

FOREWORD

Georgia, as the nation of the 'associated trio', recently was granted a clear 'European perspective', which transformed the country's long-lasting pro-EU aspirations into a tangible result of extension of European Enlargement Policy towards the Eastern Partnership region. The unprovoked invasion and aggressive war launched by Russia in Ukraine triggered a need across the Western countries for a 'paradigm shift' in global approaches, which created for Tbilisi a unique chance to take the steps towards EU membership. At the same time the pressure has increased to keep the pace for the speedy democratic transformation and for the establishment of the rules based order, where the trust of the public in democratic institutions is increased. EU actorness had always been strong in Georgia, however, these developments broadened further its scope and presence in the country.

Since its establishment in 2007, the Institute for European Studies of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University embraced the mission of contributing to the efforts aimed at Europeanization of country through streamlining the purpose-driven education. Over time, it led to the creation of the interdisciplinary Master's, Doctoral and undergraduate programmes in European Studies, with strong focus on the integrative processes in the EU. Development of the new Bachelor's programme became possible only recently with the support of the EU funded Erasmus+ Jean Monnet project 'EUSTBA', which turned itself into the important milestone: it resembles the accomplished strategic goal to teach European Studies at TSU at all three cycles of higher education; additionally it leveled up the resilience of the IES academics and administration to stay devoted to the mission as well as increased the institutional self-sustainability capabilities. One of the most important dimensions, beyond the establishment of the new Bachelor's programme, where 'EUSTBA' project contributed significantly was the active participation of the stakeholders in the development of the efficient teaching and learning methods strategy.

This edition is dedicated to the effective pedagogic tools and methods that are connecting the content of the TSU European Studies programmes to the needs of the graduates to be better in comprehending the complex issues and be prepared for the job market. The volume gives opportunity to get acquainted with the case studies of the most efficient pedagogic tools that are being used by the academics of IES-TSU, who are involved in implementation of European Studies BA, Master and Doctoral Programmes. Technically, this edition of the journal can be split in four parts: With my article in the first section, the readers of the journal will have the opportunity to get the insight of the hands-on-experience of the process of building the new interdisciplinary Undergraduate programme in European Studies at TSU; Besides, they will be able to detect the unique context, which framed our priorities including on strategizing the integration of effective pedagogic methods in the Bachelor's curriculum.

In the second part the academics involved in teaching the 'Specialization courses' at all three levels of TSU European Studies education are providing the reviews of their syllabi. The Co-Head of the European Studies programmes at IES-TSU and the leader of the European legal module, *Prof. Natia Lapiashvili* analyses the effectiveness of various pedagogic tools based on her experience of teaching the European Union Law and the related disciplines. By paying tribute to the legacies of the greatest educators of all time as well as her personal experiences on existing challenges, she shares with us her thoughts on "finding balance between teaching the European Union law based on the classic legal textbooks and teaching it in the way, which would be useful for Georgian students to benefit from the acquired knowledge and skills in their future careers". *Ambassador Archil Karaulashvili* discusses his teaching experience with innovative methods during the distance mode education at IES, which is based on his practical course related to the Political and Legal Relations between Georgia and the European Union. *Prof. Giorgi Meskhi* outlines the efficiency of streamlining a Socratic Method as a key pedagogic approach in teaching Intellectual Property Law. The contribution by *Prof. Levan Makhashvili* is significant for his broad perspective on existing challenges in European Studies education in Georgia as well as for his suggestions on "incorporating technology and game-based learning platforms and applications such as Kahoot and Quizlet", which as he claims, *inter alia*, allows 'a more balanced approach' to cover various complicated issues of the field with the groups of students with diverse educational background. Article by *Tamar Kvaratskhelia* on teaching methods in EU Fundamental Rights course is especially significant

for the efforts of the author to signify the relevance of integration of methods enabling structured analyses of the court case-law (the 'commentary on the court decision' - as she labels it), which she became acquainted with during her education at Paris Saclay University, where she continued her education after graduating from the IES-TSU Master programme in European Studies.

