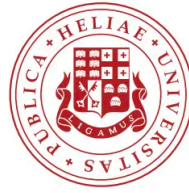




FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



ILIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Changing Tides in the Black Sea Region

Strengthening Security, Strategic Connectivity, and Resilience



TBILISI June 28-29, 2023

Changing Tides in the Black Sea Region: Strengthening Security, Strategic Connectivity, and Resilience

Venue: Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia
G. Tsereteli Street 1, University Building G, Conference Room 106, First Floor.

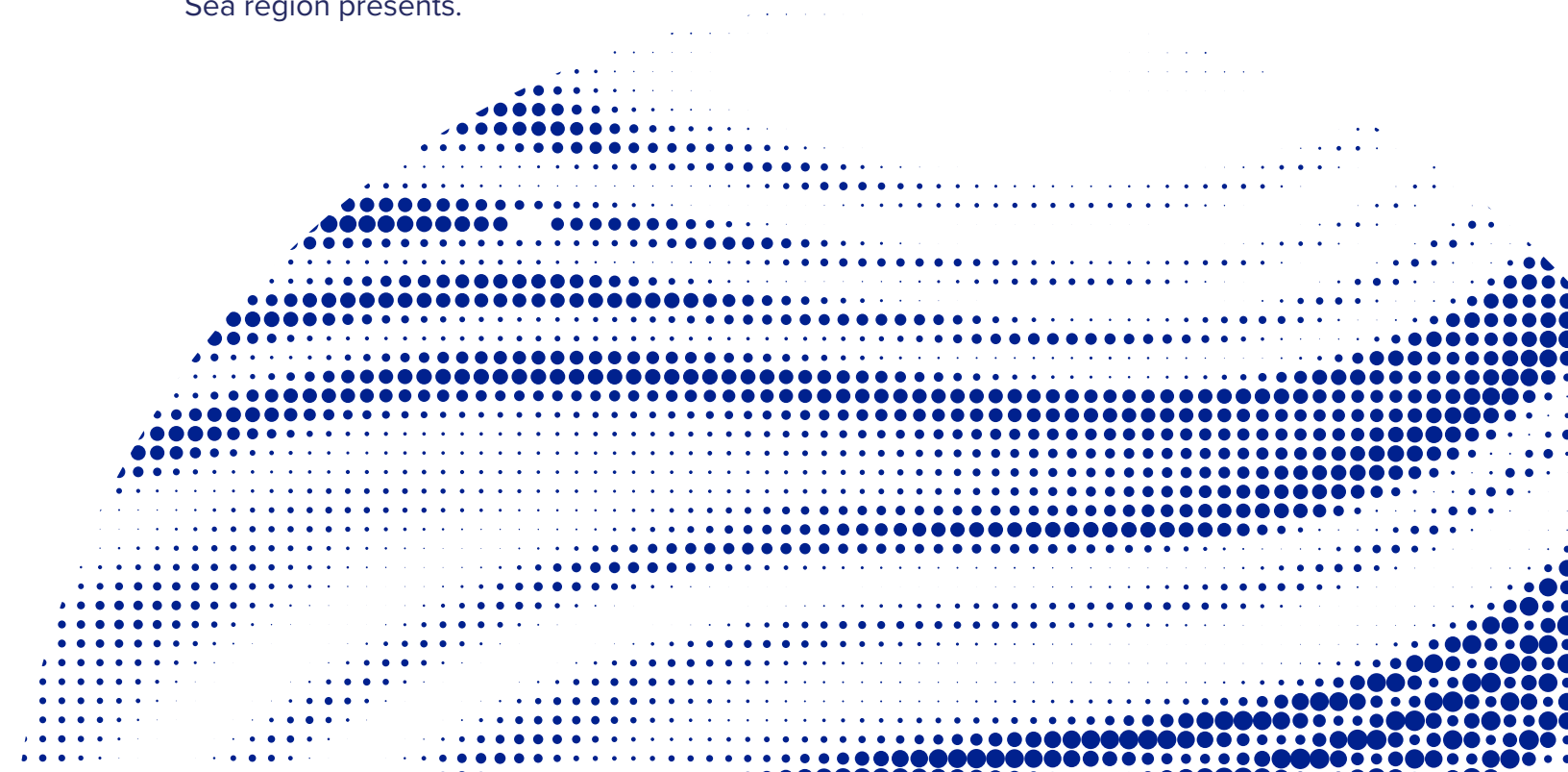
Open to public. Registration required. [Register here.](#)

Contact: eurasia@fpri.org

Conference dates: June 28-29, 2023

The Black Sea region looms increasingly large as the locus of great power military, political, and economic competition. Russia has chosen the region as a focal point of its challenge to the Western security order, as its 2008 invasion of Georgia and its 2014 and 2022 invasions of Ukraine make clear. Geopolitically, the region is where the West, Russia, and the wider Middle East come into contact. As countries like Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia seek EU membership, Russia looks to destabilize them. Turkey aims to retain its good standing with NATO, preserve its ties with Russia, and assert its interests in the Syrian civil war.

