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Accession of Georgia to NATO

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1 Introduction: NATO-Georgia relations

Georgia is a country located within Southwest Asia between Turkey and Russia, also bordering with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Being located in the Caucasian region, it controls much of the Caucasus Mountains and the routes through them. Georgia sees itself as part of Europe, hence its political direction is strongly pro-Western. The country is well-known for its desire to join the EU and NATO.¹

Georgia has cooperated with NATO since 1992 and declared its intention to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization at NATO's Prague Summit in 2002. Since then, it has been working closely with the Alliance and has constantly showed its significant interest in the membership. At the Bucharest Summit in 2008, **NATO leaders agreed that Georgia would become a member of the Alliance**. NATO has gained a valuable ally in the Caucasus – Georgian troops have been deployed in several crisis management missions, and the country is an important transportation corridor. But will NATO eventually accept Georgia as a member of the Alliance and help consolidate Georgia's security and independence?

Despite the fact that Georgia has made a big leap forward and has gradually been meeting the individual requirements for NATO membership, it has not been offered the Membership Action Plan yet. However, we do not have to go far for the explanation. The country's relations with Moscow are troubled, as Russia occupies a considerable part of Georgia's internationally recognized territory. Therefore, further steps in the accession process might spur Russia into action. On the other hand, should NATO backtrack on its 2008 decision, its credibility would be significantly tarnished.

Therefore, the discussion on whether or not and when Georgia will officially become a NATO member remains relevant.

2 NATO Enlargement/Open door policy

NATO's enlargement is an ongoing and dynamic process based on the Alliance's Open Door Policy. Its foundations are outlined in Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which says that, "*The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty.*"²

The enlargement process is focused on promotion of stability and cooperation, spreading of democracy, common values and, according to NATO itself, poses no threat to any country. At the same time no third country³ has the right to influence the process. Since 1949, NATO has expanded from its original number of members (12) to the current count of 28 (soon to be 29 when Montenegro completes the formal process).

In relation to the enlargement policy, NATO in 1995 published the Study on Enlargement. Countries aspiring to membership should, according to this study, meet certain conditions which include:

- functioning democratic political system based on a market economy,
- fair treatment of minority populations,
- commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts,

¹ The World Factbook [online]. [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gg.html>

² The North Atlantic Treaty: Official text: The North Atlantic Treaty [online]. [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

³ A country which is neither a member nor an aspirant for membership of NATO.

