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## CASCADE Newsletter, November 2014

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### Editorial

#### Building bridges between Europe and the Caucasus

*By Laure Delcour, Scientific Coordinator and Research Fellow, CASCADE, Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris*

The Caucasus is a highly challenging region to policy-makers and researchers alike, with complex and sometimes dialectical dynamics in both its Southern and Northern parts. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the region has been deeply affected by various conflicts, some of which remain very volatile. Lately, the Caucasus has also been heavily influenced by the reshaping of geopolitical relations and tensions around the region, not least in Ukraine. Many of the tensions affecting Caucasian societies feed into socio-economic cleavages, political systems and governance. Despite impressive economic growth in some Caucasus countries over the past decade, the region suffers from entrenched corruption and widening disparities in wealth, leading to socio-economic and territorial divides. Moreover, in the last few years the Caucasus has witnessed a shrinking of the democratic space and increased authoritarianism in several places.

The Caucasus – now a neighbouring region of the European Union (EU) – merits increased attention and understanding from Europe. Considerable research has been carried out in the region over the past decades, yet much of it is scattered across a number of disciplines, countries and languages,

and is not broadly shared among policy-makers and academics. The EU's decision to fund large-scale research on the Caucasus (through CASCADE and its sister project ISSICEU) offers an unprecedented opportunity to bring together various disciplines and strands of research, connect several levels of analysis and generate much needed empirical data on a fast-changing region.

A better understanding of the complex local and regional environment is key to effective EU policies. Despite having substantially stepped up its involvement in the region, especially in the South Caucasus, the European Union is still a relatively new actor there. The EU's flagship policy, the Eastern Partnership (EaP), was launched in 2009 but its core components (political association, deep free-trade area, visa liberalisation) will only apply to Georgia and not to Armenia, Azerbaijan and the North Caucasus (which is part of the Russian Federation). The Caucasus context will be the starting point for CASCADE research, which will then be linked to the EU's policy framework and the broader European and Caucasus neighbourhoods. CASCADE seeks to influence EU policy toward the Caucasus. It will do so not only by contributing to an enriched understanding of what is happening in and around the Caucasus through policy relevant recommendations, but also by building bridges between Europe and the Caucasus, which are meant to last beyond the project's lifetime.

## Publications

**CASCADE Policy Brief: Nigar Goksel, ‘Turkey’s Russia conundrum: CASCADE Policy Brief: Nigar Goksel, ‘Turkey’s Russia conundrum: To court or to curb?’**, *FRIDE Policy Brief 185*, September 2014

The Ukraine crisis has exposed Turkey’s efforts to avoid direct involvement in Russia-EU tensions. Ankara essentially hovers between gaining economic advantages from cooperation with Moscow and counterbalancing Russian assertiveness in the region. But Turkey’s relatively neutral position will not be sustainable if its vital energy and security interests in the Caucasus are threatened. An alignment of EU-Turkey tactical cooperation and strategic thinking towards the Black Sea region has been distinctly lacking, but Turkish societal links with East European and South Caucasus countries could become an asset for Turkish-EU cooperation. Read more <http://fride.org/publication/1222/turkey%E2%80%99s-russia-conundrum:-to-court-or-to-curb?>

**Commentary: Jos Boonstra, ‘Rethinking relationships in Europe’s East’**, *FRIDE Commentary 21*, November 2014

EU neighbourhood policies have produced few results in the tumultuous South and have been derailed both by Russia’s assertiveness and by very uneven local commitment in the East. A thorough review of the EU’s approach should be a top priority of the new EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, and neighbourhood commissioner Johannes Hahn. EU policy towards the East (perhaps via a renewed Eastern Partnership) should be more flexible, potentially broader in the number of countries it includes, but especially customise bilateral ties. The EU should be prepared for ongoing problematic relations with Russia and be ready to assist countries that genuinely want to implement democratic reform and build closer ties with the Union. Read more [http://fride.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Commentary21\\_Rethinking\\_relationships\\_in\\_Europes\\_East.pdf](http://fride.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Commentary21_Rethinking_relationships_in_Europes_East.pdf)

**Essay: Laure Delcour and Hrant Kostanyan, ‘Towards a Fragmented Neighbourhood. Policies of the EU and Russia and their consequences for the area that lies in between’**, *CEPS essay 17*, October 2014

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine not only challenges the country’s stability, sovereignty and integrity, it is also the culmination of the increasingly open rivalry between the European Union and Russia over their ‘common’ neighbourhood. Competition between Brussels and Moscow has crystallised in the region around two mutually exclusive integration projects, the Eastern Partnership and the Eurasian Customs Union.

