

DOCTORAL THESIS

The EU's 'transnational power over' Central Asia

*Developing and applying a structurally integrative approach to the study of the
EU's power over Central Asia*

Fabienne Bossuyt

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THE EU'S 'TRANSNATIONAL POWER OVER' CENTRAL ASIA

Developing and Applying a Structurally Integrative Approach to the Study of
the EU's Power over Central Asia

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Doctor of Philosophy

ASTON UNIVERSITY

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Thesis summary

This thesis challenges the consensual scholarly expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia. In particular, it claims that by focusing predominantly on narrow, micro-level factors, the prevailing theoretical perspectives risk overlooking less obvious aspects of the EU's power, including structural aspects, and thus tend to underestimate the EU's leverage in the region. Therefore, the thesis argues that a more structurally integrative and holistic approach is needed to understand the EU's power in the region. In responding to this need, the thesis introduces a conceptual tool, which it terms 'transnational power over' (TNPO). Inspired by debates in IPE, in particular new realist and critical IPE perspectives, and combining these views with insights from neorealist, neo-institutionalist and constructivist approaches to EU external relations, the concept of TNPO is an analytically eclectic notion, which helps to assess the degree to which, in today's globalised and interdependent world, the EU's power over third countries derives from its control over a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures, making it difficult for the EU's partners to resist the EU's initiatives or to reject its offers. In order to trace and assess the mechanisms of EU impact across these three structures, the thesis constructs a toolbox, which centres on four analytical distinctions: (i) EU-driven versus domestically driven mechanisms, (ii) mechanisms based on rationalist logics of action versus mechanisms following constructivist logics of action, (iii) agent-based versus purely structural mechanisms of TNPO, and (iv) transnational and intergovernmental mechanisms of EU impact. Using qualitative research methodology, the thesis then applies the conceptual model to the case of EU-Central Asia. It finds that the EU's power over Central Asia effectively derives from its control over a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures, including its position as a leader in trade and investment in the region, its (geo)strategic and security-related capabilities *vis-à-vis* Central Asia, as well as the relatively dense level of institutionalisation of its relations with the five countries and the positive image of the EU in Central Asia as a more neutral actor.

Keywords: EU external relations, Central Asia, power conceptualisation

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СПАСИБО БОЛШОЙ.

List of contents

Thesis summary	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
List of tables and figures.....	7
List of abbreviations and acronyms	8
Chapter 1 – Introduction	11
1.1. EU-Central Asia: a premature literature in need of theoretical expansion	11
1.2. The EU’s power over Central Asia: towards a (re-)theorisation	14
1.3. Methodology and research design	17
1.3.1. Iterative research cycle	17
1.3.2. Methodological tools	18
1.3.3. Data collection in practice	19
1.4. Structure of the thesis	22
PART ONE – INTRODUCING ‘TRANSNATIONAL POWER OVER’	
Chapter 2 – Towards a structurally integrative approach for analysing the EU’s power in Central Asia	24
2.1. Introduction.....	24
2.2. Adding a structural dimension to the analysis of EU external power	25
2.2.1. Relational versus structural power	25
2.2.2. Structural power of the EU.....	29
2.2.3. New governance perspectives and the structure-agency dichotomy.....	32
2.3. Lessons learnt: presenting five theoretical building blocks.....	36
Chapter 3 – The EU’s ‘transnational power over’: introducing a structurally integrative framework	40
3.1. Introduction.....	40
3.2. Introducing TNPO	41
3.2.1. TNPO: the term behind the concept	41
3.2.2. Understanding & operationalising the ‘transnational’ dimension of TNPO.....	43
3.2.3. The three TNPO structures	53
3.2.4. Overlap between the three TNPO structures	67
3.2.5. Defining TNPO	84
3.3. Introducing the TNPO framework	86
3.3.1. Developing a TNPO framework of analysis	86
3.3.2. Conditions under which TNPO operates.....	90
3.3.3. Examining the hypothesis via the TNPO framework.....	92
3.4. Concluding remarks	93

PART TWO – ASSESSING THE EU’S ‘TRANSNATIONAL POWER OVER’ CENTRAL ASIA

Chapter 4 – Contextual background: the EU’s motives <i>and</i> limits for accumulating TNPO over Central Asia	96
4.1. Introduction.....	96
4.2. The first decade of EU involvement in Central Asia: 1991-2000	97
4.2.1. Early post-Soviet Central Asia: a non-priority for the EU	97
4.2.2. Generous but invisible.....	99
4.3. From an invisible donor to a strategic player: 2001-2007	102
4.4. Countervailing factors.....	108
4.4.1. Comparative classification of the Central Asian states.....	108
4.4.2. Internal and external countervailing factors.....	112
4.5. Concluding remarks	113
Chapter 5 – The EU’s TNPO₁ over Central Asia	116
5.1. Introduction.....	118
5.2. Trade and investment.....	118
5.2.1. Trade.....	119
5.2.2. Foreign direct investment	126
5.3. Financial and technical assistance	129
5.3.1. EC assistance to Central Asia as a material power resource	129
5.3.2. Substance and scope of EC assistance to Central Asia in 2002-2006.....	133
5.3.3. EC assistance to Central Asia at country level.....	140
5.3.4. Effectiveness of EC assistance to Central Asia in 2002-2006.....	145
5.3.5. Concluding remarks.....	150
5.4. Security capabilities and (geo)strategic power game	151
5.5. Concluding remarks	160
Chapter 6 – The EU’s TNPO₂ over Central Asia	163
6.1. The EU’s TNPO _{2micro} over Central Asia.....	163
6.1.1. Formal institutionalised dialogue.....	164
6.1.2. Informal and/or <i>ad-hoc</i> institutionalised dialogue.....	171
6.1.3. Physical presence on the ground.....	176
6.2. The EU’s TNPO _{2macro} over Central Asia	183
6.2.1. The EU’s TNPO _{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the WTO.....	183
6.2.2. The EU’s TNPO _{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the EBRD	186
6.2.3. The EU’s TNPO _{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the OSCE.....	187
6.2.4. The EU’s TNPO _{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the Council of Europe.....	190
6.3. Concluding remarks	193
Chapter 7 – The EU’s TNPO₃ over Central Asia	195
7.1. The EU’s ‘magnetic pull’ in Central Asia	195
7.2. The EU’s intentional diffusion of norms and values in Central Asia	204
7.3. The EU’s image and symbolic power in Central Asia	205
7.4. Concluding remarks	207

Chapter 8 – The EU’s TNPO overlap over Central Asia	208
8.1. TNPO _{1(material)-2micro/macro(institutional)}	208
8.2. TNPO _{1(material)-3(ideational)}	210
8.3. TNPO _{2micro/macro(institutional)-3(ideational)}	216
8.4. TNPO _{1(material)-2micro/macro(institutional)-3(ideational)}	222
8.5. Concluding remarks.....	227
8.6. Conclusion.....	228
Chapter 9 – Exercise and reinforcement of the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia	233
9.1. Introduction.....	233
9.2. Translation of TNPO into a concrete outcome: the EU’s partnership with Central Asia	234
9.2.1. Introduction.....	234
9.2.2. The EU & Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership.....	234
9.2.3. Concluding remarks.....	240
9.3. Reinforcement of the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia.....	241
9.3.1 Introduction.....	241
9.3.2. Exploration of the implementation process.....	242
9.3.3. Concluding remarks.....	244
CONCLUSION	246
List of references.....	256
Appendix 1: Overview of most frequently used secondary sources.....	286
Appendix 2: Interview material.....	287
Appendix 3: Theoretical insights.....	294
Appendix 4: Map of Central Asia.....	296
Appendix 5: Economic and trade data of the Central Asian republics.....	297
Appendix 6: EU diplomatic representation in Central Asia.....	299

List of tables and figures

Figures

Figure 1: Toolbox for analysing intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU TNPO.....	51
Figure 2: TNPO framework.....	89
Figure 3: Examination of the hypothesis via the TNPO framework	93
Figure 4: Illustration of interaction between internal and external countervailing factors.....	113
Figure 5: Step 1 of the thesis's empirical exploration	116
Figure 6: Step 2 of the thesis's empirical exploration	234
Figure 7: Step 3 of the thesis's empirical exploration	241
Figure 8: Refinement of TNPO framework: the inclusion of countervailing factors	254

Tables

Table 1: Governance Indicators in Central Asia.....	109
Table 2: Economic indicators for Central Asia.....	111
Table 3: Imbalance in EU-Central Asia trade (2007)	121
Table 4: Indicative TACIS allocations to Central Asia in EUR million (2006).....	132
Table 5: EU member states' contributions to the ISAF mission per country (2010)	153

List of abbreviations and acronyms

AAP	Annual Action Programme
ACTED	Agence de Coopération technique et Développement
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDCO	EuropeAid Cooperation Office
BOMCA	Border Management Programme for Central Asia
CACO	Central Asian Cooperation Organisation
CADAP	Central Asia Drug Action Programme
CA-Invest	Central Asia Invest
CAREC	Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CEECs	Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
DCCA	Development & Cooperation in Central Asia (an NGO)
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DED	Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DG	Directorate General
DG RELEX	Directorate General External Relations
DG TREN	Directorate General for Energy and Transport
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness ECHO
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
ECO	Economic Cooperation Organisation
ECT	Energy Community Treaty
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy

ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EP	European Parliament
ERASMUS MUNDUS	EU Programme of cooperation in higher education
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ETF	European Training Foundation
EU	European Union
EUCAM	EU Central Asia Monitoring project
EurAsEC (or: EAEC)	Eurasian Economic Community
EUROBAK	European Business Association of Kazakhstan
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FSP	Food Security Programme
GAC	General Affairs Council
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
GDP	gross domestic product
GSP	Generalised System of Preferences
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IBPP	Institution Building Partnership Programme
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IfS	Instrument for Stability
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
INOGATE	Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe Programme
INSC	Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation
IP	Indicative Programme
IPE	International Political Economy
IR	International Relations
IsDB	Islamic Development Bank
ITA	Interim Trade Agreement
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
LRRD	Linking Relief to Rehabilitation and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

MTR	Mid-term Review
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NIS	Newly Independent States
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSA	Non-state Actor
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PHARE	Poland-Hungary Assistance for Recovering Economies Programme
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
TA	technical assistance
TACIS	Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States
TCA	Trade and Cooperation Agreement
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WB	World Bank
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Although the European Union's (EU) overall engagement with Post-Soviet Central Asia long remained limited, the past decade has seen the EU's role in the region gradually evolve from that of little more than an invisible and arguably ineffective aid donor to that of a full-fledged external actor. At the height of this evolution, the EU launched a comprehensive strategy for an extensive partnership with the region in June 2007, officially labelled 'The European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership'.¹ The fact that the EU managed to rally Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan behind this ambitious initiative might lead one to question whether the EU's power in Central Asia should not be underestimated and also whether the EU exerts at a minimum a certain amount of external power vis-à-vis the region. This proposition is reinforced, *inter alia*, by the observation that the EU-driven initiative comes at a time when other powerful external actors are also actively seeking closer ties with the five Central Asian republics. Russia and China, in particular, are pursuing an agenda of increased engagement towards their energy-rich and geo-strategic neighbours in Central Asia. Given their advantageous location in the immediate neighbourhood of the Central Asian states and their close links as well as good understanding with the local regimes, Moscow and Beijing's influence over the region is generally expected to outweigh that of Brussels. Hence, the fact that the Union nevertheless managed to get approval from the five Central Asian states to start a comprehensive partnership and enhance cooperation adds to the suggestion that the EU's leverage over the region should not be underestimated. This is reinforced further still when we consider that the EU's strategy - unlike China's and Russia's cooperative deals with the Central Asian republics - includes strengthened cooperation on areas that are highly sensitive for Central Asia's authoritarian regimes, such as democratisation and the promotion of human rights. If we are indeed to assume that the Union has notable leverage in its relations with the region, it is important to examine to what extent this assumption relates to existing theoretical and empirical considerations of the EU's engagement with Central Asia. This is the subject of the next section.

1.1. EU-Central Asia: a premature literature in need of theoretical expansion

With the literature on EU-Central Asia relations consisting of merely a handful of studies up until 2007 (e.g. Kavalski, 2007a & 2007b; Matveeva, 2006; Warkotsch, 2006), the launch of

¹ From hereafter 'EU Strategy'.

the EU Strategy for Central Asia has triggered increased scholarly interest in the EU's involvement in Central Asia (e.g. Cooley, 2008; De Pedro, 2009; Djalili & Kellner, 2008; Efezil, 2007; Hoffmann, 2010; Kassenova, 2007; Melvin, 2008a&b; Warkotsch, 2009). Yet, the literature remains fairly underdeveloped, particularly from a theoretical point of view. Thus far, there have indeed been only few attempts at approaching the EU's engagement with Central Asia through a theoretical lens (Crawford, 2008; Kavalski, 2007a, 2007b; Warkotsch, 2006, 2009). Apart from those few studies, Central Asia is also mentioned in such theoretically informed accounts as Schimmelfennig's work on 'Europeanisation beyond Europe' and Youngs' consideration of the EU's external democratisation policy, but only alongside a host of other regions and countries (Schimmelfennig, 2007; Youngs, 2008). With respect to the EU's impact on Central Asia as accounted for or expected in the literature - including in the wider literatures of international relations (IR) and EU integration - the picture looks rather bleak. On the one hand, IR scholars often simply tend to overlook the EU in their assessments of power relations and external agency in Central Asia (e.g. Carlson, 2007; Chenoy & Patnaik, 2007; Deyermond 2009, Laumulin, 2007; Wolfe, 2005). Interestingly, however, since the launch of the EU Strategy, the involvement of the EU in Central Asia is increasingly mentioned alongside that of such influential actors as China, Russia, Iran, Turkey and the U.S. (Boonstra, 2008a; De Pedro & Esteban, 2009; Kazantsev, 2008, 2009; Omarov & Usubaliev, 2008; Varbanets, 2008; Yuldasheva, 2008). While these IR accounts generally appreciate and acknowledge the EU's enhanced engagement with Central Asia, they do not necessarily give a huge amount of credit to the EU's current power over the region. Some point out that the Strategy comes too late for the EU to be able to provide an effective counterbalance to Russia and China's substantial leverage (e.g. Boonstra, 2008a: 72). Or as De Pedro claims, "[the EU's] capacity to exercise influence does not match its level of involvement, greatly limiting its potential" (2009: 114). Kavalski, in turn, contends that the EU's involvement in Central Asia testifies to its position as a regional actor with global aspirations, which it acquired following the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar world order (Kavalski, 2007a). Moreover, by arguing that the "framgregation² of the Central Asian region appears to have reclaimed its position as the testing ground for the grappling international agency of actors vying for global outreach", Kavalski asserts that the EU is just as much involved in the 'New Great Game'³ as other regional players with global aspirations, such as India and China (2007a: 855; Hatipoglu, 2006).

² Kavalski adopts the term 'framgregation' from Rosenau, 2003.

³ The term 'New Great Game' recently emerged in the literature as scholars and practitioners observed that the growing external interest in Central Asia is reminiscent of the 19th century 'Great Game' between Great Britain and Russia. For more on the New Great Game and the implications for the EU, see chapter 5

On the other hand, an expectation of low impact emerges also from the field of EU studies, where scholars predict a limited influence based on the observation that the prospect of EU membership, considered as the EU's most effective foreign policy tool, cannot be used in the case of Central Asia (e.g. Schimmelfennig, 2007; Smith, 2004; Zielonka, 2006). Schimmelfennig, for instance, in his first attempt to theorise Europeanisation beyond Europe, argues that the EU is tied vis-à-vis non-candidate countries because it cannot use the most important incentive for compliance: the prospect of membership (Schimmelfennig, 2007). According to the extant literature, the fact that the EU's most effective mechanisms for encouraging institutional changes and conditional reforms are not available for its engagement with Central Asia particularly affects the EU's scope to exert soft power and promote liberal norms in this challenging part of the former Soviet Union (Atac, 2008; Cooley, 2008; Kavalski, 2007a, 2007b; Schimmelfennig, 2007; Warkotsch, 2006; Youngs, 2008). As Cooley (2008: 1182) clarifies,

[d]espite an ambitious set of initiatives, the EU's instruments of engagement are limited compared to those that it can wield over accession countries or even countries that can be engaged through the European Neighbourhood Policy. Without a credible and clearly articulated set of incentives to comply with the values side of the EU strategy, there is little desire within the Central Asian states to engage with Brussels seriously over issues of democratic governance and human rights.

Focusing on the EU's engagement with the region from a normative power perspective, Kavalski affirms this line of expectation and adds that the EU's inability to link its demands for reform in the region with the dynamics of the EU's integration process is "likely to diminish the potential leverage of Brussels and curtail its ability to exercise its normative power" (2007a: 844).

Quite noticeably, a disproportional amount of scholarly attention in the field of EU studies is paid to the EU's efforts to promote values-based norms in Central Asia rather than to other aspects of the EU's engagement with the region, such as trade relations, security involvement, institutionalised cooperation and governance export. The promotion of democracy and human rights appears to be particularly appealing (e.g. Crawford, 2008; Melvin, 2009b; Schatz, 2006; Warkotsch, 2006, 2009). Here the literature is unanimous: despite the democratisation rhetoric of EU policy statements and an extensive range of instruments, the EU's promotion of democracy and human rights in Central Asia is largely inadequate (Crawford, 2008; Melvin, 2009b; Warkotsch, 2006, 2009).

1.2. The EU's power over Central Asia: towards a (re-)theorisation

Interestingly, a similar picture of low impact and limited potential seems to dominate the literature of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (e.g. Maier & Schimmelfennig, 2007). As Lavenex highlights, most scholarly analyses “draw relatively bleak conclusions on the [EU's] potential for promoting policy diffusion and more comprehensive political change in neighbouring countries, [t]he main reason [being] that without the membership perspective, the ENP countries may not be motivated to undertake domestic reforms” (2008: 938). However, rather than simply accepting that the EU's external influence over non-candidate countries will remain limited in the absence of accession conditionality, Lavenex challenges conventional analytical approaches by proposing a different way of conceiving of the ENP. She claims that much of the academic debate on EU external relations and the ENP is too much inspired by the experience of Eastern enlargement and, as a result, “conceives of external influence in terms of the Union's ability to induce third countries' adaptation to predetermined EU norms and regulations” (Lavenex, 2008: 938). As an alternative, she introduces a more structural perspective on EU external influence, which scrutinises the institutional extension of sector-specific governance frameworks beyond EU membership. Among other things, Lavenex finds that networks can be mobilised as alternative instruments of policy transfer, thus compensating for weaknesses of strategic conditionality and concludes that extended network governance represents a hitherto neglected structural dimension of the ENP.

The present study has a similar starting point in that it challenges the consensual scholarly expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia and argues in favour of using a structurally integrative approach to the study of the EU's influence over the region. The thesis claims that the predominant theoretical perspectives are not sufficient to grasp the full extent to which the EU's influence over the Central Asian states constitutes - like in many other cases of the EU's relations with third countries (see e.g. Holden, 2009) - a complex and multi-faceted process that encompasses structural dimensions. In particular, it contends that the prevailing approaches are too narrowly focused on (i) neorealist concepts of power, such as the possession of economic and military capabilities (Kazantsev, 2008, 2009; Laumulin, 2007; Omarov & Usabaliev, 2008; Varbanets, 2008) or on (ii) concepts and issues initially developed to study the EU's influence in Central and Eastern Europe (a region that apart from its communist past bears only remote resemblances with Central Asia) (e.g.

Schimmelfennig, 2007)⁴, and/or (iii) on the normative aspects of the EU's involvement in Central Asia, in particular the promotion of democracy and human rights (Crawford, 2008; Kavalski, 2007a, 2007b; Warkotsch, 2006, 2009; Youngs, 2008).⁵ By focusing predominantly on narrow, micro-level factors, those theoretical perspectives risk overlooking less obvious aspects of the EU's power, including structural aspects, and thus underestimating the EU's leverage in the region.⁶ Therefore, this study explores an alternative working hypothesis, assuming that the EU's power is less clearly delineated and observable (and measurable) than predominant scholarly discussions of the EU's engagement with the region allow. In particular, this thesis claims that a more structurally integrative and holistic approach is needed to understand the EU's power in the region. However, rather than rejecting the theoretical perspectives on which the existing studies draw, the thesis appreciates their strengths and distils elements that it finds wanting when it comes to understanding the EU's power over Central Asia. Accordingly, whilst disapproving of an overly parsimonious approach and maintaining that on their own the predominant approaches have insufficient explanatory value in relation to the object of inquiry, the thesis incorporates aspects of the respective perspectives in its attempt to develop a more structurally integrative explanatory model.⁷ In doing so, the thesis reflects Holsti's claim that the "study of international relations and foreign policy has always been a somewhat eclectic undertaking" (1989: 40; see also Holden⁸, 2009).

Central to the doctoral research is the premise that analyses of power need to distinguish between and account for both the relational and the structural level on which power is exerted (see e.g. Strange, 1988). In responding to this need and in view of the theoretical concerns identified above, the doctoral research introduces a conceptual tool, which it terms 'transnational power over'. Inspired by debates in International Political Economy (IPE), in particular new realist and critical IPE perspectives, and combining these views with insights from neorealist, neo-institutionalist and constructivist approaches to EU external relations, the concept of 'transnational power over' (TNPO) is an analytically eclectic device, which helps to assess the degree to which, in today's globalised and interdependent world, the EU's power over third countries derives from a combination of material,

⁴ It should be noted that in his most recent work Schimmelfennig acknowledges the limits of such an accession-centred approach. In this context, Schimmelfennig has cooperated with Lavenex on further developing a new governance-based approach as a theoretical framework to study the EU's impact on countries without the prospect of EU membership (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009). See *infra*.

⁵ While the first claim applies to the perspectives used in the above-mentioned studies from the field of IR, the second and third claim apply to the above-mentioned approaches from the field of EU studies.

⁶ As regards the point that some studies primarily focus on neorealist concepts of power, it is important to note that this does not serve to suggest that neorealism - dubbed 'structural realism' - is a 'micro-theory'.

⁷ Chapter 3 outlines in detail which elements are distilled from these approaches and for which purpose.

⁸ Holden (2009) advances a similar view in the context of the EU's external relations and foreign policy.

institutional and ideational structures, making it difficult for the EU's partners to resist the EU's initiatives or to reject its offers. In challenging the predominant expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia, the thesis hypothesises that *the EU's ability to rally the Central Asian republics behind its ambitious partnership initiative testifies to the EU's power projection over the region. This power projection draws on the EU's influential position across a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures. The EU's power, in turn, is reinforced through the course of the implementation of the EU's partnership initiative.* The main purpose of the thesis is, then, to both: develop conceptually and explore the empirical applicability of this TNPO framework; and in so doing examine concretely to what extent the EU's power over Central Asia effectively derives from a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures (as posited by the TNPO approach), enabling the EU to conclude the partnership, and the extent to which this has in turn reinforced the EU's power over the region.

Given the evolutionary character that this working hypothesis attributes to the EU's power over Central Asia, it is important to qualify the time frame under investigation. As will be clarified below, the EU's interests and presence in Central Asia remained rather low-key and insignificant until 2001. Therefore, the thesis examines the working hypothesis in relation to events and activities occurring between 2001 and 2010, with 2010 being the time of writing.⁹ Within the selected time frame, two analytical periods are distinguished, notably the pre-Strategy period (2001-June 2007) and the post-Strategy period (July 2007-2010). To explain this distinction: since the hypothesis theorises the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007 both as an outcome of the EU's power over Central Asia and as an important basis to further strengthen that power, the EU Strategy simultaneously marks the end point of the first analytical period and the start point of the second analytical period. However, since the EU Strategy was launched fairly recently, the thesis is faced with an empirical limitation in that at this early stage, notably only three years after the launch, the question of whether the EU Strategy has reinforced the Union's leverage cannot yet be fully assessed. Nevertheless, as will be outlined in more detail below, the thesis attempts to partially overcome this limitation, through the separate consideration of both instances of 'potential' reinforcement of the EU's power and evidence of 'actual' reinforcement.

To sum up the key contribution of the thesis: the research presented in this thesis seeks to generate new theoretical perspectives and provide fresh empirical findings for the literature on EU-Central Asia relations. In particular, it seeks to contribute to the development of the

⁹ The EU's engagement with the region prior to 2001 is covered in Chapter 4, which outlines the contextual background of EU-Central Asia relations.

theoretical debate on the EU's power over the region, arguing in favour of using a structurally integrative approach. In addition, given that several of the theoretical concerns addressed by this study also apply to the literature of European integration, and particularly EU external relations, at large¹⁰, it is hoped that the thesis will also induce new insights into the scholarly understanding of other cases and areas of the EU's external relations, a contribution that would build on and position itself alongside the works of Holden (2009), Keukeleire & MacNaughtan (2008) and Lavenex (2008), among others.

1.3. Methodology and research design

1.3.1. Iterative research cycle

A genuine contribution to the literature requires research to be underpinned by theoretical claims, an analytical model and a methodology that are internally coherent. In order to achieve such coherence, the study follows what is termed here an 'iterative research approach'. In practice, this implies that the analysis proceeds by way of a dialogue between theory and evidence (see e.g. Hay, 2002: 47), and as such serves the purpose of the project: to present a theoretically informed and empirically supported account of the EU's power in Central Asia. More specifically, by pursuing an iterative approach, the thesis seeks to engage in negotiating a constructive dialogue between theoretical propositions from the fields of IR, IPE and European integration, and the complex empirical reality of the EU's power over Central Asia. After the elaboration of the theoretical argument and the explanatory framework (i.e. the TNPO framework), the thesis proceeds to examine the validity of the theoretical claims articulated in relation to the EU's power over Central Asia. To this purpose, the study relies on in-depth first- and second-hand empirical research, using qualitative research methods. As the aim is to offer a 'reasoned, empirically-supported, argument' rather than a 'measurement' of the EU's power, to borrow Holden's words, causality is understood here not in terms of 'positivistic atomism', but rather in terms of the correlations between the key concept, notably TNPO, and 'social facts', with the collected data being interpreted theoretically through the TNPO-based framework (Holden, 2009: 23). Although fully aware of the trade-off that exists between the predictive capacity and explanatory power of simplified and law-like assumptions on the one hand, and eclecticism and the capacity to encapsulate the nuance and complexity of the reality (including the indeterminacy of political

¹⁰ To what extent these concerns apply to the wider literature of EU studies is clarified in Chapter 2.

processes) on the other, the thesis thus chooses to pursue an approach that falls markedly in the latter category, as reflected both in the proposed framework for analysis and in the methodological tools selected to apply the theoretical model (Hay, 2002: 35-36).

As the TNPO concept is designed to analyse the external power of the EU, it is useful to identify at this stage what the thesis exactly understands by the 'EU'. Put differently, before expounding on the methodological tools used in conducting the doctoral research, it is necessary to highlight how the thesis defines the EU. Moreover, how we define the EU also has implications for the contours of the empirical analysis. In essence, the thesis views the EU as an international organisation *sui generis* with some state-like properties, which operates through a hybrid system of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism (cf. Bretherton & Vogler, 2006; Manners, 2002: 240). Among other things, such an understanding of the EU implies that EU Member States' bilateral relations with third countries are left out of the picture. Hence, the thesis will only consider EU Member State engagement with third countries (*i.c.* the Central Asian states) when it directly relates to or is conducted within the framework of the EU's external policies and relations, most notably within the framework of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

1.3.2. Methodological tools

The data analysis relies primarily on the qualitative research method of process-tracing. In line with the iterative research approach of the analysis, process-tracing essentially constitutes a step-wise procedure, which places the researcher within a learning process at various levels - methodological, theoretical and meta-theoretical - and constantly pushes the researcher to reflect upon the connection between the theoretically expected patterns and the empirical findings (Checkel, 2008). In terms of data collection, the analysis draws on a triangulation of observations from elite interviewing and documentary research of both primary and secondary sources. To obtain a detailed mapping study of how the EU's power over Central Asia is manifested across the two subsequent periods, the study relies on a content analysis of the relevant official documents (*i.e.* bilateral agreements and official documents from the EU institutions and the Central Asian republics). In turn, elite interviewing of relevant European and Central Asian actors is used not only to supplement the data obtained through the documentary analysis but also to examine the actors' external perception of the EU's power over Central Asia. The latter is particularly salient for the empirical analysis of the ideational structure in the TNPO framework, since this parameter - as presented in Chapter 3 - captures the projection of power based on such ideational aspects as values, beliefs, norms, culture and

identity. Lastly, the research relies on a documentary analysis of secondary sources, including academic and press publications. This serves mostly to complement the empirical data retrieved from the interviews and primary documents, and - where necessary - to fill remaining empirical gaps. Before we present the structure of the thesis, it seems useful to highlight the practicalities of the data collection, as it forms the basis of the empirical analysis that is to support the main argument.

1.3.3. Data collection in practice

For the documentary analysis, a wide range of primary sources were consulted, which can be categorised in three groups: (i) legally-binding agreements and treaties, (ii) documents from the EU institutions as well as from EU member states, and (iii) documents from the Central Asian republics. The first category consists mainly of the bilateral agreements concluded between the EU and the states of Central Asia, and in particular the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs). The second category, i.e. EU documents, can be divided into documents from the EU institutions and documents from the EU member states. The former represent the largest group of the primary documents consulted. It includes official documents, project descriptions and evaluations, press releases and speeches, stemming principally from the Council (including the rotating Presidency of the Council), the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, the European Parliament and the European Commission. Most of these sources are available on the websites of the respective EU governing institutions. The websites of DG Relex, DG Trade, DG DEV and the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (since early 2010, this Delegation has split into three separate fully-fledged 'EU' Delegations, which now each have their own website) are a source of information in itself, as they provide significant background data on their specific areas of cooperation with Central Asia. Conversely, documents from EU member states take up a relatively marginal proportion of the primary sources consulted. In this category, empirical materials have been drawn from national documents and government websites of EU member states. The third and final category, i.e. Central Asian documents, consists mainly of official documents, government publications, press releases and public speeches. Most of these sources can be accessed on the websites of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Central Asian states. In some cases, additional information is available on the websites of their respective Missions to the EU. As mentioned above, the empirical research is also informed by a documentary analysis of secondary sources. Broadly speaking, three sorts of secondary sources have been used, notably (i) media

sources, (ii) academic publications, and (iii) reports and briefings from NGOs and research institutes. An overview of some of the most frequently used secondary resources can be found in Appendix 1.

As mentioned above, first-hand empirical material has also been retrieved through elite interviewing.¹¹ In total, 45 interviews were conducted over a period of nine months, running from 30 October 2007 until 11 July 2008.¹² Interviews were held in seven cities (Berlin, Brussels, Antwerp, Tashkent, Bishkek, Almaty and Astana), spread across five countries (Germany, Belgium, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). Respondents were selected according to two criteria: (i) their representativeness of a particular actor category, and (ii) their relevance within the overall field of EU-Central Asia relations and cooperation, and/or their involvement/role in the EU Strategy. Based on these two broad criteria, the interviewees can be categorised in five groups, consisting each of two or three subgroups: Group 1: officials from the EU institutions: 1.a) EU officials charged with maintaining diplomatic contacts with the Central Asian republics and/or involved in EU policy-making towards Central Asia and/or responsible for implementation of policies, initiatives and formal arrangements in place with Central Asia; 1.b) EU officials involved in drafting, presenting and/or implementing the EU Strategy; Group 2: officials of EU member states: 2.a) officials of EU member states with specific interests in the region; b) officials of EU member states with an outspoken view on or significant role in the EU Strategy; Group 3: Central Asian officials: 3.a) national officials involved in maintaining diplomatic relations with the EU and/or responsible for implementation of policies, initiatives and formal arrangements in place with the EU 3.b) national officials involved in drafting and/or implementing the EU Strategy; Group 4: practitioners from International Organisations (IOs) with offices and activities in Central Asia: 4.a) practitioners from IOs having similar projects/approaches in the region to those used by the EU; 4.b) practitioners from IOs with whom the EU (closely) cooperates in Central Asia; Group 5: Central Asian and European societal actors: 5.a) Central Asian academics, including political scientists with scholarly expertise on the EU; 5.b) Central Asian societal actors, including business organisations and NGOs involved in EU-funded projects; 5.c) European societal actors with local projects in Central Asia.

Most interviews were held under strict assurances of confidentiality. Therefore, only the name of the institutions or organisations represented by the interviewees is published.¹³

¹¹ For useful guides on elite interviewing methodology, see e.g. Bryman (2008: 436-457) and Odendahl & Shaw (2002).

¹² It should be noted that one interview was held at a much later stage, i.e. in June 2010.

¹³ In a limited number of cases, the interviewee's function or position within the institution is added. For an overview of all the interviews, see Appendix 2.1.

Moreover, for the most part, paraphrasing is used rather than direct quoting.¹⁴ Transcriptions of the written notes taken during the interviews are available on file, along with the names and details of all persons interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured, with the questions varying according to the individual context of the country, institution or organisation of the respondent. For the interviews with Central Asian officials, a basic set of 18 questions was used, which was each time supplemented with a number of issues unique to the context of the Central Asian country in question. This basic set of 18 questions centred around four themes: (i) the country's perception of the EU, including the power of the EU, (ii) the EU Strategy, (iii) the three constitutive elements of TNPO, notably the material, institutional and ideational structures, and (iv) the country's cooperation with Russia, India, the U.S., China, among other external actors. For the full questionnaire, see appendix 2.3. It seems useful to note that, as the nine-month process of interviewing went on, questions were added to the questionnaire, while others - i.e. less relevant ones - were dropped. Moreover, the semi-structured nature of the interviews implied that respondents did not necessarily comment on all the questions and that they were free to bring up additional issues. Therefore, the questionnaire in the appendix is only indicative and just serves to suggest the type of questions asked to the Central Asian officials. In practically all of the 45 interviews, questions were raised that either explicitly or implicitly referred to the central argument of the thesis, as well as to the proposed framework for analysis, notably the TNPO model and its three main parameters. As indicated above, the reputational method was applied to examine the actors' perceptions of the EU's power in Central Asia.

A final point that requires some further clarification concerns the field work conducted in Central Asia. Due to time restraints, it was not possible to visit all five Central Asian countries, which meant that a selection had to be made. In order to guarantee that the selected countries would be sufficiently representative of the region as a whole, it was decided to visit Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. As the most populous of the five Central Asian republics and with EU sanctions imposed on the country from 2006 to 2009, Uzbekistan could hardly be left out when deciding which countries to visit. Moreover, together with Turkmenistan, the country has the most autocratic presidential regime in the region, and is - arguably - the EU's toughest partner in the region. In turn, although Turkmenistan shares with Kazakhstan an abundance of energy resources attracting considerable EU interest, Kazakhstan was chosen over Turkmenistan, not only because it is the most pro-EU country in the region, but also because of its recent economic boom, which has brought with it a prosperity hitherto

¹⁴ Hence, I fully carry the responsibility for any inaccuracies that may have occurred in documenting the interview responses.

unseen in Central Asia. Conversely, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, who both are small, mountainous and landlocked, are the poorest countries in the region. Once labelled an ‘isle of democracy in Central Asia’, and still the most liberal country in the region, Kyrgyzstan was chosen over Tajikistan, whose development remains rather fragile. As a final remark, it is important to note that it was during the course of the five-week field trip across the three selected countries that the idea emerged of incorporating the notion of ‘countervailing factors’ into the TNPO framework. Responses triggered by some of the questions in the interviews during the field trip, combined with the experience of observing the object of inquiry ‘on the ground’, revealed a need to elaborate the theoretical model so that countervailing factors could be accounted for.

1.4. Structure of the thesis

As the backbone of the present study, the iterative research approach presented above evidently informs the structure of the thesis. As such, in line with the iterative approach, Part one covers the theoretical considerations and claims presented in the thesis. It consists of two chapters, an introductory theoretical chapter (Chapter 2) and a main theoretical chapter (Chapter 3). In concrete terms, **Chapter 2** lays the basis for the theoretical framework that is developed at length in Chapter 3 and subsequently applied in the empirical part of the thesis. The chapter does so by embarking on an investigative itinerary through existing theoretical propositions, reviewing a number of studies that have in common the promotion or use of structurally integrative approaches. Following this in-depth review, the chapter concludes with an outline of the insights retrieved, particularly in view of providing a sound basis for the theoretical argument and model that guide the remainder of the thesis.

Drawing on the theoretical insights gained in Chapter 2, the third chapter then introduces the conceptual tool and explanatory model that will be used to guide the subsequent, empirical study. **Chapter 3** consists of two main parts. The first part presents the thesis’s key conceptual approach, which is referred to in the thesis as ‘transnational power over’ (TNPO). In the second part, the TNPO concept is embedded into a structurally integrative framework of analysis, which is then further developed as the explanatory model that will be applied in the empirical chapters.

Part two of the thesis constitutes the empirical exploration of the thesis’s theoretical propositions. It comprises six chapters: one introductory, background empirical chapter (Chapter 4), four main empirical chapters (Chapters 5-8) and a supplementary empirical chapter (Chapter 9). Ahead of the principal empirical analysis of the EU’s TNPO over Central

Asia, **Chapter 4** presents a broad overview of the contextual background of the EU's engagement with the Central Asian republics. It sheds light on the EU's involvement in Central Asia, illuminating the Union's interests and presence in the region since the countries' independence from the former Soviet Union until the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007. In doing so, the chapter highlights the underlying motives of the EU's pursuit of TNPO *vis-à-vis* the Central Asian states. The final section of the chapter identifies a number of 'countervailing factors'. In further explaining the 'context', this section indicates that the EU's TNPO over Central Asia might be hampered - possibly weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of countervailing forces, which may relate both to internal factors, i.e. intrinsic to the EU, and external factors, i.e. extrinsic to the EU.

Chapter 5, 6, 7 and 8, in turn, constitute the first step in the empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis, and focus on the extent to which the EU wields TNPO over Central Asia, in particular for the period 2001-2007. In concrete terms, these four chapters explore the extent to which the EU's power over the Central Asian republics in 2001-2007 effectively derived from a combination of material (**Chapter 5**), institutional (**Chapter 6**) and ideational (**Chapter 7**) structures and the interaction between them (**Chapter 8**). In doing so, the chapters draw extensively on the 'TNPO toolbox' developed in Chapter 3 in order to trace and examine intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU impact across the three structures identified in the discussion of TNPO in Chapter 3.

Chapter 9 represents the remaining two steps of the empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis, which are each covered in a separate section in the chapter. The first part of the chapter, which covers Step 2 of the empirical exploration, considers the EU's launch of a new partnership with Central Asia. In doing so, it outlines the EU's Strategy that underlies the partnership initiative with Central Asia, thereby discussing the relevance of the Strategy in relation to the EU's TNPO accumulation *vis-à-vis* the region. The second part of the chapter, in turn, which covers Step 3 of the empirical exploration, examines whether and to what extent the implementation of the partnership initiative enhances the EU's TNPO over Central Asia.

As the final chapter of the thesis, the **Conclusion** draws some general conclusions whilst presenting some final considerations. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the main strengths and shortcomings of the thesis.

PART ONE – INTRODUCING ‘TRANSNATIONAL POWER OVER’

Chapter 2 – Towards a structurally integrative approach for analysing the EU’s power in Central Asia

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter showed that the literature does not give much credit to the EU’s power in Central Asia, largely because future EU membership, the EU’s most powerful tool, is off limits for the Central Asian countries. However, the chapter contended that the theoretical approaches used so far to examine the EU’s impact in the region are not sufficient to understand the full extent to which the Union wields power over the Central Asian republics. In particular, it was claimed that the predominant perspectives fail to account for the structural dimensions of the EU’s influence. Instead, they are narrowly focused on (i) neorealist concepts of power, such as the possession of economic and military capabilities, or (ii) concepts and issues initially developed to study the EU’s influence in Central and Eastern Europe, such as norm compliance through conditionality, and/or (iii) normative aspects of the EU’s involvement in Central Asia, in particular the promotion of human rights and democracy. By fixating on narrow, micro-level factors, the extant literature risks overlooking less obvious aspects of the EU’s power, including structural aspects, and thus underestimating the EU’s leverage in the region. Therefore, the present thesis argues in favour of using a more structurally integrative and holistic approach to analyse and understand the EU’s power in Central Asia.¹⁵

The aim of this chapter is to intimate the importance of adding a structural dimension to the analysis of the EU’s influence over the Central Asian states, and, by extension, of its influence over third countries in general. Put differently, this chapter posits the claim that an analysis of the EU’s external power needs to account for both the relational and the structural level on which power is exerted. It will do so by providing and drawing on an instructive review of relevant studies from across the discipline of political science¹⁶. As such, the chapter seeks to lay the basis for the theoretical framework that will be introduced in the next chapter and that will be applied in the following empirical chapters as part of the attempt to

¹⁵ It is important here to clearly distinguish ‘structurally integrative’ approaches from ‘structuralist’ approaches, such as Marxism and dependency theory. While the latter focus predominantly on the structural level of analysis, structurally integrative approaches seek to account for both the relational and the structural level of analysis, thereby working eclectically with agent-focused and structural perspectives (e.g. Payne, 2000).

¹⁶ The studies in question are mostly from the fields of IR, IPE and European integration.

analyse the EU's power over the Central Asian republics. Following this introductory section, the chapter will embark on an investigative itinerary through existing theoretical propositions, reviewing a number of studies that have in common the promotion or use of structurally integrative approaches. Following this in-depth review, the chapter will conclude with an outline of the insights retrieved, particularly in view of providing a sound basis for the theoretical argument and model that are to guide the remainder of the thesis.

2.2. Adding a structural dimension to the analysis of EU external power

In building the theoretical foundations of the thesis's argument and framework of analysis, this section addresses two key issues that remain central to discussions of social science: the concept of power and the agent-structure - or micro-macro - divide. In tracing a logical link between these two conceptual issues with respect to the EU's external power, this section focuses on a number of insightful studies, thereby going from diverging understandings of power to theoretical propositions regarding structural power and the agency-structure dichotomy, whilst highlighting structurally integrative approaches to the EU's external involvement and impact.

2.2.1. *Relational versus structural power*

As Lukes indicates, in assuming power to be relational and asymmetrical, social scientists tend to reduce power to its 'exercise' and/or 'vehicle' (2005: 70 & 73). As such, power can only mean "the causing of an observable sequence of events" (the exercise fallacy), or "whatever goes into operation when power is activated" (the vehicle fallacy) (Lukes, 2005: 70). Reducing power to its 'vehicle' has led academics to equate power with power resources, such as wealth and status, or military forces and weapons. Reducing power to its 'exercise', in turn, has led behavioural political scientists, such as Dahl (1957), to equate power with success in decision-making. This understanding of power, identified as the first dimension or 'first face' of power, and still widely applied within IR scholarship, assumes that being powerful is to win, or "to prevail over others in conflict situations" (Lukes, 2005: 70; see also Keukeleire, 2002). Indeed, when the term 'power' is used in IR studies, usually, it implicitly refers to direct or 'relational' power, most commonly defined as "the power of one actor to get another actor to do something it would not otherwise do" (Keukeleire, 2002; Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 24).

In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, growing dissatisfaction with the predominant neorealist accounts of power instigated the emergence of conceptions of structural power, in particular within IPE (e.g. Caporaso, 1978a&b; Gill & Law, 1988; Krasner, 1982; Strange, 1988). These conceptualisations were aimed at widening the notion of power by encompassing structural explanations for how power in the international realm operates.¹⁷ Indeed, central to those conceptions was the claim that orthodox approaches to IR unnecessarily limited our understanding of power and of how it is exercised in the international system by concentrating almost exclusively on direct, agent-focused forms of power and on the ‘relational power’ of one state over another (e.g. Strange, 1987; 1988).¹⁸ In extending his regime analysis, Krasner (1982; 1985) was one of the first to embrace the notion of structural power, which he termed ‘metapower’, and which referred to states’ indirect institutional power. According to Krasner, regimes¹⁹ and normative structures can, after a certain amount of time (i.e. following a ‘time-lag’) become independent sources of influence, and can thus be used as instruments to exercise power over other states (Krasner, 1982: 499). Metapower, in this view, thus refers to the ability to change the institutions themselves, or as Guzzini puts it, the ability to change the rules of the game (1993: 451). Conversely, relational power captures “the ability to change outcomes or affect the behaviour of others within a given regime” (Krasner, 1985).

Although critical of Krasner’s rational-choice and state-centric approach and assumptions, Strange picked up on his conceptual distinction between metapower and relational power, only to integrate it into her own distinct theory of structural power. Largely developed to refute the neorealist argument of America’s “hegemonic decline” (e.g. Keohane, 1986), Strange’s conception of structural power served to support her claim that U.S. power was *not* declining. She contended that this could not be observed through a traditional IR lens, as it was power itself and its distribution that had changed in light of the changing global economy (Strange, 1987). Strange was soon labelled an ‘unorthodox realist’ for arguing that international power, being increasingly diffuse and involving a whole new range of (non-state) actors, had become much more difficult to observe, its structural dimensions being less visible and less clearly delineated than the conventional notions of power. In studying the conditions of hegemony in the face of globalisation and growing interdependence, Strange (1989) proposed that global leadership requires both relational and structural power. In this

¹⁷ Interestingly, these critiques of neo-realism were inspired by the ‘faces of power’ debate in political theory, which was largely replayed in IR. For more details, see Guzzini (1993).

¹⁸ See also Wendt’s criticism of mainstream IR for failing to take into account the underlying social structures in which states are embedded, which he identified as being a more subtle form of power (Wendt, 1987; 1999: 97).

¹⁹ In Krasner’s influential definition, ‘regimes’ are defined as “sets of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge in a given issue-area” (Krasner, 1982: 186).

regard, she defined relational power - principally reflecting neorealist thought - as the capabilities of a hegemon *vis-à-vis* other actors in the system, and its ability to get others, by persuasion or coercion, to do what they would not otherwise do (Strange: 1989: 165). Structural power, in Strange's conceptualisation, refers to a different dimension of capabilities, denoting a hegemon's capacity to create essential rules, norms and modes of operation for various dimensions of the international system. Put differently, structural power implies that a party's relative power in a relationship will be greater if that party is also determining the surrounding structure of the relationship (Strange, 1988: 25). More generally, Strange defines structural power as an actor's "power to decide how things shall be done, the power to shape frameworks within which states relate to each other, relate to people or relate to corporate enterprises" (1988: 25). This definition comes close to Hay's understanding of power as context-shaping, which denotes the ability to determine the 'context', i.e. the range of possibilities of others, or in Hay's words, "the parameters of what is socially, politically and economically possible for others" (2002: 185).²⁰ As Hay explains, "to define power as context-shaping is to emphasise power relations in which structures, institutions and organisations are shaped by [actors] in such a way as to alter the parameters of subsequent action" (2002: 185). Similarly, Keukeleire and MacNaughtan assert that in altering the context in which other actors operate, an actor's use of structural power can lead to fundamental and enduring changes in the actions, behaviour and identity of other actors (2008: 24). Drawing on Strange's definition of structural power, they describe structural power as "the authority and capacity to set or shape the organising principles and rules of the game and to determine how others will play that game" (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 24).

Strange (1988) heuristically divided the concept of structural power into four primary structures, i.e. production, security, finance and knowledge, which she identified as the four societal needs in the contemporary world economy.²¹ Following an IPE logic, structural power can then be defined as the ability to shape and determine the structures of the global political economy (GPE) within which others, i.e. states as well as non-state actors, operate (Strange, 1988: 24-25). This conceptual division into four structures indicates, among other things, how Strange conceived of structural power as going beyond the traditional IR realm of material features to encompass non-physical factors. Moreover, as clearly reflected in Strange's (1988: 25) above-mentioned definition, her conception of structural power goes also

²⁰ Hay points out that 'structure' in the sense of 'context' refers to the setting within which social, political and economic events occur and acquire meaning; Agency, on the other hand refers to 'action', i.e. political conduct (2002: 95-96).

²¹ It should be noted that this aspect of Strange's theory will not be further expounded upon here, mainly because the thesis does not directly draw on this four-structure division.

beyond IR's state-centric tradition, which typically characterises such models as Waltz's (1979) neo-realism and Keohane's (1986) regime theory. In asserting that the power over outcomes in the GPE cannot be limited to that exercised by and over governments only, Strange (see e.g. 1988; 1989) theorised that global functions were being provided as the result of the growing 'transnationalisation' of non-territorially linked networks, which she conceived as an interplay of deliberate and non-intentional effects of decisions and non-decisions made by governments and other actors. In an eloquent article in *International Organization*, Strange (1989) argued that the international system was managed by a 'transnational empire', with the U.S. at its centre. Through this metaphor she sought to demonstrate that, although actors in the U.S. might not always intend or be able to control the impact of their actions, international structures are organised in such a way that decisions in some countries are systematically tied to and affect actors in other countries (Strange, 1989). In other words, the U.S. position and sheer weight within the global political economy at the time granted certain American actors a great deal of non-intentional power to which actors outside the U.S. had no choice but to adapt their behaviour. Crucially, this 'deeper' or 'purely structural' form of structural power²², as Holden (2009: 12-13) labels it, implies that the way in which the structures of the international system and/or GPE are organised indirectly privilege certain actors and are thus asymmetric.

The latter reading of structural power is central to such structuralist approaches as neo-Marxism, neo-Gramscianism and world systems theory, which are all based on the assumption that power - being structural in nature - can operate without active and/or intentional agency. As pointed out by Guzzini, this understanding of power represents a third (and final) conception of structural power that emerged at the time as a critique of neo-realism, and aims at capturing the "impersonal bias" of power relations in the international system, which systematically favours certain actors over others due to the specific positions or roles that they hold within the system (1993: 461-463; also see Guzzini, 2000). This structural power is 'impersonal' - or 'purely structural' to follow Holden's typology again - in that the origin of the produced power effect is not located at the agent-level. As Holden specifies, this type of structural power automatically constitutes power in that it does not require conscious agency to be exploited (2009: 22). An interesting case in point is Gill and Law's (1988; 1989) understanding of structural power. While harking back to Lukes's three-dimensional

²² Holden distinguishes between 'purely structural' forms of structural power and agent-focused forms of structural power (2009: 12-13).

conception of power²³, Gill and Law's critical approach to IPE is centred on a distinction between overt, covert and structural power, with the latter referring to "both material and normative aspects, such that patterns of incentives and constraints are systematically created" (1988: 97). In their understanding, the exercise of structural power in the international system is thus twofold, i.e. material and normative. As they specify, the material aspect of structural power, i.e. capital, is exercised through markets (Gill & Law, 1989: 480-1). The normative aspect of structural power, on the other hand, is embedded in the transnational historical bloc of power relations, whose discourse and practice subordinate dependent classes and pre-empt their opposition (Gill & Law, 1988; 1989). Although Strange's approach is markedly less structuralist in that it also provides for an agent-based dimension of structural power, it is this preoccupation with the structures of production and knowledge as important determinants of structural power that Gill and Law and other critical theoretical IPE scholars share with Strange's understanding of power. Identifying two more structures, i.e. security and finance, Strange asserts that what is common to all four structures of the GPE is that the dominant power within the international system is able to pursue goals by changing the range of choices open to others within the respective structure, not just through coercion or by putting direct pressure on them, but equally by pre-empting or co-opting their consent (1988: 29-31).

2.2.2. *Structural power of the EU*

Although widely accepted as seminal in IR and IPE, Strange's theory of structural power has attracted only a scattered number of academic followers in the field of EU studies, including in the subfield of EU's international involvement (e.g. Holden, 2009; Keukeleire, 2002; Tayfur, 2003).²⁴ In fact, structurally integrative approaches as a whole remain largely underexplored in studies of European integration.²⁵ Fully aware of this latent gap in the literature and convinced of the explanatory potential of a more structure-oriented perspective, Keukeleire & MacNaughtan (2008) and Holden (2009) have both greatly enriched the field in this regard by highlighting the importance and usefulness of Strange's conceptual distinction between relational and structural power. Both studies are based on the assertion that the predominant approaches for analysing power and foreign policy remain inadequate to

²³ In his seminal work 'Power: A Radical View', Lukes (1974) claimed that power had a third dimension, arguing that, beyond the decision- and non-decision-making processes, power may also stem from the actions or inactions implicated in the shaping and manipulating of other actors' preferences.

²⁴ Studies from IR and IPE that have drawn on Strange's theory of structural power are e.g. Burges (2009), Helleiner (2005) and Payne (1994). It is worth adding here that various scholars have sought to review and reflect upon Strange's work, often from their own theoretical and/or ontological viewpoints. See e.g. Cox (1996), May (1996) and Tooze (2000).

²⁵ Compared to structurally integrative approaches, structuralist approaches have an arguably more established academic basis among EU scholarship (e.g. van Apeldoorn, 2006; Cafruny & Ryner, 2003).

examine less obvious and observable aspects of the EU's power (Holden, 2009) and foreign policy (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008). The latter claim that, despite many IR scholars readily acknowledging the complexity of present-day international relations, foreign policy is still predominantly studied against a conventional, one-sided understanding of the notion; as a result, other - less obvious - dimensions of foreign policy tend to be overlooked or neglected (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 19).²⁶ In introducing a more updated and inclusive notion of foreign policy and largely inspired by Strange's theory, Keukeleire & MacNaughtan argue strongly in favour of a structural approach, albeit as part of a comprehensive framework, which accounts for both a 'conventional' understanding of foreign policy and a 'structural' understanding of foreign policy. As such, they seek to illustrate that the capacity to 'structure' the global environment and influence long-term developments has become at least as important as the ability to strengthen capabilities (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 26). They define structural foreign policy as a foreign policy that "conducted over the long-term, seeks to influence or shape sustainable political, legal, socio-economic, security and mental structures" (2008: 25).²⁷ Keukeleire & MacNaughtan thus identify five structures, with the latter structure representing immaterial issues. By adding this fifth structure, they highlight that foreign policy must look beyond the material realm of military security or economic well-being to account for less tangible aspects, such as culture, beliefs and identity and legitimacy, as these "shape the perception and behaviour of actors, influence how they define their interests and what kind of role they want to play in the international system" (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 25). Applied to the case of the EU, conventional foreign policy captures those policies that fall under the 'intergovernmental approach' of EU foreign policy-making (cf. Pillar II), while structural foreign policy stands for those policies that are decided upon according to the 'Community approach' (cf. Pillar I) (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 11-12 & 29-30). Hence, in practical terms, the former encapsulates the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), while the latter encompasses the vast array of the EU's external relations policies.

Holden (2009), in turn, focuses on one particular strand of that vast array, notably EU aid policy. He seeks to demonstrate that the EU's various aid policies can be understood as an attempt by the EU to gain structural power. More generally, he contends that the EU has

²⁶ See Appendix 3.1. for an overview of both the dominant and the other dimensions of foreign policy as identified by Keukeleire & MacNaughtan (2008).

²⁷ The notion of structural foreign policy has also been conceptualised by Telò, who defines it as a policy that affects "particularly the economic and social structures of partners (states, regions, economic actors, international organisations, etc.) [and] is implemented through pacific and original means (diplomatic relations, agreements, sanctions and so on), [of which the] scope is not conjunctural but rather in the middle or long range" (Telò, 2001: 26).

always possessed structural power to an extent, and that its external policies serve to further develop this (Holden, 2009: 30). Holden's use of the notion of structural power is in several ways the result of his search for both a conceptual tool that can capture "a deeper sense of power than direct, easily observable (and measurable) definitions" (2009: 5), and a conception of power that is stronger than those offered by social constructivist approaches, which he suggests tend to underplay the issue of power (2009: 10). In importing Strange's theory of structural power to the field of EU studies, he asserts that the concept - albeit in a slightly adapted version - is very well-suited for analysing the EU's external relations policies, not least since it captures the complexity and fragmentation that characterise the EU, as well as the depth and comprehensiveness of its external involvement (2009: 3-5 & 7-8). In Holden's view, the concept also offers a stronger and more nuanced alternative to social constructivist tools to study EU influence. Echoing the point we made in the introductory chapter, Holden explains that the constructivists' excessive focus on the EU's spread of norms and values risks blinding us to the importance of other - including more material - configurations of power and the broader political impact of the EU's engagement with third countries, such as the economic effects of its aid (Holden, 2009: 2 & 9-10 & 30).²⁸

Moreover, central to Holden's analysis of EU aid policy is the principle that there are two forms of structural power, namely an agent-focused type and a purely structural one (see *supra*). In relation to the EU, Holden describes the former type as the capacity of the EU to gain institutional leverage or economic and political weight, enabling it to shape the decisions of partner countries, while the latter type of structural power would eventually result in a wholesale liberalisation and Europeanisation of the targeted country or region (Holden, 2009: 22 & 29). Interestingly, as a starting point for his analytical framework, Holden (2009: 10) draws on Barnett and Duvall's comprehensive understanding of power as "the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate" (Barnett & Duvall, 2005: 42). In essence, this definition has two strengths. On the one hand, it opens up the scope of power analysis to include non-traditional and/or non-coercive forms of power, such as economic and discursive power. Importantly, it does so without being too broad as to lose its analytical applicability. On the other hand, the definition also allows for a wider range of the potential outcomes that result from the exercise of power. That is, it goes beyond the neorealist understanding of power as the ability to control and obtain certain outcomes (e.g. Baldwin, 1979) to encapsulate the ability to determine the conditions or terms of reference for other actors, which neatly captures that

²⁸ It is important to note that sociological (or constructivist) institutionalism, along with the rational-choice and historical variants, arguably dominates the contemporary study of European integration (see e.g. Pollack, 2004: 153-4).

subtler sense of power that Holden (2009) seeks to grasp in relation to the EU's aid policies. Holden (2005) implicitly refers to this form of EU influence in his empirical study of the EU's aid programmes in the Southern Mediterranean, especially when arguing that via the conclusion of association agreements with Mediterranean partner countries "the EU has set the agenda, the rules of the game and the discourse beforehand, [...] and holds all the cards in terms of inducements of aid and trade" (Holden, 2005: 25). In Holden's view, the conclusion of association agreements thus enabled the EU to direct these countries along the path that the EU had devised (2005: 27). As Holden (2009) asserts in his ensuing monograph on EU aid policy, it is in shaping and controlling this path of political and economic liberalisation that the EU seeks to increase its structural power through aid (Holden, 2009).

2.2.3. *New governance perspectives and the structure-agency dichotomy*

Importantly, another recent development in the scholarly study of EU external relations, which provides an additional, albeit distinct, avenue for a more structure-oriented way of conceiving of the EU's influence, is the integration and application of new governance perspectives. Still a nascent literature, this strand of EU studies proves to have substantial potential in opening up the analysis of EU power beyond accession conditionality (see e.g. Bauer *et al.*, 2007; Lavenex, 2004; Lavenex, 2008; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009; Schimmelfennig & Wagner, 2004). In reaction to traditional accounts of EU foreign policy (e.g. Hill, 1993; Smith, 2003), the term 'external governance' has emerged as an alternative tool for capturing the EU's influence, and in particular, to analyse how the EU despite the absence of accession conditionality manages to extend parts of its *acquis communautaire* towards its neighbourhood (Lavenex, 2004: 681; Schimmelfennig & Wagner, 2004). According to Magen, this emergent strand can be situated within what she considers the latest 'developmental phase' in European integration scholarship, which is primarily concerned with the impact of the EU - be it as a supranational system, actor, process, model or symbol - on the legislation, institutions and policies of third countries and international organisations beyond Europe (2007: 362). As Magen holds, this body of literature²⁹ converges on the discussion of "whether and how EU institutions, rules, policy-making processes and broader international 'actorness' [...] constitute independent variables that impact the legal, regulatory, an administrative structures and conduct of entities well beyond the EU's borders" (2007: 365). As such, these studies seek to provide evidence of the EU's 'transformative engagement' beyond enlargement, also referred to as 'EU governance export' or 'external

²⁹ Apart from the afore-mentioned external governance strand, this body of literature includes such studies as De Bièvre (2006), Grugel (2004), Magen (2006), Prange-Gstöhl (2009) and Szymanski & Smith (2005).

Europeanisation' (Magen, 2007: 366). Conceptualised by Youngs (2005), 'EU transformative engagement' involves the establishment and gradual development of formal comprehensive relations³⁰, which encapsulate regularised cooperation, dialogue and monitoring (supported by financial assistance, technical aid and conditionality) on a wide range of subjects, and which are essentially aimed at encouraging far-reaching economic, political and social change in third countries partner states.

Returning to the explanatory potential of EU external governance approaches as a structural perspective on EU power, a key proponent of this emergent strand, Lavenex (2008) investigates EU impact on the neighbouring countries in terms of establishing sectoral governance networks as a basis for regulatory approximation and organisational inclusion of ENP countries. As highlighted in the previous chapter, Lavenex (2008) challenges the predominant view of limited EU impact in non-candidate neighbouring countries beyond the so-called golden carrot of membership, contending that the academic debate on EU external relations and the ENP has drawn too much on the experience of Eastern enlargement, and, hence, is heavily fixated on the conditional transfer of the *acquis*. Using an external governance perspective, she therefore conceives of the ENP in a more structural way, distinguishing between "hierarchical policy transfer through conditionality", i.e. the main mode of external governance in EU enlargement politics (see Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004) and "horizontal network governance", which Lavenex identifies as a more structural mode of exerting EU influence (2008: 941). As she specifies, the former mode is "hierarchical in the sense that it works through a vertical process of command - where the EU transfers predetermined, non-negotiable rules - and control - where the EU ensures compliance through regular monitoring mechanisms" (Lavenex, 2008: 941). Conversely, the network mode of governance allows for the extension of norms and rules in a process-oriented, horizontal, voluntaristic and inclusionary manner (Lavenex, 2008: 943). Crucially, this mode may contribute to a de-politicisation of cooperation, as the actors involved are experts and technocrats, who are not guided by their country's national interests. Moreover, it also allows for functionally specific forms of organisation, such as agencies (e.g. the European Environmental Agency), coordinating bodies (e.g. Europol), or less formalised policy networks (e.g. the DABLAS Initiative)³¹ (Lavenex, 2008: 943). In addition, being voluntary

³⁰ For instance, through the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the ENP, the Stabilisation and Association process in the Balkans and the Cotonou convention.

³¹ The DABLAS initiative was launched by the European Commission in 2001 to provide regional environmental cooperation for the wider Black Sea Region. DABLAS aims to coordinate the actions of the Black Sea and Danube Commissions, the Black Sea and Danube countries, bilateral donors as well as international financial institutions.

and process-oriented in nature, network constellations constitute a fertile ground for mechanisms of impact based on socialisation, social learning and communication (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005; Bauer *et al.*, 2007). Network governance may well omit the formal, traditional levels of decision-making and policy-making and may forsake the traditional incentive-based tools for rule adoption; however, as pointed out by Slaughter, “behind the facade of technical adjustments for improved coordination [...] and uniformity of standards lie subtle adjustments” of domestic laws (Slaughter, 2004: 59). As suggested by Lavenex, the subtle creation of joint regulatory structures through network governance thus constitutes a hitherto neglected structural dimension of EU influence over the ENP countries (2008: 952).

The analytical potential of Lavenex’s (2008) governance-based model for examining the EU’s rule and policy transfer beyond accession conditionality is further expanded in Lavenex and Schimmelfennig (2009; also see 2010). Interestingly, they highlight a third structural mode of external governance, i.e the market mode. As the final basic form of external governance beyond hierarchy and networks, market governance captures the dynamics of regulatory approximation through market competition, thus representing only a loosely and informally institutionalised kind of interaction. Regulatory adaptation occurs here either directly, notably as a result of the principle of mutual recognition as applied in the EU’s internal market - whereby the most competitive products and services prevail - or indirectly, owing to the EU’s ‘presence’ (cf. Allen & Smith, 1990; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006) and the interdependence of third countries with the EU’s internal market and its process of regional governance (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009: 799). As pointed out by Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, the market mode may affect states, induced to harmonise their domestic rules and policies to those of the EU, as well as societal actors, in particular business associations and firms, which have no choice but to follow the EU’s regulations and standards if they want to participate in the EU market (2009: 799).

In sum, while the external governance literature within the field of EU studies is still in an exploratory phase, these new governance-based approaches, as a more structural alternative to the traditional perspectives of EU influence, may have considerable potential in terms of their analytical relevance for a more holistic understanding of EU power. In this regard, it is important to emphasise that on their own those governance perspectives will not be sufficient to fully capture EU power. The same goes for the above-mentioned conceptions of structural power, which only become meaningful when subsumed into an integrative framework, which also considers relational power. Or to reverse the central claim of this chapter, power lies not only in the systemic imperatives that determine agents’ actions, but

also in the relational interaction of agents (see e.g. Guzzini, 1993: 474). The thesis's assumption that the analysis of power, as a comprehensive account of power phenomena, should consider both the relational and the structural level on which power is exerted, as well as the interplay between both levels, finds support in the long-running debate in the social sciences concerning the duality between structure and agency, i.e. the so-called structure-agency problem.³² Here Giddens (1995) and Hay (2002) both point to the need to overcome this persistent juxtaposition in established theories of power. To cite Hay, "what is required is a mode of analysis [...] capable of reconciling structural and agential factors within a single explanation" (2002: 113). In a same vein, Giddens proposes that agent-focused theories and structuralist approaches can be seen to be complementary (1995: 49-50). Similarly, rather than studying the EU's external agency solely through their notion of structural foreign policy, Keukeleire and MacNaughtan develop a comprehensive conceptual framework based on a 'structural foreign policy - conventional foreign policy' continuum, which encompasses both conventional and 'neglected' - i.e. structural - dimensions of foreign policy (2008: 19 & 335).

The relationship between structure and agency is also considered - although more implicitly - in Young's (1991) discussion of structural leadership in institutional bargaining at the international level. In processes of institutional bargaining, Young views the link between structural power and bargaining leverage as stemming from the existence of asymmetries among the participants or stakeholders (1991: 289). As a distinct type of leadership, 'structural leadership' then reflects an actor's ability to translate structural power into bargaining leverage so as to reach agreement (1991: 289).³³ To conclude, an inspirational case in point of a structurally integrative analysis is Payne's (2000) study of U.S.-Caribbean relations. Payne responds here to the need to develop an integrative analysis by purposively combining parsimonious, agent-focused approaches with structuralist theories (2000: 81-2). In the context of Payne's enquiry into U.S.-Caribbean relations, this translates into working eclectically with propositions drawn, on the one hand, from comparative public policy analysis and, on the other, from critical IPE theories, *in casu* neo-Gramscianism. As Payne specifies, by embedding agent-oriented concepts inside structuralist propositions, he seeks to come to a better understanding - than offered by either classical realism or structuralism, or even more subtly pluralist approaches - of the possibilities for action open to both state and non-state actors in the structural situation of the U.S.-Caribbean relationship (2000: 73). In

³² For relevant discussions of the structure-agency dichotomy in IR, see Bieler & Morton (2001), Wendt (1987) and Wight (2006).

³³ It should be noted that Young conceives here of structural power through a neorealist lens, notably as power based on the possession of material resources. In this way, he defines structural leaders as experts in translating the possession of material resources into bargaining leverage (Young, 1991: 288).

this way, Payne traces signs of a broad “shift in the dominant modalities of interstate linkages” in the sense that the essence of the contemporary U.S.-Caribbean relationship “has now been reconfigured as a series of interlocking transnational and transgovernmental policy communities (here drawing on Keohane & Nye, 1989) in which different actors within the U.S. state/society complex and within various Caribbean state/society complexes (here drawing on Cox, 1981; 1987) engage each other in different policy arenas where there are no automatic priorities” (Payne, 2000: 82). This leads him to conclude that, in re-engaging with the Caribbean since the end of the 1980s onwards, the U.S. has gradually emerged as a ‘regional hegemon’ through a mixture of coercive and consensual forms of control, with the Caribbean being entangled within common patterns of trade, financial flows, migration and narcotics movements.

2.3. Lessons learnt: presenting five theoretical building blocks

In order to provide a sound basis for the theoretical argument and model that are to inform the empirical analysis of the thesis, this section will distil a distinct set of insights from the investigative itinerary outlined above. Together, these insights will form the theoretical foundations for the conceptual tool and explanatory framework that will be introduced in the next chapter. Overall, the above reflections can serve to make five points. To begin with, it is essential to acknowledge how power over the last few decades has changed in light of the deep transformation of the international realm owing to enhanced interdependence and globalisation, as well as the end of the Cold War. Indeed, being increasingly diffuse and involving a whole new range of (non-state) actors, the exercise of power at the international level has become much more difficult to observe, its dimensions being less visible and less clearly delineated. Among other things, this implies that the analysis of power can no longer focus solely on the state-to-state level, but also needs to consider transnational relations and the role and involvement of non-state actors. At the same time, the recent transformation of the international system also entails that the use and/or possession of structural power has gained more momentum.

This brings us to a second, related insight. That is, the analysis of power, as a comprehensive account of a power phenomenon, can no longer adopt a purely agent-focused approach, and instead also needs to account for the structural dimensions of power. Structural power is less tangible than agent-based power, and involves more than coercive capacity, as it includes unstated assumptions about standards and rules. As explained by Strange, the

possessor of structural power can “change the range of choices open to others, without apparently putting pressure directly on them to take one decision or to make one choice rather than others” (1988: 31). However, in drawing simultaneously on agent-focused and structural perspectives, it is important to consider that agency and structure are complementary and, even mutually dependent in that they may have a reinforcing effect upon each other. Therefore, it is essential to develop an integrative analytical framework, which, on the one hand, incorporates the relational and structural level on which power is exercised, and, on the other, considers the interplay between both levels. In essence, whereas the relational level captures the relational interaction of the agents involved, the structural level depicts the context within which this interaction takes place. Or to use the power typology, while ‘relational power’ concerns the ability to obtain a certain outcome or affect the behaviour of others (cf. to get them do something they would not otherwise do), ‘structural power’ refers to the ability to shape and control the structures within which the others operate and which determine the range of options available to them (cf. the rules of the game). As suggested by Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008), it is not a matter of possessing or not possessing structural power, but rather a matter of gradation, in the sense that relational and structural power form the two sides of a continuum. As Keukeleire (2002) puts it:

At one side of the continuum, an actor can possess structural power in the sense that this actor can indeed *decide* what the rules of the game are (with the other actor having only one option to choose). At the other side of the continuum, an actor can possess only limited structural power in the sense that this actor can only influence to a limited extent the rules of the game that will be used by other actors.

Moreover, as Strange asserts, since structural power can be defined in gradual terms - both conceptually and in practice, it can be interpreted as *influence*, which leaves some degree of freedom for the actors subject to it (Strange, 1988: 25-31, emphasis added). Building on this insight, Keukeleire and MacNaughtan define their notion of structural foreign policy as a foreign policy that “conducted over the long-term, seeks to *influence* or shape sustainable political, legal, socio-economic, security and mental structures” (2008: 25; emphasis added; also see Therborn, 2001: 92). In other words, the terms ‘influence’ and ‘structural power’ can - under the right conditions - be used interchangeably.

A third basic insight that can be distilled from the above literature review is that structural power exists in more than one form. Indeed, to follow Holden’s (2009: 12-13) typology, structural power is either ‘purely structural’ or ‘agent-based’. Capital, for instance, possesses structural power that is purely structural, as capital automatically constitutes power, independent of intentional agency. In this case, a structure thus implicitly empowers certain

actors - whilst possibly disempowering others - without the involvement of conscious agency. Conversely, agent-based structural power, as the term suggests, involves agency in the sense that the origin of the produced power effect is located at the agent-level. In this case, an actor intentionally shapes or affects the structures within which others operate.

Fourthly, in defining structural power - whether in its agent-based or purely structural form - as the control over structures, it is important to discern the nature of these structures. In this respect, three broad categories of structures can be identified: material structures (social-economic, financial and security), institutional structures (political and legal/contractual), and ideational/mental structures (values, norms, beliefs, identity and culture).³⁴ Crucially, this categorisation can only be based on a perception of structures as not constraining, but enabling or facilitating. Perceiving structures in terms of an enabling environment thus suggests that control over the structure(s) provides advantages and opportunities to the possessor of structural power - in contrast to the actor(s) subject to it - including for his/her use of relational power.

