

EDITORIAL

Azerbaijan. Historical, cultural and political landmarks

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Abstract: *The editorial staff of the science journal Polis, from Iași, has decided to continue its research activity by hosting an issue dedicated to Azerbaijan in its pages. The initiative is part of a broader project that aims to present to readers and interested specialists articles and studies signed by university professors and researchers from Azerbaijan and Romania. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 allowed the opening to the world of cultural spaces that for a long time were closed or at best semi-open. Romania, as a country that was part of the "Soviet camp", managed in 1989 to free itself from a communist regime that was illegitimate from its inception. "Freedom" was a fundamental right, which for almost half a century was denied to Romanian citizens. The "conquest" of the right to be free, in December 1989, allowed for important openings towards the space of Western culture and civilization.*

In the last three decades, Romania has managed to integrate into the EU and NATO, which represents the achievement of two major foreign and domestic policy objectives. Since the 1990s, Romania has opened up to the space full of history, culture and civilization of the Caucasus. This thematic issue dedicated to Azerbaijan represents a cultural approach through which the academic space in Romania opens up to a universe of thought that has fascinated over millennia and which, through the information provided, will enrich Romanian and universal political culture.

Keywords: *Azerbaijan, history, statehood, continuity, modernization.*

Azerbaijan – a five-millennium history of statehood

The Azerbaijani people, who regained their independence at the end of the 20th century, have a long and rich history of statehood.

The historical lands of Azerbaijan represent one of the oldest cultural

centers, where the foundations of modern civilization were laid. Archaeological discoveries in the caves of Azîh, Taghlar, Damjili, Dash-Salahli, Gazma, as well as other monuments, including the jawbone of the Azîh man (azihanthropus), who lived 300–400 thousand years ago, prove that this territory is

one of the oldest human settlements on the globe¹.

Azerbaijanis are also among the peoples with some of the oldest traditions of statehood in the world. The traditions of statehood on the historical lands of Azerbaijan date back approximately 5 000 years. The first state structures or ethno-political unions appeared on the territory of Azerbaijan as early as the end of the 4th millennium BC – the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC. In the first millennium BC and at the beginning of the first millennium AD, powerful states such as Manna, Midia, Atropatena, and Caucasian Albania existed in these lands².

At the beginning of our era, the country went through one of the most difficult periods in its history: in the 3rd century, Azerbaijan was conquered by the Sassanid Empire, and in the 7th century, by the Arab Caliphate. After the collapse of the caliphate, starting in the middle of the 9th century, the ancient traditions of Azerbaijani statehood were revived: the states of the Sajids, Shirvanshahs, Sallarids, Ravadids, and Shaddadids were established on these territories. A period of flourishing political, economic, and cultural life ensued³.

Azerbaijan then became part of the Great Seljuk Empire, which stretched from Central Asia to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and from the Derbent Pass to the Persian Gulf.

The states of the Shirvanshahs and Eldiguzids, consolidated after the collapse of the Seljuk Empire, played an essential role in the continuation and

development of the state traditions of the Azerbaijani people. The Azerbaijani state of the Eldiguzids, which became one of the most powerful political formations in the Near and Middle East, occupies a special place in the ethno-political history of the nation⁴. The Azerbaijani Renaissance reached its peak with great philosophers, poets, and literary figures such as Hagani, Nizami, and Adjemi.

Between the 15th and 18th centuries, Azerbaijani statehood culture became even richer. During this period, vast territories of the East—the Karakoyunlu, Akkoyunlu, and Safavid dynasties—were under the direct rule of Azerbaijani dynasties. This had a positive impact on the state's internal and international relations, expanded its political and military sphere of influence and the area of use of the Azerbaijani language, and created favorable conditions for the development of the material and spiritual culture of the people. At the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, Azerbaijani statehood entered a new stage in its historical evolution. Uzun Hasan's grandson, the remarkable statesman Shah Ismail Khatai, succeeded in uniting all Azerbaijani lands under his authority. Thus, a centralized unitary state was created, with its capital in Tabriz – the Safavid State⁵.

