

What is your opinion of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)?

This 'editorial' expresses no opinions. Instead it solicits yours.

The ENP has now passed its 5th anniversary and the EU foreign ministers' Council have tasked High Representative Catherine Ashton and the Commission to undertake a review of it by early 2011.

Has the ENP worked well or not? As independent analysts we intend to contribute to this policy review as an own initiative, publishing of course the views which we will present to the EU. We begin this process with the present short questionnaire (linked below) which is thus submitted to the 9,000 recipients of the CEPS European Neighbourhood Watch. We invite readers to participate by responding to the questionnaire linked below. If the response is sufficiently encouraging we will follow this up with a more structured second questionnaire, and so get closer to providing policy-operational advice to the EU.

We hope many of you will respond since we have in our hands a uniquely valuable potential source of information for the policy makers of the EU and its partner states. The e-mail list of subscribers has been built up over the last years from individuals we have met, or who known to be interested in the EU foreign policy, but from all angles: EU and member state officials, ENP partner state officials, and academics, think tank and civil society representatives and journalists in both the EU and the wider Europe, with also many interested individuals in Russia and the United States. We will present the results grouped in these categories, and will be particularly interested to see whether perceptions in the EU and partner states are convergent or not, and whether opinions differ as regards the ENP operations in Eastern Europe versus the South Mediterranean.

As background to the questionnaire we reproduce how the Commission in its official website summarises the form and objectives of the EU's policy:

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and our neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all.

This ENP framework is proposed to the 16 of EU's closest neighbours – Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,

Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

'The ENP, which is chiefly a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country, is further enriched with regional and multilateral co-operation initiatives:

- *the Eastern Partnership (launched in Prague in May 2009),*
- *the Union for the Mediterranean (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, formerly known as the Barcelona Process, re-launched in Paris in July 2008),*
- *and the Black Sea Synergy (launched in Kiev in February 2008).*

'Within the ENP the EU offers our neighbours a privileged relationship, building upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development). The ENP goes beyond existing relationships to offer political association and deeper economic integration, increased mobility and more people-to-people contacts. The level of ambition of the relationship depends on the extent to which these values are shared'.

Following this we suggest you view the ENP and Eastern Partnership on the one hand, and the ENP, Barcelona Process and Union for the Mediterranean on the other hand as single blocks of policy. Practitioners will be aware of the formal distinctions between these elements, as the Eastern Partnership and Union for the Mediterranean were introduced on top of, rather than replacing the ENP. And the Barcelona Process preceded the ENP. However we are seeking to evaluate the EU's overall policy towards these close neighbouring regions. We might in a second questionnaire invite opinions on these different components.

[Click here to access the questionnaire.](#)

We hope very much to receive your views and will report back with the results and on plans on how to carry this forward.

Michael Emerson
CEPS Senior Research Fellow

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European Neighbourhood Watch Index

EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on the European Neighbourhood Policy

Brussels, 27 July 2010. [Link](#)

1. Recalling its Conclusions of 18-19 June 2007 and of 18 February 2008, the Council thanks the Commission for its Communication taking stock of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), of 12 May 2010, welcomes the progress made so far and confirms the strategic importance for the European Union of building strong relations with its neighbours based on common values. The Communication provides a useful basis for reflection by the Council on the further implementation of the ENP, with a view to making it more effective and more attractive to all ENP partners.

2. Since its launch in 2004, the ENP as a single policy framework, based inter alia on partnership and joint ownership, as well as performance-driven differentiation and tailor-made assistance, has brought tangible benefits both for ENP partners and the EU. Moreover, the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean have added a regional dimension. The ENP has also led to deepening of relations and to significant progress in strengthening bilateral cooperation with Mediterranean and Eastern partners, which are of strategic importance to the EU. The EU stands ready to work further on these developments.

At the same time, partners need to make further tangible progress towards good governance and political reform, as these constitute core elements for the development of enhanced relations with the EU. A stronger relationship requires enhanced commitments in all areas of the relationship, including democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The EU will continue to work with the ENP partners on implementation of these commitments.

3. The Council notes the benefits which market opening has brought both the EU and ENP partners and aims at further trade liberalisation, including greater market access. Regulatory alignment is particularly important in this regard and ENP partners should do more to capitalise on the advantages this brings. Furthermore, the EU will continue to pursue the establishment of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) with ENP partners, following a thorough economic analysis and once they have met the necessary conditions.

4. The Council recalls the importance of people-to-people contacts as a means to promote mutual understanding as well as business, civil society and cultural ties. It welcomes the progress reached so far in this field with several ENP partners. Bearing in mind the importance of a secure environment, the EU stands ready to promote well-managed mobility of citizens of Eastern Partnership and Mediterranean partners.

5. The Council acknowledges the need to accompany market opening, economic integration and regulatory convergence as well as the process of strengthening bilateral relations, throughout the neighbourhood, with appropriate financial support, technical assistance and capacity building. The Council recalls that financial envelopes are determined "using transparent and objective criteria and taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of the country and the region concerned, the level of ambition of the EU's partnership with a given country, progress towards implementing agreed objectives, including on governance and reform, and the capacity of managing and absorbing Community assistance". The Council will return to the issue of financial support in the context of discussions on the next multi-annual financial framework. Furthermore, the Neighbourhood Investment Facility has proved to be a useful initiative to support the economic development of ENP partners and their interconnection with the EU.

6. The Council notes with satisfaction the progress made on the multilateral initiatives of the ENP, notably the implementation of the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership, the establishment of the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean, and looks forward to the further implementation of concrete regional projects.

