

# **Geocase Annual Report**

2020

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## Preface

We have the honor to introduce the first annual report of Geocase. As a think-tank, Geocase supports the formulation and development of policies based upon the rule of law, human rights, balanced government, a free and responsible market economy that will strengthen Georgia's regional and international roles, promote the country's national and state interests, and maintain the general public informed about ongoing domestic and external developments.

Geocase provides the Georgian government with analytical support to enable its informed decisionmaking that effectively facilitates the country's European and Euro-Atlantic ambitions, ensures its stable institutional development and promotes further its political and economic reforms.

Policy papers and other materials prepared by Geocase are based upon careful and realistic situational analyses and offer decision-makers rational, tangible and result-oriented solutions to some of the challenges they may face.

From January 2020 to December 2020 the representatives of Geocase have published 140 articles and interviews on Georgia's domestic and foreign policies as well as on critical international topics such as the coronavirus pandemic, its effects in terms of shifting balances of power between international actors and future trends of the post-pandemic international system.

Geocase drafted and published a series of recommendations and proposed initiatives for the Georgian government on the challenges the pandemic poses in terms of healthcare, economic security, education, defence and hybrid threats.

Geocase also contributed to the preparation of a policy paper concerning occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region for the effective implementation of the non-recognition policy.

The think-tank has also brought together decision-makers as part of a regular series of discussions. Among the guest speakers were the Georgian President, H.E. Salome Zourabichvili; the Georgian Minister of IDPs, Labour, Health and Social Affairs, Ms. Ekaterine Tikaradze; various heads of diplomatic missions accredited in Georgia; and other high-ranking officials.

Geocase publishes an online monthly journal focusing on the analysis of different topics of national and international importance and gives on them Georgian perspective.

The Chair of Geocase and researchers have made numerous appearances in both Georgian and foreign media on Georgia's domestic and foreign policies and challenges.

Geocase regularly holds online discussions on political issues and Georgia's regional and international role with both Georgian and foreign experts.

The representatives of Geocase also regularly take part in online international discussions and conferences.

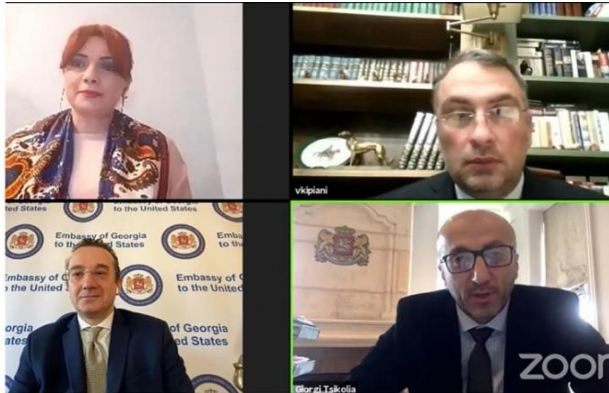
We would like to express our gratitude for your interest in the first annual report of Geocase.

Yours sincerely,

Victor Kipiani

Chair of Geocase

## Events



### **Geocase Organizes the Online Discussion on the 4-year Dynamics of the US-Georgia Strategic Partnership**

*Date: 11.12.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On the 11th of December 2020, Geocase organized an online discussion on the 4-year dynamics of the

US-Georgia strategic partnership.

The online discussion was moderated by Victor Kipiani, Chairman of Geocase. Victor Kipiani emphasized the importance of the Georgian-US relations, the strategic partnership between the United States and Georgia in light of political, economic and security domains of our country.

‘The viability of our country, the prospects for its state development largely depend on the Georgian-US relations,’ said Victor Kipiani.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to the United States of America David Bakradze analyzed the dynamics of the four-year strategic partnership between the United States and Georgia and noted that these relations are now more prominent than ever.

“During 30 years we have reached a benchmark where Georgia has become an exemplary partner for the United States in many ways.

The United States now see the greater importance that Georgia has in the region. The Increase of the annual funding from \$ 86 million to \$ 135 million by the United States confirms that the financial support is transformed to the right direction, be it democratic, economic or military cooperation,” – the Ambassador noted.

The co-moderator of the online discussion, Professor Khatuna Burkadze, focused on the importance and prospects of concluding a free trade agreement with the United States. She opened discussion on the change of balance of power in the region, regional security and importance of the Charter on Strategic Partnership.

During the discussion, Giorgi Tsikolia, Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the Embassy of Georgia to the United States, reviewed the important results achieved in recent years.

“Strong political support from Congress is our chance to take our place in the direction of free trade and move to a new stage of negotiations. “Our goal is to transform our strategic partnership into a strategic alliance and use all the opportunities we have,” said Giorgi Tsikolia.

Ambassador Bakradze summarized the 4-year dynamics of cooperation with the strategic partner and highlighted the most important events, including the passage on the occupation of Georgian territories added for the first time at the legislative level to the U.S. spending bill - Consolidated Appropriations Act in 2017, pursue a policy of non-recognition through the imposition of sanctions, conclusion of a memorandum on defense and security, large investments, as well as visits of high-ranking officials and their important messages of support.

The Ambassador noted that a new team at the White House is well familiar with the region and Georgia, and this only provides a sound ground for optimism regarding cooperation with the new administration.

"To ensure Georgia's democratic development, security and economic prosperity the US support has always been and remains the priority for Georgia," Ambassador Bakradze said.

Summing up the results of the discussion, the Geocase Chairman, Victor Kipiani once again dwelled on the positive dynamics of strategic relations between the two countries and the strategic interests of the US in the successful development of state building in Georgia. He also highlighted the work of the US Ambassador Kelly Degan and her role in deepening ties between the two countries, as well as the work and efforts of the Georgian diplomatic mission in the United States to achieve the results that distinguish the partnership between the two countries today.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/news/327/jeoqecsis-organizebit-onlain-diskusia-ashsh-saqartvelosstrategiulitanamshromlobis-4-tsliani-dinamikis-shesakheb-gaimarta>

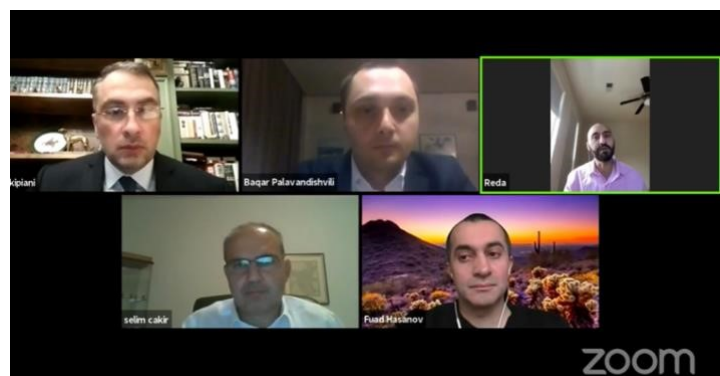
Watch the online discussion: <http://bit.ly/3qpW5wY>

## Georgia and Policies for Economic Growth

*Date: 09.12.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On December 9, 2020 Geocase hosted an online event named ‘Georgia and Policies for Economic Growth’.



Mr Reda Cherif, Senior Economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr Fuad Hasanov, Senior Economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and an Adjunct Professor of Economics at

Georgetown University and Mr Selim Cakir, Representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Georgia were the invited speakers of the online discussion. Mr Baqar Palavandishvili, a board member of Geocase, co-hosted the event and delivered a speech.

The Geocase chairman Victor Kipiani, who was the moderator the live session, welcomed the panelists and briefly overviewed the current state and pressing issues of the Georgian economy.

“Over the last decade we have witnessed many varieties of crisis: plunging oil crisis, depreciation of local currency, various types of political instability, etc. All those presented huge challenges and downsides for the Georgian economy but the crisis we are facing at this moment – the Covid19 pandemic - is very unique by its nature, ramifications and implications as well as its long-lasting consequences. Therefore, we are even more focused on what should be those extra unique ways to trigger the growth of the national economy. “- Mr Kipiani stated.

