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## **Kazakhstan's bilateral partnership with EU and Russia: between political dilemmas and economic interests**

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## **Introduction**

In 2007, the European Union launched a visionary strategy for the development of cooperation with Central Asian states. The document, called ‘The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership’ was aiming to enhance EU influence in the region through establishing a broader dialogue with the Central Asian states in areas such as institution-building, rule of law, trade, energy and security.

Ten years after its launching, EU’s bilateral relations with Central Asia republics have evolved on a different track, based on the government willingness to engage in a continuous reforming process under EU assistance. The most reliable EU partner in the region remains Kazakhstan, the only country which has signed an Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU in December 2015 as recognition of an increased economic and energy interdependence between both parts.

Kazakhstan – EU bilateral relations have been developed in the context of a ‘multi-vector’ Kazakh foreign policy. This concept defines Astana’s balanced approach towards its international partners, seeking to obtain large economic benefits and a stronger regional position in Central Asia. Its political and economic links with major powers were established by requesting a member status in the regional projects. Kazakhstan became in the last two decades a member of the Eurasian Economic Union and Shanghai Cooperation Organization, two institutional bodies led by Russia, respectively China. President Nazarbayev’s regime policy orientation often pendulates between the initiatives proposed by Russia, China and the EU, especially in the energy field, where Kazakhstan holds a leading position in the Caspian Sea zone. Therefore, the relations with the EU and Russia have been often the subject of a ‘supply and demand’ model, with Kazakhstan’s willingness to enhance links with these two partners in trade and energy sector and reluctance to implement reforms in the field of democracy, human rights and power decentralization.

## **EU policy towards the ‘neighbors of the neighbors’ in Central Asia: a twofold approach for Kazakhstan**

The framework for political cooperation in the last two decades has been linked with the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between EU and Kazakhstan. PCA is strategic program, aiming to assure an efficient transition from the post-Soviet times to a market economy and a functional democracy, In the case of Kazakhstan, the PCA was adapted to the country

political reality and had some special provisions referring to the establishment of multi-party system and good administration of the local constituencies created after 1991. Other provisions were stipulating ‘the need to (1) increase convergence of positions on international issues of mutual concern, thus increasing security and stability (2) support economic and political changes underway in the country and (3) contribute to the establishment of new forms of cooperation and political dialogue’<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, the EU and Kazakhstan agreed to institutionalize their bilateral political contacts through the creation of three intergovernmental and interparliamentary bodies: Cooperation Committee, Cooperation Council and the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. The first two were engaged in the exchange of good practices at the level of governmental ministries (Council of the EU and Kazakh government), the last one being responsible of building links between European Parliament and Kazakh parliamentary groups.

The EU – Kazakh relations in what concerns providing security and stability on the local level can be described as efficient. Through becoming a member of OSCE and signing a Partnership for Peace agreement with NATO, Kazakhstan has been one of the key actors for ensuring security and peace in the region, especially after the war in Afghanistan. EU and Kazakhstan have developed special programs for combatting terrorism and smuggling, generating a better control of the Kazakh borders. EU is interested in enhancing the collaboration with Kazakhstan in this area, as Astana is the well-equipped and responsive partner in the region<sup>3</sup>, capable to address any security challenge that can arise in the future. Although an active member of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, which is a competing security regional model for NATO, Kazakhstan has established a balanced approach in their dialogue with external partners, assuming the role of a mediator in Central Asia and beyond. An example in this context is the diplomatic talks held in January 2017 by Russia, Iran and Turkey over the situation in Syria, an event which took place in Astana.

In the area of democracy and human rights, Kazakhstan has still major issues to solve. The authoritarian regime of president Nazarbayev, which has been in force since 1991, has been very reluctant to promote reforms in areas related to free media, civil society organizations and political opposition (fig.1). The centralized political model, common for all the Central Asia states, is strongly connected with the high quantity of natural resources owned by the state. The financial resources accumulated by the government assure the political legitimacy of Nazarbayev

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<sup>2</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *The European Union and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement*, Brussels, 23 January, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Bhavna Dave, *The EU and Kazakhstan: balancing economic cooperation and aiding democratic reforms in the Central Asia region*, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), 2007, p. 4, retrieved 14 August 2017, <https://www.ceps.eu/publications/eu-and-kazakhstan-balancing-economic-cooperation-and-aiding-democratic-reforms-central>.