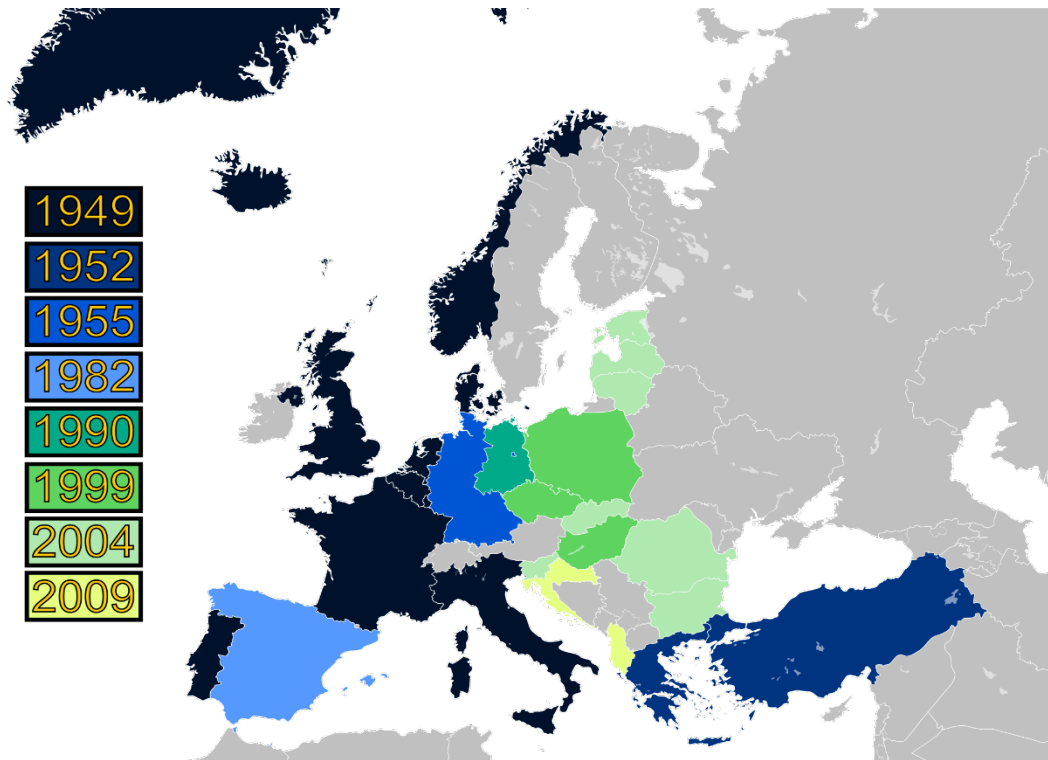


- ability and willingness to make a military contribution to NATO operations,
- commitment to democratic civil-military relations and institutional structures.⁴

Subsequently, as a result of different degrees of preparedness among the members of the 1999 enlargement, the Membership Action Plan (MAP) was designed to assist the aspirant countries in the enlargement process. It was used for the first time in the accession process of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, countries that acceded NATO in March 2004. However, **the participation in the MAP does not automatically translate into future membership.**

The accession of a new NATO member is quite a complex and demanding process, which consists of several steps and stages from accession talks between NATO experts and representatives of the individual invitees to the point when the invitee formally becomes a NATO member.⁵ One should keep in mind that the NATO enlargement is a process driven by both supply (NATO's readiness to accept new members) and demand (countries' interest to become NATO members).

Figure 1: NATO Enlargement: NATO member states by year of joining⁶



At the moment, there are four aspirant countries (i.e. countries that have declared an interest in joining NATO) – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.⁷ Aspirant countries are the countries that have declared an interest in joining NATO.

⁴ Enlargement [online]. In: [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm#

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ History of NATO enlargement. In: Wikipedia [online]. 2008 Creative Commons [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:History_of_NATO_enlargement.svg

⁷ The constitutional name of the country is Republic of Macedonia. All NATO members apart from Turkey recognize it under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.



3 Georgia's important historical milestones

After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Georgia appeared in the international arena as a new country. The collapse of the USSR has also changed the way the international system works, moving away from the bipolar arrangement. The USSR's collapse was preceded by the Georgian Civil War, in which president Zviad Gamsakhurdia played a vital role. The criminal situation in the country was highly unsatisfactory, and the efforts of trying to fight organized crime under the leadership of inexperienced Gamsakhurdia were not successful.⁸ Soon after the collapse of the communist regime in Georgia, former Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze became the country's new leader.⁹ Efforts to suppress criminal elements took place under his presidency.

Even though Shevardnadze managed to stay in power for more than a decade, discontent of the citizens grew considerably.¹⁰ Therefore, the support of Shevardnadze's government rapidly declined and a desire for change began to spread in the public. On the other hand, it was Shevardnadze who **requested Georgian membership in NATO**, which is a significant element of Georgia's foreign policy.¹¹

At the turn of the year 2003 and 2004, Georgia's domestic politics faced a decisive turning point. During the so-called Rose Revolution, Mikhail Saakashvili's United National Movement replaced Shevardnadze¹² and as a result, the country has moved closer to democracy.¹³ Assessing the impact of the revolution on Georgia's foreign affairs, it has greatly strained the relations with Russia and since then, Georgia has seen Russia as a possible security threat.¹⁴

3.1 Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Georgia's current most pressing issue is **without much debate the problem of two separatist provinces of Abkhazia and South Ossetia**. The conflict related to them has its origin in the pre-Soviet period. Both breakaway regions enjoyed some autonomy under the Soviet Union, and rising Georgian nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s further escalated the situation. Georgian territory was and still is inhabited by numerous ethnic groups, and an ethnic conflict has been brewing under the surface. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a civil war erupted.

