Institut d'Etudes Européennes
et Internationales du Luxembourg

Luxembourg Institute for European
and International Studies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Conference on

Reinventing and Reinvigorating EU-Russia Relations

8 and 9 April 2005
Castle of Bourglinster, Luxembourg

Abstract

The Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS) and the New Eurasia Foundation (FNE), with the support of the Robert Bosch Foundation, organised a conference on 'Reinventing and Reinvigorating EU-Russia Relations' on 8 and 9 April 2005 in Luxembourg. With a view to the EU-Russia Summit on 10 May 2005 in Moscow, the objective of this conference was to assess the state of EU-Russia relations and to draw up alternative strategies and policies to extend and enhance cooperation between Russia and the EU.

The conference brought together approximately 70 participants – academics, policy- and decision-makers and civil society representatives – from more than 10 countries, above all Russia but also the Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Romania and Poland. In the course of eight sessions and on the basis of short presentations and extensive discussions, four conclusions and 12 concrete policy recommendations were drawn up.

The four conclusions are as follows:

(1) the current stagnation in EU-Russia relations is due to the confluence of an implementation gap in top level decisions and of the absence of a common geo-political vision of EU-Russia relations;

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(2) one condition for narrowing the implementation gap and for developing a common geo-political vision of EU-Russia relations is to address the question of values and to recognise that common or similar values can give rise to different norms and patterns of understanding and behaviour, which in turn impact on top level decisions and implementation;

(3) a second condition is to adopt a strategic view of EU-Russia relations by elaborating, on an equal footing and without double standards, a framework that not only binds together the PCA and the four common spaces but also sets out a common political project that reflects the strategic importance of relations between the EU and Russia;

(4) a third condition is to address the structural and systemic problems in Russia and the EU and to promote the development of a distinctly European political and socio-economic model that reflects and preserves the specificities of the European identity and its many diverse components.

The 12 concrete policy recommendations are as follows:

A. in order to narrow the implementation gap

(1) associating expert communities to the assessment of the official decision- and policy-making process and to the design of alternative policies, strategies, channels and instruments that simplify the current legalistic and bureaucratic rule-book;

(2) involving civil society at various levels of decision- and policy-making, both in an advisory role and as a second-track level of cooperation with distinct formats and different 'target audiences';

(3) addressing the concerns at the level of national bureaucracies and the public and fostering mutual understanding by promoting exchange among policy- and decision-makers and civil society representatives;

(4) making use of the permanent partnership council in order to maintain and reinforce high-level consultations on a regular basis, especially in between the bi-annual summit meetings, which could be increased to quarterly meetings;

B. in order to strengthen civil society and second-track cooperation

(5) promoting capacity- and trust-building institutions that bring together the state, the market and civil society from EU countries and Russia on an equal footing and in a spirit of commonality, e.g. to design strategies aimed at implementing the Kyoto Protocol;

(6) promoting the establishment of joint institutes, research centres and think tanks with creative people from EU countries and Russia based on social entrepreneurship grounded in human and social capital in order to provide points of entry to cooperation (not social activism or philanthropy);

C. in order to promote cooperation in the area of education, research and culture

(7) reforming Russian policies, e.g. granting more autonomy to universities, promoting exchange programmes between schools and universities and improving knowledge of foreign languages, all with a view to implementing the Bologna process;

(8) reforming EU policies by broadening the ERASMUS programmes and simplifying the TACIS programme and by redirecting EU funds to defined educational programmes, e.g. Masters and PhD programmes in social sciences, thereby responding to a lack of social scientists in Russia and also avoiding the use of precious funds to cover exorbitant consultancy fees charged by EU companies;

(9) learning from experience of US universities on two-way legal tools and extending systems of loans and grants to students who study abroad and return to their native countries (e.g. by the Alpha Group and oil corporations);

D. in order to promote cooperation in various areas

(10) associating civil society representatives to decision- and policy-making (based on the example of ACP-EU cooperation);

(11) developing trans-national cross-border cooperation and improving good governance by promoting regular exchange of information on best practices;

(12) with regard to transnational organised crime, providing EU support for customs union and customs officers at some of the most porous borders, including the Ukraine and Moldova.

