

The EU – Tajikistan Cooperation

General framework

The legal framework for EU-Tajikistan bilateral relations is the [Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\)](#) in 1989 between the EU and the former Soviet Union, which was endorsed by Tajikistan by exchange of letter in 1994. Since December 2001, four EC-Tajikistan Joint Committees have taken place in the framework of the TCA dealing with trade, economic and cooperation issues. The Fifth Joint Committee will be held on 24 November in Brussels.

A [Partnership and Cooperation Agreement \(PCA\)](#) between the EU and Tajikistan was signed in Luxemburg on 11 October 2004, replacing the TCA. The PCA will heighten the EC's profile and EU interests in Tajikistan. It will reinforce the country's stability and the fight against drugs and terrorism. The PCA with Tajikistan is the most recent agreement to be negotiated with a CIS partner, and it brings EU relations with Tajikistan into line with relations with the other Central Asian countries. With ratification in 25 EU Member States still to be completed, the new PCA will probably not be fully operational before 2006/2007. Pending its ratification by the 25 Member States, an [Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade Related Matters](#) will be implemented. The Interim Agreement came into force on 1 May 2005. A Textiles Agreement, which was amended and extended various times, expired on 31 December 2004.

Economy and Bilateral Trade

Tajikistan remains the poorest of the former Soviet republics, after a civil war that destroyed infrastructure and institutions alike, ravaging the economy. Tajikistan has seen a period of robust recovery over the last 4 years, with GDP growing at an average of 10%. However, the country is still dependent on foreign aid and humanitarian assistance. The country's main economic motors are cotton and aluminium production as well as hydro-electric power Tajikistan has developed, together with the World Bank and IMF, a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

EU-Tajikistan trade relations are extremely limited. In 2004, the EU imported ? 198 million worth of Tajik goods, mainly aluminium, cotton and textiles. EU exports to Tajikistan totalled ? 69 million in 2004, mainly machinery, agricultural products, transport equipment and chemical products. The EU remains Tajikistan's first trade partner (followed by Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Switzerland and Iran).

Generalised System of Preferences - GSP. Preferential imports from Tajikistan are heavily concentrated in one sector only (textiles) but also include industrial products.

EU Assistance

The main assistance instruments used by the European Commission in Tajikistan are: Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS), the Food Security Programme (FSP), the Exceptional Financial Assistance (EFA), the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and humanitarian assistance (ECHO).

Food Security Programme (FSP)

The FSP promotes long-term food security, by improving agricultural productivity and

competitiveness, whilst alleviating the impact of transition and reforms. The FSP focuses on the poorest of the population through budget support combined with technical assistance to the Ministries of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Protection of Tajikistan. The FSP is also supporting a number of agricultural projects with European NGOs, for which 25 m was allocated for 2002-2004. The budgetary support amounts to 7-8 m annually.

For more information, please follow this link: [FSP page](#)

European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) was launched in August 2003 with a budget of 300,000 for 2003-2004, to promote human rights, support penal reform and prisoner's rights, democracy and good governance, media freedom, rule of law and security structures (police/armed forces), as well as conflict prevention.

For more information, please follow this link: [EIDHR page](#)

Technical Assistance (TACIS)

TACIS is a European Union initiative, which supports the process of transition to market economies and democratic societies in CIS countries. A dialogue-driven approach to programming better addresses the differing needs and priorities of the partner countries. In line with this new approach, National Coordinating Units (NCU) have been established in the partner countries to participate more effectively into the programming of the EC technical assistance. In Tajikistan, the definition of TACIS priorities takes into account EU/EC's cooperation objectives and the country's own policy agenda, including those set in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

The core objective of the EC assistance strategy for Central Asia is to promote the stability and security of the countries of Central Asia, to assist in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. The following priority areas of cooperation have been identified: (1) Support for institutional, legal and administrative reform; (2) Support in addressing the social consequences of transition; and (3) Development of infrastructure networks.

Assistance to Central Asia is guided strategically by the Indicative Programme (IP)

The IP 2005-2006 builds firmly upon and continues the approach initiated under the IP 2002-2004 and the corresponding TACIS Action Programmes, stepping up EC assistance for the cooperation between neighbouring countries on justice and home affairs, the energy sector and environmental issues. At national level, the links between assistance and political dialogue in the framework of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements will be strengthened, with particular emphasis on trade and civil service. Poverty reduction schemes will be consolidated in comprehensive medium-term development plans. Complementarities between TACIS and other EC aid will be enhanced, notably with the EC Food Security Programme. The indicative budget for 2005-2006 is 150 million Euros for the five states of Central Asia.