In 1992, the region of Abkhazia declared its independence, which led to an armed conflict.¹⁵ After two years of fighting, Georgia and its breakaway region signed a ceasefire, which allowed Russian peacekeepers to be present in the region.¹⁶

⁸ ČEDIA, Irakli. Organizovaný zločin v Gruzii [online]. 2008 [cit. 2016-10-07]. Available at: https://is.muni.cz/th/144910/fss_b/bakalarka_organizovany_zlocin.txt

⁹ Georgia profile - Overview - BBC News [online]. [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17302106>

¹⁰ GEORGIA'S ROSE REVOLUTION: FROM REGIME WEAKNESS TO REGIME COLLAPSE [online]. Stanford University, 2006 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www18.georgetown.edu/data/people/cdw33/publication-32608.pdf>

¹¹ Georgia: Shevardnadze Officially Requests Invitation To Join NATO. Radio Liberty [online]. 2002 [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1101463.html>

¹² Georgia and The Rose Revolution. Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training [online]. [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://adst.org/2015/11/georgia-and-the-rose-revolution/>

¹³ NODIA, Ghia. THE DYNAMICS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ROSE REVOLUTION [online]. [cit. 2016-08-29]. Available at: <http://georgica.tsu.edu.ge/files/01-Politics/Nodia-2005.pdf>

¹⁴ German, Tracey. Heading West? Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Path. *International Affairs* 91 (3/2015): 603
¹⁵ 2008 Georgia Russia Conflict Fast Facts. CNN [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-08-29]. Available at: <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/13/world/europe/2008-georgia-russia-conflict/>

¹⁶ Letter dated 17 MAY 1994 from the permanent representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the president of the Security Council. SECURITY COUNCIL REPORT [online]. Moscow, Russia, 1994 [cit. 2016-08-29]. Available at:

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Georgia%20S1994583.pdf>



In November 2006, a referendum in which South Ossetians overwhelmingly demanded independence was voted upon. However, this referendum was not recognized by the Georgian Government, and South Ossetia's Georgians, a minority, voted in an alternative referendum to remain part of Georgia.

Figure 2: Territory of Georgia with Abkhazia and South Ossetia highlighted¹⁷



In August 2008, a war between Georgia and Russia broke out. On August 7th 2008, Georgian forces entered the territory of South Ossetia officially claiming that they were trying to prevent an ongoing Russian military deployment from Russia to South Ossetia through the Roki Tunnel. Russian forces started its counterattack the next day claiming that their peacekeeping force had been attacked and that “*Georgian genocide against the South Ossetian population*” was taking place. This was afterwards proved to be a much exaggerated statement.¹⁸ The Russians defeated the main Georgian force (the best unit of the Georgian army was deployed in Iraq at the time, however) and started an invasion of Georgia, threatening to even capture the capital, Tbilisi.

An important role was played by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy who warned Russia that if it did not fulfil its pledge to withdraw its troops from South Ossetia, there would be “serious consequences.” This was also endorsed by the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice.¹⁹

Sarkozy’s talks with the Russian President Medvedev significantly helped achieve a ceasefire.²⁰ The war was formally ended on August 12th.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Clash in the Caucasus: Georgia, Russia, and the Fate of South Ossetia. Origins [online]. [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: <http://origins.osu.edu/article/clash-caucasus-georgia-russia-and-fate-south-ossetia/page/o/o>

¹⁹ Sarkozy warns Russia: withdraw from South Ossetia or face the consequences. The Guardian [online]. 2008 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/17/georgia.russia3>

²⁰ Rusko-gruzínské vztahy... 3. Rusko-gruzínská válka v srpnu 2008. Valka.cz [online]. 2010 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available at: http://www.valka.cz/13665-Rusko-gruzinske-vztahy-3-Rusko-gruzinska-valka-v-srpnu-2008#p13665_114



After the war, Russia formally recognized both South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. This statement was then followed by Venezuela, Nicaragua and a few Pacific island states (e.g. Nauru, Tuvalu).²¹

