EU's assistance to Central Asia, education is marked as a priority area among other two, which are social protection and rule of law and good governance.⁸⁵ The 2011-2013 budget allocation will be referred to later in the paper, while it is worth mentioning that in terms of this financing period Tajikistan is a priority beneficiary, followed by Kyrgyzstan.⁸⁶ This fact is a good indicator, which would contribute to the social development of these countries and democratization since education plays a vital role in the process of democracy building.

A good example of the European Union's attempt to contribute to 'good governance' is the Parliament Project, launched in Kyrgyzstan in 2007 by the EC jointly with the UNDP⁸⁷ to increase the parliamentary transparency and outreach. "Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic" (jointly with GTZ⁸⁸) is another example of how the EU contributes to the strengthening of rule of law and

⁸³ Geography of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The World Factbook. Publications. Central Intelligence Agency. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>>

⁸⁴ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. "EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?" EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>> p. 9

⁸⁵ Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

⁸⁶ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. "EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?" EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>>

⁸⁷ United Nations Development Programme

⁸⁸ German Technical Cooperation (Deutsche Technische Zusammenarbeit);

improvement of democratic standards in the country. These projects will be scrutinized in the second part of the paper.

Soviet mentality of people and communist ideology of politicians is a slight hindrance for EU's efforts of democracy promotion. However, it is not a significant obstacle in these attempts, because through its investments into education, vocational training of professionals and experts, and not less importantly - training of political leaders (as the Kyrgyz parliament) this ideology and mentality are possible to overcome gradually. This is the sole matter of time.

d. Complex geopolitical situation: role of the EU among Russia, USA and China's presence in the region

Geopolitical situation in Central Asian region is another factor, which makes effectiveness of the EU's development aid ambiguous. It is a historical phenomenon that interests of great powers always influence the formation of foreign politics of less developed states.

Central Asian countries, former socialist republics of the USSR, have historical ties with Russia, empire which ones colonized this region. Despite republics' independence and sovereign governance, each Central Asian leader has good economic, socio-political and diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation. As has been discussed previously, well-established infrastructure for economic cooperation is one of the main factors making the region important for Russia. Interest in peace and stability within and outside Central Asian borders are vital for the security of Russians as well. Therefore, with its military presence, Russian government is trying to eliminate the security threats coming from Afghanistan and other countries, where the presence of terrorist groups is possible. In terms of its development assistance, Russia has been granting enormous funds for the socio-economic development of all Central Asian states. This aid is normally unconditional, which make its use by Central Asian partners, certainly, easier. Moreover, numerous loans, granted to these states before, the Russian government has simply remitted many times due to the difficult economic circumstances and inability to pay off the debts. Central Asian leaders also see Russia as a reliable partner, who is always willing to give a helping hand in the times of need. To give an example, after the civil war in Tajikistan in the early 90s, when peaceful population found itself in poverty and hunger, Russia was one of the most generous partners to provide the country in crisis with its support. It concerns the Kyrgyz Republic after the recent unpredicted

revolution on April 7-8, 2010 and violent governmental change. Right after the Russian government directed its assistance (partially humanitarian assistance and partially a loan) to the interim government of the Kyrgyz Republic for the socio-economic maintenance and development of the country.

Labor migration should not be excluded when talking about Russia – Central Asia relation. Working migrants from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan significantly contribute to the economic development of their home countries by their remittances. Due to the lack of working places in these countries, working migrants see Russia as a single alternative in terms of making their income and supporting families. Since this creates a relative stability in Central Asian countries, political leaders are interested in supporting friendly relations with Russia. Having all these reasons in mind, one could argue that Russia is looked at as a model of political and socio-economic development for Central Asia. Majority of the national legislation, which was created in the early 90s in the process of sovereignty formation in CA, are similar to the one of the Russian Federation. This testifies of the fact that historically leaders of Central Asian states have a tendency to refer to Russia as role model and object of imitation. This is just one side of the coin, however, and other opinions are by no means excluded.

In line with Russia, United States' presence in Central Asia plays a vital role in its foreign politics formation. Through such programs – donors as USAID, American government has been granting its development aid to this region. With the formation of American military bases in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, American government is able to influence the foreign politics of Central Asian states to some extent. American government is interested in making its democratic model as an example for Central Asian states. Programs of educational exchange sponsored by the U.S. Department of State play a significant role in spreading its democratic principles and values through schoolchildren, student and university professors' visits to the United States. Being a world model of democracy and conforming to European democratic values, United States and EU's presence can be mutually complementary in their attempts to spread democracy in Central Asia.

Special Assistant to the U.S. President and Senior Director for Russian and Central Asian Affairs at the National Security Council, Michael McFaul, expressed the US Government's will to cooperate with other international actors in the developing countries, while trying to avoid the "super power game." In the nineteenth

century, there was a “Great Game Struggle” between Russia and the United States. Each of these superpowers tried to have an impact on the developing world and spread their policies in the other regions of the world. President Obama’s administration does not support such a “super power game” today. “We need to get out of the spheres of influence in the 21st century,” emphasized Mr. McFaul.⁸⁹ U.S. President sees the importance of democracy promotion in the developing world by means of direct engagement with the civil society, inculcating the universal values of democracy. Since the U.S. Government considers democratic values universal rather than being American or European, it appreciates cooperation of international donors in their attempts of promoting these universal values.⁹⁰ In such a way, the U.S. presence in Central Asian region could be considered as an advantage for the EU if these two international donors would cooperate in their efforts to advance democracies, making their assistance policies more coherent and prioritized.

In comparison to United States’ attempt to spread democracy in Central Asia, communist neighbor of Central Asia, China, by no means attempts to do so while expanding its playing field in the neighborhood. Trade relations play an important role in CA – Chinese cooperation. As has been mentioned previously, the Chinese government is investing into technological research of energy and natural resources’ mining and production; it also invests into oil and transport infrastructure for the sake of more intensive energy cooperation. Chinese leadership pays special attention to the issue of security within the region and neighborhood as well. Therefore, China provides its military assistance, especially evident it is in Kazakhstan; while alongside its border with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan it has created a demilitarized zone. Mutual contributions of great powers towards security and stability of Central Asia is, certainly, of great benefit, while the influence of each one of them makes it difficult for Central Asian leaders to create a coherent foreign politics and to follow one particular model as an example for its internal governance.

Such multidimensional foreign politics of Central Asia and its unsteadiness could be demonstrated on the example of the case with the U.S. military base in Kyrgyzstan. Mr. Bakiev promised to the Russian government to dissolve the U.S. military base in Kyrgyzstan and to increase the Russian military presence on its

⁸⁹ Michael McFaul. Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian and Central Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. Address “U.S. Support for Democracy in Kyrgyzstan.” AUCA: May 6, 2010. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

⁹⁰ Ibid;

territory, obtaining 2 billion USD to the country's development. Prior to this decision American government was paying 65 million USD annually for its military base and additional 150 million USD for stimulating economic development in the country.⁹¹ Although, the ex-President of Kyrgyzstan did not hold his promise by simply renaming it, the conclusion from this fact is that developing countries tend to build their cooperation with those partners, which offer better economic benefits. Such practice could serve as a negative example for EU's increasing presence and assistance towards this region.

