

Belarus Tajikistan  
Latvia Estonia  
Uzbekistan Moldova Armenia

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STRATEG EAST  
WESTERNIZATION  
INDEX  
2018

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Azerbaijan Georgia  
Turkmenistan Kazakhstan  
Ukraine Lithuania  
Kyrgyzstan



Belarus Tajikistan  
**Latvia Estonia**  
Uzbekistan Moldova Armenia

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STRATEGEAST  
WESTERNIZATION  
**INDEX**  
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Azerbaijan Georgia  
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**Ukraine Lithuania**  
Kyrgyzstan

# ABOUT STRATEG EAST

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StrategEast is a strategic center whose goal is to create closer working ties between political and business leaders in the former Soviet countries outside of Russia and their peers in the U.S. And Western Europe.

StrategEast believes nations from the former Soviet Union share a heritage that has resulted in common obstacles to the formation of stable, efficient, market-oriented democracies. We hope to appeal to political, business, and academic leaders in post-Soviet countries and the West, helping them better understand one another, communicate across borders, and collaborate to support real change.

Our work is focused on the 14 former Soviet states outside of Russia. This post-Soviet, non-Russia (PSNR) region includes: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

StrategEast focuses on six key issue areas that are especially influential to the transition to Western political and economic systems: Fighting corruption, implementing a Western code of business conduct within a post-Soviet business environment, modernizing infrastructure, promoting independent press and civil society, energy transparency, and leadership impact.

**LEARN MORE  
AT OUR WEBSITE:**

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**THIS REPORT  
WAS WRITTEN BY:**

Adil Nurmakov	Farkhad Tolipov	Olga Lyamar
Andrei Yahorau	Gubad Ibadoglu	Salome Minesashvili
Boris Navasardian	Ilvija Bruge	Sergiy Solodkyy
Daria Gaidai	Kateryna Zarembo	Tamerlan Ibraimov
Dovile Sukyte	Leonid Litra	<i>Several authors preferred to remain anonymous</i>
Edward Lemon	Maili Vilson	

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**StrategEast**

1900 K Street, NW  
Suite 100  
Washington, D. C. 20006

[office@strategeast.org](mailto:office@strategeast.org)  
[www.StrategEast.org](http://www.StrategEast.org)

Concept: Michael Sheitelman  
Project coordinator: Tatiana Slyngo  
Design: Vitaly Tchirkov  
Page proof: Mark Mironchuk



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>Introduction</b>	6
<b>Index Methodology</b>	10
<b>Scores</b>	16
<b>Cross-Country Analysis</b>	18
<b>Westernization Index of Post-Soviet States</b>	40
Armenia	41
Azerbaijan	49
Belarus	55
Estonia	62
Georgia	67
Kazakhstan	73
Kyrgyzstan	81
Latvia	87
Lithuania	93
Moldova	99
Tajikistan	106
Turkmenistan	112
Ukraine	119
Uzbekistan	126
<b>Bibliography</b>	132
<b>Authors' Biographies</b>	168

# INTRODUCTION

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Photo by Bartek Syta

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome the launch of this new index, which measures the state of Western transition in the 14 countries of the post-Soviet, non-Russian region. I have very personal feelings towards this part of the world, as I got to know it so close during the last quarter of a century – first as President of Poland, and then in my numerous official and non-profit activities. The potential and opportunities in this region are immense, despite all the historical and ideological burdens that left deep scars on people and governance.

In today's geopolitically tense environment, we need to look beyond the headlines, and to consider what countries of this region have been through and what is the direction – and pace – of their development. This research, more than any other, encourages us to do so. It asks us to consider what it means to be formerly Soviet, and what it means to become part of the Western world. It explores in depth what "transition" to Western standards is about.

By looking at the post-Soviet, non-Russia region through one lens, this index fills a critical gap, helping us to consider how a shared past can lead to so many variations of the present.

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The research behind this report investigates in depth what are the factors that encourage development and transition, and brings clues how the West can support more accountable, stable, and efficient institutions that can better serve the region's citizens.

When I look at this first edition of the index, I am struck by its usefulness in highlighting key aspects of political, economic and social transformation. Naturally, it puts into the limelight achievements of countries who score well and who have been successful at creating a place for themselves in the Western world. These countries at the top of this index have achieved high standards of living, accountable governments, and have been able to retain national identities even as they integrate with the EU and global markets.

But what is even more important, the index captures significant prospect for improvement among the lower-ranking countries – such as the quickly modernizing Kazakhstan, Belarus with its successful tech sector, Uzbekistan's new government and reforms. It is a witness of the fact that in general the majority of these countries are making progress, even if it is patchy. Another key

feature is an observable "diffusion of experiences" among the countries in the region, which helps to learn from each other's success and mistakes.

At first I was surprised by the absence of Russia in this comparison. The reasons to treat the Russian Federation as a separate entity make a lot of sense; Russia is a country of nearly 150 million people with its own, unique set of objectives, and thus a dissimilar trajectory of development. Unlike the majority of its post-Soviet neighbors, Russia also receives significant research and attention from the international community. As a consequence, this research encourages the "beyond" Russia thinking on the post-Soviet space, a region, in fact, with different dynamics and patterns of development.

Ultimately, this index sheds new light on the future of the post-Soviet region. It does not necessarily answer all core investments questions, but certainly provides clues and thoughtful insights for decision-makers. For members of the international community and leaders within the region, this index is a must-read for considering how to move all the transition markers forward in the coming year.

*Aleksander Kwaśniewski*  
*President of Poland (1995-2005)*





Photo by Alexander Kozachenko

On behalf of StrategEast, I am proud to launch our first annual Westernization Index, which analyzes the degree to which the 14 countries of the post-Soviet, non-Russia (PSNR) region have adopted Western institutional and lifestyle standards since gaining independence.

StrategEast created this research product with two goals in mind. First, we seek to help the nations of the PSNR better address the shared challenges they face in the process of re-building their states and institutions since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Second, we seek to draw attention to an important but geopolitically fragile region in a way that helps the international community better support its development.

The StrategEast Westernization Index is the first of its kind in 3 ways:

- 1. It is the only report to analyze the 14 countries of the Post-Soviet, Non-Russian region (PSNR) as a whole.** Identifying the PSNR as a single region means acknowledging that for all these countries, the post-Soviet transition has not been easy. It also means asking Western powers to tailor their foreign policy approaches with a more complete understanding of the region's unique and shared challenges.
- 2. It measures each country's wholesale integration into the Western world across many sectors.** Other research products tend to measure one specific issue, such as economic inequality or press freedom. We are interested in looking at the whole picture, to see how these countries have handled the transi-

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tion away from the closed, centrally-controlled institutions of the Soviet era and toward the democratic, market-oriented, and accountable institutions of today's world.

**3. It is prepared for the West by experts from the region.** The analysis and methodology are undertaken by local experts in each country. Unlike the reams of research into this region prepared by foreign experts, this is a true product of the region it studies.

Although this is the first year of publication, we believe this research can already offer important findings that could improve international relations with PSNR countries.

For example, this Index shows that of the 5 sectors measured, PSNR countries are typically more successful in pursuing economic transition over other reforms. The level of economic

Westernization averaged 57% across the region, while political and cultural Westernization averaged 50%, and legal Westernization – which includes rule of law, judicial independence, and human rights protections – averaged only 42%. This suggests that economic transition can offer a strong initial point of collaboration between post-Soviet countries and the West, and eventually serve as a bridge to greater collaboration in sectors dealing with legal and political transition.

Perhaps most importantly, the goal of this initial baseline report is not to draw attention to any country's performance or to encourage unfair comparisons, but to spotlight the PSNR and its 14 countries together. It is meant as a starting point for conversation about the region and how it can make further progress towards creating stable, accountable, efficient systems and toward becoming stronger partners with the rest of the world.

*Sincerely,*  
*Anatoly Motkin*  
*Founder and President, StratgeEast*

*Anatoly Motkin*

# INDEX METHODOLOGY

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## HOW THE SCORE IS DETERMINED

Westernization is a process of social change whereby societies adopt Western patterns of political development, legal functioning, economic relations, cultural discourse, and lifestyle. The “Westernization Index” is a tool aimed at measuring the level to which the post-Soviet countries and societies, except the Russian Federation, have adopted, accepted, or were permeated by the Western culture in all the key areas for each country. The Index is based on a series of elements and benchmarks that helped us to assess the adoption and implementation of the Western model by looking at five key areas:

1. Political Westernization.
2. Economic Westernization.
3. Legal Westernization.
4. Language and cultural Westernization.
5. Westernization of lifestyle.

We limited the Index to the five areas we believe are most critical to examine, although we accept that we could have expanded this to include even more areas for even more robust analysis. Each area (which has multiple sub areas) is weighted differently within the Index to capture the relative importance of each sector to the overall Western transition. The weight of each of the first three areas is 25%, the fourth 15%, and the fifth 10%. The maximum possible score is 100%, which represents full Westernization.

The Index is based on two types of analysis which complement each other. First, we rely on qualitative expert assessments provided by our researchers, and second, on quantitative data publically available from open sources. These two methodologies are combined in order to reflect the complete status of Westernization. Our organization partnered with local experts who authored the qualitative assessments, and a local research firm, the New Europe Center, who compiled the data collection.

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In order to ensure that the experts' analysis is consistent across countries, evaluations were given common guidelines and data sources to use in their reports. Based on these guidelines and the combined quantitative and qualitative data, experts assigned scores within each sub-area of a country. These scores were then reviewed in two steps: first by the project coordination team, and then by the third-party expert. The two-tier review is meant to decrease the likelihood of subjectivity and to ensure that the data are comparable.

Scoring was carried out through a multistage process which included analytical contributions from different research teams to make the scoring process balanced. The experts preparing country profiles calculated and suggested preliminary scores according to strict indicators. The proposed points were reviewed and adjusted by two research teams in the New Europe Center and the StrategEast independently. This allowed unbundling of the research and scoring process and calibrating and weighting scores to avoid possible bias of the country experts.

The scoring process is based on the tested methodology used by the Nations in Transit Report on the Freedom House and the Bertelsmann Transformation Index of the Bertelsmann Foundation. The scores reflect the consensus of each section's author, the StrategEast research team, the New Europe Center research team, and the reviewers and academic advisers. In cases when consensus was not reached, the score was decided by the New Europe Center and StrategEast.

The overall process was organized into four phases. First, the data collection and experts' assessment takes place. Second, the data and qualitative analysis are subjected to the two-step review. Third, changes to each country profile are made so that the data and the scores are comparable. Fourth, the data and the assessment are analyzed and compared across all countries and sectors to ensure all trends, similarities, and differentiations are identified.

The Westernization Index was developed by a team of more than 20 people, consisting of the experts from the countries studied and the project management group.

# WESTERNIZATION INDEX SCORING RUBRIC

## POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION, 25 POINTS

### POLITICAL FREEDOM, 10 PTS

High: 8–10 | Mid: 3–7 | Low: 0–2

#### A “High” score (8–10) indicates:

- Free and fair elections
- High levels of media and press freedom
- No restrictions to new political party formation/registration

### PRO–WESTERN PARTIES, 8 PTS

High: 6–8 | Mid: 3–5 | Low: 0–2

#### A “High” score (6–8) indicates:

- Parliamentary parties support European integration
- Parliamentary parties support NATO integration
- Parliamentary parties support trade with Western powers

### WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION, 7 PTS

High: 6–7 | Mid: 3–5 | Low: 0–2

#### A “High” score (6–7) indicates:

- Public opinion polls indicate high support for EU integration
- Public opinion polls indicate high support for NATO
- Public opinion favors strong alliances with Western powers

## LEGAL WESTERNIZATION, 25 POINTS

### COMPLIANCE WITH THE VENICE COMMISSION, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (5–6) indicates:

- High level of compliance with the international standards of the Venice Commission
- Close cooperation and engagement with the Venice Commission and its recommendations

### INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS, 7 PTS

High: 6–7 | Mid: 3–5 | Low: 0–2

#### A “High” score (6–7) indicates:

- A strong, independent judiciary system with little corruption or external pressure from political actors
- A high ranking on the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index

### LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (5–6) indicates:

- Legislation protecting human rights
- Enforcement of legal human rights protections
- Favorable reviews from human rights organizations

### NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (6–7) indicates:

- Judges display a willingness to conflict with prior prosecutions in appropriate situations, rather than simply duplicating indictments



## ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION, 25 POINTS

### EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION, 7 PTS

High: 6–7 | Mid: 3–5 | Low: 0–2

#### A “High” score (6–7) indicates:

- Membership in the European Union
- Membership in the World Trade Organization

### EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (5–6) indicates:

- High ranking on the Doing Business Index
- High ranking on the Corruption Perception Index

### WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (5–6) indicates:

- Major trading partner with Western nations and the EU

### WESTERN INVESTMENTS, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (5–6) indicates:

- Support for Western foreign direct investment (FDI)
- Western FDI contributes a major portion of total FDI

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION, 15 POINTS

### USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE, 2 PTS

High: 2 | Mid: 1 | Low: 0

#### A “High” score (2) indicates:

- The native language uses a Latin script
- English signage is frequently used in public

### PROFICIENCY IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST, 6 PTS

High: 5–6 | Mid: 2–4 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (5–6) indicates:

- A high share of the population can speak and write in one of the most common Western languages (English, French, German, and Spanish)
- Government promotes the study of foreign languages

### WESTERN TV, MOVIES, INTERNET SITES, AND SOCIAL MEDIA, 7 PTS

High: 6–7 | Mid: 3–5 | Low: 0–2

#### A “High” score (6–7) indicates:

- Western TV dominates airtime
- Western movies dominate cinema showings
- Wide use of Western social media channels like Facebook
- Western social media is not blocked by the government

## WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE, 10 POINTS

### SHARE WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES, 5 PTS

High: 4–5 | Mid: 2–3 | Low: 0–1

#### A “High” score (4–5) indicates:

- High share of the population has travelled to the West
- High share traveling abroad for business or education
- High share traveling abroad for vacation

### PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES, 3 PTS

High: 3 | Mid: 1–2 | Low: 0

#### A “High” score (3) indicates:

- Strong presence of Western restaurants and fast-food chains
- Strong presence of Western supermarket chains
- Strong presence of Western clothing brands

### MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMARTPHONE USAGE, 2 PTS

High: 2 | Mid: 1 | Low: 0

#### A “High” score (2) indicates:

A high share of the country has smartphones  
A high share regularly access Internet on their phone

## WHY THIS RESEARCH DOES NOT INCLUDE RUSSIA

While academic and research interest in Russia has always been significant, such interest in other former Soviet states has been limited. The StrategEast Index, by focusing on all post-Soviet countries except Russia, is intended to help generate a more balanced and multi-faceted attention to the region. By excluding Russia, we do not assume that Russia is more or less Westernized than other post-Soviet states and societies. Rather, the objective is to draw attention to all other former Soviet countries and to the development they have undergone since the collapse of the USSR.

## PILOT PROJECT

The Index is a first attempt to conduct an assessment of the former Soviet region from this perspective; thus, methodological shortcomings are inevitable. The goal is not to cover every possible aspect of the Westernization of life in the countries of the former USSR, but rather to analyze major trends and create a propitious foundation for robust and in-depth research in the future. Further, the report aims to create a more informed basis for policy debate regarding how to support the transition of PSNR countries and elevate attention to the region. We encourage readers to use this index with these points in mind.

While writing this report, the research team identified several issues that make it difficult to compare data and trends. These include the following:

### YEAR/PERIOD COVERED BY THE DATA

Certain authors proposed data covering all of 2016; others gave figures for the first half of 2017 or the first quarter of 2017. For example, this inconsistency is quite visible in the data on investments, trade, and other areas that require concrete data. Thus, it should be noted that the report does not provide data for the entirety of 2017 since the data were not yet released at the time of analysis. While the authors focus their analysis primarily on the trends of the last years they also cover effects of the Westernization which were caused by the events happened much earlier (for example, in 1990s).

### THE DATA ON FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) BY ORIGIN

Although the authors refer to the official data provided by statistics offices, this data does not specify when FDI is actually the result of domestic money reinvested through countries with a special fiscal regime such as Cyprus, the Netherlands or Austria. This may explain the high levels of FDI in Ukraine or Moldova.

### LACK OF DATA ON CERTAIN CRITERIA

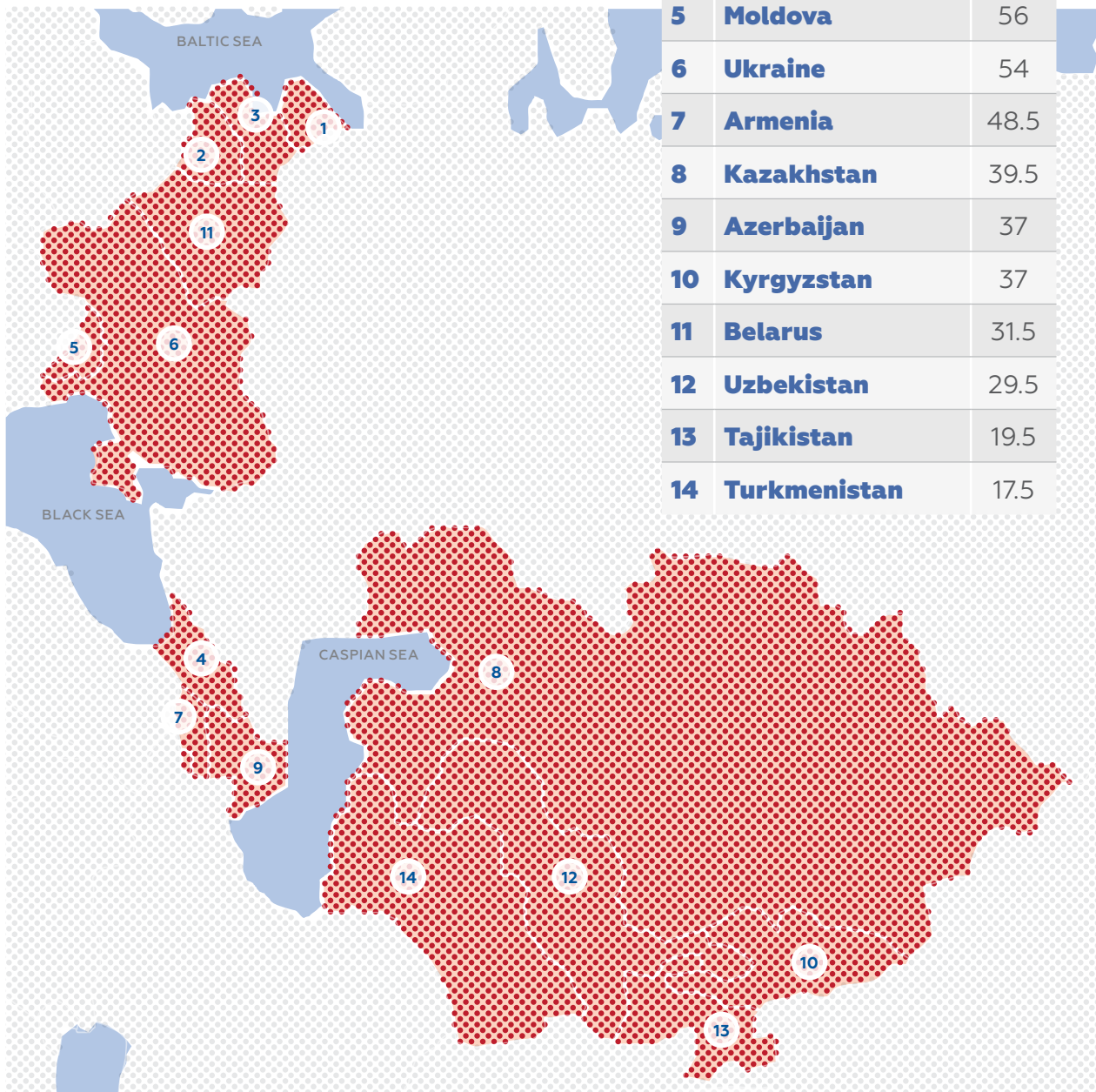
There is no data in certain countries, e.g. Moldova, on knowledge of foreign languages. Therefore, the author for Moldova had to rely on observations and other related trends in the country. Other country experts have found data on foreign language, but these differ by source. For instance, in the case of Belarus

	<p>the data are provided from the country census, while Azerbaijan refers to English Proficiency Index and Lithuania cites the country’s statistic office and the Public Service Language Center.</p>
<p><b>LACK OF DATA FOR ALL COUNTRIES:</b></p>	<p>Some data comes from sources that do not include all 14 of countries of the PSNR. For example, Armenia was not included in the 2016 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index and therefore the author had to cite other data.</p>
<p><b>DIFFERENT PUBLIC OPINION DATA SOURCES</b></p>	<p>We encountered a similar problem when measuring “Western civilization in public opinion.” While all the authors have provided data about their citizens’ attitudes towards the West, this data is derived from different types of surveys. Moreover, the questions are often asked differently from one country to another. As there is no survey that covers the entire PSNR region and uses the same methodology, we had to use the most appropriate source for each country.</p>
<p><b>DATA IS EXPRESSED IN DIFFERENT FORMS</b></p>	<p>In certain cases, the data we collected was reflected in absolute form – for instance the use of social networks in Armenia. In others, the data is expressed in relative terms, as in the case of Azerbaijan’s use of social networks or Belarus’s data on trade.</p>
<p><b>LACK OF EXTERNAL SOURCES</b></p>	<p>Several authors could not cite external sources for data in the entertainment sphere (for example, the number of US or European films in cinemas or on TV). The markets in these countries may be too small to be analyzed by monitoring media/communications companies. In these situations, we chose to rely on the observations made by local authors who are deeply familiar with the situations in their home countries.</p>
	<p>In some rare cases, the authors obtained information from informal discussions with officials but are not able to refer to the data since there was no agreement on citation. Moreover, in some cases it is difficult to cite a source for a certain observation or phenomenon. Countries like Ukraine or Lithuania benefit from various sources of news and a diverse media environment. In the case of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, there are fewer sources that provide reliable data on daily basis.</p>
<p><b>QUANTIFICATION OF TRAVEL TO WESTERN COUNTRIES</b></p>	<p>The production of consistent data on Western travel represents another methodology issue. Considering that a large number of travelers use air transportation, and the majority of them use multiple connecting flights, there is no reliable data regarding travelers’ final destinations. For instance, Kazakhstan’s profile notes that 2 million Kazakhs traveled abroad in Q1 of 2016, but it is impossible to determine post-factum who traveled where and for which reason. Many people from PSNR region travel for work and not necessarily for tourism. Also, if the numbers include multiple trips of the same person, as in the case of Latvia, they can be misleading.</p>

# SUMMARY OF 2018 EDITION

SCORES  
(BASED ON A 1-100 SCALE)

<b>1</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	93
<b>2</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>	85
<b>3</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	82
<b>4</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	62
<b>5</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	56
<b>6</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	54
<b>7</b>	<b>Armenia</b>	48.5
<b>8</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	39.5
<b>9</b>	<b>Azerbaijan</b>	37
<b>10</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	37
<b>11</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	31.5
<b>12</b>	<b>Uzbekistan</b>	29.5
<b>13</b>	<b>Tajikistan</b>	19.5
<b>14</b>	<b>Turkmenistan</b>	17.5



WESTERNIZATION INDEX,  
BY CATEGORY, POINTS

		<b>Political,</b> out of 25	<b>Legal,</b> out of 25	<b>Economic,</b> out of 25	<b>Language and Cultural,</b> out of 15	<b>Lifestyle,</b> out of 10
<b>1</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	23	23	25	13	9
<b>2</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>	22	21	23	11.5	7.5
<b>3</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	19.5	17.5	24	12.5	8.5
<b>4</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	19.5	14	16	8	4.5
<b>5</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	15.5	11.5	16.5	7	5.5
<b>6</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	16	11	14	8	5
<b>7</b>	<b>Armenia</b>	12	12	13	7.5	4
<b>8</b>	<b>Kazakhstan</b>	9	7	14	5.5	4
<b>9</b>	<b>Azerbaijan</b>	8	5.5	12.5	7	4
<b>10</b>	<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	10	10	10.5	4.5	2
<b>11</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	6.5	5.5	9	6.5	4
<b>12</b>	<b>Uzbekistan</b>	7	4	9	6	3.5
<b>13</b>	<b>Tajikistan</b>	4.5	3	6.5	4	1.5
<b>14</b>	<b>Turkmenistan</b>	3.5	3	6	3.5	1.5



# CROSS-COUNTRY ANALYSIS

# 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION

## POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION, POINTS OUT OF 25 POSSIBLE

<b>Estonia</b>	23
<b>Lithuania</b>	22
<b>Georgia</b>	19.5
<b>Latvia</b>	19.5
<b>Ukraine</b>	16
<b>Moldova</b>	15.5
<b>Armenia</b>	12
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	10
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	9
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	8
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	7
<b>Belarus</b>	6.5
<b>Tajikistan</b>	4.5
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	3.5

The PSNR political landscape includes a variety of political systems that differ greatly from each other. As a result, the adoption of a Western political model varies from one country to another. At the same time, there are certain groupings of countries that have adapted in common ways.

The Index shows that four groups of countries can be distinguished:

1. Genuine Pro-Westerners (Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia). These are the countries that have adopted a Western political model. They share an unconditional support for multiparty liberal democracy and are widely viewed as stable, sustainable democracies. These countries are also fully integrated into key Western institutions such as the EU and NATO.
2. Pro-Western façade (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova). These countries declare themselves to have a Western political model while in fact they pursue an "a la carte" approach to adopting reforms needed to meet Western democratic standards.
3. Balancing pragmatists (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan). This group is represented by states that tend to balance their relations between the West and Russia in order to maximize political or economic benefits. The "multi-vector" policy of these countries does not necessarily mean building democratic regimes. On the contrary, in most cases these countries are run by regimes which seek to strengthen their power, often to the detriment of democracy.
4. "Fortress" states (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan). These "fortress" countries are largely closed to the outside world and do not pursue sincere Western modernization. Regimes in these countries try to keep their "fortresses" out of either Western or Russian influence.

It should be noted that despite this list of broad similarities, there are also important differences between countries that have been placed in the same group.

Based on the country profiles presented in this report, one can identify other parallel patterns shared by certain states. For example, those countries which are geographically closer to the European Union (or are part of the EU) enjoy a higher level of political freedom and democracy, the exception being Belarus. The geographic proximity of those countries to the EU have led to an increased mobility of the Ukrainians, Moldovans, and Belarusians, and therefore a higher level of interaction and socialization with the West.

**TABLE 1.1.**  
Degree of political freedom

Estonia	9.5
Lithuania	8.5
Latvia	8
Georgia	7
Kyrgyzstan	6
Moldova	6
Ukraine	6
Armenia	5
Kazakhstan	3
Uzbekistan	3
Belarus	2.5
Azerbaijan	2
Tajikistan	1
Turkmenistan	0.5

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM

The Machiavellian maxim “the ends justify the means” is often the rule that guides most of the post-Soviet states, with the notable exception of the Baltic states. Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia enjoy a high degree of political freedom that is underpinned by their membership in the EU and NATO.

As our analysis moves eastward, the picture starts changing. The group of countries including Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova have built political regimes that are hybrid by their nature. The political elites in these countries are not willing to give up their efforts to control the political life of their countries. At the same time, they seek Western legitimization (especially through the EU), which forces them to be cautious in choosing their instruments of influence. Quite often, those instruments involve rent-seeking practices, corruption or blackmail to accomplish their tasks. However, given their close relations with the West and agreements with the EU, the practices they employ have certain limits. Additionally, the presence of active and relatively powerful civil societies along with decentralized media ownership – or at least partly pluralist media – are eroding their power base. This prevents incumbent leadership from securing full control over the political life. The competing interests and the existence of political opposition create a democracy without democrats. This condition endures because none of the actors are able to gain total control over the political life. This situation is aided by a high degree of influence of Western nations, which uses economic and political tools to ensure that at least the minimum rules for democratic political life are applied.<sup>1</sup>



The countries that have joined the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) – a customs union meant to rival the European Union and to integrate post-Soviet states into a new cohesive economic and political entity<sup>2</sup> – include Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. This group is alike in certain critical ways. Their leaders tend to try to hold onto power for life: President Nazarbayev in Kazakhstan (26 years in office) and President Lukashenko in Belarus (23 years in office) are illustrative examples. Along with Belarus and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan have also made changes to their constitutions to allow for indefinite rule. Two exceptions to this trend are Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. It is not clear, however, how things will develop given the increasing Russian influence in those countries. Further, the 2015 constitutional referendum in Armenia would allow the incumbent president to stay in power after 2018 as Prime Minister.<sup>3</sup>

The 2014 "Revolution of Dignity" in Ukraine, which showed that citizens could force regime change when the government lost popular support, generated fears among certain PSNR governments. Political freedom in countries such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Belarus decreased even more. As noted in the country profiles, the incumbent leaderships in those countries are afraid that a Ukraine scenario could take place in their own countries and consequently strive to prevent any attempts to mobilize protest movements.

Political parties are de jure allowed in all countries of the PSNR; from the legal point of view, they all have multi-party systems. However, de facto, genuine multi-party systems are limited to the Baltic states and to a certain degree in the EU-Associated countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova), Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan. In other countries, the system mimics a multiparty system on paper, while in reality the opposition parties are not able to make it into parliament without the consent of the ruling elite. The "how to pretend you have political opposition" playbooks used in these countries are very similar to one another.

**TABLE 1.2.**  
Pro-Western Parties in the Parliament

Lithuania	7.5
Estonia	7
Georgia	6.5
Latvia	6
Ukraine	6
Moldova	5.5
Armenia	2.5
Azerbaijan	2
Kazakhstan	2
Kyrgyzstan	2
Tajikistan	1.5
Uzbekistan	1.5
Belarus	1
Turkmenistan	1

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT

It is noteworthy that the EU member states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) have marginal forces that are not clearly anti-Western. They are rather Eurosceptic, which in principle means that they do not contest their belonging to Europe, but disagree with the current modus operandi of the system.

The countries with significant pro-Western factions in their parliaments are Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. These countries have confirmed their pro-Western position by ratifying Association Agreements (agreements of deep political cooperation and economic integration) with the EU. However, the pro-Western attitudes are often reflected in rhetoric and not in concrete actions. In these three countries, the self-proclaimed pro-Western parties adopt laws that do not converge with the commitments made to the West. Not all self-proclaimed pro-Western parties are in favor of actually making the reforms needed to become truly Western democracies.

Interestingly, Armenia has been increasingly more vocal in favor of the West, despite being a member of the Russian-headed EAEU. Often, pro-Russian members of the parliament criticize the West and pro-West members criticize Russia.

In the majority of Central Asian parliaments, there are no clear-cut anti-Western positions. This does not mean they are pro-Western, but that factions are either neutral or avoiding public criticism of the West.

## 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION

Even in countries that do not score highly on political Westernization measures, citizens are widely favorable toward Western countries and to the EU. As noted in the country profiles, the EU is more favorably regarded than any other major power, including in countries with authoritarian regimes. Significantly, citizens in Armenia, which is part of the EAEU, increasingly support joining the EU and decreasingly favor membership in the EAEU. Similarly, in Azerbaijan 63% of the population have a positive attitude towards the EU.

**TABLE 1.3.**  
Western civilization in the public opinion

Estonia	6.5
Georgia	6
Lithuania	6
Latvia	5.5
Armenia	4.5
Azerbaijan	4
Kazakhstan	4
Moldova	4
Ukraine	4
Belarus	3
Uzbekistan	2.5
Kyrgyzstan	2
Tajikistan	2
Turkmenistan	2

Other countries, such as Kazakhstan, also regard the EU positively, but mainly from the economic perspective. In Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova the EU is the most respected entity, with the majority of the population willing to have their country join the Union.

