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стратегического взаимодействия, где правила и соглашения играют решающую роль в обеспечении стабильности, справедливости и устойчивости в глобальной энергетической системе.

Энергетическая дипломатия подчеркивает необходимость разработки новых правовых механизмов, способных адаптироваться к динамично меняющемуся энергетическому ландшафту. Поддержка инноваций, поощрение энергоэффективности и развитие возобновляемых источников энергии требуют гибких и согласованных подходов в сфере нормативной деятельности. Сотрудничество на глобальном уровне в энергетической сфере, подкрепленное эффективными международно-правовыми механизмами, становится обязательным для достижения устойчивого и сбалансированного развития в области энергетики в XXI веке.

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### **EUROPEAN UNION-CENTRAL ASIA ENERGY DIPLOMACY: HISTORY OF COLLABORATION AND PROJECTS WITHIN THE GLOBAL GATEWAY INITIATIVE**

**Makhsul Botakuz,**

*[botakuz.mak@gmail.com](mailto:botakuz.mak@gmail.com)*

Master degree student of the Faculty of International Relations,  
L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan  
Supervisor – Zh.M. Medeubayeva

#### **Abstract:**

This paper examines the European Union's (EU) evolving engagement in Central Asia from 1991 to the present, focusing on the transition from economic and democratic development initiatives to sustainable development and governance, with a significant emphasis on energy projects. It analyzes the EU's strategic shift towards energy diversification and renewable resource adoption, especially through the Global Gateway program, which aims to enhance sustainable energy development and reduce fossil fuel dependence in line with the Green Deal's objectives. The paper addresses the challenges faced by the

EU in this region, including infrastructural deficits and geopolitical complexities, and evaluates the impact of these factors on the success of its initiatives. It also considers the region's underutilized renewable energy potential and the need for improved governance and policy frameworks. The paper concludes that the EU's commitment to sustainable energy development in Central Asia is crucial for promoting economic growth, enhancing energy security, and supporting environmental sustainability, highlighting the importance of strategic investments and policy reforms in achieving these goals.

**Key words:** Sustainable development, Global Gateway program, renewable energy, Central Asia

**Introduction:** the European Union's (EU) strategy in Central Asia has transitioned from primarily fostering economic and democratic development to emphasizing sustainable development and governance. This shift, encapsulated in the move from the TACIS program to the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), reflects a broader focus on regional infrastructure and energy projects. The introduction of the 2007 energy diversification policy, targeting 32% renewable energy by 2030, and the subsequent 2019 strategy, underlines the EU's commitment to renewable energy, security, and infrastructure investment, aligning with the Green Deal's objectives. The EU's Global Gateway program, aiming to invest €300 billion by 2027, further illustrates this commitment, focusing on strengthening Central Asia's sustainable energy sector through renewables, infrastructure modernization, and regional cooperation. However, this initiative faces challenges such as infrastructural gaps, hydrocarbon dependence, and geopolitical tensions, notably influenced by China's rising presence in the region. The paper will introduce the EU's multifaceted approach to addressing these challenges, highlighting key projects like Tajikistan's Rogun Dam and promoting energy efficiency and renewable resources through the REPowerEU initiative. It will also discuss the critical role of improved governance and policy in harnessing the region's renewable energy potential, thus offering a nuanced understanding of the EU's strategic engagement in Central Asia's energy sector. This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of the EU's efforts to foster sustainable energy development, mitigate energy inefficiency, and enhance regional energy cooperation in Central Asia.

### **1. The Evolution of EU-Central Asia Relations in the Energy sector:**

"One of the few regions in the world without any postcolonial ties with Europe, Central Asia is *terra incognita* for the EU in historical terms" (Olga A, 2018). After the Soviet Union's breakup in 1991, the EU initiated partnership agreements with newly independent Central Asian (CA) countries, evolving into the New Partnership strategy in 2007 and the Enhanced Partnership strategy in 2019. Early partnerships emphasized political stability, economic reconstruction, and democratic reforms. The Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) program, initiated in 1991, aimed to achieve two primary objectives: fostering economic development and transitioning to a market economy, and promoting the rule of law, human rights, and democracy. Priority projects for Europe included the reconstruction of the Great Silk Road through the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) program along the Europe-Black Sea-Caucasus-Central Asia-Asia route, and the development of oil and gas pipelines (the INOGATE program) to transport Caspian energy resources westward. INOGATE (Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe) program's primary goals included restoring, rationalizing, and integrating regional oil and gas pipeline systems. Additionally, it aimed to explore alternative transportation routes for hydrocarbons from Central Asia and the Caspian region to European markets, while also establishing an institutional framework for regional cooperation (Olga, 2018).