TACIS assistance is delivered via three 'tracks':

- **A Regional Cooperation Programme** (Track 1) to promote good neighbourly relations and concerted efforts on transport and energy networks, sustainable use of natural resources and the implementation of international environmental conventions, as well as

the rule of law. Under the IP 2002-2004, Tajikistan benefits from a number of projects, including border management and drug control (BOMCA/CADAP), support to environmental protection and to global climate change commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, and a feasibility study for road sections of the Termez-Dushanbe-Sari Tash road.

- A **Regional Support Programme Implemented at National Level** (Track 2), to further join sustainable economic development and help the Central Asian economies integrate into the world economy. Under the IP 2002-2004, the focus in Tajikistan is on civil service reform, improved customs and border management, support in the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, support to the Ministry of Labour and the Statistics Committee, as well as education reform and vocational training;
- A **Poverty Reduction Scheme** (Track 3) piloted in 2 target regions, the Ferghana Valley and Tajikistan's Southern Khatlon region, focusing on community development for the most vulnerable groups.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid DG (ECHO)

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department is a service under the direct responsibility of Commissioner Louis Michel. Since 1992, the European Commission has funded relief to millions of victims of natural and man-made disasters outside of the European Union. Aid is challenged impartially to the affected populations, regardless of their race, ethnic group, religion, gender, age, nationality or political affiliation.

Working with partners in the field

For humanitarian aid, the European Commission works with more than 200 operational partners, including specialised United Nation agencies, the Red Cross/Crescent movement and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

A key donor

The European Commission is one of the biggest sources of humanitarian aid in the world. In 2006, it provided €671 million from humanitarian programmes. This does not include the aid given separately by the EU's 27 Member States.

The European Commission's support went to projects in more than 60 countries. The funds are spent on goods and services such as food, clothing, shelter, medical provisions, water supplies, sanitation, emergency repairs and mine-clearing. The European Commission also funds disaster preparedness and mitigation projects in region prone to natural catastrophes.

For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

BOMCA in Tajikistan

BOMCA (Border Management in Central Asia) is providing comprehensive assistance to all five Central Asian Republics. The accumulated budgets of its different phases amount to approximately 25.7 MEUR over the period 2002-2010. The Commission has allocated additional 12-14 MEUR under the Indicative Programme 2007-2010. The programme is complemented by several other assistance programmes, the most significant of which is CADAP (Central Asian Drug Action Program) with a budget of 16 MEUR for the period 2001-2010.

Tajikistan has been the programme's, but also other donors, focus in recent years, not least because of the surprising withdrawal of Russian border troops during 2005. The programme has

supported that impoverished country, *inter alia*, by

- Funding the construction of a training academy for border guards in Dushanbe;
- Conducting several training-of-trainers seminars;
- Establishing computer classrooms at four locations along the Tajik-Afghan border as well as in Dushanbe in order to implement field training activities;
- Carrying out an assessment mission to an airport in the North of the country (Khudzhand);
- Developing manuals on visa management;
- Purchasing equipment for mobile units;
- Founding dog units;
- Reinforcing three border checkpoints (Ishkashim, Khorog, and Kalaykhum) with adjacent local markets mainly for Afghans living across the border on the mountainous Eastern section of the Tajik-Afghan border.

The very last activity has been complemented by interventions of the British Government that has financed the construction of about five border posts on that section of the frontier. In this context, it is worth mentioning that BOMCA and the UK concluded an informal agreement with the US Government on providing assistance to that stretch of the border: While the US focuses on the Western part, the EC and the UK contribute more to the reinforcement of the Eastern part.

Macro-Financial Assistance

Tajikistan receives exceptional financial assistance aimed at reducing debt vis-a-vis the EC. In 2001, Tajikistan benefited from a new loan of Euro 60 m and a grant of Euro 35 m for 2001-2004.

Other EC Instruments

Other EC instruments are used to support activities in areas such as mine action and migration. A projects focusing on surveying suspected mine contaminated areas and training of Tajik deminers and supervisors will be supported by the EC in 2005. Moreover, the EC is a major contributor to the Global Fund against AIDS, TB and malaria. In 2004, a grant of USD 2.5 m was awarded to Tajikistan by the Global Fund.

Two other projects co-financed by the EC and NGOs support relevant and accessible primary education for children in Tajikistan and promote cross border cooperation in the Ferghana Valley.