



Germany and Central Asia



MAP OF THE REGION



Germany and Central Asia – a partnership for the future

Since gaining their independence in 1991, the five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) have enjoyed close relations with Germany based on partnership. It was therefore no coincidence that Germany took the initiative for the [Strategy for a New Partnership between the EU and Central Asia](#) during its Presidency of the EU in 2007. The EU and its partners in Central Asia together drafted this document which points the way forward. The European Council of Heads of State and Government adopted the Central Asia Strategy on 22 June 2007 and thus the EU had for the first time created a comprehensive framework for its policy on Central Asia. The Strategy also forms the basis for current and future engagement of the German Government in this region which is so important in geopolitical terms.

Central Asia lies at the intersection between Europe and Asia, bordering on Afghanistan to the south. The historic Silk Road once ran through Central Asia. Today the region plays an ever more important geopolitical role as Europe's neighbour. This holds true not just for its considerable, in part as yet untapped gas and crude oil reserves which could be a factor in diversifying European energy supplies and for its economic potential. Shared challenges such as the fight against organized crime, terrorism and the drug trade with its worrying growth rate also make Central Asia a place which plays a role in deciding Europe's security. At the same time, Germany and the European Union have a great interest in strengthening the development of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Central Asia's newly independent states.

Federal Foreign Minister
Guido Westerwelle with
his Kazakh counterpart
Kanat Saudabayev



German engagement in Central Asia

Germany is to date the only EU member state with embassies in all five Central Asian capitals. This is not without good reason: The Federal Republic of Germany was one of the first states to establish diplomatic relations with the new republics following independence in 1991 and was quick to open embassies. The German Government there-by sent an early signal that it intended to strengthen independence and support the transformation process in the newly independent states. Through development policy cooperation it is helping the Central Asian governments with political and economic modernization. The aim is to stabilize and develop the region in the long term both internally and externally, with German support focusing particularly on the [sustainable development of a social market economy in the countries in transition and on the health sector](#). There are also regional commitments for example to support legal and judicial reform and to extend regional economic cooperation. At the European and multilateral level, the German Government provides considerable financial contributions for the development policy programmes run by institutions such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Commission.

Germany is the region's third largest trade partner after Russia and China. German foreign trade with the Central Asian countries totalled some **8 billion euro** in 2008 (EU total: approx. 27 billion euro).

Some 239,000 ethnic Germans still live in the Central Asian states. Since the early 1990s, 1,046,000 (late) repatriates including their spouses, children and other family members have settled in Germany. With its programme to promote German minorities in East-Central Europe, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe including non-European successor states of the former USSR, the German Government has since the early 1990s been helping improve the living environment of people of German descent also in Central Asia. Since 2007 the Federal Government has lent support to the tune of some 10 million euro in the five Central Asian countries.

Through the German Government's cultural preservation programme, support has been granted for the restoration and preservation of cultural objects in Central Asia totalling 1.1 million euro since 1995.

Since 1994, there has been a Goethe-Institut in Almaty and one was opened in Tashkent in 1998. There are also reading rooms and language centres in other cities across the region. In 2010 Germany is showcasing itself as a modern and cosmopolitan country to a broad

public with events in all five countries. With events throughout the year, the programme “Germany in Kazakhstan 2010” presents Germany as a centre for education and research, a nation that values culture and as an economic partner. Civil society dialogue is also to be stepped up. The Germany weeks in the remaining countries planned for autumn 2010 pursue the same goals.

The EU Central Asia Strategy

Under the heading “The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership”, the EU has for the first time created a long-term framework for its policy on Central Asia.

The Strategy was adopted by the European Council on 22 June 2007. The Central Asian states played an active role at the drafting stage.

The Strategy takes in and pools projects by the Commission and the member states.

The EU budget for cooperation with Central Asia was upped to 750 million euro.

The foreign ministers of Central Asia meet with the EU Troika twice a year for political talks.

There are annual human rights dialogues with all five countries.

Implementing the Central Asia Strategy is

not a task for the European institutions alone but for all member states. It is also a focus of German foreign policy.

The Federal Republic of Germany is making major contributions in all priority areas:

Youth and education

40% of the population of 51 million people in the region are younger than 40. Developing the education system is therefore crucial for the future. The flagship of German education work in Central Asia is the German-Kazakh University in Almaty.

As part of development policy cooperation, the German Government has for years been supporting vocational training following the German dual system model and on a smaller scale has also been promoting basic education by financing equipment and teaching materials as well as the drafting of curricula and training of teachers. The programmes are geared particularly to the needs of the private sector and agriculture. In the case of the PASCH initiative “Schools: Partners for the Future” launched in 2008, the network has now been expanded to include 45 schools in Central Asia:

- 31 schools under the auspices of the Central Agency for Schools Abroad offering the German Language Certificate of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 14 schools where German lessons are supported by the Goethe-Institut.

(Find out more at www.pasch-net.de)

The Federal Foreign Office promotes the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The Academy, which opened in 2002, offers a “Master of Political Science (Central Asia)” which has proven highly popular. A long-term lecturer commissioned by the German Academic Exchange Service has started work in 2010 to launch a new master’s degree programme in European studies.



