

Antonio Alonso Marcos

CEU San Pablo University, Madrid, Spain  
(E-mail: aalonso@ceu.es)

---

## The new EU Strategy for CA (2019): two players, one goal

---

**Abstract.** *Central Asian States and EU signed in Bishkek a new EU Strategy for CA. It was a document based on previous dialogue between Brussels and the Central Asian countries. The EU has supported this region since the times of the independence, always focus on energy and security. Although there was a Strategy in 2007, that was improved with the next one, the New EU Strategy for CA (2019). This document set three interconnected and mutually reinforcing priorities: Partnering for Resilience, Partnering for Prosperity and Working Better Together. Sometimes, the EU has been accused of developing a kind of neo-colonialism, but according to the new Strategy it is obvious that the main goal is to help those States to find their own path of development and stability for themselves.*

**Key words:** *Central Asia, European Union, New EU Strategy for CA.*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32523/2616-6887/2020-133-4-14-29>

Received: 02.11.2020/ Approved: 25.12.2020

---

**EU and Central Asia: 25 years of good relations.** The EU's relations with Central Asia are influenced, first, by an objective fact that is the great distance that separates them: from Brussels to Tashkent there are around 6,000 km, and from the Romanian coasts of the western bank of the Black Sea to the Kazakh coasts of the eastern bank of the Caspian Sea there are about 2,000 km. It is therefore clear that European Union and Central Asia are not neighbours in strictu sensu. However, the EU always seeks to establish and maintain good relations with third countries; first, with its closest neighbourhood (hence the interest in the European Neighbourhood Policy, either in its Mediterranean version or in that of the Eastern Partnership) and later with its immediate abroad, even if they are not likeminded.

Furthermore, the mass of land that separates these two players (id est, Turkey, the Caucasus, Syria, Iraq and Iran) is not the most stable and peaceful place on Earth. Therefore, they are, a priori, historically, and geographically Europe

and Central Asia were far away. As a result, not many people in Europe are interested on what is going on in this region and there are few incentives for Europeans to establish serious contact with Central Asian partners, since they are not far enough away to ignore them, but they are not close enough to be affected by what happens there. This situation is starting to change since the beginning of 21st century.

This first impression is easily dissolved by studying the history and evolution of Central Asia and by closely following current events in that region. There, numerous variables are handled that end up affecting, sooner or later, European countries. To give just one clarifying example, the US presence in the area is explained by its interest in intervening in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks and by the abundant energy/natural resources in some of those countries. These are at least the most obvious and confessable interests. Perhaps these two should be joined in the attempt to export the model of representative

liberal democracy to Kyrgyzstan, an experiment that has not fully come to fruition as planned, to offer a different model of doing politics to a region accustomed to command authoritarianism of the chiefs of the tribes and clans, the khans, the tsars or the comrades First Secretaries of the Party.

Hand in hand with the North American superpower, the European states supported that intervention with the full awareness that a large part of our security depended on what happened there, following the words of the late Défense Minister José Antonio Alonso in 2007:

“We are in all these places to help the populations, to provide the necessary security in reconstruction work, to protect human rights, to facilitate the emergence of decent and viable civil societies and to help the extension of authority of the States, in places where all these essential elements are missing or precarious. In this way, by tackling problems at source, with legitimate purposes, in solidarity and under the protection of international law, we are contributing effectively to defence and security, not only in strict conflict zones. The work that we do together with many other countries in those places also contributes, given the eminent and progressive global conformation of the world in which we live, to the security and stability of the entire planet” [1].

A year later, he similarly stated that members of the Army achieve “the ends for which they work: In Spain, the exercise of rights, freedoms and the well-being of Spaniards; outside our borders, those established by the foreign policy of the State, clearly oriented towards security and peace in the world, which is everyone’s and therefore also ours” [1; P. 2].

Spain was the first European country to recognize the independence of all five Central Asian Countries. King Juan Carlos I had a good relationship with former communist leaders of the Soviet Union, especially with Gorbachov, what made much easier to establish those diplomatic relationships, to help the new independent states in their new era. One might wonder, then, what exactly the EU is looking for in Central Asia? Why did it establish contact with those republics shortly after becoming independent? Why is there

a big department of the European Commission dedicated to improving relationships with those countries? What agreements have been reached with them?

Besides that, it is also important to know what Central Asians expect from the EU. Furthermore, the opportunity or usefulness of an EU Foreign Service in that area should be questioned, bearing in mind that, at least at present, the national interests of the member states still weigh too heavily. The general ignorance in Europe of what the member states do in that region under the EU umbrella could be overcome simply by releasing information about all the activities the Union carry out and what their successes have been. Another problem is the logic of competition, still alive in member states governments. The deeper one delves into the reality of this region, the more evident it becomes to what extent the EU is worth getting involved in Central Asian development.

**The first steps.** When the Soviet Union fell (December 1991), Spain was one of the first European countries to establish formal diplomatic relations with the five Central Asian republics in 1992. Shortly thereafter, in November 1994, the European Commission established the first delegation in the region in the then capital of Kazakhstan, Alma Ata. Some years later, Baltic republics started the process to access to EU (full members since 2004) and to get closer to the former Soviet Union republics of Eastern Europe (Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine), the Caucasus and Central Asia.

In 1992, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) was created, and this was the first instrument used to channel European aid to the region. Although it may be unnecessary to remember it, when a State or an international organization speaks of «aid», this must have immediate translation into “money”, into a budget. In this case, when speaking of the EU of the early 1990s, the currency in which the amounts appear is the “ECU”, a currency that was actually a basket of the national currencies of the member states. Shortly thereafter, the technical assistance program TACIS (*Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States*) started to operate, allocating to Turkmenistan

4 million ECU. In that country European Communities spent for the period 1992-1993 a total amount of approximately 16 million ECU: 1. Food Production, Processing and Distribution: Total 8.05 million ECU. Privatizations in the agricultural sector: 0.9 million ECU (1991). Planning and technical advisory unit of the Ministry of Agriculture: 3.8 million ECU (1992). Cereal production increase: ECU 1.5 million (1993). Technical advisory service to farmers: ECU 1.85 million (1993) [2; P. 39].

They also allocated for Tajikistan another 3.6 million ECU, 35 million for Uzbekistan, 20 million for Kyrgyzstan and more than 60 million for Kazakhstan [2; P. 28-31]. In addition, the Communities granted the republics of the USSR a loan (which they later had to repay) of 1,250 million ECU, of which 55 million ECU was authorized to Kazakhstan, 32 to Kyrgyzstan, 55 to Tajikistan, 49 to Turkmenistan and 129 to Uzbekistan [2; P. 40]. Furthermore, for the period 2000-2006, TACIS took 3,138 million euros from the Community budget.