Nowadays, the situation inside the two regions continues to be complicated, since they are officially still part of Georgia, but **in practice, the Russian influence over them is much stronger**. In 2014 and 2015, two documents were signed – the Russia-Abkhazian agreement on Alliance and Strategic Partnership²² and the Treaty on Alliance and Integration between Russia and South Ossetia.²³ These steps weaken Georgian territorial integrity, hence the full return of the regions to Georgia will be neither quick nor easy.²⁴

4 NATO – Georgia relations

The establishment of NATO–Georgia relations was laid in 1992 when Georgia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, later renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in 1997. Georgia's next step was the accession of the Partnership for Peace programme (PfP), which is an opportunity for NATO partners to build good relations with the Alliance and to cooperate in various fields.²⁵ In 1999, Georgia joined the PfP Planning and Review Process (PARP), which is a requirement for the MAP being offered.²⁶ The year 2002 was an important milestone for the NATO–Georgia relations, since Georgia officially declared its Euro-Atlantic aspirations at the Prague Summit.²⁷ Two years later, it became the first country to acquire an Individual Partnership Action Plan, which is oriented on the domestic reforms in the country.²⁸ Georgia became the fourth non-member country to join NATO Response Force in 2005.²⁹ In September 2006, NATO started the Intensified Dialogue on Membership Issues, which allowed more comprehensive cooperation between the country and NATO allies, including consultations on many levels.³⁰

The potential Georgian membership and the request of Georgia for the MAP were discussed at the Bucharest Summit in 2008. However, **this idea was blocked by the opposition composed of several Allies**. They argued with the fact that it could have a significant impact on the relations with Russia, since it shows a significant disagreement with NATO growing into the former Soviet area.³¹ In reaction to the Bucharest Summit, the head of the Russian military, General Yuri

²¹ South Ossetia profile. BBC [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18269210>

²² Russian-Abkhaz Agreement: What Is Moscow's Plan for Georgia? The Jamestown [online]. 2014 [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: <http://1url.cz/MtW5S>

²³ STATEMENT. European Union External Action [online]. 2015 [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150317_04_en.htm

²⁴ One Year After 'Independence,' Abkhazia And South Ossetia In Legal Gray Zone. Radio Liberty [online]. [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/Year_After_Independence_Abkhazia_South_Ossetia_In_Legal_Gray_Zone/1808101.html

²⁵ Partnership for Peace programme. NATO [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-08-03]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm

²⁶ Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process. NATO [online]. 2014 [cit. 2016-08-03]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_68277.htm

²⁷ Georgia and the NATO. Office of the State Minister of Georgia on European & Euro-Atlantic Integration [online]. [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www.eu-nato.gov.ge/en/nato>

²⁸ Individual Partnership Action Plans. NATO [online]. 2014 [cit. 2016-08-03]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49290.htm

²⁹ Georgia becomes fourth non-member state to join NATO Response Force. Agenda.ge [online]. 2015 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Dostupné z: <http://agenda.ge/news/43356/eng>

³⁰ NATO offers Intensified Dialogue to Georgia. NATO [online]. 2006 [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2006/09-september/eo921c.htm>

³¹ TRIANTAPHYLLOU, Dimitrios. The Security Context in the Black Sea Region: 84 [online]. [cit. 2016-07-28]. Available at: <http://6b.cz/MCE6>



Baluyevski stated that if Georgia joined NATO, "Russia [would] take steps aimed at ensuring its interests along its borders and these [would] not only be military steps, but also steps of a different nature".³²

The NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC) was established in September 2008 and since then has served for both political consultations and practical cooperation.³³ During the Summit in Chicago, Georgia participated at all meetings opened to partners. In September 2014 Georgian president Margvelashvili attended the Wales Summit, where the country obtained the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP) to help its efforts to improve its defence capabilities.³⁴

At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, the Alliance welcomed significant progress with SNGP and added new steps of cooperation, supporting Georgia's Training, Education, and Strategic Communications.³⁵

4.1 Georgia's participation in NATO missions

During the years in which Georgia has been trying to get closer to the Alliance and the membership, it has already actively cooperated with NATO on many issues.

