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| Institution: University of Glasgow (UofG) | | |
| Unit of Assessment: UoA 19 Politics and International Studies | | |
| Title of case study: Breaking the deadlock in EU-Turkmenistan relations: Setting the path towards a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014–2017 | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name(s): Luca Anceschi | Role(s) (e.g. job title): Senior Lecturer in Central Asian Studies | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: 2013–present |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020 | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No | | |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Turkmenistan is the only successor state of the Soviet Union not to have finalised a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the European Union (EU). Since 1998, the European Parliament has repeatedly declined to ratify a PCA due to concerns about the human rights record of the Turkmen regime. From 2015 onwards, Anceschi's research: (i) played a pivotal role in breaking this deadlock by demonstrating that PCA ratification could be used to promote rule of law and improve human rights in Turkmenistan. Through targeted engagement, Anceschi helped to: (ii) build consensus for a positive vote on the PCA within the European Parliament. Subsequently, his research has: (iii) shaped the implementation of a monitoring mechanism in Turkmenistan, which will measure the human rights progress necessary to achieve the long-term goal of PCA consent.</p> | | |
| <p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>2.1. Context</p> <p>A fully ratified PCA will establish a comprehensive framework to regulate the EU's relationship with Turkmenistan. There are clear economic benefits associated with PCA ratification for both parties. Notably, Turkmenistan is among the world's top producers of natural gas, which accounts for more than half of the country's overall export revenues. In contrast, the EU currently imports around 80 percent of its natural gas, and has implemented policy to ensure the diversification of its energy markets in order to reduce reliance on Russian supplies. In theory, Turkmenistan could be a complementary partner for the EU's energy security needs. However, closer cooperation between the two—in the form of a PCA—has been stalled by the Turkmen regime's poor human rights record, which is at odds with the EU's stated values.</p> <p>2.2. EU engagement with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan</p> <p>Since joining the UofG in 2013, Luca Anceschi has developed a comprehensive research programme that focuses on authoritarian policymaking in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan. His investigation of the multifaceted links connecting EU institutions with Kazakhstan [3.1] and Turkmenistan's economy and energy policymaking [3.2] are the focus of the research underpinning this Impact Case Study.</p> <p>Focusing upon the expanded PCA signed by the EU and Kazakhstan in December 2015, Anceschi's research [3.1] revealed the role that good governance promotion plays in the dynamics of EU PCA treaty finalisation, and deepened understandings of EU energy security and its place in Central Asian geopolitics. Anceschi's findings on EU-Kazakhstani relations and Central Asian geopolitics are directly relevant to the ongoing PCA negotiations with Turkmenistan. Notably, his research exposed inconsistencies in the European Parliament's refusal to ratify the draft PCA with Turkmenistan since the governance standards reportedly obstructing the PCA with Turkmenistan had not been deemed essential in the re-negotiation of the PCA with Kazakhstan. In highlighting this anomaly, Anceschi's research enabled the European Parliament and the European Commission to come to an understanding regarding a consistent approach in their dealings with Turkmenistan (as outlined in further detail in section 4 below).</p> <p>2.3. Turkmen authoritarianism at a time of crisis</p> <p>Anceschi's research has also maintained an ongoing focus on the evolution of Turkmenistan's non-democratic governance. Output [3.2] provided additional understandings of the systemic</p> | | |

crisis that Turkmen authoritarianism has been experiencing since 2014–15. Despite its natural resources, Turkmenistan is currently facing its worst economic crisis in decades—driven in part by a sharp fall in energy revenues that constitute the bulk of the country's income. The stability of the Turkmen regime is highly dependent on the country's economic growth. The economy, and thus the stability of the regime, stands to benefit from any trade agreements or infrastructure projects that might bring closer alignment with major energy markets such as the EU. A fully ratified PCA represents one such option. Anceschi's research highlighted that this ongoing economic crisis represented a unique opportunity for the EU to engage with Turkmenistan, as this predicament could increase the likelihood of the Turkmen regime accepting human rights and rule of law benchmarks in exchange for improved trade conditions.

2.4. Research-based analysis

The key findings of the underpinning research [3.1, 3.2] suggest that the ongoing economic crisis provides an incentive to the Turkmen leadership to consent to a conditionality regime, thus granting the EU leverage to bring about real human rights change within Turkmenistan. These findings informed Anceschi's advice to members of the European Parliament and led to his advisory role with the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), as outlined in section 4 below.

