



Edited by Mirzokhid Rakhimov, Akram Umarov and Gulnoza Ismailova

# Central Asia and European Union: In Search of Sustainability



The University of World Economy and Diplomacy  
Institute for Advanced  
International Studies



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# **Central Asia and European Union: In Search of Sustainability**

**Edited by Mirzokhid Rakhimov, Akram Umarov and  
Gulnoza Ismailova**

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The book includes research on the theory and practice of contemporary relations between Central Asia and the European Union, carried out within the framework of the project of the UWED Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence for European Studies of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. The monograph includes sections of the authors of their countries in the region and examines the issues of comparative studies of regionalism, the EU policy towards Central Asia, the achievements and shortcomings of the European Union's strategy towards the region, the dynamics of interstate economic, cultural and humanitarian relations, challenges and threats to relations. The book is intended for researchers and students, who are interested in relations between the European Union and the countries of Central Asia, as well as interdisciplinary aspects of contemporary international and interregional relations.

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## CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	
<i>Sodyq Safoev</i>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1. EU policy in Central Asia: a vortex of balances or a tightrope walker on the rope</b>	
<i>Khaydarali Yunusov</i>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. On the Applicability of the Experience and Model of European Integration in Central Asia</b>	
<i>Farhod Tolipov</i>	<b>26</b>
<b>3. European Union - Central Asia: shaping resilience and capacity building</b>	
<i>Ulugbek Hasanov</i>	<b>45</b>
<b>4. The European Union Strategy on Central Asia</b>	
<i>Nargiza Sodikova</i>	<b>69</b>
<b>5. Central Asia and European Union in the context of diversity extra regional multilateral formats in Eurasia</b>	
<i>Mirzokhid Rakhimov</i>	<b>86</b>
<b>6. Economic relations between the countries of Central Asia and the European Union</b>	
<i>Alexey Stokov, Vladimir Paramonov</i>	<b>102</b>
<b>7. Multilingualism and multiculturalism issue in European Union and Central Asia</b>	
<i>Saida Ixanova, Saniya Nurdavletova</i>	<b>130</b>
<b>8. Environmental dimension in relations of European Union and Central Asia</b>	

<i>Mara Gubaydillina</i>	149
<b>9. EU-CA cooperation in the field of environment, climate change and water resources</b>	
<i>Zhansaule Zharmakhanova</i>	181
<b>10. Soft and smart power issues in the EU-CA relations</b>	
<i>Firdavs Kobilov, Mirzokhid Rakhimov</i>	199
<b>11. Approaches of the Central Asian countries, the EU and leading external and regional players to Afghanistan after the Taliban came to power</b>	
<i>Rustam Makhmudov</i>	221
<b>12. Security issues in the EU-Central Asia Relations</b>	
<i>Andrey Chebotarev</i>	266
<b>13. Central Asian nations and France</b>	
<i>Yulduz Kushanova</i>	287
<b>List of contributions</b>	307

## **8.Environmental dimension in relations of European Union and Central Asia**

*Mara Gubaydillina*

### ***Introduction***

The new Strategy of the European Union for Central Asia, adopted in 2019, contains the environmental dimension as a separate area of cooperation between the EU and the Central Asian states. The goal of implementing the EU environmental policy is to establish partnerships with the countries of Central Asia, improve economic, social, fiscal and environmental sustainability in Central Asia. The environmental focus of the Strategy covers issues related to the climate agenda, water resources, uranium mines, and biodiversity protection. The European Union extends its experience to the regions of Eurasia, guided by the basic principles and objectives of the EU environmental policy. The bilateral approach of the regional strategy of partnership between the EU and Central Asia to reduce environmental threats and the application of the effective experience of Europe can reasonably be considered a promising direction of policy for the protection of the environment and climate. The countries of the Central Asian region are involved in the global UN policy on SDGs and the European “Green Deal” within the framework of the new Strategy for Central Asia 2019 through the implementation of the CAREC, EECCA, WECOOP projects; "EU-Central Asia Platform for Cooperation in the Field of Environment and Water Resources", CAWEP, "Green Bridge" initiatives; the CAIEF, GEWR forums together with UNDP, OECD, COP26 and under the financial support of the EIB, EBRD, etc.

### ***New Strategy and Ecological Motivation for EU-CA Rapprochement***

The new European Union Strategy for Central Asia 2019 aims to “create a partnership for sustainable communication with the countries of Central Asia in order to promote quality infrastructure and improve economic, social, fiscal and environmental sustainability in Central

Asia”<sup>135</sup>. The countries of the region were again given an incentive to adapt the region to climate change and take measures to improve the environment, eliminate the remaining uranium mines, protect biodiversity, water resources<sup>136</sup>.

The key documents of the EU consistently emphasize the relationship between the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations and the solution of trade, economic, financial and social problems in Central Asia<sup>137</sup>. The European Union, as one of the active initiators and conductors of the environmental transformation of the world, has assumed responsibility for supporting measures to environmentalization of the Central Asian region. Let us note the consistency of the environmental course taken by the Strategy, which resulted in the experience of interaction between the EU and Central Asia in this area, in particular, in the course of implementing projects of the Regional Environmental Centre of Central Asia (CAREC)<sup>138</sup>. All Central Asian states, the European Commission (EC) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) are CAREC members and founders.

At the same time, there are a number of difficulties in achieving the SDGs in the CA countries, challenges related to the insufficient effectiveness of EU environmental projects and the fact that “the most vulnerable countries bear the main burden of the current problems that impede the achievement of sustainable development goals”<sup>139</sup>. According

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<sup>135</sup> Council conclusions on the New Strategy on central Asia (Foreign Affairs) on 17 June 2019. General Secretariat of the Council. Council of the European Union, Brussels, 17 June 2019 (OR.en) 10221/19. – 7 p. URL: [<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39778/st10221-en19.pdf>]

<sup>136</sup> EU – Central Asia Relations, factsheet. European External Action Service. Bruxelles, 31/10/2017. URL: [[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2.factsheet\\_on\\_eu-central\\_asia\\_relations.nov\\_.18.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2.factsheet_on_eu-central_asia_relations.nov_.18.pdf)];

[[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet\\_centralasia\\_2019.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet_centralasia_2019.pdf)]

<sup>137</sup> The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Brussels, 15.5.2019 JOIN (2019) 9 final. URL: [[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint\\_communication\\_-\\_the\\_eu\\_and\\_central\\_asia\\_-\\_new\\_opportunities\\_for\\_a\\_stronger\\_partnership.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/joint_communication_-_the_eu_and_central_asia_-_new_opportunities_for_a_stronger_partnership.pdf)]

<sup>138</sup> The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) // CARECECO: [<https://www.carececo.org/main/ckh/publications/carec-newsletter-6-17-2019/>]

<sup>139</sup> Доклад Генерального секретаря. Специальное издание: ход достижения целей в области устойчивого развития (26 июля 2018 – 24 июля 2019). E/2019/68. ООН. ЭКОСОС, 08/05/2019: URL: [<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2019/secretary-general-sdg-report-2019--RU.pdf>]