KFOR

Accession to the PfP PARP has strengthened cooperation and defence planning, and thereafter, Georgia started contributing peacekeepers to Kosovo (the KFOR, a peacekeeping force).³⁶

Iraq

Even though the Operation Iraqi Freedom was not a NATO mission, it is still worth mentioning. Georgia strongly supported the US-led invasion to Iraq and deployed troops in 2003. From 2005 to 2008, Georgia also contributed a battalion of approximately 550 troops to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). The Georgian troops were withdrawn in August 2008.³⁷

ISAF

In 2004, Georgia started contributing to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. In 2009, 173 troops were sent for training to Germany prior to their deployment in 2010 to Afghanistan. The number of these troops has been boosted to 925, which was the largest contribution per capita to the ISAF among non-NATO member countries.³⁸ Currently, **Georgia is the second largest contributor among all participating countries** (after the US) to the Resolute Support Mission, a follow-up mission.³⁹

³² RODRIGUES, Luís Nuno a Volodymyr DUBOVYK. Perceptions of NATO and the New Strategic Concept [online]. IOS Press, 2010 [cit. 2016-07-28]. ISBN 978-1-60750-670-6. Available at: <http://iurl.cz/8tWED>

³³ NATO - Topic: NATO-Georgia Commission (NGC). NATO [online]. 2012 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52131.htm

³⁴ NATO - Topic: Relations with Georgia. NATO [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm?selectedLocale=en#

³⁵ NATO - Official text: Joint statement of the NATO-Georgia commission at the level of Foreign Ministers. NATO [online]. Warsaw, Poland, 2016 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133175.htm?selectedLocale=en

³⁶ NATO - Topic: Relations with Georgia. NATO [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm?selectedLocale=en#

³⁷ TUCKER, Spencer C. The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars: The United States in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts. ISBN 1851099476.

³⁸ NICHOL, Jim. Georgia [Republic]: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests. In: UNT Digital Library [online]. 2011 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc83838/m1/1/high_res_d/97-727_2011May18.pdf

³⁹ Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures. NATO [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-08-03]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_03/20160317_2016-03-rsm-placemat.pdf.



Operation Active Endeavour

Since 2010, Georgia has been supporting NATO's maritime counter-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean⁴⁰ by sending liaison officers to HQ MARCOM in Northwood, United Kingdom.⁴¹

4.2 Geopolitical importance of Georgia

Nowadays, Georgia is also important as a geopolitical region. Russia's interests in this area complicate the Georgian Euro-Atlantic aspirations. After the Russian-Georgian war, Russia controls a significant part of the country. Its rule over the economic and political life in the breakaway regions⁴² provides it with an ability to have an influence over the entire region of Transcaucasia.⁴³

Georgia possesses the most important Caspian pipeline carrying oil from the Caspian Sea to Europe avoiding Russian territory – the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC), which is at the same time the second longest pipeline in the world and can be understood as a tangible connection to the West.⁴⁴ The second major project is the pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE), whose route is almost identical to the BTC. The BTE pipeline was launched in 2007 and transports natural gas from large Azerbaijani deposit Shah Deniz.⁴⁵ The third important pipeline is Baku-Supsa, which runs from Azerbaijan to the Georgian port of Supsa on the coast of the Black Sea.

Figure 3: Map of pipelines led through Georgian territory⁴⁶



⁴⁰ NATO - Toic: Relations with Georgia. NATO [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm?selectedLocale=en#

⁴¹ Operation Active Endeavour. NATO [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-08-29]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_7932.htm

⁴² Abkhazia, the Comfortable Conflict Zone. The national interest [online]. 2013 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/abkhazia-the-comfortable-conflict-zone-8520>

⁴³ LIUBINSKAS, Aurimas. Geopolitical code of Georgia: the essence and possible development contours. In: Geopolitika [online]. 2005 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=608>

⁴⁴ German, Tracey. Heading West? Georgia's Euro-Atlantic Path. International Affairs 91 (3/2015): 603

