



NEWSLETTER

August-October 2007

Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia¹

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¹ This newsletter is edited by the APRODEV Policy Officer for Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, Colombe de Mercey. On behalf of Aproxdev’s member agencies she heads the Aproxdev program with partners in the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia to foster their networking capacity and ability to access EU funds while promoting their involvement in advocacy and lobby activities. For further information on APRODEV and its Working Group on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, please contact [c.de.mercey \(a\) aprodev.net](mailto:c.de.mercey@aprodev.net)

NEWS FROM APRODEV NETWORK

Evaluation of the Balkan Civil Society Development Network Programme 2004-2007

The Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN) is a (informal) network of 12 civil society and ecumenical organizations from 7 countries and territories in South East Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo). During its programme 2004-2007, the BCSDN organized a number of capacity-building activities (trainings, exchange and study visits) and information-sharing activities (website, databases, Balkan Civic Practices publication) based on partners/members needs.

The evaluation report of the BCSDN Programme 2004-2007 has been prepared by a team of consultants, consisting of John Beauclerck (INTRAC, GB) and Plamen Sivov (Pokrov Foundation, Bulgaria). The evaluators were asked to assess network's activities in terms of its achievements, strengths and weaknesses in the period 2004-7 and based on these suggest possible further development of the network and its activities. Thus, the evaluation gives an important input into the planning process for the network's future.

The report of the external evaluation is available on request: thf@mcms.org.mk

Exchange of Central Asia Platform representatives to BCSDN network secretariat

A delegation from the Central Asian Platform (CAP) visited the BCSDN Secretariat between 16 and 18 July, 2007. The aim of the visit was to exchange experience between the two platforms and define joint possibilities for cooperation.

The three representatives of the CAP were: Gulmira Jamanova, CAP Regional Coordinator, Director of CASDIN, Kazakhstan; Baktybek Shamkeyev, CAP member, Director of RDC-Elet, Kyrgyzstan and Djamila Kushchubekova, CAP Regional Secretariat, Program Manager of DCCA, Kyrgyzstan. The BCSDN Secretariat was presented by Tanja Hafner Ademi, BCSDN Coordinator and Zdenka Videnova, Assistant Coordinator. The first day of the visit was dedicated to presentation of MCIC, the host organization and the BCSDN network, which is seated in the organization. The second day was devoted to presentation of CAP and discussion on possibilities for joint cooperation.

Launch of NEWW Gender Watch reports: EC aid in post-soviet countries lacks gender perspective

On 11th September, the NEWW Gender Watch reports were launched, and their results were discussed with European Commission officials and civil society actors.

Expert reports from nominated countries were written in order to compare (from a gender perspective) old and new European financial instruments in three sub-regions. These sub-regions were represented by one country respectively: Georgia (representing Caucasus), Ukraine (representing EU Neighbouring countries) and Tajikistan (representing Central Asia). All reports include basic information about women's situation in their country, describe the financial aid received from various sources (not only the EU) and their impact on gender, as well as a description of the instruments allocated in the EU budget for the period 2007-2013.





Discrimination based on gender is rampant in Georgia, Ukraine and Tajikistan, the three countries examined in the study. Job ads in Ukrainian newspapers routinely state that women should not apply; more than half of Tajik maternity hospitals lack central heating; and there are no female owners of large businesses in Georgia.

As part of a policy called 'mainstreaming', the European Commission is required to take account of gender issues in all of its development aid activities. Yet gender programmes are

largely absent from the strategy papers drawn up for the three countries in the 2007-13 period. The study describes the strategy paper for Ukraine as ‘gender blind’ because it does not grapple with such issues as women’s unemployment, the gulf between male-female wages, women’s health and participation in decision-making. Because it “*completely lacks a gender dimension*”, the strategy stands little chance of eradicating poverty for either men or women, the study concludes. A €31 million strategy for the entire Central Asia region, meanwhile, does not contain “*any concrete programme or action on the promotion of gender equality.*” Similarly, the Commission’s aid plan for Georgia does not commit to any programmes on women’s rights.

