

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP: TOWARDS CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Official side-event of the Czech EU Presidency under the auspices of H.E. Mirek Topolánek,
Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

International Conference
May 5-6, 2009, Prague

Conference Synopsis

The Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative intends to mark a new beginning in the EU's relationship with its Eastern neighbours. Nowadays, the circumstances seem to be more complicated than they were five years ago when the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched. The creation of the ENP was accompanied with a widespread optimism regarding the developments in Ukraine and Georgia. However, the hopes and expectations have proven to be unreasonably high especially when it comes to the perspectives of the EU membership. Yet, there are lessons learned from that process and therefore „new beginning“ is not a start from the point zero.

Furthermore, the importance of the Eastern Partnership lays in renewed focus on Eastern Europe as well as in recognition that the six partner countries in the Eastern perimeter need to be treated distinctively from those neighbouring the EU in the Mediterranean region. Without any doubt, the significance of the initiative has been further strengthened in the aftermath of August 2008 war between Russia and Georgia and the European Commission in its December's Communication quite openly declares that the conflict contributed substantially to the acceleration of the preparations.

EaP is an ambitious project that seeks to tackle issues of utmost importance such as new framework of mutual relations (i.e. Associated Agreements) including Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), economic convergence or energy security.

The conference you are currently taking part of as panellists, workshop participants or observers intends to explore the role and possible space for engagement of civil societies in the respective countries as well as in EU27. This was an urgently missing accent in previous ENP documents and strategies. Promise of creation of the Civil Society Forum (CSF) declared in already mentioned EC's Communication could be important step in order to fill the existing gap. We believe that in the process of defining CSF, this conference will contribute positively to its shape. To achieve the purpose, we have gathered around 60 experts - civil society representatives – from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as well as those from the EU member countries. For us, EU's Eastern Policy has been a long standing priority, be it engagement in the promotion of open society projects or research.

By no means have we stood alone in the preparation process of this Conference. There are several partner institutions from the Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden, Germany or the United Kingdom as well as donor institutions. Role of both in making „Eastern Partnership: Towards Civil Society Forum“ has been essential.

Michal Thim,

Director of the Research Center
Association for International Affairs

Policy Recommendations for Eastern Partnership Summit

As formulated by participants of workshops of the conference “Eastern Partnership: Towards Civil Society Forum” on May 5, 2009.

WORKSHOP A

Building a Partnership of Shared Values?

Thematic focus: Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Interlinking progress in democracy and human rights with closer integration with the EU

- Clear benchmarks need to be set in order to assess progress in terms of democracy and the rule of law. Moreover, universal human rights standards need to be applied, so that country progress reports can address development towards democracy and target the required actions on the part of the partner governments for subsequent negotiations. In particular, the EU should include the assessments on democracy, electoral standards, and human rights by the Council of Europe, UN, OSCE/ODIHR, and civil society assessments, in its regular progress evaluations. The European Parliament should prepare its own monitoring reports to complement the Commission's reports.
- Regarding conditional mechanisms of reward or sanctions, well performing states should proceed with the negotiation of association agreements, while poorly performing states should seek reduced benefits or sanctions graduated according to the case. Where there is an insufficient progress in meeting the benchmarks, the EU should still assure the level of support to independent civil society (including capacity-building) to strengthen its impact on furthering democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the country concerned. People-to-people contacts and mobility should be increased regardless of governmental performance.
- The EU must further increase the size, capacity and expertise of its delegations and other personnel working with the EaP countries. Country reports should focus on implementation, not just adoption of laws or institutional arrangements. This requires follow-up support for implementation, including the public and civil society watchdog agencies.
- The legal framework and regulatory environment facing civil society development should be a subject of the political dialogue and also covered by the progress reports. Very specific conditionality has to be offered to different EaP countries, since the regulatory environment for civil society differs.

Support to civil society

- The civil society forum should be given a place in the operational structure of the Eastern Partnership, and should primarily comprise experts who will work in the respective Thematic Platform areas. Hence, the civil society forum should have four platforms to work with the four thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership initiative. The Democracy, Good Governance and Stability thematic platform should be re-named Democracy, Good Governance, Human Rights and Stability thematic platform, and the respective civil society platform should be supported in undertaking independent monitoring that should be made public as annexes to the progress reports for each country. The level of expertise should be a criterion for participation in the forum.
- The forum should include a monitoring group (group of civil society experts from all the EaP countries) which will monitor implementation of individual action plans, in particular, where the issues of democracy, rule of law, and human rights are concerned. It should be a permanent watch-dog group that will present regular monitoring reports conducted according to a common methodology and set of indicators for all countries. Regular reports should be presented to the Thematic Platform.

- The civil society forum website should be created, and funded by the European Parliament in order to give it more independence from the respective partner governments. The website should highlight human rights, civic freedoms, and the rule of law, and infringements in the partner countries. This should be a key communications channel for the civil society forum. In parallel, the EU should strengthen its own communications outreach in the EaP countries to disseminate information about the EU's values-based approach to democracy and human rights, and its commitment to a values-based deepening or neighbourhood relations. In the medium term, the Civil Society Forum should diversify its sources of funding, so that it is not completely dependent on the EU funding.
- The civil society facility (an instrument under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance - IPA) should be offered to EaP countries, in particular to strengthen civil society capacity. The reporting requirements for funding under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) should be further eased to make it possible for small organisations to apply.

WORKSHOP B

Resolving Conflicts: Pre-condition for Development in other Areas?

Thematic focus: Security and Peace Building

EU's greater emphasis on the role of civil society as it is suggested by the Eastern Partnership (EaP) should be welcomed. Civil society is a major stakeholder in a peace building process and has vital interest in solving conflicts which should contribute to democratization and development. Civil society has contributed to easing conflict tensions, establishing preventive and information sharing networks and bridging the divides.

Democracy building and conflict resolution is closely interconnected. Progress made in other areas of EaP concern (e. g. economic development or energy security) is not sustainable unless transformation and conflict resolution is achieved. EaP has a potential of becoming a platform to enhance Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) access to the decision making process regarding conflicts, negotiation processes etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Given the failure of conflict resolution processes so far EaP Civil Society Forum (CSF) should create greater and more inclusive space for the CSOs (including those representing IDPs) engagement in conflict resolution and peace building.
- EaP needs to engage CSOs from the conflict regions.
- Institutionalized dialogue should be created between the EU, CSOs and EaP governments (i.e. those of six partner countries) on conflict transformation. CSF could be a vehicle for this.
- EaP should help CSOs build effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the national/governmental and international policies and processes of conflict resolution.
- EaP should provide an avenue for transfer of positive examples of European experience and lessons learned in conflict transformation and addressing the issues of competing sovereignty claims and identity politics.
- Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) done by CSOs should be supported and implemented in various formats. Empowering the CSOs to put greater effort into elaborating and prioritizing CBMs should be given particular emphasis in the EaP/EaP CSF framework.

WORKSHOP C

EU Role in Economic Convergence of EaP Countries

Thematic Focus: Economic Integration

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The global financial crisis brought recession to the entire region challenging macroeconomic and social stability. The EU should help in providing adequate macro financial assistance packages to countries in need, through the IMF, other international financial institutions and through its own sources

* Economic cooperation and integration of EaP countries with the EU should be primarily based on bilateral basis with individual countries having a right to decide on the speed and depth, legal and institutional forms and sectors involved.

- * Progress in economic integration should evaluate on each individual country achievements and its particular economic conditions rather than on group performance.
- Clear prospects of FTAs should be offered to those EaP countries that are the WTO members and are ready and express willingness to enter these arrangements.
- The deep and comprehensive FTAs supported by extensive assistance packages should aim at strengthening the EaP countries competitiveness in the most important industries. If a partner country is willing, an FTA should move beyond trade in goods, to envisage free trade in services, free movement of capital, as well as regulatory and institutional convergence in such areas as competition, energy, transport, standardization and removal of other non-tariff barriers.
- The deep and comprehensive FTAs will also involve cooperation in some sectors of key importance for both sides such as energy, telecommunication, transportation and other infrastructure services, financial services, etc.
- Facilitation of labour mobility between EaP countries and EU is equally important as a free trade in goods and services especially for those countries where remittances constitute a substantial share of GNP and current account.
- There is necessity to assist in designing market access strategy to the countries that are not WTO members yet and facilitate for those who already are WTO members.
- Special attention should be paid to needs of EaP countries that are currently not covered by or have limited access to ENPI.
- Giving priority to bilateral track, multilateral aspects of economic cooperation like the Neighbourhood Economic Community (NEC) should be further explored. Content and form of NEC should be subject of a substantial feasibility study and discussion with the EaP countries.
- NIF represents a great opportunity to promote public investments in infrastructure and regulatory convergence in EU social, institutional and economic standards. Therefore specifications of NIF objectives and the assessment criteria are needed to be further elaborated in order to support projects that are efficient and sustainable.
- The ENPI and other EU funds should also support cross-border investment projects both between individual EaP countries and between them and EU partners.
- The role and involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) of EaP countries should be eminent and their engagement should be institutionalized, particularly at following stages:
 - 1) Planning (e.g. CSOs could be consulted before launch of negotiations or launch of multilateral initiatives);
 - 2) Implementation of commitments (e.g. monitoring and evaluation of Action Plans, new agreements with the EU, ENPI funding);
- CSOs should be supported in acquiring knowledge and expertise in the fields of economic integration and internal reforms.

WORKSHOP D

Connecting Neighbours: From Infrastructure to People-to-People Contacts

Thematic Focus: Communication, Transport, Visa Facilitation

Although the success of the Eastern partnership (EaP) heavily depends on the engagement of the Eastern partners (EaPs) themselves and their commitment to the principles of democracy, rule of law and good governance, the EU can and should essentially increase its engagement in the region, thus helping the states and societies in their modernisations and reforms. The present situation, characterised by visa obligation for the EaPs citizens planning to visit the EU, low level of people-to-people contacts between the societies of the EU and the EaPs, poor transport architecture and unfriendly border crossing, is highly unsatisfactory. It hampers the development of economic ties as well as tourism between the EU and the EaPs. Among the EaPs societies it also diminishes the attractiveness of the European model of development. Therefore promoting people to people contacts should be regarded as a key strategic area for the EaP, since this will provide a huge incentive for changes in behaviour and mentality of the societies of the EaPs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Given these circumstances, the EU and its member states should:

Visa liberalization

- Consider abolishing visas for all citizens of the EaPs as an ultimate strategic goal;
- Waive fees for Schengen visas starting with 1st January 2010;
- Promptly present road maps regarding visa liberalization with specific conditions to be fulfilled by all EaPs;
- Facilitate visa application procedures in all EaPs, including model such as the Common Visa Application Centre in Chisinau;
- Provide persons having positive visa history with long-term multiply visas on the basis of already existing legal regulations (their present implementation leaves a lot to be desired);
- Promote e-applications as an auxiliary tool which can speed up the procedure of visa issuing;
- Pay special attention to the selection of the EU consulate staff and provide them with obligatory courses in order to improve their understanding of the region's specifics;
- Introduce and develop an effective monitoring mechanism of visa issuing and treatment of the applicants ("Visa Watch") as well as create a "Code of Conduct" for the consulate employees.

Transport

- Render financial assistance to the creation (building or renovation) of modern railway connections between the EU and the EaPs preferably with the European medium gauge standards;
- Promote further liberalisation of the air movement between the EU and the EaP;
- Make the EU-EaP borders more friendly and the procedures of their crossing faster.

People-to-People Contacts

- Promote knowledge about the EU's exchange and assistance programmes and make them easier accessible for the EaP NGOs, local governments and citizens with the special focus on the underdeveloped regions;
- Adopt special Eastern Partnership student and youth exchange programmes, allowing gifted students to make short or long term study-related visits to the EU or to the EaP;
- Enable students from the EaPs to participate in the international Erasmus exchange programme, not only Erasmus Mundus;
- Promote voluntary service between the EU and the EaPs;
- Supporting the participation of the EaPs partners in the Jean Monnet programme and extending knowledge about the EU, as well as promoting cooperation with the EaPs scholars, including a fuller use of the 7th EU Framework Program should be established
- Provide the EaPs societies with alternative sources of information to counter local media, spreading antidemocratic and anti-western ideas.

WORKSHOP E

Eastern Partnership and Energy Security

Thematic Focus: Energy Security

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- With the Eastern Partnership being launched, the window of opportunity opens for deeper engagement of both the EU and the partner countries in energy dialogue;
- In energy field, as well as in several other sectors, the EaP could deliver benefits to both the EU and the partner countries within multilateral formats of cooperation (such as the Black Sea Synergy);

- With the Eastern Partnership being launched, the window of opportunity opens for deeper engagement of both the EU and the partner countries in energy dialogue;
- In energy field, as well as in several other sectors, the EaP could deliver benefits to both the EU and the partner countries within multilateral formats of cooperation (such as the Black Sea Synergy);
- The rules of game in accordance with the Energy Charter Treaty should be developed with the partner countries first, while keeping the door open for other formats of multilateral consultations drawing on rules and achievements developed within the EaP;
- Extension of the (legally binding) Energy Community should be preferred to non-binding Memoranda of Understanding;
- The administrative capacity, good governance, transparency, and empowerment of consumers belong to the areas that should be given priority in the energy sector and supported by the Comprehensive Institution Building Programme (CIB);
- The ENPI Regional Programme East should cover urgent projects related to energy security (e.g. joint storage, two-way interconnections, energy conservation);
- Energy efficiency, technology transfer, and renewable energy should be endorsed as one of the major „flagship initiatives“ envisaged for the EaP;
- Intelligent Energy Europe Programme should be extended to the partner countries
- The Civil Society Forum should be used as a preferred and consistent mechanism for articulating the expectations and obligations of the EaP countries with the aim of broadening the base of stakeholders within each partner countries' society.

