



EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus

Towards Sustainable Engagement
in Energy and Connectivity

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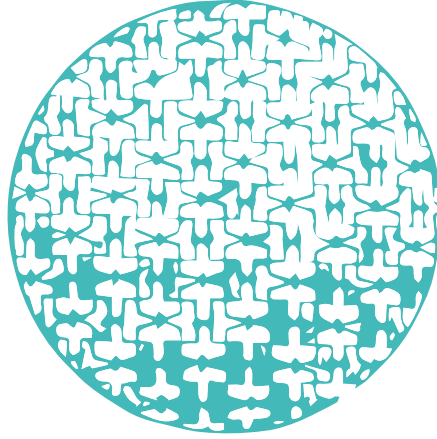
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This conference book contains texts and summaries of the speeches and presentations delivered at the conference titled “EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: Towards Sustainable Engagement in Energy and Connectivity” that was jointly organised by the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Türkiye on 22 February 2024 in Ankara. The last part of the book is an overview of the main points commonly raised at the conference.

The conference program is attached at the end of this conference book.

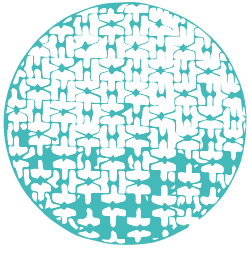


Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
WELCOME SPEECHES	2
WALTER GLOS – DIRECTOR OF THE KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG TÜRKİYE AMBASSADOR RET. ALEV KILIÇ – DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES (AVİM)	
THE VIEW FROM BRUSSELS	6
AMBASSADOR TERHI HAKALA – EUROPEAN UNION'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR CENTRAL ASIA	
PANEL DISCUSSION 1 –ENERGY	9
THE VIEW FROM THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES	16
DR. ÖMER KOCAMAN – DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES	
THE POLITICS OF CONNECTIVITY AND THE CONNECTIVITY OF POLITICS	20
PROF. DR. GERARD J. LIBARIDIAN – ARMENIAN-AMERICAN HISTORIAN AND FORMER DIPLOMAT	
THE VIEW FROM BAKU	26
ORKHAN AMASHOV – CHIEF POLITICAL ANALYST AT CALIBER NEWS MEDIA OUTLET (AZERBAIJAN)	
THE VIEW FROM BERLIN	30
DR. ANDREAS NICK – FORMER MEMBER OF THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT (2013-2021) AND FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2018-2022)	
THE VIEW FROM THE SOUTH CAUCASUS	34
STEPHAN MALERIUS – KONRAD-ADENAUER STIFTUNG TBILISI'S HEAD OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS	
PANEL DISCUSSION 2- CONNECTIVITY	37
THE VIEW FROM ACADEMIA	44
DR. DARIA ISACHENKO – ASSOCIATE OF THE CENTER FOR APPLIED TÜRKİYE STUDIES (CATS) AT GERMAN INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AND SECURITY AFFAIRS (SWP)	
EU- TÜRKİYE COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND SOUTH CAUCASUS: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE ENGAGEMENT IN ENERGY AND CONNECTIVITY - THE MAIN POINTS	45
DR. TURGUT KEREM TUNCEL – CO-EDITOR & SENIOR ANALYST AT THE CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES (AVİM)	

Introduction

As geopolitical competition among multiple actors intensifies, the world becomes a more fragmented place. The deepening and widening of political fault lines rapidly lead to economic, ideological, and cultural divides. Competition, confrontation, and the idea of frontiers determine today's political and economic thinking. In this context, certain regions such as the South Caucasus and Central Asia gain geopolitical and geoeconomic significance for different reasons, such as their strategic locations or the resources they possess. Both regions are significant in terms of energy and transport connectivity between Asia and Europe. They also possess substantial energy resources, critical earth minerals, and potential for renewable energy. Accordingly, these two regions are attracting attention more than ever.

On 22 February 2024, the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye jointly organized a conference titled "EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: Towards a Sustainable Engagement in Energy and Connectivity" in Ankara, Türkiye, to provide a platform to discuss the place of South Caucasus and Central Asia concerning energy and transport connectivity between Asia and Europe and to explore the possibilities of EU-Türkiye cooperation in these regions.

The conference was composed of two panel discussions. The first panel discussion on energy addressed questions about energy security and connectivity, putting the South Caucasus and Central Asia at its focus. The second panel discussion on connectivity centered on the question of transport connectivity, again focusing on the same regions. Both panels assessed the present situation in the South Caucasus and Central Asia with regard to energy and transport connectivity. Doing that, they addressed the relative strengths and weaknesses of these regions, and opportunities and challenges facing

the regional countries. Panelists also dwelled on the existing cooperation between the EU, Türkiye, and the countries in these two regions in energy and transport connectivity, and shared their views on the possibilities of further developing the coordination and partnership. The possible contributions of EU-Türkiye to these regions were also discussed at the panels.

In addition to panel discussions, four keynote speeches were delivered at the conference. The European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia Ambassador Terhi Hakala provided a summary of the EU's outlook on Central Asia and reflected on the relations between the former and Central Asian countries. The Deputy Secretary General of the Organization of Turkic States Dr. Ömer Kocaman explained OTS' perspectives and initiatives concerning energy and transport connectivity. Armenian-American historian and former diplomat Prof. Dr. Gerard J. Libaridian provided a critical assessment of the situation in the South Caucasus and the normalization efforts in this region between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Chief Political Analyst at Caliber News Media Outlet (Azerbaijan) Orkhan Amashov touched upon the same questions from an Azerbaijani point of view. Former Member of the German Parliament (2013-2021) and Former Vice President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2018-2022) Dr. Andreas Nick put Berlin's perspective into the picture. Along with keynote speeches, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung Tbilisi's Head of the Regional Programme for Political Dialogue in the South Caucasus Stephan Malerius and the Associate of the Center for Applied Türkiye Studies (CATS) at German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) Dr. Daria Isachenko contributed to the discussions with their inputs.

Welcome Speeches



Distinguished members of Parliament, Distinguished Ambassadors, Diplomats, Your Excellencies, Dear Friends of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung,

Currently, the European Union is home to roughly 450 million inhabitants. Türkiye, the regional power in whose capital, Ankara, we are today, counts more than 85 million citizens as its own. The South Caucasus is populated by 18 million while around 80 million men and women live in Central Asia. If I add those figures, the total sum amounts to more than 630 million people.

Neglecting political, economic, and cultural differences, this number alone highlights the comprehensive nature of the challenges involved when it comes to any kind of integrated engagement among the mentioned parties. Yet, the advantages of a deeper integration are demonstrated by your valuable attendance.

Since the demise of the Soviet Union, the intent of regional integration has been voiced now and then. However, current momentum in this regard must be understood against the backdrop of Russia's war against Ukraine. Two days ahead, we will read headlines informing us that it has been two years since the invasion started. Yet, let us not forget that already in March 2014 Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula. Thus, these days mark the first decade of the violent conflict.

Its wider implications are affecting us all:

- Europe is currently readjusting to a reality that its founding fathers – among them Konrad Adenauer – tried to overcome. Still, the power of principles does not substitute the principle of power.
- Türkiye is assuming the responsibility of its geographical position by facilitating the grain deal, as well as approving Finland's and Sweden's NATO accession.
- Georgia must cope with an influx of migrants from the north and the possibility of increased military activities in its occupied regions. Meanwhile, Armenia and Azerbaijan are negotiating border-crossing points opting for more cooperation. Thereby, paving the way towards deepened connectivity as well as towards Central Asia.

Certainly, the current sanction regime against the Russian Federation can be viewed critically. Nevertheless, implemented sanctions amplified the willingness among the Turkic states to surmount existing limitations. A pivotal play in this regard is the Organization of the Turkic States. In late 2021, its member states published the "Turkic World Vision – 2040" which includes important long-term goals.

However, tomorrow starts today!

So, I was pleased when I took notice of the signing of a joint roadmap on transport connectivity for 2023-2027 during the tenth summit of the Organization of the Turkic States in Astana last November. Thus, I am very much looking forward to the contribution of the Deputy Secretary General of the Organization of the Turkic States. Dear Dr. Ömer Kocaman a warm welcome to you!

Supporting the Organization of the Turkic States is certainly in the interest of the European Union and in line with the EU's Global Gateway Initiative. First of all, it potentially helps to secure peace and prosperity in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Secondly, it aids improving access to European markets while increasing the resilience of global supply chains and diversifying our power supply. Ultimately, it would assist in containing hegemonial ambitions in the wider region. Is this not what the European Union is at its core? An anti-hegemonial project? For this and further questions, I am especially honored to welcome the EU special representative, Ambassador Terhi Hakala, to our conference. At this point, I also want to thank the Finnish Ambassador, Pirkko Hämäläinen, and her team for their support as well as the generous offer to host a reception on the occasion of 100 years of Friendship between Türkiye and Finland.



Finally, only Türkiye is in the position and has the capability to catalyze this long-term integration process. Türkiye is certainly the bridge we all have, we all need, we all want to cross. In this respect, I am delighted to express my heartfelt gratitude towards our dear partner from AVİM, the Center for Eurasian Studies, and its director, Ambassador Alev Kılıç. Dear Mr. Kılıç, thank you for our cooperation in organizing today's conference!

To our panelists, to our speakers, and to our guests, I want to say: *Kolay Gelsin!*

I wish you all insightful and productive sessions and I hope you will enjoy the conference as much as I will.

WALTER GLOS
DIRECTOR OF KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG TÜRKİYE (KAS)

Special Representative of the EU for Central Asia Ambassador Terhi Hakala, Deputy Secretary General of the Organization of Turkic States Dr. Ömer Kocaman, Distinguished Panelists, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and privilege for the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) to be launching together and in cooperation with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) Türkiye. This conference that will allow for the discussions of EU-Türkiye cooperation in Central Asia and the South Caucasus, with a specific focus on sustainable engagement in energy and connectivity.

About two years ago, AVİM and KAS again collaborated in organizing a conference titled "EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: Challenges and Opportunities for Closer Cooperation in the Region". Today's conference can be viewed as an updated and expanded continuity of that conference to highlight those previous themes that have become even more relevant and urgent considering the developments that have taken place since then.

The global balance of power and geopolitics that have been shifting since the collapse of the Soviet Union have become more perceptible as the new year, 2024, has unfortunately inherited the unresolved problems of last year. Türkiye, at the easternmost of the West and the westernmost of the East, finds itself at the center of these problems and will have to deal with their consequences more urgently than most other countries.



The ongoing war that has become one of attrition between Ukraine and Russia, the threat of regional instability in the Middle East centered around the revived Israel-Palestine conflict, and the rising cold war shadow for global influence between the US and China have all demonstrated the limitations of connectivity options between Europe and Asia. These developments have further cemented the key position of Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Türkiye in connectivity and transport next to their already established energy lines. As the most lucrative destination for such connectivity and transport, the EU occupies a critical position in this global configuration as well.

Based on this logic, the relationships of the EU, Central Asia, South Caucasus, and Türkiye must be formulated in such a way that they are able to enjoy constructive and fruitful relations among themselves and with major actors such as the US, China, and Russia while being shielded from the potentially dangerous effects of the growing cold war logic.

Specifically for Türkiye, as AVİM, we maintain our position that Türkiye is a land of connectivity and integration between the East and the West with its two wings, one in the Balkans and the other in the Caucasus.

As a Balkan country, Türkiye is an inseparable part of the European geography. On the other hand, following the establishment of independent states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Türkiye has nourished close ties with this formerly secluded geography based on its deep-rooted social, cultural, and kinship bonds there, thus enabling Türkiye to open up to Asia and to reconcile its European and Asian profiles.

Based on AVİM's discussions with key Turkish policymakers, we could state that Türkiye expects its solid ties with the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, and its transport and connectivity potential to be reckoned with and be put into use both by the West and the East. However, this is not a passive wait or disposition.

The institutionalization of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) and its unfolding activities as envisaged in its "Turkic World Vision – 2040" document present Türkiye with a wide spectrum of opportunities to promote its relations with the East.

The Middle Corridor harmonized with the Belt and Road Initiative could also provide a new impetus to relations with China. All of this automatically makes Türkiye an indispensable partner for the EU in its search for more comprehensive relations with the South Caucasus, Central Asia, and beyond.

I hope and trust that today's conference with its distinguished speakers and audience will provide us with fresh and sound perspectives as to the EU-Türkiye cooperation in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, and the challenges and opportunities for closer cooperation in these regions.

Let me conclude by expressing my appreciation for the effective cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye, its Director Mr. Walter Glos, and his team for their remarkable and tireless efforts. Many thanks also go to Ambassador Pirkko Hämäläinen for her kind hosting of a closing reception.

Thank you.

AMBASSADOR RET. ALEV KILIÇ
DIRECTOR OF CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES (AVİM)

The View from Brussels

Dear excellencies, dear friends,

It is a pleasure to join you this morning.

I would initially like to thank the Centre for Eurasian Studies - AVİM and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for the organisation of today's event and for bringing us together in Ankara.

The EU is a strong, committed and reliable partner for the countries in Central Asia. We see a shared interest in the momentum of increased cooperation, with a long-term approach focused on producing results. We are committed to enhance regional cooperation, strengthen trade relations, and jointly pursue opportunities for sustainable investment.

An essential element of our partnership is to develop alternative connections and transport corridors for the benefit of all people and businesses – the connectivity also recalled by the title of today's event. This is an important aspect not only for the EU and Central Asia, but also for - and including - our partners on the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor – a corridor that involves Türkiye and the Caucasus.

Looking at the relations between Central Asia and the EU: Last year we celebrated the 30th anniversaries of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the EU and the Central Asian republics and our cooperation has significantly expanded in the last years. Bilaterally, the EU has actively pursued engagement with countries in the region to further strengthen our relations, including as one of the largest trade and investment partners. We are achieving this by concluding Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCA). The EPCA with Kazakhstan is in force since 2020 and we are approaching the signature with Kyrgyzstan in the next months.

With Uzbekistan, the EU initialled an EPCA on 6 July 2022 and we have also launched negotiations of an EPCA with Tajikistan.

These agreements include important commitments by both parties on political, trade and sectoral cooperation issues and they are also reform incentivising instruments. EPCAs importantly provide additional momentum to the implementation of the EU's Strategy on Central Asia and help to stimulate political dialogue as well as our economic and trade cooperation.

Our Strategy on Central Asia, adopted in June 2019 and updating our first Strategy of 2007, frames our work with the region. The Strategy outlines three priority strands for EU engagement:

- partnering with Central Asian states and societies for resilience (human rights and democracy, security, environmental challenges);
- partnering for prosperity (supporting economic diversification and private sector development, promoting intra-regional trade and sustainable connectivity);
- as well as supporting regional cooperation in Central Asia.

It is obvious that our world has seen many developments since 2019, which have strongly influenced us all. This includes the Covid-19 pandemic, or Russia's aggression against Ukraine. However, we consider our Central Asia Strategy to be a robust document, which covers relevant topics and can answer to new challenges flexibly. In our last annual Ministerial meeting that took place in Luxembourg in October, we commonly adopted the Joint Roadmap for Deepening Ties between the EU and Central Asia - a development on top of the 2019 strategy.