3. References to the research

3.1. Anceschi, L. (2014) [The tyranny of pragmatism: EU–Kazakhstani relations](#). *Europe-Asia Studies*, 66(1), pp. 1-24. (doi: [10.1080/09668136.2013.864101](https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2013.864101))

3.2. Anceschi, L. (2017) [Turkmenistan and the virtual politics of Eurasian energy: the case of the TAPI pipeline project](#). *Central Asian Survey*, 36(4), pp. 409-429. (doi: [10.1080/02634937.2017.1391747](https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2017.1391747))

The research underpinning this case study meets the 2* quality threshold as outputs [3.1] and [3.2] are published in international journals using a rigorous double-blind peer-review process. Output [3.1] tackles a highly-significant topic—the issue of good governance in EU-Kazakhstani relations—through a methodologically rigorous approach, which combined the analysis of primary sources with in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders operating within the EU institutional framework. Publication [3.2] adopts an innovative constructivist approach to investigate infrastructure development in Eurasia, placing particular emphasis on the nexus between Turkmenistan's pipeline policy and the difficult juncture experienced by the Turkmen economy in the 2010s.

4. Details of the impact

4.1. Background

The first request for assent to the EU-Turkmenistan PCA was referred by the European Council to the European Parliament in 1998. However, the Parliament declined to progress the ratification due to Turkmenistan's poor human rights record and governance standards. In early 2015, the European Council requested Parliament's consent to the PCA for the second time. The European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) suspended consideration until an understanding on PCA scrutiny could be taken forward, requesting the establishment of a human rights 'monitoring mechanism' involving the EU, the government in Ashgabat and civil society. Differing stances among the different EU institutions involved and among parliamentary groups over the make-up of this monitoring mechanism stalled the PCA ratification process.

4.2. Pathway to impact

In late 2015, based upon her familiarity with the underpinning research, the then AFET Rapporteur on the Turkmenistan file invited Anceschi to advise her team as they drafted a policy roadmap to promote the ratification of the PCA among MEPs of different political persuasions (confirmed by statement [5A]). Anceschi's research subsequently advanced the progress of the EU-Turkmenistan PCA through three key procedural steps: (i) shaping a new policy agenda (as outlined in section 4.3 below); (ii) facilitating the establishment of a consensus for a positive vote on the PCA within the European Parliament (as outlined in section 4.4 below); (iii) shaping the

implementation of a human rights monitoring mechanism in Turkmenistan (as outlined in section 4.5 below).

4.3. Step one: shaping a new policy agenda

Anceschi provided research-based advice to the Rapporteur's team via formal and informal briefings and written reports. This advice outlined a way forward by highlighting the inconsistencies in the EU's interactions with Turkmenistan in comparison to its relations with Kazakhstan, thus creating a basis for bridging the differing stances of the European Parliament and the European Commission over the required standards for human rights monitoring. Drawing upon the research, Anceschi presented PCA ratification as a strategic priority for the EU and an instrument for promoting rule of law in Turkmenistan. He argued that economic circumstances might encourage the Turkmen leadership to consent to a tightly-framed conditionality regime to be operationalised after PCA ratification and inclusive of measures on civil society liberalisation. The Rapporteur confirms Anceschi's policy advice at this stage as being, *'influential in shaping the recent AFET agenda so far as the establishment of procedural steps towards future PCA ratification'* (confirmed by statement [5A]).

4.4. Step two: facilitating the establishment of political consensus

The window of opportunity for establishing a consensus opened on 16 December 2015. On that date, former High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini informed the AFET Committee that the articulation of a monitoring mechanism would constitute sufficient basis for the AFET Committee to re-launch the procedure. However, in May 2016 it became apparent that a clear majority needed for consent to the PCA was yet to be found. The AFET Committee then suspended the consent recommendation for a second time until consensus for a positive vote could be established.

Anceschi's research subsequently underpinned a comprehensive range of targeted initiatives by the AFET Committee to build consensus among MEPs. This activity was pivotal to a positive vote on the draft resolution extension of the interim agreement (the framework for EU-Turkmenistan relations in lieu of a fully ratified PCA). Anceschi's targeted initiatives included a formal address to the AFET Committee as part of a workshop on 'EU-Turkmenistan Relations – Setting the Right Benchmarks' held on 24 January 2017. A paper based on his presentation was eventually published by the European Parliament under the title ['Engaging Turkmenistan at a time of Economic Crisis'](#), with Anceschi listed as a co-author [5B]. This paper outlined a series of conditionality benchmarks that came to form the core of the draft benchmark resolution that the Rapporteur brought before the AFET Committee for a formal vote.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, the AFET Committee prepared a Draft Interim Report on EU-Turkmenistan relations [5C]. This document was accompanied by an 'explanatory statement' to which Anceschi contributed significantly, drawing materially upon his research findings (confirmed by statement [5A]). On 16 May 2018, Anceschi delivered a further presentation to representatives of each Parliamentary Group accredited in the European Parliament to reinforce the case for PCA ratification as a strategic priority for the EU.

