
COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)

Note: As of May 2007 this file will no longer be updated.

Established: 1991.

Membership: 12 States — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Background: The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was founded in 1991 after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Meetings are held periodically on a rotating basis at the CIS countries' capitals. An informal summit was held in Sochi, Russia in July 2001. Forums include the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Prime Ministers, and the Council of Foreign Ministers.

Upon its foundation, members adopted the Alma-Ata Declaration, which confirmed the promise of the former republics to cooperate in various fields of external and internal policies, and announced the guarantees for implementation of the international commitments of the former Soviet Union. Georgia joined the Commonwealth in December 1993.

The CIS performs its activities on the basis of the Charter, adopted by the Council of Heads of States on 22 January 1993, which stipulates the goals and principles of the Commonwealth, and rights and obligations of the countries. The Charter states that the Commonwealth was formed on the basis of sovereign equality of all its members and that the Member States were independent and equal subjects under international law. The Charter also states that the CIS serves the development and strengthening of friendship, inter-ethnic accord, trust, mutual understanding, and cooperation between States.

The Commonwealth does not have supranational powers. Countries' interaction within the CIS is accomplished through its coordinating institutions: the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government, the Councils of Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers, Border Troops Commanders, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, the Executive Committee (the legal successor of the Executive Secretariat), and the Interstate Economic Committee of the Economic Union.

CIS Collective Security Council: The Collective Security Council adopted documents such as the Collective Security Concept, the Declaration by the Col-

lective Security Treaty States, and the Basic Guidelines for Deepening Military Cooperation among the Collective Security Treaty States. In accordance with these documents, national contingents are organized into three sectors (Western, Trans-Caucasus, and Central Asia) and engage in joint exercises within their sector.

Verification and Compliance: The Commonwealth does not have supranational powers. However, obligations which arise during the period of participation in the CIS Charter are binding on the relevant States until full compliance therewith. Violations by Member States of this Charter, systematic failure by a State to fulfill its obligations pursuant to agreements concluded under the framework of the Commonwealth, or decisions of the bodies of the Commonwealth, are to be examined by the Council of Heads of States. Measures permitted under international law may be imposed in relation to such a State.

Developments:

2007: The CIS Council of Heads of State met in Yalta, Crimea, on 25 May to discuss energy issues. Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan signed an agreement on forming a common energy market intended to expand electricity trade and increase access to energy resources in CIS countries. On 29 May, the CIS Electric Power Council met in Yerevan to discuss the possibility of the common energy market.

The CIS Defense Ministers Council met on 20 June to discuss military cooperation. Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said that the Council had created a specific military cooperation plan through 2010. The meeting also discussed financial questions about the CIS Joint Air Defense System. Also approved was a plan for the Comradeship-in-Arms joint exercises to be held in four parts between June and September. The air defense exercises involve Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan.

2006: In May, Ukraine and Georgia began talks discussing the possibility of seceding from the CIS. Representatives of both states said that they would analyze whether or not the benefits of CIS member-

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ship outweighed the costs. While Ukraine later promised to remain a member, Georgia stated that a slow pullout was being considered.

On 25 May, the Heads of Government of the CIS met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The meeting focused on making the organization more efficient. In total, 22 documents were discussed, 15 of which were signed without discussion. Among the approved documents was an agreement to create an international fund on humanitarian cooperation.

The Heads of Government also met in Minsk on 24 November to discuss issues of integration between CIS members, including cooperative law enforcement, security, and a joint air defense system.

2005: At the meeting of the Heads of Governments in Tbilisi, which took place on 3 June 2005, no resolution relevant to nonproliferation or WMD was adopted. The same is true for the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which convened in Moscow on 23 August 2005.

The CIS Heads of States meeting on 26 August 2005 adopted several resolutions, including one on military cooperation and another on the fight against terrorism. In the latter resolution the parties agreed to intensify their cooperation in the fight against terrorism and to implement the measures of the ongoing program. In the other resolution the heads of state decided to strengthen the conception of military cooperation and to implement it until 2010.

2004: At a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Minsk in March, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko identified fighting terrorism as the CIS's main priority. Council members also discussed the importance of efforts to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery vehicles.

