

CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 shows that the problems with stability found in the South Caucasus and SEE, stemming mainly from the post-Communist transition process and multitudinous regional conflicts, are by and large quite similar. Despite the large number of similar stability problems, however, these two regions have many differing specificities, mostly geopolitical.

A careful reading of the two pacts reveals considerable variation in recommended ways of solving similar problems. In SEE, a complex structure was set up to deal with practical questions, but the factor that seems to have done the most to foster regional cooperation was the prospect of EU membership, generally perceived as guaranteeing a better future. By contrast, regional cooperation in the Caucasus was to develop by creating a regional body, the SCC, as a local replica of the EU, though without the same prospect of joining Europe. Nor is there any certainty that this SCC on its own, desirable though it may be, will be a powerful enough incentive to force today's opponents to cooperate in building a common future. The stabilizing potential of the oil reserves may enhance the value of this SCC for Caucasian leaders, but it is hard to tell.

Despite the basic differences between the two stability pacts being studied here, we have managed to elicit a number of lessons from the SPSEE that may be useful for a future CSP. The most important lessons suggest that the pact should:

- 1) be introduced only when there are no unresolved conflicts;
- 2) involve all the actors in the region;
- 3) include a strong incentive that will interest all parties in the region;
- 4) make the incentive achievable only through regional cooperation.

The authors of the CSP have managed to promote their proposal through presentations in a host of forums, so this proposal is actually being discussed in many government gatherings and bodies. A conference in Turkey, organized by TESEV, brought together government representatives from all of the states involved in the project to discuss the CSP proposal – the “3 + 3 + 2” without the secessionist entities in this initial meeting. The mere fact that the conference was held is cited as a success by the authors of the CSP.

Even though little actual progress has been seen on this project or, in more general terms, in the stability of the Caucasus since the CSP was tabled, official reactions from the Caucasian players are fairly positive. The secessionist groups too have reacted positively to the pact project and agree with the thrust of the documents – including the leaders of Karabakh, South Ossetia and Ajaria. Only Abkhazia has not supported the CSP.

Another encouraging sign is that the proposal is being taken seriously and presented by some EU members as their own organization's strategy. In spring 2002, given the sustained involvement of Sweden, the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee approved a final report offering complete support to