Unlike the EU, which is viewed favorably in all PSNR societies, NATO is much more controversial, and often considered a threat. For instance, 30% of the population in Kyrgyzstan view NATO as a threat (19% believe that is a protection), as do 31% in Kazakhstan (versus 25% who perceive NATO as a protection) and 34% in Tajikistan (comparing to 8% thinking oppositely). In some cases, the United States evokes even more negative associations; for example, the USA is seen as a threat by 50% in Kyrgyzstan.

In countries with higher democratic scores, the foreign policy actions of the governments converge to a greater extent with the opinion of the public. That is the case with Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, and also to some extent with Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova.

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION

### LEGAL WESTERNIZATION, POINTS OUT OF 25 POSSIBLE

<b>Estonia</b>	23
<b>Lithuania</b>	21
<b>Latvia</b>	17.5
<b>Georgia</b>	14
<b>Moldova</b>	11.5
<b>Armenia</b>	12
<b>Ukraine</b>	11
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	10
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	7
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	5.5
<b>Belarus</b>	5.5
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	4
<b>Tajikistan</b>	3
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	3

In the legal field, Westernization refers to the adoption of rules and norms that are common to modern liberal democracies of the West, including the standards set by the Venice Commission, basic human rights protections, judicial independence, and acquittal rates.

There is a large gap in levels of legal Westernization in PSNR; for example, Estonia has scored 23 points out of 25 possible, whereas Turkmenistan only 3. The Baltic states are the top performers, while the Central Asian region makes up the group with the lowest rankings. There are, however, some exceptions: for example, Kyrgyzstan scores relatively high despite being geographically farther away from Europe, while Belarus, which is geographically a part of Europe, is close to Central Asian countries in its legal Westernization level. An aspect common to all is that de jure all the countries can be considered Westernized, i.e. most have ratified major international conventions and have passed laws protecting human rights and freedoms. In practice, however, enforcement of these laws is weak, and many countries explain this by stating that they have to take into consideration local traditions (e.g. historical experience or religious dogmas).

#### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION

The European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) plays a major role in ensuring that legislative texts in the PSNR meet democratic standards. It is very important to note that in recent years, constitutional amendments have either been considered or adopted in the majority of PSNR countries. This shows the rather lively and dynamic nature of legal transformational changes: in spite of more than a quarter of a century of independence, PSNR countries are still seeking a better constitutional model.

Of course, constitutional reforms do not always bring legal systems closer to Western democracies, with their balance of power and systems of checks and balances between

**TABLE 2.1.**  
Compliance of the Constitution with  
the Requirements of the Venice Commission

Estonia	6
Lithuania	6
Armenia	5
Latvia	5
Ukraine	5
Moldova	4.5
Kyrgyzstan	4
Georgia	3
Azerbaijan	2
Kazakhstan	2
Belarus	1
Tajikistan	1
Turkmenistan	1
Uzbekistan	1

**TABLE 2.2.**  
Independence of the Courts

Estonia	7
Lithuania	7
Latvia	5
Georgia	4
Belarus	1.5
Moldova	1.5
Ukraine	1.5
Armenia	1
Azerbaijan	1
Kazakhstan	1
Kyrgyzstan	0.5
Tajikistan	0.5
Turkmenistan	0.5
Uzbekistan	0.5

the branches of the government. One could identify several general approaches toward building relationships with the Venice Commission. The first group of countries completely – or mostly – heeds the Commission's recommendations (for example, Estonia, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Latvia). The second group cooperates with the Commission, sends in inquiries, but does not implement the recommendations (Azerbaijan in particular). The third group either does not cooperate with the Venice Commission at all, or does so selectively (for example, Tajikistan has asked for recommendations several times but not in regards to constitutional changes which would increase the presidential powers).

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS

Most of these countries do not have independent courts, and judges are often influenced by external pressure from the government. The high level of public distrust of the courts has to do with bribery – corruption is a common denominator of the justice system workers across the PSNR.

To some degree, this is an ironic consequence of Westernization, as the establishment of free market systems led in many places to monetization of societal relations. In place of the non-monetary interaction of the past ("being connected" or "having an in") that was in place in the Soviet times and worked using the simple principle of "quid pro quo," came a monetized form of corruption. For example, Ukraine has been shaken up by dozens of major scandals involving judges caught in embezzlement. The public trust of the judicial branch in Ukraine is pitiful – only around 6%.<sup>4</sup> At the same time Estonia is an example of judicial propriety: all world ratings studying the independence of the judicial branch (Freedom House, the Economist, etc.) list the country in leading positions; it can favorably compete with any country of the West, let alone the former Soviet states. In total, just four of the 14 countries demonstrated a high or average level of the judicial independence: among them is the traditional trio of the Baltic states (Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia), as well as Georgia.

**TABLE 2.3.**  
Legislation in the Area of Human Rights

Georgia	5
Estonia	5
Latvia	5
Lithuania	5
Armenia	4
Kyrgyzstan	3.5
Moldova	3.5
Ukraine	3.5
Kazakhstan	3
Azerbaijan	2
Belarus	2
Uzbekistan	2
Tajikistan	1
Turkmenistan	1

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS

It is characteristic of all PSNR countries to profess the protection of human rights, but just a few of them follow the letter and the spirit of the law in practice. "The state is accountable to every citizen and provides for the creation of conditions for the free development of personality, protects the life, honor, dignity, freedom, personal security, natural and unalienable rights of the citizens," is a quote from the constitution of a country which has one of the lowest Legal Westernization scores, Turkmenistan. International human rights organizations regularly criticize the majority of PSNR countries for violating human rights. A short list of human rights violations experienced by citizens of many PSNR countries includes use of torture by law enforcement agencies, politically motivated prosecution in court, persecution of non-governmental organizations, and excessive use of pretrial detention. None of the countries could claim the maximum six points in this category.

However, the degree of human rights violations in different countries is very different. For example, in Estonia, Human Rights Watch has noted problems stemming from the lack of a conclusive solution to protecting LGBT rights. In 2016 the country adopted the "Cohabitation Act," which allows for the registration of same-sex civil unions; however, it has not yet been implemented. In other PSNR countries this issue did not move anywhere beyond the protection of sexual minorities' labor rights (for example, such protection is provided for by the labor codes of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova – countries which have adopted the necessary norms as part of their preparation for visa-free travel to the EU states). In the majority of PSNR countries, protecting sexual minorities' rights is extremely unpopular.

**TABLE 2.4.**  
The Number of Acquittals

Estonia	5
Lithuania	3
Latvia	2.5
Armenia	2
Georgia	2
Kyrgyzstan	2
Moldova	2
Belarus	1
Kazakhstan	1
Ukraine	1
Azerbaijan	0.5
Tajikistan	0.5
Turkmenistan	0.5
Uzbekistan	0.5

## 2.4. THE NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS

In the majority of PSNR countries there is a problem with a low number of acquittals. The Western governments quite often criticize PSNR for lack of positive changes in this regard; the level of acquittals in majority of the states has not changed significantly since the Soviet era.

Very often judges duplicate indictments. Among the reasons named by observers are the judges' unwillingness to conflict with the prosecution. Thanks to reforms, in some countries the rate of acquittals has grown, although from very low rates (often around 1%). That is, for example, what happened in Armenia, where the acquittal rate has risen to 5%. For comparison, in Belarus that number is at 0.2%.<sup>5</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION

### ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION, POINTS OUT OF 25 POSSIBLE

<b>Estonia</b>	25
<b>Lithuania</b>	23
<b>Latvia</b>	24
<b>Moldova</b>	16.5
<b>Georgia</b>	16
<b>Ukraine</b>	14
<b>Armenia</b>	13
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	14
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	12.5
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	10.5
<b>Belarus</b>	9
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	9
<b>Tajikistan</b>	6.5
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	6

Economic Westernization follows expected patterns, with the EU Members being the most Westernized, and Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan the least. The business climate in the region is extremely diverse: from Estonia, one of the top 6 countries in the world in the Index of Economic Freedom, to Turkmenistan, ranking 174<sup>th</sup> out of 178 countries in the same rating. Corruption is also widespread, although all except the Baltic countries, Georgia, and Belarus fall outside the top 100 countries in the Corruption Perception Index. It is noteworthy that of the Central Asian countries the most Westernized is Kazakhstan, while Belarus, despite its geographical proximity to the EU, is the fourth least-Westernized, only ceding to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.

Economic Westernization scores fall into similar categories as Political Westernization scores, indicating that Westernization takes place fairly consistently across political and economic institutions. However, the individual country analyses also offer some interesting and sometimes unexpected nuances: for example, despite topping the lists of business-friendly countries, Georgia's biggest investments do not come from the West; and Ukraine's political association with the EU does not automatically mean it has a good business climate.

#### 3.1 EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION

In terms of membership or association with the EU and the WTO, PSNR countries fall into distinct clusters. Expectedly, the leaders in this group are the Baltic states, which are members of both the EU and the WTO. They are followed by the trio of the "European aspirants" – Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia – which have all signed the Association Agreements, hoping this will lead to preferential trade regimes (Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, or DCFTA) with the EU. These countries are also WTO members. The third cluster includes Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, which are WTO members and also benefit from the EU Generalized Scheme of Preferences for exports to the EU, a less ambitious scheme than DCFTA.



**TABLE 3.1.**  
EU and WTO Membership or Association

Estonia	7
Latvia	7
Lithuania	7
Georgia	4.5
Moldova	4.5
Ukraine	4.5
Armenia	3
Kyrgyzstan	3
Tajikistan	3
Azerbaijan	2
Kazakhstan	2
Turkmenistan	2
Uzbekistan	2
Belarus	1

**TABLE 3.2.**  
Ease and Transparency of Doing Business

Estonia	6
Georgia	5.5
Latvia	5
Lithuania	5
Armenia	4
Azerbaijan	4
Belarus	4
Kazakhstan	4
Moldova	4
Kyrgyzstan	3
Ukraine	3
Uzbekistan	3
Tajikistan	1
Turkmenistan	1

Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan lag behind. They are not members of the WTO, and their trade relations with the EU are regulated by general agreements (the last two also benefit from GSP). Finally, Belarus completes the lineup, not being a WTO member and not having signed even a general agreement with the EU. However, for nominally being an EU Eastern Partnership policy participant, Belarus scored 1, not 0.

### 3.2 EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS

In terms of business climate, the EU Member States trio (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) is joined by Georgia, which even outscored Latvia and Lithuania in the Doing Business Index and ranked 44<sup>th</sup> in the Corruption Perception Index, tying with Latvia. In the "European aspirants" cluster, Georgia is the clear leader in providing favorable business conditions, having implemented the highest number of business regulation reforms since 2003.<sup>6</sup>

Kazakhstan, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, and Azerbaijan belong to the "moderate" camp, ranking among the top 40 business-friendly countries according to the Doing Business ratings. This underscores that authoritarian political regimes do not necessarily equal bad business conditions, with such authoritarian states as Kazakhstan and Belarus easily outscoring Ukraine, which has an Association Agreement with the EU and is a WTO member. These countries, with the exception of Moldova, have also consecutively (and successfully) improved their Doing Business score over the recent years, having undertaken a number of business-friendly reforms.

Finally, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine rank in the middle of the Doing Business list and are also strangled by corruption. As mentioned above, despite its pro-Western political course, Ukraine finds itself in the unusual company of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan when it comes to doing business. Tajikistan and Turkmenistan lag far behind, with Turkmenistan being among the worst countries anywhere in the world for doing business.

**TABLE 3.3.**  
Western Share in the Sales of Goods

Estonia	6
Latvia	6
Lithuania	5
Azerbaijan	4.5
Moldova	4.5
Ukraine	3.5
Georgia	3
Kazakhstan	3
Kyrgyzstan	3
Armenia	2
Belarus	2
Uzbekistan	2
Turkmenistan	1.5
Tajikistan	0.5

### 3.3 WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS

Most of these countries do more trade with the EU and European countries than non-European Western countries like the US or Canada. Expectedly, Estonia and Latvia top the list, with roughly 80% of their trade taking place with the EU. Lithuania is slightly behind, with approximately 70% of trade taking place with the EU and Russia as its second major trade partner.

For Moldova, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, the EU is the major trading partner. The EU is responsible for roughly 60% of Moldova's total volume of trade and about 40% in Kazakhstan and Ukraine. However, this group also includes "resource" exporters who build up their export positions with raw energy resources. Azerbaijan's and Kazakhstan's exports to the EU are primarily energy resources (oil and gas). Kyrgyzstan's economy is also relatively Westernized thanks to its gold exports to Switzerland (42% of its exports overall), while only 5% of its trade is with the EU. However, one might question whether these countries' economies are Westernized through energy resources exports or, rather, whether the EU's economy is "Asianized" thanks to its energy dependence on these countries.

Georgia, Armenia, Belarus, and Uzbekistan constitute a Russia-oriented trade cluster, with Russia or other countries of the region surpassing the EU in terms of international trade, but with the West still making some 20–30% of their total trade volume.

Finally, Turkmenistan's and Tajikistan's trade structures are the least West-oriented, with the EU accounting for as little as 2–3% of Tajikistan's total international trade.

### 3.4 WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY

In terms of Western investments into the economies of the studied countries, the patterns of investment vary depending on the origin of the investment funds. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania top the list again, with Western

**TABLE 3.4.**  
Western Investments into the  
Country's Economy

Estonia	6
Latvia	6
Lithuania	6
Kazakhstan	5
Armenia	4
Moldova	3.5
Georgia	3
Ukraine	3
Azerbaijan	2
Belarus	2
Tajikistan	2
Uzbekistan	2
Kyrgyzstan	1.5
Turkmenistan	1.5

investment amounting to as much as 80% of foreign direct investment (FDI). They are followed by Armenia, Moldova, and Ukraine, where the EU and the US contribute more to FDI; however, at least some of this money is from domestic businesses reinvested through countries with a special fiscal policy such as Cyprus or Netherlands. In Georgia and Belarus, Western investment only makes up a third or a quarter of FDI; however, the bigger share of FDI comes from other countries like Russia, Turkey, or Azerbaijan. Finally, the resource-rich countries (Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan) receive investments from a number of countries, out of which Western FDI constitutes a relatively small share.

The actual FDI numbers show that a country's size does not necessarily correlate with its FDI. For example, Latvia received \$15.1 billion (€13.5 billion) of FDI in 2016, while Azerbaijan received \$5.4 billion in the same year. Ukraine's FDI peaked in 2013 with \$4.5 billion. Rather than size, it seems transparent rules of the game and investment opportunities are key factors in FDI.

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION

### LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION, POINTS OUT OF 15 POSSIBLE

<b>Estonia</b>	13
<b>Latvia</b>	12.5
<b>Lithuania</b>	11.5
<b>Georgia</b>	8
<b>Ukraine</b>	8
<b>Armenia</b>	7.5
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	7
<b>Moldova</b>	7
<b>Belarus</b>	6.5
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	6
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	5.5
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	4.5
<b>Tajikistan</b>	4
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	3.5

Russia maintains a significant cultural influence in the vast majority of the PSNR, although today it is having to compete not only with Western products, but also Turkish ones. Russian TV and social networks are the primary instruments of this influence. Still, individual countries' desires to reduce the amount of Russian-language content does not necessarily lead to the corresponding increase of Western content.

More often, countries try to expand broadcasting of locally-produced movies, TV series, and programs. It should be noted that the differences between the various countries' language and cultural Westernization take their root not only in their geographic location and geopolitical orientation, but also in the differences between their political systems. In authoritarian countries, the leadership strives to restrict the influence of Western information and cultural products, viewing them as a threat to political stability and often also personal identity.

The highest rankings in this area are achieved by the EU member countries (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), followed with a tie by Ukraine and Georgia. However, Moldova, despite its efforts to integrate into the European community, was outscored by Armenia. The latter can be grouped with countries that are generally open to Western cultural influence but do not accept it as the primary source of influence.

Citizens of Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan watch Western movies and use Western social networks, but Western products rank second or even third. The lowest scores belong to countries that limit access to Western information sources and cultural products – Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Leadership of those countries blocks their citizens' access to Internet resources, and both Russian and Western social networks fall within the restrictions.

**TABLE 4.1.**

Use of the Latin Alphabet in the Native Language

Azerbaijan	2
Estonia	2
Latvia	2
Lithuania	2
Moldova	2
Uzbekistan	2
Turkmenistan	2
Armenia	1
Belarus	1
Georgia	1
Kazakhstan	1
Ukraine	1
Kyrgyzstan	0.5
Tajikistan	0.5

**TABLE 4.2.**

Proportion of the Population Proficient in the Most Common Languages of the West (English, French, German, and Spanish)

Latvia	5
Estonia	4.5
Lithuania	3.5
Armenia	2
Georgia	2
Moldova	2
Ukraine	2
Uzbekistan	2
Azerbaijan	1.5
Belarus	1.5
Kazakhstan	1.5
Kyrgyzstan	1
Turkmenistan	1
Tajikistan	0.5

#### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE

The highest scores in this group belong to those countries where Latin is the primary alphabet for the native language: Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In 2017, Kazakhstan initiated the process of gradually converting the Kazakh language to the Latin alphabet.

It should be noted that the conversion to Latin script does not always correlate with overall Westernization. Having gained their independence, a number of Central Asian countries made the decision to do away with the Cyrillic alphabet within the framework of national reconstruction and abolishing Soviet traditions. In Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia, and Belarus – where the Cyrillic or local alphabets are used – Latin script and English words are broadly used by the general public, for instance in names of street signs, products, and websites.

#### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, AND SPANISH)

Countries with the best knowledge of the English language are the Baltic States – with Latvia in the lead, closely followed by Estonia, and Lithuania in third place. According to surveys, at least half of the Baltic nations' populations are proficient in English or German, and among the young people the number is growing each year. Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine received equal scores. The leadership of those countries supports and promotes the study of foreign languages – above all English – as an important part of the European integration effort. In the countries of Central Asia, the level of English language knowledge (or of other major Western languages) remains low. Here English competes with Turkish and Chinese, and in Tajikistan the primary foreign language is Russian. Within Central Asia, only Kazakhstan's government openly promotes and supports the study of English.

**TABLE 4.3.**

Share of Western Products in the Nation's Movie Theaters and on TV Channels; Share of Western Internet Sites and Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter)

Estonia	6.5
Lithuania	6
Latvia	5.5
Georgia	5
Ukraine	5
Armenia	4.5
Belarus	4
Azerbaijan	3.5
Kazakhstan	3
Kyrgyzstan	3
Moldova	3
Tajikistan	3
Uzbekistan	2
Turkmenistan	0.5

#### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS; SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, AND TWITTER)

Western TV and movie products dominate in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. As EU members, these countries must ensure that at least 51% of the media content (excluding news, sports competitions, games, commercials, and teleshopping) contains European audiovisual products. The Internet in the Baltic nations is openly accessible to the public, and Facebook is the most popular social network, with the Russian networks (VKontakte and Odnoklassniki) trailing it by a large margin.

In those countries which have expressed European aspirations – Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia – Russia has become less culturally influential as Europe has become more. Ukraine has adopted a number of resolutions in the past several years to limit the informational and cultural influence of Russia (banning specific movies, blocking TV channels and social networks). This did not result in the rapid growth of Western content, but rather led to the revival of the domestic Ukrainian cinema and television production. In Moldova, Russian TV and movies remain highly popular, and Russian TV channels maintain the highest ratings. Discussions about introducing certain restrictions – such as mandatory dubbing of Russian-language movies – have not yielded results yet. A significant portion of Internet users in all three countries prefer Russian networks – including Ukraine, where they have been blocked. Facebook leads by popularity in Georgia and Ukraine, and holds the second place (after Odnoklassniki) in Moldova.

In Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, Russian movies and TV series strongly compete with Hollywood productions – especially on broadcast TV. Moreover, Western movies are shown dubbed into the Russian language. Russian TV channels are among those with the highest ratings, and Internet users prefer Russian social networks (VKontakte and Od-

noklassniki), while Facebook is used less frequently. A notable exception is Azerbaijan, where Turkish movies and TV products lead, and Facebook is the most popular social network (more than a quarter of the country's population). In Armenia, Facebook is also the most popular social network. However, its lead on Odnoklassniki is rather insignificant. Its movie theaters, meanwhile, are mostly showing Hollywood films.

The lowest-scoring countries are Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. In Turkmenistan, television channels serve a propaganda function, broadcasting documentaries and cultural performances praising the president. Access to satellite television is limited. In Tajikistan, the situation is substantially better: a fair number of Hollywood movies are shown in movie theaters, although authorities fairly frequently block major Internet sites. At the same time, YouTube is one of the most visited Internet sites in Tajikistan, while the social media leader is the Russian Odnoklassniki. The latter is also the most popular social network in Uzbekistan, with another Russian network – VKontakte – in second place.

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE

### WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE

POINTS OUT OF 10 POSSIBLE

<b>Estonia</b>	9
<b>Latvia</b>	8.5
<b>Lithuania</b>	7.5
<b>Moldova</b>	5.5
<b>Ukraine</b>	5
<b>Georgia</b>	4.5
<b>Armenia</b>	4
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	4
<b>Belarus</b>	4
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	4
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	3.5
<b>Kyrgyzstan</b>	2
<b>Tajikistan</b>	1.5
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	1.5

The Western lifestyle permeates the fourteen post-Soviet states in completely different ways. Estonians on average have the most Western lifestyle, while Turkmenistan is the most isolated and least Western of the studied countries.

#### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES

In almost all countries where data was available, there appears to be increasing numbers of visits abroad. However, reasons for those visits vary, as do the destinations. For example, in countries like Tajikistan, there is a constant flow of people who go to work abroad to Russia (almost 98% of Tajiks working abroad are in Russia).<sup>7</sup> Turkmenistan, which in 2004 did away with exit visas, nevertheless still maintains an unpublished black list of the country's citizens who are banned from leaving the country.

The percentage of citizens traveling abroad for work is also high in those countries where quality of life is much higher – including countries that are EU members. In those cases, it is not survival at stake, but rather the opportunity to find better paying jobs thanks to the newly available job marketplace in the EU. First and foremost, this involves Lithuania, where Britain is the most popular destination for working migrants.<sup>8</sup>

After Romania became an EU member, the number of foreign travelers from Moldova rapidly increased, since many citizens of Moldova also have Romanian citizenship and therefore also gained the right to work in the EU. In Italy, there are approximately 300,000 Moldovans – approximately 10% of Moldova's total population.<sup>9</sup>

Around 1.5 million migrant workers from Ukraine are currently in Poland as a result of Polish policies favorable to Ukrainians (to replace almost a million Polish citizens who left to work in the UK).<sup>10</sup> Countries with visa-free travel agreements with the EU – Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia – have seen



**TABLE 5.1.**  
Percentage of the Population Who Have  
Visited Western Countries

Estonia	4.5
Latvia	4
Lithuania	4
Moldova	3
Ukraine	2.5
Armenia	2
Belarus	2
Georgia	2
Kazakhstan	1.5
Azerbaijan	1
Kyrgyzstan	1
Uzbekistan	1
Tajikistan	0.5
Turkmenistan	0.5

an increase in foreign travel to EU countries. In the six months since Georgia’s citizens have stopped needing a visa to travel to the EU, requests for European destinations at Georgian travel agencies has grown by 30–40%.<sup>11</sup>

More illustrative statistics account for the number of PSNR citizens who have never left their countries. In spite of its geographic location, 69% of Ukraine’s citizens have never crossed the country’s borders (prior to the 2014 Revolution of Dignity, that number was 77%).<sup>12</sup> Although Belarus is among the top seven countries with the largest number of Schengen visas issued, 59% of Belarusians have not left their country at all over the past three years.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, 3.5 million visits abroad originated in Estonia – considering the country has a population of 1.5 million people, this is more than one trip abroad per year per person.<sup>14</sup>

Some countries display a trend towards foreign travel for the purpose of education. What’s fascinating, some Central Asian countries – in particular Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – have special governmental (presidential) programs under which young people can receive scholarships to study at foreign educational institutions. For example, in Kazakhstan more than 12,000 students have studied abroad under the presidential program called “Bolashak” (“The Future”), which was launched in 1993. In Poland the majority of foreign students are from Ukraine. At the end of September 2015, 30,600 students from Ukraine were registered in Polish universities, an increase of 30% from 2014.<sup>15</sup>

Across PSNR countries, Turkey, Egypt, and Greece remain popular vacation destinations. Europe remains a popular destination both for migrant workers and tourists from the Baltic states and the Eastern Partnership’s “associated countries” (Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia), while Russia remains a popular migrant worker destination for many former Soviet republics (except the Baltic states), more so for Central Asian countries. In 2016, 22.4% of foreign citizens who entered the Russian Federation indicated the purpose of their visit as “work” (most of them were citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine).<sup>16</sup> However, the real figure might be much higher, since it doesn’t include people working illegally.

**TABLE 5.2.**  
Presence of Western Franchise Companies

Estonia	2.5
Latvia	2.5
Azerbaijan	1.5
Georgia	1.5
Lithuania	1.5
Ukraine	1.5
Uzbekistan	1.5
Armenia	1
Belarus	1
Kazakhstan	1
Moldova	1
Kyrgyzstan	0.5
Tajikistan	0.5
Turkmenistan	0.5

## 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES

Perhaps the only thing that is common to almost all the countries of the PSNR is the presence of fast-food chains McDonald's and KFC. The presence of Starbucks in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan is rather surprising, considering it has yet to open a store in either Ukraine or Estonia.

Other franchises have different presences in different countries. The supermarket chains Metro Cash & Carry and Auchan are present in some countries, and Carrefour in others. In many countries, local grocery chains are popular, whereas in Azerbaijan the most popular stores are Turkish. The same can be said about restaurant chains.

The presence of major Western hotel chains also varies across the region. Some countries have Hyatt and Hilton, where others have Marriott, Best Western, and Radisson. In Turkmenistan, there is only one foreign hotel – the Ashkhabad Sheraton.

Clothing brands have been rapidly entering the post-Soviet marketplace. Zara has opened stores in several countries (including its first in Belarus in 2017). However, Western athletic brands (e.g. Adidas, Puma, New Balance, Nike) remain popular throughout the region.

The general impression is that when calculating their entrance into a particular market, Western franchises differentiate not just regions, but also countries of the former Soviet Union, and apparently neither the quality of life, nor the purchasing power are entirely deciding factors.

**TABLE 5.3.**  
Mobile Internet Coverage,  
Smartphone Usage

Estonia	2
Latvia	2
Lithuania	2
Azerbaijan	1.5
Kazakhstan	1.5
Moldova	1.5
Armenia	1
Belarus	1
Georgia	1
Ukraine	1
Uzbekistan	1
Kyrgyzstan	0.5
Tajikistan	0.5
Turkmenistan	0.5

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMARTPHONE USAGE

At the present moment, the number of Internet users in PSNR countries varies drastically – from 15% in Turkmenistan<sup>17</sup> and 18.7% in Tajikistan<sup>18</sup> to more than 90% in Estonia<sup>19</sup>. In the majority of PSNR countries the number of Internet users ranges from about half of the population (Ukraine and Uzbekistan) to 70% (Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan).

It is noteworthy that when it comes to smartphone usage, the leader among former Soviet countries is Kazakhstan, with 65% of the population using smartphones.<sup>20</sup>

Another noteworthy characteristic of many PSNR countries is that the number of mobile users often exceeds a country's population – for example by 9% in Tajikistan. In Azerbaijan, there are 110 mobile phones per 100 people; however, the number of smartphone users is no more than 4 million people – less than half of the country's population. This has to do with many subscribers using multiple SIM cards from different mobile providers.



# WESTERNIZATION INDEX OF POST-SOVIET STATES

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
		12/25	12/25	13/25	7.5/15

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 12/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 5/10

The Freedom House’s 2017 “Freedom in the World” report assesses 195 countries and Armenia was ranked in the bottom half among the “partly free” nations. Armenia ranked higher in the area of political rights than in civil liberties.<sup>21</sup> The same report concluded that the Armenian media is “not free” (also ranking in the bottom half), but the Internet is “free.” However, media freedom in the country is viewed somewhat differently by “Reporters Without Borders.” According to their report published in October 2017, the Armenian media is “partly free,” and of the 180 assessed countries, Armenia placed 79<sup>th</sup> in the category (fifth among the PSNR republics, behind the three Baltic states and Georgia).<sup>22</sup>

In December 2015, Armenia held a referendum to amend their Constitution. As a result, the country is being transformed from a semi-presidential republic into a parliamentary one. The European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) gave a generally positive review of the proposed amendments, although its representatives repeatedly noted that the reforms must be conducted with the public’s agreement. A significant number of individuals in the opposition

and the civil society did not support the proposal, claiming that strengthening the democratic foundations of the state is not the referendum’s primary goal, instead it focuses on the reproduction of power. The referendum was also criticized for multiple violations for various reasons but primarily because international observers were not invited to the referendum, and only four invited OSCE experts reported on it.

In April 2017, parliamentary elections took place in the Republic of Armenia in accordance with the amended Constitution and the new Elections Code. For the first time in the “third republic’s” history, parliamentary elections were conducted exclusively using the proportional system. To make the election efficient, the government used technical measures such as fingerprint scanners and video surveillance at polling places that were purchased with the financial support of the European Union, the USA, and a number of other Western countries. During the pre-election campaign, every party and bloc was offered equal access to time on television which remains the primary source of information for approximately 80% of the population. International observers concluded that

the administration and process of the elections mostly complied with fundamental freedoms. At the same time, the reporters noted that the actual procedures of voting and determining the results were difficult. Local observers recorded numerous instances of lobbying and voters were pressured while being subjected to various forms of pressure and bribery from political parties.<sup>23</sup> Instances of votes-buying during the parliamentary elections in Armenia were mostly the consequence of the so-called "territorial lists" which had

inherited all the drawbacks of the majority system and therefore offset the positive effects from the conversion to a 100% proportional system.

As a result of the parliamentary elections, four parties have received seats in the country's National Assembly (in 2012, it was six parties). Overall, in 2003, after the re-registration provided for by the amended legislation, 49 of 114 political parties continued functioning in Armenia, and 32 more have been formed in the recent years.

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 2.5/8

The incumbent Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) was even more victorious in the most recent elections (2017) than during the previous parliamentary elections of 2012. However, in spite of gaining the majority of seats in the National Assembly and differences in ideology, RPA choose to preserve its coalition with the Armenian Revolutionary Federation ("Dashnaksutyun"). On the one hand, RPA proclaims its alignment with Europe's conservative political circles and takes an active part in the work of the European People's Party in the status of an observer; on the other hand, the party voices its support for the continuous strengthening of relations with Russia and broadening Armenia's cooperation

with its Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) partners. Dashnaksutyun coalition party and Prosperous Armenia Party (second by the number of parliamentary seats) mostly support RPA's foreign policy priorities, but in certain situations they frequently speak out in favor of Russia. The only pro-Western party in the Armenian National Assembly is the Way Out Alliance, which was formed as a result of the merger of the Civil Contract and Bright Armenia parties prior to the elections. Deputies of Way Out, speaking in favor of seceding from the EAEU and restarting the talks on association with the European Union, the party still holds nine of the 105 seats in the Armenian National Assembly.<sup>24</sup>

## 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 4.5/7

According to research conducted by APR Group and the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly office in Vanadzor, Armenia, significant changes took place in the Armenian public opinion between 2014 and 2016. The percentage of citizens speaking in favor of membership in the EU has increased from 25% in 2014 to 42% in 2016, while the number of

those in favor of membership in the EAEU has decreased from 38% to 25%. The remaining people polled were divided equally into those who spoke in favor of membership in both organizations and those against the membership in both. The current continuation of this trend is supported by a sociological study conducted in 2017 by the An-

alytical Centre on Globalization and Regional Cooperation: 78% of those polled had a negative reaction to Armenia's refusal to sign the Association agreement with the EU, 88.6% reacted positively to the idea of rekindling the relationship with the European Union, 58% supported membership in the organization, 50.67% were certain that joining the EAEU had a negative effect on the country and only 15.78% believed that membership in the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) provided for the country's security. Simultaneously, 61.6% of the people surveyed spoke in favor of Armenia joining the NATO in the future.

