

The Role of Germany in European Union's Central Asia Cultural and Education Policy

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Abstract

In this study, close relationships of **Germany** acting as a power unit in both union process and development processes of European Union (EU) with Central Asia Republics will be examined as a case study. In the study, Germany's relations with Central Asia containing much more than economical interest relations will be discussed. In the article, importance of Germany's role in the EU's interest to the members of international system with a new identity will be assessed and parameters of German foreign policy in respect to the area (German minority in Central Asia and strength of German culture) will be emphasized, and the study will be summed and concluded in the end.

Key Words: *European Union, Germany, Central Asia, Turkic Republics*

The EU's Central Asia Policy in the Lead of Germany

Following the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991, new states that did not directly concern German foreign policy until the time were formed in Central Asia. Germany did not ignore the countries that newly gained their independences, and started developing its relations with the countries in the area by all means. Relations with the area were continued on bilateral grounds as the EU's policy for the area did not satisfy Germany. Then again, most European countries do not have representatives within countries of the area, nor their foreign affairs ministries have units. Despite all, European Union showed its presence in the area by technical aid program (TACIS)¹ and Cooperation and Partnership Agreement for CIS countries. Humanitarian food aid should also be included in those activities. European Union provided 3,8 trillion Euros aid

¹ To see detailed information, please see Alexander Frenz, The European Commission's Tacis Programme 1991 – 2006 - A Success Story – The Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States, on http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-east/documents/annual_programmes/tacis_success_story_final_en.pdf, Access Date, 04.09.2013

through TACIS between the years of 1991 – 1999². Germany, having an important role in foreign trade of successor countries of Soviet Union, is the country that has the biggest interest in the area amongst other EU countries. Cooperation established with the area countries in 1999 when Germany was the chairman of the period was further progressed by the executed treaty amity.

We observe that Germany has stepped forward in respect to the EU's development of a policy for Central Asia by millennium. In this process, German Foreign Affairs Minister and EU Chairman of that period, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, indicated importance of Central Asia for the EU by his following evaluation in 2006. "If Central Asia is located on the border of Russia and China due to its position, controlling of this area by either one of the strong neighbors is not desirable. There is a large segment in the area that believes Europe will be interested in Central Asia and verge towards Europe"³. Steinmeier also stated importance of the area for the EU by his following solid words. According to him, "Central Asia is indispensable for Europe for its location right next to instability and collision, for its fight against Islamic radicals and for its rich energy resources. Thus, intensity of the relations which is not at desirable levels between the parties should have been increased by encouraging mutual cooperation and interaction."⁴

Germany placed great emphasis on relationships with Central Asia during its EU presidency period, and visited Kazakhstan's capital city Astana for two days in the presidency of Steinmeier on the 27-28 March 2007 in order to increase cooperation with the countries in the area. During its presidency term (January-June 2007), Germany emphasized three substantial topics while putting its priorities in order.⁵ First, it is persistently emphasized that more attention should be placed on the existing relations with Central Asia countries, Black Sea Region and Russia in the scope of expanding Europe's security and stability objectives. Furthermore, access to energy resources has a great role in Germany's interest to Central Asia, and as it will be mentioned later, a German population estimated to be over 1 million living in Kazakhstan following dissolution of Soviet Union also made an influence. Now that the population is around 200 thousand and German companies have great strength in the area is another factor.

Primary substantial reason is that Central Asia came closer to the EU borders after the last expansion wave of Europe. Thus, presence of an area with a high potential of trouble around Union member countries shall mean immediate action by Union in the area. Turning the area into a stability, safety, democracy and welfare area is the priority objective. In the area where it seems difficult to establish stability in a short period, it is highly feasible to achieve results in

²Rahr Alexander, "Europe in the New Central Asia", Deutsch – kazachisches Dialogforum, see, <http://ifa.de/dialoge/dkasac1.htm>.

³Ahta Lobjakas, "EU: German Presidency's Focus on Central Asia, Black Sea and Russia", FFE/RL, 27 December 2006, For internet source, see, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1073562.html>. Access date, 20.04.2012.

⁴Esra, Hatioğlu, "European Union – Towards a New Strategy in Central Asia Relations? (Orta Asya İlişkilerinde Yeni Bir Stratejiye Doğru(mu)?, OAKA, Volume 3, No 5, 2008, p. 3, for internet source, see <http://www.usak.org.tr/dosyalar/dergi/>.

