

June saw dramatic developments in the Middle East, with the takeover of Gaza by Hamas, prompting all kinds of ideas on how it affects the future, some of which we reproduce below. Tony Blair was also appointed the Quartet's new envoy, immediately upon his resignation as British prime minister. We wish him well in this role and hope that he has read the damning de Soto report on the Quartet (see below).

However we focus here on the implications for the wider Europe of the EU summit of 20-22 June, which repaired the damage done by the rejection of the draft Constitution in France and the Netherlands two years ago. The agreement reached in Brussels retains virtually the whole substance of the former Constitution, minus some of the grandiose language and references to symbols (such as the EU flag and anthem, which already exist and will stay in use in any case).

So after all the hyped-up crisis talk about the collapse of the EU, and the Schadenfreude commentaries coming notably from Moscow, we are back to where we were meant to be two years ago. Two years were basically wasted because Giscard d'Estaing as president of the Convention that drafted the Constitution indulged in illusions of grandeur (to be remembered as a Euro-Jefferson), followed by Chirac, who in the interest of short term party political tactics irresponsibly chose to have a referendum when it was not necessary. All of the main institutional changes in the Constitution are retained, with an end to the rotating Council Presidency in favour of a single personality for a conventional term of office, an enhanced role for the foreign policy tsar ('High Representative'), a slimmed-down number of commissioners and a reform of the voting weights with a double-majority system (by population and number of member states).

This last point about voting weights was the subject of a serious confrontation with Poland, with the 'terrible twins' Kaczynski going to the brink with unacceptable demands, and above all unacceptably polemical speeches (the reference to the need for voting weights to represent the war dead). Angela Merkel handled them adroitly, refusing all polemic, yet when the talking had to stop, confronted them with an alliance of 26 who would go ahead without them if necessary. So in the end Poland settled just for some years of delay to the introduction of the voting system to which it had objected.

The overall result is that the EU can now return to business as usual. The institutional reforms were intended to make the EU function smoothly with its enlarged membership. This has now been done for today's membership, but the prospect of further enlargements remains open. Widespread opinion in Brussels is that while Croatia could accede in a few years time, there are no bets on dates for any other candidate or would-be candidate, be it Turkey,

Table of Contents

Strengthening the ENP	2
EU External Relations Council Conclusions on the ENP	2
Central Asia.....	3
EU-Central Asia: Strategy for a new partnership	3
Portuguese Presidency Priorities.....	4
A stronger Union for a better world.....	4
EU Progress Reports on Bulgaria and Romania	5
Global Corruption Report 2007	6
Corruption in Judicial Systems.....	6
Georgia	7
Friendly fire on the visa front	7
South Ossetia prospects aired in Brussels	7
Palestine.....	8
Alvaro de Soto - Envoy to the Quartet - End of Mission Report.....	8
Behind the news with Hanna Siniora	8
The fall of Gaza and the rise of Palestine.....	9
CEPS Publications.....	11
'Union of the Mediterranean'	11
Readings in European Security, Volume 4	11
A Transatlantic perspective on European Neighbourhood	11
Political Islam in Syria	11
Political Islam in Morocco	11
Tajikistan and the EU	12
European Neighbourhood Watch Index	

the rest of the Balkans, or Ukraine. The EU of 27 is going to need a substantial number of years to comprehend how the recent huge enlargement works out. There are concerns that some of the new member states are already backsliding in terms of their commitments to the rule of law and sound democratic governance (see reports on Bulgaria and Romania below), now that the pressures of negotiation for accession are removed. All of this has to settle down.

So the agreement over institutional reform does not mean that the EU's door has swung wide open for further enlargements. Instead the emphasis is still on enhancing the neighbourhood policy, rather than boosting membership perspectives (see also texts below on strengthening the neighbourhood policy and a cautious new strategy for Central Asia).

Michael Emerson

EU External Relations Council Conclusions on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy

Luxembourg, 18 June 2007. [Link](#)

These Council Conclusions are submitted to the attention of the European Council (21/22June2007).

The Council welcomed the significant progress that has been made in strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), a core priority within the EU's external action, under the mandate agreed by the European Council of December 2006. It endorsed the Presidency's Progress Report which takes stock of the substantial accomplishments to date and looks forward to the future development of the strengthened ENP.

The Council reaffirmed the crucial importance of the ENP to consolidate a ring of prosperity, stability and security based on human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the EU's neighbourhood. Continuous efforts should be made so that all partner countries truly embrace a strengthened ENP.

The Council recalled the key principles of the ENP:

- ENP is a strategy based on partnership and joint ownership to promote modernisation and reform.
- ENP is a single, inclusive, balanced and coherent policy framework.
- Performance-driven differentiation and tailor-made assistance remain essential for EU relations with the neighbouring countries.
- ENP remains distinct from the question of EU membership and does not prejudge any possible future developments of partner countries' relationship with the EU.

The Council welcomed the work achieved so far in deepening the ENP's economic, financial, thematic, regional and civil society dimensions. It underlined that deeper economic integration is an essential building block of the strengthened ENP, to be achieved in particular by the progressive adoption of deep and comprehensive free trade agreements. The opening of negotiations on such agreements will be preceded by the accession of our partner countries to the WTO. It particularly welcomed the opening of negotiations on an Enhanced Agreement with Ukraine, certain aspects of which could serve as a model for other ENP partners in the future.