According to him, the challenges Georgia is facing today are common and typical to many countries with similar structure and economy, although more innovative and unorthodox approaches should be applied for finding proper solutions to the existing problems. “Before the pandemic all the parameters for Georgian macro economy were more or less OK but at this point, I think more should be done in order to tackle the crisis and put the economy on the normal track”- Victor Kipiani underlined.

During his speech Mr Fuad Hasanov mentioned the Asian Miracle countries and named 3 key principles as the pillar of their economic growth and success: 1) creating new capabilities in sophisticated industries (computer, electronic, IT, motor vehicles, electrical equipment, machinery etc.) 2) export and 3) fierce competition (at home and abroad) and strict accountability.

Mr Reda Cherif talked about the importance of applying innovations and using technology in order to escape the difficult economic situation and move forward. ” There is no way for a small economy to reach a proper level of development without opening up. Even big economies cannot close themselves. If you look at the success of China, to a large extent, is based on opening up and trading with other economies. India has started growing fast after they started opening up, so, even if you are very big you cannot just close yourself for different reasons: you need competition, access to technologies, exchange and so on”, - he stated.

Mr Selim Cakir’s conducted the presentation reflecting the view of International Monetary Fund on Georgia’s economic outlook for the current and next year.

“We see Georgia’s timely engagement with donor community and the country’s proven macroeconomic policy response enable the country to mitigate the economic impact of the crisis. The country’s financial system remains in good health, the budget provided timely targeted at temporary support of vulnerable households and businesses. Exchange and depreciation remain in check and inflation has already

approached the NBG's target of 3 percent. To despite about 5% contraction economic activity this year, Georgia possibly avoided much worse outcome given the size of the shock. The challenges definitely remain for 2021 but we believe that a combination of right policy response, continued efforts to contain the pandemic and mitigate its economic impact with the help of donor support will enable Georgia to overcome this difficult period and, hopefully next year around this time the macroeconomic and pandemic outlook will look much brighter than it does today" – Mr Cakir summarized his presentation.

Baqar Palavandishvili briefly reviewed the basic structure of Georgia's economy and its potential measured by the export goods. He discussed the significance of attracting foreign direct investments to enhance current and develop even more domestic capabilities in order to support Georgia's economy. He also emphasized the importance of amplifying cooperation between public and the private sector for choosing the sectors for development which will support the growth of the economy.

Mr Palavandishvili shared the moderator's view suggesting to overcome the misconception and too much reliance on the rankings, indexes and focusing more on real economy and real profit instead. "The international rankings in which Georgia takes part can serve some kind of signaling role for the investors though we should not rely on that signaling too much but the real signal for the investor is the other investors already operating and doing business in the country. Looking at how and in what kind of circumstances they operate might be the best signaling role for the investors."- he added.

At the end of the online session Victor Kipiani thanked the participants for their valuable input and mentioned: "when we speak about a Georgian economy in the first place with the help of our international partners and our good friends but also combining vision, courage and competence on our side we would be able and capable to cope with the difficulties and get to the better days".

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/81/jeoqeisis-organizebit-saqartvelos-ekonomikuri-ganvitarebispolitikis-shesakheb-onlain-diskusia-gaimarta>

*Watch the webinar:* <http://bit.ly/3su5e9L>





## **More West in the Black Sea Region: Realities and Opportunities**

*Date: 01.12.2020*

*Place: Online format*

Geocase hosted a virtual discussion – “More West in the Black Sea Region: Realities and Opportunities”.

Victor Kipiani, the Chairman of Geocase moderated the online discussion focused on the opportunities that Georgia faces in the current to the regional and geopolitical setting.

He emphasized that, "new threats and challenges always present new opportunities. It depends on human beings' creativity and depends on the boldness of respective decisions and depends on catching the right momentum. The West is not as present in the region as it should be."

During the meeting, Lieutenant General Ben Hodges (Retired), Pershing Chair in Strategic Studies at the Center for European Policy Analysis; Major General Vakhtang Kapanadze (Retired), former Chief of Defence and Military Representative of Georgia in NATO and EU, and Research Fellow at Geocase Dr. Khatuna Burkadze discussed the challenges facing the South Caucasus region and perspectives of Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration.

The former commander of US ground forces in Europe, Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, believes that Georgia should be invited to join NATO right now, claiming that “all the Black Sea nations have to put their voices together in Washington and Brussels and build advocacy the way the three Baltic countries did.”

During discussion, Major General Kapanadze emphasized that “Russia has begun to weaken its position in the Caucasus, but this does not make it any less dangerous for small countries.”

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze noted: “Euro-Atlantic integration brings security and stability to countries and regions. Georgia has made progress in Euro-Atlantic integration, showing a strong commitment of the Georgian people toward the shared values. Our brave soldiers are maintaining international peace and security together with our partners.” Dr. Burkadze emphasized: “the analysis of the current situation illustrates that Georgia’s integration into NATO should be accelerated to deliver the promise made at the Bucharest Summit twelve years ago”.

Concluding the virtual discussion, Geocase Chairman Victor Kipiani noted that now it is a turning point for the region to make qualitatively new decisions. Referring to global challenge of the pandemics, Mr.

Kipiani stressed, that "both Georgia and the West must take timely effective steps in favor of common interests. It is important to act quickly and adequately so that we do not fall behind the dynamics of events".

Watch the online discussion: <http://bit.ly/2XHhEgn>



### **The US Election Result and its Impact on the US-Georgia Future Strategic Partnership**

*Date: 11.11.2020*

*Place: Online format*

Geocase organized a virtual discussion -

‘The US Election Result and its Impact on the US-Georgia Future Strategic

Partnership’. Mr. Victor Kipiani, the Chairman of Geocase was a moderator of the online discussion.

Mr. Victor Kipiani, the Chairman of Geocase spoke about possible shifts in foreign relations and multilateral initiatives.

Mr. Victor Kipiani underlined: ‘What is clear to me is that we all, as mentioned, are to prepare for generational efforts for a new containment policy – region – wise, and new game rules – worldwide’.

Within the virtual meeting Mr. Richard Weitz, Director of the Center for Political-Military Analysis at Hudson Institute, Mr. James Jay Carafano, Vice President of The Heritage Foundation and Dr. Khatuna Burkadze, a research fellow at Geocase spoke about external and internal dimensions of the US election results.

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze highlighted: ‘First, the United States is a strong supporter of Georgia’s territorial integrity and political independence. Second, the US supports to strengthen democracy in Georgia. Third, the United States and Georgia intend to expand the scope of their defense and security cooperation. Fourth, the United States facilitates the integration of Georgia into the global economy’.

‘Overall, multi-dimensional co-operation with the United States will assist Georgia to achieve its greater goals on its Euro-Atlantic path and enhance our strategic relations,’ Dr. Khatuna Burkadze added.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/news/303/geocase-organized-online-discussions-on-the-us-election-results>

Watch the online discussion: <http://bit.ly/2LBYuGb>

## **Eradicating Corruption - Lessons to be learnt**

*Date: 21.10.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On October 21, 2020, Victor Kipiani, Chairman and Bacho Tortladze, Research Fellow at Geocase will participate in the

live webinar 'Eradicating Corruption - Lessons to be learnt' to discuss the best possible ways to fight corruption in public and private sector with the host Roger Latchman, Chartered Director, Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional-International, One of SA's leading Anti-Corruption experts, Honorary Consul of Georgia, Johannesburg and the special guest, Dr Abiola Makinwa, Senior Lecturer in Commercial Law at The Hague University of Applied Sciences, who will moderate the discussion.

<http://bit.ly/3bJIOMM>



## **Israel-UAE Diplomatic Breakthrough and its Impact for Middle East and South Caucasus**

*Date: 19.10.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On 19 October 2020, Tbilisi-based thinktank “Geocase” had an honor to host a webinar - “Israel-UAE Diplomatic

Breakthrough and its Impact for the Middle East and South Caucasus” moderated by Victor Kipiani, Geocase Chair.