DEUTSCH
KASACHISCHE
UNIVERSITÄT

The German-Kazakh University was founded in 1999 in Almaty as a private initiative. It currently has 360 students

in the subjects economics, administration, social sciences and engineering. The range of subjects is to be extended to include the environment (energy and water). Since 2007, 1.6 million euro has been made available and a further 6 million euro has been earmarked for the period up to 2013. From 2010 renovation work to the tune of 9.5 million euro is to be performed also in terms of building and energy efficiency thereby creating the first model building for renewable energies and energy efficiency in Central Asia. More information on the German-Kazakh University is available at <http://www.dku.kz>.



Over the last five years, the German Academic Exchange Service has awarded a total of 4659 scholarships of various kinds in Central Asia – an average of almost **1000 scholarships** per year. The Service is on the ground in all five Central Asian countries with lecturers or language assistants.

As a basic and further training institute for journalists, the DW-AKADEMIE run by the Deutsche Welle (www.dw-akademie.de) has been operating in the region since the mid-90s. In 2009 it opened an office in Bishkek. The focus is on cooperation with selected television and radio stations as well as online media in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Staff take part in regular regional seminars and in-house training sessions.

Human rights and the rule of law

Human rights, the rule of law, good governance and democratization are key to dignified development and stability. Germany is supporting reform in these central spheres with a broad spectrum of steps, including training for jurists and legal advice. Together with France, Germany plays the role of coordinator of the EU Rule of Law Initiative in Central Asia. For many years, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and

Development has been promoting the modernization of the legal systems in all five countries (since 2002, more than 12 million euro has been made available). The advice has focused on civil and business law as well as on setting up independent and qualified judicial organs. This involves constant exchange among the Central Asian states themselves and between them and German and European institutions. Germany supports a project together with the Council of Europe's Venice Commission to apply international human rights standards. There are exchanges and cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Justice and the ministries in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for example seminars on the execution of sentences or court structures. The German political foundations run programmes to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law in Central Asia.



Promoting economic development, trade and investment

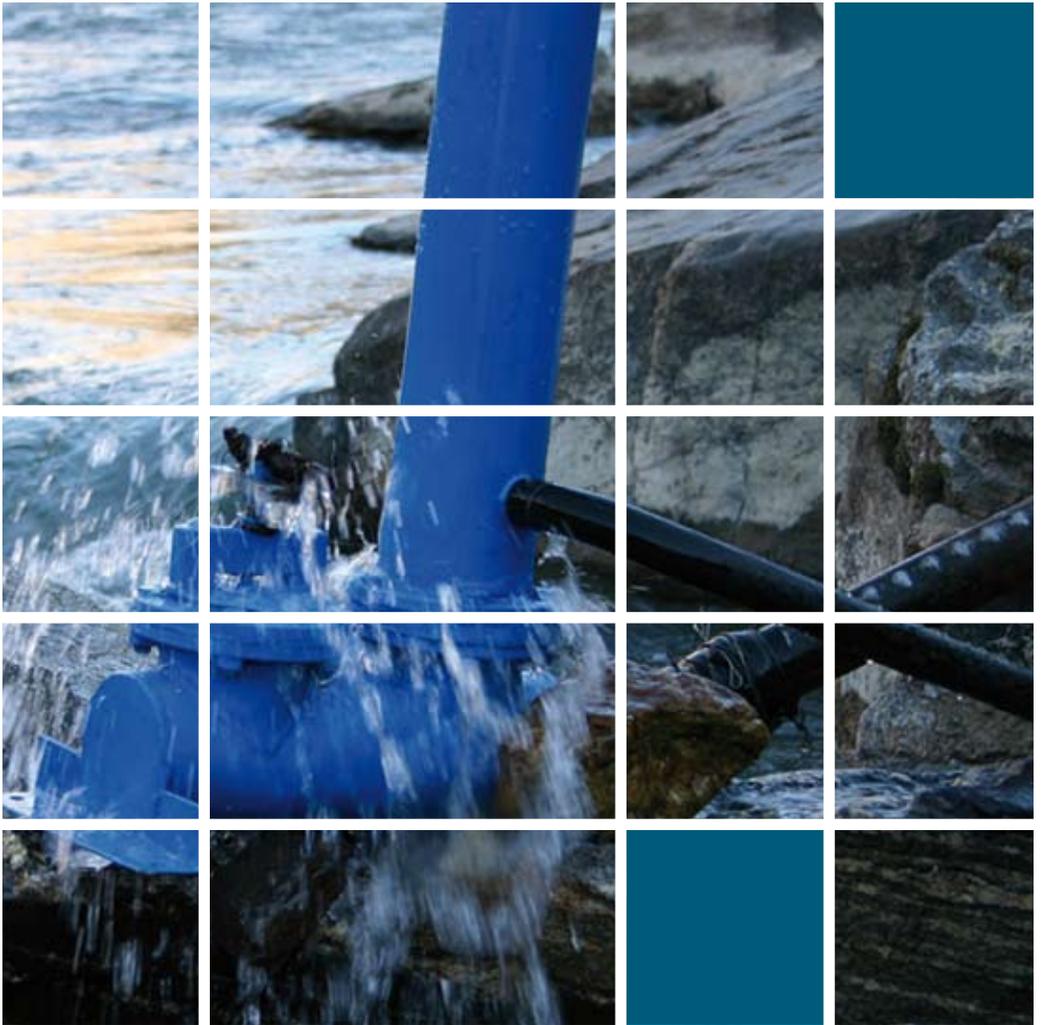
German direct investment in all five Central Asian states totalled some 250 million euro in 2008. Investment by German companies is to be seen mainly in the spheres of building materials, trade and services, car manufacturing, food and beverages industry as well as textiles. In a joint initiative with German business, the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology is training managers from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan (to date 3.8 million euro). Since the programme was launched in 2006, 443 young potentials from the region's private sector have received support. Within the German system of chambers of trade abroad, the Delegate of German Industry and Commerce based in Almaty is responsible for Central Asia. In 2008, the Representative Office was upgraded to a Delegate with a seconded head. It receives support of 0.5 million euro from the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology each year. German development policy cooperation with the countries of Central Asia focuses on the sustainable development of the social market economy. At bilateral level, the countries involved are advised on economic policy, rural financing in the micro-credit sphere is supported and the private sector bolstered.