More information:

<http://www.neww.org.pl/en.php/conference/raport/0.html>

1.  [EU Gender Watch - Summary Report](#)
2.  [EU Gender Watch Georgia](#)
3.  [EU Gender Watch Ukraine](#)
4.  [EU Gender Watch Tajikistan](#)

GENERAL EU NEWS

New Thematic Programmes and Horizontal instrument: how will they work?

None of the new EC thematic programmes established for the period 2007-2013 is yet operational in spite of the fact that the multi-annual thematic strategies 2007-2010 have all been adopted before the summer. Until very recently, uncertainty on the way the 6 thematic programmes and the horizontal instruments on human rights and democracy and on stability would be implemented remained complete. Certain Thematic Strategies (TS) are now available on the bright new [website of EuropeAid](#) but the Annual Action Plans 2007 (AAP) that should guide their operationalisation are not yet adopted.

Endorsement of several annual action plans by the DCI Member States Committee is planned for the month of October with a consultation of the European Parliament in parallel but the pace of the process differs from one programme to the other.

A few civil society consultation meetings have taken place to discuss certain thematic strategies (Investing in people, Human rights and democracy, Environment) but **no consultation was organised to discuss the AAPs**. The first occasion offered to civil society actors to hear about the content of the AAPs was on 13 September at a “*quadrilogue meeting*” organised by the new Unit F1 of Europeaid, headed by Mr Bouratsis and responsible of the coordination of thematic programmes and relations with civil society. The so-called quadrilogue meetings are an outcome of the Palermo process (started in 2003) and a place where the Commission, NGO representatives, members of the European Parliament and representatives of the Member States share information and exchange views on the thematic programmes and EC funding for civil society.

No action plan was handed over to NGO representatives before or at the quadrilogue meeting but several of them were rapidly introduced by power point presentations (see summary presentations below).

Thematic programme for NSA and LA: Annual Action Plan 2007

Budget line	21-03-01	21-03-02	Total
Type of actor	NSA	LA	
in country interventions (local calls by delegations)	99,265,000	10,685,00 0	109,950,000
multi-country interventions (Brussels call)	27,209,000	7,838,500	35,047,500
LDCs/LICs (excluded from priority list) (Brussels call)	23,178,900	6,676,500	29,855,400
Total objective 1	149,652,900	25,200,00 0	174,852,900
Objective 2: development education and awareness raising (Brussels call)	24,800,000	4,200,000	29,000,000
Objective 3: networking and coordination (Brussels call and targeted actions)	3,400,000	600,000	4,000,000
Grand Total	177,852,900	30,000,00 0	207,852,900

The annual action plan for the implementation of the new thematic programme on Non-state actors (NSA) and local authorities (LA) has been adopted by the Member states DCI committee. The way the budget will be distributed among the different objectives, actors and countries is presented in the table. All developing countries eligible under the DCI regulation are eligible for the multi-country interventions. It is enough to work in two different countries to be considered as multi-country, being part or not of the list of priority countries is not a criteria, all developing countries can be 'mixed' together.

The list of priority countries includes 68 countries; for these countries, delegations will prepare and publish local calls for proposals: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia are eligible.

The calls for proposals are expected by the end of 2007 or beginning of 2008.

The official EuropeAid website for that programme is:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/civil-society/working-documents_en.htm

It doesn't contain much information yet but we hope that it will be updated soon.

Prospects for other thematic programmes

According to the power point presentations at the quadrilogue meeting, the prospects for civil society participation in the other thematic programmes are quite disappointing.

No official information is yet available on the thematic programme for **Food Security**. However we understand from rumors that countries in crisis and fragile states will be the only eligible ones under that programme. As a result, a country like Ethiopia where the EC has supported civil society actions in the area of food security for years would not be eligible.

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights:

Apart from the NSA and LA programme, the EIDHR is the only instrument where civil society will play a central role. The 2007 and 2008 budgets will be implemented through a combination of central and local calls with 5 objectives

- human rights defenders
- torture

- death penalty
- children and armed conflict
- human rights dialogues

The central calls will cover basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, transnational activities (conflict conciliation and mediation, strengthening civil society), and international frameworks (CS campaigns supporting the ICC, HRD masters). Local calls will take place in 47 countries based on country-based support schemes.

