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Presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan: Jeenbekov and its future challenges

Following the presidential elections held on 15th October, Sooronbai Jeenbekov has become the fourth president of independent Kyrgyzstan. Future orientations in foreign policy and the gradual process to establish a parliamentary democracy, moving from a presidential political system, are two of the main challenges for the new president.

In these 26 years of independence, Kyrgyzstan has followed a different path from the others four Central Asian post-soviet republics: as a matter of fact, in 2005 and in 2010 two so-called revolutions respectively ousted Akayev and Bakiev from the role of President. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan currently is the only Central Asian republics strongly engaged to build a parliamentary democracy: the former President Almazbek Atambaev respected the constitutional law who barred him from running for a second consecutive six-year term.

Given that Jeenbekov is considered an ally of the former president, he should preserve a political continuity with him. Jeenbekov will confirm a pro-Russian orientation in foreign policy, which pushed Kyrgyzstan to join the Eurasian Economic Union (a supranational economic union backed by Moscow also comprising Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia) in 2015 and to end the United States lease on the Manas military airbase in June 2014. However, the inclusion in the EEU has sharply affected the national economy, mainly because the imposition of higher tariffs on non-EEU goods and services has hampered the lucrative activity of re-exporting Chinese goods from Kyrgyzstan to the Central Asian markets.

In the security field, the new President Jeenbekov will decide to support or not the Atambaev's proposal to Russia, to create a CSTO military facility in the vulnerable Kyrgyz-Tajik border - a potential source of threats to the national security - rather reinforce Kant military base close to Bishkek.

Fabio Indeo - *PhD holder in Geopolitics at University of Trieste and non-resident fellow research at Center for Energy Governance and Security (EGS South Korea)*