The Council welcomed the Commission's ongoing work to establish a Governance Facility, with objective and transparent allocation criteria, to better encourage partners' reforms, and took note of the ongoing work to set up a Neighbourhood Investment Fund, which should be fully compatible with FEMIP. It underlined the importance of the progress made on the opening of Community agencies and programmes to partner countries.

The Council underlined the importance of the extension of the Global Approach to Migration to the neighbouring Eastern and South-Eastern regions and considered that further initiatives could be explored to facilitate mobility for certain categories of people from ENP countries to the EU, in particular for participation in ENP-related events.

The Council equally welcomed the decision to invite Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on a case by case basis to align with EU declarations, demarches and positions on CFSP issues. A similar possibility should be pursued for the EU's Mediterranean partners.

The Council welcomed the adoption and the beginning of implementation of the Egypt and Lebanon ENP Action Plans, which will allow the strengthening of relations with these two countries.

The Council welcomed that work on a strengthened and coherent EU engagement towards the Black Sea area has started and recalled the Council Conclusions of 14 May 2007 on the Black Sea Synergy Initiative. In developing this initiative, the EU can build on the experience gained in the context of the Barcelona Process and consider the lessons learnt in the Northern Dimension and build upon synergies with other regional cooperation processes.

The Council underlined that the efforts to develop the strengthened ENP as a core foreign policy should continue dynamically and invited the incoming Presidencies and the Commission to take forward this work in the relevant bodies.

Related Document:

Presidency Progress Report on Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy, Brussels, 15 June 2007. [Download here.](#)

Related Document:

European Council Presidency Conclusions, Brussels, 21/22 June 2007. [Download here.](#)

The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership

EU Council.

Brussels, 31 May 2007. [Link](#)

Document submitted to the European Council (21/22June2007).

[Extracts]

This EU Strategy for Central Asia serves as an overall framework for the EU policies in the region of Central Asia. The EU sees a mutual interest in sustained dialogue and cooperation with the five Central Asian States respecting their differences and fostering closer cooperation among them on regional issues.

The EU is willing to contribute substantially to security, stability and prosperity in Central Asia. To this end the EU is committed to opening Commission delegations in all five Central Asian countries. Member States will consider expanding the network of embassies in Central Asia.

The EU will ensure coherence between this Central Asia Strategy and other EU regional initiatives, including the Black Sea Synergy Initiative. It will support intraregional trade and cooperation. It will also support active integration/participation of Central Asia in the WTO in order to ensure better integration of these countries in the world trade and economic system.

With this Strategy, the EU invites Central Asia to establish an enhanced political dialogue, including regular meetings at Foreign Ministers' level with the EU troika. The EU will hold annual meetings of its Heads of Mission in the region.

Based on the principles of this Strategy, the EU will work with each of the Central Asian countries to develop individual approaches to implementation, according to the specific needs and performance of each country, building on existing and future agreements, including PCAs.

The progress made on implementing the Strategy will be reviewed by the Council in June 2008 and at least every two years thereafter.

[...]

In order to intensify cooperation with Central Asian States, the EU will make full use of the potential of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, Commission and Member States programmes, cooperation frameworks such as the Baku Initiative and political dialogue, using the variety of CFSP instruments.

[...]

The EUSR and the Commission as well as Member States play an important role in implementing this Strategy. The EUSR shall, on behalf of the High Representative and in accordance with mandate, together with the Commission and the Presidency, and without prejudice to Community competence, monitor the implementation process, make recommendations and report to relevant Council bodies on a regular basis.

Twinning and seconding staff between EU and Central Asian administrations or companies is an essential part of EU cooperation with Central Asia in order to introduce EU-wide best practices in connection with Community legislation. This policy will be intensified based on the experience gained.

[...]

The EU and its Member States intend to step up support for the protection of human rights and for the creation and development of an independent judiciary, thus making a sustainable contribution to the establishment of structures based on the rule of law and international human rights standards. Cooperation on justice between the Central Asian States and the EU Member States will also be appropriate.

[...]

The EU will raise human rights issues with each Central Asian state through an appropriate channel for discussion, inter alia by entering into a structured, regular and results-oriented human rights dialogue.

The objectives of a human rights dialogue with each of the countries of Central Asia should include:

- Discussing questions of mutual interest and enhancing cooperation on human rights, inter alia in multilateral fora such as the United Nations and the OSCE;

- Raising the concerns felt by the EU as regards the human rights situation in the countries concerned, information gathering and initiatives to improve the relevant human rights situation.

[...]

The EU will conduct an enhanced regular energy dialogue with Central Asian States in the framework of the Baku Initiative.

[...]

The EU will support the exploration of new oil, gas and hydro-power resources and the upgrading of the existing energy infrastructure. To enhance EU security of energy supply, the EU will also support the development of additional pipeline routes and energy transportation networks. It will also contribute to regional energy security and cooperation, and widen export markets for Central Asian producers. The EU will lend political support and assistance to Central Asian countries in developing a new Caspian Sea - Black Sea – EU energy transport corridor.

The EU will promote the creation of an integrated Central Asian energy market and will support public-private partnerships which encourage EU investment. Based on the objectives laid down in the Baku Initiative the EU will focus cooperation with Central Asian States in particular on the following matters:

- Converging of energy markets on the basis of the EU internal energy market principles taking into account the particularities of the partner countries;
- Enhancing energy security by addressing the issues of energy exports/imports, supply diversification, energy transit and energy demand;
- Transparency and capacity-building in statistics and in the governance of the energy sector;
- Supporting and enhancing technological cooperation between the EU and the Central Asian States in the energy sector;
- Supporting sustainable energy development, including the development of energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and demand side management;
- Attracting investment towards energy projects of common and regional interest;
- Supporting the rehabilitation of existing pipelines and the construction of new pipelines and electricity transportation networks inside the region and towards Europe;
- Supporting the development of comprehensive action programmes aiming at the promotion of energy saving, energy efficiency and renewable energy, notably with a view to meeting commitments in the framework of the Kyoto protocol;
- Supporting the 'Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund' initiative;
- Encouraging the countries to take initiatives similar to those taken by the EU in the Action Plan for an Energy Policy for Europe (European Council of March 2007).