Calls should be launched at the end of 2007 and in March 2008.

[Strategy paper](#)

Investing in People: Human and Social development:

In terms of funding, the total allocation of 117 million euros is divided into 6 components, two major ones: health and education and 4 minor ones: gender equality, culture, children and youth and employment. A limited share of 12% of the budget will be allocated through 3 calls for proposals. The rest will be transferred to UN organisations (GFATM, UNICEF, ILO, UNIFEM)

The two main components will be exclusively implemented through targeted actions. In other words, the Health component of 62 million euros will be allocated to the annual EU contribution to the Global Fund on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria while the Education budget of 22 million euros will be transferred to the Fast Track Initiative Catalyst Fund with a joint management with the World Bank in both cases.

Out of the 13.4 million allocated to gender equality in 2007, 6.6 million will finance targeted action with UNIFEM (gender responsive budgeting in new aid modalities) and UNICEF (abandonment of harmful societal norms) and 6.8 million will finance a call for proposals restricted to the Mediterranean countries that support the Istanbul's conclusions on strengthening the role of women in societies (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Gaza Strip, Syria and Tunisia).

The two other calls for proposals foreseen under this programme in 2007 are on children affected by armed conflicts and trafficking of children (3.4 million) and in support of regional networking of cultural actors and support for coordinating cultural policies at regional level (4.3 million).

Environment and natural resources:

The programme is divided in 3 main components: 20.3 million allocated to targeted actions, 29 million for 3 calls for proposals and 25 million for the GEEREF (special fund on energy efficiency and renewable energies in developing countries).

A general call for proposals amounting 22.8 million euros will support actions in the areas of forest, climate change, biodiversity, desertification and forest management and governance (FLEGT).

A call with limited budget (1.1 million) will focus on the post-2012 agreement on climate change and outreach Greenhouse gas emissions trading. Another call for an amount of 5.1 million euros will target energy producing countries in Africa and Central Asia to help the management of their energy resources. A long list of targeted actions with specialised international actors and the World Bank will totalise 19.45 million.

[Strategy paper](#)

Migration and Asylum:

The AAP 2007 was already adopted by the DCI committee in July 2007 but the EP scrutiny phase lasts until end of September and a final decision will only be taken in October. Part of the 2007 and 2008 budgets will be used to finance a general call for proposals for the two years with a budget of 61.9 million euros.

Many different types of actions are foreseen in the multi-annual strategy and in the absence of the detailed AAP it is difficult to know what type of actions will be covered by the call.

[Strategy paper](#)

Stability instrument:

The specific objectives of the Stability instrument are:

- to Provide a response in a situation of crisis or emerging crisis;
- In the context of stable conditions, to help build capacity both to address specific global and transregional threats and to address pre- and post-crisis situations

The first aspect of the work, in situation of crisis, is not subject to programming, we don't know yet how it will be implemented and what role civil society will play.

For the work in stable conditions, the AAP 2007 includes 6 projects for a total budget of 35 million euros to be implemented through direct award, administrative agreements or joint management with international organisations:

- Expert Support Facility;
- Support to International Science and Technology Centre (Moscow), and the Science and Technology Centre (Ukraine);
- Knowledge management system on CBRN trafficking
- Combating illicit trafficking of NR materials in Russia and certain ENPI countries
- Export control assistance
- Fight against drugs trafficking from/to Afghanistan (First Phase)

No Call for Proposals will be launched in 2007. According to its 2007-2008 indicative programme, the Commission intended to establish a **Peace Building Partnership** with the objective of building the capacity of the international system, including multilateral organisations and non-state actors, for response in situations of crisis and in post-crisis stabilisation. Funding would be awarded through competitive and targeted grants to non-state actors and international organisations. A first call for proposal was planned in 2007 but has apparently been postponed.

[Strategy paper](#) and [2007-2008 indicative programme](#).

The Commission's international priorities for 2008

The European Commission has just adopted its new work programme for 2008 which focuses on the globalisation agenda. Regarding immigration, the Commission will propose further steps towards a common migration policy combining well managed labour migration and effective action against illegal migration and human trafficking. Regarding the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), it will continue to support political, economic and social reforms in partner countries, providing a tailor-made response to needs of ENP countries within a common policy framework. Building on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the ENP is also expected to develop the longstanding regional dialogue and cooperation with all the countries of the Mediterranean region.