The Roadmap focuses on 79 concrete actions that help to define and guide the implementation of our cooperation.

Additionally, the last two years have seen the first two meetings of the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, with the leaders of the Central Asian countries. The last such meeting took place in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, in June and the Leaders agreed to meet on a regular basis, aiming to hold their next meeting as a first Summit this year.

In addition, a number of specific meeting formats extends this engagement on the highest government level, including our yearly Civil Society Forum or our biannual Economic Forum. Our Economic Forum has been accompanied by specific engagements on the already mentioned topic of connectivity over the last years.

In November 2022, we organised the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference in Samarkand and the works started there have found their continuation not only in last year's Economic Forum in Almaty, but especially at the Investors Forum for EU-Central Asia Transport Connectivity in Brussels at the end of January.

Connecting the EU and Central Asia is a key priority for the EU under the Global Gateway strategy. Global Gateway is the EU's offer to reduce the worldwide investment disparity and boost smart, clean and secure connections in digital, energy and transport sectors, and to strengthen health, education and research systems. The EU, in a Team Europe approach together with its Member States and European Financial Institutions, has the ambition through Global Gateway to connect people through sustainable investments and reliable partnerships by supporting transformative projects that combine public and private financing. We aim at jointly promoting the EU's values, principles, and vision of sustainable, rules-based and people-centred connectivity globally. In this way, Global Gateway provides the opportunity for improving connectivity within Central Asia as well as between Europe and Central Asia.

Looking a bit closer at the Investors Forum we most recently organised in Brussels, let me first recall that the forum built on the study on sustainable transport connections between Europe and Central Asia, which the

EU worked on with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The study concluded that the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, which stretches 11,000 kilometres from Asia to Europe, has the potential to handle more land-based trade between the two regions.



Further development of the Corridor will boost trade between countries, thereby fostering economic growth, prosperity and stability in the region.

The study identified 33 hard infrastructure investment needs across the region (related to modernisation/reconstruction of existing railways/roads, additional rail/road links, fleet expansion, port capacity expansion, rolling stock, logistics centres, warehousing, etc.), as well as 7 coordinated actions on soft connectivity measures (trade facilitation, regulatory measures, digitalisation, harmonisation of tariffs, customs procedures, border controls, interoperability, market liberalisation, etc.). These are all specific, concrete, implementable and realistic actions that can contribute to the competitiveness, economic attractiveness and operational efficiency of the trans-Caspian transport connections and offer opportunities for all the five Central Asian countries to maximise their sustainable economic development by linking up better with each other – and with Europe.

And the recent Investors Forum was an important first, collective step to take these projects forward, further developing the Trans-Caspian Corridor, aiming to link Europe and Central Asia within 15 days. And it is clear that in order to achieve this; we need to coordinate our resources with partners like Türkiye, with international financial institutions, as well as with private investors and companies - both in Europe and Central Asia. Understanding this, the Forum included a panel on Türkiye and the South Caucasus, and another on the Caspian Sea. We were grateful to see many countries, financial institutions and companies responding to our call and joining us in Brussels, including Türkiye as an important corridor country.

I am also happy to share that the EU announced an overall package of 10 billion Euros that was committed to sustainable connectivity of Central Asia. The EU also announced that we will create a Coordination Platform to ensure the best collective effect of everyone's efforts, monitoring progress, and enhancing cooperation in the development of the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor. The aim is to progress further by our next Investors Forum, as this cannot be a one-off event; it's the start of a long-term endeavour.

To look beyond connectivity, we further implement Global Gateway in Central Asia *via* two so called Team Europe Initiatives, where we work together with our Member States and Financial Institutions.

The Team Europe Initiative on Digital Connectivity pursues a double objective: enabling investment in hard infrastructure, while promoting good governance in the digital sphere. It aims to provide satellite connectivity in the region creating new opportunities for improving connectivity as well as potentially increasing the capacity of existing broadband infrastructure.

The Team Europe Initiative on Water, Energy, and Climate Change is built on the common ambition of the Central Asian countries and the EU to promote a sustainable and just blue and green transition. This TEI focuses on supporting Central Asia's regional power market, greening of its energy mix and transboundary water governance initiatives - particularly the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, and the

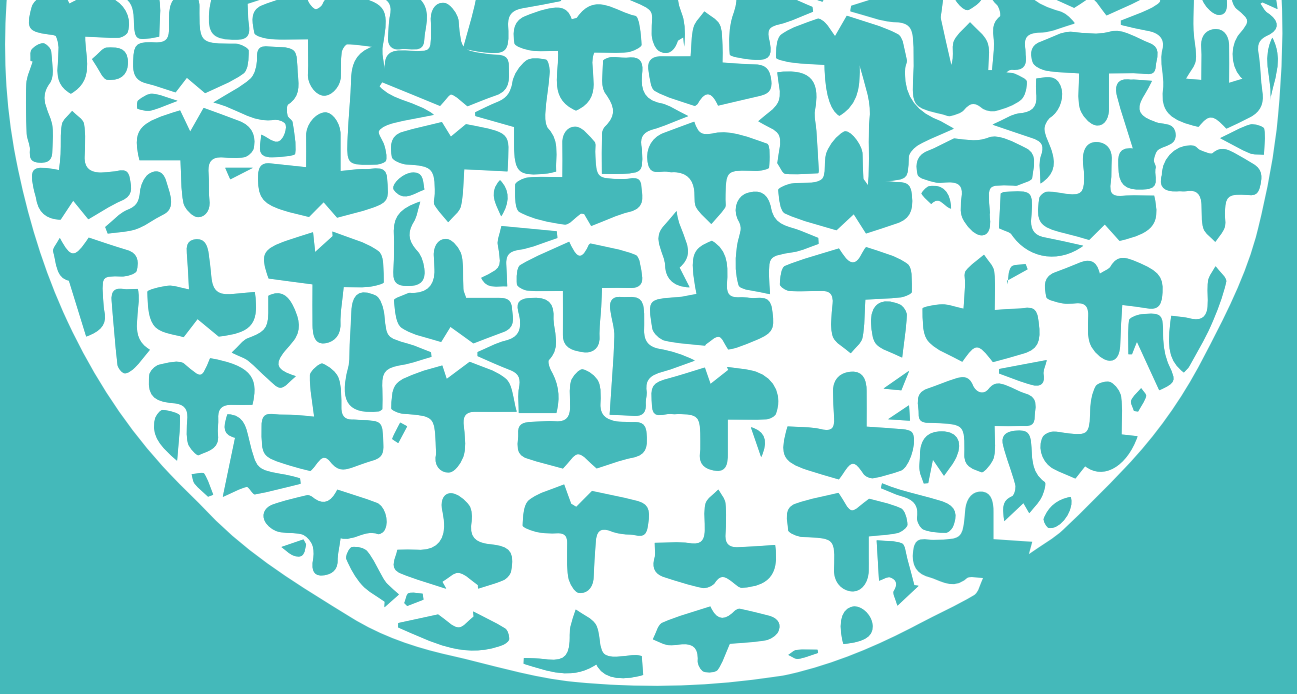
regional policy dialogue in mainstreaming of climate change in the water, energy, and environment sectors. About 40% of the initial EUR 700 million of funding under this initiative is dedicated to investments in hard infrastructures. This amount will increase through blending and budgetary guarantee projects that will be financed through the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+). This year we will launch a Coordination Mechanism for the TEI and it will include for the first time in our cooperation, energy as a main pillar, together with water management and climate resilience. In particular, the EFSD+ financial package will allow us to deploy budgetary guarantees supporting private sector operations in Central Asia for the first time.

Four programmes implemented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and supported by an EFSD+ budgetary guarantee have been approved as well. These will support private sector operations in Central Asia including on new climate technologies and critical raw materials, a topic we are also working on bilaterally, for example through a MoU we are implementing with Kazakhstan. The European Commission is also working with other financial institutions to ensure that countries in Central Asia can benefit from additional private-sector oriented programmes focussed on the transitioning to renewable energy generation and increased energy access, support to SMEs, development of value chains and development of green bonds markets.

As you can see, the last years have seen a steady increase in both political engagement and concrete projects between the EU and Central Asia in the two areas mentioned for the event today.

Thanks again to AVİM and KAS for the organisation and I look forward to the further inputs and the panel discussions during the event.

AMBASSADOR TERHI HAKALA
EU'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
FOR CENTRAL ASIA



PANEL 1

ENERGY



Panel 1: Energy

Current global problems such as climate change and energy security have made energy transition a high priority topic. How this transition could be realized is thus being widely discussed by experts and politicians. The Ukraine-Russia war has been a significant factor that intensified concerns on energy security. Diversification of energy supplies and the search for reliable partners are the topics central to these deliberations. Within this framework, the Southern Gas Corridor, starting in Azerbaijan and reaching Europe *via* Türkiye, has taken on a potentially important role. These and other relevant topics were addressed in Panel Discussion 1 - Energy..

Ahmad Humberov, *Senior Fellow of the Energy and Sustainable Development Program at the Institute for Development and Diplomacy at ADA University (Azerbaijan)*, contextualized in his presentation the EU-Türkiye

partnership, and EU-South Caucasus and EU-Central Asia relations within deepening political and ideological fragmentations on the global scale. Doing that, he emphasized the negative effects of the political fragmentation on economic and trade relations that assert themselves in the emergence of protectionist tendencies and rising trade barriers. Humberov argued that while working contrary to the prospect of partnership and connectivity among regions, fragmentation also hinders the much-needed resolve to work together to overcome global challenges such as climate change.

Touching upon energy issues, Humberov underlined that the South Caucasus, in addition to hosting natural gas reserves, has a huge potential for renewable energy. To make his point, he emphasized that the Caspian Sea is considered to be the second windiest sea in the world after the North Sea. This provides the region - specifically Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan - with a huge potential for electricity generation. On this point, Humberov informed that Azerbaijan's total installed electricity capacity stands at around 8 gigawatts, which can be increased as high as 27-28 gigawatts. The country also has a technical capacity of roughly around 300 gigawatts of green energy. Humberov stressed that even the realization of a tiny fraction of this potential will

be a game changer. As to green energy, Humbatov mentioned that critical earth minerals are important factors for energy transformation and decarbonization. As to that, he reminded that Central Asian countries, specifically Kazakhstan, have a huge potential for these minerals.

Touching upon energy cooperation between Azerbaijan and the EU, Humbatov stated that although the EU will be the largest generator of green energy, there is still demand for electricity supplies and as such, the EU is the largest market for Azerbaijan. In this respect, he highlighted that the EU and the South Caucasian and Central Asian countries intensified their dialogue on energy and connectivity issues. In May 2022, a memorandum of understanding on energy, promotion of projects on renewable energy, and connectivity was signed between Azerbaijan and the EU. He also highlighted that doubling the capacity of the Southern Gas Corridor is on the agenda.

Humbatov stated that with respect to energy deliveries to the EU, Türkiye is the pivotal actor for being a natural and indispensable bridge between the EU and South Caucasus-Central Asia. In addition to energy, for general trade between Asia and Europe, too, Türkiye is an essential country. Humbatov underlined that this status of Türkiye has gained further salience because of the Ukraine-Russia war and the consequent attempts of the Western countries to bypass Russia as a transit route, as well as the recent developments in the Southern Indian Ocean route.



Mr. Humbatov concluded that in such a context, the Middle Corridor has become a strategically significant route for the East-West trade. In this vein, he underscored Baku's speeding up of its efforts to develop new ports on the Caspian shore to capitalize on this opportunity.

Nurlan Kapenov, *Chairman of the Board of Directors at the Association of RES Qazaq Green (SPAQ) (Kazakhstan)*, addressed in his presentation the question of energy transition and presented a summary of the current situation in Kazakhstan. Kapenov stated that Kazakhstan has ambitious goals in the energy sphere and is on a progressive path in terms of developing renewable energy infrastructure. Kapenov said that the first law in Kazakhstan for supporting renewable energy was implemented in 2009. Yet, serious steps began to be taken by 2014, when a tariff system was implemented. Consequently, whereas Kazakhstan had zero megawatts of renewable energy ten years ago, today 3 gigawatts of renewable energy is generated. Kapenov informed that currently in Kazakhstan 150 projects on renewable energy including solar and wind projects are run and renewables amount to 6% of Kazakhstan's energy mix. He underlined that Almaty projects the share of renewables in the energy mix of Kazakhstan to reach 15% by 2030 and 50% by 2050. In 2023, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a strategy paper on reaching carbon neutrality until 2060. Having said that, Kapenov also stressed that Kazakhstan's energy transition is an evolutionary process, not a revolutionary one. As a legacy of the Soviet Union, even today, 70% of the total energy generation comes from coal. Kapenov underscored that this testifies that one of the problems of the energy sector in Kazakhstan is the absence of balance in energy sources.

Kapenov also referred to the effects of the geopolitical developments on Central Asia and Kazakhstan. In this vein, he underlined that the aggression of Russia against Ukraine has had significant impacts on Kazakhstan

for Central Asian countries receive all the necessary materials and equipment for the energy sector *via* Russia. However, with the Ukraine-Russia war the logistic chain was broken. As a result, at the present, these equipment are delivered to Kazakhstan from Europe *via* Türkiye. This is the reason why, Kapenov stressed, EU-Türkiye cooperation is very important for Central Asian countries.

An important emphasis in Kapenov's presentation was Central Asia's direct dependence on Russia regarding the energy sector due to imbalances in the energy sector. Kapenov explained that Kazakhstan does not have the capacity to balance its system by itself because of the absence of flexible capacities like gas turbines and hydropower plants. The misbalances in the system complicate the prospects of developing renewable energy infrastructure. Kapenov stated that today Kazakhstan balances the system only with the help of support of Russia and warned that if Russia decides to cut balancing energy, Kazakhstan would go back to the 1990s. Upon this background, Kapenov stressed the imperative for Kazakhstan to strengthen its energy security. According to him, doing that obliges Kazakhstan to develop renewable energy infrastructure and flexible capacity, which requires radical reforms in the domestic energy market and implementing real market rules.



Mr. Kapenov, in this regard, also stated that much-needed financial support to develop a new energy infrastructure could come only from the EU and European financial institutions. Türkiye and the Organization of Turkic States could also be important actors to help Kazakhstan.

Lastly, on Kazakhstan's energy security, Kapenov mentioned Almaty's deliberation on opting for nuclear power and building nuclear power plants underlining that Kazakhstan has the biggest reserves of nuclear fuel, namely, uranium. He, however, explained that Kazakhstan's bid for nuclear energy is a highly political question. As to domestic political dynamics, Almaty needs to consider Kazakh citizens' opposition to nuclear power plants in the country. Secondly, Moscow puts pressure on Almaty to coerce it to use Russian technology. As to that, Almaty perceives Türkiye and the Organization of Turkic States as important actors in countering Russian pressure.