Andrea Schmitz, a German scholar has a very skeptical attitude about the effectiveness and likelihood of the implementation of the European Union's political goals. Schmitz argues, "[a]s compared with the two regional powers the EU will play a secondary role in Central Asia long-term" (own translation: R.M.).⁹² The author believes that sharing common historical past, values, having similar political systems and cultures with Russia and obtaining assistance and investments from the Chinese side, Central Asian leaders perceive the European Union as means of diversifying its economic cooperation and expanding its political options.⁹³

Mr. Heidelberg, an expert in the field of EU's development assistance, does not see the presence of other great powers in Kyrgyzstan, "Kyrgyzstan has a multivector foreign politics. We do not have a conflict with Russia – it has strong and well-established ties with the region. We are building our interests parallel with others, but not competing. EU is interested in stability and if, for example, Russia contributes with its investments to the stability of the region this is only a benefit."⁹⁴

e. Economic development as a precondition for democratization? Theoretical approach

Having analyzed the three possible components of the notion of ambiguity in terms of aid's effectiveness, which are possibility of EU's economic interest, Soviet past of Central Asian countries and complex geopolitical situation of the region, the last, but not least is economic development. Hence, it can arguably be considered as a

⁹¹ Robert Bridge. "US military gets the squeeze in Central Asia." Global Research Center: February 14, 2009. <<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=12305>>

⁹² Andrea Schmitz. "Interessen, Instrumente, Einflussgrenzen. Die Europäische Union und Zentralasien." in: *Machtmosaik Zentralasien. Traditionen, Restriktionen, Aspirationen*. M. Sapper, V. Weichsel, A. Huterer (Hrsg.); Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung; Bonn: 2007, p. 338 („Gegenüber diesen beiden Regionalmächten wird die EU in Zentralasien auch langfristig eine untergeordnete Rolle spielen.“)

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

key element, making EU's development aid ambiguous in its efficiency, because economic well-being of a country significantly influences its political situation. Different possibilities and opinions exist regarding the question of whether economic development is a precondition for democracy or vice versa. It is obvious that the right answer does not exist since examples in favor of both of the options are available. Furthermore, some countries have experienced a concept, which would fit in between these two because economic and democratic development took place simultaneously.

In view of the complexity of this issue, which has been debated over for many years, and lack of theoretical approach of this paper, the main aim of this sub-chapter is to present some theory in order to demonstrate the two sides of the coin. I, however, do not seek to scrutinize the existing theories in depth. Few theses' of various scholars will be presented, constituting part of the development theory, which is a rather collective notion, compounding modernization, institutional theories, etc.

To begin with, Seymour Martin Lipset is one of the most prominent sociologists and political scientists, arguing for the economic development as a precondition for democracies, namely for its sustainability with his famous thesis that "[t]he more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy."⁹⁵ In order to prove his hypothesis, Lipset used several variables of economic development to test it and receive evidence. In such a way, national income, level of education and industrialization were chosen for the sake of conducting a test among the European, Anglo-Saxon and Latin American countries, which were considered democratic. As a result of these studies, wealth and education proved to be determinant factors, stimulating democratization, while the latter turned out to be more important since "[t]he higher one's education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices."⁹⁶ Lipset succeeded in making a perfect interconnection between these two factors, which stimulate the emergence of numerous other elements essential for democratic functioning of a state. Higher income reduces the level of poverty, and certainly, creates a middle class, which is essential to prevent the "class struggle" within a society. Economic prosperity disseminates the feeling of security among people and makes them protected and certain in their future – factor leading to stability. Higher income leads to better access to higher education, which also increases participatory culture. Having obtained a

⁹⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset. Chapter 2: "Economic Development and Democracy" in: "POLITICAL MAN. The Social Bases of Politics." 4th Edition; Baltimore, Maryland, 1981, p. 31

⁹⁶ Ibid, pp. 31 – 45;

good education and being satisfied with a good income, citizens become willing to participate in the political life. Besides, “[...] the more well-to-do and better educated a man is, the more likely he is to belong to voluntary organizations [...],”⁹⁷ which can currently be applied to participation in NGOs, parties, etc. Such phenomenon leads to the emergence of a strong civil society, essential for a good functioning and sustainability of democracies. Economic opulence generates tolerance, trust, independence and freedom – elements, valuable for democratic states. Besides the two major variables (wealth and education) presented by Lipset as being essential for democratic states, effectiveness and legitimacy are two other components vital for this system’s sustainability. Effective performance is an indicator of how efficient “the system satisfies the basic functions of government,” population and other groups, e.g. business. Legitimacy in its turn, “involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society.”⁹⁸ To summarize the thesis of Lipset, democratic development of a state depends upon its economic well-being, namely income and education, while its sustainability is subject to institution’s legitimacy and system’s effective performance.

Population’s satisfaction with the good economic conditions can lead not only to participatory behavior as a sign of democracy, but can also stimulate stabilization of autocratic regimes. This is the argument of Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs, who assert that authoritarian incumbents are normally not interested in promoting democracy, while trying to remain in power. The scholars determine two types of ‘goods’: ‘public’ and ‘coordination goods’, comparing them in order to draw a line on how political leaders create favorable autocratic and stable environment for themselves. Firstly, public goods are the ones, influencing economic growth – primary education, public transportation, health care, etc. Secondly, coordination goods and those, not limiting economic progress, and among which four types can be differentiated: political rights, human rights, unregulated press, access to higher education and graduate training.⁹⁹ In the autocratic systems, public goods are not provided to people, while coordination goods are delivered sufficiently. Thus, great economic powers, which are considered as autocracies today, choose to suppress only

⁹⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset. Chapter 2: “Economic Development and Democracy” in: “POLITICAL MAN. The Social Bases of Politics.” 4th Edition; Baltimore, Maryland, 1981; p. 53

⁹⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset. Chapter 3: “Social Conflict, Legitimacy, and Democracy” in: “POLITICAL MAN. The Social Bases of Politics.” 4th Edition; Baltimore, Maryland, 1981; p. 64

⁹⁹ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs. “Development and Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (Sep. – Oct., 2005); pp. 77 – 86; Published by Council on Foreign Relations, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20031707>>;

coordinated goods, such as media, in order to limit democratic development and prevent spreading ideas of this kind, while maintaining economic progress and prosperity. In such a way, de Mesquita and Downs argue that investing into the economic development by means of development assistance does not necessarily mean contributing to liberal democracies' building – they are not directly interrelated. For instance, “[n]owhere is this phenomenon more evident than in China and Russia. Although, China’s economy has grown explosively over the last 25 years, its politics have remained essentially stagnant.”¹⁰⁰ Having created a special Internet police unit, Chinese leaders put strict limitations to internet access for their citizens by “limiting the number of Internet gateways into [the country].” All national media in Russia is restricted and controlled by the government and is mainly pro-governmental.¹⁰¹ Hence, the theory on economic well-being rather promoting and strengthening an autocratic regime should also not be excluded when considering the preconditions for and possible effects of development assistance.

Coming back to the case of Central Asian countries, none of these theories can be specifically applied since the democratic and economic development of each country is peculiar. Both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have poorly developed economies and low levels of democratization. According to the theory of Martin Lipset, it is rather difficult to democratize these countries, while it would be even more difficult to make these democracies sustainable. Despite the very low economic development of the two states, Central Asian leaders still try to restrict some of the ‘coordination goods,’ which are essential for democratic functioning of a society according to de Mesquita and Downs. Namely, freedom of press is still being restricted; political rights of citizens are often limited due to unfair elections, as was the case in Kyrgyzstan in 2009 and in Tajikistan in 2006 with the presidential elections.¹⁰² By doing so, government leaders try to strengthen their positions and the role of executive branch within a system, which leads to autocratic regimes. ‘Public goods’ are not provided in a full range either, because health care and primary educational systems leave much to be desired in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. For the reason it is difficult to refer the two Central Asian countries to one of these theories, which is,

¹⁰⁰ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs. “Development and Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5 (Sep. – Oct., 2005); pp. 77 – 86; Published by Council on Foreign Relations, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20031707>>, p. 78

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp. 81-82

¹⁰² [ECORYS Nederland BV] “Democracy Building in Central Asia (1996-2006).” Evaluation of the European Commission’s democracy building programme in Central Asia; Draft Report; Rotterdam, April 7th, 2010, pp. 22-26;

probably, not necessary to do. I assume that economic well-being and democratization could be developed simultaneously by means of EU assistance, especially in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Financing micro and macro projects should be made conditional on good governance, rule of law and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the population. Such an approach would allow these countries to develop economically, become politically more liberal and democratize concurrently.