Similarities	Differences	
	EU Strategy 2007	EU Strategy 2019
Areas of cooperation:	Stress on a new partnership	Stress on a stronger partnership
– Human rights	The structure is more comprehensive and general.	The structure is more detailed and specific.
– Democratization		
– Education	A descriptive nature of the Strategy	An analytic nature of the Strategy
– Economic development		
– Energy and transport cooperation	General description of the Strategy's implementation tools	Specific initiatives in each subsection
– Ecology and water management issues	Afghanistan is a priority in terms of regional security threats	Consideration of new security threats (cybersecurity, etc.), including ISIS
– Regional security		
– Intercultural dialogue	The budget is incorporated into the Strategy with a basic breakdown (i.e. 70% for bilateral projects, and 30% for the promotion of regional cooperation)	A larger budget without any indication of breakdown, leaving priority areas for funding open to further determination

Table 1. Comparative analysis of the EU strategies on Central Asia

Resource: Dzshuraev E., Muratalieva N., 2020 *The Eu Strategy on Central Asia, Global and Regional Policy*

Until December 2006, European projects in Central Asia were primarily implemented under the TACIS program. However, starting in January 2007, they shifted predominantly to the new program, the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), which replaced TACIS. With this transition came changes in focus. While TACIS primarily supported the transition of Central Asia towards a full-fledged market economy and democracy, the DCI shifted its efforts towards reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development in the region. Nevertheless, it still addressed issues related to democracy, good governance, legal norms, and human rights.

In 2007 Strategy, Central Asia was officially designated as a region of strategic interest for the EU, focusing on security, stability, governance, and energy resource diversification. An "energy dialogue" was initiated with Central Asian countries, covering the period from 2007 to 2013 and involving cooperation at interstate and regional levels. The strategy emphasized energy cooperation, access to energy resources, and finding new ways to deliver energy to the EU. To implement this strategy, the EU planned to double funding support for Central Asian countries to €750 million, with energy being a primary focus. In February 2015, the European Commission published the Framework Strategy for a Sustainable Energy Union, aiming to unify EU member states' positions on energy issues and enhance relations with other countries. The Energy Union seeks to provide secure, sustainable, competitive, and affordable energy to EU consumers. As part of this initiative, in 2016, the Commission introduced a package to integrate the EU into the global transition to low-carbon energy development. By 2030, the EU aims to increase the share of renewable energy sources in its energy mix to 32% and achieve a minimum energy efficiency of 32.5% (Tashtemkhanova R., 2019).

The energy partnership enhanced by the 2019 EU Strategy, emphasizes the strategic importance of the region's vast energy resources. This collaboration focuses on energy diversification, aiming to reduce reliance on fossil fuels by tapping into renewable sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric power prevalent in Central Asia. It also seeks to bolster energy security, ensuring stable and reliable energy supplies while aligning with sustainable development goals to mitigate environmental impacts. Investments and improvements in energy infrastructure are critical, alongside fostering technical and regulatory cooperation to modernize energy markets and promote efficient energy use. Regional

cooperation is another cornerstone, facilitating integrated energy markets and cross-border initiatives, thus fostering a resilient, prosperous, and interconnected region that aligns with the broader objectives of the EU's Green Deal and global climate commitments. Rick Fawn (2022) claims that the ambition extends to connecting the Black and Caspian seas, sources of significant hydrocarbons for Europe.

## 2. Energy initiatives within Global Gateway

The European Union (EU) faces urgent energy challenges, accentuated by recent geopolitical tensions. Strengthening ties with Central Asian countries is crucial for the EU to diversify energy sources and decrease dependence on fossil fuels. The Global Gateway program in Central Asia is the European Union's effort to bolster connectivity, promote sustainable development, and stimulate economic progress by making substantial investments in infrastructure and forming partnerships, in alignment with its geopolitical strategy and Sustainable Development Goals (figure 1).



Figure 1. Geopolitical context of Global Gateway program

*Resource: Factsheet of Global Gateway program - Water, Energy, Climate change in Central Asia*