The region also holds considerable importance as an economic and energy transit zone, with the West, Russia, and China launching transportation and energy infrastructure projects there. Finally, Black Sea states struggle to build political, economic, and social resilience in the face of Russian attempts to destabilize them and subvert their sovereignty. The goal of this conference is to advance understanding among regional and Western scholars and policymakers on the challenges and opportunities the Black Sea region presents.



Day 1. June 28, 2023

9:30 am

Welcoming Remarks

Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)

- **Maia Otarashvili**, Director, Eurasia Program, FPRI
- **Lee Woolley**, Board of Trustees, FPRI

Ilia State University

- **Giorgi Gvalia**, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, Ilia State University

10:00 am - 11:30 am

Panel 1: NATO's Role in the Black Sea Region

- NATO's maritime presence and the future of Black Sea Security Architecture
- Tailored forward presence battlegroups - Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia
 - Assistance to regional partners - Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova
 - The membership question for Ukraine and Georgia

Speakers:

- **Nikolas K. Gvosdev**, Senior Fellow, FPRI
- **Robert Hamilton**, Head of Eurasia Research, FPRI
- **Batu Kutelia**, Senior Fellow, FPRI
- **Rick Landgraf**, Fellow, FPRI
- *Moderator: Maia Otarashvili*, Director, Eurasia Program, FPRI

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Panel 2: The EU's Role in the Black Sea Region

- Enlargement Prospects
- Economic Cooperation
- Development Assistance
- Strengthening Resilience

Speakers:

- **Serghei Ostaf**, Security and Democratization Expert, policy analyst at CReDO (Moldova)
- **Eka Tkeshelashvili**, President of the Georgian Institute for Strategic Studies (GISS)
- **Irakli Porchkhidze**, Co-founder and Vice-president, Georgian Institute for Strategic Studies (GISS)
- **Antonia Colibasanu**, Senior Analyst and Chief Operation Officer, Geopolitical Futures
- *Moderator: Aaron Schwartzbaum*, Templeton Fellow, FPRI

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Lunch break

2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Panel 3: Energy Security and Transit in the Black Sea Region

- Trans-Caspian connections
- Black Sea land and maritime connections
- Regional energy storage capacity and plans

Speakers:

- **Bruce Pannier**, Central Asia Fellow, FPRI
- **Damjan Krnjević Mišković**, Director for Policy Research, Analysis, and Publications of the Institute for Development and Diplomacy (IDD) at ADA University in Baku
- **Svetlana Ikonnikova**, Associate Professor for Resource Economics at the Technical University of Munich
- **Maximilian Hess**, Central Asia Fellow, FPRI
- *Moderator: Otto Tabuns*, Founding Director, Baltic Security Foundation

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

Panel 4: Paths for Strategic Connectivity in the Greater Black Sea Region

- Trade relationships
- Infrastructure
- China and the BRI
- Central Asia – Europe connections

Speakers:

- **Niva Yau**, Fellow, FPRI
- **Tinatin Khidasheli**, Head, Civic – IDEA
- **Dato Sikharulidze**, Senior Fellow, FPRI
- **Zenel Garcia**, Associate Professor of Security Studies, Department of National Security and Strategy, U.S. Army War College
- *Moderator: Giorgi Gvalia*, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and the Professor of Politics and International Relations, Ilia State University

Day 2. June 29

10:00 am - 11:30 am

Panel 1: Building Resilience in Regional States

- Russian attempts at destabilization using subversion and disinformation
- Russia's weaponization of corruption
- Sources of resilience: societal, economic, political
- Does democracy matter?

Speakers:

- **Katia Glod**, Russia-West Policy Fellow, European Leadership Network
- **Otto Tabuns**, Founding Director, Baltic Security Foundation
- **Sergej Sumlenny**, Founder and Managing Director, European Resilience Initiative Center
- **Asha Castleberry-Hernandez**, Former Senior Advisor (Senior Executive Service), Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. State Department
- Moderator: **Dato Sikharulidze**, Senior Fellow, FPRI

11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Panel 2: Russia's War in Ukraine and its Effects on Regional Security

- Alternative futures and Western responses (Russian military collapse, protracted stalemate, Russian territorial gains)
- The threat of escalation and Western response options
- Putin's theory of victory - can the West maintain its resolve?
- Western military aid and the trajectory of the war

Speakers:

- **Olena Snigyr**, Jean Monnet Fellow, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute
- **Batu Kutelia**, Senior Fellow, FPRI
- **Philip Wasielewski**, Senior Fellow, FPRI
- **Nikolas K. Gvosdev**, Senior Fellow, FPRI
- **Aaron Schwartzbaum**, 2023 Templeton Fellow, FPRI
- Moderator, **Robert Hamilton**, FPRI