

DESCnet

Jean Monnet Network DESCnet
Developing European Studies in the Caucasus
Newsletter 4/2017

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1 – Editorial

Dear colleagues and friends,

I would like to welcome you to the eighth issue of the DESCnet newsletter. From the events planned within the DESCnet project, the Second AESC Convention is of special significance. This time the Convention will be held in Tbilisi and will be jointly organised by New Vision University and Ilia State University. We will do our best to make sure that the Tbilisi Convention can build on the successes of the first Convention held in April 2017 in Istanbul and provide a forum for lively discussions, exchange of views and networking.

Among the many interesting developments and events that took place recently, I would like to highlight two of them. The first is the Eastern Partnership summit which was held on 24 November in Brussels. Three countries from the Caucasus region participate in the Eastern Partnership, and its impact on the development of European studies in our region is obviously large. Taking into consideration that these countries pursue different objectives with respect to relations with the EU, it should be underlined that the EU endeavours to ensure the maximum inclusivity of the Eastern Partnership. The Joint Declaration of the Brussels summit points out that each partner has a sovereign right „to choose the level of ambition and the goals to which it aspires in its relations with the European Union“. At the summit, the progress achieved in the implementation of Association Agreements was welcomed, a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia was signed and good progress in the ongoing negotiations between the European Union and Azerbaijan for a new framework agreement was stressed.

Naturally, a special focus lies on the relations with those countries participating in the Eastern Partnership Initiative with which the EU concluded Association Agreements (such a country from the Caucasus region is Georgia). As stated in the Joint Declaration, „while preserving the inclusivity of the Eastern Partnership,

it is timely to engage the AA/DCFTA partners in joint discussions on the progress, opportunities and challenges concerning the association - related reforms, as requested by these partners, and with the aim of facilitating full implementation of the AA/DCFTAs“. Thus, it can be said, that a basis for the “Eastern Partnership Plus” format is established.

The second event I would like to highlight is the anniversary of the Erasmus programme. Erasmus, which is the oldest educational programme of the EU, celebrates in 2017 30 years. The 30th of November marked the end of the anniversary campaign. It is certainly no exaggeration to state that Erasmus – continued from 2014 within the Erasmus Plus programme – has played and plays a significant role in promoting tolerance, mutual understanding and dialogue between peoples and cultures. All countries from the Caucasus region participate in Erasmus, be that as a programme country or a partner country. By way of transnational exchanges, not only the mutual understanding is growing but new perspectives have also opened up. It is delightful to see that the countries of the Caucasus region are actively engaged in using the opportunities offered by this programme.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity and wish everyone a great, successful, enthusiastic and insightful New Year!

Prof. Dr. Gaga Gabrichidze
New Vision University



2 – Upcoming DESCnet events

Second Annual Convention of the Association of European Studies for the Caucasus Ilia State University and New Vision University, Tbilisi (Georgia), 12 – 13 April 2018

Following the First AESC Convention at Yeditepe University in 2017, the Second Annual Convention will take place at the home of AESC in Tbilisi. The topic adopted by the AESC Management Board is "Divided over European Values? Assessing the Normative Cleavages in the Caucasus between the EU, Russia and Turkey".

This topic will deal with the differentiating impact of Europeanisation in the post-Soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia following the signature of the Association Agreement (AA) in 2014 and the refusal by the Armenian government to sign it. We will discuss the possible internal as well as external factors for this cleavage from different disciplines. Is there a growing normative cleavage between those countries that signed the AA and those who did not? While we can observe a straightforward Europeanisation trajectory in Georgia with all the consequences of legal approximation, we do not yet know, if this coincides with an increased normative incompatibility with Azerbaijan and Armenia on the inter-state level as well as the possible estrangements accompanying inside the respective societies. So far, the role of values in the Eastern Partnership has only randomly been addressed, with the conference we would like to make it our transdisciplinary focus for this conference. Finally, we will also analyse how far the new EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy is addressing such kind of issues. DESCnet consortium members in residence Oliver Reisner and Gaga Gabrichidze with their respective teams are already working on the logistics. The deadline for submissions is 8 February 2018. Hope to see you all in Tbilisi!

Young Researchers' Seminar "Teaching in a Multicultural Environment" University of Tartu, Tartu (Estonia), 8-14 February 2018

The seminar is aimed to discuss the following questions: How to teach politically sensitive topics for multicultural groups of students without provoking divisive effects? How to avoid conflicts touching upon politically controversial issues at classes and in other forms of educational activities? The participants of the colloquium will be provided with overview of components of teaching the European Union to graduate students and adults, to support the smooth performance of inter-university activities, to provide sufficient knowledge on teaching methodologies and to broaden the knowledge and skills for teaching European studies in higher education. The seminar combines the practical and theoretical modules dedicated to the teaching methodologies. More information and the programme can be found [here](#).

Summer School "European Integration and Rivalry between Regional Integrational Systems in the Caucasus", Yeditepe University, Istanbul (Turkey), 9-14 July 2018 (tbc)



The summer school will provide comprehensive knowledge on the different aspects and the key challenges for regional cooperation in the South Caucasus in the context of comparative regionalisms. Which challenges face the South Caucasus and how can we deal with them to move the regional cooperation forward? Can the obstacles to the full-fledged regional integration be understood through the analysis of diverging foreign policy of nations? What role do the powers in the region, such as the EU, Russia, and Turkey play and how their power and influence are defined in complex settings of the South Caucasus?

