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## **EU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIA VISITS KAZAKHSTAN**

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Time of Central Asia (22 February 2019)

European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia Peter Burian is paying a working visit to Kazakhstan on February 21-22. The agenda includes meetings at the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, as well as with local youth, the Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan said.

During the visit the EUSR will discuss a wide range of issues related to EU-Kazakhstan cooperation in the light of the upcoming adoption of the new EU Strategy on Central Asia and full ratification of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Topics include political and economic reforms, the rule of law, trade and economic relations and issues of the international agenda. A new EU Strategy on Central Asia will update the 2007 Strategy and bring it in line with developments in the region.

We shall release a new EU Strategy on Central Asia before the summer, which will stress the new opportunities for EU-Central Asia cooperation, which some of the most positive regional dynamics in Central Asia have created. This Strategy will propose to build a stronger partnership with Central Asia so that the region develops as a more resilient, prosperous and closely interconnected economic and political space," Peter Burian said.

The new Strategy sets out the EU's approach to the promotion of sustainable connectivity in and with the region, in line with the EU's Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia adopted on 18 October 2018. It will also foster a closer link between the EU's policies on Central Asia and on Afghanistan. The new EU Strategy will also provide guidance for the preparation of EU aid programming for the period 2021-2027.

The new Strategy will focus on priorities in which the EU can advance its interests, provide value added and make a difference. The Regional Multiannual Indicative Programme for Central Asia allocates 1000 million for the period 2014-2020 (including 100 million for the Erasmus+ programme) to promote regional cooperation in the areas of Sustainable Development and Regional Security.

The Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) between the EU and Kazakhstan was signed on 21 December 2015 in Astana. Since 1 May 2016 the provisional implementation of the main articles of the Agreement has been launched. The Agreement provides for significant boost to economic and political ties between the EU and Kazakhstan and also enhances concrete cooperation in 29 key policy areas, including in the sectors of economic and financial cooperation, energy, transport, environment and climate change, employment and social affairs, culture,

education and research.

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