



# ANKASAM

## bulletin

4 December 2022  
ISSUE: 2022/48



## Increasing European Interest in Central Asia

21

Taiwan's Local Elections:  
What kind of  
Future?

26

Evaluation of  
Germany-Japan  
Relations

# CONTENTS

## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

- 03 Towards Early Elections in Albania**  
Sibel MAZREK
- 09 The EU's Aid Package for Ukraine and Hungary's Stance**  
Cemal Ege ÖZKAN
- 15 Price Cap on Russian Oil**  
Kenan AĞAZADE
- 21 Taiwan's Local Elections: What kind of Future?**  
Neslihan TOPCU
- 26 Evaluation of Germany-Japan Relations**  
Göktuğ ÇALIŞKAN
- 31 Armenia-Russia Tension and Caucasus in the Context of the CSTO**  
Dr. Sabir ASKEROĞLU
- 37 Can Germany Be a "Driving Force" On Europe's China Strategy?**  
Dr. Cenk TAMER
- 42 Changing Policies of Coastal States in the Context of the Search for Energy Cooperation in the Caspian Basin**  
Rizvan ASGAROV
- 46 Tajikistan-China Military Cooperation**  
Şeyma KIZILAY
- 51 New Developments in Kazakhstan-France Relations**  
Aidana BAKTYBEK KYZY
- 06 President of Uzbekistan's Visit to France**  
Dr. Doğacan BAŞARAN
- 12 The Growing Importance of Interconnection Projects in Greece's Energy Policy**  
Cemal Ege ÖZKAN
- 18 A New Power in Central Asia: European Union**  
Medihanur ARGALI
- 23 Increasing European Interest in Central Asia**  
Dr. Emrah KAYA
- 28 Russian Energy Resources, Decreasing EU Economy and American Interests**  
Dr. Sabir ASKEROĞLU
- 34 Uzbekistan's Diplomacy in Afghanistan**  
Şeyma KIZILAY
- 39 How Permanent is the License Plate Agreement Between Kosovo and Serbia?**  
Sibel MAZREK
- 44 Russia-China Relations: A Forced Partnership?**  
Elcan TOKMAK
- 49 Peace-Conflict Predicament in Karabakh: What Does Armenia Want?**  
Kenan AĞAZADE

## ANKASAM IN PRESS

- 53 Media**

## JOURNALS

- 54 Journal of International Crises and Political Research**  
**Journal of Regional Studies**

Cankaya District, Cemal Nadir Street, No. 9, 06880.  
Cankaya - Ankara/Turkey  
Tel: +90 312 474 00 46 | Fax: +90 312 474 00 45  
Email: info@ankasam.org

All rights to this publication belong to the Ankara Center for Crisis and Political Studies (ANKASAM). Except for reasonable quotes under the Intellectual and Artistic Works Act 5846, all or part of the publication cannot be printed, broadcast, reproduced or distributed by electronic or mechanical means (copy, record and information storage, etc.) without the permission of ANKASAM. The opinions and assessments in this work belong to the author, and do not reflect the official opinion of ANKASAM institutionally.

Design-String: Esra Karadağ



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Towards Early Elections in Albania

Albanian President Bajram Begaj announced that local elections will be held on 14 May 2023. In these elections, the opposition will fight hard for municipalities that are almost entirely in the hands of the ruling Socialist Party (SP).

It can be said that the election race in Albania began early. Because it is seen that the Freedom Party (FP) and the Democrat Party (DP), founded by former President Ilir Meta, strongly oppose the Socialist Party Prime Minister Edi Rama. The rhetoric/discourses used by the op-



**Sibel MAZREK**  
ANKASAM  
Media Coordinator

position leaders seem to be very similar. Therefore, there is a question of whether there will be an alliance between the parties involved in the local elections. In particular, it can be said that DP Leader Sali Berisha was hard on Rama Government. The opposition is therefore considered to be in great competition with the ruling SP, which has many municipalities in Albania.

Opposition criticizes Rama Government, especially for economic troubles and the fight against corruption. It can therefore be stated that during the election campaign, rhetoric about these issues will become prominent. Local elections should be emphasized that they are critical to maintaining the SP's power. Because worsening living conditions in the country indicate that these elections will be difficult for the government. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the hand of the opposition is strong.

At the call of the opposition DP and FP, anti-government protests were held in the capital Tirana on 12 November 2022. It was noteworthy that there was wide participation in the demonstration, which took place upon demands regarding the cost of living and the fight against corruption. Addressing the protesters, Meta said:[1]

"You are the ones who have kept this country alive through your efforts and sacrifices. You have the right to demand responsibility for everything from the government and every office in this country. You keep the government and the state afloat with the taxes you pay."

Berisha, on the other hand, promised to double the salaries of civil servants and pensioners if he came to power again, and called on the people to support the opposition.[2] Opposition supporters urge Rama to resign. With the 8 percent hike in basic food and fuel prices in the country, high inflation figures continue to rise day by day. Therefore, the opposition blames Rama for thousands of young people leaving the country every year in search of a better life.[3]

With the 8 percent hike in basic food and fuel prices in the country, high inflation figures continue to rise day by day. After three years of negotiations for the port in question, a cooperation memorandum of 2 billion dollars was signed between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) based company "Eagle Hills Real Estate Development" and the "Albanian Seaports Development Company" on 10 August 2022. Rama stated that the port project, which the UAE company undertakes, will pave the way for economic development, that will create employment for 12 thousand people, and that the project will affect not only Durres but also the image of Albania in Europe.[4]

Opposition criticizes Rama Government, claiming that the operation of Durres Port was "gifted" to Arab investors. Berisha, who opposes the project, accused Rama of using the privatization law for his benefit. On the subject Berisha has declared, "The Port of Durres is worth at least 3 billion euros, but who are those who took our port? Are there any Albanians who know this?"[5] He also claimed that the Berisha port project caused economic damage to the country and stated that they would continue to oppose it and even organize protests.[6] Therefore, Berisha invited EU Heads of State and Governments to protest demonstrations they will organize on 6 December 2022 and said, "The largest public asset that Albanians have today is the Port of Durres. This entity is being held plundered unbelievably."[7]

In line with all these developments, it can be said that Berisha and Meta act together. Therefore, it can be stated that such protests are to test the water and a show of strength for local elections.

It can also be argued that Rama was weak in responding to opposition. This suggests that Rama, who holds the major municipalities, will seek to develop strong arguments against these problems. He thinks that if Rama loses local municipalities, his power will weaken. It is also possible that this will result in the loss of general elections.

In the meantime, Berisha, who served as the Second President of Albania between 1992-1997 and as Prime Minister between 2005-2013 and was known as the leader who served longest in the country, was charged with corruption by the United States of America (US) in 2021 and he was banned from entering the US.[8] Therefore, it can be said that Berisha tried to improve his image in eyes of the Albanian people through these local elections.

As a result, for the elections to be held in Albania on 14 May 2023, the opposition will continue to burden the Rama Government to win large municipalities such as Tirana. It is foreseeable that citizens of the country who are concerned about the economy and corruption will consider the opposition's messages with protests. Because the people of Albania, who are going through difficult economic times, can seek a solution by voting for change in the local elections.

[1] "The Protest Ends: Berisha-Meta Accuses Rama, Protesters Break the Police Cordon", Euronews Albania, <https://euronews.al/en/live-hundreds-of-protestors-gather-in-front-of-the-democratic-party-headquarters/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[2] "Tens Of Thousands Of Albanians Protest Over Rising Costs", Al Jazeera, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/13/tens-of-thousands-protest-rising-costs-in-albanias-capital>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[3] Aynı yer.

[4] "MoU Signed for Port of Durres Development", Exit, <https://exit.al/en/2022/08/12/mou-signed-for-port-of-durres-development/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[5] "Berisha: The Port of Durres Is Being Captured by the Rama-Vučić Clan with Lukashenko of Belarus", Euronews Albania, <https://euronews.al/en/berisha-the-port-of-durres-is-being-captured-by-the-rama-vucic-clan-with-lukashenko-of-belarus/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[6] "Protest for the Port of Durres, Berisha: The Country's National Wealth Is Severely Affected", Euronews Albania, <https://euronews.al/en/protest-for-the-port-of-durres-berisha-the-countrys-national-wealth-is-severely-affected/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[7] "Berisha: The Next Protest of the Opposition Will Be on December 6", Euronews Albania, <https://euronews.al/en/berisha-the-next-protest-of-the-opposition-will-be-on-december-6/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[8] "ABD'den Arnavutluk Eski Cumhurbaşkanına Yolsuzluk Yaptırımı", VOA, <https://editorials.voa.gov/a/abd-den-arnavutluk-eski-cumhurbaşkanina-yolsuzluk-yaptirimi/5945241.html>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# President of Uzbekistan's Visit to France

On 21-22 November 2022, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, paid a visit to Paris, the capital of France. The visit is critical to the relationship between Uzbekistan and France in particular, and Central Asia and Europe in general. In this context, it is possible to examine the visit through two different lenses: the relations

between Tashkent-Paris and the relations between Central Asia and Europe.

Tashkent and Paris Seeking Robust Cooperation

First of all, looking at the relations between Uzbekistan and France, it should be mentioned that Mirzi-



**Dr. Doğacan  
BAŞARAN**  
ANKASAM  
International  
Relations Expert

yoyev's visit took place within the framework of the "Uzbek-French Business Forum." As is evident from this, Uzbekistan places a high value on the French capital in terms of foreign investments. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan, Jamshid Khodjaev, has clearly expressed the importance Tashkent attaches to this issue. In his statement, Khodjaev said that Uzbekistan is a trustworthy country with all the necessary infrastructure for foreign investors and that Uzbekistan is ready to provide the necessary facilities for French companies to establish an independent industrial zone.[1] Similarly, the Chairman of the Uzbek-French Business Council, Olivier Becht, made the following statement:[2]

"Business plays a special role in economic growth, and therefore the activation of direct contacts between business circles is one of the most important issues on the agenda of discussions at the highest level. This is the key to building up a mutually beneficial economic dialogue. Among the promising areas are seen, energy, high technology, transport and logistics, and social services."

At this point, it can be said that Tashkent's invitation to Western investors is consistent with the reform processes in Uzbekistan. Because, under Mirziyoyev's leadership, the country's reform activities, which went through the "Third Renaissance" period and carried out the construction process of "New Uzbekistan" in this context, are primarily carried out under the framework of the "2022-2026 Development Strategy." [3]

The strategy has two main objectives. The first is to increase the rights and freedoms that will encourage Uzbek people to participate in politics by achieving democratic breakthroughs, and thus develop center-periphery relations, that is, state-people unity.

The second is to improve the economic situation of the Uzbek people by taking steps to facilitate the functioning of the free market. The aim of increasing the per capita income to 4,000 dollars by 2030 stems from this. As a result, the Tashkent administration implements effective diplomacy to ensure a prosperous future for the people of Uzbekistan.[4]

Both aims presented in the framework of reform processes, as predicted, envision liberalization and hence Westernization through the goal of a free-market economy and democratization. In this regard, it may be argued that Tashkent's administration values connections with France, one of the Western World's most significant actors. In other words, Uzbekistan sees France as a partner with whom it can cooperate while carrying out its reform processes. So, on November 22, 2022, Mirziyoyev met with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, and the President of the French National Assembly, Yael Braun-Pivé.[5]

Furthermore, the relations between the two countries do not only develop based on economic expectations, but some developments will expand cultural ties. An exhibition on the ancient history and culture of Uzbekistan was opened at the Louvre Museum on November 22, 2022.[6]

In addition, the two countries are also taking steps to improve cooperation between universities. In fact, at the same time as the visit, Macron's book was presented in Uzbek at the Tashkent-based University of World Economy and Diplomacy, with the university emphasizing its collaboration with three different French universities.[7] All of these developments might be seen as a continuation of the positive atmosphere in Uzbekistan-France ties.

The Role of Uzbekistan-France Relations in the Interaction of Central Asia and Europe

The effort to deepen the cooperation between Tashkent-Paris is also a reflection of the desire to strengthen the ties between Central Asia and Europe. Because of the energy problem that Continental Europe experienced following the Russia-Ukraine War, as well as the closure of the Northern Corridor in transit transportation, European powers are now more interested in Central Asia.

In this context, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on October 30–November 2, 2022, and the European Union (EU)–Central Asia Connection Conference: Global Gateway was held in Samarkand on November 18, 2022, with the participation of EU High Representative for Foreign Relations and Security Policy Joseph Borrell.[8] Mirziyoyev's trip to Paris might potentially be interpreted as a new step in this process.

The fundamental expectation of European actors during these developments is the growth of cooperation with Central Asian nations to fulfill their energy demands, and in this framework, the linkage of Turkmen, Uzbek, and Kazakh gas to the Trans-Caspian Pipeline (TCP). The TCP development formula requires the EU to focus on Caspian-based initiatives.

Moreover, these projects also have a transit transportation dimension. The Middle Transport Corridor may also be stated to be prominent here. On the other hand, European states are preparing to make investments that will contribute to the economies of Central Asian countries. As a result, the conjuncture appears to have intensified European–Central Asian interactions.

In conclusion, Mirziyoyev's visit to Paris reveals Tashkent's Western orientation in line with the spirit of the "New Uzbekistan" construction process, as well as the multidimensional understanding based on the balance in foreign policy. On the other hand, France is interested in Uzbekistan's geopolitical strategy. In a broader sense, Mirziyoyev stands out as one of the pioneers of the interaction between Central Asia and Europe. At this point, considering that Uzbekistan hosted the event titled "EU–Central Asia Connection Conference: Global Gateway", it can be stated that Tashkent has become one of the key actors with its constructive role in Central Asia–EU relations.