A number of factors resulted in Armenians changing their minds. First of all, the mass supply of Russian armaments to Azerbaijan, the weapons were used heavily during the Karabakh conflict,

including the Four Day war in April 2016. In addition, Moscow's initiatives to resolve the issues in Armenian-Azerbaijani relations were met with fierce public opposition, since those measures were seen as means of pressuring Armenia into unilateral concessions and consequently luring Azerbaijan into the Eurasian organizations. Moreover, the Armenian population did not feel any positive changes that had been promised in the framework of Armenia joining the Eurasian Economic Union. In addition, during this period, Russian companies took over the Armenian utilities market and the costs to the population went up across the board. Another extremely negative reaction was caused by the murder of a family of six by a Russian service member stationed at a military base in Armenia. The murder took place in the city of Gyumri and Russian refused to hand him over to Armenia.<sup>25</sup>

## 2 | **LEGAL WESTERNIZATION** 12/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 5/6

The amendments to the Armenian Constitution in 2005, as well as in 2015, were performed in close collaboration with and considering the recommendations of the Venice Commission. The Commission gave high marks to the set of proposals approved by the Parliament of Armenia, stating that the proposal "complied with the international

standards of democracy." At the same time, many representatives of the civil society repeatedly noted that the Venice Commission's evaluations of the proposed amendments to the Armenian constitution in both 2005 and 2015 did not fully take into consideration the specifics and realities of the social and political situation in the country.<sup>26</sup>

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 1/7

Armenia was not included in the 2016 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, which makes it difficult to compare the degree of courts' independence in Armenia with other countries. A report published by GRECO (Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption) states that the Armenian judicial system is especially susceptible to corruption. In particular, the system suffers from a deficit of independence and an insufficiently clear separation of powers. The existing system of appointment, promotion, and termination of judges and prosecutors, as well the disciplinary procedures currently in place, are all in need of improvement. Among

the problems is continuous unfairness which is expressed through the "telephone right," conflict of interest, and judge immunity. In April 2017, Armenia was supposed to report on its performance according to GRECO recommendations but according to the Council of Europe, in September 2017, Armenia only performed 43% of the recommendations.<sup>27</sup> The Eastern Partnership's European Integration Index, carried out by a group of Eastern Partnership's Civil Society Forum experts, also spoke of the insufficiency of measures to ensure independence of judges and overcome corruption in the Armenian legal-judicial system.

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 4/6

Armenia is a part of the fundamental international conventions in the area of human rights. While Armenia was preparing to join the Council of Europe in 2001 and in the subsequent years when intensive monitoring of Armenia's performance of its obligations was carried out, the country adopted a series of relevant laws at the national level. A new phase of improving the legislation was entered between 2011 to 2013, during the course of talks with the EU on the Association Agreement but that was subsequently put on hold due to

manipulation of the public opinion and propaganda – both from within the country and from abroad – against the falsely interpreted "European values," a civil opposition was engineered in order to resist the proposed laws "On the provision of equal rights and opportunities to men and women" and "On the prevention of domestic violence and protection of domestic violence victims."<sup>28</sup> As a result, the adoption of those laws, which was an important condition for strengthening the relationships with the European Union has dragged on.

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 2/6

Of the 3,764 verdicts issued by Armenian courts in 2016, 140 persons were fully acquitted and 47 partially acquitted, applying a total of 160 relevant laws. The percentage of acquitted people has gone up from approximately 1% to 5% in a period

of only 5–6 years. This trend is directly related to the cooperation of Armenia within the framework of various joint programs with the European Union, such participation in GRECO, and so on.



## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 13/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 3/7

Armenia joined the WTO in 2003 and the membership in the organization allowed the country to effectively conduct talks on Association with the EU between 2011–2013, including the agreement on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. However, the refusal to further integrate with the European Union and joining the EAEU has created problems for Armenia’s development of trade relations with many countries. For example, WTO announced sanctions against Armenia, which was the result of disagreements between

tariff responsibilities with that organization and the Eurasian Economic Union’s framework. To some degree, Armenia was compensated for not joining the EU Free Trade Area by being provided with the Generalized Scheme of Preferences GSP+ status which started in 2008. As a result, Armenia does not pay duties for goods exported to the European Union on 6,200 tariff lines and in 2016, this impacted 94% of the EU imports from Armenia, and the Armenian exporters saved €8.7 million that year.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 4/6

In recent years, Armenia has constantly been among the top-ranking PSNR republics in the “Doing Business” category.<sup>29</sup> However, in 2017 it dropped eight positions in comparison with the previous year and ended up in the 47<sup>th</sup> place. The main reason Armenia’s status has declined

is due to the application of laws regarding joint ventures in areas dealing with their management, including the lack of gender diversity. Rights and interests of investors are also insufficiently protected, and measures (including legal) are needed to ensure the transparency of ownership.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 2/6

Out of the total exports (\$1.78 billion) in 2016, 26.9% (\$478.8 million) went to EU countries and 2.2% (\$38.8 million) to the USA. Out of the total imports (\$3.29 billion), 24.0% (\$791.0 million) were from the countries of the European Union and

2.2% (\$73.3 million) from the USA<sup>30</sup>. After joining the EAEU, the scale has been gradually shifting in favor of Russia, which is a direct consequence of the continuous introduction of custom duties provided for by the Eurasian Economic Union.

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 4/6

The total amount of real investments in the first quarter of 2017 totaled \$12,985,718 (since data is provided using the Armenian dram, the exchange rate of 482 drams per one US dollar is used here and later in the text), 40.3% (\$5,231,384) is from countries of the EU and Switzerland, leaders among which are Germany, France and Cy-

prus; 38.2% (\$4,958,396) is from Russia; 13.1% (\$1,694,739) is from the three largest investors in the western hemisphere (Canada, Argentina, and the USA). Three other countries of the EAEU (Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan) are not even among the top 30 investors.<sup>31</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 7.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 1/2

Since the fourth century A.D., the Armenian language has been using a proprietary alphabet. The Latin alphabet is the second alphabet used in

names of service and trade entities, as a phonetic alternative to Armenian alphabet in the social media, for Internet addresses, and so on.

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 2/6

The most recent data available from the Armenian Statistical Service is from 2011 and according to that data, of the 3,018,854 residents of Arme-

nia, 107,922 people had more or less proficient knowledge of English, 10,106 of French, and 6,342 of German.

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 4.5/7

The area of motion picture distribution in Armenia has not really been studied, even though specialized organizations have repeatedly been tasked with collecting the relevant data. Movies produced in the USA do not have any real competition in movie theaters as they are the most popular. At the same

time, movies (and above all, TV series) made in Russia are shown almost as frequently as American films on Armenian terrestrial broadcast channels. This trend has become notable after Armenia joined the EAEU. Indian films have begun displacing Latin American TV series from the television lineups.

When it comes to social media, Facebook is the clear leader with approximately 690,000 visits per day, constantly widening the gap over competition. As of October 2017, Odnoklassniki is now behind with daily visits having dropped from the peak of 950,000 in late 2015 to 650,000 in 2017<sup>32</sup>.

YouTube has occupied the second place in the ratings having become the primary platform for blogs. Finally, the biggest news in 2017, was the rapid growth of Instagram. The number of Twitter users has also been on the rise but not increasing as quickly as other networks.

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 4/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 2/5

Based on border crossing data, 839,061 persons left Armenia to travel to other countries in the first half of 2017. Of those travelers 391,780 were citizens of Armenia. Considering the fact that a large number of travelers use air transportation, and the majority of them use multiple connecting flights, there is no reliable data regarding the travelers' final destinations. The primary reasons for trips abroad are tourism and seasonal work, and most popular destinations are European countries,

Georgia and Russia. According to the data from travel agencies, the most popular tourist destinations, besides the locations listed earlier, are Greece, Bulgaria, and Spain, all three have topped Turkey. However, the numbers from travel agencies also do not tell the whole story since more and more Armenians are planning their travels on their own. Other popular destinations for trips abroad are the USA (visiting family and migration) and the UAE (business).

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1/3

Due to the limited market and the population's low purchasing power, the largest retailers, fast-food restaurants and other chains have little representation in Armenia. Supermarket franchises, of which Carrefour is the only western one, and fuel stations are predominantly domestic.

An exception to the rule are stores carrying popular European brands of clothing, located mostly at shopping malls, as well as hotel chains, of which the most present is Best Western with six hotels across the country, followed by Marriott with four.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMARTPHONE USAGE 1/2

According to the 2016 Digital Yearbook report, 70% of the Armenian population (2.13 million people) are active Internet users, 890,000 are active users of social media, of whom 680,000 (23% of the population) use mobile connection. In 2017, 50% of the country's territory was covered by broadband mobile Internet and 4G infrastructure is being widely im-

plemented. A rapid growth in the number of users in the first years of the millennium was followed by a decrease caused by the global crisis of 2009. After that the market saw a gradual recovery, and by the beginning of 2017 the rates of telecommunication market's growth increased substantially, and are forecasted to show stable growth over the next five years.

# Azerbaijan

37/100

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF

Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
8/25	5.5/25	12.5/25	7/15	4/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 8/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 2/10

The political climate in the country has become more and more repressive and increasingly worse after the Ukrainian Revolution in 2014. Azerbaijan has been harshly criticized by international organizations and Western governments for human rights violations.

In March 2016, the Azerbaijani authorities released 16 opposition politicians, journalists, and advocates whom the international community considered to be political prisoners. However, many activists and journalists remain imprisoned (notably, leader of the REAL movement Ilgar Mammadov).

According to the "World Press Freedom Index" published by Reporters Without Borders, in 2017, Azerbaijan was ranked 162<sup>nd</sup> in the world. In the 2017 Freedom House report, the country ended up among the 10 worst freedom of

the press violators: Azerbaijan was ranked as 119<sup>th</sup> and is in the list of "not free" countries.

The most recent report (2016) on human rights published by the U.S. State Department notes that Azerbaijani authorities continue to limit freedoms such as freedom of speech, assembly and associations by using threats and violence against human rights advocates, activists and journalists.

Azerbaijan registered more than 50 political parties. The majority of organizations suspended their activities due to the difficult political climate. The political parties in Azerbaijan can generally be divided into three types:

1. Right-wing parties: mostly neoliberal and anti-communist parties.
2. Democratic parties (middle-of-the-road).
3. Left-wing: communist and socialist.

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 2/8

The incumbent New Azerbaijan Party (NPD) has 69 representatives in the Milli Majlis – the country’s parliament comprised of 125 persons, 12 politicians represent 11 parties, 43 of the parliamentarians do not have a party affiliation and 1 seat is invalidated. None of the parties in the Milli Majlis are in opposition to the country’s leadership. Therefore, the position of the incumbent NPD party has the determining voice in the Parliament. This “party of power” echoes the pro-Russian narrative and depending on the situation it most often criticizes Western

institutes, accusing them of interfering with the internal affairs in Azerbaijan.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) discussed two resolutions regarding the critical state of political freedom in the country in 2017,<sup>33</sup> resulting in anti-West discussions in the Milli Majlis. Samad Seyidov the head of the Azerbaijani delegation to PACE called the adopted resolutions “shameful” and Ali Hasanov, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan, accused the Council of Europe of being prejudiced towards the country.

## 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 4/7

According to Eurobarometer’s survey, in 2014 almost half of Azerbaijanis considered the relationship between their country and the European Union to be “good,” 15% considered it to be “bad”. 42% of the country’s population considered the EU

an important partner. More than two thirds of those surveyed (63%) viewed EU either positively (35%) or neutrally (28%), and 13% of Azerbaijanis had a negative opinion of the EU.<sup>34</sup>

# 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 5.5/25

## 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 2/6

A referendum to make modifications to the Azerbaijani Constitution was held on September 26, 2016 and voters were presented with 29 changes. According to official data, each modification was supported by no less than 90% of votes.

The Venice Commission of the Council of Europe criticized the referendum as the authorities basically had no time to consider this institution’s recommendations. On September 21, 2016, the press service of the Council of Europe published the findings of the Venice Commission,<sup>35</sup> their conclusive document

stated that the new modifications to the Constitution “seriously disturb the balance between the branches of the government” and “provide the President of Azerbaijan with unprecedented powers.”

At the same time, the Commission’s individual experts gave a positive assessment to the modifications providing for the addition to the Constitution of a norm according to which “human dignity is protected and respected” and passed the “right to protection from tyranny and to dignified treatment.”

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 1/7

According to a Transparency International report, the courts are suffering from constant interference by the representatives of executive power.<sup>36</sup> In this context, Freedom House has condemned the low

salaries in the judicial system of Azerbaijan. Moreover, judges join the prosecutors' motions and issue rulings which to a great degree read like indictment presentations.

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 2/6

The Azerbaijani legislature provides for a broad protection of human rights and liberties and Azerbaijan has joined in signing the relevant international documents. In 2016, the Human Rights Watch sent the Azerbaijani authorities a request to take action on the violations of human rights reported by the organization, which included torture and violent treatment of detainees, politically motivated prose-

cution in court, excessive use of pretrial detention, and arbitrary restriction of the freedom of movement and enforcement of laws and regulations.<sup>37</sup>

In the rankings created by ILGA-Europe, an organization tracking the violation of LGBT rights, when it comes to protecting the rights of sexual minorities, Azerbaijan took the last, 49<sup>th</sup> place.

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 0.5/6

There was a total of 13,342 convictions in 2014. The number of acquittals was meager in comparison - only 48 cases.<sup>38</sup>

# 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 12.5/25

## 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 2/7

Azerbaijan is one of the few PSNR states without a WTO membership. Also, Azerbaijan has still not signed the Association Agreement with the EU. Azerbaijan's relationship with the European Union is based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that took effect in 1999.

Since 2008, Azerbaijan has been participating in the EU's Eastern Partnership program. On November 14, 2016, the EU Council approved the mandate of the European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to engage in talks on behalf of the EU and its member

countries on the Comprehensive Agreement with Azerbaijan. This new agreement is meant to take into consideration mutual objectives and challenges faced by the EU and Azerbaijan, and replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. Talks on the new agreement commenced on February 7, 2017, after the visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Brussels. The new agreement will conform to the principles approved in 2015 within the framework of European Neighborhood Policy review and offer an updated foundation for the political dialogue and mutually beneficial cooperation between the EU and Azerbaijan.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 4/6

Azerbaijan is among the reformer countries in Central Asia region and is 57<sup>th</sup> of 190 countries in the Doing Business 2018 rankings, up from 65<sup>th</sup> in the previous rankings. Recently, Azerbaijan has carried out four reforms that affected credit, protection of minority investors' rights, enforcing contracts, and bankruptcy regulation. For example, the conducted reforms provided for the creation of a Credit bureau, improvement of the corporate

requirements for the protection of minority shareholders, implementation of electronic fee payment in the judicial system, and simplification of procedures related to bankruptcy. Overall, in the last 15 years, Azerbaijan carried out 33 reforms, seven of which were related to starting a business, six to obtaining credit, and five related to repayments of credit. In 2017, it took 4–5 days to start a business, whereas in 2003 the number was 105 days.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 4.5/6

The European Union, with 55% of the total trade, is Azerbaijan's principle trade partner. The EU is the largest export and import market for Azerbaijan, taking up 65% and 33%, respectively, in the total volume of Azerbaijan's export and import. The EU exports to Azerbaijan machinery and transportation equipment and primarily

imports gas and oil (98% of total imports) from Azerbaijan. The bilateral trade turnover totals approximately €14 billion. The largest European exporters to Azerbaijan are the United Kingdom (€894 million, 25% of the EU exports), Germany (€675 million, 19.6% of the EU exports), and Italy (€659 million, 19.1% of the EU exports).<sup>39</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 2/6

In 2016, foreign direct investments (FDI) into the economy of Azerbaijan totaled \$7.32 billion with the gas and oil sector making up 76.7%. In comparison with 2015, the amount of direct investments into the Azerbaijani economy dropped by 2.4% (in 2015 FDI totaled \$7.5 billion).

The top five nations investing into the economy of Azerbaijan in 2016 were Switzerland, Russia, Turkey, Great Britain and the Netherlands. According to Azerbaijan's State Committee for Statistics, Swiss companies invested more than \$370 million, Russian companies – \$363.2 million and Turkish companies \$307.5 million.

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 7/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

The Latin alphabet is being used. After independence, in 1992 Azerbaijan decided to switch back to the Latin script that was used before 1939.



## 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 1.5/6

According to the English Proficiency Index 2016, the Azerbaijanis are among the worst countries when it comes to knowledge of the English lan-

guage. Azerbaijan was among countries with a “very low” level of English proficiency, and ranked 57<sup>th</sup> of 72 countries where the study was conducted.

## 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 3.5/7

Hollywood movies dominate in the Azerbaijani movie theaters, with smaller niches occupied by Turkish motion pictures and domestic films. After the introduction of new rules requiring the dubbing of all movies into the national language in 2014, the share of foreign TV series dropped greatly. In 2017, TV channels broadcasted domestic TV series.

a market share of 91.55%, meaning that more than a quarter of the country's population has Facebook accounts. Twitter is number two with 1.86%, and VKontakte is in the third spot.

According to GlobalStats studies, the most popular social network in Azerbaijan is Facebook with

There are very few users of the Russian Odnoklassniki network in Azerbaijan. In fact, even the Odnoklassniki page dedicated to Azerbaijan has only 1,151 members. The popularity of YouTube has also grown but LinkedIn is not popular.

# 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 4/10

## 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 1/5

According to Azerbaijan's State Committee for Statistics, in the first six months of 2017, 20,000 Azerbaijani citizens vacationed abroad: 47.7% visited Turkey, 12.7% the UAE, 12.4% Russia, 9.1% Iran, 3% Germany, 1.6% Georgia, 1.4% Italy, 1.3% the Czech Republic, 0.7% Ukraine, and 10.1% visited other countries.<sup>40</sup>

## 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1.5/3

None of the world's top 10 grocery retailers have presence in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani market is strongly occupied by domestic and Turkish grocery chains who have widespread presence. Out of the known international fast-food chains, only McDonald's and KFC are currently doing busi-

ness in Azerbaijan: risks and monopoly on the Azerbaijani market may be the deterring factors for other brands to operate. Starbucks is also present in the country. Among other restaurant-chains widespread in the United States and Europe only Hard Rock Cafe operates in Azerbaijan.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMARTPHONE USAGE 1.5/2

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU),<sup>41</sup> Azerbaijan has gone up from the 63<sup>rd</sup> to the 36<sup>th</sup> place in the world ranking measuring the number of Internet users per 100 people. According to the report, 77 out of 100 Azerbaijanis use the Internet.

Broadband usage in Azerbaijan is 19.76 per 100 persons. In this category, the country ranks 53<sup>rd</sup> and is ahead of Russia, Turkey, Iran, Kazakhstan, and Armenia. Moreover, Azerbaijan has im-

proved its world ranking in terms of the number of mobile broadband Internet subscribers, moving up from the 68<sup>th</sup> spot to the 60<sup>th</sup>. In 2017, the number of Internet users in Azerbaijan totaled 7.8 million people, which is 3/4 of the country's population.

There are 110 mobile phones per every 100 residents but the number of smartphone users is no more than 4 million people – less than half of the population of Azerbaijan.

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
	<b>6.5</b> /25	<b>5.5</b> /25	<b>9</b> /25	<b>6.5</b> /15	<b>4</b> /10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION **6.5**/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 2.5/10

The most recent reports by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) mission observing national elections in Belarus (presidential in 2015 and parliamentary in 2016)<sup>42</sup> recorded substantial shortcomings of the legal framework for elections, issues with independent candidates' registration, and inequality of the pre-election campaigning conditions. The reports noted, "Belarus still has a considerable way to go in meeting its OSCE commitments for democratic elections."<sup>43</sup>

Of the 180 countries included in the "World Press Freedom Index" published by Reporters Without Borders, in 2017 Belarus ranked 153<sup>rd</sup>, moving up four positions from the previous year. Thus, Belarus shows improvement, but it also remains one of the countries with the greatest restrictions on media freedom.<sup>44</sup>

According to the 2017 Freedom House (USA) report, Belarus rates as "not free", with a score of 6.5 on a 7-point scale (in which 7 indicates the lowest level of democratic progress).<sup>45</sup>

In the 2016 Bertelsmann Transformation Index (Germany), Belarus is in the "hardline autocracies" group and is ranked 91 of 129 countries.<sup>46</sup> the most recent US State Department report on human rights in Belarus (2016) notes "the government failed to account for longstanding cases of politically-motivated disappearances."<sup>47</sup>

Belarus barely meets the criteria for political pluralism. Of the 15 officially registered political parties,<sup>48</sup> only seven can be called independent, and of those seven only one party has a representative in the Parliament. Despite the risk of criminal prosecution for operating without official registration (section 193-1 of the Penal Code of Belarus), some political parties, many nongovernmental organizations, and religious communities function without official registration or are forced to register outside of Belarus. The Belarusian authorities to various degrees restrict or violate the rights of social and political activists, advocates, women, religious groups, LGBTI persons, ethnic minorities, and other groups.<sup>49</sup>

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 1/8

Of the 110 deputies in the lower house of the Belarusian Parliament – the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus – only two members represent the opposition: Anna Kanopatskaya of the United Civil Party and Yelena Anisim of the Belarusian Language Society). Both entities are pro-Western, stating Belarus "is a part of Europe and considers itself a part of Europe,"<sup>50</sup> and "joining the European Union is a long-term strategic goal of Belarus."<sup>51</sup> The opposition parties outside

of Parliament are also explicitly pro-Western, supporting closer integration and membership with the European Union. At the same time, not many of them support the idea of Belarusian membership in NATO; only the Belarusian National Front (the BNF Party) supports joining NATO.<sup>52</sup> Pro-government sociopolitical structures maintain an anti-West narrative, supporting integration into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and a deeper collaboration with Russia.

## 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 3/7

Pro-Western sentiments in the country are quite strong, especially considering the substantial restrictions of independent mass media, wide-scale propaganda in the state media, and the influence of Russian media. According to a recent survey, 28.2% of Belarusian citizens believe Belarus is historically a part of the Western world, whereas 23.4% consider their country a part of the Eastern world, with more than half of the respondents unable to choose.<sup>53</sup> Public opinion is generally divided between the choice in favor of the integration with the European Union and integration with Russia. In 2017 public opinion surveys showed the following:<sup>54</sup>

- If a referendum on Belarus's joining the EU was held in April 2017, 14.9% would have voted in favor of joining the European Union, and 51.4% against
- If a referendum on the unification of Belarus and Russia into one country was held in April 2017, 31.4% would have voted in favor of unification with Russia, and 34.1% against
- 65.5% of those surveyed believe Belarus should be an independent country.

# 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 5.5/25

## 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 1/6

Belarus ignores all recommendations of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission), with rare exceptions regarding election legislation. In 1996 and 2004, the Republic of Belarus amended the constitution,

in which the Venice Commission noted the proposed constitutional amendments "fall short of the democratic minimum standards of the European constitutional heritage."<sup>55</sup>

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 1.5/7

The 2014 GRECO (Group of States against Corruption) report notes that in Belarus, “The constitutional and legislative safeguards for an independent judiciary are far from adequate. The current legal framework provides for extensive presidential powers in appointing and dismissing judges to the courts, including the Constitutional Court. Moreover, these powers also extend to disciplinary proceedings and sanctions against judges. Such far-reaching powers are not compatible with the principle of judicial independence.”<sup>56</sup>

Belarus ranked 57<sup>th</sup> of 113 countries on the 2016

World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, which judges public perceptions of the rule of law.<sup>57</sup> the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) rated the development of the rule of law in Belarus at 3 points out of 10, where 1 is the lowest score indicating poor development of the rule of law. The BTI report reads, “The judiciary depends heavily on the executive at the regional and national levels. The head of the referring executive administration is entitled to take over a trial, intervene and even influence the verdict [...]. The regime abuses judicial power, wielding it as a tool of punishment and repression against opponents.”<sup>58</sup>

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 2/6

The Belarusian legislation provides guarantees and protection of human rights and liberties. However, both the legal mechanisms of enforcing those guarantees and their actual enforcement in the practice of law do not conform to international standards. Belarus is not a Council of Europe member and is not a signatory to a number of its conventions, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and is therefore outside the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights.<sup>59</sup> Belarusian legislative norms and regular practice of human rights violations in Belarus are the subject of criticism from international organ-

izations (the UN, Council of Europe, the Venice Commission, the OSCE, and others)<sup>60</sup> and the majority of Western countries. As a result of constant violations of human rights in Belarus, the United Nations Human Rights Council appointed a special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus.<sup>61</sup> In his most recent report the special Rapporteur wrote: “The legislation continues to be supplanted and regulated by presidential decrees, which take priority over constitutional law; the absence of a system of checks and balances, inefficiency of the Parliament, and the President’s total control over the judiciary illustrate the absence of the rule of law in Belarus.”<sup>62</sup>

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 1/6

The number of acquittals in Belarusian courts is extremely low; it comprises only 0.2–0.4% of cases.<sup>63</sup> Per criminal trial statistics, only 0.2% of cases (83 out of

42,116 cases) were non-guilty verdicts.<sup>64</sup> the prosecutorial nature of the justice system and lack of judicial independence create this low acquittal dynamic.

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 9/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 1/7

Since 1993, Belarus remains in membership talks with the WTO, thus it is currently not a member. Belarus is one of the six countries in the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, but does not aspire towards signing an Association Agreement with the EU. Be-

larus has not drafted a bilateral Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation with the EU, and their ratification was frozen in 1996. Belarus does not seek membership in the EU, having chosen the path of integration into the Eurasian Economic Union.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 4/6

Since 2015, Belarus demonstrates stable positive trends in the World Bank's annual Doing Business rankings, moving up from 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2014 to 37<sup>th</sup> place in 2017. It dropped one position in 2018: 38<sup>th</sup> place.<sup>65</sup> Belarus has substantially simplified the procedures of registering a business and ranks high in such areas as "registering property," "enforcing contracts," and "dealing with construction permits." At the same time Belarus has relatively low rankings in the areas of "paying taxes," "resolving insolvency," and "getting credit." the level of corruption is "moderate," according to the perception of small and medium businesses.<sup>66</sup>

The most significant issues in the Belarusian economy deal with reducing the government sector, privatization, structural reforms, doing away with directive state crediting of inefficient entities and sectors of the economy, effective management of problematic state companies, improving the business climate, progress in adopting the WTO norms, and improving the business climate.<sup>67</sup>

In 2017 the leadership of Belarus adopted several measures aimed at the further liberalization of entrepreneurship, in hopes of further improving its World Bank ratings.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 2/6

As a consequence of a national economic crisis, as well as a world oil price decline, the volume of trade between Belarus and the EU has continued to shrink since 2013 (from €12.017 million in 2013 to €7.948 million in 2016). Nevertheless, the EU remains the second largest trade partner of Belarus (after Russia) with 21% of total foreign trade (19.9% of imports are from the EU, and 24.6% of exports are into the EU). The main exports into the EU are crude materials and low-tech goods: petrochemical products, potassium and nitrogen fertilizers, metal products.<sup>69</sup> the EU countries that are top importers from Belarus are the UK, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia,

Belgium, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Romania.<sup>70</sup> the USA's share of world trade with Belarus is insignificant, at 1.2%.<sup>71</sup>

It is noteworthy that despite the US sanctions against representatives of the Belarusian government, in October 2015 the USA authorized economic sanction relief for nine companies in Belarus: Belneftekhim and its subsidiary in the United States, Belneftekhim USA, Inc, Belarusian Oil Trade House, Belshina, Grodno Azot, Grodno Khimvolokno, Lakokraska, Naftan, and Polotsk Steklovolokno.<sup>72</sup> Since then the USA has extended sanction relief every six months.

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 2/6

The total amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) into the economy of Belarus is not substantial. The Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies reports, "The FDI stock per capita in Belarus (€1,751 in 2015) amounted to less than 40% of the Polish and Lithuanian level while the difference in terms of FDI stock per GDP is

only 15%. Moldova and Ukraine have much higher FDI stocks per GDP than Belarus."<sup>73</sup> In 2016, only \$8.6 billion worth of foreign investments entered the country. The primary share of investments came from the Russian Federation (51.5% of the total investments), the United Kingdom (17.1%), and Cyprus (7.3%).<sup>74</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 6.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 1/2

The Latin alphabet is not in official use. However, signs written in Russian disappeared from Belarusian streets a long ago – they were replaced with ones in the Belarusian language, which uses the Cyrillic script.<sup>75</sup> Street signs and information notices are very frequently also posted in English (not in Russian, which, per the constitution, is the second state language of the country). Signs in the Minsk subway were printed in English as of 2012. Names of

stores, cafés, and restaurants are most often posted using the Latin script.<sup>76</sup> Because of the concern that "the Ukrainian Scenario" (change of regime by means of a revolution) may be repeated in Belarus, there is increasing talks about the need to strengthen its sovereignty. For example, in the recent years President of Belarus Alyaksandr Lukashenko has increasingly stressed the value of the Belarusian language for the citizens' self-identity.<sup>77</sup>

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 1.5/6

The degree of foreign language knowledge in Belarus is extremely low, which is largely the result of the Soviet language study system. Per the 2009 Census, only 450,000 people (about 5% of the population) are proficient in the English language. In comparison with the 1999 Census data,

over the course of 10 years the number of English speakers in the country has increased 3.2 times – from 1% to 5% of the population. Another 138,000 residents of Belarus have proficient command of the German language, which is 2.2 times more than was indicated in the 1999 Census.

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 4/7

There is no publicly available statistical data about the share of television and motion picture products in Belarus by country of origin. However,

one can state with a high degree of certainty that Western movies – mostly Hollywood – are leading in the Belarusian theaters and on television,

followed in total volume by movies, TV series, and programs from Russia. The share of domestic, Belarusian movie productions is low – 46 films in 2015 and 21 films in 2016. The number of viewers coming to see the Western blockbusters exceed the number of viewers of the most popular Belarusian movies by 4–5 times.<sup>78</sup>

As of 2017, 70% of the population are regular users of the Internet.<sup>79</sup> the total number of social network users totals 3.94 million people, which is 41% of its the population and almost 80% of its Internet community.<sup>80</sup> the most popular networks are VKontakte (46.72% users), YouTube (43.11%), Odnoklassniki (30.42%) Facebook (14.44%), and Instagram (6.35%).<sup>81</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 4/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 2/5

A 2016 survey shows 59.6% of Belarusians have not left the country for at least three years.<sup>82</sup> However, visits to the EU have grown in recent years and in 2010, the share who visited the EU at least once reached 18.6%.<sup>83</sup> the primary reason for traveling abroad is tourism; migration work travel does exist, but is not substantial. According to official statistics, the number of “organized tourists” (i.e. those who use travel agent services to

book their trips) who traveled abroad from Belarus dropped from 738,671 in 2015 to 495,700 in 2016. Of those travelers, 23.8% went to countries of the CIS, 46.2% to countries of the EU, and 30% to other countries of the world.<sup>84</sup> Despite there being no agreement with the EU simplifying the issuance of visas, Belarus is among the top seven countries with the highest number of Schengen visas issued (more than 693,000 in 2016).<sup>85</sup>

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1/3

According to Menka Analytical Center, 189 international brands are currently present in Belarus. 89% of those are franchise partners, and only 11% offer their own products. More than half of them are Western brands from the countries of the EU (approximately 53%) and the USA (10%). Nearly half of these international brands (46%) are in the clothing category, 11% are in the food services (restaurants) category, and 9% of all international brands are in

the category of shoe sales. 43 new international brands entered the Belarusian market in 2015-2016: 30% Russian, 21% Italian, and 16% American.<sup>86</sup> On the list of globally known restaurants with presence in Belarus are McDonald’s, KFC, Burger King, Domino’s Pizza, Sbarro, and Papa John’s. In 2017, Belarus’s first Zara store opened in Minsk. Overall, international corporate franchises are just beginning to exert a presence in Belarus.



### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 1/2

The number of mobile phone accounts in Belarus is 120 per every 100 people (i.e. many persons use services of multiple mobile providers).<sup>87</sup> The proportion of the population using high-speed LTE mobile connection is 60%. At the present time, LTE service is offered in Minsk as well as all oblast centers and major regional centers of the country.<sup>88</sup>

According to the 2016 Connected Consumer Survey conducted by Google, more than 59% of Belarusians use smartphones; that number reaches 89% in the “under 35” age group. Most often smartphones are used to search for information (58%), interact in social networks (53%), and watch online videos (43%).<sup>89</sup>

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
		<b>23</b> /25	<b>23</b> /25	<b>25</b> /25	<b>13</b> /15

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION **23**/25

### 1.1 DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 9.5/10

There are no major shortcomings in the area of political freedom in Estonia: elections are free and fair and political and civil rights are respected. The country is performing exceptionally well in democracy indices: it has consistently been rated “free” in the Freedom House’s Freedom in the World report, and carries on with this rating in 2017.<sup>90</sup> It ranks as a “consolidated democracy” in the Freedom House’s Nations in Transit 2017 index<sup>91</sup> (the highest rating among the former Soviet states), and also ranks the highest among the post-Soviet states (29th) in the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index 2016.<sup>92</sup> Estonia also ranks the highest among the post-Soviet states in the Freedom of the Press 2017 index<sup>93</sup> and holds the first position in the world in the Freedom on the Net 2016 index.<sup>94</sup>

One of the few criticisms of political freedom in Estonia concerns the rights of the country’s residents who have an undetermined citizenship (6% of the population, mostly ethnic Russians) and thus cannot participate in national elections, though they can vote in local elections provided that they hold a long-term residence permit or permanent residence status. Due to strict citizenship policies, many long-term residents of Estonia, mostly those living in the country since the Soviet times, have not been able to apply for the Estonian citizenship and therefore cannot participate in the political and social life in Estonia to the full extent. These challenges demonstrate why Estonia’s level of political freedom is given less than the maximum score in this Index.

### 1.2 PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 7/8

There are altogether six parties in the 101-member Estonian parliament. While all those parties are generally supportive of integration with the West, there are parliamentarians in at least two parties who have expressed critical views of the European Union and NATO. For example, Mart Helme, the Chairman of the Conservative People’s Party of Estonia,

Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE) has repeatedly expressed Eurosceptic views and called for Estonia to exit the EU.<sup>95</sup> EKRE has also adopted a declaration calling for another referendum about Estonia’s membership in the EU.<sup>96</sup> Another party whose members have expressed views critical of the West is the incumbent Estonian Centre Party

(Eesti Keskerakond, KE, 27 seats or 26.7%). Centre Party parliamentarian Mihhail Korb had to resign from the post of Minister of Public Administration following a comment he made indicating his lack of support for Estonia's NATO membership, which he later claimed was a misunderstanding.<sup>97</sup> Korb is not the only one in his party to make statements critical of the West. The Estonian

Centre Party is also the only party in Estonia to have signed a cooperation protocol with United Russia party in 2004, an agreement which has been subject to heavy criticism but has not been cancelled nevertheless.<sup>98</sup> At the same time, it must be emphasized that not all members of respective party factions share these views unequivocally.

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 6.5/7

The public opinion of Western institutions and integration with the West is generally favorable; however, there are significant differences between the views of Estonian- and Russian-speaking residents. For example, according to the latest survey (March 2017) on public opinion and national defense, 78% of Estonian speakers but only 24% of Russian

speakers trust or somewhat trust NATO; the opinions are similarly divided on the subjects of national defense and national political structures.<sup>99</sup> Regarding the EU, 81% of Estonians claim that they trust or tend to trust the EU (constantly one of the most positive views among the EU member states), and 75% feel that they are citizens of the EU.<sup>100</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 23/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 6/6

The opinions of the Venice Commission regarding Estonia date back to 1998. Suggestions regarding the EU membership were implemented in the Third Constitutional Act of Estonia which was approved in the 2003 referendum.

### 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 7/7

According to the WJP Rule of Law Index 2016, Estonia's overall score is 0.79, which places it 11<sup>th</sup> among the 24 EU + EFTA + North America region countries with high income and 14<sup>th</sup> globally

(of the total 113 countries).<sup>101</sup> the "no corruption in the judiciary" indicator is 0.93 of 1, making Estonia one of the least corrupt countries when it comes to the judicial sector.

### 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 5/6

All international human rights obligations have been guaranteed in Estonia. The shortcomings that have been noted by the Human Rights Watch are in the areas of statelessness (especially of children), the use of Russian language in education, LGBT rights, and the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>102</sup> All other issues besides LGBT rights have been at least partially addressed by Estonia.

Regarding LGBT rights, the Estonian parliament passed the Cohabitation Act for same-sex couples. However, the provisions for the implementation of the Act have not been adopted and no progress has been made towards this goal. It is likely that the current Estonian parliament will not move forward with the issue; this affects the assessment in this section.

### 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 5/6

In 2016, 2839 complaints were filed in the Estonian Supreme Court, of which 432 (15%) were accepted for further proceedings. Of those 432: the Civil Law Chamber heard 172 cases and issued acquittals in 113 (66%), the Criminal Law

Chamber heard 102 cases and issued acquittals in 45 criminal cases (62%) and 15 misdemeanor (infraction) cases (52%); and the Administrative Law Chamber heard 97 cases and issued acquittals in 64 (66%).<sup>103</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 25/25

### 3.1 EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 7/7

Estonia is a full member of the EU (joined in 2014) and the WTO (1999), as well as the OECD (2010).

### 3.2 EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 6/6

The business environment in Estonia is extremely favorable. This is well exemplified by the fact that Estonia ranks in the top six in the world (and top 2 in Europe) in the Index of Economic Freedom 2017.<sup>104</sup> Estonia is the only country in the world which allows e-residence to citizens of other countries, which enables them to have a legal relationship with the Estonian state and thereby also easily start and develop a business in Estonia.

The tax system is simplified, with flat rates and relatively low indirect taxation which has increased in the recent years following the change of government. Compared to many other Western countries, it is still significantly cheaper to start a business or create a production line in Estonia. The country ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> in the world in the Corruption Perception Index 2017.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, it must be pointed out that Estonia has the biggest gender pay gap in the EU (26.9%).<sup>106</sup>

### 3.3 WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 6/6

In 2016, Estonia exported goods to 179 countries and imported goods from 144 countries. Of the total exports, 72% were goods of Estonian origin. The European Union countries' share of Estonia's total exports was 74% and total imports 82%. Exports to non-EU countries amounted to 26% of the total

(7% to Russia, 4% to Norway, 3% to USA), and imports from non-EU countries were 18% of the total (6% from Russia, 4% from China).<sup>107</sup> Thus it can be seen that the Western share in both import and export is dominating; however, the overall trade volumes and the diversity of markets could be bigger.

### 3.4 WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 6/6

In 2016, direct investments in Estonia totaled €18.37 billion. Of that amount, €15.34 billion came from the EU-28, €932.9 million from countries of the CIS, and €910 million from financial

centers. Direct investments from the USA totaled €261.9 million. Thus, the share of Western investments, especially from the European Union, is predominant; still, there is room for volumes growth.

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 13/15

### 4.1 USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

Estonia has always used and continues to use the Latin alphabet. The only official language is Estonian.

### 4.2 PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 4.5/6

Many Estonian citizens are proficient in internationally spoken languages and knowledge of several foreign languages is common. Based on the results of the most recent census (2011), 856,225 respondents (approx. 66% of the entire population) speak a foreign language, 291,961 speak two foreign languages, and 194,732 speak at least three. The most commonly known foreign language is

Russian: 545,537 respondents declared knowledge of Russian, most of them in the 30–49 (194,758) and 50–64 (138,579) age groups. Russian is closely followed by English: 495,420 Estonians named English as a foreign language they knew, with most English speakers in the age groups of 15–29 (198,936) and 30–49 (179,153).

### 4.3 SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 6.5/7

According to the Media Services Act of Estonia, which relies on the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of the EU, at least 51% of the television

program content broadcast per annum should be reserved for audiovisual works of European origin, i.e. produced in one of the EU member states or

by a third party affiliated with them.<sup>108</sup> Much of the rest comes from the US, as well as Russia.

Use of Western websites/apps and social media is widespread in Estonia. According to

a 2015 study, 91% of Estonian Internet users aged 51-65 and 100% aged 18-25 use Facebook.<sup>109</sup> Other social media websites/apps (e.g. Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) are also popular.

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 9/10

### 5.1 PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 4.5/5

In 2016, Estonians traveled abroad 3.5 million times. 80% of the trips were to the EU member states. Russia was visited 275,000 times (7.9%), and over all countries of the CIS 394,000 times.<sup>110</sup> Given that

the population of Estonia is about 1.3 million, this yields an average of more than two trips per person per year. However; there is no conclusive data regarding how many Estonians have never visited the West.

### 5.2 PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 2.5/3

Estonia is well-covered by major Western franchise corporations in the areas of retail sales, clothing, and food services. However, many companies such as

Starbucks and IKEA are not yet present in Estonia, and for some services, such as Netflix or Amazon, Estonia remains a small and limited market.

### 5.3 MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 2/2

Estonia is very well covered by mobile Internet, and the use of smartphones is quite widespread. In 2016, according to Eurostat, 62% of Estonians

age 16–74 used mobile devices to access the Internet on the move.<sup>111</sup> 92% of Estonian households had Internet access at home in 2016.<sup>112</sup>

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
	<b>19.5/25</b>	<b>14/25</b>	<b>16/25</b>	<b>8/15</b>	<b>4.5/10</b>

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 19.5/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 7/10

According to the 2016 Freedom in the World report by Freedom House, Georgia was ranked as a “partly free” country with a score of 3 out of 7, where 1 indicates the most “free” country and 7 the least. As stated in the report, people in Georgia are generally able to form political parties with little interference from the state. In fact, there were 220 political parties registered in Georgia in 2016, even though only about 10 parties were actually active. The report also states that freedom of assembly and holding demonstrations is generally respected.<sup>113</sup>

Georgia is also “partly free” when it comes to freedom of the press. According to the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index, in 2017

Georgia occupied 64<sup>th</sup> place out of 180 countries in the area of media freedom. Despite having the most diverse and free media environment in the South Caucasus, close links between media outlets and politicians negatively impact its score.<sup>114</sup> As reported by the OSCE/ODIHR in their final report on the 2016 Georgian parliamentary elections, even though broadcasters widely covered the candidates, they were still biased toward certain parties. For example, the government-owned Public Broadcaster media group offered more air-time to the governing party, Georgian Dream, while the privately-owned channel Rustavi 2 devoted more time to the opposition party, United National Movement. However, the overall media environment maintained a mostly neutral tone.<sup>115</sup>

### 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 6.5/8

The overwhelming majority of Georgian members of Parliament nominally support Western integration. The Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia (GDDG) party holds a constitutional majority with 115 out of 150 seats. The United National Movement (UNM, including both its splinter parties, the UNM and European Georgia) has 27 seats, the Alliance of Patriots

has 6 seats, Topadze – Industrials and Our Fatherland each have 1 seat, as does Salome Zurbishvili (an independent). UNM and European Georgia are both overwhelmingly pro-Western; UNM was pushing Georgian Dream to constitutionally guarantee the country’s pro-Western course.<sup>116</sup> the independent candidate Salome Zurbishvili is also very pro-Western.

The few anti-Western parties are the Alliance of Patriots and Topadze-Industrials. The Alliance of Patriots and its leaders, particularly Irma Inashvili and Davit Tarkhan-Mouravi, are openly anti-Western, arguing, for example, that the West tries to control Georgia, that the Association Agreement will become a problem for Georgia, and that the West threatens Orthodoxy and imposes homosexuality on the country.<sup>117</sup> However, they make up only 7 voices of the 150 members of parliament. As for GDDG, the country's main party, the majority of its members maintain the party line and the government declared pro-Western policy. Soon after win-

ning its first parliamentary majority, GDDG adopted a resolution that set Euro-Atlantic integration as a foreign policy priority. Although there are a few individual party members whose rhetoric conflicts with the party's declared position, the 2015 Media Development Foundation report on Anti-Western propaganda found that only 4 of 113 instances of anti-Western rhetoric involved the Georgian Dream. Therefore, it can be assumed that GD members along with the other two anti-Western party members would comprise of just 5–7% of the parliament, and more than 90% of their colleagues would be pro-Western, at least in their rhetoric.

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 6/7

Most the Georgian population supports pro-Western foreign policy and integration into Western institutions like NATO and the EU. According to a 2017 IRI public opinion poll, 90% of Georgians fully or somewhat support joining the European Union, whereas only 6% oppose it. Similarly, 82% strongly or somewhat support joining NATO and 13% oppose it. However, the majority does not see a trade-off between

pro-Western and pro-Russian foreign policy, as 53% say that Georgia's foreign policy approach should be pro-Western but that relations with Russia should also be kept up. By comparison, 23% are in favor of an only pro-Western approach, 12% are in support of Georgia being pro-Russian but also remaining an ally of the EU and the West, and 3% believe that the country should be only pro-Russian.<sup>118</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 14/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 3/6

In October 2017, Georgia went through a major constitutional reform that was intended to move the country from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary system, and from a mixed majoritarian/proportional election system to a fully proportional one. However, the revision process was controversial, and the final constitution amendments lacked consen-

sus, earning the moniker of a "one-party constitution" from the President and the opposition.

Even though some of the Venice Commission requirements were considered in the amendment, the Parliament disregarded others. Generally, the Commission welcomed the transition to a par-



liamentary system and several amendments were made in accordance with the Commission's requirements. The Parliament also made corrections following the Commission's suggestions. For example, the amendment allowed the parties to form blocs at the next parliamentary elections and abolished the bonus system which entailed allocating undistributed mandates to the winning party. However, several recommendations remained disregarded, which drew criticism from the Venice Commission.

Among the recommendations ignored were the postponement of implementation of the proportional system from 2020 to 2024 and maintaining the 5% threshold rule in legislative elections.<sup>119</sup> President Giorgi Margvelashvili vetoed the constitutional amendments and issued a series of suggestions – some of which were from the Venice Commission's report – but the Parliament overrode the veto and adopted the amendments on October 13, 2017.

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 4/7

In the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index 2016, which measures how the rule of law is experienced by the general public, Georgia ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 113 countries in the area of constraints on government powers, placing first among the 13 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.<sup>120</sup> In the field of judicial independence, Georgia ranked 45<sup>th</sup> out of 109 countries in the 2017 Index of Public Integrity.<sup>121</sup> As reported in the fourth evaluation round of GRECO (Group of States Against

Corruption) in February 2017, the judiciary system in Georgia still needs to improve in terms of democratic decision-making within the High Council of Justice, due to allegations that transfers have been used to “punish” disobedient judges. Moreover, achieving transparency and objectivity of disciplinary proceedings of judges remains another challenge.<sup>122</sup> In the spring 2017 IRI poll, only 30% have a favorable view of courts, while 53% have an unfavorable view.<sup>123</sup>

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 5/6

The Georgian Constitution recognizes inalienable human rights and freedoms, and the country is also part of all the major international and regional agreements and treaties on human rights including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on

Civil and Political Rights, and others.<sup>124</sup> However, the implementation of these agreements and treaties is problematic. In 2016, Human Rights Watch identified issues with rights of privacy, instances of abuse committed by law enforcement, lack of media freedom, and inadequacy of LGBT rights in Georgia.<sup>125</sup>

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 2/6

In 2016, the rate of acquittals in criminal cases in Georgia was 3.7%. Of the 16,588 cases first heard in the Common Courts, 6,116 cases were heard per se, and only 227 reached verdicts of “not guilty.” In 2010 the rate was 0.2%, but it started growing slightly after 2011, when it reached 2.3%, and increased to 4% in 2015.<sup>126</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 16/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 4.5/7

Georgia joined the WTO on June 14, 2000. That same month, it signed an Association Agreement with the European Union that went into effect in July 2016. The core economic component of the Association Agreement is a preferential trade regime – the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). The Agreement considers a wide range of reforms to facilitate the regulato-

ry approximation to EU standards, in compliance with the rights and obligations arising from Georgia's WTO membership, tackling tariff barriers and increasing market access between the country and the EU. Georgian foreign policy prioritizes admission to the EU, and this is constantly reconfirmed by the government and members of the parliament.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 5.5/6

The 2018 World Bank Doing Business Index ranked Georgia 9<sup>th</sup> out of 190 places, up seven spots from 16<sup>th</sup> place the year before. Georgia's score did not drop in any of the indicators throughout the year. On the contrary, while some areas maintained the same scores, others improved. The strongest improvement was seen in the areas of resolving insolvency and protecting minority investors.<sup>127</sup> According to the World Bank report, Georgia has implemented the highest number of business regulation reforms since 2003, a total of 47. The country is the only low-middle-income nation that made it into the group of the top 20 economies in terms of business regulation.<sup>128</sup> Georgia has also improved in terms of fighting corruption. As reported in the 2016 Transparency International

Corruption Perception Index, Georgia occupied the 44<sup>th</sup> place in the world, improving its score from 52 to 57 from the previous year. The country now has the best score in Eastern Europe or Central Asia who are not EU members.<sup>129</sup> However, a number of issues remain in need of improvement, including eliminating the unofficial, informal influence on state institutions and creating an independent anti-corruption body. According to the 2014 Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey by the World Bank, only 2.2% reported incidents of bribe requests. At the same time, the surveyed small and medium companies named political instability (42%), access to finances (21%), and tax rates (15%) as the chief obstacles to doing business.<sup>130</sup>

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 3/6

Trade with the European Union has been increasing over the years. From January to May 2017, Georgian foreign trade with the EU totaled \$1.09 billion USD, which is 15% more than the same period in 2016. Export has increased by 40% and import by 9%. Overall, trade with European Union countries comprises 28% of Georgia's total foreign trade, 26% of general export and 28% of import. At the same time, the amount of trade with the CIS countries still surpasses trade with the European Union. Trade with the countries of the CIS makes up 33% of

the total trade, 38% of export, and 31% of import. Both indicators have increased in comparison to the same period in 2016.

Turkey (15%), Russia (11%), and Azerbaijan (8%) remain Georgia's largest trade partners. As of May 2017, the USA was the 8<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner of Georgia, with 3.7% of all the foreign trade – 4.1% of all export and 3.6% of import. The amounts of both exports to and imports from the United States have increased in the first half of 2017 when compared to the previous year.<sup>131</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 3/6

By the second quarter of 2017, the five largest investors in Georgia were Azerbaijan, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, and Panama. Of the first nine largest investors, five were Western countries; the USA was in the 8<sup>th</sup> place. Throughout 2016, the USA

has invested \$53.6 million in Georgia, and the four largest EU investor countries (the UK, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, and the Czech Republic) invested \$368.4 million altogether. However, Azerbaijan and Turkey remained the largest investors, with \$558 and \$203.5 million, respectively.<sup>132</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 8/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 1/2

The Georgian language uses a unique, proprietary alphabet. The Latin alphabet is not generally used. The Russian language (and, consequently, the Cyrillic script) was used widely in the Soviet times.

In 1978, an attempt was made to amend the Constitution of the Soviet Republic of Georgia depriving the Georgian language of its state status, which led

to massive protest demonstrations in Tbilisi. The status of the Georgian language was then defended, even though Russian language remained widespread. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the state prioritized teaching the Georgian language. Since 2003, after the Rose Revolution, the study of the English language has been carried out on an intensive and large-scale basis.<sup>133</sup>

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 2/6

According to the, "Knowledge of and Attitudes Toward the EU in Georgia," survey, conducted in June 2017 by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC), 19% of the population speaks English at an advanced or intermediate level, while 18% has basic knowledge and 63% no basic knowledge.

As for other languages, according to the 2015 "Caucasus Barometer" survey, also conducted by CRRC, only 11% of Georgians speak a foreign language other than English and Russian; however, it is not specified which languages are included in this given percentage.<sup>134</sup>

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 5/7

American and European movies dominate the Georgian movie theaters. In November 2017, the three main Georgian movie theater chains were showing fourteen movies, two of which were Georgian and the rest of which were American or European,

(i.e. 85% Western-made films); a common occurrence in Georgia.<sup>135</sup> However, most of the Western movies that are shown in theaters are dubbed in Russian despite the 2011 Law on State Support of National Film Production, which calls on all of the movies shown in

theaters to be dubbed in Georgian or run in the original language with Georgian subtitles. In the beginning of 2017, of the 10 most popular TV series, two were Georgian, seven Turkish and one was French-American.<sup>136</sup> The numbers are different for movies shown on television, as American and European motion pictures dominate as well. There is no report on the topic, but as a typical example: during the whole day of October 31, 2017, five of most popular TV channels (Rustavi 2, Imedi, Public Broadcaster, GDS and Marao) showed a total of fourteen films (excluding documentaries) – all of them American and all dubbed in Georgian.

Usage of the Internet has been constantly on the rise in Georgia, but a countrywide survey conducted by CRRC in 2016 revealed that only 46% of the population use the Internet on a daily basis. Most of the time the Internet is used to access social networks. Facebook is the most popular social network, used by 86% of those who are online at least once a month. Facebook is followed by two Russian networks: 42% use Odnoklassniki and 13% use VKontakte. The usage of Twitter is only 5% and other social networks remain insignificant.<sup>137</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 4.5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 2/5

The only known data about Georgians' travel to the West comes from a 2015 study conducted by CRRC. The study showed that 9% of those surveyed reported that a member of their household has traveled to an EU country and 2% to the USA. The top destination for those who considered traveling abroad for work was Germany (15%) and for study was the United Kingdom (25%). How-

ever, the dynamics in terms of tourist visiting Europe have changed after the introduction of the visa-free agreement with the EU in March 2017. In the first six months after the need for a short-term visa was abolished, 86,500 Georgians traveled to the Schengen zone. According to travel agencies, the demand for European destinations has increased by 30-40%.<sup>138</sup>

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1.5/3

As reported by Deloitte in 2017, out of the top ten global retailers only one (Carrefour) has a location in Georgia. A large number of Western clothing chains have a presence in Georgia but are concentrated mainly in the capital city of Tbilisi. The brands include Lacoste, Armani, Boss, Sisley, Levi's, Zara, United Colors of Benetton, Adidas, and Nike. Since 2016, IKEA has been operating one of the largest stores

in Georgia, and in July 2017, the long-awaited opening of an H&M took place in Tbilisi. As for fast-food chains, McDonald's has been in Tbilisi since 1999 and currently has 12 locations throughout the country. Dunkin Donuts, Subway, Wendy's, KFC and Domino's Pizza are also present in Georgia's capital.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 1/2

In 2015, 45% of Georgians had access to the Internet but the number of mobile and Internet subscriptions in Georgia is constantly growing. Households with the Internet mostly accessed it from their home computers or laptops (83%) rather than from personal mobile phones (43%),<sup>139</sup> but the usage of mobile Internet in Georgia has also been increasing.

At the end of 2016, 2.5 million people were using mobile Internet, whereas in 2015 that figure was 2.14 million, meaning that 45% of all mobile users use their devices to go online.<sup>140</sup> In a 2017 public attitude survey by CRRC, 49% of the respondents indicated that their household owned a smartphone.

# Kazakhstan

# 39.5/100

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF

Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
9/25	7/25	14/25	5.5/15	4/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 9/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 3/10

Since 1998, the Freedom House's Freedom in the World report has categorized Kazakhstan among the group of "Not Free Countries".<sup>141</sup> The same organization's "Nations in Transit" report describes the country as a "consolidated authoritarian regime."<sup>142</sup> However, many observers often consider Kazakhstan as a lighter version of autocracy than other post-Soviet states.<sup>143</sup>

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, 77, has been in power for 26 years. In 2015, Nazarbayev received 97.75% of the votes in elections that were not considered free and fair by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). He has repeatedly amended the laws and the constitution of Kazakhstan to extend his terms and eligibility to occupy the presidential office. Under the First President Law (2000), Nazarbayev enjoys vast powers, including full immunity from any prosecution, no limits on presidential terms, and special powers to influence political decision-making in case he eventually decides to step down. Since 2010, he has held the special title of the "Leader of the Nation."<sup>144</sup>

Reporters Without Borders currently ranks Kazakhstan 157<sup>th</sup> of 180 countries in its 2017 World Press Freedom index.<sup>145</sup> The state funding of the media exceeds the volume of the commercial advertisement market. Efforts to limit the influence of critical media have come in several waves. Methods have varied from physical attacks and formal deregistration, to legal pressure on individual journalists and entire publications through of defamation suits that aimed to shut down a media outlet with excessively large fines. Popular newspapers and websites, including Respublika, Vzglyad, Dat, and Stan.kz, among others, were forced to close. Several other projects, like Svoboda Slova, were bought out by groups allegedly close to the authorities. Critical websites are often blocked.

The Internet remains the last resort for public discourse on political issues, but, according to the Freedom on the Net report, Kazakhstan may attempt methods of limiting or restricting social media, online anonymity, and other forms of online expression. In 2015, the country drifted from the "Partly Free" to the "Not Free" category.<sup>146</sup>

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 2/8

No parliamentary election in Kazakhstan has ever been deemed free and fair by the OSCE monitors. International observation missions have recognized improvements in technicalities, but have also lambasted numerous problems at all stages of a campaign.

The Nur Otan Party dominates the field. Chaired by the country's president since 2007, the party's performance at elections has never dropped below 80% of the total votes, effectively granting control over the Parliament. The party's ambiguous populist ideology is mainly focused on full support of President Nazarbayev. Other parties do not in actuality represent any independent political force, thus severely affecting parliamentary pluralism.

The two parties also represented in the parliament are Ak Zhol, an allegedly pro-business party which occasionally promotes the adoption of Western standards in customs and taxation, and the Communist People's Party. The latter is a splinter from the Communist Party of Kazakhstan that had been very critical of the regime, but was stripped of official registration in 2015. It often ventilates populist anti-West statements through its seven members in the parliament (with calls to action such as "resistance to the negative and zombifying Western values,"), but these statements are rarely taken seriously, nor is the party itself.<sup>147</sup>

Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan, a broad movement established in 2001, and its successors – For a Just Kazakhstan opposition electoral bloc (2005) and the Naghyz Ak Zhol party (shut down in 2007) – can be called the only pro-Western political forces in the recent history of Kazakhstan. All those entities were led by similar types of individuals – typically prominent businessmen, former top officials, and liberal-minded public figures. These political organizations are constantly faced with pressure and aggression. In 2002, two leaders of Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan were jailed.<sup>148</sup> In 2006, one of the leaders of Naghyz Ak Zhol was shot and killed.<sup>149</sup>

Freedom of association in Kazakhstan is strictly regulated. The Law on Political Parties (2002) makes it very difficult for a new and independent party to institutionalize. The law requires that an initiative group holds a party's constituent conference with at least 1,000 delegates and recruit at least 40,000 members to get official registration – two extremely difficult thresholds to meet in a country with a population of only 17 million people. Human rights NGOs and labor unions also face multiple restrictions. In addition, the government blocks access to mainstream media from its critics.

## 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 4/7

There are no publicly available polls about the perception of NATO or the EU by the Kazakhstani public. According to a 2016 longitudinal study that examined the perception of the EU in the Kazakhstani press, the country's media positively perceives the role of the EU in the region, portraying the EU mainly as an economic powerhouse. The authors of the study allege that their findings coincide with similar studies of the EU's external perception.<sup>150</sup>

A recent poll by Gallup revealed that less than a third – 31% – of Kazakhstanis perceive NATO as a threat (by comparison, other PSNR states perception are: Ukraine – 35%, Tajikistan – 34%, Kyrgyzstan – 30%, Moldova – 27%, and Armenia – 20%).<sup>151</sup> The country maintains close ties with the bloc. President Nazarbayev openly and proudly praises the "broad constructive cooperation with [...] NATO to ensure security in Central Asian region".<sup>152</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 7/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 2/6

In 2012, Kazakhstan joined the charter of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) by a presidential decree. The cooperation of the republic's judiciary started in 2010 with a series of educational events and conferences. Between 2007 and 2017, upon formal requests from Kazakhstan, the Commission issued its opinions on the Ombudsman Institution reform, constitutional law on the judicial system, draft law on administrative procedures, and draft Code of Judicial Ethic.<sup>153</sup> The Venice Commission has never reviewed the Constitution of Kazakhstan, which many experts

believe puts all branches of power in direct or subtle subordination of the President. However, in 2017, the Commission released an evaluation of the proposed set of constitutional amendments. Those amendments were widely advertised as a move towards democracy, but brought minor change to the misbalanced system that effectively grants the president complete control over all branches of power. The Commission produced a vague, yet rather positive assessment, calling the reform a "step forward in the right direction."<sup>154</sup> These words were later profusely showcased by the Kazakhstani authorities.

### 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 1/7

Although the Kazakhstani constitution proclaims the independence of courts in Kazakhstan, it also endows the country's president with the prerogative of appointing all judges, based on nominations from the Supreme Judiciary Council – whose members, in turn, are appointed by the President. The Supreme Court judges are nominated by the Council, then proposed by the President for approval to the Senate, a third of which is also appointed by the President.

World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators

data showed a general improvement of the rule of law in the late 2000s, with ups and downs since then, but the overall score has never been higher than 40 out of 100.<sup>155</sup> The 2016 Rule of Law Index by the World Justice Project ranked Kazakhstan 73<sup>rd</sup> out of 113, the worst scores being in the areas of corruption, criminal justice, and fundamental rights.<sup>156</sup> Likewise, scores for the Judicial Independence sub-indicator are among Kazakhstan's least successful in the World Economic Forum's 2017 Global Competitiveness Index.<sup>157</sup>

### 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 3/6

The Constitution of Kazakhstan provides for the equal protection of rights of all citizens, but the legislation contains numerous exceptions, including the above-the-law status of the first President of Kazakhstan and special protection of privacy for judges, officials, etc.

In 2005, Kazakhstan ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Po-

litical Rights. The Optional Protocol in 2009 was also added to the latter, allowing individuals to file complaints with the UN Human Rights Committee. At the same time, Kazakhstani officials emphasize that the Committee's decisions are not binding, but rather are recommendations.<sup>158</sup>

In 2016, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released its Concluding Observations on the second periodic report on



Kazakhstan, a decennial comprehensive self-evaluation of a country's respect of human rights. Although the government's readiness to cooperate through this mechanism has been appreciated, the document's overall tone was dictated by a long list of "matters of concern" in almost every

aspect of human rights issues.<sup>159</sup> According to the U.S. State Department's report, the most serious problems are infringed electoral rights, restricted freedoms of expression, press, assembly, religion, and association, and lack of an independent judiciary and due process.<sup>160</sup>

#### 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 1/6

The ratio of acquitted persons in criminal cases with public prosecution has historically been very low – 0.2% in 2016; the highest rate in the period spanning 2009–2016 was in 2015 (0.5%), in all other years it was below a 0.5%.<sup>161</sup> In addition, judges approve 95% of detention requests and nearly all requests for extension of detention made by state

prosecutors.<sup>162</sup> However, scholars admit that in the past decade – after the introduction of jury panels for criminal cases, optional for defendants – the number of acquittals increased, as 3–12% of jury trials have been ending up with acquittals in 2009–2016.<sup>163</sup>

### 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 14/25

#### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 2/7

Kazakhstan is not a member of the European Union, and it is not a part of the EU Neighborhood Policy / Instrument or the Eastern Partnership program. Instead, Kazakhstan is a founding member of the Customs Union with Russia and Belarus, which evolved into the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in 2014. The EAEU is believed to embody an ambition of the Kremlin to restore the Soviet Union, being more of a political tool, rather than an economic alliance. Official statistical data on the EAEU support this claim – according to

that data, the export and import operations within the boundaries of the Union has been decreasing since its formation, making up only around 65% of trade in 2012–2013.<sup>164</sup>

At the same time, Kazakhstan has been a member of the World Trade Organization since 2015. The final conditions of membership approval had to consider regulations within the Eurasian Economic Union, and Russia – a WTO member since 2011 – also exerted its influence at that stage.

#### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 4/6

Kazakhstan has been consistently improving its standing in the World Bank's Doing Business reports, and currently ranks 36<sup>th</sup> of 190 countries.

The authors of this study acknowledge a series of reforms that have taken place in the country since 2008.<sup>165</sup> the overall score of Kazakhstan is high-



er than average for the East Europe and Central Asia region. The rank is among the highest among the PSNR states – behind only Georgia, the Baltic states, and Russia. The 2018 Doing Business report highlighted further improvements, most notably in protection of minority investors, access to electricity, and enforcement of contracts, but also pointed out a slight decrease in resolving insolvency (time and cost of resolving bankruptcies).<sup>166</sup>

The term “corporate law” is not used as a formal legal definition in the laws of Kazakhstan, but

the concept itself is widely referred to in official discourses and in conceptual documents. The government implements corporate governance in state-owned companies. The law on joint stock companies (corporations) was adopted in 2003, and has been amended 43 times since then.

The new Astana International Financial Center (currently in the process of establishment) states that it will be governed by a special executive authority and have a special legal regime, based on the principles of English law, and an independent court.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 3/6

Import and export trade with countries of the EU normally account for nearly 40% of Kazakhstan’s total foreign trade.<sup>167</sup> It reached \$19.3 billion from January to August of 2017, a 23% increase from the first eight months of 2016, and a half of the overall volume of trade with foreign countries.

Kazakhstan’s trade with the U.S. reached \$1.1 billion in the same time span, showing a modest 5.1% increase.<sup>168</sup> Russia (\$12 billion), China (\$7 billion), and Switzerland (\$2 billion) also top the list of Kazakhstan’s main trade partners.

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 5/6

Between 2005 and 2016, Kazakhstan attracted nearly \$240 billion of foreign direct investments (FDI). A significant drop in FDI inflow was registered in 2013–2015 due to the decreased interest of investors in oil and gas; the hydrocarbons sector used to be the main area of foreign investments. In 2016, the numbers went up by 40% to \$20.6 billion, and

a similar trend has been observed in 2017.

The EU (specifically, the Netherlands), the United States, Switzerland, and France are the main investors sending 39%, 19%, 13% and 6%, respectively, of all FDI into Kazakhstan, followed by Japan and the UK.<sup>169 170</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 5.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 1/2

The possibility of a transition to the Latin script has been publicly discussed since the country gained independence. Yet, sporadic debates and speculations were not elaborated upon until 2012, when President Nazarbayev resolutely stated in his annual State of the Nation Address that the transition is to take place.<sup>171</sup> The process has stalled since then, but then began to develop rapidly in 2017. In April, President Nazarbayev asked the government to

prepare a plan of gradual transition and develop the new Kazakh alphabet by the end of the year, and to start training teachers and preparing textbooks in early 2018.<sup>172</sup> Teaching at schools with the use of the Latin script is set to begin in 2022 and the complete transition is planned to be completed by 2025. In late October 2017, President Nazarbayev signed a decree on the gradual transition of the Kazakh language to the Latin script.<sup>173</sup>

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 1.5/6

Since 2007, the authorities have been promoting a trilingual model (Kazakh, English, and Russian) in the society. The ongoing reform of the education system presumes that certain classes will soon be taught in the English language in all secondary schools and higher educational institutions.<sup>174</sup>

According to the English Proficiency Index, Kazakhstan rests in the “very low proficiency” category. In 2016, it ranked 54<sup>th</sup> out of 63 rated countries; in 2017, Kazakhstan was downgraded to the 67<sup>th</sup> place out of 80 countries.<sup>175</sup> The overall score has improved since 2011, when the first such study was published and Kazakhstan was ranked 44<sup>th</sup> out of 44 countries.<sup>176</sup>

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 3/7

Movies produced in the Western countries (mostly the U.S.) dominate the film distribution industry in Kazakhstan. The industry operates indiscriminately for Russian and Western mainstream cinematograph, so the bias is caused by a greater volume of production in the U.S. And Europe. Movies are screened in the Russian language for commercial reasons. Cinemas do not run films in original languages, with a negligible exception of special screenings. Locally produced films are becoming more popular and numerous.

There are no laws limiting the Western content on television or in theatres, except for films involving the British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, which are banned in Kazakhstan. Western television channels broadcast over Kazakhstani cable networks, but none of them has a representative office in the country, instead making the contracts on distribution rights remotely, usually from offices in Moscow. In the fall of 2017, the authorities banned several TV stations from distribution in Kazakhstan for their failure to get registered, including Bloomberg, Rus-

sia Today, and its subsidiary, the RT Documentary Channel.<sup>177</sup> Russian TV is very popular in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstani channels often mimic the shows from the Russian television.

Kazakhstan enjoys a high Internet use rate of more than 70%. Western online news media outlets are not popular. According to Alexa.com, an Internet research organization, the websites most visited from users in Kazakhstan are Google, YouTube, and the Russian social networking platform VKontakte.

The next ten most popular websites are all local, apart from Wikipedia and Instagram.<sup>178</sup>

A 2016 research by Mediasystem agency showed that 3.3 million people – a fifth of the whole Kazakhstani population – use social media. VKontakte garnered almost 2 million users, with Instagram being the runner-up with 1.3 million accounts, followed by Mail.ru’s “Moi Mir” network, Facebook, and Twitter. Combined, popular Western social networks have nearly 1.5 million users.<sup>179</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 4/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 1.5/5

There is no data about the number of Kazakhstani citizens who have visited the West. Overall, over 2 million people travelled abroad as tourists in Q1 2016.

More than 12,000 young men and women from Kazakhstan have studied abroad under the presidential “Bolashak” (“Future”) schol-

arship program since 1993, an overwhelming majority of them choosing destinations in the West.<sup>180</sup> The last 10 years have shown an increased rate of emigration from Kazakhstan, and the net migration is negative.<sup>181</sup> Many people are leaving the country for economic reasons, often choosing the West. There is also a second wave of repatriation of Russians.<sup>182</sup>

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1/3

There are Western corporations operating in Kazakhstan under franchise contracts. Foreign retail grocery market players include Metro Cash&Carry (Germany) and Ramstore (Turkey). Carrefour (France) opened its first store in Almaty in 2016, but shut it down 17 months later. The company said it would monitor the market to return with a revised strategy. Leroy Merlin and OBI are set to open their stores in 2018. Auchan, Spar, and Ikea have been in talks on entering the market since 2016. There are no Russian

supermarket chains; local chains are the most robust in Kazakhstan.

H&M, Inditex, Gap, Marks&Spencer are among the world’s top apparel and footwear companies in the Deloitte’s Global Powers of Retailing ranking who are represented in Kazakhstan.<sup>183</sup> Coffee shops and fast-food chains include McDonalds, Burger King, KFC, Starbucks, and Costa. The Uber private transportation app is legal in Kazakhstan.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 1.5/2

Official data on mobile phone usage exceeds the ITU numbers by 6 million SIM-cards (31.2 million users). According to Budde, a telecommunications research and consultancy site, Kazakhstan has a mature and developed mobile broadband market, which grew rapidly from 23% to 57% in 2010–2013, after which it grew steadily, reaching 61% by 2016. According to Content Review, a Russian ICT think-tank, Kazakhstan occupies the 9<sup>th</sup> place

in the world in affordability of mobile broadband connection. The Connected Consumer Survey 2016 a Google-sponsored research covering 61 countries, reveals that Kazakhstan has the highest smartphone usage rate among the PSNR. 77% of respondents said they regularly accessed the Internet for personal use, e.g. streaming videos, social networking, and news. The survey indicates 86% of the Kazakhstanis go online every day.<sup>184</sup>

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF

Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
10/25	10/25	10.5/25	4.5/15	2/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 10/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 6/10

According to the Ministry of Justice of Kyrgyzstan, there are 239 political parties registered in the country.<sup>185</sup> the formation of a political party is a relatively easy process. New parties and party alliances are formed before every parliamentary and local election. In 2010, there were five parties in the Jogorqu Kenes (the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan), whereas after the 2015 elections, six parties gained seats in the Parliament. Three of those parties were new and were created after 2010. However, creating and running a party takes place for the large

part not out of ideological motives, but rather to serve regional, material, or clan interests.

In the 2017 Reporters Without Borders Freedom of the Press Index, Kyrgyzstan ranked 89<sup>th</sup>, having dropped four positions compared to the previous year. Thus, Kyrgyzstan ranks higher than such former Soviet states as Ukraine (102<sup>nd</sup>), Kazakhstan (157<sup>th</sup>), and Uzbekistan (169<sup>th</sup>), but lower than other FSU countries including Moldova (80<sup>th</sup>), Armenia (79<sup>th</sup>), and Georgia (64<sup>th</sup>).<sup>186</sup>

### 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 2/8

None of the parties represented in the Kyrgyzstan's Parliament has declared pro-Western attitudes or encouraged either orientation towards the West or membership in any Western international organizations. At the same time, there are no clearly anti-Western parliamentary parties in Kyrgyzstan, either. At the same time, some pro-Western values are evident in the parliamentary parties' activities. Programs of all those parties provide for the movement towards strengthening democracy and combating government by family clans.

Among those openly stating their commitment to Western values is the Reforma party; however, the party has never been able to win seats in either central or local elections. Non-government organizations are relatively strong in Kyrgyzstan; though they do not engage in politics directly. By participating in civil actions and criticizing the government authorities, the NGO's influence the peoples' attitudes and in some cases even the authorities themselves. In their mass, non-government organizations promote the Western values of democracy and human rights.

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 2/7

According to the annual “Kyrgyzstan Resident Survey,” 97% of the population consider Russia the chief economic partner of their country, and only 2% see it as a threat. At the same time, 50% of the respondents believe that the U.S. is a threat to Kyrgyzstan, while only 14% think that the United

States is an important partner. Attitudes toward the European Union are different: 37% perceive the EU as an important economic partner, and 10% as a threat. Concerning Kyrgyzstan recently joining the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), 79% of citizens consider it a positive event.<sup>187</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 10/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 4/6

Overall, the analysis and recommendations of the Venice Commission are carefully reviewed by the Kyrgyzstan state officials and partially considered during the legislative process. In 2015, taking into consideration critical notes of the Venice Commission and, to a greater degree, the large scale of the public criticism inside the country, the authorities made the decision to abandon their plans to amend the country’s Constitution. However, in 2016 the constitutional reform once again appeared

on the nation’s agenda by the initiative of the President and several parliamentary parties’ leaders. The Venice Commission jointly with the ODIHR again presented their analysis and made a series of recommendations on the proposed amendments. Those recommendations were partially accepted – for example, for norms affecting the Constitutional Chamber at the Supreme Court of the Republic, the “higher values” norm, and so on.

### 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 0.5/7

In the 2016 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index Kyrgyzstan ranked 83<sup>rd</sup> of 113 countries on the implementation of rule of law requirements. In the Index of Public Integrity, the country ranked 75<sup>th</sup>

of 109 in the level of judicial independence.<sup>188</sup> 189 According to surveys of the country’s population, more than 51% have a negative attitude towards the courts.<sup>190</sup>

### 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 3.5/6

Kyrgyzstan’s legislation provides a broad protection of principles and mechanisms of protecting human rights. Kyrgyzstan has joined dozens of international agreements, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social, and

Cultural Rights, Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and others. The U.S. State Department’s report indicates that there are positive changes in Kyrgyzstan in the areas of conducting fair elections and functioning of the parliamentary system.

At the same time, there are still significant problems with protecting human rights, including issues with violation of procedural mechanisms,

persecution of local NGO's, activists, and journalists, threats and blackmailing of ethnic minorities by law enforcement, etc.<sup>191</sup>

#### 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 2/6

According to the Bulletin of the Supreme Court of Kyrgyzstan, the number of "not guilty" verdicts in the country's judicial system is relatively low. In the first half of 2015, of the 7,695 completed criminal

proceedings, 178 ended with an acquittal, which corresponds to 2.3%. For the same period of 2016 that rate dropped to only 1.3% – of the 7,955 completed criminal proceedings, 107 ended with an acquittal.<sup>192</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 10.5/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 3/7

Kyrgyzstan is not an EU member and does not plan to become one. Kyrgyzstan has been a member of the WTO since 1998. In January 2016, the EU granted to Kyrgyzstan the GSP+ status. However, neither its membership in the WTO, nor

the receipt of the GSP+ status have contributed to a notable increase of Kyrgyzstan's trade with countries of the European Union. The main economic partners of Kyrgyzstan are still its neighbors – China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 3/6

The World Bank's 2018 Doing Business rating Kyrgyzstan placed 77<sup>th</sup> of 190 countries, having dropped two positions since the previous year. With this rating, Kyrgyzstan sits between Ukraine (in the 76<sup>th</sup> place) and China (in the 78<sup>th</sup>).<sup>193</sup> According to an annual survey conducted among the members of the Kyrgyzstan Chamber of Commerce,

the main obstacles on the path of business development in the country are corruption (65.8%), absence of state support operating a business (51.4%), and legislative instability (45%). High social security taxes, complex tax administration system, and human resources issues were named, along with a few other problems.<sup>194</sup>

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 3/6

National Statistics Committee of Kyrgyzstan reported that the foreign trade of the country in 2016 totaled \$5.46 billion. Kyrgyzstan's top five trade partners, in the descending order, are

China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Switzerland, and Turkey.<sup>195</sup> Countries of the European Union made up 5.5% of Kyrgyzstan's total trade in 2016.<sup>196</sup> According to the Ministry of Economics of Kyrgyzstan,

42% of all the Kyrgyz export is to Switzerland. Practically all the export to Switzerland is gold. Export of products to other countries make up the following shares: Kazakhstan 17%, Russia 9%,

Uzbekistan 8.1%, Turkey 5.8%, China 5.2%. Kyrgyzstan's main partners when it comes to exports of goods other than gold are the countries of the EAEU (more than 50%).<sup>197</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 1.5/6

The Ministry of Economics of Kyrgyzstan data indicate that the top five 2016 investors making foreign direct investments (FDI) into Kyrgyzstan are China (37%), Russia (35.8%), Canada (14.6%), Turkey (4.1%), and Kazakhstan (2.9%). Canada's comparably high share is explained by the fact that the Canadian

company Centerra Gold is the owner and operator of the Kumtor gold mine – the largest in Kyrgyzstan. Otherwise, the key foreign investors into Kyrgyzstan are China and Russia. The amount of investments from Russia totaled \$291.5 million, while Chinese investments totaled \$301.3 million.<sup>198</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 4.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 0.5/2

The Latin alphabet is not being used in Kyrgyzstan. The subject of converting to the Latin script started after President Nazarbayev of neighboring Kazakhstan ordered the development of a standard to convert the Kazakh language to the Latin alphabet. Then, one of the local parliament members – Kanybek Imanaliyev from the Ata-Meken party – proposed that Kyrgyzstan make the transition to the Latin script by 2030–

2040, in order to follow Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan.<sup>199</sup> Almazbek Atambayev, the President of Kyrgyzstan at that time, had repeatedly stated that the language would not be converted from the Cyrillic script to Latin.<sup>200</sup> One should keep in mind that all the native Central Asian languages used the Latin alphabet from 1928 to 1940. Other than Kyrgyzstan, only Tajikistan continues using the Cyrillic script for its state language.<sup>201</sup>

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 1/6

According to research performed by SIAR Research & Consulting on popularity of foreign language study in Kyrgyzstan, the English language is the most popular, followed by Turkish and Chinese.<sup>202</sup> In 2015 only 17.3% of respondents said that they wanted to study the English language; in 2017, there were twice as many. Survey respondents, evaluating their knowledge of English, remarked that

even though they had spent several years learning the language in school or college, they were often unable to freely express themselves or maintain a conversation with a native speaker. The Kyrgyz rated “below average” their command of the four primary foreign language skills.<sup>203</sup> Other European languages (German, French, and Spanish) are far less common in Kyrgyzstan than English.



### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 3/7

As stated in the “Kyrgyzstan Cinema 2020” motion picture industry development strategy, the country currently lacks reliable statistical and analytical information about the state of the industry. However, it is noted that the primary bulk of movies and television content is comprised of foreign films and TV series. Most foreign films shown in movie theaters are Hollywood productions. Kyrgyzstan itself makes approximately 100 movies annually. In 2005, there were 22 full length motion pictures, 28 shorts, and 34 documentaries made.<sup>204</sup>

The number of social media users in Kyrgyzstan grows every year. The most popular networks are Facebook, VKontakte, and Odnoklassniki. In 2015, the potential reach of Facebook was 230,000 people, and in 2017, according to data provided by the Svetlana Margolis Studio, Facebook reached approximately 400,000.<sup>205 206</sup> the target audience of VKontakte in Kyrgyzstan is 1,250,000 people.<sup>207</sup> the Odnoklassniki audience is estimated at 720,000 people.

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 2/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 1/5

There is no data about the total number of citizens of Kyrgyzstan who have been abroad – including any trips to the West. The State Migration Service of Kyrgyzstan information indicates that the primary reason for traveling abroad is migrant labor. The Migration Service has reported that every year

700,000 people travel abroad for work. In 2015, there were 520,000 Kyrgyz migrant workers in Russia, 80,000 in Kazakhstan, 14,000 in South Korea, another 14,000 in Turkey, and 30,000 in other countries, mostly non-CIS destinations (Europe, the U.S., the Middle East, and Asia).<sup>208</sup>

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 0.5/3

Kyrgyzstan has none of the world’s top-10 goods retailers. The only major hotel chain present in Kyrgyzstan is Hyatt. A new hotel which will operate under the Novotel brand is currently under construction. Of the world-famous fast-food chains, the pioneer is KFC which just opened its first location in 2017. Otherwise, Western restaurant chains

are absent from Kyrgyzstan. In the clothing segment, there is a broad selection of Western brands in Kyrgyzstan: Adidas, Ecco, Lacoste, Levi’s, Nike, Reebok, and many others. However, those brands are sold at businesses owned by local entrepreneurs who purchase products of those brands and then retail them in their stores.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 0.5/2

According to the Internet Live Stats research website, there were 2,076,000 Internet users in Kyrgyzstan in 2016. Since the total population of the country is

a little over 6 million, the rate works out to approximately 34.4%.<sup>209</sup> At the same time, the National Statistics Committee reported that in 2015 more than

4 million people were using the Internet in Kyrgyzstan, and in 2014 more than 70% of the population had Internet access.<sup>210</sup> This inconsistency in numbers could be the result of using different calculation methods, where “access to Internet” may or may not include the ownership by that person of a smart phone or tablet which has Internet access capabilities.

We Are Social international agency has reported that there are more mobile phone service subscribers in Kyrgyzstan than there are residents: more than 7 million. The number of mobile network users who access social media using their smartphones is 410,000, or about 7% of the population.<sup>211</sup>

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
		<b>19.5</b> /25	<b>17.5</b> /25	<b>24</b> /25	<b>12.5</b> /15

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 19.5/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 8/10

According to the 2017 Freedom House (USA) report, Latvia is considered a “free consolidated democracy” with an overall democracy score of 2.04 (where 1 is the highest and 7 the lowest level of freedom). This score has improved since 2016, due to improvements in the areas of judicial framework, which improved 1.75 points, and independence, which improved 1.5 points.<sup>212</sup>

According to the 2017 Latvian business register, there are 78 registered political parties in the country. Formation of political parties in Latvia is relatively easy, as a party can be established by 200 citizens over the age of 18 for a token payment of 27 euros.<sup>213</sup> In addition, any political party is eligible for government funding, provided that it has received over 2% of the votes in the previous parliamentary elections.<sup>214</sup>

A notable exception regarding formation of new parties is a law banning former members of

Communist parties from engaging in political activities. This has been pointed out as a political problem by the OSCE, alongside the repeated critique of the large number of non-citizens in Latvia, which represent over 11% of the population and are bereft of political rights on local, national, and European levels.<sup>215</sup>

Latvia enjoys freedom of the press and has received the score of 26 on a scale of 1-100, where 1 greatest and 100 the least free).<sup>216</sup>

There is, however, noticeable foreign influence on the Latvian media environment. This is particularly evident in Russian-speaking media, which are highly pro-Kremlin and support the strongest pro-Russian party, Harmony Centre.<sup>217</sup> This is a crucial issue since Latvia has a large diaspora (approximately one third of the country’s population) of ethnic Russians and other Slavic minorities that use Russian as their first language.

### 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 6/8

In the 2014 Parliamentary elections, six political parties were elected to the Saeima – the Latvian Parliament. Of the 100 seats in the Saeima,

24 went to Harmony, the only significant political party believed to have close ties with Russia. That does not, however, imply that Harmony is anti-EU

or against cooperation with the Western countries. 23 seats went to Unity, the most pro-Western party elected to the Parliament, while 21 seats went to the Union of Greens and Farmers, and 17 seats to the National Alliance. The Union of Greens and Farmers, which is currently leading the national government, is pro-Western; however, it has sought closer cooperation with Russia economically. The National Alliance is first and foremost a nationalist party; however, it is considered to be pro-Western. The Latvian Regional Alliance with

its eight seats lies at a similar point of the political spectrum with Unity, while For Latvia from the Heart with seven seats is in a similar stance to the Union of Greens and Farmers.<sup>218</sup> Looking only at party positions, it would seem that 76% of the Latvian members of parliament are pro-Western. However, this would be an oversimplification as there are certainly pro-Western members in the Harmony, while there are members in some of the nominally more pro-European parties who at least privately hold anti-Western views.

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 5.5/7

The “Return to Europe” was the defining trend in Latvia’s foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union. This trend simultaneously implied that Latvia was forcefully “taken out” of Europe by the Soviet Union, and that its rightful place was with Western Europe rather than with the Soviet Union’s successor – Russia. As stated by the Latvian Institute of International Affairs, “For the ordinary citizen, Europe is an external force that helps Latvia develop, provides security, and some prosperity, simultaneously imposing change and suppressing traditional values and prejudices, occasionally doing so against the will of the majority of the population.”<sup>219</sup> the Baltic International Bank’s latest Latvian Barometer data from September 2016 shows that 49% of the Latvian population believes that the gains from the EU membership outweigh the losses (29% believe otherwise), which is an increase from 35% in 2014.<sup>220</sup> According to the Eurobarometer survey conducted in spring of 2017,

48% of Latvians tend to trust the EU (which is 6% higher than the EU28 average), while 37% tend not to trust it (EU28: 47%). Furthermore, 68% of the Latvians identify themselves as EU citizens (EU-28: 74%).<sup>221</sup> Support for NATO in the Latvian society is stable, and according to a poll carried out by the Ministry of Defense in November 2016, 58.7% of the population believe that NATO increases Latvia’s security (19.7% believe the opposite).<sup>222</sup>

According to a poll by the National Defense Academy from June 2016, 70% of the Latvian speakers believe that joining the EU was the right choice, while 21% believe the opposite. The poll also shows that only 43% of the Russian speakers agree this statement, while 43% disagree. Similarly, 73% of the Latvian speakers believe joining NATO was the right choice, compared to 16% who disagree, while only 48% of the Russian speakers agree with that this statement.<sup>223</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 17.5/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 5/6

The Latvian Constitution complies with the requirements of the Venice Commission. However, as is highlighted by repeated recommendations of

the OSCE, Latvia still has a large number of non-citizens who do not enjoy the right to vote either on national, local, or European levels.<sup>224</sup>

### 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 5/7

According to the Freedom House data, Latvia has improved its score on Judicial Framework and Independence from 1.75 (on a scale from 1 (best) to 7 (worst)) in 2016 to 1.5 in 2017.<sup>225</sup> That reflects the consequences of the reforms implemented in 2015 to improve the efficiency of the court system. Nevertheless, the court proceedings are still very lengthy – a problem reflected by the proceedings against Latvia in the European Court of Human Rights. In 2016 there were sixteen hearings against Latvia, out of which violations were found in nine.<sup>226</sup> Several high-profile cases made the news in Latvia in the past years – related to tax evasion,

insolvency administration (highlighting abuse of power and corruption in the system), and even a court ruling for political campaign over-spending against the then leading government party. Although the levels of corruption are still high – according to Freedom House, Latvia scored 3 in 2016 (on a scale from 1 (best) to 7 (worst)), the tolerance for corrupt practices is decreasing.<sup>227</sup> Additionally, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau of Latvia, which experienced a lengthy leadership problem, finally has a new, reform-oriented leadership, chosen in an open and transparent competition.

### 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 5/6

The main human rights issues in Latvia include an inefficient judiciary, poor integration of a substantial noncitizen population, and domestic violence. However, it must be noted that Latvia has adopted Western standards of human rights legislation, and human right violations by the government are rare and

unsanctioned, as well as followed by investigations.<sup>228</sup> Latvia is a member of the core UN and Council of Europe human rights treaties, most of which were adopted back in the 1990s. Although there are still human rights problems in the country, the legislation and practical means for their protection are in place.

### 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 2.5/6

The overall number of court cases per 100 inhabitants (civil, commercial, administrative, and other) in Latvia is relatively low. For the time period spanning 2010 through 2015, it was less than 5 cases per 100 inhabitants.<sup>229</sup> In 2016, the Latvian Higher Court heard 4,351 cases: Civil Department 2,282, Adminis-

trative Department 1,027, Criminal Department 730, and Civilian Case Chamber 312.<sup>230</sup> According to the data provided by the Prosecutor's Office, the rate of acquittals in Latvia remains relatively low but stable over the past few years, fluctuating between 3 and 4% (3.56% in 2016).<sup>231</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 24/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 7/7

Latvia has been a member of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund since 1992. Latvia has also been a part of the World Trade Organization since 1999, the European Union since 2004, Eurozone since 2014 and OECD since 2016. Latvia is fully integrated with the Western markets and has a free market economy.

The sanctions that the EU placed on Russia in relation to the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Donbas resonated in the Latvian market. In the short run, it created problems for the Latvian producers exporting to Russia. However, in the long run, the imposition of sanctions resulted in the diversification of Latvian export destinations and finding new markets, including China.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 5/6

In 2016 Latvia ranked 14<sup>th</sup> in the world in the Doing Business ratings by the World Bank.<sup>232</sup> Latvia also carried out additional reforms further improving the business environment.<sup>233</sup> the situation is worse with transparency where Latvia is

listed 44<sup>th</sup> out of 176 countries in the Transparency International Corruption Perception index.<sup>234</sup> As mentioned above, corruption and lack of transparency still remain Latvia's issues, despite constant improvements in those areas.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 6/6

In 2016, Latvian exports to the EU member states accounted for 74% of the country's total exports (49.9% to Eurozone), while exports to CIS countries totaled 11.3%, and 14.7% to other countries. In turn, of all imports into Latvia 79.8%

were from the EU member states, 10.4% from the CIS countries, and 14.7% from other countries. Overall, Latvia exported goods to 195 countries and imported from 152 countries.<sup>235</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 6/6

According to the Bank of Latvia, the Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) into Latvia in 2016 totaled €13.46 billion. The share of FDI originating in the EU was €9.84 billion (73.13%). The share of FDI originating in the EU and other Western countries was €11.19 billion (83.12%). One of the largest individual investors in Latvia was Russia with €1.32 billion (9.78%), while other former Soviet countries invested €408 million (3.03%). €171

million (1.27%) invested in Latvia during 2016 originated in offshore outside the EU. However, it has to be taken into account that there are hidden investments via the Cyprian, Moldovan and Austrian financial systems, which might have their origins in the FSU or Russia.<sup>236</sup> the rest of the investments came from other countries including Turkey, Israel and Singapore (€243 million or 1.81%), and one unidentified country (€123 million or 0.91%).<sup>237</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 12.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

The Latvian language uses the Latin alphabet. However, approximately 30% of the population use Russian as their mother tongue and hence use the Cyrillic script.

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 5/6

Latvia is a multilingual state, and according to the Eurostat data, 95% of the Latvian population speaks at least one foreign language.<sup>238</sup> According to the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, in 2013, 35.6% of Latvians knew at least one foreign language, 46.2% knew at least two foreign languages, and 13.1% knew three foreign languages. English was taught in school to 97.9% of all students.

The most spoken foreign languages in Latvia are Russian (56.6%), English (48.9%), and German (18.3%).<sup>239</sup>

In the 2014 EF English Proficiency Index<sup>240</sup>, Latvia ranked 14<sup>th</sup> with a score of “high proficiency.” It is unlikely that the result has worsened, although Latvia did not participate in the most recent, 2017 rankings.<sup>241</sup>

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 5.5/7

The largest share of movies in the Latvian cinemas are Hollywood productions, while at times some local movies make it into the top 10 most watched lists.<sup>242</sup> European and Russian films are also common in the Latvian cinemas, especially during movie festivals. Typically, movies in theaters are not dubbed and have subtitles in Latvian, or more commonly in both Latvian and Russian. In accordance with the national legislation, national and regional electronic media are obliged to ensure that at least 51% of the content (excluding news, sport competitions, games, commercials, and teleshopping) contains European audiovisual products, of which at least 40% must be in the state language. Furthermore, 65% of the overall content (excluding news, sport competitions, games, commercials, and teleshopping) has to be in the state language. Content dubbed in the state language is included in this category.<sup>243</sup>

Western and Russian online media are equally accessible in Latvia as there are no legal limitations imposed by the Latvian government regarding the origin of online outlets. According to data from spring 2016, the most popular online sites as defined by average daily audience, are Google with 56.6%, Inbox (email provider in Latvian and Russian) with 39.6%, YouTube with 36.4%, Facebook with 36.2%, Delfi (news site in Latvian and Russian) with 33.3%, Draugiem.lv (Latvian social network) with 24%, Tvnet (news site in Latvian and Russian) with 22.7%, Gmail - 22.0%; ss.lv (advertisements) with 19.8%, and Apollo (news site) with 15.2%. Russian social networks such as Odnoklassniki and VKontakte account for 11.2% and 5.2%, respectively. Twitter's average daily audience is 5%.<sup>244</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 8.5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 4/5

According to the Central Statistical Bureau, the number of individual foreign trips taken by Latvian residents in 2016 was 1,249,000, an increase of 8,100 from 2015.<sup>245</sup> This does not exclude repeated trips by the same person. While visa regimes with Belarus and Russia limit Latvian citizens' trips to the East, the country's membership in the Schengen Zone (and

the mobility of people in the EU) complicates obtaining clear statistics on the numbers of people travelling to the West. According to the Central Statistical Bureau, the most common foreign destinations in 2016 were Lithuania (17%), Estonia (16.8%), Russia (9.8%), Germany (6.7%), Italy (5.8%), Sweden (5.2%), UK (4.1%), Poland (3.7%), and Belarus (3.1%).<sup>246</sup>

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 2.5/3

There is a large number of Western corporations in Latvia, despite its small market, retail, clothing, and catering sectors. With the exception of small markets, there are no barriers for the Western retailers to enter the Latvian market; however, a share of the market remains occupied by Latvian companies, as currently there is much appreciation for local crafts

and food products. However, many chains including Zara, H&M, Clarks, Nike, Rimi, Maxima, McDonalds, Costa and others are important players in Latvia. Lidl and Ikea have announced their plans to enter the Latvian market in the nearest future. Online trade platforms such as ASOS, Amway, and Abercrombie & Fitch are also widely available in Latvia.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 2/2

The Internet usage rate in the country is 79.2%,<sup>247</sup> with 71% of the Latvians using the Internet on a daily basis<sup>248</sup> – a high number taking into consideration the aging society. According to data from spring 2017, 62% of the Latvian residents use smartphones – an increase of 7% from spring 2016.

46% of the residents access the Internet on their smartphones on a daily basis, while 55% do so at least once a month.<sup>249</sup> The mobile Internet networks offered by the three main providers Tele2, Bite, and LMT are accessible to more than 95% of Latvians.



SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
	<b>22/25</b>	<b>21/25</b>	<b>23/25</b>	<b>11.5/15</b>	<b>7.5/10</b>

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION **22/25**

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 8.5/10

The creation of a new party in Lithuania requires 2,000 founding members. The quota was doubled in 2015 and in 2016 there was a case of failure to register a party due to an insufficient number of members. The election history shows that newly established parties are fully capable of crossing a threshold of 5% and securing seats and even high-ranking positions in the Seimas (the Lithuanian Parliament). Advertising during political campaigns is strictly regulated, and includes limitations on receiving and using funding and appearances in the media. Such measures were adopted in order to prevent foreign interference in the national politics.

The 2017 World Press Freedom Index, which ranked Lithuania 36<sup>th</sup> among 179 countries, noted that “media in Lithuania are reputedly independent and free to criticize the government, but not always the big business interests.”<sup>250</sup> That report, as well as the 2017 Nations in Transit assessment,

stresses the difficulties of journalistic work, including punishment for defamation, low financial sustainability, and absence of limitations on media concentration.<sup>251</sup> In December 2016, attempts by the Seimas to amend the Civil Code of Lithuania by allowing the legal prosecution of persons for expressing critical opinions were prevented by a Presidential veto.

Despite the existing challenges, the Freedom of Press 2017 report ranked Lithuanian media as free and the Nations in Transit 2017 report evaluated its democracy as consolidated.<sup>252</sup> 28% of the Lithuanian population is satisfied with how democracy works in the country, the same number of Lithuanians are neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, while 42% are not satisfied.<sup>253</sup> This may be explained by a relatively young democratic tradition, especially since satisfaction is much higher among the younger generation.

### 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 7.5/8

As of June 2017, there are 37 political parties in Lithuania; 23 of them are active, three are in the process of liquidation or reform, and the remaining 11 are under liquidation.<sup>254</sup> The Parliament elected in 2016 has representatives of 10 parties/coalitions/unions (137 members) and four independent

members. There are no radical anti-EU or anti-West movements within the Seimas. On the opposite, political parties are always willing to cooperate when it comes to securing the country’s pro-European and pro-Western path. On the eve of joining the EU, Lithuanian political parties jointly appealed to

the population to support the membership. The same is to be said about Lithuania's commitment to NATO: when commemorating Lithuania's 10 years of membership in the Alliance in 2014, the major political parties signed an agreement under which they committed by 2020 to bring the GDP

spending on the country's defense to 2%. In its current composition, 90% of the Seimas members could be classified as having pro-Western attitudes, while the remaining 10% indicate soft Euro-skepticism, but possess neither a strong rhetoric, nor the power to change the Western course.

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 6/7

As of autumn 2016, 44% of Lithuanians had positive attitudes towards the EU, a significant decrease from 60% in 2004. Among the reasons for such change are unmet expectations and assertions that the EU is responsible for internal failures, including high emigration rates, increased prices after the adoption of Euro in 2015, and poverty and social exclusion, especially in rural areas. Nevertheless, more than 80% agree with the Common Security and Defense Policy, as well as common energy and foreign policies of the EU. Most importantly, 70% of Lithuanians have positive attitudes toward the future of the European Union, which is well above the EU average of 50%. Only 25% of Lithuanians agree that it would be better for Lithuania to chart its future course outside the European Union, compared to the EU average of one-third.<sup>255</sup>

As of January 2017, 84% of respondents view membership in NATO positively, and only 9% disapprove of it. Compared to 2015, support has increased by 3% and disapproval has dropped by 1%.<sup>256</sup> 81% of Lithuanians support the permanent presence of NATO allies in Lithuania: 73% believe that dislocation of the Allied troops and increase of joint military exercises positively contribute to

Lithuania's security, 67% agree that the NATO battalion dislocated in Lithuania in 2017 helps to deter hostile countries, and 48% feel safer with the presence of Lithuanian and Allied troops and military equipment.

The positive attitudes towards the EU and NATO are associated with Lithuania's "return to the family of Europe," as well the understanding that only by participating and cooperating Lithuania can secure its independence, development, and prosperity.

Adoption of Western values and practices is a work in progress in Lithuania. The majority of the society has negative attitudes towards refugees – for example, while 24% feel compassion when they hear the word "refugee," 23% feel fear.<sup>257</sup> the majority of Lithuanians reject any connection with refugees and do not wish to have them as their friends, colleagues, or neighbors. The Lithuanian society is among the most intolerant EU societies when it comes to the LGBT community. The 2012 EU LGBT Survey showed that 27% LGBT representatives felt discriminated when applying for jobs, 42% were discriminated in other than work related matters, and 81% of LGBT persons hid their sexual orientation when at school.<sup>258</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 21/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 6/6

The Lithuanian Constitution is in compliance with the requirement of the Venice Commission. The Constitutional Court of Lithuania is actively taking part in

the work of and cooperation with the Venice Commission and there are no divisive issues between Lithuania and the Venice Commission.

### 2.2 INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 7/7

According to the 2016 Bertelsmann Transformation Index, the Lithuanian judiciary “is free of both unconstitutional intervention by other institutions as well as corruption. There are mechanisms for the judicial review of legislative and executive acts.”<sup>259</sup> The 2017 report of the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary indicates that 40% of the interviewed

Lithuanian judges agree that the government respects their independence as a judge, and about 30% disagree.<sup>260</sup> Only 12% of judges report that in the past two years they have been subjected to inappropriate pressure to make a specific decision in a case or part of a case. When it comes to the public, 26% of Lithuanians trust the courts, and 24% do not.<sup>261</sup>

### 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 5/6

Lithuania has adopted numerous laws to ensure and protect human rights, mostly during its preparations to join the EU. Among the most important documents that remain unratified is the Istanbul Convention focused on preventing and combating all forms of violence against women and domestic violence. The main reason for the delay is the requirement to include non-stereotyped gender roles into educational programs, which Lithuania interprets as a danger to

the institute of traditional family and fears that after adopting the Convention the next step will be recognition of same-sex partnerships. To note, Lithuania still does not have a civil partnership law for opposite-sex couples, either. In addition to strengthening the protection of women, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights has also urged Lithuania to tackle violence against children and build a more inclusive society for persons with disabilities.<sup>262</sup>

### 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 3/6

In 2015, 72,343 criminal complaints were filed including 68,240 crimes and 4,103 infractions. In total 17,273 persons were sentenced by the courts.<sup>263</sup>

In 2016, Lithuanian courts ruled on 17,115 criminal and 206,021 civil cases, and 16,274 persons were sentenced, with the acquittal rate of 4.9%.<sup>264 265</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 23/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 7/7

Lithuania has been a member of the WTO since May 31, 2001. Since 2004, it has been a member state of the European Union and of NATO. Thus, Lithuania is member of all the key Western institutions.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 5/6

Lithuania ranks 16<sup>th</sup> in the 2017 Index of Economic Freedom. It also holds the 16<sup>th</sup> position (out of 190 economies) in the Doing Business 2018 – an increase of 5 positions compared to 2017.<sup>266 267</sup> In the 2016 IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook Lithuania was rated 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world for procedures to start a business.<sup>268</sup> As to corruption, Lithuania is 38<sup>th</sup> best out of 176 countries according to the 2016

Corruption Perceptions Index.<sup>269</sup> Lithuania aims to increase its competitiveness by creating an appealing environment for local and foreign businesses. A new Labor Code, which was long overdue, came into effect in July 2017, with a specific focus on bringing more flexibility to employer-employee relations. Also, the procedures required for companies in order to invite and hire foreign specialists are constantly being simplified.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 5/6

The EU is Lithuania's main trade partner, accounting for 60% of Lithuanian exports and 71% of the country's imports in 2016. Russia remains the biggest trade partner by individual country with a share of about 14% of exports and imports.<sup>270</sup> But Russia's share has been gradually decreasing: for example, in January-March 2014 the share of Lithuania's exports to Russia was 19.8% and imports 22.6%.<sup>271</sup>

the trade with Russia decreased especially after EU introduced sanctions against Moscow due to illegal annexation of Crimea and the war in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>272</sup>

The U.S. is an important export partner; in 2016 it ranked in the 6<sup>th</sup> position and accounted for 5% of all the exports (\$1.1 billion), while the volume of imports were 3.5 times lower (\$316 million).<sup>273</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 6/6

In 2016 five Western countries accounted for more than half of the foreign direct investments into Lithuania: Sweden (19.1%), the Netherlands (12.1%), Ger-

many (10.1%), Poland (7.3%), and Norway (7%).<sup>274</sup> Neither Russia, nor any other CIS country made a significant amount of investment into Lithuania.

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 11.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

The written Lithuanian language is based on the Latin alphabet.

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 3.5/6

According to the 2016 Official Lithuanian Statistics, the majority of Lithuanians (86%) also speak Russian, while the second most popular foreign language is English, spoken by 45% of the population.<sup>275</sup> Senior citizens and ethnic minorities (Poles 6.6% of the population, Russians 5.8%, Belarusians 1.2%, and Ukrainians 0.5%) have a good command of Russian, while English is more popular among the younger

generation. Among other popular foreign languages are Polish is spoken by 15% of the population, German (12%), and French (3%). Overall, the Lithuanians are above the EU average with 92% of population being able to speak at least one foreign language, 52% two languages, and 18% three languages, while the percentage of EU citizens speaking foreign languages are 54%, 25%, and 10%, respectively.<sup>276</sup>

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 6/7

The majority of movies in the Lithuanian cinemas are Western. At a time of writing, the main commercial movie theater in the country advertised only four Lithuanian movies and two of Russian origin, while the remaining – more than 20 – were produced in the West. The National Lithuanian channel LRT TV is steadily increasing the share of European/Western/international production in its broadcasting. However, monitoring the content of commercial TV channels revealed that some channels' lineup consists of up to 30% and more of movies and TV shows produced in Russia.<sup>277</sup> the Lithuanian government is aware of the Russian tools of disinformation, therefore closely

monitoring the media for them. Several Russian TV channels were suspended for airing unethical content, encouraging hatred and distorting the historical truth. Also, movie theaters are refusing to show reality-distorting Russian movies.

For several years Lithuania has been a leader in the fastest public Wi-Fi ratings.<sup>278</sup> 50% of Lithuanians use social networks daily.<sup>279</sup> the most popular social network is Facebook with a market share of 67.57%. Fewer people use Pinterest (11.11%), Twitter (5.78%), YouTube (5.07%), Tumblr (3.63%), Reddit (2.45%), and VKontakte (1.55%).<sup>280</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 7.5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 4/5

Compared with Q1 2015, in Q1 2016 the number of Lithuanians traveling abroad was greater by 4.7%. There were 329,900 trips made in 2016, 10% of which were tourist trips planned through travel agencies (tourism declined by 7.4% compared to 2015). Most travelers went to the United Kingdom (40,700), Belarus (30,000), Poland (24,500), Latvia (21,900), Denmark (19,800), and Norway (17,800). The UK, Denmark, and Norway are also popular destination for labor migrants; therefore some assume that the purpose of travel was either work or visiting family members or friends. Lithuanians also prefer vacationing in Bulgaria, Egypt, Greece, and Turkey, where services tend to be in a more affordable price range.

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1.5/3

According to the CBRE Understanding Retail Destinations report, market condition in Lithuania can be described as promoting sustainable growth. Lithuania was ranked 53<sup>rd</sup> best retail destination in the world.<sup>281</sup> Last year Marks&Spencer and Prisma announced their plans to exit Lithuania, while Lidl decided to enter the country. IKEA, Apple iDeal, clothing chains including H&M, Benetton, Esprit, LINDEX, Zara, and Mango, as well as fast-food chains such as KFC, McDonald, Subway, and Hesburger are established in Lithuania. However, it is a rather limited market, and local pizza and coffee chains have already occupied the market share that could otherwise be of interest to Starbucks or Pizza Hut.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 2/2

In autumn of 2017, 46% of population connected to the Internet via smartphones – a 6% increase compared to spring of 2016. During the workdays, Lithuanians spend around 54 minutes using the Internet via smartphones (16 minutes more than in 2016), and one hour during weekends (20 minutes more).<sup>282</sup>

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF

Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
15.5/25	11.5/25	16.5/25	7/15	5.5/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 15.5/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 6/10

Moldova’s track record on political freedom has been declining over the past few years. Once portrayed as a top reformer in the region and a “success story” by the EU, the Moldovan political environment has deteriorated following the strengthening of the Democratic Party’s power and influence.<sup>283</sup>

There are no major barriers in forming new political parties, especially from the legal perspective. Overall, party registration processes were successful; however, there are some isolated cases of delays. Today, there are 45 parties registered in Moldova.<sup>284</sup>

A more severe situation is observed in the areas of political association and freedom of political activity. Investigative media, such as “Ziarul de Garda,” noted that as a result of power consolidation, many mid-level professionals in state institutions – mayors, as well as members of the Parliament – are associated with and influenced by the incumbent ruling elite.

As a result, the governing Democratic Party continues gaining members at a fast rate. Nearly one-fifth of all mayors in the country belong to the Democratic Party, and 22 Members of Parliament defected to join the existing 19 Democratic Party members. As a result, the Democratic Party became the biggest in parliament, with 41 out of 101 members. Although some joined voluntarily, the opposition claims that

many joined under pressure exerted through law enforcement agencies.<sup>285</sup> OSCE claimed the most recent presidential election in 2016 were “competitive and fundamental freedoms were respected.”<sup>286</sup> However, the OSCE report also noted a series of shortcomings when it came to campaign funding and use of lobbying.

Freedom of the media is on a decline due to increasing influence and concentration of media ownership by the ruling elite. Moldova’s most powerful oligarch, Vlad Plahotniuc, is believed to control about 60-70% of the mainstream media.<sup>287</sup> Some other media outlets belong to President Igor Dodon. Their control limits access to media for all other political actors.

Recently, most of the criticism in political reforms focuses on changes in the electoral law from a proportional to a mixed electoral system. Many observers, including the Venice Commission, believe these changes, in tandem with the support of media and local administrators and their access to funds, will advance incumbent political players.<sup>288</sup>

The worsening of political freedom is also confirmed by the NIT Freedom House report, which shows a stable decline since 2013 (from 4.82 in 2013 to 4.93 in 2017).<sup>289</sup>

## 1.2 PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 5.5/8

The Parliament in Moldova is quite divided when it comes to pro-Western attitudes. There is a pro-Western informal coalition in the Parliament formed by the Democratic Party, along with the Liberal Party, the European People's Party, and the Liberal Democratic Party, which total 66 out of 101 seats. Additionally, these parties also support Moldova's joining the EU. In certain cases, other parties – even the Communist Party led by former President Vladimir Voronin – also express pro-EU opinions which are distinct from the other parties.<sup>290</sup>

One should note that the above parties are pro-EU and less pro-NATO. The North Atlantic Alliance has sympathizers in some of the parties – more so in the Liberal Party, Liberal Democratic Party, and European People's Party – but the only party that states its support for Moldova's joining NATO in their political agenda is the Liberal Party.<sup>291</sup>

Despite the official ideological narrative of self-proclaimed pro-Western parties, their adherence to pro-Western values is often questioned considering the adoption of laws and actions contradicts the core principles of the Western world. For instance, the \$1 billion banking fraud occurring under the ruling of pro-Western parties.<sup>292</sup>

The most prominent voice against the EU and NATO is the president and Socialist Party leader, Igor Dodon. The Socialist Party's playbook is similar to the one employed in Ukraine and Georgia, promoting that idea that the country's substantive supporter is Russia, while “the West wants us to become their slave” and economic relations with the West are not beneficial to Moldova.<sup>293</sup>

## 1.3 WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION. 4/7

Public opinion is polarized over the European Union. Although a plurality of citizens (49%) would vote in favor of integration into the EU, the Russian-led Eurasian Union (EAEU) is still supported by 38%.<sup>294</sup> In the recent years, the two Unions have increasingly competed for public favorability. However, Russia is seen as the greatest geopolitical threat: 28% label is as such, compared to the United States (20%), Ukraine (16%), the EU (9%), and Romania (7%).

The close numbers of the US and Ukraine should be correlated with the number of Russian supporters in Moldova.

At the same time, NATO is largely not supported in Moldova, with 43% against NATO and only 22% regarding it favorably. The root cause of the negative opinion towards NATO is related to the high consumption the Russian media content which portrays NATO as a menace.



## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 11.5/25

### 2.1 COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 4.5/6

The Republic of Moldova has a long history of cooperation with the Venice Commission on constitutional changes and key reforms. The recommendations of the Venice Commission are respected in most of the cases, but there are some exceptions. The Commission did not advise the recent change by Parliament to switch the electoral system from proportional to mixed. The Venice Commission opined

that, due to a “lack of consensus on this polarizing issue, such a fundamental change, while a sovereign prerogative of the country, is not advisable at this time.”<sup>295</sup> Although the Venice Commission’s recommendations are non-binding, they are extremely important as they reflect the position of the EU, which in turn makes it difficult for the incumbent powers to overlook the Commission’s opinion.

### 2.2 INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 1.5/7

Independence of the justice system is one of the most problematic areas in Moldova despite certain legal improvements. According to recent polls, Moldovans increasingly approve of the court system, with 14% of respondents having had a favorable view of the courts in September 2016 and 28% in March 2017.<sup>296</sup> However, Moldova’s judiciary independence has serious shortcomings when compared with other countries. The 2016 Rule of Law Index ranked Moldova 77<sup>th</sup> out of 113.<sup>297</sup>

The functioning of a judiciary – its independence, impartiality, and integrity – represents one of the key issues in Moldova. Although Moldova’s rate of implementation of the GRECO recommendations is at 83%, the results are yet to be seen.<sup>298</sup> a major obstacle to the reform of the judiciary and its independence is the Superior Council of Magistracy (SCM), which is the self-governing body of the judicial system. The SCM often disregarded the legal provisions in selecting and promoting judges, as well as not disclosing the reasoning behind its decisions to the public.<sup>299</sup>

### 2.3 LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 3.5/6

The rapprochement with the EU beginning in 2010 brought some positive developments in the area of human rights. The new legislation which was adopted under the EU Visa Liberalisation Action Plan advanced the human rights agenda by modernizing the system. First of all, the new policies had a positive impact on the protection against discrimination and established better conditions for the freedom of speech.

alization of the Roma community, and harassment of LGBT people.<sup>300 301</sup> Violation of human rights and lack of fair trials generated a high number of complaints to the European Court for Human Rights. In 2016 there were 839 cases recorded against Moldova, which is 17% less than in 2015, but also four times higher than the European average, which demonstrates a deep distrust in the rulings made by national courts.<sup>302</sup>

At the same time, such organizations as Civil Rights Defenders and Amnesty International reported serious human rights issues such as: poor conditions in the penitentiary institutions, little progress to address structural causes of impunity for torture and other ill-treatment, lack of fair trails, hate speech, margin-

The most serious violations of human rights are taking place in the Russian-sponsored breakaway region of Transnistria. The grave human rights abuses include torture, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions, and almost non-existent freedoms of expression and association.

## 2.4 NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 2/6

The rate of acquittals is 3%, which is below average in democratic countries. Moreover, the rate of issuing arrest warrants on prosecutors' demands is constantly higher than 75%, despite the critique

from the European Court for Human Rights that the power of arrest is applied in Moldova too frequently and often unreasonably. On top of this, the rate of granting seizure warrants is over 98%.<sup>303</sup>

# 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 16.5/25

## 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 4.5/7

Moldova is pursuing membership in the European Union, but remains far from actually joining. Some progress toward integration has been made, however. Moldova (along with Ukraine and Georgia) has signed an Association Agreement with the EU, which includes the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA).<sup>304</sup> the agreement was applied provisionally in 2014 and came

into full effect in July 2016. The results are modest for now; however, a certain increase of trade with the EU has been noted.<sup>305</sup>

Since 2001, the Republic of Moldova has been a member of the WTO, helping to boost trade and create proper conditions for other agreements in the region.

## 3.2 EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 4/6

In the World Bank's 2018 Doing Business report Moldova ranks 44th of 190 world economies, which indicates a stable improvement from the 103<sup>rd</sup> place in 2009.<sup>306</sup> the best conditions for business are in the areas of registering property (20<sup>th</sup>), starting a business (23<sup>rd</sup>), paying taxes (32<sup>nd</sup>), protecting minority investors (33<sup>rd</sup>), and trading across borders (35<sup>th</sup>). However, in terms of issuing construction permits, Moldova is ranked 165th, which is severely impacting Moldova's overall score. Although the regulatory environment for business has improved over the past eight years, the improvements did not lead to any significant change in the number of international businesses operating in Moldova.

Business activity is severely limited by high corruption and bureaucracy. In the Corruption Perceptions Index, Moldova is ranked 123<sup>rd</sup> of 176 countries, and continuing to decline since 2010.<sup>307</sup>

Bureaucracy is also a salient issue. A recent illustration of the problem is the withdrawal from Moldova by the Romanian construction materials retailer Dedeman "because of administrative barriers and excessive bureaucracy," related to issuing the certificate of urbanism for building a shopping center.<sup>308</sup>

### 3.3 WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 4.5/6

The European Union is the key economic partner of Moldova. In 2016, Moldova's exports to the EU accounted for 65.1% of its total trade, and imports for 49.1%. The growth of economic ties with the EU has been enormous for the last ten years. In 2005, 50.5% of exports went to the countries of the CIS (mostly to Russia) and 40.6% to the EU. Today, Moldova's exports and imports to Russia (mostly energy resources) are 11.4% and 13.3%, respectively. This drop is not only the result of strengthening the ties between the EU and Moldova but also due to Russia's embargos on wine, meat, and agricultural products – widely believed

to be issued in retaliation for pursuit of stronger European integration. Today, Moldova's number one economic partner is Romania – Moldova exports 25.1% of its traded goods to and imports 13.7% from Romania.<sup>309</sup> Interestingly enough is the Russia-sponsored breakaway region of Transnistria is also selling most of its goods on the EU market and in Romania, despite its strong geopolitical ties to Russia. Of the global economic players, China and especially the USA are missing. Exports to the USA account for 0.8% and imports for 1.3% of Moldova's trade, while the numbers for China are 0.7% and 9.8%, respectively.<sup>310</sup>

### 3.4 WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 3.5/6

Foreign direct investments (FDI) into Moldova's economy are steadily decreasing recently. In 2015, FDI totaled \$2.63 billion, compared to \$3.44 billion in 2012. The top five investors are Russia (28.3%), the Netherlands (12.4%), Cyprus (8.5%), Spain (8%), and France (7.8%).<sup>311</sup> Although more than a half of total investments are coming from the EU countries, financial experts in Moldova claim that a big part of foreign investments are actually Moldovan money reinvested through countries with

special fiscal policies, such as the Netherlands and Cyprus.<sup>312</sup> With regard to the banking sector, most of the investments come from Italy, Romania, France, and Germany.<sup>313</sup>

Moldova's investment attraction is limited due to a series of factors: a small domestic market, combined with the population's low purchasing power, as well as mass migration of the active labor force.

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 7/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

Since gaining independence, the Republic of Moldova uses the Latin alphabet. Although prior to the USSR, Moldova used the Latin alphabet – both part of the Great Romania and of the Russian

Empire – the language use shifted to Cyrillic under Soviet authorities. Moreover, the Soviet authorities renamed the Romanian language to Moldovan, to show that Moldovans spoke a different language.

## 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 2/6

There are no public opinion polls or statistics on the level of knowledge of foreign languages in Moldova. For years, the Russian language used to be the first mandatory foreign language studied at all levels. However, beginning with the academic year 2018–2019, the Russian language will no longer be a mandatory discipline and will become an elective.<sup>314</sup> English will become the main foreign language taught in schools. The level of English in Moldova is poor and while many young people do

command a conversational level of English, one would barely be able to find a person with an outstanding level of English.<sup>315</sup>

There is a certain number of people who speak French, given that this was a foreign language taught in schools during the Soviet Union and that it shares Latin roots with Romanian. However, the level of French proficiency among Moldovans is still assessed as being low.

## 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 3/7

There is a broad audience watching Western films in Moldovan movie theaters. In November 2017, Moldova's largest cinema chain "Patria" was showing 18 Western movies and two Russian movies.

Due to its language diversity, several initiatives tried to introduce mandatory quota on movie distribution language; however, they have failed. Since 2010, some of the films – especially cartoons – were distributed in the Romanian language, while the majority of motion pictures are still in Russian with Romanian subtitles. The cinema chain "Patria" explains that Russian is "a language of inter-ethnic communication" and, therefore, the distribution of films in the Russian language is ensuring equal access for all – although not for the majority of population, of which 80% speaks Romanian language.<sup>316 317</sup> The lack of films in original languages in the movie theaters is compensated by specialized "movie weeks" organized by a number of countries and by film festivals such as "Cronograf."

The most popular television channels are Russian channels, which shows content favorable to the Russian government.<sup>318</sup> The issue of banning Russian channels is actively discussed; however, due to the vested interests of incumbent politicians, it took a long time until the ban of the foreign propaganda was adopted by the Moldovan parliament.<sup>319</sup>

The social networks used in Moldova are diverse and constantly changing, with an increasing number of Facebook and Instagram users. In 2017, every third Moldovan had at least one account on social networks. In the first place is the Russian social network Odnoklassniki with 1.2 million members, followed by Facebook with 760,000 (which grew by 190,000 in just one year), Instagram and VKontakte with 250,000 each, LinkedIn with 141,000, and Twitter with 25,000.<sup>320</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 5.5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 3/5

Moldovans are quite mobile and often travel abroad, often for seasonal or permanent work. The most popular travel destinations are Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France since it is easy for a Romanian-speaking person to learn the languages of these countries. In Italy alone there are reportedly more than 300,000 Moldovans, which is about 10% of Moldova's current population.<sup>321</sup> A large number of seasonal labor migrant workers go to Russia; usually low-education and low-skilled workers.

There are two elements that increased the Moldovans' travel to Western countries: many Moldovans (about 800,000) who have Romanian citizenship and passports that allow them to travel and work freely in the EU,<sup>322</sup> and Moldova's own visa-free travel arrangement within the Schengen area since 2014,<sup>323</sup> which resulted in flourishing tourism. The US remains a popular destination for students through the "work and travel" programs.

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1/3

The Republic of Moldova has many foreign retailers in the country. Among the biggest companies is Metro Cash & Carry, a German wholesaler. The German supermarket chain Lidl and retail chain Kaufland (both part of the Schwarz-Gruppe) also announced that they will open their first stores in Moldova in 2018. The rest of the market is dominated by local chains such as, Linella, Nr1, and Fidesco, but also by Ukrainian chains such as Fourchette and Green Hills. In terms of fast-food and restaurants, Moldova has McDonalds, KFC, and Roberts Coffee. Some Ukrainian restaurants opened in Moldova, and Romanian companies are showing increasing interest in the country.

Several companies in other sectors are also worth mentioning. These include the French mobile provider Orange, the Turkish Moldcell, the Spanish Gas Union Fenosa energy provider and the Swiss Lafarge (LafargeHolchim). When it comes to clothing, foreign brands are poorly represented. Among foreign brands that have market presence are athletic wear retailers (Adidas, Puma, and Nike) and such brands as United Colors of Benetton. Many Moldovans prefer to order foreign brands online, but a series of designer brands have production facilities in Moldova. Among those are Versace, Armani, United Colors of Benetton, Max&Co, NafNaf, Trussardi, Primark, Max Mara, Prada, Nike, Dolce & Gabbana, Calvin Klein, Moncler and Geospirit.<sup>324</sup>

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 1.5/2

There is an increase in Moldovans using the mobile Internet, smartphones, and tablets. According to the 2017 official data, the number of people accessing the Internet from mobile phones, tablets, and other devices has exceeded 2 million people (of the 3.6 million population).

Especially noteworthy is the number of people using 4G networks reached 0.5 million, which is 40% more than one year ago.<sup>325</sup> The numbers will likely increase since 4G networks in Moldova now cover about 97% of the country's territory.