The event aimed to discuss key issues around new diplomatic deals for normalization of the relations between Israel and UAE, as well as Bahrain. The webinar speakers, H.E. Ran Gidor (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Israel to Georgia), Emil Avdalani (Non-resident Fellow, Geocase) and Vakhtang Charaia (Head of TSU Center for Analysis and Forecast) examined the implications of the current developments on regional stability and prosperity in the Middle East at large and on the South Caucasus.

On August 13 Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced that they planned to normalize relations. The agreement involves establishing diplomatic relations between the two Middle East states. In September normalization of relations with Bahrain also followed. The agreements mark the latest series of Israel signing diplomatic agreements with Arab nations after reaching similar deals with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994. The new deals open the way for other potential agreements on advancing business relations, direct flights, scientific cooperation, and full diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level.

These two events have region-wide repercussions ranging from the US foreign policy in the Middle East to Arab states' position to Iran's weakened diplomatic stance. Therefore, webinar participants responded to the following questions: How the recent diplomatic deals affect Israel-Palestine relations and, more broadly, the Middle East? Is this the beginning of a new round of peacemaking in the Arab world? How this affects Iran's position in the region? What is the impact of the diplomatic breakthrough in for the South Caucasus region?

With the regard to the U.S. role and support in the region, Victor Kipiani addressed Georgian policymakers and implied that “for addressing the existing problems in an innovative way, in resolute manner there should be no path dependences and when we speak about path dependence, we clearly realize what that means. The direct talks and direct contacts always matter, and the Israeli case shows how much those are. Israel's example also shows us that innovative approach and leadership matters. And we, as small nation should always remember how important a bipartisan (from U.S.) support is.”

In closing remarks on the matters of experience exchange for the South Caucasus region, speakers have shared mostly optimistic opportunities. H.E. Ran Gidor admitted he wished for Israel to have such regional “harmony” with neighbors, as Georgia has with three of its neighbors, and even with the absence of diplomatic relations with Russia, the country never stops its touristic and commercial traffic. Additionally, Ambassador stressed out the significance of multilateral relations: “recent events, post Covid-19 diplomacy have shown us clearly that the only way to move forward is to join hands and inject more resources in multilateral organizations such as UN, WTO, WHO, EU, because only concerted action could provide to the effective solution of the challenges that are not unique for one country but to the International world.”

Emil Avdaliani summarized US diplomacy's regional impact in his speech. “To put this diplomatic breakthrough not only in a regional but also in a global context, I believe that this great recalibration of US policy in the Middle East, particularly from the Middle East into the pacific region, once again shows how fundamental as well as instrumental US diplomacy is for the region overall.”

Vakhtang Charaia congratulated all participants of negotiation for successful final results and wished this success to be also shared by Georgia. "I believe sooner, or later Georgia will be the major player of the region if Georgia will have enough support from the strategic partners, Georgia will start a new level."

The webinar participants highlighted the importance of the UAE and Israel successful negotiation for the regional stability and wished this kind of accomplishments for Georgian diplomacy.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/news/278/israel-uae-diplomatic-breakthrough-and-its-impact-for-middleeast-and-south-caucasus>

Watch the webinar: <https://bit.ly/2XHhW6X>

## Georgian Studies Day

*Date: 19.10.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On October 8th, "Geocase" will participate in "The 33rd annual conference Georgian Studies Day". This year's conference is dedicated to the Georgian Experience of COVID-19.

Lika Chipashvili, our Fellow Researcher will deliver a speech on the topic: "Civic engagement during Covid19: Georgian-British friendship and solidarity".

The event is co-organized by the Embassy of Georgia to the UK and the British-Georgian Society and is hosted by the University of Westminster.

Due to the global pandemic of Covid-19, this year's the conference will be held in online format.

<http://bit.ly/2Kn556S>

**UNIVERSITY OF  
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**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Georgian Studies Day**  
**The Georgian Experience of Covid-19**  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 (Online meeting)  
**Host: School of Life Sciences (SLS)**  
**University of Westminster**  
Conveners: **Dr Tamara Dragadze, Dr Nina Porakishvili and Professor Peter M Lydyard**


**Programme:**  
9.00 Opening remarks: **Dr Tamara Dragadze**, GSD co-convenor  
9.05 Welcome remarks: **President of Georgia Her Excellency Ms Salome Zourabichvili**, **Mr Mikheil Chkhikvili**, Minister of Education,  
**UOW: Prof Andrew Linn**, Pro Vice-Chancellor; **Prof Brendan Noble**, Head of School of Life Sciences; **Prof Roland Dannreuther**, Director, New Forum for Uzbek and Silk Road Studies, **His Excellency Mark Clayton**, British Ambassador to Georgia.  
9.35 **Her Excellency Sophie Katarava**, Georgian Ambassador to UK, 'Overview of current situation in Georgia, covering economics, politics and international relations in the light of Covid-19'  
9.45 **Prof Amirani Gankrelidze**, Director General, National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health, Georgia - 'Achievements and challenges of COVID-19 - lessons learned in Georgia'  
10.05 **Prof Adrian Hayday**, Francis Crick Institute, London 'Immunity to SARS - CoV- 2 with implications for vaccines'  
10.25 Questions and answers  
10.35 **Mr Daniel Hamilton**, FTI consulting, Managing Director 'Georgia during lockdown – a personal experience'  
10.50 **Prof Alexander Tevdadze**, Rector, Kutaisi International University 'Online teaching after Covid-19'  
11.05 **Prof Tamar Gagoshidze**, Dean, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, TSU, 'A Psychologist's view on Parent - Child relationships during the pandemic'  
11.20 Questions and answers  
11.30 **Prof Ekaterine Dgebuadze**, Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, 'Education'  
11.45 **Ms Mariam Kvirivishvili**, Head of Tourism Administration of Georgia, 'Georgia safe travel destination: New projects and opportunities in the tourism sector during Covid',  
12.00 **Prof Lia Melikishvili** and **Dr Tamara Dragadze**, 'Sociology and Ethnography of lockdown in Georgia'  
12.15 **Ms Lika Chipashvili**, GEOCASE 'Civic engagement during Covid-19: British-Georgian Friendship and Solidarity'  
12.25 **Mr Peter Nasmyth**, 'Heritage and the Pandemic – an illustrated talk'  
12.40 Questions and Answers  
Twining Reports on work in progress  
12.50 Bristol: **Derek Pickup**  
12.54 Newport: **Caroline McLachlan**  
12.58 Newcastle: **David Gigauri**  
1.02 Mkuarni: **Nino Chubabria**, Director of Mkuarni  
1.06 British Georgian Society: **Tamar Lordkipanidze**, Chairman BGS  
1.10 Closing remarks: **Dr Tamara Dragadze** and  
Thanks: **Dr Nina Porakishvili and Prof Peter M Lydyard**





## From the Sidelines of Nagorno-Karabakh: Georgia, Russia, and Turkey

*Date: 07.10.2020*

*Place: Online format*

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has faced its largest eruption of fighting since a 1994 ceasefire partially brokered by the United States. Previous escalations between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces have been smothered within a few days. However, the current hostilities continue to escalate and the possibility of a large-scale war between the two states is becoming more likely. Russia has historically supported Armenia while maintaining close relations with both former Soviet republics. On the other hand, Turkey has announced its unconditional support of Azerbaijan and appears to be ready to provide military capabilities to the Azeris. Georgia has always maintained close neighborly relations with both Armenia and Azerbaijan and now has expressed its willingness to facilitate a peaceful resolution.

What are the regional consequences of a full out war between Armenia and Azerbaijan? What role do Turkey, Russia, and Georgia play in the conflict? What are the factors that inhibit long-standing peace? Why does the conflict concern the United States?

