

INTRODUCTION

In May 2000, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) published a report on a projected "Stability Pact for the Caucasus (CSP)."¹ Following a tour of the Caucasus region and extensive consultations with representatives of governments and secessionist groups in the region, an addendum to this pact was issued in the fall of 2000.² This initiative is one of the most serious proposals for stabilizing the Caucasus region and represents one of the few peacebuilding efforts for the Caucasus to be viewed positively by virtually all of the regional players: the Caucasian states themselves, the neighbouring powers and the secessionist republics.

In many ways, this regional pact project for the Caucasus is linked to the Stability Pact for South-East Europe (SPSEE). Given their similar historical, political and economic situations, the two regions covered by these pacts are often treated as comparable entities. In addition, there are many similarities between the Balkans and the Caucasus: they are both complex, multi-ethnic regions in transition to market economies after undergoing numerous and violent conflicts. Both regions are located on the fringe of the European Union (EU) and most of the newly independent states (NIS) in both regions are politically committed to eventual integration with the EU.

In both cases too, the same agency – the CEPS, a Brussels think tank – contributed to thinking about stabilization. The two pacts are comparable in other respects: both of them take an integrated, multilateral and multi-sectoral regional approach; they both set out to achieve lasting political, economic and social stability in the region, and both attempt to maximize the results of initiatives by local and outside players and joint initiatives.³

Despite these similarities, however, the two pacts reveal significant differences.⁴ The reality of the SPSEE, in effect since June 10, 1999, is its most obvious difference from the CSP, which exists only on paper. Generally speaking, the CSP is much more ambitious. This is seen in the fact that the supranational structure for overseeing the stabilization process is not the same in both pacts. Once minimal regional stability has been achieved, the SPSEE aims to bring the countries of South-East Europe into the EU, the guarantor of regional stability. The CSP, however, moves first to resolve the Caucasian conflicts by encompassing the regional players in a Caucasian superstructure or South Caucasus Community (SCC). This community, which would be a local replica of the EU model, remains to be created from scratch. Here, the EU is not the guarantor of stability but the model to imitate. Then there are other differences

¹ Michael Emerson, Nathalie Tocci, *A Stability Pact for the Caucasus*, Brussels: CEPS, Working Document No. 145, May 2000. <<http://www.ceps.be/Pubs/2000/Caucasus/ndc/Newdeal.htm>>.

² Michael Emerson, Nathalie Tocci and Elena Prokhorova, *A Stability Pact for the Caucasus in Theory and Practice – A Supplementary Note*, Brussels: CEPS, Working Document No. 152, November 2000. <<http://www.ceps.be/Pubs/2000/wd/152/supnote.htm>>.

³ Michael Emerson, chief promoter of the CSP, lists these features in "On the Forming and Reforming of Stability Pacts: from the Balkans to the Caucasus," *Europa South-East Monitor*, May 23, 2001. <<http://www.ceps.be/Pubs/SEEMonitor/Monitor23.htm>>.

⁴ Some writers even claim that the two pacts have nothing in common with each other: "[The use of the concept of 'pact'] was a confusing misnomer anyway, since the CSP [Caucasus Stability Pact] proposal has nothing in common