The CIS Heads of Government met on 16 April in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan to address several issues, including anti-terrorism efforts, transport issues, and the possibility of establishing a single bureau to coordinate States' efforts against organized crime, drug trafficking, and terrorism. Leaders also agreed to create a reserve fund for providing financial and material assistance to States dealing with or recovering from natural or industrial emergencies. On 17 April, it was also announced that the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly would dispatch a team of observers to Kosovo to gather information on the situation there and present their findings to the regu-

lar session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

On 21 May, the Council of Defense Ministers met in Armenia. They addressed a variety of topics, including the status of plans to set up a system for controlling portable anti-aircraft missile complexes. They also emphasized their desire to reach a multilateral consensus regarding their positions on nuclear non-proliferation.

In June, the Council of CIS Interior Ministers met in Chisinau, Moldova with representatives of the Executive Committee, the Antiterrorism Center, and the Organized Crime Bureau in attendance to discuss the implementation of plans to combat terrorism. This followed the Russian intelligence services' launching of anti-terrorist operations in the CIS region.

2003: The Council of Foreign Ministers met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 11 April to discuss the war in Iraq and consider a draft program for the fight against international terrorism and extremism. The Iraqi situation, and particularly the need for an international role in post-war Iraq, was further addressed at a May meeting of the CIS leaders in St. Petersburg. Also that month, a conference was held at the CIS headquarters in Moscow to review the effectiveness of radar identification systems and discuss other issues related to military cooperation.

From 18-19 September, the Council of Heads of State, Council of Heads of Government, and Council of Foreign Ministers all held meetings in Yalta to discuss a range of economic, social, humanitarian, and military issues. Under Chairman Mr. N.T. Tanayev, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Heads of Government signed an agreement calling for CIS member States' interaction in the field on international shipments by cargo tracking, a memorandum on cooperation in the field of international transport corridors, and a declaration on the provision of security on transport in member States. Additionally, they decided to create a Council of Heads of Governmental Organs to regulate the securities market.

The meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers focused on cooperation in the anti-crime and anti-terrorism arena. The ministers approved a decision on measures to control certain portable air defense system sales in CIS States and an additional resolution setting up a joint coordination structure to monitor migration.

The meeting of the Council of Heads of State on 19 September was chaired by Mr. L.D. Kuchma, President of Ukraine. Leaders endorsed a plan for the es-

tablishment of a free trade zone, and Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan signed a separate agreement that would coordinate tariff, customs, and transport legislation. Regarding nuclear issues, the Council recalled the Chernobyl accident, and supported a joint proposal by Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine to supplement text in the UN General Assembly resolution, “On strengthening international cooperation and coordination of efforts in examining, mitigating, and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe,” in its treatment of a proclamation making 26 April an International Memorial Day for Victims of Radiation-Related Incidents. The Heads of State Council also issued a decision describing their commitment to measures to stop the conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia.

At a December meeting, the CIS Council of Defense Ministers met to discuss and further plan the development of multilateral military cooperation among member States.

2002: On 14 June at its regular session, the CIS Council of Defense Ministers adopted a decision on exchanges of air defense data. They also decided to establish a common database for their air defense systems and approved a list of airfields, the services of which may be engaged by the aircraft of CIS countries in the event of necessity. It is planned that mechanisms for “a common military communications system” will be worked out at the council’s next session.

On 7 October, the meeting of the Council of the Heads of States ended with the signing of a number of documents on strengthening the integration processes in the Commonwealth. One of the documents is about a program on military-technical cooperation between CIS countries. The heads of the CIS also decided to create a Central Asian division of the CIS anti-terrorist center and to approve a regulation on the procedure for organizing joint anti-terrorist measures in the CIS and other documents.

2001: The Councils of Heads of State, Heads of Government, and Heads of Foreign Policy met from 31 May to 1 June. Among the various issues addressed were efforts to combat terrorism and other crime and to increase military cooperation. The Heads of State supported a proposal to declare 26 April the International Day in Memory of Victims of Radiation Accidents and Catastrophes, in honor of the anniversary of the Chernobyl accident.

Also in June, Valery Vorotnikov, a member of the Permanent Commission on Legal Matters of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the Russian State

Duma, announced that the Customs Union of the five CIS countries would become the Eurasian Economic Community (EVRAZES) before the year’s end.

At the informal summit in July in Sochi, Kyrgyz President Askar Akayev and Russian President Putin met to discuss Central Asian security, in particular developments in Afghanistan and the impending danger of Muslim paramilitary invasion of the Kyrgyz south. Summit participants also exchanged opinions on the implementation of an all-around bilateral partnership program to continue until the year 2010, which was signed when President Akayev visited Moscow in 2000.