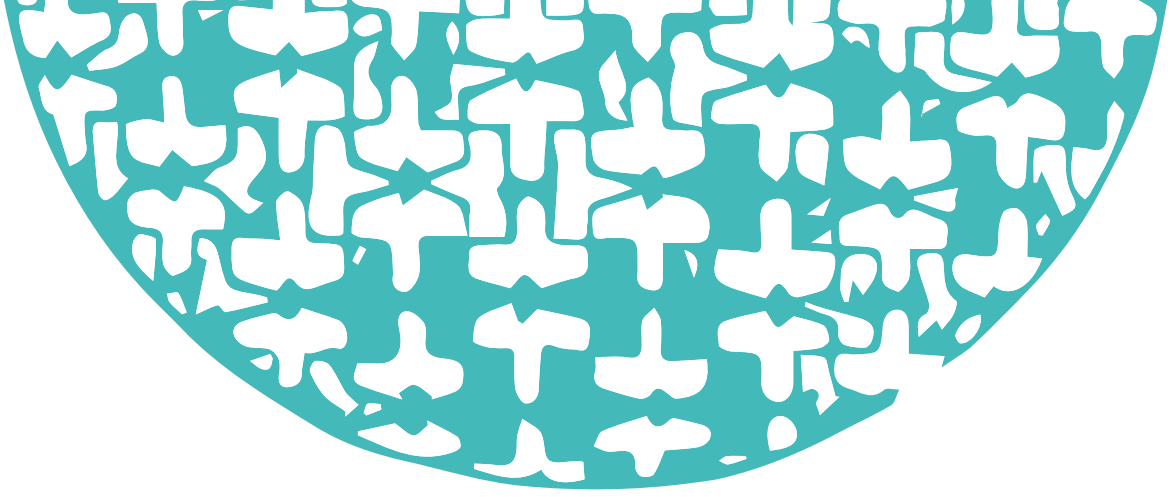
Samuel Doveri Vesterbye, *Managing Director of the European Neighbourhood Council*, in his speech, presented a summary of the mission of the European Neighbourhood Council (ENC). Clarifying that the ENC as a think-tank is funded by the EU and EU member states, Vesterbye adverted three areas that ENC's activities mainly focus on. The first area is education. The second area is data collection and data mining through surveys, interviews, and other data-gathering methods. Vesterbye said that ENC is active in data gathering in Central Asia, Türkiye, and the rest of the neighborhood; North Africa, Eastern Partnership Program countries such as Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia, etc. In this vein, he emphasized that mapping supply chains and supply chain risk analysis are an important part of the ENC's studies. Thirdly, the ENC runs training programs. It helps the European Commission and member states with business training. The ENC also provides training to various NGOs and associations. Vesterbye stated that the EU's Global Gateway initiative is one of ENC's focuses. He informed the audience that Global Gateway is an initiative on a global scale. The EU has signed contracts in Latin America, Africa, the Pacific, and so on within the framework of this initiative. As such, Vesterbye underlined, the Global Gateway is a very broad and a very large budgeted initiative.

Mr. Vesterbye referred to the war in Ukraine and the cataclysmic shifts in the world as a result, the reflections of which can be seen in trade, sanctions, and economic patterns. He stressed that the new situation also opened up space for new opportunities that did not exist before in Central Asia and the South Caucasus. He said that impact assessments of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)



and the World Bank show that there is an increase in trade through the Middle Corridor. He also argued that the increase in insurance premium risks and other expenses in Russia inclined businesses to leave Russia. This also positively contributes to the prospects for the Middle Corridor. Despite those however, Vesterbye underlined that the actual trade figures reveal that there is actually a decrease in trade, which has to do with the level of connectivity in the region that needs to be developed. This is precisely the reason why, he argued, the Global Gateway and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) are two initiatives with the utmost importance and both need to be further developed.

Remarking on the war in Ukraine, Vesterbye dwelled on energy issues. He underscored the rising importance of LNG. In addition, he underlined the shift towards renewable energy as a current trend worldwide. In this framework, Vesterbye stressed that renewable energy has become a central issue for Central Asia, as well. Thirdly, Vesterbye pointed out the question of protection of critical materials



and security of critical infrastructure as an aspect of energy security, more specifically. In this vein, Vesterbye reminded that France has more than fifty NPPs and therefore high stakes in uranium-rich Kazakhstan.

As to planned and ongoing projects on sustainable energy, Mr. Vesterbye explained that clean energy generation in Central Asia and the South Caucasus serves multiple purposes. He explained that UN reports show that

Central Asia is extremely vulnerable to climate change and this region will encounter the resultant problems much earlier than Northern Europe. This is why Central Asian governments try to develop policies and projects to remedy the effects of climate change. Green energy and renewable energy come into the picture in this regard.

The View from the Organization of Turkic States

Distinguished participants,

It is an honor to address you today at the conference on this significant topic. I am grateful for the warm hospitality, and I thank the Center for Eurasian Studies and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for organizing this important event. The chosen topic is highly relevant and timely.

I believe that the EU and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) share significant potential for sustainable engagement in energy and connectivity. Geopolitical uncertainties, disruptions in global supply chains, and the increasing energy demand stir up this potential.

EU's recently growing interest towards Central Asia and Caucasus, and the positive developments in EU-Türkiye relations will have repercussions on EU-Turkey cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus. EU with its strong institutions, programs, and projects has been in the region since 1992 to procure resilience, prosperity, and regional cooperation in the region. The EU shares the belief that the issues Central Asia is facing require concerted action and that the region would perform better if the five Central Asian countries cooperated more. Actually, this is what is happening through the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). Today, OTS member states Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan are actively cooperating in a multilateral format in the fields of economy, education, transport, tourism, and so on. They are developing common concrete projects to achieve resilience in public and private spheres.



Central Asia and the South Caucasus are pivotal regions in international politics due to their strategic location, energy resources, market potential, and role in regional security, especially amidst developments in Afghanistan.

The unpredictable international politics in Central Asia and the South Caucasus spark off competition between global and regional powers and increase the pressure on regional states and multilateral organizations to face the challenges.

The OTS is gaining visibility and becoming a center of attraction largely consequent to its annual summits attended by presidents; meetings of foreign ministers; and monthly sectoral ministerial meetings. These events foster deeper cooperation among member states and observers. Over the past fourteen years, the OTS has thrived as a consequence of collaboration among its member countries, fostering a robust communication network and cooperative working culture.

Distinguished participants,

Today's conference topic is relevant due to ongoing geopolitical developments, especially in Eurasia.

The rise of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Russia-Ukraine war have made regional connectivity a crucial aspect of international politics. Connectivity is the ability to connect or communicate with others. With respect to OTS' perspective, connectivity encompasses various aspects such as economy, education, transport, energy, security, foreign policy, youth, sports, and more.

The common heritage of Turkic countries' history, tradition, and culture can be considered as 'domestic bonds,' facilitating connectivity in various areas. These shared elements enable better communication among our communities. Of course, this perspective does not diminish the significance of other common interests.

Geography is crucial for connecting countries globally and the location of our member states along the historic Silk Road offers a potential for fostering connections, and thus connectivity. The Trans Caspian East-West Corridor, also known as the Middle Corridor, aims to revive the Silk Road, promoting economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and overall development through a network of roads and railways.

As a young and transparent regional organization, the main goals of the OTS include peace, stability, and achieving prosperity. Cooperation in transport and customs is prioritized among other issues.

The Organization has established an institutionalized form of collaboration in each sector through ministerial meetings, working groups, and forums.

Since the 1990s, the European Union has significantly expanded its relationship with Central Asia, leveraging the region's shared interests in prosperity, connectivity, energy, and security. Due to geopolitical developments and energy and transport supply chain disruptions, Brussels has increased its focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia regions. The EU-Central Asia Summit and the Global Gateway Investors' Forum recently discussed sustainable transport connections between Europe and Central Asia. The Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, a significant route, can potentially increase land-based trade between the two continents. The EU has committed 10 billion Euros to sustainable transport connectivity in Central Asia.

The Organization of Turkic States prioritizes transport cooperation, promoting corridors through infrastructure investments, rule harmonization, and innovation. The ministers of transport, the Coordination Committee on Transport, the railway administrations, and the relevant working group hold regular meetings to discuss and coordinate transportation-related matters. During the Samarkand Summit in November 2022, several key agreements were signed in the transport domain. These included the Agreement on Combined Freight Transport and the Agreement on the Establishment of Simplified Customs Corridor. The OTS Transport Connectivity Program specifically aims to create favorable conditions for transport and transit operations, with a focus on enhancing connectivity through the

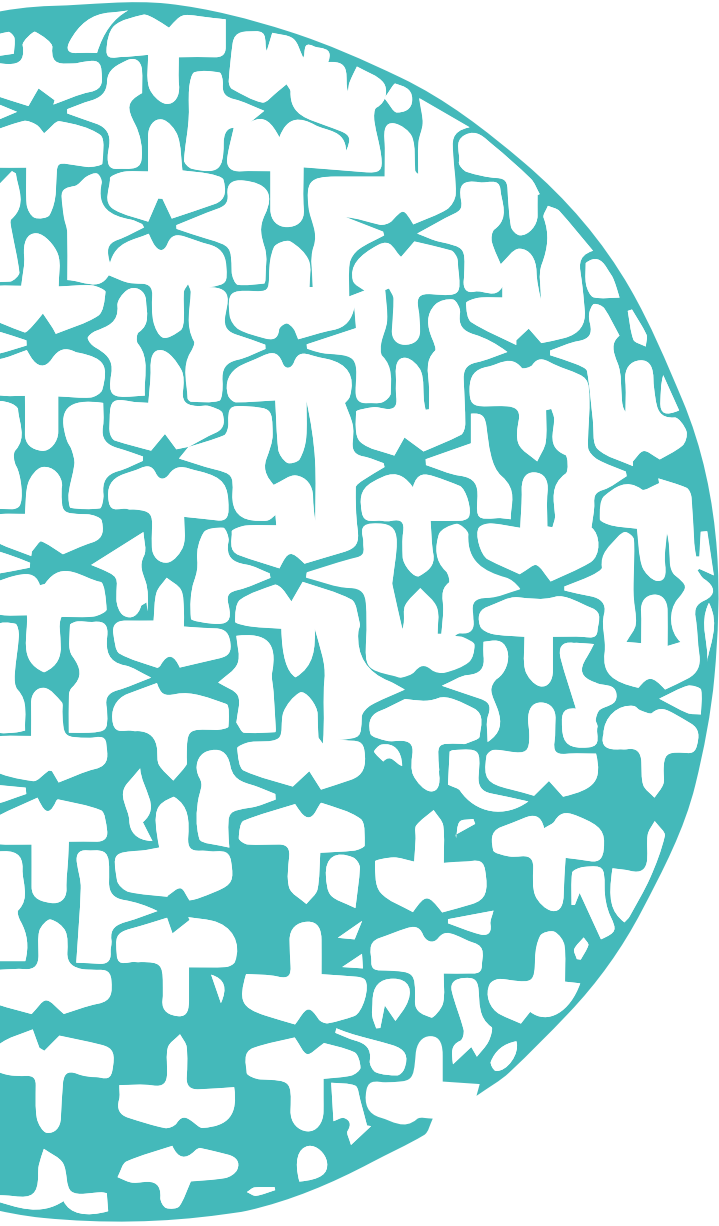
Middle Corridor. Last November 2023, the Astana Summit adopted the Action Plan for the Transport Connectivity Program, involving over thirty-five actions and determining the future of our transport cooperation.

In the short term, our main focus will be on streamlining transport and transit procedures of the OTS member states by using modern digital tools like “TIR digitalization,” “ePermit,” and “eCMR.” The “digital TIR” project, in collaboration with OTS and the World Road Transport Organisation (IRU), successfully launched a ‘green corridor’ between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, with Kyrgyzstan joining in March 2022. Two of our members, Türkiye and Uzbekistan, have implemented the “e-Permit” project, becoming global pioneers in this direction. We are now working towards extending it to other member and observer states. Currently, discussions are ongoing with member states regarding implementing “eCMR.” Here, I would like to say that our transportation agenda has expanded to include the railway sector with regular meetings of heads of railway administrations and dedicated forums.

The OTS geography is gaining strategic significance due to rising global energy consumption and increasing concerns over energy security. Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan possess the largest share of both oil and gas in the Caspian Sea region. Trans-Adriatic (TAP) and Trans-Anatolian (TANAP) pipelines as constituents of the Southern Gas Corridor have supplied Türkiye and Europe with Azerbaijani gas since the end of 2020. Southern Gas Corridor strengthens European energy security by diversifying its energy supplies and boosting decarbonization efforts.

OTS has recently started to work on energy cooperation. Two documents, “Turkic World Vision – 2040” and the “2022-2026 OTS Strategy” call for collaboration among member states for energy diversification, clean/green energy, and establishing an integrated “Turkic Energy Market.” Two meetings of the ministers of energy were held, where the OTS Program on Energy Cooperation for 2023-2027 and its Action Plan were adopted. OTS endeavors to foster cooperation among its member states and observers in various fields, including energy and transport. Central Asia and the South Caucasus have significant potential to enhance global and regional supply and energy security. Today, OTS member states significantly contribute to global energy security, especially in Europe through regional programs and projects like the Trans-Caspian East-West Corridor (Middle Corridor), Baku-Tblisi-Kars (BTK) railway, sister ports, Bakü-Tblisi-Ceyhun (BTC) oil pipeline, TANAP, and TAP.

EU’s growing interest in the OTS region prompts increased dialogue between the EU and the OTS member states, focusing on economic prosperity, resilience, sustainable connectivity, energy security, clean-green energy, and trade. Both the EU and the OTS share the same belief that the issues facing Central Asia and the Caucasus require concerted action and that the region would perform better if the countries of both regions cooperated more. When we look at the strategic documents such as EU strategies for Central Asia adopted in 2007 and 2019 and the OTS’s “Turkic World Vision – 2040,” we see the elements of this strategic regional approach. We are also looking forward to establishing regular dialogue with the EU during the Hungarian presidency of the EU Council, focusing on



connectivity and energy security. As an observer state, Hungary hosts an OTS representation office in Budapest, which is responsible for building cooperation with the EU. Both organizations have a lot to offer for the socio-economic development of the region.

As for Türkiye, of course, it can be a bridge between Europe and Central Asia-South Caucasus. If we look at the map, Türkiye with its unique geographic location and relatively stable and developed economy can play a strategic role in enhancing cooperation between EU and Türkiye. I think for this time has come. Consequent to the volatile situation in the regions including the Black Sea and the Middle East, and the war between Russia and Ukraine, Türkiye emerges as an important viable alternative to play a connecting role in achieving sustainable engagement in energy and connectivity. The EU and Türkiye have a long history of relationship. They have accumulated enough experience to overcome challenges and make use of opportunities. In this regard, I am very optimistic about the future of EU-Türkiye cooperation in Central Asia and the South Caucasus towards sustainable engagement in energy and connectivity.

Thank you for your attention!

DR. ÖMER KOCAMAN
DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF TURKIC STATES

The Politics of Connectivity and the Connectivity of Politics

What we are dealing with here is the simple question: Does the economic logic of connectivity dominate political considerations? Can we assume that economic benefits will change political considerations, or does politics dominate economic logic, thus exacerbating political tension and conflict?

Most of you could not remember, but I do, when the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline issue came up in the early 1990s. It was offered as the ‘peace pipeline,’ which sounded good as a slogan but it was based on the possibility of a deal: political concessions from Armenia regarding the Karabakh issue, and the pipeline would go through Armenia. An economic incentive to resolve a political conflict. Now, economically, it made sense for the pipeline to go to Türkiye through Armenia. And Armenia welcomed the prospect of the pipeline going through its territory. But to get the pipeline, Armenia was expected to pay a high political price in the form of more concessions than it was willing to make; Yerevan was not ready to risk the security of the Armenians in Karabakh for economic gain for Armenia. The pipeline went through Georgia and the conflict became harder to resolve.

