

# GCRF COMPASS NEWSLETTER

Comprehensive Capacity-Building in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia:  
research integration, impact governance & sustainable communities.

Issue 1, March 2018



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# Welcome Note



Dear Friends and Project Partners,

We are delighted to announce the start of our new and exciting venture - GCRF RCUK COMPASS project (ES/P010849/1, 2017-21, <http://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass>) focusing on capacity-building and development of research synergies, policy and public impact within and beyond our consortium. It is part of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of funding announced by Research Fund GCRF (£1.5 billion), the UK Government initiative in 2015. It has been specially designed to stimulate research on the challenges faced by developing countries.

Our project went through a tough competition, initially involving over 500 applicants, and four stages of the selection process. In the end, 37 projects were deemed successful, with ours being the only one in the field of politics and international relations, and a geographical focus on the Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/gcrf-calls/growcallbooklet37finaljuly2017-pdf/>).

The project envisages major research conferences, policy forums, study trips, student conventions and training schools - all for sharing best practice and knowledge exchange. With this project we will aim to lay strong foundations to enable our lasting dialogue and cooperation, and name-building, so that eventually we could proudly refer to ourselves as a global network of the '*hubs of excellence*' specialising in different aspects of

'governance' and 'order' to connect top-centres around the globe.

This newsletter brings you information about the nature of the project and its people, including our newly appointed Advisory Board. There is also information about the events that have already taken place and are yet to come. The latter are referred to as '**SAVE the DATE**': please ensure that you pencil these events in your calendars!

We will also have a separate column about our achievements and professional accolades of all partners. If you have any further suggestions on what else should be included in the newsletter, please let us know. It is run by Prajakti Kalra ([pk315@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pk315@cam.ac.uk)) from Cambridge. She will ask you regularly for updates, and will aim to publish this newsletter quarterly.

A warm welcome to you all and I wish all of us every success in achieving our goals and going well beyond them!

Yours faithfully,

Professor Elena A. Korosteleva  
Principal Investigator, University of Kent





Baroness Suttie at University of Kent, 15 March 2018

## Advisory Board

We would like to welcome our newly appointed Advisory Board, which includes members of the academic community, UK/EU policy officials and National Impact advisors. For more information please visit our project page at: <https://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass/people/>

## What our Partners say about the Project

**Artsiom Nazaranka, Belarusian State University (BSU)**

COMPASS project will support BSU to thrive and develop itself as center of excellence, reaching strategic institutional goals. We value support for research and exchange of experience in the fields of education, good governance and IT development, migration and regional security, and sustainable development. We expect a range of new joint scientific and educational publications, new courses and programs in English (with a long-term goal of establishing joint master's program), and a number of new joint scientific and educational projects. I believe COMPASS will contribute not GCRF COMPASS, University of Kent <https://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass/>

only to the promotion of BSU and Belarusian national education system in general, but also facilitate development of friendly relations with UK, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other countries and help meet real sustainable development challenges.

**Munira Shahidi, Tajik National University, Tajikistan**

The project, along with a number of others, initiated in Tajikistan, such as UNESCO, Erasmus+ and others is oriented to release the community from its cultural isolation. Tajikistan, the only country in Central Asia, gone through the civil war of 1992-1997, with its economic inefficiencies, migration and broken cultural infrastructure is ready to tackle problems of governance and build capacity. Its reconstruction challenges require collaborative research with its closest neighborhood, such as Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Belarus, as well as with Great Britain and EU.

**Akram Umarov, University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED), Uzbekistan**

Participation in this project gives us a unique opportunity to gain new experiences, establish stable and promising cooperation with partners from different countries, to contribute to the establishment of long-term and mutually beneficial scientific cooperation between representatives of participating countries. We appreciate the opportunity to meet with so many outstanding scholars from a range of countries and to maintain long term professional relationship with them in the future.

**Siddharth Saxena, Cambridge Central Asia Forum**

COMPASS is a breakthrough project, bringing together governance and governability concepts from across Central Asia, Europe and Britain to co-construct the highest standards for global coexistence and sustainable international relations.

**Nargiz Ismayilova, ADA University, Azerbaijan**

This project is just in time for the ADA. We are developing research activities

and experience of the partners will play significant role in this development. Through the project new policies and know-hows will be communicated not only to ADA but to the whole society.



Delegation from Uzbekistan in Cambridge, 3 March 2018



Roundtable on Silk Roads: Prospects and Perspectives, Cambridge 17 March 2018

## COMPASS Objectives and Goals

### **Objectives**

Conceptually, the project explores new approaches to 'external governance' to make it more effective and sustainable. It focuses on developing the concepts of 'resilience as self-governance', 'capacity-building' and 'peoplehood' as communities are guided by a sense 'good life'.

