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IBI (India) = 4.260
OAJI (USA) = 0.350

SOI: [1.1/TAS](#) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](#)

International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2021 Issue: 12 Volume: 104

Published: 28.12.2021 <http://T-Science.org>

QR – Issue



QR – Article



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THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DECISION ON THE ARAL PROBLEM

Abstract: In this article, the author, using diverse, scientific and scientific-journalistic materials, sheds light on the history of solving the Aral problem. Based on the analysis of historical data, the role and place of the European Union and international organizations in the Republic of Karakalpakstan are identified, their characteristics are presented. The ecological and socio-economic situation of the Karakalpak people is reflected in the context of the activities of the European Union, the World Bank, UNDP, and UNEP. The article contains interesting fragments that are rarely found in archival materials.

Key words: Aral problem, ecology, Karakalpakstan, Central Asia, European Union, international organization, cooperation.

Language: English

Citation: Genjemuratov, Y. (2021). The role of the European union and international organizations in the decision on the Aral problem. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 12 (104), 1178-1181.

Soi: <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-12-104-133> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2021.12.104.133>
Scopus ASCC: 2303.

Introduction

Uzbekistan is unable to bear the burden of its heavy inheritance – the Aral catastrophe. For this reason, the government of the Republic of Uzbekistan set this catastrophe as the prime task on its agenda in terms of uniting the efforts of all the Central Asian republics. As a result of the efforts of a large group of experts and scientists, on February 18, 1992, in the city of Alma-Ata, the Ministers of Water Resources of the above republics signed an agreement on behalf of their republics, on the establishment of an inter-republic commission for the coordination of water management, cooperation in the use and protection of shared water resources, and the adoption of collegial decisions on the issues of general water management. Besides, Central Asian states made joint decision about restoration of a watershed that operated of the sea basin before. These solutions are very important for providing with water to prevent final desiccation of Aral Sea coast.

In August 1992, in the city of Nukus, an international scientific conference on the Aral problem was held, the resolution of which was very important for the people of the region. Based on the decision of this conference on September 2, 1992, the

Cabinet of Ministers under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 405 "On accelerating global efforts to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters and social environmental problems." To implement this resolution, the government of Uzbekistan has made great efforts. Most of the measures specified in the resolution were implemented. Karakalpakstan and the Khorezm region received a large amount of humanitarian assistance during this period, including supplies of necessary devices and medicines.

With the active participation of the first president of Uzbekistan, the level of attention of the international community to the environmental problems in the Aral Sea area has increased. The World Bank, UNDP and UNEP are actively involved in the implementation of the Aral Sea program. A number of meetings, seminars and conferences devoted to the Aral problem were held in the Republic. Through the years of independence, a lot of work has been done under the program, such as planting trees to protect the Aral coast. Work on planting *saksaul* on an area of 1.5 million hectares, owned by Uzbekistan, began to yield good results. Particularly productive were the practical activities to

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create an action program and strategy for water resource management, increasing the responsibility of the population in protecting the environment, and restoring saline soils on the territory.

Due to independent development, Uzbekistan itself predetermined the further development of the scientific institutions of the republic. There was formed bio ecological research institute within Karakalpak branch of the Academy of the sciences of Uzbekistan..

The environmental disaster in the Aral Sea region places agriculture in a more difficult situation. In these conditions, the right decision was to form a branch of the Agricultural Academy of Uzbekistan in Karakalpakstan. Informed scientific

recommendations on agriculture and animal husbandry are of great benefit in the selection of the best varieties of agricultural crops and the improvement of species and livestock.

Cooperation was established with scientific centers in Australia, the USA, Germany, South Korea, Malaysia, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, France, China, Japan and India, and the volume of joint scientific research is gradually expanding [1].

The first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, noted that the Aral ecological catastrophe has been viewed with alarm as a tragedy of global scale [2]. It is also natural that its fate is closely connected with the fate of all the independent states of Central Asia. "All in all, we must deal with the fate of the Aral Sea together," said Islam Karimov. "To this end, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan ought to create a strong, single interstate organization. I believe that this new international organization should be located in the city of Nukus, which will create conditions for the effective accomplishment of the tasks "[2].

From September 18 to September 20, 1995, the International Conference on Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea Basin States was held in Nukus. The forum was attended by representatives of the United States, Australia, Austria, France, Japan, India and other countries, as well as experts from authoritative international organizations, foreign experts, and representatives of Central Asian republics.

Participants of the conference, who arrived in the capital of Karakalpakstan, circled over the Aral Sea water area on September 17, and also visited the capital's exhibition of science and technology achievements in the field of environmental protection.

The Chairman of the Jokargi Kenes (Supreme Soviet) of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Ubbiniaz Ashirbekov, the Deputy Director of the Office of the United Nations Development Program for Europe and the CIS (Common wealth of Independent States), Elizabeth Fong, and Chairman of the UN Commission, Ambassador Bo Kuelen, spoke about

the work carried out by Central Asian countries and the world community as a whole to eliminate the consequences of the environmental disaster that arose as a result of the desiccation of the Aral Sea.

Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Interstate Council for the Aral Sea Problems, Director of the Environment Department of the World Bank, Minister of the Environment and the Environment of the World Bank, minister of environment of the Republic of Turkey, representative of the United Nations Development Program Nakamura Tekohira and others had made presentations and projects on integrated environmental management, sustainable development and economic transformations.

On September 20, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Askar Akayev, and the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Imomali Rakhmonov arrived in the capital of the Republic of Karakalpakstan to participate in the final day of the International Conference on Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea Basin. A delegation from Turkmenistan, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Razhabov, also participated in the conference. Following the meeting, the presidents signed the "Nukus Declaration" of Central Asian states and international organizations on the problems of the sustainable development of the Aral Sea.

