

ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRAL ASIA ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP 2010/2011

2011 is a landmark year for the countries of Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – as it marks the 20th anniversary of their independence. The activities of the individual country and regional All-Party Parliamentary Groups have led to greater understanding of their individual and regional contributions to regional and geo-political issues, including that of Afghanistan, and to the establishment of relationships with their Parliaments. In addition, ways in which the United Kingdom's interests can be strengthened in this emerging region of strategic importance have been constantly borne in mind.

Whilst there is regular day-to-day communication with the London-based embassies and matching United Kingdom embassies, the culmination of recent activities has been the signing of a co-operation agreement by each of the five Central Asian Parliaments. The twelve point agreements (varying in points of detail with each Parliament) set out the guiding principles for political, economic and social understanding and development, thus addressing and contributing to a missing link in bi-lateral relationships. This is unusual in that few such documents have been signed by all these countries to date.



Lord Waverley and Senator Safaev, Uzbekistan

There have been successful outbound and inbound Parliamentary exchanges with each country, multiple meetings with high-ranking Government representatives, attendance and speeches at conferences, participation in various debates, and questions asked in Parliament. This is in addition to working towards the objectives of the co-operation agreements with, for example, promotion of rule of law, democracy and human rights. Interest by more people and organisations, whether it be from within the Parliamentary arena or elsewhere, would be welcomed to assist in this process which includes contribution to climate change and environmental awareness, especially the importance of regional energy and water security, further economic development, trade and inward investment and the promotion of cultural and educational exchanges.

This year's completed objectives included more contact with the Parliaments of Central Asia, the launch of a monthly newsletter to Members of Parliament and the provision of 'Parliament Revealed', a two hour internet-based production with Russian and other language voice overs, explaining how and why the United Kingdom parliament operates in the way it does. The Parliamentary Group is also contributing to a consultative process with the Cambridge Central Asia Forum in a global analysis encompassing multi-directional views of the region.

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Chairman