

Dr Philipp Fluri

PREFACE

Democratic institution building in and democratic governance of the security sector continue to pose challenges to all governments which have emerged from the former Soviet Union. Sustainable democratization presupposes not only a general willingness and informedness, but also operational knowledge which can only come from democratic practice.

It was with great enthusiasm that the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) coordinated PfP Consortium Working Group on Security Sector Governance accepted the challenge to cooperate on the Reichenau (Austria) conference which led to this volume. Scholars and practitioners from the Caucasus and on the Caucasus united to contribute to this publication from the perspectives of their individual specializations.

The organizers and participants were well aware of the fact that they were in for an experiment. Security Sector Governance had not been much of a catchword in a region for which lagging reforms seemed to be a trademark.

The organizers and participants were certainly positively surprised by the how constructive discussions were, and by how cooperative participants showed themselves. Whoever has the experience of attending and/or organising conferences on regional security in the Caucasus will have gone through excruciating reading of prepared texts, and endless discussions of who did what to whom during the last 4'000 years – and who would deny that the Caucasus is a region which has seen violence? The Reichenau conference participants however accepted the challenge to introduce security sector reform efforts, successes and failures in their home countries and territories to representatives of a well-informed, interested and compassionate international community.

The very features which make the Caucasus a unique region – originality, humour, wit, warmth and, more than everything else, hospitality – thus became guiding principles of the conference.

The 2003 Reichenau Caucasus conference was, to a large extent, not yet a conference on security sector reform, nor on good governance in the security sector. It was rather a highly constructive conference at which concepts such as democratic oversight and reform of the security sector were introduced and discussed. Democratic governance of the security sector was identified as a worthwhile objective. Democratic oversight and reform of the security sector were discussed as guiding and shared principles of European integration and Euroatlantic partnership and cooperation. The Caucasian experiences were preferred as experiences in their own right.²

I would like to congratulate the organizers on the 2003 conference. The experience certainly bears repetition and expansion.

Geneva, January 2004

Philipp Fluri, DDr.
Deputy Director DCAF

² See also *Security Sector Governance in Georgia*, DCAF publication, 2004 (forthcoming)