through a relative economic stability. EU has criticized the electoral process in Kazakhstan and the presidential elections, which were influenced by massive contraventions in the last two decades. In one of the statements made by Catherine Ashton in November 2012, she was mentioning that the problems related to a fair electoral competition in Kazakhstan could affect

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>National democratic governance</b>	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75
<b>Electoral process</b>	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75
<b>Civil society</b>	5.75	5.50	5.50	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.50
<b>Independent Media</b>	6.75	6.75	6.50	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75	6.75
<b>Corruption</b>	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50	6.50
<b>Democracy Score</b>	6.39	6.39	6.32	6.43	6.43	6.54	6.57	6.61	6.61

the EU ongoing assistance for reforms in Kazakhstan.

Fig.1. Freedom House' reports for 2008 – 2016 period (1 is the highest score, while 7 is the lowest one)<sup>4</sup>

EU actions in this area have been related to the establishment of human rights and civil society dialogues, together with a Rule of Law Initiative, with France and Germany as the main driving forces<sup>5</sup>. These initiatives benefited from a regional financial support of Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI) in sum of 74 million euros for the 2007 – 2013 period. As stated in the newly signed Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Kazakhstan and the EU, the compliance of the Kazakh rule of law mechanisms with the EU ones will be a pre-condition for enhancing the financial support for Astana<sup>6</sup>. Furthermore, the government is requested to take into account the EU practices when addressing the above dimensions.

<sup>4</sup> Data was collected from the Freedom House national reports for Kazakhstan, retrieved 14 August, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/kazakhstan>.

<sup>5</sup> European External Action Service, *Progress Report on the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia Implementation Review and outline for Future Orientations*, Brussels, 28 June, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Official Journal of the European Union *Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Kazakhstan*, Brussels, 4 February, 2016.

The economic relations between Kazakhstan and EU were settled through the provisions of PCA, with the objective to generate the transition of the Kazakh economy to the market economy standards. The EU contribution to the development of the economic sectors in Kazakhstan was linked to the funds offered through the TACIS program in the '90, a 'Marshall plan' for all the post-Soviet states. The technical and expertise dimension of TACIS facilitated the recovery of the Kazakh economy in the '90s and the fast growth in the beginning of the '2000 due to the increased prices for oil and gas on the international market. The growth was from 18 billion in 2000 to nearly 80 billion in 2007<sup>7</sup>, transforming Kazakhstan in the fastest developing economy in Central Asia.

EU is the largest economic partner for Kazakhstan and the primary source of investments for the Kazakh economy, representing over 50% of Foreign Direct Investment in this country<sup>8</sup>. Through its conditionality provisions for signing the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, EU accelerated the accession of Kazakhstan in the World Trade Organization in 2015. The EU is the biggest market for the Kazakh exports, counting €31 billion (36%), ahead of China (14%), Russia (11%)<sup>9</sup> (fig.2). However, more than half of the goods exported are natural resources (fig.3), which makes the Kazakh economy highly depended on the price fluctuations for oil.

The challenges for the EU – Kazakhstan economic partnership are related to the member status of the Eurasian Economic Union held by Astana. Firstly, the EU has to revise its taxation policy for Kazakhstan's products, as they are subject of a different economic market. An institutional cooperation between these two organizations is required for improving the trade and to eliminate the obstacles for commercial exchanges. Secondly, the member status of the EAEU has obliged Kazakhstan to upgrade its tariffs according to the EAEU's standards. Therefore, 'importing from EU and China became more expensive, making many consumer goods more expensive for the population, as well as the new equipment and machinery for business'<sup>10</sup>. Both the EU and Kazakhstan need to discuss these issues in order to improve their economic relations and to address any possible future developments in trade field.

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<sup>7</sup> Bahna Dave, op.cit, p.1.

<sup>8</sup> 'EU – Kazakhstan relations', retrieved 15 August 2017, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage\\_en/4076/EU-Kazakhstan%20relations](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4076/EU-Kazakhstan%20relations).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> N. Popescu, *Eurasian Union: the real, the imaginary and the likely*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2014, p. 12, retrieved 12 April, 2017, [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/CP\\_132.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/CP_132.pdf).