# Tajikistan

# 19.5/100

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF

Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
4.5/25	3/25	6.5/25	4/15	1.5/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 4.5/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 1/10

The Freedom House report classified Tajikistan as a “Not Free” country in 2017. The country’s degree of freedom score was 6.5 on a 1–7 scale (7 indicates the lowest level of freedom) and situation is likely to decline. Before and after the parliamentary elections in March 2015, representatives of the opposition were subjected to persecution. The most notable event was the arrest of opposition leaders and the banning of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), which was done in violation of the guarantees of political pluralism provided for by the peace treaty that ended the Civil War in 1997.<sup>326</sup> The Supreme Court of Tajikistan classified IRPT as a terrorist group in September 2015.<sup>327</sup>

The Constitution provides for a multiparty political system; however, the government tends to suppress political pluralism, as noted in the annual U.S. State Department report on human rights.<sup>328</sup> In May 2016, a referendum was held in the country, in which non-secular political parties were outlawed, and all

term limitations for President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon were abolished. 94.5% of the citizens were in favor of the changes.<sup>329</sup>

The Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan reported that seven political parties and 2,800 public associations were registered in the country.<sup>330</sup> Following the 2015 elections, representatives of five parties were voted into the lower house of the Tajikistani Parliament (the Majlisi Namoyandagon). The People’s Democratic Party (PDPT), which has 51 of 63 seats in the Parliament, is the largest in the country – its Leader is President Emomali Rahmon. Of the six “opposition” parties none are indeed oppositional – two of them were even created by the authorities.<sup>331</sup>

In the 2017 Reporters Without Borders Freedom of the Press Index, Tajikistan ranked 149<sup>th</sup> of 180 countries, which was one position up from the previous year. Next to Tajikistan in this rating was Russia in the 148<sup>th</sup> spot, and Belarus in the 153<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>332</sup>

### 1.2 PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 1.5/8

The ruling People’s Democratic Party is inclined to develop relationships with political parties of other countries in the region, and the drive towards cooperation with Russia is the predominant priority. In February 2017, the PDPT signed a cooperation agree-

ment with the ruling party of Russia – United Russia. None of the parties in Tajikistan have called for the integration into Western international associations, and politicians’ statements on the subject are generally very cautious. Since 2015, the foreign policy of Ta-

Tajikistan prioritizes relationships with the countries of the CIS.<sup>333</sup> Relations with Russia take the first place in the country's foreign policy Vision Statement.<sup>334</sup>

At the same time, the Tajikistani leadership attempts to develop relations with the U.S. In the beginning of 2017, a meeting between the Presidents of Tajikistan and the United States took place, and President Rahmon also met with representatives of the American business. The nation's Vision State-

ment iterates that, "The Republic of Tajikistan in consideration of the great authority and rule of the U.S. in the world politics and economics will continue putting forth maximum effort to develop multifaceted relations".<sup>335</sup> The European Union is also viewed as an important economic partner. Tajikistan is not a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (in 2017, Tajikistan's politicians stated that they were studying the pros and cons of the country's potential EAEU membership).<sup>336</sup>

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 2/7

Sociological surveys that could help draw conclusions about the foreign policy attitudes of the country's citizens are rarely conducted in Tajikistan. It is logical to assume that pro-Russian attitudes are predominant in the country. For example, a 2014 survey indicated that 85% of Tajiks trust Vladimir Putin, followed by the leader of China in the second place with 31.1%, and the President of the United States in third with 26.5%. 79.8% of Tajiks called Russia the most powerful nation in the world. 66.8% supported the Russian annexation of the Crimea.<sup>337</sup>

At the same time, the country's authorities admit that many Tajiks (2016 statements indicate approximately 1,000 people) have joined the fighters of the Islamic State (ISIS), which has declared

war on the West. The most scandalous incident was the joining of the Islamic State by the former Tajik Police OMON (SWAT) unit commander Gulumurod Khalimov.<sup>338</sup> In his video address he criticized the foreign policy of Tajikistan for its cooperation with Russia and the U.S. Observers have been noting, however, that the numbers can be exaggerated; moreover, not everyone who has sided with ISIS has anti-West convictions – financial reasons can be their primary motive.<sup>339</sup>

State mass media in Tajikistan frequently bring up the West in the context of geopolitical confrontation: i.e. stating that the West is promoting the idea of "colored revolutions," thus threatening stability in the region.<sup>340</sup>

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 3/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 1/6

In 2014, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission) provided its review of the draft of the constitutional law regarding the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Tajikistan.<sup>341</sup> Tajikistan received the same rec-

ommendations in 2013 for the draft of the Judicial Ethics Code.<sup>342</sup> This means that since its cooperation began in 2009, Tajikistan has sent inquiries to the Venice Commission for input only twice. The Tajikistani government did not seek recommendations



of the European specialists on the most recent constitutional reform in the country.<sup>343</sup>

In a referendum held on May 22, 2016, citizens of Tajikistan voted on 41 constitutional amendments. The most notable of those: the President shall be assigned the title of “Leader of the Nation,” which secures the ability to be re-elected to presidency an unlimited number of times, and the President shall be provided a lifetime immunity from prose-

cution in the court. Another important amendment reduced the minimum age for a presidential candidate from 35 to 30 years, which gave cause for speculation that President Rahmon’s son Rustam Emomali would thus be made able to participate in the presidential elections of 2020, since he would be 33 years of age by that time. After the Constitution was adopted in 1994, amendments were made in 1999, 2003, and 2016 – all of them had to do with increasing the presidential powers.<sup>344</sup>

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 0.5/7

Freedom House gave Tajikistan the lowest possible independence of courts grade (7). In the Index of Public Integrity, the annual rating of judicial independence, the country ranked 85<sup>th</sup> of 109, which is the worst showing of all the former Soviet countries in this rating.<sup>345</sup>

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 1/6

The Constitution and legislation of Tajikistan provide for the protection of human rights, but at the same time, Tajikistan is harshly criticized by human rights organizations for substantial violations in this area. Moreover, Western governments from time to time appeal to the government of Tajikistan to uphold human rights in the country. In 2016, the U.S. State Department assessed

Tajikistan as a “country that’s cause for special concern” from the standpoint of freedom of religion, noting “systematic, ongoing, outrageous violations.”<sup>346</sup> the European Parliament in its resolution on “the state of prisoners of faith” in Tajikistan specifically made an appeal to free all persons, “deprived of their freedom on politically motivated accusations.”<sup>347</sup>

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 0.5/6

Acquittals are practically never issued in Tajikistan. In 2016, only thirteen not-guilty verdicts were reached. Overall that year the judiciary of the country reviewed more than 15,000 civil, family, criminal, and administrative motions made by investigative agencies, and petitions of correctional facilities and enforcement agents.<sup>348</sup>

# 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 6.5/25

## 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 3/7

On March 2, 2013, Tajikistan became the 159<sup>th</sup> full member of the WTO. The cooperation of Tajikistan with the EU is guided by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which came into effect in

2010, and the “European Union and Central Asia: Strategy for a New Partnership,” also dated 2010. Tajikistan is also a beneficiary of the EU’s General System of Preference (GSP).<sup>349</sup>



### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 1/6

American companies in Tajikistan complain of incidents of bribery when participating in state purchases, receiving licenses, solving economic disputes, and paying taxes, as noted in the U.S. State Department's report on Tajikistan's investment climate.<sup>350</sup> the political interference in business is extremely widespread. Western observers have called Tajikistan a kleptocracy in which top

positions are occupied by the relatives of President Rahmon and his circle.<sup>351</sup>

In the World Bank's 2018 Doing Business rating Tajikistan is 123<sup>rd</sup> of 190 countries, having improved its ranking by five positions since last year.<sup>352</sup> It is, however, still the worst ranking country of the former Soviet Union.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 0.5/6

The share of Western countries in Tajikistan's trade is minimal. As of the first half of 2017, Russia remains the primary exporter: 34% of all goods imported into Tajikistan come from Russia. Kazakhstan with 19% is in the second spot and China is third with 18%. Turkey (4%) and Germany (3%) round off the top five. Exports from Tajikistan go to: Kazakhstan

(more than 35%), Turkey (22%), Taiwan (7.3%), Afghanistan (6.5%), Uzbekistan (5.6%), China (4.1%), Iran (2.2%), Russia, U.S., Pakistan, and Italy (about 1.5%). In this time span, Tajikistan's trade volume with countries of the CIS totaled \$964 million (about 58%), and with non-CIS countries – over \$718 million (about 42%).<sup>353</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 2/6

The amount of foreign investments into Tajikistan's economy is very low in comparison with regional or international standards. In 2016, the amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) was only \$434 million. The overall amount of investments was valued at

\$3 billion USD.<sup>354</sup> Countries investing the most into the economy of Tajikistan were China (78%), Russia (10%), the UK (7.5%), France (3%), and Switzerland (2.4%). The overall investments from the EU and the U.S. barely reached 17%.<sup>355</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 4/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 0.5/2

In 1922, in compliance with the language policy of the USSR, the process of converting the Tajik language from the traditional Arabic/Persian script to the Latin alphabet was launched and completed by 1936. However, just three years later in 1939, a new written language reform started, and the language was converted to the Cyrillic alphabet. The discussion about returning to the roots – either adopting the Latin alphabet, or the Ara-

bic/Persian script – is brought up in Tajikistan from time to time. However, President Rahmon warned against the multiple calls to a speedy transitioning of the Tajik language from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Arabic script, saying they are “dangerous games” whose goal is the destabilization of the situation in the country and incitement of war. In his opinion, the country's population is not ready for such severe changes right now.<sup>356</sup>

#### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 0.5/6

25% of the citizens of Tajikistan communicate in Russian fluently, 60% know Russian better than average, and 15% speak it with difficulty. Study of the Russian language is mandatory starting in elementary school. The part of the population speaking English, French, German, and other Western languages is very small – about 1.5–2%. Learning foreign languages starts in the fifth grade. The quality of foreign

language teaching leaves much to be desired, especially when it comes to rural schools. Many teachers have left the country as migrant workers; there is also a major shortage of textbooks in schools.<sup>357</sup> At the same time, there is the University of Central Asia, founded in 2000, where teaching is done in the English language; there are also several English language schools in the capital city of Dushanbe.<sup>358</sup>

#### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 3/7

Movies produced in Western countries are common in Tajikistan's cinema theaters. In November 2017, of the nine movies being shown, four were American, and one each from Germany, France, and Australia. The remaining two motion pictures were Russian.<sup>359</sup>

Major websites are fairly frequently subject to being blocked in the country. For instance, in 2015, when it became known that a former Tajik SWAT commander had joined the Islamic State, YouTube was blocked. In the beginning of October 2014, social networks including VKontakte and Facebook, YouTube, and Russian news publications, as well as the Russian-language section of Wikipedia, were

blocked by the authorities. The government denies having issued official instructions to the providers.<sup>360</sup>

At the same time, YouTube is one of the most visited websites in Tajikistan. Among web leaders is also the Russian social network Odnoklassniki (in the second place). Facebook is the eighth most popular site, competing with the Russian VKontakte network. Instagram is also quite popular in the 15<sup>th</sup> spot. Twitter is notably absent from the list of the 50 most visited websites.<sup>361</sup>

Still, as of June 2017 there were only 84,000 Facebook account holders – no more than 1% of the country's population.<sup>362</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 1.5/10

#### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 0.5/5

There are no openly available statistical data about the trips citizens of Tajikistan take to other countries as tourists. However, the country keeps track of those citizens who travel to other countries for work.<sup>363</sup> Thus, it is known that the number of

migrant workers who traveled out of the country in 2013 totaled 799,700 people – indicating that it nearly doubled in comparison with 2005 (according to data from migration cards, meaning one cannot rule out double-entry accounting).<sup>364</sup> the over-

whelming majority of foreign migrant workers from Tajikistan traveled to the countries of the CIS – 790,400 people (98.8%): mostly to Russia – 782,200 people (97.8%) and other former Soviet countries – 8,200 people (1%). The number of those

traveling to non-CIS countries was 9,300 people (a little over 1%). According to the Federal Migration Service of Russia, in 2015 there were 990,275 citizens of Tajikistan in Russia – basically one-tenth of the Tajikistani population.<sup>365</sup>

## 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 0.5/3

Of the worldwide-known Western franchises operating in Tajikistan, of note are the fast-food restaurants Southern Fried Chicken and Burger King, the clothing chain MEXX, the hypermarket Auchan, and the Coca-Cola factory – all operating under master franchises.<sup>366</sup> a Baskin Robbins ice cream cafe

opened in Dushanbe in 2016. Of the largest international hotel chains, Tajikistan has Sheraton (built in 2014), and Hyatt (built in 2009). In general, Western corporations proceed with caution when it comes to entering Tajikistan.<sup>367</sup>

## 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 0.5/2

In 2016 the number of Internet users in Tajikistan was 18.7% of the population – 1.6 million people of the 8.7 million total population.<sup>368</sup> the number of mobile service subscribers in the country dropped by 2.5 million people – from 11.2 million in January 2016 to 8.7 million in the beginning of 2017.<sup>369</sup>

There has been a decrease in the number of active subscribers, from 5.2 million to 4.4 million people. At the same time, the number of mobile accounts exceeds the population of the country by 9%. Supposedly, this is due to some citizens owning several SIM cards.<sup>370</sup>

# Turkmenistan 17.5/100

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
		3.5/25	3/25	6/25	3.5/15

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 3.5/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 0.5/10

During the final years of the Soviet Union, Turkmenistan remained immune to the political liberalization that swept across the other republics. Saparmurat Niyazov, who became First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) in 1985, supported the hardliners during the August 1991 coup in Moscow. Following independence, which was forced on the country rather than fought for, Niyazov remained in power. He ran unopposed for President in 1992, winning 99.5% of the vote. Two years later, he became the first former Soviet leader to extend his term in office, prolonging his tenure until 2002. Niyazov, who styled himself as Turkmenbashi, or leader of the Turkmen, became leader for life in 1999. Niyazov cultivated a personality cult, elevating his book the “Ruhnama” to quasi-religious status, naming months of the year after his family members, and erecting a rotating gold statue in the capital city of Ashgabat.<sup>371</sup> Turkmenistan is a rentier state, relying on revenues from gas exports. To keep the population satisfied, the government heavily subsidizes basic goods, utilities, and public transportation.<sup>372</sup>

Under Niyazov, no independent media operated in the country. State media proclaimed the “golden age” to have arrived, lavishing praise on the President and reporting on his many achievements. No opposition party was legally allowed to exist; Turkmenistan was a one-party state. Only state-

supported government-organized non-governmental organizations (GONGO’s) were permitted. Foreign donor support of the civil society was severely limited.<sup>373</sup>

Following President Niyazov’s sudden death in 2006, little-known Deputy Prime Minister Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov took over as head of state, winning rigged elections in 2007, 2012, and 2017. Both Niyazov and Berdimuhamedov claimed that the Turkmen people were not prepared for drastic changes, pursuing a gradualist approach to reform. Continuous purges of the elite and having at their disposal powerful security services helped both maintain their strong grip on power. Public criticism of the government remains virtually nonexistent.<sup>374</sup>

Reform efforts have been largely symbolic. A new Law on Media introduced in January 2013, for example, prohibited censorship and government interference in the activities of the media. But in reality, censorship remains widespread, and fear prevents most journalists from voicing any criticism of the government. Although the Law on Elections guarantees a process of vote-casting based on the concept of free elections and assures equal status to all candidates and parties, in reality the elections are just a performance, and an opportunity for the President to reconfirm his total dominance over the political life in the country.<sup>375</sup>

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 1/8

Under Niyazov, Turkmenistan was a one-party state dominated by the ruling Democratic Party of Turkmenistan. In 2009, Berdimuhamedov ordered the creation of a multi-party system. The country's first opposition party, the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, was founded by Berdimuhamedov's ally Aleksandr Dadayev in 2012.<sup>376</sup> In a further effort to create the impression that the country was no longer a one-party state, in 2013 Berdimuhamedov stepped down as the leader of the Democratic Party. In the Assembly (the Mejlis), the legislative branch of the government, the Democratic Party has 47 seats, with "opposition" parties holding the remaining 78

seats. Despite the appearance of plurality, it is only cosmetic; all political parties in the country support the President and follow the government's line.<sup>377</sup>

None of the political parties has adopted a clearly articulated pro- or anti-Western stance. Genuine opposition parties, such as the Republican Party of Turkmenistan, the Fatherland (Watan) Party, and the National Democratic Movement of Turkmenistan, are banned, operating outside of the country instead. Some of these parties support the development of democracy, a market economy, and closer ties to Europe.

## 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 2/7

Since no reliable public opinion polling exists in Turkmenistan, it is difficult to measure attitudes towards the West. The regime itself is neither anti-Western, nor explicitly pro-Western. It does not present the EU or NATO as a threat. Rather, the official ideology insists that Turkmenistan is a unique country and culture that is not ready for democratization. It insists that the current emphasis on sovereignty and independence is the best path to prosperity and economic stability.<sup>378</sup>

Turkmenistan's foreign policy doctrine of "permanent neutrality" prevents it from having aspirations to join multilateral organizations such as NATO. Ties to NATO strengthened following the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. Although Turkmenistan resisted US attempts to establish a base in the country following 9/11, it has allowed non-lethal cargo to transit its territory as part of the Northern Distribution Network used to supply the NATO mission in Afghanistan.<sup>379</sup>

# 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 3/25

## 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 1/6

Although the Constitution stipulates that Turkmenistan is a democratic state with separation of powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, in reality power is wielded exclusively by the executive embodied in the person of the President. As in other PSNR

countries, the Constitution, which was first adopted in May 1992, has been amended to further strengthen the President's formal power. The sixth round of amendments in 2016 eliminated the age cap of 70 for presidential candidates and extended the presidential term from five to seven years,

while removing all term limits.<sup>380</sup> This paves the way for the 59-year-old Berdimuhamedov to rule for life. The Constitution guarantees several rights including the freedom of religion (Article 12), the right to life (Article 22), the freedom of expression (Article 28)

and the freedom of assembly (Article 29). But, none of those rights are upheld. Turkmenistan is not a member of the Council of Europe and thus of the Venice Commission and has not sought its comment on constitutional reform.<sup>381</sup>

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 0.5/7

Although the Law on Courts guarantees the independence of judges from intervention by the legislative and executive bodies, Article 100 of the Constitution states that the President has the power to appoint and dismiss all judges. The judicial system is totally subordinate to the executive.<sup>382</sup> Justice is selectively wielded by the government to silence critics.

Corruption within the justice system is widespread. In the civil court system, bribes are frequently used to secure a particular outcome. In June 2011, the Committee against Torture expressed its deep concern “at the ineffective functioning of the justice system, apparently caused in part by the lack of independence of the procuracy and judiciary.”<sup>383</sup>

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 1/6

Although the Constitution upholds basic human rights, the regime remains one of the worst violators of human rights in the world. Torture is widely used by the police and security services.<sup>384</sup> International organizations, including the UN, have repeatedly called on the government to take steps to improve its track record. Responding to this international criticism, the regime has made cosmetic changes to its legal system.<sup>385</sup> Turkmenistan has ratified important UN human rights conventions and adopted its legislation to conform to them.<sup>386</sup>

the country’s new Penal Code, for example, contains a definition of torture in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment. Turkmenistan has also taken steps to create the impression that it is upholding human rights. In 2016, for example, Berdimuhamedov created the position of ombudsman for human rights. It remains unclear what the position entails. In reality, human rights are routinely abused, and the country has serious issues with respect to human rights protection.<sup>387</sup>

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 0.5/6

Defendants in Turkmenistan are not guaranteed a fair trial and are not considered innocent until proven guilty. Like in other former Soviet states, the General Prosecutor’s office wields tremendous power. No statistics on conviction rates have been

made public. But almost no criminal trials end in victory for the defense as the informal norm of non-acquittal prevails.<sup>388</sup> There are no meaningful processes for convicted individuals to appeal court decisions.

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 6/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 2/7

Turkmenistan's government has expressed interest in joining the World Trade Organization, establishing a commission in 2013 to explore accession. This is part of a broader proclaimed move towards market reform. Four years later, no progress towards joining the organization has been made.<sup>389</sup> Without significant reforms, which are doubtful to take place soon, Turkmenistan is not likely to meet the accession criteria. Engagement with the EU has also been

limited. Instead of having a full Representative Office, the EU operates a Liaison Office in Ashgabat. An Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related matters, which came into effect in August 2010, governs relations. A pending full Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) has yet to be ratified by the European Parliament due to human rights concerns. The EU supports Turkmenistan in the fields of education, energy, agriculture, and economic reform.<sup>390</sup>

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 1/6

Corruption, lack of adherence to international business standards, and government interference make Turkmenistan an extremely difficult place to do business. The country ranked 174<sup>th</sup> out of 178 in the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom, above only Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea and Zimbabwe.<sup>391</sup> Although President Berdimuhamedov promised to improve the investment climate after ascending to power in 2007, little progress has been made.

Turkmenistan remains a planned economy, with the state regulating all economic activity. All the land in the country is owned by the government, and most important sectors of the economy, such as the lucrative gas, transportation, communications, and cotton sectors, are dominated by state-owned companies. Just an estimated 20% of the economy is privately owned.<sup>392</sup> But even private businesses often have to sell goods and services with government-set price controls. Facing a shortage of money after the downturn in energy prices in 2015, the government has banned the exchange of foreign currencies, placing limits on how much cash individuals can bring into the country or send abroad.<sup>393</sup>

Like in other parts of the former Soviet Union, corruption is rampant in Turkmenistan. The country languished in the 154<sup>th</sup> position in the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index, compiled by Transparency International and ranking 176 countries.<sup>394</sup> Anti-corruption legislation is selectively enforced to remove political and economic rivals to the ruling regime. To gain access to the market, investors have to pay large bribes to government officials. The German automobile manufacturer Daimler, for example, gifted an armored Mercedes-Benz car worth €300,000 to one Turkmen official for his birthday in order to secure a lucrative government contract.<sup>395</sup> Monaco-based oil company Unaoil also employed a middleman to pay bribes to Turkmen officials to enter the market.<sup>396</sup> These cases, which have emerged from massive fraud investigations in Europe and the U.S., form a warning to investors looking to operate in the country.

Various laws, including the Law on Foreign Investment (2008), Law on Investments (1993), Law on Joint Stock Societies (1999), Law on Enterprises (2000), and Law on Business Activities (2008) provide the basis for corporate law. But these laws are unevenly enforced. For example, although there

are no limits on foreign ownership of companies, the government usually insists that the foreign company enter into a joint venture with the state. Conflicting management styles and business prac-

tices have made such arrangements unappealing to many investors.<sup>397</sup> English-language material on Turkmenistan legislation remains scarce. A strict visa regime also forms a barrier to investment.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 1.5/6

Russia was Turkmenistan's main trade partner in the years following independence, buying gas from Turkmenistan and exporting it to Europe. Following a dispute with Russia's Gazprom in 2009, Turkmenistan turned to China, which has since become the largest market for Turkmen gas, the country's largest export. The China National Petroleum Company received its first license to explore and extract onshore gas in Turkmenistan in 2007, opening the Central Asia–China pipeline in 2009. Turkmenistan's largest importing country is Turkey, with sales primarily of food, consumer goods, and construction materials.<sup>398</sup>

Brussels has long hoped that Turkmenistan could become the easternmost flank of the European Uni-

on's Southern Gas Corridor to reduce European states' dependence on Russian energy.<sup>399</sup> The European Union hopes that Turkmenistan can be linked to the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline, expected to open in 2018, which supplies gas to Europe from Azerbaijan. But the Trans-Caspian Pipeline has been hampered by the ongoing dispute over the classification of the Caspian Sea.<sup>400</sup>

According to the State Statistics Committee, Turkmenistan's exports in 2016 totaled \$7.5 billion, while the country's imports were estimated at \$13.1 billion USD.<sup>401</sup> Total trade with Europe amounted to \$1.8 billion USD in 2016. According to Eurostat, the EU countries make up 13% of Turkmenistan's imports and 18% of its exports.<sup>402</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 1.5/6

A small number of Western companies have invested in Turkmenistan despite the country's hostile business environment. Investment has been concentrated in the energy and construction industries. Turkmenistan possesses the world's fourth largest natural gas reserves. Several Western oil and gas companies, including ExxonMobil, Eni, BP, and Maersk have operations in Turkmenistan. All operate under production sharing agreements with the government. Both Presidents Niyazov and

Berdimuhamedov have spent billions of dollars on elaborate construction projects, such as the \$5 billion USD Avaza tourist resort or the new \$3 billion USD airport.<sup>403</sup> In 2016, \$5 billion USD was spent on construction.<sup>404</sup> Although Turkish construction companies have benefitted most from these vanity projects, French construction company Bouygues has also become a major player in the construction sector, building 50 structures with total contracts worth \$2 billion USD between 1994 and 2010.<sup>405</sup>



## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 3.5/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

Turkmenistan's written language has gone through a number of transformations in a brief period of time. Initially the Turkmen language used the Arabic script, then in 1928 the Soviets enforced a switch to Latin and then to Cyrillic in 1940. Follow-

ing independence from the USSR in 1991, President Niyazov quickly switched the country back to Latin script, making it a law in 1996. But the move is best seen as part of a break from the Soviet past and a nation-building project, rather than Westernization.<sup>406</sup>

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 1/6

The U.S., France, the U.K., Romania, Germany, and Italy have embassies in Ashgabat. Although the US Embassy sponsors English-language programs, and English is a mandatory subject in Turkmenistan's schools, very few Turkmen speak English. Two universities offer courses in English: the International University for the Humanities and Development, opened in 2014, and the Oguzhan Engineering and

Technology University, opened in 2016.<sup>407</sup> The British Embassy offers cultural programs and English-language events to the local people. Nonetheless, English is not widely spoken in Turkmenistan. Other European countries have made efforts to promote their language and culture. The German Embassy, for example, runs a German Information Centre with various cultural and educational programs.

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 0.5/7

The media in Turkmenistan promote the regime's ideology and show endless documentaries and cultural performances praising the President. Television, the main source of information, is monopolized by the state, with all seven channels controlled by the government. Satellite TV from Russia and Turkey offers one of the only ways for Turkmenistan's citizens to gain access to independent news. However, following a presidential decree in 2007, many satellite dishes have been removed and replaced with restricted cable packages.<sup>408</sup> Very few Western films are shown in Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan's first 3D cinema, opened in 2011, shows mostly documentaries about the gov-

ernment. All films shown at movie theaters are in the Turkmen language.

The Internet is also heavily censored, restricting citizens' access to information. YouTube, Twitter, Skype, and Facebook are all inaccessible from within the country. Mobile messaging applications such as Viber and WhatsApp have been blocked since November 2013.<sup>409</sup> Although a few foreign news agencies have gained accreditation, Radio Free Europe has submitted applications for accreditation several years in a row but they all have been denied. Foreign magazines and newspapers are banned for nongovernmental entities.<sup>410</sup>

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 1.5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 0.5/5

Turkmenistan is the most isolated of all former Soviet states. Most ordinary Turkmen citizens cannot afford to travel internationally. Under President Niyazov all Turkmen citizens hoping to travel abroad had to obtain an exit visa from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a legacy of the Soviet Union.<sup>411</sup> Although exit visas were abolished in 2004, the government still maintains an unpublished black list of those banned from traveling abroad.<sup>412</sup> a visa is required for citizens of Turkmenistan to enter all EU member states, as well as Russia.<sup>413</sup> Direct flight connections exist with Germany, France, and the UK on the state-controlled carrier Turkmenistan Airlines.<sup>414</sup>

A small number of wealthy Turkmen students, and students who have received scholarships, study in Europe. Foreign education is still viewed with suspicion by the government, and federal approval is required to study abroad. In 2015, a presidential decree established procedures for the government to certify foreign diplomas. To have a foreign diploma formally recognized in Turkmenistan, a graduate has to submit information on their family's history going back three generations and pass the standard Turkmen university graduation exams.

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 0.5/3

Western corporations have almost no presence in Turkmenistan. There is just one Western hotel, a Sheraton, in Ashgabat. Almost no stores stock Western food brands. The country's only shopping mall with

a supermarket, Yimpash, carries Western products. No Western fast-food chains operate in Turkmenistan. Wealthy Turkmen looking to purchase Western products travel to Istanbul, Dubai, Moscow, or Europe.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 0.5/2

Only 15% of the Turkmen use the Internet.<sup>415</sup> Turkmenistan is ranked 177<sup>th</sup> for fixed-broadband subscriptions, with just 0.06 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants.<sup>416</sup> An estimated 4.4 million mobile phones are active in the country.<sup>417</sup> the industry is dominated by state-owned Turkmen Telecom and its subsidiary Altyn Asyr, which launched a 4G service in 2013.<sup>418</sup> Its

only competitor is the Russian mobile provider MTS. The Communications Ministry oversees both companies. Online and mobile phone communications are monitored by the government; one must present identification when buying a SIM card or establishing an Internet connection.<sup>419</sup> Access to the Internet is intermittent, slow, and highly restricted.

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
	16/25	11/25	14/25	8/15	5/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 16/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 6/10

The most recent reports by the OSCE/ODIHR mission observing the 2014 national elections in Ukraine noted the unequal access of various political parties to mass media: “The insufficient level of mass media independence from political or corporate interests frequently affects their editorial independence.”<sup>420</sup> Of the 180 countries included in the 2017 World Press Freedom Index, Ukraine was ranked 102<sup>nd</sup>, five points higher than the year before. This is a notable positive trend, although there is still much room for improvement.<sup>421</sup> In 2017, observers criticized Ukraine for banning Russian social networks.

Ukraine scored 4.68 in the 2016 Freedom in the World report, on a 7-point scale where 1 indicates the highest level of democratic progress.<sup>422</sup> In the 2016 Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Ukraine is in the “defective democracies” group and ranking 38<sup>th</sup> of 129 countries.<sup>423</sup>

The 2016 US State Department report on human rights in Ukraine says the government respects the citizens’ right to assembly. Moreover, it

notes that safety provisions at demonstrations has improved. The report mentions isolated instances of violence, but overall, LGBTI groups enjoyed greater freedom to assemble than in past years.<sup>424</sup>

Reports also do not indicate any problems with the formation of political parties in Ukraine – the government does not interfere with the process in any way. The only exception is the ban on the Communist Party, which is in place due to the communist regime’s crimes committed during the Soviet era. The number of political parties in Ukraine is constantly growing, but the majority of them do not play any substantial role. Political “projects” similar to parties are created for every election, and very frequently they do not have a solid political ideology. Today, 352 political parties are registered in the country.<sup>425</sup> the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU) reports a new record set practically every year – Ukraine is the leader in Central and East Europe when it comes to the number of parties. For comparison, in 2016 there were 84 parties registered in Poland, 56 in Slovakia, 124 in Romania, 45 in Moldova, and 38 in Lithuania.<sup>426</sup>

## 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 6/8

The pro-Western rhetoric is dominant among the members of the Ukrainian Parliament – the Verkhovna Rada. Even the parties whose deputies are commonly considered anti-Western have avoided making unambiguous public statements in the recent years. Moreover, persons with directly opposite views can coexist in the same party. For example, Vyacheslav Boguslayev, a member of the People’s Will parliamentary group, is known for his sharp criticism of the West, but the same group’s leader, Yaroslav Moskalenko, has spoken out expressly in favor of Ukraine’s membership in NATO.<sup>427</sup> This is one example of the conformist, commercial nature of many parliamentarians – they will shift their position with the change of

leadership if that’s necessary to maintain their or their patrons’ (oligarchs’) revenues. Overall, only three groups can be classified as having either an ambiguous or anti-Western attitude: the Opposition Bloc, the People’s Will, and the Revival Party. This totals 88 deputies – or 20.9% of all the parliament members. The pro-Western rhetoric is clearly expressed by the vast majority of the Verkhovna Rada deputies who are part of the Petro Poroshenko Bloc, People’s Front, Oleh Lyashko’s Radical Party, and the All-Ukrainian Union Fatherland – 67.2% of all deputies. Including the many nonaffiliated deputies who are also pro-Western, it is safe to say that the pro-Western representation in the Ukrainian Parliament is no less than 70%.

## 1.3 WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 4/7

Pro-West sentiments in the country are strong, although there is a substantial share of the population (at least a third) who for various reasons do not envision a Ukraine integrated into the Western institutions. Some of them explain it with self-criticism, i.e. “no one wants us there,” while others prefer cooperation with Russia and its allies within the framework of the Eurasian Customs Union, although each year this group is becoming smaller.

For example, a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology showed:<sup>428</sup>

- If a referendum on joining the EU was held in May 2017, 69% would have voted in favor, and 31% against.
- In a referendum on joining NATO, 56% would be in favor of joining NATO, 44% against.
- When asked about their preferred direction for the country’s foreign policy, 49% supported Ukraine’s joining the EU, 11% supported joining the Eurasian Union, and 26% wanted Ukraine to develop independently without joining either of those unions.

# 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 11/25

## 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 5/6

Overall, Ukraine follows the recommendations of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (the Venice Commission). During the most recent ratification of amendments to the constitution in 2016, Ukraine used most of the Venice Commission’s recommendations into

account. In the final Memorandum of the Commission’s Secretariat issued on December 18, 2015, it confirmed the new constitutional amendments adopted most of the organization’s wishes.<sup>429</sup> Only two recommendations were not taken into consideration.

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 1.5/7

In the World Justice Project 2016 Rule of Law Index, Ukraine ranked 78<sup>th</sup> of 113 countries on the implementation of rule of law requirements. In the 2016 Index of Public Integrity, the country ranked 101<sup>st</sup> of 109 in the level of judicial independence.<sup>430 431</sup>

GRECO (Group of States against Corruption) reported notable headway in the process of reforming Ukraine's judicial branch after the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. However, the 2017 GRECO document em-

phasized the pressure being exerted on judges in the present conditions: "The current unpredictable professional state of the judges makes them especially vulnerable due to the intrusion on their independence."<sup>432</sup>

The Ukrainian courts are leaders in public distrust of the country's institutions: 85.6% of the country's citizens do not trust the system of justice. Less than 6% trust the courts.<sup>433</sup>

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 3.5/6

The Ukrainian legislation provides a very broad protection of human rights and liberties. The country is a signatory to a number of relevant international conventions, including the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages, and the Council of Europe Convention on Combating Human Trafficking. In its monitoring reports, the Parliament Assembly of the Council of Europe notes Ukraine's significant progress in performing its obligations in

the area of protecting human rights, while also noting the need to move forward with the ratification of laws to implement them.<sup>434</sup>

The US State Department's 2016 Human Rights report indicates that serious violations of human rights are occurring in the territories occupied by Russia. The document states that many international human rights advocacy groups are freely operating in Ukraine with no interference from the government.<sup>435</sup>

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 1/6

The number of acquittals in Ukraine's courts is extremely low – less than 1%. GRECO reported the low number of not-guilty verdicts is caused by the pressure exerted on judges by the prosecution.

Since the new Penal Code of Ukraine came into effect in 2012, a significant increase of acquittals

was expected, but no major changes took place. In 2016 there were 815,100 criminal cases in the country's courts of general jurisdiction (first instance courts). The courts made a ruling in 96,000 cases, and 905 defendants were acquitted – 0.9% of all verdicts.<sup>436</sup> In 2005 that number was 0.35%.<sup>437</sup>

# 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 14/25

## 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 4.5/7

Ukraine has retained WTO membership since February 2008. Joining the WTO paved the way for talks on creating a free trade zone agreement

with the European Union, which subsequently transformed into the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and constituted the eco-

conomic portion of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, contributing the largest part of the agreement text. The economic portion of the Agreement was ratified on June 27, 2014. The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agree-

ment was applied provisionally on January 1, 2016. On September 1, 2017, the Association Agreement came into full effect. Ukraine sets membership in the EU as its objective; however, at this point, its prospective membership remains far off.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 3/6

Ukraine continues to improve its ranking in the World Bank's Doing Business rankings. Last year the country placed 80<sup>th</sup> of 190 countries, but improved in the 2018 rankings to 76<sup>th</sup> place.<sup>438</sup>

World Bank analytics wrote that progress was possible by lowering the universal social fund tax, simplifying the process of receiving construction permits, and improving the protection of minority investors' rights. In the "Dealing with construction permits" category, Ukraine moved up 105 positions – from the 140<sup>th</sup> to 35<sup>th</sup>. Overall, between 2014 and 2017, Ukraine improved its ranking by 20 positions. The most marked improvements were in taxes (+65 places in four years), and connection to electric-

ity (+57 places). However, the country didn't manage to improve its results in the areas of getting credit, resolving insolvency, and registering property.