### **Speakers:**

**Neil Hauer** - *Non-resident scholar, Frontier Europe Initiative, MEI*

**Victor Kipiani** - *Chair, Geocase*

**Maxim A. Suchkov** - *Non-resident scholar, Conflict Resolution and Track II Dialogues Program, MEI*

**Gonul Tol**, moderator - *Director of Turkey Program; senior fellow, Frontier Europe Initiative, MEI*

<https://www.mei.edu/events/sidelines-nagorno-karabakh-georgia-russia-andturkey?fbclid=IwAR1UmKIupxqmC0wXjH9lprOZcP3MQI03glqBTm5Exlmq-ifNfREEp72Vkrk>

Watch the online discussion: <https://bit.ly/3oOOKjU>

## Georgia and its neighborhood

*Date: 12.08.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On August 12, 2020, Levan Mikeladze Foundation for Caucasus Studies in collaboration with the America - Georgia Business Council



organized the international annual conference on Georgia and its neighborhood. Victor Kipiani, Chair of Geocase was invited to the annual conference. He delivered a speech on modern challenges, Georgia's aspirations and the Black Sea security from the Georgian perspective.

Speech of Victor Kipiani, Chair of Geocase

Dear Organisers,

Dear Speakers,

The end of the Cold War, the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia and the ongoing pandemic have all created many extremely challenging 'new normals' and brain teasers in regional and international relations and security. Many important questions remain unanswered, and the historically unpredictable behaviour of some of Georgia's close neighbours increases the country's vulnerability. Once again, in a very short span of time, we are witnessing a process of 'creative destruction' which brings to the fore the need for an in-depth reappraisal of the situation and a consequent rearrangement. That said, some of these emerging and re-emerging threats and risks create new opportunities and introduce new criteria, so please let me sum up those whose impact and priority seem to me to be the most important.

This country is on the front line of the conflict ('meta-conflict') between two normative worlds—one of democracy and freedom, and the other of oppression and revisionism. Among other things that would give Georgia the resilience she needs, the country needs to work out and adopt effective policies capable of containing hybrid warfare. The latter poses an existential threat, and both the United State and NATO also need to equip themselves with a modern system for rapid situational assessments and timely reactions to such hybrid attacks. Indeed this challenge becomes, quite understandably, even greater when it comes to the question of how to protect partner nations that are not formal members of NATO but are none the less closely linked to the Alliance in one way or another.

Beyond this large-scale geopolitical picture, Georgia is also on the front line of frictions between regional hegemons. The country's continued Russian occupation, coupled with Turkey's growing assertiveness in the region and the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which in many ways resembles a proxy war,

are worsening the regional quagmire. New solutions are therefore needed if we are to address these many challenges in a bold and creative manner.

As if this was not enough, a further challenge that needs to be dealt with is the shifting balance of power in the Black Sea. In this regard, Georgia is not simply a stretch of land between the shores of the Black and Caspian Seas, but a critical crossroads where the Eurasian policies of the West, Russia and China are at loggerheads. We must, however, not lose sight of the fact that Georgia's geographical location is both the reason for the security threats she faces as well as the source of her economic growth. The Black Sea is nowadays an arena for competition over influence, access and information, and if we are to succeed, we and our partners and allies, therefore, require strategic persistence rather than strategic patience. A



progressive US shift towards a more extended form of deterrence in the Black Sea region would be seen as a timely response to those countries that are still hostages of the relatively prevalent 'Senkaku Paradox' or those that mistakenly follow the reasoning that 'the enemy of our friends is not necessarily our enemy'. In this regard, Secretary Pompeo's statement on the

inadmissibility of a 'closed' South China Sea should also apply to the Black Sea; and the opening of a NATO Excellence Centre in Batumi would send a strong signal that Georgia ranks among the 'vital interests' of our strategic partner.

All this is of course also compounded by Georgia's proximity to the Middle East. The latter will continue to be a focus of US attention in the near future, and certain discussions in the United States concerning possible readjustments to their wider Middle Eastern policy might lead to an additional role for Georgia as a 'safety locker' for Western interests in both the Black Sea and Caspian regions and beyond. An even closer alignment of our national interests with those of the United States could help both nations to identify a new 'signature outlook' to deepen their strategic partnership.

Personally, I believe that adopting such a new approach to the region as well as forging a qualitatively new relationship with Georgia would be in line with the US National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, particularly in those areas in which these strategies consider the question of a more effective deterrence in Europe and the Middle East. I also trust that the new security concept paper that the National Security Council is currently working on will include both accurate assessments of national and regional risks as well as some good solutions and forward-looking statements.



Closer to home, another common concern is the need to address the two frozen conflicts on Georgian territory, which are effectively geopolitical conflicts caused by the country's foreign policy choices and the occupying power's opposition to them.

I hope that this very brief speech made the point that the challenges that Georgia faces also present opportunities. More than any of our neighbors, we strive to be a democracy and a place of safety for our people and our allies. These goals have the full support of the country's population, among whom a consensus is readily identifiable both among the country's political elites as well as at the grassroots level.

To reuse a small part of one of history's most famous statements, the blood, sweat and tears that Georgia has shed in our monumental toil to maintain our freedom of choice must be recognized at their true value. Georgia punches well above her weight, and the greatest pain is not to suffer but suffering in vain.

Thank you and I would, of course, be delighted to answer any questions you may have.

*Watch the online discussion:*

- <http://www.agbdc.com/events/2020/8/12/georgia-and-its-neighborhood>
- <https://bit.ly/2LCJkQT>
- <https://bit.ly/38JFSwF>



## The United States in the Caspian Region

*Date: 30.07.2020 Place: Online format*

On July 30, 2020, the Caspian Policy Center organized a think-tank Discussion: The United States in the Caspian Region. Victor Kipiani, Chair of Geocase was invited to the online discussion. He delivered a speech on Georgia's strategic importance and its foreign policy priorities.

### Speech of Victor Kipiani, Chair of Geocase

Dear Ambassador Hoagland, dear Speakers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 'multi-vector' model cannot be applied to Georgia for several perfectly understandable reasons: 1) A large part of the country remains under Russian occupation, which naturally prevents Tbilisi from adopting a truly 'multi-vector' approach. 2) That said, a policy of 'multi-vector-minus-one' (i.e. minus

the occupying power, Russia) might be conceivable, yet even if such a policy were pursued, Georgia's path would still differ greatly from the balancing acts pursued by Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. Tbilisi steadfastly pursues formal Euro-Atlantic integration with all possible emphasis and without any meaningful caveats, and Georgia's very clear foreign policy trajectory is explicitly and irreversibly enshrined in the country's constitution.

But all this does not, of course, deny the importance of stability and co-operation in the South Caucasus, within the wider Black Sea region and in relation to the Black and Caspian Sea 'macro-region'.

Georgia's contributions to cross-border co-operation and regional development are premised on the country's role as a pivot for various major international projects, whose geopolitical and financial viability Tbilisi seeks to ensure. A multi-vector policy should therefore not be seen as purely 'outbound' in nature (e.g. Georgia vs. major regional stakeholders) but must also include 'inbound' elements that stem from the genuine interest of stakeholders in their own domestic stability and order. It also entails the vital interests of regional actors such as Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan with respect to Georgia's reforms and closer integration with Western markets and institution. This very high degree of interdependence and interconnectedness demonstrates all the realities of geopolitics and geo-economics in the Black Sea and Caspian region, and indeed underlines the importance of the need to make ties even stronger and more resilient. Combined with the region's long history and the looming challenges of our post-pandemic world, Georgia must position herself as a key actor capable of providing reliable access to the wider world and to the West while bypassing political bumps and risks, if you will. A G-World in which each country selfishly stands up for its own interests and ignores others would not just be ill-suited to our region but would also completely and irreversibly shatter the idea of furthering our interests in union or alliance with others.

Georgia's progress is equally important for the United States and the European Union: it is no accident or coincidence that both Washington and Brussels variously praise Tbilisi as a 'valuable' and 'key' partner in the region. These adjectives clearly underline Georgia's foreign policy choices and come as no surprise considering the pace and ambition of the country's agenda for rapprochement with the EU as well as the strategic nature of its partnership with the United States. In terms of Georgia's relationship with Europe, it is encouraging to observe how the country is building new political, economic and cultural ties with its European 'homeland'; how new EU and Eastern Partnership initiatives are tangibly bringing 'more Europe' to the region; and how awareness of the wider Black Sea and Caspian region is increasing among EU member states. As for US-Georgia ties, the two countries' strategic partnership charter is truly a unique constitutional document that sets out many ways in which Washington and Tbilisi can co-operate politically, economically, culturally and militarily. Beyond this, the standalone bipartisan Georgia Support Act reinforces and expands America's unwavering support for Tbilisi and determination to

oppose Russian occupation; the National Defence Authorization Act for 2021 defines various meaningful forms of US-Georgian co-operation; as does the FY 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act; and the 2016 memorandum deepening defence and security partnership became a framework agreement that was renewed in 2019. The House and Senate have in addition introduced dozens of resolutions and bills in support of Georgia, and preliminary discussions are underway over a free-trade agreement between two countries. The United States are of course not the Black Sea or Caspian country but are to some extent already a Black Sea power.