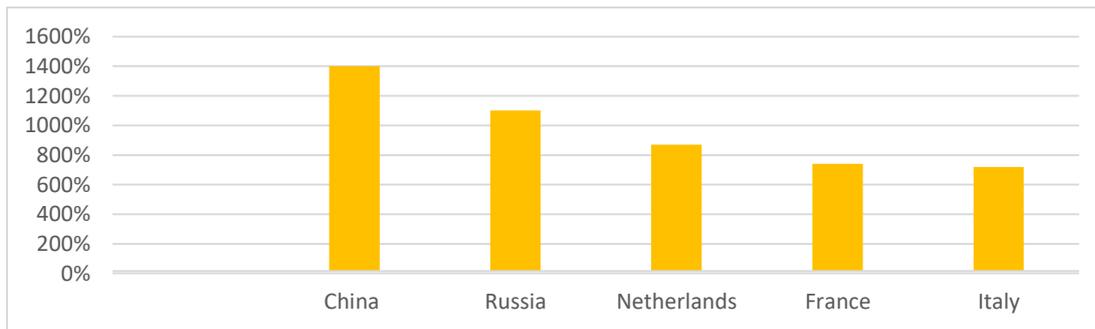


Fig. 2. The five main economic partners of Kazakhstan in terms of exports for 2015<sup>11</sup>.

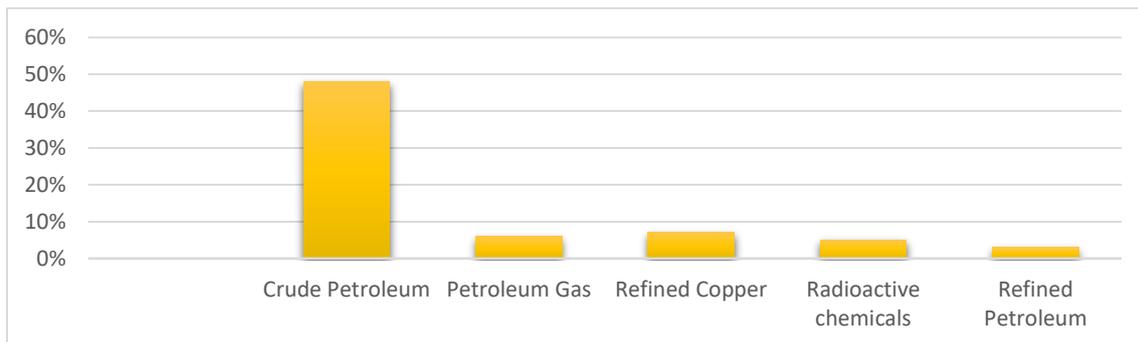


Fig. 3. Kazakh exports to the EU in 2015: percentages for the natural resources category<sup>12</sup>.

The energy sector represents the most important dimension of the EU – Kazakhstan relations. The high quantity of resources owned by Kazakhstan has increased its regional position in the Caspian Sea. After the repeated gas crises in the ‘2000s initiated by Russia, the EU decided to multiply its energy import channels. Furthermore, there were developed a few projects with the participation of Kazakhstan, under the EU assistance.

The first project, Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia (TRACECA), was established in 1993. Its aim was to build a gas network between the Black Sea region and Caspian Sea that could diversify the gas routes for the European Union. Nowadays, TRACECA crosses the territory of 12 third states, having the means to connect Eastern EU countries with Kazakhstan. Another project is INOGATE, launched in 1996 with the support of the EU and 11 states from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. INOGATE is offering assistance and ‘technical support for the creation of competitive energy markets, promotion of renewables and efficient use of energy’<sup>13</sup>. Nonetheless, the most successful and perspective project is the Baku Initiative, launched in 2004. Baku initiative proposes an alternative route for the Kazakh oil, which is

<sup>11</sup> Data was collected from ‘The Observatory of Economic Complexity’, retrieved 14 August, 2017, <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/kaz/>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> European External Action Service, ‘EU and Kazakhstan energy cooperation framework’, retrieved 13 August 2017, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/1367/kazakhstan-eu\\_enEnergy](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/1367/kazakhstan-eu_enEnergy).

mainly transported through the north direction via Russia. With Iran and Turkey as the main transitory countries, this project can reach a high potential, starting with the lifting of sanctions for the Iran energy resources and the development of the EU Energy Union.