The second story concerns my last visit to Ankara in 1997. At the time, I was serving as the Senior Advisor to the President of Armenia, the Secretary of Armenia’s Security Council, and chief negotiator with Türkiye since 1992. I met then Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz of Türkiye in Ankara and formulated

the problem between Türkiye and Armenia in the following way: Where should Armenia see Türkiye as Yerevan projects its long-term future? Should Yerevan consider Türkiye to be part of Armenia’s security problem or part of the solution to its security problem? Despite an initial effort to normalize relations and open the border, under pressure from Baku, Ankara was unable to detach its policies from the need it felt to provide unconditional support to Baku, which, in turn, made it possible for Baku to maintain some of its uncompromising positions.

Economic Logic Disrupted by Politics

I did not retell these episodes in order to criticize any of the players. But simply to remind us that the best of economic logic often runs into hard political considerations: rivalries, enmities, grand designs.

The reverse is also true: more than economic logic may be involved, for example, in the outright rejection by some countries of the Crossroads for Peace, a plan offered by the Prime Minister of Armenia. The plan deserves closer examination than it received by Azerbaijan and Türkiye and offers some considerable benefits to Türkiye and Azerbaijan, and beyond.

The lessons these incidents suggest are not new, although they are often forgotten in the context of the optimism good projects inspire.

This is the text prepared by Prof. Dr. Gerard J. Libaridian based on his speech at the conference for this publication.

No Superpowers

All this is not new. What is new is the environment in which these issues reappear. Let me offer a few assertions, which some of you will find banal and others may consider bold.

We are living in a world that no longer has an order. There are no longer superpowers in the old sense, superpowers acting as policemen that kept smaller countries in line. The East-West paradigm does not make as much sense as it did thirty or more years ago. There are no longer clear camps led by superpowers. We see rather the rise of regional powers that act without sanction by the big powers, using military solutions to political problems, and more often than not with impunity. Whereas major or formerly superpowers were not so eager to engage militarily to resolve political issues, regional powers seem to be more inclined to use force. Sometimes, force is disproportionate to the political problem. In other words, we have an international disorder that has all the problems of the Cold War and none of its benefits. We are encountering the consequences of the failure of the big powers to devise a post-Soviet new world order. Regardless, this is the environment within which connectivity is being sought, devised, and projected.

Thus, we have some dissonance between lofty goals declared by regional powers and the translation of these goals into policies that will lead to the realization of these declared goals. Some countries wish to see a peaceful and secure South Caucasus, with all communications open, but in practice imagine such connectivity at the expense of the region's smaller republics, such as threatening Armenia's sovereignty and/or



territorial integrity. When such is the case, the loftiness of the stated goals is somewhat compromised and the project is made more difficult.

What Problem are We Solving?

To get closer to the core of the problem, we need to ask some questions: What problems are Russia, Türkiye, and Iran, now joined by Azerbaijan, resolving when they speak of connectivity?

That brings us to a review of the 3 + 3 formula as the solution to the region's problems: The three South Caucasus republics plus Russia, Türkiye, and Iran. Despite the attractiveness of this formula, with the increase of the role and capabilities of regional powers, it has become less attractive as a path to ensuring regional security and the sovereignty and stability of the three South Caucasus republics.

Consider the following: Russia has a variety of problems with all three of the republics; it has occupied part of Georgia, is currently

threatening Armenia, and exerts pressure on Azerbaijan on some issues. Iran, the often-neglected but critical member of the second group of three countries, has problems with Azerbaijan, most critically regarding the purpose of Israel's intense relations with Baku. Iran has also been criticized by Baku for being pro-Armenian, although Tehran's policies toward the region have been more balanced and judicious than those of Russia or Türkiye. Türkiye has a problem with Armenia, a problem that has historical dimensions as well. In addition, despite cooperation in some areas, Türkiye, Iran, and Russia do not, in fact, share a common vision for the South Caucasus region. At some level, they remain rivals with, in the long run, competing vital interests. Anything can happen in the interim. Thirdly, at least Russia and Iran have serious issues with Europe and the US that have their own interests in the region.

Thus, under the current circumstances, an arrangement that includes the second group of three countries - Russia, Türkiye, and Iran - in a 3+3 system cannot effectively provide security guarantees and stability to the South Caucasus, as long as they are part of the problem and as long that they are not willing to change that fact. The security guarantees that the second three may offer will, in effect, constitute another way for them to project their interests onto the relationship of the three South Caucasus republics, eventually exacerbating existing conflicts within the region. At best, instead of doing so separately, Russia, Türkiye, and Iran will collectively treat the South Caucasus republics as objects of their neo-imperial designs, a situation rife with more conflicts than currently exists.

It is almost impossible for connectiveness projects not to be invested with political and geopolitical considerations.

After more than three decades of new opportunities opened by the dissolution of the Soviet Union, we might want to ask whether the connectiveness of politics, such as between Türkiye and Azerbaijan, helped negotiations toward a compromise solution to the Karabakh problem or was conducive to a positive outcome. Each player should ask itself if its past policies produced a more peaceful and stable South Caucasus and an equitable solution to conflicts. We certainly know that the resolution of the Karabakh conflict was not optimal for all concerned, to say the least.

Furthermore, the legitimate interests of Russia in the region are not served by Moscow's assumption that things can go or should go back to the way they were during the Soviet era or something close to it. Moscow can no longer take for granted Armenia's 'loyalty' to Russia no matter what Russia does and says. Russia's leaders cannot assume that it is up to Moscow to define what Armenia's interests are. Advice based on such assumptions offered publicly by Moscow and other capitals sounds more like threats. Russia must understand that it has paid a high price for not playing the role it promised to play by signing the 1997 bilateral treaty between Russia and Armenia and by accepting Armenia's membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Russian-led common defense treaty.

Similarly, we need to understand and accordingly assess the reasons for the intensified involvement of the European states, the EU, and the US in the South Caucasus region. For all practical purposes, the November 9, 2020 statement that ended the Second Karabakh War put an end to the Minsk Group co-chairmanship; it left the US and France out of the Karabakh resolution issue, and in many ways, out of the South Caucasus. It also increased Türkiye's role, thus regionalizing a conflict that had been internationalized since 1992. What problem(s) are Europe and the US resolving with their intensive reengagement in the region? Would it be wrong to assume that they are primarily looking at the South Caucasus region as an important arena for the redefined Cold War that really never disappeared? To what extent do they set aside, when looking at, for example, the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, their own interests and the larger geopolitical framework that underlies their re-engagement policies?

Here I cannot resist the temptation to tell a third story, that illustrates a moment of intersection between a big power and a small state. The year was 1991, which proved to be the last year of the Soviet Union. As unbelievable as it may seem today, in August of that year US President George H. W. Bush was in Kyiv exhorting the still Soviet Ukrainian Supreme Soviet or Parliament to forego independence and support USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev's policies aimed at the preservation of a reformed USSR. At the same time, US Secretary James Baker III had been dispatched to the South Caucasus to similarly ask the three still Soviet republics of the South Caucasus to reverse their march toward independence.

During a visit to Armenia that lasted no more than a few hours, Secretary Baker met the then-President of the Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet Levon Ter-Petrossian at the latter's residence. Other than the President, on the Armenian side present were Raffi Hovannisian, who, by the end of the year would become the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, and myself, at the time Director of the Research and Analysis Department of Armenia's Supreme Soviet or Parliament. Secretary Baker presented a number of arguments as to why Armenia should not proceed with its intention to declare independence from the USSR. Ter-Petrossian remained skeptical throughout. At the end, Ter-Petrossian asked Secretary Baker what was the real reason for the US policy regarding the independence of Armenia and other Soviet republics. Half-jokingly, Secretary Baker said something like "You realize at this time we have an Embassy in Moscow, and it takes care of all issues throughout the Soviet Union. If all of you become independent, the US will need to have embassies in fifteen independent states. The US State Department does not have that kind of budget." Ter-Petrossian thought about that for a few seconds and said "Don't you think, Mr. Secretary, that Armenia has enough problems of its own and now you are asking it to resolve the budget problem of the US Department of State?"

When looking at the South Caucasus, can the US and Europe escape the dominant paradigm based on geopolitical considerations that is determining their positions and actions regarding, let us say, the Ukraine war and do so at the expense of the interests of states in the region? I have doubts, therefore, that at the end, policies of Western countries that look at the South



Caucasus region in the context of their geopolitical interests help the South Caucasus states focus on developing their own foundations for their independence and sovereignty. It is more likely that the sovereignty and security paradigm they are promoting will end up replacing one dependence with another.

Certainly, inspiring false expectations in Georgia and Armenia is not the best way to achieve the goals of peace and stability in the region. Here the question is not only as to what Western capitals say or promise; but also, how what these capitals say are perceived and received by Armenia and Georgia when these two states are grasping for any sign of support for their redefined policies.

Regionalization of Conflict

The precariousness of the relationship of connectivity between politics and economics is best illustrated by the November 9, 2020 statement that ended the 44-day war between Azerbaijan and Karabakh and Armenia. Karabakh was the major conflict between South Caucasus states, in this case, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan won that second war.

The cease-fire statement was mediated by Russia and

signed by Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia. The statement put an end to the hostilities, provided for the arrival of a Russian peacekeeping force in Azerbaijan to protect the Armenians in Karabakh, and secured the Lachin corridor connecting Armenia and Karabakh. But the statement also referred to the opening of all communications between Armenia and Azerbaijan, including the one that would connect Western Azerbaijan to the Azerbaijani exclave of Nakhichevan, providing “unimpeded” access to Azerbaijani citizens and goods. Article 9 of the ceasefire statement also stated that Russian border troops would provide security for Azerbaijani travelers and goods. The transit route, as I prefer to call it, was inserted as a sort of reciprocal step to the availability of the Lachin corridor for Armenians, which is no longer relevant since there are no longer any Armenians left in Karabakh to connect to.

For all practical purposes, that statement’s current validity is, in my view, seriously questionable. Azerbaijan violated the statement’s main achievement, the ceasefire, when it resorted to new military operations, the last of which in September 2023 resulted in the complete evacuation/expulsion or cleansing of more than 100,000 Armenians of Karabakh to Armenia. Russia, in turn, was unable or unwilling to keep the Lachin corridor open, to secure peace, and protect the Armenians in Karabakh.

And yet, Russia, Azerbaijan tagging along, expect Armenia to honor its signature under a document stipulating an “unimpeded” Nakhichevan connection. While such a connection - a transit route is a more apt name - is desirable and possible when designed and labeled right, I should note, that “unimpeded” access does not mean unregulated access; minimal, regulated requirements do not constitute “impediments,” they constitute basic elements of interstate relations.

The Russian involvement, as so vaguely stipulated in the now defunct 9 November 2020, Ceasefire Statement is problematic for many good reasons. If their presence on such a transit route is considered necessary, which I doubt, just imagine the difference between the following two possibilities for Armenia and the region: the safety of Azerbaijani citizens and goods on the transit route near the southernmost border of Armenia is guaranteed by (a) Russian Federation border troops, (b) the trained security force of a neutral state or international corporation.

At this time, the 9 November 2020 Ceasefire Statement appears to be invalid and inoperative; for it to be invalidated it is not necessary for any of the parties signatory to the document to withdraw their signature. History is full of even more formal agreements, such as treaties, that have been relegated to the trash bin of history simply because their signatories have moved on by violating them, disregarding them when convenient, or replacing them with newer agreements.

The question of the transit route has now embroiled the three regional powers, in addition to Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as the US and Europe.

Furthermore, the wider community of nations is still part of the problem rather than the solution. Thus, connectiveness itself has raised political tensions.

I am sure each party has a justification for what they did or did not do, said or did not say. There is enough blame to go around. None of which changes the realities that are created by actions, military or otherwise, and by words. So, I will not get into the blame game or give advice to any government on how to adopt policy or what policy to adopt. Furthermore, I am the first to recognize and point out the often problematic policies adopted by Yerevan and or by the leaders of Nagorno Karabakh at different points in time. Yet those mistakes and miscalculations do not reduce the responsibility of states that were much more powerful than either Armenia or Karabakh and whose policies could have produced better outcomes for all the concerned than what we ended up with. The facts on the ground must be stated clearly and without holding back if we are to proceed toward disentangling the knots.

PROF. DR. GERARD J. LIBARIDIAN
ARMENIAN-AMERICAN HISTORIAN AND
FORMER DIPLOMAT

The View from Baku

Connectivity, if not defined with precision, could be an empty piece of terminology. But, this is manifestly not the case when it is understood in its precise contours and in light of a certain concrete context, be this regional or global. And, the politics of connectivity is of a more specific and definable nature, involving competing narratives contingent upon often differing interests. The intersecting issues of sovereignty, security, containment and sometimes even coercion are quite often inextricably intertwined.

The geopolitics of the South Caucasus, to be more precise, its intra-regional dynamics, have perceptibly changed as of November 2020, when Azerbaijan emerged victorious from its war with Armenia, restoring its territorial integrity after three long decades. This outcome had been anticipated by many, including the esteemed Dr. Gerard Libaridian, who spoke earlier.

A prospective and long-awaited peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia is imbued with the hope that a rule-based and inclusive connectivity, giving rise to sustainable growth, may indeed be in the offing for the South Caucasus. The kaleidoscope of regional connectivity was also shaken with some pieces of potential future transportation linkages currently remaining in flux. They will be settled at some point, and I will return to that in the fullness of time.

The ripples of the sea change effect produced by the Second Karabakh War for the South Caucasus, which shifted the center of regional gravity towards Baku, thereby also, increasing Turkish influence in the region, was further exacerbated by virtue of the implications of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which disrupted supply chains, causing food shortages and an increase in commodity prices due to the Russian-controlled east-west routes becoming no longer reliable. The latter has further propped up the argument that the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, also known as the Middle Corridor, could serve as the fastest and shortest route connecting Europe with China. Despite being confined to multi-modality, transit time from Shanghai to Europe *via* the Middle Corridor would be 4750 km, 500 km of which will be *via* the Caspian Basin, taking a mere ten days. This presents serious advantages over the Northern Route, traversing Russia, and the Southern Sea Route, *via* the Suez Canal, currently impacted by the Houthis, both in time, risk, and transit time. The cumulative impact, as far as can be assessed at this juncture, of these developments has increased the essential connectivity value of the South Caucasus. This is how the existing realities and potentialities appear to many in Baku. And, it is in this context that the discourse of the politics of connectivity is presently being shaped in Azerbaijan.

Perhaps the main element that defines today's discourse is our perception of self, which is no longer viewed as mere linkage, however important, in the wider east-west global network, but as an orbit in its own right, around which surrounding regional dynamics could be shaped to an extent. This is what some call "Caucasus plus," viewing the region as an indispensable epicenter. This corresponds with the potentially growing geopolitical autonomy of the South Caucasus, with its constituent members having acquired an opportunity to punch above their respective weights, if the requisite regional inter-connectivity is achieved. This provides enhanced opportunities for the ability of the region to maneuver between the different connectivity agendas pursued by various actors.