The EU signed *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement* (PCA) during the 1990s with four on five Central Asian countries, almost all of which entered into force in 1999, except with Tajikistan (which entered into force in 2010). EU and Turkmenistan signed an "Interim Agreement on Trade and Commercial Affairs between the European Community, the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Community was negotiated of Atomic Energy, on the one hand, and Turkmenistan" [3]. These bilateral agreements were complemented with a multilateral approach, specified in the EU Strategy for Central Asia of 2007, revised in 2015 and replaced by the *New EU Strategy for Central Asia*, signed in 2019 [4]. Besides that, bilateral relationships have evolved to result in the signing of several agreements improved, the *Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement* (EPCA).

The first of these EPCAs was signed by the EU and Kazakhstan [5] on December 21st, 2015, it had not yet entered into force when the New EU Strategy for Central Asia (2019) was approved, as it had to be ratified by the 28 EU member states and the Italian Parliament had yet to endorse it.

However, most articles (especially those related to business) provisionally entered into force from May 1st, 2016. The second, with Kyrgyzstan, was signed on July 6th, 2019, the day before the 15th Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU and Central Asia held in Bishkek, when the New EU Strategy for Central Asia was presented. One more is being negotiated with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Anyway, both the 2007 Strategy and the EPCAs are framed by the *New EU Strategy for Central Asia*.

What the EU was looking for in Central Asia at the beginning of that decade was set out in a February 1994 working document [6]: the aim was to "exert an economic influence on it" in addition to "encouraging investors to enter these markets and provide services and equipment" and other "interests derived from its status as a large potential consumer of energy products from the region, and especially natural gas", without forgetting the potential market of millions of consumers that populate Central Asia. Security and energy. The two major interests of the EU in the region appear since the beginning. Of course, alongside these two great interests, there are the defence of human rights and democracy. In fact, the 1995 document cites specific cases of setbacks, of actions that occurred in those years and that were viewed with great fear due to the risk of involution.

The European Commission established a series of priorities in the document COM (1995) 206 final, maintained throughout these decades and served as the basis for the current *New EU Strategy for Central Asia* (2019):

1. support the development of democratic, representative, and broad-based institutions.
2. reduce the chances of conflict.
3. continue promoting the economic reform process; and
4. improve your own financial security.

The US intervention in Afghanistan (October 2001) relaunched the superpower's interest in this area as it urgently needed to have safe military bases around Afghanistan. The same happened to their partners in the Atlantic Alliance (some of them, members at the same time of the EU). As they needed to deploy military bases on their soil

to fight against the Taliban, they also made an extra effort to improve relations with the Central Asian countries. This return of the United States to the area undoubtedly aroused suspicions in Moscow, not only because it was a vivid memory of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent *proxy war* as there were practically the same protagonists (USA, Russia, Taliban, Afghanistan, Pakistan). Fifteen years after its independence, this “window of opportunity” allowed the EU to sign a deeper agreement with the countries of the region under the umbrella of a single document: the EU Strategy for Central Asia.

Right before, the Union had created in July 2005 the position of “EU Special Representative for Central Asia”, thus showing the growing importance of this region for the EU. The first Representative was the Slovak diplomat Ján Kubiš, from July 2005 to July 2006. In October 2006 he was replaced by the French diplomat Pierre Morel, who held that position until June 2012. He was succeeded by the German diplomat Patricia Flor from July of 2012 to early 2014, when she resigned. That position was filled on an interim basis by the Hungarian diplomat Janos Herman in April 2014, until he was relieved in April 2015 by (the current) Peter Burian, with a provisional mandate for one year, although it was later extended. The mandate he received Burian of the Council was based on the traditional EU objectives for Central Asia:

“A) promote good and close relations between the Union and the Central Asian countries, based on common values and interests, as reflected in the corresponding agreements.

b) contribute to the strengthening of stability and cooperation among the countries of the region.

c) contribute to the strengthening of democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Central Asia.

d) addressing crucial threats, in particular specific problems that have direct consequences for Europe.

e) enhance the effectiveness and presence of the Union in the region, including through closer

coordination with other relevant interlocutors and international organizations, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations” [7].

As some researchers point out, it seems that sometimes the idea behind the EU’s attitude towards Central Asia is that of a teacher. For example, Spaiser says that “Similarly to democracy and governance issues, the EU consistently presents itself as an example and primary reference for regional integration” [8]. This could be true also talking about Special Representatives, adopting a position «from above», with a certain air of superiority or tutor of what is happening in other parts of the world. However, that first impression disappears when the EU documents on the Central Asian region are studied; especially the two strategies of 2007 and 2019, where they are considered as equal partners.

Under the impetus of Pierre Morel, the EU adopted in 2007 a Strategy for Central Asia, periodically reviewed [9], for example in 2015 [10]. Even more, on 19 June 2017 the Council, meeting in Luxembourg, encouraged the development of a new EU strategy for Central Asia and that it be ready before the end of 2019, consistent with the 2016 EU Global Strategy [11].

They adopted the New Strategy in 2019 and the multi-annual budget 2020-2027 for development aid for the region simultaneously. According to the 2007 Strategy:

“The EU has a great interest in making Central Asia a peaceful, democratic and economically prosperous environment. These goals are interrelated. Therefore, the objective of the EU Strategy is to actively cooperate with the Central Asian states to achieve these goals and contribute to preserving peace and prosperity in neighbouring countries” [12].

This Strategy was accompanied by an *Indicative Program for Central Asia (2007-2010)*, which again highlight the priorities (which are repeated in all documents); In this *Indicative Program*, the most interesting part is at the end, in the annexes, where you will find a list of lessons learned, very useful to understand how the relationship between the EU and Central Asia has been and to see where it has been possible to fail.

**Central Asia in the EU Global Strategy.** The EU has had a strategy since 2007 for Central Asia, subsequently renewed in 2019. This regional strategy needs to be framed within other EU strategies cited at the Introduction of the new Strategy for CA: *A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, the New European Consensus for Development, the EU Strategy on Connectivity between Europe and Asia, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the EU Strategy on Afghanistan.*

This last document is interesting because there is great international pressure to include Afghanistan in the Central Asian countries, while these five countries avoid being mixed with it, mainly due to the number of problems that would arise from it. The reasons behind this inclusion is that, in effect, this would gain intra-regional connectivity and help the economic development of a country burdened by decades of attempted conflicts, in the hope that economic development will free Afghans from their conflicts. politicians. This is also the EU seems to understand when it states in the Introduction to the Central Asia Strategy 2019: "Integrating Afghanistan as appropriate into relevant EU-Central Asia dialogue meetings and regional programs, and support more trilateral cooperation projects with partners. Afghans and Central Asia will continue to be a priority" [13].