<http://www.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/07/1578&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm



External Relations Council

The 2824th session of the External Relations Council of the European Union took place on 15-16 October 2007, in Luxembourg. EU-Russia Summit preparations and the situation in the Middle East were among the points to be discussed at this session.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/96469.pdf

European Investment Bank: Environmental and Social Practices Handbook

This EIB handbook has been made public in August 2007. The present EIB "Environmental and Social Practices Handbook" describes the internal processes and practices of the Bank, particularly the work carried out by its Projects Directorate (PJ), to ensure that all financing activities are consistent with its environmental policy. The Handbook is targeted at PJ, but it is also aimed at other internal services, to help with their own work and for the better understanding of the requirements of the Bank. The Handbook refers to the variety of financing instruments deployed by the Bank and its role at various stages in the project cycle, though the focus is on the appraisal of "investment loans. The EIB environmental policy is subject to periodic review, revision and approval by the Bank's Governing Bodies. The Handbook and its accompanying Annexes are "live" documents that undergo continuous improvement with the evolution of knowledge and experience, as well as changes in policy.

<http://www.eib.org/about/publications/environmental-and-social-practices-handbook.htm?>

EASTERN EUROPE AND THE CAUCASUS

Preparation of progress reports: the European Commission welcomes inputs from civil society actors

12 out of the 16 countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy have adopted a joint Action Plan, promoting a reform agenda; specific to each country.

In this framework, the European Commission prepares regularly progress reports, assessing the implementation of the Action Plans. The Commission is planning to issue the next progress reports on Action Plan implementation in **April 2008** for all ENP countries having an Action Plan with the EU. The Commission services welcome any input from civil society, preferably **until mid-December 2007**.

The first progress reports for seven ENP countries were issued in December 2006 and can be found on the Commission website:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm#3

list of EC Delegations and offices in third countries:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/delegations/intro/web.htm

“Working Together – Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy” Conference

On 3 September, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, hosted in Brussels the first ever meeting of Ministers and other representatives from all of the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with their counterparts from the European Union.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is a partnership between the EU and its neighbours in support of the EU's neighbours' reform processes. This Conference was building on a Commission Communication on “[Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy](#)” which

proposed several tracks to be further developed under the ENP. Discussion in the morning Ministerial-level session focused particularly on trade liberalisation, “mobility”, climate change and energy security. In the afternoon, workshops were also opened to non-governmental stakeholders from civil society, business groupings and academics.

Unfortunately, the “common values” at the heart of the ENP - such as rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and democratisation as well as core elements of EU external policies such as sustainable development, poverty eradication and gender equality - were not highlighted as key dimensions of a strengthened ENP aiming at peace, stability and prosperity.

The EU is seeking to strengthen the ENP in various areas, which are at the top of the EU agenda:

- “economic integration” by ways of deep free trade agreement and a push for regional agreements

- “energy and energy security, especially with Azerbaijan, Morocco, Egypt and Algeria;

- “free travel and fight against illegal migration” (through “mobility partnerships” still to be defined);

- “financial assistance to those partners which make progress on their governance objectives.

It further allows using EU funds to leverage a larger sum of money from other international financial institutions” (through an extended mandate of the EIB). The criteria to allocate extra financial assistance under the so-called “governance facility” are nevertheless not yet clear, as well as what falls under “governance objectives”.

Following the conference, 20 civil society representatives from Southern Mediterranean, Southern Caucasus, Eastern Europe and EU countries, among which Aprodev and several Aprodev partner organisations, have been writing an [open letter](#) to the European Commission President Barroso and the External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner. The letter insists on the need to involve civil society as a true partner of the ENP. It proposes alternative ways in which the European Neighbourhood Policy could be strengthened, such as by guaranteeing that further trade liberalisation in the region does not lead to negative social and environmental consequences, by promoting human rights and gender equality as top reform priorities.