*Portuguese Presidency of the Council:
A Stronger Union for a Better World*
28 June 2007. [Link](#)

[Extract]

EUROPE AND THE WORLD

Projecting our values

The objectives of the Union will be viable only if we are successful, together, in projecting our values in an increasingly interdependent world. The peace and security we enjoy have to be underwritten by the response Europe offers to global challenges.

Our capacity to speak out has to be strengthened. Tackling climate change, promoting economic and social development, dealing efficiently with migration, fighting organised crime and people trafficking, and combating terrorism are some of the challenges that require leadership and shared responses. Portugal will pay particular attention to questions of disarmament and non-proliferation.

A fresh approach to the Mediterranean

We also seek to develop a fresh approach towards the entire Mediterranean region. Its strategic relevance to the EU is clear. The instruments already at our disposal need to be properly applied, in particular those of a financial nature, but there is a need to think beyond them. It is necessary to intensify our political dialogue with partners on the Southern and Eastern borders to respond to challenges that require common solutions. Stability in both regions is interlinked.

Africa

Africa and Europe have a recent history of missed opportunities. The time has come for them to develop a Joint Strategy. We have to act together and, externally, be seen to act in a concerted manner. The emphasis we place on the holding in Lisbon of the Summit between the EU and Africa flows from this perception.

Strengthening transatlantic relations is a priority task. The Portuguese Presidency will contribute to furthering Transatlantic economic integration.

Transatlantic relations

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Latin America and MERCOSUL

Portugal has actively promoted closer ties between Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. There is a large convergence of values and interests between the two regions. The negotiations on an association agreement between the EU and Mercosul should be re-energised. We also envisage the launching of negotiations, with a similar goal, with Central America and the Andean Community.

Brazil

The Portuguese Presidency will develop a specific political dialogue with Brazil. We shall be organising the first EU-Brazil Summit. It will be the launching point for the establishment of

a strategic dialogue that reflects the international influence of both sides.

Strategic partners and Ukraine

The consolidation of relations between the EU and other strategic partners will be advanced. Summits with China, India and Ukraine will be at the core of our common external agenda. We will act in close collaboration with European partners in order to create the conditions for progress in the EU-Russia relationship.

The Portuguese Presidency will take forward the work carried out by the EU, with all the relevant international partners, in closely following the prolonged crisis in the Middle East. The role of the Quartet in the Middle East Peace Process is crucial. The Union will maintain its constructive approach in the handling of the situations involving Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.

Trade and ACP countries

We will maintain the European commitment to an international multilateral trading system. We will continue to pursue the goal of integrating ACP countries into the world economy.

Fostering strategic cooperation

The EU has ambitious goals for sustainable development. It will not be able to meet them without converging international efforts. Making international cooperation more robust, through a new generation of external policies and effective multilateralism, will be essential to finding solutions to global challenges.

EU Commission Progress Reports on Bulgaria and Romania

EU Commission press release, Brussels, 27 June 2007.
[Link](#)

The European Commission today has issued its reports on progress by Bulgaria and Romania in meeting the accompanying measures decided by the Commission when both countries joined the EU.

[...]

The reports on Bulgaria also set out a detailed assessment of the progress made by Bulgaria on judicial reform and the fight against corruption and organised crime. In relation to the six benchmarks set by the Commission in December 2006 as part of its Co-operation and Verification Mechanism, the Commission concludes that Bulgaria has continued to make progress in remedying weaknesses but that determined implementation is needed in order to secure irreversible change.

[...]

The report on Romania also set out a detailed assessment of the progress made by Romania on the four benchmarks set by the Commission in December 2006 in the areas of judicial reform and corruption. The Commission concludes that Romania has continued to make progress in remedying weaknesses that could prevent an effective application of EU laws, policies and programmes but that determined implementation is needed in order to secure irreversible change.

The Commission has not proposed at this stage the use of safeguard clauses which are set out in the Treaty of Accession as sufficient progress has been made to suggest that, in time, the benchmarks can be met by the Bulgarian and Romanian Governments. At the same time, the Commission has made it clear that the different benchmarks are all interlinked and need to be seen together as part of a broad reform of all areas at stake for which a long term political commitment is needed.

