

VERA AXYONOVA, PhD

Marie Skłodowska Curie REWIRE Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Vienna
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EDUCATION

Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences, Germany
PhD in Political Science & PhD Scholarship (2013)

Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany
MA in Intercultural Communication and European Studies (top three of the cohort, 2008)

East Kazakhstan State University, Kazakhstan
Diploma in International Relations (with honors, 2006)

Lincoln Trail College, USA
Non-degree exchange program (2001-2002)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

University of Vienna, Department of Communication, Marie Skłodowska Curie REWIRE Fellow
and PI of the project "Expert Knowledge in Times of Crisis" (since July 2021)

European University Institute, School of Transnational Governance, Visiting Research Fellow
(March-May 2023)

Freie Universität Berlin (FUB), Center for International Cooperation, Managing Director of the
Academics in Solidarity Program (March 2019-June 2021)

Justus Liebig University Giessen (JLU), Institute of Political Science, Postdoctoral Researcher /
Assistant Professor for International Integration (October 2014-February 2019)

George Washington University, Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Visiting
Research and Teaching Fellow (September 2018)

Carnegie Endowment's Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative, non-resident Hurford Next Generation Fellow
(September 2014-July 2015)

FRIDE, Europe-Central Asia Monitoring Program, Associate Researcher (May 2012-December 2015)

Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Social and Cultural Studies Department, Adjunct Lecturer
(January 2010-July 2016) & Centre for Intercultural and European Studies, Research Coordinator
(December 2012-October 2015)

University of Bremen, Research Centre for East European Studies, Associate Researcher
(March-October 2014)

SELECTED GRANTS & AWARDS

Klaus Schönbach Research Award by the Department of Communication, University of Vienna (2023,
shared award with George Georganakis)

Competitive grant under MSCA COFUND programme of the European Commission for the project
"Expert Knowledge in Times of Crisis: Uncovering Interaction Effects between Think Tanks, Media
and Politics beyond Liberal Democracies" (2021-2024, PI)

Competitive grant by the German Research Foundation (DFG) for the project "Domestic Preferences
and EU Cooperation" (2018-2020, co-PI with Andrea Gawrich)

Award by the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies for the excellence in
research funding acquisition, JLU Giessen (2018, personalized award)

Competitive grant by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Foreign Office
for the project "Eastern Partnership Security Dialog" (2016, co-author of application)

PUBLICATIONS

Monograph

The European Union's Democratization Policy for Central Asia: Failed in Success or Succeeded in Failure? Stuttgart: Ibidem & NY: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Edited volumes

Academics in Exile: Networks, Knowledge Exchange and New Forms of Internationalization. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022 (co-edited with Carola Richter and Florian Kohstall).

European Engagement under Review: Exporting Values, Rules, and Practices to the Post-Soviet Space. Stuttgart: Ibidem & NY: Columbia University Press, 2016.

Peer-reviewed journal articles

Dialogue for Peace: The Production of Knowledge and Norms between International Practices and Local Ownership in Ukraine (equal co-authorship with Tetiana Kyselova). *Peacebuilding*, 2024, online first, DOI: 10.1080/21647259.2024.2306040.

Responding to Crises in Authoritarian Environments: Russian Think Tanks between Policy Evaluation and State Endorsement. *Review of Policy Research*, 2024, online first, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ropr.12601>.

„We Are at War“: Reflections on Positionality and Research as Negotiation in Post-2022 Ukraine. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 26, 2023, 711-721 (equal co-authorship with Katsiaryna Lozka)

International Negotiations and Domestic Change in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood: Deconstructing Anti-Discrimination Reforms in Moldova. *East European Politics and Societies*, 36(2), 2022, 378-398 (lead author, with Denis Cenusă and Andrea Gawrich).

Re-organizing the Neighborhood? Power Shifts and Regional Security Organizations in the Post-Soviet Space and Latin America. *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 6(1), 2021, ogz080 (co-author, with Andrea Gawrich and Brigitte Weiffen).

The European Union as a Transformative Power, a Donor or a Security Provider?: The View from the Eastern Partnership Countries. *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 23(1/1), 2018, 23-40 (lead author, with Sergiy Gerasymchuk, Kornely Kakachia and Alla Rosca).

Regional Organizations and Secessionist Entities: Analyzing Practices of the EU and the OSCE in Post-Soviet Protracted Conflict Areas. *Ethnopolitics*, 17(4), 2018, 408-425 (lead author, with Andrea Gawrich).

The European Union through the Eyes of Ukrainian Think Tankers: Studying EU Perceptions Post-Euromaidan. *Kyiv-Mohyla Law and Politics Journal*, 3, 2017, 181-200 (lead author, with Diana Zubko).