EC website on the conference:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/conferences_2007_en.htm

NGO letter:

<http://www.aprodev.net/cee/documents/documents/civil%20society%20letter%20on%20ENP%20conference.pdf>

“Strengthening the ENP”: further proposals by the European Commission

In December 2006, two and a half years after the EU adopted the European Neighbourhood Policy, the European Commission published a [report on progress](#), together with recommendations about how the policy could be further strengthened. The Commission reported that progress was being made but that, since the partners face up-front reform costs now, for benefits which only come later, the EU should provide more incentives now.

In response, the EU’s Heads of State and Government (European Council) asked the incoming German Presidency to prepare a report, for their next meeting in June 2007, on progress made in implementing these proposals. EU Foreign Ministers adopted [Conclusions on the ENP](#) in June 2007, as well as the German Presidency [Report](#) which was presented to the June European Council.

(more information in the previous newsletter,
<http://www.aprodev.net/cee/documents/newsletter/2007/Newsletter%20July%202007.pdf>)

As part of the preparation of this report, the Commission presented more detail on ideas in its December 2006 Communication, for instance on:

- What further economic integration could look like
- How people to people contacts the civil society dimension could be developed
- How a multilateral “thematic dimension (e.g. cooperation on issues such as energy, transport, environment, public health etc) could be added to the ENP as well as proposals in relation to Black Sea Synergy and on opening Community programmes and agencies to ENP partner countries.

Work on the implementation of these ideas continues.

The European Commission is **presently preparing a new Communication**, taking stock of what has been proposed, discussed and achieved since its December; Communication on “Strengthening the ENP”. The next EC Communication is expected for December 2007.

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/strengthening_en.htm

Bilateral summits and cooperation councils:

20th EU/Russia summit

On 26 October, European and Russian leaders will meet in Mafra, Portugal for the 20th UE/Russia Summit. Discussions will include: the development of an early warning mechanism in case of potential energy supply difficulties, visa dialogue, fight against drugs, investment dialogue and Russia WTO accession. Parallel to the Summit, an agreement will be signed on further expansion of trade in steel and steel products. On the eve of the Summit, an EU-Russia Industrialists Round Table meeting as well as the very first Permanent Partnership Council in the field of Culture took place. This 20th EU-Russia Summit coincides with the tenth anniversary of the signature of the Strategic Cooperation Agreement between Moscow and Brussels.

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/summit_10_07/index.htm

EU-Ukraine Summit in Kiev

On September 14, Kiev hosted the EU/ Ukraine summit. It was an occasion to take stock of the positive developments in EU-Ukraine relations since the last Summit and an opportunity for the EU to underline its support for the continuing political and economic reforms in Ukraine.

An important part of the new Enhanced Agreement replacing the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is a **deep and comprehensive free trade area (FTA)**. The European Commission will launch talks on this FTA as soon as Ukraine has completed its accession process to the WTO. Both trade between Ukraine and the EU and Foreign Direct Investment from the EU are increasing steadily. In the area of justice and home affairs, work continues apace, with the EU and Ukraine recently finalising agreements on visa facilitation and on readmission. Energy and the environment were also on the agenda, with leaders taking stock of the implementation of the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding on energy

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/ukraine/intro/index.htm

http://www.eu2007.pt/UE/vEN/Noticias_Documentos/20070911CimeiraUEUcrania.htm

EU – Armenia Cooperation Council

The Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia held its eighth meeting on 16 October 2007. The parties discussed the implementation of the Armenian ENP Action Plan endorsed in November 2006 which sets the priorities for cooperation with the UE. They took stock of developments in the South Caucasus. They discussed political and economic reforms in Armenia and progress made to decommission the Medzamor nuclear power plant. The EU encouraged Armenia to continue its efforts aimed at reaching common European values and principles. It stressed that it is very important that the next Presidential elections in Armenia in 2008 should correspond to international standards.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/96556.pdf

EU - Azerbaijan Cooperation Council

The Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan held its eighth meeting on 16 October 2007. The parties discussed the implementation of the ENP Action Plan which sets the priorities for cooperation with the UE. They took stock of developments in the South Caucasus, as well as political and economic reforms in Azerbaijan. The Council also discussed energy and transport issues. The EU underlined the importance of the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as media freedom in the country. On the occasion, the two Parties also signed the Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, extending the provisions of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to bilateral trade in textiles.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/96557.pdf

