

The choice of the OSCE also raises questions about the CSP partners' representativeness. This problem might become more obvious when peacekeeping forces are deployed in the region (along with observer or election supervision missions). The OSCE would have to find a way of allowing the Iranian Republic to take part in planning its various operations by inviting it to join an operation under the OSCE banner, just as Russia participates in NATO peacebuilding operations.

#### *Key role of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*

There is general agreement that the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is the main obstacle to cooperation in the Caucasus region. Making the resolution of this conflict a priority for the international community's regional involvement is a wise move indeed. If the belligerents manage to negotiate an agreement that is given effect without too much friction, it might actually revive the interest of the other regional belligerents in ending their various disagreements.

Unfortunately, optimism can go no farther. It seems somewhat simplistic to imagine that the parties to other regional conflicts would be content to borrow a solution tailored to this specific one. The solutions to the various Caucasian conflicts, although they have similar causes, have to be attuned to the specific circumstances of each case. The Karabakh conflict has its own specificities, and merely transposing the solution for this conflict to other regional conflicts with their own specificities might do more harm than good.

#### *The SCC – conflict-resolution prerequisite or outcome?*

Everyone agrees that the prerequisite for regional cooperation lies in conflict resolution. The authors of the CSP, however, assumed that the protagonists, and especially the secessionist entities, could agree to settle their various differences through the SCC. Yet, this SCC cannot be created without the regional players' cooperation.

The option of prior conflict resolution runs up against the mistrust of the secessionist entities. Why would they agree to rejoin their original states without a functioning SCC to guarantee their security? Even if the negotiated agreement was conditional on the imminent implementation of this SCC, they would probably not want to risk seeing the home states take advantage of the situation to reimpose their hegemonies and disregard their part of the contract.

At the same time, the option of prior creation of the SCC might cast doubt on the need to find political settlements for the conflicts. For one thing, unless a way was found to get the secessionist entities to participate in the SCC without a prior political agreement, the SCC would have to be created by the sovereign Caucasian states. The SCC would then have to face charges by the secessionist republics of not representing their interests and having the same bias in favour of the sovereign states as international organizations like the OSCE and UN. For another thing, if the secessionist republics could participate in the work of the SCC without first making peace with their original states, they might then fail to see the need to make agreements and would probably try to maintain the status quo. The project sheds no light on how the