While the four preceding points relate mainly to the study of power in IR more broadly, a fifth and final reflection specifically regards the integration of structural perspectives in the study of the EU's external power. In the review presented above, it was demonstrated that structure-oriented approaches, when embedded in a comprehensive, integrative framework, offer a much-needed and useful tool to arrive at a more profound analysis of the EU's external impact. In this regard, two sorts of conceptual tools stand out: the notion of structural power, and the structural modes of EU external governance. As Holden (2009) aptly argues, the concept of structural power is well-suited for analysing the EU's external relations policies, not least since it captures the complexity and fragmentation that characterise the EU, as well as the depth and comprehensiveness of its external involvement. Moreover, the concept also provides a stronger and more nuanced alternative to predominant social constructivist approaches to study EU influence, as the notion goes beyond the impact of the EU's export of norms and values to also account for more material configurations of power and the broader political impact of the EU's engagement with third countries. In turn, the emergent literature on EU external governance proves to have substantial potential in opening up the analysis of EU power beyond accession conditionality. As a more structural alternative to the traditional perspectives of EU influence, EU external governance approaches highlight the indirect impact on third countries that may derive from the EU's internal market and the EU's establishment of sectoral governance networks,

³⁴ The idea of heuristically categorising structures draws mainly on Strange (1988) as well as Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008) (see *supra*). However, the three-structure categorisation proposed here clearly diverges from the categorisations offered in these two studies. For more on the proposed categorisation, see chapter 3.

notably as a basis for regulatory approximation. In sum, both conceptual approaches may provide for the structural perspectives required in order to analyse the EU's power over third countries through a more integrative analytical lens, which accounts for both the relational and the structural level on which its power is exercised, as well as the interplay between them.

Drawing on these five theoretical insights, the next chapter will introduce the conceptual tool and explanatory model that will be used to guide the subsequent, empirical study.

Chapter 3 – The EU’s ‘transnational power over’: introducing a structurally integrative framework

3.1. Introduction

In challenging the consensual scholarly expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia, the thesis has so far argued for the importance of adding a structural dimension to the analysis of the EU’s power over the Central Asian states, and, by extension, to the analysis of the EU’s power in terms of its external relations with third parties in general. More particularly, following the claim that the predominant theoretical approaches in the literature on the EU’s involvement in Central Asia are not sufficient to fully grasp the EU’s influence in the region, it was argued that an analysis of the EU’s external power needs to account for both the relational and the structural level on which it is exerted, as well as accounting for the interplay between the two levels. In view of offering a structurally integrative approach, and hence a tool that is more adequate to study the EU’s power over Central Asia than offered by those prevailing perspectives (neorealism, rationalist and sociological institutionalism, and constructivism), the aim of this chapter is to introduce the conceptual approach and theoretical framework that will be used to investigate the central hypothesis and thus to inform the empirical analysis in subsequent chapters. However, rather than being bluntly rejected, the predominant theoretical perspectives are in fact incorporated in the proposed explanatory model, which seeks to combine elements from these agent-focussed approaches with insights from structural perspectives, notably from new realist IPE³⁵ and EU external governance perspectives. In developing a holistic, structurally integrative framework of analysis, this chapter thus works eclectically with arguments drawn, on the one hand, from neorealism, neo-institutionalism and constructivism, and on the other, from the EU external governance literature and new realist IPE. In doing so, it takes into account the five theoretical building blocks that were constructed on the basis of the review presented in the previous chapter.

The chapter consists of two main parts. The first part presents the thesis’s key conceptual approach, which is referred to in the thesis as ‘transnational power over’ (TNPO). In the second part, the TNPO concept is embedded into a structurally integrative framework of analysis, which is then further developed as the explanatory model that will be applied in the empirical chapters. The first part starts with an explanation of the chosen terminology of ‘transnational power over’, indicating how the term responds to the need to address the

³⁵ New realist IPE captures Strange’s arguably radical ontology of IPE, which she herself came to call ‘a new realist ontology of global political economy’. See Strange (1997).

specific theoretical concerns identified above. In particular, it shows how the concept reflects the structural dimensions of power, which may be transnational in nature and exist both in an agent-focused and a purely structural form. The next section focuses on the aspect of ‘transnational’ and indicates which tools will be used to trace and assess transnational mechanisms of EU impact. The chapter then goes on to identify TNPO as consisting of three structures, which are the main parameters of the concept: a material structure (TNPO₁), an institutional structure (TNPO₂) and an ideational structure (TNPO₃). In identifying the three parameters, the chapter develops their respective analytical value and demonstrates how these conceptual devices each draw on specific aspects of the theoretical approaches mentioned above. The next section then considers the types of overlap that may occur between the three TNPO structures. The first part of the chapter concludes with providing an operational definition of the TNPO concept. The second part of the chapter embeds the concept into an integrative framework of analysis, and then presents the newly developed explanatory model. After further considering the conditions under which TNPO might occur and operate, the second part concludes with a detailed outline of how the TNPO framework will be used to examine the thesis’s working hypothesis. Ahead of the thesis’s empirical analysis, the chapter ends with a brief overview of the analytical value and usefulness of the TNPO concept and corresponding framework.

3.2. Introducing TNPO

3.2.1. TNPO: the term behind the concept

This section clarifies the adoption of the label ‘transnational power over’. In doing so, it indicates how the term responds to the need to address the specific theoretical concerns identified above. In particular, it shows how the concept reflects the structural dimensions of power, which, as the thesis assumes, can be transnational in nature and exists both in an agent-focused and a purely structural form. The section concludes by offering a provisional definition of the notion.

The denomination of ‘transnational power over’ in essence consists of a synthesis of two distinct attributes: ‘transnational’ and ‘power over’. ‘Power over’ captures the basic understanding of power as a relational exercise, which has led many to equate the term with ‘relational power’, typically defined as the ability of one actor to get another actor to do something he would not otherwise do (see above). This can also be described as ‘direct agent-

based power', in that this type of power is exercised by an agent *directly* over another agent. However, as outlined in the previous chapter, agent-based power can also be exercised *indirectly* over another agent, in that power may be exercised over the structures within which other agents operate and which determine their possibilities and choices. In short, 'power over' does not only stand for direct agent-based power (exercised over *agents*), but may also capture indirect agent-based power (exercised over *structures*), denoted above as 'agent-based structural power'. In fact, this reading of 'power over' comes close to Lukes's (2005) use of the term, which is central to his three-dimensional model of power. Indeed, by distinguishing a third face of power, Lukes sought to demonstrate that A's power over B not only derives from easily observable processes of decision-making (first face) and agenda-setting (second face), but may also operate at a deeper, less visible level, in that A may exercise power over B by "influencing, shaping or determining his very wants" (Lukes, 2005: 27). In sum, it is this structural reading of 'power over', i.e. agent-based power exercised *directly over structures* and *indirectly over agents*, that is reflected in the thesis's concept of 'transnational power over'.

'Transnational', in turn, as another distinct attribute of power, reflects the extent to which power is no longer exercised solely at the state-to-state or intergovernmental level, but increasingly involves non-state players, such as civil society organisations and corporate actors, as well as international - and even supranational - organisations. Moreover, as highlighted in the previous chapter, the term 'transnational' has also been conceptualised to indicate how power can be exercised without the active or intentional intervention of an agent (cf. the example of capital). Thus, apart from being an attribute of agent-based power, 'transnational' can also be an attribute of purely structural power. An in-depth outline of the element of transnational is provided in the next section.

To summarise, in representing a synthesis of two intrinsic features of power in contemporary international relations, the term 'transnational power over'³⁶ (i) encapsulates power that is exercised over structures as well as in direct relations, and (ii) goes beyond a narrow focus on the state level to also consider the role of non-state actors. As such, it is obvious that the concept of TNPO closely follows two key principles of Strange's new realist ontology (1996; 1997; 1999).³⁷ More generally, it is clear at this stage that the notion is based on a multidimensional and analytically eclectic approach. Indeed, while the next few sections will elaborate at greater length the principal contours of the notion are already apparent, to the

³⁶ 'TNPO' from hereafter.

³⁷ That is, her new realist ontology centres *inter alia* on the suggestion that the state is no longer the only significant actor, as well as on the need to account for structural power, along with the identification of structures (*in casu* security, finance, production, knowledge) through which power is exercised.

point where a provisional definition can be formulated. Above all, TNPO is a theoretical framework that seeks to assess the extent to which an actor's power over another actor derives from his/her control over a constitutive mix of structures, which determine the range of options available to the other actor. As will be outlined in detail below, it concerns an actor's influence across three structures, notably a material, an institutional and an ideational structure. In other words, *TNPO encompasses A's indirect power over B through her/his control over a constitutive mix of material, institutional and ideational structures, which shape or set the context within which B operates and in which s/he relates with A*. This makes it, for instance, difficult for B to resist initiatives or reject offers proposed by A.

As the next step in presenting the TNPO concept, the following section focuses on the 'transnational' dimension of TNPO and, in particular, on the mechanisms that will be relied upon to trace and assess this dimension.

3.2.2. Understanding and operationalising the 'transnational' dimension of TNPO

The above definition of the TNPO concept only holds on the assumption that power, whether intentional or unintentional, active or passive, has a substantial *transnational* dimension. This assumption is necessary in order to encapsulate the emergent complexity of global life, and in particular to account for the fact that globalisation and interdependence have significantly blurred the divide both between private and public and between the distinct levels of governance (local, regional, national, supranational, interregional, international, etc.). Crucially, this divide is blurred to the point where transnational forces interact with or exist alongside traditional intergovernmental relationships. As mentioned above, Strange was among the first scholars to observe that international power became increasingly diffused while global functions were provided as the result of the growing 'transnationalisation' of non-territorially linked networks, which she conceived of as an interplay of deliberate and non-intentional effects of decisions and non-decisions made by governments and other actors (Strange, 1987, 1988). This implies that structural power is increasingly located in or emerges from transnational economic and financial groups, networks and markets, as well as flows of capital, technology, ideas and information (see e.g. Castells, 2000; Strange, 1988). However, the thesis's assumption that power may be transnational in nature is not to suggest that the state system is no longer prevalent or that it will cease to exist or that governments have lost

their power to a new transnational capitalist elite (cf. a new ‘global ruling class’³⁸). Rather, the assumption that power has a transnational dimension serves to acknowledge that we cannot fully understand the influence of a state(-like) actor³⁹ over another state(-like) actor, if we limit our study to the analytical level of the intergovernmental relationship between the two actors. Indeed, we need to consider that, while the sovereignty of states remains largely intact⁴⁰, national borders open up through tourism, travel, migration, labour markets, free trade, the internet, etc., thus creating a multiplicity of transnational relations and networks. In the longer run, further globalisation of standards and practices - e.g. of educational standards and practices through the convergence of educational systems - is likely to continue to bring worldviews and behavioural practices closer to each other. In addition, the transnationalisation of civil societies as a result of the processes of globalisation may indirectly shape the conditions of international cooperation, which can be reflected in states’ subsequent official policies.

Based on the above line of thinking, the thesis’s use of the word ‘transnational’ follows the classical definition of ‘transnational relations’, understood as cross-border interactions and exchanges, in which at least one actor or interaction partner is nongovernmental (Keohane & Nye, 1971: xii; Risse-Kappen, 1995: 3). Above all, this comprehensive understanding of ‘transnational’ allows us to focus the analysis on the EU as a *governmental* actor, while tracing and assessing the agency of *nongovernmental* actors and networks, which either interacts with or exists alongside the EU’s agency. In this regard, the thesis distinguishes three broad sources of transnational relations that may contribute to the EU’s influence over a third country: (i) EU cooperation projects centred on engagement with local non-state actors, including NGOs and business associations (cf. ‘domestic empowerment’; see more below). It should be noted that these EU aid projects may also involve or rely on cooperation with European societal actors (e.g. NGOs, business associations, education institutions) that are active in the countries in question, (ii) direct engagement of European societal actors with state and/or non-state actors in a partner country, for instance through trade or investment or through the provision of democratic assistance

³⁸ See e.g. Robinson’s (2004) conception of a ‘new capitalist class’, which - from a typical neo-Marxist point of view - consists of individuals who, regardless of their nationality, tend to share similar lifestyles and interact through expanding networks of the ‘transnational state’. In Robinson’s view, this new form of state does not have a centralised form as historically developed modern nations do, but exists in both transnational institutions (e.g. IMF and World Bank) and the transformation of current nation states. This leads Robinson to conclude that hegemony will increasingly be exercised not by a particular nation state but by the new global ruling class.

³⁹ The notion of ‘state-like’ as a distinct property of an actor serves to refer to an entity like the EU, which possesses state-like features. See more below.

⁴⁰ Obviously, a major exception here is the partial transfer of sovereignty in the framework of regional integration, as epitomised by the EU.

(e.g. by NGOs)⁴¹, (iii) unintentional and/or passive sources of EU impact (cf. purely structural power) deriving from the EU's 'presence' or from third countries' interdependence with the EU's system of regional governance and the single market (see more below). Taken together, these three different sources of transnational relations and cooperation frameworks may constitute significant transnational forces and networks, which need to be taken into account when examining the EU's influence over the Central Asian countries, and over third countries and regions in general.

Apart from these three primary categories, there are of course several other possible transnational sources of EU impact, including labour migration, tourism, western media and educational exchanges. Some of these are studied in Schimmelfennig and Scholtz's (2008) examination of EU democracy promotion in the European neighbourhood. In analysing the impact of the EU's use of political conditionality on democratisation in its neighbouring countries, the authors also attempt to offer an alternative explanation by evaluating to what extent democracy-promoting influences in the region may stem from transnational interactions. In terms of channels and instruments of transnational linkages, the authors point to economic exchanges, such as trade and investment, personal interactions through various means of communication, tourism and academic exchanges, as well as cultural and informational influences via the media, churches or cultural performances (Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008: 192). As regards the impact of these interactions and exchanges on democratisation, they differentiate between short-term and long-term effects. On the one hand, transnational exchanges can have an immediate impact on the political struggle between pro- and anti-democratic forces in the country. Such short-term effects may come, for instance, from news reporting in foreign or overseas newspapers and broadcasts or from external financial and technical support for the opponents. Schimmelfennig and Scholtz also highlight international demonstration effects generated by successful democratic transitions in another country, which may encourage the democratic opposition and counter-elites to push for democratisation. This is closely related to Bunce and Wolchik's (2009) claim that diffusion of successful electoral revolutions in the postcommunist world may occur because of the existence of transnational networks, which support the spread of this model and bring together likeminded domestic and international actors.⁴² On the other hand, transnational

⁴¹ In this context, see e.g. Adamson (2003). Among other things, Adamson highlights that NGOs from western liberal democracies, including EU member states, have come to the region from the mid-1990s onwards mostly in order to encourage the development of an indigenous civil society, the strengthening of human rights norms, environmental protection and women's rights.

⁴² As the authors indicate, their case studies of transnational networks all displayed a similar composition, each bringing together Western democracy promoters, domestic opposition parties, local societal groups, and regional

exchanges can also work indirectly and in the longer term. The intensification of trade, for instance, may increase a society's affluence and cause societal actors to demand civil liberties and political rights (Schimmelfennig & Scholtz, 2008: 193). As the authors further illustrate, "[i]t also brings people from established democracies in contact with people from non-democratic countries, thus facilitating the spread of ideas and change of attitudes" (*ibid.*). Moreover, non-economic interactions, such as cultural and academic exchanges, can also result in long-term effects, since these may "increase the level of education as a social requisite of democracy or constitute a channel for transmitting beliefs and desires that favour democratisation" (*ibid.*). Drawing on Schimmelfennig & Scholtz's model of external democratisation, Freyburg (2009) uses what she refers to as the 'linkage model' to examine whether cross-border interaction and transnational exchange may shape state officials' preferences of certain forms of administrative standards and practices and whether they consequently may trigger processes of voluntary democratic change. To this purpose, Freyburg (2009) distinguishes two dimensions of linkage: social linkage, or 'flows of people across borders', and communication linkage, or 'flows of information across borders'. As she clarifies, bureaucrats' understanding of appropriate governance may not only be influenced by personal experiences made with democratic modes of decision-making during education- or work-related stays in Western democracies, but they may also become familiarised with democratic governance at home via frequent consultation of Western media.

While the insights provided by Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) and Freyburg (2009) shed further light on the transnational dimension of EU impact, it is important to note that for purposes of analytical convenience and due to space limitations, the thesis will examine only those sources of transnational impact that fall within the three categories identified above, notably (i) EU cooperation projects centred on engagement with local non-state actors, including NGOs and business associations (cf. 'domestic empowerment'; see more below), and possibly involving cooperation with European societal actors (e.g. NGOs, business associations, education institutions) that are active in the countries in question, (ii) direct engagement of European societal actors with state and/or non-state actors in a partner country, for instance through trade or investment or through the provision of democratic assistance (e.g. by NGOs), (iii) unintentional and/or passive sources of EU impact (cf. purely structural power) deriving from the EU's 'presence' or from third countries' interdependence with the EU's system of regional governance and the single market.⁴³ Moreover, since it is

"graduates" of electoral triumphs. The latter assume that their experiences are relevant to opposition parties in nearby countries "where such revolutions are needed, but have not yet occurred" (Bunce & Wolchik, 2009: 17).

⁴³ Sources of transnational impact that fall outside of the categorisation may nevertheless be considered to the extent that they overlap with one of the three categories.

not straightforward, both from an empirical and a methodological point of view, to examine transnational relations and networks that are established exclusively between societal actors, the empirical analysis will focus mostly on the first and third category, and only marginally on the second one (the attempt to do justice to which is beyond the scope of the present thesis).

In terms of the analytical tools used to trace and assess the transnational dimension of the EU's TNPO, it is possible to draw on insights from the extant literature on Europeanisation dynamics beyond the EU's border.⁴⁴ Particularly inspirational is Schimmelfennig's (2007) attempt to conceptually map pathways of Europeanisation beyond Europe. Through his mapping exercise, Schimmelfennig (2007) seeks to propose ways of theorising Europeanisation mechanisms in countries without any realistic membership perspective. Crucially, in reviewing the prevalent concepts and perspectives, he concludes that these all emphasise that Europeanisation may operate through intergovernmental and transnational channels alike. That is, they all suggest that pathways of Europeanisation may differ depending on whether they work through intergovernmental interactions or through transnational processes via societal actors in the target state. Presenting a four-by-four table⁴⁵ of the different mechanisms of EU impact, Schimmelfennig (2007) adds two other dimensions according to which Europeanisation may vary: EU-driven versus domestically-driven pathways, and processes following a logic of consequences versus those following a logic of appropriateness. Based on these two distinctions, Schimmelfennig (2007) retrieves several notions capturing transnational mechanisms of EU impact (see table in Appendix 3.2). Many of these concepts appear useful to analyse the transnational dimension of the EU's TNPO, most notably domestic empowerment, competition, societal lesson-drawing, transnational socialisation, transnational social learning and societal imitation. In what follows, we will see that these notions, as a significant part of the approach, can be used to capture the nuances of the transnational dimension of TNPO.

In considering each of these transnational means by which the EU is able to have an impact, it is important to examine closer the two additional dimensions that Schimmelfennig (2007) uses for mapping the different mechanisms of Europeanisation. As mentioned, on the one hand, the suggested mechanisms of EU impact can differ depending on whether they are

⁴⁴ Traditionally, Europeanisation is understood as the impact of European integration on EU member state policies, practices and politics (Radaelli, 2003; see also Vink, 2003). However, the term is also increasingly used to capture domestic effects of European integration in non-EU member states. Accordingly, the dynamics of Europeanisation can be broadly defined as patterns for the promotion of the EU model of inter- and intra-states relations (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005), or as "a process of change in national institutional and policy practices that can be attributed to European integration" (Lavenex & Uçarer, 2004: 219).

⁴⁵ This table can be consulted under Appendix 3.2.

EU-driven or domestically driven. Processes of Europeanisation that are driven by the EU are based on the provision of EU incentives to third country actors. By contrast, processes of Europeanisation that are domestically driven capture instances of rule adoption or policy adaptation that occur without inducement from the EU. In this case, domestic actors - independently from EU action - become favourable to convergence or compliance with EU norms and rules, for instance because they believe compliance or convergence will improve their domestic situation (see e.g. Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005: 8-9). On the other hand, Europeanisation mechanisms can vary depending on which logic of action the rule transfer or norm diffusion follows, i.e. the strategic logic of consequences, or the cultural logic of appropriateness.⁴⁶ As Schimmelfennig (2007) highlights, this distinction is particularly prevalent in Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier's (2005) analysis of Europeanisation dynamics in the accession countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which suggests three alternative models of EU impact in these countries.⁴⁷ In a typical rationalist tradition, their first model, i.e. the external incentives model, assumes that Europeanisation operates according to a logic of consequences, in that rule adoption or policy adaptation is based on the extent to which EU threats and rewards alter the strategic cost-benefit calculations of third country actors (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005: 10-11).

Conversely, the second model draws on a sociological approach, assuming that Europeanisation may be induced by 'social learning'. Following a logic of appropriateness, Europeanisation is driven here by the identification of the target states with the EU and the extent to which the latter manages to persuade them of the legitimacy of the EU rules and norms (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005: 18-20). In turn, the third model, i.e. lesson-drawing, may follow either logic of action. Considered as the 'ideal type' of voluntary rule transfer (in contrast to more coercive forms, such as conditionality), 'lesson-drawing' occurs in reaction to domestic dissatisfaction with current policies in the target country, which induces policy-makers or societal actors to learn from the experiences in the EU. Europeanisation is based then on their perception that the EU rules are appropriate solutions to their domestic problems (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005: 20-21). This resembles the mechanism of 'communication', which Bauer *et al.* (2007) define as "a governance mode that brings about change as a result of voluntary information exchange and mutual learning between policy-makers in EU-sponsored networks".

⁴⁶ For a detailed account of 'logic of appropriateness' versus 'logic of consequences', see March and Olson (1989; 1998). Also see Vink (2003).

⁴⁷ By incorporating both logics into their theoretical framework, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) thus attempt to bridge the rationalist/constructivist divide that persists within the literature (Orbie, 2009: 151-3).

Since the three models described by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) may also operate through transnational channels, i.e. through EU engagement with local societal actors, Schimmelfennig's (2007) mapping exercise includes three notions that represent the transnational equivalent of the respective mechanisms: domestic empowerment, societal lesson-drawing and transnational social learning. To start with, 'domestic empowerment' is a EU-driven mechanism in the sense that it is the EU that provides incentives to local societal actors. Whereas intergovernmental bargaining produces a 'top-down' process of regulatory adaptation, the empowerment of domestic civil society actors aims to achieve change from the 'bottom-up'. Schimmelfennig explains in an earlier article that by providing transnational incentives the EU seeks to use rewards to mobilise societal groups and corporate actors in a target state in order to apply pressure on their government to change its policy (2005: 832).⁴⁸ In turn, 'transnational social learning', or 'transnational socialisation', covers an EU-driven process whereby societal actors are *persuaded* into favouring EU norms or rule. The attempt at persuasion will be successful, if the civil society actors consider those norms or rules legitimate and if they identify themselves with the EU to the point where they take these norms or rules for granted. In sum, while domestic empowerment covers, for instance, the EU's provision of financial and technical assistance to societal actors in the target countries (cf. incentives or reinforcement by reward), 'transnational social learning' refers to EU-sponsored mechanisms of *dialogue* held with societal actors in the target countries, which may start, for instance, with very modest expectations of introducing the vocabulary of democracy and human rights in the discourse of the societal actors.

Traces of both types of transnational processes can be found in the EU's policies towards most of its third partners. This appears to be particularly the case of its policies towards partner countries in the Mediterranean, East Asia and Latin America (Schimmelfennig, 2007). As Youngs finds in his study of EU policies towards the Mediterranean and East Asia, the "profile of EU democracy assistance funding in the two regions suggested a bottom-up approach, oriented overwhelmingly to civil society support, and in particular human rights NGOs" (Youngs 2001a: 192; also see Youngs 2001b: 362). Similarly, the EU has been trying to develop direct links with societal actors in Latin America, where it has only limited leverage for using political conditionality (Grugel, 2004: 612). Finally, the mechanism of 'societal lesson-drawing' is domestically driven in that local societal actors are drawn to the EU as a result of dissatisfaction with the domestic status quo.

⁴⁸ However, Schimmelfennig stresses that transnational reinforcement by reward is only effective if the costs of putting pressure on the government are lower for the societal actors than the expected community rewards, and if they are strong enough to force the government to adapt to the community norms and rules (2005: 832).

They favour certain EU rules or norms because they perceive them as solutions to their domestic problems either based on rationalist calculations or based on the appropriateness of the EU solutions.

Interestingly, in a recent update⁴⁹ of his conceptual mapping of Europeanisation beyond Europe, Schimmelfennig (2009) places the mechanism of ‘lesson-drawing’ only under the logic of appropriateness, whilst inserting another - albeit similar - concept under the logic of consequences, i.e. ‘externalisation’. Introduced to the literature by Lavenex and Uçarer (2004), the notion of ‘governance by externalisation’ represents a structural mode of EU external governance. As Schimmelfennig (2009) explains, the notion captures the extent to which the EU’s impact derives from its ‘presence’ rather than from its direct actions (cf. Allen & Smith, 1990; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006). As Schimmelfennig (2009) puts it:

In this view, [...] the EU’s impact on third countries is a result of its capacity as an important system of regional governance and has an indirect (sometimes even unintended or unanticipated) effect on internal regulations and policies.

‘Governance by externalisation’ most visibly derives from the EU’s internal market and policies, encapsulating respectively the market mode of governance, described by Lavenex & Schimmelfennig (2009; see supra) and the competition mode of governance⁵⁰, presented by Bauer *et al.* (2007). As highlighted in chapter two, these types of governance may not only affect governments, induced to adapt their existing rules and policies to those of the EU, but also local societal actors, in which case Schimmelfennig (2009) uses the label of ‘transnational externalisation’. For instance, if foreign companies want to enter the EU’s market, they may have no choice but to adopt EU rules or standards (e.g. on product standards). Lavenex and Uçarer (2004) differentiate between ‘negative externalities’ and ‘unilateral policy emulation’. Following a rationalist logic of action, the former process occurs when third countries adapt to EU rules because ignoring or violating them would entail net costs (Lavenex & Uçarer, 2004: 21). Conversely, in the latter case, regulatory adaptation occurs because third country governments or societal actors perceive an EU rule as superior and adopt it in order to deal more efficiently with domestic issues. A related notion is ‘imitation’. This involves a high degree of adaptation, with ‘inspiration’ being at the other end of the adaptation scale. As pointed out by Lavenex and Uçarer, “in between are different

⁴⁹ The updated table that Schimmelfennig provides in his article can also be consulted under Appendix 3.2.

⁵⁰ This concept of competition is not to be confused with the neo-realist notion of ‘security competition’, or ‘geostrategic competition, among great powers. See more below.

forms of emulation or combination, which involve the selective adoption of specific elements of the EU policies” (2004: 422).⁵¹

Figure 1: Toolbox for analysing intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU TNPO

	Intergovernmental		Transnational	
	EU-driven	Domestically-driven	EU-driven	Domestically-driven
	Agent-based	Purely structural	Agent-based	Purely structural
Rationalist logic of action	Conditionality Competition (1)	Externalisation Competition (2) Market Negative externality	Domestic empowerment	Transnational externalisation Competition (2) Market
Constructivist logic of action	Socialisation Social learning communication	Imitation Lesson-drawing Unilateral emulation	Transnational socialisation Transnational social learning	Societal imitation Societal lesson-drawing

Note: (1) Security competition, or geostrategic competition; (2) Competition as a mode of governance

To summarise the above, the toolbox (see Figure 1) that has so far been established in order to capture the transnational dimension of TNPO centres on two distinctions: EU-driven versus domestically driven mechanisms, and rationalist versus constructivist logics of action. Moreover, most of the transnational mechanisms have an intergovernmental equivalent (see Figure 1, p.51; also see below). However, referring back to one of the thesis’s theoretical building blocks, a third distinction can be added, notably ‘agent-based’ versus ‘purely structural’ mechanisms of TNPO. In this light, ‘externalisation’ and ‘transnational externalisation’ clearly constitute purely structural sources of impact. As demonstrated above, such mechanisms as ‘negative externality’ and ‘competition’ encapsulate how the EU may wield power over third country governments or companies independently of intentional or conscious EU agency. Overall, purely structural pathways of EU impact capture instances of EU influence resulting from its presence and third countries’ interdependence with (or dependence on) the EU’s internal market and its system of regional governance. It should be noted, however, that the single market can serve as a tool of agent-based structural power. Indeed, in some cases the EU purposively uses access to its internal market as a bargaining chip to obtain concessions in other domains (see e.g. Meunier & Nicolaïdis, 2006; see more below). In addition, the EU’s ‘presence’ - described by Bretherton and Vogler as a consequence of its being (2006: 27 & 33) - may constitute a form of attraction or magnetism. This is ‘purely structural’, in that the EU’s impact arises from the appeal of its rules or norms

⁵¹ Lavenex and Uçarer note that “the most complete form of adaptation may be referred to as copying and involves full transfer of policy principles, instruments, programmes and institutional structures” (2004: 422).

(cf. unilateral emulation, imitation, lesson-drawing) or, more generally, from the attraction of its model as a regionally (economically and politically) integrated group of liberal democracies (Schimmelfennig, 2007; see also Haughton, 2007; Leonard, 2005; see more below).

By contrast, the mechanisms of ‘domestic empowerment’, ‘transnational socialisation’ and ‘transnational social learning’ - as well as their respective intergovernmental equivalents - are indicative of agent-based structural power (see Figure 1, p.51). All three represent sources of impact that are based on EU-initiated engagement with third country non-state actors. In other words, the EU’s power in these cases is a result of intentional EU agency towards local societal actors (or towards domestic elites in case of the intergovernmental equivalents). The agency relies either on the provision of material incentives - i.e. domestic empowerment - or on persuasion through dialogue - i.e. transnational socialisation and transnational social learning. In light of the three-part categorisation of transnational relations identified above, it is important to note that agent-based structural power here is not necessarily limited to agency of the EU as a governmental (or state-like) actor, but may also - indirectly - stem from the agency of EU societal actors. Indeed, the activities and involvement of EU non-state actors in third countries may contribute to the EU’s overall TNPO over these countries.⁵²

A final point regards the fact that the division between transnational and intergovernmental pathways of TNPO is in essence a fine line. Indeed, as suggested by the interrupted line in Figure 1 between the columns comprising the intergovernmental mechanisms and the transnational ones respectively, there is no absolute division line between intergovernmental and transnational. The mechanism of ‘externalisation’ in the intergovernmental column, for instance, clearly has a transnational dimension, especially when it operates through the anonymous market. To illustrate, the governance mode of ‘competition’ reflects EU transnational impact on third countries through market pressures: if a third country wants its companies to fully participate in the EU’s market, then those market pressures may stimulate domestic institutional and/or legislative change in accordance with EU rules and practices depending on the country’s need to modify certain laws and/or improve the functional effectiveness of its institutional arrangements. Another case in point is EU-driven socialisation of Central Asian officials. The EU’s attempts at socialisation are more likely to have impact if the officials in question have been involved in transnational exchanges, such as an education stay in a western democracy or regular use of western media (cf. social and communication linkage, see Freyburg, 2010).

⁵² However, as mentioned previously, the empirical chapters will focus mostly on the EU as a governmental actor and will only marginally consider the role of European societal actors.

The following two sections expand on the extent to which the approach based on the notions in the toolbox described above, and presented in Figure 1 (p.51), can help to trace and assess transnational and intergovernmental instances of TNPO across the three TNPO structures and their respective overlap.

3.2.3. The three TNPO structures

As already suggested in the concept's provisional definition, TNPO is a theoretical framework that seeks to assess the extent to which A wields power over B through A's control over a constitutive mix of three structures. For the purposes of exposition, these structures are referred to here as TNPO₁, TNPO₂ and TNPO₃. As the next step in the thesis's introduction of the concept of TNPO, this section presents those three constituent elements of TNPO and outlines which transnational as well as intergovernmental mechanisms are operational within them.

The first structure over which it is possible for A to exert influence is the material structure, labelled here 'TNPO₁'. 'Material' refers here to what is perhaps most concisely described by the (neo)realist notion of material capabilities. TNPO₁ underscores the neorealist proposition that the relative distribution of capabilities, together with certain goals (e.g. survival, security, prosperity), leads to a specific social programming, which compels states to act in certain ways (e.g. self-regarding, power-seeking) (Sørensen, 2008: 6-8).

The second structure over which it is possible for A to exert influence is the institutional structure, labelled here 'TNPO₂'. TNPO₂ draws on a range of institutionalist approaches, which converge on the proposition that 'institutions matter'. This notion of an institutional structure comprises two subcomponents, a micro-level (TNPO_{2micro}) and a macro-level (TNPO_{2macro}). The former subcomponent captures different forms of institutionalised cooperation and dialogue. The macro-level, in turn, is to the extent to which an actor draws influence over another actor from its predominant position within a particular international institution or regime.

The third structure over which it is possible for A to exert influence is the ideational structure, labelled here 'TNPO₃'. TNPO₃ encompasses such intangible factors as beliefs, values, norms, identity and legitimacy. In other words, it is ideational in the sense that it takes ideas, normative interpretations and mental constructs seriously and regards them as causally important in their own right.

3.2.3.1. TNPO₁: material structure

The first structure over which it is possible to exert influence is the material structure, labelled here ‘TNPO₁’. As noted, ‘material’ refers here to materialism in the physical understanding of the term, as captured in the common (neo)realist notion of ‘material capabilities’. Realism contends that states selfishly pursue their national interests and posits that the most important resources in the pursuit of national interests are material capabilities, most notably economic and military resources. Realism thus conceives the exercise of power in terms of a preponderance of such material resources. In turn, the notion of ‘material *structure*’ is equally ubiquitous to realism and neorealism, which theorise that the international system and how power operates within it is determined by the material structure. Mearsheimer argues that the distribution of material capabilities among states is the key factor for understanding world politics; for (neo)realists, some level of security competition among great powers is inevitable because of the material structure of the international system (1995: 91).⁵³ As pointed out by Sørensen, when neorealists such as Waltz refer to “the ‘material structure’ of the international system, they mean that the material structure (i.e. the relative distribution of capabilities) plus certain goals (survival, security, prosperity) lead to a specific social programming that compels states to act in certain ways (self-regarding, power-seeking, wary of others), or risk destruction” (2008: 6-8). In addition, neorealists contend that in competing for power, states will often engage in ‘balancing’ to contain the influence of the dominant power(s) and thus to ‘rectify’ the balance of power in their favour (see e.g. Waltz, 1979). Whilst rejecting (neo)realism’s obsessive preoccupation with the state, the present thesis shares the above beliefs to the extent that it assumes (i) the EU’s policy towards Central Asia - and by extension its external policies at large - to be shaped by self-interest considerations⁵⁴; (ii) the EU to be vying for greater influence over Central Asia, given that the policy objectives derived from those self-regarding calculations⁵⁵ involve enhancing EU power over the region; and as a result, (iii) the EU to be engaged in ‘competition’ for influence in Central Asia. Hence the inclusion of the neo-realist notion of ‘competition’ in the TNPO toolbox (see Figure 1, p.51). ‘Security competition’, or ‘geostrategic competition’, and the ensuing mechanism of ‘balancing of power’, is an agent-based form of structural power, which clearly draws on a rationalist logic of action, with the third country weighing off the advantages and

⁵³ For neorealism from a IPE angle, which focuses on economic capabilities as the main explanatory variable in international relations, see e.g. Gilpin, 1987.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that the EU’s external policies are arguably not shaped by self-interest alone, but rather by a combination of self-interested *and* normative considerations. As Magen puts it, “[t]he driving rationale behind [...] the engines of EU’s international actorship can be interpreted as stemming from both normative-ideational and rationalist, strategic factors” (2007: 381).

⁵⁵ These are covered in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, Section 5.2.

disadvantages of forming an ‘alliance’ – *i.c.* any form of cooperation - with the EU in the latter’s attempt to balance the influence of another - *i.e.* more dominant - actor.⁵⁶

Assuming that structural power is based on the possession of material resources, regime theorist Oran Young argues that a ‘structural leader’, which he identifies as one of three types of leaders in institutional bargaining, is a negotiator who is able to translate a state’s structural power into bargaining leverage as a means of reaching agreement on the terms of the constitutional contract (1991: 289). In Young’s words, “structural leaders are experts in translating the possession of material resources into bargaining leverage cast in terms appropriate to the issues at stake in specific instances of institutional bargaining (1991: 288). Crucially, Young adds that “[in] a general way, it makes sense to view the link between structural power and bargaining leverage as stemming from the existence of asymmetries among the participants or stakeholders in processes of institutional bargaining” (1991: 289). This point is central to TNPO₁ in that it assumes that the EU’s material capabilities, such as the size and strength of its market, result in asymmetric relationships and third countries’ dependence.

However, before we move on to identify TNPO₁, or the material structure, it is important to note that material power is not limited to the ‘capability’ of an agent, which is in line with the neo-realist understanding of power. Indeed, material power can also occur due to asymmetric flows of goods, finance, etc, in line with much of the literature referred to in Chapter 2, including Susan Strange’s work and neo-Gramscian perspectives, which considers structural power in terms of flows of goods, finance and the resultant gravitational pull of core economic entities.

In identifying TNPO₁, or the material structure, let us first consider the EU’s foremost material resource, the single market. The sheer size and strength of the EU’s internal market leads to a gravitational attraction and inherently asymmetric trading relationships, in particular with neighbouring and/or weak trade partners, such as the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states (Bretherton & Vogler, 2006). The possibility to include or exclude third countries to the single market is already a powerful tool, let alone the possibility of framing the terms of reference within which this possible market access is to take place. Although the EU officially maintains the language of ‘partnership’ and ‘equal footing’, in practice, its preponderant market power enables it to force its pre-agreed positions upon interested trade partners (Bretherton & Vogler, 2006: 78-79).

⁵⁶ In this respect, it is worth noting that neorealism and rational choice theory - despite their differences - share the central assumption that their subjects are utility maximisers.

On the one hand, the internal market provides the EU with agent-based structural power. This is captured in Meunier and Nicolaïdis's (2006) study of the EU's common trade policy. As they observe, the EU is not only a trade power, or 'power in trade', but also a 'power through trade'. That is, while the EU remains a major power in trade based on the strength of its internal market as well as the collective character of European trade policy and the efficiency of its institutions in negotiating lucrative commercial deals, the EU has been increasingly "using access to its huge market as a bargaining chip to obtain changes in the domestic policies of its trading partners, from labour standards to human rights, and more generally to shape new patterns of global governance" (Meunier & Nicolaïdis, 2006). Tying market access to domestic changes often involves the use of conditionality (see more below).

On the other hand, the power that derives from the internal market can be purely structural. Useful tools to capture this dimension of the EU's market power are the above-mentioned mechanisms of externalisation (negative externality and unilateral policy emulation), transnational externalisation, and the market and competition modes of governance (see above). These purely structural pathways of EU impact help to understand how EU internal rules - even without conscious EU agency - spill over to third countries. For instance, as already highlighted above, if firms want to export to the EU, the exported products need to be in accordance with the EU's rules or standards, such as environmental and safety standards. The REACH regulation on chemicals and their safe use⁵⁷, for example, affects all the companies that wish to export chemicals to the EU.

Beyond the single market, and inherently related to this, the EU draws power from its dominant position as an economic giant. An important contributor to the EU's economic weight is of course the euro, which has become a reserve currency in many parts of the world. As Holden notes, "[a] strong currency is in itself a form of structural power" (2009: 188). Other material 'resources' and 'capabilities' that fall within the sphere of TNPO₁ are - in no particular order - the provision of development and financial aid (e.g. loans and technical assistance), technological competence, and military and security-related capabilities. Obviously, the military and security-related capabilities barely stand comparison with the EU's economic and commercial strength, especially since the EU's security and defence policy remains rather limited in scope. By contrast, the EU's development policy is highly elaborate, and is intentionally used by the EU to increase its influence worldwide, and in particular its structural power (Holden, 2009). Moreover, just like access to the EU's market, development aid and financial assistance are offered as an incentive, set on the condition that

⁵⁷ REACH is a European Community regulation, which deals with the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical substances. The law entered into force on 1 June 2007.

third country governments follow the EU's demands for political and economic reforms. Central to the rationalist logic underpinning the 'external incentives model' (see above), this *modus operandi* is captured by the intergovernmental mechanism of conditionality. Reflecting the use of the carrot or the stick, conditionality exists both in a positive, incentives-based form and in a negative, punitive form. Positive conditionality is based on a reward in return for the fulfilment of a predetermined condition. In most cases, the reward concerns a tangible material benefit, such as the provision of technical or financial assistance, or preferential access to the single market. Conversely, negative conditionality metes out a punishment if a specific obligation is omitted. The punishment may consist of the withdrawal of one or more material benefits, or of the imposition of sanctions. Typical examples include the suspension of a bilateral agreement - or part of the agreement -, the imposition of an arms embargo, and the application of a visa ban for certain members of the governing elite. As highlighted by Warkotsch (2009: 254), reinforcement by reward or punishment can also be social or symbolic, i.e. through rhetorical action by means of EU public statements (e.g. Council declarations). Equally based on the strategic calculation approach, rhetorical action on the side of the EU aims at either praising a country's record of conformance or publicly condemning it in case of non-compliance. The use of conditionality through reinforcement was omnipresent in the EU's enlargement policy towards the CEECs. Indeed, as commonly known, the accession countries had to adopt the EU's entire legislative body of, or *acquis communautaire*⁵⁸, as a precondition for membership.

Already from the earliest days of the EU's involvement in Eastern and Central Europe, aid was given to the CEECs on the condition of committing to political and economic reforms. Later on, the same logic was also introduced in the EU's relations with countries beyond its immediate borders. However, there are clear limits to the impact and use of conditionality to promote domestic change in third countries. As clarified by Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) in their study of the Europeanisation of the CEECs, (accession) conditionality can only work in cases where the benefits of the material rewards offered by the EU exceed the domestic adaptation costs. In this regard, the authors observed *inter alia* a marked difference in adaptation costs between democratic conditionality and *acquis* conditionality (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004: 671-2). That is, unlike democratic conditionality, *acquis* conditionality "does not concern the political system and bases of political power as such, governments generally do not have to fear that the costs of rule

⁵⁸ In accordance with the EU's Glossary of Definitions, 'the Community *acquis*' is the body of common rights and obligations, which bind all the member states together within the EU. As Petrov (2008) notes, it is constantly evolving and comprises not only EU primary, secondary binding and non-binding legislation but also the European Court of Justice's case law. See EU Glossary available online via <europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/community_acquis_en.htm>.

adoption in individual policy areas will lead to a loss of office. Costs are thus unlikely to be prohibitive” (*ibid.*). By contrast, the adoption of liberal political norms, such as human rights, democratic elections, open contestation for office and the rule of law, implies a loss in autonomy for the third country governments. As Schimmelfennig and Scholtz point out, if the use of conditionality is to be efficient, then “[t]hese political disincentives need to be balanced in kind by tangible incentives such as military protection or economic assistance to improve the security and the welfare of the state” (2008: 6). Therefore, many scholars claim that beyond the group of credible candidates for EU membership, the EU does not have sufficient leverage to constrain the sovereignty of third country governments effectively by applying the instrument of political conditionality, either as incentive or punishment (see e.g. Holden, 2009: 182; Schimmelfennig, 2009: 20-21; Zielonka, 2008: 477-181). However, irrespective of the limits of conditionality, aid itself remains a strong tool for the EU to exert power over third countries. Or as Holden puts it:

The aid itself is a direct intervention to inject finance and expertise (and prestige) to local institutions, which it favours and ensures contact between European and local elites. Regardless of the specific effects of aid, EU aid is an important process in itself; it forms relationships between EU institutions/personnel and their counterparts and inserts the EU into the national/regional context (2009: 182).

A final point that needs to be made in the context of the EU’s provision of aid regards its civil society assistance. A substantial part of the EU’s aid goes to civil society actors, such as NGOs and business associations. This *modus operandi* can be captured by the transnational mechanism of domestic empowerment. According to a rationalist instrumental logic, civil society assistance may help to change the domestic opportunity structure in favour of societal actors with independent incentives to adopt EU rules and helps to strengthen their bargaining power towards the government or towards societal or political opponents (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004: 664).

The last step in our identification of TNPO₁ has a strong realist orientation, not least since it focuses on the EU as a strategic actor and its reliance on security capabilities. Realists view national security as the primordial national interest. Accordingly, in pursuing national security, states rely on their material capabilities, most notably economic and military capabilities (see e.g. Morgenthau, 1978). Applied to the EU, this means that the EU is above all concerned with safeguarding the EU’s external security, and in the first place, with guaranteeing stability alongside its borders. As the EU distinguishes itself internationally by favouring non-military means to advance its interests (cf. the EU as a ‘civilian power’), the

Union relies primarily on economic and other civilian instruments to guarantee its security (see e.g. Orbie, 2006, 2008; Telò, 2006). However, even in the current post-Cold War era the EU is not exempt from the need to recourse to military - be it exclusively defensive - instruments to reach certain 'hard security' objectives, in particular to reduce the kind of security threats that emerge from weak or failed states and from (post)conflict zones (cf. the European Security and Defence Policy). Indeed, irrespective of the fact that the EU does not (yet) have a fully-fledged 'EU army' and that it cannot participate in NATO military actions under the EU flag, its interests do encompass hard security goals. With respect to TNPO₁, this suggests that the EU thus also seeks to wield influence over third countries by gaining control in the security domain, *inter alia*, by relying on its security capabilities. In essence, however, in pursuing its external security interests, the EU resorts to a mix of soft security (or civilian) and hard security (or military) tools (see more below). A final aspect of the security dimension of TNPO₁ is geostrategic actorness and the ensuing balance-of-power logic that an actor may follow, another key element of realist thought (see e.g. Mearsheimer, 1995). Although the EU is usually hesitant to publicly present itself as a (geo)strategic actor, thereby seeking to distance itself from the other major international powers, the U.S. and Russia, and increasingly, China, it is in many ways involved in (geo)strategic power politics. Indeed, in practice, the EU does not eschew the balance-of-power logic in its external relations. This implies that in pursuit of a specific security objective, the EU may effectively calculate how a potential move may affect its relative power position. A clear illustration of such calculation practices can be found in the EU's relations with its eastern neighbourhood, where the EU is attempting to further expand its influence sphere, especially in view of limiting Russia's influence over the region.

In sum, the above outline has sought to demonstrate that material factors are an important determinant of the EU's TNPO. Broadly speaking, these material factors encompass trade, economic, aid and security capabilities. Together, they make up the material structure of TNPO, i.e. TNPO₁. However, the extent to which the EU can influence third countries cannot be explained by a focus on material aspects alone. Rather, as will be clarified in the following subsections, the EU's TNPO derives from its dominant position across a combination of structures - the material structure being one of them, alongside an institutional and ideational structure - and the overlap between the structures.

3.2.3.2. TNPO₂: institutional structure

The second structure over which an actor can exert influence is the institutional structure, labelled here ‘TNPO₂’. This notion draws on a varying range of institutional approaches, which converge on the proposition that ‘institutions matter’.⁵⁹ TNPO₂ is further divided into two subcomponents: a micro-level and a macro-level. The former subcomponent captures different forms of institutionalised cooperation and dialogue. The macro-level, in turn, is the extent to which an actor draws influence over another actor from its predominant position within a particular international institution or regime. In light of this division, it is worth pointing to the conceptual distinction between ‘institutions’ and ‘institutionalisation’. ‘Institutions’ can be considered as the rules of the game of a particular group, and are classically understood as the formal rules, standard operating procedures and organisations of government (see e.g. Smith, 2004: 26). However, according to new institutionalist thought, an institution also encompasses informal norms, routines and conventions (see e.g. Hall & Taylor, 1996). ‘Institutionalisation’, in turn, is the “process by which those norms, or shared standards of behaviour, are created and developed” (Smith, 2004: 26). Having specified the conceptual difference between ‘institutions’ and ‘institutionalisation’, let us now consider the two subcomponents of TNPO₂.

The micro-level of TNPO₂, or TNPO_{2micro}, encompasses different forms of institutionalised cooperation and engagement. These include both formal contractual (including treaty-based) formats of institutionalisation established as part of the EU’s relations with third countries, and less formal and less integrated (including *ad hoc*) formats of institutionalisation, often held at the bureaucratic or technocratic level rather than at the high political level. As such, TNPO_{2micro} covers practically all existing types of EU institutionalised cooperation with third countries, ranging from formal political dialogue as established through bilateral and bi-regional agreements (e.g. inter-regional dialogue with the Southern African Development Community since 1994, and bilateral dialogue with CIS countries through the Cooperation Councils, Cooperation Committees and Parliamentary Cooperation Councils established via the PCAs), over human rights dialogues and civil society dialogues, to meetings between bureaucrats or technocrats (e.g. seminars, info sessions, training sessions, twinning). Moreover, TNPO_{2micro} also includes the physical presence of the EU in partner countries. This concerns both the long-term presence and

⁵⁹ As Vink (2003) notes, “[t]he seemingly banal claim that institutions matter is an influence relevant political behaviour” typically characterises new institutionalism and “must be understood primarily as a reaction to post-war behaviouralism and rational choice, which approach politics from a rather atomised conception of the individual”.

activities of Commission delegations (EU delegations from 2010 onwards), EU Special Representatives and embassies of EU member states in the partner countries, and the occasional presence of such EU actors as the troika of foreign ministers (attending formal meetings) and EU Commissioners (e.g. through formal visits). The micro-institutional power that the EU wields through TNPO_{2micro} assumes that the denser the institutional relationship between the EU and a third country is the larger the EU's TNPO over the country will be. However, although an unmissable part of TNPO, TNPO_{2micro} hardly exists on its own. Indeed, more often than not, it tends to interact with TNPO₁ and/or TNPO₃. Put differently, TNPO_{2micro} predominantly appears in the overlap with either one or both of the other two structures (see below). Therefore, the institutional approaches that underlie the micro-level of TNPO₂ as well as the mechanisms that can be used to grasp it will be outlined in the section that deals with TNPO overlap, notably section 3.2.4.

TNPO_{2macro}, the second subcomponent of TNPO₂, is located at the macro-level of international relations, rather than at the more case-specific institutional micro-level of bilateral or bi-regional contractual (or other) relations. In particular, it concerns the power that an actor (*i.c.* the EU) may have over another actor based on the former's dominant position within an international regime⁶⁰ or international institution. To some extent, this point chimes with historical institutionalist propositions, which emphasise the asymmetries of power that arise from the way in which institutions work (Hall & Taylor, 1996: 938). In addition, it echoes Krasner's regime theoretical understanding of structural power as the power to shape the rules of institutions and regimes (see *supra*). In Krasner's view, international regimes and normative structures can, after a certain amount of time (*i.e.* following a 'time-lag') become independent sources of influence, and can thus be used as instruments to exercise power over other states (1982: 499). The EU actively promotes multilateralism and does so, primarily, in an attempt to protect itself from globalisation; however, in doing so, the EU acts as an agent of the very process of globalisation (see e.g. Keukeleire and MacNaughtan, 2008: 17-18). Because of its formidable trade power and substantial economic strength, the EU contributes to globalisation particularly through its trade policy and its support for a global free market economy and neo-liberal international order, including through the WTO, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.⁶¹ Moreover, as exemplified by its WTO agenda,

⁶⁰ In Krasner's influential definition, 'international regimes' are defined as "sets of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue-area" (Krasner, 1982: 186). This definition is intentionally broad and covers human interaction ranging from formal organisations, e.g., OPEC, OECD, to informal groups, such as the group of major banks formed during the developing world debt crisis.

⁶¹ The EU also does so, *inter alia*, through its initiatives to negotiate bilateral trade agreements with emerging trade partners and through its attempts to create free trade areas with other regions of the world.

the EU's attempts at shaping and managing globalisation are based on its own regulatory models (see e.g. De Bièvre, 2006; Meunier, 2007; Young & Peterson, 2006). As Holden writes, "the WTO is more than a series of, inevitably 'crisis-ridden', negotiations, and is an accumulated body of law, which the EU has had a major role in shaping" (2009: 188).

However, the EU also has a significant say in other areas of global governance. As Keukeleire and MacNaughtan point out, the EU "has played a pivotal role in the development, adoption and implementation of important new multilateral legal instruments, such as the Kyoto Protocol, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and various disarmament regimes and initiatives" (2008: 302). In the case of the Kyoto Protocol, for instance, the EU used "active diplomacy to encourage a broad set of smaller players as well as a crucial large power - Russia - to follow its path" (*ibid*). Similarly, because of its influential voice within the WTO, the EU can rely on its leverage to encourage non-member countries of the WTO to apply for membership and start the preparation process for accession. However, the number of cases in which the Union is an active member of an international organisation or regime remains limited due to reluctance from EU member states and third countries to grant this privilege to the EU.⁶² Nevertheless, even in cases where the Union is not a member, but is represented by all or nearly all its member states, it often attempts to reach a common EU position, which gives it a substantial amount of leverage, e.g. in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe (CoE).

To sum up, the above outline highlighted to what extent institutional factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU's TNPO. Whether at the macro-level of international relations (TNPO_{2macro}) or at the more case-specific institutional micro-level of bilateral or bi-regional contractual relations (TNPO_{2micro}), the EU derives a significant amount of leverage from institutional factors. While TNPO_{2macro} is the extent to which an actor such as the EU draws influence over another actor from its predominant position within a particular international institution or regime, TNPO_{2micro} captures different forms of institutionalised cooperation and dialogue. The latter include both formal contractual (including treaty-based) formats of institutionalisation established as part of the EU's relations with third countries, and less formal and less integrated (including *ad hoc*) formats of institutionalisation, often held at the bureaucratic or technocratic level rather than at the high political level. TNPO₂ thus fully underpins the proposition that institutions matter in the study of political power. However, a third and final structure is yet to enter the picture in order to break the silence on

⁶² For an overview of the international organisations of which the EU is a member, see Keukeleire & MacNaughtan (2008: 303).

the relevance of ideas as an independent variable of the EU's TNPO. This is dealt with in the next subsection.

3.2.3.3. TNPO₃: the ideational structure

The third and final structure over which an actor can exert influence is the ideational structure, labelled here 'TNPO₃'. It encompasses such intangible factors as beliefs, values, norms, identity and legitimacy. In other words, TNPO₃ is ideational in the sense that it takes ideas, normative interpretations and mental constructs seriously and regards them as causally important in their own right.⁶³ It is useful to start the discussion by referring to Krastev and Leonard's claim that the new world order is determined not just by the balance of 'hard power', i.e. the ability to use economic or military power to coerce or bribe countries to support you, but by the balance of what Nye has famously termed 'soft power' (Krastev & Leonard, 2007; also see Leonard, 2005). Originally defined in very broad terms as 'non-command power', Nye's concept of soft power encapsulates the ability of a state to get what it wants through attraction, rather than through coercion and payment, arising from the appeal of its culture, political ideals and policies (Nye, 1990, 2004). Although initially designed for the U.S., the notion of soft power can also be used to capture the magnetic pull of the EU.⁶⁴ From a Lukesian point of view, attraction or magnetism can be seen as a form of 'passive power'. In the case of the EU, for instance, part of its transformative power, understood here as the power to enable domestic change within third countries⁶⁵, rests on the passive leverage that it draws from its attractive single market and its success as a regionally - economically and politically - integrated group of liberal democracies (Haughton, 2007; Leonard, 2005; Therborn, 2001, Vachudova, 2001). Related to this is the attraction stemming from the so-called 'European dream' and the 'European way of living', which reflect the high level of prosperity and quality of life associated with the EU, including high living standards and efficient social welfare systems (see e.g. Bretherton & Vogler, 2006). Also the fact that the EU is characterised by a legacy of peaceful relations and successful reconciliation appeals to external partners.

⁶³ For an influential study of the role of ideas in foreign policy, see Goldstein & Keohane (1993).

⁶⁴ McCormick even uses Leonard's (2005) notion of 'soft new world order' to argue that the EU has become a superpower: the EU has become ideally suited to exercise influence in the post-modern international system, which it "draws from promoting values, policies and goals that appeal to other states in a way that aggression and coercion cannot" (2006: 6).

⁶⁵ Note that another understanding of 'transformative power' refers to the ability to translate one kind of power, e.g. structural power, into another form of power, e.g. bargaining power. Cf. the notion of the 'fungibility' of power (Baldwin, 1989).

Moreover, the EU seems to have a rather benevolent and non-threatening image compared to other international powers, including the U.S., and is increasingly accepted around the globe as a source of authority on several public policy issues (see e.g. Holden, 2009: 184). As Holden explains, “[s]ignificant here is that many do not perceive it as an actor in the sense that major states are viewed, thus its own webs of control have tended to elicit less paranoia and resistance than these other actors” (2009: 188-9). As mentioned previously, the EU’s magnetic pull stems from its presence, rather than from its intentional agency, which constitutes a purely structural form of structural power. Similarly, (non)governmental actors in third countries may be drawn to the EU’s rules or norms independently of intentional EU agency, as is encapsulated by such mechanisms as unilateral emulation, (societal) imitation, (societal) lesson-drawing (see Figure 1, p.51). At the same time, however, norms and values are also spread through conscious efforts by the EU, thereby testifying to agent-based structural power. This duality is captured in Ian Manners’s (2002) concept of normative power, which illustriously represents the ideational underpinnings of the EU’s soft power. Indeed, Manners’s framework of normative power depicts the EU as a changer of norms in international relations based on combination of its very existence and conscious agency, notably by projecting its internally shared principles and norms onto its external partners (Holden, 2009: 9; Manners, 2002: 252). The structural properties of the concept reveal a particular affinity with critical perspectives. It is not surprising therefore that Manners’s concept of normative power is partly inspired by Galtung’s (1973) notion of ideological power, which the latter developed to support his claim that the European Community at the time already wielded a substantial amount of structural power not only thanks to its economic leverage but also to its ideological power. Defined as the power of ideas, Galtung asserted that ideological power is “powerful because the power-sender’s ideas penetrate and shape the will of the power-recipient” (1973: 33 & 36). To some extent, this is echoed in Haukkala’s (2008) contemporary claim that the EU can be considered as a regional normative hegemon in its near abroad; drawing on Manners’s definition of normative power as the ability to shape conceptions of normal in international relations, Haukkala argues that the EU “is using its economic and normative clout to build a set of highly asymmetrical bilateral relationships that help to facilitate an active transference of its norms and values” (Haukkala, 2008; Manners, 2002: 239). This leads Haukkala (2008) to approach the EU’s normative power in terms of its ability to influence other states to the extent that they willingly internalise norms and values promoted by the EU, as is mostly clearly the case in its neighbourhood.

In turn, such a critical understanding of normative power can be easily linked to the neo-Gramscian notion of ‘consensual power’, even more so since neo-Gramscians have used

this concept in connection with hegemony.⁶⁶ Neo-Gramscians maintain that the most effective means of domination is based on consent gained through the creation of common sense, in contrast to the - in their view - inefficient means of domination based on coercive power (see e.g. Cox, 1981, 1987; Gill & Law, 1989).⁶⁷ In a similar vein, Manners differentiates conceptually between a ‘civilian power Europe’, whereby the EU is primarily using economic power as a form of coercion, and a ‘normative power Europe’, whereby the EU is a “normative power of an ideational nature characterised by common principles” (2002: 239). As he further clarifies, “[i]n civilian power terms, the instrumental role of economic power is central to the approach, whereas in normative power terms what is more important is the degree to which international economics are domesticated into concerns about distributive justice” (Manners, 2000). When it comes to pinpointing the norms and principles propagated by the EU⁶⁸, Manners (2002: 240) identifies four ‘core’ norms, which form a central part of the EU’s vast body of laws and policies, namely peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms, as set out in article 6 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and incorporated in the EU’s various external policies and strategies. In addition, Manners designates four ‘minor’ norms, i.e. social progress, combating discrimination, sustainable development and good governance (*ibid.*). Departing from the proposition that Europeanisation consists of “the external projection of internal solutions”, Schimmelfennig (2007), in turn, not only considers the EU’s export of its constitutional norms, but also of its model of regionalism as well as its “multilaterally managed regulatory framework for liberal markets”, or “neoliberal economic model” seen in a more critical perspective.⁶⁹ It is worth noting that the EU’s attempt to disseminate its regionalist model can

⁶⁶ Cox, for instance, defines hegemony as “dominance of a particular kind where the dominant state creates an order based ideologically on a broad measure of consent, functioning according to general principles that in fact ensure the continuing supremacy of the leading state or states and leading social classes but at the same time offer some measure or prospect of satisfaction to the less powerful” (Cox, 1987).

⁶⁷ In making this statement, they draw on the collection of Gramsci’s work presented in his ‘Prison Notebooks’, which itself elaborates on the Marxist concept of ideology. Gramsci asserted that in the social formations of the West it was ‘culture’ or ‘ideology’ that constituted the mode of class rule, secured by consent by means of the bourgeoisie’s monopoly over the ideological apparatuses (Gramsci, 1971). He demonstrated how the ruling class dominated the working class by imposing their world-view on them through the exploitation of religion, education, popular national culture and – in the case of industrialised economies - capitalism, and have it accepted as ‘natural’ or ‘common sense’.

⁶⁸ It is noteworthy that the EU’s dedicated promotion of norms such as human rights and democracy is a fairly recent phenomenon and only became prominent in the 1990s (see e.g. Balfour, 2006; Schimmelfennig, 2007). As Schimmelfennig (2007) remarks, it is the global political changes of the time (the end of the Cold War, the wave of democratisation) combined with the “concomitant institutional enhancement of the EU as an international actor (the Common Foreign Security Policy – CFSP agreed in the Maastricht Treaty) that seem to have spurred the explicit definition and promotion of the EU model beyond Europe”.

⁶⁹ Schimmelfennig (2007) rightly questions here what is distinctly ‘European’ in the principles and norms exported by the EU. As he points out, “whereas it may be granted that regionalism is a unique feature of EU external relations, democracy, human rights and market economy are Western principles that are propagated by non-EU Western countries (such as the United States) and other international organisations (e.g., the Council of Europe or the OECD) as well.

be observed in the EU's tendency to design its policies and strategies for regional groupings of countries rather than for individual states (Schimmelfennig, 2007).

In examining which factors shape EU norm diffusion, Manners (2002) suggests six different modes. Interestingly, these six factors appear to represent a combination of purely structural and agent-based structural power, or of 'power by example' and 'power by relations' in Manners's (2002) words. The first mode is 'contagion', which captures the completely unintentional diffusion of ideas and norms from the EU to other political actors. A case in point of this mode is the way in which the EU represents a model of regional integration for other regions. The second mode is 'informational diffusion', which stems from the largely passive normative power present in EU strategic communications, such as new policy initiatives, and declaratory communications, including Presidency *démarches* from the EU rotating Presidency. The third mode is 'procedural diffusion', which operates through the institutionalisation of the EU's relations with third countries. This involves "initiating and institutionalising regular patterns of communication or partnership, for example through accession procedures, stabilisation and/or association agreements, the European Neighbourhood Policy, African, Caribbean and Pacific relations, and Strategic Partnerships" (Manners, 2009: 3). As we shall see in the next section, procedural diffusion is a typical case of overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃. The fourth mode, 'transference diffusion', also reflects a type of TNPO overlap, this time between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃. Transference diffusion operates either through trade, or through aid and technical assistance, such as through the PHARE programme in the former accession countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the European Development Fund (EDF) in the ACP countries. The fifth mode is 'overt diffusion', which results from the physical presence of the EU in partner countries. Overt diffusion concerns the promotion of principles and norms through the presence of Commission delegations (EU delegations from 2010 onwards) and embassies of EU member states in the partner countries. Again this mode is an overlap of TNPO, notably between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃ (see below). The sixth and final mode determining EU norm diffusion is the 'cultural filter'. As Manners (2002) explains, this factor mediates the impact of international norms and political learning in third countries and, as such, leads to learning, adaptation or rejection of the diffused norms. To illustrate the 'cultural filter', he points to the EU's promotion of democratic norms in China and of human rights in Turkey.

The final mode chimes with Goldstein and Keohane's claim that worldviews "are embedded in the symbolism of a culture and deeply affect modes of thought and discourse" (1993: 8). Even more so, it corresponds with the mechanism of 'social learning' (see Figure 1,

p.51). According to Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, this mechanism incorporates the perception that the EU is “the formal organisation of a European international community defined by a specific collective identity and a specific set of common values and norms” (2004: 667). Whether a third country internalises the EU’s projected norms then depends on the degree to which it regards them as appropriate in light of the collective identity, values and norms (*ibid.*). This brief overview of the variety of factors contributing to the way in which EU norms are disseminated reveals the affinity of Manners’s normative power model with social constructivism, with its emphasis on the importance of shared norms, discourse and identity, normative suasion and socialisation processes. Manners (2009: 3) indicates himself that normative power should be perceived as ‘persuasive’ in the actions taken to promote norms and as ‘socialising’ in the impact of these actions. As will be indicated in detail in the next section, such mechanisms as socialisation and social learning (see Figure 1, p.51) can indeed be used to capture how the EU’s partners internalise the projected norms based on their value-judgements of the appropriateness or legitimacy of the norms.

To summarise, the above outline highlighted to what extent ideational factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU’s TNPO. In essence, it sought to demonstrate that ideational factors constitute an important determinant of the EU’s TNPO. However, while TNPO₃ was conceived here in its ideal type, in practical terms, it is often used together with material incentives, such as financial assistance, and/or with institutional elements, such as political dialogue. This insight brings us to the following section, which focuses on the extent to which the EU’s TNPO also derives from the overlap between the three TNPO structures.

3.2.4. Overlap between the three TNPO structures

As already apparent from the previous section, there seems to be considerable overlap between the three TNPO structures. Indeed, while TNPO₁, TNPO₂ and TNPO₃ are the material, institutional and ideational structures in their purest forms, in practical terms, they are often found to interact with each other. This is particularly true for TNPO_{2micro}, which is present in two different overlaps, notably in TNPO_{2micro-3} and TNPO_{1-2micro-3}. To grasp the overlap between the structures, rational institutionalist and sociological institutionalist approaches are drawn upon as well as EU external governance perspectives. Amongst other things, this involves going back to our toolbox (see Figure 1, p.51), thereby demonstrating which intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU impact can be used to trace instances of overlap between the TNPO structures. As highlighted, the toolbox distinguishes between a rationalist perspective, which assumes that third country actors adhere to a ‘logic of

consequentiality’, and a social constructivist approach, which assumes that third country actors follow a ‘logic of appropriateness’. As such, TNPO₁₋₃ falls mostly within the former logic, which maintains that political outcomes are brought about by strategically calculating actors seeking to maximise given interest. Conversely, TNPO₂₋₃ can be best explained by the latter logic, which upholds that outcomes are based on value-based judgements of norms as either appropriate or inappropriate behaviour (see e.g. Boekle *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, the section will also indicate that overlap between the structures testifies to a combination of purely structural and agent-based structural power.

It is important to note that it is not always straightforward to trace distinct patterns of overlap between the TNPO structures, as it may be difficult to detect the exact boundaries of the overlap. For instance, it is often hard to distinguish TNPO₂₋₃ from TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ and vice versa. By the same token, it is virtually impossible to observe TNPO_{1-2micro}, as the overlap between those two structures is nearly always bound to interact with TNPO₃. As such, overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2micro} appears to exist almost solely in theory. To clarify, by and large, TNPO_{1-2micro} encompasses the extent to which EU aid constitutes a direct intervention in third countries’ domestic structures and to which the assistance ensures contact between the two Parties, thereby establishing relationships between the EU and the third country that become institutionalised in one way or other (see e.g. Holden, 2009: 183). In practice, however, such direct EU intervention hardly ever occurs without deliberate attempts by the EU to push through domestic reforms that are inspired by or draw on the EU model. In short, TNPO_{1-2micro} thus appears to be inherently linked to TNPO₃. Some scattered instances of TNPO_{1-2micro} may be observed where this is not the case, but these are very rare and will not be covered in the present chapter. In contrast to TNPO_{1-2micro}, overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2macro} is more easily observable and does not necessarily interact with TNPO₃. Nevertheless, compared to the other types of TNPO overlap, TNPO_{1-2macro} is only a minor case of overlap, and will therefore be dealt with only briefly. In conclusion, given the apparent difficulties to trace the overlap between the three TNPO structures, the delineations of overlap presented below should be regarded as tentative rather than definitive. Moreover, this implies that the instances of overlap suggested in the thesis are indicative rather than exhaustive.

3.2.4.1. TNPO₁₋₂: overlap between TNPO_{1(material)} and TNPO_{2micro/macro(institutional)}

As mentioned, it is hardly possible to observe TNPO_{1-2micro} because the overlap between those two structures is nearly always bound to interact with TNPO₃. As such, overlap between

TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2micro} appears to exist almost solely in theory. In contrast, overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2macro} does not necessarily interact with TNPO₃ and is thus more easily observable. Even so, instances of TNPO_{1-2macro} are not that common and are largely confined to the security realm. Instances of overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2macro} are most likely to occur in instances of how the EU may rely upon regional security organisations to gain more influence over third countries in the security domain. This concerns two types of regional security organisations: regional security organisations in which the EU is represented indirectly - notably through a substantial membership of EU member states -, such as in the OSCE and NATO, and regional security organisations in which the EU is not represented, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO),⁷⁰ the GUAM Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development⁷¹, and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)⁷². With respect to the former case of TNPO_{1-2macro}, EU member states that are members of a regional organisation, most notably the OSCE and NATO, will often attempt to reach a common EU position within the organisation. This may provide the EU with a substantial amount of leverage, allowing it, *inter alia*, to indirectly co-determine outcomes of the organisation's decision-making procedures. Examples of this kind of overlap include the EU's support for Ukraine's recent accession to NATO and for Georgia's current bid to join NATO, support which significantly frustrates Russia. With respect to the latter case of TNPO_{1-2macro}, in turn, the EU tends to engage with 'rival' security organisations, such as the SCO, GUAM and CSTO, attempting to secure some kind of cooperation, whether in the form of dialogue or in the form of actual joint security activities. The underlying goal of such engagement attempts by the EU is to balance the influence of these organisations, and in particular the influence of the dominant member countries within the respective organisations, in the security domain.

3.2.4.2. TNPO₁₋₃: overlap between TNPO_{1(material)} and TNPO_{3(ideational)}

One way in which the EU attempts to diffuse ideas, principles and norms is by coupling them with or channelling them through the provision of such material incentives as market access and financial assistance (cf. Manners's notion of 'transference diffusion', see above). By the same token, the EU draws on its formidable trade power to promote non-trade issues, including such principles and norms as sustainable development and respect for social rights.

⁷⁰ The member countries of the SCO are Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

⁷¹ GUAM comprises Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova.

⁷² The CSTO consists of Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Belarus.

These two examples point to the interaction of ideational and material factors that may occur between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃. The overlap between both structures largely constitutes agent-based structural power, as the overlap derives mostly from conscious EU agency. Yet, in some cases, the overlap clearly testifies to structural power that is purely structural in nature. A case in point is when producers and/or legislators in a third country experience the necessity to adopt EU product standards as a result of competitive pressures (cf. the notion of ‘competition’, see above). The remainder of this subsection outlines the different kinds of overlap that may occur between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃.

To begin with, the provision of technical and financial assistance appears to be a potent tool in the EU’s efforts to export its internal practices, norms and rules, which are often aimed at affecting enduring change in the domestic environment of the targeted countries. As Petrov highlights, technical assistance provided under the auspices of EU funded assistance programmes comprises a variety of activities, ranging from investment in infrastructure to assistance in legal drafting and education (2008: 50-51). More in particular, EU technical assistance covers, among other things, the exchange of expertise and know-how, the provision of early information, especially on relevant legislation, the organisation of seminars and training activities, assistance in drafting national legislation in accordance with the *acquis*, and the modernisation and restructuring of specific sectors (e.g. agriculture, agro-industrial) in consistency with the EU rules and standards (Petrov, 2008: 50-51). This illustrates that the EU’s assistance programmes go far beyond the traditional use of development aid and have become highly interventionist and reformist. As Holden concludes, “this is a prime example of how structural power goes beyond creating dependency in developing countries to include shaping legal and institutional frameworks” (2009: 18). In financing and implementing this wide range of assistance activities in third countries, the EU thus encourages specific institutional and legal reforms of those countries’ domestic frameworks in accordance with the EU’s own regulatory frameworks, allowing the EU to expand its own governance model and regulatory system. Moreover, if successful, this ‘export’ of regulatory norms and EU-modelled practices is functionally convenient for the EU. To illustrate, transposing the *acquis*, whether in full or in part, contributes to the establishment of a favourable regulatory climate in the recipient country, therefore facilitating direct foreign investment by European firms and encouraging the mutual liberalisation of markets (Petrov, 2008: 34; also see Prange-Gstöhl, 2009: 5301). A clear example can be found in the EU’s energy security policy. In view of safeguarding its energy security, the EU is increasingly encouraging far-reaching rules-based governance reforms in neighbouring energy producing and transit countries, modelled on the EU’s internal energy market and governance rules (Youngs, 2007: 2). The EU does so in

order to “extend transparency, efficiency and certainty beyond the EU’s frontiers - crucial to helping the long term investments necessary for our energy security” (Ferrero-Waldner, as quoted in Youngs, 2007). The Baku initiative, launched in 2004, testifies to this overall aim. As Youngs points out, it is aimed at “driving energy sector reform in the [Caspian] region, around EU regulatory standards - once again using Europe’s internal market as a template” (2007: 3). So far, the EU has already provided considerable funding and investment for energy infrastructure development in the region. Similarly, the Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe Programme (INOGATE) programme serves already to modernise and develop energy transport infrastructure in 18 South-East European and former Soviet countries.