The CIS Jubilee Summit convened in Moscow from 29-30 November. Member States adopted an analytical report on work done over the past decade and future tasks. They also adopted an action plan to raise the level of efficiency of coordinating foreign political activity among member States, and supported an initiative by the Council of Heads of Security Organs to prepare draft procedures for conducting joint anti-terrorist actions within the CIS territory.

2000: On 25 January, at the meeting of the Heads of States and governments, Mr. Vladimir Putin was elected Chairman of the Council of Heads of State. The meeting adopted decisions on counteracting international terrorism in light of the OSCE Istanbul summit and decisions on the draft program of action for the development of the CIS until 2005. Heads of States also analyzed the report on the implementation of the interstate program of joint measures for the struggle against organized crime and other dangerous crimes on the territory of CIS Member States for the period until 2000.

At the May Collective Security Council meeting, the Parties to the Collective Security Treaty adopted a memorandum on enhancing the effectiveness of the Treaty.

At a 20-21 June summit in Moscow, the Presidents of the 12 CIS countries adopted a Declaration on Maintaining Strategic Stability. In this document, the Heads of States expressed their devotion to strengthening the world’s strategic security. They welcomed Russia’s ratification of the START II Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the 1997 package of agreements on missile defense. They expressed their hope that these documents would be ratified soon by the United States. In addition, they issued a joint statement saying that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty must remain the “foundation of global strategic stability, international security and peace around the world,” and that any

abrogation would undermine “steps toward the further reduction of strategic nuclear armaments.” They also established a joint anti-terrorism center to be based in Moscow, which will be jointly run by Russia and Ukraine. Only Turkmenistan will not participate.

The CIS Heads of State and Heads of Government met in Minsk from 30 November to 1 December. Delegates focused largely on plans for the CIS Anti-terrorist Center, which will serve to coordinate the efforts of various bodies within CIS States to prevent the spread of international terrorist activity and help in conducting investigations and operations. They also adopted a joint declaration on the closing of the Chernobyl atomic power station, among other decisions.

1999: At a meeting of the Collective Security Council on 2 April, the Collective Security Treaty was extended for another five years by a Protocol to the Treaty, which also created an automatic five-year extension mechanism for the future. Uzbekistan withdrew from the Treaty shortly before its extension.

1998: In April, the Council of Heads of State met in Moscow and adopted the decision on the conduct of the Special Interstate Forum for improvement of the CIS’s activity and its reformation. They also adopted the Protocol decision on the program of development of military cooperation between the CIS States.

1997: The Council of Heads of State and the Council of Heads of Government held meetings in March. They discussed documents relating to the issues of peace-keeping in the conflict zone of Abkhazia, Georgia, and they prolonged the presence of the collective peace-making forces in Tajikistan.

1996: The CIS Customs Union was created in March and includes five of the CIS countries (Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, and Tajikistan).

1995: On 31 May, security chiefs from the CIS signed an agreement on combating organized crime, which included protocols on nuclear smuggling, terrorism, drug trafficking, and “illegal armed formations.”

1994: Upon completion of the ratification process, the Collective Security Treaty entered into force 20 April for a period of five years. CIS members signed the CIS Free-Trade Zone Treaty.

1993: In September, the Heads of States signed the Treaty on the Establishment of the Economic Union, in which they developed the concept of transformation of economic interaction within the Common-

wealth. The Treaty was based on the necessity to form a common economic area based on the principles of free movement of goods, services, workers, and capital; to elaborate concerted money and credit, tax, price, customs, and foreign economic policies; to harmonize the methods of management of economic activities; and to create favorable conditions for development of direct production links.

1992: On 26 June in Minsk, eight CIS countries (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan) signed the agreement on the coordination of work related to the issues of export control over raw materials, materials, equipment, technologies, and services used or capable of being used for the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction and missiles as their means of delivery. The States Parties agreed to pursue coordinated export control policies, including the application of sanctions against all economic entities that violate the export control requirements.

The Collective Security Treaty was concluded 15 May in Tashkent by Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Georgia acceded to the Treaty later on.

Point of Contact:

Current Chairman of the CIS Executive Committee:

Yuri Yarov

Deputy Chairman: Dimitri Pyatrovich Bulyakov

Address:

Ulitsa Kirova, 17

Minsk, 220050

BELARUS

Tel: (8-1037517) 222-3517, 227-8074

Fax: (8-1037517) 227-2339

E-mail: webmaster@www.cis.minsk.by

Website: <http://www.cis.minsk.by/>