7. The Council notes with concern that unresolved conflicts in the Neighbourhood continue to hamper the economic and political development of ENP partners as well as regional cooperation, stability and security. The EU will continue to seek ways of developing and using all relevant policy tools in a concerted fashion, while taking into account agreed negotiating formats and processes.

8. The Council invites the High Representative and the Commission, on the basis of the Commission Communication, to initiate a reflection on the future implementation of the ENP and conduct consultations to this end inside the Union and with ENP partners, in view of a comprehensive discussion by the Council in the first half of 2011.

EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia

EU Council press service.

Brussels, 12 August 2010. [Link](#)

The Council adopted today a decision extending the mandate of the European Union monitoring mission in Georgia (EUMM Georgia) by twelve months until 14 September 2011 (11863/10).

EUMM Georgia seeks to provide civilian monitoring of parties' actions, including full compliance with the six-point agreement and subsequent implementing measures throughout Georgia, working in close coordination with partners, particularly the United Nations (UN) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and consistent with other EU activity, in order to contribute to stabilisation, normalisation and confidence building whilst also contributing to informing European policy in support of a durable political solution for Georgia.

«Still some work to do - EUMM for almost two years on the ground»

Commentary by Ambassador Hansjörg Haver, Head of the EUMM in Georgia

First published in «Civil.ge», 6 August 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

EUMM was deployed following the EU-brokered 12 August Six-Point Agreement and the 8 September Implementing Measures Agreement in 2008. Thanks to the support of all EU Member States the fastest deployed mission in the history of EU Common Security and Defence Policy, EUMM began its operations on 1 October 2008 with more than 200 monitors on the ground, as stipulated in the Implementing Measures Agreement. Its mandate consists of four important components, namely stabilisation, normalisation and confidence building, as well as reporting to Brussels to inform EU policy making.

[...]

While the Mission's mandate covers the entire territory of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders, the de facto authorities' denial of access to South Ossetia and Abkhazia has been hampering the mission's normalization and stabilization efforts. ... Our Georgian partners have come to accept that this limitation to the implementation of the mission's mandate is effectively counterbalanced by a consistent EU policy of non-recognition of the entities. At the same time, however, we feel that inability to access areas under the control of Sukhumi and Tskhinvali prevents us from helping bring clarity and resolve incidents that take place on the ground.

[...]

Looking at the stabilization component of the mission's mandate, we regard the Memorandum of Understanding concluded with the Georgian Ministry of Defence on 26 January, 2009, as a definite success. In the agreement, Georgia unilaterally accepts limitations on the deployment

of both troops and heavy equipment in a carefully defined strip of territory around South Ossetia and south of Abkhazia. This goes beyond the obligations included in the Six-Point Agreement. A Russian decision to reciprocate the move would help bring transparency on the presence of military forces also on the other side of the administrative boundary line and increase security for all. Unfortunately, despite repeated invitations by EUMM, this move has so far not been reciprocated by Moscow.

[...]

The positive example of the Memorandum of Understanding illustrates an important principle, namely that in a situation where the sides to a conflict cannot come to an agreement, formal or informal, unilateral concessions by one side might prove the only way to push things forward. As a result, the part that bravely accepts to make such concession not only is not harmed, but can actually benefit from it. It seems to me that recognition of this principle that we could call "constructive unilateralism" is also at the origin of the Georgian State Strategy on the Occupied Territories, and, the subsequent Action Plan for Engagement. Both the Strategy and the Action Plan set out a people-centered policy, aimed at stretching out a helping hand to the civilian populations (citizens of Georgia, to be sure) residing in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

However, the intentions enunciated in these two documents appear to conflict with provisions contained in the Law on Occupied Territories, which had adopted a more restrictive approach. With all respect to a decision of the Parliament of Georgia and to the rule of law, it should be kept in mind that this piece of legislation was passed under the emotional impact of the August war. From the perspective of EUMM, and being mandated to observe the present and potential future effects of both the law and the Action Plan, I think the Georgian authorities should strive to preserve a coherent approach and resolve possible incoherences between the Law on the one side, and the Strategy and the Action Plan on the other, in favour of the latter.

[...]

EUMM's mandate has just been renewed until September 2011. Given EU member states' support for continued engagement in the Southern Caucasus, it will probably be extended again.

Russia Deploys S-300 Missiles in Abkhazia

Civil.ge

Tbilisi, 11 August 2010. [Link](#)

Russia has deployed long range S-300 air defense missile system in Abkhazia to protect its airspace and Russian military bases deployed there, Colonel General Alexander Zelin, commander of the Russian air forces, said on August 11.

"We have deployed S-300 system on the territory of Abkhazia, which in coordination with the air defense systems of the land forces is tasked with air defense of the territory," Zelin

was quoted by the Itar-Tass, Interfax and RIA Novosti news agencies.

He said that S-300 missile system "will cover only facilities located on the territory of Abkhazia". Air defense of South Ossetia is provided with other systems, Zelin said.

The task of these air defense systems, he said, "is also to prevent violation of Abkhaz and South Ossetian airspace and to destroy any aircraft illegally penetrating into their airspace no matter what their purpose might be."

Statement by EUHR Ashton on Russian plans on missile deployment in Abkhazia

Brussels, 13 August 2010. [Link](#)

I am concerned about the reported statements that the Russian Federation has deployed a mid-range air defence system in the Georgian region of Abkhazia without the consent of the Government of Georgia.

The deployment of such a weapon system in Abkhazia would be in contradiction with the Six-point ceasefire agreement as well as implementing measures and would risk further increasing tensions in the region.

I call on Russia to fully implement all its obligations under the ceasefire agreement.

The EU reiterates its firm support for the security and stability of Georgia, based on full respect for the principles of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, recognised by international law.

