

Strategic Stability in the Caucasus: Policy Pathways for Regional Cooperation

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Abstract

The Caucasus region remains one of the most strategically sensitive geopolitical spaces between Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

This policy paper examines the evolving political, economic, and security dynamics in the Caucasus and outlines practical pathways for regional cooperation and diplomatic dialogue. The report proposes mechanisms for strengthening institutional governance, enhancing regional policy coordination, and promoting academic diplomacy as a complementary channel of engagement among regional stakeholders.

1. Introduction

The Caucasus sits at the crossroads of major geopolitical corridors linking Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

Energy routes, transportation corridors, and regional security architectures converge in this region, making it strategically significant for both regional actors and global powers.

In recent decades, the region has experienced periods of instability, competing political alignments, and fragmented regional cooperation. These dynamics underscore the importance of sustained diplomatic dialogue and policy coordination mechanisms.

2. Geopolitical Context

The geopolitical landscape of the Caucasus is shaped by overlapping regional interests, economic connectivity projects, and evolving security arrangements. The Black Sea region, energy transit routes, and transportation infrastructure have intensified the strategic importance of the Caucasus.

At the same time, the region has increasingly become a platform for diplomatic engagement, economic cooperation, and academic exchange. This creates opportunities for new policy frameworks that prioritize dialogue, institutional resilience, and collaborative governance.

3. Strategic Challenges

Despite growing economic integration, several challenges remain:

- Fragmented policy coordination among regional actors
- Infrastructure and connectivity gaps
- Competing geopolitical narratives
- Limited institutional dialogue mechanisms

Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional approach that combines diplomatic engagement, academic dialogue, and policy-driven cooperation platforms.

4. Policy Opportunities

The Caucasus presents a unique opportunity to strengthen regional cooperation through policy innovation and institutional dialogue.

Potential policy pathways include:

- Establishing regional policy dialogue forums
- Expanding academic diplomacy initiatives
- Enhancing cross-border research cooperation
- Strengthening governance and institutional transparency

These mechanisms can contribute to long-term regional stability and strategic cooperation.

5. Strategic Recommendations

1. Develop a regional policy dialogue platform focused on diplomatic coordination.
2. Support academic and policy research networks connecting universities and think tanks.
3. Promote infrastructure and connectivity cooperation across the Black Sea and Caucasus region.
4. Encourage international institutions to support governance capacity-building initiatives.

Conclusion

The future stability of the Caucasus depends on the ability of regional actors to move beyond competitive geopolitical frameworks and toward cooperative policy engagement. By strengthening diplomatic dialogue, institutional coordination, and academic collaboration, the region can build a more resilient and cooperative strategic environment.

The Caucasus Strategic Policy Forum aims to contribute to this effort by serving as a platform for international policy dialogue and research cooperation.