



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

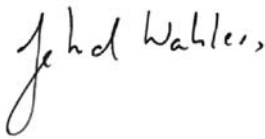
"Frozen conflicts" are constantly-recurring items on the European political agenda. The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is affecting relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and hence the security situation of the whole South Caucasus region. The expression "frozen conflicts" tends to give the impression that there is little going on, but the opposite in fact is the case – it is just the solution to the conflict which is frozen. The conflict itself is virulent and claims dozens of lives every year among the 95,000 Azerbaijani and 70,000 Armenian soldiers facing each other in the region.

This decade has already seen a war break out over the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in what is also considered to be a "frozen conflict". Russia and Georgia have still not resolved their differences with respect to these two regions and there is a similar situation with the conflict over the Transnistria region, which has broken away from the Republic of Moldova. This edition includes an article on this situation by Manfred Grund, Hans Martin Sieg and Kristin Wesemann.

The European Union and Russia have very different interests in these conflicts, while the USA is also exerting its influence in these regions. It is difficult to find solutions to these conflicts because there are so many political players involved, each with different political and, above all, economic interests. Cross-border divides in the affected regions with underlying historical or ethnic causes make the prospect of finding solutions seem ever more remote. However, the political will of powerful political players such as the EU and Russia, and also the USA, has enabled initial discussions between the interested parties to take place and some rapprochement to be achieved.

The Transnistria conflict has become much more of a high profile issue since being tabled at the Meseberg Talks held between German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev in 2010 and at the subsequent consultations. At the end of the day, the solution to this conflict lies in the continuation of the successful peace process that has been ongoing in Europe for the last 60 years and in ensuring that both the Republic of Moldova and the Transnistria region have access to an equal measure of security and prosperity.

The Transnistria conflict provides an ideal vehicle for putting the relationship between the EU and Russia under the spotlight. If an amicable solution can be found, this will help to further promote trust and cooperation within Europe in the future. This would result in a win-win situation for all concerned, and this type of approach might well be used as a model for dealing with other "frozen conflicts".

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary General

gerhard.wahlers@kas.de