The *Global Strategy for the Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union* [14] was approved in June 2016 and every year the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy prepares a report reviewing that document, where Central Asia appears only four times:

1) In the summary, at the beginning of the document: "State and Societal Resilience to our East and South. It is in the interests of our citizens to invest in the resilience of states and societies to the east stretching into Central Asia, and to the south down to Central Africa" [14; P. 9].

2) In Chapter 3, entitled "The priorities of our External Action", it literally repeats in its second section the sentence stated before: "3.2 State and Societal Resilience to our East and South. It is in the interests of our citizens to invest in

the resilience of states and societies to the east stretching into Central Asia, and south down to Central Africa. Fragility beyond our borders threatens all our vital interests" [14; P. 23].

3) In the same Chapter 3, a little further on (3.4 Cooperative Regional Orders), within the section dedicated to the "European security order", it states that "Spanning the region, the EU will foster cooperation with the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The OSCE, as a Europe-wide organisation stretching into Central Asia with a transatlantic link, lies at the heart of the European security order. The EU will strengthen its contribution within and its cooperation with the OSCE as a pillar of European security" [14; P. 33].

4) In the same point 3.4, in the section titled "A Connected Asia", it says that "In Central and South Asia, we will deepen cooperation on counter-terrorism, anti-trafficking and migration, as well as enhance transport, trade and energy connectivity" [14; P. 38].

Besides these explicit quotations, Central Asia would be implicitly included in every challenge and threat explained by the *Global Strategy*: terrorism, climate change, governance, drug trafficking, organized crime, cyber security, security, energy, ... Therefore, all these issues should be treated in more detail, perhaps not in the 2019 Strategy but in the individual EPCAs with each State.

It should not be forgotten that the Italian Federica Mogherini was at the same time the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. Her Security Strategy (2016) inspired three concepts at the New Central Asia Strategy (2019): resilience, "principled pragmatism" [15; P. 8] and strategic autonomy.

"Resilience" is a trendy concept among the current theory of coaching and management, and it was used by Mogherini to talk about the ability to resist, react and recover from adversity; it seems that what is being emphasized here is the need to maintain a united Europe, to have one voice, especially in the face of Exterior. This unity among the members of the EU is something

that must be built because sometimes it is an element that is in short supply; in fact, it is the lack of unity between the Member States that has prevented more rapid progress on many fronts of the Union. Many examples could be cited here, but just leave a few on the table: the decision whether or not to enter the Iraq war on George Bush's side divided community partners; the Brexit, the output of the United Kingdom of the processes of decision making in the EU, has had a positive consequence is that there are almost no brakes to advance security and joint defence, one of the issues that most apprehensions aroused in the British; the "crisis of the euro-order", the fact that between countries of the same club there is in practice a more direct and automatic relationship of trust, but rather a whole path full of suspicions, misgivings and even suspicions in the processes extradition, as was seen in the case of Puigdemont in Belgium or Germany.

The concept of "*principled pragmatism*" appears since the very *Introduction* of Mogherini's document, where it is said "We will be guided by clear principles. These stem as much from a realistic assessment of the current strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world. Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead" [15; P. 9]. Such expression, "*principled pragmatism*", is very close to another used at the US National Security Strategy (2017):

"This strategy is guided by principled realism. It is realist because it acknowledges the central role of power in international politics, affirms that sovereign states are the best hope for a peaceful world, and clearly defines our national interests. It is principled because it is grounded in the knowledge that advancing American principles spreads peace and prosperity around the globe. We are guided by our values and disciplined by our interests" [15; P. 55].

This concept of "*principled pragmatism*" is pivotal at the EU Strategy, where it is stated:

"We will engage in a practical and principled way, sharing global responsibilities with our partners and contributing to their strengths. We have learnt the lesson: my neighbour's and my partner's weaknesses are my own weaknesses.

So, we will invest in win-win solutions, and move beyond the illusion that international politics can be a zero-sum game." [15; P. 4].

The EU is interested on expanding their points of view as they think their criteria are fairer and more profitable for diverse economies. They want to promote their model of living together in peace and prosperity, working in Central Europe for decades. That model brought stability and safety for the entire continent and for their neighbours. That is why, some of them want to join that club. They do not want to conquer the world or repeat the schemes of colonialism; they are convinced that the key for their success comes from the ideas they try to deliver to the rest of the world, without imposing their rules to the rest of the players of global stage:

"The EU will promote a rules-based global order. We have an interest in promoting agreed rules to provide global public goods and contribute to a peaceful and sustainable world. The EU will promote a rules-based global order with multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core. We will be guided by clear principles. These stem as much from a realistic assessment of the current strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world. Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead. In a more complex world, we must stand united. Only the combined weight of a true union has the potential to deliver security, prosperity and democracy to its citizens and make a positive difference in the world" [15; P. 7].

As stated before, this concept of "*principled pragmatism*" is shared by the *US National Security Strategy* (December 2017), although it is used differently on either side of the Atlantic. It seems that the United States is quite clear that when speaking of principles, it does not mean that it seeks to establish relationships only with those who share its values, but that it is based on the idea that theirs are superior and that if everyone shared them the world would be a place where "peace and prosperity" would reign [16; P. 55]. For its part, the EU seems to have put its principles before commercial ties, that is, it would be willing to give priority to strengthening this type

of relationship over the defence of human rights compliance, although this statement should be qualified enough, since two other expressions related to “principled pragmatism” appear in a good number of European documents: “Rules based order” and “like-minded countries” [16; P. 56]. The first principle is cited when saying that “As the EU and Central Asia share the same commitment to international law and a rules-based global order with the UN at its core, the EU will enhance cooperation in multilateral and regional fora” [17; P. 15]. The second concept is also relevant, as they said: “The EU will intensify consultations on Central Asian affairs with like-minded and other relevant partners to develop mutual understanding and cooperation in areas where interests converge” [17; P. 16].