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the countries located upstream of Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, have the most hydropower resources, whereas Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, have the most hydrocarbon resources. In future, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan consider renewable energy to increase their oil and gas exports, while Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan hope to reduce their dependence on energy imports from neighboring countries. (Gulnar et al., 2020) Kazakhstan leads Central Asia in renewables with over 800 MW of solar and 300 MW of wind. Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are advancing, but face hurdles like energy deficits and infrastructural challenges. Central Asia's small- and micro-hydropower potential remains underutilized (Azimov & Avezova, 2022) due to a lack of local suppliers of sustainable energy technologies and technical specialists. Furthermore, there is a shortage of feasibility studies and economic analyses in the energy development sector within the region (Gulnar et al., 2020). Also, experts argue that the region's reliance on hydrocarbon exports and the global shift towards renewable energy present challenges (M. Skalamera, 2020) with the corruption within the energy industry poses a notable worry for international investors, prompting the need for policy adjustments aimed at streamlining investment facilitation and enhancing guarantee mechanisms (Liu Junxia, 2019). The engagement of China in Central Asia's energy geopolitics adds another layer of complexity to the region's energy dynamics, highlighting the necessity for the formulation of effective policies aimed at mitigating associated risks. (Qiang et al., 2020)

Against those challenges the Global Gateway program in Central Asia's energy sector is an EU-led initiative aimed at bolstering sustainable and secure energy development across the region. It emphasizes the advancement of renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power, to mitigate carbon emissions and bolster energy security. A significant focus is placed on modernizing and expanding the energy infrastructure, which is crucial for enhancing the efficiency, reliability, and interconnectivity of the regional energy grid. The program advocates for regional energy cooperation, fostering a unified energy market that supports energy trade and optimizes resource allocation across Central Asian nations. Additionally, it promotes energy efficiency and conservation across various sectors to diminish energy consumption and environmental impact. The initiative also encompasses capacity-building and technical assistance to enhance the institutional and policy dialogs essential for the energy sector's sustainability. Furthermore, it encourages investments in clean technologies, supporting

research and innovation to drive sustainable energy solutions.

In terms of financing, the Global Gateway aims to mobilize €300 billion in investments by 2027 using existing EU financial tools. It does not involve extra development aid but builds on mechanisms like the EU budget instrument for external action, Team Europe approach, and policy-first strategy to scale up development finance (Chloe & San, 2023). Yet, some experts have perceived as largely a repackaging of existing money to fit a new narrative that is more focused on geopolitical posturing and self-interest than the United Nations' SDGs (Vince, 2023).

### Main sectors funded by Team Europe

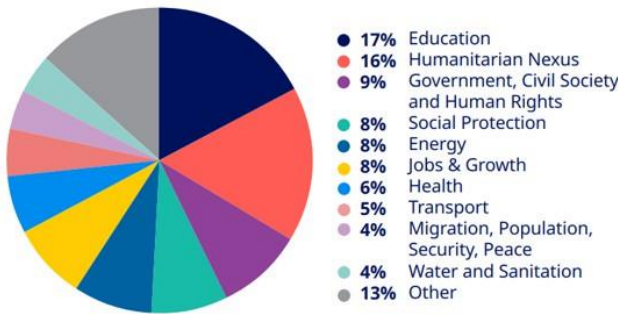


Figure 2. Main sectors funded by Team Europe.

Resource: [OECD.Stat: DAC 2a and CRS](#)

According to EuroStat, (2023) the key areas of the Global Gateway in Central Asian countries are:

- In Kazakhstan within the program focuses on the development of a secure and sustainable supply of raw materials, batteries, and renewable hydrogen. This initiative is aimed at enhancing the green and digital transformation of both the EU and Kazakhstan's economies. (European Commission - Press release, 2020) The partnership focuses on three key areas: integrating economic and industrial sectors across strategic value chains like raw materials, batteries, and renewable hydrogen; bolstering the resilience and transparency of these supply chains; and enhancing bilateral efforts in capacity building, skills, and innovation for a sustainable transition away from fossil fuels toward a greener future (Press and information, 2022).

- The Rogun Dam in Tajikistan, set for completion by 2032, is a significant renewable energy project on the Vakhsh River, aimed at doubling the nation's energy production. This 335-meter tall dam, the largest in Central Asia, will generate 3.6 GW from six turbines, yielding 17.1 TWh annually. It will enhance regional decarbonization and energy independence, with potential investment from the European Investment Bank under the Global Gateway program.

- The Sebzor Hydropower Plant (HPP), under construction on the Shokhdara River in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO), aims to provide stable, affordable electricity and reduce outages, especially from natural disasters. It targets a 5% to 6% annual demand increase until 2027. The project, costing around EUR 39.7 million, is funded by the EU and German Development Cooperation, with EUR 35.6 million allocated for construction and consulting, managed by KfW Bank.(Delegation to Tajikistan, 2022).

