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External Discussion Forum (EDF)

**"Strengthening the Co-operation of International Organizations
with NATO in Conflict Management: The Case of Abkhazia
and South Ossetia in the South Caucasus"**

Welcome to the EDF,

Our team of the 11th Vienna International Model United Nations (VIMUN) 2005 welcomes you to the External Discussion Forum on the topic of "Strengthening the Co-operation of International Organizations with NATO in Conflict Management: The Case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the South Caucasus". Without the subtitle this seems to be an overwhelming issue, but we decided to choose a small, really concrete topic to put under discussion so that our debates during the conference can be more detailed, coherent and comprehensive. The basic question is: how can armed conflicts in a country – in this case Georgia and the three autonomous regions contained within its borders – be solved? Who are the central parties of the conflict, which (geopolitical, strategic) interests do the Russian Federation, the United States and the European Union have? What sort of success can the UN and the OSCE missions expect? These and similar questions should be discussed in our committee. We hope to see well prepared – please have a look at the extensive reading list – and ambitious delegates willing to write a high-quality resolution.

For further questions feel free to contact us: edf.vimun@afa.at

Chairperson – Irina Beikert

Hello, I want to take the opportunity to briefly introduce myself and to tell you about my motivation for chairing the EDF. Currently I am about to complete my coursework in theater, film and media, with a minor in global studies at the University of Vienna. For my masters thesis I am writing about the visual representation of contemporary war in film. I am particularly interested in understanding the political, ethnic, religious, economic and social conflicts of the late 20th and early 21st centuries together with their historic background in order to be sensitive to current international relations. My further interests include photography, arts and architecture along with traveling.

I wish you all a good time while preparing for and attending the VIMUN 2005.

Co-Chairperson – Barbara Cucka

Dear Delegates, dear Observers, please allow me to introduce myself: I studied International Business at the University of Applied Sciences Eisenstadt (BA/MA). Right now, I am pursuing my Master studies of International Relations at Webster University Vienna. My studies are the perfect counterpart to my job as a lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences bfi Vienna where I teach Management and Intercultural Management. In my job my main areas of interest and research are intercultural communication and negotiation – in my studies they are international relations theory and conflict management. In my spare free time I love to read and do sports.

I am very much looking forward to meet you at VIMUN – it will be a perfect time for getting an insight into the world of diplomatic negotiations, an opportunity to learn more about the South Caucasus – and last but not least to meet people from different countries.

Usher – Siri Tholander

Hi, I would like to introduce myself and explain why I am participating as an usher at this year's VIMUN. After I had finished school last year I spent seven months working and traveling in New Zealand and Australia. Now that I am back, I will probably start to study in October, but I have not yet decided for a certain course of studies. I like literature, arts and theatre, I often go sailing and I like to travel a lot. As I am not only interested in other cultures and languages but also in the political and economic situation of other countries and international relations in general, I am now very eager to get some impression of how an international organization like the UN works and hope that I will learn a lot at the Model United Nations in Vienna.

Introduction to the Committee

The External Discussion Forum has been established in the year 2003, with the idea to create a platform for delegates to deal with problems that are beyond the UN, discuss these problems and come up, if possible, with a solution. So why are these topics beyond the UN? First of all, because the UN does not primarily care (in a committee on its own) about cooperation and collaboration with other international organizations. Secondly, the UN has a completely different approach to certain problems, and tries to keep out of it, or even has to keep out of it, as the topic of the VIMUN 2003 showed "The UN and Regional Alliances. The relationship between NATO and other regional security organizations to UN bodies."

In the following year, the second in existence, the EDF dealt with "NATO in conflict management: The case of Caucasus.", and touched a very delicate topic with it. The delegates of last years VIMUN EDF made an excellent job, and realized that the EDF is a very important institution within VIMUN, because it was absolutely necessary to involve NATO and OSCE, as well as the EU in the problem of the South Caucasus.

It is because of the enormous complexity of the topic of last years VIMUN that we, the Academic Forum for Foreign Affairs, the host and organizer of the VIMUN, decided to continue working on the problem of the South Caucasus, but to specify it more than last year.

So this year we treat the topic "Strengthening the Co-operation of International Organizations with NATO in Conflict Management: The Case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the South Caucasus". We will have 23 delegates and 4 observers.