As stated hitherto, the connectivity kaleidoscope of the South Caucasus has been shaken. Certain pre-existing elements such as energy pipelines connecting Azerbaijan *via* Georgia with Türkiye and thereafter to Europe are deeply embedded and secure. However, some elements of potential future linkages are in flux. Before they are settled, all regional actors want to reorder them around their own interests. There is competition between Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding this. However, cooperation is a necessity.

Pashinyan's "Crossroads of peace" initiative and Azerbaijan's agenda incorporating the Zangezur Corridor - a proposed overland unimpeded passage connecting mainland Azerbaijan with its Nakhichevan exclave - are viewed as being at loggerheads, but they are not necessarily mutually exclusive.



A post-2020 landscape facilitates, for the first time, the implementation of the ambitious agenda for unblocking communications between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and this could and indeed should be the pillar of sustainable and durable peace, contributing to building mutual trust.

The million-dollar question is what sort of interconnectivity would serve the region best. It should be naturally rule-based and decided solely by Baku and Yerevan. The sides have already agreed on some rules, their interpretation has proven not to be identical.

We must now address Article 9 of the 10 November 2020 tripartite statement agreed between the sides, with Russia also being a signatory, which mandates that Armenia is obliged to provide unimpeded access for Baku, allowing it to connect its mainland territory with the Nakhichevan exclave. Two points of a contentious nature are worthy of examination; 1) how unimpeded the access should be and 2) who should control the route traversing Southern Armenia.

Both issues are closely related to sovereignty. Azerbaijan's view is that the unimpeded nature of this overland passage implies that goods, cargo, and persons travelling from Azerbaijan proper to Nakhichevan, in other words, from Azerbaijan to Azerbaijan, should not be forced to undergo any customs clearance or border inspection, whereas if the final destination of goods, cargo, and persons is a third country, for instance, Türkiye, then all border and customs arrangements should be implemented.

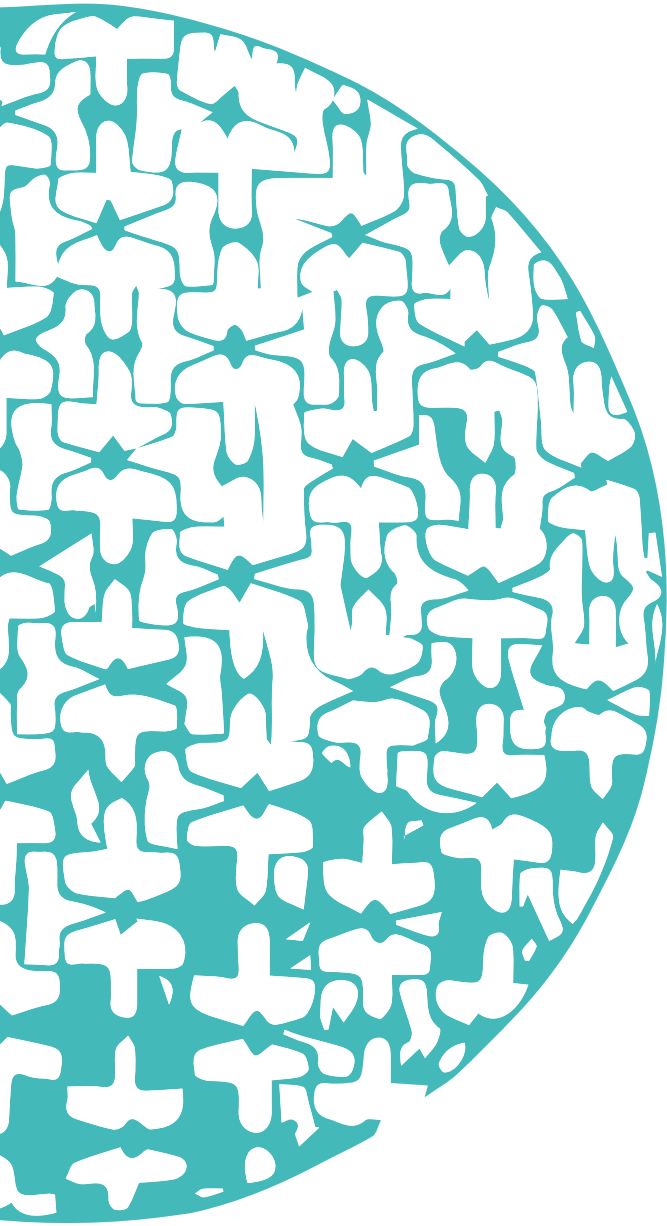
The second issue concerns the question of administering control over the route. Article 9 clearly states that this should be exercised by the border guard troops of the Federal Security Service of Russia. However, Armenia does not want to concede the control element to Russia, regarding this as further diluting its sovereignty, thus having already been significantly curbed. This is fundamentally a matter between Russia and Armenia, but the finalized route will need to be secure to satisfy Azerbaijan.

In order for the sides to move forward from the present state of affairs, a new normative framework could be adopted. If the idea of ditching Russian control is an absolute must, then Baku and Yerevan could work out a bilateral arrangement.

Any arrangement should be based on common sense with knobs on. And, the finely-carved knobs are where details are engraved and inlaid in the finest ivory.

Connectivity binding Azerbaijan and Armenia should also serve their interdependence and be based on reciprocity, by extension, leading to sustainable endemic growth. The view in Baku is that if Armenia facilitates unimpeded access *via* Zangezur, then Baku will consider the option of installing the self-same regime for persons, goods, and cargo moving from Armenia's southernmost territory to the rest of the country *via* Azerbaijan's Nakhichevan.

A few times over the past few years, and certainly since late 2022, Azerbaijan and Armenia have found themselves on the precipice of a long-awaited peace and, on every single occasion, hopes have been dashed asunder, causing mutual accusations to be expostulated by the involved parties. The Karabakh conflict, as we knew it, has now been concluded and can be completely removed from the peace process agenda. The inexorable 30-year negotiations under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Process were centered around the status of the former Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and that very issue ceased to exist when the Second Karabakh War ended in 2020, from the Azerbaijani perspective. Armenia came to terms with this gradually, throughout 2020-2022, eventually agreeing with Baku on the mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty in Prague in October 2022. This prompted Russian indignation, which eventually transformed into reluctant acquiescence, significantly curtailing Moscow's sway over the process.



As stated by Professor Libaridian, external actors have been the source of many problems besetting and exacerbating Azerbaijani-Armenian woes, rather than providing the solution. As of early 2024, the peace process is now purely bilateral with foreign players limited to the self-effacing and humble role of providing a venue for negotiations as was the case regarding the latest Aliyev-Pashinyan meeting facilitated by German Chancellor Olaf Scholtz held on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on 17 February. Azerbaijan no longer views the peace process with Armenia as an international issue, but as a bilateral process wherein direct talks should pave the way for the future. Armenia, albeit with reservations, appears to slowly perceive much wisdom in this approach.

It is now evident that, by failing to hitherto address the key issues leading to the unleashing of the region's connectivity potential, peace between these two neighboring nations is impossible. What is also clear is that Azerbaijan and Armenia have never been so close to forging a final peace, for the past major obstacle - the full restoration of Azerbaijan sovereignty over Karabakh - has been overcome. We have reason for cautious optimism. The hope in the air is that, in the year of COP29, in the eyes of the world and with all its unique opportunities for installing confidence-building measures and initiatives, we will traverse this delicate stage of the process, culminating in a long-awaited peace deal between these two nations and a more interconnected and interdependent South Caucasus.

ORKHAN AMASHOV
CHIEF POLITICAL ANALYST AT CALIBER
NEWS MEDIA OUTLET (AZERBAIJAN)

The View from Berlin

I have been asked today to provide the view from Berlin on EU-Türkiye cooperation in the Central Asia and South Caucasus region. As mentioned, I used to be an active political actor in German-Turkish relations for almost ten years, as Rapporteur for Türkiye in the German Bundestag's Committee on Foreign Affairs from 2014-2021 and serving as Vice President of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly from 2018-2022. Today, I am no longer a member of parliament as of now. So, whatever I will be saying here today is to be understood strictly from the perspective of an active observer and interested analyst and commentator, but no longer as coming from a political actor. Nothing of what I have to say today will therefore be attributable to the official position of any government or other official institution.

Germany and Türkiye

From a Berlin perspective, Türkiye is and remains a very important partner in particular for two equally important reasons. On the one hand, of course, there is the relevance of the Turkish community in Germany itself. On the other hand and even more fundamentally, the geo-strategic location of Türkiye. The latter is particularly relevant for our topic today where we look at it from a very specific aspect. Türkiye is at least a key regional power with outreach in many important areas from the Black Sea to Northern Africa, from the Balkans to Central Asia, and therefore, it is a very important and many instances indispensable partner for Europe and Germany.



It is however also important to understand that the conduct of foreign policy in Berlin and Ankara is on many occasions following different approaches: For Germany, it is an essential principle for our foreign policy to be defined and conducted embedded in multilateral frameworks, primarily embedded within the EU and NATO, with France and the US as our most important allies, but also in a broader multilateral framework of the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe and other institutions.

While Türkiye is also a valued member and partner of many of these organizations, its approach on many occasions has been perceived as being primarily defined and executed in the pursuit of its short-term national interests and acting as a regional power, following a more transactional approach, even in its relations with traditional allies, balancing its position with regard to other major powers both regionally and globally.

This fundamental difference in German and Turkish approaches creates both challenges and opportunities, both generally and also specifically in the context of today's topic.

History and Geography

What the countries of the South Caucasus and Central Asia have in common is being considered as so-called 'post-Soviet states' with their shared history of having been part of the former Soviet Union, seen by many more as a burden and a liability.

While it may already be difficult enough to escape your history, it is almost impossible to escape your geography. A very predominant factor for the countries in question is that they are more or less landlocked and surrounded by regional powers, whether it is Russia, Türkiye, and Iran in the case of South Caucasus or China and India in the context of Central Asia.

We are of course talking about two regions that are rich in strategically relevant natural resources, most obviously hydrocarbons, but also in critical minerals that are essential for renewable energy. The presentations and discussions this morning have been very instructive in this regard.

We are also talking about countries that generally have young, well-educated, and ambitious populations. Coming from a country that has its own demographic challenges, I can only underline how much this is an asset to have. Germany and Europe will over the next ten years learn even more how much of an asset this is or a liability not to have it.

While not elaborating on this further, I have to state – not least as a former representative of the Council of Europe – that many countries in this region are not necessarily easy or convenient partners from a European perspective when it comes to issues of compliance with issues like human rights and democratic governance.

Last but not least, we are talking about countries with identity markers from language to religion that carry a lot of conflict potential as evidenced in the South Caucasus over the last thirty years between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Being located at the parting line between the Russian-speaking world and the Muslim world remains challenging.

The South Caucasus

Looking specifically at the South Caucasus, the view from Berlin has been dominated by two different conflicts:

On the one hand, the post-Soviet conflict with Russia in Georgia escalated in 2008 and has been lingering ever since with the Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Had we seen further escalation, Georgia as a whole could have suffered the fate of Ukraine as we see it unfolding since 2014 and dramatically since February 2022. Georgia - together with Ukraine, Moldova, and the countries of the South Caucasus – have been included in the Eastern Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union. All of them are members of the Council of Europe. Many academic and political debates have happened how a constructive strategic framework for the countries in this area, sometimes quite unfortunately referred to as the 'in-between countries,' could look like that would open a pathway to peaceful development and

prosperity and offer an escape from being permanently exposed as objects of a geopolitical power struggle. The military escalation in Ukraine has ended those hopes for the foreseeable future.

On the other hand, the long-standing conflict on Nagorno-Karabakh has dominated the perception of the South Caucasus for three decades.

With the conflicting principles of territorial sovereignty and self-determination, the resulting danger of a narrative unfolding of a clash of civilizations, and the potential escalation of involving key outside powers including Türkiye and Russia, this conflict gave continuous reason for major concerns. It also left the impression to have become somewhat identity-creating or at least identity-enhancing to both countries involved. Against this background, the messages from the previous presentations today have been highly encouraging that both countries seem on the way to overcoming the painful memories of the recent past and looking much more toward a common future in the South Caucasus.

The role of Türkiye in the South Caucasus

The perception in Berlin of the role of Türkiye in the South Caucasus has been obviously dominated by two factors: primarily, the clear position of Türkiye in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a political and military ally of Azerbaijan, but also the difficult bilateral historical relationship of Türkiye with Armenia as evidenced by the still lacking recognition of the joint border. Again, a rapprochement between Armenia and Azerbaijan could have a positive

influence and open new perspectives also for the relationship between Türkiye and Armenia as evidenced by the re-establishment of diplomatic contacts and the opening of the border at least for citizens of third countries.

Central Asia

Shifting the view to Berlin's perspective on Central Asia. This region is landlocked between Russia and China. Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are all members of the OSCE – a strong institutional tie of the former Soviet republics to an institution once embodying the ambitious concept of a European peace order and security architecture. While those ambitions have been lost for the foreseeable future, the OSCE still offers an institutional link and a useful platform for dialogue and cooperation between the countries in Central Asia and Europe.

It is also worth remembering that during the Western military operations in Afghanistan over two decades, the use of military bases in Central Asia as logistical hubs for Western forces was highly instrumental and valuable, with German air force bases operating in Termez (Uzbekistan) and Dushanbe (Tajikistan).

With the Russian military aggression against Ukraine and the economic sanction regime, any potential for economic convergence on a broader scale like a once contemplated free trade agreement between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union – which would have been largely beneficial for the connection between Central Asia and the EU - have become obsolete for the foreseeable future.



But one of the consequences of the war in Ukraine is that the countries in Central Asia are obviously interested in increasing their freedom of maneuver and creating more leeway in their historical relationship with Russia. At the same time, Chinese influence in the region through instruments like the Silk Road Initiative and membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Council is clearly increasing.

This is clearly opening an opportunity as well, raising the necessity for more EU engagement in the Central Asian region. This is largely coming in a more pragmatic and project-based approach, especially in the field of connectivity, most prominently with a 10 billion Euros commitment for investments in the region through the EU Global Gateway initiative. European financial institutions like the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development play a key role in European engagement in the region.

The Role of Türkiye in Central Asia

Türkiye can play a critically important role in fostering dialogue and cooperation between Europe and Central Asia. Within the OSCE, Türkiye is already demonstrating this quite effectively. The Organisation of Turkic States (OTS) could be well-placed to take a more active and productive role in this context. To put it this way, the road to Tashkent/Samarkand, Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Astana/Almaty will not lead *via* Moscow, but *via* Istanbul and Ankara. To use another analogy, Türkiye could play a key role as a gateway to improve connectivity from Europe to Central Asia in a similar way as Spain has done quite successfully in the EU's relations with the countries of Latin America.

Conclusion

Increased connectivity has for a long time been assumed to be creating peaceful cooperation and cultural dialogue, becoming a safeguard against military conflict and securing peace. However, connectivity is by no means a guarantee as such for peace. The historian Niall Ferguson has reminded us that the so-called "first age of globalization" at the end of the 19th century ended abruptly in the trenches of the First World War, and it should take more than half a century for the once-achieved level of inter-connectivity to be re-established again. As we are potentially witnessing the peak if not the end of the "second age of globalization," Mark Leonard of the European Council on Foreign Relations has coined the term "connectivity wars" to underline that connectivity can also be turned into a weapon in the great power conflict.

