
EU AND CENTRAL ASIA: NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK TOGETHER FOR GREEN FUTURE

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Josep Borrell, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and Vice-President of the European Commission released a statement on the eve of the conference entitled Green Central Asia.

The following is the full text of his statement:

On 28 January 2020, friends from Central Asia, Afghanistan and the European Union will gather in Berlin for a conference organised by the German Foreign Ministry, entitled Green Central Asia. I was glad to accept the invitation and join Foreign Ministers from the region, for two main reasons:

First, to underline how urgent the challenge of tackling climate change is and how much we need to mobilise everyone to address it. The science is clear: we are facing a true climate crisis. Climate change is one of the biggest geopolitical challenges we face. It poses problems of redistribution, inside the EU and beyond, and is a driver of instability and migratory pressures. It creates problems of social justice, raises tensions and poses a threat to human rights. Tackling these multi-faceted threats cannot be left only to climate specialists. It must be at the centre of our foreign policy.

Europe is ready to lead the global fight against climate change. In December 2019 we adopted the EU Green Deal, which commits the EU to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. But the EU is only responsible for 9% of global emissions, so we need others to join us

The second reason was that the conference was a good opportunity to reconfirm the EUs commitment to strengthen cooperation with Central Asia. In fact, relations have entered a new phase. Last year EU Foreign Ministers adopted a new Strategy on Central Asia with the specific aim to step up our engagement with the region so that it becomes a more resilient, prosperous, and interconnected space. We see huge potential for greater regional cooperation in Central Asia, a view which the leaders of Central Asia share as they themselves stated at their summit last November in Tashkent

Climate change is a top priority for our partnership, as Central Asia is particularly affected. Over the past three decades, average annual temperatures in the region have already risen by 0.5 degrees Celsius and droughts and water scarcity have disrupted entire ecosystems. The

disappearance of the Aral Sea is a spectacular illustration of the negative consequences of climate change. This is not just an environmental problem: it is a catastrophe for entire communities who live on its former shores

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