Multiethnic Georgia is a wonderful case study to have a look on how, first, already present international organizations (United Nations, OSCE) manage to facilitate in the Abkhazian-Georgian and the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, and, second, how they could cooperate better among each other, and maybe also with other external actors (EU, NATO), that have not been very much present in Georgia, yet. Furthermore, you will be able to find out more about the respective countries' interests within the various international organizations and their interests within the South Caucasus; a region which was, not long ago, called to be the battle field of a "New Great Game". Since accession talks started with Bulgaria, Rumania, and Turkey, the European Union opened its eyes for a region which, up till then was barely noticed, and now could be neighbouring the EU within the near future: the South Caucasus. The so called "frozen" conflicts in Georgia, now, could become a threat for the Union's security interests as well. But it is not only the EU which opened its eyes for the South Caucasus. In the aftermath of the events of September 11 the USA looked for new alliance partners to bring stability to the region reaching from the Black Sea till the Near East. Thus, the appointment of a NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia (Robert Simmons) on 15 September 2004 was only a question of time. Georgia itself regards EU and NATO membership as a long term priority.

We are looking forward to welcome you at the EDF of VIMUN 2005.

Irina Beikert
Barbara Cucka
Siri Tholander

We would especially like to thank MA Marietta S. König for the following preparation paper, her scholarly research and academic advice.

Introduction to the Issue

Ethnic and Historical Background

Ethnic Georgians call themselves *Kartveli* and their country *Sakartvelo*. Language, religion and historical background are relevant criteria for determining ethnic identity in Georgia. However, in most of the conflicts in the Caucasus the religious factor actually plays only a trivial role. It is rather a “politicisation of ethnicity” that caused the outbreak of conflicts in the South Caucasus. An ethnic minority group demands independence and sovereignty over a geographic area of an emerging state, which they regard to be their autochthonous homeland. Their claim, however, violates the territorial integrity of the state. This autochthon cause of conflict is accompanied by a set of secondary causes, like historic, ethnic, religious, economic, social and political components that may lead to an acceleration toward violence.

In contrast to Armenia and Azerbaijan, the composition of Georgia’s society is highly multiethnic. Apart from ethnic groups of non-Georgian origin living basically in compact settlement areas (e.g. Armenians in Javakheti, Azeri in Kvemo Kartli), the Georgian nation is not ethnically homogenous either (e.g. Mingrelians in Mingrelia, Svans in Svanetia). Distinct dialects and languages are spoken and regional patriotism is rather common. However, separation tendencies in Georgia led to war only in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both entities, now, are *de facto* independent ‘statelets’, though internationally not recognized.

Abkhaz history is dated back to the 6th century BC, when the Greeks were called to have established trading posts in Abkhazia, then known as Colchis, its cities growing to a prosperous trade centre. It was here that Jason and the Argonauts were finding the “Golden Fleece”. Greeks, Romans, Persians, Arabs, Mongols, and later Russians were either trading partners or temporary rulers of that region. A Georgian rule over Abkhazia is neglected by the Abkhazian side, even though in the 10th century Abkhazia, under Bagratid dynasty, was unified with other princedoms to one kingdom of Georgia. Once more in 1325, the Principality of Abkhazia was established as an integral part of the Georgian kingdom. Subsequently, it became independent (from Georgia) – shortly after the latter’s decline in the 15th century – but was ruled by the Mongol-Tatar peoples, Turkic peoples, Russians and others. Today, the Abkhaz emphasize their independence while Georgians put an accent on the centuries of unity. The Abkhaz deny any connections to the South Caucasus, even historically. They feel themselves to be linguistically, culturally and genetically related to their north-western Caucasian neighbours and other mountain peoples in the North Caucasus. The Abkhaz speak Apsua, which is the official language of Abkhazia. It is an Abkhazo-Adyghey language belonging to the north-western Caucasian language group like Abazinian or the Circassian languages, Adyghey and Kabardian.

The Ossetes see themselves as an autochthon ethnicity and consider themselves to be direct descendants of the Iranian Alans, tribes that were once nomads in the southern parts of today’s Ukraine, Russia and the North Caucasus. Between the 16th and 18th century the Ossetian people became who they are today. The Ossetes call themselves *Iron* and Ossetia *Iriston*. The majority of the Ossetes are Christian Orthodox. With the Mongol invasion in the 13th century, the Ossetes were forced to withdraw to the upper plateaus of the Caucasus. In the 14th century, they began to cross the Caucasus Mountains again and started to settle in Georgian territory. In the 17th-18th century, the Ossetian migration flow reached its peak, ending in the 19th century. Georgians agree with this, but only partially. The Georgians are convinced that South Ossetia is one of their oldest historical and spiritual centres and an indivisible part of Georgia. In particular, the capital Tskhinvali has special historical significance for Georgians. They believe the Ossetes were latecomers to the region. That makes Ossetes “uc’xoelebi” (foreigners) to the South Caucasus region, welcomed by the Georgians as “stumrebi” (guests) to live on Georgian territory, and now “dare to violate” the Georgian hospitality by unlawfully claiming sovereignty. This Georgian perception raises the question, how long must a people be resident on a particular territory in order to be accepted as the indigenous population with rights and claims to that territory? And would this claim have worth if another people claim to have older rights to this specific territory?