PART II - Experimental Part

I. Measuring effectiveness of the development aid

The first part of the paper gave a brief overview of the history of the development aid provided to Central Asian countries by the EU, while the factors, compounding the ambiguity of the effectiveness of the EU's assistance were scrutinized. The goal of this part is to look at the possible ways of evaluating development aid's effectiveness, to look at the practical examples of the projects' implementation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan financed by the EU and to suggest the ways on how to increase efficiency of this assistance.

Democracy as an art rather than a science, generally applied methods of evaluation

Gordon Crawford, a Senior Lecturer in Development Studies at the Institute for Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds (UK), has emphasized the complex nature of democratization, stating that “[...it] is not a linear process of positive and gradual change, rather it is an irregular process following a non-linear pattern, with progressions and regressions.”¹⁰³ In his two-part article, Crawford criticizes the generally applied methods of development aid's evaluation, such as USAID's 'Managing for Results System' and 'Logical Framework Approach' suggesting that a more participatory approach should be used instead in order to democratize the process itself.¹⁰⁴

Much time has been dedicated to the development of a common method of evaluation of the projects, aimed at democratization financed by various donors; however, these attempts were in vain since each project is so peculiar and requires a special approach. Certainly, it is not easy to determine on how much stronger civil society had become, how much the degree of freedom and liberty has increased, etc.

¹⁰³ Gordon Crawford. “Promoting Democracy From Without – Learning From Within (Part I)” p.86

¹⁰⁴ Ibid;

Another complex issue often raised by the social scientists is the possibility of combining qualitative and quantitative indicators into a single method. To present a general idea of the possible methods of evaluation, two widespread approaches used by global donors and another one suggested by Gordon Crawford as being optimal will be presented.

USAID, being one of the biggest global providers of development aid, has adopted a ‘managing for results system’ in the response to a growing pressure of evaluating results of the assistance provided, being able to report on its activities and improve the effectiveness. According to this method, each group responsible for the project’s implementation is required to present a ‘results framework’ with the goals set on a systematic basis. There are three levels of this process, namely ‘strategic objectives’, ‘intermediate results’ and ‘performance indicators’. All these are interlinking among each other: strategic objectives should be related to the intermediate results achieved and performance indicators are those, which should be created to measure the intermediate results and intentional objectives set.¹⁰⁵ The positive aspect of this system is the opportunity that staff engaged in the process of project implementation has “to think carefully about and articulate clearly what they are trying to do” during the process of ‘results framework’.¹⁰⁶ However, the drawback of this system is the fact that mainly quantitative results are presented when conducting an evaluation, such as the number of people trained, books granted, workshops held, etc., while very limited time is invested into qualitative analysis, which remains mainly complementary.¹⁰⁷ Carothers argues that using only quantitative indicators could make the results incorrect and create “misleading pictures” since these outcomes are often not the result of “sophisticated, deep-reaching analyses of the political context.”¹⁰⁸

Another commonly used approach of evaluation is ‘logical framework analysis,’ (LFA) which many world donors, bilateral aid agencies and international NGOs apply. European Commission also applies this tool in the framework of its Project Cycle Management (consisting of five steps: key tasks, roles and

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Carothers. “Giving Out Grades: Evaluation” Chapter 10 in: “Aiding Democracy Abroad. The Learning Curve.” Washington D.C., 1999, p. 289

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 291

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, pp. 291 - 293

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 291;

responsibilities, key documents and decision options).¹⁰⁹ LFA can be distinguished through its unique applicability while granting development aid, namely during project management cycle and its evaluation process. During the preparation phase of the project, goals of the project should be clearly stated, activities for its achievement listed, needed resources defined, potential hindrances for its success provided and ways on progress' measurement and evaluation specified. LFA could be referred to as an objective and logical summary of the project that stimulates analytical thinking over the best possible way of project management.¹¹⁰ Normally, when evaluating the outcomes of the project, quantitative indicators are being used, in order to measure on how much has been achieved. This is an inevitable part of progress' evaluation, but qualitative indicators are also essential, especially in terms of democracy and good governance promotion.

In view of the difficulty of evaluating the impact of democratization programs and drawbacks of the two above presented methods, Crawford proposes application of the 'participatory evaluation approach' to democratization programs, the process, which is democratic itself. The process of this methodological alternative consists of four stages: planning, data gathering, data analysis, reporting and dissemination of findings. The distinctive feature of this process is the evaluating staff, which consists of internal stakeholders, comprising experts from various fields, e.g. representatives of legal bodies, academic institutions, and independent think tanks and so on; these stakeholders should be indirect (meaning non-recipients of the assistance).¹¹¹ Advantage of this system is the fact that indirect stakeholders can provide independent and critical opinions, pointing out at the weaknesses, which could be eliminated in the future projects. The main argument of Crawford is that internal actors should participate in the process of evaluation since democratization is an internal process, although attempts in support of it are coming from the outside. Internal experts can be able to identify an action plan for the future, while giving recommendations on how to make improvements. While external experts could possibly impose their (e.g. European) models of democracy, internal actors could

¹⁰⁹ [European Commission] "Logical Framework Approach. Project Approach. The Commission Way." External co-operation programmes – European Commission.
<http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/delivering-aid/project-approach/index_en.htm>

¹¹⁰ [BOND. Networking for International Development]. "Logical Framework Analysis" Guidance Notes No 4. London: March 2003. <<http://www.gdrc.org/ngo/logical-fa.pdf>>

¹¹¹ Gordon Crawford. "Promoting Democracy From Without – Learning From Within (Part II)" p.10;

adjust the programs for creating suitable for them democracies.¹¹² “One aim of a participatory approach to evaluation is to create a mechanism through which local actors can discuss what democracy means in their particular socio-economic context.”¹¹³ Certainly, such an approach involves internal actors significantly into the process of evaluation, which could obviously contribute to a more accurate evaluation by their knowledge and awareness of domestic situation. Ideally, this methodology could be applicable in Central Asian countries to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs and projects financed by the EU, but these countries are not prepared for such a system yet. As has been provided earlier in the paper, political institutions and governments undertake little effort to improve their democratic situations, remaining for the most part corrupt, fragile and to some extent authoritarian. In the light of this fact representatives of various societal levels (such as representatives of legal bodies, academic institutions) are not always loyal to their governments, which could arguably create a hindrance for an objective evaluation. Maybe one day the ‘participatory evaluation approach’ could be applied in evaluating the effectiveness of the EU’s development assistance in Central Asia. However, the corrupted governments, unstable institutions, which often highly depend upon them and leaders of the NGOs, who are not fully aware of and experienced in practicing democratic freedoms and principles would not allow the European Commission to apply this approach in these days.