For this reason, it cannot be said that rights and freedoms no longer matter to the EU, although, according to the 2016 document, this issue will not be a pre-requisite to start negotiations with states outside the Union so much. It seems to be deduced from the words that appear in the Introduction to the Mogherini document that the EU would have abandoned the aspiration to be a beacon of democracy for the rest of the world, it would seem convinced that in this field little more can be done, that it will be necessary to assume that each country has its own growth rate, its own history of rights and freedoms, made up of advances and setbacks. Something like this seems to say in the text: “We will be guided by clear principles. Both due to the realistic assessment of the current strategic environment and the idealistic aspiration to evolve towards a better world. In the coming years, our foreign action will be based on the principle of pragmatism” [18; P. 5], and later, when he explains the “Guiding Principles of our (sic) foreign action” and states that:

“We will be guided by clear principles. These stem as much from a realistic assessment of the strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world. In charting the way between the Scylla of isolationism and the Charybdis of rash interventionism, the EU will engage the world manifesting responsibility towards others and sensitivity to contingency.

Principled pragmatism will guide our external action in the years ahead” [18; P. 16]

Beyond the rhetoric of balance (between isolationism and interventionism), the EU knows that it is not a superpower, that is, that it does not have sufficient capacity to shape the international system, that it cannot transform the world in an ambitious way. It seems EU should be satisfied with more realistic, affordable goals, aiming only slightly to improve the lives of the inhabitants of Central Asia, in this case.

Finally, the concept of “strategic autonomy” is essential to understand the 2016 document well. To be clear, it is not possible to speak properly of “defence” if there is no competitive, effective defence industry. In short, if your country (or international institution) depends on other countries to receive the supply of weapons (in broad sense, technology, and spare parts), there is no real defence autonomy. Consequently, if there is no autonomy in the defence industry, there is no authentic independent defence since it will always depend on the supplying country. Although we live in the world of globalization, this argument is still valid, since the defence industry is a much more sensitive market, where other types of pressures come into play that can affect other fields not directly related.

“Strategic autonomy” was a “collateral victim” of the *Brexit* process. The *Brexit* referendum (June 2016) was the opportunity to initiate a whole series of mechanisms to advance on the path of building an authentic European common defence policy. This would be done through the Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence (PSC), as set out in the EU Treaty (articles 42.6 and 46, as well as in protocol 10). The result of the referendum gave rise, in fact, to very eloquent statements in this regard; the first, from President Juncker: “Our European Union is, at least in part, in an existential crisis. [...] The next twelve months are the crucial time to deliver a better Europe: a Europe that protects; a Europe that preserves the European way of life; a Europe that empowers our citizens, a Europe that defends at home and abroad; and a Europe that takes responsibility”, and finishing “I am convinced the European way of life is something worth

preserving” [19]. The second, a Communication from the Commission: “A stronger European defence requires Member States’ joint acquisition, development and retention of the full-spectrum of land, air, space and maritime capabilities” [20]. And the third, from Federica Mogherini, in December 2017: “We have activated a Permanent Structured Cooperation on Defence – ambitious and inclusive. 25 Member States have committed to join forces on a regular basis, to do things together, spend together, invest together, buy together, act together. The possibilities of the Permanent Structured Cooperation are immense” [21]. The same spirit inspired the next paragraph:

“The EUGS also stressed that Member States will need “full-spectrum” land, air, space and maritime capabilities to keep Europe safe and that, to acquire them, they should move towards defence cooperation “as the norm”. In the same vein, a long-term vision and objective of PESCO is to evolve towards a “coherent full spectrum force package” in complementarity with NATO” [22].

Apart from those three concepts recently commented (resilience, “principled pragmatism” and strategic autonomy), the 2016 Strategy draws attention to the use of the word “global” since its very title. As the former High Representative clarified, it does not mean that the EU aspires to be a “global leader” or a “great power” that sets the pace of how the international system is being built, what are the principles of this order; rather, it should be a synonymous of “*comprehensive approach*”, thus underlining the need for an all-encompassing approach to tackle the problems that Europe faces.

In this 2016 document, Mogherini underlines that one of the main interests of the EU in Central Asia is to promote security there to generate stability in the European environment. For this reason, the EU must cooperate with other institutions such as the Council of Europe (CoE) and the OSCE. Although all five countries are founding members of the CSCE (later, OSCE), no Central Asian country is a member of the Council of Europe. Kazakhstan requested it in 1999, but it was rejected because, at that moment, it had not yet matured enough as a democracy in terms of

respect for Human Rights and compliance with certain international standards in this regard. It seems that at present Kazakhstan has done its homework and the day may not be far when it finally accesses this organization.

In any field of cooperation (environment, human rights, freedom of the press or free and fair elections) the EU’s frame of reference must be these two organizations (CoE and OSCE). This detail is very important because, as stated before, the Central Asian countries are founding members of the OSCE since they were part of the USSR when it agreed to create the CSCE; when they acquired the *status* of independence, they maintained their membership of such Conference, later transformed into Organization. However, it must be reminded that during the Cold War, a balance was maintained in the internal debates of this Conference on politics and democracy between the disparate way of understanding that in both sides of the iron curtain (divergences that expressed themselves naturally within the CSCE); once that curtain fell, it was taken for granted that the one who has won the ideological battle was the United States and, therefore, tried to impose its political and economic model (based on three key principles: free market economy, representative liberal democracy and the Western version of Human Rights). Thus, the expression “international standards” is equivalent to “western standards”.

Ten years after the fall of the Soviet empire, the so called “colour revolutions” started in Especially Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004) and Kyrgyzstan (2005). These were like the “velvet revolutions”, the peaceful popular revolutions against communist tyranny in the countries of Eastern Europe, which ended up overthrowing those regimes in a non-violent way. These colour revolutions always happened in countries in the orbit of the former USSR and followed a clearly identifiable pattern: in a country where Russia had traditionally maintained its influence, it had fed for decades a pro-Western opposition (funded by Western money, promised to tip the balance towards the EU and the US when they came to power, replacing Russian companies with European or American companies); the



calling and holding of elections was the ideal “window of opportunity” to bring the masses out to the streets to protest the result of a (very probably) rigged election, so that the pressure on the street “forced” to the pro-Russian leader to flee the country and give up the position to the pro-Western opposition leader, thus restoring social peace and tranquillity in the environment.

The OSCE was (and is) the responsible to certify that elections are free and fair. That is why Russia and some of its traditional allies put up in quarantine everything that came from OSCE at the beginning of the 21st century, seeing her more as an obstacle to the stability of their country than as an aid to the democratic political development of their regimes. This is a clear example of what Joseph Nye called “sharp power”, the ability of other country to influence at the other country’s public opinion. In other words, it was understood that the West –more specifically the US – was instrumental in the OSCE to interfere in internal affairs of those countries and deprive Russia of support and influence in the international system. For Russia, humiliation was compounded by a sense of helplessness because it was not only a symbolic event, but also politically effective. After those revolutions, a decade later, Central Asian countries were more in favour of cooperating with the OSCE and even hosting electoral observation missions, although the reports that the OSCE writes are not usually very favourable for them. These reports are very useful for the parties as they indicate with a high degree of objectivity what progress has been made in this field of holding elections and what points should be improved.