In the preamble to the Nukus Declaration, a historical digression into the past is made, and the efforts of the peoples of the Central Asian region to create oases in the deserts are paid tribute to. It is noted that the Aral crisis is the result of an ill-considered policy towards the environment and the use of natural resources. The aggravation of the ecological situation has a direct and indirect negative impact on the living conditions of 35 million inhabitants of the Aral Sea area. It emphasizes that regional bodies have been created and plans for concrete actions have been developed. Coordination of the cooperation is carried out by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP.

The Heads of State of Central Asia reaffirmed their commitment to full cooperation on the regional level, on a basis of mutual respect, good-neighborliness and determination to work further in the name of overcoming the consequences of the ecological crisis in the Aral Sea area and its impact on the environment and human beings.

These commitments are contained in four important sections: adherence to the principles of sustainable development; accession to international conventions and agreements; adherence to the principles of human development; promotion of the development of regional institutions [3].

In 1997, the permanent Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea was established, a branch of which continues to work

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fruitfully to this day. In 2000-2001, scientific work was carried out on the topic of "The Organization of Plasma Production in Nukus" costing USD 3 million. In 2001, the Center for Dental Treatment and Prosthetics in Nukus was built, for which USD 350,000 was allocated.

There was an opportunity to attract foreign investment for the exploration of mineral deposits in the Ustyurt Plateau, in the Aral Sea and their development for the benefit of the people in the area.

Together with the Russian company Lukoil and the joint-stock company Gazprom, Petronas Charigali (Malaysia), the South Korean companies KNOC, KOGAS, DAEWOO conduct jointly work on finding of the gas, oil and restoration of the functioning oil wells.

As a result of the modernization of the processing enterprises of the region on the basis of high technologies, the production of the new type's products that fully comply with international standards is being widely established. In particular, during 1991-2010, the production of gas and gas condensate, glassware, sunflower oil, soda ash, vermiculite concentrate, talc magnetite and glycerin was mastered. The joint ventures Turtkul Textile, Nukus Textile, Asia Silk, Orient Technology and Lanextract put in order the production of cotton, cocoons, leather, and licorice after modernization and production of export-oriented products [4].

Through the commissioning of the joint production of Lanextrat in the Chimbay region, the total volume of exports in 2010 increased by USD 2.4 million. It is expected that this year the figure will exceed USD 4 million. In the Nukus textile tried enterprise the production of 25 kinds of children's knitted clothes. For the first year the enterprise produced goods over 750 million sums (Uzbek currency) and exported USD 256,000 worth of products.

Under the leadership of the first President of the country, the active development of chemical industry began in the Aral Sea area. The commissioning of the Kungrad Soda Plant helped to strengthen the economic potential of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, increase the volume of exports and employ thousands of people. The enterprise, with a production capacity of 100,000 tons of soda ash per year, is already operating at full capacity. Last year, the plant produced 903,000 tons of product, most of which was exported. This year, on the basis of the enterprise, joint ventures for the production of mineral powders, silicate bricks and detergents are planned to be put into operation, creating extra jobs.

As a result of economic growth, the region is financially stable. In 2001 year the volume of subsidy consisted of 62 presents. As of January 1, 2007, the budget of Karakalpakstan as a whole is no longer

subsidized [5]. This has been achieved due to a steady increase in the volume of industrial products and the development of production infrastructure.

Year on year, foreign economic relations are developing. Whereas in 2001 there were 28 enterprises in the region receiving foreign investment, now there are 48. The volume of production of these enterprises has doubled; in 2010, it amounted to 58.2 billion soums (Uzbek currency).

One result of such cooperation is the joint Uzbek-Cyprian venture Orient Technologies for the production of leather based on modern technologies, which began operating in Nukus. At the enterprise, where 300,000 cattle skins are processed annually and 4,800 tons of products are produced, production of goods worth USD 500,000 has been established in a short period of time. This is exported to Russia, Turkey and Italy. In the long term, it is planned to process goatskin and sheepskin and create an additional almost one hundred new jobs.

The Ustyurt gas and chemical complex is one of the world's largest oil and gas projects. In 2012, the international edition of Project Finance International recognized the project and the financial agreement for it as the best in the petrochemical and gas chemical sector. This project was also awarded the international awards "The best deal of 2012" by the publications "Trade Finance Magazine" and "Global Trade Review."

On March 13, 2014, another authoritative international publication, "Infrastructure Journal" gave a prestigious purse "Global Trade 2014 in Oil and Gas spheres in 2014 year".

This project is financed by direct investment from the founders of the joint venture – the South Korean companies Kogas, Lotte Chemical, STX Energy and the National Holding Company Uzbekneftegaz of USD 1.4 billion, as well as credit resources to a total of more than USD 2.5 billion.

Such authoritative financial institutions as the Asian Development Bank, Korea Development Bank, Korea Finance Corporation (Republic of Korea), China Development Bank (China), ING (Netherlands), Hermes, KFW, Bayern LB, Siemens Bank (Germany), Credit Suisse (Switzerland), EKN, Nordea and SEC (Sweden) as well as export-import agencies of South Korea, Germany and Sweden provided coverage for participating banks in the project, which gives an indication of its prospects and reliability.

Thus, it should be pointed out that the great role belong to the international organizations, especially UNDP, European Union, UNEP, World Bank and others contribute a great effort on Aral Sea crisis easing. Particularly thanks to them, there is improving social and ecological infrastructure.

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