Mr. Heidelberg has noted that the Delegation of the European Union in Kyrgyzstan uses primarily such tools as Logical Framework Analysis, Object Verification Indicators (OVI), and Results Oriented Monitoring - for bigger projects and, certainly, Team of Independent Experts’ evaluations to estimate the results of the EU projects.¹¹⁴ Besides, the MONIS database, introduced in 1997 to support TACIS monitoring system, is used as one of the tools of effectiveness’ evaluation since it contains reports and information on project monitoring in the European Neighborhood and Partnership countries (ENPI), Western Balkans/Turkey and Central Asia under the ‘results-oriented monitoring’ system. EU staff (Headquarters and Delegations) and monitoring teams have access to the system, which is not only a daily management tool and data storage device, but also a useful communication platform and statistical

¹¹² Gordon Crawford. “Promoting Democracy From Without – Learning From Within (Part II)” pp.1 - 19

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 18

¹¹⁴ Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

tool. The MONIS project is financed by the European Union and is implemented by the three independent monitoring teams, INTEGRATION (administration of MONIS and monitoring team for ENPI), ECORYS (for Asia and Central Asia) and ICCS/NTUA (for Western Balkans and Turkey).¹¹⁵ This database serves an important role, because it allows EU staff in different parts of the world and monitoring teams to exchange information, experiences. This should lead to the emergence of a more effective and rational approach to granting development assistance and more successful project management, based on mutual drawbacks and success stories in various regions of the world.

II. Impact of Democracy Building Programmes in the Region – Case studies of the Successful Projects

In order to have a clear picture about the type of projects, which are financed and conducted by the EU in Central Asia and to present the practical examples of effectiveness' evaluation, the two examples (in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) shall be scrutinized.

a. Case Study #1: EU Project in Kyrgyzstan “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic”

Upon the request of the former Minister of Justice Marat Kaiypov to support the reform of the Kyrgyz judicial system, which he expressed in his letter on February 13, 2007, the Kyrgyz Government received a positive answer from the European Commission. Under the Instrument for Stability, the project “Support to Judiciary in the Kyrgyz Republic” was launched on November 19, 2008 to be implemented until May 18, 2010. The project, for which the European Commission has allocated € 2.5 Million, is being implemented by the GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) in Kyrgyzstan and headed by Christoph von Harsdorf, an excellent expert and professional in this field. While aiming at contributing to the development of judiciary and penitentiary reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic, the project bases on the four main components:

1. support to review of the current legislation,
2. support to the penitentiary system reform,
3. support to improve the court judgment implementation and

¹¹⁵ MONIS. “Monitoring Information System of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership countries, Western Balkans/Turkey and Central Asia Monitoring Programme.” <<http://www.monis.org/domcfg.nsf/MoreInfo?OpenPage>>;

4. training of judges.¹¹⁶

Regarding the staff, working on the project implementation, there is a component leader and deputy component leader for each component, amounting to eight experts, responsible for each component; plus, a project deputy and a team leader (project manager), compounding a group of 10 experts.¹¹⁷ During the 18 months of the project, 59 external experts were involved into the project, 25 of whom came from abroad (Austria, Canada, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden and UK). During the runtime of the project, 24 fully IT equipped workstations and nine cars were provided to the Probation (Parole) Service; 15 books were published (with 15.980 copies distributed) and the web cite of the project (<http://eu-sjr.kg/index_eng.php>) was created.¹¹⁸

In the framework of the project members of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament), Judicial Council and Staff of the Project itself participated in the study tour to Europe. Mr. Christoph von Harsdorf has distinguished this visit as an important event and achievement of the project (in total 31 decision takers participated in the three study tours to Europe). Upon the first-hand experience of making an acquaintance with the French and Spanish judicial systems, “the group was incredibly surprised,” said Mr. Harsdorf, “no one was talking about the friend of the President,” but independence, credibility and high professionalism of the systems were rather obvious. Being motivated by such an incredible practice, the Kyrgyz decision-makers discussed their experience and understanding with the colleagues at ‘home’ and even asked to organize a conference in Kyrgyzstan again for purposes of a better understanding of the knowledge gained and spreading this among their colleagues. European experts joined the conference, in the course of which jointly with the Kyrgyz colleagues they crated a new concept: to attract young, competent and highly qualified professionals into the judicial system by means of a fair and transparent selection process. Thus, a structured way of conducting interviews and anonymous exams for young judges is currently in the process of elaboration and is to

¹¹⁶ “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic” Project funded by the European Commission and Implemented by the GTZ. <http://eu-sjr.kg/index_eng.php>

¹¹⁷ Christoph von Harsdorf. Interview with the Team Leader of the EU Project in Kyrgyzstan “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic.” Ministry of Justice, Bishkek: April 20th, 2010

¹¹⁸ “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic” Project funded by the European Commission and Implemented by the GTZ. <http://eu-sjr.kg/index_eng.php>;

be introduced shortly.¹¹⁹ Project Manager noted about such an outcome “it’s not ideal, but is already hundred percent better.”¹²⁰

For evaluating the results of the ongoing work of the project, team of independent experts came from the EU twice. The project team has been actively involved in the process of outcomes’ estimation, namely auditing has been conducted three times. In such a way, there is a double evaluation, coming from the EU side as a funding provider and GTZ as an implementing body. Mr. Harsdorf described the process of effectiveness’ measuring very carefully and comprehensively. There are three stages in measuring the results:

- 1) input
- 2) output
- 3) outcome

These three steps could be also referred to as quantifiable, verifiable and objective indicators. According to this logical chain, money, expert hours and allocation of funds for equipment are pertinent to the ‘input’ phase. This leads to the next level – ‘output’, namely expertise provided as a result of expert hours, equipment delivered once the money for it were allocated, books published, etc. “Input must always correspond to the output; it is also easier to measure the output than the outcome,” mentioned Mr. Harsdorf. “When measuring the outcome, we see, how we change the world, which use did our local partners make out of our resources,” continued the team leader of the project.¹²¹ An example of the ‘outcome’ phase could be the drafted laws for the Kyrgyz legislature. Thanks to the work of the project team, a new law has been drafted (on financial compensation if a person has been illegally arrested), concerning an important provision of human rights, which has been missing in the Kyrgyz legislation. This draft law is currently in the legislation process. Another achievement, serving, as an outcome would be the fact that 20 laws were checked on compliance with the human rights principles, as a result of which, 200 proposals for amendment were made.

Mr. Harsdorf exemplified the study tour to Europe of local decision makers as a model of this three-phase evaluation process. Money, invested into the trip is an ‘input,’ experience that the local experts gained is an ‘output’ and, finally, experience

¹¹⁹ Christoph von Harsdorf. Interview with the Team Leader of the EU Project in Kyrgyzstan. “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic.” Ministry of Justice, Bishkek: April 20th, 2010

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Ibid;

exchange and sharing, local conference organization and introduction of the new way of hiring young experts are all pertinent to the third phase of an ‘outcome.’¹²²

While conducting an interview with the head of the project and researching upon its work, I found the creation of an Association of European Constitutional Law to be an important outcome of it. Academics and students, interested in the Constitutional Law, are united within this Club to bring lawyers together under the same roof and serve as the ‘protectors of the Constitution.’¹²³ To my mind, this is extremely important to involve not only decision-makers and practitioners into the process of judicial system’s reformation, but also a wider range of the societal levels. Academics and student of the law faculties’ engagement can serve an important function in the future formation and functioning of the judicial system of Kyrgyzstan. This is a perfect example of how a project, directed at the institutional and political change of the government, can involve a broader spectrum of players, such as civil society. As Mr. Harsdorf noted, the project also aims to make an academic world prepared for making influence in the future by organizing open lectures for professors and students (making up 1000 participants) and stimulating cooperation among the universities from different regions of Kyrgyzstan. Worth mentioning is the fact that prior to the launching of project, almost no one knew how to interpret the Constitution. Moreover, a mechanism is being created to check the correspondence of all laws to constitutionality.¹²⁴