I. The state of EU-Russia relations: Elements of discontent and concrete progress

In assessing the state of EU-Russia relations, two levels can be distinguished: first of all, the official decision-making and policy-implementation process and, secondly, the underlying strategy and vision. The first level includes the following elements:

(i) the effectiveness of decision- and policy-making
(ii) the idiosyncrasies of the four common spaces
(iii) converging and conflicting interests of Russia and the EU
(iv) recent improvements and outlook

There was some disagreement among the participants with respect to decision- and policy-making. Some argued that decision-making at the top official level has vastly improved and that the main impediment to progress is the implementation gap in official decisions, not least on account of the bureaucratic structure in Russia as well as within the EU. This view is shared by Javier Solana, the High Representative of EU common foreign and security policy (Andrey Kortunov).
Others contended that there is a fundamental difference in the configuration of policy-making between Russia and EU: whereas the verticality of power in Russia poses no obstacle to effective implementation, the horizontality of power within the EU constitutes the main stumbling bloc in translating decisions into policies and ensuring implementation (Michael Emerson). Among Russian and EU officials, there was however agreement that improvements in the effectiveness of policy-making are both desirable and feasible and that academic and expert advice is pivotal in devising new mechanisms and channels of policy implementation, verification and correction (Sergey Kulik, Aleksey Slizkov, Nicolas Pascual de la Parte, Miguel Amado).

On the four common spaces that are currently being negotiated, the discussions highlighted some scepticism. On the one hand, EU-Russia relations are grounded in the 1997 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which provides a political and legal basis and which is unique to Russia and the EU (compared with previous agreements between the EU and other countries in Central and Eastern Europe). The PCA is a good basis to consolidate and extend cooperation and it displays mutual ambition, as evinced by Art. 23 on equal rights for EU and Russian citizens in a number of areas (Mark Entin). The four common spaces also provide scope for cooperation in areas of 'high politics' such as security, which could give EU-Russia relations a truly geo-political and strategic dimension.
On the other hand, it is not clear what the nature of the four common spaces is and whether the conclusion of agreements on one or more of the common spaces will match the expectations about the importance and uniqueness of EU-Russia relations. The ongoing enlargement process of the EU and the transformation of the post-Soviet space raise questions about the role of the EU and Russia in Europe and the world and therefore require a redefinition of EU-Russia relations (Michael Emerson). More specifically, there is unease on the part of the EU about Russian domestic policy (need for a stronger state than during the Yeltsin years but no *carte blanche* for rolling back democracy) and Russian foreign policy (encouraging reinforced cooperation within the CIS but condemning Russian interference in sovereign states). Equally, there is unease on the part of Russia about the EU's enlargement process (Russophobia in some new EU member-states and infringement on Russia's 'natural sphere of influence') and the EU's apparent inability to formulate and enforce common positions in foreign policy matters, which induces Russia to privilege bilateral relations (e.g. with the UK on energy) or relations with a 'chosen few' (e.g. France and Germany [and Spain] on Iraq). The question is whether the four common spaces preserve and enhance the uniqueness of relations between the EU and Russia or whether they are derived from the EU's approach to the 'New Neighbourhood' and therefore constitute a legal and bureaucratic rule-book that is 'to take or to leave' (Michael Emerson).

The discussions also revealed disagreement on conflicting and converging interests. Some participants argued that EU-Russia relations in general and the four common spaces in particular do not serve specific mutual interests but rather pursue the EU's general interest in stabilising Russia (Pavel Erochkine). More specifically, some participants wondered whether the current relations do not cater more to EU interests (importing energy and exporting goods) than to Russian interests (very limited export of high-tech and semi-processed goods). If so, then this imbalance warrants changes in the trade pattern in a such a way as to diversify Russia's exports and thereby the overall economic development by opening more sectors to international exchange and by bringing in small- and medium-sized business (Andrey Kortunov).
Other participants objected to this line of argument and contended that Russia needs to decide on its economic structure and carry out the necessary structural reforms. Rather than burdening the relations with the EU, it is preferable for both parties to agree on common standards and rules and to oversee implementation within their respective realm of sovereignty (Willem van Eekelen).

