

PhD Support Programme
The EU, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the International System



PHD SUPPORT PROGRAMME EUCACIS

2016 - 2020

THE EU, CENTRAL ASIA AND THE CAUCASUS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM



About CIFE

The Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE) is a private institution of higher education and research, founded in 1954 with its head office in Nice and branch offices in Berlin, Brussels and Istanbul. It receives special funding in the framework of the Jean Monnet Programme of the European Union. Students from all continents enroll in its programmes and work as senior officials, consultants and academic experts after graduation.

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About IEP

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EUCACIS is co-organised by CIFE and IEP with the financial support from the Volkswagen Foundation and the Erasmus+ Programme

Berlin, August 2020

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WHAT IS EUCACIS?

“The EU, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the International System” (EUCACIS) is a PhD Support Programme for doctoral researchers in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus, organised by the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP) and the Centre international de formation européenne (CIFE). Funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and the Erasmus+ Programme, it offered scholarships for three years+1 (2016-2020) to 12 *postgraduates* who were working on their doctoral theses in political science, contemporary history or economics on a topic related to the programme’s thematic focus at a university or academy of sciences in the Southern Caucasus or Central Asia (including Afghanistan, the Kashmir region in India and the autonomous region Xinjiang in China). EUCACIS provided intensive PhD research training and support for its fellows, and helped them to establish their own networks with other young researchers in the target regions and in Europe. This was achieved through:

- Four international conferences in Europe and the target regions
- Three PhD schools (plus one PhD school in the extension period)
- One three-week research training stay per fellow
- Continuous online coaching
- Individual mentoring
- Publication opportunities

Throughout the program, 27 publications were accomplished by our fellows and authors of the EUCACIS network in two EUCACIS paper series: 15 articles were published in *EUCACIS in Brief* and 12 articles in *EUCACIS Online Paper* series on topics concerning the EU’s relations with Central Asia and the South Caucasus, as well as on policies and developments of the countries in both regions, with a special focus on international relations and foreign policy. In addition, the EUCACIS fellows drafted and published further papers in various journals and formats.

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



Edited map; source: <http://www.geographicguide.net/asia/caucasus-map.htm>

EUCACIS FELLOWS

SUHAIL AHMAD

“Internal Dynamics of Afghan Conflict: Evaluating Governance”

“If two people have one apple each and they share the same with each other, they will still end up having one apple each. But if two people have one idea each and they share the same with each other, they will end up having 2 ideas each... EUCACIS was a platform that literally ended up installing hundreds and thousands of such ideas into both personal and professional Me, not to refute that we ended up sharing lot of apples too.”



**University of
Kashmir
Srinagar, India**

The research intends to first explore the internal diversity and then analyze the concomitant socio-political complexity in Afghanistan. Ethnic diversity being the prime analytical dimension for the conflict in Afghanistan, apart from other dimensions has been exhaustively and comprehensively analyzed to comprehend the intricacies of the conflict. Moreover, the external factors responsible for the transformation of internal power and strategic structures, have also been examined to further our understanding about the very subtle evolutions from an indigenous perspective.

From a methodological point of view, the philosophical doctrine of the study is based on determinism, in more lucid words, the science of causality i.e. cause and effect analogy. Historical analysis, discourse analysis comprise the two major research techniques to analyze the data.

Both primary and secondary data consultation, with a predominant emphasis on qualitative research would correspond to highlight the persuasion of the whole research project.

Theoretically, both Antonio Gramsci's Gramscian module of Hegemony and neo-Gramscian contribution of Robert Cox and Andrew Linklater (conceptualization of 'Production' and 'Communication') would be applied to understand the component of ethnic diversity and its role in shaping up the complex socio-political dynamics in Afghanistan over the period of time. Furthermore, the inevitability of Religion and its interpretations by actors like Taliban too have been studied through a comparative analysis with some of the post-modernist/post-structuralist Islamic theorists like, Maulana Maududi, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Dr. Israr Ahmed and Javed Ghamidi. Therefore, both modalities of Governance in Afghanistan, i.e. Mainstream government (elected form) and the non-mainstream government (Taliban) have been studied and analyzed to draw an inference based on scientific endorsements and diverse hermeneutics.

Academic Highlights:

PhD in Social Science,
University of Kashmir

MA in International Peace
and Conflict Studies, Isla-
mic University of Science
and Technology

MA in “The EU and
Central Asia in the
International System
(EUCAIS)”, CIFE & IEP
online Master's program

Professional Highlights:

Research Fellow (junior) at
Justus Liebig University,
University of Bielefeld,
University of Dortmund

Assistant Professor at the
Center for Women's
Studies and Research,
University of Kashmir

MAGDA ARSENYAN

“Preconditions for the Establishment of the Parliamentary Culture in Armenia”



Yerevan State University
Yerevan, Armenia

The aim of the thesis is the revelation of the issues that hinder the formation of parliamentary culture and the designation of preconditions that can boost the democratization of parliamentary culture promoting the development of legal and political consciousness of the society, multilateral parliamentary socialization as well as the modernization and implementation of a culture of parliamentary elite that needs to empower democratic citizenship in accordance with the challenges of time. The significance of the study of parliamentary culture is conditioned by the necessity to raise the effectiveness of the functioning of parliament as a major institute of public

authority, which is in the transition process to democratic consolidation. The thesis answers the following questions:

- What are the factors that define the sustainable development of parliamentary culture?
- What type of instruments are used by parliament in foreign policy? What can Armenia borrow from Eastern and Eastern Partnership countries?
- What were the main flaws of the parliaments if one considers the whole political system of the First, the Second and the Third Republics of Armenia?
- What are the priorities and directions to be defined for the next stage of political system in Armenia?

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in Political Science, Public Administration Academy of the Republic of Armenia (PAARA)

MA in Public Administration, PAARA

BA in Political Science, Yerevan State University

Professional Highlights:

Expert on Political Affairs, National Assembly of Armenia

Executive Head, “Institute of Liberal Politics”, Yerevan

Former Assistant to Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Armenia

TAMAR GAMKRELIDZE

“The Role of Europe in the Identity Formation of Post-Soviet Georgia”

“In doing a PhD, there are lots of challenges from constant struggle to organize funds (e.g. scholarships/fellowships) and staying committed to writing the dissertation to handling negative feedback/rejections and publishing articles. There were times when I was questioning the decision to pursue PhD studies. But once I committed myself through engagement in different fellowship programs like EUCACIS, I knew I had to maximize the benefits of the program in order to achieve the doctoral degree.”