The remarkable Azerbaijani commander Nadir Shah (1736–1747), who came to power after the fall of the Safavid state, further expanded the borders of the former Safavid Empire. In 1739, this great leader conquered

northern India, including Delhi. However, his plans to create a powerful centralized state on these vast territories could not be realized. After Nadir Shah's death, his immense empire fell apart⁶.

Thus, in the second half of the 18th century, Azerbaijan fragmented into small state entities – khanates and sultanates⁷. The country entered a period of military and political decline.

Azerbaijan became the arena for bloody wars between two great powers. According to the treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828), the territories of Azerbaijan were divided between two empires: northern Azerbaijan came under Russian rule, and the south came under the authority of the Iranian shahs of the Qajar dynasty⁸.

However, thanks to the efforts of patriotic figures and prominent representatives of the intelligentsia, the spiritual progress of the Azerbaijani people was ensured, and their historical memory and national culture were preserved.

On May 28, 1918, the first democratic parliamentary republic in the Muslim East was proclaimed—the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan. Important steps were taken in Azerbaijan to build an independent and democratic state: the first parliament and government were formed, the state apparatus and administrative institutions were established, the country's borders were defined, highly capable military units were quickly formed, essential work was carried out to ensure territorial integrity and na-

tional security, the flag, anthem, and coat of arms were adopted, the native language was declared the official language, and special attention was paid to the development of education and culture, along with consistent steps to resolve other issues of major importance for the further development of the people and the consolidation of national statehood⁹.

From the very first days of its existence, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, founded on the principles of popular sovereignty and equality, became the first in the East and one of the first in the world to grant women the right to vote, even before some European states.

Thanks to the activities of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan became a subject of international law, which prevented its disappearance from the political map of the world after the Bolshevik occupation in April 1920.

On April 28, 1920, Azerbaijan was occupied by Bolshevik Russia. During the Soviet period, Azerbaijani statehood faced extremely difficult challenges. Between 1920 and 1922, Azerbaijan's independence, already recognized de facto by the international community, was only partially maintained at the formal level. In March 1922, the three republics of the South Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia) were united into a single state—the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (TSFSR)—which led to the complete liquidation of formal independence¹⁰.

During the Soviet period, Zangezur, Goychay, part of Nakhchivan, and other regions were separated from Azerbaijan and annexed to Armenia. As a result, the country's territory, which during the period of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was 114 000 km², was reduced to 86 600 km²¹¹.

Resistance to Soviet power in Azerbaijan was met with deportations and brutal repression. During the repressions of 1937, most of the prominent intellectuals of the Azerbaijani people who did not accept the Soviet regime were arrested under various pretexts, deported to Siberia and the steppes of Kazakhstan, and many of them were executed¹².

During World War II, the Azerbaijani people showed extraordinary dedication. Azerbaijani divisions fought a glorious battle from the Caucasus to Berlin. Oil from Baku played a decisive role in the victory over fascism¹³.

On October 18, 1991, with the proclamation of state independence, Azerbaijan declared itself the political and legal successor to the Azerbaijan People's Republic and demonstrated its loyalty to the old traditions of statehood. Shortly thereafter, the state symbols of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic were restored¹⁴.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, which declared its independence by the will of the people, began to function in an extremely difficult context. The expansion of Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan, as a result of which Armenian armed formations occupied 20% of the country's territory, internal power struggles, and eco-

nomic collapse in the early years of independence significantly weakened the state¹⁵.

In 1993, with the return to power, at the request of the people, of national leader Heydar Aliyev, the situation began to change. From 1969 to 1982, as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Azerbaijan SSR, Heydar Aliyev had contributed significantly to the development of the republic. In 1982, he was elected a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and appointed first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, thus becoming one of the leaders of the former Soviet Union. In October 1987, in protest against the policies promoted by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, Heydar Aliyev resigned. His return to power in 1993 saved Azerbaijan from collapse.