In terms of cooperating with the Kyrgyz Government, no difficulties have emerged during the project period, as project manager has noted. Government realized that things had to be changed. Although, the sudden governmental change after the horrible events of April 7, 2010 created many inconveniences and additional workload for the project, Mr. Harsdorf does not see it as a significant hindrance. The team leader noted, “Persons have, certainly, changed, but we did not base our work on persons, activities were rather directed to the institutions, such as Ministry of Justice, Supreme Court, etc.” Project Manager has just added that he expects from the new (or interim) government full commitment to human and civic rights.¹²⁵

The EU project “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic” is a vivid example of the European Commission’s attempts of democratization,

¹²² Christoph von Harsdorf. Interview with the Team Leader of the EU Project in Kyrgyzstan. “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic.” Ministry of Justice, Bishkek: April 20th, 2010

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Ibid;

undertaken in the Central Asian region. Rule of law, good governance are essential for a strong judiciary, which contributes to the essential for democracy division of power (the so-called system of checks and balances). Therefore, it would be just The qualitative indicators of the project's outcome testify of the positive impact it already had and will have, namely 283 judges (out of 400 total), 126 bailiffs (out of 160) and 106 Probation Service Officers were trained in the framework of the project.¹²⁶ Although the project period is limited only to 18 months, which is obviously not enough to reform a judicial system of a sovereign state, but the EU (in cooperation with GTZ) have done a significant impetus for the future action. Staff of the project is very concerned for sustainability of the project, but there is a positive hope due to the availability of all materials on the web cite for 2 years after project's termination, CDs and books. The most important aspect of sustainability is the presence of trainers, whom the project staff prepared for such positions. Mr. Harsdorf expressed his hope that "[they] expect these trainers to contribute to sustainability of the project."¹²⁷

From his previous experience of working in the International Organizations, Mr. Harsdorf singled out the European Union as one of the most effective democracy promoters by means of allocating its assistance worldwide. Responding to the question on the possible ways of increasing the development aid's effectiveness, team leader singled out the importance of small projects, "the smaller the project the better." Mr. Harsdorf is rather skeptical about the effectiveness of budget support since many governments have recently expressed their will to receive just this kind of aid, "practitioners like me, still believe that projects are important, because we employ people, train them to be a competent staff and they have a chance to practically learn through such projects."¹²⁸

This example demonstrates how the European Commission allocates its development assistance to increase democratic standards and to promote the rule of law and good governance in Central Asia. Looking at the case study of this terminating EU project in Kyrgyzstan it is to conclude that it has been successful. Draft laws and amendments proposed are probably not going to be implemented right away, especially in view of the recent political situation in Kyrgyzstan (after April 7, 2010), but the ground for change with people trained are present.

¹²⁶ "Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic" Project funded by the European Commission and Implemented by the GTZ. <http://eu-sjr.kg/index_eng.php>

¹²⁷ Christoph von Harsdorf. Interview with the Team Leader of the EU Project in Kyrgyzstan "Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic." Ministry of Justice, Bishkek: April 20th, 2010

¹²⁸ Ibid;

Manager of the “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic” Project believes in the effectiveness of the EU’s development aid, having made very positive final remarks, “EU projects belong to the best ones in the country. We made and burned a firework! Twenty five per cent of the work done will lead to positive changes. Good ideas were left and partners are here for the future cooperation.”¹²⁹

Among other projects, carried out in the Kyrgyz Republic by the European Commission is the “Parliamentary Reform Project” in Kyrgyzstan, co-financed and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), aiming at strengthening the national parliament and improving its outreach and transparency. This project is one of the biggest EC projects in Kyrgyzstan. This demonstrates how the European Commission cooperates with UNDP to democratize the Kyrgyz government, choosing the top-down approach.

b. Case Study #2: “From a woman-leader to woman-deputy in the Republic of Tajikistan”

In view of gender inequality within the Tajik society and lack of women participation in the political life of the country, the European Commission launched a project called “From a woman-leader to woman-deputy in the Republic of Tajikistan” in 2006. In cooperation with the local Tajik NGOs, European Commission allocated 85 644 Euro (which is 90 per cent of the total project’s budget) for the period of 2006 – 2008 in order to contribute to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment in the Central Asian country as one of the millennium development goals. Forty women from various regions of Tajikistan participated in the project as direct beneficiaries. These women participated in the conference “Participation of women in politics: problems and perspectives,” which was organized in Dushanbe with the purpose of advancing the role of women in the political life of the country. Conference participants raised the issue of gender equality, worked out the learning strategy on creation of political image for female candidates and their cooperation with the media. In the course of the project’s implementation, 35 media materials were published on the major topic.¹³⁰

Regarding the outcome of the EC project, one of the major achievements was the Tajik NGOs’ entry into the Asian- Pacific Forum of Women. The number of

¹²⁹ Christoph von Harsdorf. Interview with the Team Leader of the EU Project in Kyrgyzstan “Support to Judiciary Reform in the Kyrgyz Republic.” Ministry of Justice, Bishkek: April 20th, 2010

¹³⁰ [European Commission]. “From a woman-leader to woman-deputy in the Republic of Tajikistan.” Gender Equality. EuropeAid. <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/tajikistan_gender-equality_en.pdf>;

women active in the political institutions of the country has also increased. For instance, the number of women-deputies in the Tajik parliament has increased by ten percent in 2007.¹³¹ With the joint efforts of the project participants, local NGOs and independent media, a long-term campaign of support for female political leaders will be provided by means of their created coalition.¹³²

Certainly, this project can be considered successful in promoting democracy and contributing to the human rights' observation within a country. First, it has contributed to the activation of women in the political life of Tajikistan, which is an essential indicator of a democratic society. Secondly, gender equality is one of the main basic human rights, and its promotion is essential for democratic functioning of a country.

Other EC projects carried out in Tajikistan aim at promotion of the rights of children with disabilities, socialization of children, etc. In the framework of such projects, the EC mostly cooperates with the local NGOs, which is, certainly, beneficial for the efficiency of the outcome since local NGOs are directly involved in the process of implementation and can remain active in the field upon projects' completion. Similar to the case of Kyrgyzstan, there are bigger projects, which are co-implemented by the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Namely, under the 'Peace and capacity building,' the two large world donors have been implementing the project "Making Tajik-Afghan border secure" with the purpose of empowering the Tajik border guarding capability. During the project period from 2001-2010, the EC has contributed € 25.7 million.¹³³ This example is just to demonstrate the fact that the European Commission cooperates in realization of large-scale projects with the other large international donors of development aid in the region. In my view, this is a positive fact, because by means of joint efforts, they can make their policies more coherent and financial contributions more considerable for the sake of effectiveness.

c. Approach of the European Commission towards democratic development in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: larger playing field in the two states

¹³¹ [European Commission]. "From a woman-leader to woman-deputy in the Republic of Tajikistan." Gender Equality. EuropeAid. <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/tajikistan_gender-equality_en.pdf>

¹³² Ibid

¹³³ [European Commission]. "Making Tajik-Afghan border secure" Peace and Capacity Building. EuropeAid. <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/tajikistan_peace-capacity-building_en.pdf>;

When looking at the two case studies of the EC projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, one can draw a conclusion that European Union is contributing to the improvement of democratic standards gradually by directing the local governments towards the positive changes. These two case studies can hardly be compared in terms of their effectiveness due to the amount of funds' allocation (€ 2, 5 million vs. € 85 644) and availability of the information. In case of the judiciary reform project in Kyrgyzstan, the first-hand experience shared by Mr. Harsdorf during the interview was very valuable when trying to evaluate objectively the effectiveness of this project. Because of the lack of expert interview from the Tajik side, it is rather difficult to measure the outcome of EC projects in this state since professional opinion of those directly involved is always complimentary to the official information and reports.