**Ilia State University
Tbilisi, Georgia**

Europe have influenced and been influenced by the Europeanization drive towards European unity”. The research finds that the UNM government redefined the political identity of Georgia through articulation of the national political project with the European values of liberal-democracy. Institutionalization of the European project, which targeted modification of cognitive principles, particularly ontological and normative notions, yielded new frames of the national political project. The pillars of the reimaged national project were “independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, democracy, prosperity and Europe”. The main pillar of the national political project, Christianity disappeared from the project, however it retained its centrality during the Saakashvili’s regime, as a cultural heritage of the country. Moreover, the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) was gradually dethroned from controlling cognitive principles by the UNM government through adopting laws and altering normative principles. The research further argues that escalation of relations with Russia contributed to strengthening a position of the European project in Georgia in spite of all odds. Hence, the European project turned into a main logic of a state building and development of Georgia, while Europe became one of the main pillars of the national political project.

The research relates to the undertakings of the United National Movement (UNM) government directed towards redefinition of the Georgian political identity in line with the European project within the period of 2004-2012. The project of Europe was introduced in Georgia by President Mikheil Saakashvili and the UNM government after assuming the power in 2004. The study engages to answer the question: To what extent did the UNM government manage to revise Georgian political identity through the European project? The key theoretical concepts to be explored are the concepts of political identity and the European project.

The study is interested in the process of identity formation. Here the key is to demonstrate the dynamics of identity change, how it has transformed over time as well as how “earlier meanings of

Academic Highlights:

PhD in Political Science,
Ilia State University

MA in European Studies,
Maastricht University

BA in Pedagogics in English and German Languages,
Ilia State University

Professional Highlights:

Researcher, Europe Our House

Former RTA Assistant, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia

Former journalist, Georgia Today

AZAD GARIBOV

“The Paradoxical Alliances: Threat Perception and Alliance Formation in the South Caucasus”



**Khazar University
Baku, Azerbaijan**

Security Complex theory (RSCT) and argues that in the South Caucasus, a combination of the three major variables of RSCT, namely long-standing enmities and amities, inherent state weaknesses, and penetration of big powers produce divergent and often conflicting alliance and alignment policies pursued by Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

These three major variables also constitute the three levels of analysis in the RSCT – domestic, regional and international. The small and inherently weak states of the South Caucasus, suffering from long-standing ethnic and territorial conflicts and/or the feeling of insecurity vis-à-vis bigger neighbours, seek alliances with extra-regional actors for ensuring their survival and security. This paves the way to the big powers’ penetration to the region, which in its turn influences and occasionally shapes the course of the conflicts, distribution of power, political systems and foreign policy identities in the South Caucasus states.

Despite holding similar positions in the international system by virtue of location, size, history, comparable political systems and ideologies, and involvement in inter and intra-state military conflicts, the alignment and alliance policies of the three South Caucasus states have significantly diverged since gaining independence. This doctoral thesis therefore examines the following questions: How do the South Caucasus states perceive major security threats and how do divergent threat perceptions shape different and often contradictory alliance and alignment policies in the region?

In order to uncover the reason that led to such divergence, the dissertation employs the materially/ideationally hybrid Regional

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in International Relations, Khazar University

MSc in International Politics, University of Glasgow

BSc in International Relations, Baku State University

Professional Highlights:

Contributing Analyst, Jamestown Foundation

Former Editor-in-Chief, Caucasus International

Former Lecturer, Khazar University

GULZANA KURMANALIEVA

“Pasture Resource Conflict and Cooperation: Explaining the Coexistence of Conflict and Cooperation in Pastoral Border South Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan”



Naryn State University
Naryn, Kyrgyzstan

The boundary regions of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are known for regional instability impacted by a lack of delineation and demarcation of border territories, which has induced inter-ethnic tensions. A growing scarcity of the pasture resources located in the border regions plays an important role for this conflict and has motivated violent outbreaks between Tajik and Kyrgyz ethnic groups. Despite policies that aim on the improvement of the pasture management, such as the introduction of pasture fees and establishment of a local Pasture Committee, multiple conflicts among ethnic communities over pasture still exist.

households and associated factors. Secondly, it explores governance structures, institutions (i.e. sets of rules or property rights) and determinants of institutional design that impact the emerging rules in-use for transboundary pasture use in the Kyrgyz-Tajik border regions. The research consequently seeks to explore ways to achieve sustainable and locally accepted regional pasture management in transboundary Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

The work employs an institutional perspective and explores the impact of the given institutional setup. It was noted that a lack of institutional arrangements for transboundary pasture use hinders Tajik herders' legal access to the region's sole summer pastures. The Kyrgyz "Pasture Committee" has pragmatically designed local rules on transboundary pasture use in the Kyrgyz-Tajik border region, thereby assuring Tajik herders at least semi-official access to the summer pastures. Yet while these rules limit conflict, they fail to limit overstocking. Locally designed rules also open up business opportunities to Tajik herders, which some of the Kyrgyz herders consider unfair and illegal. In order to achieve sustainable and locally accepted regional pasture management, despite the lack of legislative amendments and international agreements, we propose local-level institutional innovations. The work also emphasizes that pasture use regulation is paramount for maintaining regional stability and peaceful cooperation.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in Economics and Natural Resource Management, Naryn State University

MA in Economics and Management, Kyrgyz National University

BA in Linguistics, Kyrgyz National University

Professional Highlights:

Teaching Assistant, Naryn State University

Former Manager/Director, EDU-Education Center

Former Assistant to Manager of Academic Affairs, University of Central Asia

VIOLETTA MANUKYAN

“The Challenges and Perspectives of Stateness of Non-Recognized States of Post-Soviet Space”

“The greatest learning is the lesson I got during our EUCACIS PhD Schools – ‘No matter how much knowledge you have, it’s nothing, until you know the right methods and how to implement them’. And EUCACIS – its wonderful staff and the invited lecturers have taught us how to do exactly that.”