All the efforts and steps I have described go well beyond a purely bilateral format, and their ultimate goals are to promote the region's stability and prosperity through soft power, responding to the needs of the region's various members and meeting the expectations of all the relevant stakeholders beyond its boundaries. If there ever was a cause and purpose that we had to share, together, this is it.

Thank you - and I would, of course, be delighted to answer any questions you may have.

<https://geocase.ge/en/news/203/jeoqeisi-s-tavmjdomare-viqtor-yifiani-amerikisa-da-kaspiis-regionistematikaze-gamartul-onlain-forumze-mokhsenebit-gamovida>

Watch the online discussion: <https://bit.ly/3oOfwPz>

### **Geocase in the Time of Coronavirus: Challenges, Opportunitites, Ways Forward**

*Date: 18.07.2020*

*Place: Tbilisi, Georgia*

Geocase organized discussions with decisionmakers on the Georgian experience in the time of coronavirus.



The special guest H.E. Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia opened discussions. H.E. Salome Zourabichvili highlighted: “COVID Crisis for Georgia has been like for everybody else a difficult experience. It has tested us in some respects, and I would say that we are past that test. It has tested our trust and democracy, and we have been able to manage what I would call a trust triangle - knowledgeable epidemiologists, effective government, and responsible society”.

H.E. Salome Zourabichvili mentioned: “We fully appreciate the substantial humanitarian, economic and financial support that we’ve received from the EU, from the whole international community, and

international financial organisations. The fact that the European Union has included Georgia among the 15 safe countries and has renewed this inclusion just yesterday – is very important and very valued here. It's not only a facility for Georgians to travel and for Europeans to come to Georgia, but it's also a sign of the solidarity, that should remain in the future when it comes to access to the vaccine – that is an access that should be equally warranted for countries”.

Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Mrs. Ekaterine Tikaradze presented to the diplomats a brief report on the Georgian experience in the time of coronavirus.

In the speech, Mrs. Ekaterine Tikaradze underlined the issue of rendering assistance to the population living in the occupied territories and noted that during this period the number of the persons entered for receiving healthcare services were unprecedentedly big. Three coronavirus cases were confirmed among these individuals.

“In addition to accepting them in the Rukhi hospital, we render assistance on the site, providing tests, personal protective equipment, consultations; the WHO is actively involved as well”, - noted Mrs. Ekaterine Tikaradze.

The Minister stressed, that amid the pandemic the importance of healthcare and the problems existing in the field became vivid to the public.

“The main priorities of life were somehow reassessed. I think that after COVID, much stronger focus will be placed on healthcare since all the shortcomings existing in the healthcare sector of each country have become more clearly visible to the world. The significance of science and of the development of this field was also explicitly underlined”, - stated Mrs. Ekaterine Tikaradze.

Geocase Chair Mr. Victor Kipiani emphasized: “We all know that great changes are taking place in Georgia, and stakeholders and partners must be kept fully informed of these changes in order to help them reach their own unbiased conclusions and make well-informed decisions. We must also work together to guide and support Georgia's efforts to tackle the country's most pressing needs and challenges, advising decision-makers on the right course of action to take”. “Georgia has managed challenges in the global crisis. Continuation of effective communication with our partners is an important precondition to overcome common challenges in the future,” – underlined Mr. Victor Kipiani.

Research Fellow at Geocase Dr. Khatuna Burkadze talked about partners' support in the time of coronavirus. She highlighted: “Given the global crisis can be handled through joint efforts. Partners have stood by Georgia and assisted us in tackling health, economic, social and other challenges”. “I hope we will highlight our strategic importance more intensively with obtaining new role including a digital hub

in the region and deepen our ties with partners in the transformed international system to achieve our European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations,” – added Dr. Khatuna Burkadze.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/45/jeoqeisis-organizebit-pandemiis-periodshi-saqartvelosgamocdilebis-shesakheb-diskusia-gaimarta>



### **External & Internal Dimensions of the Electoral Reform**

*Date: 15.07.2020*

*Place: Online format*

On July 15, 2020, Geocase organized a virtual discussion on external & internal dimensions of the electoral reform of Georgia. Within the virtual meeting Mr Kakhaber Kutchava, Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia, Dr Khatuna Burkadze, Research Fellow at Geocase, Mr Oleg (Bacho) Tortladze, Research Fellow at Geocase and Ms Ketevan Chachava, Chairwoman of Sector 3 addressed the audience and talked about the importance of the constitutional amendments, its external and internal dimensions and the development of Georgian electoral system.

Mr Victor Kipiani, Geocase Chair was a moderator of the online discussion. Mr Victor Kipiani highlighted: ‘In the current constitution, changes to the electoral system are not ordinary amendments: they are instead a shift to a qualitatively different model which also involves the formation of stable political and party standards as well as ensuring wide possibilities for participation in defining the country’s domestic and foreign policies. Given the special importance of this aim, it was very desirable for every main political party to be involved into parliamentary discussions of these constitutional amendments; and alongside the electoral agenda, this would have sent a very clear message of Georgia’s readiness to establish a new code of behavior in politics’. ‘This is why both the disappointment that diplomats from our partner countries felt when this process of separate political groups was abandoned, and the praise they subsequently expressed following the adoption of these amendments, were equally understandable and noteworthy’- he added.

Mr Kakhaber Kutchava, Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia emphasized that the international community, as well as the facilitators of the political dialogue, commended those who ensured the successful passing of the reform package and labelled this momentum as ‘historic’ in modern parliamentary life of Georgia.



Dr Khatuna Burkadze, Research Fellow at Geocase highlighted: ‘In years Georgia aspires to become an integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic structures. Currently, the electoral reform is a precondition for maintaining accomplishments and continuation of reforms on the European and Euro-Atlantic path’. ‘The leading mechanism through which the state improves the quality of democracy is political pluralism, which guarantees the power-sharing and greater political representation. Other than that, the proportional electoral system is the most compatible with the parliamentary system, in which political parties learn cooperation through deliberation and consent. It is believed that the consensus-based policies enhance procedural democracy and produce democratic political outcomes’ –she added.

Mr Oleg (Bacho) Tortladze, Research Fellow mentioned: ‘Depolarizing the political environment and consolidating society around basic election principles are essential preconditions for a democratic election campaign and voting. Political parties and media outlets have a major responsibility in the implementation of the ODIHR and PACE recommendations and in ensuring a peaceful election. Personal attacks should shift to topic-based debates. Media organizations should set minimum ethical standards and ensure balanced coverage of election topics despite their political affiliations’.

Ms Ketevan Chachava, Chairwoman of Sector 3 talked about recommendations of the international organizations and challenges of elections including disinformation.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/46/geocase-online-discussion-on-external-internal-dimensions-of-theelectoral-reform>

Watch the online discussion: <https://bit.ly/2LUEZbO>

### **Black Sea Security: Creative Thinking and Georgia’s Perspectives**

*Date: 30.06.2020*

*Place: Online format*

The topic of this online discussion was ‘Black Sea Security: Creative Thinking and Georgia’s

Perspectives’.



The Chairman of Geocase, Mr Viktor Kipiani, stated that ongoing developments require fast and effective steps to be taken in order to strengthen the presence of our Western partners on the Black Sea.