4 — Related upcoming events

International Conference “Performing Europeanization: The Case of Georgia and other EaP Countries” **Center for Social Sciences, Tbilisi (Georgia), 22 – 23 January 2018**

Since 2009, when the EU’s Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative was launched, six countries of the post-Soviet space (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) have been provided with a new opportunity to get closer to the EU and to transform their sociopolitical and economic institutions through the approximation with EU standards. Despite the fact that the abovementioned six countries have chosen different paths - three of them have signed the EU association agreements and three abstained from doing so, being part of the EaP has definitely played a role in each case. We would like to explore this role and look at the possible scenarios or development prospects of the EaP countries with a special focus on Georgia in a comparative perspective. For this purpose, we will also consider the wider context of EU integration and focus on the EU’s recent enlargement strategies and Europeanization mechanisms in the context of EaP.

The conference aims to bring together established and emerging international and local practitioners and scholars willing to share their research findings on the current developments and transformations taking place in Georgia and other EaP countries, as well as the EU’s enlargement strategy and Europeanization mechanisms targeting the EaP region. The conference will focus on the three interconnected topics, which consist of (though are not limited to) the following themes:

- EU’s enlargement strategy - Opportunities and Challenges
- Eastern Partnership - Current Developments and Future Expectations
- EU-Georgia Relations

The deadline for abstracts was 15 December 2017. For more information, please contact conference2018@css.ge.

Winter School “People and Territories: Biopower and Geopolitics in the Black Sea and the Caucasus” **University of Tartu and Higher School of Economics, Kääriku (Estonia), 11 – 17 February 2018**

This school is part of the international project “Escapes from Modernity” which has been organizing summer and winter School all across Europe since 2007. The School will be exploring different dimensions of power and relate them with domestic and foreign policies of major international actors. This year it shall focus on juxtaposing, comparing, unpacking geopolitical, and biopolitical facets of international relations, and discuss them through the territorial lens, on the one hand, and the people-centric prism, on the other. It will put a premium on a plethora of policy practices, cultural phenomena and discourses unfolding in a spatially vast and politically turbulent area encompassing the Black Sea and the Caucasian regions.

The learning process consists of lectures and interactive classes based on students' inclusive participation, including topical presentations and group-based debate. Basic knowledge in social and cultural theories, along with skills in comparative and critical analysis, as well as independent thinking are welcome and strongly encouraged.

Topics include:

- Right-wing and left-wing populisms: regional implications for geopolitics and biopolitics;
- The Region of the South Caucasus: Geopolitical Dynamics and Societal Transformations; Sport (mega) events: implications for biopolitics and socio-cultural integration;
- Methodological workshop: how to study regionalism (includes presentations of international projects and recent publications in the field of biopower and geopolitics).

The deadline for submission was 15 November 2017. For more information, please contact olena.solohub@ut.ee.

4 — Related upcoming events (cont.)

International Young Researchers' Conference "Populism in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Conceptual, Empirical and Comparative Perspectives" The Havighurst Center for Russian & Post-Soviet Studies, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio (USA), 15-17 February 2018

"Populism" is a term often used in the scholarly literature on post-communism – and yet its meaning and explanatory potential remain elusive. The consensus that populist discourses, tropes, rituals, ideas and practices should be counted among the most important factors that propelled transformative processes in the former "second world" does not extend to question such as: what is the proper way to conceptualise and contextualise the notion of populism? What are the historical roots of the populist phenomenon and the enduring local traditions that sustain it? How did populist rhetoric and appeal change over time? What are the cultural resources that populists are able to mobilise, and in what repertoires of contention are such resources invested? What is their impact on mainstream politics and established institutional landscapes? And how do populist demands shape oppositional tactics and governmental priorities?

This Young Researchers Conference seeks to tap into the new wave of research that sheds light on such questions and on post-communist populism more generally. For more information, please contact Ms. Lynn Stevens (project coordinator) at havighurstcenter@MiamiOH.edu.

2018 Winter School in Methods and Techniques, Bamberg Graduate School of Social Sciences, Bamberg (Germany), 2 – 9 March 2018

The Winter School offers cutting-edge courses in qualitative and quantitative methodological topics, giving you the skills you need to kick-start your career. All courses are delivered by experienced instructors and supported by dedicated teaching assistants. The event's exciting plenary programme allows all-important networking, and puts you in touch with people who share your research interests.

New for 2018 are courses in Discourse Network Analysis, Maximum Likelihood Estimation, and Event History and Survival Analysis, along with Master-level courses in Qualitative Interviewing, Process Tracing Methods and Advanced Multi-Method Research. Courses that sold out quickly last year include Introduction to R (entry) and Introduction to R (intermediate); Automated Web Data Collection with R and Multilevel Regression Modelling. For more information, consult [ECPR](#).

4th Eastern Platform – Tartu Seminar "All Quiet on the Western Front? EU-Russia Relations in the Age of Populisms?", 6-7 April 2018 **CALL FOR PAPERS**

Eastern Platform-Platform Ukraine is a multi-disciplinary initiative aiming to analyse and better understand the most recent development in the relations between the EU and Russia and their shared neighbourhood, starting from Ukrainian crisis of 2014, and the ensuing deterioration of relations between the West and Moscow by creating a unified resource and network of academics studying the post-socialist space. It has the ambition to develop and grow as a forum and incubator to promote high-quality research and knowledge-sharing on the broader post-Soviet space.