⁵M. Murat, Erdoğan. Central Asia Policies of European Union (Avrupa Birliği'nin Orta Asya Politikaları (REPORT), University of Hoca Ahmet Yesevi, Ankara, September 2011, p. 31.

long term for implementing superiority of justice based on the EU values.⁶ The second substantial aspect of relations with the area is the financial relations between Central Asia Republics and EU. As we mentioned earlier, those relations steering around 30 billion dollars annually are increasing day by day with the projects designed to carry energy resources of Central Asia to Europe and foreign investors. The third aspect is the area's important role in respect to the EU's energy demand security in consideration of the rich energy sources of the area.

If we look back, we can remember that Europe was depending on Russia in terms of energy and was out of gas for a period due to Russia-Ukraine problem in 2006. Thus, this problem caused awareness of the EU on downsides of depending on a single country in energy filed, and forced the EU to take additional measures in finding different routes. Among the EU countries, France was dependent on Russia in 26%, Italy was dependent in 30%, Germany was dependent in 39%, Austria in 74%, Slovenia and Finland were dependent in 100% to Russia in terms of gas utilization in year 2006.⁷ This gas crisis was mentioned by Berita Ferrero-Waldner, foreign affairs commissioner of the EU in 2007.⁸ The crisis indicated that the EU was not prepared, has no alternatives and was defenseless against problems in energy, particularly in natural gas demand.

The most extensive policy developed by the EU for Central Asia is; the EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership, which was formalized by intense work of Germany's period presidency in 2007. The principle characteristics of this document intending to develop strategic cooperation for the first time in addition to the technical aids is that the relations with Central Asia is constructed on security and stability.⁹ This strategy document is observed to be focusing on three fields. Stability in this area is not only essential for the EU but also for Caspian Sea, Afghanistan and Russia. Therefore, the EU considered improving relations of this country with the international institutions while creating Central Asia policies. Feasibility of this by a good administration and consistent development was projected.¹⁰

Another issue in respect to the relations is the financial relations between the EU and countries in the area. Particularly Kazakhstan is the biggest trade partner of the EU. The most important element of cooperation document is the security of the EU's energy demand. Because the efforts of the EU to ensure its own energy security will strengthen foreign investor environment in Central Asia area and will also increase production efficiency of the existing energy resources in the area. Therefore, this will enable alternate routes for safe transportation of energy sources.

⁶ Hatipoğlu, a.g.m. p. 3.

⁷ Radikal, "Ukraine could not resist cold for long" (Ukrayna Soğuğa Fazla Dayanamadı), 5 January 2006, for internet source see, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/haber.php?haberno=174923>. Access date. 18.04.2012.

⁸ Central Asia: EU Commissioner Seeks Closer European Ties, 16 Ocak 2007, FFE/RL Report, Internet source, see, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1074059.html>, Access date, 19.04.2012.

⁹ To obtain more detailed information please see, Council of the EU, EU and Central Asia, Strategy for a New Partnership, http://eeas.europa.eu/central_Asia/docs/2007_eu_strategy_new_partnership_centralAsia_en.pdf, Access Date, 18.04.2012.

¹⁰ Erdoğan, a.g.m, s. 37.

Hence, the EU anticipated to political and financial ventures for production, development and delivery of other sources as well as energy issues, and an aid in the amount of 750 million Euro between the years of 2007-20013 in that extent.¹¹

The EU has identified important issues and priorities in the cooperation with Central Asia Republics by Central Asia Strategy Document prepared for 2007 – 2013 period, and always planned to increase economical aids. Thus, the EU planned to establish regional political dialogue in addition to financial relations and to develop a human rights dialogue through a country targeting to establish a European Education and Constitutional State Initiative, and an energy dialogue with area countries on a regular basis. The most important reason for Germany to continue its relations with Central Asia countries is the presence of German minority living in the area for a long term. Because German population is mostly settled in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, those two countries have significance in German policy in the area.

Parameters of German Foreign Policy

a) German Minority in Central Asia

Germans¹² living in Kazakhstan has a significant role in Germany's Central Asia policy. Presence of German minority in Kazakhstan started upon invitation of Katerina the 2nd to the country to run empty lands in Russia in the second half of the 18th century.¹³ According to Güler, some part of this minority were exiled to Kazakhstan due to suspect of spying during World War I.¹⁴ Regression in financial indicators of Kazakhstan later resulted in immigration of Germans living in the country back to Germany. Two thirds of approximately one million German living in Kazakhstan immigrated to Germany between the years of 1989 - 1997. Today, 178.000 of 239.000 ethnic Germans remained in Central Asia live in Kazakhstan.¹⁵ German state was accepting those Germans without too much hassle in the beginning. Germany desisted from this policy later because of high unemployment rate and integration of immigrating families into the society and implemented policies to encourage cognates in Central Asia to stay in their countries. As a model, German Foreign Affairs Minister suggested that Germans in

¹¹<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1074059.html>, Access Date, 18.04.2012.