**Analysis of the 2019 Strategy.** As a result of intense negotiations between the EU and Central Asian countries, former High Representative Mogherini managed to reach a consensus on a text entitled “*The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership*”, which she sent in the form of a Joint Communication to Parliament and to the Council (May 15th, 2019). The Council subsequently adopted it on June 17th adding its own conclusions. This text was finally presented at the 15th Ministerial Summit in Bishkek on July 7th, 2019 [23].

Some of the essential elements of the 2019 New Strategy had already been announced in other documents related to Central Asia, such as in the document entitled “*The EU’s new Central Asia strategy*”, written by the *European Parliamentary Research Service*, published in early 2019. Apart from an overview of how EU-Central Asia relations were for 25 years, it offered an assessment of the goals accomplished in the implementation of the 2007 Strategy [24]. Generally speaking, it pointed out as positive the progress made in terms of political dialogue (opening of EU Delegations in these countries, establishment of a Dialogue on Human Rights, holding ministerial summits), which in large part shows the interest of the countries of the region to establish contacts outside the usual trading partners (Russia and China), deepening relationships with partners as diverse as the US, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Vietnam, Malaysia or the countries of the Persian Gulf. This analysis published by the *European Parliamentary Research Service* is also critical of two of the “flagship products” of the 2007 Strategy (the Education Initiative and the Rule of Law initiative), pointing to them as ineffective. It also says that the management of cross-border rivers, border control or the virtual connection between the two regions should be improved. Finally, it points out as areas in which the fight against corruption, energy transport and the diversification of their economies have not advanced. Despite the latter, the failures or partial successes, this January 2019 document makes a very optimistic balance between the progress of the last two decades and the elements that should be improved.

Now entering the *New Strategy* for 2019, the first page offers in a few lines the elements that have been most considered when preparing this document and the messages that Special Representative Peter Burian has most frequently transmitted to the leaders of Central Asia:

“EU engagement in the region can build upon significant assets. The countries of Central Asia can trust the EU as a leading donor and committed partner in their reform and economic transition process, a leading supporter of their integration in the world trading system, a source of quality

investment and state-of-the-art technologies, and a natural supporter of their regional cooperation efforts. This Joint Communication aims to forge a stronger, modern and non-exclusive partnership with the countries of Central Asia so that the region develops as a sustainable, more resilient, prosperous, and closely interconnected economic and political space" [25; P.1].

The strategy continues to be a document in which the principles that should guide relations between the two regions, in addition to the areas of common interest, the fields in which they are going to cooperate are put in an orderly and systematized manner and which EU programs can be implemented. Thus, there remains a general framework for the interaction between the two protagonists, open to specific proposals that may be launched later, such as, for example, the Erasmus+ program, from which Central Asian students have been benefiting for years and which allow contact *people-to-people* between the two regions. As it says in its introduction:

"The dialogues between the EU and Central Asia and the EU-funded regional programs will help promote cooperative solutions at the regional level in areas such as the environment, water, climate change and sustainable energy; education; rule of law; sustainable connectivity; drug control; safety and prevention of radicalization; border management and facilitation of intraregional trade" [25; P.2].

The three main fields of action of this new strategy are: 1) Partner for resilience; 2) Partner for prosperity; and 3) Work better together. Within the first area, some areas of common interest are specified: a) Promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; b) Strengthening cooperation in border management, migration, and mobility, and in addressing common security challenges; and c) Improvement of environmental, climate and water resilience. Furthermore, for each subsection of the priorities, the *New Strategy* provides a series of specific actions that could be applied to achieve these objectives.

Another matter of great interest to the EU, and this is frequently stated through various bodies and institutions, is that the region must improve the interconnectivity among them, strengthen

intra-regional cooperation and strive to help Afghanistan. The EU emphasizes that "The EU has a strong interest in seeing Central Asia develop as a region of rules-based cooperation and connectivity rather than of competition and rivalry" [26; P.3].

The EU Special Representative for Central Asia, Peter Burian, has repeatedly been very clear in comparing the European connectivity project with other similar projects promoted by other countries:

"We also share a mutual interest in developing and strengthening connections between Europe and Central Asia, whether that is transport links, digital infrastructure, energy networks, or contacts between people. This could create new jobs, promote innovation and modernisation, which allows Central Asia avoiding the debt trap and the trap of poor-quality projects. But at the same time the connectivity for us is not and should never be about creating spheres of influence. For us, connectivity always will be rather focussed on creating opportunities for everyone" [25].

This text seeks to establish the pillars for EU-Central Asia cooperation. Respecting the idiosyncrasy of this region, considering its political and economic process, the EU wishes to work with them on certain aspects that are of interest to Europeans and in which Central Asians are a fundamental part. As mentioned, when talking about the first steps of the European Union in this part of the world, two words summarize our interests there: security and energy. Everything that has to do with the security and stability (in broad sense) of these countries affects directly to European security and stability. It is very important for the EU members that the five Central Asian countries continue the path of democracy, strengthen the political systems that they launched in 1991, and that the security of their population is always guaranteed.

Regarding the issue of energy, Europe is no longer interested only in raw materials the region can offer, but it seeks to expand markets there and offer Europe as a place to import their products or even to host students or workers. Although for some reasons (historic, language, relatives established there), Central Asian people prefer

going to Russia before than other European countries they are changing preferences for Germany, UK, France, mainly.

Now, above all, Europe seeks to create a good investment climate there; It is not enough to offer facilities, which exist, such as the creation of free-trade zone (FTZ) or the promise of tax exemption for some activities, or to remove obstacles to the acquisition of land, but rather it is necessary to generate trust, and legal security sustained over time. In line with the latter, access to the World Trade Organization was offered as a kind of warranty: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are members of this organization, while Uzbekistan is already in negotiations to enter as soon as possible and it seems that they are doing all their best to make it happen. Turkmenistan, for its part, remains on the side-lines.

**Some proposals to develop the new EU Strategy for Central Asia.** At the end of this article, it is necessary to summarize the most important ideas that have been disseminated throughout it, as they can be very useful when making recommendations to implement the EU Strategy in Central Asia.