[1] "Paris hosts Uzbek–French Business Forum", The Tashkent Times, <http://tashkenttimes.uz/business/10030-paris-hosts-uzbek-french-business-forum>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[2] "The visit of Shavkat Mirziyoyev is A New Stage in the Intensification of Bilateral Relations between Our Countries" –Oliver Becht", Uz Daily, <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/77275>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[3] Eldor Tulyakov, "Economic Development as a Priority in the Development Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2022–2026", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/economic-development-as-a-priority-in-the-development-strategy-of-uzbekistan-for-2022-2026/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[4] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "Main Targets of Uzbekistan's 2022–2026 Development Strategy", ANKASAM, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[5] "President of Uzbekistan departs for Paris", Newswires, [https://www.einnews.com/pr\\_news/602443979/president-of-uzbekistan-departs-for-paris](https://www.einnews.com/pr_news/602443979/president-of-uzbekistan-departs-for-paris), (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[6] "President of Uzbekistan to pay official visit to France", Azernews, <https://www.azernews.az/region/202425.html>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[7] "The Presentation of the Book Published by French President Emmanuel Macron in Uzbek Was Held at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan University of World Economy and Diplomacy, <https://www.uwed.uz/en/news/fulltext/2096>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[8] Doğacan Başaran, "EU–Central Asia Connectivity Conference: Global Gateway", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/eu-central-asia-connectivity-conference-global-gateway/?lang=en>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The EU's Aid Package for Ukraine and Hungary's Stance

One of the most important agenda items of European politics in recent times has been the economic aid package planned by the European Union (EU) for Ukraine. In this context, following the European Council meeting held on 20–21 October 2022, the council proposed a support package of 18 billion euros to Ukraine for 2023.[1]

The package aims to ensure that Ukraine continues to pay basic wages and pensions and

maintain basic public services such as hospitals, schools, and housing for people forced to relocate. At the same time, this package is aimed at ensuring the economic stability of Ukraine and enabling the country to restore its energy infrastructure, water systems, and transport networks destroyed by Russia.[2]

While the military point is gaining weight in the support packages of the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) for Ukraine, it is ob-



**Cemal Ege  
ÖZKAN**

served that the EU is aiming for improvements to the country's infrastructure and logistics more comprehensively. Therefore, it can be said that Brussels is more focused on the reconstruction of Ukraine.

On the other hand, it can be said that the EU is facing some challenges in its aid plan for Ukraine. Hungary, in particular, has opposed the aid package. Hungary's opposition to EU aid to Ukraine comes as no surprise. Budapest claims that the loan to be given to Ukraine is highly privileged. However, it can be stated that the main reason for Hungary's objection is the funding problem between the EU and Hungary.

In 2022, Brussels' blocking of EU funding for Budapest has increased tensions between the parties. The European Commission has also recommended the suspension of 7.5 billion euros in funding allocated to Budapest in September 2022.[3] Brussels has asked Budapest for some reforms to benefit from EU funds and has given time Hungary until December 19, 2022.[4] Therefore, as the deadline for Hungary to benefit from EU funds approaches, Budapest wants to use Brussels' aid plan for Kyiv as a trump card to strengthen its hand.

Due to the situation, it can be said that the EU may have difficulty in implementing the aid package for Ukraine. Decisions are taken unanimously in the EU and Hungary has declared that it will oppose this package. For this reason, Hungary wants to use its veto power. Therefore, the EU may need to take steps to convince Hungary to deliver aid to Ukraine. Besides, after Hungary announced its opposition to the package, an EU official stated on November 11, 2022, that Budapest had taken important steps in terms of receiving the funds.[5]

In this context, it is seen that there are positive developments in terms of Hungary's access to EU funds. It is no coincidence that after Budapest announced that it would oppose the aid package for Kyiv, the EU said that Hungary had taken "important steps." Therefore, it can be foreseen that the EU will find a solution to its disputes with Hungary to send an aid package to Ukraine.

As can be understood, the Budapest administration is trying to turn the aid package for Ukraine into an opportunity to find a solution to the fund problem with the EU. Hungary will receive 7.5 billion euros if it gains access to this aid. This will lead to a significant relief in the Hungarian economy. Therefore, Brussels has begun to soften its attitude towards Budapest.

On the other hand, Germany, which is the most politically and economically powerful country in the EU and advocates the abolition of veto power, reacted to Hungary's attitude. Although some circles accuse Hungary of being pro-Russian, the main reason for Budapest's stance is that it wants to be able to access EU funds that will relieve it financially by following a policy in line with its national interests.

As can be seen, if the EU wants to implement its aid plan for Ukraine, it must first convince Hungary. This could therefore result in the EU giving Hungary the funds it froze. Given the financial size of the aid to be provided to Ukraine by the EU, it will play a critical role both in Ukraine's reconstruction and in its fight against Russia. Therefore, the EU will prioritize the urgency of aid to Ukraine. Therefore, it can be argued that it would not be surprising if Brussels made concessions to Budapest.

In conclusion, Hungary is not expected to back down from its position. In this context, Budapest sees the support plan as an opportunity to benefit from EU funds. Given the urgency of aid to Ukraine, one could argue that Brussels will try to reach an agreement with Budapest on EU funds.

[1] "Commission Proposes Stable and Predictable Support Package for Ukraine for 2023 Of Up to €18 Billion", European Commission, [ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_6699](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_6699), (Date of Accession:20.11.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] Gabriela Baczynska-Jan Strupczewski, "EU Poised to Unblock Billions in Funds For Hungary-Sources", Reuters, [www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungary-seen-track-unlocking-billions-euros-eu-funds-this-year-eu-sources-2022-11-17/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/hungary-seen-track-unlocking-billions-euros-eu-funds-this-year-eu-sources-2022-11-17/), (Date of Accession:20.11.2022).

[4] "EU Extends Deadline for Hungary to Implement Anti-Corruption Reforms", France 24, [www.france24.com/en/europe/20221012-eu-extends-deadline-for-hungary-to-implement-anti-corruption-reforms](https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20221012-eu-extends-deadline-for-hungary-to-implement-anti-corruption-reforms), (Date of Accession:20.11.2022).

[5] "EU Says Hungary Made 'Significant Step' to Get Recovery Funds-Source", Reuters, [www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-says-hungary-made-significant-step-get-recovery-funds-source-2022-11-11/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-says-hungary-made-significant-step-get-recovery-funds-source-2022-11-11/), (Date of Accession:20.11.2022).





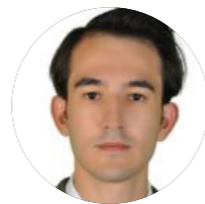
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# The Growing Importance of Interconnection Projects in Greece's Energy Policy

The process that started with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, has devastated the European Union (EU) countries the most in the field of energy. Greece has been one of the countries in the EU that have seen how difficult the dependence on Russia for energy has put itself in a difficult situation. The Athens ad-

ministration aims to profit from this process by realizing interconnection projects with various countries.

There are five states that come to the forefront in this policy pursued by Greece. Of these states, Bulgaria is located in Europe, Israel and



**Cemal Ege  
ÖZKAN**

Saudi Arabia are in the Middle East, and Egypt and Libya are located in North Africa. Therefore, it is observed that the policy is trying to be realized in a multifaceted way.

Greece pursues two goals with its policy. The first of these aims is to increase its importance in the geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean. In other words, Greece is trying to integrate the countries bordering the Mediterranean into its own defense policy. The second objective is to contribute to Europe's energy security and become an energy hub by taking part in projects that serve to reduce dependence on Russian natural gas. In this way, Greece thinks that it will increase its importance for the United States (US), the EU, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with the effect of the war conjuncture. Therefore, it can be said that Greece is trying to position itself as an important actor in ensuring Europe's energy security.

As mentioned above, the Athens administration cooperates with various countries while carrying out these policies. One of these countries is Bulgaria. In fact, in July 2022, the Greece-Bulgaria Interconnector Gas Pipeline was opened between Greece and Bulgaria. The pipeline became operational on October 2, 2022. Thus, Greece plays an important role in the transmission of Azerbaijani natural gas to Bulgaria. Based on the success of the project, it can be foreseen that more countries will be able to make demands. This will serve Greece's policy of trying to bring itself to the forefront as a transit hub in the field of energy.

Another notable state is Saudi Arabia. As it will be remembered, on July 26, 2022, Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visited Athens.[1] This visit is quite remarkable in that it is the first official visit of the Crown Prince to an EU country after 2018. Moreover, the parties have agreed on the implementation of the interconnection of undersea data cables that will connect Europe and Asia.

Egypt has also come to the fore as an important country in terms of realizing Greece's policy. As is known, in recent years the relations between Greece and Egypt have improved considerably. In this, the cooperation of the two countries on energy plays an important role. Accordingly, with the undersea interconnection project planned to be realized by Athens and Cairo, electricity exports from Egypt to Greece are planned.[2] Due to this project, electricity will be exported from the African continent to Europe. The electricity that will come from Egypt will not only meet Greece's energy needs but some of it will also be exported to other European countries. Therefore, this is also closely related to European countries.

In addition to the above-mentioned countries, Greece wants to realize an interconnection project with Israel by taking the Greek Cypriot Administration of South Cyprus (GCA) with it. In fact, in October 2022, important developments took place on the Greece-Israel-GCA line. In this context, the parties have taken important steps to implement the EuroAsia Interconnection Project, which will connect the Greek, GCA, and Israeli electricity grids. The construction works of the GCA-Crete section started on October 14, 2022, and the project is planned to be completed in 2025.[3]

Another interconnection project that came to the agenda recently was between Greece and the legitimate Abdulhamid Dibeybe Government in Libya, which Fethi Basaga in Tobruk was trying to overthrow. Farhad Bengdara, who was appointed as the chairman of the Libyan National Oil Corporation by the legitimate government of Abdulhamid Dibeybe in Libya, stated that they are considering building two gas pipelines to Greece and the Egyptian city of Damietta. On October 6, 2022, the US State Department stated that they were open to the possibility of an energy connection between Greece and Libya. Furthermore, the US has said that Washington continues to support projects that promote the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa's energy connection with Europe.[4]

These policies should not be considered only between Greece and other countries. The US, for example, offers its strong support for Greece's interconnection projects with Libya and Egypt. In this respect, Washington is clearly making a geopolitical choice in its Eastern Mediterranean policy. On the other hand, the EU supports the EuroAsia interconnection developed within the framework of Greece-GCA-Israeli cooperation.

Consequently, with the recent developments in the geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean and the conjuncture created by the Rus-

sia-Ukraine War, it is seen that Greece is focusing on interconnection projects. It is understood that Greece, especially after Russia's intervention in Ukraine, is trying to play a critical role in ensuring Europe's energy security. Through this policy, the Athens administration is trying to integrate the actors it cooperates with into its own defense and foreign policy.

[1] "Saudi Arabia and Greece Sign Agreements on Energy, Security, Telecom, Digital Economy", Gulf Business, <https://gulfbusiness.com/saudi-arabia-and-greece-sign-agreements-on-energy-security-telecom-digital-economy/>, (Date of Accession:10.11.2022).

[2] "Undersea Power Cable to Connect Egypt to Europe via Greece", Africanews, <https://www.africanews.com/2022/09/15/undersea-power-cable-to-connect-egypt-to-europe-via-greece/>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[3] "World's Longest Submarine Power Cable to Connect Greek, Cypriot and Israeli Power Grids", Greek City Times, <https://greekcity-times.com/2022/10/11/worlds-longest-cable-greek-cypriot-israeli/>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).

[4] "State Department is Open to Greece-Libya Energy Interconnection", Keep Talking Greece, <https://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2022/11/06/greece-libya-energy-natural-gas-interconnection-us-state-department/>, (Date of Accession: 10.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Price Cap on Russian Oil

It is suggested that the European Union (EU) will impose a price ceiling of \$65-70 per barrel on Russian oil. The G7 group, including the United States of America (US), as well as the EU and Australia, are expected to announce a price ceiling on Russian oil exported by sea on December 5, 2022, within the scope of the sanc-

tions planned to be imposed on Moscow, while the implementation is planned to enter into force on February 5, 2023.[1]

As it is known, Western states have long sought to limit the cost of Russian oil to reduce Moscow's revenues from energy exports. The need



**Kenan AĞAZADE**  
ANKASAM Eurasia  
Research  
Assistant



for such actions has been recognized in Europe before, but EU member states have yet to agree on some details, including the level of oil prices. However, in the EU, where decisions are taken unanimously, it is observed that member states have started to approach the issue of a price ceiling for Russian oil more moderately. Therefore, the EU is expected to announce its final decision on the price ceiling shortly. Thus, the Russian economy will face new sanctions.

As it is expected, the US was one of the first to discuss the issue of depriving Moscow of oil revenues. Western leaders have already discussed the possibility of setting a price cap between 40 and 60 dollars per barrel. However, it can be foreseen that the implementation of a price ceiling for Russian oil will bring along many risks. The fact that market participants stated that it is not clear how the price regulation mechanism will work supports this view.

There is already a surplus of oil in European refineries and these stocks cover the region's needs. The reality is that many companies have bought oil early in case the EU bans fuel supplies from Russia. However, the EU has concluded several oil supply agreements with Brazil, Canada, and the US. Considering the current situation, it can be argued that Brussels will not be intimidated by warnings from the Russian authorities to refuse to sell oil to countries that have approved the specified ceiling.

Having been hit hard by the EU sanctions, it is unclear to which countries Russia will sell its oil. In this sense, it can be said that Russia's last hope is Africa and Asia. Although African countries have low solvency, Moscow will aim to sell Russian oil to Africa at a cheaper price. In addition, China and India will also benefit from this situation. However, Indian and Chinese refineries refrain from contracting Russian oil. This is due to the uncertainty of how secondary sanctions will be applied to buyers of Russian oil above the ceiling price.

On the other hand, it is important to note that the claims that Russia, unable to sell its oil abroad, will sell it much cheaper domestically do not seem rational. This is because there are not many consumers in the domestic market that can meet the declining demand.

As a result, while the contraction in Russia's oil trade is increasing, Moscow is facing a price ceiling that will prevent it from using its energy card as planned. This indicates that troubled times await the Moscow administration.

[1] "EU Talks Stall Over Price Level for Proposed Russian Oil Cap", Bloomberg, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-11-23/eu-talks-stall-over-price-level-for-proposed-russian-oil-cap?leadSource=verify%20wall>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).



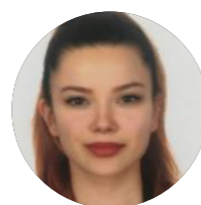


## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# A New Power in Central Asia: European Union

With the ongoing war in Ukraine, serious crises have arisen between Russia and the European Union (EU) in various fields, especially in energy. Aiming to turn these crises into opportunities, the EU has taken some initiatives to strengthen its relations with countries in Central Asia, one of Russia's traditional spheres of influence. The visits of Foreign Minister of Germany Annalena

Baerbock to Kazakhstan on 30-31 October 2022 and to Uzbekistan on 1-2 November 2022 can be interpreted as an indicator of this goal of the EU. Baerbock was accompanied by a delegation of experts in the energy and infrastructure sectors. The main purpose of these contacts is to develop energy-focused economic collaborations.