The seminar aims not only to map the challenges to the instable development of the EU-Russia relations, but also to understand and conceptually frame these challenges and their expansive potential within the former Soviet space and at the global level. Contributions are welcome addressing (but not limited to) the following issues:

1. From Baltic to Caucasus: An Emerging "Illiberal Belt" and its Security Dimension;
2. Multi-Vectoring Neighbourhood: Which Choice for Those who Do not Want to Choose?;
3. Empowering the Margins? Rethinking Centre-Periphery Relations in Europe;
4. Russia's Western Friends: Betting on the Wrong Horse?
5. From Berlin to Where? Electoral Developments in a post-Refugee Europe;
6. 100 Years of Baltic Independence: Which Challenges Ahead?

Paper proposals (max. 150 words) can be submitted by February 15, 2018 via the [submission system](#) or by e-mail directly to Dr Stefano Braghiroli (stefano.braghiroli@ut.ee). Selected paper proposals will be notified by February 17. Should you need more information please do not hesitate to contact Dr Stefano Braghiroli.

4 — Related upcoming events (cont.)

Third Interdisciplinary Corruption Research Forum "Mechanisms of Corruption: Regional Perspectives and Potential Solutions", University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg (Sweden), 7 - 9 June, 2018

The Third Interdisciplinary Corruption Research (ICR) Forum aims to bring together international junior researchers working in the field of (anti)corruption and to bridge the gap between academia and the policy sphere, and as such, will also host a panel debate between scholars and international investigative journalists. Workshops, presentations and keynote speeches will focus on the corruption and welfare nexus through a regional and context-specific lens. The panel will be open to the public and will offer a platform for presenting research and exchanging new ideas on how corruption works in practice and how the mechanisms of corruption, e.g. norms, vary across regions and cultures. These discussions will combine theoretical and empirical efforts to identify context specific patterns of corruption and respective anti-corruption policies.

We warmly invite young researchers from all disciplines (including, but not limited to, psychology, economics, political science, sociology, law, anthropology, history) to apply by February 15, 2018. For more information, please visit [ICR page](#).

IACA Summer Academy 2018 International Anti-Corruption Academy, Laxenburg (Austria), 29 June - 6 July 2018

The IACA Summer Academy is an intensive programme designed for professionals looking to consolidate their experience and enlarge their competences to better counter corruption. Interdisciplinary in nature, it addresses trends and practices on the global anti-corruption agenda and promotes a culture of the reflective practitioner. The target group comprises professionals from around the world, with a minimum of five years of relevant work experience in the public or private sector, international or non-governmental organisations, as well as media representatives, students, and researchers in areas related to anti-corruption and/or compliance.

For more information, please check [IACA page](#). The application deadline is 19 March 2018.

Third Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies Reflecting on Nation-Statehood in Eastern Europe, Russia and Eurasia." University of Tartu, Tartu (Estonia), 10 - 12 June 2018

The University of Tartu, as part of a consortium with Kent and Uppsala, will host the Third Annual Tartu Conference on Russian and East European Studies. The [Tartu Conference](#) is a venue for academic discussion of the fundamental cultural, social, economic and political trends affecting all aspects of people's life in Russia and Eastern Europe. Inaugurated in June 2016, this forum brings together scholars from across multiple disciplines, from the region and beyond. As in previous years, the organisers expect the number of participants to reach or exceed 200.

The year 2018 marks a century since the introduction of nation-statehood as the main frame for political, cultural and economic life for the peoples of Eastern Europe, Russia and Eurasia. While the discursive and cultural roots of nationhood go back at least another one hundred years, until the First World War the region was dominated by three multi-ethnic empires. Their collapse was a decisive moment, which established popular sovereignty as the key organising principle. Its implementation, however, took decades and, in more than one sense, is still incomplete. While remaining the principal foundation for democracy, nation-statehood continues to present a broad range of intellectual challenges until this day.

The conference is organized jointly by the Centre for EU-Russia Studies at the University of Tartu, the Global Europe Centre at the University of Kent, and the Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University. The conference will be supported by the European Commission under a Horizon 2020 Twinning project entitled "Building Research Excellence in Russian and East European Studies at the Universities of Tartu, Uppsala and Kent" ([UPTAKE](#)).



5 — News and ongoing

American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) in Profile

It was a cold winter's day in January when twenty scholars met in Chicago, Illinois, in 2006 with a simple idea: bring together North American specialists of the South Caucasus into one organization with the goal of expanding scholarship of the region's newly independent republics—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. The American Research Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC) was incorporated later that year.

ARISC's mission is to promote and encourage American research in the South Caucasus and to foster intellectual inquiry across boundaries within the region. To that end, ARISC's in-country staff members assist visiting scholars with the logistics of research, including connecting with local scholars. ARISC is unique in that this free support is offered to all visiting scholars who contact our staff, and all ARISC events are free and open to the public.

In 2014, ARISC organized the "Caucasus Connections" conference at Indiana University, with support from the US Department of Education and the Senior Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, and companion curricular materials were made available to the public for download and use in classrooms. Next year, ARISC will be involved in the international conference, "Remembering the Georgian Democratic Republic 100 Years On: A Model for Europe?" taking place June 25-30th, 2018 in Tbilisi. The project is dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the First Georgian Republic and aims to draw scientific attention to the importance of the First Republic for the development of the Western course and identity of the country.

