



Association of European
Studies for the Caucasus



University of St. Gallen

Center for Governance
and Culture in Europe

Shifting Allegiances, Story-Telling, and the Narrative of Values

PROGRAMME

Conference venue: Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University, 32/35 Rustaveli/Ninoshvili st., Batumi

30 April 2026

Individual arrival of participants

For funded participants: Hotel Aisi, Gorgasali – Griboedovi Street 153/29, Batumi, Georgia

18:00 Guided city tour, meeting point: Hotel Aisi, lobby

1 May 2026

10:15 Meeting in the hotel lobby, guided walk to University

11:00 Opening

12:00 Panel 1: Securitisation, Norms, and Legal Narratives

Transactional Securitisation, Narrative Fractures and the Failure of Collective Securitization
in NATO: The U.S. Approach to Russia's War against Ukraine
Armağan Gözkaman, Istanbul Beykent University, Türkiye

From Norms to Security: Securitisation of European Values
Burulkan Abdibaitova Pala, Kırşehir Ahi Evran University, Türkiye

The Value of International Law in Regional Security Narratives
Sergey Sayapin, KIMEP University School of Law, Kazakhstan

13:30 Coffee break / refreshments



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14:30 Panel 2: Maritime Space, Trade, and Security in the Black Sea

Becoming a "Legitimate Target". The Narrative Construction of Warfare in the Black Sea
Thomas Kruessmann, New Vision University Tbilisi, Georgia

Türkiye's Geoeconomic Role and Political Narratives in the Black Sea Region
Rabia Kalfaoğlu & Yasemin Necmiye Tutar, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Türkiye

Shared Words, Divided Waters: Value Signalling and Strategic Ambiguity in the Black Sea
Michael Shirley, Carleton University, Canada

16:00 Break

16:30 Panel 3: Caucasus Futures: Identity, Connectivity, and Regional Order

South Caucasus on the Way to a Common Identity
Orkhan Gafarov, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland

Connectivity as Pacification? EU Interventions in the South Caucasus
Laura Luciani, Ghent University, Belgium

Narrating Nation and Norms: Value-Driven Discourses in Azerbaijan's Foreign Policy
Elnur Ismayil, Istanbul Medeniyet University, Türkiye

Europe in the Caucasus, the Caucasus in Europe: How Europeanisation is Changing Local
Communities and how Local Communities are Changing Europe
Evgeny Romanovskiy, Charles University, Czech Republic

19:00 Dinner (tbc)

Venue: Restaurant Geo.Graphia, Batumi Boulevard (near the tennis courts)
+995 598 626-465, geographia@geographia.ge



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2 May 2026

10:00 Panel 4: War, Sanctions, and Grey-Zone Political Economies

Narrating the Grey Zone: Values, Informality, and Sanctions Evasion in Georgia's Wartime Political Economy

Kelly Chaib, independent researcher, Georgia

Global Power Rivalry in the Black Sea Region

Irakli Manvelidze & Malvina Jibladze, Shota Rustaveli State University Batumi, Georgia

Weaponizing Emotion: Russia's Reflexive Control Strategy and EU Responses

Oleksii Polegkyi, The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

12:00 Panel 5: Migration, Refuge, and the Crisis of Liberal Narratives

The Crisis of Liberalism and the Refugee Question

Ayşe Ezgi Gürcan, Istanbul Beykent University, Türkiye

Shifting Narratives and Institutional Cooperation in Post-Arab Spring Forced Migration

Abu-Awwad Hazem, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration, Romania

Geopolitical Positioning and Value-Based Migration Narratives

Tatiana Sitchinava, Ilia State University, Georgia, and Jochen Töpfer, Otto-von-Guericke-University Magdeburg, Germany

14:00 Coffee break / refreshments

15:00 Panel 6: Borders, Aesthetics, and Spatial Imaginaries

Narrating the Border: Aesthetic Methodologies and the Politics of Borderscapes

Beatrix Futak-Campbell, Leiden University, Netherlands

The Post-2022 Narrative Landscape of the Danube Delta Area

Ciprian Nițu, West University of Timișoara, Romania



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“Europe,” “Tradition,” and “Sovereignty”: Value-Laden Metaphors in Georgian Political Discourse

Vakhtang Endeladze, Akaki Tsereteli State University, Georgia

17:00 Panel 7: Media, Knowledge, and Narrative Infrastructures

When Policy Choices Rewired Narratives: Qualitative and AI-Assisted Text Analysis

Takeo Harada, Institute for International Strategy and Information Analysis, Inc. (IISIA) and
Yoko Hirose, Keio University

Convergent Television, Participatory Culture, and Value Narratives

Corrado Magnoni, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Reconceptualising Digital Diplomacy During Wartime: Insights from the Russo-Ukrainian War

Valeria Găvoază, National University of Political Studies and Public Administration,
Romania

20:00 Boat trip (tbc)

3 May 2026

10:00 Panel 8: European Belonging, Recognition, and Geopolitical Divides

Will the Real European Please Stand Up?

Fabienne Bossuyt, Ghent University, Belgium

Beyond Sovereignty: The Black Sea as a Struggle for Thick Recognition

Karel Franco Valansi, Istanbul Kültür University, Türkiye

Final discussion

11:30 End of conference