WORKSHOP F

A Role for the Civil Society Forum in the Eastern Partnership

Thematic Focus: Agenda and Design of the EaP Civil Society Forum

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Purpose

- The aim of the Civil Society Forum is to contribute to the implementation of the EaP goals through the involvement, development and strengthening the Civil Societies in all EaP countries as well as to bridge Civil Societies from the EU and EaP countries.
- The Civil Society Forum should be based on cooperative approaches and its activities should accompany the effort of the Commission, the member states of the EU, national governments of EaP countries and other participating actors from the EU (like Euronest and Local and Regional Assembly) in achieving the goals of the EaP.
- The Civil Society Forum should aim to contribute to the better use of existing instruments and tools of the EaP and to ensure that they are open to the participation of the Civil Society actors.

Agenda

- The Civil Society Forum should be included in the planning of the Action Plan goals (or new partnership instrument that should succeed the Action Plan) and activities on national level in the EaP countries.
- The Civil Society Forum should be invited to participate and to monitor the work of joint EU-EaP countries' joint sub-committees that are supposed to serve as a feed back mechanism between the European Commission and National Governments of the EaP countries.
- The Civil Society Forum should be invited to participate and to monitor the work of national EaP countries authorities in implementing AP/NPI priorities (at the national level).
- The Civil Society Forum should be given an opportunity to consult both the position documents of the EaP countries on their national Action Plans as well as the progress reports of the European Commission. In addition, it should stimulate Civil Society actors to elaborate independent assessments and recommendations.

- The Civil Society Forum can initiate discussion and come up with recommendations on how to improve criteria for the evaluation of the EaP countries' performance.
- The Civil Society Forum should develop tailor-made strategy to support a sectoral integration of EaP countries with clear benchmarks.
- The Civil Society Forum should initiate discussion with the European Commission on its participation in the structured approximation process and to ensure that representatives of civil society from the EaP countries are involved into the Comprehensive Institution-Building Program (CIB).
- The Civil Society Forum should elaborate programme on multilateral expert events and projects on issues envisaged under the four thematic platforms in order to facilitate cooperation and exchange of know how between respective expert communities from the EU and EaP countries.
- The Civil Society Forum should elaborate proposals on specific thematic panels on the fourth operational level in order to contribute to the work of thematic platforms.

Institutional design¹

- The Civil Society Forum should be established by civil society organizations from the EU and EaP countries in a partnership with the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee.
- The Civil Society Forum (CSF) of the EaP should have an operational and flexible institutional design comprised of its EU and EaP elements. Its composition should be balanced in order to ensure an adequate representation of Civil Societies of both the EU and EaP countries. The CSF General Assembly should meet at least once a year alternatively in the EU and an EaP country to evaluate the overall process of implementation of EaP.
- In order to contribute to the implementation of bilateral agenda of the EaP, the CSF of the EaP should create its national sections. The Civil society actors in EaP countries should create open national EaP platforms in order to facilitate both the participation of all interested NGOs and to agree on free and fair criteria and procedures for selection of national representatives to the CSF General Assembly and other CSF bodies.
- When it comes to the participation of other Civil Society actors from the EU countries, the Commission should make a call to invite interested NGOs. The same procedure should be applied to EaP countries where are difficulties of political or legal nature with a creation of national EaP platforms.
- The activities of the Civil Society Forum should be supported by the administrative body (a Secretariat), created by the Commission in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee. The administrative body should provide organisational and communication (web site) services to the Civil Society Forum.

SPECIAL PANEL ON MOLDOVA

Statement on Political Crisis in Moldova

We express support to the initiative, launched by the civil society in Moldova, proposing a roadmap for national reconciliation and European integration of this country. We call upon the Presidency of the European Union to consider this document in promoting democratic settlement of political crisis in Moldova. We encourage Moldovan civil society to become a driving force for the Europeanization of Moldova. We also encourage government of Moldova to work closely with Moldovan civil society.

¹ This text was drafted by the Coordinator and Rapporteur of the workshop. Consensus of workshop participants was not reached.

Program

TUESDAY, MAY 5

14:00 - 17:00

6 parallel workshops (by special invitations only)

WORKSHOP A

Building a Partnership of Shared Values?

Thematic focus: Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights

Host: Policy Association for an Open Society (PASOS)

Venue: CERGE-EI, Politických veznu 7, Prague 1

Coordinator

Jeff Lovitt, Executive Director; Policy Association for an Open Society, Czech Republic / UK

Rapporteur

Iryna Solonenko, Director, European Programme; International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine

Participants

Ana Coretchi, Program Director, East East: Partnership beyond Borders Program; Soros Foundation-Moldova, Moldova

Iris Kempe, Director; Heinrich Böll Foundation, Georgia

Amalia Kostanyan, Chairwoman; Transparency International Anti-corruption Center, Armenia

Boris Navasardian, President; Yerevan Press Club, Armenia

Kristina Prunerová, Programme Manager; European Partnership for Democracy, Brussels / Czech Republic

Grégoire Théry, Liaison Officer to the EU; Delegation to the European Union, International Federation of Human Rights, Brussels

Liudmila Ulyashyna, Coordinator, International Law in Advocacy; Human Rights House Foundation, Norway / Belarus

Arman Vardanyan, Director; Social Policy and Development Centre, Armenia

Leyla Yunusova, Director; Institute for Peace and Democracy, Azerbaijan

WORKSHOP B

Resolving Conflicts: Pre-condition for Development in other Areas?

Thematic focus: Security and Peace Building

Host: Association for International Affairs (AMO)

Venue: Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI), Pohorelec 6, Prague 1

Coordinator

Michal Thim, Director, Research Center; Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Rapporteur

Oleksandr Sushko, Research Director; Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Ukraine

Participants

Arzu Abdullayeva, Chairwoman; Azerbaijan National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Azerbaijan
Alexander Bogomolov, President; Association of Middle East Studies, Ukraine
Svante Cornell, Director; Institute for Security and Development Policy, Sweden
Archil Gegeshidze, Senior Fellow; Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Georgia
Ferenc Kálmár, Project Manager; International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary
Vlad Lupan, Independent Expert, Moldova
Olena Prystayko, Research Fellow; EU-Russia Centre, Brussels / Ukraine
Mira Sovakar, Projects Manager, Caucasus Programme; Conciliation Resources, Germany / UK
Vít Střítecký, Researcher; Institute of International Relations, Czech Republic
George Tarkhan-Mouravi, Director; Institute for Policy Studies, Georgia
Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan, Country Director; Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia

WORKSHOP C

EU Role in Economic Convergence of EaP Countries

Thematic Focus: Economic Integration

Host: Association for International Affairs (AMO)

Venue: Association for Communication in Public Sector (AKVS),
Lazarska 11/6, Prague 2

Coordinator

Alice Savovová, Executive Director; Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Rapporteur

Marek Dabrowski, President; CASE - Center for Social and Economic Research, Poland

Participants

András Deák, Executive Director; Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, Hungary
Ghenadie Ivascenco, Executive Director; Habitat-Moldova Center, Moldova
Ihar Lednik, Coordinator; Human Rights Defenders' Movement "Our Belarus", Belarus
Alexandru Oprunenco, Director, International Programs; Expert Group, Moldova
Irakli Rekhviashvili, Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative; Open Society Institute, Hungary
Rena Safaraliyeva, Executive Director; Transparency International, Azerbaijan
Olga Shumylo, Director; International Centre for Policy Studies, Ukraine
Karel Svoboda, Research Fellow; Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

WORKSHOP D

**Connecting Neighbours: From Infrastructure
to People-to-People Contacts**

Thematic Focus: Communication, Transport, Visa Facilitation

Host: Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM)

Venue: Institute of International Relations (IIR), Nerudova 3, Prague 1

Coordinator

Łukasz Adamski, Analyst; Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland

Rapporteur

Iryna Vidanova, Editor-in-Chief; Multimedia Magazine "34", Belarus

Participants

Olena Betlii, Director, Polish and European Studies Centre; National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Grzegorz Gromadzki, Director, International Cooperation Program; Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland

Jacek Kucharczyk, Research Director; Institute of Public Affairs, Poland

Peter Mossop, International Centre for Democratic Transition, Hungary

Igor Munteanu, Executive Director; IDIS-Viitorul (Institute for Development and Social Initiatives), Moldova

Lucia Najšlová, Junior Researcher, European Studies Program; Research Centre of Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Slovakia

Ghia Nodia, Board Member; Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, Georgia

Tevan Poghosyan, Director; International Center for Human Development, Armenia

WORKSHOP E

Eastern Partnership and Energy Security

Thematic Focus: Energy Security

Host: Institute of International Relations (IIR)

Venue: Institute of International Relations (IIR), Nerudova 3, Prague 1

Coordinator

Petr Kratochvíl, Deputy Director; Institute of International Relations (IIR), Czech Republic

Rapporteur

Tornike Sharashenidze, Head, International Affairs Program; Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, Georgia

Participants

Ingilab Ahmadov, Director; Public Public Finance Monitoring Center, Azerbaijan

Petr Binhack, Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic

Richard Giragosian, Director; Armenian Center for National and International Studies, Armenia / USA

Veaceslav Ionita, IDIS-Viitorul (Institute for Development and Social Initiatives), Moldova

Roderick Kefferpütz, Director, Energy Security Programme; Heinrich Böll Foundation - EU Regional Office, Brussels / Germany / Netherlands

Sascha Müller-Kraenner, Director; Nature Conservancy in Europe, Germany

Jiří Schneider, Program Director; Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Republic

Ernest Wyciszkievicz, Coordinator, Energy Security Programme; Polish Institute of International Affairs, Poland

WORKSHOP F

A Role for the Civil Society Forum in the Eastern Partnership

Thematic Focus: Agenda and Design of the Civil Society Forum

Venue: CERGE-EI, Politických veznu 7, Prague 1

Coordinator

Alexander Duleba, Director; Research Centre of Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Slovakia

Rapporteur

Igor Kohut, Chairman of the Board; Agency for Legislative Initiatives, Ukraine

Participants

Arcadie Barbarosie, Director; Institute for Policy Studies, Moldova

Valentin Burada, Program Manager; Civil Society Development Foundation, Romania
Pawel Kazanecki, President; East European Democratic Center, Poland
Artak Kirakosyan, Chairman of the Board; Civil Society Institute, Armenia
Ales Lahviniec, Adviser to Chairman; Movement for Freedom, Belarus
Siarhiej Mackievič, Chairman, Working Group; Assembly of Pro-democratic NGOs of Belarus, Belarus
Ketevan Vashakidze, Country Director; Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Georgia
Andrei Yahorau, Consortium „EuroBelarus“, Belarus
Natalia Yarotskaya, Program Officer; Think Tank Fund of Open Society Institute, Hungary

17.30 **PRESENTATION OF A STUDY** (registration required)
by **Michael Emerson**, Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), Brussels
“Synergies v. Spheres of Influence in the Pan-European Space”

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretanske namesti 5, Prague 1

Moderator

Jeff Lovitt, Executive Director; Policy Association for an Open Society, Czech Republic / UK

Comments

Elsa Tulmets, Institute of International Relations (IIR), Czech Republic / France

19:00 **GLASS OF WINE** (by special invitations only)
Venue: Embassy of Sweden, Uvoz 13, Prague 1

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6

Venue: Czernin Palace, Loretanske namesti 5, Prague 1

08:15 - 09:00 **REGISTRATION**

09:00 - 09:30 **WELCOMING REMARKS**

H. E. Karel Schwarzenberg, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

Alice Savovová, Executive Director; Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic (on behalf of organizers and partners of the conference)

OPENING REMARKS

Eugeniusz Smolar, President of the Board; Polish-Czech Forum, Poland

09:30 - 09:40 **A SPECIAL ADDRESS**
by **H. E. Peter Semneby**, EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, Brussels / Sweden

09:40 - 10:40 **PANEL A**
Building a Partnership of Shared Values?

Thematic focus: Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights

Chair

Pavol Demeš, Director; German Marshall Fund, Slovakia

Speakers

Boris Navasardian, President; Yerevan Press Club, Armenia

Liudmila Ulyashyna, Coordinator, International Law in Advocacy; Human Rights House Foundation, Norway/Belarus

Discussants

Aliaksandr Bialiatski, Chair; Human Rights Center 'Viasna' / Vice-President; International Federation of Human Rights, Belarus

10:40 - 10:50

COFFEE BREAK

10:50 - 11:00

A SPECIAL ADDRESS

by **H. E. Pierre Morel**, EU Special Representative for Central Asia and the Crisis in Georgia, Brussels / France

11:00 - 12:00

PANEL B

Resolving Conflicts: Pre-condition for Development in other Areas?