On October 3, 1993, Heydar Aliyev was elected president of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Thanks to his decisive mission, the state independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan was saved, and the years of the national leader's rule, 1993–2003, went down in history as a period of profound reforms and multilateral development¹⁶.

Today, Azerbaijan is among the most competitive countries in the world, and large-scale projects carried out with its partners have changed the energy and transport map of Eurasia.

The 44-day War of the Homeland, which ended in 2020 with Azerbaijan's Great Victory under the leadership of Supreme Commander President Ilham Aliyev, clearly reflects the determination and will of the Azerbaijani people, as well as their unwavering devotion to their historical heritage and culture¹⁷. Following the anti-terrorist operation launched on September 19, 2023, and conducted for only 23 hours, with the aim of preventing large-scale provocations in Karabakh, disarmament and withdrawal of Armenian armed formations remaining on Azerbaijani territories, and restoration of constitutional order, the sovereignty of the Republic of Azerbaijan has been fully restored¹⁸.

Extensive reconstruction and construction work is currently underway in the liberated territories: cities, villages, roads, and infrastructure facilities are being built. The program to return former displaced persons to their native homes, known as the "Great Return," is also being successfully implemented. All this work is being carried out by Azerbaijan using its own resources.

After declaring independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan pursued an independent foreign policy aimed at strengthening and consistently developing statehood and defending national interests. Azerbaijan's foreign policy is based on the norms and principles of international law, including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and non-interference in internal affairs. At the regional level, achieving strategic

goals such as establishing peace and stability and implementing major transport and cooperation projects is a major priority. Having chosen the path of democratic progress, Azerbaijan is determined to fully promote the common goal of establishing and developing equal and mutually beneficial relations with neighboring states and distant countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

After gaining independence, the Republic of Azerbaijan was the first to initiate the opening of the Caspian basin to the world. In 1994, Azerbaijan signed agreements with 13 major oil companies on the exploitation of Azerbaijan's hydrocarbon deposits, which, due to their particular importance, were dubbed the "Contract of the Century". These agreements, signed with companies from the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Japan, and other countries, brought significant investments and revenues to the republic, laying the foundation for the country's economic development.

In this context, relations between Azerbaijan and Romania play an important role in connecting trade routes between Asia and Europe. Bilateral relations with Romania cover various areas and reflect a historically close, friendly, and mutually beneficial cooperation. Romania was the first European country to establish a strategic partnership with Azerbaijan. Romania was the second country in the world (after brotherly Turkey) to recognize the independence of our republic and

the first among the member states of the European Union. Since the establishment of relations, in our contemporary history, Romania has supported all of Azerbaijan's international and regional projects and initiatives, and these relations remain strategic and mutually beneficial to this day.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, as an independent state, is a member of several international organizations, including the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Commonwealth of Independent States, and others. In 2011, Azerbaijan was elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two-year term (2012–2013). The country is constantly developing cooperation with organizations such as NATO and the European Union, as well as within the anti-terrorist coalition. At the same time, the Republic of Azerbaijan is one of the founders of the GUAM regional group. By participating in these regional organizations and initiatives, Azerbaijan promotes its national interests¹⁹.

Azerbaijan pursues an active diplomatic policy within the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), launching important initiatives that contribute to strengthening integration in both the Turkic and Islamic spaces. Our country's chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia from 2024 to 2026 is of strategic

importance for intensifying regional economic cooperation²⁰.

Azerbaijan's successful presidency and initiatives within the Non-Aligned Movement have played an important role in strengthening the prestige of this organization in recent years²¹. Azerbaijan also attaches particular importance to bilateral relations with individual states, including neighboring countries.