According to a survey conducted in 2016 among the members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine, the main obstacle to business development was corruption.<sup>439</sup> Also as of late, many foreign investors have been complaining about the lack of qualified and affordable labor force. This is true primarily in the country's western regions where Ukrainians do not want to work for the compensation offered by companies with foreign capital, giving preference to finding work in Poland or other countries of the EU instead.

### 3.3 WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 3.5/6

The European Union is gradually becoming Ukraine's chief trade partner. Trade with the countries of the EU makes up 41.1% of the total international trade of goods (as of September 1, 2017, per information presented by the country's Prime Minister Volodymyr Groysman). However, looking only at individual countries, Russia is still the top trade partner, with a 10% share of trade.

In comparison to the same period of 2016, during the first half of 2017 the export of goods and services to the EU grew by 22.8%. Last year the share of exports to the EU reached 37.7%, compared to 16.6% to the countries of the CIS.

Ukrainian exports to the USA have grown more than twofold in the first seven months of 2017. This is

118.4% better than in 2016. At the present moment, Ukrainian businesses are also able to use the US General Preference System, which provides for duty-free export sales of approximately 5,000 types of goods. Trade between the two countries continues to increase. By the end of 2016, the total value of trade with the United States totaled \$2.1 billion. In 2017 this indicator was already overtaken in the first eight months of the year (the trade totaled \$2.3 billion).<sup>440</sup> Ukraine was also able to sign an agreement with United States regarding the sales of 2 million metric tons of coal.<sup>441</sup>

At the same time, it is noteworthy that in the first half of 2017, exports to and imports from Russia have also grown, by 20.9% and 38%, respectively. The main reason for this growth is the increase in

the importation of oil products from Russia by almost 82% when compared to the same period of the previous year. Today, sales of gasoline and other

oil products make up 43% of the Russian imports into Ukraine.

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 3/6

The top five investors into the Ukrainian economy during the first six months of 2017 are Cyprus, the Netherlands, Russia, the UK, and Germany. However, funding coming through Cyprus, the Netherlands, and the UK is frequently actually of Ukrainian origin. This means that despite official statistics, the volume of Western investments in Ukraine is low.

The most unexpected phenomenon is that Russia, in spite of the conflict with Ukraine, is one of the top three investors. This has to do with

the fact that Russia actively invested in the additional funding of its banks' subsidiaries in Ukraine. Russian investments totaled \$4.4 billion, which is 11.4% of the total investments during this period (\$38.9 billion).

In 2016, countries of the European Union provided 45% of investments into the Ukrainian economy. Russia invested 38% of the entire funds. The United States was only in the 13<sup>th</sup> place in 2016 in the area of foreign direct investments into the economy of Ukraine.<sup>442</sup>

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 8/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 1/2

The Latin alphabet is not in use in Ukraine, and few support the official adoption of Latin script for the Ukrainian language. However, the Latin script is often used in the public space, as many business

owners prefer "Latinized" names for their brands. Names of the subway stations in Kyiv are written in both the Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and are announced in both Ukrainian and English.

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 2/6

As reported in the 2015 English Proficiency Index, Ukrainians are among the worst in Europe when it comes to knowledge of the English language. Ukraine is in the group of countries with a "low" level of English command, 41<sup>st</sup> of 72 countries.<sup>443</sup> According to the results of an online survey conducted by TNS, 89% of those surveyed have studied the English language, but only 18% speak it better than average, and 24% have an average command of English. The second most popular language is German (studied

by 17% of those surveyed), followed by French (9%), and Spanish (3%).<sup>444</sup>

By presidential decree, 2016 was declared the Year of the English Language in Ukraine. As part of this policy a number of measures were taken to organize language courses and summer camps and expand the teaching of English language in educational institutions. A special emphasis was made on state employees through English classes.



### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 5/7

Western movies, the majority of which are Hollywood productions, are the most popular in Ukraine. The number of Ukrainian movies has been on the rise; 20 new Ukrainian films are expected to premier by the end of 2017.

Of the 294 film premieres in Ukrainian theaters in 2017, only 2.4% were Russian (down from 5.6% in 2016).<sup>445</sup> the reduction of the number of Russian motion pictures is the result of an April 2016 amended law, "Regarding cinematography (in relation to films by the aggressor state)." the overwhelming majority of the movies were produced in the Hollywood.

The share of American TV series remained at approximately the same level of 13%, and Turkish TV series at 2.3%. The largest part of TV airtime goes to domestic content more than content produced in

any other single country: 39%, plus 8.5% produced by other countries jointly with Ukraine.<sup>446</sup> There is no specific data regarding European series, but their share could not exceed 4% (option "Other countries" in the survey).<sup>447</sup>

The number of Facebook users grew substantially after Ukraine blocked Russian social networks in the spring of 2017. In June 2017, Facebook became the most-used social media platform. Facebook's audience totaled 46%, whereas the number of users of the Russian VKontakte and Odnoklassniki networks (despite the ban) was 36% and 24%, respectively. Instagram and Twitter see limited usage: 17% and 14%, respectively.<sup>448</sup> the most popular websites in Ukraine are Google and YouTube, although some continue to bypass the blocking mechanisms to keep using Yandex and Mail.ru.

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 2.5/5

As of June 2017, 69% of Ukrainians have never been abroad. The same survey conducted by Research & Branding Group prior to the revolution, in 2013, showed that 77% of Ukrainian citizens had never left the country's borders.<sup>449</sup>

Per data collected by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 10% of Ukraine's adult population visited countries of the European Union at least once in the past two years.<sup>450</sup>

The primary reason for foreign travel is tourism. There is also an increase in the number of Ukrainians who seek work opportunities in European countries. Even though surveys show that the Ukrainians' top choice is Germany (37%), most often they travel to Poland where, by various estimates, a million Ukrainians are working today.<sup>451</sup>



## 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1.5/3

According to the Deloitte rating, none of the world's top-10 grocery retailers have a presence in Ukraine.<sup>452</sup> The Ukrainian market is dominated by domestic grocery retailers, and Metro Cash & Carry and Auchan are the only major western grocery chains.

Ukraine ranks 34<sup>th</sup> of 61 countries in the presence of international retailers, with 30.2% of stores having international owners. Of 140 cities, Kyiv ranks 63<sup>rd</sup> in number of international retailers.<sup>453</sup> However, in the past two years, despite the warfare going on in the east of the country, at least 12 new brands entered the Kyiv retail market (for comparison, in Moscow that number was 40), primarily in the medium-priced clothing sector. H&M, which

postponed its opening in Ukraine several times, currently plans to launch in 2018. There is information that talks are again underway with IKEA, which at one point declined the invitation to open a store in Ukraine because of the high corruption levels. For this reason, the appearance of IKEA in Ukraine will be a symbolic victory in the fight against corruption.

Of major international fast-food chains, only McDonald's and KFC are currently present in Ukraine. A real explosion of fast-food openings was expected in preparation for the Euro 2012 football championship, but the risks of the market and the absence of fast growth guarantees precluded them from launching in Ukraine. High demand for Ukrainian restaurants also suppressed demand for Western chains.

## 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 1/2

According to 2017 data, the number of Internet users in Ukraine was 21.6 million people, or a little less than half of the country's population. The share of Internet users aged 18–39 is 91%.<sup>454</sup> Exactly half (50%) of all users go online using mobile phones or smartphones, another 21% using tablets.<sup>455</sup>

Ukraine is 38<sup>th</sup> in the world in the number of smartphone owners, with about 10 million smartphone users.<sup>456</sup> However, for comparison, Romania, whose population is less than half of Ukraine's, has the same number of smartphone users and ranks one place above Ukraine in the same rating.

SCORE, POINTS/OUT OF	Political Westernization	Legal Westernization	Economic Westernization	Language and Cultural Westernization	Westernization of Lifestyle
	7/25	4/25	9/25	6/15	3.5/10

## 1 | POLITICAL WESTERNIZATION 7/25

### 1.1. DEGREE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM 3/10

With the ascension to power of a new President of Uzbekistan in December 2016, the overall reforms in the country have mostly focused on the economic and administrative spheres. Political freedom remains restricted so far. Since their inception, political parties have essentially played the role of puppets. The four existing parties do not compete at all in the political process and on political issues. From the onset, the parties were created using the “top-down” principle of rule. There is no opposition party whatsoever. In September 2016, all parties’ leaders supported the interim President without challenging him on any matters. Media is also under strong state control.

Although censorship has officially been abolished, its legacy persists, especially in the form of self-censorship of journalists. Recently, a new TV talk show called “International Press Club” was created, its premise being to provide a forum where officials of different ranks would appear before the public and answer various relevant and critical questions. Although this program was well-planned, it was soon axed under pressure from the Prime Minister.<sup>457</sup> Although some first tokens of political liberalization are expected to emerge through reforms launched by the new President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the overall political process remains President-centric.<sup>458</sup>

### 1.2. PRO-WESTERN PARTIES IN THE PARLIAMENT 1.5/8

In Uzbekistan, there are neither ‘pro-’ nor ‘anti-Western’ parties; due to their complete loyalty to the government, parties are rather eclectic in terms of “Western” or “Eastern” preferences and ideology. However, some individuals in the parliament may be relatively Westernized in their world outlook due to their personal educational and/or professional experiences. For instance, some parliament members have studied or had fellowships at the universities in the United States or Europe. For a truly Eastern country like Uzbekistan, even the parliament’s very existence and form are signs of recognition of the Western political culture. The parliament consists of a lower house and a Senate, and their leaders are called ‘speakers’ (even in the Uzbek language). Dele-

gations from the Uzbek Parliament – the Oliy Majlis – quite often visit their Western counterparts as part of interparliamentary cooperation. Such exchanges, among other things, also help members of the Uzbek parliament learn from Western parliaments – a process that contributes to Westernization. The Western experience of democracy and cabinet system of government is studied and officially popularized in Uzbekistan. For instance, the parliamentary experience and traditions of such Western democracies as the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Italy, France, Germany, and Japan – as well as Russia – were reflected upon in a book published in 2002 by the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.<sup>459</sup>

### 1.3. WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN THE PUBLIC OPINION 2.5/7

The population's attitude towards the Western values and lifestyle is relatively balanced. NATO had an office in Tashkent in 2013–2017, and Uzbekistan has been cooperating with NATO since 1994 within the Partnership for Peace Program. Uzbekistan recognizes NATO's mission in Afghanistan, and many Uzbek students and scholars have received grants from NATO's Science for Peace program.<sup>460</sup>

The EU also has its Delegation in Tashkent and closely works with the Uzbek government and civil society. The EU Delegation provides grants to NGOs within the "European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights" project.<sup>461</sup> In 1996, Uzbekistan and the EU signed a Strategic Cooperation Agreement.

Business Forums are regularly conducted between Uzbekistan and European countries. Uzbek students and scholars very often apply for European scholarships and fellowships through Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, and other European programs and institutions.

However, there is also criticism aimed at the West's lifestyle and values. Many Western-made computer games and websites are banned in Uzbekistan for the risk of spreading the culture of violence and immoral ideas detrimental to national values.<sup>462</sup> However, the general attitude towards the Western civilization among ordinary people, especially the youth and intelligentsia, is quite benign.

## 2 | LEGAL WESTERNIZATION 4/25

### 2.1. COMPLIANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE VENICE COMMISSION 1/6

Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted on December 8, 1992, and from the onset declared Uzbekistan a democratic country. It de jure provides for all the basic human rights, a system of checks and balances, universal and equal suffrage in free, fair, and periodic elections conducted by secret ballot, and other basic democratic norms. At the same time, there is a big gap between the de jure and de facto democracy (Constitutionalism, parliamentarism, separation of powers, multiparty system, and so on). In December 2012, the Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR published a Joint Opinion on the draft amendments and addenda to the law "Regarding elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan" and "Regarding elections to the regional, district, and city councils (kengesh) of people's deputies

of Uzbekistan." the documents concluded: "The joint Venice Commission and OSCE/ODIHR comments on the draft amendments are offered to the authorities, political parties, and civil society of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the intention to support their stated objective to improve the legal framework for democratic elections and to bring it more closely in line with the OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections." It asserted that "numerous recommendations contained in previous OSCE/ODIHR reports and assessments remain unaddressed by the draft amendments. Additionally, some of the draft amendments are overly complex and could be improved by being stated in a more clear and concise manner so that they are easily understandable to all electoral stakeholders."<sup>463</sup>

## 2.2. INDEPENDENCE OF THE COURTS 0.5/7

The judiciary in Uzbekistan is constitutionally differentiated and independent from the executive branch of the government. It is highly corrupt and vulnerable to executive pressure. This is especially the case for the Court of Criminal Affairs (guided by the criminal code). The Court of Civil Affairs (guided by the civil code) is relatively more independent

from the executive branch, although it still faces issues with professionalism.

Lawyers are often reluctant to take politically sensitive cases and defend citizens who complain against the state structures' or officials' abuses of power or injustice.<sup>464</sup>

## 2.3. LEGISLATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS 2/6

Although guaranteed by the Constitution, civil rights in Uzbekistan are restricted and sometimes poorly respected by law enforcement agencies and the judiciary. Although there is a shortage of reliable data on discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity, traditionally incidents of such discrimination are not widespread in the country. However, political rights are certainly restricted.

There are several formal institutions whose mandate is to protect human rights – for instance, the Office of Ombudsmen on Human Rights and the Committee on Democratic Institutions, NGOs, and Citizens' Self-Governing Bodies at the Parliament's Legislative Chamber, as well as the National Center on Human Rights and one officially registered independent human rights NGO "Ezgulik." They often fail to resolutely protect human and civil rights.<sup>465</sup>

In the context of the year 2017 being declared "The Year of Dialogue with People and Human Interests" in Uzbekistan, a Virtual Receiving Room of the Prime-Minister [www.pm.gov.uz](http://www.pm.gov.uz) was launched and within one month received about 200,000 messages from citizens. After the inauguration of President Mirziyoyev, this website was transformed into a Virtual Receiving Room of the President which is quite a promising innovation in the state system of protecting civil rights.

Recently Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov officially stated that international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, expelled some years ago from Uzbekistan, can return to the country and restart their work. In 2017, several political prisoners were released. All this is indicative of some improvements in this area.<sup>466</sup>

## 2.4. NUMBER OF ACQUITTALS 0.5/6

After the presidential elections held in December 2016, President Mirziyoyev convened the Congress of the Courts, at which he harshly criticized judges for not issuing acquittals ("not guilty" verdicts). He stated that such a situation caused the false impres-

sion of the courts' impeccability, but such a situation could not but generate the impression of their corruptness. In October 2016, then Acting-President Mirziyoyev noted that "in the recent years the courts did not issue a single judgment of acquittal".<sup>467</sup>

## 3 | ECONOMIC WESTERNIZATION 9/25

### 3.1. EU AND WTO MEMBERSHIP OR ASSOCIATION 2/7

Uzbekistan continues its negotiations with the WTO regarding the country's future membership in the organization.

In 1996, the EU and Uzbekistan signed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which provided the legal ground for developing multifaceted cooperation. Since then, the EU has been

engaged with Uzbekistan in various projects, including trade, investments, education, science, tourism, and more. The Office of the Delegation of the EU has been functioning in Tashkent since May 2011.<sup>468</sup> Following a period of absence from the country, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) resumed its projects in Uzbekistan in 2017.

### 3.2. EASE AND TRANSPARENCY OF DOING BUSINESS 3/6

In 2017 the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a Decree which set forth the objective for the country to rise in the World Bank's Doing Business Ratings from the 87<sup>th</sup> position in 2016 to the 40<sup>th</sup> position by 2022.<sup>469</sup> Meanwhile, in the 2017 report,

Uzbekistan already improved its ranking from the 87<sup>th</sup> position to the 74<sup>th</sup>.<sup>470</sup> Uzbekistan declared 2018 as the Year of Supporting Active Entrepreneurship, Innovative Ideas and Technologies.

### 3.3. WESTERN SHARE IN THE SALES OF GOODS 2/6

Recently, Uzbekistan restored its cooperation with the Export-Import Bank of the U.S., 13 years after the relationship was frozen.<sup>471</sup> In September 2017 Uzbekistan signed a seven-year contract to supply uranium to the United States for the to-

tal cost of \$300 million.<sup>472</sup> the volume of trade between Uzbekistan and the EU in 2016 was €1.8 billion. The European Union is Uzbekistan's fourth largest trade partner (after China, Russia and Kazakhstan).<sup>473</sup>

### 3.4. WESTERN INVESTMENTS INTO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY 2/6

Currently, many Western companies successfully do business in Uzbekistan. Among them are General Motors, Boeing, General Electric, CNH Industrial, Hyatt, and Hilton.

The most recent progress in this area was President Mirziyoyev's visit to the United States in September 2017. More than 100 US companies attend-

ed the Uzbek-American Business Forum which took place at the time of the President's visit. They discussed investment and trade projects and signed agreements for the total amount of \$2.6 billion.<sup>474</sup>

Similarly, Business Forums are held on a regular basis with all major European countries to develop investment and trade cooperation.

## 4 | LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL WESTERNIZATION 6/15

### 4.1. USE OF THE LATIN ALPHABET IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE 2/2

Uzbekistan was the first former Soviet republic to change from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. In 1993, Uzbekistan adopted the law “Regarding the Introduction of the Uzbek Alphabet Based on the Latin Script.” As is common during fundamental reform processes, this change of the alphabet could not have taken place without corresponding costs – social, economic, and political. Anticipating possible difficulties and frictions in the implementation of the law, Uzbekistan’s Supreme Council (parliament) adopted an ordinance stipulating the introduction of the new alphabet on a step-by-step basis, envisioning the completion of this process by September 1, 2010.

However, the process took longer. Even today, Cyrillic script is widely used in public and political life. In the last 25 years of post-Soviet development, the state has not enforced its language and alphabet policy, giving priority to an evolutionary pace. Slowly but steadily, Latin is becoming used everywhere in the country: textbooks in schools, names of the streets, screen captions on TV, passports, various paperwork in governmental bodies, advertisements, commodity tags in the shops, some journals, and many fiction books all use the Latin script without causing complaints or resentment on the part of the country’s Russian-speaking population.<sup>475</sup>

### 4.2. PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION PROFICIENT IN THE MOST COMMON LANGUAGES OF THE WEST (ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH) 2/6

Three interrelated circumstances illustrate and explain the popularity and dispersion of Western languages in Uzbekistan: first, the independence of 1991 brought globalization processes; second, the younger generations understand very well that learning world languages is a necessity of modern

times, and various centers providing English courses have mushroomed as a result; and third, the basics of Western languages (mostly English, French and German) were taught in secondary schools in the Soviet times, so the modern interest in Western languages is not a completely new phenomenon.

### 4.3. SHARE OF WESTERN PRODUCTS IN THE NATION'S MOVIE THEATERS AND ON TV CHANNELS, SHARE OF WESTERN INTERNET SITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER) 2/7

Local film distribution companies and television channels quite frequently show Western productions. Hollywood, National Geographic, CNN, BBC, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other Western media and communication means are widespread and popular among the Uzbek population, especially the youth. Internet and social networks cover almost the entire country. According to the Internet Live Stats report, Uzbekistan is 37<sup>th</sup> in the world in the number of Internet users (15.4 million people).<sup>476</sup> the number

of Facebook users in Uzbekistan is 360,000 people.<sup>477</sup> This compares to a greater number of Uzbeks using Russian social networks: Odnoklassniki is being visited daily by 1.5 million Uzbek citizens and 1.1 million Uzbek users are registered in VKontakte.<sup>478</sup>

The names of Western actors, artists, and singers, as well as works of Western pop, jazz, and rock music have been well known in Uzbekistan even during the Soviet times.

## 5 | WESTERNIZATION OF LIFESTYLE 3.5/10

### 5.1. PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION WHO HAVE VISITED WESTERN COUNTRIES 1/5

Although the number of tourists, students, scholars, businessmen, artists, etc., from Uzbekistan visiting the Western countries is growing dynamically, the overall proportion of the population who travel abroad cannot be very large for objective reasons. Nevertheless, since the 1990s the government has encouraged students, teachers, and scholars to

study at Western universities. The Umid Foundation was created for this purpose.

After the death of President Karimov in September 2016, a new Foundation named after him was created to provide funds and scholarships for students to study abroad, including at Western universities.<sup>479</sup>

### 5.2. PRESENCE OF WESTERN FRANCHISE COMPANIES 1.5/3

Market reforms in Uzbekistan have slowly but steadily attracted Western corporations. Brands such as McDonalds, Irish Pub, Danish Flowers, RC Cola, CORE, Lacoste, Mango, Zara, Perfume Gallery, Adidas, Motivi, Hugo Boss, United Colours of

Benetton, Semo de Roma, Siesta, Bon, Bibigon, and others, as well as various fast-food chains, are very popular among the local population, primarily in the capital city of Tashkent.

### 5.3. MOBILE INTERNET COVERAGE, SMART PHONE USAGE 1/2

The number of mobile Internet users is steadily increasing. For instance, in the two-year period from 2015 to 2017, usage has grown from 10.2 million people to 15 million – indicating that today almost half of the entire population of Uzbekistan (32 million) is online using their mobile devices.<sup>480</sup>

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# AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHIES

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## **Leonid Litra**

Senior Research Fellow at the New Europe Center in Kyiv, Ukraine. He previously served as Senior Fellow at Institute of World Policy in Kyiv and as Deputy Director of the Institute of Development and Social Initiative (IDIS) "Viitorul" in Chisinau, Moldova. Mr. Litra has authored and co-authored publications on democratization in the post-Soviet region, European integration and frozen conflicts, and has been a regular contributor to the "Nations in Transit" Report by Freedom House and the Bertelsmann Transformation Index. He was a Carnegie Research Fellow at Yale University and holds a master's degree in International Relations and European Studies from the European Institute of High International Studies, Nice, France.

## **Sergiy Solodkyy**

First Deputy Director of the New Europe Center, is an expert in foreign policy, international relations, and security. Previously, he worked at the Institute of World Policy (2010–2017). Sergiy graduated from the Westminster University majoring in International Relations (Chevening Scholarship) and also from the Institute of Journalism at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Since 1999 he has served as international news desk editor at leading Ukrainian mass media: "The Day," "Gazeta 24," and "Glavred."

## **Dr. Kateryna Zarembo**

Deputy Director of the New Europe Center. In 2009–2017 she served as Deputy Director of the Institute of World Policy (Ukraine). She also co-teaches the "European Foreign and Security Policy" course under a joint Master's Program at Jena University (Germany) and the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Ukraine). Kateryna has authored and co-authored dozens of policy papers, briefs, and articles on Ukraine's foreign policy and European integration. She holds a PhD in Political Science from the National Institute for Strategic Studies (Ukraine), an MA in European Studies from University College Dublin (Ireland), and an MA in the English and Italian languages from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

## **Daria Gaidai**

Research Fellow at the New Europe Center. She holds a master's degree in History from the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy where she also minored in Political Science. Daria has received scholarships to study at the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu and the University of Warsaw. She has co-authored a number of policy briefs and studies on the foreign policy of Ukraine, European integration, and Eastern Partnership.

### **Olga Lymar**

Research Fellow and Manager at the New Europe Center. She is responsible for project management and organizational work aimed at building up the institutional capacity of the New Europe Center. At the Institute of World Policy, where she previously worked, Olga was responsible for operating the institutional development project within the Ukrainian Think Tank Development Initiative. Now she shares her experience in building organizations' institutional capacity with other Ukrainian NGOs. In recent years, she also co-authored several pieces of research. Olga holds an MA in Philosophy from the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

### **Andrei Yahorau**

Director of the Centre for European Transformation in Belarus. He has been working in the political research area since 2001 and is the author of many publications on the EU's Eastern Policy, democratization processes, political development in Belarus, and the role and place of civil society in transformations in the post-communist area. Andrei Yahorau is a co-founder and deputy editor-in-chief of "Political Sphere" – the only specialized political science journal in Belarus. He was Belarus Country Facilitator and Co-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (2014–2015).

### **Dr. Gubad Ibadoghlu**

is an economist and civil society activist from Azerbaijan. He started his career at the Economic Research Center in 1999 and is currently a senior policy analyst for social and economic studies at the Azerbaijan's Economic Research Center. In addition, he is an associate professor at the Economic University (UNEC) in Azerbaijan. His research focuses on politics of natural resources and revenue management. Dr. Ibadoghlu was a member of the Steering Committee of the EU Eastern Partnership Program's Civil Society Forum (CSF). He has also served as a coordinator of "For Improving Transparency in Extractive Industries," a 142-member Baku-based NGO Coalition, and has been re-elected by Eurasian civil societies' representatives to the International Board of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) for 2016–2019. Currently, he is a visiting researcher at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ.

### **Ilviija Brūge**

is a Researcher at the Latvian Institute of International Affairs. She holds a BA in Political Science and an MA in International Relations from Riga Stradins University, as well as an MSc in Social Anthropology from the University of Edinburgh. She is currently in

her 3<sup>rd</sup> year of PhD studies. Ilvija is a co-editor and author of several articles and books, and has worked as a research analyst for a UK-based political risk advisory and as a national expert for various international research projects. Her research interests are linked to socio-economic, historic, political, and cultural development in the post-Soviet region with a particular focus on Ukraine.

### **Maili Vilson**

is PhD fellow in Political Science at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies and the Centre for EU-Russia Studies (CEURUS) at the University of Tartu, Estonia. Her main research interests include the European Neighborhood Policy, EU foreign policy, and democratization. Maili has published articles on the Europeanization of foreign policy of the EU member states and on the Eastern Partnership and the European Union.

### **Salome Minesashvili**

is a doctoral candidate at the Berlin Graduate School for Transnational Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. For her dissertation, Salome is working on the national identity change contextualized in foreign policies of Georgia and Ukraine. She holds master degrees in International Political Theory from the University of Edinburgh and in Transformation in the South Caucasus from Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. Prior to entering doctoral studies, Salome has worked in multiple research projects in cooperation with the Georgian Institute of Politics on foreign policy analysis, soft power politics, EU–Eastern Neighborhood relations, and transformation processes in the former Soviet Union.

### **Dovilė Šukytė**

is an Acting Director of the Eastern Europe Studies Center in Vilnius, Lithuania. Previously, she was a Research Fellow for the New European Democracies Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. From 2015 to 2017 she served two terms on the Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, during one of which she was the Forum's Acting Co-Chair. Among Dovilė's research interests are democratization and reform in the Eastern Partnership countries, and Russian foreign policy, transatlantic relations, and information warfare.

### **Dr. Farkhod Tolipov**

graduated from the Tashkent State University. 1994–2005 he taught at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkent, from which he received a PhD in Political Science.

1998–2002 he was a Chief Consultant to the Presidential Cabinet of Uzbekistan. 2005–2010 Dr. Tolipov taught World Politics and International Security at the National University of Uzbekistan. Currently he is the Director of the “Bilim Karvoni” (“Caravan of Knowledge”) non-governmental Research Institution in Tashkent. Dr. Tolipov specializes in geopolitics, regional security and regional integration in Central Asia, nationalism and democratization in Central Asian countries. He was a visiting fellow and professor at many Western organizations and universities since 1997. Dr. Tolipov is a member of the international editorial board of the “Central Asia and Caucasus” journal, senior advisory board of the “China-Eurasia Forum” and Central Eurasian Studies Society, and PIR-Center’s (Russia) expert group for the “Security Index” journal. He is an author of the monograph “Grand Strategy of Uzbekistan in the Context of Geopolitical and Ideological Transformation of Central Asia”.

### **Boris Navasardian**

has been the President of Yerevan Press Club since 1995. During his journalistic career he has worked as columnist, chief-editor, publisher, and host of TV shows. He lectured in universities, and has been a key player in civil society development, regional cooperation, and Europeanization processes in Armenia. In 2002–2006 Boris chaired the Board of the Open Society Institute – Armenia, in 2005–2007 and 2016 he was a member of Council of Europe expert groups. Since 2009 Boris Navasardian has been actively engaged in the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum in the capacity of country facilitator for Armenia. He also implemented and participated in several researches including “European Integration Index of the EaP Countries,” “EaP Media Freedom Watch,” “Monitoring of Democratic Reforms in Armenia,” “Civil Society Participation in Policy Dialogue,” “Propaganda: Deepening the Gap in Mutual Understanding,” “Monitoring of Media Coverage of Elections” and many others, and was in charge of dozens of publications.

### **Tamerlan Ibraimov**

is Board Chair at the Center for Political and Legal Studies in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. He has authored many publications on democratization, legal and political reforms in Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asia region. He holds an LLM from the American University (Washington, DC) and a PhD in law from the Kyrgyz National University.

**Dr. Adil Nurmakov**

holds a PhD in political science and is a news media expert. His professional experience started in 2000 with providing political and media consulting services in Russia and Kazakhstan. His clients included NGOs, political parties, election campaigns, international organizations and businesses. Adil has also been among the first Kazakh bloggers to cover social and political issues and has gained a considerable following for his articles and analysis of current issues. In 2007 he founded the Competitiveness Research Center, an independent research NGO. In 2011–2014 he worked as Assistant Professor at the Department of Journalism of the International IT University in Almaty, Kazakhstan. In 2012, Adil founded BlogBasta.kz, a youth-oriented initiative aimed at increasing political awareness and participation via online and offline activities. In 2014 he co-founded Ctrl+S Almaty, a citizen initiative to foster public oversight over transformations in the Kazakhstan's largest city, engage the city's residents in the preservation of architectural heritage, and promote accessible urban environment.

**Dr. Edward Lemon**

is Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Political Science, Columbia University. In his research, Dr. Lemon examines authoritarian governance, religion, security and migration in Central Asia. He is currently working on a book manuscript exploring the ways in which the government of Tajikistan has targeted political exiles who have fled the country. In addition, he has ongoing research projects on the recruitment of Central Asian citizens to fight in Syria and Iraq, and counter-extremism in Tajikistan. Dr. Lemon holds a PhD from the University of Exeter. Since 2009, he has spent almost three years working and conducting fieldwork in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Poland. His research has been published in *Central Asian Survey*, the *RUSI Journal*, *Caucasus Survey*, *Central Asian Affairs*, *Foreign Affairs* and the *Review of Middle Eastern Studies*.

*Several authors who contributed to this publication preferred to remain anonymous. The reasons they were unwilling to disclose their names in some cases had to do with security concerns, while in other cases they were dictated by the person's status, i.e. when their occupation or official position would preclude them from publicly expressing their opinion on developments in the researched countries. We respect their decision and are very grateful for their input.*









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## WESTERNIZATION

Westernization is a process whereby societies adopt Western standards for cultural norms and codes of conduct, such as individual freedom, liberal democratic governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, rule of law, secularism, and protection of private property in areas such as industry, technology, law, politics, economics, and lifestyle.

In the last few centuries, Westernization has served as a catalytic influence in the acceleration of global growth in equatable ways as with modernization.

Rather than reflective of a single society's values, however, Westernization is more than a unidirectional influence of one country over another. Over time, the process of Westernization can produce a two-sided exchange. As a country becomes more Western, it, in turn, can also produce reciprocal influence on countries in which Western ideas originated.