

Forward

Escalation of the Tension in the South Caucasus and Use of the Potential of the Georgian-Armenian Relations.

The South Caucasus sub region, since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, is constantly in tension. The problems of Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, wars, that occurred as a consequences of the escalation of situations related to these issues, the failure of almost all proposals and projects aimed at the creation of any systems and structures stem from a completely opposite interests and goals of the world powers and regional players. From the other side, these tensions could potentially stabilize the situation in the South Caucasus.

The presence of frozen and latent ethnic and religious conflicts, tensions of the Armenian-Turkish and Russian-Georgian relations, the proximity of the Middle East which has fallen into chaos, as well as the penetration of the sub region of different kind of jihadist groups further complicate the situation in the South Caucasus sub region.

Against this background, Armenian-Georgian relations are one of the few stabilizing factors, being based on the centuries-old tradition of good neighborhood, the ability to solve the problems, which is also the result of the same centuries of good neighborhood and similar civilization norms and cultural codes.

However, at present Armenia is a member of the CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union, being the only ally of Russia in the sub-region and Armenia has a powerful Russian military base in its territory. Meanwhile, Armenia is actively cooperating with NATO and the EU (though refused to sign the Association Agreement), and its relations with

the United States and with many European countries are at a very high level.

At the same time, Georgia has signed the European Union Association Agreement and holds such a rapprochement policy towards NATO, the result of which should become a full-fledged membership in this organization. Its relations with Russia remain strained and at the same time, Georgia has constantly developed its cooperation with Turkey. All the mentioned problems were complemented by quite a foreseeable aggravation of Russian-Turkish relations, which further fuels the growing escalation of tension in our sub-region.

Right because of the above mentioned reasons and the prevailing circumstances the initiators of the project, most of the results of which are being published in this collection of articles, set before themselves a goal to consider the possibility of revealing the positive potential of the Armenian-Georgian relations in order to use them in helping each other in the field of politics and economy, continuing the long tradition of scientific and cultural cooperation.

This collection of articles presents most of the researches conducted within the project. The articles are written by graduate and senior undergraduate students of Georgian and Armenian universities under the guidance of the leading experts in both countries. From the Georgian side the project was implemented by the Institutes of Ethnology and Cultural Studies and the Association of Anthropologists of Georgia. From the Armenian side the project was conducted by the Center for Civilizations and Cultural Studies at Yerevan State University and “Hazarashen” Armenian Center for Ethnological Studies.

The initiators of the project pursued another important goal. The old generation of Georgia and Armenia which grew up in the Soviet Union know each other well, understands and respects the cultural and traditional differences between two nations while the young generation has quite a vague idea about it. The project was formed in such a way so that our students had an opportunity to communicate with each other, conduct researches jointly and write papers in collaboration with each other.

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