Regional projects further economic cooperation in Central Asia and help reduce trade barriers.

Extending energy and transport links

Extending the road and rail network of the five countries which to date have insufficient links is essential for further economic development.

Germany is involved in the electrification of the rail link between Tashkent and Angren in Uzbekistan, for example, with a loan of 25 million euro.



Environment and water

In April 2008, the German Foreign Minister launched the [Berlin Water Initiative](#). The Federal Ministry for the Environment is active with environment and climate protection projects (energy efficiency, renewable energies, adapting to climate change, sustainable forestry, management of nature conservation areas, remediation of contaminated soil) in all Central Asian states (10.5 million euro since 2008).

The Berlin Water Initiative is Germany's contribution to implementing the EU Central Asia Strategy in the sphere of water. The major crossborder rivers fed by melt-water are used differently by all the riparian states. This regularly leads to tension between downstream and upstream countries. Stability in the region can only be guaranteed if the crucial resource water is used in an environmentally friendly, sustainable and sensible way taking account of neighbouring states. German support takes in: help with crossborder water management, networking water experts, scientific studies, research network and university courses in the environmental sphere (energy and water) at the German-Kazakh University in Almaty. Pilot projects were launched in 2009. Examples of projects: satellite-based water through-flow readings, rehabilitation of canals, drip irrigation, cleaning and deepening reservoirs. The Federal Foreign Office is making available 14.3 million euro here.

Tackling common threats and challenges

The security and stability of Central Asia is of paramount importance also for Europe; by way of example, one of the most important drug routes from Afghanistan runs through this region. The German Government is working with the Central Asian republics in their engagement to stabilize Afghanistan. The Termez airbase in Uzbekistan is an important hub. The Federal Criminal Police Office is offering training courses on combating organized crime and international terrorism and is providing equipment aid (2009: 450,000 euro).

In November 2009, for example, a symposium attended by the heads of the security

authorities of the Central Asian states together with Afghanistan and Pakistan was held in Dushanbe.

A consortium headed by Germany is in 2010 taking on responsibility for the implementation of the EU Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP).

Within the OSCE, Germany is making bilateral contributions above all in Tajikistan, for example to set up a Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe or to train customs officers to identify precursors for drug production (total support in Central Asia 2007-2009: 300,000 euro).

The Federal Ministry of Defence is training members of the armed forces of the Central Asian republics in Germany.

In Central Asia, Islam remained a key component of people's identity also in the Soviet era. Since independence, it has been a major factor in the transformation of society. Finding a balance within society with its Islamic culture and tradition is therefore a central task.

Intercultural dialogue

In Central Asia, a region so heterogeneous in terms of ethnic groups and religions, promoting dialogue within society is therefore a major priority. As part of its efforts to promote intercultural dialogue, the Federal Foreign Office supports multilateral initiatives and concrete dialogue projects.

In 2008, a workshop run by the Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg looked at good governance in secular states with Muslim majorities in Central Asia. Politicians and academics from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia took part.

With its Silk Highway Project which ran from 2007 to 2009, InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany set up a regional network for e-learning and exchange of information and knowledge in Central Asia.

The programmes of the political foundations have a regional approach (for example, social policy consultancy, civil society dialogue).



Outlook

The partnership between the republics of Central Asia and Germany and all other EU member states has picked up speed.

For us it is important not just to maintain this momentum but to increase it further. We want to be a constructive partner for the newly independent states in Central Asia and help ensure they develop in a stable and sustainable way. The challenges but also the opportunities we face are enormous. We want to use them together.

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Werderscher Markt 1, 10117 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 5000-0
Fax: +49 30 5000-34 02
www.auswaertiges-amt.de
poststelle@auswaertiges-amt.de



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