Related Document:

EU Commission Report on Bulgaria's progress on accompanying measures following Accession. Brussels, 27 June 2007. [Download here.](#)

Related Document:

EU Commission Report on Romania's progress on accompanying measures following Accession. Brussels, 27 June 2007. [Download here.](#)

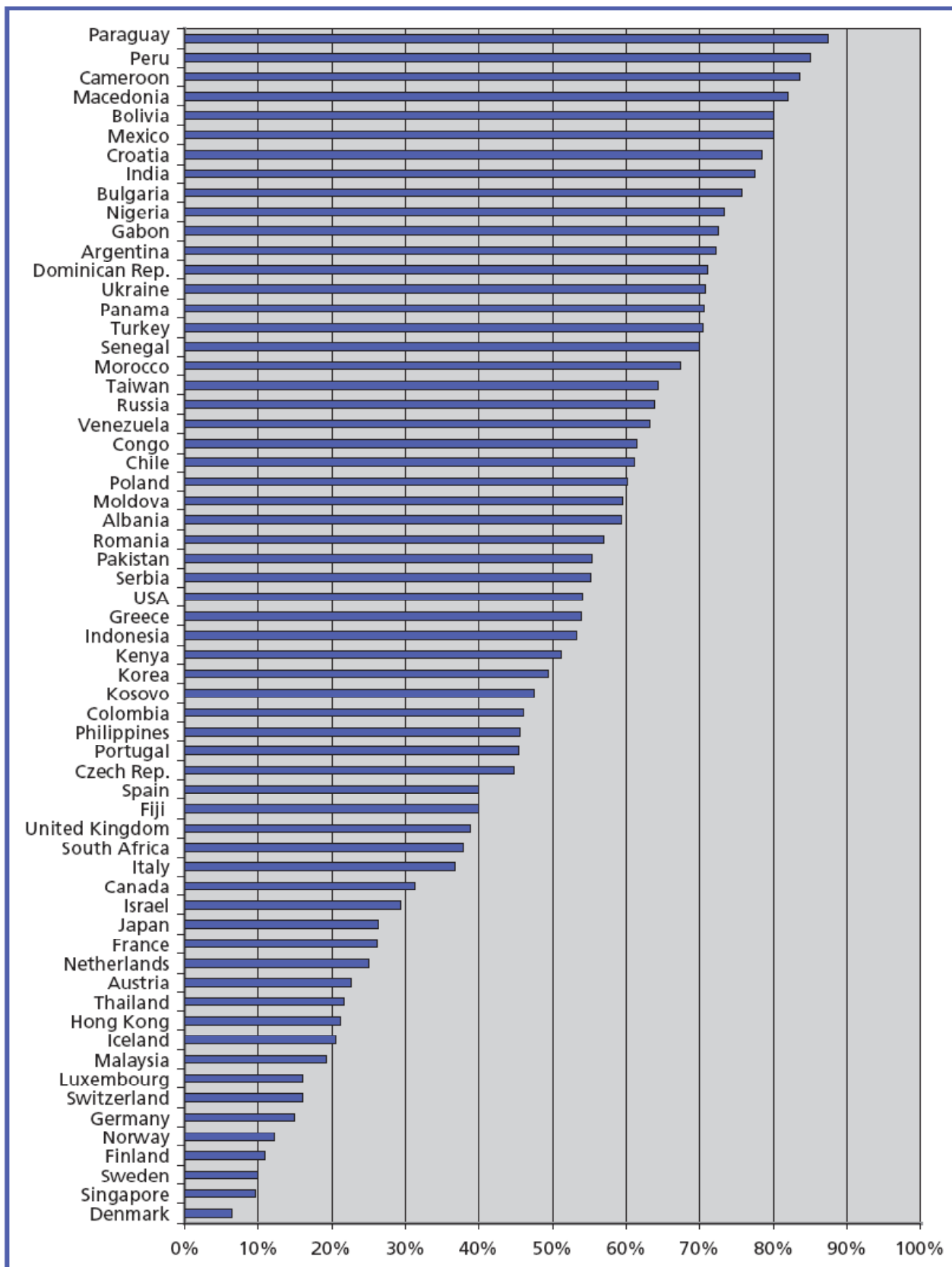
Global Corruption Report 2007 - Corruption in Judicial Systems

Transparency International, May 2007. [Link](#)

Table: Percentage of respondents who described their judiciary/legal system as corrupt

Related Event:

CEPS hosted a public meeting on 27 June 2007 at which Transparency International made a presentation of this report. [Link](#)



Respondents could select from scale from 1 to 5 (1 being not at all corrupt and 5 being extremely corrupt). The percentages reflect the answers of all those who selected 4 (very corrupt) and 5 (extremely corrupt).

Friendly fire on the visa front

By David Bakradze and Marie Anne Isler Béguin

First appeared in the European Voice Vol. 13 No. 19 : 16 May 2007.

[Link](#)

Visa facilitation and readmission agreements form an integral part of the EU's strategic partnership with Russia, and last month's Justice and Home Affairs Council decision to approve them looked entirely routine. Such agreements thicken people-to-people contacts by easing procedures for issuing short-stay visas and establish simplified criteria for multiple-entry visas for students, journalists, business executives, and others.

In principle, what is there to object to?

But the impact on the frozen conflicts of the southern Caucasus, notably Abkhazia and South Ossetia, means that the accords risk falling prey to the law of unintended consequences. Moscow has long meddled in these two breakaway territories of Georgia, fostering separatism despite having been tasked by the international community with keeping the peace.

One of Moscow's tactics has been to issue Russian passports to any resident of South Ossetia and Abkhazia who asks for one. Residents are beguiled by such passports, since they bestow the freedom to work freely in Russia. As xenophobia rises – witness the recent expulsions of ethnic Kazakh, Georgian and Azerbaijani traders from Russian markets – Russian passports become ever more valuable.

And now the European Union – unwittingly, it appears – has given residents of South Ossetia and Abkhazia another potent reason to grab a Russian passport. Unlike holders of Georgian passports, they will be able to travel more easily and at lower cost to EU countries as of June 1, when the visa agreement takes effect.