Recognizing that scholars of the South Caucasus are dispersed, ARISC also hosts virtual programs to bridge the geographical distance, such as teleconferenced networking opportunities, an online networking portal through our website (The South Caucasus Forum), and is preparing an online Reading Group featuring discussions with authors.

The funding opportunities we offer have an important impact on young scholars and graduate students studying the region. ARISC offers the Graduate/Postdoctoral Fellowship, with stipends of up to \$1500 for conducting research in the South Caucasus. The Collaborative Heritage Management in Armenia Grant offers teams of researcher's funds up to \$4000 to preserve cultural heritage in Armenia. A variety of different programs has been supported, from long-term curation and preservation of artifacts, to establishing local botanical reference collections, to the creation of websites on local architecture for public use (www.armarch.net and www.otheryerevan.am/en). One recent project involved preserving a 1,000-year-old gospel held for generations by a local family in an Armenian village, for which archival specialists made an unusual "house call" to the village to preserve the document in situ.

A quick glimpse of our accomplishments: since 2007, ARISC has supported the research of 45 scholars totaling \$123,144 in grant funds resulting in over 86 publications and presentations; we have held more than 300 talks, workshops, reading and film studies groups; our staff has assisted over 180 scholars working in the South Caucasus; international symposia, and have created curricular materials teaching about the South awarded funding from the U.S. The Rustaveli National Science Foundation Georgia, The Leon Council of American Overseas In addition to institutional offers memberships for interested in becoming more community. More information is

we have organized an summer school; and we for use in college-level Caucasus. ARISC has been Department of Education, Foundation, Open Society Levy Foundation, and The Research Centers. memberships, ARISC also individual scholars involved in our available at www.arisc.org



5 — News and ongoing (cont.)

Azerbaijani European Studies Association (AESA) founded



It was also noted that implementation of applied scientific research on different problems of the approximation and diversification of relations between Azerbaijan and the European Union would present an important opportunity.

The founding members emphasised the importance of the AESA to follow the latest global updates in science, to hold conferences devoted to the latest achievements in theory and practice in the relevant fields, to organise lectures and invite guest speakers, as well as to be a platform for scholars and experts to exchange ideas.

The constituent meeting of The Azerbaijani European Studies Association (AESA) that unites a group of researchers, professors and practitioners was held in Baku, Azerbaijan on 9 December 2017.

The chairman of the meeting, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Hajizada, stated that the role of non-governmental organisations is crucial in strengthening civil society, at the same time, participating actively in the social, political and economic life of the country. The main goal of the AESA is to bring together individuals interested in all interdisciplinary aspects of the studies on Europe and Azerbaijan, as well as helping scientists, researchers, students and professionals to develop their network.

One of the main goals of the Association is to establish and co-operate with partner organisations in order to implement various programs for facilitation of mutual understanding and to stimulate the exchange of best practices.

Relevant decisions were made to take all the necessary measures to register the association. The participants also expressed their gratitude to The Azerbaijani-French University (UFAZ) for providing the venue.

*Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mukhtar HAJIZADA
Fulbright Fellow at
Davis Center at Harvard University,
Jean Monnet Chair (2014-17) and
founding chair of
the Azerbaijani European Studies Association*



4 — News and ongoing (cont.)

Ongoing discussion forum on the DescNet webpage

The platform is meant to support discussion surrounding topics of interest in the region and relating to teaching European Studies. The outlet aims to build on the successes of the DESCnet partnership by generating original discussion and posing unique questions to address in the following topics:

- Teaching Politically Sensitive Issues,
- Experiences in European Studies in the Region, and
- European Studies more broadly (which could be included in the developing curriculum of regional institutions).

The section [Teaching Politically Sensitive Issues](#) aims to share tips from educators, scholars, and students who have either given or attended lectures dealing with academic topics which may trigger emotional responses in the classroom. Sharing successful or unsuccessful experiences and techniques is essential for building a common understanding of best practices for addressing sensitive issues in this region in particular.

Without feedback from former or current students, researchers, and lecturers from or with experience in the region, identifying these successes or areas for improvement of European Studies in the Caucasus would be impossible! The [European Studies Experiences](#) section is therefore dedicated to sharing the view of those involved in the Development of European Studies in the Caucasus; whether it be students from the region studying abroad, guest lecturers working in the region, or natives of the region organizing workshops, attending conferences, or conducting research in the field.

The section [Hot off the Printing Press](#) draws attention to academic publications in categories: those addressing the Caucasus as a region, best practices in teaching methodology, and developments in European Studies more broadly. These sections serve the purpose of sharing information among both European and Caucasus countries more fluidly.

Individuals can:

- Send information concerning publications, courses, or events to content manager Heidi Erbsen (heidiann@ut.ee) or share them in the comments sections.
 - Pose questions concerning current events (either Caucasus or European focused).
 - Send feedback from courses, workshops, seminars, or conferences he or she has personally attended which deal with European Studies in the region.
 - Share stories from the DescNet page to social media portals with wider reaching audiences.
- In order to continue to build on the successes of DescNet we ask that this information be shared in the partner university or institute outlets. We are looking forward to a wide range of participation to keep moving forward.