Mapping the Substance of the EU's Civil Society Support in Central Asia: From Neo-liberal to State-led Civil Society. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 49(3), 2016, 207-217 (equal co-authorship with Fabienne Bossuyt).

Promoting Justice Reforms in Central Asia: The European Union's Rule of Law Initiative as Part of a Comprehensive Democratization Strategy? *Central Asian Affairs*, 3(1), 2016, 29-48.

The Effectiveness of Sanctions and Regime Legitimacy in Central Asia: Examining the Substance of EU Sanctions against Uzbekistan. *L'Europe en formation*, 375, 2015, 21-35.

When Security Threatens Human Rights: Reviewing the Case of Central Asia. *Security and Human Rights*, 24(2), 2013, 159-168.

Book chapters

Democratization and Human Rights. In: Jakob Lempp und Sebastian Mayer (eds.), *The EU as an Actor in Central Asia: External Action, Regional Responses*. London: Palgrave, forthcoming July 2024 (lead author, with Tinatin Tsertsvadze).

A Journey to the 'Self': From Precarity as Non-belonging to the Search for Common Ground. In: Olga Burlyuk and Ladan Rahbari (eds.), *Migrant Academics' Narratives of Precarity and Resilience in Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023.

Conceptualising Normalisation in International Organisations' Responses to Secessionist Conflicts: Insights from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In: Andrea Gawrich, Peter Haslinger and Monika Wingender (eds.), *Analysing Conflict Settings: Case Studies from Eastern Europe with a Focus on Ukraine*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2022 (lead author, with Andrea Gawrich).

Academics in Exile: Networks, Knowledge Exchange and New Forms of Internationalization. An Introduction. In: Vera Axyonova, Florian Kohstall and Karola Richter (eds.), *Academics in Exile: Networks, Knowledge Exchange and New Forms of Internationalization*. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2022 (equal co-authorship with Carola Richter and Florian Kohstall).

Ukrainian Think Tanks in the Post-Euromaidan Period: Exploring the Field. In: Natalia Shapovalova and Olga Burlyuk (eds.), *Civil Society in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine: From Revolution to Consolidation*. Stuttgart: ibidem, 2018 (lead author, with Fabian Schöppner).

Protecting the Rule of Law in Post-Soviet States: The Relevance of European and Eurasian Integration. In: Roman Petrov and Peter Van Elsuwege (eds.), *Post-Soviet Constitutions and Challenges of Regional Integration: Adapting to European and Eurasian Integration Projects*. London: Routledge, 2017 (co-author, with Olga Burlyuk).

On the Export of European Values, Rules and Practices: Introducing the Debate. In: Vera Axyonova (ed.), *European Engagement Under Review: Exporting Values, Rules, and Practices to the Post-Soviet Space*, Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2016.

Do They Deliver What They Promise? The Capability-Expectation Gap in the Perceptions of Regional Security Actors in the Post-Soviet Space. In: Samuel Goda, Oleksandr Tytarchuk and Maksym Khylyko (eds.), *International Crisis Management: NATO, EU, OSCE and Civil Society*. Amsterdam et al.: IOS Press, 2016.

Policy publications

From Conflict to Engagement: Threat Perceptions in the OSCE Area. In: FLEET, *Islands of Cooperation*, Policy Paper. Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2018 (co-author, with Victoria Bucataru, Alexander Graef, Dzmityr Halubnichy, Alla Leukavets and Julia Wanninger).

From a Security Community to a Post-Ukraine Uncertainty: Security Actors and Security Perceptions in Kazakhstan and Belarus. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Hurford Next Generation Fellowship Research Paper No. 3, 2015.

Evaluation of the EU's Human Rights Policies and Engagement in Central Asia. Study commissioned by the European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies. Brussels, 2014 (co-author, with Jos Boonstra and Tika Tsertsvadze).

Trading Values with Kazakhstan. EUCAM Policy Brief No. 32, September 2013 (with Tika Tsertsvadze).

Security Sector Reform in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: What Role for Europe? EUCAM Working Paper No. 14, May 2013 (co-author, with Jos Boonstra and Erica Marat).

The Afghanistan-Central Asia Relationship: What Role for the EU? EUCAM Working Paper No. 13, February 2013 (co-author, with Marlene Laruelle and Sebastien Peyrouse).

The EU Education Initiative for Central Asia Five Years On: Lessons Learnt? EUCAM Policy Brief No. 30, February 2013.

EU Human Rights and Democratisation Assistance to Central Asia: In Need of Further Reform. EUCAM Policy Brief No. 22, January 2012.

