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Call for Papers

From the EU's Eastern Partnership to the EU's Central Asia Policy: Continuity and Change

- Event: Conference
- Where: Khazar University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
- Format: on-site (with an online option if pandemic measures do not allow for on-site participation at the time of the conference)
- When: 16 – 17 February 2023
- Funding availability: partial (thanks to the generous support of Globalisation Studies Groningen (GSG))
- Organizers: dr. Marek Neuman (University of Groningen), dr. Agha Bayramov (University of Groningen) & dr. Farid Guliyev (Khazar University)

Conference rationale:

During the last stages of the EU preparing for its largest enlargement round in history, to finally take place in 2004/2007 and seeing the inclusion of twelve new member states, the European Union set out to establish a framework for structuring its relations with the soon-to-be new neighbourhoods to the South and the East of the enlarged Union. In the East, these relations were structured along two lines; the Four Common Spaces governing relations with the Russian Federation, and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP, 2004) governing relations with a large group of countries to the East (and those bordering the Mediterranean). Whereas the ENP was to provide a platform for closer political and economic ties, its Eastern flank - consisting of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine – soon received an institutional upgrade in the shape of the Eastern Partnership (EaP, 2009) that reflected the tightly net web of interactions that has emerged between the EU on the one, and the six East European partner countries on the other hand. Over time, the Eastern Partnership expanded in terms of areas of cooperation (e.g. democracy, good governance, the economy, energy, civil society) and in the intensity of conditioned structural reforms in the six partner countries in exchange for closer engagement with the EU, leading scholars to conceptualize the EaP as a forum for

the EU's external governance, feeding the EU's understanding as "transformative-power Europe" (Börzel & Lebanidze 2017).

Almost in parallel to intensifying its relations with Eastern Europe, the EU began to design a strategy towards Central Asia, with the first policy document being issued in 2007. And yet, whereas scholarship on EU-EaP relations has mushroomed in the last decade, the scholarship on the EU's ability to exert transformative influence over the five Central Asian republics has not only been limited, but also sobering. It has been made abundantly clear that the EU lacks any normative power vis-à-vis the region (Ahrens & Hoen 2019), not least because it competes for attention (and influence) with the other regional powers, China and Russia foremost (Meister 2009; Sharshenova & Crawford 2017; Konopelko 2017; Bossuyt 2018; Keijzer & Bossuyt 2020). However, more recent work on EU-Central Asia relations reveals that the EU has certainly not been an absent actor in the region and that, depending on the policy area under scrutiny, its sectoral engagement with the region as a whole, or the Central Asian republics individually, can be analyzed along the lines of EU external governance (Neuman & Bayramov 2023, forthcoming).

This parallel shaping of structural frameworks with Eastern European countries on the one, and Central Asian republics on the other hand, begs comparison. Consequently, the planned conference encourages original, critical, interdisciplinary, and methodologically diverse papers on the European Union's external governance towards the two regions and/or their respective constitutive states. Analyzing the EU's political, socio-economic, and cultural relations and technical cooperation with the two respective regions, we aim to uncover how (and why) the EU is possibly adopting a different approach to designing its foreign policy vis-à-vis the region in question. Which continuities and which differences between these two approaches can be identified?

Possible paper topics, with both theoretically- and empirically-driven work being encouraged (this list is not exhaustive, only indicative):

- Juxtaposing EU-Eastern Europe relations with EU-Central Asia relations, best practices and main differences
- The EU's region-building efforts vis-à-vis Eastern Europe and Central Asia
- The EU's socio-economic governance in the two regions
- The EU's political cooperation with the two regions
- The EU's cultural cooperation with the two regions
- The EU's cooperation with the two regions in the area of climate change
- The EU's engagement of civil society in the two regions
- The EU's sectoral involvement in the two regions

Please submit your paper abstract (300 words max. + paper title + 5 keywords) electronically to dr. Marek Neuman and to dr. Agha Bayramov at EUinBaku@rug.nl no later than September 30, 2022, 23:59h CET time.

A selection of papers will be included in an edited volume with a reputable publishing house to be published in late 2023 / early 2024.

With regard to funding, the organizers will be able to provide limited travel and/or accommodation grants to selected conference participants, specifically to facilitate the participation of scholars from both Eastern Partnership and Central Asian countries. Should you wish to qualify for travel and/or

accommodation funding, please indicate so by elaborating upon your motivation when submitting your paper abstract.

Important dates:

- 30 September 2022: closing of submission phase for paper abstracts and travel allowance application (both sent to EUnBaku@rug.nl)
- 14 October 2022: Notification of acceptance paper-givers
- 31 October 2022: Registration via e-mail (m.neuman@rug.nl and a.bayramov@rug.nl), no registration fee
- 31 January 2023: Deadline for paper submission and their circulation among participants
- 16-17 February 2023: Presentation of papers at conference