Additional information: Heidi Erbsen (heidiann@ut.ee)

Network for Developing European Studies in
the Caucasus

Jean Monnet Network DESCnet

6 — Opinions and comments

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING EUROPEAN STUDIES

EU policy towards training and education is designed to support EU Member States in addressing common challenges, for example, technological developments, global competition, qualification deficits, and so on. The framework for co-operation in education and training is Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020).¹ Beyond its borders, the EU approaches the promotion of education and training based on the following five priorities:

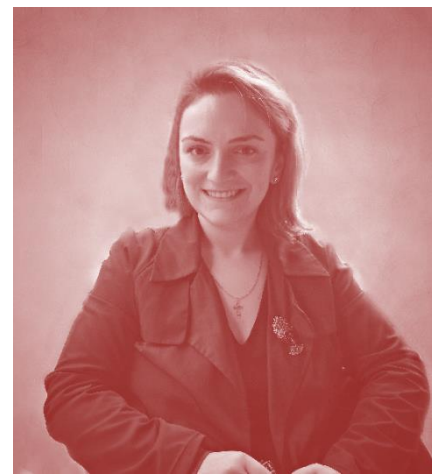
- To advance the EU as a center of excellence in education and training;
- To support partner countries outside the EU in their modernisation efforts;
- To promote common values and closer understanding between different peoples and cultures;
- To support Member States and higher education institutions in the EU and beyond in their internationalisation efforts;
- To improve the quality of services and human resources in the EU and beyond through mutual learning, comparison and exchange of good practice.

Based on common interests, Georgia is called upon to make an effort in the field of education, science and training and to promote sustainable development of human resources and human capital. Since the ENP was launched, the EU encourages Georgia's participation in the Erasmus Mundus and TEMPUS programmes. Moreover, the EU stimulates Georgian universities to establish research activities in European Integration Studies and to apply for Jean Monnet Modules and Chairs. Even though a number of Georgian universities, teaching staff, and thousands of students benefited from the EU's financial support, the difference in challenges faced by Georgian universities compared to universities in the EU Member States are fundamental. Based on my experience as a student in Georgia, Austria and Spain and as a lecturer in Georgia, I may note significant difference in teaching methodologies, materials, technological developments, attitude, perspectives, etc. The most successful representatives of Georgian academia prefer to stay at European universities, due to professional development possibilities, higher salaries and standards that are offered in EU Member states to academic staff. In Georgia, still much is dependent on individual perspective, experience, motivation and qualification of each lecturer, therefore the quality of lectures varies from one to another. Developments and innovations implemented by the University administrations are pro-active, but rather spontaneous and not sustainable. The deficit of skills of human resources and also technological developments are not seen as a part of the primary agenda.

I would say that the general challenges of Georgian universities are very much linked to teaching European studies. In order to accurately reflect the challenges of teaching European Studies, there is a need to do research and needs assessments among academic representatives of the universities as well as students. The bottom-up perspective of problem-solving should be taken into consideration, thus the opinion of Georgian academia and students should be heard and shared. Top-down initiatives of University administrations are in most cases not clear enough and not supported by staff and students. In this process, sharing EU expertise plays a decisive role. There are a number of methodological lessons that are needed to be learned from the EU Member States' experience in the process of management of Georgian universities. For example, participation of lecturers and students in the decision-making process should be ensured. It is not always effective to inform them post-factum. The strategy of universities for development of programmers, infrastructure, etc. should be discussed and agreed with staff members and adopted based on needs assessments. The budgetary process should be transparent and the needs assessment document must be the basis for initiation, approval and implementation of the budget document. Spontaneous decisions do not ensure transparency and consistency in the management process.

Last but not least, even though within the last decade Georgian universities achieved significant progress in terms of co-operation with European universities, mostly rejected malpractices of post-soviet management, to a certain extent improved libraries, promoted new studying programmes, signed co-operation memoranda with EU universities and initiated common projects with them, much is needed to be done based on the principle of transparency, participation, learning from European lessons, prioritising students' needs, and responding to the national and international demands of the job market.

*Gvantsa Davitashvili
Caucasus School of
Law, guest lecturer*



¹ Please see <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Aef0016>>.

6 – Opinions and comments (cont.)

Thomas Kruessmann / Betül Soysal / Meline Avagyan

Towards the Second Annual AESC Convention: What's in it for Students?

Thomas: Dear Betül and Meline! Please introduce yourself. Why did you decide to become an AESC member?

Betül: Hello! I am Betül Soysal, a senior BA student in the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Yeditepe University, Istanbul / Turkey. I also pursue a double major at Faculty of Law and minor major at the Department of Sociology. When I participated in the AESC Istanbul Convention in 2017, I just realized that AESC is the exact opportunity to enhance my knowledge about the Caucasus and to improve myself, my perspective through experiencing this territory. So, this precise moment led me to become a member of AESC.

Meline: Hi! I am Meline Avagyan, currently doing a Master in Democracy and Governance at the University of Tartu. What can make a student from the Caucasus region think about joining AESC? I shall tell you: It is the idea of One Caucasus, a region where there is peace, freedom, human rights and a generation without negative stereotypes and hate towards one another. We live in a region full of conflicts based on various issues, starting from ethnic ending with political and none of them can be solved as long as we do not start working on our societies mentality, because even something somehow is being solved, the conflict on the ethnic level still exists, and why? There are many questions and at the same time there are many answers and none of them were useful so far to establish "a bit of peace" in the region.

Thomas: How did you hear about AESC?

Betül: I was in a Vice-President position of Students' Club of International Relations when DESCnet and AESC decided to hold their first annual convention at my university. So, I had the direct chance to meet with AESC and to hear about its vision.