However, as stated before, Kazakhstan is using the 'supply and demand' model when assessing its involvement in the above initiatives. The most suitable and cheaper way of transporting is often chosen when exporting the oil and gas to the foreign partners. In this context, EU signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Cooperation (2008), eliminating some technical barriers for the Kazakh oil companies. Nowadays, over 70% of the Kazakh oil exports go to the EU<sup>14</sup>, which represents a major achievement for the transportation projects established through next to the Black and Caspian Sea.

### **Prospects and challenges for the Kazakh– Russian partnership in a new geopolitical environment**

In one of his statements, the President of Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has described the policy promoted by Kazakhstan's authorities as one of the most consistent and dedicated to the integrationist processes in the ex-Soviet space<sup>15</sup>. This approach has provided Russia with a pragmatic and effective partnership with this country over time.

Indeed, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the leadership of the new independent and sovereign state, which manages the country's business so far, has shown its willingness to promote a consistent foreign policy and keeping as many elements as possible from the Soviet Union. Moreover, Nursultan Nazarbayev, unlike most of the leaders of the new independent states, has asked to be accepted in the new created organization called Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which was set up in December 1991. The other countries have hesitated to become part of this initiative.

Even if the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had no predicted success, later Kazakhstan has shown its willingness to be a founder member of the Eurasian Economic Union.<sup>16</sup> Being located between Russia and China, and having sufficient energy resources available not only for the internal needs, this country managed to take over the leadership among the Central Asian countries, especially in terms of macroeconomic results.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> К 22 Казахстанско-российские отношения на современном этапе: Информационно-аналитический обзор, ed. coord. S. Mashimbaev, Alma-Ata, 2007, pag. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Later named Eurasian Economic Union.

If the partnership between the EU and Kazakhstan has been analyzed in the first part of this paper, in this section we are going to examine the Russia-Kazakhstan bilateral relationship. The question to be answered is as follows: how effective is the bilateral Moscow-Astana partnership, including within the Eurasian Economic Union, given the fact that Russia promotes its own interests in a unilateral manner using foreign policy instruments less advantageous for its partners? Another question to be answered relates to how Belarus involvement in this regional cooperation project has influenced the institutional setting of EAEU that Nursultan Nazarbayev has sustained from the very beginning.

Moscow-Astana bilateral relationship has begun with the statement of sovereignty of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Kazakhstan, adopted on 25 October 1990<sup>17</sup>. Almost a year after the declaration of sovereignty, on August 17, 1991, a joint statement of Nursultan Nazarbayev and Boris Yeltsin, "On the creation of a common economic space", was signed in Almaty. Through this statement, Kazakhstan has promoted the idea of joining a regional co-operation formula, with a set of priorities regarding the bilateral economic and social issues, as well as maintaining connections between all republics that were members of the USSR. These were the first steps taken towards the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, although initially the idea was to set up only an economic committee with the purpose to bring together republics with similar problems. In December 1991, in Almaty, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was announced. Kazakhstan has tried to position itself as a catalyst for regional integration projects.

CIS failures have not minimized Astana's interest for the regional initiatives promoted by Moscow, even though they have shown that sometimes the results of difficult and prolonged negotiations will not be taken into account if Russia's economic interest can not be met. For example, this is the case of the Free Trade Area negotiation within the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The debates on the creation of the free trade area within the CIS have been rather difficult. On April 15, 1994, the CIS Free Trade Area Agreement<sup>18</sup> was signed by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Ukraine, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. After five years, in 1999, an additional protocol was ratified and

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<sup>17</sup>«Казakhstan». Национальная энциклопедия, 2 том . Человек с книгой. Статьи и публикации, Культурное наследие Национальный проект, 2015, <http://www.madenimura.kz/ru/culture-legacy/books/book/kazakhstan-nacionalnaa-enciklopedia-2-tom?category=all&page=151>

<sup>18</sup> Зона свободной торговли в странах СНГ: история создания, RIA Novosti, Moscow, July 30, 2012, <https://ria.ru/spravka/20120730/713035602.html>

introduced certain changes to the original agreement. Later on, Moscow was the one to hesitate on signing the final document.