**Medihanur  
ARGALI**

Baerbock met with his Kazakh counterpart Mukhtar Tleuberdi in Astana, the first stop of his Central Asian contacts, and discussed bilateral relations as well as trade, economy, and investment issues. Praising the reforms carried out in Kazakhstan, Baerbock said, "We want to expand our dialogue on political reform, the rule of law, and human rights."<sup>[1]</sup>

Baerbock also met with Kazakhstan Prime Minister Alihan Smailov and exchanged views on expanding bilateral trade, and developing renewable energy sources and logistics infrastructure. Emphasizing that Germany is Kazakhstan's most important commercial, economic, and investment partner in the EU, Smailov said, "Astana is determined to maintain and strengthen a high level of interaction with Berlin."<sup>[2]</sup> In addition, Smailov stated that the volume of German direct investments in Kazakhstan's economy increased by 25 percent and exceeded \$320 million in 2021, and said that trade volume between the two countries increased by 6 percent to \$2.2 billion.<sup>[3]</sup>

After his contacts in Kazakhstan, Baerbock went to Uzbekistan and met with his Uzbek counterpart, Vladimir Norov, in Tashkent. Afghanistan was one of the main agenda topics of the meeting. In this context, the safe passage of Afghan refugees to EU territory through Uzbekistan was discussed.<sup>[4]</sup> Norov argued that Western states should return Afghanistan's frozen assets abroad and stated they would support initiatives to restore the infrastructure there.

Baerbock also met with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev within the scope of her Uzbekistan contacts. At the meeting where the development of bilateral relations was discussed, Baerbock stated that Germany supports democratic and socio-economic reforms in Uzbekistan.<sup>[5]</sup>

Currently, Germany is Uzbekistan's largest trading partner in Europe. As a matter of fact, trade volume between the two countries has increased by 24 percent in the last five years. Moreover, more than 200 German companies operate in Uzbekistan. So much so that in 2021, 1 billion-dollar-worth in investment was made from Germany to Uzbekistan. It is estimated that the trade volume between parties will reach 1.4 billion dollars in 2022. Therefore, it is not surprising that a delegation led by Baerbock visited large enterprises operating in the Tashkent and Samarkand regions with the participation of German capital.

On the other hand, during Baerbock's visit to Uzbekistan, "Many companies from Europe want to invest in Uzbekistan." This statement shows that the EU desires to expand in Central Asia not only economically but also ideologically. Baerbock also gave a message to both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan by saying, "For the Central Asian states, the future is more than a choice between staying in Russia's backyard and being dependent on China." Thus, Baerbock called on countries of the region to prevent the expansion of Russian and Chinese influence.<sup>[6]</sup>

In this context, it can be argued that Germany aims to cooperate with Central Asia according to the "raw material in exchange for technology" plan. For this reason, Baerbock also expressed the supply of rare earth metals necessary for the EU economy. Because of the main supplier of such raw materials in China. However, in the EU, dependence on China is considered dangerous. Therefore, according to the Berlin administration, Kazakhstan may become an alternative option for the extraction of these metals. However, this requires a high-tech structure. Therefore, Baerbock stated that Germany is ready to provide the necessary assistance to Kazakhstan.

In addition to Baerbock's visit to Central Asia, President of the European Council Charles Michel visited Astana on October 27, 2022, and met with the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Michel described the summit as more than a dialogue between two regions and emphasized that the two regions are getting closer to each other. Michel, like Baerbock, called for more cooperation in the region.<sup>[7]</sup>



Finally, on 17 November 2022, EU Foreign Relations and Security Representative Josep Borrell also visited Uzbekistan. Noting that Russia as well as China is an important factor in the region, Borrell stated that regional states want to diversify their relations and that the EU stands out as a key partner in that sense. Borrell also expressed satisfaction with the reforms the Central Asian countries have implemented.

The last important development regarding the EU's initiative to Central Asia is the visit of the President of Uzbekistan, Mirziyoyev, to France on 21-22 November 2022. This visit is important in terms of EU-Central Asia interaction as well as Uzbekistan-France relations. Mirziyoyev's contacts in Paris focused mainly on economic relations.

As a result, Central Asian states develop close relations with actors such as the EU as part of their balance-based multi-vector and multi-dimensional foreign policies. It is seen that this is an economy-oriented convergence. In this convergence, it can be said that the EU's energy-based targets are also determinant against the investment expectations of regional states. Therefore, it is possible to talk about a cooperation process shaped by the mutual win-win logic.

[1] "Германия намерена расширить диалог с Казахстаном по полпреформам и правам человека", Total, [https://total.kz/ru/news/vneshnyaya\\_politika/germaniya\\_namerena\\_rasshirit\\_dialog\\_s\\_kazahstan\\_po\\_polpreformam\\_i\\_pravam\\_cheloveka\\_date\\_2022\\_10\\_31\\_14\\_48\\_55?ysclid=lala7jixtw626175637](https://total.kz/ru/news/vneshnyaya_politika/germaniya_namerena_rasshirit_dialog_s_kazahstan_po_polpreformam_i_pravam_cheloveka_date_2022_10_31_14_48_55?ysclid=lala7jixtw626175637), (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[2] "Алихан Смаилов главе МИД Германии: "Мы видим существенный потенциал по увеличению объемов взаимной торговли"", Prime Minister, <https://primeminister.kz/ru/news/alihan-smailov-glave-mid-germanii-my-vidim-sushchestvennyy-potencial-po-velicheniyu-obemov-vzaimnoy-torgovli-319524?ysclid=lalaad5an4677737043>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[3] Ibid.

[4] ""Мы не согласны с Узбекистаном в этом вопросе" — Бербок о движении "Талибан", Kun, <https://kun.uz/ru/51775710>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[5] "Шавкат Мирзиёев принял Аннелену Бербок", Kun, <https://kun.uz/ru/86182721?ysclid=lalacchik7100476544>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[6] "Иные хотят включить Узбекистан в свою сферу влияния. Мы хотим партнёрства на равных-глава МИД Германии", Gazeta, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2022/11/02/annalena-baerbock/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[7] "What Explains Growing European Engagement in Central Asia?", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/11/what-explains-growing-european-engagement-in-central-asia/>, (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Taiwan's Local Elections: What kind of Future?

The last of the four-year local elections in Taiwan was held on 26 November 2022. Dubbed the "9-in-1" elections, voters selected candidates including mayors of 16 provinces, mayors of 6 special municipalities, council members, and lower-level local administrators. Candidates of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), the main opposition Nationalist Party (Kuomintang or KMT), and smaller parties, such as the Taiwan People's Party (TPP) and the New Power Party (NPP), participated in the elections.<sup>[1]</sup>

As shown in Map 1, the opposition party KMT emerged victorious, winning several major constituencies, including the capital Taipei.<sup>[2]</sup> While it is estimated that the DPP, which received great support from the public with a rate of 57,1% in the general elections in 2020, will win the local elec-

tions; the elections resulted in the victory of the KMT. Local election results are not just the determination of whether the candidates of the competing parties left with the victory; it also contains clues about the future direction of Taiwan and the 2024 Presidential Elections. Within the scope of the election results, the attitudes of the two parties (DPP and KMT) that stand out and how Taiwan will follow in terms of both domestic and foreign policy are very important.

As it is known, the establishment of the KMT dates from the establishment of the People's Republic of China. After the transition from the Chinese Empire to the Republic of China in 1912, the KMT, founded by Sun Yat Sen, left the mainland in 1949 because of internal conflicts with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and continued its activities in Taiwan.



**Neslihan TOPCU**



During its rule, the KMT instilled in the local people in Taiwan the view that China is their homeland, and this situation played a role in keeping the Chinese identity alive on the island.[4] From this point of view, it is possible to say that the KMT has not been conscious of establishing an independent country in Taiwan since the moment it started to work in Taiwan; on the contrary, KMT acted to take China under its control again. Therefore, a separatist approach towards becoming an independent country and creating a Taiwanese identity has not developed on the island.

Towards the end of the 1980s, with the steps taken towards democratization in Taiwan and the new parties that emerged, new politicians began to develop "Taiwan consciousness." Since the mid-1990s, being "Taiwanese" has become an alternative to "Chinese consciousness." Established in 1986, the DPP played an important role in the emergence of such an approach. The rivalry and two different perspectives between the DPP and the KMT reached its climax with DPP's Chen Shui-bian, who served as chairman between 2000 and 2008.[5]

The reflections of this competition, which started in the past, continue today. It is seen that at the campaigns of the DPP and KMT on the way to the 2022 local elections, while the DPP stands out with its strongly pro-independence identity; the KMT draws attention with its stance in favour of maintaining friendly relations with China. KMT leader Eric Chu said, "We advocate being close to the United States (US), being friendly with Japan, and making peace with the mainland (China)"[6] and DPP leader Tsai Ing-Wen said, "Taiwan is facing strong external pressure. The spread of Chinese authoritarianism compels the Taiwanese people to commit to freedom and democracy every day,"[7] which reflects the political approaches of the KMT and DPP.

In these local elections in Taiwan, the people preferred the KMT. So, how will this result find reflections in both domestic and foreign policy? First, looking at domestic politics, it is seen that the tension between China and Taiwan escalated both based on discourse and action during the DPP's rule. For example, in 2022, Chinese warplanes violated Taiwan's airspace for a total of 199 days.[8] Also in the same year, Chinese People's Liberation Army Spokesperson Wu Qian claimed that Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party authority's separatist activities and collusion with external forces are the root cause of the current tension and disturbance in the Taiwan Strait.[9]

When the elections, which have generally been held in recent years, are examined, it is seen that the tension between China and Taiwan and Beijing's attitude caused the voters in Taiwan to vote for the DPP. However, in the local elections in 2022, the opposite picture was encountered. Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-Wen, who stood out with the words "The election is as a vote for democracy amid rising tensions with China," resigned from the DPP presidency after his bad results in the local elections, is an indication that the DPP did not expect to face such a picture.[10] When evaluated in terms of domestic politics, the fact that the KMT won the elections can be interpreted as the island's people wanting to get away from the tensions with China and favouring the use of dialogue channels to solve the problem. Sarah Wu and Yimou Lee summarized this election result by saying, "China threat bet fails to win votes." [11]

Although the 2022 local elections are seen as hope for the KMT for the 2024 general elections, it is possible to encounter different results. As can be seen, the DPP, which came out with a great victory in the general elections in 2020, could not emerge with the same victory in the 2022 local elections.[12] Therefore, the competition between the DPP and the KMT will increase even more while going to the 2024 general elections. Tsai's words, "We don't have time to feel sorry. We fell, but we will stand up again"[13], revealed the ambition of the DPP. On the other hand, election victory has revived the KMT's hopes of victory for the future.

As a result, although the KMT won the local elections, the presidency is still in the hands of the leader of the DPP, Tsai. In addition, most of the parliament is in the DPP. Therefore, DPP still has an active role in shaping foreign policy. In this context, it is foreseen that a foreign policy will be followed to continue the tension in relations with China, to develop diplomatic relations with all other states, especially the US, to continue their attempts to become a part of the international community and to increase political and economic ties with the countries in the region. However, the defeat of the DPP in the 2022 local elections may also cause the party's foreign policy stance towards China to soften.

[1] "Taiwan's 2022 Local Elections: The State of Electoral Campaigns", Taiwan Insight, <https://taiwaninsight.org/2022/11/04/taiwans-2022-local-elections-the-state-of-electoral-campaigns/> (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Increasing European Interest in Central Asia

Central Asia, located in the heart of Eurasia, has become one of the playgrounds where global power struggle takes place with changing world after the end the of Cold War in 1990. Its rich underground resources and geopolitical location have played a decisive role in transforming Central Asia into an important centre. Being adjacent to countries such as Russia, China, and India, being in the Caspian Region and being at the centre of north-south and

east-west corridors, the geopolitical, geostrategic and geoeconomic importance of the region has increased.

As it can be understood, the importance of Central Asia is not only due to its geopolitical features and underground riches. At the same time, competition in Eurasia, geopolitical ruptures and aggressive policies between countries directly affect the region. One of the last



**Dr. Emrah KAYA**  
ANKASAM Central  
Asia Expert

examples of this is the turn of the European states to Central Asia after the Russia-Ukraine War. These geopolitical ruptures and increasing tension in the world make the riches of Central Asia more valuable.

Although the process of Europe's orientation towards Central Asia has visibly gained momentum after the Russo-Ukrainian War, it dates to earlier times. For example, European Union (EU) adopted its first strategy document for Central Asia in 2007.[1] It published its last strategy document in 2019.[2] In these adopted strategy documents, the European Council summarizes its objectives as focusing on promoting resilience, prosperity, and regional cooperation in Central Asia. In this process, reforms, democracy, human rights, rule of law, judicial independence and a free-market economy are among the priorities of the EU.[3]

The strategy document of 2019, it is aimed to create a more integrated Central Asian market by investing in regional cooperation, combatting problems such as environmental degradation and terrorism, and developing cooperation with Central Asian states to establish stability in Afghanistan.

In this context, it is aimed to establish a partnership for resilience and prosperity.[4] In this process, the EU has developed four tools based on its strategy documents to establish relations with Central Asia and create an area of influence. These are financial instruments within the scope of the EU, financial instruments within the framework of the relations established by the member states, bilateral agreements, and political dialogue channels to be established.[5] The first EU-Central Asian Economic Forum was held on the 5th of November 2021. In addition, visits were made at various levels from Europe to Central Asia.

As a result of the deterioration of Europe's relations with Russia in the Russia-Ukraine War, energy need in Europe has reached the highest level. At this point, European states, which are looking for different alternatives, have turned to Central Asian states with relations they have established both nationally and within

the scope of the union. This policy became more visible, especially with the onset of the war. In addition, ensuring stability in the Caucasus, albeit at a certain level, means removing barriers for Europe to reach new alternative resources in the heart of Eurasia.

One of the reasons Europe turned to Central Asia is that reaching China is shorter and less costly at this point. It is important that Middle Corridor stabilizes and allows access to energy resources as well as transportation and transportation. The harmony and stability between the Central Asian states strengthen the perception that the region in question is a safe investment area. On the other hand, reforms carried out by the countries of the region and liberalization steps in the economic framework are among the main factors that attract the EU.