Insofar as such EU assistance packages offer tangible material benefits to partner countries, norm adaptation and rule compliance may occur as a result of a positive cost-benefit assessment by the third countries. That is, when offered the possibility of assistance, the latter weigh up the costs and benefits of the proposed or required norm adaptation in view of their material interests and political preferences (see e.g. Warkotsch, 2009). Accordingly, they comply with the EU’s rules⁷³ and norms if the domestic adaptation costs are smaller than the benefits of the material rewards (cf. Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier’s external incentives model). Material reinforcement mechanisms can also be used indirectly through the transnational channel to mobilise societal actors (e.g. human rights NGOs or corporate actors) in the target state to put pressure on their government to change its policy and adapt to the suggested community norms and rules (cf. domestic empowerment). Over the years, civil society support has become an integral part of the EU’s democracy and human rights promotion policy (see e.g. Balfour, 2006: 118; Youngs, 2001a & b). For transnational reinforcement to be effective, it follows that the costs of putting pressure on the government should be smaller than the expected community rewards (Schimmelfennig, 2005). However, as Schimmelfennig concludes from the experience of the former candidate states in Central and Eastern Europe (CEECs), the main channel of international reinforcement in the CEECs is intergovernmental, because “societies are too weak vis-à-vis the states, and electorates are too volatile, to serve as effective agents” of domestic change through material reinforcement (2005: 828).

Reinforcement mechanisms can also be punitive rather than rewarding. In this perspective, for a partner country to conform with the EU’s rules and norms, the costs of the EU’s punishment need to exceed the costs of domestic adaptation. As mentioned previously,

⁷³ Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier’s understanding of ‘EU rules’ covers a broad range of issues and structures. To name just a few, they comprise rules for regulation in specific policy areas, rules of political, administrative and judicial process, and rules for the set-up and competences of state and sub-state organisations (2005: 7).

the EU also uses intangible symbolic forms of rewards and sanctioning, notably through rhetorical action (see e.g. Warkotsch, 2008: 228; Manners, 2009: 3). For instance, EU statements (e.g. Council declarations) often serve to publicly praise a country's norm adaptation or condemn its non-compliance (cf. naming and shaming). While the EU frequently resorts to this kind of symbolic punishment in case of norm violation, it is less tempted to apply material forms of sanctioning, such as aid reduction, arms embargoes and visa bans (see e.g. Youngs, 2001a, 2001b). Indeed, although the EU uses conditionality to promote democracy⁷⁴, amongst other norms, it often shies away from imposing punitive measures in reaction to norm violation (Schimmelfennig, 2007; Youngs, 2001a). As Youngs explains, "European policy-makers [see] a more positive, incentives-based form of conditionality as more legitimate and potentially more effective" than the use of sticks (Youngs 2001a: 192). This is based on the belief that cooperative engagement is more conducive towards enticing democratisation than an approach of isolation (see e.g. Balfour, 2006: 119).⁷⁵ This belief applies especially to the EU's policies for countries without a membership prospect. Put differently, in the EU's relations with non-candidate countries, conditionality is not a decisive policy tool for EU norm diffusion (see e.g. Schimmelfennig, 2009; also see above). The range of democracy and governance projects that the EU funds and implements in these partner countries is indeed more cooperative than coercive; most of these assistance programmes are voluntary and agreed with recipient countries, many of which are governed by non-democratic regimes (Youngs, 2009: 897). However, in the absence of (effective) conditionality, rule transfer and norm diffusion seem even less likely at first sight. For instance, the proposed governance reforms might be controversial in the eyes of the domestic governments. However, as we will see further on, given the limits of conditionality, the EU increasingly resorts to external governance by transgovernmental networks and functional modes of cooperation in order to transfer its governance model, and thus to disseminate such values as transparency, accountability and participation. In this perspective, the EU does not directly promote democratic norms of governance as politically sensitive norms, but instead tends to diffuse them through functionally-oriented sectoral cooperation (Freyburg, 2010; see also Freyburg *et al.*, 2009; Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009).

So far, we can conclude that the overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃ largely constitutes agent-based structural power, as it derives mostly from conscious EU agency. Yet,

⁷⁴ For more on the EU's use of democratic conditionality, see e.g. Schimmelfennig & Scholtz (2008).

⁷⁵ As we shall see in the empirical chapters, this belief is not always shared among all the EU member states. That is, some member state governments often prefer the use of material sanctions in cases where clear norm violation has occurred.

there are cases where the overlap between the two structures testifies to structural power that is purely structural in nature. As captured by the market and the competition modes of governance, it concerns cases where the EU's impact on third countries derives from the 'presence' of its internal market rather than from its conscious actions. Governments or societal actors are induced to adapt domestic policies and regulations to those of the EU. Following a rationalist logic of action, they do so because ignoring or violating the EU's rules and regulations would entail net costs (cf. negative externality). For instance, if foreign companies want to enter the EU's market, they may have no choice but to adopt EU rules or standards (e.g. product standards).

A final type of overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃ occurs entirely via the transnational channel and is even more indirect than in the case of domestic empowerment through material reinforcement, in that the agency does not lie at the level of the EU, but at that of European companies. The overlap perceives foreign direct investment (FDI) from European businesses as a form of people-to-people contacts through which EU norms and best practices are promoted. In other words, this final type of TNPO₁₋₃ encompasses the extent to which FDI from European companies allows for 'transnational socialisation' (see toolbox in Figure 1, p.51) of domestic work force into EU labour and social rights as well as the European business environment and technological excellence, thereby exposing local labour force to European working conditions as well as to EU business practices, including participation in decision-making, accountability and transparency. The overlap rests on the assumption that the presence of European firms in EU partner countries will produce spillover effects to improve the socio-economic climate from the bottom-up, and thus expand EU influence through the export of the EU's technical excellence and its socio-economic model (see e.g. Denison, 2009; Peyrouse, 2009a). This might be particularly relevant as a complementary - or even alternative - mechanism of EU norm diffusion in third countries where traditional mechanisms of EU impact, including political conditionality, are either absent or inefficient, especially in states governed by non-democratic regimes. How then is this type of TNPO₁₋₃ manifested? To begin with, in working with local labour force in their foreign plants, European companies share their advanced knowhow and technical excellence and efficiency.⁷⁶ More importantly, however, another area of European expertise that is exported is the preoccupation with social capital.⁷⁷ As clarified by Peyrouse, this preoccupation reflects the European corporate philosophical credo, associated with the European quality of life, that "the greatest wealth of a country or a company stems from its

⁷⁶ Of course, it is noteworthy that not all European companies active outside the EU recruit staff locally.

⁷⁷ It would be naive to assume that this applies to all the European companies that work abroad with local labour force.

development of human potential, not only its profit-making ability” (2009a: 13). Denison specifies the content and implications of the EU preoccupation with social capital, indicating that “[European] companies build into their commercial offers the norms and tools of long-term political and social development, through comprehensive packages of targeted training, education and welfare provision with clear linkages and impact beyond the [business] sector” (2009: 10-11). Denison expounds on the long-term, reformist effects of the export of these EU best practices for the domestic or local socio-economic climate, and suggests that the companies’ contribution might even transcend the development of a more efficient local labour force, planting the seeds of a middle-class “likely to engender broader social progress” (*ibid.*).

3.2.4.3. TNPO₂₋₃: overlap between TNPO_{2micro/macro(institutional)} and TNPO_{3(ideational)}

In constituting the interaction between institutional and ideational factors, TNPO₂₋₃ encompasses the extent to which ‘institutions matter’ as the site for socialisation through dialogue. The overlap can be observed at both the micro-institutional and macro-institutional level, although it occurs predominantly at the former level. In essence, TNPO_{2micro-3} encompasses modes of rule transfer and norm diffusion based on EU-initiated processes of communication and social learning. In contrast to the interaction between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, overlap between TNPO_{2micro} and TNPO₃ thus largely follows a logic of appropriateness, capturing how third country actors internalise EU norms not because they calculate the consequences of the norm adaptation but because they feel that norm conformance is ‘the right thing to do’. As Manners (2009: 3) argues, normative power implies the use of persuasive action, which involves constructive engagement, the institutionalisation of relations, and the encouragement of dialogue between the parties. The theoretical mechanism underlying processes of socialisation suggests that, through constructive dialogue, the socializee (i.e. the third country) is persuaded by the legitimacy of the socialiser’s (i.e. the EU) interpretations of the world and changes its identity and interests accordingly (Checkel, 2005: 812; also see Warkotsch, 2009: 252). As the outsider fully internalises the projected norm, norm diffusion through persuasive action is assumed to be more sustainable than norm compliance resulting from strategic calculation, which might end when the incentive structures changes (Checkel, 2005: 813; Warkotsch, 2009: 252).⁷⁸

⁷⁸ However, for normative suasion to be successful, certain conditions need to be met. As Warkotsch indicates, these include that “educational practices have to be carried out consistently, over a reasonably long period of time” (2009: 253).

Socialisation is a key instrument of the EU's democracy promotion agenda. As Youngs observes in this regard, the "EU's strategy [is] characterised by an aim to develop deeply institutionalised patterns of dialogue and cooperation as means of socialising political elites into a positive and consensual adherence to democratic norms" (Youngs, 2001b: 193 & 195). According to Youngs, "the socialisation approach is designed to create opportunities for 'imitation and demonstration effects' and starts with very modest expectations of introducing the vocabulary of democracy into domestic discourse and inducing elites to at least pay lip service to democracy" (Youngs, 2001a: 359). Put differently, by including the issue of democracy in institutionalised relationships, the EU puts the issue on the table. The EU can then try to involve government representatives from the partner country in a dialogue, "unleashing a dynamic of socialisation around democratic norms" (Youngs, 2001a: 359). Once actors are persuaded of the legitimacy or appropriateness of the socialiser's interpretations, they begin to truly internalise the external principles and values. Accordingly, Freyburg (2009) defines democratic socialisation as "a process of attitude change toward democratic governance as a consequence of exposure to democratic rules and decision-making practices". Exposure to and familiarisation with normative principles is built in in the wide range of dialogue venues that the EU has devised for its relations with partner countries (cf. Manners's notion of procedural diffusion, see above). First and foremost, the EU formally institutionalises its cooperation with third countries and groups of countries through bilateral and regional agreements.⁷⁹ The latter ensure the progressive development of formal comprehensive ties encompassing regularised cooperation on a wide scope of subjects, including trade, competition, justice and home affairs, education, transport, environment, regulatory standards, human rights and democracy. As these agreements constitute the legal framework of the institutionalised cooperation, they take centre stage in terms of providing formal dialogue mechanisms. That is, they establish permanent institutional set-ups for regular meetings, such as technical committees and sub-committees. Political dialogue takes place at various governance levels, ranging from the level of high-ranking politicians and decision-makers, through that of senior bureaucrats as well as lower-ranking officials, to the parliamentary level. Moreover, political dialogue forums can also be brought into being in a more *ad hoc* fashion, which could then still be institutionalised formally at a later stage, for instance through the conclusion of a strategic partnership with the country or region in question.

⁷⁹ EU bilateral agreements and regional arrangements include the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) in the Western Balkans, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the Russia Common Strategy, the Cotonou Convention with the ACP countries, and the bilateral trade cooperation and development agreements concluded with, *inter alia*, South Africa and Mexico.

In addition, the EU disposes of a whole array of dialogue mechanisms as part of the cooperation programmes that are designed to encourage and support the implementation of the commitments made under the formal agreements. Most of these dialogue mechanisms draw on the assumption that for socialisation to be successful, “educational practices have to be carried out consistently, over a reasonably long period of time” (Warkotsch, 2009: 253). In this light, EU socialisation efforts can be seen as attempts to “teach” partner countries the ideas and norms underlying the EU’s policies in order to persuade them that these norms and values are appropriate, and encourage them to internalise the projected norms and rules (Schimmelfennig, 2009) (cf. ‘social learning’, and Manners’s notion of ‘cultural filter’). As such, the EU engages in socialisation processes, amongst other things, by organising exchange programmes bringing third state officials on short-term trips to the EU and by funding conferences, seminars and partnership programmes. In Latin America, for instance, Grugel has observed that the EU seeks to spread its principles of regional integration and good governance through “research funding, seminar programmes, and the creation of a fund to provide for the regular exchange of ideas within Latin America, in imitation of its own policies” (2004: 612). However, as mentioned earlier, third country internalisation of the projected norms - following a logic of appropriateness - depends on the extent to which the country identifies with the EU - as the formal embodiment of a European international community - and the extent to which it perceives the projected rules and norms as appropriate in light of this collective identity (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004: 667). One type of transgovernmental cooperation that has so far been largely overlooked in the literature, but which may appear particularly suited for socialising officials from authoritarian states into democratic modes of governance is Twinning, an EU assistance instrument that establishes transbureaucratic cooperation between a sub-unit of public administration in an EU member state and the equivalent institution in a partner country (Freyburg, 2009, 2010). As Freyburg (2009) clarifies, the aim of Twinning is to offer the administrative expertise and (technical) know-how of European practitioners to third state public administrations. In the run-up to the Eastern enlargement of 2004 and 2007, Twinning proved very efficient for transposing the *acquis* to the accession countries. Following this success, Twinning also became an instrument for exporting the *acquis* to countries without a membership prospect; it is now widely used in the EU’s neighbourhood for approximating domestic legal and administrative standards to those of the EU “as a means to manage interdependence and foster integration below membership” (Freyburg *et al.*, 2009). An additional asset in the context of the ENP is the aptitude of Twinning projects for transferring democratic modes of governance. In socialisation terms, Twinning projects are expected to expose officials in third country

administrations to “rules and norms incorporated in the corporate identity of the respective socialisation entity”, in this case European liberal democracies, “and to render them more susceptible to democratic governance” (Freyburg, 2010). In practice, this implies attempting to trigger attitudinal change in the administrative culture of the partner countries by building up intensive working relations through which third country practitioners are exposed to key democratic rules and decision-making practices inherent to European bureaucracies, including public participation transparency and accountability. As we shall see below, this use of Twinning for democratisation purposes should be situated within a wider strategy of the EU to transfer modes of democratic governance through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral level.

Importantly, alongside the various dialogue mechanisms designed for third state officials, the EU’s national and regional cooperation programmes also provide numerous opportunities for dialogue with civil society. Dialogue with societal actors is particularly relevant in the context of the EU’s democracy promotion strategy, which considers a pluralist and independent civil society as a crucial aspect of democracy building and human rights awareness building (see e.g. Balfour, 2006: 118). The profile of EU democracy assistance funding confirms this claim, with civil society support receiving a considerable share of the resources, oriented particularly to human rights NGOs⁸⁰ (Balfour, 2006: 118; Youngs, 2001a: 362; Youngs, 2001b: 192). As captured by the mechanisms of ‘transnational socialisation’ and ‘transnational social learning’ (see toolbox in Figure 1, p.51), the dialogue venues set up under the EU’s democracy promotion policy also serve to socialise and persuade ‘outsiders’, this time members of society instead of members of the regime. As Adamson clarifies, the aim is to “convince the local population of the benefits of creating independent civil society organisations and interest groups, and attempt to socialise members of society [...] to prioritise such issues as human rights concerns, press freedom, and other components of liberal democracy” (2003: 22). To conclude, it is important to point out that EU socialisation power is executed also through the EU’s presence ‘on the ground’. Acting as residential representatives of Brussels in the partner countries, the EU delegations, EU Special Representatives and, to a lesser extent, the embassies of EU member states all contribute to the provision of first-hand dialogue opportunities with third countries (cf. Manners’s notion of ‘overt diffusion’, see above). Since a significant part of their task is to engage in dialogue

⁸⁰ This overwhelming attention paid to secular NGOs of the western advocacy type also points to a weakness of the EU’s policy, notably its narrow identification of indigenous civil society (Balfour, 2006: 118; also see Adamson, 2003). Moreover, in partner countries governed by non-democratic regimes, the EU often feels constrained in its civil society promotion actions, in the sense that it feels like it has no choice but to cooperate with civil society organisations (CSOs) that are engaged in non-political services only, or more generally, with CSOs tolerated by the government (see e.g. Schimmelfennig, 2009: 18).

with local officials and societal actors, their relevance in terms of socialising the ‘outsider’ should not be overlooked.

At this stage, it is clear that TNPO_{2micro-3}, in the form of rule transfer and norm diffusion based on EU-initiated processes of communication and social learning, constitutes agent-based structural power, as those dialogue processes of socialisation are driven consciously and deliberately by the EU. It is noteworthy that this makes it fully distinct from behavioural adaptation as a result of ‘lesson-drawing’ or ‘unilateral policy emulation’ (see Figure 1, p.51). They do not occur in the overlap, but fall entirely under TNPO₃ and reflect a purely structural type of structural power, as norm compliance is induced by domestic factors rather than by pro-active EU norm promotion. However, we cannot draw a fully conclusive picture of TNPO₂₋₃, without covering the overlap occurring at the macro-institutional level. As mentioned previously, the EU does not only encourage bilateral and regional dialogue, but also multi- and plurilateral dialogue. As Manners points out (2009: 3), persuasion in the external promotion of norms also involves the encouragement of multi- and plurilateral dialogue. In other words, the EU also attempts to diffuse its norms and values through persuasive action and dialogue at international institutions. The EU’s wide-spread policy of actively supporting institutionalised multilateralism promotes the EU as a partner and a teacher (cf. social learning). As Holden suggests, in this way, the EU tries to “encourage patterns of behaviour, modes of thinking and modes of governance favourable to [its] interests, seeking a world based on liberal capitalist and multilateral values where its economic weight and institutional expertise give it a central role” (2009: 19). That the EU attempts - and quite often succeeds - to gain a central position in influential international institutions and establish forms of global governance favourable to its values and modes of operation, is above all clear from its dominant role in the WTO (see above). The EU’s ability to use the WTO as an instrument to spread its regulatory system is perhaps most concretely exemplified in the case of the WTO accession process. As a loyal member of the working parties set up for guiding the accession process of applicant countries, the EU has huge leverage over future WTO member states, which as a requirement for accession have no choice but to alter their domestic legal and economic institutional frameworks in accordance with EU demands raised in the pre-accession talks.⁸¹

As highlighted above, the EU also has a significant say in other areas of global governance and has played a crucial role in the development and adoption of important new multilateral legal instruments, such as the Kyoto Protocol, the ICC and several disarmament

⁸¹ Here one could even argue that this is an instance of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃, as the EU’s leverage at the WTO obviously draws on its extensive trade power.

regimes and initiatives. Even in cases where the EU itself is not a member of the organisation, but is represented by all or nearly all its member states, it attempts to use the institution as a multilateral dialogue venue for diffusing its values and norms. For instance, the EU regularly uses the multilateral level (e.g. the OSCE and the COE) to reinforce its attempts at norm diffusion by conferring prestige or shame upon a norm compliant or norm violating state (see e.g. Manners, 2009).⁸² At these multilateral venues, EU attribution of prestige may vary from public declarations of praise to support of membership, whereas EU attribution of shame may involve the use of symbolic sanctioning or public condemnation, e.g. through EU declarations at the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna. Moreover, in its bilateral cooperation settings, the EU often links its projected rules and norms with the corresponding or overarching international ones, such as those from the OSCE and the UN. The fact that this linking increases the legitimacy of the projected rules and norms has proved to contribute to the likelihood of adaptation (Freyburg *et al.*, 2009; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004: 668).

Before moving on to the next - and final - type of TNPO overlap, it is important to stress that, as noted in the introduction to the present section, it is not always straightforward to trace distinct patterns of overlap between the TNPO structures given the relative fuzziness of the boundaries of TNPO overlap. This is most obvious in the case of TNPO₂₋₃ and TNPO₁₋₂₋₃, which are often hard to distinguish from one another.

3.2.4.4. TNPO₁₋₂₋₃: overlap between TNPO_{1(material)}, TNPO_{2(institutional)} & TNPO_{3(ideational)}

TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ encapsulates instances of overlap between all three TNPO structures. Although this final type of TNPO overlap may also apply to the macro-institutional level of TNPO₂ rather than to the micro-institutional level, this section only focuses on instances of overlap applying to the micro-institutional level, and thus only outlines overlap between TNPO₁, TNPO_{2micro} and TNPO₃.⁸³ In the most basic - and most comprehensive - respect, TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ encompasses the extent to which EU cooperation agreements with third countries both establish institutionalised relationships and offer options for the provision of technical and financial assistance, which in turn serve to diffuse norms and values and/or to export parts of the *acquis* into the legal orders of the partner countries (see e.g. Petrov, 2008: 46). In the same context, it also captures how these EU agreements offer options for the formalised incorporation of

⁸² Interestingly, by the same token, Russia and China employ the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as an instrument to diffuse authoritarian norms among the Central Asian member states of the organisation. For an interesting account, see Ambrosio (2008).

⁸³ This is mainly in order not to overload the analytical model.

conditionality, which also serve to diffuse norms and values and/or to export parts of the *acquis* into the legal orders of the partner countries. Since the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993, political conditionality has been introduced to all new EU agreements with third countries, notably through the mandatory inclusion of an essential elements clause (see e.g. Balfour, 2006: 118; Petrov, 2008: 46; Schimmelfennig, 2007). The clause stipulates that respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are essential elements of the cooperation agreement, as both an objective and a condition of the institutionalised relationship. In case of violation of the essential elements, the legal terms of the agreement permit the EU to take appropriate measures, such as suspension or termination of the agreement. The introduction of the essential elements clause in its cooperation agreements has allowed the EU to put democracy, human rights and the rule of law at the forefront of its political dialogue with third countries. At the same time, however, the EU has been rather reluctant to terminate or suspend an agreement, whether in part or in full, in response to a country's violation of the essential elements clause. This joins up with the EU's overall reluctance to impose punitive measures in reaction to norm violation (see above). However, this does not undo the observation that the EU's strategy of democratic conditionality towards non-candidate countries has so far been inconsistent, with the EU imposing sanctioning measures mostly on *ad hoc* basis and "without any coherence or vigour" (Youngs 2001a: 357). Based on the seemingly variable application of political conditionality, several authors have argued that, despite the essential elements clause, a consistent use of political conditionality appears to be overshadowed by security and stability concerns (Youngs, 2004; Crawford, 2005; Warkotsch, 2006). In fact, some even go as far as suggesting that this is true for the EU's overall democracy promotion and human rights policy, which apart from conditionality comprises efforts at socialisation and domestic empowerment (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 16-17). For instance, with regard to the EU's human rights policy, Youngs states that security-related concerns have pushed the EU's policy more in the direction of the general promotion of international stability and have entailed a "state-oriented capacity-building bias" (Youngs 2004: 424). Inconsistency of the EU's policy due to stability and security concerns is directly related to the fact that many of the EU's non-European partner countries are governed by authoritarian or autocratic regimes; that is, while compliance with the EU's normative standards is politically costly for such governments, the EU can often not afford to isolate or anger them in view of strategic interests. The EU is aware that if the political costs of compliance with its democratic norms are not balanced out by the benefits of its economic or diplomatic rewards or the additional costs of punishment, non-democratic third states are unlikely to agree to conform to the projected norms. In turn,

the low consistency of the EU's political conditionality approach may negatively affect the policy's effectiveness. As Holland notes, the "seemingly variable application of conditionality [...] detracts from the EU's international credibility and influence" (2002: 135). However, to compensate for the limits and failures of the EU's traditional democracy promotion policy, the EU increasingly resorts to a more indirect way of transferring democratic principles, i.e. through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral level.

This alternative, more indirect model of democratisation, termed 'democratic governance promotion' (see e.g. Freyburg *et al.*, 2009), constitutes a second type of TNPO¹⁻²⁻³. Here the overlap is based on the assumption that the "intensifying web of association relations between the EU and associated third countries introduces a new form of democracy promotion through sectoral cooperation" (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 19). As already mentioned, the EU uses Twinning projects not only to export parts of the *acquis*, and thus to approximate domestic legal and administrative standards to those of the EU, but also to expose third country officials to democratic modes of governance. This indirect use of Twinning for democratisation purposes should be seen within a wider EU approach aimed at promoting democracy in a more indirect fashion, notably through transgovernmental, technical cooperation at the sectoral level, or as Freyburg *et al.* put it, "through the 'back-door' of joint problem-solving" (2009: 917). As such, democratic governance promotion differs from traditional democracy promotion in that it is targeted at the level of sectoral, bureaucratic policy-making rather than at the level of the general polity and political institutions, including elections, parties and parliament (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 18). It represents the subtle diffusion of democratic norms of governance common to administrative policy-making practices in western liberal democracies, such as horizontal and vertical accountability, transparency and stakeholder and general participation (Freyburg *et al.*, 2009). In other words, the EU attempts not just to "externalise its *material acquis rules* for regulating public policy in each sector of political cooperation between the EU and its neighbouring countries, but also *procedural rules* on how sectoral policies and actors are made transparent, accountable and participatory" (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 18; emphasis in original). The underlying assumption is that democratisation of sectoral governance - as stimulated indirectly through transgovernmental sectoral cooperation - may spill over into a third country's general polity "by inculcating democratic values, norms and habits on societal and bureaucratic actors and creating a demand for far-reaching democratisation of the entire political system" (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 19). Assessing the democratisation potential of EU transgovernmental functional cooperation with ENP countries, Freyburg *et al.* (2009) find that the EU does succeed in incorporating democracy-specific provisions in domestic legislation

and that this is more likely when the provisions are strongly codified in the *acquis* and are linked to the overarching international norms. However, they also observe that the implementation of the adopted rules into administrative practice is weak or even absent, pointing to a substantial gap between the adaptation of legislation and its application.

Within the literature, EU democratic governance promotion falls within the emergent strand of EU external governance, where it tends to be used alongside the notion of ‘network governance’. As highlighted in the previous chapter, a key proponent of the emergent literature on EU external governance, Lavenex (2008) has challenged the predominant view of limited EU impact on the neighbouring countries in the absence of accession conditionality by focusing on socialisation through ‘network governance’, which she claims is more effective than hierarchical policy transfer through conditionality. Network governance constitutes a third and final⁸⁴ type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃. Closely related to the second type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃, notably democratic governance promotion, this final type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ captures the extent to which the EU manages to export material *acquis* rules through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral level. The network mode of governance differs significantly from policy transfer through conditionality, although both modes are used to approximate third country legal and administrative standards to those of the EU. To begin with, whereas ‘governance by conditionality’ is hierarchical in the sense that it works through a vertical process of command, where the EU transfers predetermined, non-negotiable rules, ‘network governance’ allows for the extension of norms and rules in a process-oriented, horizontal, voluntaristic and inclusionary manner (Lavenex, 2008: 941-3). In particular, it captures the EU’s “attempt to establish stable communication between sectoral experts in the framework of the ENP subcommittees and the possibility of such sectoral experts participating in EU agencies and programmes” (Lavenex & Schimmelfennig, 2009: 798). Moreover, as the actors involved are experts and technocrats, who are not guided by their country’s national interests, policy transfer through network governance resorts to a de-politicisation of cooperation. This point largely corresponds with Magen’s observation that in promoting domestic reform that might be politically sensitive, the EU attempts to avoid or lower suspicion among the governing elites by using depoliticised, technocratic phrasing, and in particular the legalistic language of the *acquis* (Magen, 2007: 390-1). In short, the EU increasingly couches politically sensitive reforms in ‘low politics’ terms. Or as Magen puts it:

Rather than wielding the rhetoric of ‘liberty’ or ‘freedom’ in North Africa and the Middle East, or speaking overtly of ‘transformational diplomacy’, use of the *acquis communautaire* [...] acts

⁸⁴ As mentioned above, it is important to note that the instances of TNPO overlap suggested in the thesis are indicative rather than exhaustive. This implies that there might be more than three types of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃.

as a means of promoting EU interests while blunting the danger of resistance to external intervention. Indeed, Commission officials engaged in the design and pursuit of the ENP stress the tactical advantages of promoting what amount to highly intrusive demands on national sovereignty through formally depoliticised and legalised language (2007: 391).⁸⁵

In addition, network governance also allows for functionally specific forms of organisation, such as agencies (e.g. the European Environmental Agency), coordinating bodies (e.g. Europol), or less formalised policy networks (e.g. the DABLAS Initiative) (see previous chapter). Crucially, being voluntary and process-oriented in nature, network constellations constitute a fertile ground for mechanisms of impact based on socialisation, social learning and communication (see toolbox in Figure 1, p.51). In sum, network governance may well omit the formal, traditional levels of decision-making and policy-making and may forsake the traditional incentive-based tools for rule adoption; yet, as highlighted by Slaughter, “behind the façade of technical adjustments for improved coordination [...] and uniformity of standards lie subtle adjustments” of domestic laws (Slaughter, 2004: 59). In the ENP, this subtle creation of ‘joint regulatory structures’ through network governance applies to cooperation in several areas, including environment, migration, transport and economic policies (Lavenex, 2008). In the area of internal security, for instance, Lavenex and Wichmann (2009) find that the EU increasingly resorts to network governance in order to obtain the ENP countries' participation in the realisation of the EU's internal security project, thereby extending its internal transgovernmental networks to ENP countries. Interestingly, as noted by the authors, although on paper the EU's approach allows for “horizontal patterns of co-owned cooperation”, in practice, the integrative potential of the policy networks is undermined by “the lack of mutual trust and institutional incompatibilities in ENP countries” (Lavenex & Wichmann, 2009). Thus, what is supposed to be extended network governance is in reality “an attempt at unilateral policy transfer by 'softer' means” (*ibid.*).

To summarise, TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ encompasses three types of overlap involving all three TNPO structures. Clearly, all three types are agent-based structural power, as they are driven by conscious EU agency. However, while the first type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ captures a direct form of TNPO overlap, the latter two reflect more indirect forms of interaction between the three structures. Indeed, the first type captures the extent to which EU cooperation agreements allow for options for the incorporation of conditionality, which in turn serve to promote norms and principles and/or to export parts of the *acquis*. In contrast, the second type of

⁸⁵ This practice of de-politicisation is mainly driven by the European Commission, which is no surprise given that the Commission represents the EU's bureaucracy and technocracy, is responsible for *acquis* transposition, and runs nearly all the EU governance programmes in the partner countries.

TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ encompasses the extent to which EU agreements allow for the promotion of norms and principles, and in particular democratic governance norms, not through direct political leverage at the intergovernmental level (i.e. in the form of conditionality), but through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral, bureaucratic/technocratic level. Similarly, although in a somewhat less indirect fashion, the third and final type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ grasps the extent to which EU agreements allow for the export of material *acquis* rules through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral, bureaucratic/technocratic level. Importantly, in view of the EU's power over non-candidate countries, and in particular over states governed by non-democratic regimes, the latter two types of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ appear to constitute more promising sources of influence than the type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ involving the direct, intergovernmental channel of conditionality. It will be interesting to see in the empirical part of the thesis to what extent this applies to the Central Asian republics.

The remainder of the present chapter first provides an operational definition of the TNPO concept. It then integrates the notion in an analytical model, which will serve to guide the empirical analysis of the thesis. Drawing on the definition of TNPO and the hypothesis derived earlier on from the theoretical overview, that section will also specify the core mechanisms and conditions under which TNPO is expected to operate. The chapter ends with an outline of how the TNPO framework will be used to examine the hypothesis in the empirical part of the thesis.

3.2.5. Defining TNPO

In providing an operational definition of the TNPO concept, it is useful to return to the provisional definition given in section 3.2.1. According to the provisional definition, *TNPO is a theoretical framework that seeks to assess the extent to which an actor's power over another actor derives from his/her control over a constitutive mix of three structures, which determine the range of options available to the other actor.* As outlined in detail above, this constitutive mix of structures comprises three structures, notably a material, an institutional and an ideational structure. Moreover, the term 'constitutive' also reflects the considerable level of overlap occurring between the structures. In other words, TNPO serves to assess the extent to which an actor's power over another actor derives from his/her control over a material, an institutional and an ideational structure and the interaction between the structures, which, *ceteris paribus*, determine the range of options available to the other actor. Importantly, such a definition of TNPO can only work based on the assumption that (i)

power, whether intentional or unintentional, active or passive, can be *transnational* in nature; that (ii) structures have an ‘enabling’ or ‘facilitating’ impact; and that (iii) structures shape and determine the context within which actors operate and relate with each other (see Hay, 2002; Holden, 2009; Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 27). Accordingly, it is essential to consider that TNPO constitutes power wielded not directly *over another ‘actor’*, but directly *over the underlying ‘structures’* that determine the range of options available to that other actor. TNPO thus constitutes power wielded by an actor indirectly over another actor. This proposition has led us to define TNPO as follows: *TNPO encompasses A’s indirect power over B through his/her control over a constitutive mix of material, institutional and ideational structures, which shape or set the context within which B operates and in which s/he relates with A.* This makes it, for instance, difficult for B to resist initiatives or reject offers proposed by A. Put differently, A’s TNPO over B facilitates his/her capacity to obtain a desired outcome from B. In more operational terms, the concept can be defined in the following way: *TNPO is the degree to which an actor in the international realm wields power over another actor through his/her control over a constitutive mix of material, institutional and ideational structures, which shape or set the context within which the other actor operates and in which the two relate with each other.* It is important to stress that TNPO in essence constitutes a form of agent-based structural power, in the sense that it encompasses A’s capacity to affect the underlying structures of B’s political, legal, socio-economic and security environment, in line with A’s interests (see more below). However, A’s control over the structures, and the interaction between them, goes beyond agent-based structural power, as it may also derive from purely structural mechanisms of impact (e.g. externalisation, societal lesson-drawing, etc). Indeed, in some cases, A is empowered by a structural force irrespective of A’s conscious or intentional agency. Hence, it is accurate to state that A’s control over the three TNPO structures, and the interaction between them, derives from a combination of agent-based and purely structural mechanisms of impact.

Having offered an operational definition of the TNPO concept, it is necessary to emphasise that concepts usually do not have an objective meaning independent from the theoretical or conceptual frameworks within which they are used (see e.g. Gale, 1998). A concept such as TNPO thus becomes much more meaningful when embedded in a framework of analysis. Therefore, in the next section an analytical model will be developed based on the notion of TNPO. Once developed, the framework of analysis should help us to demonstrate how an actor such as the EU can rely on its TNPO to obtain a favourable outcome, which in turn strengthens the EU’s TNPO.

3.3. Introducing the TNPO framework

3.3.1. *Developing a TNPO framework of analysis*

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the thesis argues strongly in favour of using a comprehensive, integrative understanding of power. This is above all reflected in the definition of the TNPO concept (see above). However, in order to use such a comprehensive notion in view of our attempt to gain a more accurate, holistic understanding of the EU's power vis-à-vis Central Asia, it is necessary to integrate the concept into a framework of analysis. In embedding the TNPO concept into an analytical model, it is essential to incorporate the two main features of TNPO. On the one hand, this means that the framework needs to account for the distinction between the relational and the structural level on which power is exercised as well as for the interplay between the two levels (cf. the central premise of the present thesis). On the other hand, this means that the model needs to encompass the extent to which TNPO is made up of three structures with considerable overlap. To those ends, we will draw on insights⁸⁶ from, amongst others, Hay (2002), Giddens (1995) and Young (1991) on the interplay between structure and agency, as well as on Keukeleire and MacNaughtan's (2008) concept of structural foreign policy. Let us start with considering the relationship between structure and agency, or in Hay's words, the relationship between 'context' and 'conduct' (Hay, 2002). Agency in the sense of 'conduct' refers to political action (Hay, 2002: 95-96). By contrast, structure in the sense of 'context' refers to the setting within which social, political and economic events occur and acquire meaning; as Hay explains, "by appealing to a notion of structure to describe context, political scientists are referring to the ordered nature of social and political relations - to the fact that political institutions, practices, routines and conventions appear to exhibit some regularity or 'structure' over time" (2002: 94).

As pointed out in the previous chapter, the thesis's central proposition that the analysis of power, as a comprehensive account of power phenomena, should consider both the relational and the structural level on which power is exerted as well as the interplay between them, finds support in the structure-agency debate in the social sciences. Here Hay asserts that "what is required is a mode of analysis [...] capable of reconciling structural and agential factors within a single explanation" (2002: 113). To illustrate this point in the field of EU studies, it is useful to refer to Keukeleire and MacNaughtan's conceptual study of EU foreign policy (2008). Rather than studying the EU's external agency solely through their notion of

⁸⁶ Several of these insights have already been covered, notably in chapter 2, section 2.2.3.

structural foreign policy, they develop a comprehensive conceptual framework based on a 'structural foreign policy - conventional foreign policy' continuum, which encompasses both conventional and 'neglected' - i.e. structural - dimensions of foreign policy (2008: 19 & 335). In line with Hay's proposition, Giddens (1995) argues that agent-focused theories and structuralist approaches can be seen to be complementary: on the one hand, resources, treated as structural elements of social systems, are drawn upon by actors in the instantiation of interaction (1995: 49-50). The power relations sustained in the regularised practices constituting social systems can be considered as reproduced relations of autonomy and dependence in interaction (*ibid.*). Domination, on the other hand, understood here as the sway that actors have over others and over the material world they inhabit, then refers to the structured asymmetries of the resources drawn upon and reconstituted in such power relations (*ibid.*). This corresponds with Wendt's constructivist claim that the interests and capabilities of states are determined by the underlying social structure in which states are embedded and which, in Wendt's view, is "constituted primarily by ideas and cultural contexts" (1999: 97). As Holden points out, the proposition that agents and structures are co-constitutive is the essence of the 'structuration principle' (2009: 12). This also includes the link between agency and purely structural power. To illustrate this, Holden refers to how the global economic system after the World War II was largely shaped by U.S. agency, notably via its development of international economic governance institutions, European integration (cf. Marshall plan) and Japan's economic recovery (*ibid.*). In other words, the U.S. developed a system "whose structural qualities would privilege" the role of the U.S. (*ibid.*). An additional theoretical insight in considering the relationship between structure and agency and how they interact, can be derived from Young (1991). As already mentioned, according to Young, the essential feature of what he labels 'structural leadership' lies in the ability to translate structural power into bargaining leverage as a means of reaching agreement (1991: 288-289). Young adds that "it makes sense to view the link between structural power and bargaining leverage as stemming from the existence of asymmetries among the participants or stakeholders in processes of institutional bargaining" (*ibid.*). In addition, he asserts that "bargaining leverage is necessarily relational; the important thing is what an actor stands to lose or gain relative to what others stand to lose or gain from institutional bargaining" (*ibid.*). This serves to indicate that any examination of the outcomes in institutional bargaining "need to rest on an assessment of the relative, in contrast to the absolute, circumstances of the participants", i.e. of the relational in contrast to the structural level (Young, 1991: 289).

As mentioned above, the juxtaposition of structure and agency is also overcome in Keukeleire and MacNaughtan's (2008) conceptual study of EU foreign policy, in particular

through their understanding of how structural foreign policy complements and interacts with conventional foreign policy. However, their conceptual framework is also inspirational for the second key feature of TNPO, in that it identifies various structures, notably material structures (social-economic and security), institutional (political and legal), as well as mental (e.g. values, identity and culture) structures. Moreover, their framework enables an extension of the analysis of foreign policy beyond the (inter)state-level to include the transnational level, which involves, *inter alia*, business and civil society actors (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 25-29). In addition, their approach suggests that it is not a matter of possessing or not possessing structural power, but rather a matter of ‘gradation’. That is, they see their framework as a continuum with several gradations of structural foreign policy and structural power. As Keukeleire (2002) puts it:

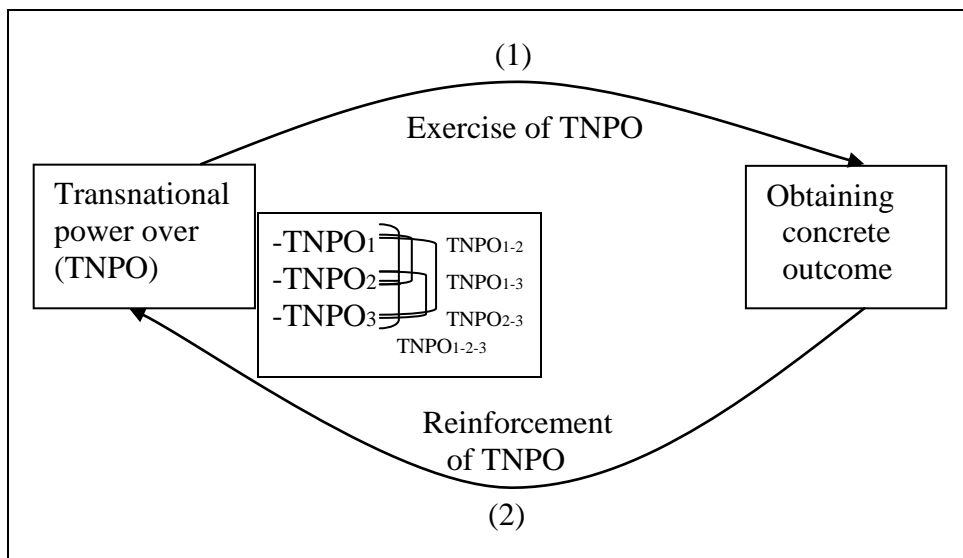
At one side of the continuum, an actor can possess structural power in the sense that this actor can indeed *decide* what the rules of the game are (with the other actor having only one option to choose). At the other side of the continuum an actor can possess only limited structural power in the sense that this actor can only influence to a limited extent the rules of the game that will be used by other actors.

Keukeleire and MacNaughtan’s conceptual continuum ranges from a “high degree of structural foreign policy” to “absence of a structural foreign policy” (2008: 255-297). This conceptual gradation allowed them to observe that the intensity of the EU’s structural foreign policy varies considerably from region to region, and that in some cases the extent of structural foreign policy towards these regions is rather limited or even completely absent.

Having outlined the propositions and approaches that we find insightful for developing the TNPO model, let us now set out the framework. This should be viewed as an initial attempt to depict the way in which TNPO might be considered to operate and will be further explored, developed and possibly refined in the subsequent empirical chapters. In this sense, the TNPO model introduced in this chapter forms a starting point for the empirical exploration of the EU’s influence vis-à-vis Central Asia, as well as for any possible further theoretical development as a result of that empirical investigation, in accordance with the iterative research approach outlined in the introductory chapter. Above all, the TNPO framework should be helpful in demonstrating how an actor such as the EU can rely on its TNPO to obtain a favourable outcome from a partner country (or region), which in turn strengthens the EU’s TNPO. The framework thus assumes that relational and structural power are complementary, or even mutually dependent. To recapitulate the definition of TNPO, the notion helps to assess the degree to which an actor in the international realm wields power over another actor through his/her control over a constitutive mix of material, institutional and

ideational structures, which shape or set the context within which the other actor operates and in which the two relate with each other. As mentioned above, this definition only holds on the assumption that power, whether intentional or unintentional, active or passive, can be transnational in nature. This allows us to consider the observation that globalisation and interdependence have significantly blurred the divide between private and public, as well as between the distinct levels of governance (international, interregional, supranational, regional, national, local), to the point where transnational forces interact with or exist alongside traditional intergovernmental relationships. In turn, the word ‘degree’ in the definition reflects an element of ‘variation’. That is, the degree of TNPO that an actor wields may not only vary from country to country and from region to region, but is also likely to be subject to change over time. It follows that an actor’s TNPO increases the more control s/he has across the three constitutive structures. Put differently, since TNPO consists of the combined effect of the actor’s control over these three structures, his/her TNPO increases the more influential s/he is in each of them. By the same token, having only a limited control over a particular TNPO structure noticeably undermines the actor’s overall TNPO. A further outline of the conditions under which TNPO occurs and operates is provided below. Let us now first have a look at the depiction of the TNPO model.

Figure 2: TNPO framework



As depicted in the diagram (Figure 2), the TNPO framework identifies two broad phenomena of influence, thereby reflecting the production of a mutually enhancing effect. More in particular, the framework distinguishes between the relational (1) and the structural (2) sphere in which the power phenomena occur, whilst accounting for the interplay between the two spheres. Most centrally, the diagram depicts how an actor’s TNPO derives from his

control over a constitutive mix of three structures (TNPO₁, TNPO₂ and TNPO₃) and from the possible interaction between them (TNPO₁₋₂, TNPO₁₋₃, TNPO₂₋₃ & TNPO₁₋₂₋₃). The phenomenon depicted by the upper arrow then indicates how the actor's TNPO enables him, in the relational sphere, to obtain a favourable outcome from another actor (cf. definition of relational power: A's ability to get B to do something he would otherwise not do). At the relational level, the actor thus relies on his TNPO as a resource in order to affect a (political) outcome. Put differently, TNPO is translated into relational power. Usually, this process will involve bargaining of some sort. In turn, the phenomenon depicted by the lower arrow indicates how the desired outcome subsequently reinforces A's TNPO over actor B. This occurs at the structural level, since A's favourable outcome seeks to influence the context - i.e. the TNPO structures - within which actor B operates and in which he relates with A. In sum, agency and structure are depicted as being mutually constitutive. This also implies an element of 'gradation' in the sense that the extent to which the obtained outcome is favourable to actor A depends on the degree to which he wields TNPO over B. In turn, the extent to which A's TNPO is reinforced by the obtained outcome equally depends on the degree to which the outcome is favourable to A. Of course, it is possible that another - unidentified - variable also contributes towards the attainment of the desired outcome. For instance, the occurrence of an unplanned event, which may suddenly improve political relations between the two parties, and which may thus positively affect the mood during the bargaining process. Other such unidentified variables may include aspects related to specific features of those involved in the bargaining process, such as strong leadership capabilities or personal relationships between negotiators. However, in view of presenting insights that are to some extent generalisable, the thesis needs to abstract political reality and therefore rules out the possible enabling impact of unidentified variables, and thus assumes that all else is held constant.⁸⁷ In other words, the thesis assumes that there is no enabling impact other than the effect of the identified independent variables.

3.3.2. Conditions under which TNPO operates

Before moving on to outline how the TNPO model will be used to examine the thesis's hypothesis, it is necessary to further specify some of the features of TNPO as well as the conditions under which TNPO occurs and operates. In doing so, this section partly draws on

⁸⁷ Indeed, in seeking to offer generalisable findings with a view to offering a better understanding of political phenomena, political science - as a science in its own right - is expected to abstract political reality rather than provide a full coverage of it. Yet, it should be pointed out that it remains debatable how far the researcher may go in abstracting political reality.

the features that Keukeleire and MacNaughtan (2008: 27) attribute to their notion of 'structural foreign policy'. To begin with, the structures that an actor aims at influencing, shaping or creating in pursuit of TNPO are not only viable in the short run, but are equally sustainable in the long run (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 27). Moreover, because the actor needs to ensure that the TNPO structures have a relatively permanent quality, establishing or affecting these structures within which the other actor operates can be more difficult and can take more time than affecting the behaviour of that actor in a specific situation (*ibid.*) In addition, the actor's TNPO can only be effective and sustainable if it is comprehensive and if it simultaneously focuses on the various TNPO structures (material, institutional and ideational) and mechanisms of impact (both the transnational and intergovernmental channels). As pointed out by Keukeleire and MacNaughtan, being comprehensive requires the use of a wide range of instruments (2008: 27). The latter condition, together with the condition that TNPO requires a sustained effort over the long term, indicates why the EU - more than individual states - is an apt actor to pursue TNPO.

As already pointed out, an actor's TNPO increases the more control s/he has across the three constitutive structures. Put differently, it is the combined effect of his influence over the three constituent elements that makes up the his TNPO over the other actor and that determines the extent to which he is able to obtain a desired outcome from the other. Applied to the EU, this means that the more TNPO the EU has over a third country or region, (i) the easier it will be for the EU to obtain a desired outcome from this third party, and (ii) the more favourable the outcome will be for the EU. For instance, in a case where the EU's TNPO is very strong - with the EU being highly influential across the three TNPO structures -, the desired outcome will not only be easily obtained, the outcome will also be extremely favourable to the EU, in the sense that the third party accepts the EU's proposal on the table across the board. Conversely, in a case where the EU's TNPO is rather limited in scope - with the EU having only a significant sway over one or two of the TNPO structures -, the desired outcome will be more difficult to obtain and will be less favourable to the EU. That is, the third party is likely to ask the EU to make compromises, and may attempt to make pay-offs; the EU may have to downgrade the contents of the proposal, for instance by removing or reformulating 'sensitive' issues.

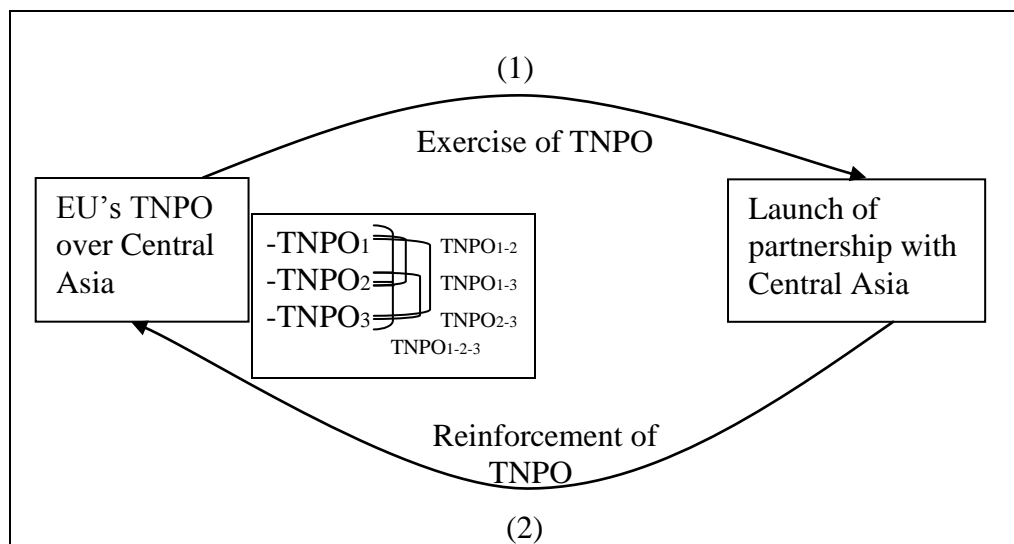
As a final step in presenting the TNPO concept, the next section will outline how exactly the TNPO model can be used to examine the thesis's central hypothesis.

3.3.3. Examining the hypothesis via the TNPO framework

As noted above, TNPO essentially constitutes a form of agent-based structural power, in the sense that it encompasses actor A's capacity to affect, in line with A's interests, the context within which B operates and in which B relates with A. Applied to our topic of inquiry, this means that the EU's TNPO over Central Asia constitutes a form of agent-based structural power, in the sense that it encompasses the EU's capacity to affect, in line with its interests, the context within which the Central Asian states operate and in which they relate with the EU. As will be indicated in the empirical chapters, the EU's policy towards Central Asia is shaped to a considerable extent by self-interest considerations, which suggests that the EU has clear interests in further accumulating TNPO over Central Asia. As will be shown in the next chapter, the EU's strategy for a new partnership with the region encapsulates the policy objectives deriving from these self-interest considerations. Taking that for granted, the aim of the empirical chapters is then to explore not 'why', but 'to what extent' the EU exercises and accumulates TNPO *vis-à-vis* Central Asia. More specifically, the aim is to use the TNPO framework in order to verify the viability of the thesis's hypothesis, which was previously formulated as follows: *the EU's ability to rally the Central Asian republics behind its ambitious partnership initiative testifies to the EU's power projection over the region. This power projection draws on the EU's influential position across a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures. The EU's power, in turn, is reinforced through the course of the implementation of the EU's partnership initiative.* By using the TNPO framework (see Figure 3, p.93), the hypothesis can be reformulated in the following way: *the extent to which the EU wields TNPO over Central Asia has enabled the EU to conclude an ambitious partnership with the five Central Asian states, which in turn reinforces the EU's TNPO over Central Asia.* In verifying the viability of this proposition via the TNPO model, the first step is then to examine in concrete to what extent the EU's power over Central Asia effectively derives from a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures and the overlap between them. To do so, we will draw extensively on our TNPO toolbox (see Figure 1, p.51) in order to trace and evaluate intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU impact across the three TNPO structures. The second step consists of examining to what extent the EU's TNPO has enabled the EU to conclude the partnership with the five Central Asian republics. In concrete, this means that we need to evaluate (i) to what extent the obtaining of the 'desired outcome', i.e. the partnership, was facilitated by the EU's TNPO, and (ii) to what extent the outcome is favourable to the EU. The third and final step is then to assess whether and to what extent the obtained outcome, i.e. the partnership, in its turn

reinforces the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. To that end, we need to evaluate (i) to what extent the EU Strategy is being successfully implemented and (ii) to what extent the implementation of the strategy enhances the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. In order to assess to what extent the EU's control over the three TNPO structures is further strengthened, we will again use the TNPO toolbox (Figure 1, p.51) to trace and evaluate intergovernmental and transnational pathways of EU impact.

Figure 3: Examination of the hypothesis via the TNPO framework



As depicted in Figure 3, the TNPO framework allows us to account for the distinction between the relational (=1) and the structural (=2) level on which the EU's power over Central Asia operates, as well as for the interplay between the two levels. The upper arrow depicts the translation of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia into a desired outcome, notably the launch of a partnership with Central Asia. In turn, the lower arrow depicts how the implementation of the partnership initiative subsequently reinforces the EU's TNPO over the region, notably by further shaping and affecting the context - i.e. the TNPO structures - within which the Central Asian states operate and relate with the EU.

3.4. Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to offer a structurally integrative approach in its search for a conceptual tool and framework that are more adequate to study the EU's power over Central Asia than those offered by the prevailing theoretical perspectives (neorealism, rationalist and sociological institutionalism, and constructivism). In particular, the aim of the chapter was to

introduce an analytical approach that allows the thesis to challenge the consensual scholarly expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia. However, rather than bluntly rejecting the predominant theoretical perspectives, the chapter in fact suggested to incorporate some of the theories' propositions in developing a model that combines elements from agent-focussed approaches with insights from structural perspectives, notably from new realist IPE and EU external governance perspectives. As such, the chapter thus worked eclectically with arguments drawn, on the one hand, from neorealism, neo-institutionalism and constructivism, and on the other, from the EU external governance literature and new realist IPE. In doing so, it took into account the five theoretical building blocks presented in the previous chapter. Central to the thesis's theoretical argument is the claim that an analysis of power, *in casu* an analysis of the EU's power over Central Asia, needs to account for the distinction between the relational and the structural level on which power operates, as well as for the interplay between the two levels. To account for this, the chapter introduced a conceptual tool - and corresponding model -, which it labelled 'transnational power over' (TNPO). Rather than being a theory, TNPO provides a conceptual frame that serves to broaden and, arguably enhance, our understanding of the EU's power over the Central Asian states, and over third countries in general. The concept is an analytically eclectic device, which serves to assess the degree to which, in today's globalised and interdependent world, the EU's power over third countries derives from its control over a constitutive mix of material, institutional and ideational structures, making it difficult for the EU's partners to resist its initiatives or reject its offers. The element of 'transnational', as suggested by the term, is a crucial part of the TNPO concept in that the notion assumes that power, whether intentional or unintentional, active or passive, can be transnational in nature. In order to trace and assess transnational and intergovernmental mechanisms of EU impact across the three TNPO structures and their respective overlap, the chapter constructed a toolbox, which centres on three analytical distinctions: (i) EU-driven versus domestically driven mechanisms, (ii) mechanisms based on rationalist logics of action versus mechanisms following constructivist logics of action, and (iii) agent-based versus purely structural mechanisms of TNPO. Once the TNPO concept had been fully defined and dissected, the chapter proceeded to integrate it into a framework of analysis. In sum, the chapter argued that the TNPO concept and corresponding model is useful for the following reasons:

- Whilst assuming that structures provide an 'enabling' environment, the TNPO model defines power as context-shaping.
- In considering the importance of structural factors, the TNPO model accounts for both the relational and the structural level on which power is exercised, whilst capturing the

dialectical relationship between the two levels. As such, the TNPO model presents structure and agency as being mutually constituent.

- The TNPO concept works eclectically with on the one hand rigorous, parsimonious approaches, and on the other, structuralist approaches.
- The TNPO concept strikes the right balance between on the one hand neorealist approaches that preclude any role for normative factors, and on the other, social constructivist (or sociological institutionalist) approaches that undermine the impact of material factors by being preoccupied exclusively with the EU's normative objectives (e.g. democracy promotion).

Having presented the theoretical part of the thesis, the aim is now to empirically explore the thesis's theoretical claim. This is the subject of the following chapters.

PART TWO – THE EUROPEAN UNION’S ‘TRANSNATIONAL POWER OVER’ CENTRAL ASIA

Chapter 4 – Contextual background: the EU’s motives *and* limits for accumulating TNPO over Central Asia

4.1. Introduction

Ahead of the empirical analysis of the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia, it is useful to start the empirical part of the thesis with a broad overview of the contextual background of the EU’s engagement with the Central Asian republics. This chapter therefore aims to shed light on the EU’s involvement in Central Asia, illuminating the Union’s interests and presence in the region since the countries’ independence from the former Soviet Union until the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007. In doing so, the chapter seeks to highlight the underlying motives of the EU’s pursuit of TNPO *vis-à-vis* the Central Asian states. At the same time, the chapter identifies a number of ‘countervailing factors’. In further explaining the ‘context’, it indicates that the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia might be hampered - possible weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of countervailing forces, which may relate both to internal factors, i.e. intrinsic to the EU, and external factors, i.e. extrinsic to the EU.

The chapter shows that post-Soviet Central Asia remained outside of the EU’s main sphere of interest until the early 2000s, tucked away in the outskirts of Europe’s eastern periphery. This lack of interest was reflected in the relatively low level of EU engagement with 1990s post-Soviet Central Asia. Moreover, European aid provided to the five Central Asian states was considerably lower than the means given by the EU to the other countries of the former Soviet bloc. In 2001, the Union even intended to reduce its assistance to Central Asia. However, following the terrorist attacks of 11 September and the launch by the United States of its large-scale military operation in neighbouring Afghanistan, the region was suddenly put in the spotlight, revealing its geostrategic importance. This therefore provided an initial trigger for increased European political interest in this peripheral zone. The second part of the chapter, in turn, points to the existence and impact of countervailing forces that may mediate the EU’s TNPO over the Central Asian countries. Indeed, the EU’s TNPO might be hampered - possible weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of countervailing forces. These relate both to internal factors, i.e. *intrinsic to the EU*, and external factors, i.e. *extrinsic to the EU*. The group of external countervailing forces consists of factors that are intrinsic to the third party, *in casu* the Central Asian states, as well as factors that are extrinsic to them.

The chapter comprises two parts. The first part is structured chronologically, thereby identifying two stages of EU involvement in Central Asia in the period 1991-2007: a stage of relatively limited EU interest and involvement (1991-2000), and a stage of gradually increasing engagement as a result of the EU's growing geostrategic interests in the region (2001-2007). Culminating in the launch of an ambitious EU strategy for a partnership with Central Asia, this second stage indicates that the EU's policy towards the region has been increasingly shaped by self-interest. In light of the thesis's theoretical claim, this suggests that by 2007 the EU had clear interests in further accumulating TNPO over Central Asia. In turn, the second part of the chapter identifies countervailing factors that may mediate the EU's TNPO over the Central Asian countries, which relate both to endogenous and exogenous factors.

4.2. The first decade of EU involvement in Central Asia: 1991-2000

4.2.1. Early post-Soviet Central Asia: a non-priority for the EU

This subsection discusses the EU's policies towards the former Soviet bloc in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It shows that while the policies were designed to build ties with the former Soviet bloc countries and help them on the path of transition, they distinguished rather heavily between the different post-Soviet states. As such, the Central Asian republics received only a fraction of the attention paid by the EU to the group of former socialist countries. Above all, the limited involvement of the EU in 1990s Central Asia mirrored its scarce interests in this peripheral and rather unknown region.

Following the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the EU conducted a conceptual redivision of the former Soviet bloc. In practice, this implied that the EU formulated two distinct policy agendas for two very different groups of countries, closely reflecting the EU's foreign policy priorities at the time. On the one hand, the Union extended the already existing assistance programmes 'Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring their Economies' (PHARE) to those countries in Central and Eastern Europe likely to join the EU in the medium-to-long term, notably Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. These states were not only geographically closer to the EU, but they were also more dependent on the Union in comparison with the other countries of the former Soviet bloc. Moreover, and partly as a result of this, they were also more inclined to comply with the conditions imposed by the EU. On the other hand, the Union created a new assistance programme for the remaining group of former Soviet states, i.e. 'Technical

Assistance for the Common Wealth of Independent States' (TACIS).⁸⁸ Both PHARE and TACIS provided technical and financial assistance to support these countries' transition towards market economies and democracies. However, the PHARE beneficiaries received more than double the amount spent on the TACIS programme.⁸⁹ This clearly indicates that Central and Eastern Europe was much more important for the EU's 1990s foreign policy than the other countries of the former Soviet bloc (Hughes, 2007: 76-96). In addition, the EU also made a clear categorisation within the group of TACIS beneficiaries, with Russia and the Ukraine being prioritised over the others and receiving around 50% of the total TACIS budget.

As a next step in its conceptual redivision of the former Soviet bloc, the EU institutionalised the policy-oriented disconnection of Central and Eastern Europe from Russia and the other former soviet bloc countries. It did so by concluding 'Europe Agreements' with the Central and Eastern European candidate member states and Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with the TACIS beneficiaries countries, including the Central Asian countries. While the Europe Agreements were aimed at integrating the partner countries into the EU, the PCAs served mainly just to strengthen the EU's bilateral ties with the TACIS countries and to develop broad cooperation. Replacing the 1989 Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the Soviet Union, PCAs were concluded with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1995, and with Uzbekistan in 1996.⁹⁰ A PCA was signed with Turkmenistan in 1998, but the agreement is not yet enforced as the ratification process remains frozen (see more below). The conclusion of a PCA with Tajikistan was delayed until 2004 due to the civil war and subsequent perceptions of instability (see more below).⁹¹ The overall goal of the PCAs was to provide a broad framework of economic and political cooperation with the former Soviet states, supporting them in their transition towards open market economies and political democracies. Yet, although the PCAs with the Central Asian countries provide for the establishment of political dialogue⁹², covering human rights, constitutional reform and regional issues, they are primarily economically and technically oriented, with their political and institutional framework being less elaborate than that of other PCAs, particularly those with Russia and Ukraine (Matveeva, 2006: 85; Petrov, 2002). Still, the PCAs with the Central

⁸⁸ The TACIS beneficiaries included Russia, the Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the five Central Asian states.

⁸⁹ In the period 1990-1999, the EU spent ca. EUR 10,200 m. on PHARE and EUR 4,200 m. on TACIS (Hughes, 2007).

⁹⁰ These three PCAs entered into force in July 1999 for an initial period of ten years, automatically renewable on an annual basis thereafter.

⁹¹ The PCA with Tajikistan entered into force in January 2010. Previously, an Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-related Matters between the EU and Tajikistan had been in force since May 2005.

⁹² As we will see in more detail in chapter 6, the PCAs provide for three political dialogue structures, the 'Cooperation Council', the 'Cooperation Committee' and the 'Parliamentary Cooperation Committee'.

Asian republics provide the legal basis for cooperation across a wide range of sectors, including trade, economic cooperation, legislative approximation to EU norms and standards, and improvement of the business and investment climate.

In sum, the EU's conceptual redivision of the former Soviet bloc in the 1990s meant that the former Soviet states - except for the three Baltic states - were placed in the category of 'outsiders'. These states were to constitute the EU's eastern periphery, with whom contractual relations would not go beyond the level of 'partnership'. Situated at the most outward point of this eastern periphery, the Central Asian republics triggered only little interest from Brussels throughout the 1990s, even less so since the EU considered Central Asia as the most backward region in the former Soviet Union, and as the least inclined to adopt European norms and values (Kassenova, 2007). Indeed, while the Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Uzbek leaderships were enthusiastic about forging stronger relations with the EU when signing the EU-initiated PCAs, their enthusiasm was only marginally reciprocated, especially as the EU's political engagement with the region remained low-key.

4.2.2. *Generous but invisible*

The EU may well have provided relatively small amounts of assistance to Central Asia in comparison with its aid to other parts of the former Soviet bloc; nevertheless, the Union has grown out to be the largest donor in Central Asia (Djalili & Kellner, 2008). At the same time, however, the EU's engagement with the region remained low in terms of visibility. Moreover, assessments of the impact of the EU's assistance programmes were mixed. Other donors in Central Asia, including the U.S. and the UN, were also criticised for the limited impact of their aid programmes, but they did not suffer from the same lack of visibility as the EU did.

The European Commission opened its first delegation office in Central Asia in 1994, in Almaty, the then capital of Kazakhstan. The delegation was charged with implementing part of the EU's technical and financial assistance in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.⁹³ Later on, the Commission opened a regionalised office in Bishkek and in Dushanbe, supervised by a *chargé d'affaires* and subject to the head delegation in Kazakhstan.⁹⁴ At the time, the Commission was already represented in Dushanbe, through the Central Asian office of the European Commission Humanitarian Office's (ECHO). This

⁹³ In 2006, the Commission moved the head office of the Delegation to Astana, Kazakhstan's new capital, with the remaining desks in Almaty functioning as a regional office.

⁹⁴ The office in Dushanbe opened in May 2004. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, the Commission delegation in Kazakhstan as well as the regionalised offices in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan became fully accredited 'EU Delegations', each headed by an EU ambassador.

regional office opened in 1993 in order to coordinate the EU's provision of humanitarian aid to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. ECHO assistance was generally provided to the most vulnerable parts of the population, usually living in disaster-prone areas, and consisted, among other things, of drugs, food and medical supplies.⁹⁵ In Kyrgyzstan, humanitarian aid was provided, for instance, in 1994 and 1995 to help people after floods and earthquakes. In Tajikistan, ECHO assistance was delivered throughout the civil war, which lasted from 1992 until 1997, unlike TACIS, which was halted after only a few months due to security risks owing to the start of the war in 1992. By 1995, the domestic situation was deemed safe enough for TACIS to resume. From 1996 onwards, the Central Asian states have also been beneficiaries of the ECHO programme 'Disaster Preparedness ECHO' (DIPECHO), designed for natural disaster preparedness. After the Tajik civil war, the EU continued to deliver humanitarian aid to Tajikistan, supplemented with technical assistance under TACIS and other aid programmes.⁹⁶ As an instrument introduced shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, TACIS was designed to "promote the transition to a market economy and to reinforce democracy and the rule of law in the partner States" (Council, 1999). TACIS in 1990s Central Asia was mostly aimed at economic development, capacity building of government services and poverty reduction (European Commission, 2002). From 1994 onwards, TACIS was also used to fund Tempus projects in Central Asia, aimed at supporting the modernisation of higher education through cooperation with universities from EU Member States. Apart from TACIS and ECHO, a range of other EC instruments were introduced in the 1990s to assist the Central Asian countries. Local NGOs and media, for instance, have been sponsored through the European Initiative (now Instrument) for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), although the number of projects remained scarce until the mid-2000s. In turn, food security aid has been provided through the 'Food Security Programme'. Moreover, the EU has been delivering macro-financial assistance. This has included one-off targeted assistance for the impact of the 1998 Russian economic crisis. In addition, the five Central Asian countries were granted preferential access to the EU's market under its 'Generalised System of Preferences' (GSP).

Next to these national assistance programmes, the EU established a number of regional and transboundary programmes, dealing with transport, energy, environmental issues and drugs trafficking. Two of these programmes even go beyond the region of Central Asia

⁹⁵ International Crisis Group (2006) reports that between 1992 and 2004 Tajikistan was given around EUR 155 million in humanitarian aid for public health, food security, and transport issues (aviation, security, road and rail, and infrastructure) and sanitation. Between 1992 and 1999, Kyrgyzstan was given EUR 20 million in assistance from ECHO.

⁹⁶ However, due to a deadly incident involving a TACIS expert who had been kidnapped, the EU's technical assistance to Tajikistan was suspended from 1998 until 2000. The other assistance programmes, including ECHO, EIDHR and FSP, remained operational.

and encompass other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and in particular countries bordering the Black and Caspian Seas. The first region-wide programme was the 'Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia' (TRACECA), established at a conference in Brussels in 1993. The programme foresees the construction of a vast east-west corridor connecting the EU to the three South Caucasus and five Central Asian states via the Black and Caspian Seas. It provides both technical aid and infrastructure rehabilitation projects, adding up to a value of EUR 110 million in 1993-2002. In turn, the 'Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe' programme (INOGATE) was established in the mid-1990s as part of EU efforts to strengthen its energy security. The programme is based on an umbrella agreement concerning the integration of oil and gas transport systems, signed by no less than 21 countries. An EC regional programme that is exclusive to Central Asia is the 'Central Asia Drugs Action Programme' (CADAP), originally a French initiative launched after a 1996 declaration by President Chirac. Following French promotion and assessment efforts, the programme was adopted by the Commission, which established CADAP in early 2001. Aimed at supporting the Central Asian states at fighting drugs trafficking across their borders, CADAP comprises "legal advice, training, strengthening law enforcement capacities, forensics and intelligence gathering together with preventative measures, such as anti-drug projects in prisons" (Matveeva, 2006: 88-89).

With EU assistance between 1991 and 2002 totalling around EUR 944 million, the EU grew out to be the largest donor in the region (European Commission, 2002: 12). However, this cumulative amount conceals the paradox that, despite being the most generous donor in the region, the Union was a rather invisible development actor in Central Asia, especially in comparison with other donors, including the U.S., the UN and Asian and Muslim development agencies. Moreover, assessments of the impact of the EU's assistance programmes were mixed. One of the problems was the breadth of the objectives and programmes, which negatively affected the time delivery, effectiveness and follow-up of the projects (European Commission, 2002). Another obstacle was that reform in the Central Asian states was slower than in most other CIS countries, amongst other things due to limited administrative and technical capacity. Crucially, this indicated that the Central Asian states faced problems that went beyond matters of 'transition' for which TACIS was not adequately equipped. As a first step in accommodating for the special needs of the Central Asian countries, the Commission introduced its Food Security Programme to the region in 1996 to address problems of inadequate access to food in impoverished parts of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The programme is based primarily on the provision of budget support to ministries and government agencies to implement reforms, in particular in the areas of agriculture, social

protection and state statistical agencies. However, many donors concur that there are serious limits to budget support when used for promoting reform in a poor country such as Tajikistan (International Crisis Group, 2006: 16). Following an extensive review of its assistance to the region, the Commission acknowledged and addressed many of the shortcomings of its assistance, both in relation to limited effectiveness and to limited visibility, as envisaged in its Regional Strategy Paper for Central Asia for the period 2002-2006 (European Commission, 2002). Amongst other things, the Commission responded to the need to concentrate its assistance on a much more limited number of priorities and programmes and to strengthen dialogue, both on regional cooperation and on TACIS priorities, including through the PCA dialogue mechanisms (*ibid.*).