Thematic focus: Security and Peace Building

Chair

Svante Cornell, Director; Institute for Security and Development Policy, Sweden

Speakers

Alexander Bogomolov, President; Association of Middle East Studies, Ukraine

Ivlian Haindrava, Director, South Caucasus Studies Program; Center for Development and Cooperation – Center for Pluralism, Georgia

Discussants

Arzu Abdullayeva, Chairwoman; Azerbaijan National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, Azerbaijan

Vlad Lupan, Independent Expert, Moldova

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan, Country Director; Eurasia Partnership Foundation, Armenia

12:00 - 13:00

LUNCHEON

13:00 - 14:00

PANEL C

EU Role in Economic Convergence of EaP Countries

Thematic Focus: Economic Integration

Chair

Tomáš Valášek, Director, Foreign policy and Defence; Centre for European Reform, Slovakia / UK

Speakers

Alex Oprunenco, International Programs Director, Expert Group, Moldova

Olga Shumylo, Director; International Centre for Policy Studies, Ukraine

Discussants

Ihar Lednik, Coordinator; Human Rights Defenders' Movement "Our Belarus", Belarus

Rena Safaraliyeva, Executive Director; Transparency International, Azerbaijan

14:00 - 14:20

COFFEE BREAK

14.20 - 14:30

A SPECIAL ADDRESS

by **H. E. Evaldas Ignatavicius**, Undersecretary; Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Lithuania

14:30 - 15:30

PANEL D
**Connecting Neighbours: From Infrastructure
to People-to-People Contacts**

Thematic Focus: Communication, Transport, Visa Facilitation

Chair

Andrew Wilson, Senior Policy Fellow; European Council on Foreign Relations, UK

Speakers

Grzegorz Gromadzki, Director, International Cooperation Program; Stefan Batory Foundation, Poland

Vitali Silitski, Director; Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, Belarus

Discussants

Igor Munteanu, Executive Director; IDIS-Viitorul (Institute for Development and Social Initiatives), Moldova

Jacek Kucharczyk, Research Director; Institute of Public Affairs, Poland

15:30 - 15:45

COFFEE BREAK

15:45 - 16:45

PANEL E
Eastern Partnership and Energy Security

Thematic Focus: Energy Security

Chair

Roderick Kefferpütz, Director, Energy Security Programme; Heinrich Böll Foundation - EU Regional
Office, Brussels / Germany / Netherlands

Speakers

Richard Giragosian, Director; Armenian Center for National and International Studies, USA / Armenia

Sascha Müller-Kraenner, Director; The Nature Conservancy in Europe, Germany

Discussants

Leila Aliyeva, President; Center for National and International Studies, Azerbaijan

Vitalii Martyniuk, Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, Ukraine

16:45 - 17:00

COFFEE BREAK

17:00 - 17:20

A SPECIAL ADDRESS

by **H. E. Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, Commissioner responsible for External
Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy; European Commission,
Brussels / Austria

followed by a **PRESENTATION OF THE CONFERENCE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

at the presence of distinguished guests:

H. E. Catherine von Heidenstam, Ambassador to the Czech Republic,
Kingdom of Sweden

H. E. Jan Pastwa, Ambassador to the Czech Republic, Poland

H. E. Tomáš Pojar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czech Republic

17:20 - 18:30

CONCLUDING PANEL
Civil Society Participation in Eastern Partnership:
Recommendations and Future Activity

Chair

Jiří Schneider, Program Director; Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI), Czech Republic

Rapporteurs of workshops A-F

Iryna Solonenko, Director, European Programme; International Renaissance Foundation, Ukraine

Oleksandr Sushko, Research Director; Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation, Ukraine

Marek Dabrowski, President; Center for Social and Economic Research, Poland

Iryna Vidanava, Editor-in-Chief; Multimedia Magazine "34", Belarus

Tornike Sharashenidze, Head, International Affairs Program; Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, Georgia

Igor Kohut, Chairman of the Board; Agency for Legislative Initiatives, Ukraine

19:00

RECEPTION (open to all registered conference participants)

Venue: Embassy of Poland, Valdstejska 8, Prague 1

Conference Working Language:

English and Russian simultaneous translation

Conference Agenda

Building a Partnership of Shared Values?

Topic A (workshop/panel)

Thematic focus: Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights

The EaP provides another political instrument (along with those of Council of Europe and OSCE) to assist Eastern European countries in developing stable democratic institutions and enhancing good governance. through stronger participation of civil society in areas such as human rights, electoral standards, freedom of the media, combating corruption, training and networking of local authorities, and democratic institutions building (law enforcement agencies - judiciary, police). Implementation of good governance standards is particularly important for business environment in the region, including the conditions and opportunities for European companies and their development.

Resolving Conflicts: Pre-condition for Development in other Areas?

Topic B (workshop/panel)

Thematic Focus: Security and Peace Building

The War between Russia and Georgia over the breakaway regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia in August 2008 and other unresolved conflicts in Transnistria, Crimea and Nagorno-Karabakh hinder Eastern European countries closer approach to the EU. Support for civil society, confidence building measures in conflict regions and across ceasefire lines and civil society expertise may help eventually overcome deeply-rooted disagreements at the highest political level.

EU Role in Economic Convergence of EaP Countries

Topic C (workshop/panel)

Thematic Focus: Economic Integration

Economic integration is supposed to be one of the core assets of the EaP. New initiative would eventually speed up negotiations on deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). However, bringing markets together demand substantial reforms in areas like combating corruption, new legislation adoption, set up of free market standards etc. Mutual economic interests are good starting point but without progress in above mentioned fields EaP would fall far behind its initial expectations.

Connecting Neighbours: From Infrastructure to People-to-People Contacts

Topic D (workshop/panel)

Thematic Focus: Communication, Energy Security & Transport, Visa Facilitation

There is a broad range of issues related to connection and/or contacts between peoples of the EU countries and Eastern Neighbours of the EU. One of the most important is Energy Security of both EU and its Neighbours. However, this issue is also closely related with state of infrastructure with basically non-existent transport networks between the EU and Eastern Neighbours. Then we are not too far from people-to-people contacts with limitations imposed on fluent movement of individuals by current visa regime(s). Significant improvement in connectivity would support substantially progress in all other issues tackled by EaP.

Eastern Partnership and Energy Security

Topic E (workshop/panel)

Thematic Focus: Energy Security

Amongst others, the conflict in Georgia in 2008 clearly demonstrated the EU's precarious energy security as it threatened key diversification routes such as the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE) and Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipelines. In the aftermath of the war several Caspian states, such as Azerbaijan, also decided to sell more of their energy supplies to Russia rather than to the EU, which would, undoubtedly, also affect the viability of the EU's planned Nabucco pipeline. In January 2009, the EU's energy security took yet another dive with the Ukrainian-Russian gas row. What initially appeared as the traditional annual bilateral clash between the two swiftly degenerated into a veritable pan-European gas crisis. The conflict lasted nearly 20 days and shut down gas supplies to 18 European countries for almost two weeks, leaving thousands of households to face a particularly cold winter and seriously disrupting European industry.

A Role for the Civil Society Forum in the Eastern Partnership

Topic F (workshop)

Thematic Focus: Agenda and Design of the Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum proposed by the European Commission will become a formal tool of cooperation of the European Union and the civil society of the Eastern Partnership region countries. The aim of the workshop is to formulate recommendations on how the Civil Society Forum should be designed regarding its agenda (priority topics for civic engagement) and institutional structure (country representation and nomination mechanisms to the Forum).

Panelists, workshop participants and key note speakers

Arzu Abdullayeva, Azerbaijan

Arzu Abdullayeva has been the Chairwoman of the Azerbaijan National Committee of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly since 1992 and since 2000, she has co-chaired the International Helsinki Citizens' Assembly. Between 1978 – 1990, she was a scientific officer of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. In 1993, she won the Olof Palme International Peace Award and since 1992, she has been involved in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, conflicts in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and former Yugoslavia states. In 1988, Ms Abdullayeva was one of the initiators of the Popular Front Party and in December 1989 one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party. Apart from it, she is one of the co-chairs and founders of the Azerbaijan National Committee on European Integration.

Łukasz Adamski, Poland

Łukasz Adamski is a political scientist and historian working as an analyst in the Polish Institute of International Affairs. His main areas of expertise are Ukraine, Belarus and German foreign policy. He has published in various journals (Polski Przegląd Dyplomatyczny, Sprawy Międzynarodowe, Europa), newspapers and magazines (e.g. Gazeta Wyborcza, Rzeczpospolita, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Tygodnik Powszechny, Nowa Europa Wschodnia). His historical research is focused on history of Ukrainian political thought, Polish-Ukrainian relations and national movements in Eastern Europe. Mr Adamski is a graduate of Warsaw University (2005) and he pursued studies in Germany at the Free University of Berlin (2002-2003) and in Russia at Saint Petersburg State University (2004), as well. Furthermore, in 2007, he was a visiting researcher at the National University of „Kyiv-Mohyla Academy“.

Ingilab Ahmadov, Azerbaijan

Ahmadov Ingilab Agajan obtained his PhD at Saint-Petersburg State University in Russia. In 2000, he became a Doctor of Economics at the same university. In 1993 – 1995, he was the Assistant Director of the Centre for Socio-Psychological Studies, in 1997 – 1999 an advisor at the Ministry of Economy, in 1995 – 2004 the Director General of the analytical informational agency “Trend“. Since 2004, Mr Ingilab has served as the Director of the Public Finance Monitoring Centre. He is the author of several publications, such as “Oil gloss of economy“, “State Oil Fund of the Azerbaijan Republic“, “The agriculture of Azerbaijan: Condition, Problems and Prospects“ or “Government regulation of economy in transition period“. Since 2008, he has headed the Caspian Energy Studies Centre at Khazar University, where he has taught the courses “Economics of Energy“ and “Caspian Energy and World Development“.

Leila Aliyeva, Azerbaijan

Leila Aliyeva is a political analyst based in Baku, Azerbaijan. She directed the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Baku (1995-1997), and founded the Centre for National and International Studies (2005), held fellowships at Harvard University (1993-1994), UC Berkeley (2000), Woodrow Wilson Center -Kennan Institute (1995), SAIS -Johns Hopkins University (2001), NATO Defense College (2005) in Rome, Italy and most recently at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington DC (2007). She advised the President of the EBRD, as well as leading oil companies. Moreover, she was the OSCE international election observer in Georgia in 2004 and served on the board of the Open Society Institute in Baku in 1998. Ms Aliyeva was also the National Coordinator of the Human Development Report for UNDP (1997). She is the author of a number of publications on the issues of security, conflicts and politics in the region and her research was published by the Oxford University Press, the Sharpe, the Journal of Democracy and others.

Olena Betlii, Ukraine

Olena Betlii is an Assistant Professor at the Department of History and an Assistant Director of the Polish and European Studies Centre at the National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy“. She was an Assistant Professor at the European and Euroatlantic Policy Department and the secretary of the Academic Board at the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine in 2006 -2007. Olena has conducted her research in Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republic, and USA and presented its results at international conferences, congresses and workshops in Kyiv, Warsaw, Krakow, Pardubice, Szeged, Berlin, Stockholm, Lund, Dublin, New York and Urbana-Champaign. She is author of articles published in Ukraine, Poland and the. Her major research interests include: a discursive creation of symbolic regions in Europe, regional identity of Ukraine, international history and European integration history.

Aliaksandr Bialitski, Belarus

Ales Bialatski completed his PhD at the Post-graduate school of Literature Institute at Belarusian Academy of Sciences. Currently, he is the chairperson of the Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs in Belarus. Mr Bialatski was the leader of the underground pro-democratic youth movement during the USSR era and in 1996, he was one of the founders of the Human Rights Centre "Viasna" (Spring) dealing with the protection of victims of political repression. Apart from this, Mr Bialitski has gained many awards such as "Andrei Sakharov Freedom Award 2006" (Norway), "Homo Homini Award 2006" (Czech Republic) or "Per Anger Prize 2006" of the Swedish Government. In 2006 and 2007 Ales Bialitski was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. He is the author of a number of books on human rights.

Alexander Bogomolov, Ukraine

Alexander Bogomolov holds a PhD in Arabic linguistics from the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow. The areas of academic interest include: Arab and Ukrainian political discourse, post-Soviet ideologies (Ukrainian, Russian and Crimea Tatar nationalism and political Islamism), frozen conflicts and conflict prevention, along with Ukraine's strategic security, democratization and civil society. From 1995 to 2006 he served as the Vice President and since 2006 as the President of the Kyiv-based Association of Middle East Studies (AMES). The AMES is a non-governmental think-tank engaged in research and policy analysis of the Middle East countries, Central Asia and Caucasus, ethnic conflicts, and Ukraine's home and foreign policy. Since 2003, the AMES has been extensively engaged in Crimea, where it has completed two large research projects – covering the development of local Islamic institutions, Muslim political activism, localized versions of nationalist ideologies and inter-ethnic conflicts.

Valentin Burada, Romania

Valentin Burada holds an M.A. in International Relations and European Studies from the University of Bucharest. He has served as the Director of the Department for Development Cooperation Civil Society Development Foundation in Romania since 2008. In this position, he coordinated the organization of the Black Sea NGO Forum in Bucharest in November 2008. Since March 2009, he has been the Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the FOND, the Romanian NGO platform for Development. Between 2006-2008, Mr Burada was a member of the steering group of the CONCORD's Working Group Enlargement, Pre-Accession and Neighbourhood. Since 2005, he has contributed to the world Social Watch Report with national chapters on Romania. Since 2007, he has supported the contribution of the FOND to the CONCORD's Aid Watch Report. Currently, he is working on ENP and ENPI related issues, with a particular focus on the civil societies in Moldova and Georgia.

Ana Coretchi, Moldova

Ana Coretchi holds an MA in Human Behaviour. She is a fellow of the Solomon Asch Centre for Study of Ethno-Political Conflict. Since 1992, she has been affiliated with the Soros Foundation-Moldova, being responsible for various programs, such as the Higher Education Support Program, the Gender/Women's Program, the Educational Policy Program or the East-East Partnership beyond the Borders Program. Major interests of her research are youth issues, education, trends and processes in the societies in transformation, conflict settlement policy in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the CSI. She is the author of a number of publications (Youth Promotion in the Society in Transition. Case Study: The Republic of Moldova; Management of Integration in Multicultural Societies; From Misunderstanding towards Openness and Collaboration in Multicultural Societies: Experience of Moldova, Estonia and Northern Ireland).

Svante E. Cornell, Sweden

Svante E. Cornell is the Co-Director of the Institute for Security and Development Policy, and Research Director of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, a Joint Center affiliated with Johns Hopkins University-SAIS and ISDP. Mr Cornell's main areas of expertise are security issues, state-building, and transnational crime in Southwest and Central Asia, with a specific focus on the Caucasus. He also has expertise in Turkish and Pakistani politics and foreign policy. He is the Editor of the Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst, the Joint Center's bi-weekly publication, and of the Joint Center's Silk Road Papers series of occasional papers. Mr Cornell is the author of four books, including Small Nations and Great Powers, the first comprehensive study of the post-Soviet conflicts in the Caucasus. He is currently completing a study of Azerbaijan since Independence, to be published by M.E. Sharpe, Inc..