Surely the EU justice ministers did not intend to unsettle these two territories and abet Russia's illegal efforts to kindle conflict with its neighbour? Fortunately, there is a remedy – one that does not harm the EU–Russia partnership: Brussels should immediately commence a dialogue with Georgia on visa facilitation. The mere start of such talks would send a powerful signal to residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia that bearing a Georgian passport does not put them at a disadvantage.

Georgia, which signed a European Neighbourhood Partnership action plan with the EU last November, is making blazing progress on a series of issues that matter deeply to justice ministers. Its judiciary and criminal justice systems are undergoing deep reforms, its border management is the best in the eastern neighborhood, and it is committed to fighting human trafficking and illegal migration.

Georgia is a reform role model for all neighbourhood countries. Just three years after the Rose Revolution it boasts a thriving democracy and the fastest-growing economy in Europe. The World Bank has just named Georgia the number one reformer in the world. And at a time when the EU is focused on diversifying its energy supplies, Georgia serves as a bridge

between the Union and the vast hydrocarbon reserves beneath the Caspian Sea.

In short, Georgia is proof that democratic transformation is not only possible, but can take place with stunning speed. Perhaps this is what upsets the Russian Federation.

David Bakradze chairs the Georgian parliament's committee on European integration. Green MEP Marie Anne Isler Béguin chairs the European Parliament's EU-Georgia parliamentary co-operation committee.

South Ossetia Prospects Aired in Brussels

Georgian Security Analysis Center

Press Release, 27 June 2007. [Link](#)

Dmitry Sanakoev*, leader of the South Ossetian Provisional Administration, addressed the 9th EU-Georgian Parliamentary Cooperation Committee in Brussels on June 26. He called for a more active role of the international community in finding peaceful solutions to the territorial conflict in Georgia's South Ossetia region. There is no doubt that the conflict must end, said Sanakoev. "That will be impossible without the restoration of trust and respect between Ossetians and Georgians. We now have a unique opportunity to set a precedent for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the post-Soviet space. . . Georgia returns back to Europe and my region, South Ossetia, ought to return to Europe together with Georgia," he concluded. Sanakoev proposed that European-style autonomy, as in Italy's South Tyrol, could serve as a model. The Moscow-backed de facto South Ossetian Government of Eduard Kokoity condemned Sanakoev's visit to Brussels.

Related Event:

Dmitry Sanakoev was invited the guest speaker to a CEPS seminar on 26 June 2007, with the topic: "New prospects for Conflict Settlement in Georgia". [Link](#)

End of Mission Report

Alvaro de Soto, Under-Secretary-General, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Envoy to the Quartet
May 2007. [Link](#)

[Extract]

The Quartet as a diplomatic instrument**Assessment of its value and methods of work**

60. When I first learned of the creation of the Quartet some years ago, it struck me as an ingenious diplomatic experiment. I am credited with having invented the "Friends of the Secretary-General", in the 1990-1991 El Salvador negotiations, whose main purpose was to harness the diplomatic energies of would-be competing mediators. Be that as it may, as a practitioner I am always on the lookout for creative additions to the good officer's toolbox. The idea of a mechanism to harmonize disparate diplomatic efforts and to discourage potentially contradictory solo forays by important actors in the Middle East, where there is a crying need for some sort of mediators' traffic cop, had distinct appeal.

[...]

62. I regret to conclude, after two years, that the Quartet, with all its promise, may well epitomize, in the field of diplomacy, Bismarck's sausages theory regarding democracy – they may be delicious, but you don't want to visit a sausage factory to see how they are made. Unfortunately also, the Quartet's sausages, with notable, occasional exceptions, don't have the indescribable combination of spice, juice and tanginess that can make them so scrumptious. Moreover, I am fast approaching the conclusion that, unless he is willing to take a stand to alter the status quo, the Secretary-General should seriously reconsider continued membership in the Quartet. More on that later.

63. In my experience, the nature of this Quartet lies somewhere between a "contact group" and a "group of friends", concepts familiar to UN veterans. Contact groups are frequently used by chairpersons of the UN General Assembly to bring together the main players, including the most recalcitrant ones, on a given issue; there is also the Afghanistan contact group which gathers the country's neighbours plus the US and Russia, and the one on the former Yugoslavia, etc. Members of a contact group are usually not like-minded, and they operate as rather loose mechanisms. A "group of friends" presupposes that the members of the group have in common a friend who is in the lead and shared goals. Whatever the Quartet was at its inception, let us be frank with ourselves: today, as a practical matter, the Quartet is pretty much a group of friends of the US – and the US doesn't feel the need to consult closely with the Quartet except when it suits it.

This Week in Palestine ... Behind the News with Hanna Siniora

By Hanna Siniora

First appeared in the Jerusalem Times, 18 June 2007.

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The damage that many Palestinians feared – took place, no excuses; we all share in the blame. Hamas heavily tarnished its image, as a democratically elected movement, by resorting to brute force to resolve the power struggle resulting from its sweeping electoral victory in January 2006. Up to the military putsch that led Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, the movement had the democratic and moral high ground. The impatience of its radical elements and its alliance with extremist regional partners might bring about the possible demise of the first Arab Islamic party that came to power through the ballot box.

Hamas now, although it has military supremacy in Gaza, has lost the support of civil society in Palestine. The public was horrified at the barbaric atrocities committed by the military militias. Hamas has undermined the democratic process and allowed a combination of forces, internally and externally, to seek its elimination.

President Mahmoud Abbas was constantly blamed for indecisiveness, but Abbas knew that whoever resorted to force will lose legitimacy and the backing of his people, as well as the Arab world and international community. Hamas radicals have committed political suicide by allowing civil war and usurping power by force. President Abbas with the backing of the majority of his people was finally forced into action.

