

# EU-Central Asia High Level Political and Security Dialogue

The fourth High Level Political and Security Dialogue between the European Union and the countries of Central Asia (Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at the invitation of the government of Kyrgyzstan. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was invited as a special guest to the Dialogue.

The meeting was held at the level of Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, hosted by the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Ms Dinara Kemelova and chaired by Mr Jean-Christophe Belliard, Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs of the European External Action Service.

The Dialogue is an opportunity to address political and security issues of shared concern. The participants exchanged views on a number of key issues, including counter-terrorism and violent extremism, drug trafficking and border management, and reviewed possibilities for reinforced cooperation in these areas. The stability of the wider region, including Afghanistan, was also considered. Finally, regional and international issues were discussed over lunch. It was agreed to intensify common efforts between the EU and Central Asian states in all these areas.

The High Level Political and Security Dialogue reflects a shared interest of the European Union and of the Central Asian countries to strengthen dialogue and cooperation on security issues. It also builds on the intensified levels of cooperation developed through the EU – Central Asia Strategy and the substantial EU cooperation programmes in the region.

The European Union has a record of long-standing security cooperation with both the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, notably through border management programmes BOMCA for Central Asia and BOMNAF for Afghanistan, which focus on integrated border management, cross border cooperation and trade facilitation in the region. The EU also supports Central Asian partners in the fight against drugs through a regional Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) and a trans-regional programme EU Action against Drugs and Organised Crime (EU-ACT).

The High Level Political and Security Dialogue is held regularly; the first Dialogue took place in 2013 in Brussels. The next round will be held in 2018.