Marek Dąbrowski, Poland

Marek Dąbrowski is a Professor of Economics and the President of the CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research in Warsaw, the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the CASE in Kiev (Ukraine), a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute for the Economy in Transition in Moscow, a member of the Executive Committee of the Association of the Comparative Economic Studies (ACES, 2007-2009), one of the founders and a former member of the Executive Committee of the European Association for Comparative Economic Studies (EACES, 1995-1996; 2003 – 2006). Apart from it, he is a member of many other scientific committees, consulting boards and councils. From the end of 1980s, he has been involved in policy advising and policy research in many countries throughout the world and in a number of international research projects related to monetary and fiscal policies, currency crises, international financial architecture, the EU and EMU enlargement, the perspectives of European integration, the European Neighborhood Policy and political economy of transition. Mr Dąbrowski is a consultant of the World Bank and the UNDP. He has actively participated in the GDN activities from its beginning (1999). He is the author of several academic and policy papers, and editor of several book publications.

Pavol Demeš, Slovakia

Pavol Demeš has been the Director for Central and Eastern Europe of the German Marshall Fund of the United States since January 2000. Previously, he served as the Executive Director of the SAIA-Service Center for the Third Sector. He also served as a Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of the Slovak Republic (1993-1997), and in 1991-1992, he was the Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs. An internationally recognized NGO leader, Mr Demeš has served on the boards of national and international associations and foundations. Prior to the „Velvet Revolution“ in November 1989, Demeš had been a bio-medical researcher at Comenius University in Bratislava. He is a graduate of Charles University in Prague (1980). He has received the EU-US Democracy and Civil Society Award (1998), Royal Dutch Decoration Knight of the Order of Orange Nassau (2005) and Yugoslav Star of First Class (2005).

Alexander Duleba, Slovakia

Alexander Duleba is the Director of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA). He obtained his PhD degree in Political Science from the Institute for Political Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1998. From May 1993 until August 1995 he was an analyst at the Slovak Institute for International Studies at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic. In September 1995 he started to work as a research fellow for the RC SFPA and in May 2000, he became its Director and simultaneously the head of the Center's Eastern Europe research program. His main publications include: *The Reform of the Neighborhood Policy. Tools, Institutions and a Regional Dimension*, *Regional Integration in the East and West: Challenges and Responses*, *Foreign Policy of Slovakia after NATO and EU Accession*, *Eastern Policy of the Enlarged European Union. A Visegrad Perspective*.

Michael Emerson, United Kingdom

Michael Emerson is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) in Brussels. He served as the European Union Ambassador to Moscow from 1991 to 1996. His primary research interests focus on pan-European institutions, political economy of wider Europe, European security policy, and EU relations with Russia, Ukraine and the Northern Dimension, Turkey, and Cyprus, while his secondary areas of research expertise include the economics of transition to a market economy, EU politics, enlargement of the EU, European Monetary Union, democratization in South Eastern Europe, EU relations with the Caucasus, and EU-US relations. He earned an MA from the University of Oxford and honorary doctorates from Kent University and Keele University.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Austria

Benita Ferrero-Waldner is the EU Commissioner responsible for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy. She obtained a Dr Juris from Salzburg University. Upon graduation, she started to work for various companies in the USA and Germany. In 1984, she was a special consultant at the Austrian Embassy in Madrid. From 1984 to 1986, she was working at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1986, she was the First Secretary at the Austrian Embassy in Dakar (Senegal) and then she worked at the Department for Development Cooperation, at the Austrian Embassy in Paris as a Counsellor for economic affairs and later as a chargé d'affaires. In 1993, Ms Ferrero-Waldner became the Deputy Chief of Protocol at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and after that, the UN Chief of Protocol. Between 1995-2000, she was the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and from 2000 to 2004 the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria. In November 2004, she became the Member of the European Commission.

Archil M. Gegeshidze, Georgia

Archil M. Gegeshidze is a Senior Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS). His professional expertise lies in the fields of regional security, cooperation in the South Caucasus, and the Euro-Atlantic integration. Prior to joining the GFSIS, he had been a Fulbright scholar at Stanford University (USA). Dr Gegeshidze worked for the Georgian government in 1992-2000. His last governmental position was the Head of the Foreign Policy Analysis Department of the State Chancellery (the presidential office). While working in the government, Dr Gegeshidze also served as an Assistant to the Head of State on National Security and as the Chief Foreign Policy Advisor to the President. Currently, he is lecturing on globalization and development at the GFSIS. Mr Gegeshidze holds a Candidate of Science degree from the Tbilisi State University in Economics and Social Geography. He has also achieved the diplomatic rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Richard Giragosian, USA

Richard Giragosian is the Director of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) in Yerevan, Armenia and serves as an Associate Fellow with the Washington-based Institute for the Analysis of Global Security (IAGS). He is a regular contributor to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) publications, a contributing analyst for the London-based Jane's Information Group, and is a guest columnist for the Turkish-language international edition of the Newsweek. He is also a former guest lecturer for the U.S. Army Special Forces and served for nine years as a Professional Staff Member in the United States Senate.

Grzegorz Gromadzki, Poland

Grzegorz Gromadzki has been the Director of the International Cooperation Programme at the Stefan Batory Foundation in Warsaw since 2006. He was a journalist (1994-1997) at the foreign desk of the “Gazeta Wyborcza”, the leading Polish newspaper, and a Senior Analyst at the Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw (1997-2000). Prior to joining the Batory Foundation, he had worked as an independent analyst.

Ivlian Haindrava, Georgia

Ivlian Haindrava is the Director of the Programme “South Caucasus Studies” at the Centre for Development and Cooperation – Center for Pluralism (CDC-CfP) in Tbilisi. His fields of interest include: national and regional security, conflict resolution, democracy, elections and civil society. Mr Haindrava has been active in Georgian politics for 20 years. Currently, he is one of the leaders of the Republican Party of Georgia. In 1992-1995 and 2004-2008 he was a Member of the Parliament of Georgia, in 1993-1995 a member of the State Constitutional Commission of Georgia. Haindrava is the author of a number of publications in national and foreign media.

Catherine von Heidenstam, Sweden

Catherine von Heidenstam is the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden to the Czech Republic. Prior to it, she worked as the Chief of Protocol, the Ambassador for Human Rights and the Swedish Ambassador to Tunisia. Between 1994-1996, she became the Deputy Director at the UN Department and in 1991-1993 she served as the Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN, Vienna (Austria). From 1983 to 1986, she was the Second Secretary of the Swedish Embassy in Hanoi (Vietnam). Before, she had worked as the Second Secretary at the International Development Cooperation and at the Permanent Representation of the OECD (Paris).

Evaldas Ignatavicius, Lithuania

Evaldas Ignatavicius the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. In 1991 – 1995, he was the Counsellor at the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to the Republic of Poland. After that, up to 1998, he headed the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2000, he was the Lithuanian Consul General to Kaliningrad and in 2001-2002 the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After, he lectured at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University. Between 2004-2009, he was the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Veaceslav Ionita, Moldova

Veaceslav Ionita is an expert and the head of the Economic Policy Department at the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives IDIS „Viitorul“. He is also an Associate Professor at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova. Mr Ionita has performed in the domains of public finance, macro-economic forecasts, energy security policy at the IDIS „Viitorul“ for nine years. He is also a member of the Special Parliament Commission for local public administration reforms, a member of the Council of Experts to the Supreme Court of Justice, a representative of the IDIS to the Economic Policy Institutes Network. He has developed curriculum and programs for the „Management of Public Administration Department“ and since 1997 he has pursued trainings and courses in public policy and decision-making mechanisms in public management. He is the author of a number of publications, such as: „Knowledge Management“, „Unofficial Taxation“, „Investor’s Guide“ and many more.

Ghenadie Ivascenco, Moldova

Ghenadie Ivascenco holds an MA in Regional Development and currently works as the Executive Director of the „HABITAT-Moldova Centre“. He is also the Project Manager of the United Nations Development Programme in Moldova and a member of the Board of Experts in the programme East-East: Partnership beyond borders of the Soros Foundation Moldova. In 2002 – 2008, he coordinated many EU- and UN-funded projects in Moldova in the field of local and regional development, central public administration reform and cross-border cooperation.

Ferenc Kálmár, Hungary

Ferenc Kálmár is the Project Manager at the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT), based in Budapest, Hungary. His main duties revolve around the management of project implementation and development in diverse geographical and thematic areas of responsibility: the Western Balkans, Afghanistan and the Middle East (with special regard to Lebanon, Egypt and Yemen), development of democratic institutions, regional cooperation, protecting the rights of vulnerable groups, local development and strengthening local democracy and grassroots activity, conflict management and mediation. Mr Kálmár gained two advanced degrees in the field of International relations, Foreign policy and Security studies; an MA at the National Defense University in Budapest, Hungary and an MA at the University of Lyons in France. Apart from this, he has also worked as a Research Fellow at the Policy Planning Unit at the NATO HQ.

Vladimir N. Karyagin, Belarus

Vladimir Nikolayevich Karyagin is the Chairman of Minsk Capital Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers and a member of many other scientific boards and associations. Since February 2006, he has been heading an analytical group for fight against bribery and heading the Coordination Council for development and promotion of the National Business Agenda of Belarus. Simultaneously, since 1985 Mr Karyagin has been engaged in the development of private sector of economy and management on research, legislative, organizational and professional levels. Along with this, since 1988, he has been heading public associations of the entrepreneurs and employers on local, republican and international levels.

Paweł Kazanecki, Poland

Paweł Kazanecki is the Director of the Centre for East European Democracy, which struggles for promotion of democracy mainly in the post-Soviet area. He has been deeply interested and very active in this field of study. Moreover, he is a member of the Executive Committee of the Zagranica Group, the Polish platform for NGOs active abroad. Mr Kazanecki is also a member of the Polish Program Council of the Czech-Polish Forum.

Roderick Kefferpütz, Germany / Netherlands

Roderick Kefferpütz is responsible for energy policy at the EU Regional Office of the Heinrich-Böll Foundation, a think-tank and policy network affiliated with the German Green Party. Prior to that, he had worked as a consultant to the Moscow office of the Foundation. He is a regular commentator on energy security and EU-Russian relations in the international and German media, and has authored and edited a number of publications on these issues. Mr Kefferpütz holds a degree in International Relations and an MPhil with distinction in Russian and Eastern European Studies, focusing on EU-Russian energy relations, from the University of Oxford.

Iris Kempe, Germany

Iris Kempe has been the Director of the Heinrich-Böll Foundation of the South Caucasus Regional Office Tbilisi since May 2008. Before, she had worked as a Senior Research Fellow, responsible for Eastern Europe at the CAP – Bertelsmann Group on Policy Research, Munich. She holds an MA in Political Science and her dissertation was on the topic: “Russia at the Turning Point: The Social Question. An Investigation into Social Policy from 1991 to 1996.” She is the author of a number of publications and comments on international affairs, East-West relations, Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and on transition problems: “Presidential Election and Orange Revolution. Implications for Ukraine’s Transition”, “Relations between the enlarged EU and the Russian Federation”, “Russland am Wendepunkt. Analyse der Sozialpolitik von 1991 bis 1996” and many more.

Igor Kohut, Ukraine

Igor Kohut is a Ukrainian political analyst with 13 years of expertise in political processes, parliamentary affairs, and policy analysis. Currently, Mr Kohut chairs the Board for the Agency for Legislative Initiatives, a think tank specializing in parliamentary and legislative issues. In this capacity, he frequently manages public monitoring and policy campaigns, conducts research, organizes round table discussions on political and legislative matters, as well as development of parliamentarism, European integration and alignment of the Ukrainian law with EU norms and standards. Mr Kohut also acts as an editor-in-chief of the Parliament Journal. Prior to his present position, Mr Kohut had worked as a consultant to the Reforms and Order parliamentary faction and was in charge of extensive public policy and legal research. Since November 2005, Mr Kohut has been acting as the Director of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies.

Amalia Kostanyan, Armenia

Igor Kohut is a Ukrainian political analyst with 13 years of expertise in political processes, parliamentary affairs, and policy analysis. Currently, Mr Kohut chairs the Board for the Agency for Legislative Initiatives, a think tank specializing in parliamentary and legislative issues. In this capacity, he frequently manages public monitoring and policy campaigns, conducts research, organizes round table discussions on political and legislative matters, as well as development of parliamentarism, European integration and alignment of the Ukrainian law with EU norms and standards. Mr Kohut also acts as an editor-in-chief of the Parliament Journal. Prior to his present position, Mr Kohut had worked as a consultant to the Reforms and Order parliamentary faction and was in charge of extensive public policy and legal research. Since November 2005, Mr Kohut has been acting as the Director of the Ukrainian School of Political Studies.

Petr Kratochvíl, Czech Republic

Petr Kratochvíl works as the Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations and as a lecturer at several Czech universities. He obtained his PhD in Political Science in Prague in 2004, but he studied and did research abroad (Germany, Belgium, Russia), as well. He is a member of the European Commission's Expert Pool Team Europe, a consultant for the European Parliament, a member of the U.S.-based International Studies Association, the IIR's official representative to the European Consortium for Political Research, the IIR's representative to the Trans-European Political Studies Association, and an editor-in-chief of the scholarly journal *Perspectives*. He has extensively published on European integration, EU-Russian relations, European Neighbourhood Policy and International Relations. He is frequently consulted by the state authorities of the Czech Republic (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the Government, Parliament) and has appeared on numerous TV and radio programmes.