Based on the conducted research, my impression is that many projects of the European Commission are directed towards the improvement of democratic standards in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. However, as has already been mentioned, in my view, smaller EC projects are co-financed with the local NGOs in Tajikistan as opposed to Kyrgyzstan, where mostly large-scale projects are carried out. A possible assumption for this could be a greater need to empower and activate the civil society in Tajikistan. As it can be inferred from the chapter on the history of democratic development of these two Central Asian countries, civil society in Kyrgyzstan was developed in a rather democratic way during Akaev's regime as opposed to the still tangible consequences of the civil war in Tajikistan. It became also evident to me that the European Commission has a special attitude in terms of its development aid towards Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan despite the peculiar approaches towards both of them. Such a peculiarity is essential, to my mind, since each country is special in its own way, and requires an individual approach.

The statement that Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are on the top agenda of the European Commission for the nearest future testifies the fact that these two states are the priority budget recipients in the framework of the bilateral cooperation for the period of 2011-2013.

Tajikistan will be the main aid recipient, followed by the Kyrgyz Republic. There are three priority areas for the European Commission to work on, namely, a) social protection, b) education and c) rule of law and good governance.¹³⁴ Priority areas in Kyrgyzstan for this period are education reform, social protection, judicial

¹³⁴ Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

reform and fight against corruption, while in Tajikistan – social protection, health and Private sector Development.¹³⁵ Among all these areas, EC pays a special attention to education through its Education Initiative. Already since 2010, funding for such programs as TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus has doubled in Central Asia. During 2011-2013, the concept of supporting education enhances education reform, student and professor exchanges and developing the ‘human capital’ – training of officials, etc.¹³⁶

In such a way, this fact supports my argument that there is potentially larger playing field for the European Union in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The EC is willing to invest into democratization by means of improving social protection, reforming judicial systems, promoting good governance and, most importantly – education. Making systematic contributions into all these priority areas, the EC will be able to improve the democratic standards in Central Asian countries. This could be referred to as a ‘soft power’ the EU uses to democratize the Central Asian region. Especially, investments into education are of vital importance since it is a long-term ‘asset’ into the future potential of the countries; it changes the mindset of young people cultivating democratic values and principles and prepares worthy professionals, political leaders and partners.

PART III

I. Suggestions on how to increase effectiveness of the development aid in promoting democracy

As it has been demonstrated throughout the paper, it is not an easy task to promote democracy in the developing countries, especially under the tangible influence of such factors as economic underdevelopment, communist ideology and soviet mentality, complex geopolitical situation, etc. The presented case studies testify that the European Commission is undertaking many efforts to improve the democratic performance in Central Asian countries by means of improving good governance, rule of law, social protection and promoting the value of basic human rights. Despite the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of the development aid, it is obvious that incrementally this assistance is contributing to the improvement of democratic

¹³⁵ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. “EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?” EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>>

¹³⁶ Ibid;

standards in Central Asia. In view of the fact that the ‘EU-Central Asia Strategy’ embodies many aspects for its activity in this region ranging from economic development, energy security to democratization and environmental issues, the funds available for all these spheres (€750 million over 7 years) are arguably not sufficient in order to thoroughly work on these issues and achieve efficient results. Because of that, my argument is that the EU’s development assistance would contribute more considerably towards democratization and would be more effective if the European Commission’s approach would be slightly transformed. Namely, EU’s assistance should be structured in a rather selective manner on a conditional basis, become more oriented on civil society, while education should be given a priority.

a. Selectivity: more investments into the cultural and educational exchange

Limited funds, lack of EU staff on the field and a wide spectrum of activities, planned by the European Commission in the Central Asian region are not likely to have considerable impact in making positive transformations. Therefore, for the sake of effectiveness of the development aid, in my view, it would be reasonable for the European Commission to define priority areas and allocate the available funds on these selected spheres. Despite the expressed will of the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to receive budget support and concentrate on economic areas, building a civil society should be prioritized. Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline argue that if the EU will try to put all the areas of the “EU-Central Asia Strategy” at the center of its attention, “it risks focusing on all while achieving very little.”¹³⁷ I support the scholars’ argument that the EU’s asset in Central Asia lies in the field of education, the area, possessing rich potential and is worth doing investments.¹³⁸

Young generation constitutes a large part of the Central Asian population, as has been presented previously in the paper, and the EU should consider it a worthy potential to develop in a long run. In order to change the mentality of Central Asian people, democratic ideas and values should be promoted. The currently existing cultural and educational exchanges (TEMPUS, Erasmus Mundus), which are available not only for students, but also for professors, as the representatives of an older generation, are a good indicator of a positive change. By means of exchanging democratic ideas, gaining valuable intercultural experience and receiving high-quality

¹³⁷ Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. “EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?” EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>,> p. 14

¹³⁸ Ibid;

education during the exchange programs of the EU, Central Asian citizens can make a considerable contribution into the democratic development of their home countries.

Improving education does not only mean engaging young students and professors into exchange programs, but also increasing the quality of national education and training professionals locally. Education reforms that the EU envisages in its new Initiative 2011-2013 are essential for the process of democracy building. However, education reforms are planned only in Kyrgyzstan for the above-indicated period, and are not that much considered in Tajikistan. Popular high-quality education stimulates the emergence of the middle class, increases the level of tolerance and mutual respect within the society and leads to higher political participation. Such a gradual (although long-term) process of development leads to democratization, which is likely to be sustainable since people are the core of any country and government.

With the introduction of its new 2011-2013 Initiative, the European Union has already realized the need for defining of the priority areas for its cooperation with Central Asia in granting development assistance. This is a sign of the EU's attempt to make its aid more selective and need-oriented. The 'EU-Central Asia Strategy' provides for a strengthened approach of the development assistance, which aims to develop regional cooperation in Central Asia, including granting development assistance based on the regional needs and goals. However, I think that up to this moment it reveals that bilateral assistance remains relevant in view of each Central Asian country's peculiarity. In its Initiative, the EC has already defined priority areas for future assistance, which were presented previously, based on the experience gained.

In such a way, increasing funding for the defined priority areas on the expense of less urgent ones in line with the enhanced monitoring by the EC and cooperation with the other foreign partners in the area would contribute to the increase of effectiveness of the EU's development aid. Mr. Heidelberg noted that "through better donor coordination and more intensive dialogue with the government on the key areas" development aid would achieve higher level of effectiveness.¹³⁹

b. Conditionality

The issues of Central Asian governments' commitment, transparency and efficiency remain on the table. Even if the European Commission defines the priority areas for its future assistance, the risk of this development assistance being ineffective

¹³⁹ Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

still exists. In the course of conducting the present research, I associate myself with the argument of Gordon Crawford that the process of democratization by means of the development assistance should be complementary with the internal efforts and significant inputs of the local governments. External actors (foreign donors) alone are not able to bring about democracy into the country “from without” by means of its development aid, therefore, efforts should be coming “from within” as well.¹⁴⁰

With that in mind, the European Commission should stimulate the governments to put many efforts for the sake of successful projects’ implementation and making them effective. Referring to the Soviet past of the Central Asian countries again, political leaders are not always willing to cooperate with the external donors, because there is low political participation of people, which gives the political elites more power in the multivector foreign policy formation and does not oblige them to be fully committed to any of the partners. Corruption is another issue of tremendous significance to be considered when granting the development assistance. This fact is possibly one of the reasons that some Central Asian governments prefer to receive budget support from the EU rather than financial assistance for specific projects.

