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The Kick-off event for our research project "Resilience in the South Caucasus: Perspectives and Challenges of the New EU Foreign Policy Concept" (Jena-Cauc) was held on 10 November 2021.



The Jena-Cauc research team is comprised of Co-Principal Investigators, Dr. Bidzina Lebanidze and Prof. Diana Forker, who is also the Head of the Institute; postdoctoral researcher, Tiffany G. Williams; and doctoral researchers, Veronika Pfeilschifter and Irena Gonashvili. Jena-Cauc will also host international fellows throughout the term of the project. Along with providing the research contributions, **the project also aims to enhance national and international cooperation in teaching and research on the Caucasus throughout academic disciplines.**

Resilience and regional and European integration in the SC	(Societal) resilience and democratization	Resilience and ENP	Language and minority policies	Global and diffuse risks
RQ1: To what extent do EU incentives speak to the expectations of local stakeholders in the SC?	RQ1: To what extent can CSs become drivers of democratization in the SC and how is it related to EU's resilience approach?	RQ1: How does concept of resilience relate to EU's previous approaches to the SC region?	RQ1: To what extent do language and minority policies in the SC correspond to the Charter of CoE?	RQ1: What are major global and diffuse risks in the SC?
RQ2: How can the effectiveness of the post-EUGS EU foreign policy be improved?	RQ2: How do 'new' CSs unfold societal resilience and which potential do they develop in regards to state resilience?	RQ2: To what can the resilience approach overcome a condition of conceptual ambiguity of the ENP/EaP?	RQ2: To what extent and how can new policy approaches contribute to the conflict settlements in the SC?	RQ1: To what degree and in which ways can resilience contribute to EU's handling of global and diffuse risks in the SC?
Research group leader: Dr. des. Tiffany Williams	Doctoral Researcher: Veronika Pfeilschifter	Doctoral Researcher: Irena Gonashvili	Principal Investigator: Prof. Diana Forker	Principal Investigator: Dr. Bidzina Lebanidze

Scientific Advisory Board	
Caucasus Studies FSU Jena [applicants] [Forker, Lebanidze]	
Cooperation partners in the South Caucasus [Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan]	
Political Science (FSU Jena) Imre Kertész Kolleg (FSU Jena)	Dr. Tsypylma Dariyeva (ZOS, Berlin) Dr. Franziska Smolnik (SWP, Berlin)
Research	TRANSFER
RESEARCH GROUP Resilience and regional and European integration [Williams, post doc] (Societal) resilience and democratization [Pfeilschifter, doc] Resilience and European Neighbourhood Policy [Gonashvili, doc] Language and minority policies [Forker] Global and diffuse risks [Lebanidze] advanced and related research topics [International Fellows]	Round-Table discussions Conference in Tbilisi (2022) Conference in Jena (2023) Jena-CAUC online platform project website Jena Caucasus Policy Papers Podcast YouTube-Kanal other outreach activities
Phase I 2021 2022 2023	Phase II 2024 2025 2026
Resilience against populism and polarization EU energy policy in Azerbaijan and the Caspian Basin EU-China rivalry in the South Caucasus	conferences Jena/Tbilisi Round-Table discussions --

In addition to presenting the key details about the overall project and what to expect next in the near future, each member of the research team and the current fellows presented their planned contributions, particularly how their research will address the concept of resilience.



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A core research objective of the Jena-Cauc project is to **provide a comprehensive analysis of the resilience approach of EU foreign policy in the South Caucasus, and its contribution to conflict and crisis prevention, as well as to regional and European integration.**

Dr. Bidzina Lebandize will examine the role of the resilience approach in global and diffuse risks as it applies to the South Caucasus countries.

Tiffany G. Williams will analyze the resilience of regional- and local-level policies designed to promote European integration in the South Caucasus.

Irena Gonashvili's research will examine the Europeanization of environmental and climate policies in the South Caucasus countries, and the capacity of the EU to promote resilience in these policy areas as an external actor.

Our current senior fellow, **Prof. Ashot Aleksanyan**, presented how his research will probe the degree of political and economic resilience Armenia could expect depending on its strategic relationship with the European Union. Also, our former senior fellow, **Dr. Elguja Khokrishvili** further developed his comparative analysis of economic resilience amongst the South Caucasus countries during his fellowship with the Jena-Cauc project.





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Additionally, the Jena-Cauc project aims to **address the broader demand to further conceptualize and define resilience across the social sciences.**

Prof. Diana Forker will examine the degree to which language and minority policies in the South Caucasus countries contribute to societal resilience and conflict settlement.



Veronika Pfeilschifter's research will problematize resilience as adaption in order to better understand the role of resilience-building in creating new solidarities and political economies of trust.

Our current junior fellow, **Natia Botkaveli**, presented her research on the role of minority languages in cultural resilience-building, and in particular, her planned analysis of the case of Georgia.



The presentations were followed by a lively and open Q&A session, as well as a networking reception. **The Jena-Cauc Project Team is grateful to all the participants and presenters who made the Kick-off a fun, safe, and engaging event!**

For more information about our project and upcoming events, visit our website at <https://www.kaukasiologie.uni-jena.de/jena-cauc/>, or follow us on social media.

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