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**Author**

CHANKSELIANI, Maia

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**Abstract**

In the context marked by increasing competition between nation-states and universities, expanding individualization, growing influence of nonstate actors, and the new reality of Brexit, this study uses narrative and numeric data to explore the rationales of U.K. higher education (HE) internationalization, specifically motives of attracting students from Eastern Europe, Russia, Caucasus, and Central Asia to the United Kingdom. Among four main rationales of international student recruitment, economic rationale emerged as the most decisive. Interviewed international/admissions officers viewed student mobility from this region as an expression of socioeconomic transformation in sending countries as well as political and strategic priorities in the United Kingdom. They referred to the economic situation in the region, the development of the HE sector within the source countries, the U.K. government discourse on migration, and universities' own strategic planning as four main issues that can influence future trends of student mobility from this

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region to the United Kingdom. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)