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**6th South Caucasus Security Forum 2019**

**DRAFT Agenda**

**13-14 May**

*Radisson Blu Iveria Hotel, 1 Rose Revolution Square, Tbilisi*

**DAY 1 – May 13, 2019**

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| 9:00 – 9:45 | REGISTRATION | | |
| 9:45 – 10:00 | **OFFICIAL WELCOME**   * **Ekaterine Metreveli,** President, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (Rondeli Foundation) * **Felix Hett,** Director,Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung South Caucasus Regional Office * **Jozef Zekucia**, Director, Stratpol – Strategic Policy Institute | | |
| 10:00 – 10:10 | **KEYNOTE OPENING REMARKS**  **Keynote Address: H.E. Mamuka Bakhtadze, Prime Minister of Georgia** (TBD) | | |
| 10:10 – 11:25 | **SESSION 1.** **The Black Sea Region: A Critical Intersection** More than ten years have passed since the Bucharest Summit at which Georgia and Ukraine were promised eventual membership to NATO. Over this past decade, however, the countries have seen Russian invasion and occupation. The Membership Action Plan to accession does not appear achievable for either Georgia or Ukraine in the near future. Nevertheless, Russia has been heavily militarizing the Black Sea, raising international security concerns. The region is home to three NATO members (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) and several NATO partner countries, so any instability or hostility in the area directly impacts the Alliance   * How should this threat be addressed, both by NATO and by Georgia and Ukraine? * What are the concrete steps that will be taken under NATO's Black Sea Security Initiative? * How do opposing views of the three NATO member states (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) affect NATO’s military engagement in the Black Sea?   **Moderator**: **Brian Whitmore,** Senior Fellow and Director of Russia Program, CEPA, USA  **Speakers:**   * **Minister** **of Defence of Georgia** (TBD) * **Robert Ondrejcsak,** State Secretary of Defence of Slovak Republic, Slovakia * **Bogdan Klich,** Former Minister of National Defence, Member of the Senate, Poland (TBD) * **Olga Oliker,** Program Director, Europe and Central Asia, International Crisis Group, USA | | |
| 11:25 – 11:55 | **COFFEE BREAK** | | |
| 11:55 – 13:10 | **SESSION 2. Georgia’s Unresolved Conflicts: Is there room for manoeuvre?**  A decade after the August War and a quarter-century since the outbreak of violence in Georgia, the country’s conflicts have no clear resolution in sight. Their stagnancy has rather become normal, and involved parties prefer the question of status over that of resolution. Nevertheless, younger generations have expressed growing interest in the pursuit of reconciliation. A new initiative by the Georgian government – A Step to a Better Future – aims to revive engagement with the regions.   * What are the prospects of conflict transformation, with the goal of reconciliation? * What steps can be taken to address major security and human rights issues facing local population? * Where do the main actors stand on the issues? * How real is the threat of annexation by the Russian Federation?   **Moderator**: **Donnacha Ó Beacháin,** Dublin City University, Ireland  **Speakers:**   * **Ketevan Tsikhelashvili**, State Minister of Reconciliation and Civic Equality of Georgia, Georgia (TBC) * **Toivo Klaar**, EU Special Representative to the South Caucasus, Georgia (TBC) * **Varvara Pakhomenko,** Head of Mission in Ukraine, Geneva Call, Ukraine * **Natalia Mirimanova,** Independent conflict resolution Expert | | |
| 13:10 – 14:10 | **LUNCH** | | |
| 14:10 – 15:25 | **SESSION 3. Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: A breakthrough possible?**   * What implications will the new wave of talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan have for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict? * Does a realistic path to peace exist and is it possible to convince populations of both countries? * What will be the role of external actors in this process?   **Moderator: Joshua Kucera**, Caucasus Editor, Eurasianet.org  **Speakers:**   * **Olesya Vartanyan**, Analyst, Eastern Neighbourhood, International Crisis Group, Georgia (STRATPOL *preliminary confirmed)* * **Sophia Pugsley**, International Alert, EPNK, | | |
| 15:25 – 16:40 | **SESSION 4. Climate Change: A Security Threat also for the South Caucasus**   * What are the security implications of climate change? * Why do they matter for the South Caucasus? * What can be done to mitigate the associated risks?   **Moderator:** **Sonja Schirmbeck,** Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Germany  **Speakers:**   * **Kira Vinke**, Project leader, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Germany * **Theresa Sabonis-Helf,** Professor, National War college, National Defence University (NDU), USA * **Nino Antadze,**  Team Leader, Energy and Environment Portfolio, United Nations Development Programme in Georgia, Georgia | | |