An effective way to stimulate the governments for compliance and increase the effectiveness of its assistance is conditionality. In the first part of the paper, this concept has been presented as the tool the EU uses in order to effectively promote its main principles of liberty, democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, while “seek[ing] to develop and consolidate commitment to these values in partner countries and regions through dialogue and cooperation.”¹⁴¹

Although there are many external actors in Central Asian countries, which gives some political elites a chance to use their presence for their benefit of manipulation, governments are still interested in receiving the donor assistance. Especially economically poor states, e.g. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, are interested in receiving any possible support coming from the international community. In order to increase the effectiveness of this aid, the European Commission should make its aid conditional on good governance, observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, etc.

¹⁴⁰ Gordon Crawford. “Promoting Democracy From Without – Learning From Within (Part I-II)” pp. 77 – 98, pp. 1-19

¹⁴¹ Art.3(1), Regulation (EC) No 1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006;

Upon projects' completion, it would be reasonable to make the results of the Commission's and independent group of experts' evaluations accessible to the public in order to provide that as a lesson to potential grant recipients and indicate the drawbacks of the government. Making such evaluation public, would become a stimulus for the governments to perform better in implementing projects. In case of successful project completion and achieving the results set, the Commission should increase future funds allocation for a specific sector within the government. Contrary to the positive conditionality, negative 'strings' are rather difficult to apply in case of the Central Asian region. For instance, in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, having limited trade relations with the EU, not having significant economic ties and not receiving tremendous sums from the EU, negative conditionality would be difficult to apply. Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline believe that "[...] all European funds pulled together do have the size that gives Europe the opportunity of making a positive impact on Central Asian societies and creating some leverage, while strengthening its image in the region."¹⁴² In such a way, I suppose that positive conditionality would have a driving effect towards effectiveness of the development aid, while negative could be applied sometimes, especially in cases of providing budget support. In my view, this instrument is essential in granting development aid to Central Asian countries.

c. Orientation on civil society (Non-Governmental sector)

Democratization is directly linked with civil society. Observation of human rights, guaranteeing the rule of law and increasing the level of political participation – population is involved in each one of these. Therefore, civil society's involvement into the process of democratization is essential. Graeme Gill, the political science scholar, defines civil society as “a society in which there are autonomous groups which aggregate the views and activities of individuals and which act to promote and defend the interests of those people, including against the state,”¹⁴³ and noting that it “fundamental for the functioning of an effective democracy.”¹⁴⁴

In order to build a strong and politically active civil society, Non-Governmental organizations' engagement into the democratization process is vital.

¹⁴² Jos Boonstra and Hale Jacqueline. “EU Assistance to Central Asia: Back to the Drawing Board?” EUCAM Working Paper # 8. January 25th, 2010. <<http://www.ceps.be/book/eu-assistance-central-asia-back-drawing-board>> p. 16

¹⁴³ Graeme Gill. “Democratization: Economic Prerequisites?” in: *The Dynamics of Democratization. Elites, Civil Society and the Transition Process*. USA: 2000. p.5

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 7;

NGOs serve as a bridge between civil society and government, providing access to local institutions and spreading awareness on civic rights among the population. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Central Asian countries yet since not so many ones enjoy freedom, access to the governmental issues and cannot demonstrate their personal competence sometimes.

Delegations of the European Union in Central Asia find the role of civil society and NGOs in the process of democratization very important, but in most cases still tend to finance the bigger projects, dealing directly with the governments. There are a few difficulties connected with funding small NGOs in Central Asia, which Mr. Heidelbach has pointed out (regarding the case of Kyrgyzstan). Bigger projects are being supported due to the organizational staff and questioning credibility of small NGOs. The minimum sum allocated for project realization constitutes 50 thousand Euros and the average period of implementation is two years. The procedure of project monitoring and results evaluation is the same for both the big and small projects. Because of the limited staff of the EU Delegations, it is difficult to manage a large amount of small projects. Some small NGOs have not earned the reputation of being credible yet and the EU is lacking expertise on the ground concerning this issue, which prevents the EU Delegations from funding small projects of NGOs.¹⁴⁵

Complementary to the above-mentioned factors, the group of independent experts, ECORYS, during evaluation of the EC's democracy building programme in Central Asia has singled out the bureaucratic procedure of writing grant proposals and requirement for the NGOs co-financing as the ones, constituting challenges for funding small projects of NGOs.¹⁴⁶ First, grant proposals should be submitted in English, a challenging requirement for some NGOs. Second, the lengthy and tiresome paper work when applying for EC's financing and upon the project completion, create an obstacle for NGOs. Finally, individual contribution of NGO into the project is a precondition for financing a project. Since NGOs are non-profit organizations and mainly do not have any income from their work, making a financial contribution into the project could be challenging.

Richard Youngs considers funding NGOs as a means of democratic institution building and creation of a coercive system of cooperation between government and

¹⁴⁵ Olaf Heidelbach. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

¹⁴⁶ [ECORYS Nederland BV] "Democracy Building in Central Asia (1996-2006)." Evaluation of the European Commission's democracy building programme in Central Asia; Draft Report; pp. 1 – 103; Rotterdam, April 7th, 2010;

civil society. Independent mass media, political activists and opposition – all belong to the civil society and can foster the process of democratization, making it sustainable in the end.¹⁴⁷ NGOs networks are not well established in Central Asia yet, because this was not practiced during the time of the Soviet Union. Charles Buxton, a specialist on NGOs work in Central Asia, realizing the importance of the civic activism at the grassroots' level in advancing democracies, expresses optimism about the potential development of NGOs in Central Asia. Based on his research and findings Buxton is convinced in that “[g]eopolitical issues and choices will remain important for the fragile states of Central Asia and major civil society campaigns will inevitably have to grapple with them.”¹⁴⁸ In such a way, there is a potential for the strong civil society in Central Asia, and there is room for the EU to invest into it by means of supporting NGOs' projects.

Michael McFaul, a Special Assistant to the U.S. President, Barack Obama and Senior Director for Russian and Central Affairs at the National Security Council emphasized the importance of engaging civil society in line with the U.S. efforts of spreading democracy in Kyrgyzstan. Mr. McFaul explained the policy of “dual track engagement” that the Obama administration uses in advancing democracies abroad. This is the policy of direct engagement with people, civil society, regardless of the U.S. relations with the local governments. “We support independent institutions, learning institutions when trying to promote dedication to the universal values of democracy.”¹⁴⁹ A Special Assistant to the U.S. President also stressed that the best tool of the U.S. “in advancing democracies abroad is connecting people directly to American people, American institutions and civil society to demonstrate what these universal values are.”¹⁵⁰ U.S. administration connects people by means of student and professor exchanges, giving lectures to the student audiences, meeting media representatives and political activists.