The EU also recalls that official visits to the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia should be made in full respect of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity

«Georgia needs U.S. help in rebuilding, standing up to Russia»

By John McCain

First published in «The Washington Post», 8 August 2010.

[Link](#)

[Extracts]

Though disagreements remain over how the conflict began, there is no denying that two years ago this weekend, Russian troops crossed an internationally recognized border and invaded Georgia. They attacked all of the country with strategic bombers, pushed deep into its sovereign territory, displaced nearly 127,000 ethnic Georgians from their homes, recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states, and established a military occupation that remains in effect.

Much has changed in the past two years -- but not for the better. Russia not only occupies Georgian territory but is

building military bases there, denying access to humanitarian missions and monitors, permitting the ethnic cleansing of Georgians in South Ossetia, and working to fortify the administrative boundary lines of the breakaway regions into hardened borders. More than 100,000 ethnic Georgians who fled Russia's invasion remain in a situation of effective displacement, according to U.N. estimates. Even now, Russia is in violation of the cease-fire commitments it made with French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

[...]

The administration has appeared more eager to placate an autocratic Russia than to support a friendly Georgian democracy living under the long shadow of its aggressive neighbor. It has lavished Medvedev with long phone calls and frequent meetings, with only modest foreign policy gains to show for it. Meanwhile, the administration has demonstrated little willingness to engage with Georgia's leadership, to further its NATO aspirations, to help rebuild its defenses or, until recently, even to call Russia's troop presence in Georgia what it is -- an occupation -- let alone pressure Russia to withdraw. The White House and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently made some encouraging statements in support of Georgia; now, they should turn these good words into better policies.

If Medvedev is serious about his vision of a Russia guided by the rule of law, he could bring his government into compliance with the international agreement he made to return Russian forces to their prewar positions outside Georgia. For its part, the Obama administration could rally the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to develop a road map with Russia to end the occupation of Georgia -- an incremental approach that could lead to the withdrawal of Russian troops, the return of displaced persons and the restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity. If Russia does not make progress, there should be consequences: Medvedev must know that cooperation on Georgia is a U.S. priority and that if Russia does not deliver on our priorities, he should not expect the United States to deliver on his priorities, such as accession to the World Trade Organization.

Another area where Georgia needs U.S. support is in rebuilding its defenses. Georgia is doing more fighting in Afghanistan than much of the NATO alliance it wishes to join. Yet it has been a struggle to get the administration to provide Georgian troops heading into combat even basic equipment, armored vehicles and replacement parts. Beyond this short-term assistance, Georgia needs long-term support to provide for its own defense. This is likely to entail antitank capabilities, air defenses, early-warning radar and other defensive systems that should not be misconstrued as U.S. endorsement for any Georgian use of force against its separatist regions. Georgia will always be less powerful than Russia, but that is no reason to leave it vulnerable two years after a Russian invasion.

For all the damage it has done to Georgia, and its threats to do more, Russia has failed to achieve its strategic objectives: The democratic government of Georgia has survived and is thriving. The U.S.-Russia relationship should enhance this success, not jeopardize it. We have an opportunity to support Georgia's emergence as a strong, whole and free nation -- but only if we remember who our real friends are.

The writer is a Republican senator from Arizona.

Meeting between Russian President Medvedev and Edward Kokoity, «President» of South Ossetia

Russian presidency press release
Sochi, 13 August 2010. [Link](#)

[Extracts]

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV: August is a month of particular significance for Russia's relations with South Ossetia and Abkhazia. We just recently commemorated the anniversary of the start of Georgia's invasion and the military operations that followed. I have already said everything I can on this matter. I would like to take this opportunity here in your presence to say once more that the decisions that Russia took then to protect the peoples of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and to protect Russian Federation citizens too, and the subsequent decisions I made to recognise these two new countries were not easy steps to take, and required careful consideration. But the last two years have shown that they were absolutely essential, because it is precisely these decisions that have given these two peoples the chance to develop and not be exterminated in genocide or any conflicts of the kind that had regrettably gone on for the last two decades. Our relations are therefore built upon a very particular foundation -- the events of 2008, the events preceding that conflict, and events reaching further back into our long history. And of course, we have the present day too.

The relations that we have today between Russia and South Ossetia are friendly and very close. They are based on several treaties, including the treaty on friendship and the treaty on protection and security, which concerns the presence of Russia's military base in South Ossetia. These treaties, the huge number of important contacts, ties and agreements that our various agencies have, and the ties between our economic actors, are the base upon which we will continue to build our relations in the future. I want to say very clearly here, so as to leave no doubt in people's minds that Russia will not go back on what was a difficult but nonetheless right decision.

PRESIDENT OF SOUTH OSSETIA EDUARD KOKOITY: It is also particularly valuable that thanks to Russia our people for two years are living a new life, a peaceful life, and have this Russian military base on our soil and Russian border guards who are guaranteeing peace and stability in the region. Of course we realise that this decision you made was far from easy, but it was a destiny-making and historic decision for our people, and on behalf of the people of the Republic of South Ossetia I want to once again express our immense gratitude.

On the Twelfth Round of Geneva Discussions on Security and Stability in Transcaucasia

Russia MFA press release, 29 July 2010. [Link](#)

Within the framework of the international discussions on security and stability in Transcaucasia, the Twelfth Meeting took

place in Geneva on July 27. It was attended by delegations from the Republic of Abkhazia, Georgia, the Russian Federation, the United States and the Republic of South Ossetia, as well as by representatives of the EU, UN and OSCE.

The Group on Security exchanged views on the current situation on the borders of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Georgia, discussed further the issue of the nonuse of force in Transcaucasia, and considered possible directions for further work on measures to restore confidence in the region.