In practical terms, the project seeks to enhance UK relations and build capacity with chosen partners, along the following three dimensions:

- 1) **Research Integration**
- 2) **Impact governance**
- 3) **Sustainable communities**

### **Beneficiaries**

- At the **Local/regional level**, specialist knowledge and best practices in peace

and security dialogue, conflict resolutions, cultural and normative identity-building, geopolitical, economic and energy cooperation.

- At the **UK level**, research and policy access to the hitherto 'closed' region, associated with top-down bureaucracy, conflict-torn societies, geopolitical dependencies, and a wider Eurasian civilisation, including the economic Silk Road project

- At the **Global level**, a new insight into 'better global governance' by unpacking and engaging with the notions of order at all levels, 'peoplehood', resilience, and sustainability of the increasingly fragmented international system.

For more information about planned activities, project Work Packages, and a Calendar of events, please visit our website: <http://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass>.

## Past Events

### GCRF RCUK Launch, London, 21 July 2017

Leading experts from the UK and in developing countries across the world are joining forces to tackle some of the most serious global challenges in a new multi-disciplinary research programme launched today. In one of the most ambitious international research programmes ever created, £225 million has been invested across 37 interdisciplinary projects to address challenges in fields such as health, humanitarian crises, conflict, the environment, the economy, domestic violence, society, and technology. The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Research Councils UK Collective Fund is supporting projects in the range of £2 – 8 million over four years. It aims to build upon research knowledge in the UK, and strengthen capacity overseas, to help address challenges, informed by expressed need in developing countries.

### Launch in the Royal Society, 4 September 2017

Professor Korosteleva was invited to present the project to the Royal Society in London on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017. The audience was impressed with the project's focus and especially its GCRF COMPASS, University of Kent <https://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass/>

methodology that linked the theory of governance and its explorations to the citizens' juries, to interrogate its utility.

### 1st GCRF COMPASS project meeting, Cambridge, 5 October 2017

University of Kent and University of Cambridge COMPASS members met for the first time in Cambridge to discuss the way ahead for the project. Whilst the work described in the proposal outlined the overall aims and objectives of COMPASS, more detailed discussions were necessary to define work package content, the roles of project partners and how they interact in the project. These discussions will be ongoing throughout the project and the Cambridge meeting was a useful occasion to establish a baseline from which to go forward.



### Informal Project Launch, University of Kent, School of Politics and International Relations, 6 November 2017

Professor Elena Korosteleva and her team had an informal launch of the project organized by the School of Politics and International Relations to celebrate this success. Head of School, Professor Richard Whitman noted that this grant was the largest in the history of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Kent, and wished the team further success.



### Informal project launch, London, 29 November 2017

On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2017, the Kent and Cambridge teams met with the four Ambassadors from the project's partner states. The meeting was hosted by the Belarusian Embassy in London. The meeting was an opportunity to introduce the project's aims as well as to discuss the main areas of interest for Azerbaijan (Ambassador Taghizadeh), Belarus (Ambassador Aleinik), Tajikistan (Mr Qurbonov) and Uzbekistan (Ambassador Shaykhov). We were also joined by two members of the Minsk Dialogue Track-II Initiative, Yauheni Preiherman and Dzianis Melyantsou. During the meeting we considered how different interests could be aligned, and what concrete initiatives we could cooperate on in the next four years.



### Project Launch Workshop in Tajikistan, 8 February 2018

On 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 the Shahidi Foundation hosted a workshop to launch the GCRF COMPASS project in Tajikistan. The invitees included the members of the team from the Tajik National University and the agenda of the meeting was to introduce the members to each other to discuss the project. During the meeting the work packages and deliverables of each member were outlined and an agenda for future meetings and workshops was also considered.

### Meeting of the heads of Tajik National University (TNU), 18 February 2018

Discussion and planning innovative research within the "GCRF Comprehensive Capacity-building in Eastern Neighborhood and Central Asia: research integration, impact governance and sustainable communities (COMPASS)".

Participants: 21 heads of chairs of TNU or their representatives, including Department of International Affairs, Department of History and Manuscripts, Economy and Innovations, Chemistry,



Cultural Studies and Arts, Department of Biology and others.

The main issue was how to contribute to the reform of the system of education in TNU. There were a lot of questions raised including: Why even successful projects, made by some students within the projects of Erasmus+ and Chinese Center of Confucius Studies are not presented publicly? How these projects correlate with the processes in the neighboring countries and universities in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan? What can TNU recommend to the government of Tajikistan, regarding the re-establishment of collaborative research between two neighboring countries in different disciplines, for example, re-researching manuscripts, as evidences of the common national/regional heritage?