In the first place, it should be noted that the region is very different today than it was 25 years ago. The fears and uncertainties that existed then in European capitals and in Brussels about the political, economic, and social evolution that these new republics were going to have seem dissipated today. Of course, some risks are still alive and some threats that have been warned from the beginning have not yet materialized (and may never occur); generally speaking, it can be said that the worst is over as these countries control their sovereignty since their independence and there is no sign of a regression towards a rebirth of the Soviet Union.

This fear has always been in these former Soviet countries and continues to this day, especially after Putin's work at the head of the Kremlin. It is not just what it says, it is what it does. And in this regard, the Russian military interventions in South Ossetia and Ukraine have not left these rulers any calmer, but rather the opposite. The creation of a Eurasian Economic Union, which at first was assumed only "Economic" (as its

name suggests) and which has gradually become more political, has caused many surrounding countries to have serious doubts and to rethink their membership to an organization led in that way by Moscow. Finally, the existence of Russian minorities in these countries, especially in Northern Kazakhstan, in regions bordering Russia and where Kazakh language is hardly heard, has led to the emergence of a strong nationalist sentiment for a long time; although ethnic or nationalist parties are banned, some groups of "Cossacks" (terrorist recruiters), the "Russian National Unity" or simply "Rus" have appeared [27].

On the other hand, although some countries - especially Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan - have made strenuous efforts to adapt to international (that is, Western) standards of respect for democracy and Human Rights: "It is hoped that the anticipated 2017 reform process will result in significant improvements" [28].

The reality is that the word "transition" cannot be applied to these regimes that rather seem to have prioritized stability over freedom; For fear of possible anarchy, they have chosen to introduce changes timidly and gradually. And perhaps they cannot be judged too harshly for this, considering the regional environment in which they are located (geographically and culturally speaking). Another very different issue is the situation in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, where it seems rather that there has not even been a real attempt to establish democracy. In any case, the "legitimation by results" [29] does not mask the lack of political pluralism [30]. Having a Constitution only on paper but not implemented it is not enough to be democratic regime. For example, Kyrgyzstan has a very "parliamentary" constitution, which means that power is not as concentrated in the hands of the president as it happens in the rest of the republics that surround it, but the Kyrgyz experience is far from being a paradise of stability, growth, progress, or development.

Furthermore, democracy cannot be imposed, it cannot be imposed "from above" but needs to come from a genuine request from a broad social base willing to actively participate in politics. As Tamayo and Carrilo said:

“Synthesizing both proposals and paraphrasing Lipset, the legitimacy with which domination is exercised and the effectiveness in the provision of public goods constitute the two essential ingredients of the legitimacy of the administration. Following this same line of argument, in another place we distinguished between two sources of legitimacy of the administration: the institutional legitimacy that derives from the adjustment of the behavior of the administration to a socially accepted value system on how the administration should be in a social state and democratic of right; and legitimacy through returns, which is obtained by producing public policies, goods and services that respond to socially accepted public evaluation criteria” [31].

Third, and as a continuation of what was said in the previous paragraph, the EU has always put respect for European values first when establishing relations with other third countries, also in this case. However, it seems that this rule lost weight in comparison to a more accentuated pragmatism, relaxing the demands of compliance with democratic values.

In connection with this, there is the power struggle established in the area, abolished under the guise of a struggle to exert influence in the region. The different powers would struggle to win more contracts, to establish more commercial relations, to sign more agreements on education, ... to become more present in that area. The EU would enter this “gold rush”, competing with old –and more experienced– rivals such as the US, Russia, China, India, Iran, or Turkey.

The EU has irrigated this region with Community funding, but it would be unfair to say that this spending has not had any control. It has invested a good number of millions of euros, it is true, but it has not done it irresponsibly; rather EU selected very well which projects they could finance and where the Union’s money is spent. With patience, generosity, hope, a great deal of trust and with a more long-term perspective, EU opted to establish itself in the region and today many Central Asians have benefited –directly or indirectly– from Community funds, mainly through advisory and technical cooperation

projects with the governments of the area and with civil associations that operate there. 25 years ago, Europe barely appeared on the radar of many Central Asians; today some of them have stopped looking to Russia or China and have opted for American and European institutions to complete their university studies. It can be said that in these years small steps forward have been taken and consolidated at the end of these decades. It seems there is no comeback in this process of trust and confidence between the EU and Central Asia.

Of course, there are still serious threats in the region, and it would be irresponsible not to take them into account but stop investing in the progress and development (economic, political, social) of those countries is not an option. The war in Tajikistan put a brake on European investments, but that did not mean that the country was not left in the crosshairs of cooperation; the situation in Afghanistan has not improved since the end of Soviet invasion and its instability has always threatened the entire region, but it is worthy to invest on people than abandon them. The situation in Tajikistan may degenerate in such a way that a civil war can be re-lived, but that does not prevent the need to continue financing development projects; war may or may not come, but Tajiks need to eat, dress, receive education and medical care, progress and have a future every day.

There would be a consideration regarding the Union itself, more specifically the unity of action abroad as the guiding principle of Community relations with third countries. In the first paragraph of the Preamble to Spanish Organic Law 2/2014, of March 25, on Action and the Foreign Service of the State, it is stated that “at the European level, an ambitious process of supranational integration has been developed in which the Member States have attributed to the European Union the exercise of such a wide range of competences that national and international action are closely intertwined” [32]. If the member countries are truly immersed in this process of supranationalization, they must abandon old schemes and begin to accept that the EU “embassy” must defend the trade

and economic interests of all its member states equally and must ensure that there is no unfair competition among European companies.

**Conclusion.** The European Union External Action Service (EEAS) should work for the good of the Union and the member countries should rethink their presence there as the promotion of their own countries can be incompatible with the common good of the Union. This is difficult to carry out since national interests continue to exist; sometimes they are compatible with those of the EU, sometimes not, and sometimes the interests of one country are incompatible with those of another. Until now, it has been accepted without problem that there are European

delegations and embassies of member countries in the same country; perhaps, in the not-too-distant future, that makes as much sense as there being an embassy from a member country and “delegations” from some regions in Brussels.

However, the role of the EU in Central Asia helps to think about how much united or individualistic and selfish member States are. The Union needs to speak with one voice in Central Asia if it wants to maintain a credible discourse on respecting human rights, for example, since a Union imposing sanctions on a country for not respecting freedom of religion or opinion would not be very credible while a member State ignores the restrictions.