**Yerevan Brusov State
University of Languages
and Social Sciences**

Yerevan, Armenia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia more than two and a half dozen countries declared independence. Some of these countries declared independence immediately, whereas the others still remained non-recognized. However, the issues of recognition weren't the toughest one for the states of Post-Soviet space, as each country also had to face peculiar challenges arose by the processes of statebuilding and stateness. What to say about the states that had to not only simultaneously undergo these challenges alongside with the unprecedented system crisis in the world history – post-Soviet transformation and the deepening of the globalization process, but also suffered from the consequences of an armed conflict and in these circumstances undertook the processes of post-conflict state-building and stateness.

This doctoral project studies the challenges and perspectives of stateness of unrecognized post-Soviet states, the disclosure of which is of exceptional significance not only for the studied countries, but also for achieving regional and international peace and security. Therefore, the study puts forward the

following research questions: what is the condition of stateness of the non-recognized states of post-Soviet space and what impact has (or does not have) the non-recognized status on their stateness level. In order to fully scrutinize the topic various methods such as: case-study, cluster and comparative analysis, inductive and deductive, qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, factor and path analysis, cross-temporal comparison will be implemented within the study.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in International Relations, Yerevan Brusov State University of Languages and Social Sciences (YSULS)

MA in International Relations, YSULS

BA in Pedagogy, YSULS

Professional Highlights:

Expert at the Standing Committee on Foreign Relations, National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

Lecturer, UNESCO Chair on Human Rights, Democracy and Political Science

ALBINA MURATBEKOVA

“China’s contemporary social and economic interaction with India in border areas: models and challenges”

“EUCACIS gave an unforgettable experience of learning through mentoring and encouraging the fellows. Its major distinction was in tailored approach and practical guidance.”



**Al Farabi Kazakh University
Almaty, Kazakhstan**

China and India are two adjacent nations that are among the most populous and fastest-growing economies in the world. Both are influencing the global order and contributing to discussions on the emergence of a new wave of globalization. Being ancient civilizations with a deep legacy of interaction in trade, historical and cultural exchange, and diplomatic contacts, yet, they have irreconcilable challenges that hamper their bilateral interaction. One of them is a border issue, which influences the development of bilateral cooperation. This research studied the China-India relations through their border issue and beyond. An analytical picture of historical evolution and modern timeline of the border issue, as well as an

analysis of geopolitical factors, key regional issues, and leadership perceptions allowed to understand deep strategic differences of China-India cooperation. For Central Asian states, which perceive China as a neighboring power and India includes Central Asia in its “extended neighborhood”, it is important to understand the essence of China-India bilateral relations. China and India are among the largest trading partners of the Central Asian states and both have robust historical and cultural roots with the region. However, limited research has been conducted to investigate deep relations between China and India from the Central Asian perspective. Accordingly, the research analyzed border issues as one of the most important “thorns” in Sino-Indian bilateral cooperation, while scrutinizing their strategic divergences allowed to understand its impact on regional cooperation with Central Asia.

Studying at PhD introduced me with the world of research, an academic community, and scientific collaboration. It was a life experience of involving into the international community through research. One of the most valuable experiences during the past five years of PhD was in collaboration with the international academic community. Before it was difficult to imagine, I could meet with prominent experts in my area to discuss different perspectives of my theme. During the PhD, I learned how to comply with expectations, frame ideas into a knowledge framework, and examine them through scientific discussions. Conducting PhD also allowed for finding new friends and like-minded people all over the world. Sharing the knowledge and experience during the research trips enabled to widen expectations and blur existing limits. Travel experience and get-together meetings became an essential part of self-growth during the research work. Thanks to EUCACIS programme, I had introduced to such opportunities. I believe that gained experience became a strong basis for my further professional and personal development.

Academic Highlights:

PhD in Oriental Studies
from Al Farabi Kazakh
National University and
R.B. Suleimenov Institute
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MSc in Regional Studies
from Al Farabi Kazakh
National University

BSc in Regional Studies
from Ablai khan Kazakh
University of International
Relations and World
Languages

Professional Highlights:

Eurasian Research
Institute: Research Fellow

Ablai khan Kazakh
University of International
Relations and World
Languages: Lecturer of
Oriental Studies

R.B.Suleimenov Institute
of Oriental Studies:
Research Fellow

JAMSHID NORMATOV

“Financial Liberalization in WTO: Opportunities and Risks for Developing Countries”



**University of World Economy
and Diplomacy**
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Developing countries, which make up 75% of WTO membership, have not liberalized or liberalized little their financial sector. Particularly interesting is the case of countries of Caucasus and Central Asia, which emerged as newly independent states after the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Caucasus and Central Asian states have been pursuing path of reforms to integrate into the World Economy and majority of them became WTO members (except for Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan – two are about to join the organization). Financial sector reform is one of the significant issues in WTO negotiations for Caucasus and Central Asian countries, since there is a huge potential for financial liberalization in these economies to generate additional growth opportunities.

This research studies the relationship between financial liberalisation under the context of WTO membership and economic growth in developing countries with a particular focus on the Caucasus and Central Asia. Research methodology relies on a multidisciplinary approach and includes a legal analysis of financial regulation as well as econometric s and a regression analysis. The research will draw conclusions about the link between liberalization and growth, and provide policy recommendations on pursuing financial reforms in the focus countries.

The rational of study lies in the fact, that financial liberalisation might lead to increased competition and thus lower cost of borrowing for businesses, which would lead to economic growth. In fact, efficient financial sector is commonly considered as key factor behind growth in developing countries. Hence, the countries of Caucasus and Central Asia could develop common approach in financial liberalisation and speak with common voice in WTO negotiations.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in International Economics and World Economy, University of World Economy and Diplomacy

MA in European Studies, European Institute of Saarland University

BA in International Relations, Tashken Oriental Institute

Professional Highlights:

Lecturer, Westminster International University Tashkent

Former Lecturer, University of World Economy and Diplomacy

JASUR SALOMOV

*“The Formation and Development of Political Systems of Central Asian Countries in the Late XX-
Early XXI Century: A Comparative Analysis”*

“EUCACIS was an amazing journey that enabled me to gain high-quality European research experience, display it on an international stage and build multicultural network – in short, changed me from a local thinker into a global one.”