Azerbaijan's geopolitical significance, its location on the historic route of economic cooperation linking Europe and Asia, East and West, and, in particular, its ability to provide a corridor to Europe via the Caspian Sea for routes from Central Asia, have given the country the status of an internationally relevant player. It is no coincidence that the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum gas pipeline, and the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway project have significantly increased Azerbaijan's international importance²². These projects have not only made Azerbaijan a key state in ensuring Europe's energy security, but have also laid the foundation for the creation of the Middle Corridor, stretching for a thousand kilometers. In addition, Azerbaijan's role in the Belt and Road Initiative is gradually increasing, making the country an important strategic partner for China.

On August 8, 2025, a trilateral peace memorandum was signed at the White House between US President Donald Trump, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. During the

same ceremony, Donald Trump also spoke about the Zangezur corridor and announced the signing of a 99-year agreement between the United States and Armenia. The TRUMP International Route of Peace and Prosperity (TRIPP), which is to cross the territory of Armenia through the Zangezur corridor and connect the mainland of Azerbaijan with the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, at the initiative of the US administration, will play an important role in connecting Asia with Europe²³.

Today, Azerbaijan regularly hosts numerous international events, including the Baku Global Forum, the World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue, the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, the Azerbaijan Grand Prix (Formula 1 Qatar Airways Azerbaijan Grand Prix), the Eurovision Song Contest, and others.

The Heydar Aliyev Foundation, headed by First Vice President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mehriban Aliyeva, plays an important role in promoting Azerbaijan's culture and traditions. With the support of the Foundation, social and humanitarian projects are implemented and various events are organized not only in Azerbaijan but also beyond its borders.

The COP29 conference, held with great success in Azerbaijan between November 11 and 22, 2024, was the largest event ever organized by our country. The conference registered 76 000 participants. At the opening ceremony of the COP29 Leaders' Summit on November 12, attended by more than 80 heads of state and gov-

ernment, President Ilham Aliyev emphasized that Azerbaijan, as a country located at the crossroads of North and South, East and West, has the capacity to build political, cultural, energy, trade, and transport links between various international actors. The COP conference in Baku will be remembered for its historic successes and important decisions on many issues awaiting resolution, with Azerbaijan leaving behind a valuable legacy. Decisions on 52 topics were adopted at COP29. These decisions were officially enshrined by the UN as the "Baku Climate Unity Pact" (BAKU Agreement)²⁴.

At the third session of the Executive Board of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), held in Kenya, it was announced that the 13th World Urban Forum will take place in Baku in 2026²⁵.

Thus, the Republic of Azerbaijan today plays an essential role in various international and regional projects, rightly serving as a bridge between East and West.

In order to continue and develop bilateral relations, the editorial board of *Polis magazine* decided to produce a thematic edition dedicated to the history of Azerbaijan. Its creation was entrusted to Gudsi Dursun oglu Osmanov and Sabin Dragulin.

Cultural diplomacy and political science magazine *Polis*, from Iași

The corpus dedicated to the history and culture of Azerbaijan comprises

22 contributions. The approaches are diverse and come from historiography, political history, economic history, geopolitics, the phenomenon of diaspora, cultural identity, cultural interferences, architecture, etc., the published texts being signed by specialists in the field from Azerbaijan. The ordering of the articles and studies was carried out according to chronological and thematic criteria.

The coordinators' intention was to identify specialists in various fields, who would cover as wide a period of local history as possible through their contributions. The difficulties of covering a historical period that exceeds two millennia are obvious, and this issue of *Polis* magazine did not set out to cover them exhaustively. However, taking into account the absolute novelty of a cultural and political culture project that concerns the history of Azerbaijan, we believe that we have managed to achieve an important opening.

The absolute novelty of this editorial project for the Romanian side, considering that it was the first experience for a political science journal in Romania to publish an issue dedicated to Azerbaijan, required a very important research activity. This consisted in identifying relevant themes, from a historical, political, etc. point of view, which are too little known, given that an exhaustive approach is impossible. In this context, a particularly important role in carrying out the preliminary documentation was played by Ms. Nigar Mamedova.