The EU-Central Asia Human Rights Dialogues: Making a Difference? EUCAM Policy Brief No. 16, April 2011.

INVITED TALKS

The Role of Evidence-Based Policy in Shaping Democratic Governance. Contributor to panel discussion at the Norface GOVERNANCE Final Conference “Democratic Governance in a Turbulent Age”, University of Vienna, 14-16 February 2024.

Reflections on researcher positionality in times of war. Invited talk at the international conference “The politics of knowledge production and the Russo-Ukrainian War”, Central European University, Vienna, 30 November-1 December 2023.

Experiencing epistemic decolonization in the context of Russia’s war against Ukraine. Invited talk at the international conference “600 Days of the All-out War: Fighting for Freedom, Fighting for Democracy”, Prague & Vienna, 18-20 October 2023.

The Pitfalls of Knowledge Diplomacy, as part of the STG Talk “Higher Education Institutions and Diplomacy: Never the Twain Shall Meet?”, organized by Claudio Radaelli and Diane Stone, European University Institute, 4 October 2023.

The Ethics of Research on De Facto States and Protracted Conflicts, contribution to the Discussion Session “How to Study De Facto States in Times of Crises?”, Pre-Conference Workshop “Dynamics of Frozen Conflicts under Scrutiny”, University of Tartu, 11 June 2023.

Crisis Expertise beyond “Global North” Democracies: The Power of Knowledge or the Knowledge for Power? Invited talk at the Research Cluster on Crisis of Expert Knowledge and Authority, European University Institute, 18 May 2023.

Expert Knowledge in Times of Crisis, Uncertainty and War: Looking beyond the “Global North”. Invited talk at the Eureast Platform, Ghent University, 10 May 2023.

European Engagements in Post-Soviet Protracted Conflict Areas: What Have We Learned? Invited talk at the Conference “Thirty Years On: Is There Still a Post-Soviet Space?”, organized by the International Institute for Peace, Vienna, 15-16 November 2021.

Think Tanks beyond Western Europe: Comparing Ukraine and Russia. Invited talk at the online panel discussion “Thinking Europe’s Future. The role of think tanks between policy expertise and normative vision”, organized by the Austrian Institute for International Affairs, 17 June 2021.

Conflict Transformation through Dialogue: Analysing the Role of the EU and the OSCE in Ukraine. Guest lecture at the University of Birmingham, 12 November 2018.

Post-Soviet Think Tanks: The Influence of Think Tanks on Policy Processes in Post-Soviet States. Guest lecture at the George Washington University, 17 September 2018.

Domestic Preferences and EU Cooperation. Explaining Policy Change in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. Project presentation at the Centre for EU Studies, Ghent University, 20 June 2018.

The European Union and Ukrainian Think Tanks: Studying EU Perceptions Post-Euromaidan. Guest talk at the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies, Regensburg, 12 January 2017.

From a Security Community to a Post-Ukraine Uncertainty: Security Actors and Security Perceptions in Kazakhstan and Belarus. Guest lecture at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC, 17 July 2015.

Recommendations for Operationalizing a New EU Strategy for Central Asia. Guest talk at the German Foreign Office, Workshop “Central Asia – Exploring EU Interests and Options”, Berlin, 19 Jan. 2015.

Civil Society Development Trends in Central Asia. Invited talk at the European Economic and Social Committee's Hearing on the Review of Central Asia Strategy, Brussels, 3 December 2014.

Democratization in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 25 Years On. Guest lecture at the State University of New York at Cortland, 4 March 2014.

The European Union's Support to Security Sector Reform in Central Asia. Guest lecture at the International DAAD Summer School "Opportunities and Risks of Transformation in Central Asia and Afghanistan", Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 12-19 August 2013.

EU Assistance to Civil Society in Kazakhstan. Invited talk at the Workshop "Kazakhstan and Europe: Linking Security and Stability to Democratic Development", KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 11 May 2012.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

KIMEP University, Kazakhstan

Using Focus Groups in Qualitative Research, workshop for PhD candidates and postdocs in the framework of the ESCAS Conference, Almaty, fall 2023

European University Institute, Italy

Guest contribution to MA-level seminar Policy Entrepreneurs & Think Tanks: Organizational and Individual Strategies for Impact, led by Diane Stone, spring 2023

University of Vienna, Austria

Expert Knowledge and Politics, postgraduate (ViDSS) theory seminar, co-taught with Sophie Lecheler, fall and winter term 2022/2023

German-Kazakh University, Kazakhstan

Introduction to Expert Interviews, postgrad block seminar, spring 2022

National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

Comparative Conflict Analysis, MA-level hybrid seminar, co-taught with Sebastian Relitz & Galyna Solovej, fall 2021