Abbas dismissed PM Ismail Haniyeh and appointed a new cabinet headed by Dr. Salam Fayyad to repair the damage that divided the future Palestine into two entities, Gaza under the military domination of Hamas, and the West Bank under the legitimacy of the presidency and the PLO. PM Salam Fayyad emergency government, according to the basic laws of the PLC, have a mandate of 30 days that can be renewed up to 90 days by avoiding a constitutional showdown with Hamas majority in parliament. Ninety days are not enough for the emergency government to repair the damage of the past fifteen months. President Abbas and legal experts have to look for legal means to extend the mandate of the emergency government, at least, up to the end of the presidential term in 20 months. This the period necessary for Fayyad to deal with the political and economic damaged, also in order to repair and stabilize the internal collapse. PM Fayyad immediate concern and full attention should be focused on preventing the collapse of the security in the West Bank, institutionalizing the security force to serve the nation and not individuals and parties, provide the basic needs and services to the Palestinian people in Gaza, irrespective of the illegitimate Hamas control, to work on preserving relations with Gaza despite the political nuances. The Palestinian economy should receive the primary attention, plans prepared while Fayyad was Finance minister should be implemented, as international sanctions are being lifted.

Hamas as emotions simmers down has to revert to rational behavior, should remove weapons and masked militias from the streets of Gaza and observe and implement the rule of law. Assassinations of political and security rivals should cease immediately. As soon as possible Hamas should accept the

dismissal of Ismail Haniyeh and his cabinet to begin to seek reconciliation. Hamas has two alternatives. To preserve its place as a political movement. In the first place Hamas future is not as a military force, its strength is political, it has to renounce violence to prevent Gaza from sinking deeper into violence, otherwise it will give the hard line military in Israel the perfect excuse to try to eliminate the Hamas movement by force, already such plans are being discussed by the new Minister of Defense Ehud Barak.

Secondly if sane forces in Hamas prevail, it should avoid further radicalization and military confrontation, to prevent being snuffed out by force. The Algerian experience should be fully understood by Hamas and Fateh, everybody loses in a civil war situation. The Palestinian supporters of Hamas as well as the Palestinian people at large will become the victims, if the present rift is allowed to deepen. The national aspirations of the Palestinian people for self determination and independence will receive a major setback and the suffering will escalate.

Now, Hamas has to work in earnest with the special Arab League committee that was set-up recently to repair relations and heal wounds. Hamas have to consider seriously early elections to avoid a constitutional impasse, in order to regain public confidence. If Hamas is so sure of public support, it should stop the process of early elections. In addition, the release of the BBC journalist from captivity should be one of its first acts of restoring law and order in Gaza. Hamas, if it is serious to show that it supports the recent statement of Ismail Haniyeh that Hamas accepts a Palestinian state in the borders of June 4, 1967, should release the captive soldier Gilad Shalit, via the good offices of President Abbas, it will help it to reverse negative public opinion worldwide.

The President, should be firm and resolute, he was forced to act, but should keep in mind that he was elected to look after the welfare of his people, all his people. Abbas has to work toward reestablishing internal dialogue, economic reconstruction, massive reform and an end of occupation. This is a tremendous agenda, no one except the President has this mandate, let us all support him and pray that he may succeed.

Mr. Hanna Siniora is the Palestinian Co-CEO of IPCRI – the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information www.ipcri.org.

The fall of Gaza and the rise of Palestine

By Gershon Baskin

Reproduced with the author's permission, 15 June 2007. [Link](#)

The fall of Gaza to Hamas has thrown the Palestinian people into its worst crisis since 1967. With every crisis there are usually new opportunities and those must be investigated and pursued, if possible. Gaza is lost, for the time being and there is little that the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah can do to immediately change the course of events. The present focus must now be on the West Bank and on saving the Palestinian people from additional unnecessary disasters and nightmares. There is now an opportunity to contrast the horrors of Gaza with a new reality in the West Bank that could serve as an example and focal point for positive Palestinian energies.

The Palestinian leadership in Ramallah should detach itself from Gaza (for the time being). If, at the same time, the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and East Jerusalem would issue the following ten-point plan, a new future of promise and hope could be turned into a reality that would be the best possible way to serve the interests of the Palestinian people. The following is the proposed ten point plan:

1. The Palestinian leadership of the West Bank and East Jerusalem's should declare that it is their intention is to establish an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that will live in peace with all of its neighbors.
2. The Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and East Jerusalem recognizes Israel's right to exist, adheres to all of the agreements that have been signed between the PLO and the State of Israel and renounces all forms of violence.
3. The Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and East Jerusalem calls for the Government of Israel to renew permanent status negotiations immediately that will convene with the assistance of the Quartet and will proceed without interruption until agreements are reached and ratified by both sides.
4. The Palestinian leadership calls on the Government of Israel to immediately release all of the tax revenues which are being held by Israel and to transfer them to the Palestinian treasury account in Ramallah. The leadership calls on Israel to also release Palestinian prisoners to the West Bank, especially those who were arrested prior to the establishment of the Palestinian authority in 1994 and other prisoners who state their agreement to live under the new realities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and are willing to live in peace with all of their neighbors.
5. The Palestinian leadership calls on the governments of the world to renew their diplomatic relations and financial support for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.
6. The Palestinian leadership calls on the governments of the world to provide humanitarian support for the people of Gaza through various international aid agencies and calls on the Government of Israel to allow food and medical aid that will reach the people of Gaza directly to enter Gaza.