4.3. From an invisible donor to a strategic player: 2001-2007

In the political and diplomatic sphere, the EU was even more invisible than it was in its aid delivery. Between 1991 and the early 2000s, EU diplomatic activity in the region was limited to the visits of only a handful of European officials. This further confirms the observation that 1990s Central Asia hardly appeared on the radar of the EU and its Member States. In what follows, we will see that the terrorist attacks of 11 September and the subsequent launch of the military operation in Afghanistan suddenly drew European attention to the region. Nevertheless, it took until 2004 before the EU as a whole woke up to the fact that relations with Central Asia needed to be intensified and that it had to become a more visible actor in this geostrategically significant region.⁹⁷

The terrorist attacks of 11 September and the subsequent launch of the military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan were a turning point in how the EU viewed Central Asia. In granting a new geostrategic importance to the Central Asian states, these events mobilised the political will in the EU to increase funding for and enhance engagement with the region, including in fields related to the EU's security. Following on from the Council conclusions of 17 October and 19 November 2001 and the EU Troika visit at Ministerial level to Central Asia, the General Affairs Council of 10 December 2001 called for a strengthening of relations with the region, *inter alia*, by enhancing "political dialogue with all countries in Central Asia" and by "targeting assistance to a reduced number of priority areas, including poverty reduction, social and economic development, good governance, environment and water management" (Council, 2001a). Moreover, the Council stated that action needed to be considered concerning border control and border management, and that

⁹⁷ For a map of Central Asia, see Appendix 4.

full use of CADAP needed to be taken to combat drug trafficking in the region (*ibid.*). Accordingly, the European Commission's Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 stipulates that the core objectives of assistance for the region comprise the promotion of stability and security, and support to the five countries in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction (European Commission, 2002: 17). In 2002, the Commission opened a 'Europa House' in Tashkent in order to coordinate the EU's assistance programmes in Uzbekistan, but as a liaison office, the Europa House has no formal authority. The new Strategy Paper focused on three priority areas: (i) support for institutional, legal and administrative reform, (ii) management of natural resources and development of infrastructure networks, and (iii) support in addressing the social consequences of transition. An important goal of the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper was to focus the TACIS bilateral programmes on "poverty reduction policies and programmes and on key trade and investment reforms in convergence with the EU while promoting civil society and democratisation" (European Commission, 2007a: 16-17). To this end, a large component of the bilateral programmes consisted of 'Small Project Programmes', including policy advice projects, civil society support programmes (IBPP), Managers' Training programme, Customs, Statistics, Tempus and EIDHR (*ibid.*). By using a regional strategy paper, encompassing cooperation with the entire region, rather than individual country strategy papers, the Commission introduced a new framework for assistance to the Central Asian states through a regional approach in order to respond more adequately to the challenges faced by the region, as well as to increase effectiveness, coherence and the overall impact of the assistance (European Commission, 2007a: 17). The approach reflected the extent to which the Commission struggled with ongoing debates over how to perceive Central Asia, i.e. as a unified region or as five distinct countries. However, once the implementation of the projects under the new framework was well under way, the Commission soon discovered the flaws of the new approach. On the one hand, it realised that in being involved in small-scale projects across a very wide range of areas, its assistance was still too broad and too scattered, which negatively affected the coordination and effectiveness of the overall impact.⁹⁸ On the other hand, the Commission realised that the regional dimension of the new approach, whilst very suitable for certain issue areas, was overemphasised, and that, as a result, its approach was not sufficiently adapted to the reality on the ground.⁹⁹ These shortcomings were gradually addressed by responding more readily to the individual needs and situation of the five countries and were fully taken into account in the formulation of the next strategy paper. Indeed, as we shall see

⁹⁸ Author's interviews at the regional office of the (then) Commission delegation in Almaty on 19 May 2008 and at the head office of the (then) Commission delegation in Astana on 28 May 2008.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

in more detail below, the current EC Strategy Paper for Central Asia, i.e. for the period 2007-2013, pursues a more balanced dual track of bilateral and regional cooperation, pursuing a regional approach for problems occurring across or involving all five countries, including water resources management, transport infrastructure and anti-drugs trafficking, whilst following a bilateral, tailor-made approach for individual national issues. Moreover, cooperation is now focused on a limited number of ‘focal sectors’, including rule of law and education.

Not to forget, the EU’s TACIS assistance under the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper also made several notable and durable achievements, including in the areas of institutional capacity and governance, and trade and development. In this regard, the EU’s technical assistance was particularly effective in issues related to regulatory reforms. Independent evaluations indeed showed that TACIS made a significant contribution to regulatory convergence and legislative approximation in those areas (see e.g. DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006). Moreover, the Commission launched the programme ‘Border Management in Central Asia’ (BOMCA) in 2003, designed to strengthen border management and facilitate legal trade and transit between the five countries.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, although boosted by the 2001 events, the EU’s interest in the region remained relatively limited, and was mainly concentrated with the Commission and those member states that had troops stationed in the region, including France and Germany. In support of NATO’s military campaign in Afghanistan, the latter two had opened a military base in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan respectively. A new and arguably stronger impetus came from the EU’s eastern enlargement in 2004 and the inclusion of the three South Caucasian countries into the ENP. As this brought Central Asia geographically closer to the EU (‘the neighbours of our neighbours’)¹⁰¹, this second call for intensified ties with the Central Asian states should be placed against the background of the EU’s overall concern with bringing stability and prosperity to its borderland states (see e.g. Kassenova, 2007, 2008). As laid down in the European Security Strategy of 2003, the latter is crucial if the Union is to safeguard its own security (Council, 2003). An important part of the EU’s response to face security threats in Central Asia are the BOMCA and CADAP programmes. In May 2004, the Commission decided to link BOMCA to CADAP, and merged the two programmes into one policy framework, which “represents the practical expression of the EU’s strategic interest in supporting the security and stability of the Central Asian region”.¹⁰² Later that year, the Commission, together with fifteen states from the Black Sea and Caspian

¹⁰⁰ BOMCA was based on an Austrian plan to launch a medium-size programme for training and capacity building of border guards in the Ferghana Valley (International Crisis Group, 2006; Matveeva, 2006).

¹⁰¹ See map of Central Asia in Appendix 4.

¹⁰² Source: <http://cadap.eu-bomca.kg/>

regions, launched the 'Baku Process', a ministerial-level initiative that links up with TRACECA and INOGATE. Participants pledged to hold regular ministerial conferences on energy and transport, and discuss increased harmonisation of the two sectors.¹⁰³ The initiative revealed the EU's interest in integrating Central Asian states in broader EU policies pursued under the ENP to support regional cooperation and integration.

A third - related - impetus for increased engagement with Central Asia was triggered by the Tulip revolution in Kyrgyzstan in March 2005 and the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan in May 2005. Both events crushed European hopes of successful colourful revolutions taking place in Central Asia following such events in the Ukraine and Georgia.¹⁰⁴ As such, the EU recognised that stability in the region was frail and that genuine democracy and good governance would not emerge in Central Asia without increased external involvement.¹⁰⁵ In addition, the need to become more active in the region gained further urgency because of the growing risk that the precarious situation in Afghanistan - where NATO was (and is) still struggling to contribute to peace and security - could destabilise the Central Asian neighbouring countries. At this point, the EU came to acknowledge that it was time to take new measures, recognising that the outcome of TACIS in Central Asia, although generally beneficial, fell somewhat short of expectations (see e.g. De Pedro, 2009). In particular, the EU realised that despite being the largest donor in the region, its involvement had so far had a limited effect, both in terms of the transformation of the countries and in terms of the enhancement of the EU's influence and visibility. A first step in increasing the EU's political engagement with and visibility in the region came in July 2005 with the appointment of a EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Central Asia.¹⁰⁶ His task is to coordinate the EU's activities in the region as well as to further develop a EU policy for Central Asia in close cooperation with the Council. Moreover, in representing the EU in the region, his function is to strengthen the Union's diplomatic ties with the Central Asian states and other relevant actors operating in the region (Quigley, 2007). A second move to enhance political engagement followed in March 2007, with the formal establishment of the 'EU Troika -

¹⁰³ Participating states were Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia (as an observer), Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

¹⁰⁴ The Tulip revolution, which led to the ousting of President Akajev, did not bring the anticipated and hoped-for reforms and improvements to Kyrgyzstan; instead, the country was confronted with on-going political upheaval, while the new - albeit democratically elected - President followed a course that looked increasingly similar to that of his predecessor. In turn, the Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan, which saw hundreds of peaceful protesters killed by government troops, painfully revealed how far President Karimov is ready to go in consolidating his autocratic rule over the country.

¹⁰⁵ The EU realised this once more after the interethnic tensions in Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, which arose in the wake of the overthrow of President Bakijev earlier in the year.

¹⁰⁶ The Slovak Jan Kubic was the first to be appointed EUSR for Central Asia. He was succeeded by the former French ambassador Pierre Morel in 2006. For more information on the position of EUSR, see Bossuyt *et al.* 2008, pp.108-9.

Central Asia’, an annual meeting at foreign ministerial level between the EU and the five Central Asian republics. This regional political dialogue setting is quite unique, in that it is currently the only international forum where all five Central Asian states are formally reunited at such a high political level. The forum already existed informally since December 2004, established as a follow up to the visit of then Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, to Central Asia in March 2004.¹⁰⁷ The overall aim was to reunite the five countries around one table and contribute to building confidence and mutual trust between them. The forum also served to support the Commission’s regional assistance strategy, enabling the Commission to discuss issues of common concern directly with the countries.

A final incentive for stronger ties with Central Asia emerged from the gas conflict between Russia and the Ukraine in early 2006, which revealed the need for the EU to scale back its energy dependency on Russia. The EU’s search for alternative oil and gas suppliers quickly led it to Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, which were both viewed as potential partners in the EU’s attempt to diversify its energy supplies. Related to this, enhanced EU involvement in the region was also necessary in order to counterbalance the strong influence of the region’s big neighbours, Russia and China. A monopolisation of Central Asia by both states was to be avoided, because it would jeopardise not only the EU’s chances of getting direct access to the region’s energy resources but also the Central Asian countries’ - already slow - progress towards genuine democracy and political pluralism. At this point, the EU came to acknowledge the need to devise a strategic document that would support and enhance the EU’s role in Central Asia in line with its interests. Officially tasked by the European Council in December 2006 to draft an EU political strategy for Central Asia, Germany seized its presidency of the EU in the first six months of 2007 as an opportunity to use its political weight in the Union and its strong ties with the Central Asian countries in order to step up the EU’s relations with the region and launch an ambitious strategy for a partnership. Endorsed by the European Council in Brussels on 22 June 2007, the final version of the Strategy was presented to the Central Asian states at the EU Troïka - Central Asia meeting in Berlin on 30 June 2007, the last day of the German Presidency. Reflecting an attempt to develop a comprehensive and long-term approach to upgrade relations with Central Asia, the Strategy provides a framework for enhanced cooperation, building *inter alia* on the existing PCAs and outlining joint goals to foster closer relations in the political, economic, and trade, as well as cultural and educational spheres. As mentioned above, the document presents both a bilateral

¹⁰⁷ Before March 2007, the forum had met four times: in Bishkek in December 2004, in Brussels in June 2005, and in Almaty in April and June 2006. While the first three rounds were held at political directors level, the latter one was held at ministerial level. The items on the agenda included trade and economic cooperation, justice and home affairs (migration and drug trafficking) and environment and water management (Matveeva, 2006: 90-91).

and a regional dimension of cooperation, taking into account the lessons learnt from its previous assistance initiatives. The regional pillar aims specifically at cooperation on cross-boundary issues, including anti-drugs trafficking, water management, energy and transport. The bilateral dimension, in turn, allows for a more ‘tailor-made’ cooperation with the five republics, which specifically considers the countries’ individual needs. This carefully considered balance between the regional and bilateral pillar of cooperation is also reflected in the EC Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia for the period 2007-2013, which provides a substantial support to the Strategy. The ‘Development Cooperation Instrument’ (DCI), the Commission’s new development aid instrument, was scheduled to replace TACIS in Central Asia in 2007 as part of a major overhaul of EC external assistance.¹⁰⁸ However, due to several delays in the implementation of a number of EC projects in Central Asia, TACIS remained operative after 2007 until all the projects were completed. To implement the Strategy, the Commission more than doubled its budget for the region, and released plans to have a fully accredited delegation in each of the five countries. Additional funding comes from a number of EU member states, which have committed themselves to launch new projects under the framework of the Strategy. France and Germany, for instance, are the lead coordinators in developing the ‘EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia’, which aims at supporting reforms and sharing experiences between the EU and the Central Asian Republics in the area of legal and judicial reforms. Progress of the implementation of the Strategy is discussed annually with the Central Asian foreign ministers at the EU Troika - Central Asia.

To summarise, while the EU’s overall engagement with Post-Soviet Central Asia long remained limited, the past decade has seen the EU’s role in the region gradually evolve from that of little more than an invisible and arguably ineffective donor to that of a full-fledged external actor. The EU’s desire to attain a greater presence and visibility in Central Asia culminated in the launch of an ambitious EU strategy towards the region, which the Union hopes will lead to a comprehensive partnership, encompassing enhanced cooperation in the political, economic and trade, as well as cultural and educational spheres.

¹⁰⁸ The 2007 overhaul of EC external assistance implied that the more than 30 funding mechanisms were condensed into six: DCI, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), pre-accession assistance, stability instrument, humanitarian aid and macro-financial assistance. The DCI is now the EU’s principal development instrument for development projects in partner countries, excluding Russia and the countries that fall under the ENP, which are now supported through ENPI. Nevertheless, building upon past and ongoing initiatives, including TRACECA and INOGATE, ENPI is also being used to finance a number of large projects that involve Central Asian states alongside countries from the South Caucasus or Black Sea region.

4.4. Countervailing factors

In further explaining the ‘context’, this section points to the existence and impact of countervailing forces that may mediate the EU’s TNPO over the Central Asian countries. Indeed, the EU’s TNPO might be hampered - possible weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of countervailing forces. These relate both to internal factors, i.e. *intrinsic to the EU*, and external factors, i.e. *extrinsic to the EU*. The group of external countervailing factors includes factors that are *intrinsic to the third party*, in *casu* the Central Asian states. In outlining these contextual factors, this section starts with a brief comparative classification of the Central Asian states, with particular attention to their political regimes and the socio-economic context.

4.4.1. Comparative classification of the Central Asian states¹⁰⁹

4.4.1.1. Political regimes

A cursory examination of political systems in Central Asia leads to one unmistakable conclusion: the region suffers from an acute democratic deficit.¹¹⁰ By any number of measures - those of Freedom House, the Voice and Accountability Scores of the World Bank, the Bertelsmann Transformation Index, the various indicators in the Polity datasets - the states of Central Asia rank among the least liberal, open and democratic in the world. With the exception of Kyrgyzstan, which in the early 1990s was touted as an “island of democracy” in the region (Anderson, 1999), this has held true throughout Central Asians’ experience as independent states. Any number of explanations - historical, cultural, socio-economic, elite dynamics, the external environment - can be invoked, indicating that the region’s authoritarian regimes are “overdetermined”.¹¹¹ However, while sharing a number of typical features, the authoritarian regimes in Central Asia differ in pluralism. Whereas Turkmenistan’s and Uzbekistan’s rank as extremely repressive, Kazakhstan’s and Tajikistan’s tend to be a bit “softer,” at times relying more on co-optation than outright coercion, whilst Kyrgyzstan has had moments of relative political liberalisation coupled with political instability linked to attempts by Presidents Askar Akaev (1991-2005) and Kurmanbek Bakiev (2005-2010) to impose stronger presidential rule. As such, some would classify the regimes

¹⁰⁹ This subsection is based on a draft version of Bossuyt & Kubicek (2011).

¹¹⁰ In the wake of constitutional reforms and October 2010 elections in Kyrgyzstan that were judged free and fair by outside observers, Kyrgyzstan may emerge - again - as an oasis in an authoritarian desert. However, given the political and ethnic violence in the spring of 2010, it is far from certain that political stability, let alone democracy, is assured.

¹¹¹ For a useful review of various perspectives, see Kubicek (2010).

by dividing the region “into a more semi-authoritarian north-eastern tier and an authoritarian or even dictatorial governed south-western tier; the former consisting of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and the latter of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan” (Warkotsch, 2009: 249).

Moreover, the Central Asian states - like many other new states - tend to struggle with the issue of “stateness”. Examples of “stateness” problems in the region are numerous: difficulties in constructing national mythologies to foster identification with the state (Marat, 2008; Ilkhamov , 2005); the 1992-1997 civil war in Tajikistan; sporadic ethnic violence between Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan that reached new heights in 2010; political violence in Uzbekistan; and the persistence of corruption and ‘clan politics’ that work against national unity and state capacity. The World Bank’s Governance Indicators on political stability, government effectiveness and the rule of law all touch upon aspects of “stateness” and state capacity. As indicated in Table 1, scores for most Central Asian states -Kazakhstan being the main exception - are very low. Fears of internal conflict and instability, in turn, contribute to the lack of democracy in the region by giving the leaders a rationale - notably order and stability - to centralise authority and prevent the emergence of an opposition.

Table 1: Governance Indicators in Central Asia, as percentile rank among all countries



Source: World Bank Governance Indicators; data initially retrieved for Bossuyt & Kubicek (2011)

A particular aspect of stateness that can be observed in Central Asia - and which is equally common for new states - is a strong concern over sovereignty. Recognising the relative weakness of their states and having a natural desire to establish their states as recognised, empowered actors in the global agenda, state leaders in the region tend to be very touchy upon actions that threaten their sovereignty. In the early 1990s, concern with state-building and sovereignty became an important preoccupation of the local regimes, precluding international cooperation even at a regional level. The clearest illustration is the “positive neutrality” stance of Turkmenistan (see e.g. Anceschi, 2008). After the so-called “colour revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan in 2003-2005, there was a renewed emphasis in the region on resisting outside pressure to support “sovereign democracy”, a Russian notion that found resonance in Central Asia, especially in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where presidents were nervous about a repetition of Kyrgyzstan’s 2005 “Tulip Revolution” in their countries (Isaacs, 2010; Fumagalli & Tordjman, 2010).

Another typical - and arguably problematic - feature of the Central Asian countries’ political landscape is that civil society remains a relatively weak political actor (see e.g. Adamson, 2002, 2003). True, a variety of organisations have emerged in Central Asia, often linked to *mahallas* (neighbourhood organisations), guilds, and *waqfs* (foundations) and mostly Islamic in nature, filling in to provide social services to people in need (*ibid.*). However, because of the dominance of clan structures and patronage politics, many associations (e.g. trade unions, business groups) are more interested in becoming a part of the system than pressing for political change. Many groups also tend to be apolitical and small in size, often more interested in working (and obtaining funds) from international partners than pressing an agenda against their Central Asian governments (Buxton, 2009). Those associations that do advocate more political issues such as human rights have found themselves repressed - as in the case of ‘Sunny Uzbekistan’ in 2005-2006 (see e.g. Stevens, 2010) - or marginalised - as in the case of the state-initiated National Commission for Democratization and Civil Society in Kazakhstan in 2004. Kyrgyzstan, however, is an exception in the region in that it has a relatively vibrant civil society. Yet, even there, civil society groups, especially western-backed ones, have at times faced harassment or repression from the government.

4.4.1.2. The socio-economic context

Central Asia was traditionally the most underdeveloped region of the Soviet Union. With the exception of Kazakhstan - which was much more integrated into the Soviet industrial economy and which experienced steep economic growth in the 2000s -, the average level of

wealth remains markedly low. As demonstrated in Table 2, large numbers of Central Asians subsist on less than two dollars per day, revealing a very high degree of poverty. As indicated in the table, overall levels of prosperity in most states in the region compare unfavourably to those in other states in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and North Africa. In turn, the extent to which the five states differ in size and resource endowments largely corresponds with their difference in national wealth. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have no hydrocarbon resources, and are the poorest countries in the region. Uzbekistan has the largest population and has some gas reserves. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have substantial energy reserves, and are the most prosperous countries in Central Asia.

Table 2: Economic indicators in Central Asia



Source: UN Human Development Report, 2009; data initially retrieved for Bossuyt & Kubicek (2011)

In contrast, the five countries differ much less with regard to their political economy. The overall inequality indicators for most Central Asian states may well compare favourably to those of the other countries listed in Table 2 (albeit still being high by continental European standards); however, control over the most valuable resources in all five Central Asian countries - hydrocarbons, pipelines, mines, power generation, large industrial enterprises - is subject to neo-patrimonial or patronage politics controlled by the president and his immediate family and clan. Political power in Central Asia is defined by the ability of leaders to control these patronage pyramids, which have been attributed as a hold-over of Soviet times, a result of economic shortages and an over-reliance of natural resources in the country's economic

profile, the weakness of formal political institutions and cultural practices in the region that pre-date Soviet rule (Collins, 2002, 2004, 2006; Ishiyama, 2002).

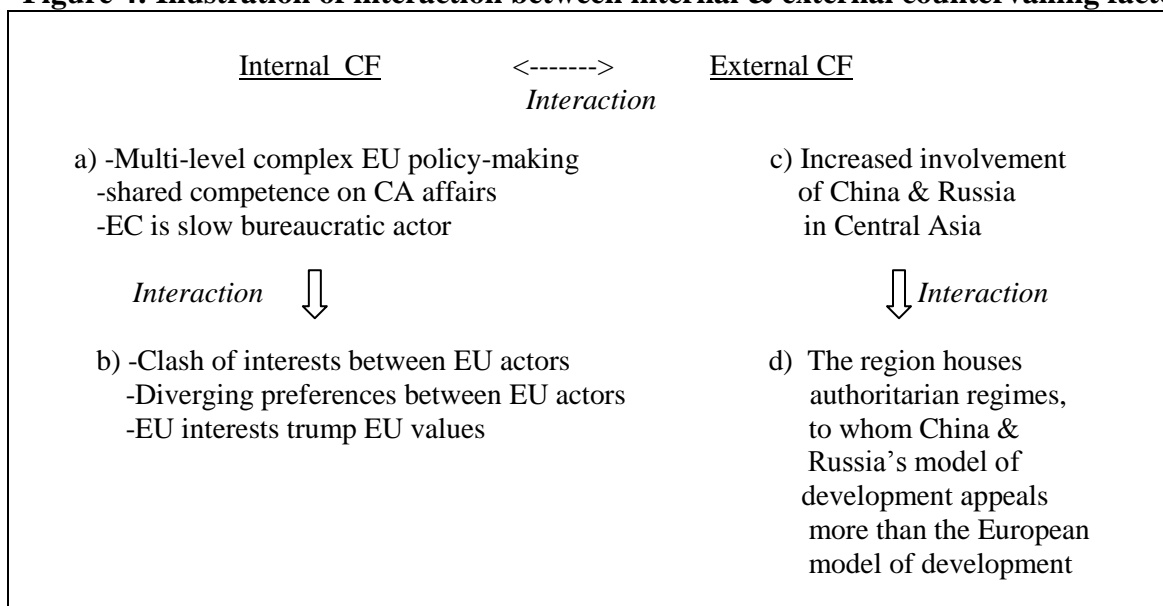
4.4.2. *Internal and external countervailing factors*

The above comparative classification of the Central Asian countries suggests that the domestic context of the five states may pose limits to the EU's TNPO over the region. Indeed, several of these contextual factors, such as the authoritarian nature of the regimes, may indeed be expected to act as intervening variables constraining the scope of the EU's TNPO. Clan politics in the Central Asian states, for instance, may pose limits to what the EU can do in terms of democratisation in the region, as it rests upon unelected and unaccountable informal institutions, shuts off would-be rivals from economic (and thereby political) resources, and often operates in opposition to the rule of law. The problem in Central Asia is not so much inequality per se, but the structures set up by the authorities to perpetuate that inequality to their advantage. Market-based reform – i.e. one of the goals promoted by the EU (see Chapter 5) – is very limited unless new economic elites emerge to challenge the status quo, as high-value sectors continue to be reserved for those who have demonstrated loyalty to the president. The EU's reform-based agenda is thus likely to encounter such limits given the elites' interest in preserving patronage networks and a more personalised approach to politics. Another example of the possible constraining impact of the domestic context relates to the states' resource endowments, which could affect the ability of the EU to encourage political change in the countries concerned. Larger states with more resources - i.e. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan - will, *ceteris paribus*, likely be less susceptible to pressure from the EU than smaller states with fewer resources - i.e. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

In addition, however, we may also expect an intervening - possibly weakening - impact on the EU's TNPO from factors that go beyond the countries' domestic context, such as the EU's complex institutional set-up and its conflicted nature (e.g. diverging preferences of EU Member States), or the strong competition that the EU encounters in the region from Russia and China. Hence, the thesis argues that any account of the EU's TNPO must be true to how the EU's power might be mediated – possibly weakened – by contextual factors. In accounting for the possible intervening impact of countervailing factors, the thesis distinguishes between “internal countervailing factors” and “external countervailing factors”. The former are factors that are *intrinsic to the EU*, such as the nature of the European Commission as a slow, bureaucratic actor, or the fact that EU competence on Central Asian affairs is a shared competence and hence subject to impact from disagreement between the

Member States based on their diverging preferences. ‘External’ countervailing factors, in turn, are factors that are *extrinsic to the EU*. These consist of factors that are intrinsic to the third party, *in casu* the Central Asian states (cf. domestic contextual factors), as well as factors that

Figure 4: Illustration of interaction between internal & external countervailing factors



are extrinsic to the third party. The former, for instance, may relate to the neo-patrimonial structure of the countries’ political economy, the fact that they have a weak civil society or the authoritarian nature of the regimes. The latter, in turn, may stem, for instance, from the strong competition that the EU encounters in the region from Russia and China. Importantly, internal and external countervailing factors may be expected to interact (see Figure 4).

In responding to the need to take the possible constraining impact of contextual factors into account, attention will be paid throughout the empirical chapters to how the EU’s TNPO is affected – if at all – by internal and external countervailing factors.

4.5. Concluding remarks

This chapter comprised two parts. The first part outlined the EU’s relations with the five Central Asian states, tracing the Union’s involvement and interests in the region from 1991 until today. The first showed how the EU’s conceptual redivision of the former Soviet bloc in the early 1990s meant that the Central Asian states were placed in the category of ‘outsiders’, i.e. the states in the EU’s eastern periphery, with whom contractual relations would not go beyond the level of ‘partnership’. Situated at the most outward point of this eastern periphery, 1990s Central Asian triggered little interest from the EU. The second part, however, showed

how the EU's engagement with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan gradually rose to a new level in the last decade, evolving from an invisible and arguably ineffective donor to a more fully-fledged and strategic actor. While the EU's limited engagement with Central Asia was boosted by the terrorist attacks of 11 September and the subsequent military campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan, it was not until the 2004 Eastern enlargement that the Union as a whole started discussing the need for increased involvement in Central Asia. Subsequent efforts by the Union to scale up its cooperation with the Central Asian republics and become a more visible actor in the region included the appointment of a EU Special Representative for Central Asia and the establishment of an EU Troika - Central Asia, and culminated in the launch of an ambitious EU Strategy for Central Asia. The Strategy was triggered largely by a need to develop cooperation more commensurately with the region's geo-strategic and geo-economic relevance for the EU. In particular, the chapter demonstrated that the EU's interests in Central Asia relate to matters of stability, security and diversification of energy resources.

In further explaining the 'context', the second part of the chapter pointed to the existence and impact of countervailing forces that may mediate the EU's TNPO over the Central Asian countries. Indeed, the EU's TNPO might be hampered - possibly weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of countervailing forces. These relate both to internal factors, i.e. *intrinsic to the EU*, and external factors, i.e. *extrinsic to the EU*. The group of external countervailing factors consists of factors that are intrinsic to the third party, *in casu* the Central Asian states, as well as factors that are extrinsic to them. The former, for instance, may relate to the neo-patrimonial structure of the countries' political economy, the fact that they have a weak civil society or the authoritarian nature of the regimes. The latter, in turn, may stem, for instance, from the strong competition that the EU encounters in the region from Russia and China.

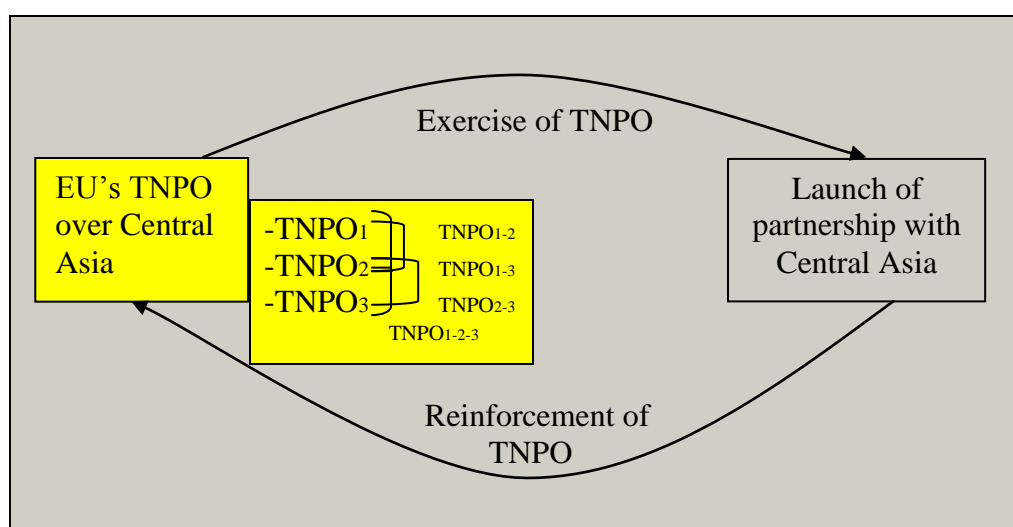
Having outlined the motives of the EU's pursuit of TNPO over Central Asia in the present chapter, as well as the countervailing factors that may limit the EU's TNPO over the region, the aim of the following chapters is to explore 'how' and, and in particular, 'to what extent' the EU exercises and accumulates TNPO *vis-à-vis* Central Asia. More specifically, the aim is to use the TNPO framework to explore the viability of the thesis's working hypothesis: *that the EU's ability to rally the Central Asian republics behind its ambitious partnership initiative testifies to the EU's power over the region. This power draws on the EU's influential position across a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures. The EU's power, in turn, is reinforced by the implementation of the EU's partnership initiative.* Based on the TNPO framework (see Figure 3, p.93 in Chapter 3), the working

hypothesis can be reformulated as follows: *the EU's TNPO over Central Asia has enabled the EU to conclude an ambitious partnership with the five Central Asian states, which in turn reinforces the EU's TNPO over Central Asia.* In exploring the viability of this proposition, the first step (Chapters 5-8) is to examine concretely to what extent the EU's power over Central Asia effectively derives from its control over a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures and the interaction between them. To do so, we will draw extensively on the TNPO toolbox (see Figure 1, p.51 in Chapter 3) in order to trace and evaluate intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU impact across the three TNPO structures. The second step (Chapter 9 - part 1) then consists of examining to what extent the EU's TNPO enabled the EU to enter into an ambitious partnership with the five Central Asian republics. In concrete terms, this means that we need to evaluate (i) to what extent the obtaining of the 'desired outcome', i.e. the partnership, was facilitated by the EU's TNPO, and (ii) to what extent the outcome is favourable to the EU. The third and final step (Chapter 9 - part 2) is then to assess whether and to what extent the obtained outcome, i.e. the partnership, in turn has reinforced the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. In order to realise that end, the thesis seeks to evaluate (i) to what extent the EU Strategy is being successfully implemented and (ii) to what extent the implementation of the Strategy enhances the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. This evaluation will again be conducted with reference to the TNPO toolbox, which serves to trace and evaluate intergovernmental and transnational pathways of EU impact.

Chapter 5 – The EU’s TNPO₁ over Central Asia

The remainder of the thesis serves to empirically explore the extent to which the EU exercises and accumulates TNPO *vis-à-vis* Central Asia. More in particular, the aim is to verify the viability of the thesis’s working hypothesis: *the EU’s ability to rally the Central Asian republics behind its ambitious partnership initiative testifies to the EU’s power projection over the region. This power projection draws on the EU’s influential position across a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures. The EU’s power, in turn, is reinforced based on the implementation of the EU’s partnership initiative.* Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 constitute the first - and main - step in the thesis’s empirical exploration of this proposition (Figure 5). Chapter 9 presents steps two and three, using the TNPO framework to examine how the partnership concluded with the five Central Asian states (step two) in turn reinforces the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia (step three). As the first step in the empirical exploration of the working hypothesis, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 focus on the extent to which the EU wields TNPO over Central Asia, in particular for the period 2001-2007 (see below). In concrete terms, together, these four chapters thus aim to explore to what extent the EU’s power over the Central Asian republics in 2001-2007 effectively derived from a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures and the interaction between them. In doing so, the four chapters will draw extensively on the TNPO toolbox (see Figure 1, p.51 in Chapter 3) in order to trace and examine intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU impact across the three structures identified in the discussion of TNPO in Chapter 3.

Figure 5: Step 1 of the thesis’s empirical exploration



As we have seen in the previous chapter, the EU’s interests and presence in post-Soviet Central Asia remained relatively low-key until 2001, when the attacks of 11 September

and the subsequent military operation in Afghanistan triggered an initial move towards increased engagement with the region. The hypothesis is therefore examined mostly in relation to events and activities occurring after 2000.¹¹² Based on the hypothesis, which singles out the EU Strategy as a key variable, two analytical periods are distinguished, the pre-Strategy period (2001-June 2007) and the post-Strategy period (July 2007-2010), with 2010 being the time of writing and thus not a real end date. As explicated in Chapter 1, the working hypothesis theorises the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007 both as an outcome of the EU's power over Central Asia and as an important basis to further strengthen that power, which implies that the EU Strategy simultaneously marks the end point of the first analytical period and the start point of the second analytical period. In short, this explains why the present chapter, as the first step in the empirical exploration of the hypothesis, focuses mostly on events and activities occurring in 2001-June 2007, i.e. the pre-Strategy period.

As mentioned, the next four chapters together make up the first – and main – step of the empirical exploration of the working hypothesis. Step 1 of the thesis's empirical exploration is structured as follows. After this introductory section, the present chapter covers the empirical examination of the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia. The chapter finds that the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia derives in particular from its position in the region as a leader in trade and investment, its considerable provision of development and financial aid to the five states and its (geo)strategic and security-related capabilities *vis-à-vis* the region. Next, Chapter 6 presents the EU's TNPO₂ over the Central Asian states. It is divided into two sections, examining respectively the EU's micro-institutional power - or TNPO_{2micro} - and the EU's macro-institutional power - or TNPO_{2macro} - over the region. Subsequently, Chapter 7 offers an empirical exploration of the EU's TNPO₃ over Central Asia. This chapter assesses the EU's 'magnetic pull' over the Central Asian countries, in terms of their attraction to the EU's norms, standards and values. In addition, it also examines the EU's image and symbolic power in the region. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the different cases of interaction of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. This chapter starts by exploring the overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₂, followed by the overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, the overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃, and finally the overlap between TNPO₁, TNPO₂ and TNPO₃. Chapter 8 concludes with a summary of the main empirical findings and a brief reflection upon the significance of the findings in view of the thesis's aim to offer a more holistic understanding of the EU's power over the Central Asian republics.

¹¹² For an overview of the EU's involvement in Central Asia before 2001, see Chapter 4.

5.1. Introduction

As highlighted in Chapter 3, the first TNPO structure, TNPO₁, is the ability of the EU to utilise and influence the material structure, with ‘material’ referring to materialism in the physical understanding of the term, as captured by the (neo)realist notion of ‘material capabilities’. In contending that states selfishly pursue their national interests, realism posits that the most important resources in the pursuit of national interests are material capabilities. Realism thus conceives the exercise of power in terms of a preponderance of material capabilities, most notably economic and military resources. As Young suggests with respect to institutional bargaining and international negotiations, a state may attempt to translate the possession of such material resources into bargaining leverage cast in terms appropriate to the issues at stake in specific instances of institutional bargaining (1991: 288). Crucially, Young adds that “[in] a general way, it makes sense to view the link between structural power and bargaining leverage as stemming from the existence of asymmetries among the participants or stakeholders in processes of institutional bargaining” (1991: 289). This point is central to TNPO₁ in that it assumes that the EU’s material capabilities, such as the size and strength of its market, result in asymmetric relationships and third countries’ dependence. In sum, this chapter will thus explore to what extent the EU derives TNPO over the Central Asian republics from its possession and use of material capabilities. Following this introductory paragraph, the chapter will first examine to what extent the EU derives power over Central Asia from its dominant position as an economic giant, in general, and from its single market and foreign investment strength, in particular. This will be followed by an assessment of the extent to which the EU draws power over the region from its provision of development and financial aid to the five states. The final group of material resources that will be explored are the EU’s security-related and (geo)strategic capabilities vis-à-vis the region.

5.2. Trade and investment

The EU draws a substantial amount of power in the international realm from its dominant position as an economic giant. An important contributor to the EU’s economic weight is the monetary union with its single currency. The euro is a reserve currency in many parts of the world, including in Central Asia. “A strong currency is in itself a form of structural power”, as Holden notes (2009: 188). Moreover, the EU is a global leader in investment. The EU is the largest investor in many countries around the world, although that still does not compare to what is by far the largest contributor to the EU’s economic weight, the single market. The

sheer size and strength of the EU's internal market not only leads to a gravitational attraction but in many cases also to inherently asymmetric trading relationships, in particular with neighbouring and/or weak trade partners. This also applies to the Central Asian states: whilst the EU is their principal or one of their principal trade partners, the Central Asian republics are rather insignificant trade partners for the EU. This subsection focuses on the EU's position as a trade and investment leader in Central Asia. It will first outline the EU's trade relations with the region - thereby exploring the implications for the EU's TNPO¹ -, before having a look at the EU's direct investments in the Central Asian states.

5.2.1. Trade

Irrespective of the current trade volume between the two regions, the Central Asian governments view the EU above all as a formidable 'trade power'.¹¹³ In concrete, this means that they see the EU, on the one hand, as "an actor to be reckoned with", and, on the other, as an actor that offers a lot of potential in terms of increasing trade flows as well as securing investment opportunities in their respective economies.¹¹⁴ The latter is crucial for the countries' attempts to diversify their one-sided, resource-based economies, which preclude any real chance of long-term economic stability.¹¹⁵ At the same time, the energy-rich states Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and - although to a lesser extent - Uzbekistan, also strongly welcome the EU's interest in gaining direct access to their gas reserves. The EU already buys large stocks of hydrocarbons from Central Asia, but mostly indirectly. That is, Central Asian gas arrives in the EU via Russia and the Ukraine, with Russia fully in control of the transit routes and using this monopolistic transit control to exert leverage over the countries at both ends of the pipelines (see e.g. Prange-Gstöhl, 2009).¹¹⁶ The Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis of January 2006 revealed the EU's need to decrease its energy dependency from Russia and by-pass Russia for its oil and gas supply.¹¹⁷ Considering that Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and

¹¹³ Author's interviews at the Diplomatic Mission of Kazakhstan to the EU in Brussels on 4 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the EU in Brussels on 5 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Uzbekistan to the EU in Brussels on 11 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU in Brussels on 13 March 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Tajikistan in Brussels on 20 March 2008, at the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in Tashkent on 2 May 2008, at the Kyrgyz MFA in Bishkek on 8 May 2008 and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 27 May 2008.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Kazakhstan's exports consist mostly of oil, minerals, steel, iron and grain. Kyrgyzstan's exports comprise mainly gold and cotton. Turkmenistan exports mostly gas and cotton, while Uzbekistan mainly sells cotton, gas and gold. Tajikistan's exports consist largely of aluminium and cotton. See "World Development Indicators", World Bank, <www.worldbank.org>. See Appendix 5 for an overview of the countries' main import and export products and their share in the countries' overall imports and exports.

¹¹⁶ This also applies to Central Asia's oil exports, but to a lesser extent. About 85 per cent of the oil exports of Kazakhstan, the region's main oil producer, pass through Russia (Boonstra, 2008: 76).

¹¹⁷ As Denison (2009: 5) notes, EU attempts to develop commercial energy cooperation with the region long predated the Russia-Ukraine gas crisis of January 2006. In fact, plans to diversify energy supplies go back to the

Uzbekistan are still largely dependent on Russia for their hydrocarbon exports and energy infrastructure, they share with the EU a strong interest in diversifying energy routes. However, as we will see further on in the chapter, the EU's aim of providing the Central Asian energy producers with viable export opportunities has increasingly appeared to be a tough challenge, not least since the Central Asian states tend to be very pragmatic when it comes to the export of their energy resources, and their foreign policy in general (see below). Moreover, the Central Asian governments' energy diversification policy is aimed to a large extent at pressing Russia - and in particular its national gas company Gazprom - to pay higher prices for their gas, an approach that has already paid off (see e.g. Boonstra, 2008a; Cooley, 2008; Dreyer, 2009; Youngs, 2007).

While the Central Asian states will continue to need the EU - with its proposed construction of new energy routes bypassing Russia - in order to secure higher prices for their gas from Gazprom, energy relations between the EU and Central Asia seem to have become characterised by asymmetric interdependence in favour of the latter (see more below). By contrast, the EU's overall trade relations with the region display exactly the opposite asymmetry. As is clear from Table 3 (p.121), while the EU is Central Asia's principal trade partner,¹¹⁸ accounting for nearly a third of the region's external trade in 2007,¹¹⁹ the Central Asian states are rather insignificant trade partners for the EU (Bossuyt, 2009; Peyrouse, 2009a). In absolute terms, the discrepancy in trade power between the EU and Central Asia is huge, and each of the Central Asian countries is dependent on the EU market. Of the five countries, Kazakhstan is most dependent on the single market, with the EU being Kazakhstan's first trade partner. Trade with the EU represented almost 40 percent of the country's total external trade in 2007.¹²⁰ Simultaneously, Kazakhstan is the EU's largest trade partner in the region. In the last decade, EU trade with Kazakhstan has increased dramatically, rising from about EUR 4 billion (0.2 percent of total EU-27 trade) in 1999 to EUR 19.5 billion (0.7 percent of total EU-27 trade) in 2007, when Kazakhstan ranked 29th in the list of the EU's trade partners (see Table 3, p.121).¹²¹ However, EU trade with Kazakhstan is heavily dominated by oil and gas. Hydrocarbons accounted for more than 80 percent of the EU's

introduction of the TACIS programme in 1991, which subsequently materialised with the initiation of INOGATE in 1995 and the launch of the Baku Initiative in 2004.

¹¹⁸ At EU Member State level, the largest contribution to the trade volume between the two regions comes from Germany and Italy, followed by France, the UK and the Netherlands (Eurostat, 2008). See Appendix 5 for more detailed figures. Interestingly, trade between Central Europe and Central Asia is rapidly increasing (see Peyrouse, 2009c).

¹¹⁹ In 2007, Central Asia's trade with the EU amounted to US\$30 billion, compared to US\$21 billion with Russia and ca. US\$18 billion with China (Peyrouse, 2009c).

¹²⁰ Source: European Commission, EU-Kazakhstan bilateral trade relations, available at http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/kazakhstan/index_en.htm, last accessed 20 June 2009.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

imports from the country in 2007.¹²² In fact, the EU's imports from the region as a whole are dominated by a few commodities, in particular oil, gas, metals and cotton. While the EU's exports to Kazakhstan are becoming increasingly diversified, its exports to the entire region remain concentrated in the areas of machinery and transport equipment, which represented more than half of the EU's exports to Central Asia in 2007.¹²³

Table 3: Imbalance in EU-Central Asia trade (2007)



Source: European Commission (2009); Peyrouse (2009a)

On the whole, EU trade with the other four Central Asian states remains very modest. Nevertheless, the EU is one of the main trade partners of all four countries, but it is not their first trade partner (see Table 3). Depending on the country, the latter position is held by either Russia, China or Kazakhstan.¹²⁴ Yet, as Kazakhstan is the region's economic and trade leader and accounts for nearly 85 percent of the EU's overall trade with Central Asia, the EU is nevertheless the region's first trade partner. It is not difficult to understand why the EU's trade with the Central Asian countries remains limited: the region is overall not an attractive market for EU companies. On the one hand, the market is relatively small: the region's total population amounts to just over 60 million and per capita GDP levels remain low, with the exception of Kazakhstan.¹²⁵ Indeed, the majority of the Central Asian population continues to have a poor standard of living, with only Kazakhstan experiencing a certain level of prosperity.¹²⁶ On the other hand, EU companies are often put off from entering the Central Asian market because of a number of persisting trade barriers, including tariff barriers, weak administrative and institutional capacity, cumbersome bureaucracy and regulation, landlocked location and weak transport infrastructure, underdeveloped industry and private sector, and incompetent and corrupt customs control (Bossuyt, 2009). Nevertheless, the last few years

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ For exact percentages of the trade partners' share in the Central Asian markets, see Appendix 5. For exact percentages of the EU's share, see European Commission, EU-Central Asia trade relations, available at http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/bilateral/regions/cis/index_en.htm, last accessed 10 June 2009.

¹²⁵ For the population and the per capita GDP levels of each country, see Appendix 5.

¹²⁶ Kazakhstan is the only country of the four to have a middle class. Nevertheless, the majority of its population resides in rural areas, where poverty is still rife. For the exact figures of the five countries' per capita GDP levels, see Appendix 5. For an interesting account of Kazakhstan's emerging middle class, see Daly (2008).

have seen a growing number of European companies exploring trade and investment opportunities in the region, also outside of the commodities sector (Bossuyt, 2009; Peyrouse, 2009a, 2009c). Again, this has been mostly the case in Kazakhstan, which is not surprising given that it is by far the most developed country of the region; beyond the fact that its GDP per capita dwarfs that of the other four states, Kazakhstan has also implemented a number of far-reaching economic reforms, which have significantly contributed to its recent economic boom.

The EU's overall bilateral trade relations with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have been governed by PCAs since their entry into force in 1999. The trade section in these three agreements stipulates that the Parties have non-preferential access to each other's markets, based on the principle of 'most favoured nation'. Moreover, in view of facilitating practical access to the single market for Central Asian products, the PCAs foresee gradual regulatory approximation of the partner countries' legislation and practices to the main trade-related EU *acquis*. These include technical regulations, sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, customs-related matters and protection of intellectual property rights (see e.g. Articles 52 and 66, Kazakhstan PCA). Between May 2005 and 31 December 2009, EU-Tajikistan trade relations - pending ratification and entry into force of the PCA signed in October 2004 - were governed by an Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters. This temporary agreement encompassed most of the PCA's trade-related provisions. Previously, trade relations with the country were based on the Trade and Cooperation Agreement signed with the Soviet Union in 1989. EU bilateral trade relations with Turkmenistan are still governed by the latter agreement, pending the entry into force of an Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters. The Interim Agreement was ratified only recently, notably in 2010, following a long suspension of the ratification process due EU concerns over the human rights situation in the country. The agreement is expected to enter into force by the end of 2010.

With Kazakhstan, the EU has had additional bilateral trade arrangements in place to regulate trade in some key products that are not covered in the PCA, notably steel products and textiles.¹²⁷ As Kazakhstan is not yet a member of the WTO, the European Community negotiated a textiles agreement and a number of steel agreements, which set quantitative limits for certain steel products. The last steel agreement, which was in force in 2005-2006, increased quantitative limits by 70 per cent, providing Kazakh steel producers with significantly larger export opportunities. Since 2007, bilateral trade in steel has been based on

¹²⁷ In addition, there are three nuclear-related agreements in place between Kazakhstan and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). See <http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/eu_kazakhstan/political_relations/agreements/index_en.htm>, last accessed 9 November 2009.

autonomous measures, mainly due to some apparent difficulties to conclude a new steel agreement.¹²⁸ After the expiry of the textiles agreement in late 2004,¹²⁹ an additional Protocol to the PCA was negotiated, extending the provisions on trade in textiles. However, the Protocol still needs to be signed and ratified in order for it to enter into force. The European Community has also had a bilateral textiles agreement in place with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. However, despite the agreement's expiry at the end of 2004, the Parties involved have not yet decided whether or not to conclude an additional protocol to the PCA, like in the case of Kazakhstan. More recently, an agreement was signed between the European Community and the Kyrgyz Republic on certain aspects of air services, notably on 1 June 2007. The agreement, which entered into force in April 2008, aims to give all EU air carriers non-discriminatory access to flight routes between the Community and Kyrgyzstan. The arrangement also seeks to bring bilateral air service agreements between both sides in line with the EC's *acquis*. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 4, all five Central Asian states are beneficiaries of the EU's GSP. This trade arrangement grants the five countries preferential access to the EU's market in the form of reduced tariffs for their products. However, although the aim of the GSP regime is to develop a more diversified trade with the EU, the Central Asian republics have so far taken only little advantage of this EU instrument.¹³⁰ Preferential imports from Tajikistan, for instance, have so far been heavily concentrated in one sector, notably textiles, although they also include some industrial products. According to the European Commission, which deplores this "enormous unused potential", the problem is mainly Central Asian governments' lack of advanced knowhow and expertise in the field of trade regulation.¹³¹ In fact, this has also been one of the principal aspects hindering the states' progress on their regulatory approximation with the main trade-related EU *acquis*, as envisaged in the PCAs. Progress has been especially slow on their approximation with sanitary and phytosanitary standards, industrial standards and intellectual property rights. In the course of the last ten years, the European Commission has therefore gradually multiplied its trade-related technical assistance projects that are focused on support for PCA implementation. As the Commission explains, as long as the states do not comply with these requirements, they will not be able to significantly increase, and in particular, diversify their

¹²⁸ Author's interview at the European Commission, DG Trade, 'Central Asia, South Caucasus & Belarus' desk, on 9 April 2008.

¹²⁹ This was due to the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing, which implied that all quotas on textiles and garment (cf. multifiber arrangements) had to be removed.

¹³⁰ Author's interview at the European Commission, DG Trade, 'Central Asia, South Caucasus & Belarus' desk, on 9 April 2008.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

exports to the EU.¹³² Next to a lack of knowhow on these often highly technical regulatory issues, another problem is that such regulatory adaptations require the Central Asian governments to implement domestic reforms, for which the necessary political will is quite often missing. Of the five Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan has made most progress on adapting its regulatory framework not only to the main trade-related EU *acquis*, but also to the needs of an open economy in general. In recent years, the Kazakh government has amended or replaced a large number of laws, including a Customs Code, new Tax Code, investment law and laws on franchising and licensing. Several other laws are in the process of being prepared or amended (see e.g. Hindley, 2008). As a result, Kazakhstan feels that it is entitled to being granted market-economy status by the EU, and has repeatedly asked the trade bloc to finally grant it this status.¹³³ The EU, for its part, has announced that it is now only a technicality, as Kazakhstan - unlike the other Central Asian states - is very close to meeting all five criteria that the EU has set for meeting the conditions.¹³⁴ Kyrgyzstan, in turn, despite initiating numerous reforms in the mid-1990s to develop a market economy and despite joining the WTO in 1998, has made less progress on complying with EU regulatory trade requirements (see more below). Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are lagging behind even more.

Another important aspect of the EU's trade relations with the Central Asian republics is the EU's continued support for the states' accession to the WTO. Of the five countries, Kyrgyzstan is the only state that has already acceded to the WTO. However, Kyrgyzstan does not exemplify the way to go. As the country rushed into joining the organisation without genuine and thoughtful preparation, Kyrgyzstan has been struggling to comply with WTO requirements and rules, mainly due to its limited institutional and legislative capacity (see e.g. Hindley, 2008; see more below). This is much in the same way as it struggles to comply with the EU regulatory requirements as envisaged in the PCA (see above).¹³⁵ The EU has set WTO membership as a pre-condition for closer bilateral trading and investment relations. The EU has done so because it views WTO membership as the best way for the Central Asian states to strengthen their economies, to arrive at a deeper integration into the international trading system, and - not to forget - to facilitate European access to their markets. To support the countries' accession to the WTO, the EU provides considerable technical assistance for

¹³² Signe Ratso, Director of the DG Trade Unit for WTO Affairs, OECD and Food Related Sectors, speaking at the ECIPE seminar 'Kazakhstan and the WTO: Foreign Economic Diplomacy and CIS Integration into the World Economy' in Brussels on 23 March 2008; and author's interview at DG Trade on 9 April 2008, *op. cit.*

¹³³ Amongst other things, the EU's recognition of Kazakhstan as a full market economy would protect the country against anti-dumping measures, and would thus facilitate its non-oil exports to support diversification, especially in product groups where the country has a comparative advantage, i.e. metals, chemicals and cereals.

¹³⁴ Signe Ratso, *op. cit.*

¹³⁵ Author's interview at DG Trade on 9 April 2008, *op. cit.*

legislative institutional reform in accordance with the accession requirements. The EU does so, *inter alia*, because it upholds that WTO accession will have a more profound effect on the countries' trade and economic welfare if it is accompanied with further institutional and legislative reforms.¹³⁶ The lack of such reforms in the case of Kyrgyzstan is one of the reasons why the country, despite committing to fully complying with and fully respecting the WTO requirements and rules at the time of its accession, has a poor record of WTO compliance and has experienced only a marginal increase in economic and trade welfare since its accession in 1998 (Hindley, 2008). As we will see further on in the chapter, in the case of Kazakhstan, the EU does not only provide substantial trade-related technical assistance, but it also plays a major role in the WTO Working Party established to overlook and steer the country's accession process, which is now nearing completion.¹³⁷ Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which applied in 1994 and 2001 respectively, are significantly less advanced in their accession to the WTO. This is not surprising given that compared to Kazakhstan trade liberalisation and economic reform have been considerably less comprehensive, especially in Uzbekistan, which, amongst other things, applies import substitution in numerous sectors. Turkmenistan, for its part, showed only little or no interest in joining the WTO until 2006, when the sudden death of its autocratic ruler Saparmurat Niyazov paved the way for a more open foreign policy under Niyazov's successor, Gurbanguly Berdimukhammedov. The country is now in the process of preparing an application for WTO accession, and talks between Turkmenistan and the WTO secretariat have already taken place in this regard.¹³⁸ The EU has been encouraging Turkmenistan to apply for WTO accession.¹³⁹

In outlining the trade relations between the EU and Central Asia, we have highlighted Central Asia's seemingly asymmetric dependence on the EU market. Before moving on to explore the EU's position as an investment leader in the region, it is useful to consider, in conclusion, the political potentialities inherent in the given pattern of (inter)dependence and the implications for the EU's power. At the most basic level, the EU draws considerable leverage over the Central Asian republics simply from its influential position as the largest market in the world. In this regard, it is clear that the EU's possibility to include or exclude the Central Asian countries to the single market is a powerful tool. Moreover, the EU's power

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ It is noteworthy that Kyrgyzstan in the 1990s was regarded in the West as the most reformist post-Soviet republic, in that the country sought to move swiftly towards Western-style political and economic infrastructures. This picture started changing in the early 2000s, as Kyrgyzstan increasingly struggled to meet its commitments and the country regressed into authoritarianism. At the same time, Kazakhstan gradually emerged as the most progressive economic reformer in the region, up to the point where western analysts doubt whether its economic successes could be repeated elsewhere in Central Asia (see e.g. Daly, 2008).

¹³⁸ Author's interview at the Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU on 13 March 2008.

¹³⁹ Author's interview at DG Trade on 9 April 2008, *op. cit.*

also derives from its possibility to frame the terms of reference within which this possible market access is to take place. Although the EU maintains the language of ‘partnership’ and ‘equal footing’, its preponderant market power has indeed enabled the EU to force pre-agreed positions upon its trade partners in Central Asia, most notably through the conclusion of PCAs, the countries’ participation in the EU’s GSP regime and the WTO accession process (cf. agent-based structural power).¹⁴⁰ It is important to note that the extent to which the EU has managed to do so varies from country to country. In addition, as we shall see in the section covering overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, there is yet another way in which the EU derives power from its single market, notably through ‘governance by externalisation’, which encompasses purely structural modes of EU impact (cf. Chapter 3). ‘Governance by externalisation’ captures, for instance, how Central Asian governments may be induced to adapt their existing rules and policies to those of the EU, independently of deliberate EU action (see below). Nevertheless, the picture of the EU’s power *in* and *through* trade needs to be balanced, and this on two accounts. On the one hand, EU-Central Asia trade is dominated by hydrocarbons. As mentioned, the EU has significantly less leverage in this area, up to the point where its bilateral energy relations with Central Asia are increasingly characterised by asymmetric interdependence in favour of the latter. On the other hand, the trade-related commitments of the Central Asian republics made under the PCAs, the GSP regime and their WTO accession process have often failed to translate into actual progress or implementation. The main reasons behind this failure are limited institutional capacity and the lack of political will.

5.2.2. *Foreign direct investment*

The EU is one of the principal sources of foreign investment in Central Asia. Kazakhstan, in particular, has benefited from substantial European FDI flows in the last decade, largely thanks to its booming hydrocarbon sector. FDI inflow in Kazakhstan totalled US\$7.3 billion in 2006, nearly half of which came from the EU, making the EU the country’s single largest investor (Hindley, 2008; Peyrouse, 2009a). In 2007, FDI from the EU further increased and amounted to 54 per cent of the country’s total FDI inflow. In the other four Central Asian states, FDI inflows from Europe have been more moderate, although there has been a constant increase (Bossuyt, 2009). In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the EU also continues to have the largest share of foreign investment. In the other states, the EU competes closely with China and Russia. China, in particular, is poised to become the region’s main source of foreign

¹⁴⁰ It should be noted that these aspects will be further covered in the section on TNPO overlap. For instance, the EU’s power through WTO accession will be covered in more detail in the section on TNPO_{1-2macro-3}.

investment. In the last few years, Central Asia have seen a dramatic increase in investment flows from China, directed mainly at extraction and mining as well as infrastructure. The EU Member States that are most active in the region are the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands. Except for Germany, those Member States are represented mostly in the Central Asia's extraction and mining sector. Hence, it is not surprising that energy giants Shell, BP, ENI, GDF Suez and Total are the largest investors in Central Asia, and in particular in Kazakhstan. The extraction and exploration industry is generally the main beneficiary of foreign investments across the region. Nevertheless, European FDI in Central Asia is not limited to the activities of a number of multinationals operating in the oil and sector. There is also a large number of European companies active in the supply, petrochemical and processing sectors of the hydrocarbon industry¹⁴¹, including companies that provide goods and services that aim at minimising the harm towards the environment. Moreover, there is a growing interest from European investors in sectors that have little or no connection with the energy industry. The UK and Germany, for instance, are one of the largest foreign investors in the Kazakh agriculture sector. As a result of its economic boom, Kazakhstan's FDI flows have become increasingly diversified. The construction sector has become one of the largest beneficiaries of foreign investment.¹⁴² Other important sectors that attract European investment are the agriculture sector, including food processing, the financial sector, the telecom sector and the transport sector (Bossuyt, 2009).

Unlike trade, investment matters have largely been a EU Member State competence until the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which conferred exclusive competence on foreign direct investment to the EU (see TFEU, Art. 207(1) & Art. 3(1)). Until December 2009, investment relations were thus not governed by agreements signed by the EU, but by agreements signed bilaterally between EU Member States and Central Asian states. Kazakhstan, for instance, has bilateral investment treaties in place with seventeen EU Member States. These investment treaties tend to be largely similar to one another, usually guaranteeing free access to the domestic market for investments as well as non-discrimination vis-à-vis other investors. In addition, they tend to include a provision on the prohibition of dispossession as well as a clause on the procedures for dispute settlement. These investment treaties may well provide protection against some cases of abuse of foreign investors. Nevertheless, they cannot avoid the persistence of widespread corruption at local and national levels. One of the biggest problems in this regard is the lack of a fully-functioning and

¹⁴¹ To name just a few, in Kazakhstan, there is, for instance, the Dutch petrochemical firm LyondellBasel, the French consortium Spie Capag, the Belgian dredging company Jan De Nul and the Belgian hydraulic crane company Sarens. In Turkmenistan, there is, amongst others, the Belgian firm Enex Process Engineering. For more companies, see Bossuyt (2009).

¹⁴² Source: National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, available at <www.nationalbank.kz>.

independent judiciary. In the Central Asian states, the judiciary more often than not tends to serve as an arm of the executive branch rather than as an enforcer of contracts and a guardian of property rights. The fact that this leaves many European investors vulnerable for abuse and constitutes a major deterrent for further investment is one of the reasons why the EU has come to treat the rule of law as one of the key priorities of its involvement in the region (see more below).¹⁴³ Kazakhstan, which is generally considered the most advanced of the five countries, was ranked 150th out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2007.¹⁴⁴ The Kazakh government is known for frequently challenging contractual rights and amending legislation to favour domestic investors over foreign ones. Given that Kazakhstan is still one of the region's better performers in attracting outside investment, it is no surprise that all of the Central Asian states are ranked in the list's bottom-forty of most corrupt countries in the world.¹⁴⁵ In practice, this means that every foreign investor, independent of the size of their Central Asian investments and activities, will be confronted with some kind of corruption. Next to the widespread corruption, the arbitrariness of the Central Asian regimes and administrations and the limited economic and political liberties in general¹⁴⁶ mar Central Asia's investment climate and discourage many European firms from making major investments in the region.¹⁴⁷

In sum, the EU is one of Central Asia's main sources of foreign investment. Despite considerable investment barriers, the region has been attracting increased flows of investment from the EU. The energy sector is the primary beneficiary of European investments. Nevertheless, European interest in other sectors is steadily growing, especially in Kazakhstan. While investment matters - unlike trade - are for the most part still a Member State competence rather than an EU competence, the EU draws significant leverage over the region from the volume of European investments taken in their totality. It is clear that investment relations are characterised by asymmetric interdependence in favour of the EU. Although the EU is increasingly competing with other major sources of foreign investment, in particular China, the Central Asian states are likely to remain dependent on the EU for the inflow of investments, especially in view of their economies' need of diversification. In addition, as we shall see in the section that covers overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, European FDI in the

¹⁴³ Author's interview with the then Acting Head of Delegation of the EC Delegation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, in Astana on 30 May 2008.

¹⁴⁴ Corruption Perception Index, Transparency International, available at <www.transparencyinternational.org>.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ For exact data, see e.g. the rankings of Freedom House regarding *i.a.* political freedom, freedom of press and civil liberties, available at <www.freedomhouse.org>.

¹⁴⁷ Another investment barrier is the region's underdeveloped transport and logistics infrastructure. Together with the fact that Central Asia is a predominantly landlocked region, this significantly raises transaction costs for EU companies investing in the region.

region also contributes to the EU's influence over the Central Asian republics at a more subtle level, notably as a form of people-to-people contacts through which EU norms and best practices are promoted.

5.3. Financial and technical assistance

As a second step in exploring the extent to which the EU derives TNPO over the Central Asian republics from its possession and use of material capabilities, this subsection examines the extent to which the EU draws power over the region from its provision of technical and financial aid to the five states. Apart from being a world leader in trade and investment, the EU is also a major donor of aid and financial support, contributing to more than half of total world aid. Likewise, the EU is not only a major trade and investment actor in Central Asia, but it is also the region's single largest donor. Again, we can expect the EU to draw substantial leverage from the position it holds as Central Asia's principal donor. However, as noted in Chapter 4, despite being the largest donor, the EU's assistance to the region has been considerably lower than its aid to other parts of the former Soviet bloc. Moreover, the EU's engagement with the region has long remained low in terms of visibility. In addition, assessments of the impact of the EU's assistance programmes in Central Asia have been rather mixed. However, other major donors in Central Asia, such as the U.S. and the UN, whilst not suffering from the same lack of visibility as the EU did, have also been criticised for the relatively limited impact of their aid programmes (see e.g. International Crisis Group, 2006). It is important to note that development policy is a shared EU competence. This implies that, next to the Commission's development assistance programmes and projects, EU Member States run their own bilateral development aid initiatives. This thesis focuses predominantly on the development aid that is organised at the EC level and only marginally considers Member State initiatives.¹⁴⁸

5.3.1. *EC assistance to Central Asia as a material power resource*

In terms of resources spent on technical and financial aid to the Central Asian countries, the EU is the largest sponsor in the region, followed by the U.S. and Japan. Between 1991 and 2006, the EC spent EUR 1.387 billion on bilateral assistance alone to Central Asia, inclusive

¹⁴⁸ It should be noted that there are also Member State aid initiatives that are directly linked to or integrated in EC development assistance projects.

of assistance under the TACIS national programmes, humanitarian assistance, macro-financial support and food security aid, and exclusive of assistance under the TACIS regional programmes (European Commission, 2007a: 41-42). In comparison, in the same period, USAID, provided development and financial aid to Central Asia worth US\$ 1.5 billion¹⁴⁹. The five countries are all official development assistance (ODA) recipients. Since their independence in the early 1990s, ODA has gone in almost equal amounts to each of the states, with the exception of Turkmenistan (Pomfret, 2006: 13). Being the two smallest countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have thus received much higher assistance per capita (Pomfret, 2006: 13). This fully reflects the fact that these two countries have been most in need of international assistance. Of the two, Tajikistan has experienced the highest dependence on foreign aid. Like Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan is a small, landlocked country. However, compared to Kyrgyzstan, it is both more mountainous and more cut off from major markets. Moreover, the country endured more than five years of civil war, which left it “economically battered and politically quiescent ever since” (Melvin, 2008a). In 2006, the country’s ODA made up 11.6 per cent of its GDP (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2008). It is also the largest beneficiary of EC assistance in the region. Tajikistan has received more than EUR 500 million in EC assistance since 1992 (European Commission, 2007a). As the second largest EC beneficiary in the region, Kyrgyzstan’s dependence on EU aid is also considerable: in 2006, EC assistance accounted for over five per cent of the country’s government budget (Warkotsch, 2009: 268). However, it is important to note that a considerable share of EC aid offered to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan has consisted of humanitarian and food security assistance¹⁵⁰, aid from which the other three Central Asian states have not or only occasionally benefited. Hence, the picture changes when looking at the TACIS allocations only. In 2006, for instance, Uzbekistan was the largest Central Asian beneficiary state of TACIS, with EUR 8 million, followed by Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, which both received EUR 6.5 million (see Table 4, p.132). With EUR 5 million, Kyrgyzstan was only the fourth recipient country, just ahead of Turkmenistan, which received EUR 4 million (see Table 4, p.132). This recipient ranking of TACIS remained more or less the same throughout 2002-2006. However, the allocation situation has been modified under the latest Regional Strategy Paper (2007-2010), with Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan now effectively being the main Central Asian beneficiary states of DCI, the successor to TACIS (European Commission, 2007a).

¹⁴⁹ Source: USAID, “USAID Assistance in Central Asia : 1992-2007”, available at <http://centralasia.usaid.gov/page.php?page=article-15&from_t>.

¹⁵⁰ For instance, between 1997 and 2004, Kyrgyzstan received EUR 74.5 million in budget support from the EC’s Food Security Programme (Matveeva, 2006: 86).

Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan's aid dependence on the EU has translated into a significant amount of EU leverage over the countries' ruling elites. Conversely, the EU - and virtually all other external donors for that matter - has had only a minor say on the development course of Turkmenistan. The country has been the least dependent on EU assistance, and on foreign assistance in general. Indeed, as Turkmenistan followed an increasingly isolationist course, it showed only little interest in receiving international assistance, with the despotic nature of Niyazov's regime resenting offers of ODA rather than encouraging them. Despite its political isolation and reluctance towards international cooperation, through TACIS, Turkmenistan received about EUR 11.75 million in technical assistance between 2001 and 2005, compared to EUR 22.4 million for Kazakhstan, one of the region's main TACIS beneficiaries (European Commission, 2005a). The gradual opening of the country following Niyazov's death in 2006 has led to a more open stance towards foreign assistance, which has created opportunities for the EU to step in and expand its development assistance to the country. Compared to Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan has maintained much closer relations with the main international development actors, not least the EU. Nevertheless, the country has done so with a certain degree of reservation and distrust, fully in line with the autocratic nature of the Uzbek regime. The fact that the country did little to improve its poor record on economic and political reform has led to temporary suspensions of aid, including by the U.S. and the European Bank for Development and Reconstruction (EBRD) (Melvin, 2008a). Kazakhstan, in turn, presents yet a different case, in that the country has experienced an unprecedented economic growth since its oil boom of 1999, which - after a decade of economic disappointment - gradually pulled it further and further ahead of the other Central Asian countries. In the mean time, Kazakhstan was one of the main Central Asian recipient countries of TACIS (see e.g. Table 4, p.132). With its GDP now dwarfing that of the other four states, Kazakhstan, despite still being an ODA recipient, no longer needs development assistance in the same way as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan do. In fact, the Kazakh government itself likes to stress that the republic is no longer in need of development assistance to the point where it has become a donor itself, seeking to contribute to the development of its Central Asian neighbours.¹⁵¹ At the same time,

¹⁵¹ Author's interview at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 27 May 2008, and address by the Kazakh Ambassador to the UK, H.E. Ambassador Kairat Abusseitov, at the University of Reading on 11 March 2009. It is interesting to note that during the EU's consultations with Kazakhstan in preparation of the EU Strategy for a New Partnership, Kazakhstan repeatedly sought to underline the extent to which it differs from the other four Central Asian republics, stating that it has always been outside of the group of the other four countries, being closer to Russia and less Asian oriented - i.e. a sort of middle ground between Russia and the four others. In this respect, the Kazakh government likes to refer back to the old Soviet times when Kazakhstan - unlike the four other states - was granted a special status by Moscow. Now that Kazakhstan has become economically more advanced than the others, it continuously asks the EU (as well as other donors and partners) to acknowledge Kazakhstan's separate position and has repeatedly urged the EU not to put it in the same box as the other four Central Asian

the Kazakh government greatly appreciates the EU's provision of technical assistance¹⁵², especially in domains that are essential for the country's key goal of economic diversification.¹⁵³ While Kazakhstan feels that it has advanced significantly on the path of development, it acknowledges that, as a relatively young nation with a persistent soviet legacy, it still faces serious shortcomings in key governance sectors, including transport, education and environment, for which it considers the EU's technical assistance - including its expertise and know-how - to be of tremendous value.¹⁵⁴

Table 4: Indicative TACIS allocations to Central Asia in EUR million (2006)



DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG (2006)

To sum up, since the late 1990s, the Central Asian states have continued to welcome the provision of EU technical and financial assistance, although to varying degrees. Indeed, as the five states have experienced distinct trajectories of political and economic development since their independence from the Soviet Union, their need for and/or receptiveness towards EU assistance has come to vary substantially. Yet, all five countries share the EU as their primary donor, and seem rather eager to continue to receive EU assistance, whether in the form of only technical assistance, like in the case of Kazakhstan, or in the form of more comprehensive aid (e.g. also budget support, food security, etc), like in the case of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In other words, the EU's position as a donor translates in a certain

states (which the EU nevertheless did, insisting on the importance of a regional approach, alongside a bilateral, tailor-made approach).

¹⁵² EU 'development' assistance typically includes e.g. direct budgetary grants for structural or sectoral reforms and adjustments in a recipient country. By contrast, EU 'technical' assistance mostly comprises the provision of advice and training to public and private actors in the recipient country. For public actors, this may include the undertaking of feasibility studies for the construction of major infrastructure works, assistance on redrafting legislation, or technical aid to reform a ministry (e.g. advice on how to use specialised software for governmental use) with a special focus on improving the capacity to align with international legal frameworks.

¹⁵³ Author's interview at the Diplomatic Mission of Kazakhstan to the EU in Brussels on 4 February and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 27 May 2008.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

amount of EU leverage, which varies in strength across the region: it is strongest in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, i.e. the most aid dependent countries, and weakest in Turkmenistan, i.e. the least open country. In-between, there are Uzbekistan, which has been a significant but often difficult recipient country, and Kazakhstan, the most advanced of all five countries. In order to gain further insights into the extent to which the EU's provision of technical and financial assistance to Central Asia constitutes a material power resource, the next subsection will outline the substance and scope of the EC aid offered to the region from 2002 to 2006. To do so, it will draw predominantly on the Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2002-2006¹⁵⁵ - which includes the Central Asia Indicative Programme for 2002-2004 -, the Central Asia Indicative Programme for 2004-2006 and the Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2007-2013 (which encompasses an overview of past assistance).

5.3.2. Substance and scope of EC assistance to Central Asia in 2002-2006

As mentioned in Chapter 4, following the events of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent military operation in Afghanistan, the EU General Affairs Council of 10 December 2001 called for an enhancement of relations with the Central Asian partner countries. Amongst a number of other things, the Council recommended to “target assistance on a reduced number of priority areas, including poverty reduction, social and economic development, good governance, environment and water management” (Council, 2001a). In addition, it also urged attempts to “combat drug trafficking” and “consider action on border control and border management” (*ibid.*). Accordingly, the TACIS Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 announced that the core objective of the EC's assistance would be “to promote the stability and security of the countries of Central Asia and to assist in their pursuit of sustainable economic development and poverty reduction” (European Commission, 2002: 3). In an attempt to provide a better response to the problems faced by the region and to enhance the effectiveness, coherence and overall impact of EC aid, the Strategy Paper introduced a new framework for TACIS in the five Central Asian countries, targeted more explicitly at a regional approach and based on a three-track scheme (see below). In view of the Council's policy recommendation to narrow the focus and work with a reduced number of priorities, the Strategy Paper identified three priority areas for cooperation: (i) support for institutional, legal and administrative reform, (ii) development of infrastructure networks and protection/management of natural resources, and (iii) support in addressing the social

¹⁵⁵ It is important to note that there are no individual Country Strategy Papers for the Central Asian republics. Indeed, since 2002, the five countries have been grouped together under a Regional Strategy Paper, unlike the other seven beneficiary states of TACIS, which continued to have individual Country Strategy Papers.

consequences of transition (European Commission, 2002: 19). The three priority areas were chosen in accordance with TACIS Regulation No. 99/2000, adopted by the Council in December 1999, which stipulated that planning for each TACIS beneficiary state as well as for multi-country programmes had to involve selection of three out of the six areas of cooperation defined in the Regulation (Council, 1999: Art. 2.2). The Strategy Paper motivated the selection of the three priority areas by stating that these were areas where the EC “has a comparative advantage, with a longer time perspective in order to achieve the greatest impact” (European Commission, 2002: 18).