- Sustainable Energy, Climate, and Competitiveness in Central Asia (SECCA) project, part of its Connectivity Strategy for Central Asia, aims to foster sustainable energy development in the region. With a focus on energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE), SECCA intends to enhance the energy mix in Central Asia, aligning with the European Green Deal's objectives. The project, with a budget of €6.8 million, seeks to strengthen the policy framework, increase investments, and raise awareness in EE and RE sectors. It promotes regional economic cooperation and connectivity, aiming to improve energy resilience, security, and independence while also supporting job creation and economic growth. SECCA's approach includes facilitating high-level dialogues, developing gender and climate-sensitive energy policies, and identifying investment projects in renewable and efficient energy solutions.

Additionally, the REPowerEU program, embedded within the European Union's Global Gateway initiative, targets the energy crisis by aiming to reduce reliance on Russian fossil fuels and expedite the shift to renewable energy. The program supports infrastructure development, such as gas interconnectors and renewable projects, to strengthen energy resilience and integration throughout Europe, thereby aiming for a rapid transformation of the energy sector, promoting energy savings, and increasing renewable energy investments and deployment across EU member states.

The efficiency of the EU's projects in the energy sector of Central Asia is a complex issue,

influenced by factors such as the potential for renewable energy (G. Kaliakparova et al., 2020) development energy-use inefficiency (Hiroyuki Taguchi & Aktamov Asomiddin, 2022) and the application of renewable energy and digital technology in energy-deficient regions (V. Elistratov et al., 2021). While Central Asian countries have significant potential for renewable energy, the actual deployment of these resources remains low. Weak policy governance and natural resource abundance contribute to energy-use inefficiency, suggesting a need for improved energy policies. The application of renewable energy and digital technology in energy-deficient regions could further enhance energy efficiency. These findings highlight the potential for the EU to support the development of renewable energy and the improvement of energy policies in Central Asia.

### **Conclusion:**

Since 1991, the EU's engagement in Central Asia has evolved from promoting economic and democratic development to focusing on sustainable development and governance, with significant investment in regional infrastructure and energy projects. The EU's strategic shift towards energy diversification and the adoption of renewable resources, particularly through the Global Gateway program, aims to enhance sustainable energy development and reduce dependence on fossil fuels, aligning with the Green Deal's objectives. Despite facing challenges like infrastructural deficits and geopolitical complexities, the EU continues to prioritize renewable energy, infrastructure modernization, and regional cooperation. However, the success of these initiatives hinges on addressing the region's energy inefficiency and governance issues, and fully leveraging its renewable energy potential. The EU's commitment to investing in Central Asia's sustainable energy landscape presents a vital opportunity to foster economic growth, enhance energy security, and support environmental sustainability in the region.

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## «ҚАЗАҚСТАН - ДАМЫҒАН ЕЛ МӘРТЕБЕСІНЕ ЖОЛ»

**Молдахмет Жансұлтан Жамбылұлы**

[zhansultanmoldakhmet@icloud.com](mailto:zhansultanmoldakhmet@icloud.com)

Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы ЕҰУ,

Халықаралық қатынастар факультетінің студенті, Астана, Қазақстан

Ғылыми жетекші – Б.М. Батишева

Соңғы онжылдықтарда Қазақстан әлемнің дамыған елдері арасында өз орнын алуға ұмтылуда, өйткені айтарлықтай экономикалық өсім мен әлеуметтік даму байқалады. Еліміз ауқымды даму бағдарламаларын табысты іске асыруды, білім мен ғылымға инвестиция салуды және халықаралық диалогқа белсенді қатысуға аса басымдылық беруде. Бұл мақала Қазақстан прогресінің негізгі аспектілерін қарастырады, елдің даму жолында кездесетін сын-қатерлері мен мүмкіндіктерін талдайды және жаһандық үрдістер контекстінде болашақтың перспективаларын ұсынады.

Дамыған елдер қатарына кіруі үшін келесі критерийлері орындалуы маңызды:

- 1. ЖІӨ-нің жоғары деңгейі:** жалпы және жан басына шаққанда, бұл жоғары өмір сүру деңгейі мен стандартты көрсетеді.
- 2. Нарықтық экономика:** экономиканың дамыған нарықтық жүйесінің болуы.
- 3. Қызмет көрсету саласының басымдығы:** ЖІӨ өндіру процесінде өнеркәсіп пен ауыл шаруашылығынан басым болады.
- 4. Тұрақты халық және мемлекет:** дамыған мемлекетте даму жүйесі тұрақты әрі ұзақ мерзімді болады.

Қазақстан Республикасы дамыған 30 елдер қатарына кіру үшін алғы істерінің бірі 2012 жылы желтоқсан айында “Қазақстан – 2050” стратегиясын қабылдауы. Бұл стратегияның негізгі мақсаттары - берекелі қоғам құру, Қазақстанның әлемдегі ең дамыған 30 елдің қатарына кіруі.