### References

1. Alonso J. A. Speech at the Military Easter. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/Jjj8R5d> (accessed 01.12.2020).
2. Communication from The Commission: Towards A European Union Strategy for Relations with the Independent States of Central Asia COM (1995) 206 final. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/ljj8UFL> (accessed 30.11.2020).
3. European Parliament document P6-7\_TA (2009)0253. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/4jj811v> (accessed 31.10.2020).
4. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership, JOIN (2019) 9 final. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/Njj82VU> (accessed 31.07.2020).
5. Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the other, Official Journal of the European Union, 4.2.2016, L 29/3 - L 29/150. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/ijj88hh> (accessed 31.07.2020).
6. The EU's future contractual relations with the NIS of the former Soviet Union: an assessment of strategy» (SEC (94) 258 of 10.02.1994).
7. European Council Publication “Decision (CFSP) 2016/596 of the Council, of April 18, 2016, by which the mandate of the Special Representative of the European Union for Central Asia is extended”, Official Journal of the European Union, 19.4.2016, L 103/24 - L 103/25. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/mjj84YQ> (accessed 31.07.2020).
8. Spaiser O. A. The European Union's Influence in Central Asia: Geopolitical Challenges and responses (Lexington Books, London, 2018, 67 p.)
9. European Council Publication “The European Union and Central Asia: the new partnership in action” Available at: <https://cutt.ly/pjj85RJ> (accessed 30.07.2020).
10. European Council Publication “Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy for Central Asia” Available at: <https://cutt.ly/0jj4eAj> (accessed 30.07.2020).
11. European Council Publication., document of the Council 10387/17. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/njj4i9P> (accessed 30.07.2020).
12. Russell, M. The EU's new Central Asia strategy. European Parliamentary Research Available at: <https://cutt.ly/xjxZJQb> (accessed 30.07.2020).
13. The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/Hjj4d3b> (accessed 30.05.2020).
14. European Union Publication “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy Available at: <file:///C:/Users/05424730/Downloads/OF0116825ENN.en.pdf> (accessed 31.10.2020).

15. A stronger Europe: a global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3eaae2cf-9ac5-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1> (accessed 31.10.2020).
16. US National Security Strategy. Available at: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nssall.html> (accessed 31.10.2020).
17. The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities...", op. cit., This concept of "rule-based order" is a little more explained at the 2016 Mogherini's Strategy, Available at: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/global-strategy-european-union%E2%80%99s-foreign-and-security-policy> (accessed 31.10.2020).
18. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/qkhULxX> (accessed 25.10.2020).
19. European Union Publication "State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a better Europe: a Europe that protects, empowers and ensures security" Available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-16-3043\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-3043_en.htm). (accessed 25.10.2020).
20. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: European Defense Action Plan. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/ES/COM-2016-950-F1-ES-MAIN-PART-1.PDF> (accessed 25.10.2020).
21. European Union Publication "Permanent Structured Cooperation (CEP). Available at: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/sites/eca-audit-defence/EN/Documents/PESCO.pdf>, P. 1. (accessed 25.10.2020).
22. European Defence Agency "The EU Capability Development Priorities: 2018 CDP revision". Available at: <https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-publications/eda-brochure-cdp>, P. 4 (accessed 25.10.2020).
23. European Union Publication "15th EU-Central Asia Foreign Ministers' Meeting Bishkek, 7 July 2019 Joint Communiqué «The EU and Central Asia: Forging a Stronger Partnership Together». Available at: <https://cutt.ly/4jxCazE> (accessed 26.10.2020).
24. EU-Central Asia relations. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/LjxCvy5> (accessed 26.10.2020).
25. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52019JC0009&from=GA> accessed 26.10.2020).
26. Burian P. Central Asia has always been important for Europe // International Politics and Society, 2019. Available at: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/09/central-asia-always-important-europe/> (accessed 31.09.2020).
27. Russian Federation Stirring pro-Russian Separatism in the Republic of Kazakhstan// Inform Napalm, 2016. Available at: <https://informnapalm.org/en/russian-federation-kazakhstan/> (accessed 31.09.2020).
28. OSCE Publication "OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Early Parliamentary Elections, March 20, 2016". Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kazakhstan/248781?download=true> (accessed 31.09.2020).
29. Deutsch K. W., Politics and Government. How the people decide their fate (México DF, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1976, 29 p.).
30. Ponce Solé J. Social Sciences, Administrative Law, and good public management. From the fight against the immunities of power to the battle for a good government and a good administration through a fruitful dialogue // Management and Policy Analysis Magazine, 11(2014).
31. Tamayo M., Carrillo Barroso E. The legitimacy of public administration: a political culture approach // International Forum, 170, 684 (2002).
32. Spanish Government Publication "Law 2/2014, of March 25, on the Action and Foreign Service of the State" Available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2014-3248> (accessed 01.11.2020).

**АНТонио Алонсо Маркос**

*Университет CEU Сан-Пабло, Мадрид, Испания*

**Новая стратегия Европейского союза в отношении Центральной Азии (2019):  
две стороны, одна цель**

**Аннотация.** Государства Центральной Азии и Европейский союз подписали новую стратегию Европейского союза в отношении Центральной Азии в Бишкеке. Это документ, основанный на предшествующем диалоге между Брюсселем и центральноазиатскими странами. Европейский союз поддерживает

этот регион с момента обретения независимости, всегда уделяя особое внимание вопросам энергетики и безопасности. Несмотря на то, что в 2007 г. Уже существовала подобная стратегия, она была усовершенствована и дополнена новой стратегией ЕС для ЦА (2019 г.). В этом документе определены три взаимосвязанных и взаимоусиливающих приоритета ряда стран: Партнерство ради устойчивости, Партнерство ради процветания и более эффективная совместная работа. Иногда Европейский союз обвиняют в развитии своего рода неокOLONиализма. Однако, согласно новой стратегии, совершенно очевидно, что главная цель – помочь этим государствам найти свой собственный путь развития и стабильности.