Moreover, the new framework introduced in the Strategy Paper centred on a three-track scheme for the TACIS assistance. Track 1 consisted of a ‘regional cooperation programme’, aimed at promoting regional cooperation between the Central Asian countries. It was focused on areas where the EU has a strategic interest, including transport and energy networks, sustainable use of natural resources, implementation of international environmental conventions, and justice and home affairs (European Commission, 2002: 4). Track 2 comprised a ‘regional support programme’, addressing the Central Asian countries’ main shared challenges to sustainable economic development and transition. The programme was implemented at national level in order to allow for a tailored approach, taking into account the countries’ diverging levels of development. Track 3, in turn, was focused on poverty reduction in two selected target zones across Central Asia, thereby providing support to the countries’ objectives and commitments in light of their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) (*ibid.*). TACIS bilateral assistance under the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper was complemented by a series of other EC instruments, including humanitarian aid through ECHO, EIDHR, macro-financial loans and grants, direct budget support through the Food Security Programme and the EU’s GSP. In terms of the allocations, the Strategy Paper earmarked 26 per cent of available resources in 2002-2006 for regional cooperation (Track 1), 54 per cent for bilateral cooperation programmes (Track 2) and 25 per cent for poverty reduction schemes (Track 3) (European Commission, 2007a: 17). Between 2002 and 2004, annual EC allocations for TACIS projects amounted to EUR 50 million, i.e. double the amount of the annual allocations in the preceding two years (European Commission, 2007a: 5). In 2005, allocations further increased, notably to EUR 66 million. This amount included EUR 15 million for Track 1 projects, EUR 33 million for Track 2 projects and EUR 18 million for Track 3 projects (*ibid.*). In 2006, total allocations amounted to EUR 60 million, with Track 2 and Track 3 both receiving fewer funds compared to 2005 (cf. Table 4, p.132). Indeed, while the Central Asia Indicative Programme for 2005-2006 firmly built on the approach initiated under the Indicative Programme for 2002-2004, it gave further priority to

activities under Track 1, stepping up EC assistance for the cooperation between Central Asian countries, and in particular in the areas of justice and home affairs, the energy sector and environmental issues (European Commission, 2005a). At bilateral level, it strengthened the links between EC assistance and political dialogue in the framework of PCAs, particularly in the areas of trade and civil service (*ibid.*). For activities under Track 3, the 2005-2006 Indicative Programme planned for poverty reduction schemes to be consolidated in comprehensive medium-term development plans and for complementarities between TACIS and the FSP to be enhanced.

Returning to the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper, the idea to introduce a regional cooperation programme (Track 1) was predicated on the belief that the Central Asian states face many shared challenges and that these are best addressed in collaborative frameworks to prevent increasing differences among the five countries (European Commission, 2002). The regional cooperation programme therefore aimed to promote good neighbourly relations and confidence-building between the Central Asian republics as an efficient way to deal with the main challenges and development problems faced by the region. According to the Strategy Paper, such common development and transition problems include “slow democratic transition, poor records of implementing human rights obligations, concern over Islamic radicalisation, the proliferation of weapon of mass destruction, demographic pressures straining the capacity of social services, lagging implementation of market-oriented economic reforms, poor business and investment climates, widening income disparities and poverty” (European Commission, 2002: 4). Common challenges encompass concern over transnational crime and inefficient border management, as well as a need for both economic diversification and increased access to world markets and for more sustainable use of natural resources (*ibid.*). Interestingly, the selection of the objectives and priority areas of the EC’s assistance in light of these development problems and challenges clearly reveal the extent to which the EU is concerned with new concepts of security, which focus more on ‘soft security threats’, many of which tend to stem from such politically and economically weak states as the Central Asian states. In this sense, drawing on the EC assistance offered under the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper, it could be argued that the EU is “securitising the domestic political and economic structures” of the Central Asian countries and that in doing so “the EU is also claiming a right to shape these structures itself” (cf. Holden, 2009: 21). As will become clearer in the next paragraphs, this remark provides a further indication that TACIS was designed to serve the EU’s interests, not least by inculcating structural changes amenable to its own interests (see e.g. Holden, 2009).

The selected priority areas of the regional assistance offered under the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper reflected an interrelated focus on EU strategic interest and regional transition needs. To begin with, a primary goal of EC regional assistance was the development of “viable, secure, safe and competitive transport and energy routes” in order to promote trade and investment flows in Central Asia as well as between the EU and Central Asia (European Commission, 2002: 21). Assistance in the two priority areas of energy and transport focused, *inter alia*, on the harmonisation of conditions for transit with those of the EU and the harmonisation of oil and gas standards, the funding of feasibility studies and other small, non-bankable components of road, maritime and rail infrastructure projects (European Commission, 2007a: 17). As mentioned in Chapter 4, regional cooperation in transport and energy networks was undertaken respectively within the framework of the TRACECA and INOGATE programmes. Between 2004 and 2006, the area of transport received around EUR 29 million in assistance (*ibid.*). Activities included, for instance, a prefeasibility study for the development transport road Sari-Tash-Dushanbe-Termez, which would link Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and could stimulate development of the industry, agriculture and mountain tourism in the areas bordering the road (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006). In 2005-2006, support for the development and improvement of energy routes attracted some EUR 10 million (International Crisis Group, 2006). Assistance in that two-year period included a technical audit of oil and gas pipelines, rehabilitation of gas transport systems, and in particular of the Bukhara-Tashkent-Bishkek-Almaty pipeline, and coordination of national energy policies. Between 2002 and 2006, a total of EUR 45 million was allocated for supporting INOGATE initiatives in Central Asia (European Commission, 2007a: 17). Another priority area under the Regional TACIS Programme was Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). In this area, assistance was focused on border management (via BOMCA), the fight against organised crime, and in particular against trafficking of drugs (via CADAP) and human beings, and migration and asylum management. Together, these three fields attracted a total of EUR 112 million in 2002-2006 (European Commission, 2007a: 18). Activities in these areas included support of the countries’ efforts in reforming and modernising their national border management systems in line with EU practices, and the organisation of a migration and asylum system more in accordance with EU standards (*ibid.*). In this respect, Crawford remarks that “rather than promoting systems of legal justice within Central Asian states, such activities and expenditure relate more to the EU’s own concerns and perceived self-interests with regard to limiting the impact on EU member states from organised crime, economic migration and asylum seeking originating from Central Asia” (2008: 179). This insight corroborates the finding that key EU policy documents, and most notably the European

Security Strategy (Council, 2003), preserve a key role for EU aid in guaranteeing the EU's security (see e.g. Holden, 2009: 21). A further priority area of regional assistance in 2002-2006 was the environment. In 2004-2006, EUR 60 million was committed to address environmental issues, and in particular water management (e.g. the Aral Sea, and trans-boundary waters and river basin management), climate change, biodiversity and a more sustainable use of natural resources (European Commission, 2007a: 18). The environment is in fact an area in which the EC has been assisting the region since the early days of TACIS in 1992. Similarly, the participation of the Central Asian states in the TACIS priority areas of transport (via TRACECA) and energy networks (via INOGATE) started in the 1990s. By committing more resources to the TACIS regional programmes, the Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 thus attempted to further enhance the countries' participation in these regional schemes (see more below).

EC bilateral assistance programmes under the Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 were allocated a total of EUR 142 million, inclusive of assistance under TACIS, the Food Security Programme (FSP) and the Exceptional Financial Assistance programme (EFA) (European Commission, 2007a: 19). In addition, considerable funding was provided through ECHO in the form of humanitarian and disaster preparedness assistance, in particular to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Bilateral programmes under the Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 consisted to a large extent of 'Small Project Programmes', including policy advice projects, civil society support programmes, the Institution Building Partnership Programme (IBPP), Bistro¹⁵⁶, Managers Training programme, TEMPUS, Customs, Statistics and EIDHR (European Commission, 2007a: 17). Almost 60 per cent of bilateral assistance under the Strategy Paper was committed to poverty reduction, the main priority area (*ibid.*). Poverty reduction activities included local development projects (via the FSP) as well as sector reform-oriented budget support (via the FSP)¹⁵⁷ coupled to technical assistance (via TACIS). In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, for instance, national government support projects sought to reform and improve public financial management by combining budget support with technical assistance (*ibid.*). The second priority area was administrative, legal and regulatory reforms, alongside civil service reform and governance, which together received about 20 per cent of available resources (*ibid.*). Activities in this area, organised mainly in light of the PCA implementation commitments, were directed at institutional capacity-building and improved functioning of the rule of law, more in line with the legal frameworks of the EU. Activities

¹⁵⁶ The TACIS instrument Bistro was designed to provide rapid, short-term and small-scale assistance (max. EUR 100,000) to public and private actors in the Central Asian region.

¹⁵⁷ Kyrgyzstan, for instance, received EUR 74.5 million in budget support under the EC FSP between 1997 and 2004 (Matveeva, 2006: 86).

involved several of the Small Projects Programmes, including Bistro, IBBP, TEMPUS (higher education), the Managers Training programme and the TACIS Policy Advice Programme (*ibid.*). The latter programme, for instance, served to “provide a quick and flexible response to governments’ emerging priorities and urgent needs in key areas of economic and social reforms” (*ibid.*). A noteworthy initiative that was implemented in all five countries was the project aimed at providing support to the reform of official statistics. In Uzbekistan, for instance, this project sought to improve existing external trade data in compliance with the requirements of the PCA, introduce international statistical methodologies, classifications and standards, and establish a system of social statistics to meet international requirements (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006).

It is important to note that many of these assistance activities, including the regulatory convergence projects, concentrated predominantly on economic reforms and trade and investment-related measures. Since such reforms are crucial in view of enhancing the countries’ economic performance and achieving a fully functioning market economy, this EU preoccupation with an improvement of the local trade and investment regulatory environment seems to point to a considerable degree of EU self-interest again, especially since many of these EU-led measures - in combination with the activities in the area of transport - would eventually greatly facilitate trade and investment opportunities for EU companies (cf. Crawford, 2008). At the same time, however, the Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in particular, made it clear to the EC on several occasions, especially during Cooperation Committee meetings - i.e. where implementation of PCA-related projects as well as the agenda of future cooperation are discussed at senior civil servant level -, that economic issues were to remain the principal area of bilateral cooperation and that they were not ready to engage seriously on matters that were not related to trade or economic affairs.¹⁵⁸ With respect to Uzbekistan, this was even more the case in the wake of the Andijan massacre in May 2005, when bilateral relations with the EU were glacial. Nevertheless, between 2002 and 2006, several TACIS projects with an explicit democratisation focus were carried out, including in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (see more below). In turn, while it is noteworthy that EC bilateral assistance featured programmes targeted at civil society organisations, many of these ‘Small Project’ programmes were also for a large part economically oriented, such as the ‘Managers Training’ programme. A notable exception was civil society assistance

¹⁵⁸ See e.g. the minutes of the first and the second meeting of the extended support to the implementation of PCA between the EU and Uzbekistan, Phase III project on 16 March 2006 and 29 September 2006 respectively (available upon request).

provided through EIDHR¹⁵⁹, which explicitly supported projects targeting a more pluralistic political system and a more independent society, and involved the participation of many non-economic actors, including NGOs and the media. However, from 1994 to 2004, EIDHR assistance in Central Asia remained limited to only a few projects a year (Crawford, 2008: 180-184). Indeed, it was only in 2005 that the instrument became more fully applicable to the region and that the Central Asian republics became more regular EIDHR beneficiaries. Even so, despite a marked increase in the number of projects, funding for EIDHR assistance in Central Asia in 2005 and 2006 was still rather limited compared to EIDHR expenditure in other regions (*ibid.*). A considerably higher amount of resources for Central Asia was spent under ECHO, the EC's humanitarian aid programme. As mentioned, the main recipients of ECHO activities in Central Asia have been Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Since 2003, the region has also benefited from aid under DIPECHO, the natural disaster preparedness programme of ECHO. That year, EUR 3 million was committed for disaster preparedness in Central Asia (mainly in Tajikistan, and to a lesser extent in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan), followed by EUR 2.5 million in 2004 and EUR 3.5 million in 2005 (International Crisis Group, 2006: 15).

A final source of EC bilateral assistance to the region is in the area of nuclear safety. Since the early 1990s, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have benefited from EC support for the improvement of nuclear safety as part of the TACIS Nuclear Safety programme. The latter programme was allocated a total of EUR 1.3 billion (1,200 projects) between 1991 to 2006.¹⁶⁰ A final assistance scheme proposed in the Strategy Paper is the pilot poverty reduction initiative in two-three selected target regions across Central Asia, offered under Track 3. With a total budget of EUR 15 million per year, the pilot scheme aimed at "reducing the potential for social conflict, strengthening local economies, improving equality of wealth distribution and strengthening of local government capacity to respond to community concerns" (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006). The pilot scheme was based on a community-based and demand-driven approach embedded in comprehensive medium-term development plans for rural areas and the most vulnerable groups of the population. The target regions included the Ferghana Valley (i.e. a border area of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan) and the Khatlon region in southern Tajikistan. In the latter region, for instance, one of the projects sought to enhance individual incomes and improve living standards through community participation (cf. empowerment) and local government capacity building (cf. cooperative governance) (*ibid.*).

¹⁵⁹ It is worth noting that on 1 January 2007, as part of the overhaul of EC assistance in 2007, the 'European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights' was replaced by the 'European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights', the financing instrument for the promotion of democracy and human rights.

¹⁶⁰ Information retrieved from the website of the European Commission's Institute for Energy, available at <http://nuclear.jrc.ec.europa.eu/tacis-insc/index.php>, last accessed 19 September 2010.

5.3.3. EC assistance to Central Asia at country level

In response to lessons learnt from past involvement in the region, the EC assistance under the Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 wanted to be better targeted towards specific sectors and issues where the Central Asian countries had expressed a clear interest in reform, and to increase TACIS' responsiveness to governments' commitment to the reform process (European Commission, 2002: 3). This aim was clearly reflected in Track 2 of the Strategy Paper: although based on a regional approach that identifies the countries' main shared problems of transition and sustainable economic development, Track 2 was designed to be implemented via tailored national activities (European Commission, 2002: 4). Therefore, in order to fully examine the EC's aid to Central Asia as a material power resource, it is both necessary and useful to have a closer look at the EC's assistance to the region at country level. In doing so, this subsection first explores EC assistance offered to Uzbekistan, followed by aid delivered to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and, finally, Kyrgyzstan.

As already mentioned, Uzbekistan was the main recipient country of TACIS in Central Asia in 2002-2006. Under Track 2 of the Strategy Paper, substantial allocations were given for further support to the implementation of Uzbekistan's commitments under the bilateral PCA. Generally speaking, this heading encompassed projects aimed at promoting economic, political and social development in line with the priorities set out in the PCA. The objectives included development of a sustainable secretariat, assistance in fulfilling international agreements, implementation of outstanding reforms in business law and trade policy, and engagement and strengthening of civil society (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006). A key area of assistance was support to the country's economic transition to a market economy. Activities in this area included projects in support of the customs authorities, standardisation and certification processes, development of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and land registration (European Commission, 2007a). The EC also offered assistance in support of democratic reform. In the period 2003-2007, three democracy promotion-related projects were implemented, which were targeted at the process of parliamentary reform and capacity-building. Together, the three projects were allocated a total of EUR 2.8 million (*ibid.*). In addition, Uzbekistan participated in the higher education programmes TEMPUS and Erasmus Mundus. In the framework of the latter programme, for instance, Uzbek exchange students came to Belgium in 2005 to follow an educational training at specialised colleges of Belgian educational institutions. Outside of the priorities set out in the PCA, considerable resources were allocated to the security sector, in particular through BOMCA. In 2002-2006, BOMCA activities in Uzbekistan included the construction of a training centre for the border guards at

Termez (at the Uzbek-Afghan border) and provision of border security infrastructure and equipment in Surkhandarya (at the Tajik border), which allowed the Uzbek government to resume its demining programme on the Tajik-Uzbek border (Matveeva, 2006: 90).

Conversely, Turkmenistan was the smallest recipient of TACIS in Central Asia. The country received a mere EUR 15.25 million over the period 2002-2006. Activities were concentrated in the areas of customs and statistics, higher education, and support to rural and economic reform. The higher education sector, in particular, attracted a multitude of projects. Somehow remarkably given Turkmenistan's dictatorial rule by the late Niyazov, the EU managed to commit Turkmenistan to engage more seriously in higher education modernization and reform. The EU did so mostly by stressing that higher education is in essence an investment in human capital for the future. Activities in this area included operationalisation of the NATO Virtual Silk Highway system, establishment of Internet training centres at universities and higher education institutions and development of a common platform for a distance learning system in Turkmen higher education institutions. Turkmenistan was also allocated resources to participate in the Managers Training Programme (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006).

Compared to EC aid in Turkmenistan, the assistance offered to Kazakhstan was far more comprehensive. In line with the priorities set out in the PCA, the main areas of assistance in 2002-2006 were related to support to economic reforms (in particular, accession to the WTO, intellectual property rights, regulatory standards, and investment climate) and to reform of the public service and of the judiciary. Activities in the latter area, for instance, included support to notary reform, institutional development of the Court system, support to the judicial academy, support to the Ombudsman in Kazakhstan and support to developing a Child's Ombudsman. Projects in the area of civil service reform included an initiative focused on the development of standards for civil service provision in Kazakhstan, notably "by improving access to information on the government's activities, reinforcing the system of accountability, and strengthening complaint mechanisms" (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006). Another PCA-related project was targeted at the development of competent local governance. The aim was to assist the Kazakh government in developing a strategic plan for decentralisation (*ibid.*). In addition, the country was allocated significant resources for higher education reform (through TEMPUS), development of transport networks (through TRACECA) and energy routes (through INOGATE), and progress on environmental issues. Activities in the areas of higher education reform included a project aimed at the development and monitoring of a quality insurance system for higher education in order to achieve a higher education system more in accordance with international standards. Projects in support of

transport networks included technical and financial assistance delivered through TRACECA for the development of port of Aktau, considered as central for capacity-building of Kazakhstan's economy, including for the export and transit of energy resources across the Caspian Sea. An important TRACECA project, which was also implemented at the port of Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan, was "Supervision and Training for the Supply of Navigational Aid Equipment". This large-scale project was aimed at ensuring technical supervision of the supply navigational aid equipment and appropriate training measures for the using of the equipment delivered.¹⁶¹

EC assistance offered to Tajikistan was even more extensive and relied on several complementary instruments to TACIS, in particular ECHO, FSP, EFA, and EIDHR. As already mentioned, Tajikistan has benefited from considerable humanitarian assistance under ECHO. Between 1992 and 2006, Tajikistan received more than EUR 160 million in humanitarian assistance.¹⁶² In 2002-2006, humanitarian support included food aid, nutrition (especially for malnourished children), agricultural inputs, irrigation works following the 2000-2001 drought, food-for-work projects, medical and pharmaceutical supplies, medical training and health education, drinking water and sanitation (European Commission, 2006e). In 2004, for instance, ECHO provided emergency funding worth EUR 350,000 to support the people affected by the June 2004 torrential rains. Tajikistan has also been allocated food security aid since the 1990s. Between 1996 to 2006, EC food security aid granted through the FSP totalled EUR 39.5 million.¹⁶³ Assistance on food security was provided mainly in the form of direct budget support combined with technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Protection of Tajikistan. Moreover, in 2002-2004, the FSP supported several rural development projects implemented by well-established European NGOs with a budget of EUR 5 million (European Commission, 2006e), Tajikistan also benefited from macro-financial assistance provided through EFA, aimed at reducing Tajikistan's debt with the EC. For the period 2001-2004, Tajikistan was given a loan of EUR 60 million and a grant of EUR 35 million (*ibid.*). Assistance under EIDHR, in turn, focused on the promotion of human rights, penal reform and prisoner's rights, democracy and good governance, media freedom, rule of law and security structures (police and armed forces) as well as conflict prevention. In 2003-2004, EIDHR activities in Tajikistan were allocated a

¹⁶¹ Website of TRACECA, available at <http://www.traceca-org.org/docs/main.php?il=lotaprtj_ml3_2_ta39&l=en>, accessed on 8 March 2010.

¹⁶² Website of ECHO, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/asia/tajikistan_en.htm>, accessed on 20 August 2010.

¹⁶³ Website of EuropeAid, country page for Tajikistan, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/country-cooperation/tajikistan/tajikistan_en.htm>, accessed on 20 August 2010.

budget of EUR 300,000 (*ibid.*). With respect to activities implemented under TACIS in 2002-2006, the main focus was on civil service reform, education, social development and protection programmes in the Ferghana valley, improvement of living standards in the southern and north-western rural provinces of the country (notably Khatlon and Sughd), i.e. through the pilot poverty reduction scheme, and an institutional reform support programme.¹⁶⁴ TACIS assistance delivered to the country in the five-year period amounted to EUR 58.55 million.¹⁶⁵ Under Track 1, TACIS assistance to Tajikistan included border management (via BOMCA) and anti-drugs trafficking activities (via CADAP), support to environmental protection, projects to implement Tajikistan's global climate change commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and a feasibility study for road sections of the Termez-Dushanbe-Sari Tash road. It is worth noting that BOMCA has been particularly active in Tajikistan, among other things because of the country's unsafe border with Afghanistan and the unexpected withdrawal of Russian border guards in 2005.¹⁶⁶ BOMCA activities between 2003 and 2006 included the construction of a training academy for border guards in the capital, Dushanbe, training-of-trainers seminars, development of manuals on visa management, purchasing of equipment for mobile units, establishment of dog units, and construction and reinforcement of border posts, especially along the eastern part of the Tajik-Afghan border (DRN-ADE-ECONCG, 2006). TACIS activities in Tajikistan under Track 2 focused on civil service reform, improved customs management, support in the implementation of the TCA, support to the Ministry of Labour and the Statistics Committee, higher education reform and vocational training (European Commission, 2006e). In 2003, for instance, the project 'Support to the Civil Service Reform' aimed at strengthening the National Department of State Services by conducting a review of existing legislation and regulations, as well as by teaching needs analysis and assessing the need for remedial action. In addition, Tajikistan also benefited from assistance under a number of alternative EC financing schemes, including support to activities in de-mining, migration and the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (*ibid.*). In 2005, for instance, the EC supported a project aimed at surveying suspected mine contaminated areas and training of Tajik de-miners and supervisors. In 2004, Tajikistan received a grant of US\$ 2.5 million by the 'Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria', to which the EC is a major contributor (*ibid.*).

EC assistance offered to Kyrgyzstan in 2002-2006 was equally comprehensive as the aid to delivered to Tajikistan, although less substantial in terms of allocated resources. Like

¹⁶⁴ Website of the EU Delegation to Tajikistan, available at <http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/tajikistan/about_us/welcome/index_en.htm>, accessed on 20 August 2010.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Based on an intergovernmental agreement between Russia and Tajikistan, Russian border troops had been protecting parts of the Tajik-Afghan border since 1993.

Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan received support not only through TACIS but also through ECHO, EIDHR and FSP, amongst other instruments. The main priority area for assistance was poverty reduction, which was addressed, *inter alia*, through sector-oriented budget support and rural development schemes (European Commission, 2008d: 84). The FSP allocated direct budget support to the Kyrgyz government of approx. EUR 8.5 million per year, combined with technical assistance to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Protection (*ibid.*). The overall aim was to achieve long-term food security and improved nutrition, and increase agricultural productivity and competitiveness, whilst reducing the impact of transition and reforms. Another key area was support for the promotion of civil society and democratisation, implemented, *inter alia*, through EIDHR. Activities in this area included establishment of basic fundamentals of the legal framework, reform of the judiciary, support of the prisoners' rights, media freedom, rule of law and conflict prevention (*ibid.*). Most other activities in 2002-2006 were implemented through TACIS. With a total budget of EUR 41.05 million, assistance under TACIS focused on customs reform, education, social programmes in the Ferghana valley, support to civil service reform and an institutional capacity development programme.¹⁶⁷ In the latter area, for instance, initiatives included support to the development of a national employment policy. It is important to note that several of the areas covered by the EC's technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan in 2002-2006 corresponded with the priorities set out in the PCA. This applies in particular to the assistance offered to support administrative, legal and regulatory reforms (mainly in trade and investment policies) and civil service reform and governance. In the area of civil service reform, for instance, projects aimed at improving legislation relating to the civil service, implementing a reorganisation of the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Agro-processing (MAWA), introducing financial management reforms in other ministries similar to those implemented in MAWA, as well as strengthening the Civil Service Training and Retraining Centre in the Academy of Management (DRN-ADE-ECO-NCG, 2006). In the area of governance, EC assistance was targeted at strengthening local governance, notably in the form of capacity development and institutional analysis of the Ministry of Local Self Governance, so as to underpin the existing legal basis for local self-governance (*ibid.*). Another key objective was economic development, including private sector development. Activities in this area included a project on private sector development in the Issyk-Kul region and an initiative aimed at strengthening the non-banking financial sector. The former project was an initiative that worked through a network of business support agencies in order to promote start-ups and the expansion of small

¹⁶⁷ Website of EuropeAid, country page for Kyrgyzstan, available at <http://eeas.europa.eu/kyrgyz_republic/index_en.htm>, accessed on 14 August 2010.

businesses, especially in agro-processing and ecotourism (*ibid.*). The latter project, which was implemented in cooperation with other donors (notably the World Bank finance sector programme, the Asian Development Bank and USAID), sought to elaborate mortgage systems and legislation (*ibid.*). Under Track 1 of the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper, Kyrgyzstan - like the other four countries - benefited from technical assistance in the area of border management. Projects implemented through BOMCA included support to capacity building and supply of modern equipment, as well as support to reforming the national border management system (European Commission, 2008d: 85). In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic was also given assistance in the area of nuclear safety and in the fight against HIV/AIDS (*ibid.*).

5.3.4. Effectiveness of EC assistance to Central Asia in 2002-2006

Now that we have outlined the substance and scope of the EC assistance provided to Central Asia between 2002 and 2006, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the assistance in terms of the extent to which the EC programmes and projects reached their anticipated results and impact in the medium-long term. Therefore, the final part in our exploration of EC technical and financial assistance as a material power resource considers the effectiveness of the EC's aid offered to the Central Asian states in 2002-2006. In doing so, this subsection considers both the successes and failures of the assistance and its strengths and weaknesses, whilst providing insights into the explanatory factors underlying the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the aid.

Overall, the EC's assistance to Central Asia from 2002 to 2006 seems to have yielded mixed results. On the one hand, the aid delivered to the region achieved some notable successes. According to the European Commission itself, independent evaluations and assessment of its aid found that its programmes in Central Asia were "most successful when addressing issues relating to an enabling regulatory environment for trade, business and investment" (European Commission, 2007a: 23). A significant contribution to regulatory convergence and legislative approximation was made particularly in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (European Commission, 2007a: 20 & 23). Other positive results included "strengthening the legal process, institution building, raising awareness of PCA norms and values, including to civil society, integration into world economy and reforming the economy" (European Commission, 2007a: 23). The positive results in these domains can in part be explained by the fact that these programmes correspond to the key areas of the EC's competence and/or areas in which the EC has recognised expertise, such as trade and

economic policy, central tax and budget reforms (European Commission, 2007a: 19; European Commission, 2008d). Another major contributory factor is the fact that cooperation in these fields is a key part of the PCAs and that the aid in most of these domains can build on the results of and the links developed under previous assistance. Related to this, the European Commission itself notes that “[t]he continued input of EU advisory assistance has kept the Central Asian states in the general transition reform process that started in the early 1990s with the Central European States that have since joined the European Union” (European Commission, 2007a: 24). A particularly useful tool in this regard was the TACIS Policy Advice Small Project Programme, which managed to provide “a quick and flexible response to governments’ emerging priorities and urgent needs in key areas of economic and social reforms” (European Commission, 2007a: 19). As we shall see in more detail in the sections below, most Central Asian governments indeed made use of these advisory functions, regularly calling upon the EC’s advice and help in drafting legislation and framing reforms.¹⁶⁸ Again, such assistance appeared most successful in focal areas of EC competence, including trade and economic policy, central tax and budget reforms (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, the EC’s assistance to Central Asia encountered a number of setbacks and suffered from a few deficiencies, which sometimes compromised the intended results of the assistance. For starters, as a central feature of the EC assistance to the Central Asian countries in 2002-2006, the strong reliance on a regional approach soon appeared to have several limits in light of the reality of the Central Asian context, which revealed the need for a stronger national policy framework.¹⁶⁹ This applied especially to the EC’s reliance on a regional framework for the development and implementation of the bilateral assistance programmes (Track 2). That is, the regional support framework took the similarities between the five countries too much for granted and failed to sufficiently account for their diverging needs.¹⁷⁰ Moreover, most regional programmes under Track 1, including BOMCA, CADAP, TRACECA and INOGATE, clearly confirmed the relevance of a regional cooperation framework for addressing a number of pressing cross-boundary issues, including transport links, the environment and border management, the regional programmes often failed to deliver due to the lingering political tensions between the states involved and a lack of

¹⁶⁸ This point was brought up by several of the interviewees from the European Commission Delegations (now EU Delegations) in the region. See, *inter alia*, author’s interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 14 May 2008 and author’s interview at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan (Political and Economic section) in Astana on 28 May 2008.

¹⁶⁹ This point is not only mentioned in several policy documents and independent assessments, but it was also confirmed by virtually all interviewees concerned.

¹⁷⁰ See e.g. author’s interview with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

political will at government level (see e.g. European Commission, 2007a: 21-22; International Crisis Group, 2006: 24). Most reluctant to engage in regional cooperation initiatives have been Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, although the EC did manage to seal their participation in a number of its regional programme activities, including TRACECA and BOMCA. Alongside personal rivalries and jealousy, regional cooperation in Central Asia is undermined by the fact that the Central Asian republics are still trying to develop their own national and cultural identities, which translates in an obsession with safeguarding their national interests (see more below). Beyond unrealistic expectations of regional cooperation, some of the EC's regional programmes, and in particular TRACECA and INOGATE, had only a minor impact due to the limited amount of resources they had been allocated. In turn, BOMCA and CADAP, which - as the EU's flagship programmes in Central Asia - had been given more funding, managed to achieve some significant successes and largely achieved their anticipated results. However, a reality check and a quick look underneath the surface indicate that border management problems, and even more so, drugs trafficking issues, are there to stay as long as the region's primary ail, corruption, is not alleviated.¹⁷¹

This brings us to problems and obstacles limiting the sustainability of the intended effects of EC assistance in the medium-long term. What most of these problems or obstacles have in common is that they entail negative consequences for the follow-up of the intended results and/or the implementation process after the completion of the EC projects, which is what has been referred to as an 'implementation gap' (European Commission, 2008d). The latter points, *inter alia*, to the observation that new laws - including laws that were drafted with the help of the EU - are often not implemented accordingly, or not implemented at all. One aspect limiting the sustainability is indeed the high incidence of corruption in the region.¹⁷² However, in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, problems with sustainability of the assistance outcomes are also related to the countries' attitude of aid dependency. A large degree of aid dependency on the EU may well provide the EU with considerable leverage over these aid dependent countries (see above); however, their attitude of aid dependency prevents them from taking matters in their own hands and carrying out policy reform processes until the end. As one interviewee from the Commission illustrated, handing out computers and other ICT equipment, such as specialised software for government departments, to the Kyrgyz and Tajik governments comes with the risk that they will ask the EU for new equipment once the old installations are broken or outdated, or that they will ask

¹⁷¹ Author's interview with the Regional Programme manager of the EU's BOMCA and CADAP Programmes, conducted at the regional head office in Bishkek on 16 May 2008.

¹⁷² As noted above, in the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International, the five Central Asian republics are all ranked in the list's bottom-forty of most corrupt countries in the world.

the EU to repair the equipment when it is broken.¹⁷³ The Kyrgyz attitude of aid dependency was apparent during interviews with Kyrgyz government officials, with each of them declaring that they would like to see the EU distribute more technical assistance and budget support to the Kyrgyz government.¹⁷⁴ This attitude is even stronger in Tajikistan. To give one example, the country would like to receive more direct budget support from the EU, but it has been very slow in actually implementing planned reforms of its national budget and financial system despite progress with public financial management reform being a distinct criteria set by the EU for receiving more budget support allocations (European Commission, 2005b).

One problem with reform-oriented budget support that is recognised by the Commission is the difficulty in finding good indicators to measure progress (see e.g. International Crisis Group, 2006). Moreover, although direct budget reform was promoted as a new approach to conditionality, it has become clear that such conditionality to trigger structural adjustments is largely ineffective in the absence of complementary technical assistance to improve the government's institutional and administrative capacity (see above). Changing the attitudes of aid dependency might be a challenge that is in another league altogether, but the EC has come to understand that sectoral budget reform needs to be accompanied by targeted technical assistance, which was already applied under the FSP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2002-2006. More generally, the EC has been increasingly investing in capacity-building projects in the region in view of increasing the sustainability of its support and reducing countries' aid dependency. As we have seen above, several of the bilateral programmes under the Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 indeed consisted of providing assistance that centres on trainings (e.g. on collection and processing of official statistics), consultancy and the sharing of expertise (e.g. on how to improve their economic policy and trading environment). Capacity-building and institutional strengthening initiatives will remain indispensable if future EC assistance is to increase the sustainability of its intended effects. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the public finance management, "despite certain progress achieved with EC assistance, is still in the initial phase of reform, and further institution building and enhancement of capacity is required to improve decision-making, expenditure functions and restrain corruption" (European Commission, 2008d). Even in Kazakhstan, which is already far beyond the stage of needing logistical support such as computers and software programmes, limited institutional capacity remains a problem, including the limited

¹⁷³ Author's interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 14 May 2008.

¹⁷⁴ Author's interviews at the Diplomatic Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the EU in Brussels on 5 February 2008; at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, International Economic Department, in Bishkek on 8 May 2008; and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, Department of Relations with the West, Division of Relations with the EU, in Bishkek on 12 May 2008.

competence of civil servants and of staff in general. As one interviewee clarified, this is particularly the case of the middle ranks of civil service and company management rather than at the senior ranks.¹⁷⁵ Related to this, there is also a lack of competent local governance. Such assistance programmes as the Managers Training Programme and such projects as the local government capacity-building initiative and projects aimed at strengthening civil service training schools have been particularly designed to address this issue of lack of competence. Another problem undermining effective implementation is the lack of decentralised government.¹⁷⁶ The latter is especially problematic in Kazakhstan, which covers an enormous territory. In order to tackle this problem, the EC has, for instance, organised a project aimed at assisting the Kazakh government in developing a strategic plan for decentralisation. In Kyrgyzstan, decentralisation of the administrative structures is now part of the government's agenda, but implementation of the administrative reform is advancing very slowly (European Commission, 2008d).

However, the EU also had its share in the problems with the limited sustainability of some of its assistance offered to the region. To begin with, although revised under the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper with the aim of being more concentrated and of involving only a number of focus areas, the TACIS bilateral programmes for 2002-2006 still consisted of too many 'stand-alone' technical assistance projects, including in the area of institutional and administrative reform.¹⁷⁷ As noted in an independent evaluation ordered by the Commission, "[t]hese actions often achieve good results at project level but have limited impact at sector and national policy level due to a lack of continuity and coherent long-term sector planning. Inevitably, this has had negative effects on sustainability" (*ibid*). More generally, moreover, TACIS, as the main assistance instrument, suffered from a lack of flexibility, being subject to a very time-consuming, unwieldy bureaucratic system, which in its turn was subject to a slow and intricate formal decision-making process.¹⁷⁸ This seriously undermined the responsiveness of the aid delivery and even contributed to considerable time lag of TACIS' implementation¹⁷⁹ in Central Asia (European Commission, 2007a: 21; European Commission, 2008d: 21). In this regard, it was hoped that the new assistance instrument, DCI, would have a lot more scope in terms of flexibility and responsiveness to the countries' development needs

¹⁷⁵ Author's interview with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁷ See e.g. author's interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 14 May 2008.

¹⁷⁸ Author's interview with the Central Asia coordinator of EuropeAid Cooperation Office, D/1 in Brussels on 26 February 2008 and author's interview at the regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 8 May 2008.

¹⁷⁹ It is important to note that the time lag experienced in implementing the TACIS programmes was equally - if not to a larger extent - due to the limited institutional and administrative capacity of the Central Asian countries.

and the region's rapidly changing environment. In concluding this subsection, it is important to note that the other external donors active in Central Asia in 2002-2006 were hardly achieving any better results. Indeed, the performance of the assistance delivered by key western donors such as the U.S. and the UN agencies, was not rated any better and was to some extent considered even less effective than the aid offered by the EU. Moreover, they too were confronted with several problems, often similar to those faced by the EU (see e.g. Adamson, 2002, 2003; Schatz, 2008; Schatz & Levine, 2009). However, one aspect on which their assistance scored substantially better than the EU's aid did was the visibility of their programmes and activities. Indeed, while key donors such as the U.S. and the UN managed to make their assistance known among the local public, *inter alia*, through large publicity campaigns, the EC's aid remained largely unnoticed to the Central Asian population (see e.g. International Crisis Group, 2006; Matveeva, 2006). This lack of visibility increasingly worried the EU to the point where this became a priority issue in the EU Strategy of June 2007, and hence also for the assistance that was to be delivered under the 2007-2013 Strategy Paper.¹⁸⁰ In the mean time, a number of measures were already taken to enhance the visibility of the EU's assistance, including the establishment of closer contact between the EC Delegations and the local public (e.g. annual organisation of a European film week, organisation of school competitions and the public celebration of Europe Day), an increase in the number of consultation sessions with civil society, larger investments in publicity campaigns, and an upgrading of the EU's presence on the ground (see more below).

To sum up the main findings of this subsection, the EU's aid delivery to Central Asia from 2002 to 2006 appears to have achieved some notable successes while at the same time encountering several setbacks and suffering from a number of deficiencies. The largest successes were achieved in the area of regulatory reform in the administrative and legal spheres. Yet, limited institutional capacity and lack of political will on the side of the Central Asian governments very often hampered the impact of the assistance in the longer run, including the actual implementation of the initiated reforms. Moreover, the assistance had its own shortcomings, especially in terms of the aid responsiveness and flexibility of TACIS, the main instrument.

5.3.5. Concluding remarks

This section served to assess the extent to which, from a TNPO₁ perspective, the provision of aid is a material power resource, which contributes to the EU's TNPO over the Central Asian

¹⁸⁰ Author's interview at the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, Central Asia Division, in Berlin on 30 October 2007.

countries. Irrespective of the limits encountered by the EU in providing assistance to the Central Asian countries, aid itself remains a strong tool for the EU to exert power over the region. This applies both from a TNPO1 perspective and from a TNPO overlap perspective. As demonstrated above, looking at it through a TNPO1 lens, the mere fact that the EU is Central Asia's main donor implies the existence of material asymmetries and provides the Union with a certain amount of leverage over the region, varying in strength across the five countries. In turn, the overlap of TNPO1 with other two TNPO structures accounts for a more sophisticated type of power-creating or power-enhancing aspects of EU aid, as captured in the TNPO toolbox (Figure 1, p.51). To quote Holden again, "[r]egardless of the specific effects of aid, EU aid is an important process in itself; it forms relationships between EU institutions/personnel and their counterparts and inserts the EU into the national/regional context. [...]. The aid itself is a direct intervention to inject finance and expertise (and prestige) to local institutions, which it favours and ensures contact between European and local elites" (2009: 182). Such power-creating and power-enhancing aspects of the EU's assistance to Central Asia will be explored below, in particular in the sections covering the overlap between TNPO1 and the other two TNPO structures, notably sections 8.1, 8.2 and 8.4.

5.4. Security capabilities and (geo)strategic power game

The final step in our exploration of the EU's control over TNPO1 vis-à-vis Central Asia has a strong realist orientation, not least since it focuses on issues that are central to realist thought: security capabilities and geostrategic power. Realists view national security as the primordial national interest. Accordingly, in pursuing national security, states rely on their material capabilities, most notably economic and military capabilities. Applied to the EU, this means that the EU is above all concerned with safeguarding the EU's external security, and in the first place, with guaranteeing stability alongside its borders. As the EU distinguishes itself internationally by favouring non-military means to advance its interests (cf. the EU as a 'civilian power'), the Union relies primarily on economic and other civilian instruments to guarantee its security. However, even in the current post-Cold War era the EU is not exempt from the need to recourse to military - be it exclusively defensive - instruments to reach certain 'hard security' objectives, in particular to reduce the kind of security threats that emerge from weak or failed states and from (post-)conflict zones (cf. the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)). Irrespective of the fact that the EU does not (yet) have a fully-fledged 'EU army' and that it cannot participate in NATO military actions under the EU flag, its interests do encompass hard security goals, including the successful implementation of key

NATO operations in which EU member states are participating. The present subsection focuses on the extent to which the EU attempts and manages to gain influence in the security domain. In what follows, it will be demonstrated that Central Asia holds a mix of soft security and hard security risks for the EU. Moreover, in light of Central Asia's geostrategic importance, it will be shown that the EU is involved in the so-called 'New Great Game' that is being played out in the region, and that the Union pursues strategic power on the Central Asian chessboard (cf. the notion of 'geostrategic competition' in the TNPO toolbox, see Figure 1, p.51), the rules of which, however, appear to be conditioned by the Central Asian states themselves.

The fact that Central Asia borders Afghanistan as well as the EU's neighbouring countries to the East holds a multiple security risk for the EU, which has proved to be a vital incentive for the EU to enhance its engagement with the Central Asian republics and increase its influence over the region (see above). According to this logic, any factors that may provoke instability in the region are therefore to be addressed, such as extreme poverty, social unrest and lack of respect by the authorities for human and civil rights. Moreover, the region is home to a host of transnational security threats for the EU, including illegal migration and organised crime, in particular people and drugs trafficking. Not surprisingly, stability and security (including energy security) are the main strategic interests of the EU in Central Asia, as has been reiterated ever since the Council meeting of 10 December 2001 (Council, 2001a; also see e.g. Council, 2007b; Erler, 2007; European Commission, 2002; 2007a). In practice, this means that much of the EU's engagement with the region - from its political dialogue mechanisms to its various assistance programmes - should be seen in light of the EU's strong concern with security objectives. These include both hard security and soft security objectives. With respect to the former, the EU has so far not had any missions in Central Asia under the EDSP. Even so, the EU has obviously been very concerned with the successful implementation of NATO's International Stability and Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan. Of the EU's 27 Member States, no less than 25 are currently participating in the military operation in Afghanistan, with Cyprus and Malta being the only EU member states not contributing to the mission (see Table 5, p.153). The EU is not only concerned with avoiding potential spill-over of extremism from Afghanistan to Central Asia, but the region is also crucial as a transit and basing source for resupply of ISAF. Next to an American military base¹⁸¹ at the Manas airport in Bishkek, the region hosts two military bases run by European NATO members, notably a German base in Termez, Uzbekistan, and a French base at the

¹⁸¹ It is important to note that the U.S. initially had a second military basis in the region, i.e. in Uzbekistan. However the Uzbek regime ordered the Americans to close down the basis after the U.S. government had dismissed the Uzbeks' violent response to the protests in Andijan in May 2005.

airport of Dushanbe, Tajikistan. In light of the ISAF mission, both EU member states signed basing agreements with the respective Central Asian countries. Since the launch of the ISAF mission, NATO members have also signed commercial transit agreements with the Central Asian states. Along with other EU diplomats, Pierre Morel, the EUSR for Central Asia, has been in close contact with NATO and has contributed to securing NATO's bid to guarantee the continued support of the Central Asian republics for the alliance's mission in neighbouring Afghanistan.

Table 5: EU member states' contributions to the ISAF mission per country (2010)



Source: NATO website, see <<http://www.isaf.nato.int/troop-numbers-and-contributions/index.php>>

Next to the ISAF mission, the EU shows a keen interest in working with Central Asian republics on the basis of other joint security interests, such as border management and drugs trafficking issues (Boonstra, 2009). The EU's border management programme, BOMCA, and its anti-drugs trafficking programme, CADAP, are indeed the two clearest indicators of the EU's direct involvement in the region as a security actor and its attempt to increase its influence in the security realm. Another aspect of the EU's involvement in the security domain in Central Asia regards the activities of the OSCE in the Central Asian states and the latter's membership of the regional organisation (see below in the section on TNPO₂ and its overlap). At the same time, however, the EU and the Central Asian states have been pursuing conflicting notions of security threats as well as diverging approaches on how to avoid and address them, with the Central Asian states being much closer to Russia and China's approaches and perceptions of security threats than to those of the EU and the OSCE (Boonstra, 2009). Very often, issues that the EU and the OSCE believe to be factors contributing to security and stability, such as further democratisation and an improvement and reform of the education sector and the judiciary, are considered security threats in the eyes of

the authoritarian regimes in Central Asia, or rather, threats to the very survival of the regimes themselves (see e.g. Boonstra, 2009). As Kreikemeyer and Zellner (2007) illustrate, “[t]he differences are underscored each time there is an election, and the CIS gives high marks to the same elections that the OSCE finds seriously flawed, or at least still substantially lacking in freeness and fairness”. Another case in point, which applies particularly to Uzbekistan, is the fact that the Uzbek regime easily found support with Russia and China for its violent crushing of the peaceful protest march in Andijan in May 2005.¹⁸² In the context of their shared membership in the SCO, both regional powers stressed their common values with Uzbekistan, backing the Uzbeks’ harsh response to what the regime called a ‘terrorist threat’. In contrast to the U.S. and the EU, which asked for an independent investigation into the events at Andijan and strongly opposed the Uzbeks’ heavy-handed crackdown on the situation, which in reality was just a peaceful protest march organised by a group of Uzbek Muslims, Russia and China fully supported the Uzbek government, mainly based on their shared concern with fighting ‘Islamic extremism’ *within* their respective national territories¹⁸³ (see e.g. Ambrosio, 2008; Hall, 2008; Olcott, 2007; Stevens, 2010). Because of this clear divergence in notions of security and the perception of security threats between the EU and the Central Asian states, the EU sometimes takes a rather prudent stance when announcing potentially ‘sensitive’ assistance goals to the Central Asian governments. While it is important to note that this does not apply across the board, the EU often avoids presenting its soft security-oriented programmes directly as such to its Central Asian partners, including projects on human rights awareness in the Kyrgyz police forces or its support to judicial reform in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. This was particularly the case in Uzbekistan in the aftermath of the Andijan events, when the Uzbek regime was very dismissive of any EC projects directly targeting improvements of the country’s human rights and democratisation situation.¹⁸⁴

Russia and China’s support of Uzbekistan’s heavy-handed response to the Andijan protests point to an additional insight. That is, when Russia and China emphasise the idea of ‘common security values’ in their relations with the Central Asian republics, *inter alia* through the shared membership in the SCO, then there is no doubt that this serves as a way to oppose western initiatives and alliances in Central Asia and counterbalance U.S. and EU influence in the region. This brings us directly to the final aspect of the EU’s TNPO1, i.e. the

¹⁸² Uzbek security forces allegedly shot dead hundreds of mostly unarmed protesters in Andijan that day. According to human rights groups and witnesses, more than 700 people were killed. The Uzbek government said that 187 people died and insisted that violence had been instigated by Islamic insurgents. See Alima Bissenova, “News Digest”, *CACI Analyst*, 16 May 2007.

¹⁸³ Cf. Russia’s heavy-handed handling of the situation in Chechnya and China’s hostile treatment of the Chinese Uyghur population in the Xinjiang Province.

¹⁸⁴ See e.g. lecture by Daniel Stevens, former project leader of TEMPUS project in Uzbekistan and former leader of commissioned assessments of EC projects in Uzbekistan, at SOAS in London on 21 January 2010.

EU's (geo)strategic power, and the balance-of-power logic that has underlied its involvement in Central Asia, in particular from 2005 onwards. As a rule, the EU tends to avoid to publicly present itself as a geostrategically motivated actor, thereby seeking to distance itself from other major international powers, most notably the U.S., Russia, and China. The EU does exactly this in relation with its engagement and interests in Central Asia. Indeed, EU officials¹⁸⁵ hardly ever fail to indicate that the EU does not want to become embroiled in the regional power games¹⁸⁶ that are being played out in Central Asia between Russia, China and the U.S., among other external actors¹⁸⁷ (cf. the so-called New Great Game)¹⁸⁸. Yet, by their very nature, the EU's geostrategic and security interests in the region, not least the EU's energy needs, unavoidably make the Union a competitor for 'influence' over the Central Asian republics vis-à-vis those other external powers (cf. the notion of 'geostrategic competition' in the TNPO toolbox, see Figure 1, p.51). Just like Russia and China seek to counterbalance the leverage of the EU and the U.S. and expand their own influence, the EU has become increasingly concerned with containing Russia and China's (re)new(ed) power hold over the region. Although this concern did not come overnight, it was reinforced to a large extent by Uzbekistan's rapprochement to Moscow and Beijing in the aftermath of the Andijan events in 2005 and further added to the EU's conviction that its strategic influence over the region had to be enhanced. In January 2007, External Relations Commissioner at the time, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, told Reuters that "failure to do so would leave Russia and China in a position to draw the five Central Asian republics further into their spheres of

¹⁸⁵ See e.g. speech by German Minister of State, Gernot Erler, "Towards a New EU Ostpolitik? Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia", speaking on behalf of the EU Presidency, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 7 February 2007, <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/diplo/en/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2007/070207-Erler-EUOstpolitik.html>, accessed on 18 August 2008; also see author's interview with political advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia, in Almaty on 20 May 2008.

¹⁸⁶ A good example of such a 'regional power game' is Kyrgyzstan's 2009 cat-and-mouse game with Russia and the U.S. over whether or not to renew the lease of the U.S. air base at Manas airport in Kyrgyzstan. Russia was believed to be pressing (former) Kyrgyz President Bakiyev to shut down the American transit base - crucial for the NATO mission in Afghanistan - in exchange for considerable financial and economic support. Yet, after months of speculation and despite a vote in the Kyrgyz Parliament ordering the Americans to leave the base, Bakiyev decided in July 2009 that the U.S. transit base could remain operational after all.

¹⁸⁷ Following the demise of the USSR in 1991, Russia's decades-long grip over Central Asia weakened substantially, and soon this once-exclusive Russian influence sphere attracted attention from other external actors, which saw several opportunities. An early interest in the energy-rich region came from American and European oil giants, such as Chevron and BP, which was soon accompanied by an emerging interest from China, Iran, Turkey, India, Pakistan and the U.S., all of whom had historical ties with and/or geopolitical stakes in Central Asia. Turkey was motivated by geographic proximity, economic opportunity, as well as religious and cultural connections. For China, it was access to new markets and energy resource that mattered most, but also its intention to avoid spill-over of Central Asia's resurgent Turkic nationalism into the adjacent Chinese province of Xinjiang, a predominantly Turkic-Muslim area. Iran was interested in economic opportunities and cultural ties, especially with Tajikistan. For more details, see e.g. De Cordier, 2007; Roy, 2009.

¹⁸⁸ This label arose based on the observation that the growing external interest in Central Asia is reminiscent of the 19th-century 'Great Game' between Victorian Britain and tsarist Russia. For more details on the 'New Great Game', see e.g. Djilili & Kellner, 2006; Hatipoglu, 2006; Kaushik, 2007; Kavalski, 2007a; Menon, 2003; Swanström, 2005.

influence. [...] I think it's not a matter of securing the energy resources only - it's really a matter of engaging with these [Central Asian] countries. [...] If we don't engage with these countries, these countries will turn eastwards and turn to Russia and China. And I think it's highly important that [Central Asians] also look very strongly towards Europe.”¹⁸⁹

Central to the outcome of the regional power games is the role of the Central Asian countries themselves. Indeed, rather than being mere pawns on the Central Asian chess board, the Central Asian states themselves engage in offsetting the external actors out against each other in order to reap the maximum benefit of these power games.¹⁹⁰ This is in fact the basis of the so-called ‘multi-vector foreign policies’ of the Central Asian countries, which summon the governments to cooperate with a diverse group of external partner countries.¹⁹¹ Perceived as a tool to safeguard their sovereignty, the idea of following a ‘multi-vector foreign policy’ emerged in the 1990s as a way to avoid future overreliance and strong dependence on one particular external partner, i.e. Russia at the time. This foreign policy approach is based on the principle of treating all external partners as equals and thus of not selecting or favouring certain partners above others. In practice, the Central Asian regimes have come to apply this ‘multi-vector foreign policy’ in a very pragmatic, utilitarian way, seeking to maximise the benefits of their cooperation with external actors. Turkmenistan has been somewhat of an exception in the region. That is, in pursuit of full independence of external involvement, it has maintained a position of ‘positive neutrality’ in its international relations. This explains, *inter alia*, why the country did not seek to join regional organisations, such as the SCO and CSTO, and is only an associate member of the CIS, the post-Soviet regional organisation founded right after the collapse of the USSR to reunite all post-Soviet states (apart from the three Baltic countries).¹⁹² Of course, Turkmenistan’s neutrality in international affairs is strongly linked to the severe isolationism that late President Niyazov dragged his country into under his dictatorial rule. Whilst maintaining Turkmenistan’s position of ‘positive neutrality’, new Turkmen President Berdymukhammedov has ended the country’s decade-long isolationism and is increasingly adopting a ‘multi-vector foreign policy’, following the example of his

¹⁸⁹ See “Central Asia: EU Commissioner Seeks Closer European Ties”, *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 16 January 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1074059.html>>.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. the above example of the U.S. transit base at Manas airport in Kyrgyzstan

¹⁹¹ Author’s interviews at the Diplomatic Mission of Kazakhstan to the EU in Brussels on 4 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the EU in Brussels on 5 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Uzbekistan to the EU in Brussels on 11 February 2008 and at the Diplomatic Mission of Tajikistan in Brussels on 20 March 2008.

¹⁹² Turkmenistan is a member of one regional organisation, notably the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), which it joined in 1992, along with the other four Central Asian states.

fellow Central Asian rulers.¹⁹³ In recent years, the country has indeed been pursuing a very pragmatic approach, especially in relation to its gas sales and gas exploitation (see below).¹⁹⁴

In terms of the implications for the EU's power in the region, the multi-vector approach of the Central Asian states is in effect a double-edged sword. On the one hand, their pursuit of a multi-vector foreign policy provides the EU with a certain amount of leverage over the Central Asian countries. Indeed, the latter's interest to cooperate more closely with the EU is inherently - though not entirely - linked to their intention to establish counterweights to the dominance of Russia and China and hence reduce their dependence on these two powers. If the Central Asian states want to continue to use their enhanced cooperation with the EU as a counterweight to scale back Moscow and Beijing's dominance in the region, they have no choice but to try and stay on relatively good footing with Brussels. Crucially, the fact the Central Asian republics resort to the EU to establish a counterweight suggests that they perceive the Union as a 'major actor', powerful enough to counterbalance the involvement of the other major actors, *i.e.* Russia, China, and to a lesser extent, the U.S. On the other hand, however, the EU's leverage over the Central Asian states is conditioned by this very same policy, in that it essentially constitutes a pragmatic, utilitarian approach, aimed at maximising the governments' short-term benefits. Above all, this translates into a considerable level of unpredictability and unreliability on the part of the Central Asian partner countries, and complicates the prospect of a fully stable bilateral relationship (see below). This has most noticeably been the case in the area of energy relations, which is subject to intense competition, in particular between Russia, China, Iran and the EU. A case in point is Turkmenistan's on-and-off readiness to supply gas directly to the EU. Ever since he came to power in early 2007, Turkmen President Berdymukhammedov has been giving the EU mixed signals by making assurances that its country will deliver gas to the Union whilst being reluctant to officialise any such commitments. The Turkmen stance is motivated by two factors. On the one hand, as mentioned earlier, Turkmenistan has become very preoccupied with diversifying its energy partners in order to reduce its dependence on Russia for selling gas. Among other things, the Turkmen regime has been pressing Russia's national gas company, Gazprom, to pay higher prices for Turkmen gas by threatening to sell gas directly to other partner countries, including to EU member states (see e.g. Spechler & Spechler, 2008). This approach has already paid off, with Gazprom in 2007 accepting a 30 per cent increase in gas prices, despite an earlier contract with Turkmenistan fixing the price of Turkmen gas until

¹⁹³ Author's interview at the Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU in Brussels on 13 March 2008.

¹⁹⁴ It is important to note that Turkmenistan only wants to sell gas 'at its borders', which complicates prospects of gas imports for partner countries that do not border Turkmenistan, such as the EU member states. Author's interview at the Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU in Brussels on 13 March 2008.

2009. The prospect of Turkmenistan selling gas directly to the EU market is very worrying for Gazprom, as the company is heavily reliant on the income of its gas sales to European countries (see e.g. Feklyunina, 2008). It is clear that Turkmenistan has emerged as the big winner, even more so since it simultaneously managed to pull off two lucrative agreements on the construction of direct gas export pipelines to Iran and China (which opened in late 2009 and early 2010 respectively). On the other hand, Turkmenistan is fully aware of the uncertain fate of the planned EU energy corridor - i.e. Nabucco¹⁹⁵ and its feed pipe, the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline -, which is to transport Turkmen and Kazakh gas to Europe across the Caspian Sea without transit through Russia and Ukraine. In the absence of full certainty on the construction of the new energy corridor, Turkmenistan seems hesitant to sign any official gas supply agreements and contracts with the EU side.¹⁹⁶ In the mean time, however, Turkmenistan is taking pragmatic use of this self-created uncertainty over gas exports as a bargaining chip in its relations with the EU, Russia and other interested energy partners (Denison, 2008: 101-2; Endicott, 2009).

Another illustrative example of how the multi-vector foreign policy approach of the Central Asian states has proved to be a double-edged sword for the EU's power in the region is Uzbekistan's position towards the EU sanctions imposed on Tashkent following its heavy-handed crackdown on the protests in Andijan in 2005. As already pointed out, following the May 2005 events, the Uzbek regime quickly found support with its Chinese and Russian counterparts. This support was only further reinforced when the EU decided in October 2005 to impose a series of sanctions on the regime to 'punish' it for its violent handling of the peaceful protests at Andijan, as well as for its unwillingness to allow for an independent, international inquiry into the events and the heightened repression of civil society by the Uzbek government in the months following the uprising in Andijan. While the sanctions drove Uzbekistan further towards Russia and China and largely failed to achieve the intended goals (see below), they nevertheless revealed that Uzbekistan cannot afford disrupting all ties with the EU, not only because the EU is a significant trade partner and donor of the country, but also because the regime is wary of being dominated by Russia and China, and hence needs the EU to counterbalance the latter's influence. Interestingly, even the U.S. took advantage of the frosty relations between the EU and Uzbekistan. As one interviewee explained, after the Americans had been forced to close down their military base in Karshi Khanabad, they quietly stayed in the background, happily letting the EU do the 'dirty work', whilst slowly undertaking diplomatic efforts to re-establish friendly relations with

¹⁹⁵ If fully constructed, Nabucco will be a 3,300-kilometer-long gas pipeline, which will run from Azerbaijan via Turkey into Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and ending in Austria.

¹⁹⁶ Author's interview at the Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU in Brussels on 13 March 2008.

Tashkent.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, although the Uzbek regime only undertook minor steps to meet the demands set by the EU to lift the sanctions, it strongly resented being ‘targeted’ by the EU and did not want to become an international ‘pariah’ (Hall, 2008: 80; Olcott, 2007). The regime’s rapprochement to Russia and China should therefore be seen as an attempt both to avoid being internationally isolated and to frustrate the EU, notably by pointing out to Brussels that the government could rely on the support of its other partners - which in addition had no problems with the regime’s stance on human rights and democracy - and by threatening to break all contact with the EU if Brussels did not lift the sanctions.¹⁹⁸ The Uzbek regime also repeatedly stated that it did not like to be preached to¹⁹⁹, or to use the words of an interviewee of Uzbekistan’s MFA quoting Winston Churchill, “I love to learn but I hate to be taught”.²⁰⁰ Paradoxically, this very same argument also applies to the country’s position towards China and Russia, since the Uzbeks are very concerned with safeguarding their sovereignty and hence resent any attempts by Russia and China - or any other powerful external actor for that matter - to intervene in the country’s domestic affairs. In short, this indicates that Uzbekistan was playing bluff poker towards the EU. Indeed, in the last ten years or so, Tashkent’s relations with Russia have never been very stable, mostly out of fear of being run over by Moscow. In addition, Russia considers Kazakhstan as the region’s powerhouse as well as its main strategic ally in Central Asia, which strongly irritates President Karimov, still clinging onto his firm belief that Uzbekistan is Central Asia’s natural leader. China, in turn, arouses even more suspicion in Tashkent, which is extremely wary of China’s growing control over the region’s natural resources and economic infrastructure (see e.g. Hall, 2008: 80).

To sum up, the EU appears to have acquired leverage over Central Asia in the security and (geo)strategic field. That is, in these two closely-related domains, the EU derives TNPO1 respectively from its security-related capabilities vis-à-vis the region (including via technical

¹⁹⁷ Author’s interview at the OSCE office in Tashkent on 2 May 2008. By 2008-2009, the Americans harvested the fruits of their efforts, as they managed - be it under NATO’s hat - to regain access to the Uzbek territory in view of logistically supporting NATO’s mission in Afghanistan.

¹⁹⁸ This point (i.e. that the Uzbek government could rely on the support of its other partners - which had no problems with its stance on human rights and democracy - and that it threatened to break all contact with the EU if Brussels did not lift the sanctions) was reiterated very clearly during the author’s interview at the Uzbek MFA in Tashkent on 2 May 2008, just three days after the EU Foreign Ministers decided at a meeting of the GAERC in Luxemburg against lifting the sanctions imposed on Uzbekistan (see more below).

¹⁹⁹ To give an example, Uzbek Foreign Minister Vladimir Norov stated at the EU Troika - Central Asia Foreign Ministers meeting in Astana in late March 2007 that his government did not intend to “explain ourselves to anyone”, adding that the EU-Uzbek situation cannot be that of a “pupil and a lecturer”. See Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, “EU In Tashkent For Intensive Talks On Human Rights Situation”, 3 April 2007, <<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1347531.html>>.

²⁰⁰ Author’s interview at the Uzbek MFA in Tashkent on 2 May 2008. The interviewee specified that he had used this quote during his visit to the UK Foreign Office in London around the same time of the GAERC meeting in Luxemburg (on 29-30 April 2008) in order to express the Uzbeks irritation at any extension of the sanctions. The UK was one of the main supporters of keeping the sanctions regime imposed on Uzbekistan.

assistance programmes such as BOMCA and CADAP), and from the Central Asian countries' recognition of the EU as a geostrategic player, whom the respective regimes perceive as being powerful enough to counterbalance the dominance of Russia and China. However, while the EU is indeed exercising (geo)strategic power on the Central Asian chessboard, the rules of the game appear to be conditioned by the Central Asian states themselves. This is clearly reflected in the pragmatism with which the regimes pursue their 'multi-vector foreign policy' (and the ensuing unpredictability of their behaviour), which reveals to be a double-edged sword for the efforts of the EU - *and* of other external powers - to expand its leverage over the countries of Central Asia.

5.5. Concluding remarks

In presenting the empirical examination of the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia, the above outline has sought to explore to what extent material factors contribute to the EU's TNPO. These material factors encompass the EU's position in the region as a leader in trade and investment, the EC's considerable provision of development and financial aid to the five states and the Union's (geo)strategic and security-related capabilities vis-à-vis the region. Arguably the largest asymmetry in terms of TNPO₁ is in the field of trade, with the EU constituting the region's first trade partner while most Central Asian countries take up only a fraction of the EU's total market share. This also applies to investment relations. Indeed, although the EU is increasingly competing with other major sources of foreign investment, in particular China, the Central Asian states are dependent on the EU for the inflow of investments, especially in view of their economies' need of diversification. Nevertheless, there are limits to the Central Asian republics' dependence on the EU in the economic and trade field and to the extent to which the EU can rely on its economic and trade capabilities in order to exert leverage over the five countries. Two factors stand out. On the one hand, EU-Central Asia trade is dominated by hydrocarbons, an area in which the EU has significantly less leverage, up to the point where its bilateral energy relations with Central Asia are increasingly characterised by asymmetric interdependence in favour of the latter. On the other hand, the trade-related commitments of the Central Asian republics - i.e. made under the PCAs, the GSP regime and their WTO accession process - have often failed to translate into actual progress or implementation.

A seemingly mixed picture emerged from the section's exploration of the EU's aid delivery to Central Asia in 2002-2006. In outlining the EC's provision of technical and financial assistance, the section found that the EU's aid delivery to the region achieved some

notable successes. The largest successes were obtained in the area of regulatory reform in the administrative and legal spheres. Yet, the successes were offset by a number of setbacks and several deficiencies. In particular, limited institutional capacity and lack of political will on the side of the Central Asian governments very often hampered the impact of the assistance in the longer run, including the actual implementation of the initiated reforms. Moreover, the assistance had its own shortcomings, especially in terms of the aid responsiveness and flexibility of TACIS, the main instrument.

Perhaps more surprisingly, the chapter also found that the EU appears to have leverage over Central Asia in the 'hard' areas of security and (geo)strategic power politics. On the one hand, the EU derives TNPO1 from its security-related capabilities vis-à-vis the region, including via technical assistance programmes such as BOMCA and CADAP. On the other hand, the EU also draws power from the Central Asian countries' recognition of the EU as a geostrategic player, whom they perceive as being powerful enough to counterbalance the dominance of Russia and China. However, while the EU is indeed exercising (geo)strategic power on the Central Asian chessboard, the rules of the game appear to be conditioned by the Central Asian states themselves. This is clearly reflected in the pragmatism with which the regimes pursue their 'multi-vector foreign policy', which has proved to be a double-edged sword for the attempts of the EU - *and* of other external powers - to expand its leverage over the countries of Central Asia.

Irrespective of the limits encountered by the EU in exercising influence over the region by relying on material resources, it can be concluded that the EU through its control over the material structure, i.e. TNPO1, has established itself as a power to be reckoned with by the Central Asian republics. Moreover, the mere fact that the EU is Central Asia's main donor and trade partner and a significant source of incoming investment implies the existence of considerable material asymmetries in favour of the EU, which provide the Union with a certain amount of leverage over the region. Of course, it is important to add that this leverage varies in strength across the five countries and across the different aspects of material structure. Among other things, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were found to be most dependent on EU aid, whereas the EU's impact in the trade and investment areas appeared strongest in the case of Kazakhstan. The EU's geostrategic leverage, in turn, revealed to be roughly similar throughout the region.

With respect to the analytical dimensions identified in the TNPO toolbox, it is clear that the EU's TNPO1 over Central Asia is located predominantly within the 'intergovernmental' sphere and almost exclusively follows a rationalist logic of action. Interestingly, the EU's control over the material structure is not fully EU-driven and agent-

based, but also encompasses some ‘purely structural’ features. Indeed, the EU also draws considerable ‘passive’ influence from the fact that the Central Asian republics perceive the EU as a major international trade power as well as a (geo)strategic actor, powerful enough in their eyes to counterbalance the dominance of Russia and China. In this respect, it is worth highlighting that our exploration of the EU’s leverage over Central Asia demonstrated the usefulness of (neo)realist insights in capturing several aspects of the EU’s TNPO¹ over the region, in particular the ‘hard power’ aspects, i.e. security-related and geostrategic power.²⁰¹ To conclude, some preliminary evidence was found, which indicated that the EU’s market power over the Central Asian countries encapsulates a number of specific purely structural mechanisms of EU impact, most notably ‘externalisation’ and ‘competition’ (governance), occurring both in their intergovernmental and transnational forms (cf. TNPO toolbox, see Figure 1, p.51). This will be explored in greater detail in the section covering TNPO overlap.

²⁰¹ For a good discussion of the ‘great power competition’ in Central Asia from a realist and neorealist perspective, see Menon & Ziegler, 2008.

Chapter 6 - The EU's TNPO₂ over Central Asia

As highlighted in Chapter 3, alongside material factors, TNPO is also composed of institutional elements, which make up the second parameter of TNPO, TNPO₂. This chapter presents the empirical examination of the EU's TNPO₂ over Central Asia. In particular, it explores the extent to which the EU effectively exercises power over the Central Asian states through its control over institutional factors. The chapter is divided into two parts, which respectively cover the two subcomponents of TNPO₂, i.e. its micro-level and its macro-level. As such, the first part of the chapter explores the different forms of institutionalised cooperation and dialogue established between the EU and the five Central Asian republics. The second part, in turn, examines the extent to which EU draws influence over the five countries from its predominant position within particular international institutions or regimes. As with the empirical exploration of TNPO₁, the chapter focuses mostly on the Pre-Strategy period, notably 2001-June 2007, whilst already offering some insights into events and relations taking place in the Post-Strategy period.

6.1. The EU's TNPO_{2micro} over Central Asia

The different forms of institutionalised cooperation and engagement captured by the micro-level of TNPO₂, or TNPO_{2micro}, include both formal, contractual (including treaty-based) formats of institutionalisation established as part of the EU's relations with the Central Asian states, and less formal and less integrated (including *ad hoc*) formats of institutionalisation, often held at the bureaucratic or technocratic level rather than at the high political level. However, as noted in Chapter 3, although an unmissable part of TNPO, TNPO_{2micro} hardly exists on its own. Indeed, more often than not, it tends to interact with TNPO₁ and/or TNPO₃, and predominantly occurs in the overlap with either one or both of the other two TNPO structures. Therefore, this section contains only few references to and applications of the analytical mechanisms from the TNPO toolbox. For analytical applications of TNPO_{2micro}, we thus refer to the sections covering TNPO₁₋₂, TNPO₂₋₃ and TNPO₁₋₂₋₃, which make ample use of the TNPO toolbox.

6.1.1. Formal institutionalised dialogue

To begin with, at the highest formal level of institutionalisation, each Central Asian state is linked contractually to the EU through an individual PCA or TCA framework.²⁰² Because the PCA with Tajikistan was signed only in 2004, the agreement came in force only recently, notably on 1 January 2010. As mentioned above, the delay in signing the PCA was largely due to the civil war that held the country hostage in 1992-1998. Between May 2005 and December 2009, an interim trade agreement between the EU and Tajikistan was in force, which governed all trade and trade-related matters of the bilateral cooperation as envisaged in the PCA.²⁰³ Until December 2009, nearly all other aspects of the bilateral cooperation were formally governed under the framework of the TCA signed with the then USSR back in 1989 and endorsed by Tajikistan by exchange of letter in 1994. Relations with Turkmenistan are still governed by this TCA, as EU concerns over the country's poor internal political situation have halted the ratification process of the PCA signed with Turkmenistan in 1998 (see Chapter 4).²⁰⁴ These concerns have been expressed most noticeably by the European Parliament and the EU Member States.²⁰⁵ As mentioned earlier, for the same reasons, the ratification of the Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters signed with Turkmenistan was suspended until April 2009, when the Council and the European Commission persuaded the European Parliament to unblock the ratification process despite only a very limited improvement of the country's internal political situation.²⁰⁶ The

²⁰² PCA between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Kazakhstan, O.J. 1999, L 196, signed 23 January 1995 and in force since 1 July 1999, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21999A0728\(02\):EN:NOT](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21999A0728(02):EN:NOT), accessed on 30 March 2010; PCA between the European Communities and their Member States and the Kyrgyz Republic, O.J. 1999, L 196, in force since 1 July 1999, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31999D0491:EN:HTML>, accessed on 30 March 2010; PCA between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Uzbekistan, O.J. 1999, L229, in force since 1 July 1999, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21999A0831\(01\):EN:HTML](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21999A0831(01):EN:HTML), accessed on 30 March 2010; PCA between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Tajikistan, COM(2004) 521 final, in force since 1 January 2010; Agreement between the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation, signed on 18 December 1989.

²⁰³ Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters between the European Community and the European Atomic Energy Community and the Republic of Tajikistan, OJ L 340, in force from May 2005 until December 2009, [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:22004A1116\(01\):EN:HTML](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:22004A1116(01):EN:HTML), accessed on 30 March 2010.

²⁰⁴ PCA between the European Communities and their Member States and the Republic of Turkmenistan, COM (97) 693 final, signed in May 1998, not yet in force.

²⁰⁵ For more details on this, see e.g. Bossuyt, 2010.

²⁰⁶ For this reason, the European Parliament's approval of the interim agreement provoked severe criticism from human rights and other advocacy groups concerned with the country's poor record of human rights. The Parliament, together with other EU actors, responded to the criticism by stating that the EU could act more forcefully and put more pressure on the regime regarding respect for human rights once the bilateral agreement was in force. See e.g. European Parliament official website, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2006-0085&language=EN#title4>, accessed on 4 July 2010.

ratification process was fully completed in July 2009. The interim agreement is expected to enter into force by the end of 2010.²⁰⁷ The PCAs with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have been in force since 1 July 1999 for an initial period of ten years. In accordance with the legal terms of the PCAs (see supra), the three agreements were automatically renewed in July 2009 for another period of ten years, as none of the Parties unilaterally expressed their willingness to end the respective agreements. At the EU-Kazakh Cooperation Council meeting of 17 November 2009, the two Parties adopted a Joint Statement calling for the review of the 1999 PCA in view of updating the current provisions or establishing a new agreement (Council, 2009c). Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have also expressed their interest in extending the scope of cooperation under their current PCAs with the EU, but have not yet officialised their wishes to do so.

