

3+3 Regional Cooperation Format and the South Caucasus

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Abstract : Due to its important geopolitical location and strategic economic situation, the South Caucasus has been a region that has been a crossroads of interests between different states and empires since ancient times. Over the centuries, the forms of international relations with regard to the South Caucasus region have been constantly changing, however, the national interests of the Caucasian nations as well as the interests of the regional hegemonic powers in relation to the countries of the South Caucasus have remained almost unchanged. The conflict-ridden South Caucasus's attempt to create a new format of regional cooperation has a rather rich history, dating back to the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, despite the diversity of initiatives, they do not deviate from the format of political statements and it is natural that the case was never settled before their implementation, as none of the previous cooperation initiatives was able to reach all members of the region. The current regional co-operation platform is linked to the name of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who spoke out about the initiative during a visit to Azerbaijan. The so-called 3 + 3 platform for regional cooperation involves cooperation between three countries in the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and three "big neighbors" - Russia, Turkey and Iran. Very soon, the initiative received a positive response from the authorities of Azerbaijan, Iran and Armenia. According to them, this cooperation platform will strengthen cooperation between the countries involved in the regional platform and will focus on security, economic and transport issues. Our goal is to determine the interests of the main regional actors involved in the South Caucasus Cooperation Platform (3 + 3): Iran, Russia and Turkey. Our goal is also to determine what threats, risks or benefits may be associated with the involvement of the three countries of the South Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia in this platform and what will be the consequences for Georgia, whose 20% of its internationally recognized borders are still occupied by Russia and whose territory is still under creeping occupation.

Keywords : South Caucasus, Georgia's interest, the interests of Iran, the interests of Turkey, Russian interests, Georgia's occupation

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