There was noted the desirability of continuing the activity of the incident prevention and response mechanisms in the area of the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian borders on a regular basis, including the use of the established lines of operational communication. The delegations of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia stressed the urgent need to achieve a document legally enshrining the principle of nonuse of force by Georgia against Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The meeting of the Humanitarian Group continued discussion on ways to resolve the problem of refugees and displaced persons. UN experts briefed its participants on the international standards in determining the basic principles to restore the property rights of these categories of citizens. The Russian side stressed the need for putting maximum priority on creating the proper conditions for the return of refugees to areas of safe living.

This latest round of Geneva Discussions has again shown that Georgia's stance continues to be unconstructive and exhibits a stubborn reluctance to seek practical ways leading to the consolidation of peace and security in the region. In this context one should also view the draft submitted the other day by Georgia, of a UN General Assembly resolution on the status of refugees and internally displaced persons in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This demonstrative action of Tbilisi had an adverse effect on the meeting's atmosphere (primarily in the Humanitarian Group) and obviously does not contribute to the overall normalization of the situation in Transcaucasia.

The next meeting in Geneva is tentatively scheduled for October 14 this year.

«Kosovo's future among the free nations»

By Hashim Thaci

First published by «EUObserver», 16 August 2010. [Link](#)

On 22 July, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) recognized what Kosovars have known for two years - that Kosovo is a sovereign, independent state.

The Court's 10-four majority was decisive, and its conclusions were clear: the adoption of our 17 February 2008 declaration did not violate international law; it did not violate United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244; and, it did not violate the constitutional framework that had been established by the United Nations to guide the interim stabilisation of Kosovo. The opinion affirmed Kosovo's place in the international community, something which 69 countries have already recognised. I call on those states that have not yet done so to recognize Kosovo now.

The people of my country did not arrive at the decision to declare their independence lightly or in a political vacuum. We were long deprived of the most basic human rights, and in 1999, subject to a murderous campaign of ethnic cleansing from a Serbian government led by Slobodan Milosevic. These events prompted international intervention, and ultimately UNSCR 1244, which, as the Court made crystal clear in its ruling, suspended Serbia's authority over Kosovo. After close to 10 years of UN supervision, Kosovo accepted the terms of a UN-mediated process on Kosovo's final status, which concluded that "the only viable option for Kosovo is independence."

As this history makes clear, and as the ICJ acknowledged in its advisory opinion, the circumstances that led to Kosovo's declaration of independence were, and are, unique. The narrowness of the court's ruling on this subject should reassure those countries that have been reluctant to recognise Kosovo. Kosovo's declaration of independence is not a precedent, and attempts to argue that the Court concluded otherwise or that its ruling opens a Pandora's Box are wrong.

Some in Serbia have argued in recent days that the court did not address the question before it. It did. The legal question about Kosovo's independence has been asked, and the ICJ's affirmative answer was unambiguous. Attempts by Serbia to reframe the question after the court's ruling, or to say that the court did not answer questions that were not put to it, are deliberately misleading. These are not legal arguments. They are Serbian efforts to reopen long-exhausted status negotiations via another UNGA resolution because it did not like the answer it received from the Court.

For its part, Kosovo sees the ICJ advisory opinion as an opportunity to put the past behind us and to move forward with all the countries of the Balkans, including Serbia, towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

My country is prepared to sit down with Serbia to discuss practical issues that would improve the lives of our citizens. We are neighbors. We face common challenges. Our police forces should work together to combat international crime. Our two countries should co-operate on practical issues such as energy, telecommunications, and education. We have a common interest in working together to ascertain the fate of

missing persons – both Serb and Albanian – from the period of armed conflict.

We cannot, and we will not, discuss Kosovo's status as an independent sovereign state, Kosovo's territorial integrity, or the creation of de facto or de jure autonomous regions within our borders.

We do not expect Serbia to recognise Kosovo immediately, and we understand that it may take time before Serbia is ready to sit down as equals to discuss practical issues. In the meantime, Kosovo will continue to do what it has been doing for the last two years. We will complete implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan, including its far-reaching guarantees for the protection of the rights of members of all ethnic groups in Kosovo. We will continue to strengthen the democratic institutions of our young country, and we will take the decisions necessary to promote long-term, private sector-led economic growth here. Finally, we will strengthen the rule of law by tackling organised crime and corruption.

Kosovo will continue the reforms necessary to secure its rightful place in the United Nations, in Nato and the EU, and it will continue to behave as the sovereign, independent state that it is, and that the ICJ so resoundingly confirmed.

The writer is prime minister of Kosovo.

Related Documents:

- Advisory ruling of the International Court of Justice on "the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence in respect of Kosovo", 22 July 2010. [Access here.](#)

- Reactions to the ICJ ruling on Kosovo: The domestic and regional dimension. [Access here.](#)

Comments from South Ossetian «Deputy Foreign Minister» on Kosovo Ruling

Voice of Russia interview, 23 July 2010.

Transcript by «Saylor Company - Public Relations Counsel»

"Notwithstanding the fact that decision of International UN Court is an advisory ruling, it creates certain internationally legal precedent. It is crucially important to underline, that the court marked only the declaration of independence itself. However, in my opinion, this decision may be considered as an indirect recognition of Kosovo independence that will push other states to recognize it.

"I believe that the issue of declaration of independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia will be examined by the UN as well, and it may then be possible to prove these declarations of independence do not contradict the norms of international law."

"I hope the Western countries will sooner or later acknowledge the existing reality when it comes to South Ossetia's independence - that will bring to more extended recognition of our statehood."

