

Policy Brief: Conflict Risk and Democracy in Europe & Central Asia (2021â€“2023)

Executive Summary

This policy brief examines the relationship between conflict events (peaceful and violent protests), population exposure, and democracy scores across 11 countries in Europe and Central Asia from 2021 to 2023. Using data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and democracy indices, the analysis reveals trends in protest activities, their impact on civilian populations, and correlations with democratic governance.

Key Findings

- **Increasing Violent Protests:** The frequency of violent protests has risen in several countries, correlating with higher fatalities and population exposure.
- **Democracy Scores:** Countries with lower democracy scores tend to experience higher violent protest frequencies, suggesting a link between governance and conflict risk.
- **Regional Variations:** Central Asian countries show higher authoritarian tendencies, impacting protest dynamics compared to European nations.
- **Population Exposure:** Areas with high population exposure to protests face increased risks of social unrest and governance challenges.

Policy Recommendations

- **Strengthen Democratic Institutions:** Enhance electoral processes and civil liberties to reduce protest-related tensions.
- **Conflict Mitigation:** Implement community-based conflict resolution programs to address protest triggers.
- **Data-Driven Governance:** Use real-time conflict data to inform policy and prevent escalation of violent protests.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Foster EU-led initiatives to support democratic reforms in Central Asia.

Conclusion

Addressing the interplay between protests, population exposure, and democracy is critical for regional stability. Policymakers should prioritize democratic reforms and proactive conflict management to mitigate risks.