Pursuant to the PCAs, formal institutionalised dialogue takes place between the EU and the PCA partner countries at four different levels. At the highest political level, there is the Cooperation Council, which is responsible for supervising the implementation of the PCA and discussing bilateral cooperation based on the PCA from a general perspective. The Council is composed, on the one hand, of senior members of the government of the partner country concerned - usually headed by the (vice-)Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister or other Minister - and, on the other hand, of members of the Council of the EU and of the European Commission - headed by the (vice-)Minister of Foreign Affairs of the EU Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU (cf. Art. 18 TEU).²⁰⁸ The Cooperation Council is held annually, meeting alternately at the Council of the EU in Brussels and at the MFA - or other Ministry - of the partner country concerned. The Kazakh delegation to the eighth EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council in Brussels, for instance, which took place on 18 July 2006, was led by Kazakhstan's then Minister of Agriculture Akhmetzhan Smagulovich Yessimov (Council, 2006). In turn, the Kyrgyz delegation to the ninth EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Council meeting, which took place in Brussels on 13 February 2007, was headed by Daniar Toktogulovich Usenov, the then First Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic (Council, 2007e). The meeting was chaired by Gernot Erler,

²⁰⁷ Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-Related Matters between the European Community and the European Atomic Energy Community and the Republic of Turkmenistan, OJ L 340, signed on 2 December 1998 and to enter in force in 2010.

²⁰⁸ Art. 18 TEU stipulates that the Presidency of the Council of the EU is responsible for representing the EU in all matters related to the CFSP, in particular holding the political dialogue with the partner countries and partner organisations. It should be noted that the Lisbon Treaty - entered into force in December 2009 - introduced some changes to the institutional representation related to foreign affairs. With respect to political dialogue, including the Cooperation Council meetings, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy is now the leading representative and decides who chairs the meetings at the EU side. If s/he is withheld from chairing a meeting due to other commitments, s/he delegates the role of chairperson to the EU Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU. See more below.

Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, President of the Council of the EU at the time. The EU side further included Robert Cooper, Director General for External and Politico-Military Affairs of the Council Secretariat, Hugues Mingarelli, acting Deputy Director General for External Relations, thus representing the European Commission, and Álvaro Mendonça e Moura, ambassador of the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU, who represented the incoming Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU (*ibid.*). To give yet another example, the ninth EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council meeting, which took place in Brussels on 14 September 2009, was chaired by Frank Belfrage, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, then President of the Council of EU, and Vladimir Norov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan.²⁰⁹ Next, at senior civil servant level, there is the Cooperation Committee, which meets once a year to discuss the PCA implementation agenda and progress from a more detailed angle. It consists of senior civil servants of the government of the partner country and of senior bureaucrats of the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

In addition, at technical-bureaucratic level, the Cooperation Committee is assisted by expert Sub-Committees, which are composed of technocrats who hold issue-specific discussions related to the implementation of the PCA. The PCAs in force with Central Asian partner countries tend to encompass two subcommittees, covering notably ‘Justice and Home Affairs’ (JHA) and ‘Trade, Investment, Energy and Transport’ (TIET) respectively. In the case of Kazakhstan, the former sub-Committee is called ‘Justice, Liberty and Security’ (JLS) Sub-Committee. The first session of the EU-Kazakhstan JLS Sub-Committee took place in Astana in November 2002. The fifth session, for instance, which took place in December 2006, was organised by the Prosecutor General’s Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, located in Astana. At around the same period, Astana also hosted meetings in the framework of the TIET Sub-committee. The EU-Uzbekistan JHA Sub-Committee, in turn, met for the first time in Tashkent in July 2002. Specific technical aid was allocated to Uzbekistan under TACIS to assist the government in preparing and organising meetings held in the framework of the PCA. This support consisted primarily of strengthening Uzbekistan’s PCA Secretariat and of assisting the country’s MFA and other government institutions involved in the implementation of the PCA and in the organisation of the EU-Uzbek Cooperation Council, Committee and Subcommittees meetings. In autumn 2005, however, the GAERC decided to partially suspend the PCA as part of the sanctions to be imposed on the Uzbek regime (see above). In concrete, this meant that the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Committee and its

²⁰⁹ See press release of the meeting, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/er/110087.pdf>.

subcommittees were to be suspended until the Uzbek side would show sufficient progress towards meeting the criteria set by the EU for lifting the sanctions (Council, 2005b). The Cooperation Council was the only formal dialogue setting that remained in place. As Uzbekistan reacted very angrily towards the EU's punitive measures, diplomatic relations between the EU and Uzbekistan virtually came to a standstill. Among other things, this resulted in the European Commission experiencing a hard time in implementing its on-going technical assistance projects in the country. Despite only minor Uzbek progress towards meeting the criteria set by the EU, the GAERC decided to lift the suspension of the political and technocratic dialogue meetings during its review of the sanctions on 14 May 2007 (Council, 2007a). An important factors behind this decision was the Uzbeks' readiness to enter into a 'human rights dialogue' with the EU.²¹⁰ Indeed, at the seventh meeting of the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council, which took place in November 2006, Uzbekistan agreed in principle to begin a 'dialogue' with the EU on human rights in the framework of the PCA European Union (2007a: 22). Consequently, after exploratory talks with the Uzbek side in Tashkent in December 2006, the GAERC decided in spring 2007 to establish a 'Human Rights Dialogue' with Uzbekistan, which was to take place under the auspices of the PCA's JHA Sub-Committee (*ibid.*). As a result, the committee was renamed 'Subcommittee on Justice, Home Affairs, Human Rights and related issues' (*ibid.*). The first formal EU-Uzbekistan Human Rights Dialogue was held in Tashkent in early May 2007 (see more below), shortly before the GAERC's next review of the sanctions on 14 May 2007.

Finally, at parliamentary level, there is the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC). The PCC provides a forum for political dialogue between Members of the European Parliament and members of the national Parliament of the partner country concerned. One of the roles of the PCCs is to review the implementation of the PCA. The Committees are entitled to request information from the respective Cooperation Councils, to which they can also make recommendations. The PCCs meet once a year, alternately at the European Parliament in Brussels or Strasbourg and at the Parliament of the partner country. Meetings of the EU-Kazakhstan PCC, for instance, took place, *inter alia*, at the *Majilis* - i.e. the Lower House of the Kazakhstani Parliament - in Astana in May 2005, at the European Parliament in Brussels on 29-30 May 2006 and at the European Parliament in Brussels on 11 July 2007.²¹¹ Meetings of the EU-Uzbekistan PCC took place, *inter alia*, in Strasbourg in May 2002. As pointed out by International Crisis Group, "these committees offer a formal structure in which

²¹⁰ See e.g. Reuters AlertNet, "EU welcomes Uzbek move on rights dialogue", 23 April 2007, <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L23296048.htm>.

²¹¹ Author's interview at the European Parliament in Brussels on 11 July 2008; author's interview with the Assistant of the Deputy Chairman of the Mazhilis in Astana on 25 May 2008. Also European Parliament (2006).

members of the European and the national parliaments can exchange information and discuss questions of political and economic cooperation arising within the framework of the PCAs” (2006: 19-20). The EU side is represented by members of the ‘Delegation to the EU-Kazakhstan, EU-Kyrgyzstan and EU-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Cooperation Committees, and for relations with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Mongolia’.²¹² Before the entry into force of the PCA with Tajikistan, so-called ‘Interparliamentary Meetings’ (IPMs) took place with the country, which are now replaced by PCC meetings. IPMs continue to be held with Turkmenistan. Importantly, the Soviet-era TCA, which is still the main legal framework for relations with the country, also provides for formal bilateral dialogue, notably in the form of the ‘Joint Committee’, which is held annually between senior officials from Turkmenistan and from the European Commission. The tenth meeting of the EC-Turkmenistan Joint Committee, for instance, took place in Brussels on 4 June 2009. The 8th and last meeting of the EC-Tajikistan Joint Committee, which is now replaced by the Cooperation Council, was held in Dushanbe on 25 November 2008.

Apart from the PCAs, the ITAs and the TCA, the EU has a number of additional agreements and other formal arrangements in place with the Central Asian countries. These include three nuclear-related agreements concluded between Kazakhstan and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom): an Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Safety, an Agreement for Cooperation in the Field of Controlled Nuclear Fusion, and an Agreement for Cooperation on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.²¹³ These agreements also provide for institutionalised dialogue between the two sides, mainly in the form of Coordination Committees at technocrat level. In summer 2006, for instance, the first meeting of the ‘Coordination Committee’ established under the Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Controlled Nuclear Fusion took place in the National Nuclear Centre in Almaty, Kazakhstan. In addition, the EU and Kazakhstan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the Field of Energy. In view of extending cooperation in the area of energy, the MoU, signed in December 2006, establishes two road maps, i.e. one on energy security and

²¹² Now that the PCA with Tajikistan has entered into force, the name of the standing Delegation has slightly changed, as there are now also PCC meetings held with Tajikistan. For meeting documents of the Delegation, see <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/organes/dcas/dcas_meetinglist.htm>. It is worth noting that the parliamentary delegation evolved from the Delegation for Relations with the Republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which created a working group for Central Asia in 1993. A year later, the European Parliament established a Delegation for Relations with Central Asia and Mongolia.

²¹³ The Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Nuclear Safety was signed in July 1999 and came into force in June 2003; the Agreement for Cooperation in the Field of Controlled Nuclear Fusion was concluded in November 2002 and entered into force in April 2004; the Agreement for Cooperation on the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was signed in December 2006 and became operational on 1 September 2008. See <http://ec.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/eu_kazakhstan/political_relations/agreements/index_en.htm>, last accessed 9 November 2009.

one on industrial cooperation.²¹⁴ The arrangement foresees regular meetings at technocrat level aimed, *inter alia*, at approximating Kazakhstan's energy regulations to those of the EU. More recently, the EU also signed a MoU on energy issues with Turkmenistan and a MoU on cooperation in the field of transport network development with Kazakhstan (see also Chapter 6). For an overview of the textiles and steel agreements concluded with Central Asian partner countries, see section 5.1. (above).

Alongside formal dialogue at bilateral level, the EU also has a number of institutionalised dialogue settings in place with the Central Asian republics at regional and multi-country level. Most prominently, there are the meetings of the 'EU Troika - Central Asia'²¹⁵, which are held at least once a year at foreign ministerial level, alternately in the EU and in Central Asia. Until the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, the EU side was formally headed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the EU Member State holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU, a role that is now in the hands of the High Representative (Art. 18 TEU & Art. 18 TFEU). However, the latter actually tends to delegate this function back to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the EU Member State concerned when s/he is withheld from attending the meeting due to commitments elsewhere. The EU side is further represented by senior officials of the Council Secretariat, including the EU Special Representative for Central Asia, and the European Commission. Before the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU delegation to the meetings also tended to include representatives of the previous and the incoming Presidency. The Central Asian partner countries, in turn, are all five represented by their Ministers of Foreign Affairs (or Vice-Ministers of Foreign Affairs). In this respect, it is important to stress that the EU-Central Asia dialogue setting is quite unique, in that it is the only institutionalised forum in the region that involves the full participation of all five Central Asian republics and reunites the five countries at such a high political level. Indeed, none of the existing regional organisations in the area - e.g. CSTO, CIS, SCO - include the involvement of all five Central Asian states, due mainly to Turkmenistan's reluctance to join these organisations as a full member. As such, the meetings of the EU Troika - Central Asia have of course not gone unnoticed in the countries that head those 'rival' regional organisations, most notably Russia and China. The origin of this regional political dialogue setting with the Central Asian states, which became fully formalised with the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007, goes back to a follow-up initiative to the visit to the region of then Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten in

²¹⁴ To consult the text of the MoU, see <http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/international_cooperation/doc/mou_kazakhstan_en.pdf>, accessed on 31 March 2010.

²¹⁵ Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, this regional political dialogue setting is called 'EU-Central Asia Ministerial Meeting'.

March 2004. At the time, the European Commission sought to create a regular political dialogue with the Central Asian countries at regional level with the aim of establishing an informal forum that could gather the five states around one table and “contribute to building confidence and mutual trust between them” (International Crisis Group, 2006: 18-20). At the same time, the Commission sought to create this regional dialogue format to support the regional assistance programming planned under the 2002-2006 Regional Strategy Paper. Preliminary meetings were organised at political director level, including in Bishkek in December 2004. The first official round of the regional political dialogue was held in Almaty in summer 2005; the second round took place in Brussels in December 2005. There was another meeting at the level of political directors in April 2006 and at the level of ministers in June 2006, both in Almaty (*ibid.*). In these first rounds, discussion focused on a number of issues of common concern, including trade and economic cooperation, justice and home affairs (migration and drug trafficking), environment, water and energy management and terrorism (Matveeva, 2006: 90-91). On the fringes of the meetings, the European Commission tried, though not always successfully, to hold informal bilateral talks concerning domestic political and human rights issues, including with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan (*ibid.*). The next meeting of the EU Troika - Central Asia, held in Astana in March 2007, i.e. during Germany’s Presidency of the Council of the EU, focussed on prospective enhanced cooperation under the forthcoming EU Strategy for a Partnership with Central Asia, which was then being finalised through a concerted effort made by Germany’s MFA, DG Relex and the EUSR for Central Asia. The eventual document of the EU Strategy was presented to the five Ministers of Foreign Affairs concerned at the subsequent session of the EU Troika - Central Asia forum, which was held at the *Reichstag* - right underneath the glass dome - in Berlin on 30 June 2007, the final day of Germany’s Presidency.

Another regional dialogue that the EU initiated with countries in Central Asia is the Caspian-Black Sea Energy dialogue, better known as the ‘Baku Process’ or ‘Baku Initiative’, formally launched at the first Ministerial Conference on Energy Cooperation in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2004. The central aim of the Baku Initiative is to promote regional energy cooperation and progressive integration of the regional energy markets between the EU and the littoral states of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, which include the Central Asian states Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. The process also involves the participation of the states’ neighbouring countries, which include the Central Asian countries Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. At the same time, the EC sought to give a new impetus to the EC-funded regional programmes INOGATE and TRACECA, which were brought together under the framework of the Baku Process. Following the Ministerial Conference, four working

groups of experts were established in accordance with the four key areas of cooperation as agreed upon by the participants of the conference: (i) harmonising the legal, regulatory and institutional framework between the respective energy markets and the EU; (ii) enhancing the safety and security of energy production, transportation and supplies, (iii) embarking on energy efficiency policies and programmes in view of sustainable development; and (iv) enhancing the attraction of funding for new infrastructures and project facilitation²¹⁶ (see more below). The second Energy Ministerial Conference was held in Astana in November 2006. Along with the other littoral states of the Caspian Sea and the littoral states of the Black Sea and their respective neighbouring countries²¹⁷, the five Central Asian republics met up with senior officials from the European Commission, the EU Presidency, EU Member States, EU candidate countries, the EIB, the EBRD and the World Bank. Russia also attended the meeting, notably as an observer. Among other things, it was decided to maintain regular meetings of the four working groups of experts, particularly in view of implementing the Energy Road Map agreed in Astana.²¹⁸ In addition, it was decided to strengthen the role of the INOGATE Technical Secretariat in Kiev and its regional offices in Central Asia (Almaty) and the South Caucasus (Tbilisi). Following the conference, the working groups developed Action Plans to implement the multilateral Energy Road Map.

6.1.2. Informal and/or ad-hoc institutionalised dialogue

Compared to the formal dialogue mechanisms, the range of informal and *ad-hoc* types of institutionalised cooperation between the EU and the Central Asian countries appears a lot more extensive, and - not surprisingly - involves a much wider spectre of actors, including non-governmental actors. In the latter case, as we shall see in the sections covering TNPO₂₋₃ and TNPO₁₋₂₋₃, the main mechanisms that capture this type of TNPO_{2micro} are domestic empowerment and transnational social learning.

Most of these informal and/or *ad-hoc* dialogue settings are established in the framework of the EC's assistance programmes in the region. In this regard, it is important to highlight that in the initial phase of the TACIS programme, technical assistance to the Central

²¹⁶ See website of the European Commission, Regional Cooperation, *Baku Initiative*, <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/energy_transport/international/regional/caspian/energy_en.htm>.

²¹⁷ The littoral states of the Black and Caspian Seas are the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Turkey and Ukraine. Their respective neighbouring countries are the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

²¹⁸ See "Ministerial Declaration on Enhanced Energy Cooperation between the EU, the Littoral States of the Black and Caspian Seas and their Neighbouring Countries", Astana, Kazakhstan, 30 November 2006, http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/international_cooperation/doc/2006_11_30_astana_conclusions.pdf, accessed on 5 April 2010.

Asian partner countries was managed primarily through a ‘top down’ approach. This was, on the one hand, a result of the governments’ limited sense of ‘ownership’ and, on the other, of their insufficient institutional capacity (European Commission, 2007a: 20). In order to enhance coordination of the assistance between the EC and the national authorities and increase the latter’s ownership of the assistance, the EC soon decided to establish National Coordination Units (NCUs) within the governments, supported by EC-funded technical assistance. Uzbekistan’s NCU, for instance, was established in 1992. Until July 2000, it was a joint Uzbek-EC institution, after which the NCU became an institution of the Uzbek Government, supported by an advisory team of European and local experts.²¹⁹ In cooperating closely with the NCUs, TACIS became increasingly based on a dialogue-driven approach in an attempt by the EC to guarantee that the assistance programming would better address the diverging needs and priorities of the Central Asian partner countries. This is reflected most noticeably in the assistance delivered under the 2002-2006 Strategy Paper and the related Indicative Programmes and Annual Action Plans, although national government often still expressed concerns about their perceived lack of ownership, in particular with respect to the regional programming. For each of the five countries, the TACIS priorities were defined by taking into account both the EC’s cooperation objectives and the countries’ own policy agenda. In 2002-2006, the NCUs played a key role in enabling the governments to participate more effectively in the programming of the EC’s technical assistance. In preparation of the 2002-2004 and 2005-2006 Indicative Programmes, for instance, the Uzbek NCU each time transmitted summaries of Uzbek national policy in selected areas to the EC, ensuring alignment of EC and Uzbek priorities.²²⁰ In turn, in view of implementing the Annual Action Programmes, which identify projects to be financed by the EC, the Uzbek NCU each time gathered preliminary proposals from Uzbek Ministries and Agencies, conducted a pre-selection of the proposals, and prepared project fiches together with the potential beneficiaries, which it then sent off to the EC for consideration.²²¹ At regional level, joint meetings of the TACIS National Coordinators and corresponding governmental bodies took place in order to further closer cooperation with the governments of partner countries on implementation of the EC assistance programmes (European Commission, 2007a: 22).

Next to this kind of semi-formal bilateral and regional dialogue held during the preparation phase of the programming and ahead of the implementation of the projects, there exists a wide range of dialogue settings created under the EC assistance that occur mostly on

²¹⁹ See website of Uzbekistan’s National Coordinating Unit, <<http://tacis.uz>>, accessed on 5 June 2010.

²²⁰ See e.g. handout of the presentation to the donor community of the proposed Action Programme for 2005, available at <http://tacis.uz/docs/Presentation_AP2005_05_Oct_2004_UZBEKISTAN.pdf>.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

an *ad-hoc* basis, i.e. for the duration of the projects concerned. Indeed, as is clear from the overview given in section 5.3. above, EC assistance programmes in Central Asia rely to a large extent on the transmission of know-how through the provision of policy advice, consultancy, training sessions, seminars, info sessions etc. In essence, all of these ‘assistance tools’ are based on *ad-hoc* dialogue between EU and Central Asian interlocutors, aimed at information-sharing and exchange of ‘know-how’ (cf. ‘communication’ and ‘social learning’, see TNPO toolbox, p.51). Participants in the dialogue may include governmental and/or non-governmental actors (cf. intergovernmental social learning and transnational social learning, see TNPO toolbox, p.51). Projects targeted at stimulating political openness and enhancing the role of civil society organisations often seek to facilitate and encourage dialogue between state and non-state actors in the partner country, although there are also a great deal of projects that involve non-governmental actors only (cf. domestic empowerment, see TNPO toolbox, p.51). This applies especially to projects implemented under EIHDR and IBPP. The latter programme aims, *inter alia*, at reinforcing Central Asian civil society organisations to enable them to participate in the decision-making process in their countries. The main goal of IBPP is to foster citizens’ initiative and to strengthen the capacity of NGOs, not-for-profit professional organisations and local and regional authorities active in the social sector and in all areas relevant to civil society support as well as business partnership.²²² A case in point is an EC project in Kyrgyzstan implemented in 2005-2006, which aimed at organisational and individual capacity-building of local human rights actors (again cf. domestic empowerment, see TNPO toolbox, p.51). The main activities of the project consisted of awareness-raising and training in view of human rights organisational capacity building: human rights tools, campaigning, awareness-rising and public relations, human rights education, advocacy, monitoring and social activism.²²³ Additional examples - among numerous others - include a ‘civic education for youth’ project implemented in Tajikistan and a project aimed at capacity-building of a Kyrgyz young lawyers’ association.

A more recent EC assistance programme that involves a great deal of *ad-hoc* dialogue and specifically relies on information sharing and exchange of know-how between European and Central Asian business intermediary actors is the ‘Central Asia Invest’ Programme. Aimed at promoting sustainable economic development of SMEs in Central Asia, the specific objective is to strengthen the role and competences of Central Asian Business Intermediary Organisations, such as Chambers of Commerce, in increasing their capacity to support SMEs and to influence policies in favour of micro- and small-scale companies. To that purpose, the

²²² Information retrieved from the website of the (former) EC Delegation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, http://delkaz.ec.europa.eu/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=593&Itemid=43

²²³ *Ibid.* Information on the website was dated 6 October 2006.

projects involve close cooperation between European Business Intermediary Organisations and counterpart organisations in Central Asian countries, whose staff, *inter alia*, receives skills training and attends seminars organised by their European partner organisation.²²⁴

In turn, a particular type of governmental policy advice involving *ad-hoc* dialogue is so-called Twinning. However, in Central Asia, only one project has so far been implemented using Twinning, notably a TACIS project implemented in 2005-2006, which aimed at Twinning the Spanish and Greek Ombudsman offices with their counterpart in Kazakhstan. The twinning element implied sharing European best practice in the organisation and implementation of the institution of the Ombudsman.²²⁵ As noted by several interviewees from the European Commission, despite the EU's intention to use this assistance tool more widely in the region and despite substantial interest from both the EU side and the Central Asian partner countries in working through Twinning arrangements, Twinning is currently off limits for use in Central Asia due to unforeseen legal restrictions of DCI, the EC's new assistance instrument introduced in the region in 2007.²²⁶ Nevertheless, there are still numerous EC projects that have been and are being implemented in the region, which involve similar kinds of *ad-hoc* dialogue aimed at institutional and administrative capacity-building and development through 'information exchange' and sharing of European best practice (see more below).

A final series of *ad-hoc* dialogue held between the EU and the Central Asian countries is initiated by the European Parliament, rather than by the European Commission. To begin with, the Parliamentary Delegation to the region frequently meets to discuss topical issues regarding the Central Asian partner countries. In this context, the Delegation²²⁷ often invites representatives from the national parliaments, from the embassies or from opposition groups of the Central Asian states in order to exchange views on key issues of mutual concern (International Crisis Group, 2006: 19-20). These interparliamentary meetings serve above all to 'socialise' the third country parliamentary representatives into the EU's parliamentary practices and customs, as well as the principle of liberal democracy, including parliamentary democracy (cf. social learning, see TNPO toolbox, p.51). In November 2005, for instance, the

²²⁴ Author's interview with the Central Asia coordinator at the EuropeAid Cooperation Office, D/1, in Brussels on 26 February 2008; author's interview with the Vice-President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kazakhstan during the latter's visit to the Chamber of Commerce of Antwerp, Belgium, on 17 June 2010; and author's interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan, Projects Section, on 14 May 2008.

²²⁵ Author's interview with the Project Manager of Trade and SMEs Projects of the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, in Astana on 28 May 2008.

²²⁶ Author's interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan, Projects section, in Bishkek on 8 May 2008; and interview with the Project Manager of Trade and SMEs Projects of the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, in Astana on 28 May 2008.

²²⁷ It is worth noting that the Delegation was chaired by Ona Juknevičienė (ALDE, LT) under the legislature of 2004-2009, Currently, it is chaired by Paolo Bartolozzi (EPP, IT).

European Parliament invited Kazakh government and opposition representatives, international NGOs and journalists to a hearing on the political climate in the run-up to the presidential election a month later (*ibid.*).

The Delegation may also send *ad-hoc* fact-finding missions to the region to evaluate important events or the general political climate. For instance, a fact-finding mission was sent to Kyrgyzstan in spring 2005 to assess the situation following the toppling of President Akaev. Another example includes the fact-finding mission sent to Turkmenistan in June 2006 to evaluate the political climate, *inter alia*, in view of ratifying the planned ITA with the country. During the visit, the parliamentary delegates asked the Turkmen regime to allow international observers to the local Turkmen elections in July and December 2006, and raised their concerns with the poor human rights situation. Apparently, a meeting with the Foreign Minister scheduled to last one hour eventually took six hours. The President, however, declined to meet with the delegates. The visit followed the approval by the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee of the ITA signed with Turkmenistan, which - as a next step - had to be ratified by the Parliament and subsequently approved by the Council. The parliamentary visit to Turkmenistan left a deep impression on the delegates, shocked by the hard reality of the country's repressive political climate. This was to have major implications for the ratification prospects of the ITA.²²⁸ In October 2006, the Parliament's International Trade Committee voted against further consideration of the trade agreement with Turkmenistan, stating that the ITA should only be re-considered when the Turkmen regime showed sufficient progress towards improving its human rights record. This counts as one of the few instances where the EU, and *in casu* the Parliament, attempts to exert influence on a third country through 'conditionality' rather than 'socialisation' (see TNPO toolbox, p.51).

Another activity of the European Parliament in the region involves election observation. Indeed, it often sends over a parliamentary delegation to monitor elections, as during the historic presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and the equally historic parliamentary elections in the country in October 2010. In addition, the European Parliament calls for reforms in the region by adopting resolutions on developments in Central Asia (cf. Art. 21 of TEU). The Parliamentary resolution adopted on 16 March 2006, for instance, deplored the fact that two prominent Kazakh opposition figures had died in the three months following President Nazarbayev's re-election and asked for the matter to be put on the agenda of the PCC of May 2006 (International Crisis Group, 2006: 20).

²²⁸ See e.g. EPP Group, "No ratification of Trade Agreement with Turkmenistan now", Daniel Caspary, Press release, 28 June 2006, <<http://www.eppgroup.eu/press/showPR.asp?PRControlDocTypeID=1&PRControlID=5045&PRContentID=9062&PRContentLg=en>>.

6.1.3. Physical presence on the ground

TNPO_{2micro} also includes the physical presence of the EU in the Central Asian partner countries. This concerns both the long-term presence and activities of the Commission delegations (i.e. EU delegations from 2010 onwards), the EU Special Representative and embassies of EU Member States, and the occasional presence of such EU actors as the EU Troika (attending formal meetings) and EU Commissioners (e.g. through formal visits).

As already noted, the European Commission has been represented in the region since 1994, when it opened a Delegation office in Almaty, then capital of Kazakhstan. In accordance with the provisions in the Maastricht Treaty relating to the CFSP, the EC Delegations (EU Delegations under TFEU) are not only responsible for implementing EC assistance and commercial policy, but also for the political representation of the European Community. Hence why the heads of the EC Delegations have the rank of ambassador and are accredited as the official representatives of the EC to the government of the partner country.²²⁹ The Commission has also been represented in the region through a local ECHO office, which opened in Dushanbe in 1992 to offer humanitarian support to war-struck Tajikistan (see above). Almost a decade after the launch of the Delegation office in Almaty, the EC opened a regionalised office in Bishkek and Dushanbe, notably in 2002, in order to address the EC's palpable underrepresentation in the region. In June 2007, the head office of the Delegation moved to Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan. The office in Almaty, which is located a few thousand miles closer to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan than Astana, was turned into a regionalised office, responsible for a specific number of assistance matters, including the financing and contracting. The gradual delegating of implementation and decision-making competences from the head office in Kazakhstan to the regionalised offices in Bishkek and Dushanbe positively affected the impact of the EC's assistance, including the ability to reach out to the local stakeholders. Indeed, the presence of a EC Delegation office in the three countries appeared to have a strong motivating effect on the local stakeholders, including both governmental and civil society actors, who started to feel more involved in the assistance process. Likewise, the presence in the field of the Project Managers from the EC Delegation offices has added value to the assistance delivery, as they participate intensively in everyday project life, activities and events. In Uzbekistan, the EC opened A 'Europe House' in Tashkent in September 2002, among other things, to enhance the visibility of EU assistance provided to Uzbekistan. The office has no diplomatic status and is managed by a Coordinator, assisted by local staff. The Europa House serves as a liaison office for the implementation of

²²⁹ The Delegations have the status of full diplomatic missions, representing the EC in third countries.

the EC assistance programmes in Uzbekistan. It cooperates closely with the Uzbek NCU. It does so in accordance with the protocol of understanding signed with the Uzbek Government, which covers the role of the NCU and that of the Europa House in the planning and implementing of the projects under the TACIS programme (now DCI) in Uzbekistan. In 2008, a Europa House was opened in Ashgabat. The office has similar goals and institutional terms. In 2010, the regionalised offices of the EC Delegation in Bishkek and Dushanbe as well as the head office in Astana became fully-fledged EU Delegations, each managed by an EU ambassador and assisted by both local and European staff. Staff numbers have grown considerably compared to five years or so ago. The EU now plans to open an EU Delegation in Tashkent and Ashgabat.

The presence of the EU Member States is also an important aspect of TNPO₂micro, given that the embassies of EU Member States are required to cooperate with the EC Delegations (now EU Delegations) in view of their joint responsibility in carrying out the CFSP. Indeed, the EC Delegations and the Member States' diplomatic missions in EU partner countries are required to "cooperate in ensuring that the common positions and joint actions adopted by the Council are complied with and implemented" (Art. 20 TEU).²³⁰ They are required to "step up cooperation by exchanging information, carrying out joint assessments and contributing to the implementation of the provisions referred to in Article 20 of the Treaty establishing the European Community" (*ibid*). Close cooperation occurs in particular between the EC Delegation and the diplomatic mission of the EU Member State holding the Presidency of the Council. Indeed, when a Member State is holding the EU Presidency, then its embassies in Central Asia have a leading role in steering EU relations with the region as part of their CFSP duties under the mandate of the EU Presidency (cf. Art. 18 TEU). If the Member State concerned is not represented in Central Asia, then another Member State - normally the country that is to assume the next Presidency - is asked to take up the role of 'Acting EU Presidency'.²³¹ Germany, for instance, before taking over the EU Presidency in January 2007, represented Austria in the first half of 2006 and Finland in the second half of 2006 as local EU Presidency in a number of Central Asian states. In turn, France did the same for Portugal and Slovenia in the second half of 2007 and the first half of 2008 respectively, before assuming the EU Presidency itself in the second half of 2008.²³² Germany is the only EU Member State to have an embassy in all five countries, followed by France and the UK,

²³⁰ In the Lisbon Treaty, Article 20 is amended as follows: in the first paragraph, the words "Commission delegations" are replaced by "Union delegations", the words "the common positions and joint actions adopted by the Council" by "decisions defining Union positions and actions adopted pursuant to this Chapter".

²³¹ This state of affairs applies to the pre-Lisbon period. Again, some changes have been introduced by the entry into force of the Treaty.

²³² Author's interview at the Embassy of France to Kazakhstan & Kyrgyzstan in Astana on 29 May 2008.

which hold the second largest diplomatic representation in the region. Interestingly, the new Member States from Central and Eastern Europe are also relatively well-represented in Central Asia. Kazakhstan, not surprisingly, hosts the largest number of diplomatic missions of EU Member States, many of which were opened in light of the country's economic boom in the early and mid-2000s. A full overview of the EU's diplomatic representation in Central Asia, including all embassies of the Member States, is enclosed in Appendix 6. According to several interviewees from EU Member State embassies as well as from the EC Delegation in Astana, cooperation between the Delegation and the Member State embassies has improved markedly over the last few years and closely follows the provisions laid down in Articles 18 and 20 of TEU.²³³ Interestingly, the cooperation in some cases reflects the different views among the Member States as to their readiness to support and implement EU-level foreign policy activities. As such, those that belong to the group of 'reluctant' Member States, including some of the larger Member States such as France, openly state that their primary attention in the partner countries concerned still goes to the pursuit of their national interests. The French ambassador to Kazakhstan even stated that he finds it a 'nuisance' to have to deal with the responsibilities that his embassy is given under the CFSP and that he would much rather spend all his attention to pursuing French national interests in Kazakhstan.²³⁴ Yet, it should be noted that this view was not shared by all interviewees from the French diplomatic missions in the region.²³⁵ Moreover, the French diplomatic missions in Central Asia, including the embassy in Astana, were reportedly praised for their effective and dedicated management of EU-level activities during the French Presidency of the Council in the second half of 2008.²³⁶ In this respect, it is important to highlight that cooperation in Central Asia between the EC Delegations and the Member State embassies was lifted to a higher level during the German Presidency in the first half of 2007. Several interviewees pointed to the increased number of meetings organised by the local German embassies and their excellent briefing to the fellow European embassies of the diplomatic developments and state of affairs in the countries concerned.²³⁷ It is clear that the cooperation between the EC Delegations and the Member State embassies in Central Asia has contributed significantly to the institutional

²³³ Author's interview with the then Dutch ambassador to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Astana on 30 May 2008; author's interview with the then First Secretary of the Embassy of Belgium to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Astana on 27 May 2008; author's interview with the then Acting Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, in Astana on 30 May 2008.

²³⁴ Author's interview with the then French ambassador to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in Astana on 29 May 2008.

²³⁵ Author's interviews at the Embassy of France to Uzbekistan in Tashkent on 6 May 2008 and at the Almaty office of the Embassy of France to Kazakhstan on 22 May 2008.

²³⁶ Author's interview with the then Dutch ambassador to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Astana on 30 May 2008; and author's interview with the then First Secretary of the Embassy of Belgium to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Astana on 27 May 2008.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

possibilities to effectively represent the interests of the EU in the Central Asian countries. Via their enhanced cooperation, they seem to have improved the coordination of their activities in relation to the CFSP, including through the coordinated sharing of the various assessments and policy recommendations flowing back from and to the Commission, Council and the Member States. In addition, the EC Delegation and its (former) regionalised offices function as a venue for meetings, activities and press conferences relating to affairs that involve the EU as a whole. They also serve as the contact points for joint EU cultural activities, such as the annual European Film Week and the celebration of Europe Day in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It is interesting to point out that the EC Delegation in Astana is based in the same building as most EU Member State embassies to Kazakhstan, which often also function as embassies to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, such as the Belgian and the Dutch embassies. Needless to say, this has a facilitating impact on the level of cooperation and coordination. Conversely, coordination between the head office of Delegation in Kazakhstan and the regionalised offices in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan long appeared to be rather troublesome. Indeed, in the mid-2000s, the head office - then led by Adriaan Van der Meer - pursued a strict centralised control, thereby keeping a firm grip over any issues from the regionalised offices involving decision-making and refusing to delegate important tasks to them, up to the point where many staff members felt uncomfortable about the high level of centralisation. Moreover, this negatively impacted upon the effectiveness of the assistance delivery: the strict control procedures were time-consuming and the stakeholders in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan complained that the head office in Kazakhstan was not sufficiently in touch with the reality on the ground.²³⁸ Although some officials appear reluctant to confirm this ‘on the record’, the strict control was in fact fully down to ambassador Van der Meer, the Head of the Delegation, who - as a result - was not exactly regarded as a beloved person in the regionalised offices, and who reportedly also kept a strict hierarchy within the head office itself.²³⁹ Things indeed changed for the better once Van der Meer left office early 2008 to take on a job elsewhere, with the regionalised offices gaining substantially more decision-making power and the atmosphere soon lightening up in the head office.²⁴⁰ It is not clear whether or not Van der Meer had been forced to leave office.

²³⁸ Author’s interview with the director of the Kyrgyz NGO ‘Development & Cooperation in Central Asia’ - a stakeholder in a number of EC projects -, in Bishkek on 15 May 2008.

²³⁹ Author’s interview with the then Acting Head of Delegation (i.e. the temporary replacer of Van der Meer) of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, in Astana on 30 May 2008; author’s interview with the *Chargé d’Affaires* of the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek on 14 May 2008; author’s interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan, Projects section, in Bishkek on 8 May 2008.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

An inherent aspect of the EU's TNPO₂micro over the region is the position of the EUSR for Central Asia, currently held by the French diplomat Pierre Morel, who took over from the Slovak Jan Kubis in October 2006.²⁴¹ A year earlier, the Council had decided to create the post of EU Special Representative for Central Asia (cf. in accordance with Article 18(5) TEU). As mentioned in Chapter 4, the appointment of an EUSR for Central Asia signalled the acknowledgement by the EU that it had to respond to its growing interests in this vast region, where the Union remained underrepresented and short of diplomatic activity. The creation of the post in July 2005 thus served as a first step to strengthen the EU's political engagement with and visibility in the region. In concrete, the mandate of the EUSR consists of coordinating the EU's activities in the region as well as further developing the EU's Central Asia policy in close cooperation with the Council. In this context, interviewees from the EC Delegations and Member State diplomatic missions in Central Asia reported that the EUSR keeps in close contact with them and comes to visit them from time to time.²⁴² Moreover, in representing the EU in the region, the mission of the EUSR is to strengthen the Union's diplomatic ties with the Central Asian states and other relevant actors operating in the region, including regional organisations such as CSTO and SCO. The main office of the EUSR is based in Brussels, where he is supported by two political advisors and from where he travels on a regular basis to the region. On the ground, he is represented by a local office located in Almaty. The office, which is based on the premises of the EC regionalised office, is staffed with a political advisor and a secretary. Current EUSR Pierre Morel has been very active, not least with regard to the drafting and implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia.²⁴³ On the whole, he has contributed substantially to enhancing the EU's visibility in the region and has been very helpful in expanding and deepening the areas of cooperation. To give an example, during the ethnic violence in southern Kyrgyzstan in spring 2010 Pierre Morel was one of the first international diplomats to arrive in the country to discuss the situation with several stakeholders and offer possible EU support. Moreover, he has met up several times with the current Presidents of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, i.e. the most authoritarian leaders in the region and also the EU's 'toughest' Central Asian partners, to discuss bilateral cooperation, including issues related to human rights. At the same, however, Pierre Morel - along with the Council Secretariat - has been criticised by MEPs and human

²⁴¹ See e.g. Pierre Morel's mission statement, available at <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=1153&lang=EN>.

²⁴² Author's interview with the then Acting Head of Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, in Astana on 30 May 2008; author's interview at the Embassy of France to Uzbekistan, in Tashkent on 6 May 2008.

²⁴³ Author's interviews with the Brussels-based Political advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia at the Office of the EUSR for Central Asia, in Brussels on 19 February 2008 and with the Almaty-based Political advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia at the Regional Office of the EUSR, in Almaty on 20 May 2008.

rights organisations for being too lenient with respect to the countries' poor record of democratisation and human rights, specifying that he appears more concerned with pursuing the EU's stability and security goals, including energy interests, than with pursuing normative goals related to democratisation and human rights.²⁴⁴

A final element that needs to be covered regards the occasional presence in the region of high-level EU actors, such as the EU Troika (when attending formal meetings) and EU Commissioners (e.g. through formal visits). This is obviously a more *ad-hoc* form of institutionalised cooperation, but it is nevertheless worth highlighting as it contributes to the EU's visibility and presence in the region, in particular at the diplomatic level. Next to the framework of the Cooperation Council meetings and EU Troika-Central Asia meetings, high-level EU actors often travel to the region on official EU visits to the partner countries or on the occasion of national or international high-level meetings organised by the governments. As mentioned earlier, this used to be quite different, with only a handful of EU officials travelling to the region until the mid-2000s, when Chris Patten's visit to Central Asia marked a first step towards reversing this trend for the better. In autumn 2006, then German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier went on a visit to all five republics in preparation of the EU's Strategy for the region. He did so in close consultation with the then Finnish Presidency of the EU and the European Commission. During his five-day trip, Steinmeier held talks with government representatives, including on human rights and rule of law issues, and met representatives of civil society and of the political and cultural communities of the countries. Steinmeier was accompanied by a delegation of European companies - mostly from the energy and infrastructure sectors -, who was to participate in a European-Central Asian business forum in Astana. About six months later, in March 2007, Steinmeier travelled back to the region, along with fellow Member State Foreign Ministers and senior EU officials, including External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, to promote the forthcoming EU Strategy at the EU Troika-Central Asia meeting in Astana (see above). Following the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007, the EU Troika travelled five times to the region, each time to another republic, to discuss the implementation of the Strategy. The first visit in the series of five took place in September 2007 under the Portuguese Presidency; the last visit was in spring 2008 under the Slovenian Presidency (Council of the European Union & European Commission, 2008). The first visit was to Uzbekistan, with whom relations at the time were still edgy due to the EU sanctions imposed on the regime. That said, the fact that the EU troika decided to visit Uzbekistan first was probably not a coincidence, even less so since the success of the EU Strategy for Central Asia depended to a large extent

²⁴⁴ Author's interviews at the European Parliament on 11 July 2008.

on the participation of Uzbekistan: the country is not only the most populous state, but it is also the only country that borders all other four Central Asian states. During the visit in September 2007, the EU delegation²⁴⁵ spoke to several senior Uzbek officials, including the Prime Minister, the Secretary of the National Security Council, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the First Deputy Minister of Justice. About a month after the troika's visit to Uzbekistan, High Representative Javier Solana in his turn also travelled to Central Asia, where he visited Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. His three-day visit to the region served to further foster political dialogue at the highest political level and support the implementation of the EU Strategy. Solana's spokeswoman explained that "the best way to signal that the region is important for us and that we want to deepen this strategic dialogue is to pay a visit".²⁴⁶ In motivating Solana's selection of those three countries, she added that Solana had "chosen [the] three countries for several reasons - he already saw the ambassador of Uzbekistan in New York, so that is a point, and he has been in contact, well, regularly with the Tajik president. Therefore we think it's a good selection because the timeline is not long".²⁴⁷ High-level EU visits to the region were clearly no longer a rarity, as yet a month later, i.e. mid-November 2007, it was the turn of Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs to fly over to the region for bilateral talks on energy cooperation. Piebalgs only visited Turkmenistan, where he discussed the terms of potential trade in gas with his Turkmen counterpart. Next, in April 2008, External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner returned to the region for talks with Tajikistan on the further development of the bilateral relationship. During the visit, she expressed EU solidarity with the country after the extremely cold winter, which had provoked a humanitarian crisis - for which Tajikistan had received aid through ECHO. In sum, it is clear that high-level EU visits to the region gradually multiplied from 2005-2006 onwards, with the inception of the EU Strategy providing a further trigger for EU visits to Central Asia. The increased number of high-level visits to the region since the launch of the EU Strategy will be further covered in Chapter 9.

²⁴⁵ The EU delegation was headed by the Portuguese Presidency's Coordinator for Central Asia, Ambassador Kurto, and included EUSR Pierre Morel, a senior official from the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the Head of Directorate for External Relations of the European Commission, Gunnar Wiegand.

²⁴⁶ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2007), "Central Asia: Solana Visit To Focus On Energy, Drug Trade", 7 October 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1078882.html>.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

6.2. The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Central Asia

This section explores the EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Central Asia, i.e. the second subcomponent of TNPO₂. As mentioned, TNPO_{2macro} is located at the macro-level of international relations, rather than at the more case-specific institutional micro-level of bilateral or bi-regional relations captured by TNPO_{2micro}. In particular, it regards the power that the EU derives over the Central Asian countries from its dominant position within international regimes and institutions, a proposition that draws on the historical institutionalist point that asymmetries of power arise from the way in which institutions work. The section will start by exploring the EU's TNPO_{2macro} over the Central Asian states with regard to the WTO, where the EC is prominently represented as a single actor. It will focus in particular on Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO. Next, the section will examine the EU's TNPO_{2macro} in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which has been very active in Central Asia. Subsequently, the section will explore the EU's TNPO_{2macro} in organisations where the Union is not a member²⁴⁸ but is represented by all or nearly all of its Member States. The focus will be on the OSCE and the Council of Europe, organisations of which the Central Asian republics are either members or partners, or which they aspire to join in the near or distant future.

6.2.1. *The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the WTO*

As pointed out in section 5.2. (above), Kyrgyzstan is the only Central Asian state that has already joined the WTO. The other four states have either started the preparation process for accession, notably Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, or are preparing their application for membership, notably Turkmenistan. While Kazakhstan has already advanced significantly within the accession process, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan still have a long way to go, hampered mostly by limited progress in liberalising their domestic economies. As already noted, WTO accession is a key goal of the EU's trade relations with and assistance to the Central Asian countries. The EU's influential voice within the WTO, together with its enormous trade power, enables the Union to encourage non-member countries of the WTO to apply for membership and start the preparation process for accession. In this regard, the EU's influence is strongest during the preparation phase of the accession process. Kazakhstan's ongoing accession process is a case in point. Having applied for WTO membership in 1996,

²⁴⁸ Note that it is the EC that is/was a member of the WTO and the EBRD, not the EU. Under the TEU, the EU, unlike the EC, did not have a legal personality. This has changed under the Lisbon Treaty, which grants the EU legal personality, as it subsumes the EC.

Kazakhstan has been involved in the accession process for quite a long time. However, this is not particularly striking given that WTO accession requires transition countries such as Kazakhstan to deal with a great deal of difficult reforms and adjustments, which can be very time-consuming. Kazakhstan also wanted to avoid getting into the same situation as Kyrgyzstan. The fact that the latter wanted to rush its accession - Kyrgyzstan acceded to the WTO in less than two years and four months - implied that it ended up agreeing to concessions that turned out not to be in its interest and making commitments that went far beyond its institutional and administrative capacity. In the case of Kazakhstan, progress in preparing for accession has also been hampered by the government's limited knowledge and know-how about trade policy-making, which the Kazakh side itself acknowledges.²⁴⁹ Together, these factors explain why the EU has provided substantial technical assistance for legislative institutional reform and administrative assistance in support of the accession requirements. That said, the latter have in fact to a significant extent been set by the EU itself in its capacity as a key member of the Working Party formed to steer Kazakhstan's accession. The members of the Working Party play a major role in the accession of new members, as the latter have to negotiate the terms of their admission to the WTO bilaterally with each of the Working Party members. Acceding countries are expected to demonstrate their readiness to fulfil the common obligations established by all of the WTO agreements. In addition, they are expected to provide schedules of concessions in the areas of tariffs, agriculture, services, and trade-related investment measures (see e.g. UNESCAP, 2001). It is in this part of the process that key members of the Working Party, most notably the EU and the U.S., can exercise a considerable amount of leverage over the applicant, *i.c.* Kazakhstan. This applies especially to the EU, which - being Kazakhstan's primary trade partner - can afford itself to be strict and demanding with respect to the country's preparation. Moreover, bilateral negotiations with a Working Party member are concluded by signing a bilateral accession protocol. This entire process prompts applicant countries to continue informal discussions with the Working Party members - in particular with important members such as the EU and the U.S. - to anticipate possible concerns and evaluate the overall level of support for its accession. Since the start of the accession process, Kazakh trade officials have indeed regularly been meeting with the EU officials involved in the evaluation of Kazakhstan's accession in order to discuss the state of affairs and the EU's possible concerns.²⁵⁰ In addition, Kazakh trade officials have often consulted DG Trade regarding further explanation and specification of some of the accession

²⁴⁹ This was highlighted by Zhanar Aitzhanova, Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade of Kazakhstan and chief negotiator in Kazakhstan's WTO accession talks, at the ECIPE seminar "Kazakhstan and the WTO: Foreign Economic Diplomacy and CIS Integration into the World Economy" attended by the author in Brussels on 26 March 2008.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

requirements that the EU had set. Their requests for information tend to be related to trade-related issues that are highly technical, which the Kazakh government was struggling to get a grasp of.²⁵¹

The Working Party for Kazakhstan's accession to the WTO consists of 32 WTO members.²⁵² By the 10th session of the Working Party in April 2008, Kazakhstan had completed bilateral agreements with most of the members, and chances were high that the U.S. and the EU - the 'toughest and most demanding negotiating partners in Kazakhstan's accession process - would soon accept the terms agreed with Kazakhstan on its accession and declare their satisfaction with Kazakhstan's preparation. Kazakhstan's accession thus seemed very near.²⁵³ However, before the EU had the chance of holding a final round of bilateral talks and putting its final stamp on Kazakhstan's accession process, Kazakhstan's accession was suddenly taken off rails when the country agreed in 2009 to establish a customs union with Russia and Belarus, which entered into force in 2010. This decision confirmed earlier observations that Kazakhstan's "WTO accession is complicated by its entanglement in a wider political and economic complex emerging from Russian pre-eminence and its claims to such pre-eminence in the former Soviet Union" (Hindley, 2008). From the beginning, Kazakhstan's WTO accession was poised to be a politically sensitive matter for Russia (cf. Ukraine and Georgia's accession to the WTO), which would not easily tolerate its closest ally in Central Asia to join the WTO before its own accession to the organisation (see e.g. Hindley, 2008). This point was even further confirmed when Russia announced after the formation of the customs union that it intended to accede to the WTO jointly with Kazakhstan and Belarus, much to the frustration of the members of the Working Parties - not least the EU - that had already spent so much time and effort on the preparation of Russia and Kazakhstan's individual accession process. As Hindley (2008) explains, Moscow's regional economic diplomacy is "driven in substantial part by a desire to maintain its grip on the former Soviet republics by establishing ever closer economic and, where possible, institutionalised ties with them". Nevertheless, Russia's intention to accede jointly did not further materialise, with the three countries deciding to enter the WTO separately after they

²⁵¹ This was highlighted by both by Zhanar Aitzhanova, senior Kazakh trade official and chief negotiator in Kazakhstan's WTO accession talks and by Signe Ratso, senior EC trade official and involved in Kazakhstan's WTO accession talks, at the ECIPE seminar "Kazakhstan and the WTO: Foreign Economic Diplomacy and CIS Integration into the World Economy" attended by the author in Brussels on 26 March 2008.

²⁵² Apart from the EU, the members of the working party on the accession of Kazakhstan are Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Georgia, Honduras, India, Jamaica, Japan, Republic of Korea, the Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Poland, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey and the U.S.

²⁵³ When bilateral agreements have been concluded with all members of the Working Party, the latter adopts a Protocol of Accession, which is then submitted for consideration to the Ministerial Conference. If the Protocol is adopted at the Ministerial Conference, the applicant officially accedes to the WTO.

realised that their diverging levels of preparation (Belarus in particular is lagging behind compared to Russia and Kazakhstan) would complicate matters. Hence, after a brief period of panic, irritation and frustration at DG Trade, it now seems that the EU can still go ahead with putting its final mark on Kazakhstan's WTO accession process, as the country is proceeding with the accession process individually. In the mean time, Kazakhstan has already held several informal and formal talks with the EU again.

6.2.2. *The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the EBRD*

Created in 1991, the EBRD's goal is to aid post-communist countries' transition from a centrally planned economy towards an open, market-oriented economy and to encourage private and entrepreneurial initiatives in the countries. In particular, it finances investments and supports private sector development. As such, the EBRD is currently active in 29 countries from the former Soviet bloc, including in the Central Asian republics. In 2006, its investments and activities were divided between the financial sector (45%), the corporate sector (30%), infrastructure (17%) and energy (8%).²⁵⁴ The Bank only allows investments to be made as far as they meet the requirements of transition impact, additionality and sound banking principles.²⁵⁵

The Bank's membership encompasses the European Community, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and 61 national governments, including all 27 EU Member States. Not surprisingly, the EU is the EBRD's largest shareholder, with a total share (and part in the vote) of 63 per cent.²⁵⁶ The EC is represented by a Governor and an Alternate Governor, as well as by an Executive Director and an Alternate Director on the Board of Directors. While the latter is entrusted with the direction of the EBRD's general policies and activities, the Board of Governors is in hold of the Bank's real powers and directs major tasks to the Board of Directors. Most grant funds for technical assistance projects come from the EC, which also co-finances investments. In 1996-2006, the EC donated over EUR 3.6 billion in grant funds and co-financing, including for nuclear safety.²⁵⁷ Through its operations, the Bank ensures to promote EU norms and standards, in particular EU environmental standards. Moreover, the

²⁵⁴ See website of DG ECFIN, <http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/financial_operations/coordination/ebrd/index_en.htm>.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Note that this figure also includes the share of the EIB, which amounts to 3.05 per cent of the total vote. Source: Website of the EBRD, <<http://www.ebrd.com/>> and website of DG ECFIN, <http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/financial_operations/coordination/ebrd/index_en.htm>.

²⁵⁷ See website of DG ECFIN, <http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/financial_operations/coordination/ebrd/index_en.htm>.

EC and the EBRD have been cooperating through joint projects and activities in a variety of sectors, including in the areas of energy, municipal and environmental infrastructures, SME support and nuclear safety. In addition, the EU will benefit even further from enhanced cooperation with the Bank in favour of the Union's involvement in Central Asia, as it signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with the EBRD and the EIB for "joint financing of projects of significant interest to the EU", in particular in the area of infrastructure.²⁵⁸ Strengthened EU interaction with the EBRD and EIB is in fact one of the goals set out in the EU Strategy for Central Asia. EIB activity in Central Asia will focus mostly on the energy sector and the environment and include energy supply and energy transport projects under TRACECA and INOGATE (Council, 2006c). Priority areas are municipal utilities, which will encompass projects regarding district heating water supply and waste disposal, and sustainable energy, which will include projects regarding efficient electricity transmission/distribution, energy efficiency and renewable energy (European Commission, 2007a). In sum, these final cases of 'institutionalised cooperation' can be regarded as instances of TNPO₁-TNPO_{2macro}, in that the EU manages to attract financial assistance from these partner institutions for projects in Central Asia, which in effect are implemented to serve its (own) interests in the Central Asian countries.

6.2.3. The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Central Asia: the case of the OSCE

According to Warkotsch (2007b), the OSCE is the West's most important human rights and democracy promoter in the Central Asian republics. Even so, he notes that in Central Asia the organisation has not managed to reach the same successes in state building and democratisation as it did in other parts of the ex-USSR and in Central and Eastern Europe (Warkotsch 2007a). This is readily acknowledged by senior OSCE officials.²⁵⁹ Former OSCE Secretary General, Wilhelm Höynck, for instance, rates the OSCE's record in Central Asia "mixed at best" (Höynck, 2003: 311). As former constituent parts of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian acquired membership of the OSCE by default in 1992. They just had to voluntarily confirm their wish to join the organisation, but as pointed out by Matveeva (2006: 69-71), it is unclear whether the governments had full comprehension of the implications of their membership, which implied making firm commitments to human rights and democratic standards. Failure to show respect for these standards is consistently denounced, in particular through statements by fellow OSCE members at the Permanent Council in Vienna. As we will

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁹ Author's interview at the OSCE National Office in Uzbekistan, in Tashkent on 2 May 2008.

see in the section covering TNPO overlap, OSCE member states from the EU - i.e. those that are holding the EU Presidency - are very active in denouncing violations of OSCE standards by means of such declaratory statements. The impact of such declaratory diplomacy on the Central Asian governments is on the whole relatively minor, but it nevertheless has a substantial symbolic effect on the regimes, not least since most Central Asia governments are eager to enhance their international legitimacy (see more below).

Since the accession of the Central Asian states to the OSCE, the region has hosted a broad OSCE portfolio, ranging from electoral monitoring and protection of minority rights to rule of law, environment and small arms control (Matveeva, 2006: 69-71). OSCE offices were opened in each country to implement and supervise the projects under the diverse portfolio. OSCE monitoring of national elections, however, soon became a controversial issue for the authoritarian regimes in the region, whose parliamentary and presidential elections received bad ratings from OSCE observers. While the OSCE experienced some notable successes in the region, such as its initiatives regarding support for minorities and education in Kyrgyzstan, it struggled to contribute to the countries' political modernisation. In Kazakhstan, for instance, the organisation's assistance in the development of new legislation faced many difficulties, and has rarely translated in effective implementation (Melvin, 2009b: 379). Moreover, the OSCE field missions increasingly faced opposition from the local regimes, wary of the organisation's meddling in their internal affairs. Even in Kyrgyzstan, for instance, where the OSCE national office - based in Bishkek - had played a positive role in the aftermath of the Tulip Revolution in March 2005, *inter alia* by assisting the organisation of the presidential elections in July 2005, the country's MFA in 2006 decided to reduce the OSCE's mandate, limiting it to economic and social matters and suspending its security and political action fields (*ibid.*). Similar restrictions were imposed on the mandates of the national OSCE offices in other Central Asian states. By far the furthest restrictions were imposed by the Uzbek government, notably in the aftermath of its violent crackdown on the Andijan protests in 2005. The OSCE was paying an expensive bill for its call for an independent inquiry into the events, as the Uzbek regime responded to the call by reducing not only the mandate of the national OSCE office but also its financial means.²⁶⁰ As noted by Matveeva, "in such circumstances it is hard to be strategic, and the [field missions] [have] been diverted into more projects and less politics" (2006: 69-71). At the same time, Russia was turning the organisation into a 'battleground between the East and West', thereby virtually causing an 'existential crisis', by rallying other former Soviet states to join its efforts to scale down the 'human dimension' activities of the OSCE, and in particular, the

²⁶⁰ Author's interview at the OSCE National Office in Uzbekistan, *op.cit.*

organisation's electoral monitoring mandate. This conflict played a major role in the EU's decision to support Kazakhstan's bid for the 2009 Chairmanship of the OSCE. Irrespective of this, Kazakh diplomats lobbied hard with their European counterparts to rally their support for the Kazakh bid (Dave, 2008: 43-44). The acceptance of Kazakhstan's bid at an OSCE Ministerial meeting in December 2007 eventually required a compromise to be concluded between Russia and the U.S., whereby Kazakhstan was offered the 2010 - instead of the 2009 - Chairmanship of the organisation.²⁶¹ Given the geostrategic complexities and contentions underlying the OSCE's state of affairs and Kazakhstan's limited progress in meeting its OSCE commitments to human rights and democratic standards, it was clear that the country's chairmanship was going to be a tough challenge for the organisation. Fully aware of this, the EU was quick to assume a leading role in offering the country assistance in preparation of its OSCE Chairmanship, which the Kazakh government took ample use of.²⁶² Assistance focussed mostly on capacity building, *inter alia*, through training sessions of officials. Simultaneously, the EU used these meetings with Kazakh officials to remind the government of the commitments that it had made in December 2007 upon its award of the Chairmanship. The Kazakh regime realised that if it was to make the most of the historic opportunity of the Chairmanship it would need the support and active engagement of the EU to succeed in the challenge of chairing the OSCE (Melvin, 2009b: 378). Russia, from its side, was not pulling back and held an active dialogue with the Kazakh government on concrete and common agendas for its Chairmanship. The EU realised that Kazakhstan's Chairmanship - despite the major challenges - was a strategic opportunity to encourage further political modernisation not only in Kazakhstan but in entire Central Asia given the country's emerging leadership role and external orientation in the region. For the Kazakh regime, the EU has become increasingly significant not just as a leading economic partner but also as a source of inspiration for the country's economic, social and political modernisation (see e.g. Melvin, 2009b: 375). In addition, President Nazarbaev has become increasingly eager to gain international legitimacy for his management of the country. Given these contexts, Kazakhstan viewed OSCE chairmanship as a natural extension of its ambitious intention to promote a European form of socio-economic development as set out in President Nazarbaev's 'Path to Europe' (see more below).²⁶³

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

²⁶² Author's interview at Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of European Cooperation, in Astana on 26 May 2008.

²⁶³ Keynote address organised by Kairat Abusseitov, Kazakh Ambassador to the UK, at the Centre for Euro-Asian Studies of the University of Reading on 11 March 2009.

6.2.4. The EU's TNPO² macro over Central Asia: the case of the Council of Europe

The OSCE and the Council of Europe generally apply as Europe's traditional democracy promoters (see e.g. Bale, 2008: 388). Apart from some overlap in the scope of the two institutions, there are a number of institutional similarities between them. Like at the OSCE, the EU is represented at the Council of Europe (CoE) by all its 27 Member States. In their turn, the latter are also represented through their Ministers of Foreign Affairs, who participate in the CoE's Council of Ministers. Importantly, like at the OSCE, the EU Member States always strive to reach a common EU position on the matters discussed and managed at the CoE. In addition, like the OSCE, the CoE also has a Parliamentary Assembly. Unlike the membership of the OSCE, however, the CoE is limited to European countries, which means that countries fully situated outside of the European continent cannot join the Council, which currently has 47 members. Although the CoE is formally separate from and independent of the EU, several projects are conducted jointly with the EU (see below). The central aim of the COE is to promote parliamentary democracy, human rights and the rule of law both within and beyond the borders of its members, and "if possible, to set pan-European standards for them" (Bale, 2008: 388). To that purpose, the CoE supervises nearly 200 binding treaties and conventions, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which is overseen by the European Court of Human Rights. More recently, the CoE has been providing assistance to post-communist states - including Central Asian countries - to incorporate human rights and protection of minorities into their domestic reform agendas (*ibid*).

Located partly in Europe, Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian state eligible to take full part in all the CoE bodies. An early move by Kazakhstan to approach the CoE already came in 1995, followed in 1997 by the Kazakh Parliament's request for 'special guest' status with the Parliamentary Assembly. In 1999, the Kazakh Parliament requested 'observer status' with the Parliamentary Assembly.²⁶⁴ However, neither of the requests were granted. The Assembly stated that the country was not yet advanced enough in its political modernisation and lacked the required commitment to democratic reform and respect for human rights. By the time that the Assembly announced its decision, Kazakhstan itself regretted having made the requests, as the Kazakh regime came to understand that it would have to make several far-reaching commitments if the requested status were granted, commitments it was in fact unwilling to make.²⁶⁵ About ten years later, Kazakhstan has still not been granted observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly, but has achieved progress in fulfilling the

²⁶⁴ Author's interview at the Regional Office of the EUSR in Almaty on 20 May 2008.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*.

requirements.²⁶⁶ Moreover, in April 2004, the Parliamentary Assembly signed a cooperation agreement with the Parliament of Kazakhstan, which allows Kazakh members of parliament to regularly attend the Assembly sessions. In addition, the Kazakh government cooperates with the CoE's 'Commission for Democracy through Law', better known as the Venice Commission, where it holds observer status. This Commission is an advisory body of the CoE, composed of independent experts in the field of constitutional law. The CoE is now increasingly encouraging Kazakhstan to apply for fuller integration into the workings of the CoE, such as becoming a full member of the Venice Commission, based on the conviction that this would provide an impetus for the country's political modernisation, including for constitutional reform. Kazakhstan, from its side, shows interest in strengthening its relations with the CoE, including in acceding to certain CoE conventions.

While Kazakhstan has an observer status with the Venice Commission, Kyrgyzstan is a full member of the Commission (as the body is open to non-European countries since 2002). Moreover, although not a member, the Uzbek government also cooperates with the Venice Commission, notably since the EU invited the legal advisory body to establish projects in the Central Asian states as part of the EU's 'Rule of Law Initiative', launched under the EU Strategy for Central Asia. Since then, the Venice Commission has been active in the entire region. Irrespective of this, the EU is well-represented in the Commission; while most of its legal experts are from EU Member States, the European Commission has a special status with the Venice Commission and participates in its plenary sessions. The Venice Commission focuses mainly on conducting evaluations of draft constitutions and constitutional amendments; sometimes, it assesses related legislation, such as minority or electoral law.²⁶⁷ The Commission formulates such legal opinions following requests from either the participating states or the other bodies of the CoE. Its opinions, however, are not binding but are nevertheless influential. Before starting its work under the EU's Rule of Law initiative, the Venice Commission thus cooperated in Central Asia only with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where its work focused on the main constitutional bodies. Among other things, it offered legal opinions on constitutional reform and draft laws to the election code, law on ombudsman and judicial reform. However, as noted by Isaacs, the Commission's "work in Kyrgyzstan was affected by the chaotic constitutional aftermath of the 'Tulip revolution', while in Kazakhstan cooperation was limited to seminars and conferences on these issues" (2009: 2). The Commission's work in the region recently expanded, mostly because of its cooperation with the EU under the EU's Rule of Law initiative, which involves all five

²⁶⁶ See Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, "Progress report of the Bureau of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Standing Committee, 25 January-14 April 2008", Doc. 11565 part I, 11 April 2008.

²⁶⁷ See website of the Venice Commission, <http://www.venice.coe.int/>

countries. As Isaacs observes, the frequency and depth of the Venice Commission's recent activities in the region "vary from country to country and reflect the political realities of dealing with issues related to rule of law in some Central Asian states" (2009: 3). The Commission has, for instance, undertaken fact-finding missions to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and attended a conference on judicial reform in Kazakhstan (*ibid.*). In Uzbekistan, in the framework of the EU's Initiative for the Rule of Law, the Venice Commission organised two seminars on the implementation of habeas corpus in the country's legal system. The Commission currently seems most active in Kyrgyzstan, where it recently offered several legal opinions and organised a number of conferences on the principles of the rule of law and the separation of powers (*ibid.*). In the aftermath of the removal of former President Bakiev, the Provisional Government of the Kyrgyz Republic invited a delegation of the Venice Commission to visit Bishkek and meet with representatives of the Provisional Government and members of the Working Group on the drafting of the Constitution and the Constitutional Council. In April 2010, the Provisional Government had asked the Venice Commission to assist it in its efforts to draft a new Constitution. The Commission adopted its legal opinion on the Kyrgyzstan draft Constitution in June 2010.²⁶⁸

In sum, it can be concluded that the EU relies on the CoE in order to supplement - or strengthen if you like - its own efforts to promote human rights, democratic reform and rule of law in the Central Asian countries. In effect, this testifies not simply to an instance of TNPO_{2macro} but rather to an instance of overlap of TNPO_{2macro} with TNPO₃.

²⁶⁸ See *Proceeding of the 83rd Plenary Session of the Venice Commission*, 4 June 2010, Venice, [http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2010/CDL-AD\(2010\)015-e.asp](http://www.venice.coe.int/docs/2010/CDL-AD(2010)015-e.asp).

6.3. Concluding remarks

The above outline has sought to highlight to what extent institutional factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. Whether at the macro-level of international relations (TNPO_{2macro}) or at the more case-specific institutional micro-level of EU bilateral or bi-regional contractual relations (TNPO_{2micro}) with the Central Asian countries, it is clear that the EU derives a significant amount of leverage from institutional factors. With respect to TNPO_{2micro}, the chapter demonstrated that the EU's bilateral and regional relations with the countries have grown to be considerably institutionalised. This applies both in terms of formal contractual (including treaty-based) formats of institutionalisation and in terms of less formal and less integrated (including *ad-hoc*) formats of institutionalisation, which mostly involve the bureaucratic/technocratic level or societal level rather than the high political level. The level of institutionalisation, however, varies across the five countries, depending mostly on the legal basis of the cooperation. As such, relations with Kazakhstan appear to be institutionalised most densely, followed by the EU's cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Bilateral ties with Turkmenistan, in turn, are rather moderately institutionalised. Hence, assuming that the denser the institutional relationship between the EU and a country is, the larger the EU's TNPO_{2micro} over the country will be, we can draw the provisional conclusion that the EU's micro-institutional power is largest in the case of Kazakhstan, but rather limited in the case of Turkmenistan, while relatively dense in the other three countries.

Next, the chapter indicated that the EU's TNPO over Central Asia also comprises institutionalised dialogue and cooperation through a web of - sometimes overlapping - international organisations and institutions, most notably the WTO, the EBRD, the OSCE and the CoE. The section highlighted the extent to which the EU manages to draw influence over the Central Asian countries through its influential representation in these international bodies. Also at the macro-level, the degree of institutionalisation differs between the five countries. Clearly, the EU wields by far the largest amount of TNPO_{2macro} over Kazakhstan. Next is Kyrgyzstan, followed by Tajikistan. The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Uzbekistan, in turn, is moderate, but is denser than the Union's macro-institutional ties with Turkmenistan, where its TNPO_{2macro} is rather limited. In this regard, it is important to highlight the limits encountered by the EU's TNPO_{2macro} over the countries, which include factors that are either endogenous or exogenous to the Central Asian states. A significant factor is the strong competition that the EU faces in the region from China and Russia, which have their own share of TNPO_{2macro} over the Central Asian republics, except for Turkmenistan, which does not participate in the

regional organisations led by these two ‘rival’ powers. Another aspect that curtails the EU’s macro-institutional power, and in particular in the case of the OSCE, is the Central Asian regimes’ suspicion of and aversion to external meddling in their ‘domestic affairs’, especially in areas that could directly affect the societal status quo in their countries. This explains, *inter alia*, why the OSCE field missions in the region have been facing considerable opposition from the local governments, which decided to cut their budgets and mandates.

Irrespective of these ‘countervailing’ factors, the chapter already pointed to a number of instances of interaction between TNPO₂ and the other two TNPO structures, notably TNPO_{1-2macro} (cf. EBRD/EIB) and TNPO_{2macro-3} (cf. CoE, but also OSCE). In this respect, it is worth recalling that TNPO₂, and particularly TNPO_{2micro}, tends to interact - more often than not - with TNPO₁ and/or TNPO₃, up to the point where TNPO_{2micro} hardly occurs on its own. Empirical illustrations of this are provided in Chapter 8, which deals specifically with TNPO overlap.

Chapter 7 - The EU's TNPO₃ over Central Asia

In addition to material and institutional factors, the EU's TNPO is also composed of ideational factors, which make up the third and final TNPO structure, TNPO₃. As the ideational structure, TNPO₃ encompasses such intangible factors as beliefs, values, norms, identity and legitimacy. In other words, TNPO₃ is ideational in the sense that it takes ideas, normative interpretations and mental constructs seriously and regards them as causally important in their own right. This chapter presents the empirical exploration of the EU's TNPO₃ over Central Asia. In particular, it examines the extent to which the EU effectively exercises power over the Central Asian states through its control over such ideational factors. The chapter begins by exploring the EU's 'magnetic pull' in Central Asia, which encompasses a variety of aspects, ranging from the magnetic pull of EU-style prosperity and stability to the attraction of EU culture, norms and standards. While the EU's magnetic attraction stems mostly from the Union's 'presence', rather than from its intentional agency, (cf. purely structural TNPO₃), the section will also highlight the extent to which norms and values are spread through conscious efforts by the EU (cf. agent-based TNPO₃). A final aspect that the section will examine, is the 'image' of the EU in Central Asia, and in particular, the symbolic power of its image. In doing so, it will explore, *inter alia*, the Central Asian attitudes - both popular and elite attitudes - about Europe. As with the above empirical explorations of TNPO₁ and TNPO₂, the chapter focuses mostly on the Pre-Strategy period, notably 2001-June 2007, whilst already offering some insights into events and relations taking place in the Post-Strategy period.