Another benefit of building a strong civil society is an economic advantage that the country gains because of investing into democratic institutions. Mr. McFaul expressed disagreement on behalf of the U.S. government in the general assumption

¹⁴⁷ Richard Youngs. “European Approaches to Democracy Assistance: Learning the Right Lessons?” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 1. Feb 2003, pp. 127-138. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993634>>

¹⁴⁸ Charles Buxton. “NGO networks in Central Asia and global civil society: potentials and limitations.” *Central Asian Survey*. 28:1. 2009. p. 56 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02634930902775129>>

¹⁴⁹ Michael McFaul. Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian and Central Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. Address “U.S. Support for Democracy in Kyrgyzstan.” AUCA: May 6, 2010. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

¹⁵⁰ Ibid;

that economic development is a precondition for democratization, “It goes both ways, and especially in countries, which don’t have oil and gas.” The U.S. is trying to support the creation of stable legal institutions, democratic institutions and the rule of law so that businesspersons would not be afraid of investing into their business and not being protected under the law. Besides, while investing into formation of the strong democratic institutions, external donors invest into fighting corruption. Independent media, political opposition, strong parliament, independent courts – all these institutions are able to make an impact in eradicating corruption.¹⁵¹ (An example of a ‘watchdog function’ of the media comes to my mind). “None of this assistance would matter until corruption is eradicated,” stated Mr. McFaul.¹⁵²

In my view, this is a right approach of the United States towards building democracies in Central Asia. Student exchanges and professors’ visits to the U.S. play an important role in building a strong civil society, appreciating democratic ideas and human rights values. Investing into national education and educational exchange promotes tolerance, which is essential for multicultural societies of CA, brings new ideas into democratizing societies and gives these young people a chance to make a difference in their countries. Increasing investments particularly into this sector would allow the EU to increase the effectiveness of its development aid in the long run. Supporting NGOs with development assistance would contribute to the formation of independent democratic institutions in Central Asia, and consequently, lead to the economic growth (although it can be very limited).

There are challenges the EU is facing in supporting NGOs (civil society) today, but the Commission is still trying to establish contacts with local NGOs and offer opportunities for funding their projects. As it has been demonstrated in the case study#2, some EC projects in Tajikistan are carried out in cooperation with NGOs or solely by the non-governmental sector. For instance, supporting disabled children, schoolchildren and women to foster and protect their basic human rights, making them aware thereof. There have been cases in Tajikistan when public institutions were referring to the local NGO representatives for advice. Thus, there are evident attempts of fostering civil society’s involvement into the process of democratization by means of supporting NGOs’ projects. Nevertheless, the EC should fund more projects of a

¹⁵¹ Michael McFaul. Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russian and Central Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. Address “U.S. Support for Democracy in Kyrgyzstan.” AUCA: May 6, 2010. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

¹⁵² Ibid;

small size in Central Asia in order to increase the effectiveness of its development assistance. Especially effective this would be in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, relatively poor countries, which are more flexible for reforms and could be fostered by the influence of the civil society.

Mr. Heidelberg emphasized the EU Delegation's willingness to support and work with NGOs in the nearest future since after the Lisbon Treaty entered into force (Dec. 1, 2009) the number of staff in the Delegations is expected to increase.¹⁵³ More room for NGOs' involvement is given in the framework of the 2011-2013 Initiative. Therefore, there is optimism in that civil society of Central Asia is likely to become strong and active, contributing to the effective democratization of these countries.

Conclusion:

The role of the European Union in Central Asia is becoming more significant in view of the increase of the amount of funds available within the framework of EU-Central Asia Strategy and new 2011-2013 Initiative. Internal enhancement within the European Union structure, namely entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (Dec 1, 2009), because of which the number of staff in the EU Delegations will increase, contributes to its significance and visibility in Central Asia. Throughout the paper, weaknesses in democratic performance of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were pointed out and it became evident that democratization process is not an easy one.

Five factors, compounding the ambiguity of the effectiveness of the European Union's development aid were presented. First, the political development of Central Asian countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union was different and not always steady towards the positive path. Second, the instability of political development and difficulty in perception of democratic values can be explained by the influence of the Soviet past: communist ideology of politicians and soviet mentality of the older generation. Third, the economic interest in energy resources of the EU in Central Asia could arguably undermine the initial purpose of the world donor's engagement in the region – advancing democracy and improving the universal values. Fourth, the unstable and sluggish democratic development in Central Asian states is influenced by the complex geopolitical situation and presence of several external actors in the

¹⁵³ Olaf Heidelberg. Interview with the Project Manager of the EU Delegation to Kyrgyzstan. March 23rd, 2010, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan;

region. Finding themselves among the influence of authoritarian and democratic world powers, Central Asian elites often struggle to choose one firm path of development. The last, but not least is the economic underdevelopment of Central Asian countries, namely in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which could possibly impede the process of democratization in these states.

In the course of this research, these factors revealed to have a limited impact on democracy promotion in the region since arguments were presented to disprove their long-term influence on the effectiveness of the development aid. The given case studies of the successful EC projects prove that the EU is on the right path of advancing democracy promotion in Central Asia. The judiciary reform project has already contributed to the improvement of democratic standards in the Kyrgyz Republic and is likely to have its impact despite the poor overall performance in this country. The EC project empowering women has also made an impact on the promotion of basic human rights in Tajikistan and democratization as well by increasing the number of female deputies in the government.

The comprehensive and strengthened approach of the 'EU-Central Asia Strategy' encompasses a very wide spectrum of activities to be improved in Central Asia. The goals of the Strategy start to be practically implemented while new challenges arise and the approach of granting assistance should be slightly reconsidered. However, this is a usual phenomenon to happen since practically things work differently than theoretically, especially in view of each state's peculiarity.

In order to make the development aid more effective, EU's assistance should become more selective, conditional and civil society-oriented. Making education a priority area, investing into cultural and educational exchanges, making aid conditional on good governance, rule of law and human rights' observation, and building closer links with civil society by financing small projects of NGOs would increase the effectiveness of the EU's development assistance in the long-run and have a positive impact on democratic performance. Economically poor countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, chosen as the case studies for this research, which do not possess energy resources, provide a larger room for EU's activity on advancing democracy. The EU can engage more actively with the civil society in these countries and invest into education reforms and cultural exchange.

In such a way, in the course of the research, my hypothesis that the EU is gradually contributing to the improvement of democratic standards in Central Asia

has proved to be right. The European Union is gradually establishing a firm ground for its action in the region, becoming more visible because of its activities and increasing the amount of funds available for advancing democracy in Central Asia. If the European Union will direct its assistance to the development of democratic impulses in the region by prioritizing investments into the independent media, strong civil society, independent democratic institutions and high quality education, the democratic performance of CA countries will significantly increase and will be sustainable. Civil society representatives and governmental institutions should be both involved in the process of EC projects' implementation to make the aid more efficient.

Suggestions for future research

My suggestion for future research is to conduct a rather practical inquiry on possible ways on how the European Union can engage closer with the civil society of Central Asian countries for the sake of advancing democratic development. Civil society of Central Asia constitutes a high potential for the future sustainable democracies in this region. Granting foreign assistance to developing countries is important, but the importance of internal compliance and local governments' cooperation should not be forgotten since the external assistance and activities alone would not matter without internal processes taking place simultaneously. Democratization is an internal process, which can only be advanced with the help of foreign assistance, but not externally established from a scratch. Therefore, ways of engaging civil society, democratic institutions and NGOs into the democracy building and advancing process and their close cooperation with the European Commission (as an external donor) in such an attempt should be further researched.

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