

The Central Asian–European relationship at a crossroads?

SIPRI Director Dan Smith in conversation with the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia and SIPRI experts

In 2007, the European Union adopted the *Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia*. Nearly a decade later, the countries and societies of Central Asia have experienced important domestic and international change. The recent death of Uzbekistan's long-term leader Islam Karimov marks the beginning of a shift to a new leadership generation in key countries of the region, and raises questions about how Central Asia's non-democratic politics will adapt to these power transitions. Despite some progress in the region over the past twenty-five years, much of Central Asia is confronted by stagnant economies, low levels of human development and deep-seated corruption. With opposition movements suppressed and human rights under pressure from governments, the region has experienced incidents of extremist violence.

Externally, the rise of China and the launch of its *One Belt, One Road* initiative and the revitalization of Russia's interest in Central Asia has begun to shift Central Asia's geo-economics and to challenge its 'multipolar' foreign and security policies.

What are the key regional security challenges facing Central Asia? Will Central Asia's non-democratic model of stability endure as the region experiences internal change and new external relationships? How can the EU best build its relationship with the states and societies of Central Asia as the region transforms?

Friday, 21 October 2016, 10:30–12:30
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
Signalistgatan 9, Solna

Programme: *Coffee will be served at 10:30; the discussion will start at 10:45*

Panellists:



H.E. Ambassador Peter Burian
EU Special Representative for Central Asia



Dr Neil Melvin, Senior Researcher
Russia and Eurasia Programme, SIPRI



Ekaterina Klimenko, Researcher
Russia and Eurasia Programme, SIPRI



Moderator:

Dan Smith, Director, SIPRI

Please confirm your participation by **19 October** to Ms *Cynthia Loo*,
SIPRI Senior Management Assistant, Tel: 08-655 97 51, email: cloo@sipri.org