EU- Georgia Cooperation Council

The Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Georgia held its eighth meeting on 16 October 2007. The parties discussed the implementation of the ENP Action Plan. They took stock of political developments as well as economic reforms in Georgia. The EU side noted substantial progress achieved in a number of areas and encouraged Georgia to continue its efforts aimed at a strengthened economic integration with the EU. The EU stressed its expectation that Georgia's judiciary system and democratic institutions need to function according to the rule of law and to their respective institutional competences.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/96558.pdf

Moldova

EU- Moldova agreements on the facilitation of the issuance of visa and on readmission

Visa facilitation and readmission agreements between the European Community and Moldova were signed on 10 October in Brussels. The European Commission started the negotiations of the two Community agreements in February 2007 and succeeded in finalising the whole process in April 2007.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/96380.pdf

€4 million to reduce poverty in Moldova

On top of the regular annual assistance funds for Moldova, the European Commission grants €4 million to tackle chronic poverty and focus on the needs of the most deprived population. This grant is allocated through the Commission's Food Security Programme 2006 and was disbursed on the 3rd of September 2007. The grant will further contribute to encourage the development of a more productive agricultural sector, thus promoting long-term food security,



a stable supply of food, and secure incomes for rural farming populations. The European Commission has further assisted Moldova through the TACIS instrument which has been replaced since 1st January 2007 by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

<http://www.delmda.ec.europa.eu/whatsnew/pdf/04092007PressReleaseFS-en.pdf>

European Neighbourhood Instrument implementing rules for cross-border cooperation programmes

The implementing rules for the cross-border cooperation programmes under the European Partnership and Neighbourhood instrument have been adopted.

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2007/l_210/l_21020070810en00100025.pdf

The Norwegian Government's strategy for Belarus

The Norwegian Government is stepping up its efforts to promote democratic development and respect for human rights in Belarus and is now launching a comprehensive strategy for this endeavour. A general outline of the strategy was presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in an address to the Storting (the Norwegian Parliament) on 12 June 2007.

In connection with its efforts to promote democratic development in Belarus, the Government has increased the funds allocated for project cooperation with the country from NOK 4 million in 2006 to NOK 9 million in 2007. A further increase is envisaged for 2008.

Read Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre's address to the Storting on 12 June 2007 [here](#). A translation of the whole strategy can be found [here](#) (PDF version).

BALKANS

Enlargement Strategy and Progress Reports 2007

On 6 November 2007 the Commission will adopt its annual *strategy document* explaining its policy on EU enlargement. The document includes also a summary of the progress made over the last twelve months by each candidate and potential candidate: Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244).

In addition, the 2007 *progress reports* will be published, where the Commission services monitor and assess the achievements of each of the candidate and potential candidates over the last year. The so-called "enlargement package" contains also proposals to the Council for revised European and Accession partnerships for each country, in which the Commission lists areas where further reforms are needed. Finally, the Multi-annual Financial Framework sets out the financial assistance available to support the reform efforts of the candidate and potential candidates.

All documents will be available on the following page:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/reports_nov_2007_en.htm

According to the *EU Observer*, the reports say that many problems remain to be solved in the region, and that the EU would delay the launch of membership talks with Macedonia.

Information from the EU observer:

“The EU will not give the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia the green light for starting accession talks next week as the Balkan country had hoped, with the European Commission citing political shortcomings for the delay.

According to an annual commission evaluation report to be published next week, seen by Macedonian newspaper Dnevnik, the parliament and the administration are not functioning well enough, and important reforms are still not completed.

On top of that, due to its internal political disputes, the functioning of the Macedonian parliament has been disturbed and there has not been enough dialogue between the party in power and the opposition for a long time, says the document.

As a result many laws are still blocked, in particular concerning the reform of the judicial system. Brussels also criticises the fact that because the Macedonian government realised there were delays, it has now hastily speeded up the writing of new laws - harming their quality.

The report also says that problems typical of countries of the Balkan region – such as lagging reforms of the judiciary and corruption problems – have still not been tackled. “According to the commission report, corruption remains "widespread."