⁴⁵ TICHÝ, Lukáš. Význam Jižního Kavkazu pro energetickou bezpečnost EU a rusko-gruzinský konflikt. In: Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky [online]. 2009 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www.amo.cz/vyznam-jizniho-kavkazu-pro-energetickou-bezpecnost-eu-a-rusko-gruzinsky-konflikt/>

⁴⁶ Location of Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Wikipedia [online]. [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan_pipeline#/media/File:Baku_pipelines.svg



For the transportation of Caspian oil are also crucial the railway line Baku-Poti as well as the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, which will facilitate the transport of passengers and goods between Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey from 2017.⁴⁷

Additionally, Georgia is important for opening new markets to Europe, and thanks to its natural resources, it is also seen as a component of an alternative corridor to the Russian one.⁴⁸

5 The readiness of Georgia to join NATO

In addition to participating in NATO missions, it is crucial to assess the readiness of Georgia from other points of view as well. One of them is the defence budget. Georgia has already met the NATO requirement of spending at least 2 % of its GDP on defence (unlike the majority of Allies).⁴⁹

Another important factor is the military preparedness. Since the Rose Revolution, Georgian armed forces went through an intensive transformation. However, aside from defence spending, credible national defence of the Georgian territory against Russia in line with Article 3 of the Washington Treaty is almost impossible as long as Russia remains an enemy.

To achieve the requirements of the Alliance, a number of planning documents have been created.⁵⁰ NATO also stresses the importance of judicial reform, which would increase the independence of judges,⁵¹ and would encourage further efforts in this area.⁵²

At the moment, Georgia fulfils all the requirements for the MAP and is ready for the next step.⁵³

6 Arguments for and against

Georgia has already proved to be a reliable partner to NATO, for example in its contributions to international missions, but also in its willingness to reform itself. However, there are still substantial arguments against its membership among the Allied members.

An argument often used against the acceptance of Georgia to NATO is that it has not resolved its territorial integrity yet. Nonetheless, this is not an official requirement for becoming a member of NATO, as demonstrated by the case of Western Germany in 1955.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway will be fully operational in 2017. Agenda.ge [online]. Tbilisi, Georgia, 2016 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://agenda.ge/news/52315/eng>

⁴⁸ LIUBINSKAS, Aurimas. Geopolitical code of Georgia: the essence and possible development contours. In: Geopolitika [online]. 2005 [cit. 2016-07-24]. Available at: <http://www.geopolitika.lt/?artc=608>

⁴⁹ SEIB, Philip. The Case for Georgia Joining NATO [online]. In: . 2016 [cit. 2016-07-29]. Available at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/philip-seib/the-case-for-georgia-join_b_9644762.html

⁵⁰ KRÍŽ, Zdeněk a Zinaida SHEVCHUK. Georgian readiness for NATO membership after Russian-Georgian armed conflict [online]. 2011 [cit. 2016-07-29]. Available at: http://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/MVZ208/um/43679852/Kriz_-shevchuk.pdf

⁵¹ Reform in Georgia [online]. 2015 [cit. 2016-07-29]. Available at: http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id923/Readings%20No%201_2016.pdf

⁵² Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers on Open Door Policy. NATO [online]. [cit. 2016-07-29]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_125591.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁵³ Georgia Stuck in NATO Limbo. Institute for war and peace reporting [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-08-06]. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/georgia-stuck-nato-limbo>

⁵⁴ Gruzie pět let po konfliktu s Ruskem: NATO stále v nedohlednu, vztahy s Ruskem stále neurovnane. Natoaktual.cz [online]. 2013 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Dostupné z: http://www.natoaktual.cz/gruzie-pet-let-po-konfliktu-s-ruskem-nato-stale-v-nedohlednu-vztahy-s-ruskem-stale-neurovnane-i10-na_analyzy.aspx?c=A131014_152735_na_analyzy_mo2



Furthermore, the country is important for the development of the European economy and may help to reduce the dependence on Russia thanks to its pipeline transport.

Georgia has fulfilled all requirements for gaining the MAP and “*is currently more prepared for NATO than the majority of post-communist countries were at time of their admission.*”⁵⁵

Nevertheless, some members oppose by the fact that Russia shows its antagonism against further enlargement of NATO into the post-Soviet region, which influences the whole process.