But the current crisis goes much beyond rivalry between two economic integration projects. Ultimately, it is likely

to turn the area located between the EU and Russia into a fragmented neighbourhood; a highly unstable and volatile region with changing and overlapping external influences and shifting loyalties. Read more <http://www.ceps.be/system/files/CEPS%20Essay%20No%2017%20Fragmented%20Neighbourhood%20-%20H%20Kostanyan%20L%20Delcour.pdf>

**Book: Florian Mühlfried, Being a State and States of Being in Highland Georgia** (Oxford, New York: Berghahn, 2014)

The highland region of Georgia, one of the former Soviet Socialist republics, has long been hailed for its beauty. It is largely unexplored and alien to the state. Taking a fresh look at the Georgian highlands allows the author to consider perennial questions of citizenship, belonging and mobility in a context that has otherwise been known mainly for its folkloric dimensions. Scrutinizing forms of identification with the state at its margins, as well as local encounters with the erratic Soviet and post-Soviet state, the author argues that citizenship is both a sought-after means of entitlement and a way of guarding against the state. This book not only challenges theories in the study of citizenship but also the axioms of integration in Western social sciences in general. Read more <http://www.berghahnbooks.com/title.php?rowtag=MuehlfriedBeing>

**Article: Sophie Hohmann, Cécile A Lefèvre and Michel L Garenne, A framework for analyzing sex-selective abortion: the example of changing sex ratios in Southern Caucasus**, *International Journal of Women’s Health*, Volume 2014:6 Pages 889-97, 2014

This paper proposes a socio-economic framework of supply, demand, and regulation to explain the development of sex-selective abortion in several parts of the world. This framework is then applied to three South Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) where sex-selective abortion has happened since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The authors argue that sex-selective abortion cannot be explained simply by patriarchal social systems, sex discrimination, or preference for male offspring. The emphasis is put on the long-term acceptability of abortion in the region, the acceptability of sex-screening by both the medical establishment and the population, newly-imported sex-screening techniques, and the changing demand for children associated with the major economic and social changes that followed the dismantlement of the Soviet Union. Read more <http://www.dovepress.com/a-framework-for-analyzing-sex-selective-abortion-the-example-of-changi-peer-reviewed-article-IJWH>

**Book: Sophie Hohmann, Silvia Serrano and Claire Mouradian. Edited by: Julien Thorez, Development in Central Asia and the Caucasus - Migration, Democratisation and Inequality in the Post-Soviet Era**, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014)

After the final collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the so-called 'last empire', the countries of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – and of the Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia – became independent nations. These countries, previously 'production centres' under the command economy system of the Soviet Union, have had to make enormous political and economic adjustments in order to develop along democratic and capitalist lines. Despite this, inequality in Central Asia and the Caucasus is widening as the Soviet systems of healthcare and education disappear. Rejecting the Cold War-era East/West paradigm often employed to analyse the development of this region, this book studies the phenomenon of skilled migration using the North-South model which has characterised the migration patterns and poverty levels of the rest of the developed world. Read more <http://www.ibtauris.com/development-central-asia-caucasus>

**Book: Anne Le Huérou, Aude Merlin, Amandine Regamey and Elisabeth Sieca-Kozłowski, [Chechnya at War and Beyond](#) (London: Routledge, 2014)**

The Russia-Chechen wars have had an extraordinarily destructive impact on the communities and on the trajectories of personal lives in the North Caucasus Republic of Chechnya. This book presents an in-depth analysis of

the Chechen conflicts and their consequences on Chechen society. It discusses the nature of the violence, examines the dramatic changes which have taken place in society, in the economy and in religion, and surveys current developments, including how the conflict is being remembered and how Chechnya is reconstructed and governed. Read more <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415744898/>

**Book chapter: Stephen J. Collier and Nino Kemoklidze, '[Pipes and Wires](#)', in Nigel Thrift, edited by Adam Tickell, Steve Woolgar, and William H. Rupp (eds.) *Globalization in Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)**