Jacek Kucharczyk, Poland

Jacek Kucharczyk is a sociologist and think-tanker. He is the Research Director at the Institute of Public Affairs, one of Poland's leading think-tanks. In the 1980s, he was active in the underground students' and publishing movement. One of the founders and the former Board Chairman of the Policy Association for an Open Society PASOS, an association of 36 think-tanks from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. He is the author and editor of numerous policy briefs, articles, reports and books on democratic governance, foreign policy, the EU integration and transatlantic relations. His publications include „Advantures with Utopia“, „Bridges Across the Atlantic?“, „Citizens of Europe“, „European integration in the Polish public life“, „Learning from the experience of West-European think tanks: a study in think tank management“, „Democracy in Poland 2005-2007“. He frequently comments on current domestic and European affairs and politics for Polish and international printed and electronic media.

Aliaksandr Lahviniec, Belarus

Aleksandr Lahviniec is the foreign policy adviser to Dr. Aliaksandr Milinkevich, the Chairman of the Movement for Freedom, Belarus. He is a senior lecturer of political science and European studies at the European Humanities University in Vilnius, Lithuania. He is the author of a number of articles related to democracy, foreign policy and European choice for Belarus. He holds an MA in Political Science from the Institute for Political Studies in Strasbourg, France.

Ihar A. Lednik, Belarus

Ihar A. Lednik is the Head of the Organizing Committee on Rehabilitation of Political Persecution Victims, and the coordinator of the Human Rights movement „Our Belarus“, which is one of the working directions of the Coordinating Council of Individual Entrepreneurs of the Republic of Belarus. Since 1991, he has been running his own business - Mr. Lednik is the founder and owner of the companies „Yason“ (Borisov, Belarus) and „Lima“ (Moscow, Russia). In 1992, he was an intern in the Hamburg Society working on the issues of attracting investments and creating a joint-stock venture in Hamburg. He continued working on this issue in Belarus from 1995 to 1997. After business activity in Belarus had been paralysed by economic crimes and corruption, Ihar Lednik became a political and civil activist. Currently, Mr Lednik is working on the creation of a regional financial-production group in Borisov.

Jeff Lovitt, United Kingdom

Jeff Lovitt is the Executive Director of the PASOS, a network of 39 independent think-tanks spanning 24 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In 2007-2008, he co-edited „The Challenge of European Development Co-operation Policy for New Member States“, a PASOS report for the European Parliament, and Democracy's New Champion and the „European Democracy Assistance after EU Enlargement“, a PASOS study into the democracy assistance policies of the Visegrad Four countries. From 2000-2005, he was the Director of Communications at the international secretariat of the Transparency International. In 1999-2000, as an editor and media consultant, his clients included Commerzbank and Forum 2000, the foundation of Vaclav Havel. In 1987-1995, he was an editor and journalist in London for *The European* and *the Sunday Times*. He has also reported for the *Financial Times*, and been an op-ed contributor for the *International Herald Tribune*.

Vlad Lupan, Moldova

Vlad Lupan graduated from Moldovan State University and later in Romania, the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, in Bucharest. In 1996 - 2008 he was gathering diplomatic experience with the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international institutions. He dealt with OSCE and NATO issues, Transnistrian conflict resolution in Moldova. He was also involved in negotiations about the withdrawal of Russian troops and the CFE Treaty. He headed the OSCE and NATO Division, was in charge of the issues related to the Human Dimension of the OSCE. Between 1999-2001 he was a member of the Join Control Commission for the security zone of the Transnistrian conflict, while between 2002-2004 he was one of the three official Moldovan negotiators in the five-sided format of political talks (now the 5+2 format).

Siarhiej Mackievič, Belarus

Siarhiej Mackievič is currently working as the Chairman of the „Centar Supolnaść“. Centar Supolnaść is a Civic Society Centre based in Minsk (Belarus). Apart from this, Mr Mackievič has been serving as the Chairman of the Working Group of the Assembly of pro-democratic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) since 2004. The Working Group of the Assembly of pro-democratic NGOs is the biggest non-governmental network in Belarus, created by 250 organizations in 1997. It is a voluntary association of public organizations and initiatives, which freely choose different forms of organizational interaction, based on the principles of equality and independence, and designate democracy and independence of Belarus as their values.

Vitalii Martyniuk, Ukraine

Martyniuk Vitalii holds an MA in International Relations from the Kyiv International University (Ukraine). He has been the Director of the Information and Analysis Department, NGO „International Institute for Humanitarian Technologies (Kyiv) since 2007, the Vice-President of the Centre for Global Studies «Strategy XXI» (Kyiv) since the beginning of 2009 and an associated member of the Ukrainian Centre for Independent Political Research (Kyiv) since 2007. In 2003 – 2007, he was the Deputy Director at Ukrspetsconsulting LTD (Kyiv), in 2001 – 2003 a consultant at the Information and Analysis Direction of the Committee for policy of military-technical cooperation at the National Security Council of Ukraine and in 1997-2001 the Deputy Director on Foreign Links, Trade International LTD. He is the author of more than 50 analytical articles, papers, reports on transatlantic relations, NATO's modern state and future, the EU's development, European security, energy security, Ukrainian-Russian relations.

Pierre Morel, France

Pierre Morel has been the EU Special Representative for Central Asia (since October 2006) and the EU Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia (since September 2008). He studied at the Institute for Political Studies in Paris and he obtained a degree in Law from Paris University. He attended the National School of Public Administration, as well. In 1991, he was a diplomatic advisor to the President of the Czech Republic and he led the delegation for the negotiation of the Maastricht Treaty. He became a member of the International Institute of Strategic Studies in the same year. After that, he was the French ambassador to Kirghizstan (1993-1996), Georgia (1992-1993), to the Russian Federation and at the same time to Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Tadjikistan and Moldova (1992-1996), to the People's Republic of China (1996-2002) and to the Holy See (2002-2005). In 2005–2006, he was an advisor to the Policy Planning centre at the French foreign ministry, Paris.

Peter Mossop, Hungary

Peter Mossop is currently working for the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT) in Hungary as a consultant, with EU related work and projects related to the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Previously, he worked for the Swedish Foreign Service at the EU and Security Policy departments. There he worked with EU enlargement related issues such as Romania's and Bulgaria's EU negotiations and with the enlargement process related to EU working groups and the IPA. He has been a desk officer for several central European countries and Sweden's largest trading partner, Germany, working on bilateral and EU related relations. At the Security policy department he worked with preparing, coordinating and following up the Swedish Chairmanship of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers. He has also worked for the OSCE Mission in Kosovo with particular focus on higher education and minority related issues. His studies included Political science and Sociology with a special focus on the political and social transitions and post-conflict development in Central and Eastern Europe as the Western Balkans.

Sascha Müller-Kraenner, Germany

Sascha Müller-Kraenner is a Senior Policy Adviser and the European representative to “The Nature Conservancy”. He is one of the founders of and a senior adviser to the Ecologic Institute. He lectures on International Energy and Climate Policy at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin. In 2003-2006, Mr Müller-Kraenner served as the Director for Europe and North America at the Heinrich-Böll Foundation. He was the head of the foundation's programme on foreign and security policy, as well. From 1991 –1998 Mr Müller-Kraenner was the Director for International Affairs of the Deutscher Naturschutzring. Before that, he had served as the chief of the staff of Kornelia Müller, a Green member of the State Parliament of Saxony. He has been awarded by many fellowships and publishes extensively on international relations, the European integration and environmental diplomacy and the United Nations' climate change treaty.

Igor Munteanu, Moldova

Igor Munteanu holds a PhD in Public Law and acts as the Executive Director of the IDSI Viitorul (Institute for Development and Social Initiatives), a liberal think-tank established in Moldova. In 1996 - 1999 he was serving as the chief-editor of the political science journal “Arena Politicii” (The Arena of Politics), providing a venue for professional political analysis and legal commentaries of legislative and political processes in the country. He has written and edited several books and articles related to legal and political regimes after USSR dissolution, economic modernization and regional economies in transition, local and regional governance. Since 2001, Mr Munteanu has been acting as an Expert of the Working Group of the Institutional Committee of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, monitoring the statute of local and regional autonomy in the member countries and in 2007 he accepted to become a Member of the Advisory Board of the Black Sea Trust Fund (BSTF).

Boris Navasardian, Armenia

Boris Navasardian has been the President of the Yerevan Press Club, the first independent association of journalists in Armenia, since its foundation in 1995. From 2002 till 2006, he was chairing the Board of the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation-Armenia. In 2005-2007 Mr. Navasardian was also member of the Council of Europe's expert group on "Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information in Times of Crisis". His journalistic career started upon the graduation from the Journalism Department of Rostov State University in 1979. In 1990 he headed a Russian version of the "Republic of Armenia" daily – the organ of the first Parliament of independent Armenia. In 1990-1995 he was the publisher and editor-in-chief of the "Zerkalo" weekly. Boris Navasardian lectured at Yerevan State University, the Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) State University and the Yerevan State Linguistics University.

Ghia Nodia, Georgia

Ghia Nodia is a professor of politics and the Director of the International School of Caucasus Studies at Ilia Chavchavadze State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. He is also the founder and a member of the board of the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), an independent public policy think-tank in Tbilisi, which he led in 1992-2008. He has published extensively on two sets of topics: regional security, state-building and democratization in the Caucasus, and the theories of nationalism and democratic transition in the post-Cold-War context. He has been involved in pro-democracy advocacy efforts in Georgia and internationally, and has been a frequent participant of international congresses and conferences on the related topics. In February-December 2008, he served as the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia.

Alexandru Oprunenco, Moldova

Alex Oprunenco is the International Programs Director at the Expert-Grup, independent think-tank located in Chisinau, Moldova. Mr Oprunenco holds an MA degree in Political Science and Political Economy of Transition from the Central European University, Hungary. His research interests lie mainly in the field of European integration, international economy and competitiveness, development impact of migration, foreign trade and foreign aid effectiveness in the Republic of Moldova. In the recent years he has been involved in monitoring the implementation of the EU-Moldova Action Plan and research on economic integration between EU and Moldova. In some recent study he has also contributed to the research on approximation and prospects for euro-integration in the energy field.

Jan Pastwa, Poland

Jan Pastwa graduated from Gdansk University Law School and commenced his professional career as the Director of the Information Unit of the National Committee of the 'Solidarność'. From 1990 to 1994 he served as the spokesman for the Gdansk governor and from 1994 to 1996 he was the Director of the Governor office in Gdansk. Moreover, he was active in the Polish Scouting movement. He was a member of the underground scouting organizations in the 1980's and from 1990 to 1994 he was the Vice-President of the Polish Scouting Union. From 1997 to 2007, he worked as the Director of the Civil Service. Since March 2007, he has been the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to the Czech Republic.

Kristina Prunerová, Czech Republic

Kristina Prunerová has earned Master's Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy at the University of Economics in Prague (Czech Republic). Since 2004 she has served as a human rights officer at the Czech NGO, People in Need (PIN), and since 2005 she has been the Secretary of the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba (ICDC). The ICDC was founded by former Czech president and human rights champion, Václav Havel, as an international committee striving to build political support for Cuban democracy. Since May 2008, she has served as the Programme Manager of the „European Partnership for Democracy“. Ms Prunerova is currently responsible for the start of pilot projects of the EPD in the area of funding.

Rena Safaraliyeva, Azerbaijan

Rena Safaraliyeva has been the Executive Director of the Transparency International chapter in Azerbaijan since 2000. Ms Safaraliyeva holds a PhD degree in General Linguistics from Moscow Languages University and a post-doctoral degree from Azerbaijan Languages University. Rena has co-authored two major publications on business ethics (Business Ethics: Manual for Azerbaijan Companies, 2004 and Business Ethics Codes for 10 Azerbaijan Companies, 2005) and numerous reports (including Country Corruption Assessment: Public Opinion Survey in Azerbaijan 2004 and Country Corruption Assessment: Business Opinion Survey 2006) along with analytical articles on anti-corruption efforts of the government of Azerbaijan and civil society.

Alice Savovová, Czech Republic

Alice Savovová has been working as the Executive Director of the Association for International Affairs since 2007. She graduated at the Faculty of International Relations at the University of Economics, focusing on European integration and international trade. She has participated in the scholarship programme "Global Business Programme" at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. She has worked on short-term projects in Germany, China and Brussels.

Peter Semneby, Sweden

Peter Semneby is the EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus, his main task is to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on their way to moving closer to the EU and its core values. He encourages and supports cooperation between the states of the region, along with his contribution to a peaceful settlement of the Caucasian conflicts, as well as to the prevention of new disputes. Previously, he worked as the Head of the OSCE Mission to Croatia (2002-2005), Head of the OSCE Mission to Latvia (2000-2002) and he participated in the OSCE Mission to Georgia (1992). He was responsible for European Security and Defence Policy at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs through 1997-2000. He served at Swedish embassies in Germany, Ukraine and the USSR.

Jiří Schneider, Czech Republic

Jiří Schneider is the Program Director of the Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI). He is the former Political Director of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the former head of its Policy Planning Department. From 1995 until 1998, Schneider served as the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Israel. From 1990 until 1992, Jiří Schneider was the Member of the Czechoslovak Federal Parliament. In 2002, Ambassador Schneider served as an International Policy Fellow at the Open Society Institute in Budapest. He also lectures at Charles University and New York University in Prague. Since 2006 he has coordinated a joint project of V4 think-tanks to strengthen the Eastern dimension of the EU's policy which has recently taken shape of the Eastern Partnership project.

Tornike Sharashenidze, Georgia

Tornike Sharashenidze holds an MA in Public Administration and a PhD in Diplomatic History. He is a Professor and the Head of International Affairs Program at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs. Mr Sharashenidze worked as an International Affairs and World Economy Analyst for the Resonance Daily and the 24 Saati Daily (1998-2002). He was a Senior Analyst for the National Security Council of Georgia (2003-2004), a Foreign Policy Assistant to the Prime Minister of Georgia (2005) and the Director of the NATO Information Centre of Georgia (2006). He founded the MA Program of International Affairs at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (2005) and has been a research fellow of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies since 2007.