### Visit by Belarusian State University to Kent, 12-17 March 2018

Kent hosted our colleagues from the Belarusian State University (BSU), led by Dr Artsiom Nazaranka between 12-15 March. The agenda included discussing further collaboration under the GCRF COMPASS project, and new ERASMUS+ opportunities in the Eurasian region; as well as knowledge exchange about the Global Master's programme and future research and publication strategies.

### Project meeting with Baroness Alison Suttie in Kent, 15 March 2018

On 15<sup>th</sup> March University of Kent hosted Baroness Suttie to discuss the COMPASS project's aims and options for joint cooperation. Baroness Suttie outlined her interest in the region, and in working on strengthening parliaments and administration in particular. She kindly agreed to join the project's Advisory Board, to help oversee future joint initiatives and policy impact in particular. The project meeting was also complemented by a Q&A session with students from the School of Politics and IR, as well as exchange students from the Belarusian State University. Students asked questions about the consequences of Brexit for relations with the Eurasian region; relations between the UK and Russia; and the effect the UK's withdrawal from the EU GCRF COMPASS, University of Kent  
<https://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass/>

might have on the Union's foreign and security policy.

### Cambridge NAVROZ: 17 March 2018



Cambridge Central Asia Forum had its annual Navroz (New Year) celebrations on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March. The evening was preceded by a Roundtable on the Silk Roads: Prospects and Perspectives which was attended by the Ambassadors of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, Head of Mission of Tajikistan and First Secretary Consul of Turkmenistan. Deputy Vice Chancellor and Master of Jesus College, Professor White gave a welcome speech to open the proceedings. Dr Saxena, Professor Nolan, Dr Fennell along with other academics including from University of Kent and University College London were present. At the beginning of the meeting Dr Saxena gave a brief introduction of the GCRF COMPASS project to the audience and talked about the opportunities for capacity building, partnership and policy making between the UK and the wider region of Central Asia.

The evening's program was outstanding with performances from across Central Asia and was attended by more than 200 people from London and Cambridge. For more information see <https://centralasia.group.cam.ac.uk/>



## Save the Date: Forthcoming events

### Project Launch, Minsk 22-23 May 2018

The official launch of the GCRF COMPASS project will take place in Minsk, at the Belarusian State University on 22-23 May 2018. The launch will be opened by the Rector of the Belarusian State University, with welcome remarks from the Ministry of Education and the Parliament of Belarus. The launch will be attended by all project partners, members of the Advisory Board and invited guests. The working meetings will continue the next day, followed by the Minsk Dialogue Forum on 23-25 May, with top regional and international officials, academics and practitioners in attendance.

For more information please see <https://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass/events/calendar/?event=30596&eslug=gcrf-compass-launch>

### Tartu Conference 10-12 June 2018

The Tartu Conference is a venue for academic discussion of the fundamental cultural, social, economic and political trends affecting all aspects of people's life in Russia and Eastern Europe. Inaugurated in June 2016, this forum brings together scholars from across multiple disciplines, from the region and beyond. As in previous years, the organizers expect the number of participants to reach or exceed 200.

Members of the COMPASS team will present in two panels on 11<sup>th</sup> June. Dr Saxena and Professor Korosteleva will chair panels on, 'Challenges for regional security and capacity-building in the eastern region and Central Asia: (I) a domestic perspective'; and (II) an international perspective'. The first panel will include presentations from Anar Valiyev (Azerbaijan), Munira Shahidi and Nargis Nurulla-Khozhaeva (Tajikistan), Alisher Faizullaev (Uzbekistan) and Andrei Rusakovich (Belarus). The second panel will include

presentations from Roza Turarbekava (Belarus), Yauheni Preiherman (Belarus), Oybek Madiyev (Kent), Leonardo Pataccini (Tartu) and Eske Van Gils (Kent). The programme can be found [here](https://sisu.ut.ee/tartuconference/programe) <https://sisu.ut.ee/tartuconference/programe>

### UPTAKE Training School in Uppsala, 27 August- 2 September 2018

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2018 the 4th UPTAKE Training School will take place at Uppsala University. The Training School aims to bring together young researchers working in the field of Eastern European and Russian Studies to present their work on the theme "Straight talk about Russia: Internal developments, external conflicts and outside perceptions". The Training School will include paper presentations, guest lectures, round table discussions as well as networking activities and social programme.