‘It is vitally important to correct security imbalances along the Alliance’s eastern flank and to restore parity between the Baltic and Black Sea regions. Ongoing processes require that we rapidly take effective steps to strengthen the presence of our Western partners on the Black Sea according to a principle of “One

Flank, One Threat, One Presence”. The specific characteristics of the Black Sea region must also be taken into consideration, and notably the ferocity with which different geopolitical interests are in confrontation.

The region is of critical importance to Russia’s efforts to ensure strategic depth along her southern borders, and as a corridor towards the Mediterranean and North Africa,’ stated Mr Kipiani.

According to Mr Kipiani, the Black Sea region is the lock of the Eastern European and Middle Eastern security: ‘Security in the Black Sea plays a role beyond the region’s borders, and acts as a kind of lock for Eastern European and Middle Eastern security. Also, China’s “One Belt, One Road” strategy will in the not-too-distant future add a new and important dimension to the Black Sea region, further complicating the task of ensuring a balance of power between the region’s different actors.’

The Director of the Douglas and Sarah Allison Center for Foreign Policy at The Heritage Foundation, Mr Luke Coffey argued that NATO’s naval presence in the Black Sea should be increased in order to strengthen the Alliance’s position in the region, and suggested establishing a Black Sea Security Centre in Georgia. It could be a model of the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn. He also underlined the fact that many things have changed since the Bucharest Summit and that Georgia can continue its Euro-Atlantic integration process separately, ‘but we must help Georgia as well as Ukraine on their paths towards Euro-Atlantic integration,’ he added.

The President of Georgia, H.E. Salome Zourabichvili contributed to this online discussion, pointing out that she raised the idea of a centre of excellence in Batumi to NATO authorities 1 year ago—an initiative that she hopes will be carried out.

The Research Fellow at Geocase, Dr Khatuna Burkadze noted that Georgia’s integration into NATO can be accelerated and the twelve years’ promise of the Bucharest Summit should be delivered in the future.

She highlighted: “Historically, the enlargement of NATO has illustrated that it brings security and stability to the countries and the regions. NATO should remain an important instrument for Western strategy in the Black Sea region. This issue is crucial for the concept of - a Europe, whole, free and at peace because the Black Sea region, whole and free is an integral part of the European security architecture. In this regard, Georgia is a reliable partner due to the following reasons:

Despite impediments, Georgia made startlingly rapid progress in democratic transition. Also, adoption of the constitutional amendment has illustrated that Georgia has taken an important step towards greater parliamentary pluralism for the 2020 parliamentary elections. Georgia is an example for the region;

Georgia has important progress in the process of Euro-Atlantic integration, showing the unwavering commitment of Georgian people towards shared values. Currently, Georgia has almost 900 troops in Afghanistan making it the largest non-NATO troop contributor to the NATO training mission. Georgia

will continue to contribute to the European security architecture for achieving together with partners the common goal - a Europe, whole, free and at peace;

Georgia's strategic location makes it important for NATO. Georgia sits at a crucial geographical and cultural crossroads and has proven itself to be strategically important for economic and military reasons. Georgia offers its infrastructure and logistic capabilities for the transit of NATO forces.

Ambassador Nikoloz Rtvelashvili emphasized the historic and modern aspects of security in the Black Sea region.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/41/jeoqesi-s-organizbit-luk-kofis-monatsileobit-shavi-zghvisregionis-usafrtkhoebis-shesakheb-onlain-diskusia-gaimarta>

Watch the online discussion: <https://bit.ly/38L2JI8>



### **Polish Eastern Policy 2019**

*Date: 27/29.11.2019*

*Place: Poland*

On November 27-29, 2019, Andrzej Klimczyk, the Geocase Advisory Board member, participated in the conference: "Polish Eastern Policy 2019".

The event was organized by College of Eastern Europe in Wroclaw and under Honorary patronage of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, prof. Jacek Czaputowicz.

During the conference, among others issues, priorities of Polish foreign policy, future of Eastern Partnership Program and cooperation between EU countries and Georgia were discussed Mr Klimczyk was one of the speakers at the panel named "Black Sea - a geopolitical Trojan horse?" which was prepared by the editors of the bimonthly "New Eastern Europe". In his speech Andrzej Klimczyk thoroughly informed the participants about current situation in Georgia. He stressed that Georgia is the most advanced State in economic, social and democratic reforms on the road to join EU out of all countries participating in the Eastern Partnership Program.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/news/23/jeoqesi-s-mrcheveli-anzhei-klimchuki-konferenciaze-polonetisaghmosavluri-politika-2019>



## Georgia Defence Security Conference (GDSC)

*Date: 6/7.10.2019*

*Place: Batumi, Georgia*

Victor Kipiani, the Chair of Geocase and Andrzej Klimczyk, the advisory board

member, participated in Georgia Defence Security Conference (GDSC) held in Batumi, Georgia, on November 6-7, 2019.



<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/4/jeoqeisi-s-tsarmomadgenleba-saqartvelos-tavdacvisa-dausafitkhoebis-konferenciashi-gdsc-monatsileoba-miighes>



## Hybrid Warfare in The Black Sea Region: Ways for Effective Countering

*Date: 30.10.2019 Place: Tbilisi, Georgia*

On October 30, 2019, Victor Kipiani, the Chairman of Geocase, moderated the session entitled "Hybrid Warfare in The Black Sea Region: Ways for Effective Countering" at the NATO-Georgia Public Diplomacy Forum held in Tbilisi.

The aim of the forum was to contribute to the expansion of the Public Diplomacy Experts Network and to share information and experience with NATO member and partner countries.

The forum was attended by representatives of governmental structures, the North Atlantic Alliance, international and local NGOs, research and analytical institutes, as well as experts from NATO member and partner countries.

The 4th NATO-Georgia Public Diplomacy Forum was organized by the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia and the Information Center of NATO and the European Union with support of the Embassy of Poland to Georgia.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/3/nato-saqartvelos-sakhalkho-diplomatiis-forumi-30-oqtomberi2019-ts>

Watch the online discussion: <https://bit.ly/38KGPVE>

**Geocase hosted a meeting with William Lahue, the former head of the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia and a former NATO liaison officer in the South Caucasus**

*Date: 10.10.2020*

*Place: Tbilisi, Georgia*



On October 10, 2019, Geocase hosted the first of the series of informal "coffee chat" gatherings, entitled "Georgia's NATO Membership - opportunity and roadblocks: thoughts and reflections".

The event's keynote speaker was William Lahue, the former head of the NATO Liaison Office in Georgia and a former NATO liaison officer in the South Caucasus.

Victor Kipiani, the chair of Geocase, moderated the meeting the aim of which was to discuss NATO-Georgia relations and perspectives of Georgia's NATO membership.

At the meeting, the representatives of the civil and public sectors, diplomatic corps and researchers discussed various ways and the prospect of Georgia's NATO membership as well as other optimal options for strengthening the country's security within the Atlantic community.

<https://www.geocase.ge/en/events/1/shekhvedra-saqartvelosa-da-samkhret-kavkasiashi-nato-ssamekavshireo-ofisis-yofil-khelmdzghvaneltan-b-n-uiliam-lehiustan>

## Interviews and publications

### Victor Kipiani

#### **The Three Seas Initiative: An All-important Project for Georgia and the Region**

*Date: 02.11.2020*

In peruse of reliable and efficient projects and platforms to increase the resilience of democracies in the region and increase intensify partnership between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black sea region countries, Victor Kipiani, the



author of the article, discusses The Three Seas Initiative (3SI) and considers it to have a great potential political and institutional impact for maintaining stability and democracy in countries of the regions, thereby preserving democracy in the entire Western world. “3SI is as important for Tbilisi as any other viable initiative capable of bringing the country closer to Europe, and increasing Georgia’s engagement with Central and Eastern Europe is indeed essential for the country’s economic development and efforts to upgrade its critical infrastructure—not only for Georgia’s benefit, but also for that of the countries of the wider Black Sea region, “ notes Victor Kipiani in his article.