7.1. The EU's 'magnetic pull' in Central Asia

One particular aspect of the EU's TNPO₃ over the Central Asian countries is the Union's magnetic pull vis-à-vis the five states. As highlighted in Chapter 3, the EU's magnetic pull stems from its presence, rather than from its intentional agency, and thus largely constitutes a purely structural form of impact. The aspect of magnetic pull is probably best captured in Nye's concept of soft power, which encapsulates the extent to which an international actor, *i.e.* the EU, gets what it wants through attraction, rather than through coercion and payment, arising from the appeal of its culture, political ideals and policies (Nye, 1990, 2004). In the case of Central Asia, this 'magnetic pull' of the EU rests on the passive leverage that it draws, *inter alia*, from its attractive single market and its success as a regionally - economically and politically - integrated group of liberal democracies. On the one hand, as covered in section

5.2., a considerable amount of the EU's market power over Central Asia is based on the attraction of the single market. This is particularly well-captured by notions of 'external governance', most notably the mechanisms of 'externalisation' and 'competition', which occur both in their intergovernmental and transnational forms (cf. TNPO toolbox, see Figure 1, p.51). This aspect will be further explored in the section covering overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃. On the other hand, the EU's appeal in Central Asia also stems from its success as a regionally - economically and politically - integrated group of liberal democracies. This success does not only give it a certain amount of legitimacy and credit with its Central Asian partner countries, but it also makes it a model of development, although not necessarily the preferred model and not necessarily a model to be followed in all respects. The question is thus whether and to what extent the Central Asian republics share the EU's beliefs in regional cooperation and integration, economic liberalisation and liberal democracy based on fair societal representation and respect for human rights as universally valid ideas about the good political order. The answer is relatively straightforward: all five countries perceive the EU as the most successful form of regionalism, as well as the ideal and most successful model to guarantee economic welfare, modern statehood and democracy. However, they do not perceive it as necessarily the best model for their own states.²⁶⁹ Indeed, while they find the EU inspirational as a model in a number of governance areas, including sustainable development, higher education and market liberalisation, they equally - if not more - find inspiration with alternative models, including for constitutional democracy and state-society relations. As skillfully pointed out by then Kazakh Foreign Minister Marat Tazhin addressing the NATO security forum in Astana in June 2009, the Kazakh government may well be interested in adopting the 'European model' on issues such as civil society, energy exploitation and transport, technology and environment policies; however, it is not "[the Kazakhs'] task to mechanically apply experiences of other regions but rather to creatively reconsider alternative models and gradually develop our own unique regional architecture".²⁷⁰ In legitimising the states' course of development, Central Asian officials never fail to point to the unique geographical 'position' of the region located at a crossroads between Europe and Asia, as well as to their lingering post-soviet legacy, which - in their view - make that their countries require a different model of development than that of the EU, or any other region

²⁶⁹ E.g. author's interviews at the Diplomatic Mission of Kazakhstan to the EU in Brussels on 4 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the EU in Brussels on 5 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Uzbekistan to the EU in Brussels on 11 February 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU in Brussels on 13 March 2008, at the Diplomatic Mission of Tajikistan in Brussels on 20 March 2008, at the Kyrgyz MFA in Bishkek on 8 May 2008 and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 27 May 2008.

²⁷⁰ Source: "Nato woos Kazakhstan at security forum", *EUObserver*, 26 June 2009.

for that matter.²⁷¹ Moreover, in response to Europeans' insistence on political and economic reforms European-style, they also like to stress the need for 'gradualism' and 'strict control' in their countries' development and state-building process, referring to the fact that their countries only recently gained independence and had no democratic tradition, in contrast to the centuries-long road that the EU Member States had to walk before reaching their current level of development, statehood and democratisation.²⁷² As pointed out by Kreikemeyer & Zellner (2007):

In 1991, the five newly independent states in Central Asia had neither a tradition of state-building nor of democracy. Their political culture, partly inherited from the Soviet system but partly a product of traditionalism could not but add strong authoritarian and clannish flavour to the transition. A process of re-traditionalisation was characterised by a strengthened role for traditional institutions, which could provide social comfort to the population in the absence of any reasonable state policy in this sphere. [...] For the local leaders the issue of sovereignty was the most precious prize they won after the demise of the USSR. Closely linked to that was the interest in maintaining power, i.e. control over vast streams of revenue in the political economy. Under conditions of a neo-patrimonial society, this meant the tight informal control over revenue streams (energy, customs, privatisation, etc.) to ensure proper patronage networks and the full control over key appointments. [...] In each of the Central Asian states this has had the consequence of a break-down of the social contract. Governments are unresponsive to the needs and desires of the population. The emphasis of state-citizen relations is on coercion and co-optation, not constituency building.

In sum, this implies that the initial expectation in Brussels and Europe's capitals of a relatively linear development in Central Asia from economic liberalisation through democratisation to democratic consolidation has not occurred. Instead, the region has experienced an emergence of strong autocratic presidentialism with neo-patrimonial structures, based on patronage networks and clan politics (Collins, 2009; Franke et al, 2009; Ishiyama, 2002). Some states have arguably evolved to 'enlightened autocracy', notably Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and to a lesser extent Tajikistan, which have relatively open societies and which oppose heavy-handed repression (Bowyer, 2008; Denison, 2009; Melvin, 2009a).

When referring to alternative models of development to the European model, the Central Asian regimes normally mean the Russian model of 'enlightened autocracy' based on

²⁷¹ E.g. author's interviews at the Uzbek MFA in Tashkent on 2 May 2008, at the Kyrgyz MFA in Bishkek on 8 May 2008 and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 27 May 2008.

²⁷² Author's interview at the Uzbek MFA in Tashkent on 2 May 2008. Also see e.g. Kassenova (2007) and Kreikemeyer & Zellner (2007).

the principle of ‘sovereign democracy’. The attraction of Russia’s model is most clearly reflected in Kazakhstan’s political system. As Bowyer (2008) explains, it is based on a strong president complemented by a dominant ‘super party’, i.e. Nur-Otan, or Fatherland’s Ray of Light, in the national parliament “as the result of ‘competitive’ though well-managed elections”. In the August 2007 parliamentary elections, the party captured all the seats via the new all party-list system. Still, unlike the situation in Uzbekistan, the two parliamentary Chambers, the Senate and the Majilis, i.e. the Lower House, are far more than mere puppets of the president. As Bowyer (2008) specifies, the members of parliament are “well-educated individuals who lobby for the regions of the country they represent and the needs and concerns of their local constituents”.

Moreover, rather than promoting the ‘language of democracy’, the ruling elites in Central Asia promote a discourse of ‘stability’, stemming from their claim that their countries are still at an early stage of state- and nation building. In this regard, they contend that economic development is the first anchor of stability, as a necessary precursor to progress on democratic reforms (Kreikemeyer & Zellner, 2007). Hence why all five countries stress that priority should be given in their cooperation with the EU to the field of economic development much more than to democratisation and human rights. In defending the importance of stability, local leaders even go as far as publicly associating a quick transition to western-style democracy with chaos and instability. Both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan commonly use the lengthy chaos and instability in Kyrgyzstan following the Tulip revolution as an example of the ‘risks’ and ‘dangers’ of advancing democratic transformations in the region. Hence why they publicly present the recent colour revolutions in post-Soviet states as producing democratic back-sliding rather than as solving problems. As noted by Dave, “the state-regulated media skilfully portray the ‘colour revolutions’ in the near abroad as a popular outpouring against economic discontent and which has only exacerbated lawlessness. Such propaganda has had a considerable effect in inoculating the ordinary people ‘against political change’ to support ‘stability’ and in equating democracy with social unrest and Western propaganda” (2008: 61). In this regard, it is important to note that the Kyrgyz revolution increased suspicion among the ruling elites in the region towards the U.S. and EU agendas of democratisation, and triggered a region-wide backlash in democratisation trends, leaving an even narrower space for autonomous political action. Among other things, registration procedures for both local and Western NGOs were tightened.²⁷³ Partly as a result of this, civil

²⁷³ Author’s interviews at the national office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Tashkent on 29 April 2008 and at the head office of the Kyrgyz NGO ‘Development & Cooperation in Central Asia’ in Bishkek on 15 May 2008.

society organisations have increasingly turned to areas that are less politically sensitive, such as health, migration and poverty reduction.

At the same time, however, the governments continue to pay lip service to EU demands for democratic reform and political modernisation, up to the point where they have integrated such ‘façade behaviour’ towards values-based democracy and other EU norms into their relationship with the EU. The Uzbek regime, in particular, likes to boast to EU officials with its (entirely superficial) top-down democratisation policy, referring *inter alia* to the country’s civil society (which is fully state-run and tightly controlled) and its political pluralism (with all the parties in parliament being established by the President).²⁷⁴

Nevertheless, it would be far too exaggerated to conclude that the ruling elites do not have a genuine interest in adopting certain elements of the ‘European model’. All five countries do maintain an interest in taking on some EU rules, standards, norms and practices, although largely in non-political or less politically sensitive areas, such as tax law, customs, budget control, environmental standards and higher education (cf. Bologna agreement). This is above all the case in Kazakhstan, as exemplified most clearly with the state’s ‘Path to Europe’ programme (see more below). It is even the case in Turkmenistan, where the gradual opening of the country following the sudden death of President Niyazov revealed that the new leadership is interested in adopting certain elements of the ‘European model’, in particular in the fields of higher education, renewable energy, transport, technology and sustainable development. As covered in Chapter 3, there are a number of specific mechanisms that capture such domestically-driven pathways of Europeanisation. Indeed, such mechanisms as ‘unilateral emulation’, ‘imitation’ and ‘lesson-drawing’ (see TNPO Toolbox in Figure 1, p.51) grasp the ways in which third country governments may be induced, independently of deliberate EU action, to adopt EU norms and standards or adapt existing rules and policies to those of the EU. Considered as the ‘ideal type’ of voluntary rule transfer (in contrast to more coercive forms, such as conditionality), ‘lesson-drawing’ occurs in reaction to domestic dissatisfaction with current policies in the target country, which induces policy-makers or societal actors to learn from the experiences in the EU. Europeanisation is based then on their perception that the EU rules are appropriate solutions to their domestic problems (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005: 20-21). This is close to the mechanism of ‘communication’, which Bauer *et al.* (2007) define as “a governance mode that brings about change as a result of voluntary information exchange and mutual learning between policy-makers in EU-sponsored networks”. In Central Asia, this kind of lesson-drawing from EU practices and regulations occurs mostly in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where government

²⁷⁴ Author’s interviews at the Uzbek MFA in Tashkent on 2 May 2008

officials are regularly found to contact the local EC Delegation office or the EC headquarters in Brussels to ask for information and/or advice regarding specific EU policies or regulations, sometimes even asking for an expert on the matter to be sent over.²⁷⁵ As noted, Kyrgyzstan does this also through the CoE, where it has asked the Venice Commission to offer legal opinions on draft laws (see above). Moreover, the Kyrgyz Parliament has solicited the advice and assistance of the European Parliament as part of a deliberate attempt to ‘learn’ from EU parliamentary experience.²⁷⁶ In Kazakhstan, in turn, policy advice and information from the EU is even requested by the Prime Minister’s Cabinet and President’s Administration.²⁷⁷ The fact that Kazakhstan was found to solicit the EU’s advice most is to a significant extent because all Central Asian countries Kazakhstan’s domestic situation and level of development comes closest to that of the CEECs.²⁷⁸

What happens next in the lesson-drawing process is a thorough review by the policy-makers of the examined EU policies and rules, making a prospective evaluation of their ‘transferability’, i.e. whether these could operate effectively in the domestic context of their states. ‘Unilateral emulation’, in turn, can be viewed as a specific kind of lesson-drawing. Regulatory adaptation occurs then because third country governments or societal actors perceive an EU rule as superior and adopt it in order to deal more efficiently with domestic issues. In other words, the domestic policy-makers become favourable - independently from EU action - to convergence or compliance with a EU norm or rule, because they perceive it as an effective remedy to an inherently domestic need or policy challenge and believe that compliance or convergence will improve their domestic situation (cf. logic of appropriateness). Given the ‘difficult’ context of Central Asia, it is not straightforward to judge the extent to which national governments adopt a specific EU norm or rule because they genuinely believe it will advance the domestic situation in that policy area. Nevertheless, cases can be found where this was effectively the motivation underlying the adoption - or perhaps better the ‘selective adoption’ - of a specific element of a EU policy or regulation. A case in point is the adoption of EU standards on food quality and food safety. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the government has asked the EC for guidance on food safety standards and

²⁷⁵ Author’s interviews at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 14 May 2008 and with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

²⁷⁶ Author’s interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 8 May 2008.

²⁷⁷ Author’s interview at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, Political and Economic Section, in Astana on 28 May 2008.

²⁷⁸ Author’s interview with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

accreditation systems.²⁷⁹ As highlighted by Lavenex and Uçarer, there are different degrees and forms of emulation (2004: 422). The most complete form of adaptation is ‘copying’ and involves “full transfer of policy principles, instruments, programmes and institutional structures”, with ‘inspiration’ being at the other end of the adaptation scale (*ibid.*). A related notion is ‘imitation’, which involves a degree of adaptation higher than inspiration but lower than copying. In Central Asia, the most common type is probably inspiration. In any case, emulation by Central Asian policy-making usually involves a ‘selective’ adoption - rather than a full adoption - of specific elements of the EU policies, typically following a thorough evaluation of the transferability to the domestic context. The fact that the adoption tends to be selective also points to the observation that Central Asian government officials examine other options and that in other issue-areas they may select non-EU rules as the most appropriate remedy to their domestic policy problem. Moreover, as with adoption of EU rules and norms as a result of ‘social learning’, i.e. based on intentional EU action (see more below), adoption of EU rules and norms as a result of lesson-drawing has not always tended to translate in to actual implementation in the Central Asian countries, quite on the contrary.²⁸⁰ Obviously, this ‘implementation gap’ raises serious question marks with respect to the ‘actual’ impact of the appeal of these elements of EU norms and policies in these countries in the longer run.

Particularly interesting in terms of the EU’s appeal as a governance model is the extent to which the Central Asian states may - or may not - be drawn to its model of regional cooperation and integration. As mentioned, the Central Asian regimes recognize the EU as the most successful model of regional cooperation and integration. However, they do not perceive it as the best model in terms of their own integration into regional cooperation frameworks, mostly because of the regimes’ obsessive concern with safeguarding their countries’ national sovereignty. As such, the Central Asian states are reluctant to enter into any form of regional integration that goes beyond intergovernmental decision-making and strongly oppose any form of economic integration beyond the level of a customs union.²⁸¹ Turkmenistan, in its turn, is hesitant towards any form of regional integration, as evidenced by the fact that it is a member of only one regional cooperation organisation, namely the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), in contrast to the other four states, which are all members of several regional cooperation organisations, most notably the SCO, CSTO, CIS and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsec) (see e.g. Abdrakhmanova, 2008; Collins, 2009). Uzbekistan, however left the latter organisation in 2008, confirming the country’s reluctance

²⁷⁹ Author’s interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 14 May 2008.

²⁸⁰ Author’s interview with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

²⁸¹ Author’s interviews at the Uzbek MFA, the Kyrgyz MFA and the Kazak MFA, *cit op.*

to 'sacrifice' its national sovereignty, *in casu* in favour of greater influence of the region's dominant power, Russia (see e.g. Collins, 2009). In this regard, it is worth noting that Russia initiated - and continues to dominate - virtually all the above-mentioned regional cooperation organisations (see e.g. Boonstra, 2008a). Moreover, the specific idea of regional cooperation between the five Central Asian states has not gained much attraction. On the one hand, the countries do not all equally share the EU's perception of Central Asia as a region in its own right, despite their shared historical, cultural and linguistic (cf. Turkic) background and geographical position. On the other hand, the few attempts that have been made at establishing a Central Asian regional cooperation organisation, mostly initiated by Kazakh president Nazarbaev, failed in the face of Uzbekistan's envy of and irritation at Kazakhstan's strong economic growth and recent emergence as the region's leading country, at the expense of Uzbekistan, which still perceives itself as the region's natural leader. In fact, there also remains strong suspicion between Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, based largely on historic feuds, and between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Hence, the extent of lesson-drawing from the 'EU experience' in this domain is rather limited. However, while we can rule out any major EU impact of domestically-driven mechanisms on regionalisation processes within Central Asia, this does not apply to EU-driven attempts at regionalisation in Central Asia. Indeed, we have already observed instances of EU-driven impact on regional cooperation among the five Central Asian states, including through the EU's regional assistance initiatives, such as BOMCA, CADAP, INOGATE and TRACECA, and even more so, through the EU-initiated regional political dialogue forum, i.e. the EU Troika-Central Asia format of foreign ministerial meetings, which is unique in that it is the only political dialogue forum that gathers all five Central Asian states around the table at such a high political level.

In considering the 'lesson-drawing' aspect of the EU's TNPO₃ over Central Asia, it is important to also consider the EU's appeal at societal level. Nevertheless, the attraction of the EU among the Central Asian population appears somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, a considerable amount of attraction stems from the so-called 'European dream' and 'European way of living'. This typically reflects the high level of prosperity and quality of life associated with the EU, including high living standards and efficient social welfare systems, which have prompted many Central Asians to migrate to the EU. In addition, the appeal of the EU also derives from its a legacy of peaceful relations and successful reconciliation, as well as the non-repressive nature of the European societies and governments. In as far as a endogenous and independent civil society and political opposition movement have emerged in the region, considerable numbers of these societal groups have turned to the European model for inspiration and lesson-drawing. As pointed out in Chapter 3, such mechanisms as 'societal

lesson-drawing', 'societal imitation' and 'societal inspiration' capture how local societal actors may be drawn to the EU as a result of dissatisfaction with the domestic status quo. They favour a certain EU rule or norm because they perceive them as a solution to their domestic problems and an improvement of the status quo (cf. logic of appropriateness). Yet, their room for manoeuvring remains limited in the face of strict government control of their movement and an fairly hostile media climate (see above). Moreover, secular, western-oriented societal groups in Central Asia do not necessarily represent society as a whole. Indeed, since gaining independence from the Soviet Union, the countries in the region have witnessed an erosion of the secular values in society. As noted by Olcott (2007), "[o]verall, the spread of traditional values, be they national-cultural, traditional-religious or fundamental religious, has proceeded far more rapidly than the spread of western 'civic cultural' values". This is particularly the case of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. It applies much less to Kazakhstan, whose society was perhaps more russified under soviet rule than the other countries, but more importantly, whose society has largely co-opted general western or secular values. Hence, apart from Kazakhstan, identification with Europe among Central Asia's societies tends to be weak, as is their knowledge of the European liberal-democratic model of society and politics. As highlighted by Melvin, "Central Asians are not genetically or culturally averse to democracy, but it is important to be realistic about the conditions under which democratisation can emerge. Poor societies, with little prospect of significant socio-economic change in the near and medium term, are not strong candidates for a deep-seated and sustainable process of democratisation" (2009a: 128). Kazakhstan, however, provides a different prospect. In contrast to its Central Asian neighbours, Kazakhstan has witnessed the emergence of a middle class, which enjoys a western-style quality of life (see e.g. Daly, 2008). Although wide sections of Kazakh society are still experiencing low levels of prosperity and even poverty, based on the income of its lucrative hydrocarbons sales, the country is likely to continue to generate wealth, redistributed among the population. This suggests "the emergence of socio-economic conditions more conducive to democratisation in the decades ahead" (Melvin, 2009a: 129). Moreover, despite the lack of genuine democratisation and any signals from the Kazakh leadership to progress in that direction any time soon, ambitious initiatives such as the government's Path to Europe programme²⁸² and its OSCE Chairmanship, as well as its self-profiling as a 'Eurasian' nation-state, indicate Kazakhstan's intention to move closer to Europe and "emulate European social

²⁸² Kazakh State Programme 'Path to Europe' 2009–2011, launched in February 2008, available at http://www.kazembassy.org.uk/path_to_europe_state_programme.html, accessed on 11 March 2009. Also see Council (2008f), Slovenian Presidency, Statement at the OSCE Permanent Council, Kazakhstan (Path to Europe), Permanent Council No. 703, 28 February 2008.

and economic development in important ways” (Melvin, 2009a: 129, also see Dave, 2008; Melvin, 2009b).

7.2. The EU’s intentional diffusion of norms and values in Central Asia

Next to domestically-driven processes of Europeanisation, norms and values are also spread in Central Asia through conscious efforts by the EU (cf. agent-based structural power). As mentioned, this duality is captured in Manners’s (2002) concept of normative power, which depicts the EU as a changer of norms in international relations based on combination of its very existence and conscious agency, notably by projecting its internally shared principles and norms onto its external partners. When it comes to pinpointing the norms and principles propagated by the EU, Manners (2002: 240) identifies four ‘core’ norms, which form a central part of the EU’s vast body of laws and policies, namely peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and the fundamental freedoms, as set out in article 6 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and incorporated in the EU’s various external policies and strategies. In addition, Manners designates four ‘minor’ norms, i.e. social progress, combating discrimination, sustainable development and good governance (*ibid.*). As a regionally integrated system of liberal democracies, the EU essentially represents three key elements, namely regionalism, regulated transnational markets and democratic constitutionalism (Cf. Schimmelfennig, 2007). Drawing on Schimmelfennig (2007), which departs from the proposition that Europeanisation consists of “the external projection of internal solutions”, the question is then whether and to what extent the EU deliberately exports to Central Asia (i) its constitutional norms, (ii) its model of regionalism and (iii) its “multilaterally managed regulatory framework for liberal markets” - or ‘neoliberal economic model’.

However, while the dissemination of EU norms, values and standards is conceived here as an ideal type of TNPO₃, in practice, the deliberate export of these three EU-models is usually channelled through the provision of material incentives (overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃), such as financial assistance and enhanced market access, and/or through the institutionalised cooperation framework established with the Central Asian countries (overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃). As we shall see in the section covering TNPO overlap, these processes of EU norm export are captured, *inter alia*, by such mechanisms as ‘conditionality’ and ‘social learning’ (see TNPO toolbox in Figure 1, p.51).

7.3. The EU's image and symbolic power in Central Asia

A final aspect of the EU's TNPO₃ over Central Asia concerns the Union's image and symbolic power in the region. As noted in Chapter 3, on the whole, the EU seems to have a rather benevolent and non-threatening image compared to other international powers, including Russia, China and the U.S. Moreover, the Union is increasingly accepted around the globe as a source of authority on several public policy issues. As pointed out by Holden, "[s]ignificant here is that many do not perceive it as an actor in the sense that major states are viewed, thus its own webs of control have tended to elicit less paranoia and resistance than these other actors" (2009: 188-9). This section will show that these insights largely correspond to the image that the EU enjoys in the Central Asian republics. In doing so, it will also explore the Central Asian attitudes - both popular and elite attitudes - about Europe. Importantly, in considering the symbolic power of the EU's image in Central Asia, it seems more useful to refer to 'Europe' rather than to the EU. Of course, as a geographic term 'Europe' encapsulates much more than the EU. However, for most people in Central Asia, having only very little knowledge about the EU as a political community in its own right, both terms have come to represent one and the same symbolic reality.

To begin with, contrary to the Central Asian attitudes about the United States, Central Asians have mostly positive assumptions about the EU, in particular about the EU's role at the international stage. To some extent, Central Asian 'suspicion' towards America goes back to the time of the Cold War and the bipolar international climate. However, suspicion in Central Asia about American foreign policy increased dramatically in the aftermath of the American invasion and subsequent occupation of - fellow muslim - Iraq in 2003 (see e.g. Schatz, 2008; Schatz & Levine, 2009).²⁸³ Moreover, the Central Asian governments are sensitive to claims at home that cooperation with the U.S. spoils the countries' image in the eyes of their traditional allies, most notably Russia, China and fellow Islamic countries.²⁸⁴ In contrast, the EU is perceived as a more neutral and benevolent external actor.²⁸⁵ In this sense, one could argue that the EU enjoys a number of comparative advantages in relation to other external actors, which help strengthen its influence in the region (see e.g. De Pedro, 2009). As highlighted by Shairbek (2009), this perception of the EU as a relatively neutral player,

²⁸³ Author's interviews with the Assistant of the Deputy Chairman of the Mazhilis in Astana on 25 May 2008, at the Kyrgyz MFA in Bishkek on 12 May 2008 and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 26 May 2008.

²⁸⁴ In addition, in Kyrgyzstan, anti-American sentiments among the population are related to unfortunate incidents involving the presence of U.S. military stationed at the air base near Bishkek, including the reckless behaviour of U.S. military vehicles in Bishkek, the killing of a local truck driver and the dumping of air petrol on farmlands. Source: *CACI Analyst*, issue of 20 August 2008.

²⁸⁵ Author's interviews with the Assistant of the Deputy Chairman of the Mazhilis in Astana on 25 May 2008, at the Kyrgyz MFA in Bishkek on 12 May 2008 and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 26 May 2008.

combined with its experience on regional cooperation, has allowed it to gain the trust of the Central Asian governments to act as a neutral ‘arbiter’ and ‘mediator’ on pressing regional issues that the governments themselves have repeatedly failed to resolve between each other, most notably water management and hydro-energy issues. The major line of contention concerns the use of the rivers, which the upstream countries, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - which need to exploit the rivers for the production of hydro-energy -, refuse to share unconditionally with the downstream countries, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, which are dependent on the rivers for agricultural purposes. Also more generally in Central Asia, the EU’s reputation as a benevolent and non-competitive actor generates trust and grants the Union a higher level of legitimacy compared to other external actors (see e.g. de Pedro, 2009: 131-133). Moreover, its fairly positive reputation in the region is something that the EU is keen to use as an asset in its relations with the Central Asian states. Hence why the EU avoids presenting itself in the region as a ‘competitor’ in the so-called New Great Game (see above). Nevertheless, as pointed out above, the EU is still subject to considerable criticism from the ruling elites, who particularly dislike the ‘lecturing tone’ that the EU tends to put on when addressing its Central Asian partner countries (cf. Uzbek reference to quote by Winston Churchill, see above). In particular, the EU’s insistence on the need for democratic reform and improvement of human rights often leads the Central Asian regimes to accuse the EU of using double standards in its relations with the republics.²⁸⁶

A final element that needs addressing is the popular attitudes towards Europe in the region. As already mentioned, the ‘European way of living’ and so-called ‘European dream’ appeal to Central Asian societies, in particular to the ‘urban dwellers’, who associate Europe with a high level of prosperity and quality of life, including high living standards and efficient social welfare systems. Related to this, European merchandise is very much desired in Central Asia, where European products enjoy a very good reputation, based on the perception that they are generally of very high quality and standard. Conversely, Chinese merchandise, although more affordable to the low-income Central Asian societies, on average has a rather poor reputation. Moreover, European culture appears to be linked to a certain level of ‘Romanticism’ among Central Asians, including among Uzbeks, Kyrgyz and Kazakhs, who tend to associate Europe with cities like Paris and Rome, and often seem to be drawn to French romantic symbols and ideals, such as love and beauty. Interestingly, France also appears to have a particular attraction on Central Asia’s ruling elites, including on Kazakh

²⁸⁶ Author’s interviews at the Uzbek MFA in Tashkent on 2 May 2008, at the Kyrgyz MFA in Bishkek on 12 May 2008 and at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 26 May 2008.

president Nazarbaev, who famously found considerable inspiration for his country's constitution with the French Constitution.

7.4. Concluding remarks

To summarise, the above outline highlighted to what extent ideational factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU's TNPO. Overall, the findings presented above reveal a rather mixed picture of the EU's TNPO₃. On the one hand, the chapter did not find evidence of strong ideational attraction to the EU's norms, values and principles related to liberal democracy, including human rights, rule of law and good governance. Clearly, these results suggest that such ideational factors do not constitute an important determinant of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. In understanding this 'limit' to the EU's power over the region, the section again pointed to a number of 'countervailing' factors, including the virtually inherent authoritarian nature of Central Asian politics, and related to this - the attraction to alternative models of development, most notably the Russian model, and the traditional fabric of Central Asian society. To some extent, however, Kazakhstan appeared to be an exception, offering better prospects for European-style development and democratisation.

On the other hand, the chapter found that the EU enjoys a relatively positive reputation as a more neutral actor in Central Asia, which gives it more credit compared to other external actors. Moreover, despite several findings suggesting a limited EU impact in the normative sphere, the section remarked that the dissemination of EU norms and standards studied in the section is an ideal type of TNPO₃. Indeed, in practice, the deliberate export of EU norms and standards is usually channelled through the provision of material incentives (overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃), such as financial assistance and enhanced market access, and/or through the institutionalised cooperation framework established with the Central Asian countries (interaction between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃). This final remark brings us to the next chapter, which focuses specifically on the extent to which the EU's power over Central Asia may also derive from the interaction between the TNPO structures.

Chapter 8 - The EU's TNPO overlap over Central Asia

As already apparent from the above three chapters, there seems to be considerable interaction between the three TNPO structures. Indeed, while TNPO₁, TNPO₂ and TNPO₃ can be considered the material, institutional and ideational structures in their purest forms, in practical terms, they are often found to interact with each other. This is particularly true for TNPO_{2micro(institutional)}, which is present in two different overlaps, notably in TNPO_{2micro(institutional)-3(ideational)} and TNPO_{1(material)-2micro(institutional)-3(ideational)}. Before starting our empirical exploration of the interaction between the structures, it is useful to reiterate the analytical distinction between the 'logic of consequentiality' and the 'logic of appropriateness', which helps to understand the mechanisms of impact underlying the different types of overlap. As such, TNPO_{1(material)-3(ideational)} falls mostly within the former logic, which maintains that political outcomes are brought about by strategically calculating actors seeking to maximise given interest. Conversely, TNPO_{2(institutional)-3(ideational)} can be best explained by the latter logic, which upholds that outcomes are based on value-based judgements of norms as either appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. Moreover, it is also important to bear in mind that overlap between the structures testifies to a combination of purely structural and agent-based structural power.

8.1. TNPO_{1(material)-2(institutional)}

As outlined in Chapter 3, instances of TNPO_{1-2micro} are rather rare, as the overlap between those two structures is nearly always bound to interact with TNPO₃. To clarify, by and large, TNPO_{1-2micro} encompasses the extent to which EU aid constitutes a direct intervention in the Central Asian countries' domestic structures and to which the assistance ensures contact between the respective Parties, thereby establishing relationships between the EU and the Central Asian countries that become institutionalised in one way or other. In practice, however, such direct EU intervention hardly ever occurs without deliberate attempts by the EU to push through domestic reforms that are inspired by EU practices or draw on the EU model. In short, TNPO_{1-2micro} thus appears to be inherently linked to TNPO₃. Some scattered instances of TNPO_{1-2micro} may be observed where this is not the case, but these are very rare and will not be covered in the present chapter. In contrast to TNPO_{1-2micro}, overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2macro} is more easily observable and does not necessarily interact with TNPO₃. Nevertheless, compared to the other types of TNPO overlap, TNPO_{1-2macro} is still only a minor case of overlap, and will therefore be dealt with only briefly in the present chapter.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, instances of TNPO_{1-2macro} appear largely confined to the security realm, although not exclusively. The most common cases of overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO_{2macro} occur in instances where the EU relies upon regional security organisations to gain more influence over third countries in the security domain. This also applies to the case of Central Asia, where the EU relies on two groups of regional security organisations to increase its influence over the region. On the one hand, there is the OSCE and NATO, two regional security organisations in which the EU is represented itself, although indirectly, i.e. through a substantial membership of EU member states. On the other hand, there are the ‘rival’ regional security organisations, *in casu* the SCO, which includes Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and the CSTO, which includes Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Belarus. As the former case of TNPO_{1-2macro} is covered in detail in section 6.2 (above), we will focus here on the latter case. What is so interesting about this instance of TNPO_{1-2macro}, is that it consists of the EU approaching these ‘rival’ security organisations with the request of entering into a some kind of cooperation. In other words, the EU has sought to engage with the SCO and the CSTO - and to a lesser extent with the CIS - to secure some kind of cooperation, whether in the form of ad-hoc political dialogue or in the form of actual joint activities.²⁸⁷ The main goal of such engagement attempts by the EU is to balance the influence of these organisations in the security domain, and in particular to balance the influence over the Central Asian countries wielded by the dominant member countries within the respective organisations, i.e. Russia and China. This engagement with the SCO and the CSTO is conducted mostly by the EUSR for Central Asia, Pierre Morel, whose mandate stipulates the maintaining of contacts with these regional organisations. The engagement established so far does not go beyond *ad hoc* pragmatic cooperation on matters of common concern, which suggests a preference of the EU for occasional dialogue with these organisations over deep institutionalised cooperation.

Outside of the security domain, the EU engages on a regular basis with EURASEC, the Eurasian Economic Community, which includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. However, a much more important case of TNPO_{1-2macro} outside of the security realm concerns a regional institution in which the EU itself is represented, namely the EBRD. As mentioned in section 6.2.2, which covers the EU’s TNPO_{2macro} in the case of the EBRD, the EU manages to attract financial assistance from the EBRD for projects in Central Asia that are in effect implemented to serve its (own) interests in the Central Asian countries. In addition, the EU will benefit even further from enhanced cooperation with the

²⁸⁷ Author’s interview with the regionally-based political advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia in Almaty on 20 May 2008.

EBRD in favour of the Union's involvement in Central Asia, as it signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with the EBRD and the EIB for joint financing of projects of significant interest to the EU, in particular in the area of infrastructure (see above). As noted, strengthened EU interaction with the EBRD and EIB is in fact one of the goals set out in the EU Strategy for Central Asia. EIB activity in Central Asia will focus mostly on the energy sector and the environment and include energy supply and energy transport projects under TRACECA and INOGATE (see above).

8.2. TNPO_{1(material)}-3(ideational)

The overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃ encompasses the interaction of material and ideational factors. As outlined in Chapter 3, TNPO₁₋₃ largely follows a rationalist perspective, which assumes that third country actors adhere to a 'logic of consequentiality'. Put differently, all instances of TNPO₁₋₃ are brought about by strategically calculating actors seeking to maximise given interest. TNPO₁₋₃ is manifested in a number of ways. Most typically, it covers the EU's diffusion of ideas, principles and norms through its provision of material incentives, such as market access and financial assistance (cf. Manners's notion of 'transference diffusion', see Chapter 3). Insofar as such EU assistance packages offer tangible material benefits to partner countries, norm adaptation and rule compliance may occur as a result of a positive cost-benefit assessment by the third countries. That is, when offered the possibility of assistance, the latter weigh up the costs and benefits of the proposed or required norm adaptation in view of their material interests and political preferences. Accordingly, they comply with the EU's rules and norms if the domestic adaptation costs are smaller than the benefits of the material rewards (cf. Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier's external incentives model). Material reinforcement mechanisms can also be used indirectly through the transnational channel to mobilise societal actors (e.g. human rights NGOs or corporate actors) in the target state to put pressure on their government to change its policy and adapt to the suggested community norms and rules (cf. domestic empowerment).

The overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃ largely constitutes agent-based structural power, as the overlap derives mostly from conscious EU agency. Yet, there are cases where the overlap between the two structures testifies to structural power that is purely structural in nature. As captured by the market and the competition modes of governance (see toolbox in Figure 1, p.51), it concerns cases where the EU's impact on third countries derives from the 'presence' of its internal market rather than from its conscious actions. Governments or

societal actors are induced to adapt domestic policies and regulations to those of the EU. Following a rationalist logic of action, they do so because ignoring or violating the EU's rules and regulations would entail net costs (cf. negative externality). For instance, if foreign companies want to enter the EU's market, they may have no choice but to adopt EU rules or standards (e.g. product standards).

A final type of overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃ occurs entirely via the transnational channel and is even more indirect than in the case of domestic empowerment through material reinforcement, in that the agency does not lie at the level of the EU, but at that of European companies. The overlap perceives foreign direct investment (FDI) from European businesses as a form of people-to-people contacts through which EU norms and best practices are promoted. In other words, this final type of TNPO₁₋₃ encompasses the extent to which FDI from European companies allows for 'transnational socialisation' (see toolbox in Figure 1, p.51) of domestic work force into EU labour and social rights as well as the European business environment and technological excellence, thereby exposing local labour force to European working conditions as well as to EU business practices, including participation in decision-making, accountability and transparency.

In the remainder of this section, we explore whether and to what extent the above-mentioned types of TNPO₁₋₃ apply to the EU's TNPO over Central Asia.

A first instance of TNPO₁₋₃ that can be observed is the EU's deliberate export of norms and rules to the Central Asian countries through its provision of material incentives. In particular, the EU channels the dissemination of norms and rules in Central Asia through the provision of technical and financial assistance and - although to a lesser extent - through trade incentives, i.e. the prospect of enhanced market access. As highlighted above, technical and financial assistance provided under the auspices of EU funded assistance programmes in Central Asia comprise a variety of activities, ranging from investment in transport infrastructure and energy efficiency, to food security aid and support to civil society, as well as to assistance in legal drafting on customs law, in budgetary control, and higher education etc. In financing and implementing this wide range of assistance activities in the Central Asian countries, the EU encourages specific institutional and legal reforms of the countries' domestic frameworks in accordance with the EU's own regulatory frameworks. As mentioned in Chapter 3, if successful, this 'export' of regulatory norms and EU-modelled practices is functionally convenient for the EU. That is, transposing the *acquis*, whether in full or in part, contributes to the establishment of a favourable regulatory climate in the recipient country, therefore facilitating direct foreign investment by European firms and encouraging the mutual liberalisation of markets (see Chapter 3). A case in point is the EU's assistance to the region

in the energy domain. In view of safeguarding its energy security, the EU is increasingly encouraging far-reaching rules-based governance reforms in neighbouring energy producing and transit countries - including Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan - modelled on the EU's internal energy market and governance rules (Youngs, 2007: 2). The EU does so in order to "extend transparency, efficiency and certainty beyond the EU's frontiers - crucial to helping the long term investments necessary for our energy security" (Ferrero-Waldner, as quoted in Youngs, 2007). The Baku initiative (see section 6.1) testifies to this overall aim. As pointed out by Youngs, it is aimed at "driving energy sector reform in the [Caspian] region, around EU regulatory standards - once again using Europe's internal market as a template" (2007: 3). In this regard, the EU has already provided considerable funding and investment for energy infrastructure development in the Caspian Sea region. Similarly, the INOGATE programme serves already to modernise and develop energy transport infrastructure in the region, including in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

Insofar as the EU's assistance packages offer tangible material benefits to the Central Asian partner countries, rule adoption and norm convergence by the governments may occur as a result of a positive cost-benefit assessment. That is, when offered the possibility of assistance, the latter weigh up the costs and benefits of the proposed or required norm adaptation in view of their material interests and political preferences. Accordingly, they comply with the EU's rules and norms if the domestic adaptation costs are smaller than the benefits of the material rewards. In the case of the CEECs, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier (2005) found that there is a marked difference in the readiness to adopt a EU rule or norm between, on the one hand, democratic norms, i.e. the general EU rules of liberal democracy and, on the other, general *acquis* rules. As the authors point out, the differences can be explained mainly with the costs that a government incurs if it adopts the EU rule (Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2005: 210-214). This finding also largely applies to the case of Central Asia, where incumbent governments are much more reluctant to converge with EU rules of democracy and human rights than with general EU *acquis* rules, such as customs and taxation regulations or environmental standards. Indeed, the Central Asian ruling elites will only adopt a EU rule if they are certain that it will not erode their domestic power, and thus only if the costs of convergence do not outweigh the benefits.

Material reinforcement mechanisms can also be used through the transnational channel, that is, to mobilise societal actors in the target state, such as human rights NGOs and corporate actors, to put pressure on their government to change its policy and adapt to the suggested community norms and rules (cf. domestic empowerment). As highlighted in section 6.1, the EU offers a considerable amount of civil society support in the Central Asian

countries, including through its EIDHR programme and its Institution Building Partnership programme (IBPP), TEMPUS (for higher education) and the Managers Training Programme. For domestic empowerment based on transnational reinforcement to be effective, it follows that the costs of putting pressure on the government should be smaller than the expected community rewards (Schimmelfennig, 2005). Therefore, as Schimmelfennig concluded in his study of the CEECs, the main channel of international reinforcement in these countries was intergovernmental, because “societies [were] too weak vis-à-vis the states, and electorates are too volatile, to serve as effective agents” of domestic change through material reinforcement (2005: 828). As is clear from the outline in Chapter 7, this is even more the case in the Central Asian states, most of which are far more authoritarian and repressive than the former candidate states in Central and Eastern Europe. This applies in particular to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, where societies are not strong enough to oppose or challenge the ruling elites and where electorates have no genuine opportunity to vote for ‘change’. Moreover, civil society is kept firmly in check, and in most Central Asian countries only so-called GONGOs are currently allowed to operate, which stands for ‘Government-organised Non-governmental organisation’.

Yet, this does not mean that we should rule out any constructive impact of EU civil society assistance in the Central Asian countries. Indeed, even in a repressive societal environment such as Uzbekistan, EU civil society projects manage to make a difference, although - for all means and purposes - not to a major extent.²⁸⁸ A case in point are the EU’s community development projects in Uzbekistan, where the EU’s approach for cooperation at the non-state level has become increasingly centred on finding ‘soft’ entry points for the empowerment of societal groups. This approach was introduced especially in light of the ‘difficult EC assistance climate’ following the Andijan events and the EU’s imposition of sanctions, in which even the title of the TEMPUS project “Capacity Building for Independent Learning in Higher Education in Uzbekistan” sounded slightly provocative for the Uzbek regime. One example of a successful community development project is the IBPP project “Choices for Youth”, which was implemented in Uzbekistan in 2005-2006 and which involved the direct and indirect participation of a local youth-oriented GONGO (there are currently no independent domestic NGOs in Uzbekistan), a German NGO and municipal authorities. The project aimed at increasing the capacity of and coordination between local organisations and local government as well as to strengthen the skills of young people and give them orientation for career development.²⁸⁹ An additional aim was to enhance youth

²⁸⁸ See e.g. lecture by Daniel Stevens at SOAS in London on 21 January 2010, op.cit.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

knowledge related to the prevention of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS infections. While the first goal appeared rather challenging to achieve given the suspicion in Uzbekistan towards both decentralisation and state-society cooperation, the other two components of the project proved to be fairly successful. The local governments concerned were satisfied that their youngsters were kept off the streets, which meant criminality decreased. More importantly, however, the young people concerned attended the training and info sessions *en masse*, as they became very favourable to the interactive and participatory manner in which the training and info sessions were organised by the European project leaders, a teaching method that the youngsters had so far not been familiarised with.²⁹⁰ As such, through organising training activities that were not considered ‘politically’ sensitive to the ruling elites, the EC managed to nevertheless induce a form of ‘empowerment’ - limited though it may be - of a crucial societal group in a country where close to 40 per cent of the population is below 16.

A similar ‘soft entry point’ approach underlies the EU’s SME development initiatives in the region. While aimed at fostering SME development, many of the EU’s initiatives in this domain at the same time also target domestic empowerment of corporate actors vis-à-vis government. A case in point is the IBPP project “Strengthening the institutional capacities of the Almaty Chamber of Commerce as a service and representation” implemented in Kazakhstan in 2007-2009 with a budget of almost EUR 2 million.²⁹¹ In fact, this project reflects the intention and set-up of the EC’s programme CA-Invest, a programme targeted specifically at SME development in Central Asia through the establishment of cooperation links between European and Central Asian business intermediary actors, such as Chambers of Commerce and entrepreneurial associations.²⁹² The underlying goal of CA-Invest, the first phase of which started in 2007, is domestic empowerment of corporate actors in Central Asia vis-à-vis their governments, based on capacity-building by and information exchange with European partner organisations.

Another aspect of the EC’s assistance to Central Asia that suggests the importance of indirect pathways of domestic empowerment is its increasing focus on education and vocational training. In Uzbekistan, for instance, the European Training Foundation (ETF), in cooperation with the EC, helps to set up national vocational education and training (VET) policy. This long-term EC project combines policy development and capacity building in VET, involving all stakeholders of VET reform, i.e. national policy making, regional development planning and local vocational colleges (European Training Foundation, 2009).

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁹¹ Information retrieved from the website of the (former) EC Delegation to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, <<http://delkaz.ec.europa.eu/joomla>>.

²⁹² See e.g. author’s interview at the Regionalised EC Delegation to Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek on 14 May 2008.

However, due to the required participation of Uzbek authorities, progress in the reforms depends to a large extent on the willingness of the government to participate. As noted by the European Training Foundation (2009) with respect to the first phase of the project, Uzbek governmental involvement in “specific ETF activities has been discontinuous, especially in the national qualifications framework project where the country actively participated in some activities, only to drop out later on”. This implied that only part of the expected results were achieved and that eventual impact on the policy agenda of the country was limited.

In a similar vein to the VET projects, but at a much larger scale, there is the EC programme for higher education reform, TEMPUS, in addition to the Erasmus Mundus programme for exchange of students and lecturers. While the TEMPUS programme is generally quite popular in the region, including in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, progress on higher education reform has been slow, constrained mostly by the scant experience of policy coordination and the very centralised nature of policy- and decision making in the countries, with decisive measures being taken only at the highest policy levels. Hence, this does not chime with the bottom-up approach that Tempus projects rely upon, which require active local partners - both universities and government bodies -, who as a pre-condition need to be able to communicate and must have a sense of initiative as well as some project definition and management capacities (European Commission, 2004). Yet, despite these restraints, it is important to note that all five countries show a significant interest in modernising their higher education systems in accordance with the European model as set out in the Bologna Declaration, with Kyrgyzstan even intending to join the Bologna process (Jones, 2010; Mouraviev, 2008). This is based mainly on their belief that the European model of higher education offers the best remedy for the improvement of their domestic higher education systems (cf. lesson-drawing). At the same time, the EC is actively promoting the Bologna Process in the Central Asian states, *inter alia*, through info sessions and seminars for government officials, but also - of course - through TEMPUS (cf. social learning).

Importantly, as highlighted in Chapter 3, reinforcement mechanisms can also operate through the anonymous market. These are cases of TNPO₁₋₃, which testify to purely structural EU impact. That is, it concerns cases where the EU’s impact on the Central Asian countries derives from the ‘presence’ of its internal market rather than from conscious EU actions, as captured is by the market and the competition modes of governance (see TNPO toolbox in Figure 1, p.51). There are indeed numerous instances in which Central Asian governments or societal actors are induced to comply with EU regulatory standards and norms, including quality and safety standards, and environmental standards. Most commonly, they do so because ignoring or violating these EU’s rules and regulations would entail net costs (cf.

negative externality). A case in point is when Central Asian producers and/or legislators experience the necessity to adopt EU product standards as a result of competitive pressures (cf. the notion of ‘competition’ in Figure 1, p.51). Moreover, if Central Asian producers want to export to the EU’s market, they often have no choice but to adopt specific EU rules or standards that relate to the sector or product range in question. As their products have to meet the product standards applicable to the single market, the size - and hence attractiveness and benefits - of the market induces Central Asian export companies to adopt the EU product standards concerned.²⁹³ However, given the limited levels of development in countries like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, local producers often do not have the means to adapt to the EU norms and standards, as this adaptation usually requires investment in expensive advanced technology and logistical infrastructure. Moreover, the governments in turn may lack the financial means and technological know-how to allow for monitoring and supervision systems of norm compliance, which hand out labels and certificates to companies complying to the EU norms and standards that the government seeks to introduce.²⁹⁴ As such, the EU often provides tailor-made technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in order to help the governments establish such infrastructure required for the supervision and monitoring of local producers’ compliance with a newly adopted EU norm. A specific area in which the EU offers substantial technical assistance to this end is the food sector. In Kyrgyzstan, for instance, the EC has been implementing several projects targeted at helping the government establish advanced control systems for food companies’ compliance with EU food quality and food safety standards, including the building of labs equipped with high-tech measurement systems.²⁹⁵

8.3 TNPO_{2micro/macro(institutional)-3(ideational)}

In constituting the interaction between institutional and ideational factors, TNPO₂₋₃ regards the extent to which ‘institutions matter’ as the site for socialisation through dialogue. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this type of overlap can be observed at both the micro-institutional and macro-institutional level, although it occurs predominantly at the former level. In essence, TNPO_{2micro-3} encompasses modes of rule transfer and/or norm diffusion based on EU-initiated processes of communication and social learning. In contrast to the overlap between TNPO₁

²⁹³ Author’s interviews with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008 and with the Vice-President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kazakhstan during the latter’s visit to the Chamber of Commerce of Antwerp, Belgium, on 17 June 2010.

²⁹⁴ Author’s interview at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan (Projects Section) in Bishkek on 14 May 2008.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

and TNPO₃, which adheres by and large to a logic of consequences, overlap between TNPO_{2micro} and TNPO₃ follows a logic of appropriateness, which upholds that outcomes are based on value-based judgements of norms as either appropriate or inappropriate behaviour. As such, overlap between TNPO_{2micro} and TNPO₃ captures how third country actors internalise EU norms not because they calculate the consequences of the norm adaptation - as in the case of TNPO₁₋₃ -, but because they feel that norm conformance is ‘the right thing to do’. EU socialisation efforts can be seen as attempts to “teach” partner countries the ideas and norms underlying the EU’s policies in order to persuade them that these norms and values are appropriate, and encourage them to internalise the projected norms and rules (Schimmelfennig, 2009) (cf. ‘social learning’). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the theoretical mechanism underlying processes of socialisation suggests that, through constructive dialogue, the socializee (i.e. the third country) is persuaded by the legitimacy of the socialiser’s (i.e. the EU) interpretations of the world and changes its identity and interests accordingly (Checkel, 2005: 812; also see Warkotsch, 2009: 252). As the outsider fully internalises the projected norm, norm diffusion through persuasive action is assumed to be more sustainable than norm compliance resulting from strategic calculation, which might end when the incentive structures changes (Checkel, 2005: 813; Warkotsch, 2009: 252).

Importantly, these processes of EU norm export do not only involve domestic governmental actors but may also be targeted at local societal actors. The mechanisms of ‘transnational socialisation’ and ‘transnational social learning’ (see TNPO toolbox in Figure 1, p.51) help to capture how the dialogue venues set up, *inter alia*, under the EU’s democracy promotion policy instance serve to socialise and persuade members of society, instead of members of the regime. As Adamson clarifies, the aim is to “convince the local population of the benefits of creating independent civil society organisations and interest groups, and attempt to socialise members of society [...] to prioritise such issues as human rights concerns, press freedom, and other components of liberal democracy” (2003: 22).

It is also relevant to note that TNPO_{2micro-3}, in the form of rule transfer and norm diffusion based on EU-initiated processes of communication and social learning, constitutes agent-based structural power, as those dialogue processes of socialisation are driven consciously and deliberately by the EU. This makes it fully distinct from behavioural adaptation as a result of ‘lesson-drawing’ or ‘unilateral policy emulation’ (see Figure 1, p.51). They do not occur in the overlap, but fall entirely under TNPO₃ and reflect a purely structural type of structural power, as norm compliance is induced by domestic factors rather than by pro-active EU norm promotion.

In what follows, this subsection will explore the extent to which overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃ occurs in the case of EU-Central Asia, looking both at the micro-institutional and the macro-institutional level.

As has already become apparent from the empirical explorations above, the EU's assistance and cooperation with Central Asia - both at governmental and societal level - relies to a large extent on processes of socialisation, implemented through the various formal and informal patterns of regular institutionalised communication, as well as through the physical presence of the EU in the Central Asian countries (cf. Manners's notion of overt diffusion). Moreover, the EU resorts to the instrument of socialisation both for its promotion of liberal norms, i.e. democracy, human rights, good governance and rule of law, and for its transference of 'acquis' rules. As noted by Youngs with respect to the EU's democracy promotion, the "EU's strategy [is] characterised by an aim to develop deeply institutionalised patterns of dialogue and cooperation as means of socialising political elites into a positive and consensual adherence to democratic norms" (2001b: 193 & 195). According to Youngs, "the socialisation approach is designed to create opportunities for 'imitation and demonstration effects' and starts with very modest expectations of introducing the vocabulary of democracy into domestic discourse and inducing elites to at least pay lip service to democracy" (Youngs, 2001a: 359). Put differently, by including the issue of democracy in institutionalised relationships, the EU puts the issue on the table. As can be observed in the EU's relations with Central Asia, this approach is applied in the EU's attempts at diffusing other liberal norms, most notably human rights, rule of law and good governance. At the highest political level, this can be observed most noticeably in the bilateral Cooperation Councils held with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, and since 2010, with Tajikistan, and - much more so - in the bilateral human rights dialogues that the EU holds with each of the five countries. At a bureaucratic/technocratic level, this can be observed most noticeably in the bilateral Cooperation Committees and Sub-committees, as well as in the numerous forums of *ad-hoc* institutionalised dialogue established during and for the implementation of the EC's bilateral and regional assistance programmes. In addition, socialisation practices can also be observed at interparliamentary level, i.e. in the annual bilateral PCC meetings with members of the Central Asian national parliament. At societal level, in turn, efforts at socialising local actors through dialogue can be observed in a wide variety of civil society assistance programmes, including IBPP, Managers' Training Programme, CA-Invest and EIDHR.

In all of these dialogue venues, exposure to and familiarisation with EU regulatory procedures or normative principles is built in. In this light, EU socialisation efforts can be seen as attempts to "teach" partner countries the ideas and norms underlying the EU's policies

in order to persuade them that these norms and values are appropriate, and encourage them to internalise the projected norms and rules (Schimmelfennig, 2009) (cf. ‘social learning’). There are, for instance, numerous examples of projects where the EU engages in socialisation processes by organising exchange programmes bringing Central Asian actors - both governmental and societal - on short-term trips to EU Member States, where the invited officials/civil servants or NGOs/corporate actors visit partner organisations, as well as by funding conferences, seminars and partnership programmes. This approach is used particularly in the BOMCA and CADAP programmes.²⁹⁶ Moreover, as Adamson notes with respect to EU democracy promotion through civil society assistance, the aim is to “convince the local population of the benefits of creating independent civil society organisations and interest groups, and attempt to socialise members of society [...] to prioritise such issues as human rights concerns, press freedom, and other components of liberal democracy” (2003: 22).

However, somewhat problematically given the context of Central Asia is that - according to Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier - third country internalisation of the projected norms - following a logic of appropriateness - depends on the extent to which the country identifies with the EU - as the formal embodiment of a European international community -, and the extent to which it perceives the projected rules and norms as appropriate in light of this collective identity (2004: 667). As highlighted in Chapter 7, identification with EU liberal norms tends to be relatively weak in the case of Central Asia, both at the societal and at the governmental level (see e.g. Warkotsch, 2006; 2009). This may shed some light on the observation that EU socialisation attempts in the normative-ideational sphere in Central Asia do not appear to yield the intended results in the sense that they did not have a noticeable impact on the democratisation process, which in Uzbekistan, among others, arguably has reached a dead end (see e.g. De Pedro, 2009; Emerson, 2009). A particular constraint in relation to socialisation of civil society, in turn, is that - as Adamson (2003) notes - the EU’s civil society policy in Central Asia pays overwhelming attention to secular NGOs of the western advocacy type, which is only one section of civil society in the region, and thus points to a narrow identification by the EU of indigenous civil society. Moreover, the EU often feels constrained in its civil society promotion actions in Central Asia, in the sense that it frequently has no choice but to cooperate with GONGOs and civil society organisations that engage in non-political services only.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ For some practical examples in the cases of BOMCA and CADAP, see website of EuropeAid, <http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/asia/regional-cooperation-central-asia/border-management-fight-against-drugs/index_en.htm>.

²⁹⁷ See e.g. lecture by Daniel Stevens at SOAS in London on 21 January 2010, op.cit.

Despite all odds, there are instances of successful social learning processes of officials and civil servants, in particular in Kazakhstan. Nourzhanov (2010), for instance, finds evidence of some “behavioural adaptation” to EU democratic norms among the Kazakh power elite, who have engaged with various socialising agencies “frequently, willingly, and productively”. According to Nourzhanov (2010), this is mainly because of the sufficient degree of “demobilisation” in Kazakhstan, which allows state-elites both the leverage and the room to manoeuvre the domestication of international standards. This is in line with Freyburg’s (2010) observation that EU attempts at socialisation are more likely to have impact if the officials in question have been involved in transnational exchanges, such as an education stay in a western democracy or regular use of western media (cf. social and communication linkage). Moreover, as noted in Chapter 3, one type of transgovernmental cooperation that appears particularly suited for socialising officials from authoritarian states into democratic modes of governance is Twinning. As noted, Twinning an EU assistance instrument that establishes transbureaucratic cooperation between a sub-unit of public administration in an EU member state and the equivalent institution in a partner country (see Freyburg, 2009, 2010). As Freyburg (2009) clarifies, the aim of Twinning is to offer the administrative expertise and (technical) know-how of European practitioners to third state public administrations. In practice, this implies attempting to trigger attitudinal change in the administrative culture of the partner countries by building up intensive working relations through which third country practitioners are exposed to key democratic rules and decision-making practices inherent to European bureaucracies, including public participation transparency and accountability. Although there has so far been only one EU Twinning project in Central Asia - due to legal restrictions in the EC assistance instrument used in the region-, it is worth noting that the social learning process underlying this project, i.e. the Twinning of the Ombudsman Office of Kazakhstan with its counterpart offices in Spain and Greece, was particularly effective, reaching virtually all the intended results.²⁹⁸

As a final aspect in exploring TNPO₂₋₃, the remainder of this subsection considers the kinds of overlap occurring at the macro-institutional level. As highlighted in Chapter 6, the EU does not only engage in bilateral and regional dialogue with the Central Asian states, but also in multi- and plurilateral dialogue, including at the WTO, the OSCE and the CoE, where the EU attempts - and quite often succeeds - to gain a central position in order to establish forms of global or regional governance favourable to its values and modes of operation. The EU’s ability to use the WTO as an instrument to spread its regulatory system is perhaps most

²⁹⁸ Author’s interviews with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

concretely exemplified in the case of the WTO accession process. As outlined in section 6.2, as a member of the working party set up for guiding the accession process of Kazakhstan, the EU has considerable leverage over the country, which as a requirement for accession has no choice but to alter parts of its domestic legal and economic institutional frameworks in accordance with EU demands raised in the pre-accession talks.²⁹⁹

As highlighted above, even in the OSCE and the CoE, where the EU itself is not a member of the organisation, but is represented by all or nearly all its member states, it attempts to use the institution as a multilateral dialogue venue for diffusing its values and norms in Central Asian countries.³⁰⁰ At the OSCE, for instance, one way in which the EU attempts to do so is by conferring prestige or shame upon the Central Asian member countries of the organisations in response to their norm compliant or norm violating behaviour. Indeed, through EU declarations at the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna, made by the rotating EU Presidency, the EU frequently resorts to ‘symbolic sanctioning’ through public condemnation of OSCE norm violating behaviour of Central Asian member countries. Examples include EU condemnation of unfair elections, such as the parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan in 2007 (Council, 2007h) and in Tajikistan in 2010 (Council, 2010e), and the presidential elections in Uzbekistan in 2007 (Council, 2007g), flagrant human rights violations, such as the prosecution of human rights defenders (Council, 2009d) and restrictions on media freedom (Council, 2007i; Council, 200f) and internet usage (Council, 2009e)³⁰¹. In turn, examples of public praise declared by the EU at the OSCE include positive comments on Kazakhstan’s state programme ‘Path to Europe’ (Council, 2008f) and on the abolition of the death penalty in Uzbekistan (Council, 2008h). The impact of such declaratory diplomacy on the Central Asian governments is on the whole relatively minor, but it nevertheless has a substantial symbolic effect on the regimes, not least since most Central Asia governments are eager to enhance their international legitimacy. It is worth noting that the EU also resorts to such praise and symbolic sanctioning of the Central Asian regimes through its own institutional venues, namely through ‘Presidency Declarations’ and CFSP ‘Common Positions’. Examples include the Declaration by the Presidency condemning the unfair court case of Mr Iskandarov in Tajikistan (Council, 2006d) and the Declaration by the Presidency condemning the unfair presidential elections in Tajikistan in November 2006 (Council, 2006e). As a final point, it is important to highlight that, in its bilateral cooperation with and assistance to the Central Asian

²⁹⁹ Here one could even argue that this is an instance of TNPO1-2-3, as the EU’s leverage at the WTO obviously draws on its extensive trade power.

³⁰⁰ Interestingly, by the same token, Russia and China employ the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation as an instrument to diffuse authoritarian norms among the Central Asian member states of the organisation. For an interesting account, see Ambrosio (2008).

³⁰¹ Additional examples are included in the reference list of the primary sources in the bibliography.

states, the EU often links the projected rules and norms with the corresponding or overarching international ones, such as those from the OSCE and the UN. It does this, *inter alia*, in its environmental assistance projects in the region, where the EU helps the countries to comply with the Kyoto Protocol and the Aarhus Convention, among other things. Interestingly, as some scholars have observed in the ENP region, this ‘linking’ to other international standards and norms increases the legitimacy of the projected rules and norms, and has proved to contribute to the likelihood of adaptation (Freyburg *et al.*, 2009; Schimmelfennig & Sedelmeier, 2004: 668).

8.4. TNPO_{1(material)}-2(institutional)-3(ideational)

This section explores the instances of overlap that occur between all three TNPO structures. Although this final type of TNPO overlap may also apply to the macro-institutional level of TNPO₂ rather than to the micro-institutional level, this section only focuses on instances of overlap applying to the micro-institutional level, and thus only outlines overlap between TNPO₁, TNPO_{2micro} and TNPO₃. In the most basic - and most comprehensive - respect, TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ captures the extent to which EU cooperation agreements with the Central Asian states - i.e. the PCAs and TCA - establish institutionalised relationships and offer options for the provision of technical and financial assistance, which in turn serve to diffuse norms and values and/or to export parts of the *acquis* into the legal orders of the partner countries. In the same context, it also captures how these EU agreements offer options for the formalised incorporation of conditionality, which also serve to diffuse norms and values and/or to export parts of the *acquis* into the legal orders of the partner countries. Conditionality is incorporated in the EU’s relations with Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan through the essential elements clause in the respective PCAs with the four countries. The clause stipulates that respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law are essential elements of the cooperation agreement, as both an objective and a condition of the institutionalised relationship. In case of violation of the essential elements, the legal terms of the PCAs permit the EU to take appropriate measures, such as suspension or termination of the agreement. As mentioned above, in 2005, the EU decided to impose a series of sanctions on the Uzbek regime following the country’s heavy-handed response to the peaceful protests in Andijan in May 2005, which the EU considered as a serious violation of the country’s commitment to human rights. The sanctions included an arms embargo, a partial suspension of the PCA, and a EU visa ban for a number of senior diplomats and officials. On the one hand, the sanctions

were effective in the sense that they had a strong symbolic impact in the sense that the regime, which does not like to be a pariah, felt targeted and isolated. However, on the other hand, this sentiment did not trigger substantial compliance with the EU requirements and conditions set for lifting the sanctions. Apart from making a few concessions, such as the release of a few political prisoners, the Uzbek regime refused to give in to EU demands. In other words, for Uzbekistan, the costs of compliance, i.e. losing grip on the domestic power base, outweighed the benefits, i.e. lifting of the sanctions. The EU, in its turn, while long divided over the need to keep the sanctions in place, gradually gave in to pressure from Germany - concerned with the possible negative impact on the fate of its military base in Uzbekistan - to lift all the sanctions (Council, 2008b) despite any considerable improvement in the domestic human rights situation in Uzbekistan (see e.g. Bossuyt, 2010). This seems to join up with the observation by several authors that, despite the essential elements clause, a consistent use of political conditionality in the EU's external relations appears to be overshadowed by security and stability concerns (Youngs, 2004; Crawford, 2005; Warkotsch, 2006). Indeed, apart from the pressure to keep the German military base, the EU also needed Uzbekistan in view of the planned implementation of the EU Strategy, which simply could not work without participation of Uzbekistan, which holds a central position within the region (see above). Moreover, the EU Strategy in fact strongly reflects the EU's conclusion that more positive EU engagement is required with the region's authoritarian regimes, not least with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, if the intended strategic, economic and values-based goals of the Strategy are to be achieved. Hence, the eventual decision by the Council to lift the sanctions imposed on Uzbekistan despite the absence of noticeable improvement should also be seen in the context of an increasing EU preference for 'constructive engagement' with the region, as the German Presidency of the EU termed it at the time.³⁰²

On the whole, it can be observed in Central Asia that conditionality - as a distinct EU policy tool - is not efficient to promote liberal norms in the region. Indeed, as evidenced in the case of Uzbekistan, even in the face of strong punitive measures in response to norm violation, the authoritarian regimes in Central Asia are too concerned with safeguarding their own survival for agreeing with democratic reforms, which they perceive as too great a risk, as they would erode their domestic power base. However, this finding does not undo the observation that the EU is still able to promote democracy in the Central Asian republics. Indeed, as mentioned in Chapter 3, to compensate for the limits and failures of the EU's traditional democracy promotion policy, the EU increasingly resorts to a more indirect way of transferring democratic principles in its external relations, i.e. through transgovernmental

³⁰² Author's interview at the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin on 30 October 2007.

cooperation at the sectoral level. This alternative, more indirect model of democratisation, termed ‘democratic governance promotion’ (see e.g. Freyburg *et al.*, 2009), constitutes a distinct type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃. Here the overlap is based on the assumption that the “intensifying web of association relations between the EU and the Central Asian countries introduces a new form of democracy promotion through sectoral cooperation” (cf. Chapter 3). As already mentioned, the EU uses Twinning projects not only to export parts of the *acquis*, and thus to approximate domestic legal and administrative standards to those of the EU, but also to expose third country officials to democratic modes of governance. This indirect use of Twinning for democratisation purposes should be seen within a wider EU approach aimed at promoting democracy in a more indirect fashion, notably through transgovernmental, technical cooperation at the sectoral level, or as Freyburg *et al.* put it, “through the ‘back-door’ of joint problem-solving” (2009: 917). As such, democratic governance promotion differs from traditional democracy promotion in that it is targeted at the level of sectoral, bureaucratic policy-making rather than at the level of the general polity and political institutions, including elections, parties and parliament (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 18). This subtle diffusion of democratic norms of governance, common to administrative policy-making practices in western liberal democracies, can also be observed in the case of Central Asia, where an increasing number of EC projects implemented at the bureaucratic/technocratic/civil servant level attempt to familiarise the participants to such European administrative policy-making practices as horizontal and vertical accountability, transparency and stakeholder and general participation.³⁰³ The underlying assumption is that democratisation of sectoral governance - as stimulated indirectly through transgovernmental sectoral cooperation - may spill over into the country’s general polity “by inculcating democratic values, norms and habits on societal and bureaucratic actors and creating a demand for far-reaching democratisation of the entire political system” (Schimmelfennig, 2009: 19). However, the extent to which this spill-over effectively takes place in the Central Asian countries is difficult to assess and beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Within the literature, EU democratic governance promotion falls within the emergent strand of EU external governance, where it tends to be used alongside the notion of ‘network governance’, which constitutes a another type of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃. In concrete terms, it captures the extent to which the EU manages to export material *acquis* rules through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral level. The network mode of governance differs significantly from policy transfer through conditionality, although both modes are used to approximate the

³⁰³ Author’s interview with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008.

Central Asian countries' legal and administrative standards to those of the EU. Whereas 'governance by conditionality' is hierarchical in the sense that it works through a vertical process of command, where the EU transfers predetermined, non-negotiable rules, 'network governance' allows for the extension of norms and rules in a process-oriented, horizontal, voluntaristic and inclusionary manner (Lavenex, 2008: 941-3). Moreover, as the actors involved are experts and technocrats, who are not guided by their country's national interests, policy transfer through network governance resorts to a de-politicisation of cooperation. This point largely corresponds with Magen's observation that in promoting domestic reform that might be politically sensitive, the EU attempts to avoid or lower suspicion among the governing elites by using depoliticised, technocratic phrasing, and in particular the legalistic language of the *acquis* (Magen, 2007: 390-1). In short, the EU increasingly couches politically sensitive reforms in 'low politics' terms. In the case of Central Asia, instances of network governance can be found in the policy areas of transport, energy and environment. A case in point is the policy framework of TRACECA and INOGATE (see above), which offers the 'ideal' setting for such horizontal extension of EU regulatory norms in the areas of transport and energy infrastructure through the subtle creation of 'joint regulatory structures' through network governance (European Commission, 2008a: 170-190). INOGATE, for instance, is specifically targeted at harmonisation of the partner countries' legal and technical standards with those of the EU, the integration of energy systems, and the modernisation of existing infrastructure or development of new infrastructure in accordance with EU safety standards. However, similar to the situation in ENP countries (cf. Lavenex & Wichmann, 2009), a major constraint for EU attempts at network governance in Central Asia is the lack of mutual trust between the stakeholders and the EU partners, as well as institutional incompatibilities, to the extent that in practice there is no real co-owned cooperation between the EU side and the Central Asian partner countries involved.³⁰⁴ In turn, this points to an issue that was raised earlier, i.e. the so-called implementation gap observed with respect to EU-inspired legislation. Indeed, in many cases where a EU rule is adopted and incorporated into domestic legislation, this is not accompanied by actual implementation of the rule (cf. above).

To conclude, it is useful to consider a case of overlap between TNPO₁, TNPO₂ and TNPO₃ that occurs entirely via the transnational channel and that is even more indirect than in the cases of domestic empowerment through material reinforcement mentioned above, in that the agency does not lie at the level of the EU, but at that of European companies. As introduced in Chapter 3, it concerns a type of overlap that perceives FDI from European

³⁰⁴ Author's interviews with the project manager of trade and SMEs projects at the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan in Astana on 28 May 2008 and at the Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to Kyrgyzstan, Projects Section, in Bishkek on 8 May 2008.

businesses in third countries, *in casu* in Central Asia, as a form of people-to-people contacts through which EU norms and best practices are promoted. In other words, this final type of TNPO₁₋₃ encompasses the extent to which FDI from European companies allows for ‘transnational socialisation’ (see TNPO toolbox in Figure 1, p.51) of Central Asian work force into EU labour and social rights as well as into the European business environment and technological excellence. That is, through FDI from European enterprises, local labour force are exposed to European working conditions as well as to EU business practices, including participation in decision-making, accountability and transparency. As such, the overlap rests on the assumption that the presence of European firms in the Central Asian countries produces spill-over effects to improve the socio-economic climate from the bottom-up, and thus expand EU influence through the indirect export by European companies of the EU’s technical excellence and its socio-economic model (see e.g. Denison, 2009; Peyrouse, 2009a). While it is not straightforward to assess the actual spill-over effect of these European FDI activities onto the Central Asian socio-economic environment, it is true that many European firms³⁰⁵ active on the Central Asian markets work with local labour force, offering them European-style in-house training, treating them in accordance with European social and labour rights, and familiarising them with EU corporate life.³⁰⁶ As highlighted in Chapter 3, this type of TNPO₁₋₃ is particularly relevant as a complementary - or even alternative - mechanism of European norm diffusion in such ‘difficult’ environments as Central Asia, where there is limited impact not only of traditional top-down mechanisms for the diffusion of liberal norms, including political conditionality, but also of liberal norm dissemination from the bottom-up, i.e. through direct civil society assistance (see above). How then is this type of TNPO₁₋₃ exactly manifested? To begin with, in working with local labour force in their Central Asia-based plants, many European companies share their advanced knowhow and technical excellence and efficiency (which compose in fact their key comparative advantage vis-à-vis local companies and companies from Russia and China, the main European commercial competitors in Central Asia). In addition, the European investors export their preoccupation with social capital.³⁰⁷ As clarified by Peyrouse, this preoccupation reflects the European corporate philosophical credo, associated with the European quality of life, that “the greatest wealth of a country or a company stems from its development of human potential, not only its profit-making ability” (2009a: 13). Denison specifies the content and implications of

³⁰⁵ For a (non-exhaustive) overview of European companies active in the region, see Bossuyt (2009).

³⁰⁶ This insight is based on the findings of a research project on Flemish corporate presence and activities in Central Asia, conducted by the author for the Flemish Regional Government. For more details, see Bossuyt (2009).

³⁰⁷ It would be naive to assume that this applies to all the European companies that work with local labour force in Central Asia.

the EU preoccupation with social capital, indicating that “[European] companies build into their commercial offers the norms and tools of long-term political and social development, through comprehensive packages of targeted training, education and welfare provision with clear linkages and impact beyond the [business] sector” (2009: 10-11). Denison expounds on the long-term, reformist effects of the export of these EU best practices for the domestic or local socio-economic climate in the Central Asian countries, and suggests that the companies’ contribution might even transcend the development of a more efficient local labour force, planting the seeds of a middle-class “likely to engender broader social progress” (*ibid.*).

8.5. Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to outline the extent to which the EU derives power over Central Asia from the interaction between the three TNPO structures. Again, the examination of EU impact yielded a mixed picture. To start with, as far as deliberate export of EU norms and values to the region is concerned, the outline demonstrated that this is channelled either through the provision of material incentives (overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃), such as financial assistance and enhanced market access, or through the institutionalised cooperation framework established with the Central Asian countries (overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃). However, in most of these instances of overlap, only limited evidence was found of strong impact of the EU in terms of behavioural change or adaption on the Central Asian side. Indeed, whether through the provision of material incentives or via the use of socialisation, deliberate diffusion of EU norms and rules appears to achieve only limited results.

However, the chapter found more successful processes of Europeanisation in Central Asia among those cases of overlap that are based on domestically-driven mechanisms, i.e. that occur independently of EU deliberate action. With respect to the overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, this concerns in particular those instances of impact captured by the market and the competition modes of governance: cases where the EU’s impact on third countries derives from the ‘presence’ of its internal market rather than from EU conscious actions. In these instances, Central Asian actors adopt EU rules or norms because ignoring or violating them would entail net costs (cf. negative externality).