7. The Palestinian leadership will make preparations for new elections in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that will be held within three months. In those elections, only political parties that accept the recognition of Israel, adhere to previous international agreements and commitments, support democracy and renounce violence will be allowed to participate in the elections.

8. Recognizing the mistakes of the past, the Palestinian leadership is immediately implementing a plan to unite all Palestinian security forces into one singular force under the direct command of the political echelon. The number of troops will be greatly reduced so that the new government will focus its attention on development, building the new state, education, health and welfare. The law of holding unauthorized arms will be strictly enforced and the first task of the Palestinian security force will be to collect unauthorized arms. The Palestinian government, with the assistance of foreign governments will engage in an aggressive public campaign to collect arms, through public media and education and through the enforcement of the law.

9. In accordance with the peace directive of the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, all forms of incitement against peace and against Israel will be prohibited. The government of Palestine will immediately advance programs of educational reform that will introduce education for peace with Israel at all grade levels and in all schools. This campaign will include the public owned media as well and will prove without any doubt that the people of Palestine are determined to make peace.

10. The actions of the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and East Jerusalem will seek to create a new reality in the West Bank and East Jerusalem that will serve as the primary inspiration to the Palestinian people of Gaza to overthrow the Hamas government in Gaza and to once again unite the Palestinian people and lands so that eventually the Palestinian state to be established in the West Bank and East Jerusalem will include Gaza as well.

With such a platform placed on the table by the Palestinian leadership in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, Israel should immediately respond in accordance with the Palestinian requests: release tax revenues, release prisoners, reopen full diplomatic relations including permanent status negotiations, assist in the creation of a new security reality by removing checkpoints and road closures throughout the West Bank and even declare that Israel will freeze the further construction of the security barrier pending future assessment. Israel should make all efforts to assist in the creation of new promise and hopes for the people of Palestine and for the people of Israel.

Public opinion research on the Israeli public recently conducted by IPCRI has clearly demonstrated that if the Israeli public truly believed that the Palestinians were sincerely interested in peace, they would be willing to make the concessions necessary to secure a peace agreement with the Palestinians. The most convincing action that Palestinians could take that would convince the Israelis, according to the research, is the adoption of peace education in schools and in the media. For Israelis, that is a true reflection of the values of the society and such a program would demonstrate to the Israeli people and

to the international community that the Palestinian people are ready for peace. Israel would have to respond swiftly and with sincere intent that would strengthen the commitment for peace amongst Israelis and Palestinians alike.

The alternative to the above proposal is only more disasters and suffering for all Palestinians and for all Israelis. The recent events are far from the best scenario and from a Palestinian perspective represent a colossal tragedy. The Palestinian leadership has reached a new crossroad – and they must make a choice in which direction to lead. There are always more than two alternatives, but those alternatives lead either in the direction of hope and peace or towards more despair and suffering. Leadership is about making tough decisions. Crises provide opportunities for real change and this is the time for change.

Gershon Baskin is the Israeli Co-CEO of IPCRI – the Israeli/Palestine Center for Research and Information. www.ipcri.org

A little clarification, please, on the 'Union of the Mediterranean'

Michael Emerson & Nathalie Tocci

CEPS Commentary, 8 June 2007. [Download for free](#)

[Abstract]

President Sarkozy's proposal for a Union of the Mediterranean has attracted some interest, but as independent observers, CEPS researcher Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci are somewhat puzzled as to what he has in mind. A basic question they raise in this CEPS Commentary is how this Union would relate to the EU's present policies in the region, which is based on the 12-year old Barcelona process, onto which has been rather clumsily grafted the Southern branch of the two-year old European Neighbourhood Policy.

Readings in European Security, Volume 4

Michael Emerson (ed.)

CEPS Paperback, May 2007. [Download for free](#)

[Abstract]

The fourth volume of *Readings in European Security* considers the EU's internal and external challenges on a number of fronts, spanning from its own burning banlieues to Afghanistan. Containing the most recent set of working papers of the European Security Forum (Nos. 21 through 25), this collection brings together the contributions of leading experts on security matters during the period of January 2006 to February 2007. The book begins with the wider implications of the EU's constitutional malaise on the international scene and the EU's current or desired role as a strategic actor. The reflection on internal challenges extends to consider the rise of suicide bombings and parallel societies within Europe, with scholars offering diverse views on the role of Islam. Risks to the EU's energy security are also assessed, in which its relations with Russia figure prominently. Ukraine comes to the fore in this context, with in-depth analysis given of its energy and foreign policy goals against the background of domestic reforms. Finally, the chapter devoted to Afghanistan provides a critical assessment of the West's handling of the conflict, underscoring its growing difficulties in trying to set the global strategic agenda.

Whole, free and integrated? A Transatlantic Perspective on the European Neighbourhood

Fabrizio Tassinari

CEPS Working Document, n. 271, 25 June 2007.

[Download for free](#)

[Abstract]

Since the end of the cold war until 2004, Europe and America's strategic outlooks towards the European neighbourhood ran largely in parallel. Washington's foreign policy mantra was that of a Europe 'whole and free', where the dividing lines inherited from the cold war were to dissolve through the gradual inclusion of Central Europe in the Euro-Atlantic family

of nations. The EU focused on its enlargement strategy, which ensured that progress of the former communist countries would be monitored and benchmarked, in order to attain the ultimate goal of their full integration into the EU. Is this transatlantic goal of making Europe 'whole, free and integrated' still valid in the post-enlargement European context, and is it applicable to the wider European neighbourhood? After September 11th, with a particularly assertive US administration and an increasingly introspective EU, the answer to these questions is hardly apparent. In an attempt to clarify matters, this first offers a conceptual reading of the US and EU approaches to the European neighbourhood. It then maps transatlantic divergence and convergence in the countries and regions of the European neighbourhood. On the basis of this assessment, the third section ponders a set of recommendations to inspire a transatlantic agenda that accounts for the emergence of this wider European neighbourhood.