**National University of
Uzbekistan**

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

After gaining independence, Central Asian republics started the processes of democratic transition and formation of their political systems based on their own cultural and political norms. Given the different approach in the assessment of the transformation, the process of formation and development of the political systems in Central Asian countries require deep and comprehensive analysis. To be more concrete, this study, first and foremost, requires a comparative and interdisciplinary approach. The main objective of the research is to identify peculiarities of the formation and functioning of the political systems and to create a theoretical model that enables to assess transition processes of Central Asian republics.

Special scientific interest represents the research of the processes of modernization and inclusion of Central Asian countries into globalization

processes, dynamics of institutional development, which are in varying degrees influence to political, regional and international factors.

Thorough, based on rich empirical material scientific analysis of the nature, extent and results of these processes are certainly relevant, because it allows not only to assess the political systems of Central Asian countries, but also to predict their further development, to influence on current process of modernization strategy of each country.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in Contemporary History, Institute of History of Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan

MA in International Security Law, University of World Economy and Law

BA in International Law, University of World Economy and Diplomacy

Professional Highlights:

Junior Researcher, Institute of History of Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan

BAHODUR SHERALIEV

“Tajikistan in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Multilateral Negotiations Process: Achievements, Commitments and Perspectives for Tajikistan”



Tajik Slavic University

Dushanbe, Tajikistan

This research explores possible challenges and opportunities for Tajikistan’s implementation of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement commitments. Moreover, it evaluates experiences from best practices as well as sharing experiences with neighbouring countries. The paper will present policy recommendations to Tajikistan for climate change mainstreaming and for the implementation of the roadmap for the Nationally Determined Contribution on emissions reduction and UNFCCC Paris Agreement commitments.

The research method consists of a literature review, an analysis of the sectoral policy and international agreements ratified by Tajikistan. The paper will also include data

collection and processing of allocations from the national budget on climate change activities, surveys and interviews with key stakeholders from the government, think tanks, development partners and regional as well as international organizations; field visits to different regions of Tajikistan in order to see local capacity level on climate change mainstreaming, and the participation at UNFCCC Conference of Parties negotiations as a member of the Tajik delegation.

The topic is highly relevant for Tajikistan as well as for international relations studies because implementation and enhanced ambition of Nationally Determined Contribution, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the transition to green economy is a priority at the moment.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in International Relations, Tajik Slavic University

MA in Global Political Economy, University of Kassel

Diploma in Electrical Engineering, Tajik Technical University

Professional Highlights:

Chairman of the Environmental Agency under the Government of Tajikistan

Former Advisor for Climate Finance and Climate Change, GIZ

Former Financial Inclusion Consultant, EBRD

SHOLPAN TAZABEK

“Faculty Members and Internationalization of Higher Education in Kazakhstan: Exploring Perceptions, Experiences and Engagement”



Nazarbayev University
Astana, Kazakhstan

Internationalization of higher education is a worldwide trend that is taking lead in many countries, but it is especially important in Kazakhstan – a country, which is making different attempts to reconfigure its higher education in the context of postsocialist transformations. Since 1991, educators led by country policymakers have been taking various approaches to engage the local universities in international activities, but there is little evidence that these efforts have involved the leadership from academic staff. Meanwhile, the research indicates that faculty members act as key agents in the internationalization of higher education. The importance of the faculty members is informed by the strong influence that they have on teaching and learning, research, service, and the overall development of a

university. Their engagement in internationalization can define whether academia will adopt international values and incorporate international perspectives into their daily practices, or not, and accordingly, will or will not contribute to successful implementation of the internationalization agenda.

It is noteworthy that existing studies emphasize the importance of the faculty engagement in internationalization and agree that this inquiry deserves further research attention. However, the literature shows that very little research has been done in Kazakhstan, and almost no research has been conducted from the perspective of the faculty members. Therefore, by taking a qualitative approach using 30 semi-structured interviews, this multiple case study attempts to conduct an in-depth inquiry into faculty members’ perceptions, motivations and engagement in internationalization at two universities in Kazakhstan. By exploring faculty members’ perspectives on these issues, the findings of this research can serve as helpful contribution to the field of local higher education as well as an original contribution to the international research on internationalization of higher education.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in Education, Nazarbayev University

MA in Political Science, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

BA in English Language, Tsinghua University

Professional Highlights:

Research Assistant, Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education

Former Chief Manager, Almaty Management University

Former Chief Manager, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

KIALBEK TEMISHEV

“Political Development of Kyrgyzstan in English-American Press: 2001-2012 Years”

For me personally, the EUCACIS PhD Support Programme has become instrumental to get inspiration and complete my research dissertation. The Programme has provided full academic support and professional coaching, including tailored training programme blended by consultations with postdoctoral researchers and face-to-face discussion with peers from countries of the European Union, Caucasus, Central Asia and Afghanistan



Kyrgyz National University
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

The research work offers a historiographic analysis of two violent overthrows of state power in the contemporary history of the Kyrgyz Republic.

A thorough study of impact by these significant events on the formation of statehood, the democratic development of society and the well-being of the country has produced important conclusions and practical recommendations for further sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan. Key recommendations included necessity for strengthening the balance of power, reforming security sector, ensuring transparency in governance and developing of well-balanced foreign policy concept.

The particularity of the research was the inclusion of an English-language research base about events in the history of Kyrgyzstan in the domestic academic discourse. Thus, based on a comparative historiographic analysis of more than a hundred English-language and Russian-language sources of information and opinions of respective scientists and politicians, the research has identified main similarities and differences in the interpretation of the root causes, consequences and influence of political events on the state development.

Ultimately, the research has brought clarity to interpretation of power overthrows in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2010, considering existing academic definition of “people’s revolution” and “coup d’etat”. In addition, the research has explained main reason of the “color revolutions” in the world as ongoing systemic crisis of state governance in modern society. Importantly, the research has examined popular hypotheses about the role of ‘external powers’ in overthrowing the state power in Kyrgyzstan and has demonstrated the evidence of impact by such internal factors on two power overthrows in the country as government mistakes and failures, including large-scale corruption, short-sighted foreign policy, criminalization of power, weak leadership and poor rule of law.