*Please read the full version:* <https://www.geocase.ge/en/publications/285/the-three-seas-initiative-an-all-important-project-for-georgia-and-the-region>

#### **About Tomorrow – Remembering Yesterday While Bearing in Mind the Present Day**

*Date: 07.01.2021*

According to Victor Kipiani, Georgia's urgent objective is to materialize the idea of modern Georgian national-state unity oriented not merely towards tomorrow (time flies fast even without looking back), but the day after tomorrow... We must analyze with equal accuracy both the dynamics of global and regional trends and the anatomy of domestic challenges and determine the impact of the interrelationship of the first two and their effect on the third.



The success of any affair is based on understanding its conceptually correct beginnings, substantiating the principles that define the system, and finding the optimal point of intersection between historical memory, current process, and future mosaic.

One of the main guarantees of our overall success is natural unity.

In advocating our development and interests, we must, first and foremost, rely on ourselves. And whatever is the support of the international system and law, its effectiveness and efficiency must rely on the main foundation – Georgian realism, qualified pragmatism and, in terms of values, - rationalism.

*Please read the full version:* <https://www.geocase.ge/en/publications/340/khvalindelze-gushindelisgakhsebita-da-dghevandelis-gatvalistsinebit>

## Baqar Palavandishvili

### Geopolitics and EU Competition Law

*Date: 26.02.2020*

The article discusses the complicated interplay between EU's industrial policy, competition policy and developments on the global market. The tension between these considerations manifested itself in the blocking by EU Commission of the merger of Europe's two biggest rail companies and



subsequent reactions of EU member countries. As a result, there is a strong call for reforming EU competition law to take into account EU's broad strategic goals and long-term implications of geopolitical challenges. Any reform of EU competition law would have lasting implications not only for Europe, but also for other countries such as Georgia.

*Please read the full version: <https://geocase.ge/en/publications/58/geopolitikuri-realoba-da-evrokavshiris-konkurenciis-politika>*

### Georgia's Investment Strategy – Part I

*Date: 10.10.2020*

The article concerns the relevance of foreign direct investment (FDI) for Georgian economy and discusses the mechanisms to speed up the process of FDI spillover effect, which includes improving the capabilities of domestic firms by learning about new production techniques,



management and business practices through demonstration and imitation as well as through linkages between the investor and domestic companies and by raising the skills and productive knowledge of employees. The article discusses the significance of sophisticated industries, the role of priority sector and the education policy. In addition to opportunities, the article analyses the challenges of the proposed strategy and offers the solutions.

*Please read the full version: <https://geocase.ge/en/publications/267/saqartvelos-sainvesticio-politika-na-tsili-i>*



## Khatuna Burkadze



**Dr. Khatuna Burkadze - It is essential to accelerate Georgia's membership in NATO through the strong support of the US and other members of the Alliance.**

*Date: 19.11.2020*

*Interpressnews discussed strategic co-operation between Georgia and the United States with **Dr. Prof.***

***Khatuna Burkadze**, a fellow researcher at Geocase.*

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze underlined: ‘In the very turbulent time in the region, the visit of the US Secretary of State has illustrated that the US strongly supports Georgia. Strategic partnership with the US will assist Georgia to overcome existing challenges’.

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze emphasized: ‘Because of the changing security environment, we need to strengthen defense and security co-operation with our strategic partner including in the field of cyber defense. Unfortunately, Georgia is a target of cyberattacks in the cyber era. Nowadays, ensuring secure cyberspace is one of the key priorities of national security policies. In light of the foregoing considerations, it is essential to develop new initiatives for enhancing defense and security capabilities. One of the new initiatives could be the establishment of joint the US-Georgia Center to counter hybrid threats. Also, the expansion of joint-exercises and continuation of the development of appropriate infrastructure will enhance our security in the region and increase abilities to overcome challenges effectively’.

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze highlighted: ‘Under the administration of President Joseph R. Biden, I believe that our relations will deepen and bring new initiatives in terms of enhancing strategic partnership in the fields of democracy, defense and security, economy and people-to-people relations’. She spoke about 7 key priorities of the US-Georgia strategic partnership agenda.

*Please read the full interview: <https://geocase.ge/en/publications/308/khatuna-burkadze-ashsh-s-mtkicemkhardatcherit-saqartvelos-nato-shi-tsevroba-dasachqarebelia>*



**Dr. Khatuna Burkadze – As a strategic partner, the United States steadily supports Georgia**

*Date: 06.10.2020*

Interpressnews discussed strategic co-operation between Georgia and the United States with Dr. Prof. Khatuna Burkadze, a fellow researcher at Geocase.

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze emphasized: ‘In the emerging post-pandemic international system, Georgia with the US support should succeed in achieving greater integration with the global economy, strengthening energy security and establishing itself as a transit and logistic hub by carrying out largescale economic projects.’

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze underlined: ‘Also, it is vital to launch the negotiations on a free-trade agreement between Georgia and America. In this regard, it is essential to highlight Georgia’s strategic location, located at the critical crossroads. This free-trade agreement would encourage greater American investment in Georgia as well as increase the number of American tourists, further strengthening co-operation between Georgia and America in the security sphere.’

‘Multi-dimensional co-operation with the United States will assist Georgia to achieve its greater goals on its Euro-Atlantic path’, - Dr. Khatuna Burkadze added.

*Please read the full interview:* <https://geocase.ge/en/publications/200/khatuna-burkadze-ashsh-rogorcstrategiuli-mokavshire-saqartvelos-tsinsvlas-mtkiced-utchers-mkhars>



**Dr. Khatuna Burkadze – In the post-pandemic period, Georgia will continue to overcome challenges and implement reforms with the EU support**

*Date: 11.09.2020*

*Interview on Georgia’s European perspective, EUGeorgia agenda and European aid with Dr. Khatuna Burkadze, a research fellow at Geocase.*

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze underlined: ‘70 years have passed since the birth of the idea of European integration. Through the idea of cooperation within the European Community, the European states have achieved a high level of economic and political integration. Therefore, the EU has a distinguished role

among regional international organizations. Supranational elements of the EU such as legislative, executive and judicial institutions facilitate to define the EU policy areas and implement European norms, standards effectively.’

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze mentioned: ‘The EU stands by Georgia and assists it in tackling health, economic, social and other challenges. The EU assistance package covers all vulnerable groups to deliver tangible results to the Georgian population’.

Dr. Khatuna Burkadze emphasized: ‘Being a full member of the European family means to have a sustainable European state system that contributes to building a stronger Europe. The Baltic states, regardless of Soviet history, have become member states of the EU. This is a significant model for Georgia on the European integration path’.

‘The post-pandemic period could give the impetus to the EU including a new approach of the EU Enlargement. It will increase opportunities for Georgia’s European perspective to become a member of the European family currently made up of 27 countries with 450 million citizens’, - Dr. Khatuna Burkadze added.

*Please read the full interview:* <https://geocase.ge/en/publications/142/khatuna-burkadze-post-pandemiurperiodshic-saqartvelo-evrokavshiris-mkhardatcherit-gaagrdzelebs-gamotsvevebtan-gamklavebasa-dareformebis-gankhorcielebas>



## Zviad Kirtava



### **Before the second wave**

*Date: 12.09.2020*

Over the summer, mitigation of previous restrictions, border opening, rise of tourism and mobility have resulted - along with significant revival of economy - also in notable public disregard for previously well-adopted recommendations (facemasks, distancing,

avoidance of mass gatherings) witnessed in a number of countries due to the growing illusion of impressive success against the pandemic, and so called Covid-fatigue. All of these has led to a serious increase of cases even in countries where pandemic control had previously been well exercised. Georgia also started to see an increase in clusters and cases in recent weeks, as well as a low compliance of the population to recommendations. That requires timely improvement of communication, usage of objective measurable dataset for follow-up observation of epidemiological situation, and other relevant preparatory changes of pandemic management, in case new – this time hopefully more localized and pinpoint - containment measures are needed.

