

## Notes on contributors

**Aleksandr Akimov** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Accounting, Finance and Economy at Griffith University, Australia. As a trained economist his major areas of expertise are emerging market finance, post-communist Central Asia, sustainable and energy finance, Australia public policy.

**James Blanchett** completed his master's degree in European Union Studies at the University of Canterbury in 2024. His research interests focus on EU enlargement, in particular examining EU enlargement policy and practice in Central and Eastern Europe.

**Larisa Kangaspuro** is a researcher at the University of Helsinki Aleksanteri Institute - Finnish Centre for Russian and East European Studies. Her academic background is History and Law. My research interests include public perceptions of the penal system of modern Russia and the Nordic countries in historical perspective.

**Nina Markovic** is a political scientist with a PhD from the Australian National University and extensive experience in academia and senior parliamentary research roles in Canberra. Her research and public work focus on Balkan studies, Europe–China relations, Australian security policy, migration, and diaspora dynamics, with a strong emphasis on translating academic research into policy, public debate, and real-world impact.

**Milenko Petrovic** is Jean Monnet Chair, and Senior Lecturer Above the Bar at the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) and at the Department of Global, Cultural and Language Studies, University of Canterbury, New Zealand. He is Deputy Director of NCRE and President of the Australasian Association for Euro-Asian Studies (AAEAS). His research and publications focus on problems of post-communist democratisation and socio-economic transition in East Central and South-Eastern Europe and the EU's eastern enlargement.

**Raymond Taras** is an Emeritus Professor in the School of Liberal Arts at Tulane University, New Orleans, United States of America. Born and educated in Montreal, Quebec, Raymond Taras received his postgraduate degrees at universities in Europe and has published on the collapse of the USSR, Russia's identity in international relations, the rise of liberal and illiberal nationalisms, the internationalization of ethnic conflicts, the dangers of xenophobia, the critique of multiculturalism, the impact of fear on European foreign policy, and the makings of nationhood.