Orkhan Nabiyeu proposes to readers a contribution with the title: „Contours of Power and Identity: A Political History of Azerbaijan Across Epochs of Nation-Building and Ideological Continuity”. This article examines the evolution of Azerbaijan's political identity through the lens of party ideology, nation-building, and the institutionalization of authoritarianism. Using a multidisciplinary framework that draws on political sociology, authoritarianism studies, post-Soviet transitions theory, and ethno-psychological analysis. Findings reveal that the political landscape in Azerbaijan reflects a historically conditioned, culturally resonant, and politically instrumental preference for strong state-centered conservatism.

Ramin Khalil Guliyev, with the article entitled: “The Effects of the Organization of the Baku Customs House on Trade”, opens the series of articles and studies published in the thematic issue dedicated to Azerbaijan.

The contribution addresses an aspect of tsarist colonialism in Azerbaijan, namely the establishment of a system of taxes on trade in the territory of Northern Azerbaijan, through the establishment of customs offices. The author focuses on the establishment of the Baku customs office, trying to answer three main questions: a) What were the problems that the tsars encountered when establishing the customs office; b) Why did Russia choose Baku as the location for its first customs office in Northern Azerbaijan; c) To assess the impact on

trade with the establishment of the customs administration.

To answer these questions, the author studied documents located at the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire, and the Acts of the Caucasian Archaeological Commission.

Ibrahim Kazimbeyli proposes a very interesting topic, entitled: "The Military-Political Situation in the South Caucasus in the Early 19th Century and the Occupation of the Iravan Khanate by Russia" through which he aims to provide an overview of the general history of the Iravan region, an ancient territory of Azerbaijan, which in history was known as the Iravan Khanate. This state entity stretched from the southwestern areas of North Azerbaijan and was located on both banks of the Araks River in the first half of the 18th century.

The author presents us with the political situation of the Khanate at the beginning of the 19th century, especially during the First and Second Russo-Iranian Wars using primary archival sources, official Russian state documents, and extensive historical literature.

The historical journey is continued by Aytan Maharramova who opens the analyses of the communist period with the article entitled: "The Impact of 'Khrushchev's Liberalization' on the Development of the Musical Sphere in Azerbaijan". In the first part, the author has a very interesting approach to the analysis of totalitarian systems, in this case the Soviet one.

The analysis is focused on the musical sphere, as a source of legitimization of the regime, used by the Soviet political system to become an instrument of strengthening the ideological position. And music, along with many other aspects of the daily life of each individual, became an instrument of power, being used according to a strict ideological line. The death of Joseph Stalin and the rise to power of Nikita Khrushchev marked the beginning of the "Thaw" or "Soviet liberalization" in all areas of public life, and the musical field was no exception. This change brought significant changes to musical life as well.

Namig Asadov addresses in the article "Cooperation Between the Azerbaijan SSR and the Socialist Countries of Eastern Europe in the Field of Science and Education" how the Azerbaijan SSR managed to establish foreign relations mainly in the economic and humanitarian-cultural fields with the countries within the socialist system and partly with the countries that were inclined towards the socialist mode of production. Despite all the internal difficulties that Azerbaijan experienced within the USSR, thanks to an active foreign policy it managed to integrate into the system of international relations which were later useful after gaining independence.

Aliyeva Sevdagul contribution "From Soviet Conformity to Cultural Revival: Historical Continuity and Change in Azerbaijan's National Narrative" offers a meticulous examination of the multiple transformation

of Azerbaijan's cultural and historical identity, spanning from the Soviet era to its post-independence trajectory. During the Soviet period, for ideological and colonial reasons, the regime imposed sweeping reforms that challenged the fundamental elements of national consciousness. The reassertion of independence in 1991 allowed Azerbaijan to systematically and deliberately recover its historical memory, traditional cultural paradigms, and sovereign identity.