Outcome of the Tenth Round of Negotiations on a New Russia-EU Framework Agreement

Russian MFA press release

Moscow, 23 July 2010. [Link](#)

A plenary meeting was held in Brussels on July 22, 2010, which summed up the tenth round of talks on a New Russia-EU Framework Agreement. Vladimir Chizhov, Russia's Permanent Representative to the EU, headed the Russian delegation, and Hugues Mingarelli, the European Commission's Deputy Director General for External Relations, led the EU delegation.

The parties continued negotiating the text of the agreement. Four sections are in the process of discussion and joint editing: on interaction in the sphere of political dialogue and external security; cooperation in the areas of freedom, security and justice; sectoral economic interaction; and cooperation in questions of culture, education, vocational training, sports and youth. Trade and investment issues of the economic section were discussed in the context of the prospects of Russia joining the WTO, and the establishment of the Customs Union of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus.

Agreement was reached to hold the next, 11th round of talks in September-October this year.

Statement on entry into force of the customs code of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan

Russian presidency press release

Astana, 5 July 2010. [Link](#)

Meetings of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc) Interstate Council and the Supreme Governing Body of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan have taken place in Kazakhstan.

The Astana meeting's main result was the signing of a package of documents, including a statement by the Russian, Kazakhstani and Belarusian presidents on the entry into force of the customs code of the Customs Union between the three countries starting from July 6, 2010 (Russia and Kazakhstan began implementing the code in their relations on July 1).

[...]

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV:

We have just held a meeting of the Customs Union's Supreme Governing Body, and have signed a statement on the Customs Code's entry into force. It will take effect in relations between

our three countries starting on July 6, although Russia and Kazakhstan have been applying its provisions since July 1. We have also signed a whole series of international agreements regulating the legal and financial aspects of the Customs Union's activities. We have approved many decisions on specific points. We still have a lot of work ahead on building up the Common Economic Space, but given there are a lot of benefits and advantages to be gained in this development I am sure that we will come to agreements on everything and approve all of the necessary decisions as swiftly as possible.

[...]

I am pleased that we have agreed on the status of the [EurAsEc] court, because we had made hardly any practical progress in this area before. The fact that we have reached an agreement on the court's work is an indication that we are now entering the concluding stage in our integration, because a court is only needed when we have real relations of substance, which give rise to the possibility of real problems and disputes. It is very good that now, in line with the agreements reached, this statute will apply not only to relations between our three countries at the state level, but also to relations between our economic actors – the companies registered on the territory of the Customs Union and EurAsEC member countries.

Joint news conference following Russian-Armenian talks

Russian presidency press release
Yerevan, 20 August 2010. [Link](#)

PRESIDENT OF ARMENIA SERZH SARGSYAN:

I will start with the most important thing. We confirmed once again at the very highest level our mutual commitment to continue building and strengthening the cooperation between our two countries. This is in our countries' strategic interests and the interests of greater security and stability throughout this region. Our relations are those of strategic allies, and this reflects our peoples' feelings and meets the demands of Armenia's and - I hope – Russia's real national interests.

Five agreements were signed today following our talks. I particularly want to note the agreement on building new power units at our nuclear power plant, and the protocol that amends the terms of the agreement we have with Russia on the Russian military base on our soil. This protocol not only extends the timeframe for Russia's use of this base, but also expands the scope of its geographic and strategic responsibilities. Previously, the base's operation was limited by the former Soviet Union's external borders, but this restriction has now been removed from the text of the agreement. Russia has taken on responsibility for jointly guaranteeing Armenia's security and helping to equip our armed forces with modern arms.

[...]

Russia is the main foreign investor in the Armenian economy, accounting for more than 60 percent of all foreign investment.

Last year alone, Russia invested \$500 million in strategic sectors of our economy, in the energy sector, transport, and telecommunications. We are expecting a very solid investment package in the near future too. This includes the joint project to build a new unit at the Armenian nuclear power plant, and build new transport infrastructure, which has great importance for our entire region.

We also discussed the international situation and spoke about the main problems in the Trans-Caucasus region today. We affirmed our readiness to continue building up our cooperation within the Collective Security Treaty Organisation and the Commonwealth of Independent States and also in the Eurasian Economic Community, in which Armenia has observer status. Of course, we will also keep working together in the UN, OSCE, and other international and regional organisations.

We spoke about conflicts. Armenia's position remains unchanged on this issue. Our position is that crises and conflicts must be resolved exclusively through peaceful means, without the use of force and without threat of force, in strict compliance with international law and within the formats that exist and that have been used in practice over recent times.

I am grateful to President Medvedev for understanding the importance of the balance of power in the region as a crucial factor in preventing provocations and discouraging militarist ambitions. This in full measure corresponds to our position on the Nagorno Karabakh settlement issue.

[...]

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV: I want to note in this respect two agreements that Mr President mentioned. One is the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in building new power units at the Armenian nuclear power plant. This is indeed a new page in the history of our nuclear energy cooperation, and it is an important area for our work together. And then there are our contacts in the security area. We play an active part in the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. An informal CSTO summit is coming up now. With respect to security, Protocol 5 is very important in its extension of the term of the interstate agreement on the Russian military base in Armenia, the purpose of which is to help maintain peace and security in the southern Caucasus in general.

[...]

Of course we looked at the Nagorno Karabakh problem. Thank you, Mr President, for your assessment of the role Russia is playing. I want to assure you that we are ready to continue playing our part as intermediary and help this process, look for a political solution based on the mutually acceptable agreements that have come out of our common efforts through the OSCE's Minsk Group and the bilateral contacts with Armenia and Azerbaijan.

[...]