Basic points at issue in both the Abkhazian-Georgian and the Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts are 1) the recognition of the territorial integrity of Georgia, 2) the right of people to self-determination and the future status of Abkhazia respectively South Ossetia, 3) the future attribution of special political-territorial status to Abkhazia respectively South Ossetia including the creation of its own constitution, institutions and emblems and contractible powers within different sectors. Furthermore, in the Abkhazian-Georgian conflict the repatriation of the 200.000-250.000 Georgian refugees to Abkhazia is highly disputed. Last but not least, both, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, demand the introduction of international guarantees to support the above arrangement when accomplished.

Intervening Options of External Actors

According to the UN Charter, there are three basic techniques that need to be distinguished in the frame of conflict management: negotiation and mediation, provision of good offices and services, and encouragement of third party participation.

Negotiation is a process consisting of regular meetings and other forms of communication between the conflicting sides to jointly seek to settle and, then, resolve their conflict.

Within the framework of a peaceful conflict management external actors voluntarily intervene in a non-violent and not-binding form to contribute their ideas and material resources to support a positive transformation of the conflict. By third party involvement the interactivity of a conflict resolution process is improved. Mediation is carried out by external actors through the following instruments:

Good services or *good offices* respectively are the weakest form of third party intervention. It means that a third party provides basic physical needs and services required to hold negotiations. These basics include, but are not limited to: communication facilities, transport, and accommodation. By that the third party does not directly involve itself in the negotiation process. *Conciliation* or *facilitation* aims to reduce hostility by intermediary efforts like the establishment of communication between the conflict parties and encouragement to start negotiations. *Non-directive mediation* implies stronger intervention into the process of conflict resolution through implementation of workshops to solve specific problems, round table discussions, etc. *Directive mediation* and *power mediation*, indicate third party involvement by those actors who are not dependant on legal principles and norms, rather their actions reflect their own interests and depend on their own power means to enforce agreements. These actors fall back upon a set of sticks and carrots in order to intervene in the conflict resolution process.

Problem-solving attempts mainly take place in the framework of workshops. The conflict sides are invited to conceptualize the conflict within a non-binding atmosphere to creatively invent win-win outcomes. *Arbitration* means that the third party makes use of legal norms and principles to contribute to a conflict settlement. An influential third party may also enforce its decision and is not influenced by actors involved in the conflict.

In the practice of conflict management in ethno-political conflicts, many intervention instruments are combined depending on the status and intensity of the situation. The catalogue of basic conflict management contains various strategies and instruments: the establishment and support of peace alliances, the support of reconciliation, the development of local conflict regulation mechanisms, the fortification of civil forces (NGOs, media etc.), the support of democratization, the reconstruction of juridical structures, the reconstruction of an infrastructure, the development of sound economic practices, and the support of the security sector, including border guards.

Deployment of the OSCE Mission to Georgia and the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia

On 3 December 1992, the CSCE Mission was established in Georgia and the South Caucasus soon became one of major priorities of the OSCE. The objective of the Mission was to facilitate negotiations between the conflicting parties and to help them to reach a peaceful political settlement. Furthermore, the Mission was to monitor the Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF) in South Ossetia.

The Mission of the United Nations to Georgia (UNOMIG) was established in Abkhazia on 17 September 1992. The UN and the OSCE delegated conflict management responsibility between themselves geographically in order to use their resources more efficiently. After the UN and the OSCE split the responsibilities for Abkhazia and South Ossetia respectively, the OSCE mandate gradually expanded. The mandate of the OSCE Long-Term Mission in Georgia now finally focuses on conflict management in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, which had not priority for the UN. At the 14th Meeting of the Permanent Committee on 29 March 1994, new modalities approved for an expanded CSCE Mission to Georgia in order to give the Mission the primary role in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict resolution process and modalities must be extended every six months.

On 22 April 1997, the OSCE Mission, which operates throughout Georgia, was expanded, adding a branch office in Tskhinvali. Through this field office, the Mission maintains contact with the Tskhinvali authorities and local village authorities in the conflict zone, making the OSCE a visible presence throughout the area. It also monitors the JPKF, including regular visits to JPKF posts and checkpoints, collecting information on the military situation, reporting on the status of the existing cease-fire and calling the attention to the political consequences of any military activities to JPKF commanders.