<http://euobserver.com/9/25065>

<http://euobserver.com/9/25069>

Commission and Serbia complete negotiations on stabilisation and association agreement

On 10 September the Commission completed the negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia, an important step in the country's road towards European integration. Before initialling the Agreement the Commission will consult with the EU Member States on the text and will assess progress in Serbia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement is based on the gradual implementation of a free trade area and reforms designed to achieve the adoption of EU standards. The negotiations with Serbia, which had been suspended because of its non-cooperation with the ICTY, had started up again on June 13th. The strategy for Serbia's accession published in November 2006 by the Commission includes the signature of the association and stabilisation agreement, the development of trade relations, aid for democratisation, education and capacity building.

Commission decisions on multi-annual indicative planning documents for 2007-2009:

On 21 June 2007, the European Commission has finalised its planning for the financial assistance the candidate and potential candidate countries will receive in 2007-2009 under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). An overall indicative amount of €3.96 billion will help Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (under UN Security Council Resolution 1244) enhance political and economic reform and development, on their path towards EU membership.

[Albania](#)  [154 KB]

[Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)  [130 KB]

[Croatia](#)  [343 KB]

[The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#)  [291 KB]

[Kosovo under UNSCR 1244](#)  [143 KB]

[Montenegro](#)  [157 KB]

[Serbia](#)  [207 KB]



[Turkey](#) [269 KB]

[Multibeneficiary](#) [207 KB]

[Frequently asked questions on Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance \(IPA\)](#)

4th EU - Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia stabilisation and association council meeting, Brussels 24 July 2007 - Joint press release:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/95474.pdf

Evaluation of the EC Country Strategy in Albania 1996-2001

EC support to Albania has been encompassed by a Country Strategy since 1995. The evolution of assistance policies was interrupted by the financial crisis of 1997, which in turn led to a major reassessment of policy by all donors. Since 1999, EC programmes have been realigned towards the priority of EU integration, associated with the Stabilization and Accession Process. The evaluators feel that without sustainable economic development, built on functioning public institutions, and strong civil society, this priority may be unrealistic.

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/evaluation/document_index/2001/951607_docs.htm

[Summary](#)

[Final Report](#)

[Note by the Evaluation Unit](#)

[Response of the EC services](#)

26 July 2007: new Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) comes into force
(Information from EC Enlargement newsletter):

The newly enlarged and amended Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA 2006) came into force yesterday, 26 July 2007, for five parties - **Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Kosovo**. This ambitious and far-reaching agreement was signed by the five parties plus Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia in December 2006 following several months of intensive negotiations chaired by the Stability Pact and supported by the European Commission. In addition to harmonising the trade regime among the parties, the agreement also includes new areas of trade policy such as government procurement and intellectual property.

The new CEFTA should make an important contribution to economic development and regional co-operation. It complements the EU's Stabilisation and Association Agreements for the candidate and potential candidate countries of the Western Balkans; this comprehensive framework is supposed to boost trade and attract foreign investment, as it happened successfully in the past with Central European countries that eventually joined the EU. The European Commission has provided continuous political, technical and financial support, at every stage of the trade liberalisation process in the region.

Further information available at:

[Signing of new CEFTA \(19/12/2006\)](#) [Opening remarks of Commissioner Rhen at the CEFTA summit \(19/12/2006\)](#)

[Launch of the creation of the new CEFTA \(05/04/2006\)](#)

[For more information on the EU trade policy towards the Western Balkans](#)

European Agency for Reconstruction: [The EU Reconstructs the Wastewater Treatment Plant in Podgorica](#)

A €1.6 million project to reconstruct Montenegro's largest wastewater treatment plant in Podgorica has been completed. This marks a significant step towards achieving proper treatment of wastewater generated by the capital of Montenegro and its urban areas.