¹² Germans who had lived in Soviet Union were called Russian Germans. This term is also used for those Germans who still live in the once Soviet area. Russian Germans came to Volga region 200 years ago by II. Katarina's call and that is why they are called Russian Germans since then. They were expelled to Kazakhstan after Adolf Hitler attack Russia in 1941. (Eski Sovyetler Birliđi'nde yařayan tüm Almanlara Rusya Almanları denilirdi. Yaygın literatürde "Rusya Almanları" kavramı günümüzde de eski Sovyetler Birliđi'ndeki bütün Almanları kapsayıcı şekilde kullanılmaktadır. Rusya Almanları 200 yıl önce Almanya'dan II. Katarina'nın çağrısı üzerine Volga bölgesine yerleşmişlerdir. Bu sebeple Volga Almanları olarak da anılırlar. Adolf Hitler'in 1941 yılında Rusya'ya saldırmasıyla birlikte büyük ölçüde Kazakistan'a sürülmüşlerdir).

¹³TsyppylmaDarieva, "Recrutingfort he Nation: Post-SovietTransnationalMigrants in Germany and Kazakhstan", *RebuildingIdentities, Pathwaysto Reform in Post-SovietSiberia*, Erich Kasten (Ed.), Berlin, 2005, s.156.

¹⁴ Nermin Güler, "German Minority in Kazakhstan" (Kazakistan'da Alman Azınlığı), *Eurasia File*, Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Special Edition, Volume: 7, No:4, Winter 2001-2002, p.164.

¹⁵ An extensive study on German minorities was made in year 2010. For details, see, *Overview of Migration Trends in Europe and Central Asia 1990-2004*, World Bank, 2010, p.35-37.

Kazakhstan should stay in Kazakhstan as a bridge between two countries in 1996.¹⁶ Furthermore, former Chancellor of Germany, Helmut Kohl asked Germans living in Kazakhstan to stay there during his visit to Kazakhstan in April 1997. German state provided an aid of approximately 30 million Euros (55 million German Marks¹⁷) to found new businesses and establish new employment areas in Northern Kazakhstan where ethnic Germans live for that purpose. However, despite of all those measures, departure of Germans living in Kazakhstan from the area could not be prevented. Amount of aids provided for that purpose in 1999 is 8 million Euros. 7 million of the aid was made under cooperation in financial field, and one million was made under technical collaboration.

Relations between two countries since Kazakhstan gained its independence are developing in each area pursuant to the treaty dated 22 September 1992. This treaty also anticipates guardianship of minorities and ethnical groups. Pursuant to this treaty, Germany undertook to support Kazakhstan in transition to Market economy and implementation of reforms. Thus, German state secured legal statuses of Germans living in Kazakhstan. Both countries also secured use of mother languages by minorities living in their countries in their own free will, and practice their cultural and religious activities.¹⁸

History of German minority in Kyrgyzstan started by Germans arrival to Talas Valley from Volga area in 1882. The reason for increase in German population in the area is Stalin's forcing Volga Germans to immigrate to the area during World War II. In year 1989, population of the Germans constituting the fourth large group in the country was registered as 100 thousand people. The number decreased by each day since the independence of Kyrgyzstan down to approximately 10 thousand people. Majority of the people immigrated to their historical homeland of Germany. The areas where Germans live in greater intensity are Tokmak, Sokuluk and Mavi Su regions. Germans living in Kyrgyzstan supported development of Kyrgyzstan culture. The most significant one is Theodor Herzen who designed German print of Manas Saga for the one thousandth year celebrations of the saga. Furthermore, a study constituting a base for Manas researches was held by German Wilhelm Radlloff. State of Germany provided an aid in the amount of approximately 5 million Euros to encourage Germans in Kyrgyzstan to stay in this country just like in Kazakhstan. 4 Recreational Facilities were established for the use of other ethnical groups in the country as part of subject aids. Bertagal, a German village was supported by a milking center and a harvest equipment. A small German minority is present in other countries of Central Asia. However, those are very small groups compared to the ones in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Majority of them immigrated to Germany.¹⁹

¹⁶ Güler, a.g.m, p. 172.

