

  
**13** NEW INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

Yann ALIX, Kuralay I. BAIZAKOVA,  
Pierre CHABAL (eds.)

**EVOLVING REGIONAL VALUES  
AND MOBILITIES  
IN GLOBAL CONTEXTS**

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**THE EMERGENCE OF NEW  
(EUR)ASIAN REGIONS AND  
DIALOGUES WITH EUROPE**

  
**PETER LANG**



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## **The European Union's New Strategy Towards Central Asia: priorities and responses to latest challenges**

KURALAY BAIZAKOVA AND ASSIYA KUZEMBAEVA

Cooperation between Central Asian (CA) countries and the European Union (EU) has developed through several phases. The current period aims to consolidate and expand the EU's position in CA and the Caspian region. The EU has already developed its vision of the future of CA as a region that has potential to become a bulwark against drug-trafficking, illegal migration and religious extremism.

From the early 1990s, the EU has been present in CA and established diplomatic relations with all CA countries, but at first without a clear strategy. The legal basis for cooperation was laid down in 1995–1996 with the signing of the *Partnership and Cooperation Agreements*. Such model agreements were concluded with all CA countries, after which the EU began preparing of a concept on relations with the new independent states of CA. Comparatively favourable economic and political prerequisites and contexts then contributed to launch a full-fledged cooperation.

The first years of cooperation focused on trade, investment and the development of democratic institutions. From 2002 onwards, it gradually covered other important areas, such as energy, transport, as well as justice, the rule of law and security issues. This chapter details the EU Strategy for Central Asia 2007–2013 (1), the process of updating the EU strategy in Central Asia (2) and the essential characteristics of this updated EU strategy in CA (3) before it places it in the context of the CA geopolitical situation (4) that is opening further perspectives (5).