University of Tartu, Estonia

Process Tracing and Data Management, workshop for PhD candidates and postdocs, spring 2023
Fieldwork in the Study of Conflict and Authoritarianism, MA-level block seminar, spring 2020

University of Birmingham, UK

Doing Fieldwork in Challenging Environments, postgrad block seminar, in the framework of Erasmus+ Teaching Mobility Program, fall 2018

George Washington University, USA

Research Design and Qualitative Research Methods, postgrad block seminar, fall 2018
Introduction to Expert Interviews, postgrad block seminar, fall 2018

Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany

Selected Methods in Conflict Studies, postgrad block seminar, summer term 2018
Europeanization in a Comparative Perspective, BA & MA-level lecture, winter term 2016/2017
Interviewing Experts and Elites in an International Context, postgrad seminar, winter 2017
Geopolitics in Post-Soviet Regions, MA-level seminar, summer term 2016
Interviewing Experts and Elites in an International Context, postgrad seminar, winter 2016
Foreign Policy Analysis, MA-level seminar, winter term 2015/2016
Current Debates in German and European Politics, BA-level seminar, winter term 2015/2016
International Security Organizations, BA-level seminar, summer term 2015
Foreign Relations of the European Union, BA-level seminar, winter term 2014/2015

Fulda University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Recurring MA-level seminars in European Foreign and Security Policy, Foreign Policies of EU Member States, EU Foreign Affairs and the Neighborhood Policy, Research Methods in European Studies, and The EU Democratization Policy, offered between winter term 2010/2011 and summer term 2016

University of Bremen, Germany

External Relations of the European Union, BA-level seminar, summer term 2010
Introduction to Comparative Politics, BA-level tutorial, winter term 2009/2010

REPRESENTATION & COMMITTEES

Editorial Board member, Ethnopolitics (since 2024)
Mentor, University of New Europe mentoring program for students and scholars at risk (since 2022)
Founding co-chair, ECPR Research Network on Statehood, Sovereignty and Conflict (since 2021)
Member, Institutional Review Board, Dep. of Communication, University of Vienna (since 2021)
Member, Younger Generation Leaders Network on Euro-Atlantic Security (2016-2024)
External advisor, Academics in Solidarity Program, FUB (2021-2023)
Member, WG "Innovative and Future-Oriented Learning and Teaching Formats", FUB (2020-2021)
Member, FLEET Expert Group, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and OSCE (2017-2019)
Peer-mentor, Research Funding Expert Programme at the Giessen Graduate Centre for Social Sciences, Business, Economics and Law / GGS (2016-2019)
Speaker, International Security and Statehood Section, GSS, JLU Giessen (2015-2019)
ECPR Liaison Officer, Institute of Political Science, JLU Giessen (2014-2017)
Member, WG on Antidiscrimination and Antiracism, Fulda University of Applied Sciences (2012-2015)
Co-organizer, Career Initiative for Doctoral Fellows (2010-2011) & Equal Opportunities Officer (elected), Bremen International Graduate School of Social Sciences (2009-2010)

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & MEDIA OUTREACH

I regularly communicate my research via traditional and social media channels and engage in public discussions related to my professional activities as a scholar. These are most recent examples:

Academic (Im)mobility and the Strive for Research Internationalization. Opening talk at the annual event of the Postdoc Office, themed "The Settled Down PostDoc: Does Mobility Improve Your Research?", University of Graz, 17 April 2024: <https://postdoc.uni-graz.at/de/veranstaltungen/annual-event-of-the-postdoc-office-2024>

Pragmatic Academic Panel Discussion on Migration and Research. Guest speaker at the Anti-Racism Week of the Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy, University of Vienna, 23 November 2023.

Guest on Business Diplomacy Today, Podcast episode 19 "Expert Influence in Policy- and Decision-making", 9 November 2023: <https://businessdiplomacy.today/2023/11/expert-influence-in-policy-and-decision-making>

Interview to CABAR (a project of the Institute of War and Peace Reporting) "Kazakhstan's think tanks: from legitimization of political decisions to constructive opposition. Expert interview", 2 November 2023: <https://cabar.asia/en/kazakhstan-s-think-tanks-from-legitimization-of-political-decisions-to-constructive-opposition-expert-interview>

Learning from Experiences of Academic Displacement and Exile. Discussion with Judith Kohlenberger and Dietlind Hüchtker as part of Disciplines in Motion Lecture Series, University of Vienna, 20 April 2023.

REWIRE Fellow of the Month Interview. Vienna, 8 March 2023: <https://rewire.univie.ac.at/fellow-of-the-month/vera-axyonova>