Academic Highlights:

PhD candidate in Contemporary History, Kyrgyz National University

MSc in EU and Central Asia in the International System Studies, IEP/CIFE

MSc in Policy Studies, University of Edinburgh

BA in Law, Osh State University

BA in English Language and Literature, Osh State University

Professional Highlights:

Head of Program Unit, UN World Food Programme (WFP)

Former Community Services Associate, UN Agency for Refugees (UNHCR)

Former Advisor to MP, Kyrgyz Parliament

SUPERVISORS AND INVOLVED ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

PROF. DR ASHOT ALEKSANYAN

Position: Associate Professor and Chair of Theory and History of Political Science at Yerevan State University.

Research interests: European civil society, human political rights and freedoms, and post-soviet social partnerships.

Supervised Fellow: Magda Arsenyan.



Ashot Aleksanyan: “The participation of my PhD student and me as a scientific adviser in the EUCACIS program gave me not only a promising future, but also a unique one; it is possible to get a high-quality education in the field of interdisciplinary analysis and research methods in the social and human sciences. For PhD students and their supervisors, the EUCACIS program has done everything necessary for us to form an academic culture of communication and cooperation. At the EUCACIS programme courses, PhD students successfully studied interdisciplinary courses, adapted to the European scientific environment, took part in all seminars and scientific conferences. Thanks to this, my PhD student from an academic point of view conducts current political science research. Participation in the EUCACIS program broadens the analytical horizons, while participants from the South Caucasus and Central Asia contributed to cultural exchange and breaking stereotypes. In addition to improving knowledge and skills, which will have to operate almost consistently, the new interactive study format allows you to feel all the features of the European academic research system and learn all about its advantages. The EUCACIS program played an important role for the personal development of my graduate student and me, as we both had a good opportunity to work in an international environment and cultural enrichment.”

PROF. DR ASIFA JAN

Position: Dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of Kashmir, Srinagar.

Research interests: Post-colonialism, multiculturalism, peace and conflict studies, globalization, Asian studies, gender justice and civil society, and peace building.

Supervised Fellow: Suhail Ahmad.



Asifa Jan: “Frankly speaking, so many positives reflected during the course of the whole programme. I personally believe that a person can do no justice at all doing anything until and unless one enjoys doing the same. One thing I can so audaciously emphasize that I thoroughly enjoyed every session, every moment, every activity (whether actively participatory or audience) during the course of the whole programme and I can testify the same about others, hence the level of the programme was simply top notch. Cross geographical and cross cultural nature of the participants was the primary highlight of the programme. I was personally very impressed by the hospitality of all the German participants in general, East German participants in particular. Furthermore, what was very impressive from a professional perspective was the inclusion of various Avante garde initiatives and measures that simply raised the bars. The balance between seniors and juniors in managing, organizing various programmes really enhanced the level of participation across all domains... last but not least, if I have to rate the whole programme, I would disappoint myself if rate anything below 9 out of 10... I really wish to participate more and more in future cooperation programmes... Danke schön!!!”

PROF. DR GHIA NODIA

Position: Professor of politics and director of the International School of Caucasus Studies at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. He is a former minister for education and science of Georgia.

Research interests: democratisation; state-building, security, and conflicts in Georgia and the Caucasus; theories of nationalism; and democratic transition in the post-cold-War context.

Supervised Fellow: Tamar Gamkrelidze.



PROF. DR LAURA YEREKESHEVA

Position: Associate Professor and Deputy Director for International Affairs, as well as Head of the Department of Central and South Asian Studies and a UNESCO Chair Coordinator at the

R.B.Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies.

Research interests: Comparative religious studies, sociology of religion, theory of systems, culture and politics of identity in Central Asia and South Asia, intercultural dialogue, and international relations.

Supervised fellow: Albina Muratbekova.



PROF. DR HASAN ALIBAYLI

Position: Head of Department International Relations History. Dr. Alibayli is former diplomat who worked at the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Tehran as Chargé d'affaires in 1993-95.

Research focus: Foreign policy of Azerbaijan; History of international relations

Supervised Fellow: Azad Garibov.

PROF. DR TIGRAN TOROSYAN

Position: UNESCO Chair on Democracy, Human Rights and European Studies at Brusov State University, Yerevan. Former President of the National Assembly of Armenia.

Research interests: UNESCO Chair on Democracy, Human Rights and European Studies at Brusov State University, Yerevan. Former President of the National Assembly of Armenia.

Supervised Fellow: Violetta Manukyan.



Tigran Torosyan: "The EUCACIS program is a real and important support for post-Soviet countries in the direction of reforms in higher education and science. It will become more productive and integrated if the PhD papers will be defended at European universities."

PROF. DR DAMIRA OMURALIEVA

Position: Pro-Rector of Naryn State University, Former Dean, Head of Department at Naryn State University

Research interests: Economics.

Supervised Fellow: Gulzana Kurmanalieva.



DR NISHANBAY SIRAJIDDINOV

Position: Professor at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy

Research interests: Applied Econometrics, Economic Policy Analysis, Developing Countries, Foreign Direct Investment, Fiscal Policy and Taxation.

Supervised Fellow: Jamshid Normatov.



PROF. DR MIRZOKHID RAKHIMOV

Position: Head of Department of Contemporary History and International Relations, Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Research interests: Head of Department of Contemporary History and International Relations. The Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Supervised Fellow: Jasur Salomov.



PROF. SAIDALI MUHIDDINOV

Position: Dean of the Faculty of the History and International Relations, Russian-Tajik Slavonic University, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Supervised fellow: Bahodur Sheraliev.



PROF. LYNNE PARMENTER

Position: Adjunct professor, Nazarbayev University, Graduate School of Education, Nursultan, Kazakhstan.

Research interests: Internationalisation of education. Globalisation and education, Global citizenship education, Intercultural education, Education reform.

Supervised Fellow: Sholpan Tazabek.



PROF. DR. NAZIRA MOMOSHEVA

Position: Professor at the Faculty of History and Area studies, Kyrgyz National University, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Research interests: Contemporary foreign policy of Kyrgyzstan and the relations between the EU and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Supervised Fellow: Kialbek Temishev.



PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

1st EUCACIS Conference

“The EU, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the International System”

30 - 31 August 2016
Almaty, Kazakhstan



On 30 and 31 August 2016, the international conference **“The EU, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the International System”** (EUCACIS) took place in Almaty (Kazakhstan). The conference has been attended by experts and contributors from Central Asia, the Southern Caucasus, Europe, China, India and Russia who discussed various aspects of the relations between the EU, Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as current developments and challenges in policy fields such as water, resources and trade, security and foreign policy.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Michael Emerson Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS), illustrated areas of intra- and inter-regional cooperation and regionalization in fields such as transport or trade, but also a number of cleavages between the regions and single countries that emerge. Prof. Dr Mirzokhid Rakhimov, Head of the Contemporary History and International Relations Department of the Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, asked in his keynote speech about “The New Great Power Contest for Central Asia?”. In subsequent panel discussions, experts examined foreign policy options of the Central Asian and South Caucasian states and attempts of regionalisation in both regions.

The conference also served as the kick-off event for the PhD Support Programme. During a final selection process on the brink of the conference, the fellows of the PhD Support Programme were selected among the applicants from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan as well as from the Chinese region of Xinjiang and the Indian region of Kashmir.



2nd EUCACIS Conference

“Geopolitical Change in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus”

3 - 4 July 2017
Berlin, Germany



The international conference “**Geopolitical Change in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus: Which Future Role for Europe?**” took place on 3-4 July 2017 at the premises of the Representation of the European Commission to Germany.



The conference involved well-known experts and high-ranking decision-makers as well as young researchers who discussed the role of global and regional powers in Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus as well as the consequences for EU’s future policies towards both regions. It spurred discussions about a new start for the relations between Russia and the US, its implications for Central Asia and the South Caucasus and the role of the “late global power” China. The keynote-speaker, H.E. Ambassador Peter Burian, EU Special Representative for

Central Asia, offered an intriguing glance into the EU’s strategy for Central Asia, which he assessed as a „magnitude of challenge“. In particular, he emphasized the EU’s effort to support Central Asian states in enhancing administrative capacity and building up domestic economies which currently suffer from low oil prices, shrinking remittances and a lack of reforms. Moreover, the EUCACIS fellows were able to witness panel debates between scientists and practitioners from the respective regions and discuss their PhD posters with the conference visitors during lunch breaks.



3rd EUCACIS Conference

“Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Transition: International Perspectives”

30 - 31 August 2018
Tbilisi, Georgia

On 30 - 31 August 2018 the international conference on „**Central Asia and the South Caucasus in Transition: International Perspectives**” took place in Tbilisi, Georgia. The event was supported by and took place at the ILIA State University, the city’s second biggest academic entity.

During the 2-day conference, panel debates covered such topics as security and stability, transition processes, as well as the role of the socio-cultural dialogue between Central Asia, the South Caucasus and Europe. In a first panel, the nature of the conflicts in the South Caucasus region has been discussed controversially, and a critical assessment of the role of the EU, Russia, and further external actors in the solution of these conflicts and the development of the region has been made. A second panel debate



focussed on opportunities of democratic transformation and interregional cooperation in Central Asia. It has been emphasized that, since Uzbekistan’s opening up under President Mirziyoyev and the launch of the Chinese ‘One Belt One Road’ initiative, regional rapprochement and development has become a priority issue for Central Asia, in particular with regards to tourism, connectivity

and trade. Finally, a third panel offered a glance into the challenges of civil society engagement and the role of the ‘European model’ for the political cultures and democratization processes in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

The panel discussions have been continued and deepened in working groups. The debates made clear that, despite the many challenges for peace, stability and prosperity in both regions, great achievements have been made, and the European Union remains an important partner.



During the conference, the twelve EUCACIS fellows were provided with the opportunity to present their research to a wider audience and profit from feedback and panel debates with European, Caucasian and Central Asian academics, decision-makers, and professionals.

4th EUCACIS Conference

“The EU, Central Asia and the South Caucasus: New Approaches on Regional and International Cooperation”

23 - 24 May 2019
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan



The fourth and final international conference “**The EU, Central Asia and the South Caucasus: new approaches on regional and international cooperation**” took place on 23-24 May 2019 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. The event was organised with the PhD fellows’ support regarding the conceptualization of the programme, and in close cooperation with the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. The conference focused on possibilities of regional and international cooperation in different areas such as border management, migration, trade, energy,

and security. Overall, it was agreed that regional cooperation should be enhanced since some challenges can only be tackled together; this especially includes climate as well as security issues. In the latter case, the role of Afghanistan was stressed which should not only be seen as a risk but as a partner.

On the international level, the role of the EU, Russia, China and the US in Central Asia was discussed. There were views of a declining role of Russia in favour of China and an uncertain future of the US engagement in the region, which currently seems to follow other priorities. Not least, the EU with its offer of a non-exclusive partnership seems to leave a certain room for manoeuvre for the Central Asian states. It was emphasised that a coordinated effort of all external actors involved would be profitable for all sides. Some EUCACIS fellows enriched the debates with their specific PhD research outputs, while others answered questions relating their dissertation projects in an international expert hearing on “democracy and social change in post-Soviet space”.



The conference was also the occasion for the official EUCACIS Graduation Ceremony in the impressive setting of a Kyrgyz yurt. The fellows were honoured for their successful participation in the PhD Support Programme and got the chance to look back and recap the past three years together with the EUCACIS team and their supervisors.

1st PhD School

3 - 8 July 2017
Berlin, Germany



Subsequent to the 2nd ECACIS conference, the first EUCACIS PhD School took place in Berlin from 5 to 8 July 2017. The aim of the PhD School was to deepen the knowledge of the fellows within the field of International Relations, to improve their methodological competences and scientific writing skills, to strengthen their presentation skills, to provide them feedback on their PhD theses and to widen their network. The seminars included an introduction to the three online courses „Methodology of Political Science“, „Methodology of

Economics“ and „Comparative Regionalism“ as well as lectures on “Theory of International Relations” and on “Democracy Theory”. The courses provided the fellows with a variety of theoretical perspectives and social science methods, which especially benefitted those fellows who were in the beginning of their theses, but also served as a useful insight into new perspectives for more advanced fellows.