*Please read the full version: <https://www.geocase.ge/en/publications/239/meore-talghis-tsin>*



### **New studies suggest possible cross-immunity between common cold and Covid-19**

*Date: 17.05.2020*

Several studies indicate there might be both cellular (lymphocyte-based) and humoral (antibody-based) cross-immunity between pandemic-causing new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) with other, less

dangerous strains of Human coronaviruses (HCoV) - for years causing the so-called “Common cold”. That could explain differences in COVID morbidity and mortality, better protection of children, and unexplained cases of non-transmission to some family members, which had close and persistent contacts with infected persons. In case of confirmation these preliminary results may have significant implication on development of population immunity as well as on possibility of future polyvalent coronavirus vaccine studies.

Source:

- <https://www.cell.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0092-8674%2820%2930610-3>
- <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.05.14.095414v1?fbclid=IwAR3IC72lOPIppxxjZqOjV01hfdsXDyrGbIZz5pNZpB3rcBeokDOtkgMu2Y8>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/general-information.html>

*Please read the full version:* <https://www.geocase.ge/ka/publications/150/akhali-kvlevebi-sezonur-gacie-basa-da-covid-19-s-shoris-jvaredini-imunitetis-shesadzleblobaze-miutiteben>

Lika Tchipashvili



### **President-elect Joe Biden and the EU: Waves on both sides of the Atlantic are now blue**

*Date: 25.11.2020*

Given current priorities of foreign policy of the elected President, Joe Biden and the EU, the paper focuses on the normalization of US-EU relations. The article emphasizes the importance of Euro

American cooperation in strengthening common Western values, NATO, tackling common global challenges such as the Covid -19 pandemic, climate change and so on. “[Biden’s victory] Such results no longer put into question the international liberal order and it can be seen as a contributing factor to the normalization of the largely rules-based international system.” noted in the article. The prospect of a closer development of Euro-American relations is seen as a new opportunity to further develop Georgian national interests regarding Georgia’s Full EU and NATO Membership.

Please read the full version: <https://www.geocase.ge/en/publications/312/jo-baideni-da-evrokavshiri-akhlal-talghebi-atlantis-orive-mkhare-lurjia>



### **Gender quotas: the worst mechanism for increasing women’s political participation except for all the others**

*Date: 16.07.2020*

The article underlines the importance of increasing women's political representation in Georgia. Among other things, it focuses on the current situation and ambivalence of women's political

participation in all branches of power: the representation of women at the legislative level is extremely low, while women represent around 53% of Georgia’s judiciary and Georgia is ranking among leading countries in the world with high representation of women at the executive level. Taking into account the successful experience of many different countries around the world, the article highlights advantages of mandatory gender quotas to become Georgian political parties’ system more democratic and resilient.

Please read the full version: <https://www.geocase.ge/en/publications/193/genderuli-kvotireba-yvelaze-cudi-meqanizmi-qalta-politikuri-monatsileobis-zrdisa-magram-uketesi-ar-arsebobs>



### **Georgian Case in the European Union**

*Date: 14.05.2020*

Dedicated to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, the paper highlights the importance of the European Project and its invaluable benefits.

*“Over the past seven decades, the European project’s achievements have made it the world’s*

*best, most effective and functional model of a Community of Nations - not only for its member states, but also for its partners [including Georgia].”* noted in the article. The paper focuses on the democratic progress and concrete achievements of Georgia on the path of EU integration, a leading country among members of the Eastern Partnership as well as Western Balkans. Given the current geopolitical context, the article emphasizes the coincidence between the EU’s priorities and national interests of Georgia which makes the prospect to further develop mutually beneficial co-operation better than ever.

*Please read the full version: <https://www.geocase.ge/en/publications/146/qartuli-qeisi-evrokavshirshi>*

Bacho Tortladze

**TikTok – a Hidden Threat to State Sovereignty**

*Date: 13.05.2020*

The article discusses the challenges of the Internet space related to both personal data and state security. The focus is on the social network TikTok, which has skyrocketed to popularity in many countries around the world, including Georgia. The mobile application is considered to be a practical tool of Chinese propaganda and state policy. It analysis possible threats directly related to Georgia and proposes specific measures for risk insurance.



Source: <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/347858>

Please read the full version: <https://www.geocase.ge/ka/publications/145/tiktoki-faruli-safirkhe-sakhe-lmtsifo-suverenitetistvis>

**Twelve Years since the 2008 War - Challenges and Perspectives**

*Date: 08.08.2020*

The article summarizes the political and legal aspects of the status quo 12 years after the August 2008 War. It explains the importance of defining Russia as an occupying force for the effective conduct of Georgia's non-recognition policy. The historical and legal facets of the issue are analyzed to dispel speculation about on whom the responsibility for starting the war should be laid. It summarizes prospects for restoring the country's territorial integrity, including the role of non-recognition policy in the process of protecting Georgia's sovereignty.



Source: <https://www.ghn.ge/news/230819-2008-tslis-agvistos-omi-kronika>

Please read the full version: <https://www.geocase.ge/ka/publications/211/12-tseli-agvistos-omidan-ga-motsvevebi-da-perspeqtivebi>



## Infographics



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In advocating our development and interests, we must, first and foremost, rely on ourselves And whatever is the support of the international system and law, its effectiveness and efficiency must rely on the main foundation – Georgian realism, qualified pragmatism and, in terms of values, - rationalism.

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**VICTOR KIPIANI**  
CHAIRMAN



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We should not rely only on international rankings, the real signal for the investor is the other investors already operating and doing business in the country.

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**BAKAR PALAVANDISHVILI**  
GEOCASE BOARD MEMBER



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MULTI-DIMENSIONAL CO-OPERATION  
WITH THE UNITED STATES WILL ASSIST  
GEORGIA TO ACHIEVE ITS GREATER  
GOALS ON ITS EURO-ATLANTIC PATH AND  
ENHANCE OUR STRATEGIC RELATIONS.

DR. KHATUNA BURKADZE

 Geocase



“

CORONAVIRUS DOES NOT ALLOW US  
TO MAINTAIN A STATIC, UNCHANGING  
STRATEGY FOR A LONG TIME. THE  
SITUATION CAN CHANGE RAPIDLY,  
ESPECIALLY IF WE ARE RELUCTANT TO  
FOLLOW THE REGULATIONS... WE HAVE  
TO MOVE FORWARD WITH SUCH A  
PRINCIPLE - "TWO STEPS FORWARD,  
STOP, CHECK THE SITUATION, AND  
MAYBE, - A STEP BACK"... AND AGAIN  
FROM THE BEGINNING ...

**Dr. Zviad Kirtava**

 Geocase

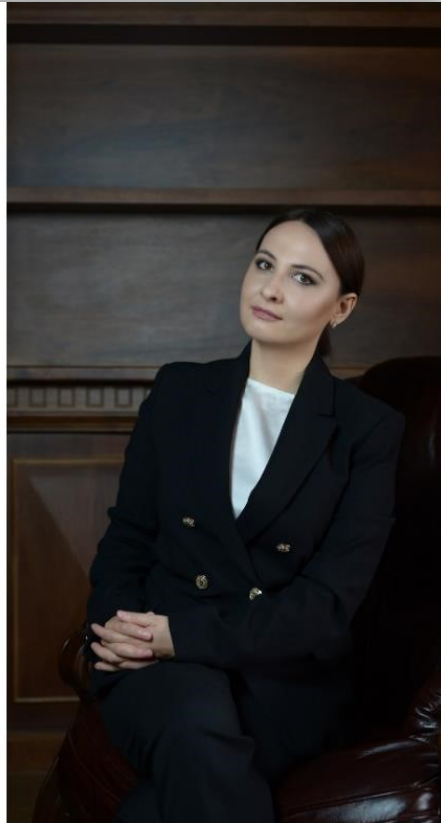




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The prospect of a closer development of relations between the US and the EU, especially in the process of strengthening common western values and developing multilateralism, should be considered only as a contributing factor to Georgia's national interests regarding Georgia's full European (EU) and Euro-Atlantic (NATO) integration.

**LIKA TCHIPASHVILI**  
Fellow Researcher



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**Unfortunately, the modus operandi of the Georgian political spectrum, in which players see themselves as fighting a mythical battle of good vs. evil, remains unchanged.**

**OLEG (BACHO) TORTLADZE**