For the time being, the main tasks of the OSCE Mission to Georgia are to assist in the creation of a wider political context for a firm political solution, to facilitate direct dialogue and round table discussions between the parties at different layers of authority, to monitor peacekeeping operations and support liaison activities within JPKF, to regularly observe and report on the security and humanitarian situation on the ground, to establish contacts with the local authorities and representatives of local population, to promote NGO sector development and mass-media programs, and to observe human rights conditions (mainly through its Human Dimension Office). The Mission to Georgia, in the frame of its flexible mandate, also considers the human dimension, supporting the promotion of respect for international obligations and commitments regarding human rights, fundamental freedoms and minority rights. These activities are closely co-coordinated with the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. In relation to Georgia as a whole, the Mission's task also is to assist in the development of legal and democratic institutions and processes, the establishment of an independent judiciary and the monitor of elections. Here, the Mission cooperates with ODIHR and the Council of Europe as well as communicates with other international organizations active in Georgia in this field. A major aspect of the Mission's mediation role is its cooperation with international organizations such as the European Commission, CoE, UNDP, UNHCR, IOM and donor organizations active in the region, like the IMF and World Bank.

In relation to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the Mission's task is to ensure liaison with the United Nations operations in Abkhazia. Observing the situation closely, the Mission reports regularly to the OSCE, enabling the representative of the Chairman-in-Office to participate in negotiations carried out under United Nations auspices if the UN so requests.

In light of the tensions near the border of Georgia and the Russian Chechen Republic, relations between the two states have become increasingly tense, inciting, acrimonious accusations against each other. Georgia refused to allow Russia to use territory for military actions against Chechen positions during the first Chechen War (1994-1996), which lead to a strain in Georgian-Russian relations. As a result, the OSCE Mission to Georgia has put special emphasis on the performance of its monitoring task since 1994, which is a unique obligation among OSCE Missions. From December 1999 till December 2002 the OSCE Permanent Council gradually expanded the mandate of the OSCE Mission to Georgia to include observation of the border between Georgia and the Ingush Republic of the Russian Federation, and the border between Georgia and the Dagestan Republic of the Russian Federation to defuse tensions in the border area before they escalate into conflict. It was decided that the OSCE monitors would be unarmed and would have no enforcement responsibilities. The Georgian government assured the security for OSCE border monitors and ensured their freedom of movement. In December 2004, the OSCE Border Monitoring Observation Mission was closed due to Russia's refusal to agree to a further prolongation of the BMO's mandate. Hence, the BMO's personal is presently withdrawn from the region.

The UNOMIG established its political headquarter in Tbilisi, and its executive headquarters in Sukhumi/Abkhazia. At present the staff totals 107 military observers, 90 international civilian observers and 175 local civilian staff. Special Representative of the Secretary General and Head of Mission is Ms. Heidi Tagliavini of Switzerland. Since the Abkhaz-Georgian Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation Forces of May 1994, the UNOMIG mandate is, based on the Security Council resolution 937 (1994) of 27 July 1994 the following: To monitor and verify the implementation by the parties to the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces, observe the operation of the Peacekeeping Force (PKF) of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) within the framework of the implementation of the agreement, observe the demilitarized status of the security zone, monitor the withdrawal of troops of the Republic of Georgia from the Kodori Valley to places beyond the boundaries of Abkhazia, Republic of Georgia, patrol the Kodori Valley regularly, report regularly to the Secretary-General within its mandate, in particular on the implementation of the agreement, any violations and their investigation by UNOMIG, as well as other relevant developments, maintain close contacts with both parties to the conflict and cooperate with the CIS PKF and, by its presence in the area, contribute to conditions conducive to the safe and orderly return of refugees and displaced persons. UNOMIG is officially invited by the Georgian government and recognizes Georgia's territorial integrity. By that, it is regarded by the Abkhazians to be prejudiced in favor to the Georgian side. Abkhazia does not accept UNOMIG as a neutral mediator. Instead, Abkhazia appointed Russia as a direct mediator. Russia, though, formerly involved party of the

Abkhazian-Georgian conflict, and now, Commander-in-Chief of the Peacekeeping Force (PKF) of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in Abkhazia follows its own interests, which often run contrary to the UN's mediation works. Since the signing of the cease fire in 1994 there were repeatedly clashes between Abkhazian guerrilla units and the Georgian troops based at the border region. The UNOMIG is affected by the combat operations as well, like in October 2001 when a UNOMIG-helicopter was shot down. Moreover, members of the UNOMIG are hijacked from time to time.

The *Group of Friends of the Secretary-General* (Germany, France, Great Britain, Russian Federation and the USA) plays an important role as well. They meet irregularly in Geneva to discuss further ongoing within the Abkhazian-Georgian conflict resolution process. In 2001 the Group composed, under the guidance of the then UN-Special Representative Dieter Boden, a paper which deals with the future distribution of competences between Georgia and Abkhazia. Since then, it constitutes the basis for further negotiations, even though strictly rejected by the Abkhazian side.