Furthermore, the fellows presented their theses and received feedback from their peers as well as from EUCACIS team advisors on how they can improve their structure and content. This task required the fellows to dwell deeper into the topics of their PhD colleagues, which brought the group closer together. The individual consultation time with the respective



EUCACIS team advisors provided the fellows with the chance to discuss questions regarding their research, but also to address any other personal questions and concerns. Finally, an evening event with CIFE alumni offered the fellows the opportunity to get in touch with other young researchers and to learn about different career paths and career-related challenges in different regions of the world.

2nd PhD School

19 - 23 February 2018
Berlin, Germany



The fellows of the PhD Support Programme EUCACIS met for the second time to deepen their academic and professional skills at the PhD School from 19th to 23rd February 2018 in Berlin. They attended several trainings and lectures, presented their PhD theses and received detailed comments by their EUCACIS team advisors and their peers.

During their PhD School, apart from training on their presentation skills as well as lectures on academic English writing and strategies for academic publishing. They were presented an editor's

perspective and workflow, and were encouraged not to quit working on their articles after receiving critical comments from a reviewer, but to consider them seriously and to revise the article.

Moreover, the EUCACIS fellows had the opportunity to gain insights into the development of EU-Central Asia relations from a diplomat's perspective. Michael Siebert, Head of the Division for Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus at the German

Federal Foreign Office, presented considerations for the review of the EU-CA Strategy, but

was also interested in the opinions of the young scholars regarding the current state of affairs in their home countries and the future cooperation between the EU and Central Asia.



3rd PhD School

31 August - 2 September 2018
Tbilisi, Georgia

Following the third EUCACIS conference, the fellows attended their third PhD School in Tbilisi, Georgia, on 1-2 September 2018. It took place at the ILIA State University, home university of Professor Ghia Nodia, one of the involved supervisors of the programme and active contributor to the project's achievements.

During the 2-day PhD School, the fellows received professional input on the fields of academic teaching and on project management, both fields that are of high relevance for young researchers and junior academics.

Furthermore, the participants had methodological consultations and exchanged their preliminary research results with their peers and their academic advisors of EUCACIS. Finally, trainings on academic English writing and on publishing academic papers completed the PhD School. As this PhD School was the last face-to-face gathering for the EUCACIS fellows before the final conference, they took the opportunity to discuss their theses, in particular existing challenges and obstacles with their academic advisors, in order to get additional coaching on how to get the research project to a successful end.



At a visit of the Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP), the fellows benefitted from a presentation on the topic “Twenty-seven years independent Georgia – achievements and challenges”, and discussed the development of the country with the GIP researchers. Besides the academic programme, fellows and team enjoyed a guided tour through Georgia’s lively capital and were impressed by its cultural richness.

4th PhD School

14 - 15 February 2020
Istanbul, Turkey

On 14 and 15 February 2020 the EUCACIS fellows of the extension period and the EUCACIS team came together for the 4th and last EUCACIS PhD School in Istanbul. At the final stage of their doctorates, the school served the purpose of sharing useful tips and information that could aid them to embark on their career path or disseminate their research after completion.

The guest speaker Neil Urquhart trained the fellows on presenting and sharing academic research. The fellows learned techniques for an effective presentation, for engaging and inspiring audiences whether by well-structured



content, employing visual stimulus, by voice control or confident body gestures. The training was motivating for the fellows with regard to their teaching activities at university, but also gave them input for the upcoming doctoral defences and for oral presentations of any kind. Professor Thomas Christiansen from Free International University

of Social Studies (LUISS) shared his suggestions with the fellows on academic publishing including how to turn the dissertation into a book, how to approach journals or publishing houses, and gave insights of the publication process. Together with EUCACIS programme director Professor Mathias Jopp, he also coached on individual and collective grant proposal writing for academics, motivating the junior researchers to apply for visiting fellowships, post-doctoral projects or international research consortia. Our fellows also discussed the final stages of their research with their mentors from CIFE and IEP, aiming at



overcoming all remaining obstacles in order to submit the final drafts of the theses within the next weeks and months.

1st Research Training Stay

*10 - 30 July 2017
Berlin, Germany*



From 10 until 28 July 2017, the first research training stay with six fellows from the PhD Support Programme “The EU, Central Asia and the Southern Caucasus in the International System” (EUCACIS) took place in Berlin. The programme participants have either full-time or part-time jobs next to their PhD projects, so the attendance phase in Berlin provided them with the opportunity to concentrate on their PhD research, visit Berlin libraries and relevant institutions and conduct interviews.

Especially the main library of the Humboldt University – the Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum – was a popular place for the fellows to visit. Its large selection of literature on the economic, political and social development in Central Asia and the South Caucasus was greatly beneficial for the fellows who often complain about difficulties with access to relevant literature at the universities in their home countries.

In the course of the three weeks, the fellows visited several political institutions and think tanks such as the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), and the Bundestag. The exchange with the expert of the respective institution and the possibility to ask questions related to the fellows’ fields of research was a highlight. At the German Ministry of Foreign Relations, for instance, a fruitful debate on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict took place with the Head of the Political Department, Michael Siebert.



2nd Research Training Stay

26 February - 18 March 2018
Berlin, Germany



The other six fellows participated in the second Research Training Stay, where they became acquainted with libraries in Berlin and met experts from the Federal Chancellery, the Center for East European and International Studies (ZOiS) and from Human Rights Watch. The director of ZOiS introduced the fellows to the internal structure and processes of a new and innovative research center, whereas at the Human Right Watch office, a heated debate on human rights and the situation of human right activities in Central Asia took place. The debate allowed all involved discussants to reflect on and revise their views and “cultural filters”.

Many of the fellows had significant problems with accessing scientific literature at their home Universities. Therefore, a guided tour to the Berlin based libraries with facilitated access to their rich book stocks was highly important for the fellows during their Research Training Stays in Berlin. They were able to make use of the databases and literature available at the Staatsbibliothek, the Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and at other libraries. One of the fellows was able to complete her policy paper during the Research Training Stay, which was among the first papers to be published.



The EUCACIS fellows benefitted from those intensive weeks in Berlin, as they received significant input relevant to their academic careers, and had time to focus on their research in a suitable environment. However, it was not only the fellows who benefitted from the stay. The discussions during Lunch Debates with CIFE and IEP staff on various international relations issues, different academic approaches and cultural features were enriching for all.