There was however agreement that some significant improvements have been achieved in terms of the first level – the current decision-making and policy-implementation process. For instance, there is now an autonomous department for EU-Russia relations with extensive competencies, which is unique within the Russian Presidential Administration and

underscores the importance of relations with the EU, thus reflecting one of President Putin's key priorities (Sergey Kulik). Better coordination at the top official level has also contributed significantly to a convergence of the two economic spaces, including the harmonisation of some trade procedures, investment in large-scale projects and Russia's signature and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in exchange for the EU's support for Russian membership in the WTO (Aleksey Slizkov).

The second level at which EU-Russia relations can be assessed – the underlying strategy and vision – includes the following elements:

(i) formulating a political project
(ii) associating the civil society
(iii) fostering popular participation

One critical dimension of EU-Russia relations is the prevailing sense of uncertainty on both sides. There are question marks about both the EU integration and enlargement process. More fundamentally, the EU pains to clarify its identity – what it stands for, what it shares with its neighbours and how it relates to global powers, above all the USA. It is not clear whether the proposed Constitutional Treaty addresses these questions and whether it musters sufficient popular support. Similarly, Russia is in search of a political and socio-economic model for itself and struggles to settle relations with the ex-Soviet countries as well as the USA, China and India. In the face of increasing complexity and inter-dependency, there is a need for clarity in the key political debates on the future of EU-Russia relations (Armand Clesse).

Referring to a number of documents and meetings (e.g. the Russian Council of Defence and Foreign Policy), it was also said that both the EU and Russia lack a genuinely strategic view of their relations. While they agree on the importance of stable economic relations and a gradual *rapprochement*, they fail to address some of the most central geo-political questions like a common security strategy and closer political integration (Michael Emerson). Russia continues to be ambiguous about EU membership, but President Putin seems to favour closer political ties that confer a special status to EU-Russia relations (Andranik Migranyan). Substantial progress in political and security cooperation hinges on whether both sides can specify their primary and secondary strategic objectives and whether there is sufficient mutual understanding. This implies that the EU refrains from fitting Russia into its conception of Europe. Instead, the EU and Russia should formulate a common vision that includes not only current and future EU member-states but also the shared 'near-abroad' (Vladimir Suprun).

There was also concern about a lack of civil society participation and of popular support for the current EU-Russia cooperation. While those involved in the day-to-day business of official decision- and policy-making are more optimistic about the present and future of the relations between the EU and Russia, academic and policy experts as well as civil society actors remain pessimistic about the achievements and prospects of cooperation. More fundamentally, there is an acute lack of mutual understanding and of democracy, in the sense that decisions are taken by a small group of officials, while regular and thorough exchanges are still limited to certain sectors of society (Timofei Bordachev).
What is required in order to consolidate and enhance relations at all levels and in all domains of political, economic and cultural activity is to improve mutual understanding at the level of expert communities and to involve civil society and the public at large. Expert communities

could be associated in an advisory function, e.g. assessing decisions and suggesting alternatives approaches and strategies. Civil society could provide a second-track level of cooperation in different contexts and with different formats and 'target audiences', above all informing the public at large and promoting economic, social and cultural exchange (Andrey Kortunov).

Both the EU and Russia suffer from a democratic deficit, in the sense that decision-making is concentrated at the top, often without any regards for lower echelons of the state apparatus, never the public interest. The bureaucracy and the population are simply expected to adopt (and to adapt to) executive decisions rather than to help shape the decision- and policy-making process. Besides casting a long shadow on the reality of representative democracy, such a pattern implies that people are likely either to undermine reforms at the level of implementation or in practice to change the rules imposed upon them by the elites. Either way, cooperation is stalled and there is a sense of increasing powerlessness on the part of decision-makers and of alienation on the part of their constituencies (Timofei Bordachev).