Relevance of Main Foreign Interests

The main interests of all sides involved in South Caucasus affairs mainly focus on the access to natural resources, especially to the oil and gas resources in the Caspian Sea basin, and on the conduct of trade and commerce in the region. Lately, however, the growing geo-strategic role of the South Caucasus led to an increasing of military presence by the regional powers Russia, Turkey, Iran and the United States.

The Russian Federation

For many observers, Russia's role and its activities within this region remain incomprehensible. With its "conflict policy" Russia seeks to maintain its influence in the South Caucasus, and seeks to play a dominant role within the mediating process, which is widely accepted by most of the other external actors. Historically, Russia perceives the South Caucasus as an area of national interest. It pays careful attention to political and military stability in this region, which neighbors its southern peripheries. Russia has strong commercial interests in the region as well, including the oil reserves in the Caspian Basin, other natural resources and the three South Caucasian national energy markets. Russia is also one of the main arms suppliers to the three South Caucasus countries.

Russia is interested in achieving parallel success on both issues, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, although the focus remains on obtaining a settlement in Abkhazia. Russia repeatedly claimed not to have any territorial aspirations in Georgia, but it supports the idea of an autonomous status for both Abkhazia and South Ossetia in order to, as many presume, avoid the loss of support of the North Caucasian peoples. Furthermore, the *de facto* independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia may serve as a political leverage for Russia on Georgia. Thus, it seems to be dependant on Georgia's willingness to heed Russia's geo-strategic interests in this region whether Russia is willing to support the conflict resolution processes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia or not.

On December 5, 2000, Russia introduced a visa regime for Georgia. This regime excluded Abkhazia and South Ossetia, whose old Soviet passports have always been accepted by Russia. This formal decision of Russia to withdraw from the Bishkek visa-free agreement of 1992 for most CIS countries and introduce visa restrictions has been highly criticized by the Georgian side, especially since it does not apply to the whole Georgian-Russian border; rather, it excludes Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both Abkhazian and South Ossetian people refuse Georgian citizenship, consequently have no Georgian passports and lack travel documents outside their *de facto* independent territories and the Russian Federation. Thus, thousands of Abkhazians and South Ossetes have already accepted Russian citizenship in order to obtain Russian passports. In January 2001, the European Parliament requested the Russian Federation to reverse its visa regime, referring to the disastrous consequences it has for single Georgian citizens, and called for exceptions to be made for Abkhazia and South Ossetia "*de facto* annexation of these indisputably Georgian territories."

In August 2002, concerns were expressed in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia about a Georgian – allegedly anti-Chechen – military operation in the Pankisi Gorge. The Pankisi Valley has been mostly inhabited by Kists, ethnic Chechens, for decades. In the course of the war in Chechnya, many Chechens fled to the Pankisi Valley on Georgian territory. Certainly fighters have tried to hide among the refugees who tried to hide in the Pankisi Valley. The Russian Federation feared military coups from the Pankisi Valley against its territory, and in autumn 2002, the situation escalated when representatives of the

Russian Federation claimed that Al Qaida terrorists would hide in the Pankisi Gorge as well. Russia, presenting its military actions in Chechnya as a part of the global war against terrorism, demanded that Georgia takes action against the terrorists in the Pankisi Gorge and threatened to militarily intervene by itself, if Georgia remained passive. The Georgian side vigorously denied the presence of Al Qaida terrorists in the Pankisi Valley and referred to several military actions it had already undertaken to clear the valley of criminal structures. A further contentious point is the withdrawal of Russian troops on Georgian territory. On 17 November 1999, at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, the Russian Federation and Georgia made a joint statement on, *inter alia*, the terms of withdrawal of Russian bases in Georgia. The military bases in Gudauta (Abkhazia/Georgia) and Vaziani (near Tbilisi) were to be disbanded and withdrawn by 1 July 2001. As for the two remaining bases in Akhalkalaki and Batumi, the two sides were to complete negotiations regarding duration and modalities by the end of the year 2000. But the discussions continue: While Georgia insists on withdrawal within 2 or 3 years, Russia claims to need at least 11 years.

Thus, the picture is not a balanced one. While, on the one hand, Russia has been repeatedly reproached for playing Abkhazian, Chechen, Ossetian or Nagorno-Karabakh cards as a means of meddling in internal developments in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, it, on the other hand, continues to suffer from its ever shrinking authority in the post-Soviet territory. A main point of concern is the prospect of being deprived of the position as a regional oil and gas monopolist.

