

The EU and Central Asia: between geopolitics and transnational challenges

A brainstorming workshop

12 November 2014

Residence Palace, Brussels

Programme

11:00-11:30 **Registration and welcoming coffee**

11:30-11.45 **Introduction to the workshop and tour de table**

Antonio Missiroli, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris and Alfredo Conte, EEAS, Brussels

11:45-13:00 **Panel 1 – Central Asia in a changing geopolitical landscape**

Central Asia is a region in flux. In geopolitical terms, it is potentially liable to two larger and evolving geopolitical blueprints run by Russia and China: respectively, the Eurasian Union and the New Silk Road project. In such a context, what are the foreseeable intentions of the two regional and global powers – and their ramifications for Central Asia? Do the five countries in-between perceive themselves as a regional bloc? And what are their individual positions towards these geopolitical shifts?

Chair Eva Gross, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Impulse Nicu Popescu, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Impulse Raffaello Pantucci, Royal United Services Institute, London

13:00-14:00 **Sandwich lunch**

14:00-15:15 **Panel 2 – Central Asia: transition and other challenges**

The five Central Asian republics face other challenges that have an impact on stability, security and prosperity. These include the challenge of political transitions, Islamic extremism, energy transit and, more generally, porous borders. Beyond governance and rule of law, the region also faces major socio-economic disparities. Energy and water serve both as conflict drivers as well as potential sources of wealth – and the same goes for trade and transportation routes. What is the role of regional security organisations? Can current efforts in supporting regional integration for post-withdrawal Afghanistan be connected with those of Central Asia? And what role may other sub-regional powers like India and Pakistan play?

Chair Eva Pejsova, EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris

Impulse Andrea Schmitz, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin

Impulse Jozef Lang, Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw

15:15-15:30 **Coffee break**

15:30-16:45 **The role of the EU: how central is Central Asia?**

The final session links the discussion (and findings) of the previous two panels with regards the EU's role in Central Asia. In view of the forthcoming stocktake of how the EU Central Asia strategy has been implemented since 2012, and in light of the institutional changes within the EU (including the new leadership), how can the EU's own interests best be defined and pursued? What could the contributions of the EEAS regarding conflict prevention and peace-building consist of, and how should the EU position itself *vis-à-vis* both the geopolitical shifts and the regional/transnational challenges? Where could the Union's experience add value? And what could a differentiated approach which takes into account the specific characteristics of the states in Central Asia look like?

Chair Mr Eduards Stiprais, Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Riga

Impulse Ambassador Meier-Klodt, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin

Impulse Luc Veron, European External Action Service, Brussels

15:45-17:00 **Wrap-up and concluding remarks**

17:00 **End of workshop**