QUESTION: A question for the Russian President. Mr President, you talked about Russia's efforts as mediator. I would like to ask: what does Russia, one of the co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk

Group, think of various attempts and proposals to expand the chairmanship of the Minsk Group? And what do you think of Azerbaijan's initiatives to remove this issue [Nagorno Karabakh] from the remit of the Minsk Group and discuss it in other international organisations, such as the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, UN General Assembly and others?

DMITRY MEDVEDEV: You know, in recent times I really have paid a lot of attention to this issue. I have my own position – not just as president but also as a person who is closely monitoring developments.

A few points. First, the result is what's important, not the institutions that are used to achieve this result.

Second, the mediatory institutions that are used or proposed must be mutually acceptable, including for the parties involved in difficult negotiations. It is impossible to impose a mediator if the parties do not wish it or if there is some reason to doubt their impartiality. And finally, if the parties agree to involve other participants, including within the framework of the Minsk Group or some other institutions, we would naturally take this as a given. The main thing is that this work be effective.

To speak simply and frankly, up until now it is only the Minsk Group that meets all these criteria. All other potential participants in these negotiations are removed from the topic at hand, not always immersed in its details, and it is difficult to use their capacities as mediators.

So I would think it is correct to make the efficiency of work conducted the most important criteria and, in my opinion, this is possible within the framework of the Minsk Group and the mediation efforts of the Russian Federation.

Mr Sargsyan, you have not yet said anything. What do you think about this?

PRESIDENT OF ARMENIA SERZH SARGSYAN: You spoke about our economic relations so well and in such detailed fashion that I have nothing to add.

And as for increasing the number of mediators, we have categorically and unequivocally stated for many years that the current composition of the Minsk Group is the most acceptable for us. But since I've probably commented on this a hundred times, I think that everyone knows the Armenian position. We believe that we can achieve concrete results only within the Minsk Group.

In addition, I would like to say that there is no peace in the region, but there is no war either. It is bad that there is no peace, but at the same time it's good that there's no war.

and Deputy Secretary of State of the United States James Steinberg met on the margins of the OSCE Informal Ministerial with Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Elmar Mammadyarov and Foreign Minister of Armenia Edward Nalbandian in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The Heads of Delegation of the Co-Chair countries recalled the joint statement on Nagorno-Karabakh of December 1, 2009 at the OSCE Ministerial meeting in Athens and reminded the sides of their commitment to seek a peaceful settlement to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict based on the principles contained in the Helsinki Final Act, particularly those related to refraining from the threat or use of force, the territorial integrity of states, and the equal rights and self determination of peoples. They reiterated that the elements articulated by Presidents Medvedev, Sarkozy, and Obama on July 10, 2009 at LAquila and repeated at Muskoka on June 26, 2010 must be the foundation of any fair and lasting settlement to the conflict. These proposed elements have been conceived as an integrated whole, and any attempt to select some elements over others would make it impossible to achieve a balanced solution. Foreign Minister Kouchner and Deputy Secretary Steinberg expressed appreciation for the efforts of President Medvedev and Foreign Minister Lavrov to bridge the differences between the parties, taking into consideration the positions discussed during the meetings in Sochi on January 25, 2010 and in St. Petersburg on June 17, 2010.

The Heads of Delegation of Russia, France, and the United States stressed that the efforts made so far by the parties to the conflict have not been sufficient to overcome their differences. They deplored recent developments which have increased tension in the region, including the serious armed incident of June 18-19, 2010 and inflammatory public statements. They warned that the use of force created the current situation, and its use again would only lead to suffering, devastation, and a legacy of conflict and hostility that would last for generations. They urged a greater spirit of compromise to reach agreement on a common basis for continuing the negotiations. Additional actions by the sides are needed to reinforce the ceasefire of 1994 and to create a more favorable atmosphere for further political dialogue and reaching agreements. The Heads of Delegation of the Co-Chair countries renewed their commitment to support the sides in reaching a peace agreement, but reiterated that the primary responsibility to put an end to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict still remains with Azerbaijani and Armenian leaders.

Joint Statement by the Heads of Delegation of the Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries

Almaty, 17 July 2010. [Link](#)

The Heads of Delegation of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov, Foreign Minister of France Bernard Kouchner,

Russian MFA on Signing of the US-Polish Protocol on the Deployment of Missile Defense Interceptors in Poland

Russian MFA press release
 Moscow, 6 July 2010. [Link](#)

[Extract]

We believe that there are currently no missile threats for Europe, nor are they likely in the future, to counter which it is necessary to deploy a missile defense system near Russian borders.

Ambiguity remains about "possible verification measures" concerning the future Polish positioning area, which Poland's foreign minister mentioned in Krakow. News media omit the important nuance of the statement of Mr. Sikorski, who spoke about the possibility of inspecting the Polish facility "on a basis of reciprocity." It is difficult to understand what this is about, since Russia, unlike Poland, does not place in its territory elements of a foreign strategic infrastructure. So the basis for "reciprocity" is not discernible here, and the Polish side, with which the matter had been discussed in the context of the Bush administration plans to create a third missile defense site, knows this very well.

Of course, we would only welcome the readiness of the United States and NATO to cooperate on an equal footing with Russia in creating a future European missile defense architecture. But good intentions and actions still diverge here. If, however, as under the previous administration, attempts continue to "fasten" us to a model already approved in Washington and endorsed in Brussels, this option won't work.

Our stance is identical in dialogue with NATO as well. We welcomed the recent statement by NATO's Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in favor of the establishment of equal cooperation on missile defense within the RNC framework, taking into consideration Russia's opinion. If such an approach is supported, then we could work together effectively in finding answers to the new challenges of the XXI century in the field of missile proliferation.