The United States

The Russian Federation is not the only major player in the region. Both Russia and the United States regard Georgia as a 'strategic toehold'. While Russia aims to gain its Black Sea shoreline for military reasons, the United States primarily focuses is on Georgia's important role as a transit country for the export of Caspian energy resources to the ports of the Mediterranean, bypassing Russia. On 18 September 2002, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline, which is expected to earn at least 100-120 million USD a year for Georgia, was opened symbolically. After the events of 11 September 2001, the interest of the United States to the South Caucasus and Central Asia rose sharply. The United States drastically increased their military presence in the region. While the official reason for this increase was the fight against terrorism, many presume that the Americans are actually preparing for a longer presence in order to protect strategic and economic interests. Georgia hopes that with the presence of the United States, the influence of Russia in the region might be weakened. After 11 September 2001, Georgia and Azerbaijan allied themselves with the United States and supported its "fight against terror"-alliance while Armenia remained loyal to Russia. In the course of the Iraq war, Georgia felt obliged to support the United States in its actions undertaken against a "terrorist regime" in Iraq. By then, American soldiers were already on Georgian soil because in May 2002 the United States sent 200 military trainers to Georgia with the purpose to support the Georgian forces in their reform process within the Train and Equipment Program. This program was first signal of American military presence in this region and led to a discord within American-Russian relations. In February 2003, Georgia offered the United States use of military bases in Georgian territory for military actions against Iraq. This is in the line with Georgia's foreign policy, regarding co-operation with NATO as a high-priority security issue and NATO membership as a long term priority. Already in 1994 Georgia became a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Program. Georgia participates in the NATO Planning and Review Process (PARP), under which defense planning data are shared and evaluated. In November 2002, the former Georgian President Edward Shevardnadze officially raised a corresponding request before the Prague NATO summit.

However, most of the authors are in agreement that the resolution of the conflicts will not be possible without the support by the Russian Federation. The conflict areas are situated in Russia's immediate neighborhood and are geo-strategically and economically interested in the goings-on within the region. Thus, a closer cooperation between the Russian Federation and the United States can only be in the interest of all sides.

Variations of Federalism and Territorial Autonomy

It is generally recognized by now that a permanent solution of the conflicts about secession will only be realized within the framework of federalist and autonomous approaches because they grant a greater degree of the right to self-government. Federal systems represent a compromise between opposite demands for recognition of diversity, on the one hand, and integration, on the other. Basically, there needs to be distinction drawn between the concepts of "territorial autonomy", where certain territorial entities are granted special provisions, and "federalism", which refers to a territorial-political organization

of the entire state. While territorial autonomy depicts a form of decentralization, federalism is ideally based on a polycentric structure.

The term *autonomy* is derived from Greek: *auto* meaning self, *nomos* meaning law. In the legal-political vocabulary autonomy denotes self-government. We distinguish between three different forms of autonomy: territorial, cultural, and personal autonomy. In the following we will concentrate shortly on cultural and, finally, on territorial autonomy. Cultural autonomy refers to a broad understanding of the term culture, though, covering not only art and literature, but also a way of thinking, tradition, moral principles, and patterns of living. Territorial and cultural autonomy are established in the legal system of a state, and with it, part of the national governmental structures. Still, purely cultural autonomy does not enable the development of state-like institutions. The lack of differentiation between these two approaches to autonomy is particularly significant as it relates to the perception of autonomy in the post-Soviet region.

Territorial autonomy assumes the delegation of authority to a lower level, which may happen through simple law (statutes of autonomy) as well as through a “constitutional law for autonomy.” Federalism however contains a division of power between the central state and the federal member states, which either have the same rights and authorities with respect to the central government (a symmetrical state structure, such as a “federal state” like the Federal Republic of Germany), or with varying levels of authority with respect to the central state (a asymmetrical state structure by means of a “canonization” or “regionalization” like that which exists in Switzerland).

Perception of Autonomy in the Post-Soviet Region

The majority of separatist endeavours in intra-state conflicts strive for the status of a quasi-total territorial autonomy within a federal nation-state or even total state independence. The claim for territorial autonomy is predominant, but it is not striven for within the present existing state structure, where the former autonomous status was often withdrawn. Therefore, the *de facto* independent region of Abkhazia does not aim to gain territorial independence within the state of Georgia, but rather within the Russian Federation. South Ossetia also strives for unification with North Ossetia-Alania, and by that wishes to become part of the Russian Federation as well. Nevertheless, the status of state sovereignty is given preference in both, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and in fact they consider themselves to be independent, even though not recognized, republics. Hence, any proposals of autonomy within the existing state structure of Georgia are considered not to be adequate and a restriction to their newly gained “independence”.