Early career researchers from COMPASS institutions are encouraged to apply, in order to familiarise themselves with a Training School set-up, which we aim to organise as part of COMPASS activities.

In order to apply, please fill in the form on the website to include a brief paper abstract (150-200 words), and return it to Stella Marceta by **1 May 2018** by email ([stella.marceta@ires.uu.se](mailto:stella.marceta@ires.uu.se)), and include "UPTAKE TS UPPSALA" in the subject line.

For more information see <http://www.uptake.ut.ee/cfp-fourth-uptake-training-school-straight-talk-about-russia/>

### COMPASS Study Trip, Brussels, 21-26 January 2019

The study trip aims to bring top-level delegations from Belarusian State University (BSU), ADA University (Azerbaijan), Tajik National University (TNU) and Uzbek University for World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED), to Brussels for a 5-day training and networking workshop. After spending a

week in Brussels, they will attend a policy-forum in London.

The Training School will cover:

-Tailored training sessions (with guest speakers from relevant EU institutions and best-practice exchange) on:

- EU institutions and decision making
- EU lobbying and negotiation strategies
- Tenders and funding opportunities
- Negotiation Skills Workshop
- Political communication and diplomacy
- Roundtable discussions on EU's Global Strategy, Trade & EaP and CA region
- EU & "Geopolitical challenges in the East"
- EaP: what's in it for the partners?

- Meeting EU institutions (visits), including meetings with Eastern Partnership's/ Central Asia's Diplomatic Advisers from the 28 Member States at Residence's Palace.

- Meeting relevant national Embassies to discuss agenda and priorities; networking and an organised cultural tour.

## In other news

### Accolades

**Professor Elena Korosteleva** was appointed LSE IDEAS Visiting Professor in November 2017.

**Professor Munira Shahidi** has started a new course entitled, 'Activity, Employment and Social behavior of cattle breeders in the Pamir mountains' in Tajik National University. The course is based on presentation and discussions of Salimsho Akbarsho's research. This course is part of collaborative work with German researchers.

### Conferences

**Professor Elena Korosteleva** attended a meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan on the 18 February-2 March 2018.

**Dr Siddharth Saxena** attended a meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan on 28 February-2 March 2018.

**Dr Siddharth Saxena** attended the ONE GLOBE FORUM in New Delhi, India on 9-10 February 2018. He addressed challenges related to capacity building, governance and new industrial paradigms in the Eurasia space.

### Publications

**Korosteleva, E.** (January 2018) 'Putting the EU Global Security Strategy to Test: 'Cooperative Orders' and Othering in EU-Russia Relations', *International Politics*.

**Korosteleva, E.** (December 2017) 'Challenges of a Changing Eastern Neighbourhood', in the *Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Chapter 15.

**Korosteleva, E., Merheim-Eyre, I. and E. Van Gils** (February 2018) 'The Politics' and 'The political' of the Eastern Partnership Initiative: Reshaping the Agenda' SI as a book.

**Madiyev, O.** (2017) Why have China and Russia become Uzbekistan's biggest energy partners? Exploring the role of exogenous and endogenous factors.' *Cambridge Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 1. QYJ7IT. ISSN 1879-3665. (<https://doi.org/10.22261/QYJ7IT>)

**Kalra, P.** (April 2018) 'The Silk Road and the Political Economy of the Mongol Empire' (*Routledge Studies on the Chinese Economy*, Series Editor: Professor Nolan)

**Faizullaev, A.** (2017). 'Symbolic Insult in Diplomacy: A Subtle Game of Diplomatic Slap', *Brill Research Perspectives in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, 2(4): 1-116. <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/24056006-12340008>

# Social Media

For current news and information please find us on:

**Twitter** (@GCRF\_COMPASS)

**Facebook** GCRF COMPASS  
(<https://www.facebook.com/>)

**Research Gate** We recommend you create profiles on Research Gate and connect with the partners to stay abreast of all the new and exciting research and work being undertaken by our colleagues.

**Official Website:**  
<https://research.kent.ac.uk/gcrf-compass/>



Her Excellency Mrs Iskakova (Kyrgyzstan), His Excellency Mr Shaykhov (Uzbekistan), His Excellency Mr Jawad (Afghanistan), Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge, Professor White, Dr Saxena, Dr Jorayev (UCL), Dr Kudaibergenova, Mr Annayev (First Secretary, Turkmenistan) and Mr Qurbonov (Head of Mission, Tajikistan) at the Roundtable on *Silk Roads: Prospects and Perspectives* in Cambridge, 17 March 2018

**Thank you for your attention!**

Please send your questions and news to Prajakti Kalra ([pk315@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pk315@cam.ac.uk)).