Sabina Muradova in her study: "Social Aspects of Social Stratification in Azerbaijan" analyzes the social aspects of stratification, examining how hierarchical structures within societies influence the chances of evolution on the social scale, the relationships and social interactions of individuals, etc. The author presents and analyzes the mechanisms and factors that facilitate or hinder the process or through which inequality is perpetuated, including access to education, employment, healthcare, and social networks.

Nigar Huseynova in the study "National-Cultural Relations in the Cultural System: Modern West and Renewed Azerbaijan" presents the concept of tolerance. Azerbaijan was and is at the crossroads of the West and the East and between various civilizations. Cultural diversity has allowed the national culture to enrich itself by developing an environment of mutual understanding, religiosity and dialogue, which has become an integral part of the lifestyle and activities of every citizen of the Republic of Azerbaijan. To this symbiosis are

added the influences of Western culture, which allows for the creation of a uniqueness and universality that gives substance to multiculturalism.

Sara Aleskerova offers interested readers a study entitled: "Azerbaijan and Lobbying: Ways to Realize the Potential of the Diaspora". The author believes that approximately 50 000 000 Azerbaijanis live on the territory of five continents, of which 10 000 000 are in the diaspora. This detail is very interesting because it demonstrates that there is a significant number of Azerbaijanis in the world, 20% of whom live outside the borders of the state of Azerbaijan. The main theme that the author proposes is how a functional lobbying mechanism can be created by the Azerbaijani authorities, which would allow the diaspora to help improve the image of their own country at the international level. In the context of current geopolitical changes and the continuous movement of the balance of power, lobbying has become one of the key priorities in Azerbaijan's foreign policy to protect national interests.

Ulviyya Huseynova, through the study "Azerbaijan's prospects in international relations based on the example of the UK", presents the fundamental coordinates that Azerbaijan, after gaining independence in 1991, followed: a) diplomatic recognition at the international level; b) creating security; c) developing economic cooperation at the international level; d) participating in international organizations; e) developing cultural relations.

Aygun Seyidova in her research "The Rich Architectural Heritage of Azerbaijani Fortresses: Gulustan Fortress" presents us with the historical, architectural and cultural significance of Gulustan Fortress, one of the most important medieval fortresses in the Shamakhi region of Azerbaijan. The study focuses especially on the Shirvanshah period (11th-16th centuries), when Gulustan Fortress served as a major political center and military fortress. The article concludes that Gulustan Castle not only played a vital defensive and political role in medieval Azerbaijan, but also represents a significant element of the country's architectural heritage. The research emphasizes the importance of preserving and promoting Azerbaijan's historical and architectural heritage for future generations.

Kamala Yusifova in her article titled "Architectural development of Baku City" examines the historical evolution of the gradual development of Baku, starting from the initial fortification structure and ending with its transformation into the main center and most important city of Azerbaijan. The development of the city was influenced by two characteristics: its geographical position and the onset of the oil boom period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Namig Karimov, through the article entitled "The Emergence, Development, and Subsequent Fate of the Nabucco Project", explores Azerbaijan's position and policy towards the Nabucco project, in which the country was considered one of the main suppliers. The

study also examines the fundamental need for initiating the project, its sources of supply, the challenges it faced, and the attitudes of the leading states towards its implementation, given that Azerbaijan has a strategic interest in diversifying its oil and gas export routes.

Aida Yusifzade continues the theme proposed by Karimov Namig Alishah with the article "Political aspects of the development of Eurasian transit corridors: International relations, transport policy, and geopolitics". The author carries out a specific study of geopolitics and shows how transit corridors in Eurasia constitute a sophisticated and multidimensional political strategy that transcends simple logistical considerations, encompassing international diplomacy, economic rivalry, regional integration and complex geopolitical maneuvers. At the same time, the viability and future expansion of these corridors fundamentally depend on the capacities of states to institutionalize effective governance frameworks, to increase transport security, to diversify transit routes and to harmonize national sovereignty with the requirements of regional and global integration.

