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VISIONS AND AIMS FOR SECURITY SECTOR GOVERNANCE IN SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

Introduction

The traditional understanding of security covers two basic fields – defense and foreign policy, while the modern understanding of security is more encompassing and includes also topics related to stability and sustainable development.

The exploitation and the transport of the Caspian oil and gas resources as well as the region's strategic location make regional security an issue of highest importance. When we discuss the regional stability problems in the Caucasus, the zones of frozen conflict, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, often quickly become a central issue, because they are a threat to the stability and the normal development of the countries concerned. However, one should not forget that others issues, such as the fight against corruption, the build-up of a stable economy, the democratic development and the promotion of the rule of law are no less important for the security of the South Caucasus region.

Georgia currently experiences mass protests and strikes against the governmental coalition's attempts to remain on power through falsifying the results of the recent parliamentary elections. The public's reaction shows that the existence of a viable democracy is becoming one of the most important aspects of security in the country. In other words, it is increasingly difficult to establish stability when the constitutional (political) rights of the people are ignored. Thus, democracy could be considered as one of the main factors for stabilizing the region.

This has been proved by the peaceful government change Georgia lived in November 2003, possible thanks to the existence of still weak, but already working civil structures, such as free media, specialized NGOs and a growing public awareness of a civil society. Furthermore, it can be

qualified as an important evolution that power structures remained loyal to their constitutional duties in this crisis situation, despite some attempts to involve them in the political conflict.

Summarizing we can state that democratic reforms and the existence of civil society structures might be the strongest guarantees for stability and sustainable development of the South Caucasus region and are a key precondition for integration into the Western military and political structures such as NATO and the EU.

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