

Editor's Note

The current issue of the Caucasus Strategic Perspectives (CSP) journal entitled *“South Caucasus at the Crossroad of Peace and War”* is dedicated to the different mediation activities between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenia’s internationally wrongful acts and foreign policy, Armenia-Azerbaijan peace process, as well as the news initiatives in the South Caucasus region.

The CSP’s new issue includes 7 articles. The CSP’s current authors analysed the EU’s and the US’s mediator roles to reconcile Armenia and Azerbaijan, Armenia’s international responsibility in relation to the formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan, Russia-Armenia relations, the perspective of the Middle Corridor, and Iran-Armenia relations and its implications for Azerbaijan, etc.

The new issue’s *Articles Section* starts with **Esmira Jafarova’s** article of *“The Role of the European Union and the United States in Armenia–Azerbaijan Peace Process: Shifting Gears with Optimism?”* which explores the recently found activism by two external actors – the European Union and the United States – in the post-conflict peace process between Armenia and Azerbaijan following the 44-day Karabakh War and poses the question of *“Can the EU and the US make a real difference with their newly found activism?”*.

Joint article of **Agha Bayramov, Tom Wagenmakers, and Douwe van der Meer** titled *“From Passive to Active: Unpacking the EU’s New Role in Promoting Peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia”* analyses the European Union’s increased involvement in promoting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan following the Second Karabakh War in 2020, explores the motivations behind the EU’s engagement, including its political and economic interests in the South Caucasus, and highlights the challenges that the EU faces in promoting lasting peace in this region.

Najiba Mustafayeva's article of "*Criminalization of Ecocide: Impetus towards Armenia's International Responsibility*" provides analysis of the existing legal framework and Armenia's obligations under international law for environmental damage in the liberated (formerly occupied) territories of Azerbaijan, with an overview of the current worldwide initiatives on criminalization of ecocide alongside other recognized international crimes, as well as the challenges and implications of this process.

Ali Askerov's article of "*Charting a Course between Independence and Semi-Colonialism: Armenia at a Crossroads*" focused primarily on Armenia's new policy aimed at reducing this country's dependence on Russia, which puts the former at a crossroads between remaining a client country of Russia or taking radical steps towards achieving genuine independence.

Soso Dzamukashvili's article of "*Stuck between War and Peace: What are the Prospects of a Peace Treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan?*" discusses major factors that impact the prospects of a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia and concludes that the process to sign a peace deal is significantly derailed by Russia, which is interested in keeping its military presence in the region by maintaining the status quo in the conflict-affected region of Azerbaijan.

Krzysztof Winkler's article of "*The Middle Corridor: Perspectives and Opportunities after the War in Ukraine*" argues that the war in Ukraine has created new momentum for Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Türkiye in terms of reinforcing the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route and assess the current political and economic environment and challenges related to the effective use of the Middle Corridor transport route that have to be dealt with.

Maxime Gauin's article of "*The Axis of the Iranian Islamist Regime and Armenian Nationalism*" presents the origins of and the recent developments in the alliance between Iran, on one side, and Armenian diaspora nationalists and the government of Armenia on the other, and also explains the reinforcement

of the ties between these two countries and the unprecedented rise of Iranian aggressiveness against Azerbaijan.

Finally, on behalf of the CSP team, we hope this issue provides food for thought and contributes to and enriches the discussion on subject-matter issue.

Sincerely
Farid Shafiyev
Editor-in-Chief of CSP Journal