**Ключевые слова:** Центральная Азия, Европейский Союз, Новая стратегия для Центральной Азии.

**Антонио Алонсо Маркос**

*Сан Пабло СЕУ университеті, Мадрид, Испания*

### **Еуропалық Одақтың Орталық Азияға қатысты жаңа стратегиясы (2019): екі тарап, бір мақсат**

**Аңдатпа.** Орталық Азия мемлекеттері мен Еуропалық Одақ Қырғызстан еліндегі Бішкек қаласында – Орталық Азияға қатысты Еуропалық одақтың жаңа стратегиясына қол қойды. Бұл Брюссель мен Орталық Азия елдері арасындағы диалогқа негізделген құжат. Еуропалық одақ бұл аймақты, тәуелсіздігін алғаннан бері қолдайды, әрі әрқашан энергетика мен қауіпсіздік мәселелеріне ерекше назар аударады. 2007 жылы осыған ұйқас стратегия болғанына қарамастан, ол Орталық Азияға арналған Еуропалық Одақтың жаңа стратегиясымен жетілдірілді және толықтырылды (2019 ж.). Бұл құжатта бірқатар елдердің өзара байланысты және өзара нығайтатын үш басымдығы айқындалған: тұрақтылық үшін әріптестік, өркендеу үшін әріптестік және тиімді бірлескен жұмыс. Кейде Еуропалық Одақ неокOLONиализмнің дамуына кінәлі. Алайда, жаңа стратегияға сәйкес, басты мақсат – бұл мемлекеттерге даму мен тұрақтылықтың өзіндік жолын табуға көмектесу.

**Түйін сөздер:** Орталық Азия, Еуропалық Одақ, Орталық Азия үшін жаңа стратегия.

### **References**

1. Alonso J. A. Speech at the Military Easter. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/Jjj8R5d> (accessed 01.12.2020).
2. Communication from The Commission: Towards A European Union Strategy for Relations with the Independent States of Central Asia COM (1995) 206 final. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/ljj8UFL> (accessed 30.11.2020).
3. European Parliament document P6-7\_TA (2009)0253. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/4jj811v> (accessed 31.10.2020).
4. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership, JOIN (2019) 9 final. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/Njj82VU> (accessed 31.07.2020).
5. Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the other, Official Journal of the European Union, 4.2.2016, L 29/3 - L 29/150. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/ijj88hh> (accessed 31.07.2020).
6. The EU's future contractual relations with the NIS of the former Soviet Union: an assessment of strategy» (SEC (94) 258 of 10.02.1994).
7. European Council Publication "Decision (CFSP) 2016/596 of the Council, of April 18, 2016, by which the mandate of the Special Representative of the European Union for Central Asia is extended", Official Journal of the European Union, 19.4.2016, L 103/24 - L 103/25. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/mjj84YQ> (accessed 31.07.2020).
8. Spaiser O. A. The European Union's Influence in Central Asia: Geopolitical Challenges and responses (Lexington Books, London, 2018, 67 p.)
9. European Council Publication "The European Union and Central Asia: the new partnership in action" Available at: <https://cutt.ly/pjj85RJ> (accessed 30.07.2020).
10. European Council Publication "Council Conclusions on the EU Strategy for Central Asia" Available at: <https://cutt.ly/0jj4eAj> (accessed 30.07.2020).
11. European Council Publication., document of the Council 10387/17. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/njj4i9P> (accessed 30.07.2020).
12. Russell, M. The EU's new Central Asia strategy. European Parliamentary Research Available at: <https://cutt.ly/xjxZJQb> (accessed 30.07.2020).

13. The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities for a Stronger Partnership. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/Hjj4d3b> (accessed 30.05.2020).
14. European Union Publication "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy Available at: <file:///C:/Users/05424730/Downloads/OF0116825ENN.en.pdf> (accessed 31.10.2020).
15. A stronger Europe: a global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3eaee2cf-9ac5-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1> (accessed 31.10.2020).
16. US National Security Strategy. Available at: <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nssall.html> (accessed 31.10.2020).
17. The EU and Central Asia: New Opportunities...", op. cit., This concept of "rule-based order" is a little more explained at the 2016 Mogherini's Strategy, Available at: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/global-strategy-european-union%E2%80%99s-foreign-and-security-policy> (accessed 31.10.2020).
18. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/qkhULxX> (accessed 25.10.2020).
19. European Union Publication "State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a better Europe: a Europe that protects, empowers and ensures security" Available at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-16-3043\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-3043_en.htm). (accessed 25.10.2020).
20. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: European Defense Action Plan. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2016/ES/COM-2016-950-F1-ES-MAIN-PART-1.PDF> (accessed 25.10.2020).
21. European Union Publication "Permanent Structured Cooperation (CEP). Available at: <https://www.eca.europa.eu/sites/eca-audit-defence/EN/Documents/PESCO.pdf>, P. 1. (accessed 25.10.2020).
22. European Defence Agency "The EU Capability Development Priorities: 2018 CDP revision". Available at: <https://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-publications/eda-brochure-cdp>, P. 4 (accessed 25.10.2020).
23. European Union Publication "15th EU-Central Asia Foreign Ministers' Meeting Bishkek, 7 July 2019 Joint Communiqué «The EU and Central Asia: Forging a Stronger Partnership Together». Available at: <https://cutt.ly/4jxCazE> (accessed 26.10.2020).
24. EU-Central Asia relations. Available at: <https://cutt.ly/LjxCvy5> (accessed 26.10.2020).
25. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52019JC0009&from=GA> accessed 26.10.2020).
26. Burian P. Central Asia has always been important for Europe // International Politics and Society, 2019. Available at: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2019/09/central-asia-always-important-europe/> (accessed 31.09.2020).
27. Russian Federation Stirring pro-Russian Separatism in the Republic of Kazakhstan// Inform Napalm, 2016. Available at: <https://informnapalm.org/en/russian-federation-kazakhstan/> (accessed 31.09.2020).
28. OSCE Publication "OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Early Parliamentary Elections, March 20, 2016". Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/kazakhstan/248781?download=true> (accessed 31.09.2020).
29. Deutsch K. W., Politics and Government. How the people decide their fate (México DF, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1976, 29 p.).
30. Ponce Solé J. Social Sciences, Administrative Law, and good public management. From the fight against the immunities of power to the battle for a good government and a good administration through a fruitful dialogue // Management and Policy Analysis Magazine, 11(2014).
31. Tamayo M., Carrillo Barroso E. The legitimacy of public administration: a political culture approach // International Forum, 170, 684 (2002).
32. Spanish Government Publication "Law 2/2014, of March 25, on the Action and Foreign Service of the State" Available at: <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2014-3248> (accessed 01.11.2020).

#### Information about the author:

*Антонио Алонсо Маркос* – профессор истории и общества в Университете Сан-Пабло CEU, старший научный сотрудник Исследовательского отдела безопасности и международного сотрудничества (UNISCI), профессор COPE Radio Master. Мадрид, Испания.

*Antonio Alonso Marcos* – Professor of History and Society at the CEU San Pablo University and a Senior Researcher at the Research Unit on Security and International Cooperation (UNISCI), Professor at the COPE Radio Master. Madrid, Spain.