Meline: When I heard about DESCnet / AESC and read about its aims and projects, it just sounded so close to my own aims and ideas. My story with DESCnet started when I took part in a winter school in Stavropol on the topic of anti-corruption. Honestly, I was not so much excited, as I go to Russia quite often, more precisely, every summer, and that sounded as another regular trip to Russia, but wait, not that much. I have found myself in a very interesting, professional and friendly environment. The organising team amazed me with their open-mindedness and supportive behaviour and the participants with smart, creative ideas. I can certainly say that this first experience brought me to more integration and interest in the project.

Thomas: How was your first convention experience with AESC and DESCnet?

Betül: It is actually complicated. First, I was pretty surprised due to the intensity of the Convention as a whole, later I was amazed by the variety of knowledge I got from the sessions and then I was exhausted. It took a while to digest all the things I have learned and the people I have met at very short period. Eventually I can say that it was a great opportunity that I am looking forward to having it again.

Meline: Unfortunately, I missed the chance to be part of the 2017 Convention in Istanbul. But I look forward to see what you guys will be preparing for 2018 in Tbilisi.

Thomas: Okay, let's stay a while with Betül How does it feel to be the only student in the AESC Board of Directors? Why did you propose your candidacy?

/ cont. next page /

6 – Opinions and comments (cont.)

Betül: The Board of Directors of AESC is different from lots of management boards. Their vision is to promote the Association through various channels aiming to reach different people from different ages and different countries. So, when they explained their intention to open a space in the Board for a student, I put in my candidacy. I really wanted to be a part of the big effort which ingathers open-minded visions in their structure. Also, to be a student is not something so different in the AESC Board of Directors, because they do not expect anything more than from you of being a student-representative, they just expect what you can do the best and nothing more. I feel pretty comfortable while expressing myself and my ideas knowing that they won't be exposed to any kind of treatment else than the other members.

Thomas: What specific goals do you have in AESC?

Betül: AESC is the perfect place to reach lots of information about the territory and also to meet with the people who are professionals in their positions. Furthermore, it leads you to learn about the events happening about and within the Caucasus. I am seeking to meet more people whom I can hear, and learn more. This Association is also a channel for me to widen my vision.

Thomas: What is your role in preparing the 2018 Second Annual Convention in Tbilisi?

Betül: I am the student-representative of Turkey for the Convention in Tbilisi. So, I am trying to reach students, associations and think-tanks relating AESC to Turkey.

Thomas: How are you planning to make this Convention attractive to students? What can it deliver (in the best case)? Why do you believe that this is important?

Betül: The Juniors' Panels are going to be pretty attractive, I assume. It will be the chance for the students who are willing to express their opinions and enhance their academic skills in an Annual Convention which will be reported. Listening about the issues we are living in is a helpful method, but discussing is better for us, students.

And I am well aware the sessions during the Convention will provide us this opportunity to speak up and discuss the idea of ours. I believe, each and every student should be involved into an event like this in their student life. Hearing, learning, discussing and being a part of a puzzle which tries to facilitate and to solve the problems we are facing to day due to lack of communication and knowledge is really important.

Thomas: Can you tell us more about the Juniors' Panel?

Betül: Juniors' Panels will feature advanced BA and MA students around the world. These panels will provide young academics to show their talents and knowledge in front of valuable professors, academics, participants. If you are a student and seeking a carrier in academic, it is an incredible chance to prove yourself!

Thomas: Meline, one final question to you. As you are a recent member of AESC, what do you expect?

Meline: Joining AESC is a chance for me to have my contribution to the development of the South Caucasus in various spheres, first, by trying to somehow promote European values, which are close and accepted by the societies. One of the most important ideas and goals that should be worked on very hard and try to accomplish is PEACE, that hasn't been established in a way the EU managed to establish it after WW2. Also, one of the motivations that pushed me closer to this project was the huge network of the DESCnet/AESC community, meeting new people from different countries and cultures, but who share with you the same vision and goals. I believe and I am convinced from my own experience, that we can only reach something if we work united, towards the same goals and ideas. This is what makes me get more and more motivated to join and continue my co-operation with AESC, and I hope that one day, I do not know when, we will leave the mountains in peace.

Thomas: Thank you both for your answers and comments!