Olga Shumylo, Ukraine

Olga Shumylo holds an MA from the London School of Economics and is the Director of International Centre for Policy Studies. She is an expert in European integration and worked as an advisor to Hryhoriy Nemyria, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister for European and International Integration over the past year (February- November 2008). Ms Shumylo was responsible for the EU-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, Ukraine's participation in EU agencies and programmes, cooperation between Ukraine and international financial institutions, and improvement of the country's investment climate. In 2003-2007, Ms Shumylo ran the Department for European Integration at ICPS. She also led the expert group for the preparation of policy papers and briefs on various critical EU-related issues. In 2004, Ms Shumylo also worked as a visiting research fellow at the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels.

Vitali Silitski, Belarus

Vitali Silitski graduated from Belarusian State University (Department of Philosophy and Economy, program in Sociology) in 1994. He holds an MA in Politics (Central European University, Hungary) and PhD in Political Science (Rutgers University). In 1999-2003, he worked as an associate professor at the European Humanities University in Minsk. Afterwards, he was a Reagan-Fascell Democracy fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy (Washington D.C.) and a visiting scholar at the Centre on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (Stanford University). He has authored over 100 publications on the issues of democratization and authoritarianism in the former USSR, electoral revolutions and preemptive authoritarianism, politics of economic reforms, EU relations with Belarus, Belarus-Russia integration, etc. In 2007, he was appointed the Director of the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies.

Eugeniusz Smolar, Poland

Eugeniusz Smolar studied Economics at Warsaw University. He was forced to finish studies due to his presence at the demonstrations in March and August 1968. He emigrated to Sweden where he graduated in Sociology at Uppsala University. From 1982 to 1997, he worked for the Polish section of the BBC; since 1988 as the Director. He was a co-founder of the political quarterly 'Aneks'. From 2002 to 2004, he was the Program Director of the Polish Radio. In October 2007 he became the Director of the Centre for International Relations. Mr Smolar is also the Director of the Polish Program Council of the Czech-Polish Forum.

Iryna Solonenko, Ukraine

Iryna Solonenko has been the Director of the European Programme at the International Renaissance Foundation (Soros Foundation in Ukraine) since May 2004. In 2000 – 2004 she was working for the EastWest Institute, Kyiv Centre and dealt with implications of the EU enlargement for Ukraine's relations with its Central-European neighbours and regional development in Ukraine. Prior to it, she had been involved in USAID- and CIDA- funded projects. Ms Solonenko is a PhD candidate at the Department of European Integration, National Academy of Public Administration in Ukraine. In 2006-2007 she undertook a research at the European Research Institute of the University of Birmingham (UK). Ms Solonenko holds an MA in International Relations and European Studies from the Central European University in Budapest and BA in History from the National University „Kiev-Mohyla Academy“ in Kyiv.

Mira Sovakar, Germany

Mira Sovakar is the Caucasus Programme (CP) Project Manager at the Conciliation Resources in London. She is currently managing dialogue and confidence building programmes in the context of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. She joined the CR in October 2008 after having lived and worked in the South Caucasus for more than five years. Recently, he has been an external consultant for the humanitarian organization Geneva Call to engage policymakers in Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh and South Ossetia in drawing up public policies on anti-personnel mines. Prior to this, she had worked at the South Caucasus Regional Office of the “Heinrich-Böll Foundation” in Tbilisi, Georgia, where she ran the Programme on Women's Empowerment and Gender Democracy and managed various projects on conflict transformation, civic participation and minority rights. Ms Sovakar holds a Master's degree in English language and literature, Slavic studies and Philosophy from the University of Cologne, Germany.

Vít Střítecký, Czech Republic

Vít Střítecký is a Research Fellow at the Institute of International Relations in Prague, Czech Republic and a lecturer at the Department of IR, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague, where he teaches the theory of security and strategic studies and critical security studies. He is also a PhD candidate at the Department of IR, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague. He holds a Master degree from the Department of IR, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague and he is currently completing a postgraduate research degree in international security at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Mr Stritecky has also studied at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden, and conducted research at the Tbilisi State University. He has widely published on various security issues and on political and security problems of the South Caucasus and Georgia in particular.

Oleksandr Sushko, Ukraine

Oleksandr Sushko has worked as the Research Director at the Institute For Euro-Atlantic Co-operation since June 2006. Prior to this, he had been the coordinator of the Monitoring Programme (1999-2000), a political analyst (1997-1999), the Director of the Center for Peace, Conversion and Foreign Policy of Ukraine, Kyiv (2000-2006). He holds a PhD in Political Science (1998). Mr Sushko was a Visiting Fellow of the Freedom House and Monterey Centre for Nonproliferation Studies (USA) in January-February 2002. His fields of interest include the European integration, EU-Ukraine relations, NATO-Ukraine relations, Ukrainian foreign and domestic policies and security studies.

Karel Svoboda, Czech Republic

Mgr. Karel Svoboda (1979) is a research fellow at the Institute of International Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Charles University and an analyst for the Association for International Affairs. He specializes in the field of economic transformation in the post Soviet area. His articles appeared in Czech and foreign journals, for example Politex, Slovanský přehled, Slovanské historické studie, Mezinárodní vztahy, and other scholarly magazines. He is also a frequent commentator of current issues for the Czech media.

Karel Schwarzenberg, Czech Republic

Karel Schwarzenberg is the incumbent Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. He studied Law and Silviculture Studies at the Universities of Vienna, Munich and Graz . Between 1984-1991, Mr Schwarzenberg was the President of the International Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, awarded in 1989 together with Lech Walesa with the Human Rights Award of the Council of Europe. On January 1, 1990, he became a member of the Collegium of Councillors of President Václav Havel and between July 1990 - July 1992, he was his Chancellor. Since December 2004, Mr Schwarzenberg has been a member of the EU Affairs Committee of the Senate and a member of the Permanent Delegation of the Parliament to the NATO Parliamentary assembly. Since December 2006, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security Committee of the Senate and a member of the Permanent Delegation of the Parliament to the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan, Armenia

Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan has headed the Eurasia Partnership Foundation, the legacy of the Eurasia Foundation in Armenia, since 2007. Prior to that, he had worked as a freelance business and strategy consultant and written for a variety of media. A major part of his experience has been with the International Alert, a peace-building NGO in London, as the head of the Eurasia program. He has also taught at universities in U.S. and former Soviet Union on political science, conflict resolution and strategy development. He holds a PhD from the USSR Academy of Sciences Linguistic Institute in Turkic Linguistics and an MA in Society and Politics from Lancaster University and an MA in Public Administration in International Administration from Bowling Green State University. He publishes widely, particularly on the topics of the Caucasus, international politics and the methods of decision-making.

Michal Thim, Czech Republic

Michal Thim has been the Director of the Research Center of the Association of International Affairs (Prague) since August 2007. Mr Thim graduated from Political Sciences at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Charles University in Prague. The main areas of his interest as an analyst include Turkish foreign policy, the region of South Caucasus and the European Neighbourhood Policy. He was the Program Director of the „South Caucasus in 2008 and Beyond: Frozen Conflicts or Frozen Peace?“ – the AMO’s international conference.

Elsa Tulmets, France

Elsa Tulmets holds an MA in Political Science and International Relations from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po) and a PhD from Sciences Po and Free University of Berlin. Ms Tulmets pursued an intership at the French Ministry of Defence in 2000. In 2000 – 2003, she was lecturing at Sciences Po (Paris) and at CIES Sorbonne (Paris). Between 2001 – 2005 she was conducting a research at the Centre Marc Bloch in Berlin. In 2005, she was lecturing at Europa University Viadrina in Frankfurt Oder. Since 2002, she has been co-editing The European Political Economy Review and since 2005 has been working for the CEFRES (Prague) and the Centre March Bloch (Berlin). Since 2006, she has been lecturing at Charles University (Prague) and working for the Institute of International Relations (Prague). Her fields of interest include: the theories of international relations, the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EU enlargement and foreign policies of particular EU members.

Liudmila Ulyashyna, Belarus

Liudmila Ulyashyna graduated from the Law Faculty of the Belarusian State University in 1980 and worked as an attorney in the Minsk City Bar in 1980-2000. After she had completed her Master’s degree in International and German Constitutional law in 2002-2004 and LL.M in International and Communication Technology Law in Norway in 2004-2007, she initiated a project for Belarusian lawyers and human rights defenders on international human rights law. The project was supported and conducted by members of the Human Rights House Network organizations. Currently, she is working as a coordinator at the Human Rights House Foundation (Oslo) and is leading two projects on human rights education for lawyers and human rights defenders. She provides expertise and gives lectures on the implementation of international human rights law into national legal systems and conducts her research on international human rights standards at the European Humanities University, Belarusian University in exile in Vilnius.

Tomáš Valášek, Slovakia

Tomas Valášek is the Director of Foreign Policy and Defence at the Centre for European Reform, a private London-based think-tank. He has written extensively on Eastern Europe, transatlantic relations and European security and defence policy. Previously, he had served as the Policy Director and the head of the security and defence policy division at the Slovak Ministry of Defence. Before having joined the government, Mr Valášek had founded and directed the Brussels office of the World Security Institute (formerly the Centre for Defence Information, CDI), a Washington-based defence think-tank (2002-2006). From 1996 to 2002 he was working as a Senior European Analyst at the CDI’s Washington office. Mr Valášek is the author of “What the economic crisis means for the EU’s eastern policy” (CER policy brief, 2009), “France, NATO and European defence” (CER policy brief, 2008), a co-author of “Preparing for the multipolar world: European foreign and security policy in 2020” (CER essay, 2007) as well as numerous articles appearing in newspapers and journals including the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times.

Ketevan Vashakidze, Georgia

Ketevan Vashakidze has held a variety of teaching, consulting and management positions both in Georgia and internationally. Ms Vashakidze has consulted the government of Georgia, the World Bank Group, UNDP Regional Office in South-East Asia, UNICEF in NYC & Bolivia as well as various NGOs and universities in Georgia on a number of development issues. She holds an MA in International Development and Policy Analysis from Columbia University. She has also pursued PhD studies in Social, Economic and Political Geography at Tbilisi State University and Edinburgh University. Ms Vashakidze is an adjunct professor at Tbilisi State University, where she has been teaching courses in human geography, policy analysis, and international development since 1997. She is the chairperson of the Grant-Makers East Forum, a group that promotes development of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia by providing a forum to discuss effectiveness of grant-making, exchange experience, get inspired and encourage new donor activity in the region.

Iryna Vidanava, Belarus

Iryna Vidanava has been active in promoting civil society in Belarus for more than a decade. She is the editor-in-chief of the CDmag, an independent youth publication which is the only youth magazine in Belarus. Ms Vidanava has also served as the International Coordinator for the Assembly of Pro-Democratic NGOs, Belarus' largest third sector umbrella organization, and has held leadership positions in two leading youth NGOs, the Belarusian Students' Association and Youth Information Centre. In the United States, Ms Vidanava worked as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Civil Society Studies at Johns Hopkins University and interned at the Freedom House. Ms Vidanava holds a PhD from Belarus State University, where she has also lectured. She received an MA in Public Policy from the Institute of Policy Studies at Johns Hopkins University in May 2006.

Andrew Wilson, United Kingdom

Andrew Wilson is a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. He has previously held academic positions at the LSE, Cambridge and University College London. His most recent books are *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (Yale UP, third edition, 2009), *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (Yale UP, 2005) and *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World* (Yale UP, 2005). His publications at ECFR include *Meeting Medvedev: The Politics of the Putin Succession*; *Can the EU Win the Peace in Georgia?* And most recently *European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood*.

Ernest Wyciszkievicz, Poland

Ernest Wyciszkievicz joined the Polish Institute of International Affairs in 2001 as an analyst. In 2001-2004 he was a member of the Editorial Board of the Polish Foreign Affairs Digest. Since 2009 he has been the International Economy/ Energy Security Programme/ Coordinator. He is also the Managing Editor of a Russian-language quarterly on European affairs. His main areas of interest are: energy security, political economy of oil and gas, EU energy policy, EU-Russia relations, as well as Russian foreign and security policy. His publications include: *Caspian Oil and Gas - What Relevance for the West*, *Security Challenges in the Post-Soviet Space*, *EU External Energy Policy and Turkey*, *Turkey's neighbourhood*, *Geopolitics of Pipelines and Energy Interdependence and Inter-State Relations on the Post-Soviet Space* (forthcoming).

Leyla Yunusova, Azerbaijan

Leyla Yunusova is a Doctor of History, her thesis was on the topic: „English-Russian Rivalry on the Caspian Sea and Azerbaijan in the First Part of the 18th Century“. Currently, she is the Director of the Institute of Peace and Democracy (IPD). She was the Deputy of Minister and the Head of the Information and Analytical Center at the Ministry of Defence (1992 - 1993) and the Director of the Independent Information and Analytical Center „Azeri“ (1993 - 1995). Since 1994, she has been the chairwoman of the Society of Women of Azerbaijan for Peace and Democracy in Southern Caucasus, since 2001 the Chief of the Women Crisis Center and since 2005 the Director of the Institute of Peace and Democracy.

Conference Papers

Unresolved Conflicts and the Eastern Partnership

**A Paper Submitted by Institute for Security and Development Policy
Svante Cornell and Karoly Benes**

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the unresolved conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria have fundamentally determined the security environment in the Black sea region. These so-called 'frozen conflicts' – in contradiction with their label – have been everything but frozen. They have been dynamic processes; leaving aside episodes of violence, the political balances between and within the parties have constantly been shifting. The August 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia proves the point that Europe can no longer ignore the unresolved conflicts of the region, or pay lip service to non-functional resolution mechanisms. Unfortunately, the lack of movement toward political solutions during the last decade indicates the inadequacy of peacekeeping, conflict management and resolution mechanisms that are at play in these conflicts. Indeed, if anything has been frozen, it has been the mechanisms for conflict resolution.