Following Anceschi's programme of targeted initiatives, the European Parliament scheduled a plenary vote on the Draft Interim Report for March 2019. On 13 March 2019, MEPs voted 44-1 in favour of the draft resolution extension (confirmed by plenary report [5D]). The Rapporteur confirms that, *'Anceschi's research and engagement activity facilitated the establishment of consensus around the Draft Interim Report.'* (statement [5A]). Reflecting upon the significance of this breakthrough, the Advocacy Manager for the International Partnership for Human Rights said, *'The resolution passed by the European Parliament is a milestone in EU-Turkmenistan relations. It makes it clear that closer cooperation, for which the PCA provides, is not possible without real human rights improvements in Turkmenistan'*. (quote from article [5E])

4.5. Step three: shaping a short-term human rights monitoring mechanism

Following the positive vote in March 2019, Anceschi's research has shaped the next step towards PCA ratification, which involves the implementation of a short-term human rights monitoring mechanism in Turkmenistan (likely to last between 24–36 months). This mechanism will be overseen by a fully-fledged EU delegation in Ashgabat, which was inaugurated in late 2019. Former High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini described the decision to

commit to a full diplomatic presence in Turkmenistan as, ‘a sign of commitment of the European Union to increase our partnership and cooperation in many different fields’ (confirmed by article [5F]).

The Policy Advisor to the AFET Committee confirms that Anceschi’s presentation and report [5B] directly informed the Draft Interim Report [5C], which was later adopted as the Parliament’s resolution on 19 March 2019—establishing the good governance benchmarks to be monitored by the EU. He wrote that, ‘Anceschi’s research advised the formulation and careful setting of targeted benchmarks to measure Turkmenistan’s progress in the rule of law dimension as a prerequisite for further cooperation with the European Union (confirmed by statement [5G])

Reflecting upon the progress made to date, the Policy Advisor to the AFET Committee added, ‘The monitoring of the conditions set out in this Resolution will be crucial in determining the institutional path towards the ratification of the Partnership & Cooperation Agreement between Turkmenistan and the European Union moving forward’. He continued, ‘The development of a PCA between the European Union and Turkmenistan is a necessarily slow process and will require continued engagement and negotiations [...] The implementation of monitoring mechanisms and the ultimate ratification of the PCA remain a long-term goal [...] Dr Anceschi’s policy advice will help guide the ratification of the Partnership & Cooperation Agreement with Turkmenistan in the foreseeable future’. (confirmed by statement [5G])

4.6. Beneficiaries

The primary beneficiaries of Anceschi’s research and engagement activities are policymakers within the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs. The secondary beneficiaries are EU and Turkmen citizens, who stand to benefit from closer international trading and human rights improvements. Due to the European Parliament election in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, progress in the full implementation of human rights monitoring in Turkmenistan has been delayed. Nevertheless, Anceschi’s research has played a significant role in overcoming a major obstacle to improving relations between the EU and Turkmenistan within the REF period.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[5A] Statement from the AFET Rapporteur on the Turkmenistan file (confirms the role of the research in shaping the policy agenda and in building consensus among MEPs on the Draft Interim Report) [\[PDF Available\]](#).

[5B] [Engaging Turkmenistan at a Time of Economic Crisis](#) (2017) Paper requested by the European Parliament’s Committee on Foreign Affairs (Anceschi is listed as a co-author on p.2 and his research-based activities listed throughout) [\[PDF Available\]](#).

[5C] [European Parliament Draft Interim Report 1998/0031R\(NLE\)](#) (statement [5G] confirms that this report was directly informed by Anceschi’s research and engagement activities) [\[PDF Available\]](#).

[5D] [European Parliament Plenary Sitting Interim Report A8-0072/2019](#) (confirms the details of the positive vote on p.12) [\[PDF Available\]](#).

[5E] International Partnership for Human Rights article: ‘[EU-Turkmenistan Human Rights Dialogue: Push for implementation of new benchmarks](#)’ (27 March 2019) [\[PDF Available\]](#).

[5F] Official Website of the European Union - News Story: ‘[High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini visited Ashgabat to sign the Establishment Agreement of an EU Delegation to Turkmenistan.](#)’ [\[PDF Available\]](#).

[5G] Statement from the Policy Advisor to the AFET Committee (October 2020) (confirms the role of Anceschi’s research in the setting of targeted benchmarks to measure Turkmenistan’s progress in the rule of law dimension as a prerequisite for further cooperation with the European Union) [\[PDF Available\]](#).