In the post-Russian-Ukrainian War period, important visits were made from Europe to Central Asia. The most striking of these is the visit of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel. Michel, who visited Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan between 26-28 October 2022, attended the first summit with leaders and representatives of Central Asian states. Various decisions were taken between parties, both bilaterally and within the scope of Europe-Central Asia. For example, it was agreed to further deepen relations between the EU and Uzbekistan. On the other hand, leaders issued a statement confirming that they will work together on peace, security, democracy, rule of law and sustainable development by international law.[6]

Another important visit was made by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell. Borrell has announced that he will discuss transportation connectivity, energy connectivity and digital connectivity at the summit.[7] Because, looking at the details, it is seen that relations between the EU and Central Asia have deepened and expanded. It gains an age-appropriate feature by including issues such as relationships that have become multidimensional and digital connections. Finally, various visits are made within the framework of bilateral relations. For example, between 30 October and 2 November 2022, Foreign Minister of Germany Annalena Baer-

bock visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Baerbock said that relations between countries should be established within a framework of equality and focused on the underground resources of Kazakhstan and various advantages of countries, especially the demographic characteristics of Uzbekistan.[8] Because Germany is one of the largest economies and industrial centres in Europe.

However, it is externally dependent on energy. For this reason, it is one of the states most negatively affected by the conflict with Russia. Therefore, Central Asia gains critical importance in eyes of states such as Germany.

As a result, the value and importance of Central Asia in eyes of Europe are increasing for various reasons. This situation brings with it a direct intensifying interest. During a conflict with Russia, the EU shows this interest at various levels and issues with the policies it has adopted. Central Asian states also see Europe as an important actor within their versatile foreign policy scope. Especially the economic resources of Europe, the level of development in technology and industry, the environment of peace and stability that it has maintained for a long time, and the continuous structural integration process offer important opportunities and a road map for Central Asia. In this context, the fact that Central Asia and the EU are open to reconciliation and cooperation rather than competition shows that relations will not be shaped in a zero-sum scope.

[1] "The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership", Council of the European Union, 10113(7), 2007, [http://aei.pitt.edu/38858/1/st10113\\_en07.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/38858/1/st10113_en07.pdf), (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[2] "EU Builds a Strong and Modern Partnership with Central Asia", European Union External Action, [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet\\_centralasia\\_2019.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet_centralasia_2019.pdf), (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[3] "Central Asia: Council Adopts a New EU Strategy for the Region", EU Debates, News&Opinions, <https://www.pubaffairsbruxelles.eu/eu-institution-news/central-asia-council-adopts-a-new-eu-strategy-for-the-region/>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[4] "EU Builds a Strong..", op. cit.

[5] Katrin Böttger-Julian Plottka, "A New Start for the EU Central Asia Policy in 2021? Current State, Developments and Perspectives for the Revision of the EU Central Asia Strategy", *L'Europe en Formation*, 385/1, 2018, s. 50,

[6] "President Michel visits Central Asia", European Council, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/president/news/2022/10/28/20221028-pec-visits-central-asia/>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[7] Doğacan Başaran, "AB-Orta Asya Bağlantı Konferansı: Küresel Ağ Geçidi", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/ab-orta-asya-baglantı-konferansi-kuresel-ag-gecid/>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[8] Gökтуğ Çalışkan, "Baerbock'un Orta Asya Ziyaretlerinde Enerji Faktörü ve Kazakistan", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/baerbock-un-orta-asya-ziyaretlerinde-enerji-faktoru-ve-kazakistan/>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Evaluation of Germany–Japan Relations

On November 4, 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Beijing, causing a great stir in the worldwide press. German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo three days before the visit. [1] The meeting included themes such as nuclear non-proliferation and economic security, as well as sanctions against Russia, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reform, and climate change issues. The parties agreed to expand their cooperation on these matters and expressed concern about the South and East China Seas situations.

Despite their geographical distance, Steinmeier described Japan as an important partner in a subsequent interview, demonstrating the desire

to develop bilateral relations. There are two factors in the development of Germany-Japan relations. The first is a rise in high-level bilateral communication and interactions, while the second is an increase in cooperation areas. The visits of the German President, Chancellor and Foreign Minister to Japan in 2022 can be seen as good examples of high-level dialogue.

Secondly, the trade volume between the parties is growing, economic cooperation is increasing, and progress is being made on security. Indeed, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock stated that the two nations desire to improve communication and cooperation on security.[2] This statement by Baerbock is an indication of Germa-



**Göktuğ  
ÇALIŞKAN**

ny's desire to increase its influence in the Indo-Pacific. However, Japan and Germany signed an agreement on information security in 2021, and in November of the same year, a frigate of the German Navy became the first German warship to visit Japan in twenty years.[3] Furthermore, the same frigate participated in a combined naval drill with Japan. In addition, cooperation between the two countries in areas such as climate, cyber security and 6G projects was discussed.

The Japan-Germany reconciliation has some solid grounds. The first element might be argued to be Germany's ups and downs with China. Because Germany and China are unable to achieve an agreement on several topics. Although some important messages emerged from Scholz's recent visit to Beijing, it can be said that bilateral relations are not making progress. Because Berlin believes it must be careful in its actions against Beijing. Furthermore, the zero Covid policy and several foreign investment limitations hinder German companies' ambitions and operations in the Chinese market.[4]

The problems and the tangle of disagreements between Germany and China cause Berlin to turn its direction towards Japan and to develop cooperation with Tokyo. Germany can position Japan as a role model while engaging with China. Because Japan's relationship with China is generally in balance, the parties try to avoid possible crises.

The second reason for the two nations' rapprochement is based on the strategy implemented by Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. According to this, security issues in Europe and East Asia are connected in some manner, and this circumstance draws European governments and Japan closer together. For example, Kishida stated in an interview that they cooperated with Germany and stated that they supported Europe on sanctions against Russia.[5] This indicates that Japan's security interests align with those of Europe. Similarly, Baerbock noted in a statement that Berlin can completely rely on Tokyo in the Indo-Pacific.[6]

On the other hand, some factors may pose problems to German Japanese relations. These can be listed as China's attitude, Japan's relations with China, and the change and transformation in Germany's Indo-Pacific policy. Beijing may make certain demands of Berlin in exchange for using its influence with Moscow to bring the Ukraine conflict to a conclusion. This could deteriorate Germany's relationship with Japan. Because China's economic influence on Russia is quite high. As a result, if China makes demands of Russia in the context of the Ukraine war, energy, and

other concerns, it may make big demands of Germany in return. Accordingly, Beijing may ask Berlin not to side with Tokyo on issues such as conflicts and human rights violations in the Pacific.

Secondly, Japan can take steps by considering its interests in its future policy. For example, Japan's refusal to criticize China on human rights may call German Japanese relations into doubt. Because, as a country that supports values such as human rights, Germany may feel uncomfortable with the step taken by Japan.

Lastly, Germany, in its policy statement published in 2019, mentioned that the countries with which it will establish partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region should have democratic and common values. However, the messages and statements made by the German Government in September 2022 show that this policy has changed. Accordingly, it has been stated that the Indo-Pacific partnerships and cooperations would be focused on all states in the region. In other words, dedication to common values such as democracy and human rights has been set aside, and it is accepted that collaboration would be based on mutual interests. In reality, it is sensible for Germany to undertake such a transition at a time when the world's axis of power and geopolitical importance has shifted to Asia. However, with the increase of the states establishing partnerships in the region, the importance given to relations with Japan may decrease.

In short, Japan-Germany relations are going well. The increased number of meetings and visits in recent years, as well as signed agreements and statements, indicate that the two nations wish to enhance their collaboration, particularly based on security. This means that bilateral relations will develop further. However, China's position and attitude stand out as the most critical element that might influence the parties' relations.

[1] Haruka Nuga-Mari Yamaguchi, "Germany Stresses Increasing Defense Role in Indo-Pacific", AP News, <https://apnews.com/article/europe-business-china-japan-germany-5f9944de51934227f0a051cf15ee3f5f>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[2] "Japan, Germany Vow To Guard Rules-Based Int'l Order Amid Ukraine War", Kyodo News, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2022/07/033e3232483a-japan-germany-foreign-chiefs-look-cooperation-amid-chinas-rise.html>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[3] Julian Ryall, "Germany, Japan Seek Deeper Ties During Scholz Visit", Deutch Welle, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-and-japan-look-deeper-ties-during-scholz-visit/a-61608621> (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[4] "China's 'Zero-COVID' Policy Frustrates EU Firms", Deutch Welle, <https://www.dw.com/en/chinas-zero-covid-policy-prompts-eu-firms-to-put-investments-on-hold/vid-eo-61694530>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[5] Japonya Başbakanlık Ofisi, "Japan's Response to Russia's Aggression against Ukraine", [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101\\_kishida/statement/202205/\\_00009.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/101_kishida/statement/202205/_00009.html), (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[6] Federal Dış İlişkiler Ofisi, "Statement by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock", <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/baerbock-asia-g20/254110>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Russian Energy Resources, Decreasing EU Economy and American Interests

Experts which are analyzing Ukraine's situation often focus on the conflict between Russia and the United States (US). But Washington's aim is, in a sense, to get Russia bogged down in Ukraine and to distance Europe from Russian energy resources. However, these policies cause both for Ukraine's and European Union

(EU) countries to face severe economic problems.

In September 2022, the EU announced its intention to impose a price cap on Russian oil. This will negatively affect the cost of many goods in the European market.[1] In addition to this, it is



**Dr. Sabir  
ASKEROĞLU**  
ANKASAM  
Eurasia Expert

also known that European countries aim to end natural gas imports from Russia. For example, Germany, which is the locomotive of the EU economy decided to put Nord Stream 2 on the shelf at the beginning of 2022. The Berlin administration has taken such a decision, although it is predicted that it will provide great benefits to the German economy and especially to its industry. According to predictions of the European Commission, Germany will enter an economic recession (downsizing) in 2023. Of course, this will negatively affect the EU in general not just the country in question.

According to European Commission, Germany's gross domestic product is expected to contract by 0.6% in 2023. Moreover, this figure is the worst among the twenty-seven countries of the EU, along with Sweden. As a matter of fact, German Economy Minister Robert Habeck, who made a statement on the subject, said, we are in a serious energy crisis that is rapidly turning into a socio-economic crisis. [2] However, it is thought that the economy will grow between 0.3% and 1.4% in June 2023 across the EU and the Eurozone. Until 2024, it is predicted that economic growth will be 1.6% on average in the EU and 1.5% in the Eurozone. Whereas the International Monetary Fund predicted a 5% growth in 2021 for 2022. The European Commission links such changes to the energy crisis, inflation and business sentiment.[3]

According to Paolo Gentiloni, who is responsible for the Economy at European Commission, economic indicators have deteriorated significantly, and a two-quarter decline is approaching. It can be said that the reason for this is the "uncertainty" caused by the war in Ukraine, high energy prices and a decrease in purchasing power due to inflation.[4]

In fact, the Ukraine Crisis is a security system crisis in the European continent. This crisis, however, could have been given another direction before it led to larger conflicts. However, the USA used the escalation of the crisis for its own interests. First, the Washington administration brought the EU against Russia.

In this context, while the US forced the EU to take serious decisions, the US ensured reducing the trade between Brussels and Moscow and intensifying the economic war. The conflict in Ukraine has created a suitable basis for the US to pull the EU out of cooperation with Russia. However, cheap Russian energy is vital for the European economy and production. The strong European economy is also seen as a competitor to the US economy. Because for many years, EU companies have represented an important competition for American industry. This is one of the reasons why the "Transatlantic Partnership" supported and promoted by Washington, did not happen. Because the US wanted to achieve several goals by transforming both sides of the Atlantic coast into a common market.

The first of these was the establishment of a global economic center under American leadership and the ability of the US to protect its position in the European market. The second was to prevent China from entering the Transatlantic market, which is the center of the global economy. The third was to be able to stand together as "one West" against the economic power of China.

Because of these goals, the US wants to prevent Europe from being economically independent and to cut off its ties with the Russian energy resources that allow it. Likewise, the strategic goal of the USA is to position itself as a strategic partner with China; but at the same time, it is to take away the opportunities of Russia, which derives most of its economic income from its trade relations with Europe.

As a result, it is hard to say how long the Ukrainian War will last. But the prolongation of the war did not only affect Russia; It negatively affects Europe, economically. Undoubtedly, the process increases the EU's dependence on the US. This, in turn, serves the global goals of the Washington administration.

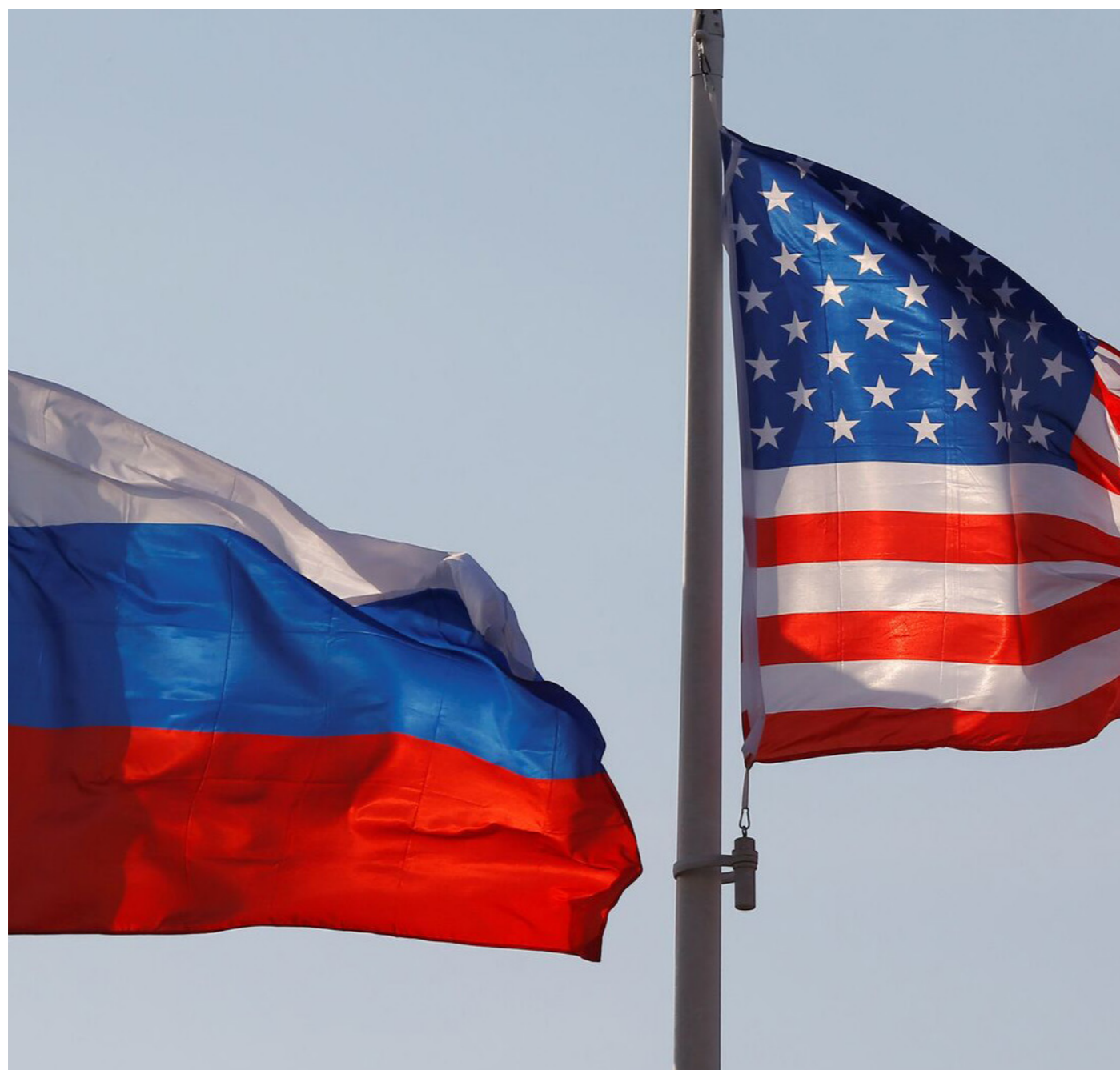


[1] "ЕС решил ускорить введение потолка цен на российскую нефть", VTB, <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/23/09/2022/632cef249a794744958db323>, (Date of Accession: 23.11.2022).