Ukraine President's Independence Day address

Ukraine presidency press release
 Kyiv, 24 August 2010. [Link](#)

[Extract]

Real independence is based on such foundations as economic freedom, human liberty as a citizen, and freedom of speech. Independence without freedom is not true.

Our first steps were successful, but they should be regarded only a precondition for the beginning of deep reforms. The aim of these reforms is to make independence a reality, not just nice words ... The real work has just started. My reforms are systemic in nature. They cover all areas of life. Their aim is to transform Ukraine into democratic, economically developed, socially oriented state, in which each citizen has the opportunity

of self-actualization and development. Humanization of the society, modernization of the economy, achieving European standards of living – these are the tasks we set ourselves for the near future.

To this end we ensured rapid adoption of the Law "On Foundations of Domestic and Foreign Policy", which is a guide for all branches of government, beginning with President. I initiated its preparation and consideration in the Parliament personally, since realized that without this document recurrence of the so-called political expediency is possible, which can be put by some state leaders above the Constitution.

Today, when this law works, we have achieved the main goal – every citizen of Ukraine knows the direction of our country's development. Ukraine has become a predictable partner for the world.

I work with many international experts and organizations to implement real reform of public administration.

Eventually, we have implemented judicial reform of the European level to ensure independence of judges, and that all people could count on fair and impartial trial. So that the cornerstones of Ukrainian justice were the law and human rights, not politics or money. The purpose of judicial reform is to ensure fair administration of justice in Ukraine, as well as to create transparent judiciary, which is accountable to the citizens.

There is work going on with ministries and departments, law enforcement agencies to create a new culture of justice. It will be essential for creating a just society.

To achieve this, I initiated the reform of criminal justice system. We conduct consultations with European experts and work with the Venice Commission in the area of expertise of the new laws, so that justice administration was something to be valued, not feared of.

These tasks are difficult, but they must be performed for Ukraine to become a truly free, independent, fair state.

We adopted the program of economic reforms. It has been widely discussed in scientific and professional environment. According to the conclusions, made by international organizations, it is one of the best programs of coming out of crisis and making economic restructuring out there today. We have created a coordinative center for implementation of reforms; detailed programs setting specific dates for each direction of reforms, systems of monitoring and controlling the process were developed.

[...]

In a short time we have restored cooperation with the IMF, which was interrupted due to failure of the previous government to comply with its obligations. The need for a program of cooperation with the IMF is explained not only by the need for positive signal for investors, but also by the fact that we inherited huge debts from our predecessors that put Ukraine on the brink of bankruptcy hole, we must now pull the country out of.

[...]

I will not allow Ukraine to abandon the path of democratic reforms, economic reforms, fight against corruption, freedom of speech and rule of law. This path will be hard. But I am sure: we will make it together, dear compatriots, with honor, and make Ukraine a modern, strong, European state.

All the things I talk about are difficult to achieve. But I believe that the era of populism in our country is over, and therefore we – the government and the citizens – must all talk about our problems openly.

[...]

I would like to emphasize again that European integration remains priority of our foreign policy. For the first time in the years of independence we have approached the Association Agreement with the European Union, and I am convinced that the Ukraine – EU Summit, to be held this autumn, will be crucial step forward in this direction.

It is obvious that normalization of our relations with Russia does not stand in the way of our European integration, but helps it. The United Europe needs economically strong, democratic Ukraine, which together with Russia contributes to strengthening stability in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as throughout the Eurasian space. We have restored such relations with our northern partner as soon as it was possible.

We have raised our bilateral dialogue with the U.S to the highest level. Getting rid of highly enriched uranium we supported the initiative of our partner. Thus, we also made another significant contribution to a nuclear-free world. And the step has found support and was positively received by our partners in the U.S. and worldwide.

[...]

Democratic world watches the processes, lately taking place in Ukraine, positively and with great care. Including in such important area as freedom of speech. I do not rule out that fundamental right of citizens or journalists to freely express their position through the media may stumble upon certain obstacles in certain media. But I would like to state with full responsibility that the state is in no way involved in such cases. It is rather about conflicts of media owners' interests in the business environment, which the opposition is trying to present to the international community as attempts to restrict freedom of speech in Ukraine. We are open to any public or other kind of organization that wishes to investigate observation of freedom of speech in our country and this is the proof that we have nothing to hide.

For my part, as Guarantor of the Constitution, I will do everything possible to prevent the slightest manifestation of pressure on the media, regardless of its source.

EU opens accession negotiations with Iceland

EU press release

Brussels, 27 July 2010. [Link](#)

The first intergovernmental conference on the accession of Iceland to the European Union was held in Brussels today, formally opening accession negotiations with this country. The Belgian Presidency delivered the EU Negotiating Framework, which outlines the principles, substance and procedures guiding the negotiations with Iceland, thus paving the way for the upcoming accession talks between Iceland and the EU.

Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy Commissioner Stefan Füle said: "The opening of accession negotiations today marks a new chapter in the history of our relations with Iceland. Accession should be a win-win situation for both sides. For Iceland, it will mean economic and monetary stability and a voice at the EU decision making table. For the EU, it will mean we become stronger in dealing with the Arctic region and in areas such as renewable energy and climate change."

Before actual chapter by chapter negotiations start between Iceland and the EU Member States, the 'screening' process will provide an in-depth analysis of the EU rules and regulations with which the country must comply (the so-called *acquis*). This process, estimated to last from November this year to mid-2011, will allow Iceland to familiarise itself with the *acquis* and the Commission to assess how prepared Iceland is for EU membership. Once screening has been completed, individual chapters can be opened for negotiations between the EU Member States and Iceland.

In the framework of the IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession), the Commission will continue to support Iceland's accession process through pre-accession funding to help the country further align its laws with the *acquis*, as well as providing objective information on the EU and its policies.