Nevertheless, connectivity through Central Asia has a long history and an important future. At the Chinese end of the Silk Road, in the impressive old imperial city of Xian, the oldest mosque in China reminds us of Muslim merchants traveling on the Silk Road in the 8th century. The 21st century is quite likely to be referred to as the Asian Century. Connectivity with Asia is and will be a strategic imperative for Europe; as the French writer Paul Valéry has reminded us, Europe is essentially a "petite cap Asiatique."

DR. ANDREAS NICK

FORMER MEMBER OF THE GERMAN PARLIAMENT
(2013-2021) AND FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF
THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE (2018-2022)

The View from the South Caucasus

The South Caucasus - a region home to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia - borders Russia in the North, and Iran and Türkiye in the South. It is located between the Black Sea in the West and the Caspian Sea in the East. South Caucasus is a war-torn region. For the last thirty years, we have seen a civil war in Georgia and a secessionist war between the Tbilisi government and the Abkhazian separatists. Moreover, we have seen two wars between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh and Russia's war against Georgia in 2008. The region continues to be volatile mainly because of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and Russia's occupation of 20% of Georgian territory. Beyond its volatility, as Professor Librarian has stated in his speech, the South Caucasus also lacks a regional identity that all countries of the region share and cherish. We cannot speak of a regional political identity either. The South Caucasus, in these respects, represents the opposite of the Baltics or the Benelux. I nevertheless believe that there is hope to build such an identity for the region, but this is dependent on political dynamics. One of the main region-related topics is connectivity. All three South Caucasus countries take the issue of connectivity seriously, as each of them regards itself as a potential central regional transport hub and decisive facilitator. They also all view themselves as the rightful beneficiary of increasing connectivity. Many regional connectivity projects are linked with historical references, such as the Silk Road. The then Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili in 2021 stated that "our initiatives – and I would particularly single



out the connectivity among them -towards engaging in the common transport and energy projects together with EU, Central Asia, Middle East, and EU member states have returned a function us, which is a small country of the Caucasus historically had at the crossroads of Europe and Asia." I should point out, however, that all three South Caucasus countries regard themselves as hubs between Europe and Asia through historical references.

Connectivity in the South Caucasus entails visions for national, regional, and supra-regional development and for overcoming conflicts. The prospect of benefiting from increasing connectivity could be said to be an important motivation for the normalization process between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's "Crossroads of Peace" project gains meaning in this context. The prospective revival of road and rail connection between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan is an important concern both

for Baku and Yerevan. Besides, Azerbaijan and Georgia aim to make the most out of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway (BTK). The International North-South Transport Corridor provides opportunities for all three South Caucasus countries.

It should be underlined that connectivity projects are not apolitical or primarily technical initiatives. They are instead closely intertwined with politics because control over the flow of goods and passengers represents an instrument of power. This is why politics greatly influences transport connectivity in the South Caucasus.

The centerpiece of connectivity in the South Caucasus is the Middle Corridor that connects Türkiye with the landlocked Central Asia in a narrower sense, and China and the EU in a broader sense. However, this route was seen as a niche option before Russia's attack on Ukraine; it was not really a direct or serious competitor to the Northern Corridor that passed through Russia. The Middle Corridor is a multimodal route that includes both rail transport and maritime transport across the Caspian Sea and also across the Black Sea, which would serve as an alternative to Türkiye. The Corridor also crosses many countries and state borders, which necessitates common standards such as customs tariffs and coordination along the transport chain across state borders.

Anyhow, though intercontinental transit *via* the Northern Corridor has not been completely stopped, Russia's war against Ukraine has led to a steep increase in demand for alternative routes.

An alternative to the Northern Route connecting Asia and Europe is the maritime route passing through the Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and Suez Canal. However, this route's viability has become questionable for being not only costly but also because of the recent Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea.

The importance and the potential of the Middle Corridor has thus significantly increased. The main and most important question now is the one concerning the feasibility of this corridor. In 2021, around 1.46 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units were transported *via* the Northern Corridor, but only slightly more than 9.000 TEU *via* the Middle Corridor. I should point out, however, that a diversion of transit cargo exceeding even 10% of the Northern Corridor's tonnage will require large investment, and the economic efficiency of this corridor is yet to be assessed. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's (EBRD) estimates that the immediate investment needs for Middle Corridor infrastructure upgrades are around 3.5 billion Euros.

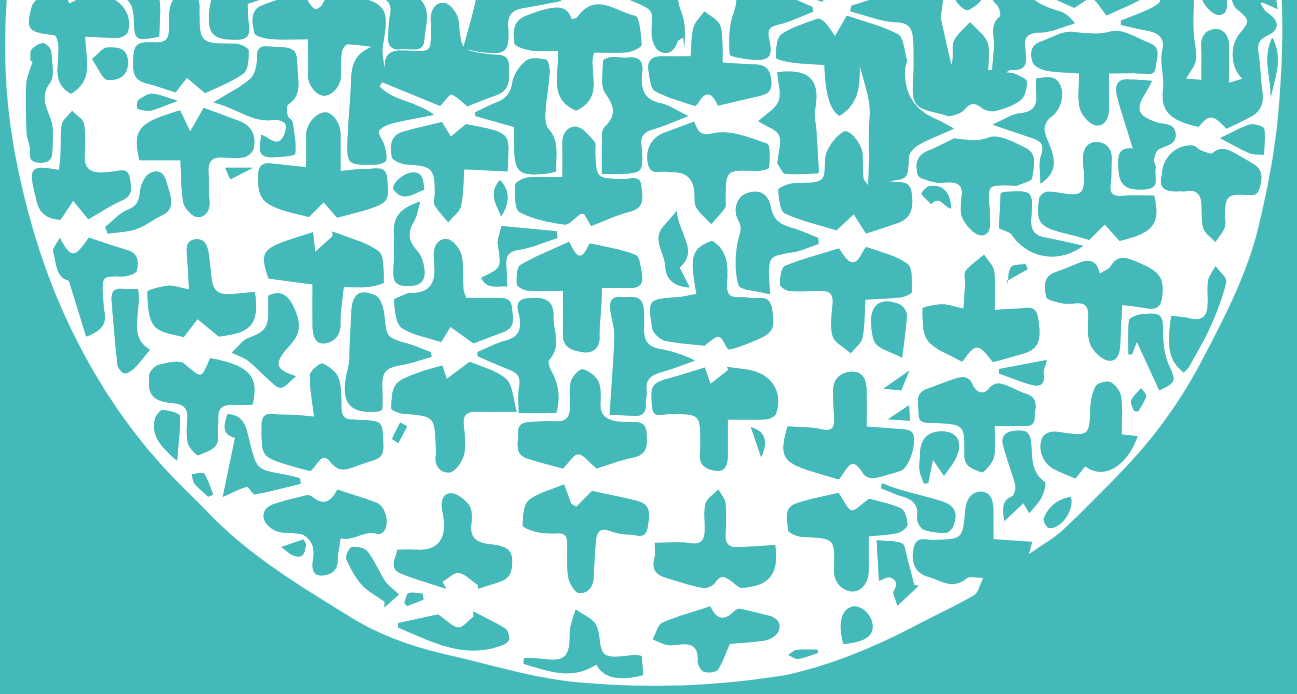
Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad (BTK) is the major regional rail infrastructure project of the Middle Corridor. BTK illustrates the dilemmas faced by the Middle Corridor. The BTK was originally due to be completed by 2010, but its finalization was delayed several times and it eventually became operational only in 2017. The total amount of goods deliveries *via* this railway in 2022 amounted to 432,284 tons. In its full swing, annual cargo deliveries on the line will reportedly reach 17 million tons. Azerbaijan and Türkiye want to increase the capacity of the BTK from the current 1 million tons to 5 million tons per year. Azerbaijan's President İlham Aliyev stated in December 2022 that

an additional 100 million USD investment is needed to attain that goal. Passenger trains were supposed to start running in summer 2019, but they, too, were delayed, and they will reportedly start running in late spring or summer 2024. Azerbaijani sources are indicating the hope that the completion of the project will make a big difference in the development of transit and trade in the region. At the initial stage, it is expected that the railway will serve one million passengers and transport 6.5 million tons of cargo.

As the example of BTK shows, challenges, dilemmas, and bottlenecks are still present with respect to the Middle Corridor and to connectivity in general in the South Caucasus. Three main problems need to be addressed in this regard; the availability of data, the lack of actual statistics, and, probably most importantly, reliable assessments. Region-specific data on how many people are actually transported is incomplete and sometimes contradictory. The few relevant studies with comparative perspective are several years old and they do not include more recent geopolitical and economic developments.

To sum up, connectivity in the South Caucasus is both an extremely interesting and relevant topic. The question of connectivity reveals some of the conflict dynamics in the region and also unearths the enormous potential of the South Caucasus. However, actual studies and reliable data on this topic are scarce, which means that trustworthy assessments are also scarce. It is also, unfortunately, a topic that is both underestimated and underappreciated in Europe as a whole and in the EU as a regional block.

STEPHAN MALERIUS
KONRAD-ADENAUER STIFTUNG
TBILISI'S HEAD OF THE REGIONAL
PROGRAMME FOR POLITICAL DIALOGUE
IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS



PANEL 2

CONNECTIVITY



Panel 2: Connectivity

Connectivity is one of the axioms of contemporary geopolitics and geoeconomics. Ironically, the popularity of this term has soared due to the ongoing decoupling and fragmentation on the global scale. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has intensified the process of global fragmentation. Great power competition, particularly the US-China rivalry is also a major factor contributing to this development. Within such a global context, the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, otherwise known as the Middle Corridor, has become a major subject of interest. Energy connectivity has too become a popular subject in the same context. The panelists dwelled on all these topics during the Panel Discussion 2 - Connectivity.

Ambassador Kirsti Narinen, *Roving Ambassador of Finland to South Caucasus*

Connectivity is about three themes. These are: 1) Demand – we need to have a reason to connect; 2) Infrastructure – we need to have the means to connect; 3) Political will – we need to be able to connect, urge or permit to have the

the other two. Connectivity is also about three items, intertwined with these three themes: 1) People – somebody needs to connect; 2) Goods – trade needs to move which needs infrastructure; 3) Permanent trading – gas, oil, electricity – needs to have the demand and the infrastructure. A few examples help to understand this 3+3 formula.

Demand: During the Cold War, Estonian people lived in isolation only 80 km away from Finland, a neighbor with shared history, culture, and almost language. A ferry connection was re-opened in 1965 and it sailed twice a week. The demand to travel across was growing as freedom of travel increased towards the end of the Cold War and exploded in 1991. There was neither infrastructure nor enough visas or border guards to meet the demand. Yet, there was the political will to increase the communication of people and commercial activity. Soon, there was visa freedom and twelve ferry connections a day. Therefore, there was demand and political will, and infrastructure followed these two.

Infrastructure: Finland had bought pipeline gas from Gazprom since the 1970s, which was the time of Finland's deepest dependency on Soviet trade and also political appeasement policy.

Ambassador Kirsti Narinen kindly provided a text based on her presentation. To streamline the presentations of all panelists, we present a slightly edited version of this text.

Gas was not a natural energy source for a country of hydropower, nuclear power, and biomass. Nevertheless, for political reasons, infrastructure was built and gas began to flow. In 2007, there came an idea to further diversify the Finnish energy supply and to connect Finland to the European gas network *via* Estonia. The Baltic connector with EU's financial support was inaugurated in December 2019. Opening a market had a positive impact on the price. When Gazprom disconnected its pipeline gas in May 2022 after Finland refused to pay in rubles, its gas supply was safe as there was the Connector. Infrastructure created safety and helped to end an undesired dependency, which originally was created by enforced political will.

A more positive example is the Nordic electricity network and the electricity market in our region. Different electricity production sources are collected into one shared grid and we have the most inexpensive tariffs in Europe. Telecommunication networks are also shared.

Then, on the political will: I attended one of former Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev's centennial conferences in Baku last year. One thing he said was "Energy trade is 10% steel and 90% politics." He thought that building infrastructure would bring along the demand and political will. And, he was right. At the time he decided to build energy infrastructure, there were no clients and also not enough material to fill the pipes. Yet, he knew there would be. Well before energy security became topical, Azerbaijani energy traveled *via* Georgia to Türkiye, and



later further to the European market, diversifying the then very Russia-dominated market. Many South-East European countries and Türkiye itself are increasingly pleased to have this alternative. It is of growing importance, as long as fossil fuels are the driving force of the economy. Green transition and increased use of domestic renewable energy can change these dynamics. There is of course a clear connection between political will, infrastructure, and money. Economic dependency is often based on or creates the political will. And economic dependency sometimes limits political sovereignty.

Infrastructure to connect creates interdependency. Europe widely thought that having energy infrastructure connecting Russia to Europe would build bondage to facilitate political will to cooperate and avoid conflicts. Little did we know when Nord Stream 1 and 2 were laid in the Baltic Sea bed to connect the European market and Russia *via* Germany that this connection

would in 2022 become toxic and then totally disappeared because of a manmade explosion. Connectivity is not always a blessing.

How does this relate to the South Caucasus and the wider region? Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye are a long section of the so-called Middle Corridor, or Trans Caspian route. It, as such, is not a new idea, but its significance has increased with Russia's unprovoked unjustified military aggression on Ukraine. Additional and substitute routes are needed for goods when the Northern Route *via* Russia is not available or not desired. The Middle Corridor also serves trade and increases connections within the Trans-Caspian region, not only to and from its extreme ends, Europe and China. The project deserves attention as a whole but also its sections; intra-connectivity contributes to the bigger whole perhaps even more as EU-China trading relations have their constraints.

If we reflect on the three themes, the political will to enhance the route is strong, all along it. There seems to be a demand for trade. However, the rather limited infrastructure - both physical and digital - might turn into an obstacle. There is a need for multiple investments in Central Asia, Caspian Sea, South Caucasus, and also in Europe. There are many borders to cross along the Middle Corridor. Digitalization would facilitate the smoothness of movement.

A strong political will and vision are needed to make the words come true. The Azerbaijani energy industry was largely built with international private capital. The Middle Corridor cannot live without secured market-based conditions supported by public and international funding. Georgia's recently opened EU path with candidate

status is a very significant factor in the project.

Armenia physically and trade-wise is rather isolated. The political will to open borders with its neighbors seems to need work mainly outside Armenia. Trade and economic demand would be there; I just last week bought a nice "made-in-Türkiye" coat in Yerevan. But, without direct connectivity, you need to take detours which add on expenses.

Perhaps having large crowds of people traveling across borders, like the cases of transborder travels between Finland and Estonia, or Finland and Sweden, may not happen at once. However, border areas would cease to be border areas and become transit areas with economic activity. Highway and railroad networks would need to be built. Energy linkages through Armenia would be a rather natural choice.

As described above, in some cases political will comes first and is decisive. In other cases, political will emerges as a result of the pressure of the demand. And sometimes, infrastructural solutions are the driving force. It is your sovereign choice to decide which angle serves you best. But, freedom of movement and connectivity definitely serve the economic interests best.