[2] "Минэкономики ФРГ прогнозирует падение ВВП страны на 0,4% в 2023 году", Vedomosti, <https://www.vedomosti.ru/economics/news/2022/10/12/945197-minekonomiki-frg-prognoziruuet-padenie>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).

[3] "Прогноз Еврокомиссии: ЕС вступит в рецессию в четвертом квартале 2022 года", Frank Media, <https://frankrg.com/101261>, (Date of Accession: 23.11.2022).

[4] Паоло Джентилони: "Рецессию в Евросоюзе можно избежать", Euronews, <https://ru.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/11/22/eu-economic-semester>, (Date of Accession: 23.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Armenia–Russia Tension and Caucasus in the Context of the CSTO

Yevgeny Fedorov, who is a deputy of the United Russia Party, which is in power in Russia, described Armenia as a "geopolitically dead-locked country." Fedorov made a statement and said that "The power in Armenia was brought to power by the United States of America (USA) during the Orange Revolution process, as in Kyiv. However, the survival of Armenia de-

pends on Russia."<sup>[1]</sup> According to Fedorov in the country in question, there is hostility to Russia and this problem should be solved according to Russian laws. Because Armenia is an illegal state structure that has not separated from the Soviet Union by legal means. Therefore, this issue needs to be resolved.<sup>[2]</sup>



**Dr. Sabir  
ASKEROĞLU**  
ANKASAM  
Eurasia Expert

On the other hand, before the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)'s Yerevan summit, on November 22, 2022, many people gathered to protest Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. During the protests, protesters carried written banners which were writing "Russia and the CSTO are enemies, Putin is the murderer!".<sup>[3]</sup>

While reaction against Russia's policies increased among Armenian society, Russian political elites' statements about Yerevan got harsher. Based on this situation lies the inability of Russia and the CSTO to provide the expected support to Armenia in the Second Karabakh War and in the conflicts that took place from time to time after the war.

As a matter of fact, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on 23 November 2022, refused to sign the Final Declaration of the CSTO Summit held in Yerevan and the draft resolution on aid to Yerevan. About this issue, Paşinyan said that "The CSTO did not protect Armenia, which is a member, against Azerbaijan, which is not a part of the organization."<sup>[4]</sup> In addition, the Armenian leader stated that the organization had a cumbersome structure, and that quick decision could not be taken.<sup>[5]</sup>

"During the mass protests in Kazakhstan in January 2022, it took a day for the CSTO to develop a solution that helped stop the riots and prevent the coup. In terms of defending Armenia against Azerbaijan, the CSTO failed. Because the alliance does not fulfil its responsibility."

In fact, problems between Moscow- Yerevan line are not something new. There is a disagreement that goes back to Pashinyan's coming to power. Because the main goal of the Prime Minister of Armenia is to make his country a more democratic country by removing it from the influence of Russia and integrating it into the world. On the other hand, Moscow considers this geopolitical orientation as a "betrayal."

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitri Peskov, who is commenting on Pashinyan's criticisms and his failure to sign the Final Declaration, said that "Pashinyan has the right to criticize the CSTO's stance in the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflicts; But it is clear that he still needs the organization".<sup>[6]</sup>

It is possible to say that Russian- Armenian relations getting worse day by day. Yerevan questioned its membership because of not getting Moscow's support and trying to make pressure on Russia by doing some explanations. Additionally, Armenia wants to sever its ties with CSTO with these criticisms.

Kremlin, on the other hand, is looking for ways to transform the CSTO into an organization which is a prominent spirit of unity and solidarity. That's why statements of Pashinyan, which are stating that he does not respect the organization created discomfort in Moscow. In this framework, while Russia looking for a formula for not to lose Armenia, on the other hand, it also preparing for fighting the Pashinyan administration.

At this point, it is possible to argue that Russia is sacrificing the Pashinyan Government. However, Moscow did not develop a policy that would create an alternative to Pashinyan. For this reason, he opens the legitimacy of Armenia to the discussion by giving some messages through politicians like Fedorov. It should be noted that; The main purpose of such thrashes is to put pressure on Pashinyan and thus limit the Armenian leader's anti-Russian stance.

However, the statement also points out that when Russia's relations with the former Soviet Union countries deteriorate, it may question the legitimacy of these states. Because Fedorov's statements about Armenia remind the example of Ukraine. Similarly, during the periods when various discussions regarding the CSTO in Kazakhstan were experienced, threats against Kazakhstan were made on Russian state television. In fact, it was stated in this publication that Kazakhstan is a problem and that this problem will be focused on after Ukraine.

Russia is giving signals about using military power against neighboring countries which Russia does not see the current legitimation as legitimate. But threats caused these countries to get away from Russia and post-Soviet countries are looking for new allies.

Based on all this information, it can be said that Russia's influence over Armenia has begun to decline. This will bring the development of Moscow's relations with Baku. However, the fact that the Pashinyan administration is not considered legitimate and opening the way for the Karabakh Clan, known for its closeness to Russia, may harm Baku's interests in the region.

As a result, the worsening of Armenian-Russian relations opens the future of the CSTO to the discussion. Because Yerevan gave importance to its relations with Washington and Paris at the point of seeking security. This situation seems to lead Russia to seek a new balance and cooperation in the Caucasus region.

[1] "“Вопрос надо решать”: В российской Думе назвали Армению незаконным государством с проявлениями русофобии", Obozrevatel, <https://news.obozrevatel.com/abroad/vopros-nado-reshat-v-rossijskoj-dume-nazvali-armeniyu-nezakonnym-gosudarstvom-s-proyavleniyami-rusofobii.htm>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[2] Op. cit.

[3] "В Ереване в преддверии саммита ОДКБ провели антироссийскую акцию: люди вышли с флагами Украины и плакатами "Путин – убийца". Фото и видео", Obozrevatel, <https://news.obozrevatel.com/abroad/v-erevane-v-preddverii-sammita-odkb-proveli-antirossijskuyu-aktsiyu-lyudi-vyshli-s-flagami-ukrainyi-i-plakatami-putin-ubijtsa-foto-i-video.htm>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[4] "Пашиян раскритиковал работу ОДКБ и отказался подписывать документы", Gazeta.Ru, <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2022/11/23/15831991.shtml>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).

[5] Op. cit.

[6] "«Это фиаско»: в Кремле рассказали о разногласиях в ОДКБ", Biznes Online, <https://m.business-gazeta.ru/news/573090>, (Date of Accession: 25.11.2022).





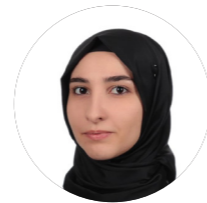
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Uzbekistan's Diplomacy in Afghanistan

The dominance of the Taliban in Afghanistan in August 2021 has significantly changed the regional and global balances. The Taliban, which has been in power for more than a year, has not yet been recognized by any country, although it has been trying to gain international recognition and legitimacy. However, many states have established dialogue with the Taliban. However, diplomatic activities of some countries on the integration of Afghanistan into the international system and approach to Taliban administration draw attention. It is seen

Uzbekistan, one of the important countries of Central Asia, stands out among these actors. Because the changing regional geopolitics has increased the diplomatic and commercial influence of Central Asian countries on Afghanistan. In this sense, Uzbekistan is a critically important actor in Kabul.

It is seen that the Tashkent administration carries out intense diplomacy on Afghanistan both by increasing the communication between the countries at the regional level and based on in-



**Şeyma KIZILAY**

ternational institutional structures. The meeting of Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Vladimir Nurov with United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) deputy president Marcus Putzel on 26 November 2022 is also a stage of the said diplomacy. In the meeting between the two, the establishment of an international negotiation group under the leadership of the United Nations (UN) to meet with the Taliban was discussed. It has been stated that the purpose of establishing an international negotiating group within the UN is "to agree on an algorithm for faster implementation of mutual obligations."<sup>[1]</sup> In other words, it is aimed to create an international delegation for negotiation to make faster progress on dialogue with the Taliban.

Uzbekistan's breakthroughs in Afghanistan are exemplary in the international arena. Tashkent expresses its opinion that the Taliban administration should not be excluded from the international system on different platforms. While doing this, Tashkent emphasizes that it is important for the Taliban to fulfil international demands and establish an inclusive government in the country.

Uzbekistan also supports the rhetoric that the Taliban administration cannot be officially recognized under current conditions. In addition, Tashkent established a key level of communication with the Taliban on many issues. In this sense, it can be said that the Taliban sees Uzbekistan as an important interlocutor to establish external connections and improve communication with international actors. Tashkent has developed a moderate relationship dynamic by focusing on economic cooperation without isolating or marginalizing the Taliban. It is known that mutual contact between countries is provided. Ismatilla Ergashev, Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, also stated that the government works closely with the Taliban and expressed the level of the dialogue established by saying, "We have had solid contacts for a long time, we talk regularly and discuss cooperation."<sup>[2]</sup>

Tashkent is important in terms of Afghanistan's external links as well as the ties established with the Taliban. In this sense, an important activity is demonstrated through conference diplomacy. In the last year, Uzbekistan has played an encouraging and facilitating role in many international meetings. The conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities" held on 15-16 July 2021 sets an example in this sense. The meetings where the Taliban came together with the international community and the constructive role of Tashkent reveal that Uzbekistan is a critical actor in Afghanistan.

It is possible to say that Uzbekistan's stance on the Taliban administration is shaped based on regional security. Instability in Afghanistan was not only limited to this country but also spread to neighbouring countries and Central Asia as a nearby geography. Therefore, threats posed by the possibility of further conflicts direct the Tashkent administration to diplomatic tools.

On the other hand, in last year when radical elements gained freedom of action, the terrorist organization DEASH and its so-called Khorasan Province (ISKP) increased their activities. This causes a serious increase in the perception of threats in Central Asian countries. Therefore, the establishment of a healthy government in Afghanistan is essential for national and regional security. In this context, it can be said that security has an important place in Uzbekistan's Afghanistan diplomacy.

Another reason that pushes Uzbekistan to be active in diplomacy is that Afghanistan should be involved in regional projects. Today, Central Asia has become the key geography of many important projects and planning. However, security risks originating from Afghanistan raise doubts about the continuity of projects.

On the other hand, Afghanistan is also important for the progress of projects that will bring great gains. For this reason, the dialogue with the Taliban and the inclusion of the country in regional projects are important for actors such as Uzbekistan. For example, the Trans-Afghan Transport Corridor is one of the projects to that Tashkent attaches importance. The project allows Central Asian countries to reach the high seas via Afghanistan.

Another regional project is the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project. The announcement of the realization of this project was made at an international conference under the leadership of Uzbekistan. This is remarkable in that it shows a link between the value Tashkent attaches to regional development and projects and its diplomacy towards Afghanistan.

As it will be remembered, the Taliban also participated in the "Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development International Conference" held in Tashkent on 25-26 July 2022. A delegation led by the Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, representatives of the

Government of Uzbekistan and representatives of more than 20 countries attended the meeting. The subjects the focus of the summit were initiatives in the transportation and communication sector, especially the construction of the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Line.[3]

Among the objectives of Uzbekistan within the scope of regional projects is the strategy of securing the trade route from Afghanistan to Pakistan's ports in the Indian Ocean.[4] In line with this goal, we can talk about Uzbekistan which deepens the communication between the West and Afghanistan. Assistance is needed for the realization of infrastructure projects and the integration of Afghanistan. It can be stated that the Tashkent administration plays a constructive and facilitating role in this regard.

In addition, Uzbekistan plays a strategic role in the delivery of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. This factor brings the Tashkent administration to the forefront with the initiative it has taken in Afghanistan-based diplomacy activities. Moreover, Tashkent has taken steps to facilitate the delivery of such aid, as well as to increase it further. It is known that Uzbekistan sent a delegation to Washington to provide more aid to Afghanistan. Efforts are also being made for greater engagement with the Taliban.[5]

Based on all this information, it is possible to talk about an Uzbekistan that leads and hosts international meetings, plays a facilitating role in aid to Afghanistan, and aims to increase the communication of the Taliban administration with international actors. The issues increase Tashkent's international image and visibility.

As a result, it is possible to say that Uzbekistan sees Afghanistan as an opportunity for regional integration. At the same time, it can be said that Tashkent has taken steps to strengthen its global image, as it acts as an effective actor in the solution to the Afghanistan Problem. Therefore, it can be predicted that Tashkent will maintain its current stance and will continue to make a name for itself with its effectiveness in Afghanistan.

[1] "UN Official Concludes Meeting with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan Leaders on Afghanistan", Afintl, <https://www.afintl.com/en/202211262624>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[2] "Uzbekistan Seeks to Engage Taliban Without Alienating West", VOA News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/uzbekistan-seeks-to-engage-taliban-without-alienating-west/6557338.html>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[3] "Uzbekistan-Afghanistan: A project for the construction of a railway line was discussed", Uz Daily, <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/74516>, (Date of Accession: 26.11.2022).