¹⁷ Euro being effectively used since 1 January 2002 took over both German Mark and some other currencies used in Europe, therefore German Mark is converted to Euro and calculated in estimation.

¹⁸ Bulletin des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Bundesregierung, 30 September 1992, p. 975.

¹⁹ Visit web page of German Embassy in Kyrgyzstan for detailed information, http://www.german-embassy.elcat.kg/de/deutsch_de.html. Access date, 19.04.2012.

b) German Culture

German culture has a significant role in Germany's Central Asia policy. Germany is shaping cultural policy in the area particularly with the support Goethe Institute (GI). In addition, there are activities of various German non-governmental organizations (NGO). Konrad – Adenauer and Friedrich – Ebert Foundations are also active in the area. They have an office in Bishkek and Almaty. Friedrich – Ebert Foundation is organizing international conferences on political and economical developments in the region and carry on activities for the development of social democracy. In addition, they have good relations with the oppositions supporting the West. Germany is organizing mutual culture weeks in the other Central Asian countries to enable affiliation of cultures and encourage learning German language and presenting cultural existence in the area. It is continuing activities in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan for that purpose. However, number of Germans living in those countries is few and therefore activities are less in number compared to other countries.

For example, German lessons are only given in Ashgabat and another city in Northern Turkmenistan. The most important cultural events in this country are German culture week in 1996 and Turkmen culture week held in Germany in years 1997 and 1998. Cultural activities of Germany in Kazakhstan are practiced pursuant to an agreement made in year 1994. Goethe Institute organized 4500 language courses with the participation of 90 thousand people for Kazakhstan citizen Germans until year 1998. It also made an agreement to send German teachers to Kazakh schools in year 1997. A “German House” was founded in Kazakhstan in order to propagate German culture.²⁰ It also gained its share in educational field by German-Kazakh University founded in 1999.

German – Kyrgyz cooperation in cultural field goes back to culture agreement dated 1993. Combined commissions are assembled in Bishkek in 1994 and in Bonn in 1997 to seat cultural relations on a strong foundation. Due to small number of Germans living in Kyrgyzstan, German language has a significant place. German reading hall opened by Roman Herzog at National Library in year 1998 is acting more like an information center rather than a classical reading hall, meeting the needs of researchers to a large extent. Goethe Institute opened a language learning center providing German education in Bishkek in October 2000. German is one of the most important languages in terms of foreign language after English. There have been high quality teachers that came from Germany for that purpose as part of the program. Language school diplomas required to study in Germany are provided through this program. German instructors also support Kyrgyz colleagues. In addition to sending teachers, course materials and tools are also provided for the schools in Bishkek, Talas and Oş. German Academic Exchange Association (DAAD) is organizing periodic semester scholarships and taking Kyrgyz students to Germany for summer schools. Some Kyrgyz colleges concluded bilateral agreements with the University of Munich, offering opportunities to both Kyrgyz

²⁰ Visit web page of German Foreign Affairs Ministry for detailed information and documents, see <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de>. Access date, 19.04.2012.

students and academicians in Germany. Likewise, German Academicians have the same opportunity in Kyrgyzstan.²¹

Conclusion

As is seen, German foreign policy outreached the limitations by the end of two-pole world and achieved a brand new expansion. This has brought new options for German foreign policy. Germany has canalized towards CIS countries, particularly to Central Asia countries, following a more active policy than the other EU countries. Central Asia has a special importance for Germany's foreign policy, whereas Kazakhstan has more special and important place in Central Asia, and such interest is not a result of ideological approaches but a diplomacy required by political, cultural and economical facts. Furthermore, Germany made great contribution to the progress of relations between the EU and the countries in the area during its presidency. German minority constituting the foundation of Germany's Central Asia policy increases everyday and yet maintains its significance for Germany. Therefore, preservation and development of German culture in the area appear as the most important priority of German foreign policy. Particularly Goethe Institute is performing an important task to that extent. Various German non-governmental organizations are contributing to increase dialogues with the countries in the area. After the second half of 1990's, German economy started evidencing its strength in the area as much as possible, and German companies established close ties with the countries in the area. Engagement of those companies in the area in future will continue to be an important factor in German foreign policy.

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²¹ Visit web page of German Embassy in Bishkek, http://german-embassy.elcat.kg/de/deutsch_de.html. Access date, 19.04.2012.

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