The European Union's role in facilitating a rapprochement between the parties has been marginal, in spite of Europe's power of attraction over most parties to the conflicts (with the exception of Russia, a direct or indirect party to all conflicts). Indeed, for the past decade and a half, Europe – and the EU – have appeared to shun involvement in the unresolved conflicts, appearing to judge that these were too complex and too risky to merit involvement. Moreover, the rest of EU activity in the region betrays an implicit assumption that the EU could achieve its goals in the region without directly dealing with the conflicts. While never logically consistent, this policy must now be considered discredited in the aftermath of the war in Georgia, which made apparent the potential costs inaction on the part of Europe.

Hence a stronger commitment to conflict resolution from the West, specifically the EU, is a fundamental step that would be required in order to guarantee stability in the Eastern neighborhood – and hence a sine qua non for the fulfillment of the aims of the Eastern Partnership. Indeed, the launching of the Eastern Partnership brings actuality to this subject. As it aspires to promote European values, security and prosperity in the region, it cannot ignore the fact that the unresolved conflicts are the single most acute problem of the countries of the Eastern Partnership, affecting four of the six members directly and one, Ukraine, indirectly. Whether the Eastern Partnership – not originally intended for conflict resolution – can meaningfully address the issue, however, remains to be seen.

The Eastern Partnership and the Unresolved Conflicts

To understand the potential of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) – as a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) – and its implications on the involved Eastern European states, it is noteworthy to shortly describe how and with which purpose the EaP was developed by the EU's decision making bodies. It is also important to place an emphasis on the difference between the first pillar EU policies, including the ENP and the EaP, and the second pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), to specify the EaP's role and possible potential in the conflict resolution, but clearly distinguish it from other EU mechanisms dealing with foreign and security policy.

The Eastern Partnership was presented by Poland and Sweden at the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council on May 26, 2008. It was meant to complement and balance the French-brokered Union for the Mediterranean, bearing in mind the special importance of the EU's Eastern neighbours, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and strengthen the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The initiative was discussed and welcomed by the European Council in June 2008, which invited the Commission to elaborate a proposal for modalities of the Eastern Partnership and present it to the Council.

Following the Georgian-Russian war, the Eastern Partnership gained new momentum, as in the aftermath of the conflict the Extraordinary European Council on September 1, 2008 decided to speed up the implementation of the initiative. The Council noted the impact of the crisis on the entire region, and considered that it was more necessary than ever to support regional cooperation, in particular through the European Neighbourhood Policy. According to the Council's guidelines, the Commission elaborated and issued a Communication concerning the Eastern Partnership in December 2008², which consisted of concrete suggestions and a working structure for the EaP, defining it as a specific Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, Eastern Partnership, Brussels, 3.12.2008. COM (2008) 823. and Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication, Brussels, SEC(2008) 2974/3, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/

In March 2009, the European Council endorsed the Commission's proposal and issued a Declaration on EaP, officially launched at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Prague two months later, in May.

The new element in the Eastern Partnership initiative is the multilateral track, which goes beyond the current Neighbourhood Policy, traditionally handling the partner countries through bilateral negotiations. The multilateral track includes bi-annual meetings for the heads of states of the involved EU and Eastern European countries, annual spring meetings for the ministers of foreign affairs and four thematic platforms (Democracy, good governance and stability; Economic integration and convergence with EU policies; Energy Security; Contacts between people), facilitating the cooperation in the above-mentioned specific fields, not just between the EU and the Eastern partners, but at least equally importantly, among the partner countries. The multilateral track also contains selected flagship initiatives, such as a Southern energy corridor, providing focus to FOR the multilateral cooperation.

Furthermore, the Eastern Partnership was created to promote the rule of law, good governance, human rights, protection of minorities, and the principles of the market economy in the partner states, through new contractual relations, superseding the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, and introducing new Association Agreements, a new Comprehensive Institution-Building Programme, visa facilitation process and energy security cooperation. The comprehensive feature of the initiative could enhance the prosperity and the stability in the region, creating a platform for confidence building through its multilateral mechanisms, supporting the better governance, the economic development and the adoption of the European aquis, thus indirectly facilitating conflict resolution in the region. However, the initiative is lacking any kind of mechanism designed specifically for conflict resolution, which could set back the fulfilment of the Eastern Partnership's objectives, considering the paramount importance of the unresolved conflicts in the affected countries.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that the hard security issues, such as launching EU civilian and military missions or forming a common EU standpoint in a conflict resolution process, is still under the CFSP/ESDP's umbrella. Thus, Eastern Partnership's role in these questions is marginal. The decision-making in CFSP issues requires consensus among the member states in every single case, and the executive branch of the CFSP is the Council Secretariat. The division of the scope of authority between the European Commission, responsible for the implementation of the ENP and EaP, and the Council Secretariat, in charge of the CFSP and ESDP, has already caused discord within the EU in several cases. Therefore, it is also foreseeable that certain controversies may occur between the different EU bodies concerning the conflict resolution processes in the region, hampering the efficiency of the EU engagement.

South Ossetia and Abkhazia

The outbreak of the war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 constituted the most considerable change in the status quo in the Black sea region since the early 1990s. The growing tensions in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the ensuing violent confrontation between Georgian and Russian forces in South Ossetia, and Russia's subsequent invasion of Abkhazia and Georgia clouded the Georgian government's hopes of reintegrating the separatist regions in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the war made the obsolescence of existing conflict resolution processes in the region obvious. While previously treated as issues to be resolved through negotiations between Tbilisi and the secessionist governments, the August events reduced the conflicts in the two separatist regions to constitute components in a larger conflict between Georgia and Russia – something that was arguably the case even earlier, given the growing Russian assertion of direct control over the territories since 2001.

In the wake of the war, the Georgian government faces an increasingly turbulent domestic scene. A political crisis emerged after the events in November 2007, when a government crackdown on street protestors put an end to the era of post-revolutionary political stability in Georgia. The crisis was followed by the government's decision to hold early presidential and parliamentary elections. The January 2008 presidential election secured Mikheil Saakashvili a second term in office, but the events shook the internal political scene to the core, introducing a highly polarized political climate marked by fallouts between the ruling elite and the opposition movement, followed by fracturing of the ruling elite itself. This, albeit an inevitable phase in Georgia's democratization process, made the domestic political scene both vulnerable to external pressure and delayed national processes, particularly those connected with conflict resolution.

The outbreak of the Russo-Georgian war coincided with the French Presidency of the European Union, which provided a window of opportunity to the ambitious French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, to prove his commitment to a stronger, common European voice in foreign policy. The European Union's – and especially the French Presidency's – role during the ceasefire negotiations was essential, considering a context where Washington was relatively weak.³ Yet both the conduct and the result of the negotiations were controversial.

³ Christian Lequesne and Oliver Rozenberg: The French Presidency of 2008: The Unexpected Agenda, SIEPS, 2008:3op.

France hardly consulted with EU institutions, and Moscow was provided with the opportunity to expertly exploit the deficiencies of the ceasefire agreement, delaying the withdrawal of its troops and directly ignoring the principles laid down in the agreement. The rapid launch of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, an autonomous mission monitoring and analyzing the situation on the de facto borders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, was also a European accomplishment, giving impetus to the enhancement of another French presidency priority, the European Security and Defense Policy. However, Tbilisi has placed emphasis on the further enhancement of the EU's activity under the ESDP's umbrella, asking for additional police functions to the Monitoring Mission, extending its mandate to cover peacekeeping tasks. The EU has so far been reluctant to undertake further commitments and extend its mission.

One of the incentives provided by Eastern Partnership for a conflict resolution in Georgia, could be the ratification of an Association Agreement, including a Free Trade Area, fostering a deeper economic integration between EU and Tbilisi. The Agreement may strengthen the country's territorial integrity, cementing the EU's standpoint about the refusal of the breakaway regions' recognition. At the moment, the best Georgia could do to facilitate the negotiations on an Association Agreement, is the successful implementation of the ENP Action Plan, endorsed in 2006. It is the best way to prepare for the requirements laid down in the acquis, and it could organically lead to deeper discussions on an Association Agreement.

The Association Agreement, as a deeper and broader political agreement, may include a Free Trade Agreement, establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, which is also high on the Georgian government's political agenda. The Extraordinary European Council in last September called on the Commission to start negotiations with Georgia on an enhanced free trade agreement, but the process seems extremely slow. Currently, Georgia has been a member of an "upgraded" Generalized System of Preferences since 2006, which offers tariff and custom allowances for the participants. However, as far as the relationship between a Free Trade Agreement and the conflict resolution is concerned, it is reflected in Deputy Prime Minister Giorgi Baramidze's opinion: "The FTA has not only economic, but immense political importance for us, as besides export and investment promotion it would bring Georgia closer to the EU and make it more attractive for the population living in occupied areas." The hint at the breakaway regions signals that even an economic question is examined in relation to the reintegration of the country, which imbibes every issue in the Georgian political sphere.

The visa facilitation process offered by the Eastern Partnership includes negotiations on the simplification of the procedures necessary to obtain Schengen visas; particularly, it implies lower requirements for documents and a shorter period of time necessary for visa processing, as well as lower visa charges. Such visa facilitation has already been made possible for Russia, which is a concern in Tbilisi not least as Russia has been handing out Russian passports systematically in the occupied Georgian territories, a policy dating back to the early 2000s. As Baramidze said, "the fact that Russian passport holders in the occupied territories of Georgia enjoy visa preferences compared to the rest of the population makes the present situation extremely critical." In the long run, the EaP could lead to a visa free regime, but due to resistance from several EU member states, this process will probably take a long time.

Should developments over the next few years suggest a substantial increase in economic growth, transparency and respect for human rights in Georgia, supported by a stronger European commitment, the de facto leadership of Abkhazia may ultimately favor a federative relationship with Georgia rather than with Russia, if given the liberty to choose. While such a shift in loyalty on part of that secessionist government is unlikely to occur within the next several years, the coming period will be crucial for Georgia in proving itself as the better alternative to Russia. As far as South Ossetia is concerned, however, the prospects for such a development are excessively small, given Moscow's near-total control over the territory even before the war. Now, it is little more than a Russian military garrison, with the ability of locals to influence events near zero.

The development of conflict resolution regarding Georgian breakaway regions will depend heavily on the relationship between Russia and the West in the years to come. Depending on the extent to which Brussels and Washington are prepared to challenge Russia's actions in the region, Moscow may change its policies vis-à-vis its near abroad. Over the next few years, a bargaining game between Russia and Europe should not be excluded, as the two seek to find ways to establish a new relationship. In this context, the Eastern Partnership's role in conflict resolution is to enhance economic prosperity in Georgia, facilitating the adoption of EU standards, and helping to build a more transparent and efficient public administration. However, even if the Eastern Partnership could provide certain incentives for the conflicting parties, it is unlikely to have a crucial role in the conflict resolution in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, considering the military aspect of these conflicts, and the vast Russian leverage on the breakaway regions.

Nagorno-Karabakh

The Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is the single most important determinant of the security situation and international relations in the South Caucasus.

The conflict has placed relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan in deadlock, and has cemented Armenia's dependence on Russia. Azerbaijan's earlier dependence on Turkey and the West has been greatly reduced thanks to its economic development fueled by oil; this has made Azerbaijan an increasingly independent force compared to its two neighbors, Georgia and Armenia. Due to the embargo imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey as a result of Armenia's occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven adjoining Azerbaijani provinces, Armenia suffers from economic and political isolation in the region and relies on Georgia and Iran for land transport routes. Russia's support for Armenia has provided for a substantial Russian influence over Armenian politics.

Since Turkish President Abdullah Gul's visit to Yerevan last September, Armenian-Turkish relations have shown certain signs of thaw. The so-called "football diplomacy" – Gul and his counterpart watched a World Cup qualifying match between Turkey and Armenia – have led to the beginning of a normalization process between the two countries; but the process will probably take longer time. For Armenia, the Eastern Partnership and the thaw in the Turkish-Armenian relations could provide a way out from its political and economic isolation. The financial incentives provided by the Eastern Partnership could ease the country's dependence on Russia, and a warmer, more cooperative international environment could foster tighter relationships between the European Union and Yerevan, laying down the foundation of a possible rapprochement in the region. Yet the Turkish-Armenian rapprochement itself was a perfect illustration of the fallacy of approaching regional issues in isolation from the conflicts. Indeed, the ruling Justice and Development Party government in Turkey at first appeared to approach a rapprochement without preconditions; yet in the face of domestic criticism and strong Azerbaijani objections, was forced to desist from delinking the bilateral Turkish-Armenian relationship from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.⁴

The lack of Armenian and Azerbaijani enthusiasm for the process of resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict hence remains a central. Over the past several years, both Armenia and Azerbaijan have pursued policies with regard to Nagorno-Karabakh aimed at winning time. Indeed, both appear to have seen time to be in their respective favor. Armenia has anticipated an increasing acceptance for the enclave's separation from Azerbaijan as time passes, and as it believes the principle of self-determination is gaining ground internationally, citing the examples of East Timor, Kosovo and Montenegro. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, has trusted its vastly increased military spending, fueled by incomes from its energy exports, to provide for a significant shift in the power balance in its favor. This logic has led many analysts to conclude that a resumption of warfare between the two states is a plausible scenario in the coming years, as the imbalance between them grows.

Azerbaijan has sought to play a complicated balancing act in its foreign policy, maintaining a working relationship with Russia while at the same time citing an orientation toward the west as its main foreign policy priority. This orientation was enhanced with the completion of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum oil and gas pipelines, allowing Azerbaijan to pursue an increasingly independent foreign policy. In the aftermath of the war in Georgia, Russia briefly pushed unilaterally for a reinvigoration of the peace process in Nagorno-Karabakh. These efforts built on the assumption of a changing geopolitical balance in the region, filling the vacuum of a temporarily lost Western foothold in the region – and thus a window of opportunity to reinforce Russia's role of the sole arbiter of regional affairs. One aspect of this is the prospect of Azerbaijan redirecting parts of its gas exports through Russia, in the face of continued European hesitation on credibly supporting the Nabucco pipeline project, planned to transport gas from the South Caucasus and Central Asia through Turkey to the European market. The Eastern Partnership places emphasis on the enhanced energy security engagement with Baku, as the only oil and gas exporting EU partner involved in the initiative. The importance of the so-called Southern energy corridor is paramount for the EU to diversify energy transport routes and energy sources.