[4] "Uzbekistan Seeks to Engage Taliban Without Alienating West", op. cit.

[5] Ibid.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Can Germany Be a "Driving Force" On Europe's China Strategy?

One of the current debates in the west is how to deal with China after Russia, which is allegedly threatening the world's peace and security. While countries like Germany opt for the continuation of economic relations with China and in this sense, a moderate policy, western countries pioneered by the United States (US) advocate putting a distance in relations with China. As a matter of fact, on 23rd November 2022, in the article, which was published in American-centered Foreign Policy, Olaf Scholz undermines the unity of the West in the issue, the heading used.[1] In the article in question, it is claimed that the German Chancellor has alienated himself both in domestic politics, in Europe and at the global level by deciding to go

to Beijing alone. Despite this divergence in the West, Germany may be right regarding China in the long term. Namely, it can prove to the West how significant a dialogue with China is in encumbering a possible conflict in Taiwan. In addition to this, Germany has indicated to the West that China's influence on Russia can be used to resolve the conflict in Ukraine.

According to a second likelihood, Germany's temperate approach to China may end in disappointment, as was the case with the Russia-Ukraine War. Because it does not want to achieve such a result, the Berlin administration may revise its view of China to act more in harmony with Continental Europe. According to



**Dr. Cenk TAMER**  
ANKASAM  
Asia-Pacific  
Expert



the news of Politico Magazine dated November 23, 2022, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs is committed to taking a tougher stance against China, forcing German companies to reduce their dependence on Beijing, and at the same time, the European Union (EU) to sign an investment agreement with Taiwan. develops a new strategy to underpin its efforts.[2]

The real question here is whether this stance of the ministry will ultimately create a radical change in Germany's China policy or not. As a matter of fact, it is unthinkable for Germany to act separately from the general attitude in Europe. On the contrary, Berlin can be defined as the driving force of Europe. Therefore, Germany can make a prominent difference in shaping European policies concerning China. Despite this, Continental Europe does not trust Germany's China policies, based on its experience in the Russia-Ukraine War. Because although Berlin had the political power and diplomatic ability to prevent the war, it could not use this national power over Moscow successfully enough.

Germany thought that Russia needed Europe for energy and therefore could not easily act against Ukraine. In other words, Berlin underestimated the risk of this war. Even considering such a possibility, Germany did not have many means to stop Russia. Before the war, the leaders of both Germany and France visited Moscow for mediation. After these visits, Europe obviously saw that it was not possible to convince Russia and that they would do nothing to hinder the war in Ukraine. Despite this, Europe put the main burden of this on Germany after the attack of Russia on Ukraine started. Because Berlin was the main actor in the Nord Stream-2 Project, which will make Europe more dependent on Russia in the energy issue. So to speak, Europe claims that it has made a great strategic mistake because Germany insists on cooperating with Russia.

Today, Continental Europe is trying to abate the damage that can be caused by counting on the policies followed by Germany in energy and trade relations. Because it is seen that Germany is the "driving force" in Europe's China policy. The main question in Europe's mind is how much and to what extent Germany's policies can be trusted.

Despite everything, it can be said that Germany does not want to make a radical change in its Chinese policy. In this context, it can be estimated that Berlin will continue to voice China's claims of human rights violations and will continue to criticize its military activity in the region. In addition to this, German companies will be asked to be mindful when doing business with China and to reduce dependency.[3]

The main change here can be in a positive way. In other words, Germany may give more importance to dialogue with China. This strategy has begun to attract the attention of Europe and conti-

ental countries have begun to see the advantages of increasing communication with Beijing. The starting point for this is the German Chancellor Scholz's visit to Beijing on 4 November 2022. Here, Scholz said that after his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, they agreed to oppose Russia's nuclear threats. Also, Scholz pointed out that China can use its influence over Russia to end the war in Ukraine. According to Chinese authorities, Cinping expressed to Scholz his opposition to the use of nuclear weapons in Eurasia.[4]

After the statements, Western powers saw that doing business with China may be advantageous. Approximately ten days later, both US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron talked about nuclear weapons in their bilateral meetings with Cinping by means of the G20 Summit held in Bali, Indonesia. In other words, the Western powers realized that China was sensitive to the nuclear issue thanks to Germany's policies and started to go against it over this issue. Namely, the actors in question thought that by pulling China to their side, they can isolate Russia in the international arena. At this point, the West has a significant question to answer. Who is the West's real rival/enemy? In this context, to end Russia's war in Ukraine as soon as possible or is stopping the rising Chinese threat an urgent policy?

The West has difficulty in answering these questions. According to the Atlantic powers, Russia has lost the war in Ukraine and therefore it is necessary to deal with China, which is the main threat in the next decade. That is why, the main purpose of the dialogue with China is not to stop Russia; To protect interests in the Indo-Pacific.

According to Continental Europe led by Germany, it does not seem possible to fight China intensively before the war in Ukraine ends. Even after the Russo-Ukrainian War, it is not possible to completely wipe out economic ties with China. However, these bonds can be weakened, and dependence can be abated. Germany goes beyond this and sees that an open settling with China and marginalizing it is not a realistic approach.

In a nutshell, it is seen that the USA and Germany are positioned at different points in the West's perspective on China. Despite this, both actors learn new strategies from each other. For example, after his Beijing visit, Scholz made a phone call with US President Joe Biden and conveyed his impressions of the visit. After that, the USA started to talk about nuclear weapons with China. On the other hand, Germany has commenced preparing new laws and advanced strategies to reduce its economic dependence on China. Germany says that it will be more careful in constituting relations with China on critical technology and trade items in the future.[5]

The basic view of Europe is also moving in this direction. Therefore, in the West's struggle with China, Germany becomes a "driving/determining" force.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# How Permanent is the License Plate Agreement Between Kosovo and Serbia?

Following Kosovo's refusal to withdraw its decision on license plates on November 21, 2022, the European Union (EU) mediated urgent solution-oriented negotiations in Brussels to prevent further escalation. However, as these discussions did not produce positive results, global concern grew. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) urged the parties to keep

calm following the Brussels discussions and thus indicated that they were on high alert in Kosovo's north.

With the Brussels talks, where the EU's proposal was rejected, the United States of America (US) stepped in for an urgent solution. At the request of the US, the Government of Kosovo



**Sibel MAZREK**  
ANKASAM  
Media Coordinator

postponed the second part of the three-stage implementation plan on license plates (fining owners of vehicles without Republic of Kosovo (RKS) license plates) for 48 hours.

After the Pristina government agreed to the US proposal, there was a flurry of diplomatic activity between Kosovo and Serbia. Because, as Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti stated, "we are making every effort and require all possible international and local support to reach an agreement within 48 hours."<sup>[1]</sup>

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic, on the other hand, claimed that talks with Pristina are still ongoing without providing any details.<sup>[2]</sup> So much so that the two countries reached a consensus on November 24, 2022, to reduce the tension in the license plate crisis. According to this agreement, Serbia agreed to issue license plates representing Kosovo cities, while Kosovo resolved to stop issuing vehicle licenses.<sup>[3]</sup> To avoid the situation from escalating in the region where heated developments were taking place, the region was put on high alert and significant attempts were made to address the problem through dialogue.

On the other hand, Kurti stated that Kosovo and Serbia will reach a final agreement to normalize relations before the spring of 2023.<sup>[4]</sup> Vucic, on the other hand, claimed that international actors were siding with Pristina in the discussions and declared that Kosovo Serbs would not return to Kosovo institutions unless the Association of Serb Municipalities was established, which is the second condition in addition to license plate fines.<sup>[5]</sup>

According to the statements made by the presidents of the two nations following the agreement, the parties are not completely satisfied. Because the agreement on license plates is regarded as a forced arrangement imposed by the EU and the US. In other words, while the agreement in question paves the path for the normalization of ties between the two nations, reaching a final agreement seems difficult. As a result, the current picture indicates that Pristina and Belgrade still have a long way to go in terms of normalization.

It should be noted that the EU is widely seen as having performed poorly in the Kosovo-Serbia crisis. Indeed, the parties have not embraced the various solution proposals that have been debated for months, and no concrete results have emerged from the negotiations. Thus, there is talk about the EU losing its place to the US during the crisis. The Washington administration gave results in not escalate the crisis and led the two countries to an agreement that prevented possible protests in the north of Kosovo. Vucic talked to Kosovo Serb leaders and said that they should remain calm. Undoubtedly, this statement was an important development.

Based on the developments, the tension between the two countries seems to have decreased, at least for a while. However, it is believed that the decisions made will only provide a temporary solution. Although the parties promised to normalize relations, it can be foreseen that some conflicts will continue. Because while Serbia demands the establishment of the Association of Serb Municipalities from Kosovo, Kosovo strongly opposes it. The Belgrade administration seized an important opportunity for the establishment of the association. Because it is well known that the EU and the US stance on this subject align with Serbia's and has previously exerted pressure on the Pristina government on the issue. Therefore, Belgrade may request that the EU and the US intensify pressure on Pristina about Kosovo failing to fulfill its commitments under the agreement, such as the Association of Serb Municipalities.

However, the EU can use their membership goals to warn both countries to avoid conflicts. For example, Czechia's EU Presidency informed the Committee of Permanent Representatives that the decision to provide visa exemption to Kosovo had been taken off the agenda.<sup>[6]</sup> The EU made its decision owing to tensions in Kosovo's north. As a result, the fact that the EU, which considers the visa exemption and the dialogue process independently, decided to be influenced by the dialogue process for the first time sends a message to the parties to avoid causing more issues.

In conclusion, the agreement between Kosovo and Serbia on license plates on 24 November 2022 reduced the escalating tension in the region. However, it can be argued that disagreements will continue to occur during the dialogue process for the normalization of relations between the two countries.

[1] "Kurti: Every International Support Needed for Agreement within 48 Hours", NI, <https://rs.niinfo.com/english/news/kurti-every-international-support-needed-for-agreement-within-48-hours/>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).

[2] "Vučić najavio nastavak pregovora s Kosovom, no bez dodatnih detalja", Al Jazeera Balkans, <https://balkans.aljazeera.net/videos/2022/11/22/vucic-najavio-nastavak-pregovora-s-kosovom-no-bez-dodatnih-detolja>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).

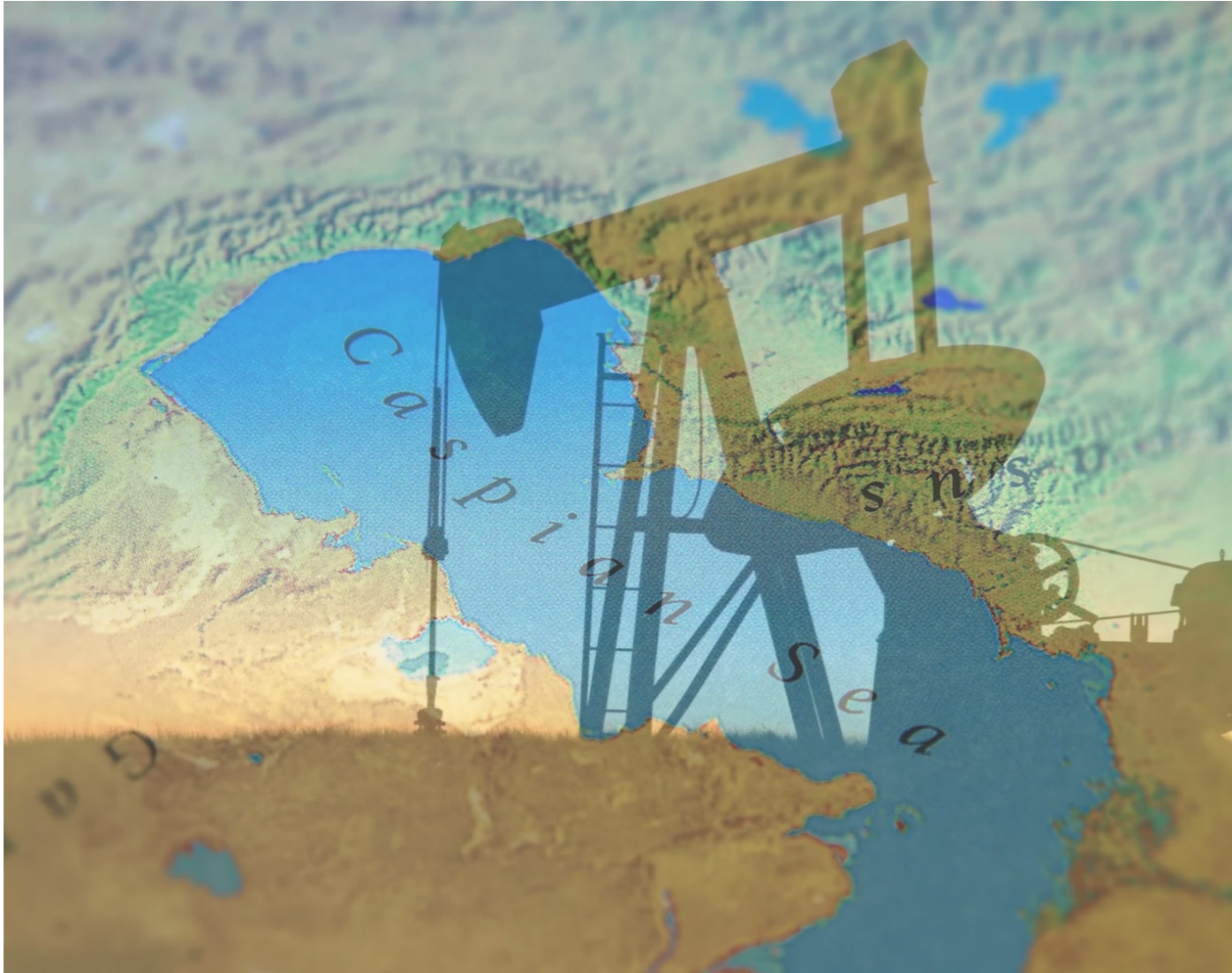
[3] "Kosovo and Serbia Reach Deal on Licence Plate Dispute-Borrell", Euronews, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/11/24/kosovo-and-serbia-reach-deal-on-licence-plate-dispute-borrell>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).

[4] "Kosovo PM: Agreement on Normalization with Serbia Before Spring 2023", NI, <https://rs.niinfo.com/english/news/kosovo-pm-agreement-on-normalization-with-serbia-before-spring-2023/>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).