In turn, the outline of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ pointed to the limits of the use of conditionality in the Central Asia to export EU norms and rules, whilst revealing the advantages of more indirect ways of transferring liberal norms as well as material *acquis* rules. In particular, it demonstrated that the promotion of norms and principles in Central Asia works better through

transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral, bureaucratic/technocratic level than through direct political leverage at the intergovernmental level based, *inter alia*, on conditionality.

In conclusion, it is important to note that it is not always straightforward to trace distinct patterns of overlap between the TNPO structures, as it may be difficult to detect the exact boundaries of the overlap. For instance, it is often hard to distinguish TNPO₂₋₃ from TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ and vice versa. By the same token, it is very difficult to observe TNPO_{1-2micro}, as the overlap between those two structures is nearly always bound to interact with TNPO₃. Given the apparent difficulties to trace the overlap between the three TNPO structures, the results of the empirical exploration of TNPO overlap presented above should therefore be regarded as tentative rather than definitive, and as indicative rather than exhaustive.

8.6. Conclusion

As the first step in the empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis, **Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8** sought to examine the extent to which the EU wields TNPO over Central Asia, in particular for the period 2001-2007. In concrete terms, these four chapters aimed to explore to what extent the EU's power over the Central Asian republics in 2001-2007 effectively derived from the Union's control over a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures and the interaction between them. In doing so, the chapters drew extensively on the TNPO toolbox established in Chapter 3 in order to trace and examine intergovernmental and transnational mechanisms of EU impact across the three structures.

Chapter 5 presented the empirical examination of the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia. The chapter found that the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia derives in particular from its position in the region as a leader in trade and investment, its considerable provision of development and financial aid to the five states and its (geo)strategic and security-related capabilities *vis-à-vis* the region. However, despite finding sufficient evidence of significant control over the material structure, the chapter also pointed to a number of 'obstacles' and 'limits' encountered by the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia. This applies particularly to the EU's aid delivery to the region. Indeed, despite a number of notable successes of the EU's assistance in 2002-2006, including in the area of regulatory reform in the administrative and legal spheres, the successes were offset by a number of setbacks and several deficiencies. In particular, limited institutional capacity and lack of political will on the side of the Central Asian governments very often hampered the impact of the assistance in the longer run,

including the actual implementation of the initiated reforms. Moreover, the assistance had its own shortcomings, especially in terms of the aid responsiveness and flexibility of TACIS, the main instrument. In turn, with respect to the EU's geostrategic influence in the region, while the chapter demonstrated that the EU is exercising considerable (geo)strategic power on the Central Asian chessboard, the rules of the game appear to be conditioned by the Central Asian states themselves. This is clearly reflected in the pragmatism with which the regimes pursue their 'multi-vector foreign policy', which has proved to be a double-edged sword for the attempts of the EU - *and* of other external powers - to expand its leverage over the countries of Central Asia.

Chapter 6, in turn, covered the EU's TNPO₂ over the Central Asian states, highlighting the extent to which institutional factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. The chapter showed that the EU derives a significant amount of leverage from institutional factors, both at the macro-level of international relations (TNPO_{2macro}) and at the more case-specific institutional micro-level of EU bilateral or bi-regional contractual relations (TNPO_{2micro}) with the Central Asian countries. With respect to TNPO_{2micro}, the chapter demonstrated that the EU's bilateral and regional relations with the countries have grown to be considerably institutionalised. This applies both in terms of formal contractual (including treaty-based) formats of institutionalisation and in terms of less formal and less integrated (including *ad-hoc*) formats of institutionalisation, which mostly involve the bureaucratic/technocratic level or societal level rather than the high political level. The level of institutionalisation, however, varies across the five countries, depending mostly on the legal basis of the cooperation. As such, relations with Kazakhstan appear to be institutionalised most densely, followed by the EU's cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Bilateral ties with Turkmenistan, in turn, are rather moderately institutionalised. In addition, the chapter indicated that the EU's TNPO over Central Asia also comprises institutionalised dialogue and cooperation through a web of - sometimes overlapping - international organisations and institutions, most notably the WTO, the EBRD, the OSCE and the CoE. The chapter highlighted the extent to which the EU manages to draw influence over the Central Asian countries through its influential representation in these international bodies. Moreover, it found that the degree of institutionalisation also differs at the macro-level. As such, the EU wields by far the largest amount of TNPO_{2macro} over Kazakhstan. Next is Kyrgyzstan, followed by Tajikistan. The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Uzbekistan, in turn, is moderate, but is denser than the Union's macro-institutional ties with Turkmenistan, where its TNPO_{2macro} is rather limited. In this regard, it is important to highlight the limits encountered by the EU's TNPO_{2macro} over the countries,

which include factors that are either endogenous or exogenous to the Central Asian states. A significant factor is the strong competition that the EU faces in the region from China and Russia, which have their own share of TNPO_{2macro} over the Central Asian republics, except for Turkmenistan, which does not participate in the regional organisations led by these two ‘rival’ powers. Another aspect that curtails the EU’s macro-institutional power, and in particular in the case of the OSCE, is the Central Asian regimes’ suspicion of and aversion to external meddling in their ‘domestic affairs’, especially in areas that could directly affect the societal status quo in their countries.

Subsequently, **Chapter 7** presented an empirical exploration of the EU’s TNPO₃ over Central Asia, highlighting to what extent ideational factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU’s TNPO. Overall, the findings revealed a rather mixed picture of the EU’s TNPO₃. On the one hand, the chapter did not find evidence of strong ideational attraction to the EU’s norms, values and principles related to liberal democracy, including human rights, rule of law and good governance. The results suggested that such ideational factors do not constitute an important determinant of the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia. In understanding this ‘limit’ to the EU’s power over the region, the chapter again pointed to a number of ‘countervailing’ factors, including the virtually inherent authoritarian nature of Central Asian politics, and related to this - the attraction to alternative models of development, most notably the Russian model, and the traditional fabric of Central Asian society. To some extent, however, Kazakhstan appeared to be an exception, offering better prospects for European-style development and democratisation. On the other hand, the chapter found that the EU enjoys a relatively positive reputation as a more neutral actor in Central Asia, which gives it more credit compared to other external actors.

Chapter 8 outlined the extent to which the EU derives power over Central Asia from the interaction between the three TNPO structures. Again, the examination of EU impact yielded a mixed picture. To start with, as far as respect to deliberate export of EU norms and values to the region is concerned, the outline demonstrated that this is channelled either through the provision of material incentives (overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃), such as financial assistance and enhanced market access, or through the institutionalised cooperation framework established with the Central Asian countries (overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃). However, in most of these instances of overlap, only limited evidence was found of strong impact of the EU in terms of behavioural change or adaption on the Central Asian side. This suggested that - whether through the provision of material incentives or via the use of socialisation - deliberate diffusion of EU norms and rules appears to achieve only limited results. However, the chapter found more successful processes of Europeanisation in Central

Asia among those cases of overlap that are based on domestically-driven mechanisms, i.e. that occur independently of EU deliberate action. With respect to the overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, this concerns in particular those instances of impact captured by the market and the competition modes of governance: cases where the EU's impact on third countries derives from the 'presence' of its internal market rather than from EU conscious actions. In these instances, Central Asian actors adopt EU rules or norms because ignoring or violating them would entail net costs (cf. negative externality). In turn, an examination of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ pointed to the limits of the use of conditionality in the Central Asia to export EU norms and rules, whilst revealing the advantages of more indirect ways of transferring liberal norms as well as material *acquis* rules. In particular, it demonstrated that the promotion of norms and principles in Central Asia works better through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral, bureaucratic/technocratic level than through direct political leverage at the intergovernmental level based, *inter alia*, on conditionality.

With regard to the thesis' aim to offer a more holistic understanding of the EU's power over the Central Asian republics, it is clear that the TNPO framework has enabled us to trace and explore the various aspects of EU influence over the Central Asian states. Put differently, the TNPO model (see Figure 2, p.89) has allowed us to study the EU's power in Central Asia through an alternative lens, identifying, among other things, instances of EU power that may appear less obvious when examined through the predominant models used to study the EU's relations with Central Asia. Moreover, the TNPO toolbox (see Figure 1, p.51) provided a very helpful analytical reference point to trace and explore the various mechanisms of EU impact on the Central Asian countries. In particular, the quadruple distinction between (i) logic of appropriateness and logic of consequences, (ii) intergovernmental and transnational, (iii) EU-driven and domestically-driven, and (iv) agent-based and purely structural, mechanisms of EU impact, allowed us to approach the empirical case in a holistic manner, providing a structurally integrative account of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. Importantly, it also allowed us to trace considerable differences of the EU's TNPO across the five Central Asian states. In particular, the difference appears to lie in the diverging combination between the five countries of the material, institutional and ideational structures that the EU controls, with the EU's control over particular structures (and particular overlap) being weaker in some Central Asian countries compared to other Central Asian countries.

At the same time, however, the empirical study pointed to the need to integrate an additional aspect into the TNPO analysis, i.e. countervailing factors. Indeed, the empirical examination confirmed the need, as anticipated in Chapter 4, to take 'contextual' factors into account, as it revealed the existence and impact of countervailing forces that mediate the EU's

TNPO over the Central Asian countries. Indeed, although we found abundant evidence of EU TNPO, we came to the conclusion that the EU's TNPO is hampered - possibly weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of internal and external countervailing forces, such as the authoritarian nature of the Central Asian regimes and their suspicion of and aversion to external meddling in their 'domestic affairs', especially in areas that could directly affect the societal status quo in their countries.

Chapter 9 – Exercise and reinforcement of the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia

Europa ist ein gefragter Modernisierungspartner in Zentralasien.

[Europe is a popular modernisation partner in Central Asia.]

Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia, in an interview with the German monthly e-magazine *Zentralasien-analysen* (July 2010, issue 31-32)

9.1. Introduction

Now that we have examined the extent to which the EU derives power over Central Asia from its control over the three TNPO structures and the interaction between them, we can move on to implement the two remaining two steps of our empirical exploration of the thesis’s working hypothesis, which are each covered in a separate section in the present chapter. As such, the first part of the chapter, which covers Step 2 of the empirical exploration, considers the EU’s launch of a new partnership with Central Asia, hypothesised in the thesis as a specific outcome of the exercise of EU TNPO over the Central Asian republics, which testifies to the EU’s ability to obtain a favourable outcome at the relational level of its relations with the EU region (see Figure 3, p.93). In doing so, the first part of chapter will outline the EU’s Strategy that underlies this new partnership with Central Asia, thereby discussing the relevance of the Strategy in relation to the EU’s TNPO accumulation vis-à-vis the region. The second part of the chapter, in turn, which covers Step 3 of the empirical exploration, seeks to examine whether and to what the extent the implementation of the partnership initiative enhances the EU’s TNPO over Central Asia, allowing the EU to gain more influence at the structural level of its relations with the region (see Figure 3, p.93), *inter alia* by shaping further the terms of cooperation in such fields as economic and investment relations, transport, energy, human rights and democratisation, the environment and education.

However, it is important to note that these two remaining parts of the empirical exploration will not be as in-depth and extensive as the empirical analysis conducted under Step 1. Instead, they offer a more résumé-like and concise empirical examination, and hence are less analytically conclusive compared to the empirical exploration offered in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, which constitute the more substantial part of the thesis’ empirical work.

9.2. Translation of TNPO into a concrete outcome: the EU's partnership with Central Asia

9.2.1. Introduction

This section presents the second step in our empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis. In particular, it considers the EU's launch of a new partnership with Central Asia, hypothesised in the thesis as a specific outcome of the exercise of EU TNPO over the Central Asian republics, which testifies to the EU's ability to obtain a favourable outcome at the relational level of its relations with the EU region (see Figure 6). To this end, the section offers a structured outline of the EU's Strategy that underlies the new partnership with Central Asia, discussing the relevance of the Strategy in relation to the EU's TNPO accumulation vis-à-vis the region.

Figure 6: Step 2 of 3 of the thesis's empirical exploration



9.2.2. *The EU & Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership*³⁰⁸

Theorised in the thesis as a concrete outcome of the exercise of EU TNPO over the Central Asian republics (see Figure 6), the EU's launch of a new partnership with Central Asia in June 2007 testifies to Union's ability to obtain a favourable outcome based on its TNPO over the five countries, which we examined in Chapters 5-8. Established with the aim of strengthening bilateral and regional ties between the EU and the five Central Asian states, the partnership initiative is a non-binding, informal commitment made between the two sides to enhance their cooperation, in particular in areas of common concern. As such, the partnership

³⁰⁸ From hereafter 'EU Strategy'.

is an end in itself, a long-term objective, as is indicated in the EU Strategy³⁰⁹ (Council, 2007b). However, the partnership is in essence a process that was - for the most part - unilaterally initiated by the EU, with only a relatively minor level of consultation taking place with the five Central Asian partner countries ahead of the official launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007. Consultations took place, *inter alia*, during subsequent visits to the region by the EUSR, the rotating EU Presidency and the EU Troika, as well as during the EU Troika-Central Asia meeting in Astana in March 2007 (see above). The goal of these consultations was mainly to verify the identification in the draft strategy of the areas of common interest to both sides (see more below). It was only following the launch of the EU Strategy that the Central Asian side became more involved in the direction and steering of the new partnership, *inter alia* through the establishment of bilateral Priority Papers, which set out the ‘bilateral’ priority areas per country, as well as the appointment by each Central Asian partner government of a national coordinator, who is responsible for the implementation of the Strategy at country level. Moreover, the EU Strategy, which establishes the strategic basis and framework of the partnership, is a EU document, not a Central Asian document. This lack of ‘ownership’ ahead of the launch of partnership - and to a significant extent also following its launch - did not go unnoticed in the Central Asian capitals and is one of the reasons why the Kazakh government subsequently launched its ‘own’ strategic document for its bilateral relations with the EU, the so-called ‘Path to Europe’.³¹⁰

Yet, the relative lack of ownership did not really compromise the EU’s ability to rally the five states behind its ambitious partnership proposal. On the contrary, the fact that it managed to unilaterally push through this initiative suggests that the five countries were genuinely interested in enhancing cooperation with the EU and enter into an extensive partnership. More importantly, it also suggests an element of power asymmetry in the relations between the two sides in favour of the EU. This brings us back to the working hypothesis, and in particular, to the proposition that the launch of the partnership with Central Asia is a concrete outcome of the EU’s exercise of TNPO over the Central Asian republics. To explore the viability of this proposition, the remainder of this section will offer a structured outline of the EU’s Strategy, whilst discussing the relevance of the Strategy in relation to the EU’s exercise of TNPO vis-à-vis the region.

³⁰⁹ For the full text of the Strategy, see Council (2007b), “The EU and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership”, June 2007, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/librairie/PDF/EU_CtrlAsia_EN-RU.pdf>.

³¹⁰ Author’s interview at the Kazakh MFA in Astana on 26 May 2008. For the text of the ‘Path to Europe’ strategy, see <http://www.kazembassy.org.uk/path_to_europe_state_programme.html>.

9.2.2.1. The EU Strategy in general

In concrete terms, the EU Strategy provides an overall framework for strengthening EU relations with Central Asia, aiming in particular at the establishment of a long-term partnership with the region. In doing so, the strategy builds firmly on previous achievements in EU relations with the countries of Central Asia, in particular on the results obtained under the implementation of the EU's assistance programmes and the formal agreements concluded with the five partner countries. Moreover, in defining the EU's priorities for enhanced cooperation with Central Asia, the strategy spells out cooperation areas that are of common interest to the EU and the region. As such, the strategy remains faithful to the 'regional' focus of cooperation introduced under the EC's Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2002-2006 (see Chapter 5). This indicates that the EU continues to perceive Central Asia as a region in its own right, and therefore believes that the five countries would thus benefit from regional cooperation, which - as noted - is still at a premature stage, not only because of personal feuds between presidents vying for regional leadership, among other factors, but also because of the fact the countries themselves do not all equally share the EU's perception of Central Asia as a regional entity.³¹¹ At the same time, however, while maintaining an overall regional focus, the strategy emphasises that bilateral cooperation under the partnership will be tailored to the specific needs and requirements of each Central Asian republic. This shows that the strategy effectively acknowledges the 'faults' of the EU's past assistance to the region, which did not sufficiently account for the diverging levels of development between the five states (see Chapter 5). Building on the cooperation framework introduced under the EC's Central Asia Strategy Paper for 2002-2006, the strategy identifies a bilateral and a regional component of cooperation, with the latter component aimed predominantly at addressing common regional challenges and cross-boundary issues that specifically require a regional or plurilateral approach, such as water/river management and energy and transport infrastructure development, as well as border management and anti-drugs trafficking. The strategy therefore also prescribes the formal establishment of a bi-regional political dialogue forum, which in essence means the formalisation of the EU Troika-Central Asia dialogue format, which up until 2007 was an informal setting. This regional dialogue forum is also aimed at fostering confidence-building and mutual understanding between the five states in view of dealing with common problems at regional level. In this regard, the Strategy specifically states that the

³¹¹ Whether or not Central Asia should be approached as a region in its own right is in fact subject to a fierce debate among experts and analysts of the region. In this context, some observers contend that Central Asia should be approached rather as an inherent part of Eurasia, which, next to the five Central Asian states, encompasses the Caucasus and Afghanistan. See e.g. Collins (2009), De Cordier (2007), De Pedro (2009), Kimmage (2008), Norling & Swanström (2007), and Roy (2004).

“EU can offer experience in regional integration leading to political stability and prosperity” (Council, 2007b: 6).

9.2.2.2. Seven priority areas of cooperation

The EU Strategy identifies seven priority areas for enhanced cooperation with Central Asia, reflecting several common concerns and interests. These priority areas are (i) promotion of human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation, (ii) facilitation of education of Central Asia’s youth, (iii) promotion of economic development, trade and investment, (iv) enhancement of energy and transport links, (v) fostering of environmental sustainability and water management, (vi) border management, drugs and human trafficking, and (vii) development of intercultural dialogue.

The first priority area outlined in the EU Strategy is the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, good governance and democratisation (Council, 2007b: 12). It is worth noting that while listed as the first priority area for enhanced cooperation, it is doubtful whether the Central Asian regimes attribute the same level of importance to this area. As stated in the Strategy, the EU believes that “a stable political framework and a functioning economy depend on the rule of law, human rights, good governance and transparent, democratic political structures” (*ibid.*). To that end, the document announces that the EU will “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” (*ibid.*). A particular initiative that the EU proposes in this regard is the establishment of a regular bilateral human rights dialogue with each of the Central Asian states (*ibid.*), based on the format of the dialogue that was already in place with Uzbekistan. In addition, the Strategy states that the EU will financially support and steer a Rule of Law Initiative, and will cooperate with the OSCE, the CoE and the UN in the field of justice (*ibid.*).

The second priority area presented in the EU Strategy is the improvement of education in the region, which it describes as an “investment in the future” (Council, 2007b: 15). In explaining the relevance of the priority area, the Strategy states that “good education is essential for opening up [the youth’s] future opportunities” (*ibid.*). In order to “help adapt these countries’ education systems to the needs of the globalised world”, the EU will establish a European Education Initiative for Central Asia. This Initiative will focus on all levels of education. It will assist the improvement of primary school education, secondary school education, and vocational education and training, while enhancing higher education

cooperation, notably via academic and student exchanges under the new Erasmus Mundus facility and TEMPUS (*ibid*). In addition, the EU will support the creation of regional education centres and cooperate closely with the OSCE Academy in Bishkek (Council, 2007b: 16).

The promotion of economic development, trade and investment constitutes the third priority area outlined in the EU Strategy. In this area, the EU Strategy calls for the removal of trade barriers between the Central Asian republics, and announces that the EU will continue to support WTO accession for the four countries that are not yet WTO members (Council, 2007b: 16). The document also states that the EU will work towards improved access for Central Asian products to EU markets through the renewed EU Generalised System of Preferences. Moreover, the EU will foster the creation of a regulatory and institutional framework for an improved business and investment environment, in particular by developing public-private partnerships, and assist the countries' attempts at economic diversification. In order to "make better use of Central Asia's economic potential, not least through improved regional cooperation", the EU will promote the development and expansion of the regional infrastructure in the fields of transport, energy and trade, notably under INOGATE, as part of the Baku Initiative, and TRACECA, which will received funds from both DCI and ENPI (Council, 2007b: 17).

Related to this is the fourth priority area outlined in the EU Strategy, the enhancement of energy and transport links. The document states that "both the EU and Central Asia have a paramount interest in enhancing energy security as an important aspect of global security" and points to their "common interest in diversifying export routes, demand and supply structures and energy sources" (Council, 2007b: 18). In this context, the strategy notes that a "market-based approach linked to a transparent, stable and non-discriminatory regulatory framework guarantee the best prices and opportunities for all stakeholders" (Council, 2007b: 19). Therefore, the EU will, *inter alia*, conduct an enhanced regular energy dialogue with the Central Asian states, based on the Energy Charter and bilateral MoUs on Energy issues, and "lend them political support in developing a new energy transport corridor from the Caspian Sea via the Black Sea to the EU" (*ibid.*)

The fifth priority area outlined in the EU Strategy concerns environmental sustainability and water management. With respect to water, the document explains that the connection of the five countries through cross-boundary rivers, lakes and seas, a regional approach requires a regional approach for the protection of these resources. In particular the strategy points to the need for "an integrated water management policy ("upstream and downstream solidarity)" (Council, 2007b: 21). In addition to safeguarding of fair access to

water, the EU wants to provide help in the areas of forest management and vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters. The strategy announces that an EU-Central Asia dialogue on the environment, launched in Spring 2006, will provide the basis for joint cooperation efforts in the area (Council, 2007b: 22).

The sixth priority area presented in the EU Strategy is common threats and challenges. In addressing these, the strategy announces that the EU will give greater support to the countries' fight "against corruption, drug trade, human trafficking, illegal trade of weapons from and to Afghanistan and organised crime" (Council, 2007b: 26). In doing so, it will, *inter alia*, increase its support for the development of modern border management in Central Asia, which is essential for creating secure borders and hence for combating regional crime, including drug trade and extremism.

The seventh and final priority area is intercultural dialogue. According to the strategy, the "diversity of religions and centuries-old traditions of peace and tolerance constitute a valuable heritage in Central Asia" (Council, 2007b: 26). Building on this heritage, the EU intends to promote respect for freedom of religion and foster dialogue within civil society.

9.2.2.3. Relevance in relation to TNPO accumulation

In outlining the EU Strategy, it is important to discuss the relevance of the Strategy and proposed partnership in relation to the EU's accumulation of TNPO over Central Asia. To do so, this subsection will focus on what appears the key instrument for enhancing cooperation with Central Asia, 'constructive engagement'. Indeed, as a red line throughout the strategy, 'dialogue' appears essential to the overall approach underlying the EU's partnership initiative, which suggests that the EU intends to rely in particular on its TNPO₂ over Central Asia, i.e. its control over the institutional structure of its relations with Central Asia. In terms of TNPO₂_{micro}, for instance, the EU wants to introduce a regular Energy dialogue, a rule of law dialogue, a human rights dialogue (including a civil society forum) and an EU-Central Asia dialogue on environment, as well as formalise the existing EU Troika-Central Asia political dialogue. Moreover, on the ground, the EU's presence will be expanded through the establishment of a EC Delegation (now EU Delegation) in each of the five countries, as well as an increase in coordination between the Member State embassies and the EC Delegations (now EU Delegations). Clearly, these initiatives will provide important opportunities for the EU to strengthen its control over the micro-institutional structure in its relations with the five countries. In terms of TNPO₂_{macro}, in turn, the EU intends to extend cooperation with the

OSCE, the CoE and various UN bodies. In addition, the strategy clearly announces that the EU will seek engagement with such regional organisations as the CSTO, SCO and EurAsec in order to hold regular and *ad-hoc* dialogue. In short, the EU also seems eager to strengthen its control over the macro-institutional structure in its relations with the Central Asian countries.

The proposed ‘constructive engagement’ with Central Asia also appears to be relevant for the overlap between TNPO₂ and the other two TNPO structures. Particular opportunities for strengthening the EU’s management of the interaction appear to lie with the mechanisms of ‘socialisation’ and ‘social learning’ (TNPO₂₋₃), which the Strategy seems to attribute considerable importance to. For instance, the document explicitly states that the EU “can offer experience [to Central Asia] in regional integration leading to political stability and prosperity” (Council, 2007b: 6). Similarly, the Strategy highlights that “good governance, the rule of law, human rights and democratisation” are “areas where the EU is willing to share experience and expertise” (Council, 2007b). In addition, it notes that “lessons learnt from the political and economic transformation of Central and Eastern Europe can also be offered” (*ibid.*). Importantly, the strategy also foresees Twinning and seconding staff between EU and Central Asian administrations or companies, which it considers “an essential part of EU cooperation with Central Asia in order to introduce EU-wide best practices in connection with Community legislation.” (Council, 2007b: 10). It will be interesting to see whether and to what extent these socialisation- and social learning-based initiatives will allow for a more effective dissemination of EU norms, rules and standards.

9.2.3. Concluding remarks

To summarise, it is clear that the Strategy represents an ambitious EU project, signaling a clear intention to substantially upgrade relations with Central Asia. It seeks to do so across a specific number of areas, including human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation; education; economic development, trade and investment, energy and transport links; environmental sustainability and water management; border management, drugs and human trafficking; and intercultural dialogue. The consistent and sustainable implementation of the Strategy will be a key indicator for the EU’s and Central Asia’s political resolve to upgrade their relations. In this context, one particular challenge in implementing the strategy, however, is the unavoidable clash between the EU’s interest in enhanced engagement on security and energy issues and its goal of increased cooperation on human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation, areas that remain politically sensitive in Central Asia.

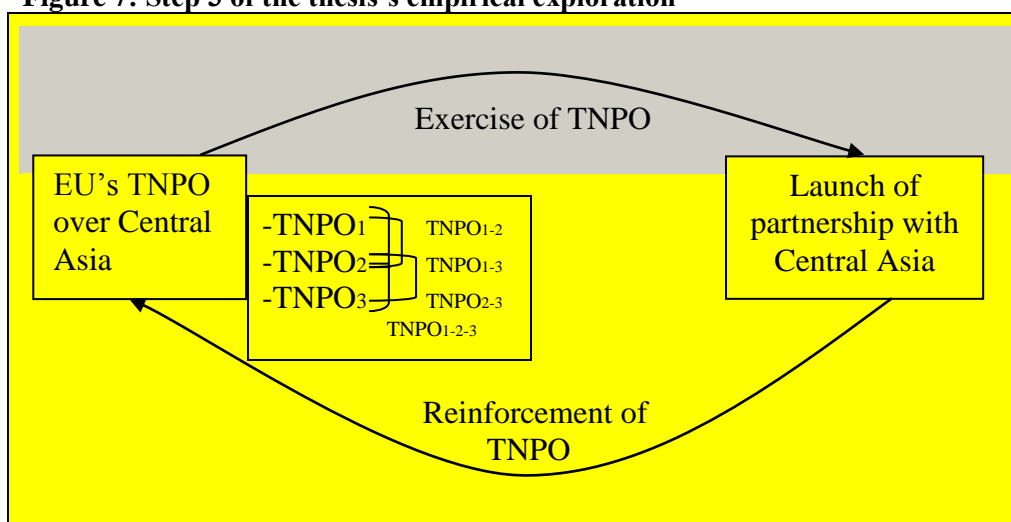
As regards the relevance of the Strategy and proposed partnership in relation to the EU's accumulation of TNPO over Central Asia, the section highlighted that the EU appears particularly keen to strengthen its TNPO₂ over Central Asia, i.e. its control over the institutional structure of its relations with Central Asia. This applies both to micro-institutional level and the macro-institutional level of its relations with the Central Asian countries. Moreover, it indicated that the strategy offers relevant opportunities for strengthening the EU's management of the interaction of TNPO₂ with the other two TNPO structures. In this respect, the Strategy appears to attribute considerable importance to an enhanced use of 'socialisation' and 'social learning' (TNPO₂₋₃), which may offer promising opportunities for a more effective dissemination in Central Asia of EU norms, rules and standards.

9.3. Reinforcement of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia

9.3.1. Introduction

This section covers the third and final step of the empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis. In concrete terms, it seeks to examine whether and to what the extent the implementation of the partnership initiative enhances the EU's TNPO over Central Asia, allowing the EU to gain more influence at the structural level of its relations with the region (see Figure 7), *inter alia*, by shaping further the terms of the cooperation in such fields as economic and investment relations, transport, energy, human rights and democratisation, environment and education.

Figure 7: Step 3 of the thesis's empirical exploration



However, since the EU Strategy was launched fairly recently, the thesis is faced with an empirical limitation in that at this early stage, notably only three years after the launch, the question of whether the EU Strategy reinforces the Union's leverage cannot yet be fully assessed. Therefore, the empirical exploration presented in this section should be viewed as a preliminary assessment rather than a fully conclusive examination. While we are being realistic about what the Strategy can achieve in a short time, we also seek to avoid assessing the impact purely in terms of the degree to which the Strategy is being implemented.

In order to explore whether the EU's TNPO over Central Asia has strengthened based on the implementation of the strategy, the section draws on official documents, including, the first and second evaluations of the implementation of the Strategy issued jointly by the Council and European Commission respectively one year and three years after the launch of the Strategy (Council of the European Union & European Commission, 2008; 2010), as well as independent assessments by scholars and observers (see e.g. Boonstra & Hale, 2010; De Pedro, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010; Melvin & Boonstra, 2008; Melvin, 2008d).

9.3.2. Exploration of the implementation process

As noted above, following the launch of the EU Strategy in June 2007, National Priority Papers were established bilaterally with each of the five Central Asian countries in order to identify the common priority areas for the cooperation. In addition, all five Central Asian states appointed a National Coordinator responsible for strategy implementation. In March 2008, the Slovenian Presidency of the EU convened in Brussels the first meeting between the EU Senior Officials Troika and the Central Asian National Coordinators for discussions on the implementation of the EU Strategy. Since then, the forum has become the institutionalised body for the joint EU–Central Asia follow-up on the implementation of the Strategy.

In terms of the budget made available for the implementation, the European Commission allocated EUR 750 million for the period 2007-2013 (European Commission, 2007a). These funds are for the projects and programmes implemented under the EC's Regional Strategy Paper for 2007-2013, which constitutes a more concrete embodiment of the EU Strategy, in particular with respect to the financial and technical assistance proposed under the Strategy (*ibid.*). In this regard, it is important to note that the EU Strategy is a joint initiative between the Commission and the Council. As such, the EU Strategy foresees increased coordination between the two institutions. This also means that apart from the

assistance provided under the EC's programmes for Central Asia, there is now also substantial assistance provided by the EU Member States, which allocate their own funding to this additional assistance. The National Priority Papers, for instance, include a list of planned EC assistance projects, followed by a list of EU assistance initiatives that will be implemented by EU Member States.³¹² The Member State activities thus complement the assistance offered by the EC, joining up neatly with the main proposals outlined in the Strategy and are focused mostly on education, rule of law, democratisation, border management and environment. In the area of rule of law, for instance, France and Germany have assumed responsibility to lead the implementation of the Rule of Law initiative introduced by the strategy.³¹³ Other Member States, in turn, have followed suit for other key initiatives proposed in the strategy. This also implies that the embassies of the Member States are now more involved in maintaining EU relations with the region. For instance, at the ambassadors level, a regional meeting of EU Heads of Mission now convenes annually in Central Asia. In 2008, this meeting was convened by the French Presidency of the EU at the French embassy in Tashkent. Moreover, the Council and the Commission are jointly responsible for regularly reviewing progress in implementing the Strategy. Hence their release of joint progress reports, which they submit bi-annually to the European Council. An additional source of funding for the implementation of the strategy comes from IFIs, most notably the EIB and the EBRD, which are called upon for the implementation of a number of specific assistance goals, including the development of large infrastructure projects (see Chapter 5).

As highlighted in section 9.2, dialogue and engagement appear to be the key instruments underpinning the Strategy, suggesting that the EU seeks to enhance its socialisation efforts in the region. In the past three years, the EU has indeed significantly upgraded its institutional links with the Central Asian countries across a wide range of areas. Apart from the annual regional political dialogue at Foreign Minister level and the existing dialogue under the framework of the PCAs, the EU now also holds regular dialogue under the 'European Education Initiative', the 'EU Rule of Law Initiative' and the Environment Initiative. Moreover, the EU now maintains a regular 'Human Rights Dialogue' with each of the Central Asian states, which includes a civil society forum. Discussions include issues related to media freedom, child protection, freedom of assembly and women's rights. In addition, there is also regular dialogue on energy issues, mostly in the framework of the Baku Initiative and the bilateral MoUs on Energy signed with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. These dialogue forums are not limited to the level of senior officials, but also involve the

³¹² It should be noted that these National Priority Papers are not publicly available and are hence not referenced.

³¹³ See Fact Sheet of 'European Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia', available at <http://eeas.europa.eu/central_asia/docs/factsheet_law_en.pdf>.

participation of civil servants. The ‘European rule of law initiative’, for instance, is designed to foster judicial reform by dialogue at a political as well as an expert level and long-term cooperation projects between Central Asia and European institutions.³¹⁴ The dialogue on energy between the Central Asian states and the EU involves both technical discussions at expert level and political consultations over the development of new pipeline routes and transportation networks to transport Kazakh and Turkmen energy resources to the EU market.

However, while the initiatives outlined above point to a considerable enhancement of relations, several of these initiatives have their deficiencies (see e.g. Melvin & Boonstra, 2008: 8-9; De Pedro, 2009; Hoffmann, 2010). With respect to the human rights dialogues, for instance, it remains unlikely that such ‘superficial’ discussions with ruling elites in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan can effectively increase EU influence in the area of democracy and human rights in the highly authoritarian countries. Indeed, despite the regular human rights dialogue, the regimes in these two countries have proved to excel at outwitting the EU on important issues such as the monitoring of human rights. This finding joins up with the challenge that the EU faces in the region in balancing its security and energy interests with its goals in the normative sphere, including democratisation and – perhaps not surprisingly - human rights (see e.g. Cooley, 2008: 1181). In addition, the implementation has so far focused predominantly on cooperation at the level of government officials and has not yet sufficiently allowed for an active involvement of civil society, national Parliaments, local authorities and other important stakeholders. Another final important shortcoming is that the implementation of the EU Strategy - despite the considerable increase in funding – still lacks the resources required to have a major tangible impact on the ground in Central Asia, commensurate with the ambitious goals set out in the strategy.

9.3.3. *Concluding remarks*

Three years on from the launch of the EU Strategy, it is clear that the EU has made significant progress in strengthening its ties with Central Asia. Importantly, the Central Asian countries have continued to show considerable interest in the EU’s partnership initiative, as reflected, *inter alia*, in their participation in all the initiatives proposed and implemented under the EU Strategy, including in key areas such as education, rule of law, water and environment. Moreover, all Central Asian states now engage with the EU in a structured Human Rights

³¹⁴ European Commission, EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia, 28 November 2008, at http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/central_asia/docs/factsheet_law_en.pdf, accessed on 12 October 2010.

Dialogue. Political dialogue, in general, has intensified to a considerable extent. In addition, the strategy implementation visibly benefits from increased involvement of the Council, as reflected, *inter alia*, in the considerable contribution of several EU Member States to the implementation of the strategy, as well as from enhanced coordination both between the Council and the Commission, and between the EU actors and the Central Asian stakeholders. To what extent these ‘enhancements’ effectively ‘reinforce’ the EU’s TNPO over the region, however, is more difficult to evaluate, not least since the strategy was launched only three years ago.

At the same time, however, the section observed that the implementation of the strategy is confronted with some significant shortcomings, which again pointed to the occurrence of countervailing factors, which impact negatively upon the empowering feedback effect of the concrete outcome obtained - i.e. the launch of the partnership with Central Asia -, and as such constrain the potential subsequent reinforcement of the EU’s TNPO over the region. The shortcomings include, *inter alia*, the limits of the bilateral human rights dialogues as a forum for genuine socialisation of authoritarian ruling elites into more respect for human rights, and the challenge that the EU faces in the energy-rich and geo-strategically important region in balancing its security and energy interests with its goals in the normative sphere, including democratisation and - perhaps not surprisingly - human rights. In addition, the implementation has so far focused mostly on cooperation at the level of government officials and has not yet sufficiently allowed for an active involvement of civil society, national Parliaments, local authorities and other important stakeholders. Another important shortcoming is that the implementation of the EU Strategy - despite the considerable increase in funding - still lacks the resources required to have a major tangible impact on the ground in Central Asia, commensurate with the ambitious goals set out in the strategy.

CONCLUSION

As a way of concluding the thesis, this last chapter draws some general conclusions and final considerations. In doing so, it outlines the principal theoretical insights and empirical findings. It concludes with a brief consideration of the main strengths and shortcomings of the thesis, followed by a presentation of avenues for future research.

Theoretical insights

The thesis challenged the consensual scholarly expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia by arguing in favour of using a structurally integrative approach to the study of the EU's influence over the region. The thesis claimed that the predominant theoretical perspectives are not sufficient to grasp the full extent to which the EU's influence over the Central Asian states constitutes - like in many other cases of the EU's relations with third countries - a complex and multi-faceted process that encompasses structural dimensions. In particular, it contended that the prevailing approaches are too narrowly focused on (i) neorealist concepts of power, such as the possession of economic and military capabilities or on (ii) concepts and issues initially developed to study the EU's influence in Central and Eastern Europe (a region that apart from its communist past bears only remote resemblances with Central Asia) and/or (iii) on the normative aspects of the EU's involvement in Central Asia, in particular the promotion of democracy and human rights. By focusing predominantly on narrow, micro-level factors, those theoretical perspectives risk overlooking less obvious aspects of the EU's power, including structural aspects, and thus underestimating the EU's leverage in the region.

Therefore, the thesis explored an alternative working hypothesis, assuming that the EU's power is less clearly delineated and observable (and measurable) than predominant scholarly discussions of the EU's engagement with the region allow. In particular, the thesis claimed that a more structurally integrative and holistic approach is needed to understand the EU's power in the region. However, rather than rejecting the theoretical perspectives on which the existing studies draw, the thesis appreciated their strengths and distilled elements that it found wanting when it comes to understanding the EU's power over Central Asia. Accordingly, whilst disapproving of an overly parsimonious approach and maintaining that on their own the predominant approaches have insufficient explanatory value in relation to the object of inquiry, the thesis incorporated aspects of the respective perspectives in its attempt to develop a more structurally integrative explanatory model.

Central to the doctoral research was the premise that analyses of power need to distinguish between and account for both the relational and the structural level on which power is exerted. In responding to this need and in view of the theoretical concerns identified above, the doctoral research introduced a conceptual tool, which it termed ‘transnational power over’. Inspired by debates in IPE, in particular new realist and critical IPE perspectives, and combining these views with insights from neorealist, neo-institutionalist and constructivist approaches to EU external relations, the concept of TNPO is an analytically eclectic notion, which helps to assess the degree to which, in today’s globalised and interdependent world, the EU’s power over third countries derives from a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures, making it difficult for the EU’s partners to resist the EU’s initiatives or to reject its offers. The element of ‘transnational’ is a crucial part of the TNPO concept in that the notion assumes that power, whether intentional or unintentional, active or passive, can be transnational in nature.

In challenging the predominant expectation of low EU impact in Central Asia, the thesis hypothesised that *the EU’s ability to rally the Central Asian republics behind its ambitious partnership initiative testifies to the EU’s power projection over the region. This power projection draws on the EU’s influential position across a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures. The EU’s power, in turn, is reinforced through the course of the implementation of the EU’s partnership initiative.* The main purpose of the thesis was, then, to both develop conceptually and explore the empirical applicability of this TNPO framework; and in so doing examine concretely to what extent the EU’s power over Central Asia effectively derives from a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures (as posited by the TNPO approach), enabling the EU to conclude the partnership, and the extent to which this has in turn reinforced the EU’s power over the region.

Conceptually, the TNPO concept was further developed, defining it as the extent to which A wields power over B through A’s control over a constitutive mix of three structures and the interaction between them. For the purposes of exposition, these structures were referred to as TNPO_{1(material)}, TNPO_{2(institutional)} and TNPO_{3(ideational)}.

In order to trace and assess transnational and intergovernmental mechanisms of EU impact across the three TNPO structures and their respective overlap, the thesis constructed a toolbox, which centres on four analytical distinctions: (i) EU-driven versus domestically driven mechanisms, (ii) mechanisms based on rationalist logics of action versus mechanisms following constructivist logics of action, (iii) agent-based versus purely structural

mechanisms of TNPO, and (iv) transnational and intergovernmental mechanisms of EU impact.

Empirical findings

The main findings of the empirical exploration of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia can be summarised as follows:

The empirical examination of the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia found that the EU's control over the 'material structure' vis-à-vis the region derives in particular from its position in the region as a leader in trade and investment, its considerable provision of development and financial aid to the five states, as well as its (geo)strategic and security-related capabilities vis-à-vis the region. However, despite finding sufficient evidence of significant control over the material structure, the thesis also pointed to a number of 'obstacles' and 'limits' encountered by the EU's TNPO₁ over Central Asia. This applies particularly to the EU's aid delivery to the region. Indeed, despite a number of notable successes of the EU's assistance in 2002-2006, including in the area of regulatory reform in the administrative and legal spheres, the successes were offset by a number of setbacks and several deficiencies. In particular, limited institutional capacity and lack of political will on the side of the Central Asian governments very often hampered the impact of the assistance in the longer run, including the actual implementation of the initiated reforms. Moreover, the assistance had its own shortcomings, especially in terms of the aid responsiveness and flexibility of TACIS, the main instrument. In turn, with respect to the EU's geostrategic influence in the region, while the thesis demonstrated that the EU is exercising considerable (geo)strategic power on the Central Asian chessboard, the rules of the game appear to be conditioned by the Central Asian states themselves. This is clearly reflected in the pragmatism with which the regimes pursue their 'multi-vector foreign policy', which has proved to be a double-edged sword for the attempts of the EU - *and* of other external powers - to expand its leverage over the countries of Central Asia.

The empirical exploration of the EU's TNPO₂ over the Central Asian states, in turn, highlighted the extent to which institutional factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. This section showed that the EU derives a significant amount of leverage from institutional factors, both at the macro-level of international relations (TNPO_{2macro}) and at the more case-specific institutional micro-level of EU bilateral or bi-regional contractual relations (TNPO_{2micro}) with the Central Asian countries. With respect to TNPO_{2micro}, the section demonstrated that the EU's bilateral and

regional relations with the countries have grown to be considerably institutionalised. This applies both in terms of formal contractual (including treaty-based) formats of institutionalisation and in terms of less formal and less integrated (including *ad-hoc*) formats of institutionalisation, which mostly involve the bureaucratic/technocratic level or societal level rather than the high political level. The level of institutionalisation, however, varies across the five countries, depending mostly on the legal basis of the cooperation. As such, relations with Kazakhstan appear to be institutionalised most densely, followed by the EU's cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Bilateral ties with Turkmenistan, in turn, are rather moderately institutionalised.

In addition, this section indicated that the EU's TNPO over Central Asia also comprises institutionalised dialogue and cooperation through a web of - sometimes overlapping - international organisations and institutions, most notably the WTO, the EBRD, the OSCE and the CoE. The section highlighted the extent to which the EU manages to draw influence over the Central Asian countries through its influential representation in these international bodies. Moreover, it found that the degree of institutionalisation also differs at the macro-level. As such, the EU wields by far the largest amount of TNPO_{2macro} over Kazakhstan. Next is Kyrgyzstan, followed by Tajikistan. The EU's TNPO_{2macro} over Uzbekistan, in turn, is moderate, but is denser than the Union's macro-institutional ties with Turkmenistan, where its TNPO_{2macro} is rather limited. In this regard, it is important to highlight the limits encountered by the EU's TNPO_{2macro} over the countries, which include factors that are either endogenous or exogenous to the Central Asian states. A significant factor is the strong competition that the EU faces in the region from China and Russia, which have their own share of TNPO_{2macro} over the Central Asian republics, except for Turkmenistan, which does not participate in the regional organisations led by these two 'rival' powers. Another aspect that curtails the EU's macro-institutional power, and in particular in the case of the OSCE, is the Central Asian regimes' suspicion of and aversion to external meddling in their 'domestic affairs', especially in areas that could directly affect the societal status quo in their countries.

Next, the empirical exploration of the EU's TNPO₃ over Central Asia demonstrated the extent to which ideational factors need to be taken into account when considering the EU's TNPO. Overall, the findings revealed a rather mixed picture of the EU's TNPO₃. On the one hand, the section did not find evidence of strong ideational attraction to the EU's norms, values and principles related to liberal democracy, including human rights, rule of law and good governance. The results suggested that such ideational factors do not constitute an important determinant of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. In understanding this 'limit' to the EU's

power over the region, the section pointed to a number of ‘countervailing’ factors, including the virtually inherent authoritarian nature of Central Asian politics, and related to this - the attraction to alternative models of development, most notably the Russian model, and the traditional fabric of Central Asian society. To some extent, however, Kazakhstan appeared to be an exception, offering better prospects for European-style development and democratisation. On the other hand, the section found that the EU enjoys a relatively positive reputation as a more neutral actor in Central Asia, which gives it more credit compared to other external actors.

Subsequently, the empirical examination outlined the extent to which the EU derives power over Central Asia from the interaction between the three TNPO structures. Again, the examination of EU impact yielded a mixed picture. To start with, as far as deliberate export of EU norms and values to the region is concerned, the outline demonstrated that this is channelled either through the provision of material incentives (overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃), such as financial assistance and enhanced market access, or through the institutionalised cooperation framework established with the Central Asian countries (overlap between TNPO₂ and TNPO₃). However, in most of these instances of overlap, only limited evidence was found of strong impact of the EU in terms of behavioural change or adaptation on the Central Asian side. This suggested that - whether through the provision of material incentives or via the use of socialisation - deliberate diffusion of EU norms and rules appears to achieve only limited results. However, the section found more successful processes of Europeanisation in Central Asia among those cases of overlap that are based on domestically-driven mechanisms, i.e. that occur independently of EU deliberate action. With respect to the overlap between TNPO₁ and TNPO₃, this concerns in particular those instances of impact captured by the market and the competition modes of governance: cases where the EU’s impact on third countries derives from the ‘presence’ of its internal market rather than from EU conscious actions. In these instances, Central Asian actors adopt EU rules or norms because ignoring or violating them would entail net costs (cf. negative externality). In turn, an examination of TNPO₁₋₂₋₃ pointed to the limits of the use of conditionality in the Central Asia to export EU norms and rules, whilst revealing the advantages of more indirect ways of transferring liberal norms as well as material *acquis* rules. In particular, it demonstrated that the promotion of norms and principles in Central Asia works better through transgovernmental cooperation at the sectoral, bureaucratic/technocratic level than through direct political leverage at the intergovernmental level based, *inter alia*, on conditionality.

As a second step in the empirical exploration of the working hypothesis, the thesis focused on the EU Strategy. It concluded that the EU Strategy represents an ambitious EU project, signaling a clear intention to substantially upgrade relations with Central Asia. It seeks to do so across a specific number of areas, including human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation; education; economic development, trade and investment, energy and transport links; environmental sustainability and water management; border management, drugs and human trafficking; and intercultural dialogue. The consistent and sustainable implementation of the Strategy will be a key indicator for the EU's and Central Asia's political resolve to upgrade their relations. In this context, one particular challenge in implementing the strategy, however, is the unavoidable clash between the EU's interest in enhanced engagement on security and energy issues and its goal of increased cooperation on human rights, rule of law, good governance and democratisation, areas that remain politically sensitive in Central Asia.

As regards the relevance of the Strategy and proposed partnership in relation to the EU's accumulation of TNPO over Central Asia, the thesis highlighted that the EU appears particularly keen to strengthen its TNPO₂ over Central Asia, i.e. its control over the institutional structure of its relations with Central Asia. This applies both to micro-institutional level and the macro-institutional level of its relations with the Central Asian countries. Moreover, it indicated that the strategy offers relevant opportunities for strengthening the EU's management of the interaction of TNPO₂ with the other two TNPO structures. In this respect, the Strategy appears to attribute considerable importance to an enhanced use of 'socialisation' and 'social learning' (TNPO₂₋₃), which may offer promising opportunities for a more effective dissemination in Central Asia of EU norms, rules and standards.

As a third and final step in the empirical exploration of the working hypothesis, the thesis concentrated on the implementation of the EU Strategy. This section found that in the three years since the launch of the EU Strategy, the EU has made significant progress in strengthening overall relations with Central Asia. Importantly, the Central Asian countries have continued to show considerable interest in the EU's partnership initiative, as reflected, *inter alia*, in their participation in all the initiatives proposed and implemented under the EU Strategy, including in key areas such as education, Rule of Law, water and environment. Moreover, all Central Asian states now engage with the EU in a structured Human Rights Dialogue. Political dialogue, in general, has intensified to a considerable extent. In addition, the Strategy implementation visibly benefits from increased involvement of the Council, as

reflected, *inter alia*, in the considerable contribution of several EU Member States to the implementation of the strategy, as well as from enhanced coordination both between the Council and the Commission, and between the EU actors and the Central Asian stakeholders. To what extent these ‘enhancements’ effectively ‘reinforce’ the EU’s TNPO on the region, however, is more difficult to evaluate, not least since the strategy was launched only three years ago.

At the same time, however, the section observed that the implementation of the strategy is confronted with some significant shortcomings, which again pointed to the occurrence of countervailing factors impacting negatively upon the empowering feedback effect of the concrete outcome obtained - i.e. the launch of the partnership with Central Asia, thus limiting the possible reinforcement of the EU’s TNPO over the region. The shortcomings include, *inter alia*, the limits of the bilateral human rights dialogues as a forum for genuine socialisation, and the challenge that the EU faces in the - predominantly authoritarian - region in balancing its security and energy interests with its goals in the normative sphere, including democratisation and - perhaps not surprisingly - human rights. In addition, the implementation has so far focused mostly on cooperation at the level of government officials and has not yet sufficiently allowed for an active involvement of civil society, national Parliaments, local authorities and other important stakeholders. Another important shortcoming is that the implementation of the EU Strategy - despite the considerable increase in funding - still lacks the resources required to have a major tangible impact on the ground in Central Asia, commensurate with the ambitious goals set out in the strategy.

Usefulness of the TNPO framework in relation to the theoretical proposition

With regard to the thesis’ aim to offer a more holistic understanding of the EU’s power over the Central Asian republics, it is clear that the TNPO framework enabled us to trace and explore the various aspects of EU influence over the Central Asian states. Put differently, the TNPO model has allowed us to study the EU’s power in Central Asia through an alternative lens, identifying, among other things, instances of EU power that may appear less obvious when examined through the predominant models used to study the EU’s relations with Central Asia. Moreover, the TNPO toolbox provided a very helpful analytical reference point to trace and explore the various mechanisms of EU impact on the Central Asian countries. In particular, the quadruple distinction between (i) logic of appropriateness and logic of consequences, (ii) intergovernmental and transnational, (iii) EU-driven and domestically-driven, and (iv) agent-based and purely structural, mechanisms of EU impact, allowed us to

approach the empirical case in a holistic manner, providing a structurally integrative account of the EU's TNPO over Central Asia. Importantly, it also allowed us to trace considerable differences of the EU's TNPO between the individual five Central Asian states. In particular, the difference appears to lie in the diverging combination - between the five countries - of the material, institutional and ideational structures that the EU controls, with the EU's control over particular structures (and particular overlap) being weaker in some Central Asian countries compared to other Central Asian countries.

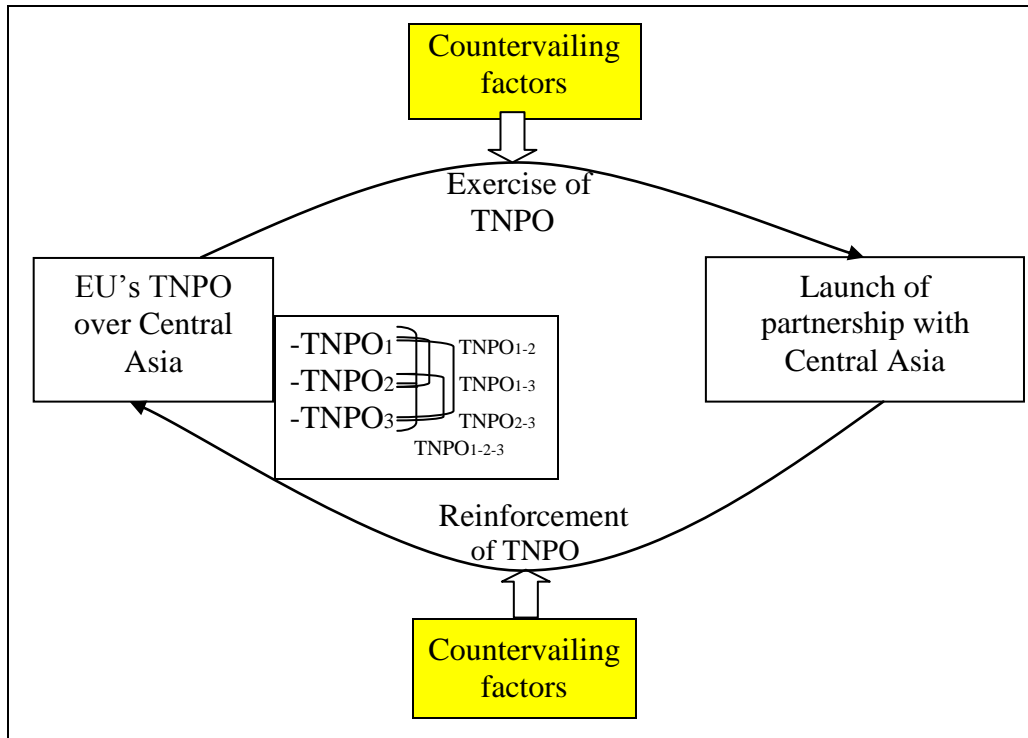
At the same time, however, the empirical study pointed to the need to integrate an additional aspect into the TNPO analysis, i.e. countervailing factors. Indeed, the empirical examination confirmed the need - as anticipated in Chapter 4 - to take 'contextual' factors into account, as it revealed the existence and impact of countervailing forces, which mediate the EU's TNPO over a third party, *in casu* the Central Asian countries. Indeed, although we found abundant evidence of EU TNPO, we came to the conclusion that the EU's TNPO is hampered - possible weakened - by the intervening effects of a series of countervailing forces (CF).

On the one hand, the CF relate to internal factors, i.e. *intrinsic to the EU*, such as the fact that the European Commission is a slow, bureaucratic actor, or the fact that EU competence on Central Asian affairs is a shared competence and hence subject to impact from disagreement between the EU Member States based on their diverging preferences (cf. the case of the Uzbek sanctions and Germany's preference - against the preference of other Member States - to lift the sanctions because of its military base in Uzbekistan). On the other hand, CF relate to external factors, i.e. *extrinsic to the EU*. The group of external CF consists of factors that are *intrinsic to the third party*, *in casu* the Central Asian states, but also factors that are extrinsic to them. To illustrate, external CF may relate to the authoritarian nature of the Central Asian regimes, which is *intrinsic* to the countries. In turn, another external CF may be the strong competition from Russia and China that the EU is confronted with in Central Asia. Importantly, internal and external CF can be seen to interact.

As indicated in Chapter 9, CF can also affect the feedback effect, i.e. the extent to which the desired outcome (obtained at the relational level), *in casu* the launch of the partnership with Central Asia, reinforces the EU's TNPO over the other actor(s), *in casu* Central Asia. In other words, the degree of the TNPO reinforcement depends not only on how (un)favourable the concrete outcome (obtained at the relational level) - *in casu* the launch of a partnership with Central Asia - is for the EU but also on the possible intervention of countervailing factors in the feedback phase - *in casu* during the implementation of the partnership initiative -, which

may limit the degree of reinforcement of the EU's TNPO over the other actor(s), *in casu* the Central Asian partner states.

Figure 8: Refinement of TNPO framework: the inclusion of countervailing factors



By adding the aspect of CF, we now know how the EU's exercise or accumulation of TNPO may be limited by the intervention of countervailing forces. As depicted in Figure 8, CF can affect the exercise of TNPO either 'before or after', or 'both before and after' the achievement of a concrete outcome, *in casu* the launch of the partnership with Central Asia. In the former case, CF limit or constrain the EU's ability to translate its TNPO into an effective outcome, i.e. the launch of the partnership. In the latter case, CF limit or constrain the EU's ability to implement the arrangement, and, as such limit the reinforcement of the EU's TNPO over the region. In other words, CF can operate both on the relational and on the structural level. CF limit the EU's TNPO, and as such affect the Union's ability to translate its TNPO into a desired outcome, the feedback effect of which might in turn be negatively affected by CF, limiting the (potential) reinforcement of the EU's TNPO.

Main strengths & shortcomings of the thesis

In terms of the key contributions of the thesis, the doctoral research generated new theoretical perspectives and provided fresh empirical findings to the literature on EU-Central Asia relations. In particular, it contributed to the development of the theoretical debate on the EU's power over the region, arguing in favour of using a structurally integrative approach. In

addition, given that several of the theoretical concerns addressed by this study also apply to the literature of European integration, and particularly EU external relations, at large, it is hoped that the thesis will also induce new insights into the scholarly understanding of other cases and areas of the EU's external relations, a contribution that would build on and position itself alongside the works of Holden (2009), Keukeleire & MacNaughtan (2008) and Lavenex (2008), among others.

At the same time, there are also some shortcomings that need to be acknowledged. To begin with, there are of course limitations to the detail of argument that a study of this scale can make. Moreover, the thesis, admittedly, does not systematically use the TNPO model and TNPO concept in the second and third steps of the empirical exploration of the thesis's hypothesis, largely because of space concerns. That said, this shortcoming offers an interesting opportunity for future research.

Avenues for future research

As mentioned, Steps 2 and 3 of the empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis are implemented in Chapter 9, but not as in-depth and extensively as the empirical analysis conducted under Step 1 and offered in Chapters 5-8, which constitute the more substantial part of the thesis's empirical work. Therefore, one opportunity for future research is to apply in full these two final steps of the empirical exploration of the thesis's working hypothesis. The main purpose of the research would then be to examine not so much to what extent the EU's power over Central Asia derives from a combination of material, institutional and ideational structures (Step 1), but rather to what extent the EU's TNPO has enabled the EU to conclude the partnership (Step 2), and to what extent the implementation of the partnership has in turn reinforced the EU's power over the Central Asian countries (Step 3).

Another avenue for future research might be to use the TNPO model to examine the EU's influence over other third countries/regions. Indeed, given that several of the theoretical concerns addressed by this study also apply to the literature of European integration at large, and particularly the literature of EU external relations, the theoretical model presented in this thesis might be applied in future research to induce new insights into the scholarly understanding of other empirical cases and areas of the EU's external relations. The TNPO model could be used, for instance, to assess the EU's influence vis-à-vis the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region or vis-à-vis countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

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Appendix 1: Overview of most frequently used secondary sources

<i>Media sources:</i>	
EUObserver	http://euobserver.com/
European Voice	http://www.europeanvoice.com/
EurActiv	http://euractiv.com/
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty	http://www.rferl.org/
EurasiaNet.org	http://www.eurasianet.org/
Ferghana.ru	http://enews.ferghana.ru/
Institute for War and Peace Reporting	http://www.iwpr.net/
Times of Central Asia	http://www.timesca.com/
Silk Road Intelligencer	http://silkroadintelligencer.com
<i>Academic sources:</i> ³¹⁵	
Central Asia and the Caucasus: Journal of Social and Political Studies	
Central Asian Survey	
<i>Reports and briefings from NGOs and research institutes:</i>	
Central Asia-Caucasus Institute Analyst ³¹⁶	http://www.cacianalyst.org/index.php
Zentralasien-Analysen	http://www.laender-analysen.de/zentralasien/
EU Central Asia Monitoring (EUCAM) ³¹⁷	http://www.eucentralasia.eu/
1) EUCAM Watch	
2) EUCAM Policy Brief	
International Crisis Group	http://www.crisisgroup.org/
Human Rights Watch	http://www.hrw.org/
Freedom House	http://www.freedomhouse.org/
Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)	http://www.ceps.eu/
European Centre for International Political Economy (ECIPE)	http://www.ecipe.org/

³¹⁵ Apart from drawing on articles from these two scholarly journals, numerous other academic sources were called upon. As will become clear in the empirical chapters of the thesis, the academic sources derive from a wide range of publications.

³¹⁶ This is the bi-weekly journal of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Program Joint Center.

³¹⁷ EUCAM is an 18-month joint project of the *Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior* (FRIDE) and the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS). The initiative focuses on the EU-Central Asia Strategy, and is supported by several EU member states and civil society organisations.

Appendix 2: Interview material

A2.1. List of interviews by country and city

<i>Location</i>	<i>Institution/organisation³¹⁸ represented by interviewee</i>	<i>Date</i>
GER - Berlin	Federal Foreign Office, Central Asia Division	30/10/07
BEL - Brussels	Diplomatic Mission of Kazakhstan to the EU	04/02/08
	Diplomatic Mission of Kyrgyzstan to the EU	05/02/08
	Diplomatic Mission of Uzbekistan to the EU	11/02/08
	EuropeAid Cooperation Office, D/1, Projects Section	16/02/08
	Federal Foreign Office of Belgium: - Department of External Action of the EU - Division of Bilateral Relations with Eastern Europe and Central Asia	18/02/08
	Office of the EUSR for Central Asia, Brussels-based political advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia	19/02/08
	EuropeAid Cooperation Office, D/1, Central Asia coordinator	26/02/08
	Diplomatic Mission of Turkmenistan to the EU	13/03/08
	Greek Representation to the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the EU	20/03/08
	Diplomatic Mission of Tajikistan to the EU	20/03/08
	European Commission, DG Trade, 'Central Asia, South Caucasus & Belarus' desk	09/04/08
Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, External Relations Office, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Desk	19/06/08	

³¹⁸ For a limited number of interviews, the interviewees' function or position within the institution or organisation is added. Also note that, in three cases, the interview involved not one but two or three interviewees. In all three cases, notably the Belgian Federal Foreign Office, the European Parliament and the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the two or three interviewees represented either different departments within the same institution or different divisions within the same department. Especially in the case of the European Parliament and the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the cross-departmental and cross-divisional representation of the interviewees allowed me to retrieve very valuable data and gain substantial insights into the subject matter. For instance, in the case of the interview at the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the threatening and fairly harsh tone of the interviewee from the Department of Analysis and Strategy of Foreign Policy was markedly offset by the much milder and positive tone of the interviewee from the Europe Department, whose pro-European answers contradicted – albeit implicitly – the anti-European responses of his colleague.

	<p>European Parliament:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External Relations Policy Department, 'Ukraine, South Caucasus, Central Asia & Iran' desk officer - Interparliamentary Relations office, administrator at Non-Europe desk - Committee on Foreign Affairs, shadow <i>rapporteur</i> of the Parliament's Report on the EU Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia 	11/07/08
BEL - Antwerp	Vice-President of Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kazakhstan (Interview held during interviewee's visit to the Chamber of Commerce of Antwerp)	17/06/10
UZB - Tashkent	National University of Uzbekistan, Associate Professor of World Politics	28/04/08
	Konrad Adenauer Foundation	29/04/08
	Europa House, chief coordinator	01/05/08
	<p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Europe Department - Department of Analysis and Strategy of Foreign Policy 	02/05/08
	OSCE national office	02/05/08
	Embassy of France	06/05/08
KYR - Bishkek	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Economic Department	08/05/08
	Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission ³¹⁹ to KYR, Projects section	08/05/08
	OSCE Academy, Director	08/05/08
	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Relations with the West, Division of Relations with the EU	12/05/08
	Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to KYR, Political and Economic Section	14/05/08
	Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to KYR, Projects Section	14/05/08

³¹⁹ It is important to note that the three Delegations of the European Commission in Central Asia have become EU Delegations since the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty in december 2009.

	Regionalised Delegation of the European Commission to KYR, <i>Chargé d’Affaires</i>	14/05/08
	Development & Cooperation in Central Asia ³²⁰	15/05/08
	Agence de Coopération technique et Développement ³²¹	16/05/08
	Regional office of the EU’s Border Management (BOMCA) and Drug Action Programmes (CADAP) in Central Asia, Regional Programme Manager	16/05/08
KAZ - Almaty	Regional Office of the Delegation of the European Commission to KAZ, KYR and TAJ, Political and Economic Section	19/05/08
	Regional Office of the EUSR for Central Asia, Political advisor to the EUSR for Central Asia	20/05/08
	Embassy of France ³²²	22/05/08
	University of Al-Farabi, Professor at the Faculty of International Relations, Department of Regional Studies and World Economy	22/05/08
	UNESCO, Culture Officer	23/05/08
KAZ - Astana	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of European Cooperation	26/05/08
	Embassy of Belgium to KAZ, KYR & TAJ	27/05/08
	European Business Association of Kazakhstan, local office ³²³	27/05/08
	National Parliament of KAZ, Assistant of the Deputy Chairman of the <i>Mazhilis</i> ³²⁴	27/05/08
	Delegation of the European Commission to KAZ, KYR & TAJ, Political and Economic section	28/05/08
	Delegation of the European Commission to KAZ, KYR & TAJ, Project manager of trade and SMEs projects in KAZ	28/05/08

³²⁰ ‘Development & Cooperation in Central Asia’ (DCCA) is a Central Asian development NGO based in Kyrgyzstan, which has received EU funding for a number of its projects and actively participates in dialogue schemes organised by and at the EC Delegation in Bishkek.

³²¹ The ‘Agence de Coopération technique et Développement’ (ACTED) is a French development NGO. In Central Asia, ACTED is active in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Some of its projects in Central Asia are funded by the EU.

³²² The Head Office of the Embassy of France to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is based in Astana, but was originally located in Almaty, the former capital of Kazakhstan. However, some of the office space in Almaty is still being occupied, *inter alia* by the cultural section and consular service of the Embassy. In Bishkek, France has established an *antenne diplomatique*, which serves as the local Kyrgyz office of the Embassy.

³²³ The headquarters of the European Business Association of Kazakhstan (EUROBAK) is based in Almaty.

³²⁴ The *Mazhilis* is the name of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Kazakhstan.

	Embassy of France to KAZ & KYR	29/05/08
	Embassy of the Netherlands to KAZ, KYR & TAJ	30/05/08
	Delegation of the European Commission to KAZ, KYR & TAJ, Acting Head of Delegation	30/05/08

A2.2: Attendance of seminars and roundtables with high profile speakers:³²⁵

<i>Location</i>	<i>Event & guest speakers</i>	<i>Date</i>
BEL - Brussels	<p><i>ECIPE seminar: “Kazakhstan and the WTO: Foreign Economic Diplomacy and CIS Integration into the World Economy”</i></p> <p>-Zhanar Aitzhanova, Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade of Kazakhstan, and chief negotiator in Kazakhstan’s WTO accession talks</p> <p>-Bolat Akchulakov, Deputy Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources of Kazakhstan</p> <p>-Roderick Abbott, Former Deputy Director General of the WTO and Former EU ambassador to the WTO</p> <p>-Brian Hindley, Senior Fellow of ECIPE</p> <p>-Signe Ratso, Director of the DG Trade Unit for WTO Affairs, OECD and Food Related Sectors</p> <p>-Dr. Svante Cornell, Head of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Programme</p>	26/03/08
BEL - Brussels	<p><i>CEPS event “Engaging Central Asia: The European Union’s New Strategy in the Heart of Eurasia”</i></p> <p>-Pierre Morel, EU Special Representative for Central Asia</p> <p>-Neil J. Melvin, Senior Fellow, CEPS, and Reader in Conflict Analysis, Department of Politics and IR, Brussels School of International Studies/University of Kent</p> <p>-John Stroehlein, senior researcher, International Crisis Group, Brussels</p>	30/06/08
UK - Reading	<p><i>Keynote address organised by the Centre for Euro-Asian Studies of the University of Reading: “Kazakhstan’s Path to Europe Programme”</i></p> <p>-H.E. Ambassador Kairat Abusseitov, Kazakh Ambassador to the UK</p>	11/03/09

³²⁵ The written notes taken during these events have been used as empirical data for the thesis. Notes were taken only when keynote speakers addressed matters of direct relevance to the issues under investigation in the dissertation. Transcriptions of the notes are available on file.

UK - London	<p><i>Seminar organised by the Centre of Contemporary Central Asia and the Caucasus, SOAS, London, “The ‘how to’ of EU engagement in Uzbekistan since 2005: a tale of two projects”</i></p> <p>-Dr. Daniel Stevens, former project leader of TEMPUS project in Uzbekistan & former leader of commissioned assessments of EC projects in Uzbekistan</p>	28/01/10
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A2.3: Questionnaire used for interviews with Central Asian government officials:

In all interviews conducted with government officials from the Central Asian republics, the questionnaire presented below was supplemented with a number of issues unique to the context of the Central Asian country in question. Moreover, as the nine-month process of interviewing went on, questions were added to the questionnaire, while others - less relevant ones - were dropped. Therefore, the questionnaire is only indicative and serves to suggest the type of questions asked to this particular group of interviewees.

2.3.1. Questions on the perception of the EU:

- 1) Does your government/country feel closer to the EU since the 2004 and 2007 enlargements of the Union?

- 2) How does your government/country perceive the EU? Is the Union different from other important international actors (Russia, US, China, India, ...)? If so, why and to what extent?

- 3) Could the EU be considered as a ‘model’? If so, in what way? (cf. a model in terms of norms and standards of governance, a model in terms of economic development, quality of life, level of freedom of the citizens,...)

2.3.2. Questions on the EU Strategy for A New Partnership with Central Asia:

4) What was your government's reaction/response to the EU's initiative to launch the Strategy? Does your government want closer cooperation with the EU? If so, why, and to what extent? How important is enhanced cooperation with the EU for your country?

5) Does your government feel that a higher presence of the EU in Central Asia is necessary?

6) What does your government think of the way in which the Strategy was drafted/prepared? To what extent was your government engaged/involved in the preparation process?

7) What does your government think of the Strategy and its achievability? (the contents of the document, the goals that it sets out, ...). Which proposed areas of (enhanced) cooperation do you particularly favour and/or dislike?

8) What does your government think of the way in which the Strategy was presented to your government and the other Central Asian states?

9) What does your government think so far of the implementation process of the Strategy, including the level of involvement of your country?

2.3.3. Questions on the three constituent elements of TNPO - TNPO1, 2 & 3:

10) What does your government think of the EU's past and ongoing cooperation with and involvement in your country as well as in Central Asia as a whole? In such spheres as financial/cooperation aid (TACIS, BOMCA, TRACECA, ...), trade, energy, FDI, formal and informal (political dialogue), education (Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, ...), human rights and rule of law?

11) In what areas does your government want to cooperate (more) with the EU? In what areas does your government want to see (enhanced) EU involvement? In trade, FDI, financial and/or development aid, energy sphere, adoption of EU (production,

quality, ...) standards, formal and informal (political) dialogue, rule of law, water management, drugs control, counter-terrorism, development, support of SMEs, ...?

12) What do you think of the mandate of the EUSR for Central Asia? Does the EUSR play a positive role in the EU's relations with Central Asia? If so, in what way?

13) Where do you think that the EU's main strengths and main weaknesses lie?

14) What does your government think of the values that the EU promotes? Does your country/government feel familiar with such values and norms as of democracy, peace, rule of law, multilateralism, civil society, ...?

15) How does your country feel identity-wise towards the EU? Can you identify with people from Europe?

16) What does your government think of the EU's 'Neighbourhood Policy'? Would your country like to become a beneficiary of that policy programme?

2.3.4. Questions on cooperation with other external actors (Russia, the U.S., China, etc.):

17) What does your government think of its past and ongoing cooperation with such external actors as Russia, India, the U.S. and China?

18) Does your country want to strengthen its ties with these external actors? If so, to what extent, and in what fields?

Appendix 3: Theoretical insights

A3.1: Dominant and other dimensions of foreign policy



Source: Keukeleire & MacNaughtan (2008: 20)

A 3.2: Mechanisms of EU impact beyond the EU member states



Source: Schimmelfennig (2007)



Source: Schimmelfennig (2009)

Note: direct = EU-driven; indirect = domestically-driven

Appendix 4: Map of Central Asia



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Appendix 5: Economic and trade data of the Central Asian republics



³²⁶ Source: EBRD, available at <http://www.ebrd.com/pubs/cs/country.htm>, last accessed on 04.05.09.

³²⁷ This is based on the KOF 'Index of Globalisation 2009', which draws on figures of 2006. Available at http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/static/pdf/rankings_2009.pdf, last accessed on 04.05.09.



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Appendix 6: EU diplomatic representation in Central Asia



Source: International Crisis Group (2006); author's own data collection