Khatira Hajiyevea with her article "Azerbaijan in the Context of Europe's Alternative Energy Source" concludes both the series of three articles dedicated to energy as a source and legitimization of geopolitical contexts, as well as the fourteen dedicated to Azerbaijan.

The author shows that the national security of each state is closely linked

not only to the economic, military, ecological and political spheres, but also to energy security. Energy supply is a crucial condition for the sustainable development of a country. Ensuring a stable energy balance is one of the main factors of global security. The presence of rich hydrocarbon reserves in the Caspian Sea basin was one of the factors that determined the cooperation between the EU and the Republic of Azerbaijan. The rich energy resources of Azerbaijan strengthen its economic potential and play a very important role in regional cooperation. The inclusion of Azerbaijan in programs such as the "European Neighborhood Policy" and the "Eastern Partnership" was one of the instruments for achieving this cooperation.

The issue's theme attracted the attention of specialists from Romania. Thus, out of the 22 thematic articles, six were proposed by Romanian authors.

This part opens with the study of Professor Ciprian Iftimoaei and is entitled: "Romanian Azerbaijani Cyber-Diplomacy: Emerging Cooperation in Black Sea ExtendedRegion". The author emphasizes, in his analysis, cyber security. The contribution explores the collaboration between Romania and Azerbaijan, which is in continuous evolution. The two countries, although they have different geopolitical ties, have common interests in protecting critical infrastructure, increasing cyber resilience and countering hybrid threats.

Nicoleta Zagura, in the article: "Cultural roots - Atashgah Zoroastrian Fire Temple, Baku". This study exam-

ines the Absheron Peninsula and Baku as spaces where natural phenomena, history, and religion converge. Known for its eternal flames, Absheron inspired the fire cults of Zoroastrianism and sustained the Atashgah temple in Surakhani, later a centre of Zoroastrian, Sikh, and Hindu worship.

Anamaria Tudorie continues the presentation of Azerbaijan's exceptional archaeological heritage in the article: "Heritage Protection and National Identity. Case Study on Prehistoric Elements of the Gobustan Archaeological Site, Azerbaijan". For the author, the analysis of the heritage at Gobustan contributes to a better understanding of the role of prehistoric heritage in shaping the contemporary cultural identity of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The article by Sabina-Adina Luca and Bogdan Gheorghită entitled: "Azerbaijani youth and sociocultural identity reflected in political discourse" presents how political, economic, social and cultural factors lead to identity transformations at the individual, group and societal levels. The authors sought to identify how young people and their problems are reflected in the official political discourse.

Professor Anton Carpinschi proposes a very interesting theoretical approach through the article entitled: "Is human security more than just a good idea?" Towards a scenario of interpersonal securitization from the Atlantic to the Urals". The author proposes an essay in which human security becomes fundamental when it materializes through intercultural dia-

logue and the cultivation of mutual trust, through a process called “interpersonal securitization”. In this way, beyond political-strategic security arrangements, the path from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains of an authentic human security system can also be achieved through interpersonal securitization, with the aim of taming the nature of hatred between people.

The penultimate article of the thematic part is signed by Dacian Vasincu and is entitled: “Eastern European parliamentarism: comparative study Azerbaijan–Romania”. This article provides a comparative analysis of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan and

Romania, emphasizing the interplay between historical legacies, institutional design, and democratic legitimacy. The study applies the principal-agent model and the concept of the crisis of representation to highlight the structural differences between the two systems.

This part reserved for the theme of the issue ends with Bogdan Gheorghîță’s travel notes entitled: “Baku Diary – Social-Political Travel Notes”.

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Notes

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