[5] "Vucic, Kosova ile Varılan Anlaşmayı Değerlendirdi", Balkan News, <https://www.balkannews.com.tr/sirbistan/vucic-kosova-ile-varilan-anlasmayi-degerlendirdi-h5074.html>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).

[6] "AB'den Kosova'ya Ceza: Vize Muafiyeti Kararı Gündemden Kaldırıldı", Balkan News, <https://www.balkannews.com.tr/kosova/ab-den-kosova-ya-ceza-vize-muafiyeti-karari-gundemden-kaldirildi-h5061.html>, (Date of Accession: 28.11.2022).





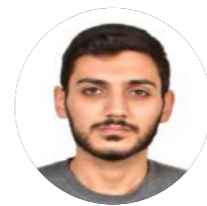
## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Changing Policies of Coastal States in the Context of the Search for Energy Cooperation in the Caspian Basin

The Caspian Sea, which has been a challenging point for many actors throughout history, has not lost anything of this feature today; in fact, it has become a source of hope for the European Union (EU) and Balkan countries facing the energy crisis because of the sanctions imposed on Russian natural gas due to the war in Ukraine. With the creation of states that gained independence after the disintegration of the Union, the number of coastal states on the Caspian Sea increased to five. These states, which were insufficient in terms of technology

in the first years of their independence, struck a blow to Russia's monopoly in the region thanks to the cooperation of Western-based energy companies. However, the conflicts between the coastal states and the West's effort to keep its relations with Moscow in a certain place did not limit local changes.

On the other hand, the conjuncture that emerged after 2020 has opened the door to the development of new equations. On the one hand, after the Second Karabakh War, Cas-



**Rizvan  
ASGAROV**

pian-based projects became more applicable; on the other hand, the disputes between Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan regarding the natural gas fields called "Serdar" and "Kepez" were resolved and the region began to be called "Friendship Basin."<sup>[1]</sup> In addition, the reconciliation between Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan has shown that Caspian-based cooperation processes will accelerate as an important development. <sup>[2]</sup>

It is a perfectly normal development that Caspian-based projects gain importance. Because of the sanctions imposed on Russia due to the Russia-Ukraine War, the suspension of the Nord Stream-2 Natural Gas Pipeline, the sabotage of the Nord Stream-1 and Nord Stream-2 Natural Gas Pipelines, the missile strikes in Poland and the Friendship Oil Pipeline to Hungary was closed by Kyiv, the energy crisis in Europe deepened. Therefore, the Southern Gas Corridor has come to the fore as the most reliable route. Increasing the carrying capacity of the Trans-Caspian Natural Gas Pipeline has come to the fore.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the pipeline, which was added to TANAP to transfer natural gas to Bulgaria via Greece, after Gazprom cut off the shipment to Bulgaria, which is dependent on Russian natural gas, in April 2022, the following words the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, drew attention:<sup>[3]</sup>

"The Greece-Bulgaria Gas Interconnection Project will play a critical role in strengthening Europe's energy security and diversifying its gas supply. Energy security is part of the national security of every state. Current developments in international politics also confirm this. For about two years, Azerbaijani gas has been exported to European markets and will now be sent to Bulgaria. Changing Europe's energy map, the Southern Gas Corridor is one of the continent's largest infrastructure projects. Azerbaijan is proud to be the pioneer of the Southern Gas Corridor."

It is also seen that there has been an increase in the Balkan visits of the President of Azerbaijan. The contacts of Aliyev, who visited the regional states, especially Serbia, indicate that natural gas pipeline routes that are likely to extend to the Balkans and Visegrad countries are being tried to be implemented. Undoubtedly, these new energy routes will also relieve Moldova, which has difficulties in gas supply due to its debts to Gazprom. The statements of Wolfgang Urbancic, Head of the Austrian Energy Regulator "E-Control", stating that Azerbaijan will become an alternative market along with Algeria and Norway should not be ignored in the context of these initiatives. Because Azerbaijan is turning into an important centre for Europe to overcome

the energy crisis.<sup>[4]</sup>

At this point, it should be noted that energy-based mobility was not limited to Baku, especially Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan came to the fore in energy geopolitics. The Astana administration is working on the sale of Kazakh energy through the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku Supsa Pipelines after the cuts applied to the Kazakh natural gas exported via Russia under the pretext of modification. Kazakhstan is expected to export natural gas through these pipelines starting in 2023. It is stated that this is one of the issues discussed during Aliyev's visit to Tbilisi.

On the other hand, on 19 October 2022, Romania-based Romgaz and Azerbaijan's SOCAR companies signed a memorandum of understanding containing a statement of intent on "developing a joint liquefied natural gas project (LNG) in the Black Sea". It is known that SOCAR currently operates an oil transshipment terminal in Georgia and thus carries out Bucharest-based shipments from Kulevi Port. As can be seen, the development of such works is on the agenda.<sup>[5]</sup>

On the other hand, the region, especially Baku, is making an active effort to deliver Turkmenistan's natural gas to Europe. On the other hand, it should not be ignored that Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji visited Ashgabat and met with the President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov. In this meeting, swap agreements were discussed regarding the structuring of natural gas debts and the transfer of natural gas, oil, and petroleum products.<sup>[6]</sup>

On the other hand, it was announced by Owji that Russian investors signed an agreement with Iran for the development of seven oil and gas fields worth 4.5 billion dollars.<sup>[7]</sup> When this situation is considered together with the regional visits of the US and EU officials, it can be stated that the competition in the region has increased.

At this stage, it should be noted that the energy crisis, which negatively affected Europe, increased the importance of the states bordering the Caspian. The fact that two of the five coastal states were the target of sanctions brought the other three countries to the fore. In this context, it can be said that Azerbaijan, which has been exporting energy to Europe for a long time, has also turned into an important route country.

The agreements made by Kazakhstan with Shell are also noteworthy. After his victory in the early Presidential elections of 20 November 2022, it can be predicted that Tokayev will take much more concrete steps in this area as well.





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Russia-China Relations: A Forced Partnership?

While the Russia-Ukraine War continues with uncertainties, it is expected that European Union (EU) will announce a ceiling price towards Russian oil, before the embargo, which will start on 5 December 2022.[1] Europe aims to make the war not sustainable for Russia and punish the Moscow administration by making sanctions more powerful and ceiling prices. As a remedy for this situation, the Kremlin, on the one hand, improves its relations with the states it sees as allies; On the other hand, it is trying to diversify the countries to which it will export oil.

During this period China and North Korea deepened their relations with Russia. Thus, parties have become allies that support each other directly or indirectly. In this environment,

the Western states led by the United States of America (US) started voting to condemn North Korea's intercontinental ballistic missile test on November 19, 2022, in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC); However, due to the opposition of Russia and China, the two permanent members of the UNSC, no condemnation decision was made.[2] Both of these countries emphasize that the actions of the Pyongyang administration were caused by provocations of the US.

Also, high-level officials of Russia and China emphasize their deepening relations in their meetings, against the US and they state that the rise of China and Russia cannot be prevented.[3] Because both China and Russia are



**Elean TOKMAK**

adjacent to many geopolitical fault lines, the actors have started to need each other more in many discussions. For example, while the US continues to work on the Taiwan Policy Law; China states that the Taiwan Issue is the main red line.[4]

On the other hand, Europe raised its determination about support to Ukraine as the Ukrainian War started to change course. In this context, while Russia starting to regress against Ukraine, on the other hand, Europe is continuously helping Ukraine as mentioned before, preparing to announce the ceiling price for Russian gas. It is obvious that the announcement, which is expected to be made before December 5, 2022, will have a devastating effect on Moscow in many ways.

Also, when the situation of Russia and China is examined in terms of their borders to political fault lines and being in some political discussions, it can be said that both states have justified reasons for their commitment to each other. Considering that both states, which trying to isolate other countries in the international system, are looking for friendly and allied states at many points, it can be said that both China and Russia will constantly support each other in the current conditions of the international system. However, both countries have an implicit struggle for influence and occasionally conflicting economic and political interests.

In addition to all of this, while solidarity on the China-Russia-North Korea line increased; At the G-20 Leaders' Summit, Chinese President Xi Jinping held meetings with many Western heads of state. The meeting with US President Joe Biden on November 14, 2022, differs from other meetings. Following the Biden-Jinping meeting, on November 23, 2022, US Defense Minister Lloyd Austin and Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fanghe held a meeting at the request of the US side on the break of the ASEAN+ Defense Ministers Summit.[5] Although the subject of the two meetings is almost the same, the efforts of the US to approach the Chinese side in a positive way in these meetings attracted attention. The situation in question can be interpreted as an effort by the Washington administration to attract Moscow's ally to its side. In this sense, the claim that the parties are heading towards a search that can be concluded in the form of controlled bipolarity has come to the fore.[6]

In this context the US wants to create cracks between the Russia-China-North Korean alliance to counter the global threats of Russia and North Korea and, if it succeeds, to use Beijing to limit the areas of action of these two states.

On the other hand, China is calculating how these rapprochement efforts can be used for China. As a matter of fact, in a news

published in China Daily after the Biden-Jinping meeting held on November 14, 2022, it was stated that China was waiting for concrete steps in terms of the US's rapprochement efforts.[7] Therefore, Beijing refrains from closing the door to these rapprochement efforts to strengthen its hand against Moscow, with which it has an implicit rivalry, and to gain some concessions from Washington.

As can be understood, while Russia is dealing with the actions of the EU and the US; China wants to turn Russia's difficult situation into an opportunity, especially in the energy field. China and Qatar signed a twenty-seven-year energy agreement on 21 November 2022.[8] Beijing's signing of such an agreement with Doha despite the presence of a pipeline such as the "Power of Siberia" in the region indicates that it will consider all opportunities in its silent competition against Russia.

As a result, Russia-China relations, which have developed since February 2022, have been called a "boundless alliance" by China and Russia at one point, but both countries have interests in the other's sphere of influence. For example, Central Asia, which Russia sees as its immediate environment, is on the route of China's Belt-Road Project. Moreover, the Beijing administration is developing its relations with Central Asian states by making many investments in the region. This bothers Russia. In this context, it can be said that while Washington wants to use China to limit Russia and North Korea, Beijing is trying to gain an advantage in its relations with Russia by using the US and other countries. For this reason, it can be stated that the reason why China signed an energy agreement with Qatar despite the difficult situation Russia is in is that it tries to strengthen its hand.

[1] Matina Stevis-Gridneff, Alan Rappeport, "Ukraine's Allies Near Imposing Cap on the Price of Russian Oil", The New York Times, [www.nytimes.com/2022/11/22/business/russia-oil-price-cap.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/22/business/russia-oil-price-cap.html), (Date of Accession: 22.11.2022).

[2] "UN Security Council members condemn North Korean Missile Launch", Aljazeera, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/21/un-security-council-members-condemn-north-korea-missile-launch](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/21/un-security-council-members-condemn-north-korea-missile-launch), (Date of Accession: 21.11.2022).

[3] "Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu meets with new Russian Ambassador to China Igor Morgulov, Vowing to Push Bilateral Relations to a New Level for a New Era", Global Times, [www.globaltimes.cn/page/202211/1278441.shtml](https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202211/1278441.shtml), (Date of Accession: 01.11.2022).

[4] Jiang Chenglong, "US Called on to Respect China's Core Interests", China Daily, [www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202211/23/WS637d5806a31049175432b510.html](https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202211/23/WS637d5806a31049175432b510.html), (Date of Accession: 23.11.2022).

[5] Ibid.

[6] Mehmet Seyfettin Erol, "ABD-Çin Arasında Yeni Soğuk Savaş'tan Yeni Bir Paylaşım mı?", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/abd-cin-arasinda-yeni-sojuk-savastan-yeni-bir-paylasima-mi/>, (Date of Accession: 21.11.2022).

[7] Shen Dingli, "US' Sincerity to Its Commitments Vital to Sino-US Ties", Asia News Network, [asianews.network/us-sincerity-to-its-commitments-vital-to-sino-us-ties/](https://asianews.network/us-sincerity-to-its-commitments-vital-to-sino-us-ties/), (Date of Accession: 15.11.2022).

[8] Maha El Dahan-Andrew Mills, "Qatar Seals 27-year LNG Deal with China as Competition Heats up", Reuters, [www.reuters.com/business/energy/qatarenergy-signs-27-year-lng-deal-with-chinas-sinopec-2022-11-21/](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/qatarenergy-signs-27-year-lng-deal-with-chinas-sinopec-2022-11-21/), (Date of Accession: 21.11.2022).





## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Tajikistan-China Military Cooperation

Central Asia has lately become a geography that attracts the attention of global actors more than ever.

Even though the opening of the West towards the region is heavily covered in the international press, it is seen that China, as an Asian country, tends to develop and deepen relations with regional countries

For example, on 22 November 2022, Tajikistan and China decided to conduct a common counter-terrorism operation every two years. [1] Yet, China generally establishes economic bounds in its relations with other states. However, a change is seen with this approach and the Beijing administration's military operations come into question. As a matter of fact, Military



**Şeyma KIZILAY**

cooperation in the Dushanbe-Pekin line is an indicator of this.

In essence, conducting military operations between two countries is not a new issue. Joint operations were held in 2006, 2015, 2016 and 2019.[2] In 2015, Tajikistan and Chinese special operations forces conducted a joint counter-terrorism operation at a mountain training center outside Dushanbe. The operation in question was the first joint training exercise conducted by special operations forces overseas.[3] In 2016, a joint force of approximately 10 thousand people conducted an operation in the Mountainous-Badakhshan region. In the same year, the "Quadruple Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism in the Fight Against Terrorism" was established with the participation of China, Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.[4] In 2019, a military operation called "Cooperation-2019" was held; Beijing and Dushanbe have deepened their partnership in the fight against terrorism. 12 thousand soldiers from both sides were present in the operation.[5]

The point that makes the new operations planned to be conducted distinctive is that a more systematic way will be followed in these maneuvers. It can also be pointed out that it will have a more formal nature as it will be actualized based on an agreement. In addition, military equipment and equipment support will be provided to Tajikistan, which can take the cooperation between the parties to the next level.

It is known that China wants to be one of the active powers in Central Asia. In line with this goal, the Beijing administration, which tried to evolve its partnerships with the regional capitals, was following a path that concentrated mostly on the economic and commercial sectors. However, China's efforts are not circumscribed to this. Because Beijing is also taking steps in terms of military cooperation. Therefore, these moves may pave the way for an increase in China's military influence in the region.