It is not insignificant that for some governments any kinds of concessions toward autonomy, however constructed, are felt to be indicative of a loss of power. This issue appears frequently in the post-Soviet states with their still rather young state structures. Here, the claim for autonomy is often perceived as a threat towards the still developing formation of their own national identity. Attempts for autonomy are therefore often linked to the fears of a threatening secession of territorial entities. It is especially feared in ethnically heterogeneous states that in granting autonomy to the Ossetes other minorities may feel discriminated and start to demand their autonomy as well. It is important to mention that international law does not yet recognize the claim of minorities for autonomy. Minority rights are basically regarded as individual rights, also in the UN and in the OSCE. With the claim for and the granting of autonomy the probability of intervention by other states that sympathize with the secessionist movements increases because external powers may tend to take advantage of the problems of states that are affected by secession in order to pursue their own political and economical interests. Demands for secession often become public knowledge without any of the conflict sides having to mention the desire for autonomy, not to mention federalism, beforehand. When they are finally made subject to discussion, it is often when there have already been violent occurrences, often with losses on both sides. As a result of these hindrances, it becomes difficult to convince people that the approaches of territorial autonomy and federalism might be possible solutions for the conflict.

Confederalism vs. an Asymmetric Federalism: The Case of Georgia

In Georgia, the conflicting parties, basically Abkhazia and Georgia, take in the discussion of federalist and autonomous structures by naming two completely diverging approaches, confederalism vs. an asymmetric federalism. Though neither of both sides puts down in writing what idea they have of these concepts, the verbalization of them already led to a disaccord among and between the conflicting sides. By definition a *confederation* means that sovereign states form an alliance with each other. This is the closest convergence the Abkhazian authorities are willing to accept for the time being, and it speaks for

itself that the South Ossetians would not be averse to such a solution as well. But this concept is not acceptable for the Georgian side. The international community, likewise, denies any discussions about confederative systems, because the establishment of a confederation would offend Georgia's right for territorial integrity. On closer examination of the endeavors for autonomy on post-Soviet territory it becomes clear that autonomy mainly is equated with secession. This underlines the assumption that federalist concepts might be far easier to be realized than any forms of autonomy. The Georgian side, on the other, though nowadays offering 'the broadest possible autonomy', originally had an asymmetric federation in mind, though never specifying it. So, it is only assumable that Georgia thought about the Georgian territory, including the separatist entities, to form a federal state with the Georgian government being the dominating actor of it. This in turn remains unacceptable for the Abkhazian, and the South Ossetian authorities.

This, once more, shows that the resolution processes of the Georgian-Abkhazian and the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict are deadlocked. The current political status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, hence, are marked by *de facto* independence and *de jure* violation of Georgian state sovereignty. Ten respectively twelve years have already passed since the cease-fire agreements, which are still valid, but the current situation is stuck in a "trap of habituation." To make matters worse, certain structures such as warlordships, shadow economy, and trafficking promote and, this is the main point, encourage the *status quo* because many people benefit from these activities. Crime continues to be a source of concern in the zone of conflict.

The conflict parties, barely, will be able to solve these conflicts without the help of external mediators. However, the major long-term goal for the mediation is to make the conflict parties understand that the mediators' task is not to solve the conflict for them, rather, to encourage them to solve the conflict on their own, allowing the external mediators to withdraw on the long term. Thus, the conflict parties must be encouraged to stay in contact with each other. The external actors' main goal is to absorb aggressions from both sides. To be able to do so, the external mediators must institutionalize their mediation projects and establish local entities, which can continue the mediative work independently. Local conflict mediation structures with mediators, government representatives, and various community leaders must be developed so that conflict might be quickly resolved on a local level before a given conflict has the opportunity to enflame violence.

Meanwhile, many authors voice their support not only for a stronger cooperation between UNOMIG, the OSCE Mission, the Russian Federation, and the United States, but also claim that stronger engagement of the European Union, NATO (and other regional powers like Turkey) into the political conflict management process in the South Caucasus is also necessary. NATO and EU cooperation could only increase the chances of successful conflict management. It is the different skills and abilities of these external actors that make cooperation so attractive, as they will surely complement each other. However, the mentioned external actors still regard themselves as competitors in some areas, and it will take some time until a process of rethinking will start. To discuss the potentials and limits, pros and cons of cooperation between different external actors in the field of conflict management shall be the aim of the EDF at VIMUN 2005.

Sources and Links for further Research

Even though the given bibliography is rather all-inclusive, it is only a cut-out of the complex literature which may be found on EDF 2005's topic. For a substantiated preparation for the EDF we propose a three step action:

1. Obligatory reading for all participants of the EDF

Cornell, Svante E. (2004b), NATO's Role in South Caucasus Regional Security, in: Turkish Policy Quarterly, No. 3, June 2004, pp. 123-134, Available for download at: <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/docs/publications/2004/TPQ.pdf>, 3. Oktober 2004.