7 — New publications

- **Aslanov, Bakhtiyar / Samedzadeh, Sevinj**
The Positions of Political Parties and Movements in Azerbaijan on the Resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict
Caucasus Edition. Journal of Conflict Transformation, published online 2.12.2017, available at <http://caucasusedition.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Azerbaijan-Political-Parties.pdf>
- **Bagdasaryan, Susanna / Petrova, Svetlana**
The Republic of Abkhazia as an Unrecognized State
Russian Law Journal 2017 Nr. 1 pp. 98-118.
- **Blakkisrud, Helge / Kolstø, Pål**
Stavropol as "Russia's Kosovo"? Nationalist Mobilization and Public Response in a Russian Region
Post-Soviet Affairs 2017 Vol. 33 Nr. 5 pp. 370-388.
- **O'Brachta, William**
Regional Autonomy in Rich Regions: Evidence from Ajara, Georgia
Caucasus Survey 2018 Nr. 1 pp. 18-41.
- **Comai, Giorgio**
Conceptualizing Post-Soviet *de facto* States as Small Dependent Jurisdictions
Ethnopolitics, published online 1.11.2017.
- **Delcour, Laure / Kowal, Paweł / Kunz, Barbara / Lang, Kai-Olaf / Parmentier, Florent / Szeligowski, Daniel / Tulmets, Elsa**
(Re-) Engaging our Partners to the East. What the Weimar Triangle Should Do for the Eastern Partnership
Genshagener Papiere Nr. 19, November 2017.
- **Galstyan, David**
The Position of Political Parties in Armenia on the Resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and Turkey-Armenia Relations
Caucasus Edition. Journal of Conflict Transformation, published online 2.12.2017, available at <http://caucasusedition.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Armenia-Political-Parties.pdf>
- **Ghahlanian, Irina**
Post-Soviet Armenia. The New National Elite and the New National Narrative
Routledge 2018.
- **Graser, Alexander / Burjanadze, Giorgi / Malkhasyan, Hayk / Evoyan, Mariam / Natsvlshvili, Vakhtang**
Proportionality and Human Rights in German, Armenian and Georgian Constitutional Adjudication
Comparative Legal Studies 2017 Nr. 2, available at http://lawlibrary.info/ge/books/CLS_Issue-2_Proportionality-and-HRs-in-const-adjudication_DE_AM_GE.pdf
- **Jarábik, Balázs / Groza, Iulian / Kobzova, Jana / Konstantynov, Viktor / Kuimuchian, Tsovinar / Litra, Leonid / Sharashenidze, Tornika / Webb, Isaac**
The State of Implementation of the Associations and Free Trade Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova
Published originally for the European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies (EP/EXPO/B/AFET/2017/05) in November 2017 and available at [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603836/EXPO_STU\(2017\)603836_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603836/EXPO_STU(2017)603836_EN.pdf)
- **Kasapoglu, Can**
Russian Forward Military Basing in Armenia and Moscow's Influence in the South Caucasus
NATO Research Paper No. 143, November 2017, available at <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1122>
- **Kasbarian, Sossie**
The Politics of Memory and Commemoration: Armenian Diasporic Reflections on 2015
Nationalities Papers 2018 Vol. 46 No. 1 pp. 123-143
- **Korosteleva, Elena / Merheym-Eure, Igor / Van Gils, Eske (eds.)**
"The Politics" and "The Political" of the Eastern Partnership Initiative
Routledge 2018. Includes:
 - Korosteleva, Elena: Eastern Partnership: Bringing "The Political" back in
 - Simão, Licínia: Bringing "The Political" back into European Security: Challenges to the EU's Ordering of the Eastern Partnership
 - Konstanyan, Hrant: How "The Political" can make the European External Action Service More Effective in the Eastern Region
 - Merheim-Eyre, Igor: Exploring the European Union's Rationalities of Governing: The Case of Cross-border Mobility in the Eastern Partnership
 - Van Gils, Eske: Differentiation through Bargaining Power in EU-Azerbaijan Relations: Baku as a Tough Negotiator
 - Sakwa, Richard: Europe and the Political: From Axiological Monism to Pluralistic Dialogism

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7 — New publications (cont.)

- **Kostanyan, Hrant / Giragosian, Richard**
EU-Armenian Relations: Charting a Fresh Course
CEPS Research Report Nr. 2017/14 of November 2017, available at
www.ceps.eu/publications/eu-armenian-relations-charting-fresh-course
- **Kruessmann, Thomas**
Teaching Anti-Corruption in the Caucasus and in the Black Sea Region(s)
Проблеми законності (Problems of Legality) 2017 Nr. 138 pp. 169-182.
- **Nagashima, Toru**
Russia's Passportization Policy Towards Unrecognized Republics: Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria
Problems of Post-Communism, published online 13.12.2017
- **Petrov, Roman / van Elsuwege, Peter (eds.)**
Post-Soviet Constitutions and Challenges of Regional Integration
Routledge 2017. Includes:
 - Burlyuk, Olga / Axyenova, Vera: Protecting the Rule of Law in Post-Soviet States: The Relevance of European and Eurasian Integration
 - Dragneva, Rilka: The Eurasian Economic Union: Balancing Sovereignty and Integration
 - Dragneva, Rilka: The Association Agreements between the EU and Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine: Constitutional Issues of Sovereignty and Legitimacy
 - Gabrichidze, Gaga: The Constitutional Order of Georgia and its Adaptability to the EU-Georgia Association Agreement
 - Ghazaryan, Narine / Delcour, Laure: From European Integration Process to Eurasian Economic Union. The Case of Armenia
- **Roberts, Sean**
The Eurasian Economic Union: The Geopolitics of Authoritarian Cooperation
Eurasian Geography and Economics, published online 13 December 2017
- **Sadigov, Turkhan**
Adoption of Agricultural Innovations in Azerbaijan: No Prospects for Modernization
Caucasus Survey 2018 Nr. 1 pp. 42-61
- **Sadigov, Turkhan / Guliyev, Farid**
Eroding Support for Democracy in Azerbaijan? Context and Pitfalls in Survey Research
Caucasus Survey, published online 4 January 2018
- **Schumacher, Tobias / Marchetti, Andreas / Demmelhuber, Thomas (eds.).**
The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy
Routledge 2018. Includes:
 - Schumacher, Tobias: The European Neighbourhood Policy: The Challenge of Demarcating a Complex and Contested Field of Study
 - Schimmelpfennig, Frank: Beyond Enlargement: Conceptualizing the Study of the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Hoffmann, Nils / Niemann, Arne: EU Actorness and the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Baltag, Dorina / Romanyshtyn, Iulian: The Challenge of Analysing the Performance of the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Aggestam, Lisbeth: Power and Leadership in the European Neighbourhood: Contending Role Concepts
 - Hyde-Price, Adrian: Realism and the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Kratochvil, Petr / Tulmets, Elsa: Constructivist Approaches to the Study of the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Aarstad, Åsne Kalland / Bremberg, Niklas: The Study of the European Neighbourhood Policy through the Lenses of Critical Approaches
 - Exadaktylos, Theofanis: Methodological and Theoretical Challenges to the Study of the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Van Elsuwege, Peter / Petrov, Roman: Legal Perspectives on the Study of the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Browning, Christopher: The Construction and Deconstruction of the EU's Neighbourhood
 - Marchetti, Andreas: Of Borders and Boundaries: The Neighbourhood as the EU's Buffer Zone
 - Zielonka, Jan: The EU and the European Neighbourhood Policy: The Re-making of Europe's Identity
 - Miskimmon, Alistair: Strategic Narratives of EU Foreign Policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy
 - Korosteleva, Elena: The Challenges of a Changing Eastern Neighbourhood
 - Börzel, Tanja / Lebanidze, Bidzina: Coherence, Cohesiveness and Consistency in the European Neighbourhood Policy