The increase in China's weapon exports to Central Asian countries in recent years is also remarkable. Because it is known that China has met 18% of the region's weapon needs for the last five years.[6] In the case of Tajikistan, steps are taken to provide military equipment and improve cooperation. In October 2016, the sides agreed to build 11 border posts.[7] In 2018, the Chinese company named "China Ordnance Industry Group Corporation Limited" allocated armored patrol vehicles to contribute to Tajikistan's border security. [8]

In addition to the rise in Chinese influence, Tajikistan's strong military ties with Russia cannot be neglected. The structure of the country's military organization is like that of Russia. At the same time, Russia's largest military base abroad is in Tajikistan Therefore, China's increasing role in military affairs may deepen the rivalry between Beijing and Moscow.

Security concerns and regional policies also have an impact on China's development of military cooperation with Tajikistan. Tajikistan is a strategically significant country for China as it shares a common border (the Wakhan Corridor) with Afghanistan under the Taliban. Undoubtedly, this makes the country an important component of China's security on its western border.[9] The establishment of border posts is also a reflection of this. Moreover, in 2017, allegations that China tried to establish a military base in Tajikistan came to the fore.

In 2021, China's military presence in Tajikistan came into question again. In this context, it was alleged that Beijing agreed to pay Dushanbe approximately \$8.5 million for the construction of a paramilitary base on the border.[10] It is seen that China's military activities in Tajikistan are mostly concentrated in the Mountainous Badakhshan region nearby Afghanistan. As a matter of fact, the news that military garrisons were being built in the region in question was reflected in the press.[11]

One of the main factors in Beijing's development of military cooperation with Tajikistan and Central Asian countries in general; To ensure the security of the Belt-Road Project. That is why economic relations shift to the axis of security over time. For this reason, there

has been an increase in China's weapon exports to the countries of the region and efforts to develop military infrastructure in recent years. A similar situation exists in the field of operations. This is closely related to Beijing's desire to protect its investments and corridors.

As it is known, developments based in Afghanistan have made the regional security environment vulnerable. As a matter of fact, in addition to the destabilizing activities of local groups, the terrorist organization DEASH has also augmented the attacks. Understandably, both Tajikistan and China are concerned about these threats. In this context, Beijing focuses on developing military cooperation with Central Asian republics, especially Tajikistan, in line with its goal of combating terrorism. In this context, Beijing is trying to deepen its relations with the regional capitals by means of the anti-terrorism structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). However, it can be said that China wants to sign new agreements with Central Asian states to develop military and commercial cooperation.

Consequently, China gives priority to developing military cooperation with Tajikistan and Central Asian countries in general. Here, Beijing has two main goals. The first of these; is national security. The second is to increase its influence in Central Asia. This goal is likely to accelerate the Sino-Russian rivalry. In the current situation, while China acts based on the SCO and the fight against terrorism; Russia, on the other hand, is trying to institutionalize its influence through the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). The fact that Moscow works through the CSTO instead of using the SCO, in which Moscow is a member of Beijing, can be evaluated as evidence of the segregation between Russia and China.

[1] "Tajikistan-China Agree to Conduct Joint Counter Terrorism Drills at Least Once every Two Years", Asia Plus, <https://asiaplustj.info/en/news/tajikistan/security/20221122/tajikistan-china-agree-to-conduct-joint-counter-terrorism-drills-at-least-once-every-two-years>, (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[2] Ibid.

[3] "In Russia's Shadow: China's Rising Security Presence in Central Asia", Wilson Center, [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/KI\\_200519\\_cable%2052\\_v1.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/KI_200519_cable%2052_v1.pdf), (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[4] "Sino-Tajik Exercises: The Latest Chinese Encroachment Into Russia's 'Sphere of Influence'", The Jamestown Foundation, <https://jamestown.org/program/sino-tajik-exercises-the-latest-chinese-encroachment-into-russias-sphere-of-influence/>, (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[5] "China and Tajikistan Kicks off Joint Counter-Terrorism Exercise", China Military Online, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-08/12/content\\_9587478.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2019-08/12/content_9587478.htm), (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[6] "China's New Military Posture in Central Asia", Nesa Center, [https://nesa-center.org/chinas\\_new\\_military\\_posture\\_in\\_central\\_asia/](https://nesa-center.org/chinas_new_military_posture_in_central_asia/), (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[7] "China in Central Asia: Building Border Posts in Tajikistan", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/09/china-in-central-asia-building-border-posts-in-tajikistan/>, (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[8] "In Russia's Shadow...", op. cit.

[9] "China's New Military...", op. cit.

[10] Catherina Putz, "China's Security Infrastructure Continues to Grow in Tajikistan", The Diplomat, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/chinas-security-infrastructure-continues-to-grow-in-tajikistan/>, (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).

[11] "Tajikistan Agrees with China to Hold Anti-Terrorism Exercises Every Two Years", Nova News, <https://www.agenzianova.com/en/news/tajikistan-agrees-with-china-to-hold-anti-terrorism-drills-every-two-years/>, (Date of Accession: 24.11.2022).



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# Peace–Conflict Predicament in Karabakh: What Does Armenia Want?

Although Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's efforts to incorporate France in the Azerbaijan negotiations, it is possible to argue that this situation has harmed the normalization process. Furthermore, Pashinyan's actions discredit the European Union's (EU) respectable stance in the quest for peace.

Despite Russia, Armenia's attempt to undermine the negotiating procedures is primarily aimed at restricting Moscow's influence. Because Pashinyan is a pro-Western actor, and one of his political aims is to reduce Armenia's reliance on Russia. France, on the other hand, is trying to become the only mediating actor in the region and wants to prove that Moscow's



**Kenan AĞAZADE**  
ANKASAM Eurasia  
Research  
Assistant



efforts for a peace agreement are insufficient. On the other hand, it should be noted that the current geopolitical situation provides serious advantages to Azerbaijan. Because, while the West's two adversaries, Russia and Iran, serve as Armenia's allies, France's actions also hinder the EU's constructive efforts. This means preserving the current status quo.

The United States (US), on the other hand, advocates for the Karabakh Armenians to be granted a cultural or different status. This leads the US to a biased position in favor of Armenia, which is far from mediating. Because the Washington administration desires to become an effective power in the region by giving Karabakh a new status.

At this point, the US, Russia, and France's supporting Armenia is hindering the peace process. This makes it difficult for the parties to compromise. All of this raises the prospect of another armed conflict. As a result, if Armenia fails to take the expected measures in the peace talks, it would not be surprising if the Azerbaijani Army considers taking a military action. Because of this, the current process is in Azerbaijan's best interests. Because the Baku administration is determined to liberate the other occupied regions.

The Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) Collective Security Council held on November 23-23, 2022 in Yerevan, Armenia's capital, should also be mentioned. Because the meeting plainly disclosed the member nations' approaches to the Moscow government. Pashinyan, made remarks criticizing Kremlin leadership, claiming that the CSTO was ineffective and opened discussion about leaving the organization.[1]

Moreover, Pashinyan had given messages at the extraordinary meeting held in October 2022 that they could leave the organization. [2] This had caused Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko to criticize Pashinyan.[3] Despite this, Pashinyan maintained its stance on November 22-23, 2022, and this did not go unnoticed. While Yerevan is opening up to the West, it is also attempting to overcome its isolation in Karabakh by putting pressure on Russia.

In conclusion, Pashinyan seeks to create chaos inside the CSTO in order to fend off criticism for breaking the Brussels and Sochi Agreements and thus bring France into the mediation proceedings, despite the fact that it is a party to the Karabakh conflict. This implies abandoning the pursuit of peace in Azerbaijan-Armenia relations. Already, the process shows that the dynamics of the conflict are becoming closer than ever.

[1] "Пашинян не подписал декларацию ОДКБ: недоумение Лукашенко", Mignews, <https://mignews.com/news/politic/pashinyan-ne-podpisal-deklaraciyu-odkb-nedoumenie-lukashenko-popalo-na-video.html>, (Date of Accession: 29.11.2022).

[2] Sabir Askeroglu, "Армяно-российская напряженность и Кавказ в контексте ОДКБ", ANKASAM, [shorturl.at/aboE2](http://shorturl.at/aboE2), (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).

[3] Ibid.



## ANKASAM ANALYSIS

# New Developments in Kazakhstan-France Relations

Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev visited France on November 29-30, 2022, at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. This visit is of symbolic importance as it is the first official visit of the President of Kazakhstan to Europe after his re-election.

On the 30th anniversary of Kazakhstan-France diplomatic relations, the Presidents stated that they welcomed the two countries' political, commercial, and economic cooperation and reminded the parties of the validity of the "Strategic Partnership Agreement" signed between the parties on June 11, 2008 and expressed their

desire to develop relations based on trust at all levels. Kazakhstan is France's most important economic partner in Central Asia, and France is one of the leading investors in Kazakhstan's economy. Commercial and economic contacts between the parties are actively expanding, and joint energy projects are expected to be implemented.

During the meeting, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, first expressed his heartfelt congratulations to Tokayev on his re-election as President of Kazakhstan and stated his support for reforms aimed at strengthening



**Aidana  
BAKTYBEK KYZY**

the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, and social justice, all of which are essential preconditions for stability and sustainable development. In addition, Macron declared that they are ready to continue close interaction within the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement framework between Kazakhstan and the European Union (EU). In this context, the leaders referred to the first Central Asia-EU Summit held in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, on October 27, 2022.

The parties also reaffirmed their mutual desire to strengthen peace, security, and stability at the global and regional levels. It is important to note that they stress their unwavering commitment to international law and the core values of the UN- Charter, such as respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Considering the current geopolitical landscape, the expansion of the Trans-Caspian international transport route and the launch of major transportation projects were viewed as important issues. In this regard, Kazakhstan wants EU nations to collaborate in constructing corridors, to serve as a "buffer market" between East and West, South and North.[1] Tokayev supports the implementation of the EU's Global Gateway Project.

90% of France's trade with Central Asian countries is carried out through Kazakhstan. Furthermore, France has been one of the five major investors in the country's economy since 2005. The bilateral trade volume between France and Kazakhstan reached 2.5 billion dollars in the first nine months of 2022.[2] It is known that the two countries carry out joint projects in the fields of energy, mining, light industry, construction, aviation, engineering, health and food. Currently, more than 170 French companies and joint ventures operate in Kazakhstan. The goal is to increase this figure. Tokayev met with the representatives of the French business world within the scope of his visit.

In addition, during the meeting, the parties exchanged views on strengthening the ties between the two countries in the fields of education and culture and discussed the current issues on the international agenda and the main issues in Central Asia. In addition, increasing student mobility was encouraged by opening two French schools in Astana and Almaty in 2024, increasing the number of scholarships under the Abay-Vern Program and expanding the list of French higher education institutions under the "Bolashak Programme". In the framework of climate change discussions, the necessity for a large-scale project to build a wind power plant with a capacity of 1.2 GW in Kazakhstan was

highlighted. This project symbolizes the strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the fight against climate change.

Tokayev signed many documents as a part of his official visit to France. As it is known, Kazakhstan is one of the main Uranium and crude oil suppliers of France. The two countries agreed to develop cooperation in the field of critical raw materials, including rare earth elements.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Energy of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Energy of France signed an agreement on cooperation in the peaceful use of the atom and a protocol for the development of a nuclear power plant in Kazakhstan. In addition to these, various documents were signed in the fields of renewable energy sources, green hydrogen production, water management, rail transport and agricultural trade.[3]

Kazakhstan values the development of relations with Western nations, notably France, in the present political landscape. Kazakhstan piques Europe's interest due to its advantageous geographical location and position as the leading country in Central Asia. Furthermore, Kazakhstan, which was negatively impacted by Russia's economic sanctions but succeeded in attracting investments from European corporations withdrawing from Russia, is the first Central Asian state to sign an Extended Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU.[4]

In conclusion, this visit highlighted the significance of Kazakhstan-France collaboration, as well as Central Asia-EU cooperation in general. The parties, who committed to expanding bilateral relations in sectors such as economy, investment, education, health, research, and culture in the spirit of strategic partnership demonstrated a strong desire to strengthen their strategic partnership and take their relations to the next level. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that the parties' relationships will continue to grow and develop.

[1] Sabir Askeroğlu, "AB'nin "Orta Asya Açılımı" ve Kazakistan'la İlişkileri", ANKASAM, <https://www.ankasam.org/abnin-orta-asya-acilimi-ve-kazakistanla-iliskileri/>, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).

[2] "Токаев: «90% торговли Франции с Центральной Азией приходится на Казахстан»", Kursiv Media, <https://kz.kursiv.media/2022-11-29/tokayev-90-torgovli-francii-s-centralnoj-aziej-prihoditsya-na-kazahstan/>, (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).

[3] "В рамках визита президента Казахстана во Францию подписан ряд документов", Kazakhstan Today, [https://www.kt.kz/rus/state/nachalis\\_dvustoronnii\\_peregovory\\_glav\\_kazahstana\\_i\\_frantsii\\_1377943616.html](https://www.kt.kz/rus/state/nachalis_dvustoronnii_peregovory_glav_kazahstana_i_frantsii_1377943616.html), (Date of Accession: 01.12.2022).

[4] Askeroğlu, op.cit.

# ANKASAM IN PRESS

## 28 November 2022

Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Studies (ANKASAM) President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Seyfettin Erol's evaluations on Uzbekistan's reform process were published in Dunyo News Agency, one of Uzbekistan's leading news agencies.

## 30 November 2022

ANKASAM Chief Advisor of the President, Retired Ambassador Aydın Nurhan, evaluated the current developments in foreign policy in Al Jazeera Arabic.





*The latest issue of the International Journal of Crisis and Politics Studies, an international peer-reviewed journal operating within the Ankara Center for Crisis and Politics Studies (ANKASAM), has been published. Academic Keys, ASOS Index, CEEOL, Cite Factor, DRJI, Index Copernicus, Ideal Online, Research Bible, Sindex and TUBITAK DERGIPARK databases are scanned by our journal can be accessed via the link below.*

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CRISIS AND POLITICAL STUDIES VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

# JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES

*The latest issue of the Journal of Regional Studies, an international peer-reviewed journal operating within the Ankara Crisis and Political Research Center (ANKASAM), has been published. Our journal is scanned by Academic Keys, ASOS Index, CEEOL, Cite Factor, DRJI, Index Copernicus, Ideal Online, Research Bible, Index and TUBITAK DERGIPARK databases. You can reach our journal via the link below.*

ANKASAM JOURNAL OF REGIONAL STUDIES VOLUME VI, ISSUE I