Political Islam in Syria

Salam Kawakibi

CEPS Working Document, n. 270, 12 June 2007.

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[Abstract]

Syria is almost unique among Arab states in that the only variant of political Islam to be found here is state-sanctioned. This paper observes how the trends, tendencies and central figures of political Islam in Syria have positioned themselves with regard to relations with Europe, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy. Based on a series of (anonymous) interviews with both 'independent' and more government-linked sources, Salam Kawakibi traces the evolution of political Islam in Syria, the growth of civil society agitation and the revival of practices of faith in this country. No party, no organisation and no individual within the country can claim to be both a representative of political Islam and independent, states this author in exile.

Political Islam in Morocco

Samir Amghar

CEPS Working Document, n. 269, 11 June 2007.

[Download for free](#)

[Abstract]

According to a survey by the International Republican Institute in the US, the Islamists will take the majority of seats in the legislative elections in Morocco this September 2007, with nearly 47% of votes cast. This paper looks at the key players on the Moroccan political stage and the potential challenges to relations with Europe if these parties are called upon to manage public affairs. Represented by the Party of Justice and Development and the Association for Justice and Charity, Moroccan Islam has seen an ideological transformation from radical – even violent – political doctrine to a more pragmatic and progressive strategy. This volte-face goes hand in hand with a policy of dialogue and collaboration with EU member states and with the US.

*Tajikistan and the EU: From Post-Conflict
Réconstruction to Critical Engagement*

Matteo Fumagalli

CEPS Policy Brief, n. 132, 1 June 2007.

[Download for free](#)

[Abstract]

The international community has traditionally looked at Tajikistan through the lenses of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, but there is now a significant opportunity for the EU to develop closer ties with that country within the context of its broader efforts to forge a Strategy for the Central Asian region. In this paper by Matteo Fumagalli, Lecturer at University College Dublin, it is argued that it is now time to dispose of this outdated framework and to begin to deal with Tajikistan as a 'normal country'. Such a paradigm change would offer the EU key opportunities, namely operating in a country that has experienced relative stability since the end of its civil war in the 1990s and where, as a result, there is now the possibility to concentrate on advancing reform. Furthermore, progress in key areas in Tajikistan would offer the opportunity to promote similar policies elsewhere in the region.

European Neighbourhood Watch index

Issue 27 • May 2007

- EU-Russia Summit
- Ukrainian leaders sign joint statement
- Want an EU visa?
- Iran and Belarus forge 'strategic partnership'
- EU statement on parliamentary elections in Armenia
- EU Council Conclusions on the Black Sea
- EU Council Conclusions on Uzbekistan
- Getting Turkey right
- To the Turkish people from their European friends
- Arab peace plan is key to ending Gaza violence
- CEPS publications:
 - Political Islam in Algeria
 - Political Islam in Egypt
 - The Armenian road to democracy
 - The EU and Kazakhstan
 - Turkmenistan in transition

Issue 26 • April 2007

- Black Sea Synergy
- Ukraine's political crisis
- EU-Russia relations
- Turkey's programme for alignment with the EU acquis
- EU-Western Balkans visa facilitation and readmission agreement
- EU Council Conclusions on Central Asia
- Political Islam in Turkey
- Political Islam and Europe - Views from the Arab Mediterranean states and Turkey

Issue 25 • March 2007

- Berlin Declaration
- 50 Years of European Integration and Russia
- Commission President message to the people of Belarus
- EU-Ukraine Enhanced Agreement
- EU-Egypt Action Plan adopted
- EU Council Conclusions on ENP Agencies and Programmes
- EU Council Conclusions on Uzbekistan
- ENP Two Years on: Time Indeed for an 'ENP plus'

- The EU's strategic role in Central Asia
- The EU in Abkhazia and South Ossetia
- State Capture and Widespread Corruption in Serbia
- EP report on the Future of Kosovo
- The future of Russia and the EU

Issue 24 • February 2007

- UN Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement
- EU statement on Kosovo Status Plan
- US envoy on Kosovo Status Plan
- President Putin' Annual Press Conference

Issue 23 • January 2007

- 2007 Serbian Parliamentary Elections
- EU Statement on the assassination of Hrant Dink
- Interview with Alexander Lukashenko
- EU-Ukraine enhanced Agreement
- EU Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on ENP
- New opportunities for Azerbaijan
- Romania's EU accession and relations with Moldova
- Freedom in the World 2006
- An Energy Policy for Europe
- President Bush Address - Renewal in Iraq
- World View of US Role from Bad to Worse
- Dialogue between Islamists and West a necessity

Issue 22 • December 2006

- European Council Conclusions
- EU Foreign Affairs Ministers Council Conclusions
- Dear Turkey, Play it Long and Cool, CEPS Commentary
- Seeking Kant in the EU's relations with Turkey
- Strengthening the ENP
- Increase in financial assistance to Moldova
- Ethnic targeting and deportations in Russia
- European Council Declaration on the Middle East
- The Iraq Study Group Report

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