Evers, Frank (2003), Mission Information Package: South Caucasus, available for download at: http://www.core-hamburg.de/documents/CORE_MIP_South_Caucasus.pdf

ICG (International Crisis Group), Georgia: Avoiding War in South Ossetia, ICG Europe Report No. 159, Tbilisi/Brussels, Available for download at: http://www.icg.org/library/documents/europe/caucasus/159_georgia_avoiding_war_in_south_ossetia.pdf 26 November 2004.

Ropers, Norbert (1997), The Roles and Functions of Third Parties in the Constructive Management of Ethnopolitical Conflicts, Bathos Occasional Papers 14, Berlin, Available for download at: <http://www.bshuttle.de/berghof/>, 28 March 2003.

Sabanadze, Natalie (2002), International Involvement in the South Caucasus, ECMI Working Paper No. 15, available at: http://www.ecmi.de/download/working_paper_15.pdf.

2. A check out of the given bibliography

3. Single research and reading concerning the state's position the single delegate is representing

A. Monographies, Anthologies, Journals and Papers

Akaba, Natela (2000), The Swiss Experience and Prospects for a Peaceful Abkhazian-Georgian Peace Settlement, in: Coppieters, Bruno/ Darchiashvili, David/ Akaba, Natela (eds.), Federal Practice. Exploring Alternatives for Georgia and Abchasia, Brussels: VUBPRESS-VUB University Press, pp. 75-89.

Alekseev, Mikhail A. (1998), Early Warning, Ethnopolitical Conflicts, and the United Nations. Assessing the Violence in Georgia/Abkhazia, in: Nationalities Papers (2), pp. 191-211.

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Cornell, Svante E. (2002b), Autonomy and Conflict. Ethnoterritoriality and Separatism in the South Caucasus - Cases in Georgia, Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research.

- Cornell, Svante E. et al. (2004a), *Regional Security in the South Caucasus: The Role of the NATO*, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Washington: Johns Hopkins University, available at: <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/docs/publications/2004/nato.pdf>.
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- Evers, Frank (2003), *Mission Information Package: South Caucasus*, available for download at: http://www.core-hamburg.de/documents/CORE_MIP_South_Caucasus.pdf
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- Huber, Martina (2004), *State-building in Georgia: Unfinished and at Risk?*, Conflict Research Unit, The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', Available for download at: http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/2004_occasional_papers/Georgia.pdf.
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Suny, Ronald Grigor (1994), The Making of the Georgian Nation, bearb. Aufl., Bloomington:Indiana University Press.

B. News, Organizations and Internet Resources

Central Asia and Caucasus analyses:
<http://www.eurasianet.org>

Central Asia and Caucasus Institute (CACI) at the Johns Hopkins University:
<http://www.cacianalyst.org/>

Centre for European Policy Studies:
<http://www.ceps.be/>

Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue:
<http://www.hdcentre.org/>

Centre for OSCE Research (CORE) at the Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy at the University of Hamburg (IFSH)
<http://www.core-hamburg.de>

Civil Georgia – Online Magazine (Maybe the best page for Georgian news and analyses in English language)
<http://www.civil.ge/eng/>

Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus:
<http://www.caucasus.dk/>

EU's relations with Georgia
http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/georgia/intro/index.htm

EurasiaNet Newslines and Articles
<http://www.eurasianet.org/>

Forum on Early Warning and Early Response (UK):
<http://www.fewer.org/>

Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<http://www.mfa.gov.ge/english>

Georgian daily and weekly newspapers online (mainly in Georgian, some in Russian language):
<http://www.opentext.org.ge>

Georgian news in Russian language:
<http://www.sakartvelo.ru>

Homepage of the OSCE:
<http://www.osce.org/>

Homepage of the OSCE Mission to Georgia:
<http://www.osce.org/georgia/>

International Crisis Group
<http://www.icg.org>

IWPR (Institute for War & Peace Reporting) – IWPR’s Caucasus Reporting Service
<http://www.iwpr.net/>

Kavkazkij Uzel (North Caucasus news, with correspondents from Abkhazia and South Ossetia):
<http://kavkaz.memo.ru/>

London Information Network on Conflicts and State-Building:
<http://www.links-london.org/>

NATO Partnerships - Georgia
<http://www.nato.int/pfp/ge/georgia.htm>

RFE/RL (Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty) News line
<http://www.rferl.org/>

Rustavi 2 (TV Broadcasting Company, Online)
<http://www.rustavi2.com/>

United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig/>

UNHCR, Projects in South Ossetia:
<http://www.unhcr.org>