

icd - institute for cultural diplomacy



Europe Meets Russia: A Forum for Young Leaders  
11th - 16th April, 2010

## Europe meets Russia: A Forum for Young Leaders

The Next EMR Weeklong Seminar will take place from 11th - 16th April, 2010

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*The European-Russian Relationship in the next Decade: Priorities and Strategies*

Berlin 11th -16th April 2010

#### 1. European-Russian Relations

Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has increased its independence, joined a number of international organizations and developed a strategic partnership with the European Union. This partnership is based on four main policy areas, described as “common spaces”: freedom, security and justice; economic and environmental issues; external security; and research and education. Agreed upon at the St. Petersburg Summit of May 2003 the „common spaces“ will continue to be the focus of the European-Russian-partnership also in the next decade. The EU and Russia will also continue to co-operate on dealing with a number of challenges, both at international level and in their common neighbourhood. These include climate change, drug and human trafficking, organised crime, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation and the Middle East Peace Process.



#### 1.2. Economics and Politics

The relations between the two entities have, at times, been strained and there is a far-reaching history of European-Russian conflict expressed in different views on the importance of territorial sovereignty, use of military force abroad and the right to self-determination. Moreover, the insufficient level of democracy in the Russian Federation in accordance with European standards proves to be an equally important concern for the European-Russian relations. However, the current process of democratisation and market reform in Russia, facilitating the collaboration of the two entities on the political and economic arena, proves to be irreversible and will continue also in the next decade, even though it might be interrupted from time to time by occasional shocks and setbacks. One is certain: Russia does not opt for a policy of confrontation and isolation towards the European Union, but is involved in European cooperation at ‘arm’s length’ on the basis of a special partnership relation. Especially in light of global warming and dwindling energy resources, the respective administrations and governments have no choice but pursuing the strategy of working together and engaging in mutual politics in order to overcome these obstacles.



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### 1.3. Culture and Education

Cooperation in the spheres of culture and education between Russia and Europe are continuously developing. Russian universities have become more actively involved in European and International programs. Due to this Russian and European students have increasingly more possibilities to learn about each other's cultures. These programs, however, are negatively affected by the "passive



isolationism" of younger generations from both Russian and European backgrounds, who are lacking the motivation to travel between Europe and Russia and learn about their cultural values, heritage and their differences. The main priority in this field for the next decade is therefore creating a mutual interest of young academics and professionals in their cultures, values and way of life.

### 1.4. Extend of Cooperation

The governments of both European countries and Russia share a belief in the possibility of establishing a European and global order built on cooperation, mutual understanding, common values, and non-confrontation. Our current way of communicating, however, is not flawless. It does generate cultural exchanges, but these can also lead to conflicts and misunderstanding. Cultural Diplomacy is the key tool to addressing these problems. By creating a constructive dialogue between governments and representatives, it optimizes the intercultural relations.



On a national level, there exists a variety of bilateral initiatives which aim to increase the frequency and intensity of discussions between members of the EU on one side and Russia on the other. One such initiative is the Petersburg Dialogue, which was organized under the supervision of Vladimir Putin and Gerhard Schröder in 2001. In relation to cultural diplomacy, the Petersburg Dialogue is especially important because it is not only concerned with political problems, but also with the problems of civil society and tries to change the perception each country holds of the other, which is often biased. The European-Russian relations have changed since the collapse the USSR and in order to maintain peace also in the next decades, a genuine mutual understanding and cooperation from both sides are vital.

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### 1.5. Financial Crisis: Obstacle or Opportunity?

As such, the financial slump has clearly harmed the Russian economy, especially through the fall in the price of oil. Instead of solely considering the disadvantages resulting from this crisis however, it may be more fruitful to take a look at the opportunities that it creates for the European-Russian economic relations in the next decade. One of the potential benefits that Russia and the EU can gain from the crisis is an impetus for deeper and more thorough cooperation, striving for a common strategy to deal with the aftermath of the crisis in the next decade. It is only through cooperation, not isolation, that Russia and the EU can establish solid grounds for further development of business relations. Thus, the financial crisis created an opportunity for the Russian government to reorganize and modernize its economy and create a new set of institutions and infrastructure for faster financial transaction.



### 2. Europe Meets Russia: A Forum for Young Leaders

“Europe Meets Russia: A Forum for Young Leaders” seeks to explore the cultural side of European-Russian relations.

#### 2.1. Principles of the Forum

Our point of departure is the belief that Cultural Diplomacy is one of the tools which can help to lay solid foundations for the future of European and Russian relations based on dialogue, understanding and trust. The EMR Forum intends to bring together young, ambitious and active people from Europe, Russia and all over the world in order to help them understand the spirit of Cultural Diplomacy and its significance. The Forum enables them to exchange experiences, ideas and to receive incentives to improve the current state of affairs. The EMR Forum takes place several times a year.



#### 2.2. EMR-Forum, 11th-16th of April 2010

The forthcoming EMR-Forum is dedicated to the priorities and strategies of European-Russian relations specifically in the next decade, based on current challenges and opportunities the two entities are facing.

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### **The following issues will be addressed and explored in particular:**

- ⇒ The development of European-Russian relations over the past 60 years and the probable salient issues over the coming decade
- ⇒ The strategies being employed by Russia and Europe towards each other and the potential for change in these approaches over the coming decade, looking in particular at the role of soft power and cultural diplomacy
- ⇒ The increasing integration of the European Union and the implications of this process for European-Russian relations
- ⇒ Cooperation between Europe and Russia in the fields of sustainability, renewable energy and climate change

### Speakers

The speakers during the Forum will include leading figures from the fields of politics and diplomacy, academia, civil society, and representatives from the private sector.

### Participants

The participants will include students and professionals with an active interest in European-Russian relations from across the world.

### Certificate of Attendance / Sustainable Network

Upon completion of the Weeklong Seminar, all participants will be awarded with an official certificate detailing the activity of the week and welcoming them to the ICD's Forum, which assists them in furthering their academic and professional prospects by engaging in a network of likeminded individuals around the world.

### In Cooperation with





**Institute for Cultural Diplomacy**

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