| 16:40 – 17:00 | **COFFEE BREAK** | | |
| 17:00 – 18:15 | **SESSION 5. Hybrid Threats**  The world has witnessed a sharp increase in hybrid threats, including election manipulation, the undermining of social cohesion, and outright destabilization. While experts struggle to agree on the precise definition of a hybrid threat, some Eastern European countries face them on daily basis. This panel is dedicated to sharing experiences with these contemporary challenges, a critical step to better understanding and addressing them.   * How is a hybrid threat identified and measured? * What are some ways that states can and should address active hybrid threats? * How can states exhibit resilience in the face of setbacks?   **Moderator: Shota Utiashvili,** Senior Fellow, GFSIS, Georgia  **Speakers:**   * **René Nyberg**, Former Finnish Ambassador to Vienna, Moscow and Berlin, Former Head of Finland’s OSCE delegation, Finland * **Brian Whitmore**, Senior Fellow and Director of Russia Program, CEPA, USA * **Sven Sakkov**, Director, International Centre for Defence and Security, Estonia * **Khatuna Mshvidobadze**, Senior Fellow, GFSIS; Adjunct Professor, Cybersecurity at Utica College, NY, USA | **Break-Out Session A: Disengaging Iran: Implications for South Caucasus**   * What are the possible implications for the South Caucasus of the American withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal? * How can countries in the region navigate relations with global partners and allies while maintaining friendly relations with Iran? * What does the EU’s reiterated commitment to the Iran deal and the US policy toward Iran mean for the South Caucasus and the broader region?   **Moderator**: **Teona Akubardia**, Lecturer, University of Georgia, Georgia  **Speakers:**   * **Hamidreza Azizi,** Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Regional Studies Research Institute, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran * **Dr. Ali Akbar Jokar**, Senior Fellow, Russia and Caucasus, Institute for Political and International Studies, Iran (FES TBC) * **Fuad Chiragov,** Expert, Center of Analysis of International Relations, Azerbaijan * **Benyamin Poghosyan,** Executive Director, Political Science Association, Armenia | |
| 20:00 – 22:00 | ***Official Dinner – by invitation only*** | | |
| DAY 2 – May 14, 2019 | | | |
| 9:00 – 9:15 | **KEYNOTE SPEECH BY MFA OF GEORGIA** | | |
| 9:15 – 10:30 | **SESSION 6. The Future of the Eastern Partnership**  Ten years ago, the EU introduced the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative. Despite its establishment as a constituent of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the EaP quickly took on a unique role in foreign relations. Combining both regional and individual approaches to integration, the EaP has demonstrated enough flexibility to keep its multidimensional format active and cooperative, effectively advancing political association and deepening integration with the more dedicated countries. Despite growing competition with the Russian-lead Eurasian Economic Union, some EaP states remain engaged in both frameworks. Although the EaP continues to be competitive and attractive for participating states, there is an apparent division between the EaP partners wishing to join the EU and the ones reluctant to do so, which could potentially alter the EaP format and the development of further “exclusive formats” within it.   * Could this threaten the coherence of the EaP and cause the “reluctant group” to further distance itself from the EU? * How could such a development affect the relationships between states in the South Caucasus?   **Presentation:** *“The Eastern Partnership at 10 - multi-speed and differentiation*" by **Denis Cenusa,** Justus-Liebig-Universitaet Giessen  **Moderator**: **Felix Hett**, Director,Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung South Caucasus Regional Office  **Comments:**   * **Frantisek Ruzicka,**State Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Slovakia * **Dirk Wiese**, German MP and Coordinator for the Eastern Partnership/Russia at the German Foreign Office, Germany * **H.E. Ulrik Tideström**, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Sweden in Georgia | | |
