



Meet Geopolitika's New Partner and Expert

By Henrik S. Werenskiold

*Geopolitika enters into a new partnership, this time with the Georgian think tank **Geocase**, whose chairman becomes the newest addition to **Geopolitika's** permanent editorial team.*

It is a great pleasure for us to announce that Geopolitika not only continues to strengthen our partnerships with foreign publications and think tanks with shared values, but also expands our editorial team. This time we turn our attention to Georgia, where we enter into a collaboration with the geopolitical think tank GeoCase. Their renowned chairman, Victor Kipiani, becomes an official part of Geopolitika's editorial board. For our regular readers, Victor is a familiar name, as he has previously been interviewed by us and has contributed analysis on geopolitical affairs in Georgia and the Caucasus region.

A well-respected lawyer in Georgia, Kipiani is the co-founder and senior partner of one of the country's oldest and most respected law firms, MKD LAW, which is based in Tbilisi. But Kipiani also has a long history of interest in geopolitics, which is why in 2019 he founded Geocase, where he leads a team of diverse and highly qualified experts and researchers, offering the highest level of expertise, transparent and independent analysis, as well as clear policy recommendations.

Kipiani's interests include international relations, security, governance, implications of the global order for Georgia and its neighbourhood, and macroeconomics. He regularly covers these topics in both English and Georgian media. He is also a frequent commentator on the latest political developments in Georgia as well as on various global geopolitical trends and events.

Kipiani is also a member of the Georgian Bar Association, sits on the International Advisory Board for the Association of International Politics and Security Studies, is a board member of the Independent Directors' Association, and is a member of that council at the Accounting, Reporting and Auditor Oversight Service. For his fruitful cooperation with Tbilisi State University and his outstanding contribution to the development of the legal profession, he has been awarded the Ivane Javakhishvili Medal.

For Geopolitika, Kipiani steps into the role of commentator and expert on Caucasian and Eurasian affairs, which will further strengthen our publication's focus on Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Kipiani will write for Geopolitika exclusively on a voluntary basis and much of his work will also be published in Geopolitika's partner publications. Also, as part of the partnership between Geopolitika and Geocase, editor Werenskiold will step into an advisory role for the latter.

We hope for a long and fruitful collaboration with Kipiani and Geocase. Not only to inform Norwegians about a very exciting, but all too often neglected country in Norway and the Norwegian media image; but also - and perhaps a little naively - contribute to strengthening the relationship between our small countries in an increasingly dangerous world. Following is a short interview with Kipiani, so that our readers can get to know our latest addition better. Welcome aboard, Victor!

- What is your background and what led you to found Geocase?

- I practice law and have been a senior partner in one of Georgia's oldest law firms, called MKD Law, for over 25 years. Prior to that, I was a clerk to the Chief Justice of the Georgia Supreme Court and had a brief stint in the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The reason why I founded Geocase has been my long-standing interest in international politics and relations, as well as a number of other fields related to geopolitics. Also, having a good network of professionals is an excellent arena to communicate and enjoy intellectual exchange.

- What are Georgia's biggest geopolitical challenges and political ambitions, and what can be done to overcome them?

In short, Georgia faces two main challenges: firstly, being a 'geographical prisoner' in an area with clashing geopolitical interests, and secondly, weak institutional capacity and fragile social cohesion - both of which are the result of historical legacy, both old and more recent. The solution may lie in being embraced by Western societies, combined with Georgia's continued commitment to an EU-driven agenda, which appear to be the most realistic measures to address these challenges.

- Where do you see your country in 10 years?

- A simplified representation could be: (a) Georgia as a politically and economically sustainable actor within the EU, and (b) Georgia benefiting from a solid security shield extended to them by NATO.

As the war in Ukraine is about more than just Ukraine itself, but about the security landscape after the war along NATO's eastern flank, it is not surprising that this war also has and will have direct consequences for Georgia. In addition, the same war is a test for the West to meet the current and future challenges with new strength. Considering how much Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity depend on this sustainability, the effort becomes even more important and evident.

- Why do you want a partnership with Geopolitika?

- The reason for the proposed partnership is to give Geocase a stronger voice, as well as to use it as a tool to educate and inform the Norwegian public about Georgia and the Caucasus region. The ultimate goal is to increase support, understanding and empathy for our common cause.

- As small nations separated by great geographical distances in an international system dominated by great power competition, how can Georgia and Norway help each other to develop in a solid way?

- Despite our differences, we can and should find common ground in knowledge sharing to transform our nations to become more competitive, able to handle various challenges on their own. The next important lesson is integration into a system of shared values and principles that promote social welfare and equal opportunities for our citizens. I also believe that Norway's contribution to the development of Georgia's institutions is significant, and this contribution deserves recognition and appreciation.

- Analyzing geopolitics through political realism is not common among Norwegians, but the world is increasingly developing in that direction. What would you say to them?

- The world is becoming increasingly interconnected and intertwined, with increasing risks that are becoming more pervasive. Therefore, the new reality is that nothing can be taken for granted - neither in security nor in terms of prosperity. Therefore, it would be useful for Norwegians to develop a broader and more objective perspective in order to be able to keep up with and adequately respond to global trends.