In the third part we have opportunity to get acquainted with the reviews on teaching methods that are widely used by the authors of various disciplinary courses that are part of the curriculums of several faculties across TSU and of other higher education institutions of Georgia. At the same time they form the inalienable part of the core curriculum of IES-TSU European Studies programmes: We usually label them as 'preconditions' or 'scaffolding courses', which is a local jargon at IES and describes their function to help either to pave the way for a better understanding of the specialization courses of our interdisciplinary programmes at all three cycles of European Studies education, or to contribute to the development of transversal skills. In the first article of this part, *Professor Tamaz Zubiashvili* reviews "the main components and organization of the teaching process of the 'population' course, which also covers "the problems of demographic policy in the countries across various regions of the world and their reflection in the educational process of the university". *Prof. Vakhtan Charaia* and *Mariam Lashkhi* co-authored the article on innovating the FinTech Technologies-related courses at the higher educational institutions, which is *per se* is a remarkable novelty in Georgia. The specific teaching methodology they plan to use in the implementation of the new course outlines its value in the process which leads to the learning outcomes as defined in their syllabus. *Aleksandre Davitashvili* describes the most efficient pedagogic methods he uses during teaching the course on the Introduction to Politics (another name of the course is 'Principles of Democratic Governance'). The author says that his methodological approach was crafted in the process of testing various tools across the groups of students in various multidisciplinary environments. *Prof. Giuli Shabashvili* discusses the advantages of blended approach in teaching academic writing. At the same time she makes a strong emphasis on the effectiveness Problem Based Learning. The case study which author highlights is a review of the specific task related to the issues of multilingual education.

The final part of this issue of the journal gives us an opportunity to read the article by *Prof. Eter Ghvineria*, which is based on her famous course on "Teaching and Learning Methods" – that majority of the PhD candidates of many generations across the various Doctoral programmes of all faculties of TSU are well acquainted with. Within the frames of the EU funded 'EUSTBA' project, Prof. Ghvineria made a valuable input into the special Jean Monnet Workshops and International Conferences that had been dedicated to the development of the strategy of integrating effective pedagogic tools into our new Bachelor's programme.

Neither this publication, nor the accomplishment of the mission of integration of effective pedagogic methods and tools in the curriculum of the undergraduate programme in European Studies could have been possible without the absolutely fascinating and outstanding role played by the international experts, where we have to underline the invaluable contribution provided by *Kerry Longhurst* -Professor at Collegium Civitas and Visiting Professor at College of Europe, *Marek Martyniszyn* -Professor of Law at Queen's University Belfast (UK), *Agnese Dāvidsone* -Rector of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences and Associate Professor, *Kamil Zwolski* -Associate Professor in International Politics, Jean Monnet Chair of European Security Governance, Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy Politics & International Relations, University of Southampton (UK), and *Daniela Urse* - Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Bucharest. We are extremely delighted that Professor Urse accepted the offer of IES to undertake the position of Academic Co-Head of European Studies programmes. Also, together with Professor Longhurst she also joined our editorial board recently. We would like to welcome both academics wholeheartedly once again and to thank them for their contribution to the development of IES at TSU.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone who made possible completion this issue of the *Georgian Journal for European Studies*. I would like to thank the academics, quality assurance experts, technical staff, for their professionalism and dedication. I would like to thank *Mariam Kveladze* for her incredible administrative assistance, my beloved family and my daughter *Ana Topuridze* for their emotional support.

Overall, the names of those who helped us in implementing successfully all working packages of the EU funded Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Project "Establishment of the interdisciplinary Bachelor's Programme in European Studies/EUSTBA" are numerous. Though, we faced some challenges as well: The autonomy enjoyed by the Institute since its establishment as it was envisaged under the TACIS grant agreement (Special Direct Grant of the European Commission in 2007, that was provided for the Establishment of the Institute for European

Studies at TSU), was not a catchphrase over the past fifteen years, but a reliable principle which helped us in the past: (a) to build ties and good collaborative practices with all four founding faculties of TSU, (b) to strengthen interdisciplinary content of our programmes, (c) to contribute to the third mission of the University which includes activities aimed at internationalization of the studies as well as the Europeanization of Georgian society at large, and (d) to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy during various phases of Institutional building. For these purposes the EC-TACIS grant agreement provided to us the autonomous governance under the oversight of Rector. Recently, during the last phase of the Bachelor's programme accreditation process, we witnessed some unfortunate attempts of the take-over via a creeping centralization process. IES Team did not feel ready to fall prey to a super-centralizing impulse, which suddenly came from some members of the faculty (that we chose as an umbrella faculty for technical reasons) and still bears the scars of the disagreement due to lack of precision and predictability, resulting in suppressing the opportunities in accomplishment effectively of our mission. Saying this, I would like to acknowledge an absolutely outstanding role played by *Prof. George Sharvashidze*, the Rector of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, who showed a stunning resilience and incredible support to IES in a decisive moment during the programme accreditation, securing its traditional path of governance without allowing anyone the earthshaking effects.

Of course, our huge gratitude goes to the European Union and its EACEA office, for guiding us through with their very helpful answers every single time we had a feeling that without the professional clarifications we might had been lost during the various phases of the project implementation.

Nino Lapiashvili

Co-Editor-in-Chief and founder of the Georgian Journal for European Studies
Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Project 'EUSBA' Coordinator and Team Leader