Dr. Esmira Jafarova, Board Member and the Deputy Director of the Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center-Azerbaijan), in her speech also underlined the increasing importance of the Middle Corridor. As to that, she informed the audience that recently cargo shipping through this route has increased by 75%. Dr. Jafarova underlined some of the relative advantages of the Middle Corridor. She underscored that it is 2000 km shorter than the Northern Corridor passing through Russia and the more favourable climate conditions. These factors render cargo transportation quicker. Dr. Jafarova also mentioned that some complexities need to be solved. Because the Middle Corridor passes through multiple countries, there is no single operator or common rules and procedures throughout the route. These problems require the Middle Corridor countries to work together to effectuate common regulations. Another problem is the dated infrastructure that cannot sustain the desired volume of transportation. Hence, infrastructural modernization that necessitates investment is critical for the fate of the Middle Corridor.

Dr. Jafarova also shared her views on connectivity in the South Caucasus as an essential section of the Middle Corridor. She mentioned that Article 9 of the 10 November 2020 Trilateral Statement that ended the Second Karabakh war which reads "All economic and transport connections in the region shall be unblocked. The Republic of Armenia shall guarantee the security of transport connections between the western regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic in order to arrange unobstructed movement of persons, vehicles, and cargo in both directions. The Border Guard Service of the Russian Federal Security Service shall be responsible for overseeing the transport connections."



She sustained that the actualization of this article will be a big boost for the connectivity between Asia and Europe. Yet, she also emphasized the challenges in the implementation of Article 9 due to the shifting stance of Yerevan on this issue. As to that, Dr. Jafarova reminded the memorandum of understanding between Baku and Tehran to use Iranian territory to link Azerbaijan proper with Nakhichevan and beyond.

Dr. Jafarova emphasized that opening up connectivity in the South Caucasus will mean the regional states own something and build something together, which would foster a sense of regional ownership.

Dr. Jafarova provided a few insights on energy-related issues. She said that Azerbaijan has been investing in renewable energy infrastructure, particularly solar and wind, for clean energy transition and diversification of its energy mix. She said Baku plans to increase the share of renewable to 30% in its energy mix by 2030. Last but not least, Dr. Jafarova touched upon the Black Sea electricity cable that links Azerbaijan, Georgia, Hungary, and Romania and underlined that there are ambitious plans to create a Green Energy Corridor through the Black Sea. She emphasized that energy connectivity between Azerbaijan and Europe will help not only Azerbaijan's but also Europe's energy transition to renewable energy.

Hayk Darbinyan, *Acting Head of the Department of Bordering Countries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*

Current turbulent times in international relations and crises that we all face in different parts of the globe continue to negatively impact international trade and economic relations between states and different regions. Numerous trade routes that have historically served as vital channels for commerce have experienced significant reductions in capacity, with some ceasing operations altogether. This situation creates additional difficulties in the context of connectivity.

The instability and fragility of the current international system compel us to explore avenues for diversifying existing routes and connections, or alternatively, to seek out new opportunities. This is essential to fulfill our economic needs and ensure the sustainable development and prosperity of the people in our countries.

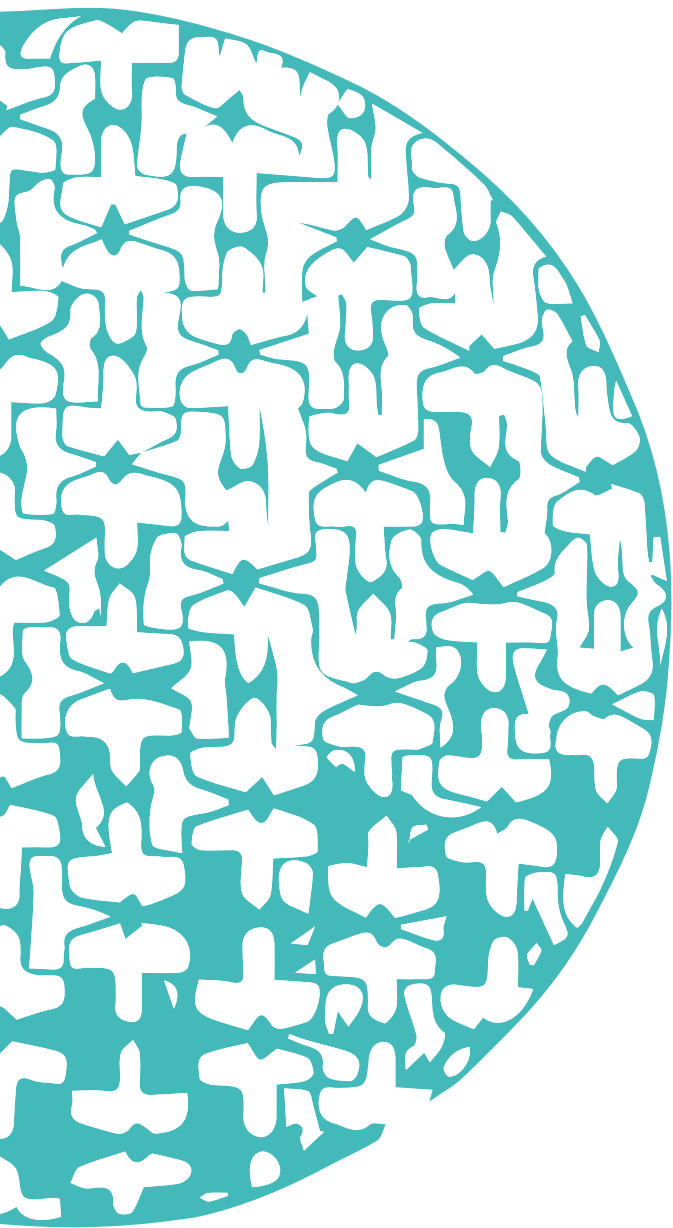
Armenia enjoys excellent relations with Georgia, our Strategic Partner and neighbor in the North, as well as with our millennia-old southern neighbor Iran. Armenia's relations with Georgia and Iran are not only important politically and strategically; they also have a crucial economic significance for the South Caucasus.

Regrettably, numerous communication links and a significant portion of infrastructure have remained non-operational in the South Caucasus for decades. Armenia-Türkiye and Armenia-Azerbaijan interstate borders remain closed. As a result, potential profits from Armenian-Turkish and Armenian-Azerbaijani economic cooperation have not been realized.

Mr. Hayk Darbinyan kindly provided this text based on his presentation at Panel Discussion 2: Connectivity.



In an era marked by a number of crises and conflicts worldwide, closed or non-functioning borders, communication channels, and other links could be deemed an unacceptable luxury. For that very reason, Armenia is interested in and spares no effort to unblock all economic infrastructures in the South Caucasus. In this vein, the Government of the Republic of Armenia introduced the “Crossroads of Peace” project, which is about creating new infrastructures and improving the scope and quality of existing ones through renovation, construction, and connecting roads, railways, pipelines, cables, and electricity lines between Armenia, Georgia, Türkiye, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Azerbaijan. Equality, reciprocity, and mutual respect for territorial integrity are the three essential principles for unblocking all the economic infrastructures, implementing the “Crossroads of Peace” project, achieving regional cooperation, and securing the well-functioning economic links and connectivity in our region. That is why Armenia considers respecting the following principles extremely important.



Principle 1: All infrastructures, including roads, railways, airways, pipelines, cables, and electricity lines, operate under the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the countries through which they pass.

Principle 2: Each country in its territory through its state institutions conducts border and customs controls; ensures passage of vehicles, cargo, and people through its territory; and provides the security of all the infrastructures. In fact, a special unit is created within Armenia's law-enforcement system, which has the function of ensuring the security of international communications passing through Armenia, as well as the cargo, vehicles, and people using them, of course, jointly with our Patrol Police.

Principle 3: These infrastructures can be used for both international and domestic transportation.

Principle 4: All countries use all the infrastructures on the basis of reciprocity and equality. According to the principle of reciprocity and equality, border and customs control procedures can be somewhat streamlined, too.

Peace, stability, regional cooperation, and economic growth demand collective responsibility and political will. Armenia is ready to undertake its share of that responsibility and expects all the actors of our region to follow the same approach.

The View from Academia

To start with, what needs to be highlighted is the unique setting of the discussion format that brings together Türkiye, the European Union, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. To explore the potential of how Türkiye and the EU could cooperate in terms of a meaningful engagement with the regions, two questions are of relevance.

First, what Türkiye and the EU can learn from each other in their engagement with the South Caucasus and Central Asia? Both share the same goal of peace and stability. Yet, their geographic outreach, institutional ties, as well as conceptual approach differ. The EU has a strategy for Central Asia, but not for the South Caucasus. EU's engagement with the South Caucasus is under the framework of the Eastern Partnership, despite the background that all three countries of the South Caucasus have different expectations towards the EU. Türkiye, on the other hand, is the only actor that institutionally connects both South Caucasus and Central Asia *via* the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), although not all countries of the regions are members of the OTS. Taken together, however, their geographic outreach has the potential to contribute to their shared goal of peace and stability. In this context, the development to be watched is Hungary's EU presidency that starts in July 2024. With Hungary being the EU member and the OTS observer might provide an opportunity for cooperation in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.



The second question of relevance is what Türkiye and the EU can learn from the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Any sustainable engagement will have to accommodate the interests and the agenda of the countries of these regions.

The idea of regional ownership is an important concern in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Equally important is the shared interest of keeping the regions away from the geopolitical implications of great power rivalries. This approach finds its expression in the necessity of multivector foreign policy conduct. In this regard, one of the lessons to be learned is that the perspective of the West-East divide is not necessarily shared by the countries of South Caucasus and Central Asia, given these countries tend to view their geopolitical neighborhood in 360 degrees, rather than as a binary.

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EU–Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: Towards a Sustainable Engagement in Energy and Connectivity – The Main Points

The World Fragmented

The world has entered a new era. Thirty years ago, after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, the lifting of the Iron Curtain induced the dream of a new era of vanishing borders and globalization that was supposed to allow the movement of money, goods, and people across borders without any impediment – the dream of an unbounded world. Today, however, the world is becoming more and more fragmented and boundaries are being erected. Cultural, economic, and political fault lines are disintegrating the globalized world. A new kind of Cold War - Cold War 2.0 - is unfolding, meaning the Cold War logic has resurfaced.

Yet, Cold War 2.0 does not provide the ‘comforts’ that the Cold War 1.0 provided. The world today is not a bipolar world. Instead, the rise of the Global South and regional powers is a salient feature of the new era. What is developing globally is multipolarity. One of the two superpowers of the previous Cold War is gone, and the prevailing one has lost its relative power and can no longer act as the global policeman. Meanwhile, the Global South refuses to follow the lead of the great powers.

This is the global political and economic context that inspires discussions on energy and transport connectivity. Paradoxical though it may look, the more the world fragments, the more connectivity becomes a relevant topic.

The Interplay between the Political and Economic Logics of Connectivity

Connectivity projects – be it energy or transport connectivity – are not solely economic or technical initiatives. On the contrary, political considerations have a significant weight in the planning and implementation



of these projects. This is so because, besides being an economic and social instrument, connectivity is additionally an instrument of power; controlling the flow of money, goods, ideas, and people is a direct way of exercising power. For this simple reason, in addition to being economic projects, connectivity projects are also long-term political projects. The interplay between the political and economic logics thus underlies connectivity projects. Because connectivity is not only an economic or technical initiative but also a political one, connectivity projects that would normally be complementary and mutually reinforcing may become rival initiatives.

Accordingly, connectivity projects cannot and should not be evaluated only through economic or technical lenses. Utmost attention should be paid to the relationship between demand, infrastructure, and political will. At times, demand may incite the emergence of political will to implement connectivity projects. At other times, the construction of infrastructure by the imposition of the political will subsequently creates demand. Hence, proposed connectivity projects must be assessed from different angles instead of applying one-fits-all formulas based on unidirectional causal relationships.

The Middle Corridor

The Russia-Ukraine war and the consequent questions on the utility of the Northern Route passing through the Russian Federation and, more recently, the deteriorating security situation at the Southern Sea Route via the Suez Canal have considerably increased the relevance of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route - widely known as the Middle Corridor. In addition to the China-led Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the European Union's Global Gateway initiative, the Middle Corridor is one of the most significant initiatives to connect Asia and Europe. The Middle Corridor is not an alternative to BRI or the Global Gateway. Rather, this route complements both the BRI and the Global Gateway.

Besides political and security-related reasons to develop it as a main transport route, the Middle Corridor has several advantages over its alternatives.

It is 2000 km shorter than the Northern Route. As such, the Middle Corridor is the shortest and fastest route between China and Europe. Climate conditions through this route are also more favorable than the northern alternative. The fact that cargo shipping through the Middle Corridor recently has increased by 75% attests to the existing demand for this route.

However, there are challenges to overcome as well to render the Middle Corridor a more convenient trade route. The old and inadequate infrastructure on this route needs to be developed. The Middle Corridor is a multimodal transit route that includes terrestrial and maritime transport. Maritime transport *via* the Caspian Sea is one of the drawbacks in terms of transit time and cost.

Thirdly, the Middle Corridor passes through multiple countries. This creates problems in terms of border crossing procedures and again increases transit time and cost.

Therefore, for the Middle Corridor to become more convenient, there is a need for investment for the modernization of the hard infrastructure. Secondly, countries on the Middle Corridor are required to work together to simplify, standardize, and coordinate border crossing procedures. In addition to hard-infrastructure, they and other stakeholders need to invest in soft-infrastructure such as digitalization. Whereas hard and soft infrastructures need to be developed across regions, there is also a need to develop intra-regional connectivity as well.

Energy Connectivity

Energy is another topic that possesses utmost importance at the global level. EU's continuously deteriorating relations with the Russian Federation render energy security, hence energy supply diversification, one of the most critical questions for the EU policymakers in Brussels and national policy makers in EU member countries. In addition, the global problem of climate change compels governments to take steps towards renewable energy transition.

Trans-Anatolian (TANAP) and Trans-Adriatic (TAP) pipelines, as the constituents of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC), have been supplying Türkiye and Europe with natural gas since the end of 2020. It is an energy corridor that contributes to the EU's energy diversification efforts. Since the onset of the Ukraine-Russia war, the relevance of the SGC for the EU's energy security and diversification has risen significantly.

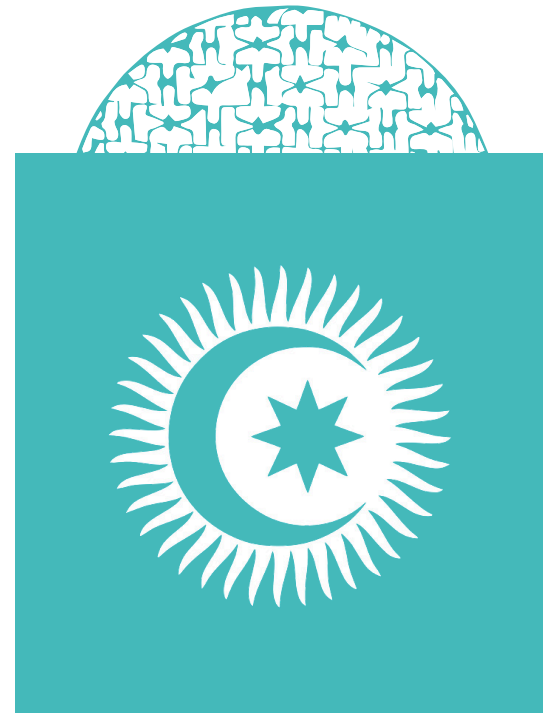
The Rising Relevance of the Organization of Turkic States for Energy and Transport Connectivity

The Organization of Turkic States (OTS), initially known as the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council), as an intergovernmental organization aiming at fostering comprehensive cooperation among Turkic states, has gained further significance in recent years. Both its organizational development and recent global and regional geopolitical developments yield this result. The OTS appears as an important actor for energy and transport connectivity.