TEAM MEMBERS



Matthias Waechter

Director General / CIFE

“The four years of the EUCACIS programme were a unique human, academic and cultural experience for me. Human experience at first, because it gave me the opportunity to meet a group of wonderful, keenly motivated, and highly talented young PhD students coming from a great variety of backgrounds. Over the four years of the programme, I could witness not only their professional growth, but also the building of a small community with strong personal bonds. A human experience also, because over the four years of the programme, we worked not only in a great team at CIFE and IEP, but also because we could meet the supervisors of our PhD students, who were extremely supportive of our project. An academic experience, because it made me learn so much about countries and regions I knew little before. When my colleague Mathias Jopp asked me some years ago whether CIFE would like to join and support this project, I had never devoted academic studies to Central Asia nor to the Caucasus. Due to working with our fellows and attending our conferences, I now know what the "state of the art" is. Finally, a cultural experiences, because EUCACIS made me discover three highly interesting and beautiful countries I had never visited before: Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan.”



Mathias Jopp

Head of International
Programmes / IEP

“The EUCACIS programme was an unprecedented experience for the IEP and a highly important one for me. After having run, in close cooperation with CIFE, two Master programmes for students from Central Asia, the PhD support programme was the logical follow-up of the previous endeavours. The twelve selected students from universities in the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia were the right ones selected out of four hundred applications and around 130 complete dossiers of eligible candidates. Six of them submitted their PhD theses to their universities, three of them already having defended them and obtained a PhD, by the end of the project lifetime. Six fellows are in the process of finalising their thesis drafts, some of them are waiting for going back to normal at their universities for having their final defence after the COVID-19 lockdown. One EUCACIS fellow meanwhile became a high ranking official in the state administration of his country, which is a good example of having an impact on the fellows’ careers in the region. I am very grateful to all of our team in IEP and CIFE who made this success possible.”



Helgard Fröhlich

Programme Director (retired)
/CIFE

„We are not forming coalitions of states, we are uniting men.' Inspired by these words of Jean Monnet and committed to the European model of living and learning together in peace and prosperity we have developed this PhD support programme for excellent postgraduates from Central Asia, Southern Caucasus countries and the Kashmir region. Right from the beginning two aims were closely interconnected: to provide intensive research training to support the participants in writing their doctoral thesis and to bring together these young researchers with outstanding experts in order to establish academic and human networks which go far beyond pure career interest. Therefore we have designed EUCACIS as blended learning programme which combined e-learning methods with intense presence PhD schools and international conferences.

It was a great pleasure for me being part of the programme team. 'United in diversity' - this is a future-oriented concept and strengthens our trust in global solidarity and cooperation."



Susann Heinecke

EUCACIS Programme
Manager / CIFE

“After having worked with master students from Central Asia and the Caucasus for several years, I was excited to set up a PhD Support Programme with young researchers from both regions with diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. Already during the application period, I realised what richness of research topics the programme entails. The twelve fellows finally selected out of around 130 applicants worked on very diverse research subjects, representing several academic disciplines such as political sciences, history and economy, and came from eight different countries. On top of this inherent diversity of the cohort, we organised the face-to-face events in different locations in Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, bringing senior and junior researchers from all three regions together. The result was an intense and striking academic exchange across all kinds of borders that we would not have expected when outlining the project! The bonds that have been made will sustain, and will hopefully lead to a better understanding and an even closer cooperation in the future.”



Janny Schulz

EUCACIS Project Manager (2017-2020) / IEP

“For me, EUCACIS is a lot about growth. It’s about growing together, and growing and not only as scholars, but also as persons. Every time we saw the fellows, they surpassed their former selves. And along with the fellows, I grew myself. During the course of the programme, I grew from a Master student who joined EUCACIS as an intern, to a young professional and project manager. EUCACIS gave me the chance to surpass myself, and I knew I could always rely on the support of the amazing EUCACIS team. For me, the end of EUCACIS is not only the end of a programme, but the end of the first ever programme that I managed, and I feel like I am graduating from EUCACIS myself. Plus I will never forget what I learned about pasture conflicts in Kyrgyzstan through Gulzana Kurmanalieva’s academic work!”



Tatjana Kuhn

EUCACIS Programme
Manager (2017-2018) / CIFE

“Between February 2017 and March 2018, I coordinated the EUCACIS programme on CIFE’s side. This is a very dear time in my memory because I had the impression that the German colleagues from CIFE and IEP benefitted just as much from the interaction with the EUCACIS fellows as vice versa. Besides the personal gain, I see especially two strengths in the programme. First, the “sandwich character“ of the programme makes sure that the PhD candidates are not removed from the academic contexts in their home countries as it foresees only short-term capacity development visits to Europe. I am convinced that this approach to a structured PhD programme reduces brain-drain in our partner countries and enhances their research capacity development. Second, the active involvement of the fellows in the programme – e.g. their participation in and co-organization of the final EUCACIS conference – has surely strengthened the fellows’ skills and their confidence as young researchers. Overall, I think that the programme was a great success and would be happy to see more sustainable funding mechanisms for such international research capacity building formats.”



Julian Plottka

EUCACIS Programme
Manager (2016-2017) / IEP

“EUCACIS was ahead of its time. Starting in 2010, its predecessor master program (EUCAIS) was planned in the aftermath of the adoption of the EU’s first Central Asia Strategy in 2007. As achieving its goals proved difficult, interest in relations with Central Asia faded in Europe. EUCAIS and EUCACIS continued emphasizing the importance of the relations between both regions until interest resumed in the run-up to the new EU-Central Asia Strategy in 2019. In applying its approach of blended learning, to allow participation of young professionals and junior researchers without leaving their home institutions, EUCACIS was also ahead of its time. Forced by the current pandemic, higher education institutions turned to e-learning. EUCACIS has shown that blended learning is more than a makeshift for university closures. For transcontinental research and higher education, blended learning is useful and saves financial and natural resources. EUCACIS’ practical experiences can help reaching the new Central Asia strategy’s objectives in the area of research and higher education.”

EUCACIS 2016 – 2020

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August 2020