REGIONAL COOPERATION POSSIBILITIES AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE IN THE CAUCASUS

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On December 9, 2014, Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung held a meeting in Hilton Hotel Ankara titled Regional Cooperation Possibilities and Prospects for the Future in the Caucasus.

Opening speeches of the meeting were delivered by Ret. Ambassador and Honorary President of AVİM Ömer Engin Lütem and Head of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Office in Turkey Dr. Colin Dürkop. The meeting consisted of three panels.

In the first panel, which was moderated by the Senior Specialist of AVİM Aslan Yavuz Şir, Mr. Haykak Arshamyan (Program Coordinator of Regional Studies Center), Assist. Prof. Dr. Serdar Palabıyık (TOBB University) and Dr. Nika Chitadze (President of International Security Research Center and Ph. D. Associate Professor of the International Black Sea University) delivered their presentations. The panel was concluded with a Q&A session.

In the second panel, which was moderated by Director of AVİM Alev Kılıç, the keynote speakers were Mr. Richard Giragosian (Director of Regional Studies Center), Mr. Alexey Malashenko (Scholar in Residence, Religion, Society and Security Program in Carnegie Moscow Center), Prof. Dr. Mitat Çelikpala (Kadir Has University), Dr. Mukhtar Hajizada (Head of Department Jean Monnet Chair holder, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Khazar University (Nefchilar campus) and H.E. Giorgi Badridze (Senior Fellow, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies (GFSIS) and lecturer at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University). The session was concluded with a Q&A session.

The third panel was a panel for a general evaluation.

The message that emanated from the conclusion was as follows:

- There is a potential for conflict in the region.

- Status quo is seen by some as the better of two evils.

- However, status quo is also seen as a zero-sum game.

- Cooperation obviously is a win-win situation and there is cooperation even if it is exclusionary.

- However, exclusion is not the desired option and cooperation is open to all.

- To achieve inclusive cooperation, the region needs to develop more trust in itself.

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Hazel Çağan-Elbir is an analyst in AVİM. Çağan-Elbir continues her studies in Political Economy doctorate program at Atılım University.

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