The functioning of the Free Trade Area could have damaged the Russian state budget with important financial resources from the trade of natural resources, especially energy resources, to the other signatory states. It was only in 2011 when the talks advanced towards the signing of a Free Trade Area Treaty.<sup>19</sup> Only eight of the 11 states that participated in the initial negotiations for the creation of the Free Trade Area within the CIS have signed the final version of the document.<sup>20</sup>

The co-operation format adopted and ratified by the signatory states is no longer valid in the original formula. Vladimir Putin signed an order in 2015 whereby from January 1, 2016<sup>21</sup> the Russian Federation interrupted the action of the Free Trade Area Treaty regarding Ukraine. This is one of the effects of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which began in March 2014, after Crimea annexation.

The modest results obtained within the CIS, as was mentioned above, have not diminished Kazakhstan's interest in participating in the development of new regional economic integration models, where Russia is the main actor. Thus, the Astany leadership participated in the creation of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan<sup>22</sup>, and then to the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union, which today counts five member states.<sup>23</sup>

Officially, the EAEU was built on the same principles of equality of all participants and respect for their sovereignty and independence in foreign policy decisions. However, there have been several difficulties faced by participating actors. From the beginning this initiative has been considered to be the reflection of Russia's hegemony in the region, which negatively affected the

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<sup>19</sup> ДОГОВОР о зоне свободной торговли, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Minsk, 2011,

<http://cis.minsk.by/reestr/ru/printPreview/text?id=3183>

<sup>20</sup> Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Tadjikistan and Ukraine. After the Russian – Georgian war from August 2008, the Georgian government decided to leave the CIS. Georgia is only part of the previously signed treaties.

<sup>21</sup> Договор о зоне свободной торговли СНГ, RIA Novosti, Moscow, December 16, 2015,

<https://ria.ru/spravka/20151216/1343259840.html>

<sup>22</sup> The initiative to create the Russia – Belarus-Kazakhstan Customs Union was launched in 2007. The project has developed rapidly, and so in 2010 the single customs tariff has already been introduced and the Customs Code has been adopted. The co-operation advanced through the abolition of border control in 2011. In the same year, the three speeches by the presidents of the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan, published in Izvestia (October 2011), have launched the initiative to create the Eurasian Union. With this initiative, the three States leaders launched an official invitation to join this project not only for the former Soviet space, but also for other European or Asian states. The initiative was interpreted as a new attempt by Moscow to recreate the Soviet Union. Another opinion was that the EAEU was Russia's response to the EU's Eastern Partnership project.

<sup>23</sup> The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is formed by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. Also, within EAEU was signed an Agreement for a Free Trade Area with Vietnam and negotiates another one with New Zealand.

image of the future organization. Russian experts were not sure that the model proposed by Moscow to its partners was well defined and responded to the main problems faced by government authorities under rather complicated global economic conditions. EAEU has been built upon EU institutional model, but adapted to the style of governance characteristic of most of the actors involved: vertical projection of political decisions and little freedom of action without Moscow's approval. Furthermore, Lukashenko's hesitation to sign certain documents has delayed the application of essential provisions for the good functioning of the new trade rules, in particular those of the Customs Code. This also made political dialogue among the founding members of the project more difficult and Moscow was often obliged to anticipate internal political crises within the EAEU.

Most challenges for Kazakhstan have been related to the extent to which the new established organization could impact the domestic business environment. Kazakh entrepreneurs, as well as simple citizens, have initiated protests<sup>24</sup> during which they claimed their interests affected. The domestic market, especially in the northern part of the country, was invaded by Russian products, much cheaper and of a lower quality. Internal debates have begun to focus on the following: how will the Kazakh economic and political independence be restricted if Kazakhstan decides to promote a foreign policy that is against Russia's interests in the region? The answer to this question was demanded by an important part of Kazakh society when Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014, arguing its actions by selective compliance with international law. Russia was the unpredictable element, and the tools and strategies used to achieve its geopolitical goals could no longer be classified as "predictable" or in accordance with a "stable strategic partnership."