As far as conflict resolution over Nagorno-Karabakh is concerned, the international negotiation mechanisms have proven grossly inappropriate. The OSCE's Minsk Group, co-chaired by Russia, France and the United States, has contributed to freezing the situation in the region – implying that it has succeeded in preventing a return to violence, but failed to achieve any sustainable advancement toward a durable peace agreement. Indeed, the structure of the Minsk Process suffers from several drawbacks. One is the nature of its composition: it is dependent on cooperation between the U.S., France and Russia, a problematic proposition as it indexes the success of the group in particular to Russian-American relations. Given the clear Russian interest in maintaining a status quo in the region – implying an interest in preventing a comprehensive resolution of the problem on any terms other than those that would guarantee Moscow a continued domination over both countries – this incapacitates the Minsk Group. Another weakness is the level of the Minsk Group, which is chaired by mid-level diplomats. Especially given the composition of the Minsk Group, a much higher level of representation would be necessary. Hence, one step that the United States and France could do to bolster the peace process would be to appoint serious, senior diplomats with hands-on experience of conflict resolution elsewhere to the position of co-chair of the Minsk Group, and invite Moscow to do the same.

⁴ Christian Lequesne and Oliver Rozenberg: The French Presidency of 2008: The Unexpected Agenda, SIEPS, 2008:30p.

Presently, there appears to be no diplomatic alternative to the Minsk Group. But even if the Minsk Group remains the official channel for conflict resolution measures, this does not preclude a more assertive European role in promoting a resolution of the conflict. Here, France's role as co-chair is crucial, and requires a more purposeful coordination between EU institutions and the French Minsk Group co-chair.

Transnistria

The Moldovan communist government's foreign policy has been dominated by "realpolitik" concerning the conflict resolution in Transnistria. This has implied a pragmatic approach, which has recognized Tiraspol's dependence on Moscow, and that a settlement of the conflict is virtually impossible without Russian participation. Thus during the past several years, the Moldovan Communist Party and President Vladimir Voronin have pursued a bilateral settlement of the Transnistrian conflict under Russian auspices.

The failure of the Kozak Memorandum in 2003, a Russian-sponsored settlement that would have provided for extensive sovereignty for Transnistria guaranteed by Russian troops staying on Moldovan soil for up to 20 years, resulted in a deterioration of Moldovan-Russian relations, but the lack of attention of Western states and Moscow's overwhelming leverage on Tiraspol once again incited Chisinau to seek a solution in Moscow for the Transnistrian conflict. The EU's participation in the 5+2 negotiation format (Russia, Moldova, Transnistria, Ukraine, OSCE, US, EU) has proven insufficient. Chisinau therefore again involved in negotiations on a possible settlement through trilateral channels with Moscow and Tiraspol, recognizing the lack of interest among the Western states, the EU and NATO for deeper engagement.

The European Union's engagement with Moldova is primarily handled through the European Neighborhood Policy and within its framework the ENP Action Plan and the Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2013. The Action Plan states that the EU sustains efforts towards a settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, but the scope of these efforts have been limited. However, it is noteworthy that when it has decided to get involved, the EU's involvement has reached appreciable successes. The chief example is the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) in Moldova and the EU's Common Visa Application Center housed by the Hungarian Embassy in Chisinau. The EUBAM, financed by the EU Commission as a part of ENP, has been an effective contribution to legitimizing trade to and from Transnistria, improving the capacity of the Moldovan and Ukrainian customs services, thus enhancing the rule of law in the region since its establishment in 2005.

Yet EU policy needs to deal with the specific interests of EU member Romania towards Moldova. Due to historical reasons, Moldova was once part of the so-called "Great Romania", Bucharest considers Moldavians as a part of the larger Romanian nation, and is therefore at least rhetorically ready to provide them with Romanian passport and citizenship en masse. Not surprisingly this policy is condemned by Chisinau, which blames Bucharest for interference in its internal affairs. Moreover, the Romanian policy is exploited by Tiraspol, which paints a specter of unification of Moldova and Romania as a reason for its intransigence. Likewise, Romania's passport policies have weakened the EU's ability to criticize Russian distribution of passports in Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. Since the brutal police crackdown on street violence following the Moldovan elections of April 2009, Romanian-Moldovan relations further deteriorated as Chisinau accused Bucharest of supporting the opposition parties and movements, and thereby interfering in Moldova's internal affairs. The tensions between the two countries also weaken the EU's position in Moldova.

Moldova's future orientation is highly dependent on the West's ability to provide incentives for the Moldovan political leadership to remain committed to the country's democratization and European integration. Without such incentives, political support and commitment to a closer cooperation and a possible EU membership, Chisinau could easily transform into a less democratic, less transparent country with a strongly Russian-influenced foreign and internal policy; and with the parts of the population not supporting this inclination voting with their feet. Therefore, after the communist victory on the general election in April 2009, the ensuing mass demonstrations, and the violent governmental crackdown, it is vital to continue cooperation with Moldova, including its involvement in the Eastern Partnership, in order to prevent a further shift in Chisinau's foreign policy toward a less democratic and possibly pro-Russian direction.

Conclusions

The EU, in order to achieve its own interests in the Eastern Neighborhood, will need to expand its involvement in conflict resolution in the countries of the Eastern Partnership. In this context, the Eastern Partnership itself can at best play a supporting role, providing a forum for dialogue, and a vehicle for the broader Europeanization of the countries concerned.

That will not in itself resolve the conflicts, however, and it would be a mistake to assume that the gradual Europeanization of the Eastern Neighborhood – for example through the gradual incorporation of most of the EU acquis into the domestic systems of the six countries – would necessarily advance conflict resolution. Quite to the contrary, the conflicts themselves may prove to be the biggest stumbling block to the Europeanization of these countries, and could derail the EU's efforts within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. Therefore, it will be crucial for the EU to build on its growing engagement with the region by expanding its involvement also in hard security areas under the CSFP, something that will be required to advance conflict resolution.

There is one area, however, where the Eastern Partnership may provide a tangible contribution to conflict resolution. That is in providing a vehicle for the soft power of the EU, which can form a point of attraction for the populations if not the leaderships of the secessionist areas. In particular, EU financial support for the reconstruction of conflict zones and the building of economic prospects there is an avenue for the future. The conflict zones are recognized by the EU as part of the countries involved in the Eastern Partnership and therefore included in the program, though the EU has not fully resolved how its activities will be formulated in these legally and politically sensitive areas. Building these activities in a way that strengthens prospects for conflict resolution and that holds out a European perspective for the inhabitants of these regions could be the Eastern Partnership's main contribution to conflict resolution.

Eastern Partnership: Its Origin, Opportunities and Challenges

A Paper Submitted by The Polish Institute of International Affairs

Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a new proposal for regional cooperation, addressed by the EU to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Enhancement of these countries' relations with the EU rests upon their will and progress in the pursuit of democratic values and the implementation of market economy principles. Those member countries that are particularly interested in cooperation with the EaP addressees will be responsible for upholding political support for this initiative within the EU and the acquisition of funds to finance it, but also for persuading the Eastern neighbors to introduce the essential political and economic reforms.

Origin

Eastern Partnership, which will be inaugurated on 7 May during an informal EU summit in Prague, was initiated by Poland and Sweden. In May 2008 the two countries proposed to deepen relations with the Eastern neighbors embraced by the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), although the final project has been shaped by a number of EU members. The need to intensify relations with the Eastern neighbors has been consistently emphasized by the Visegrád Group states, and a similar view was held by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Germany, which introduced the "ENP Plus" proposal during its EU presidency in the first half of 2007, has played an important role. Over the past few years the constraints of the current ENP concept have become more visible and a growing number of countries were willing to admit that a special attitude to "European EU neighbors" in Eastern Europe was necessary. These states struggle with different hardships than those faced by Middle Eastern and North African countries, which indeed neighbor on Europe, although they remain culturally and politically distinct. The alternations in the policy of France and the establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean were also conducive to the Partnership. Additionally, the EU was growing more aware of the challenges and threats emerging in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, which was the reason why work on the project has gained new impetus after the Russian-Georgian war. Despite the differences in their assessment of Russia's role and aspirations to consolidate "its sphere of influence," EU member states realized that political and economic destabilization as well as "frozen conflicts" in their eastern vicinity could directly affect the EU, so the Union's increased attention was needed. With the commitment of Sweden the development of the EU's independent Eastern policy was no longer seen as an area of particular interest of the "new" member states alone. Had it not been for the concretization of the project by the European Commission, the EaP would not have gained the support of the whole EU, and the Czech presidency contributed to the launch of the EaP significantly by listing it among its priorities.

Opportunities

Eastern Partnership is a plan for the development of relations between the EU and the countries of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus that allows for a gradual incorporation of these countries in EU policies and programs as well as their integration in the Union's common market. In its bilateral dimension it provides for the signing of association agreements and the creation of deep and comprehensive free trade areas. The EaP also enables EU's Eastern neighbors embraced by the ENP to develop multilateral cooperation with the Union through regular meetings on various levels: of heads of state and prime ministers, ministers of foreign affairs, senior officials and experts. The Partnership is to be a forum for exchanging information and experience, playing the role of a confidence-building measure. Desecuritization of the EaP agenda is to allow for a thorough exercise of EU's "soft power" and, therefore, indirectly contribute to the improvement of international security in the region.

The realization of Eastern Partnership requires, inter alia, steps towards future liberalization of visa policies in relations with each partner country and cooperation in energy security. In the latter sphere, however, high expectations should only concern the EaP role in promoting market economy mechanisms and facilitating the elimination of nontransparent economic structures. The EU has committed itself to assist more forcefully in the pursuit of reforms in the neighboring countries through support for administrative improvements in those states, transfer of good practices in trade and economy, as well as development and consolidation of democratic institutions.

Eastern Partnership is not a strategy for enlargement, but it does not rule out the possibility of an EaP state becoming a member of the EU in the future. The model of developing relations under the EaP appears flexible enough to satisfy the countries that are merely interested in close cooperation with the Union (Armenia, Belarus) as well as those striving to become included in the integration process (Ukraine, Georgia). The inclusion of Belarus in the EaP project is aimed at creating a platform for permanent dialogue with lower and middle level structures of the Belarusian establishment, thus contributing to transformations in the country. The quality of political elites is a problem, however, also in other partner states, so the EU is supporting nongovernmental institutions advocating the implementation of European standards of governance.

The inauguration of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum a day before the summit in Prague shows that Eastern European societies are also among the EaP's addressees. To meet their expectations, the EaP will encourage the development of human relations and the forging of civil societies and democratic institutions.

Challenges

The EaP is an auxiliary instrument, not a package that will serve the EU to solve all the problems of its Eastern neighborhood. Giving substance to the framework of cooperation defined by the EaP will to a large extent depend on the countries it is addressed to, on their political will, readiness and progress in strengthening ties with the EU. The consent of all EU members to pursue the EaP is a political impulse, which the countries especially interested in developing the initiative (Visegrád Group members, Baltic states and Sweden) should duly catalyze. In time these countries' ability to collaborate with Germany will determine the preservation of political support for the initiative, the acquisition of funds for its financing, as well as the assistance for EU's Eastern neighbors in implementing indispensable political and economic reforms. Defining the correlation between the EaP and EU's relations with Russia, as well as the inclusion of Turkey and Russia in certain projects and safeguarding EaP's complementarity to other regional initiatives—all these will prove a challenge for the EU.

The implementation of the EaP at the time of an economic crisis will be a challenge in itself. Difficulties in partner countries could impede adjustment processes in their economies. The EU should no doubt coordinate activities within the EaP with those undertaken by the International Monetary Fund, which approved loans for Armenia, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine. Tackling corruption could be of special economic significance. The EU should engage in cooperation with the Council of Europe and appropriate NGOs to influence the EaP countries effectively in this respect.

In order to safeguard thorough benefits from the potential of the member countries, conditions ought to be created for the coalescence of groups of states aimed at closer cooperation and deeper involvement in the pursuit of certain EaP flagship projects. This idea was initially included in the Polish-Swedish proposal, whereas the European Commission in its December 2008 communiqué highlighted the special role to be played by member states with experience in transformation processes. In the course of the EaP's implementation the coordination of member states' development aid for the Eastern neighborhood should be borne in mind so that financial resources are allocated in the most efficient manner, and enhanced coordination of development aid directed at EaP states by the Commission and by the member countries poses yet another challenge.

Given the diversity of the member states, the multilateral dimension of cooperation should not be overestimated, nor should the success of the entire EaP project rest upon it. Closer cooperation between those beneficiaries of Eastern Partnership that are most interested in specific projects would be a step in the right direction. Multilateral collaboration merely ought to complement bilateral relations between the EU and the Eastern neighborhood countries.

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Special Thanks

Lukasz Adamski, Polish Institute of International Affairs; Károly Benes, Institute for Security & Development Policy; Ana Coretchi, Soros Foundation-Moldova; Mateusz Gniazdowski, Polish Institute of International Affairs; Balazs Jarabik, Pact Int; Natalia Karchevska, Pact Int; Petr Kratochvíl, Institute of International Relations Prague; Jeff Lovitt, Policy Association for an Open Society; Katerina Przybylska, East European Democratic Centre; Jiří Schneider, Prague Security Studies Institute; Kateřina Špácová, Civic Belarus; Ane Tusvik Bonde, Human Rights House Foundation.

We would like to thank all those help and cooperation have made this conference possible.

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Eastern Partnership: Towards Civil Society Forum
May 5-6, 2009, Prague

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