The OTS geography that comprises Central Asia, South Caucasus, Anatolia, and the eastern edge of Europe renders it a pivotal nexus of global connectivity. Türkiye, a member of the OTS, is a natural bridge between Asia and Europe.

Intra-regional integration is as important as inter-regional connectivity. The OTS is an important organization not only for inter-regional connectivity as it covers a wide territory from Central Asia to the Balkans. It is also an organization that facilitates intra-regional integration, particularly in Central Asia.

With steps such as “Agreement on Combined Freight Transport,” “Agreement on the Establishment of Simplified Customs Corridor,” “Transport Connectivity Program,” and “Action Plan for the Transport Connectivity Program,” the OTS seeks to further develop its geography as a main transit route between Asia and Europe and augment the Middle Corridor.



The EU’s commitment of 10 billion Euros to sustainable transport connectivity in Central Asia reveals that policymakers in Brussels have the intention to cooperate with Central Asian countries in the transport connectivity sphere.

In addition to transport connectivity, with its hydrocarbon and critical earth mineral-rich members, such as Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, the OTS is a relevant structure in terms of energy politics. The increasing relevance of the SGC is a factor that boosts the importance of the OTS since three of its members, namely, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, possess huge oil and natural gas reserves that render them important energy suppliers. Another OTS member country, Türkiye, is a central energy transit hub for Europe. The OTS takes action to facilitate cooperation among its members in the energy field. The objective to create an integrated “Turkic Energy Market” is a noteworthy attempt in this regard.

The OTS and its member countries are also relevant for the initiatives for renewable energy transition in the EU. Azerbaijan has the potential to generate renewable energy from wind and solar. The ongoing planning and talks on creating a Green Energy Corridor between Azerbaijan and Europe attest to Azerbaijan's potential to contribute to the EU's renewable energy transition, in addition to its contribution to the latter's energy diversification efforts. Kazakhstan, on the other hand, with its critical earth mineral reserves, which are important for renewable energy transition and decarbonization, can also be an important partner for the EU.

Modernization of the energy infrastructure and renewable energy transition are important objectives for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Türkiye. The EU's financial support and investment in the energy sectors of these countries could be crucial for achieving these goals.

There is promising room for two-way cooperation between the EU/EU member countries and the OTS/OTS member countries in different domains of the energy field. Such a collaboration would help Central Asian countries to reduce their dependencies on the Russian Federation in the energy sphere.

Normalization and Stability in the South Caucasus

Both the Middle Corridor and the SGC pass through multiple regions, namely Central Asia, South Caucasus, Türkiye, and Europe. Among those regions, the South Caucasus has certain volatilities. The ambiguous relationship between Georgia and the Russian Federation due to the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and

the remaining disputes between Armenia and Azerbaijan forestall full normalization and remain potential destabilizing factors. The need for normalization of the relations and stability in the South Caucasus is obvious for the smooth functioning of the Middle Corridor and the SGC.

Opportunely, recent developments are reshaping the region. The occupation of the former Nagorno Karabakh region of Azerbaijan had been a main obstacle to peace and stability in the South Caucasus. This problem was solved with the victory of Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War in 2020. Armenia's and Azerbaijan's agreement on mutual recognition of territorial integrity and sovereignty in October 2022 in Prague was a momentous step forward for peace and stability.

Though a large part of the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has ceased to exist, there are still a few disagreements to solve such as border delineation and the operationalization of what is referred to as the Zangezur Corridor, a route connecting mainland Azerbaijan with its exclave Nakhichevan. At the core of the disagreement on the Zangezur Corridor lies the nature of passage from mainland Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan *via* Armenia's territory, in other words, whether passages will be unimpeded or there will be customs clearance or border inspection at Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

This disagreement continues. Yet, with creative ideas such as differentiated regulations for cargo and people traveling from Azerbaijan to Nakhichevan, in other words, from Azerbaijan to Azerbaijan, and for those traveling from Azerbaijan to other countries, and through mutual concessions, this disagreement might be resolved. Though Armenia's "Crossroads of Peace"



initiative and Azerbaijan's perspective on the Zangezur Corridor have certain discrepancies, the fact that both Yerevan and Baku are eager to benefit from connectivity creates hopes for a resolution.

As to peace and stability in the South Caucasus, particularly as regards to Armenia-Azerbaijan normalization, past experience has shown that interference of outside actors is rather damaging than conducive for the resolution of the conflicts. Outside actors, more often than not, are motivated by their own interests and agendas rather than by the drive to procure peace and stability. Therefore, exclusively bilateral negotiations between Baku and Yerevan might be the most direct and shortest way to stability in the South Caucasus.

EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus

With respect to their relations with Central Asian and South Caucasian countries, the EU and Türkiye possess relative advantages. The EU engages with the South Caucasus through its Eastern Partnership initiative.

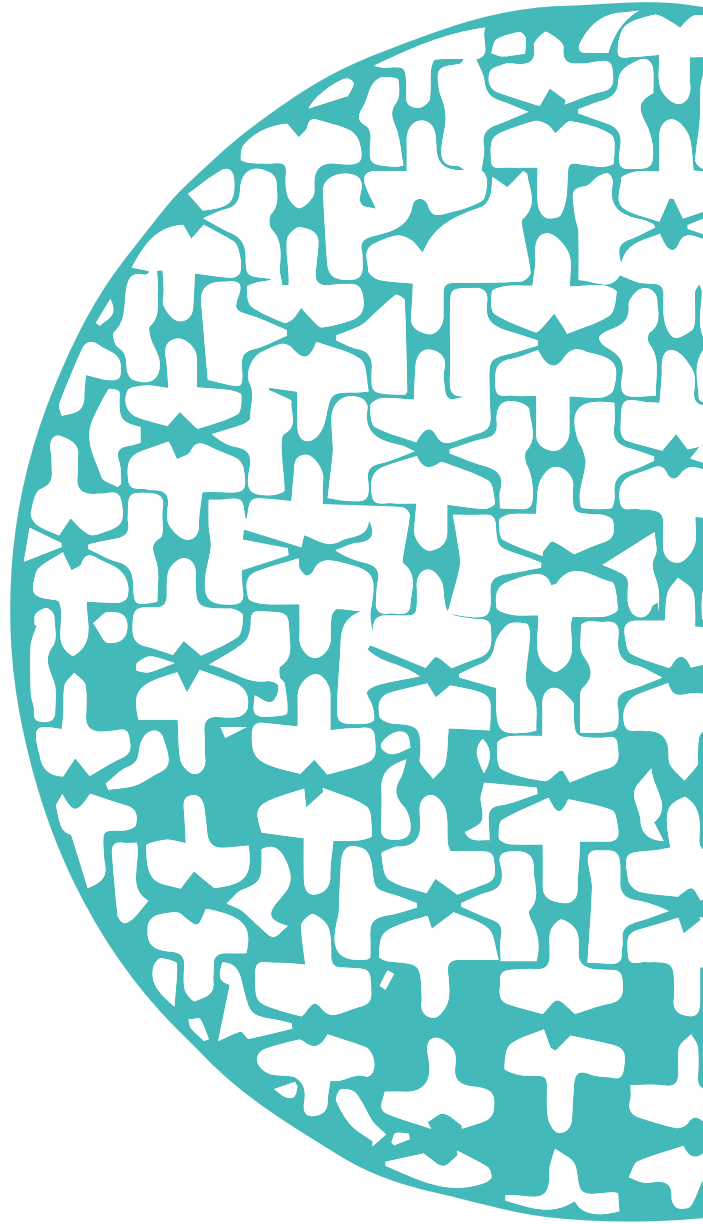
Brussels announced its Central Asia strategies first in 2007 and then in 2019. The EU as a union and individual EU member countries sustain bilateral relations in different fields with the South Caucasus and Central Asian countries. While the EU has a certain level of soft power over these countries, its major strength appears to be its economic power. The EU is both an important investor and a market for South Caucasus and Central Asian countries.

Türkiye has deep historical, cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic ties with the South Caucasus and Central Asia. It borders with the South Caucasus and has centuries long connections with all the South Caucasus peoples. Türkiye is thus an integral part of the Caucasus, not an outsider. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ankara has developed substantial economic and political relations with all the countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia (with the exception of Armenia). Its multifaceted diplomacy and cross-cultural diplomatic skills are a major asset for Ankara to deepen and widen its relations. In the aftermath of the Second Karabakh War in 2020, Türkiye's stature in the South Caucasus has significantly increased. The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railroad (BTK), Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline (BTC), Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline (BTE), Trans-Anatolia Pipeline (TANAP), and its extension Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) are the transport and energy connectivity infrastructures that potently ties Türkiye and South Caucasus and potentially further east. These infrastructures are the constituents of the Middle Corridor and the Southern Gas Corridor. In addition to these, the OTS is now a robust mechanism that pieces Türkiye together with South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Therefore, cooperation between the EU and Türkiye is bound to yield positive results, as they can strengthen each other's capabilities and supplement weaknesses. The shared goal of peace and stability in the South Caucasus and Central Asia could be the factor that binds Ankara and Brussels. Yet, one needs to be cognizant of various political discrepancies between Türkiye and the EU that stand as potential obstacles against effective cooperation. Thus, at least a partial resolution of the disagreements between Türkiye and the EU and some EU member countries is desirable.

Finally, both Türkiye and the EU need to pay utmost regard to the interests and perspectives of the South Caucasus and Central Asian countries. Rather than imposing their own agendas, Ankara and Brussels must align their agendas with the agendas of the regional countries. As to that, Türkiye and the EU will have to respect principles such as regional ownership, refusal to take sides in the great power rivalries, and holding onto multivector foreign policy that most of the South Caucasus and Central Asian countries embark on.

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Program

EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus

Towards Sustainable Engagement in Energy and Connectivity

February 22, 2024

Master of Ceremony: **Bruno HAMM-PÜTT**
Research Fellow, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye (KAS)

09:00 **The View from the Morning | Registration**
Location: Da Vinci Ballroom

09:30 – 09:45 **Welcome Speeches**

Walter GLOS
Director, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye (KAS)

Ambassador Ret. Alev KILIÇ
Director, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)

09:45 – 10:00 **The View from Brussels | Keynote**

Ambassador Terhi HAKALA
EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Central Asia
European External Action Service (EEAS), Brussels

10:00 – 10:15 **The View from the OTS | Keynote**

Dr. Ömer KOCAMAN
Deputy Secretary General, Organization of Turkic States, Istanbul

- 10:15 – 11:25** **Panel Discussion 1 | Energy**
- Ahmad HUMBATOV**
Senior Fellow, Institute for Development and Diplomacy
ADA University, Baku
- Nurlan KAPENOV**
Chairman of the Board of Directors, Qazaq Green Association, Astana
- Samuel DOVERI VESTERBYE**
Director, European Neighbourhood Council, Brussels
- Moderation: Pauline SEYFERT**
Founder & Chairman, Adlera Group
- 11:25 – 11:45** **Q&A Session open to the Audience**
- 11:45 – 12:15** **Coffee Break at the Foyer of Da Vinci Conference Room**
- 12:15 – 12:30** **Politics of Connectivity and the Connectivity of Politics | Keynote**
- Prof. Dr. Gerard Jirair LIBARIDIAN**
Armenian-American Historian and Diplomat
- 12:30 – 12:45** **The View from Baku | Keynote**
- Orkhan AMASHOV**
Chief Political Analyst, Caliber News Media Outlet
- 12:45 – 13:35** **The View from the Noon | Lunchbreak**
Location: Da Vinci-III Room
- 13:35 – 13:50** **The View from Berlin | Keynote**
- Dr. Andreas NICK**
Former Member of German Bundestag; Rapporteur for Türkiye in the
Committee on Foreign Affairs; Former Vice President of the
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
- 13:50 - 14:05** **The View from the South Caucasus | Input**
- Stephan MALERIUS**
Head, Regional Programme Political Dialogue South Caucasus
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Tbilisi
- 14:05 - 15:15** **Panel Discussion 2 | Connectivity**
- Ambassador Kirsti NARINEN**
Roving Ambassador of Finland to South Caucasus

Dr. Esmira JAFAROVA
Board Member, Deputy Director
Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center), Baku

Hayk DARBINYAN
Acting Head
Department of Bordering Countries of the MFA of the Republic of
Armenia

Moderation: **Galip DALAY**
Senior Consulting Fellow, Turkey Initiative,
Middle East and North Africa Programme,
Chatham House

15:15 – 15:45 **Q&A Session open to the Audience**

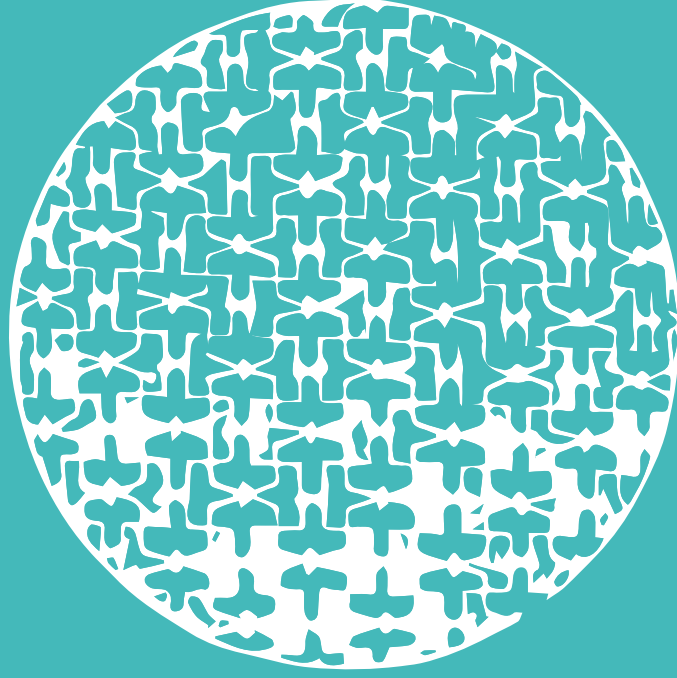
15:45 – 16:15 **Coffee Break at the Foyer of Da Vinci Conference Room**

16:15 – 16:30 **The View from Academia | Key Take-Aways**

Dr. Daria ISACHENKO
Turkey CATS Associate (Centre for Applied Türkiye Studies)
German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin

16:30 – 16:35 **Closure by**

Bruno HAMM-PÜTT
Research Fellow, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Türkiye



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This publication reflects the views of the speakers at the “EU-Türkiye Cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus: Towards Sustainable Engagement and Connectivity” who had the freedom to choose any terminology to express their views.

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