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**Abstract**

In the twenty years since independence, new Eurasian nation-states of the former Soviet Union have introduced major changes to the way students are admitted to institutions of higher education. Azerbaijan (1992), Uzbekistan (1993), Kazakhstan (1999\*), Russia (2001\*), Kyrgyzstan (2002), Ukraine (2004\*), and Georgia (2005) have all created new state or nongovernmental assessment agencies to design and conduct standardized external admissions tests. New norms and procedures for how higher education institutions (HEIs) use test results and other selection criteria in admissions decisions have also been introduced (Gabrscek, 2010).<sup>1</sup> In most cases, written, standardized testing has replaced oral examinations as the primary selection criterion (Drummond, 2011a). These changes are about much more than improving the quality of selection decisions or increasing efficiency

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through the employment of new technologies. In each country the reforms represent an attempt to shift the considerable power of admissions discretion from HEIs to other actors in the educational system. This article examines the key political, institutional, and capacity issues surrounding these reforms across the Eurasian region. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)