The concept of globalisation has become ubiquitous in social science and in the public consciousness, and is often invoked as an explanation for a diverse range of changes to economies, societies, politics and cultures – both as a positive liberating force and as a wholly negative one. Whilst our understanding of the politics, economics, and social resonance of the phenomenon has become increasingly sophisticated at the macro-level, this book argues that globalisation too often continues to be depicted as a set of extra-terrestrial forces with no real physical manifestation, except as effects. Read more <http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199212637.do>

## Events

**'EU and the South Caucasus: What Next for the Eastern Partnership?', 8 October 2014, Rome, Italy**

Jos Boonstra was a discussant at a meeting held in Rome on 8 October about the 'EU and the South Caucasus: What next for The Eastern Partnership?', organised by the Italian Institute for International relations (IAI). Read more [http://www.iai.it/pdf/convegna/Azerbaijan\\_141008.pdf](http://www.iai.it/pdf/convegna/Azerbaijan_141008.pdf)

**CASCADE panel at UACES conference, '[Security in the Caucasus: Past and Present](#)', 2 September 2014, Cork, Ireland**

Chaired by Dr. Laure Delcour, the panel focused on aspects of security in the Caucasus, with papers by CASCADE researchers presenting a historical view of Georgia-Abkhaz relations (Nino Kemoklidze); an analysis of recent Georgian foreign and security policy, combining systemic, balance-of-power, domestic, and ideological factors (Dr. Kevork Oskanian); and a theoretical framework for the study of security and democracy in the Caucasus region (Dr. Derek Averre). Read more <http://www.cascade-caucasus.eu/223>

**CASCADE partner GFSIS co-organises an event with EU-FP7 MAXCAP project, 'The EU, Russia and Turkey in the Neighbourhood', 8 October 2014, Tbilisi, Georgia**

The event provided the opportunity to critically assess the EU's strategy towards the Eastern neighbourhood and compare it to the policies pursued by other regional powers such as Russia and Turkey. It involved experts from the region, civil society organisations as well as representatives from the EU Delegation and EU diplomatic representations in Georgia. Read more <http://www.cascade-caucasus.eu/349>

**CASCADE team exchanges views on research and fieldwork methodology, Second Steering Committee meeting, 22-24 September, Paris, France**

The meeting gathered 25 CASCADE researchers in Paris on 22-24 September. It provided an opportunity to network, present the literature review on the security-democracy nexus and discuss in more detail the research to be conducted under specific topics, including methodology. Read more <http://www.cascade-caucasus.eu/335>

**[International Science Conference](#), 14-15 October, Tomsk, Russia**

Aude Merlin, Lecturer in Political Science at the ULB and member of CASCADE, delivered a presentation about the project. Her paper entitled 'Rethinking the role of war veterans in Caucasus' was presented at the conference '[Man in a changing world](#)'. Read more [http://lsar.tsu.ru/public/files/prog\\_abstr\\_conf\\_2014.pdf](http://lsar.tsu.ru/public/files/prog_abstr_conf_2014.pdf).

## Field Trips

### **Fieldwork in Chechnya, Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IGRAS), 12-17 October 2014 (in cooperation with EU-FP7 ISSICEU project)**

The team conducted interviews with members of the parliament, heads of administration, journalists and civil

society organisations. Interviews focused on the economic recovery and the implementation of investment projects in Chechnya, the interaction between tradition and modernisation, and post-conflict social mechanisms. Read more <http://www.cascade-caucasus.eu/443>

## Upcoming Events

### **Call for Papers – Conference ‘Religions and Secularities in the Caucasus: New Configuration’**

CASCADE project, in collaboration with the ISSICEU project and Ilia University, Tbilisi, 1-2 June 2015

The conference will look at changes in the religious landscape in the Caucasus from the angle of the common Russian/Soviet legacy. The latter has largely defined forms

of religion and secularity in the region in the last decades. Nevertheless, in spite of this common legacy, these developments differ greatly from one part of the region to another. The conference will also explore the relationship between local processes and larger regional or even global trends, in view of the growing interconnectedness of the Caucasus. Read more <http://www.cascade-caucasus.eu/279>

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