

## FOREWORD

The present issue focuses on Russia and some of its neighbors, an area of considerable importance but remaining in a state of some indeterminacy. Despite the fact that three decades have passed since the beginning of the transformation in the post-Soviet world, we are dealing with the obvious instability and dysfunctionality of many Eurasian countries. We suggest that the main root of this anxiety is the political and social awareness of the society and the elites in the Russian Federation, which remains the undisputed leader in the post-Soviet region and the only CIS state with far-reaching international ambitions justified by its military potential. It is the Russian factor that conditions the maintenance of conflicts in the Caucasus in a frozen state, a real war in Eastern Ukraine, and stagnation in Belarus. On the one hand, after the institutional weakness of the 1990s, we are observing an increase in the assertiveness of the Russian state in Eastern Europe, on the other, however, the growing economic stagnation, as well as the atomization and alienation of society, which have an impact on the entire post-Soviet region. A couple of its states, mainly Georgia and Ukraine, have changed their geopolitical orientations, which creates different perspectives for new stability, as well as international cooperation.

The set of proposed articles focuses on five thematic areas: the systemic transformation of the Russian state, its perspectives in the field of the economy and sustainable society, the post-Soviet area in international relations, social change in Russia, as well as the ideological background of changes, which stretches from economic and philosophical liberalism to different versions of traditionalism.