



ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE



GEORGIA & DENMARK

Two Small States in a Changing World

TBILISI, GEORGIA

3-4 October





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“Georgia & Denmark: Two Small States in a Changing World”

**Conference organized jointly by Defence Institution Building School
and
Royal Danish Defence College**

INTRODUCTION

On the 3-4th of October 2023, the Defense Institution Building School (DIBS) and the Centre for Stabilisation (CFS) at the Royal Danish Defence College's (RDDC) Institute for Strategy and War Studies (ISK) organised the conference “Georgia & Denmark: Two Small States in a Changing World” in Tbilisi, Georgia. The conference was organized within the framework of the cooperation agreement concluded between the parties in March 2023 and funded by the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund.

AIM

The aim of the conference was to highlight the history of diplomatic relations as well as bilateral cooperation between Georgia and the Kingdom of Denmark (henceforth Denmark) in the field of defense and security. The conference also addressed the challenges faced by small states in a rapidly changing and gradually multipolar world order, and discussed potential solutions. Furthermore, the conference delved into the Russian aggression against Ukraine and discussed the challenges that have arisen as a direct consequence of this conflict for Georgia and Denmark.





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SPEAKERS

The conference was addressed by high-ranking officials from the defense, diplomatic and security sectors of Georgia and Denmark, including the Minister of Defence of Georgia, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, and the former Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of Denmark. The ambassadors of the two countries also addressed the forum. Leading Georgian and Danish subject matter experts and practitioners participated in thematic panel discussions.

PARTICIPANTS

The conference was attended by public servants from the wider defense and security sector of Georgia from the following state agencies:

- o Parliament
- o Ministry of Defence
- o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- o Ministry of Internal Affairs
- o Ministry of Economics and Sustainable Development
- o State Security Service
- o National Security Council
- o National Defence Academy
- o Cyber Security Bureau
- o NATO-Georgia Joint Training and Evaluation Center

The conference was also attended by representatives of the diplomatic corps, including representatives of the SNGP core team, Danish representatives in the form of Voluntary National Contributions (VNC) to Georgia as well as representatives of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Denmark in Georgia.





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THE CONFERENCE

The conference was opened with a prerecorded addresses from the Minister of Defence of Georgia, Mr. Juansher Burchuladze, and the former Acting Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence of Denmark, Ms. Pernille Langeberg. During their addresses, the officials highlighted the growing dynamics of cooperation between the countries and the importance of bilateral events like the conference for enhancing this cooperation.

The addresses of the officials of the Ministries of Defence were followed by the first panel of the conference, which focused on a new era of bilateral cooperation between Georgia and Denmark. As part of the panel, the Ambassador of Denmark to Georgia and Armenia, H.E. Anne Toft Sørensen, and the Ambassador of Georgia to Denmark and Iceland, H.E. Nata Menabde, delivered speeches and examined the history of diplomatic relations as well as the main fields of current cooperation and potential avenues for future cooperation. In the second part of the panel, the Head of International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department at the Ministry of Defence of Georgia, Mr. Shalva Kvinikhidze, delivered a keynote address highlighting successful cooperation between Georgia and Denmark in the field of defense.

The second panel of the conference focused on cooperation within bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Representative of Danish Emergency Management Agency, Col. Susanne Kristensen, Deputy Rector of the National Academy of Georgia, Col. David Razmadze, and representative of the Royal Danish Defence College, Special Advisor Mr. Hüseyin Yücel, discussed cooperation between the various agencies of Denmark and Georgia. The presentations and discussion highlighted the assistance and expertise provided by different Danish agencies, as well as future plans of cooperation, especially in the field of emergency management and support. The panel was concluded with a presentation by Senior Advisor of NORDEFCO (Nordic Defense Cooperation), Mr. Thomas Hauge Berg, who presented the historical background, judicial foundation, and specific functions and means of cooperation of NORDEFCO. The presentation highlighted NORDEFCO as but one example of a regional security organization.

The second day of the conference focused on the current and potential future challenges faced by Georgia and Denmark specifically and small states in general. The day was opened with a keynote address by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Lasha Darsalia, who discussed Georgia's strategic vision with regards to Euro-Atlantic integration and the challenges on this path.



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The keynote address was followed by a panel discussion attended by the following representatives:

- Deputy Head of EU Delegation to Georgia, Ms. Asuncion Sanchez Ruiz
- Director General for European Integration Issues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Mr. Archil Karaulashvili
- Head of International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Integration Department, Ministry of Defence of Georgia, Mr. Shalva Kvinikhidze
- Head of Foreign Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, Ms. Mariam Gabunia
- Assistant Professor at the Royal Danish Defence College, Dr. Jonas Gejl Kaas

The panelists discussed the EU-prism in Georgia, the current state of cooperation, as well as current challenges and opportunities. One of the main themes of the discussion was Georgia's EU prospects in light of the upcoming decision on the country's candidate status, along with the transition process of Georgian economy and civil society to meet the conditions set by the EU. What the panel also delved into was the ongoing and developing shift in both mentality and policy of the EU. The EU has transformed not only in size, as a consequence of BREXIT and the accession of new member states, but also in its *raison d'être* – that is, from being founded on what can be termed a peace doctrine to e.g., delivering weapons to Ukraine.

This was followed by a panel discussion dedicated to examining the far-reaching consequences of the Russian aggression in Ukraine. The first panel discussion of the session was attended by:

- Associate Professor at Aarhus University, Dr. Rasmus Brun Pedersen
- Professor at Georgian Institute for Public Affairs, Dr. Tornike Sharashenidze

The panel discussion focused on the small-state perspective within international relations and how the domestic and foreign policies of small states are affected by the gradually multipolar world order. One discussion highlighted the reemergence of spheres of influence as a concept, and how NATO is not only important for Georgia, but Georgia is also significant for NATO's geopolitical gravity within the Black Sea region. Also, various foreign policy strategies of small states in the proximity of a potentially adversary great power were also discussed – among these the issues of balancing, hedging, and sheltering.

The final panel focused on various emerging threats and challenges, such as the increasing importance of cyber warfare, energy security and the implications for Georgia following the shifting alignments and power dynamics in the South Caucasus in light of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This panel was attended by:

- Deputy Director of the Institute for Military Technology at the Royal Danish Defence College, Lasse Kronborg
- Professor at Aalborg University, Brian Vad Mathiesen
- Specialist of International Relations at Institute for Law & Policy Research, Giorgi Gobronidze



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KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CONFERENCE

The conference fostered active engagement from both speakers and participants, facilitating in-depth discussions on various aspects of bilateral cooperation and the challenges arising from Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The panel discussion on the EU Prism in Georgia drew particular interest from the participants.

The participation of high-ranking officials and diplomats added to the success of the event. In their speeches, these officials emphasized the importance of such events in strengthening and enhancing cooperation between Georgia and Denmark.

The conference was the first joint engagement between DIBS and RDCC within the framework of the Danish Peace- and Stabilisation Fund's program for Georgia. Its success highlights the potential for enhancing the avenues of future cooperation between the institutions.