The newly created regional context called for a rethinking of the bilateral relationship with Moscow. As stated before, „... *from Astana's perspective, Kremlin's policy towards Ukraine can be considered dangerous since it shows Russia's determination to interfere with the domestic affairs of its neighbours in the pursuit of its own interests. Furthermore, this policy reveals and raises the price a country needs to pay for its potential attempts to break free from the Russian zone of influence.*”<sup>25</sup>

For the government authorities in Astana, the solution was simple and similar to the previous strategy: stability and continuity, both within the international organizations it was part of, and in their bilateral partnership with Russia. However, this partnership could no longer be

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<sup>24</sup> Kazakhstan: Landmark Eurasian Union Treaty Signed Amid Protests and Arrests, Eurasianet, May 29, 2014, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/68416>

<sup>25</sup> Aleksandra Jarosiewicz, Kazakhstan's attitude towards integration with Russia: less love, more fear, OSW, May 26, 2014, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2014-05-26/kazakhstan-attitude-towards-integration-russia-less-love-more>

compared to the period before March, 2014, before the Crimea annexation. By turning the West into a major international opponent, Moscow has focused on identifying new partnerships or deepening old and effective ones, demanding or forcing to be supported by states like Kazakhstan, Belarus, or Armenia in international fora, such as the UN. Thus, this Central Asian country reached between the overlapping of Russia's political and economic interests in the region. The situation was complicated with the launch of the Eurasian Economic Union on January 1st, 2015, and the decrease, in this context, of the external economic opportunities for Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan has not hesitated to demonstrate continuity and loyalty towards Russia, although the government has acted with greater caution in relation to Moscow, but also with other actors in the region. Fear that it can follow the same pattern as Ukraine has not disappeared. Approximately 22% of the country's population are Russian ethnics<sup>26</sup> - a solid argument to influence the content of future domestic or foreign public policies. Through invoking the country's modernization goals, under the pressure of new international economic trends, the need for technology and increased competitiveness, Astana's government has succeeded in promoting domestic policies with minimal institutional and bureaucratic effects, but which have diminished to some extent the dependence on Russia. The authorities have turned to historical memory and the drama faced by the nation in the Soviet era: the loss of human lives, the negative impact on the social structure, culture, traditions and religious beliefs.

However, without operating and reforming the political system, encouraging the political elite to transform itself, without consolidating measures of domestic social cohesion, the country remains defenseless in the face of external threats. Transformation must take place, even with the risk of temporary social destabilization. Otherwise, if the reform process will take place after Nazarbayev's departure, the struggle will no longer be in the interests of the citizens, but for taking over the power. Nursultan Nazarbayev still has enough credibility to assume the reforms. Therefore, he must find the will to make the transition less painful for his own voters.

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<sup>26</sup> CIA World Factbook, This page was last updated on July 9, 2017,  
[http://www.indexmundi.com/kazakhstan/demographics\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/kazakhstan/demographics_profile.html)

## Conclusions

EU engagement in Kazakhstan was policy oriented to the energy field, leaving behind the political and legal sensitive issues of Astana's government. This twofold approach has established inconsistency in the EU strategic actions for Kazakhstan. The European structures should reaffirm their commitment for the ongoing reforming process in Kazakhstan and to underline the institution-building and rule of law as key priorities for their bilateral relations with this country. Following this rationale, the EU should manage their financial assistance in strong interdependence with the government capacity to deliver reforms in the upcoming years.

Kazakhstan has a strategic position in the region and its foreign policy pendulates based on the opportunities offered by its international partners. According to Weitz, under the Nazarbayev regime, 'Kazakh officials have pursued a 'multi-vector' foreign policy that has sought to maintain good relations with the most important external great powers'<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, a broader EU impact in Kazakhstan can be reached only through a reformed partnership with Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union as a whole. Nonetheless, a strategic operational vision for Central Asia could transform EU from a payer into a real player in the region.

Russia is a difficult partner, which does not always respect the rules and norms it imposes on its partners. That is why today we are witnessing a rethinking of Kazakhstan's foreign and domestic policy and a re-evaluation of the strategic partnership with Moscow. The (almost) invisible reform of the public institutions and the political system in Kazakhstan are primarily due to external challenges and threats, especially those coming from Russia. Diversification of external opportunities requires more resources in order to achieve national targets. Promoting a prudent foreign policy could be an appropriate strategy for this country, but not a sustainable one for a long time period.

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Weitz, *Kazakhstan and New International Politics of Eurasia*, Central Asia - Caucasus Institute, Massachusetts, 2007, p. 5, retrieved 14 April 2017, [http://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2008\\_07\\_SRP\\_Weitz\\_Kazakhstan-Eurasia.pdf](http://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2008_07_SRP_Weitz_Kazakhstan-Eurasia.pdf).

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К 22 Казахстанско-российские отношения на современном этапе: Информационно-аналитический обзор, ed. coord. S. Mashimbaiev, Alma-Ata, 2007

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