| 10:30 – 11:00 | **COFFEE BREAK** | | |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | **Presentation: Security Radar 2019: Wake-up call for Europe and Q/A**  *In the context of dramatic challenges for the European Security architecture, new emerging cold and hot conflicts, an annexation, and intensifying cyberattacks, the Security Radar 2019 – Wake-up call for Europe analysis aims to shed light on two main factors which have a substantial impact in political decision makers: public opinion in general, and expert perspectives in particular, regarding the security and foreign policy situation in Europe. According to some experts, even though there are far fewer conventional and nuclear weapons on its territory, Europe appears to be in a worse situation today than it was during the Cold War. The experts suggest that the rules and common understanding that once guided the world through dangerous moments are becoming more and more irrelevant. The representative public opinion poll was held in seven European countries (Germany, France, Latvia, Poland, Serbia Ukraine, Russia). In addition to the poll, active political consulting experts from the above-mentioned countries were involved in group discussions.*  **by Reinhard Krumm,** Head, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Austria; **Alexandra Dienes,**Research Associate, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Austria  **Comments: Paata Gaprindashvili,** Director, Georgia’s Reforms Associates (GRASS), Georgia (TBC) | | |
| 12:00 – 13:15 | **SESSION 7: Newsworthy? – Media shaping security and progress**  Media outlets play a key role in shaping the public debate on security, conflict, and cooperation. They can become tools of conflict and propaganda or help to build peace and understanding. Today, the media landscape is rapidly changing, throwing journalists and free media into a global witch-hunt while trust in the media plummets, hitting historic lows across the region. In spite of this environment, new media projects and innovative collaborations are emerging.   * How is the media in the South Caucasus contributing to the security discourse? * What is the role of local media in conflicts in the region? * What influence do global media trends have on journalism in the South Caucasus?   **Moderator: Rayhan Demytrie,** Foreign Correspondent, BBC News  **Speakers:**   * **Margarita Akhvlediani**, Editor-in-chief JAM News, Go Group Media, Georgia * **Dominik K. Cagara**, Executive Director, OC Media, Poland * **Joana Levison,** Director, Media & Public Affairs, Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, Czech Republic | **Break-Out Session B: Changing US-Turkey relations and implications for the South Caucasus**   * How do the“flexible alliances” of Turkey with Russia and Iran impact its relation with US? * How does the strategic decoupling between the US and Turkey affect the South Caucasus? * How do Turkey‘s recents policies towards the West shape Turkey’s relation with NATO?   **Moderator**: **Vazha Tavberidze,** Journalist, RealPolitik TV Show, Georgia  **Speakers:**   * **Richard Giragosian**, Director, Regional Studies Center * **Osman Sert,** Research Director, Ankara Institute | |
| 13:15 – 14:00 | **LUNCH** | | |
| 14:00 – 15:15 | **SESSION 8: End of The West? Changing Perceptions in the Region**  **•** The 2019 EP Elections: What do they mean for the South Caucasus? How can the region address its consequent implications?  • What would a strong anti-European presence or rise in pro-Russia stances in parliament mean for EU relations with the South Caucasus?  • What are the perceptions of the South Caucasus in the West?  • Where is “the West” – is there hope for balancing their commitments while keeping expectations modest in the region?   * Rise of Populism in the US: how far will it go and what are foreign policy implications?   **Moderator**: **Giorgi Khelashvili,** Chairperson, Centre for Social Sciences (CSS), Georgia **Presenters:**  **Tod Lindberg,** Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute, USA  **Corina Stratulat**, Head of European Politics and Institutions programme and Senior Policy Analyst, EPC, Belgium  **Comments from the Region:**   * **Giorgi Badridze,** Senior Fellow, GFSIS, Georgia * **Rashad Shirinov,** Independent Analyst, Azerbaijan * **Armenia NN** (FES TBC) | | **Break-Out Session C:** **Democracy Facing New Threats**  **Moderator:** **Ondřej Zacha,** Eastern NeighbourhoodProgramme Manager, Stratpol – Strategic Policy Institute**,** Czech Republic  **Speakers:**   * **Ghia Nodia,** Director, CIPDD, Georgia * **Edit Zgut,** Foreign policy analyst, PhD researcher at IFIS PAN, GSSR; University of Warsaw, Poland * **Gavin Helf,** Senior Expert, Central Asia for the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, DC, USA |
| 15:15 – 16:00 | **Reception** | | |