

## DÉBAT

### **Thierry de Montbrial, Founder and Executive Chairman of Ifri and the WPC**

Thank you very much. We have a very strict agenda because we will have only one hour for lunch before resuming, so I will take one question. I am going to give the floor to someone, the only person who does not ask for the floor. That is Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean, who helped to set up this session.

### **Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean, Research Fellow and Director of Russia/NIS Center of Ifri**

Je voudrais poser une question à M. Darsalia, vice-ministre des Affaires étrangères de Géorgie, sur ce qui est en train de se passer dans le pays et les éventuelles sanctions de l'Union européenne qui risquent de mettre en péril votre objectif d'adhésion à l'UE. Votre pays a eu une chance extraordinaire d'obtenir le statut de candidat, et j'entends bien que vous avez un voisin avec lequel vous êtes enfermés, pour réutiliser votre expression, dans une cage avec un ours blessé. Comment réconcilier cette menace, côté russe, avec la volonté d'adhérer à l'Union européenne sans réprimer les manifestants dans la rue et en respectant toutes les valeurs que le rêve géorgien déclare être les siennes ? Merci.

I would like to ask a question to Mr. Darsalia, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia, regarding what is going on in the country and the EU possible sanctions that may jeopardize Georgia's EU accession goal. Your country was extraordinarily lucky to be granted the status of candidate, and I do understand the fact that you are stuck with a neighbor, in a cage with a hurt bear to refer to your own words. How could you find a balance between this threat on the Russian side and your will to enter the European Union while not cracking down on protesters in the street and upholding all the values the Georgian dream has claimed? Thank you.

### **Lasha Darsalia, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Georgia**

Thank you. I hope I correctly understood the question because there was translation going on. There were several questions, as I understand the insight, and several facts, I would say. First of all, the issue is that European and Euro-Atlantic integration is not debated in Georgia. Everyone supports this and the government is in front of this. There was this interpretation of recent statements, and it was not that Georgia stops Euro-Atlantic integration. That was not the statement. The statement was about that it just waits for the European Union to make it clear when Georgia can start the several stages in this issue.

Regarding the European and Euro-Atlantic integration, generally, support for European integration in Georgia is more or less 90%. It is always very high. Unfortunately, as I have already said, Georgia has two key issues: territorial integrity and European and Euro-Atlantic

integration. Unfortunately, for the last three decades the reality was that occupation of Georgia's territories was used by the Russian Federation to hinder, stop or derail Georgia from this path. Also, it is not only what is happening in the occupied territories. It is also this ongoing hybrid war against Georgia, which has the several dimensions. First of all, this is demonizing the West or Western values in Georgia, demonizing the West generally, as well as demonizing Georgia in the West, too. Unfortunately, this is the reality where we live. Regarding European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Georgia, Georgia considers this as expanding the space for peace and cooperation. It is not against any country, and it is definitely not against Russia. However, unfortunately, that is how Russia interprets this, and that is why we have this hybrid war from Russia against Georgia.

### **Thierry de Montbrial**

Thank you very much. Unfortunately, we have to end up here. I hope you understand why I said at the beginning that this session is important. I think this session is important because if we want to avoid this, to slip from the Second Cold War, which I mentioned this morning, to a real Third World War, it is crucial to use these concepts we have been briefly discussing this morning. I am sure that in future editions of the World Policy Conference we will try to go deeper into these ideas, and obviously talking about the future of the Middle East in a more and more complex situation, at some point we will also have to use these kinds of concepts. Thank you very much indeed. By the way, one more word about the future of the European Union itself, because the European Union is in miniature, so to speak, a model of global governance, and if one wants to deepen the concept of European foreign policy, European defense or security policy, we will be obliged to go into these kinds of considerations within Europe. Therefore, it is really very important. Thank you very much.