7 — New publications (cont.)

- Furness, Mark: European Neighbourhood Policy Decision-making at Critical Junctures: EU Institutions, the Member States and Neighbourhood Countries
- Hadfield, Amelia: EU Member States and the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Nitoiu, Cristian: The European Parliament as an Actor in its Own Right in the EU's Neighbourhood
- Maass, Anna-Sophie: Financial Instruments and the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Bicci, Federica / Noutcheva, Gergana / Voltolini, Benedetta: The European Neighbourhood Policy between Bilateralism and Region-building
- Bouris, Dimitris / Dobrescu, Madalina: The EU and Civilian Missions in the Neighbourhood
- Portela, Clara: The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Politics of Sanctions
- Simão, Licínia: The European Neighbourhood Policy and the South Caucasus
- Hoekman, Bernard: Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements
- Weber, Bernd: The European Neighbourhood Policy and Energy
- Trauner, Florian / Cassarino, Jean-Pierre: Migration: Moving to the Centre of the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Lavallée, Chantal / Léonard, Sarah / Kaunert, Christian: Counter-terrorism Cooperation and the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Bossuyt, Fabienne / Kostanyan, Hrant / Orbie, Jan / Vandecastelle, Bruno: Aid in the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Johansson-Nogués, Elisabeth: Perceptions of the European Neighbourhood Policy and of its Values and Norms Promotion
- Delcour, Laure: Soler i Lecha, Eduard: European Neighbourhood Policy Mechanisms: Conditionality, Socialisation and Differentiation
- Khakee, Anna / Youngs, Richard: Geopolitics and Democracy in the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Freyburg, Tina / Lavenex, Sandra: Democracy Promotion by Functional Cooperation
- Balfour, Rosa: Human Rights in the European Neighbourhood Policy
- Colombo, Silvia / Shapovalova, Natalia: The European Neighbourhood Policy Promotion of Civil Society
- Gstöhl, Sieglinde / Lannon, Erwan: The Neighbours of the EU's Neighbours: Overcoming Geographical Silos
- Henökl, Thomas: The European Neighbourhood Policy and the CFSP/CSDP: From the European Security Strategy to the Global Strategy
- Simão, Licínia
The EU's Neighbourhood Policy towards the South Caucasus. Expanding the European Security Community
Palgrave Macmillan 2018.
- Sotiriou, Stylianos A.
The Irreversibility of History: The Conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia
Problems of Post-Communism, published online 19.12.2017
- Tabak, Hüsrev / Tüfekçi, Özgür
Turkey-Azerbaijan Relations after 15 July: Expectations, Solidarity and Cooperation
Caucasus International 2017 Vol. 7 No. 2 pp. 83-96
- Terzyan, Aram
The EU vs. Russia in the Foreign Policy Discourse of Armenia: The Fragility of Normative Power or the Power of Russian Coercion?
Eastern Journal of European Studies 2017 Vol. 8 No. 2 pp. 185-203
- Toal, Gerard
Near Abroad: Putin, the West, and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus
Oxford University Press 2017.
- Uitdehaag, Adrianus (Jos)
Survey of Enforcement in Europe
Comparative Legal Studies 2017 Nr. 3, available at <http://lawlibrary.info/ge/books/CLS_Issue-3_Enforcement.pdf>.
- Weidenfeld, Werner / Wessels, Wolfgang
Jahrbuch der Europäischen Integration 2017
Nomos: Baden-Baden 2017
Includes:
 - Böttger Katrin / Plottka, Julian: Zentralasienpolitik
 - Lippert, Barbara: Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik
 - Lippert, Barbara: Östliche Partnerschaft
 - Khotenashvili, Mariam: Georgien
 - Fischer, Sabine: Die Europäische Union und Russland
- Yemelyanova, Galina M.
The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in the Context of Muslim-Christian Relations
Caucasus International 2017 Vol. 7 No. 2 pp. 121-137

List of new publications relevant for DESCnet and AESC composed by: Thomas Kruessmann

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