European Agency for Reconstruction: [EU launches new €1.5 million project to help curb money laundering in Macedonia](#)

The European Union has signed a €1.5 million 'twinning' contract with the Institute for Fiscal Studies of Spain and the Directorate for Money Laundering Prevention (DMLP) of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to strengthen the latter's administrative and technical ability to fight money laundering

CENTRAL ASIA

EC external aid managed by the delegation in Almaty (dated 31 July)

ongoing projects

http://www.delkaz.cec.eu.int/joomla/images/stories/CrisDataBase/list_active_public_new.pdf

projects in preparation

http://www.delkaz.cec.eu.int/joomla/images/stories/CrisDataBase/list_preparation_public_new.pdf

EC Assistance to Central Asia 2007: regional programming, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan

The future priorities of EC assistance under the 2007 programming will be the following:

The **regional component** of the assistance will support higher education reform and cooperation (Tempus IV, with a EC contribution of 5 million euros) and support to SME development (

The assistance through **Tempus IV** aims at contributing to an area of cooperation in the field of higher education involving the European Union and partner countries in the surrounding area (not only Central Asian countries). The programme will particularly help promote voluntary convergence with EU developments in the field of higher education deriving from the Lisbon agenda and the Bologna process.

The assistance for **SME Development** aims at promoting sustainable economic development of Central Asia Countries by encouraging the development of Small and Medium Enterprises. It will in particular aim at reinforcing the institutional skills and competences of Central Asian Business Intermediary Organisation, and at promoting closer linkages between Business Intermediary Organisation in the EU and Central Asian countries and contributing to regional economic integration.

The programmed aid to **Turkmenistan** will provide support to the modernisation of the education system in the country. Through a three-fold project, it will provide help to the modernisation strategy for the education and training system, for the improvement of: content of education and training and education and training sector staff development.

It will also provide Legal Capacity building, to support the development of a legal tool to consolidate the Turkmen legal terminology, Technical Assistance to the National Coordinating Unit (TANCU), and Targeted Policy Advice (in many different fields).

Lastly, the EC assistance under the 2007 programming will aim at strengthening the national capacity of Turkmenistan to promote and protect human rights, providing the country with an institutional strengthening and policy support facility.

In **Uzbekistan**, building on the successes of the former TACIS Institution Building & Partnership Programme (IBPP), the EC will fund a NGO Partnership Programme, to contribute to social dialogue and the improvement of living standards of vulnerable groups in the country. Social reintegration projects, assistance to the Uzbek NGO association for the creation of a training programme for NGOs and the reinforcement of four support facilities for rural NGOs are planned. EC assistance under the 2007 budget line will also aim at strengthening the Cameral Parliamentary system and networking with Regional Authorities. The project is to support the current process of reforms, and further democratisation in Uzbekistan by modernising the Uzbek Parliament and reinforcing its relationship with society.

Milder sanctions on Uzbekistan

(information from EastWeek, <http://osw.waw.pl/>)

“The EU head of diplomacy meeting in Luxembourg on 15 October once again eased the sanctions imposed on Uzbekistan following the brutal massacre of civilians in Andijan in May 2005. Currently the sanctions are limited to an embargo on arms sales to Uzbekistan. This decision is the outcome of a compromise between those member states which advocate a continuation, or even a toughening of sanctions, and those which firmly oppose this measure. The sanctions were imposed after the Uzbek security forces brutally suppressed a demonstration in Andijan. The EU then suspended the Partnership and Co-operation agreement (PCA) with Uzbekistan, imposed an embargo on arms sales to that country and prohibited twelve high-ranking Uzbek officials responsible for the massacre from entering the EU. It was stated that the sanctions would be lifted on condition that Tashkent admitted an independent investigation into the Andijan case. No such investigation has been carried out yet, but technical contacts within the PCA framework were resumed as early as November 2006, and the visa limitations were extended by just six months. The sanctions were eased again in May 2007 when the visa ban was restricted to eight officials. Under the most recent decision, only the embargo on arms sales remains in force, while the visa limitations have been lifted for a period of six months (but they may be restored if there is no improvement of the human rights situation in Uzbekistan). The EU is gradually lifting the sanctions imposed two years ago, despite the fact that Tashkent has failed to meet the necessary conditions and is merely pretending to be open to dialogue. This is due to the lack of agreement within the EU as to the future direction of co-operation with Uzbekistan, and illustrates the inefficacy of the EU policy on Central Asia.”