7 Conclusion

After the dissolution of the USSR, Georgia has consistently shown its European identity.⁵⁶ However, the more Georgia moves closer to the Western world and shows its Euro-Atlantic aspirations, the more Russia threatens and shows its opposition. The 2008 Bucharest Summit marked a milestone for the NATO-Georgia relations. Nevertheless, since then and after the war with Russia, the discussions on the eventual NATO membership continue to be complicated due to internal disunity of the Alliance.

There is now a lack of consensus among the NATO members whether to invite Georgia to the Alliance or not. To a great extent, this is caused by the threatening policy of Russia, while supporters of Georgia's membership stress that NATO's policy should not be influenced by any other non-member state.⁵⁷ At the moment, Georgia meets the requirements for gaining the MAP, whilst the Alliance still takes into account the complicated relations with Russia. The problem of Georgia's territorial integrity is also crucial in the context of NATO membership and should not be omitted.

Fundamental questions

These questions should help you to formulate the position of the country you represent on this topic. They are only basic questions, in no way exhaustive of the topic. Thus, they should not be relied upon completely. However, you should make sure to answer all of them and be able to express your country's position towards them.

- Should Georgia get the Membership Action Plan? If so, when?
- Is Georgia ready to become a NATO member? Which aspects should Georgia fulfil for being invited to the Alliance?
- Are there any risks which should be considered when inviting Georgia to NATO? If so, which?
- Would it be possible to accept Georgia with two frozen conflicts on its territory? If so, how specifically?
- In what other ways could the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia influence the accession process?
- Would the Alliance benefit by accepting Georgia? Why? Why not?

⁵⁵ HAMILTON, Colonel Robert E. Georgia's NATO Aspirations: Rhetoric and Reality [online]. 2016 [cit. 2016-09-10]. Available at: <http://www.fpri.org/article/2016/07/georgias-nato-aspirations-rhetoric-reality/>

⁵⁶ Is Georgia's pro-Western Course at Risk? The New Eastern Europe [online]. 2015 [cit. 2016-08-30]. Available at: <http://www.neweasterneurope.eu/articles-and-commentary/1820-is-georgia-s-pro-western-course-at-risk>

⁵⁷ Georgia's Path towards NATO Membership: Expectations for the Warsaw Summit [online]. [cit. 2016-08-03]. Available at: http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id923/Readings%20No%201_2016.pdf



Recommended reading

Membership Action Plan (MAP)

Useful link for more detailed information on what the Membership Action Plan is. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm?selectedLocale=en

Factsheet - Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (SNGP)

http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_12/20151209_151209-factsheet-nato-georgia-package.pdf

Bucharest Summit Declaration

Full text of the 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration. Useful for the context of NATO-Georgia relations. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm

Georgia's Path towards NATO Membership: Expectations for the Warsaw Summit by Mariam Apriashvili

Summary of the NATO-Georgia relations, arguments for and against Georgian membership.

http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id923/Readings%20No%201_2016.pdf

“Heading West? Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic path” by Tracey German

An article about shaping the Georgian pro-western policy, its relations with Moscow and the Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia. Primarily, the chapter *“The ‘European’ narrative and Euro-Atlantic integration”* on pages 606-610 is recommended. <http://docdro.id/FKutbUY>



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Pražský studentský summit

Pražský studentský summit je unikátní vzdělávací projekt existující od roku 1995. Každoročně vzdělává přes 300 studentů středních i vysokých škol o současných globálních tématech, a to především prostřednictvím simulace jednání čtyř klíčových mezinárodních organizací – OSN, NATO, EU a OBSE.

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Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky (AMO)

AMO je nevládní nezisková organizace založená v roce 1997 za účelem výzkumu a vzdělávání v oblasti mezinárodních vztahů. Tento přední český zahraničně politický think-tank není spjat s žádnou politickou stranou ani ideologií. Svou činností podporuje aktivní přístup k zahraniční politice, poskytuje nestrannou analýzu mezinárodního dění a otevírá prostor k fundované diskusi.

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