Background

The Negotiating Framework is the core reference for the accession negotiations with a candidate country. It points out areas where special efforts are necessary to fulfil the accession criteria, which in the case of Iceland include fisheries, agriculture and rural development, environment, free movement of capital, and financial services.

Iceland is the third country with which the EU is currently negotiating accession, after Croatia and Turkey, which both opened accession negotiations in 2005.

Related Document:

Negotiating Framework for EU-Iceland accession negotiations. [Access here.](#)

EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process and Gaza
Brussels, 27 July 2010. [Link](#)

The High Representative briefed the Council on her recent trip to the Middle East and in particular on her visit to Gaza. The Council underlined the urgent need for a lasting solution to the situation in Gaza and for the revival of its economy. It called for the immediate, sustained and unconditional opening of crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. It discussed the possible role the EU could play in contributing to improved access.

The High Representative, in a statement to the press on behalf of the Council, reiterated the EU's call for the proximity talks to lead as swiftly as possible to the resumption of direct peace talks leading to a settlement on the basis of a two-state solution negotiated between the parties within 24 months. She urged the parties to find a satisfactory way of addressing all the final status issues, reaffirmed the EU's commitment to its position on the Middle East Peace Process set out in the December 2009 Council conclusions, urged the Israeli government to end all settlement activities, appealed to both sides to avoid any provocative actions and called for the immediate release of Gilad Shalit.

Statement by the Middle East Quartet
Brussels, 20 August 2010. [Link](#)

The representatives of the Quartet reaffirm their strong support for direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians to resolve all final status issues. The Quartet reaffirms its full commitment to its previous statements, including in Trieste on 26 June 2009, in New York on 24 September 2009, and its statement in Moscow on 19 March 2010 which provides that direct, bilateral negotiations that resolve all final status issues should "lead to a settlement, negotiated between the parties, that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic, and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours."

The Quartet expresses its determination to support the parties throughout the negotiations, which can be completed within one year, and the implementation of an agreement. The Quartet again calls on both sides to observe calm and restraint, and to refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric. Welcoming the result of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee in Cairo on July 29, the Quartet notes that success will require sustained regional and international support for the negotiations and the parallel process of Palestinian state-building and the pursuit of a just, lasting and comprehensive regional peace as envisaged in the Madrid terms of reference, Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Quartet Principals intend to meet with their colleagues from the Arab League in September in New York to review the situation. Accordingly, the Quartet calls on the Israelis and the Palestinians to join in launching direct negotiations

on September 2 in Washington, D.C. to resolve all final status issues and fulfil the aspirations of both parties.

Statement by EUHR Ashton on resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians
EEAS press release
Brussels, 20 August 2010. [Link](#)

I welcome the decision by Israel and the Palestinians to resume direct negotiations. This decision by the parties to engage in substantive talks represents a major step on the road towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, something I am hopeful we can now achieve.

I want to firstly commend U.S. President Barack Obama, my U.S. counterpart, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Senator George Mitchell for their hard work and determination to bring the Israelis and Palestinians to the negotiating table. I want to also credit my Quartet partners and Quartet Envoy Tony Blair and I would like to thank all of the EU member states for their support of this process.

I also want to stress the importance of the positive outcome of the Arab League Foreign Ministers meeting of July 29.

As a member of the Quartet, and on behalf of the EU, I will continue to work with the parties to support the negotiations. We all want to see a two-state solution with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with each other and their neighbours.

The parties must work fast and hard on all the final status issues to meet the Quartet's call for a negotiated settlement within one year.

To give negotiations the best chance of success, an enabling environment on the ground is essential. It is therefore imperative that both parties keep calm and exercise restraint. They should only act on the basis of international law, refraining from all provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric.

Successful negotiations will also need sustained regional, international support and the continuation of the Palestinian state-building process, which the EU fully supports. I call on all concerned to fulfil previous pledges to help the Palestinian Authority.

I also want to reiterate the EU's readiness to contribute substantially to post-conflict arrangements aimed at ensuring the sustainability of peace agreements.

Modernisation and a new political game in Russia?

Félix Krawatzek

CEPS Commentary, 5 August 2010. [Link](#)

[Abstract]

When President Medvedev took office in 2008, it was widely expected that former President Putin would take back the reins by 2012, at the latest. The change in the constitution in December 2008 to extend the presidential term to six years was widely seen as a strengthening of President Putin's tenure in the future. Against all expectations, however, it is Medvedev who is increasingly distinguishing himself from his former mentor by proposing an independent political project for Russia, which has at its heart the 'modernisation' of the country. In this new Commentary, Félix Krawatzek, visiting Researcher to CEPS, explains why 2012 will be a decisive year for Russia and an interesting one for the rest of the world.

Looking afresh at the external representation of the EU in the international arena

Michael Emerson and Piotr Maciej Kaczynski

CEPS Policy Brief, No. 212, 20 July 2010. [Link](#)

What would the EU need to do to its external representation to be effectively equipped as a global international actor in the emerging multi-polar world? In general, an extensive 'upgrade' of the EU's external representation is required, since the EU often languishes in the observer ranks even where its competences may be substantial. This is a highly complex field, however – politically, legally and institutionally – and any attempt to formulate operational recommendations will have to be finely tuned to many different specific situations.

This Policy Brief by CEPS Research Fellows Michael Emerson and Piotr Kaczynski serves both as an overview of the complexities of EU and member state external representation and as an invitation to further debate on the issue.

It forms part of a project being undertaken by a working group consisting of CEPS, EPC, the Egmont Centre and the Leuven University Centre for Global Governance Studies.

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