II. The importance of values for EU-Russia relations

The debate on the role of democracy in EU-Russia relations touches on the question of values. According to some participants, the West in general and the EU in particular apply double standards (Andranik Migranyan, Tatjana Zdanoka, Sergey Lounev). On the one hand, the EU lectures Russia on the lack of democracy, the decline in freedom of expression and the end of independent media. On the other hand, the EU discriminates against Russia in ways that can only be described as non- or anti-democratic. First of all, in the wake of EU enlargement and the EU requirement for transit visa, the access to Kaliningrad is more difficult than it was to Berlin during the Cold War (Andranik Migranyan). Secondly, the fate of the Russian minorities in the Baltic States has worsened over the years. Not only are they being marginalized, but their exclusion from the political process (e.g. 20% of the total population are *de facto* barred from regional elections in Lithuania) is deemed to be in accordance with the EU's Copenhagen criteria on fundamental values of democracy (Tatjana Zdanoka). The effect of applying double standards is to generate a sense of discrimination, alienation and hostility in Russia vis-à-vis the EU.
To be sure, Russian expectations in the early 1990s of receiving substantial assistance and joining the European club were undoubtedly excessive; however, the current trajectory of EU integration and enlargement not only confirms Russians in their trauma and disenchantment vis-à-vis democratic and market reforms, but also suggests to Russians that the door to the political Europe has been shut for at least 20 years. Economic cooperation hardly compensates for a lack of political inclusion. Instead of being associated to the construction of a wider Europe, Russia remains on the margins and suffers the consequences of what is perceived to be the hypocrisy of the EU, whether with regard to its action in Kosovo (which does not compare to Russia's presence in Transdniester or Abkhazia) or more recently in the Ukraine (Sergey Lounev). What this points to is the need for Russia to devise its own model based on distinct, expressly Russian specificities and not to leave the discourse on values to the EU (and USA) alone, not least since the EU and Russia share the same values and neither has an exclusive claim to monopoly.

Other participants contended that the EU countries and Russia share the same values but differ on norms which shape patterns of understanding and behaviour and so engender real

differences (Christopher Coker). This argument is borne out by historical examples: the most European Russians were émigrés who settled down in Western countries, yet at the same time refused to assimilate and renounce their Russian-ness by embracing a culture that is normatively different. For instance, Alexander Herzl said to Michelet that 'we [Russians] are not the executors of your historical testament'. Other examples include a recent rejection of Vaclav Havel's demand that Eastern Europeans and Russians become more American. The divergence between Russia and the EU at the level of norms, not values, is perhaps most clearly evinced by the Yukos affair and the abolition of gubernatorial elections. Both cases show that the rule of law is a common value but that there are real differences at the level of practices which enshrine norms. The Russian understanding of the rule of law (Putin's 'dictatorship of the law') must be seen against the distinctly Russian backdrop of lawlessness and incivility, not least since the 1990s and the introduction of the Western variant of liberal democracy and market economy.
It therefore makes no sense to advocate or implement efforts aimed at values convergence because this would be felt as the imposition of a Western model in violation of Russian norms and patterns of understanding and behaviour. This is why both Jeremy Rifkin's book *The European Dream* and Mark Leonards's book *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century* are mistaken in advocating a single socio-economic model for the wider Europe. However, historical experience allows judgements about the discrepancy between values and norms and therefore enables critiques and suggestions for reforms. More specifically, one way of understanding human rights is in terms of actualising human potential (including social and cultural capital). To say this is to suggest that a society which does not secure and foster the actualisation of human potential will ultimately collapse. To say this is also to say that democracy is both a value and a norm and that the state is more powerful if and when it is accountable and transparent, otherwise the Executive takes all the blame for socio-economic crises. It follows that within democracies power evolves and adapts to events rather than simply imposing a uniform mould (Christopher Coker).

Yet other participants objected to this position and argued that there are genuine differences at the level of values. Even if we recognise the Christian heritage that is common to the EU and Russia, the distinct legal codifications of human rights and of the values of democracy give rise to value divergence. What is more, the Western model does not need to be imposed because an increasing number of countries have made or want to make the sovereign decision of importing it, including Moldova, Georgia, the Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and perhaps also Armenia (Michael Emerson). There was also mention of the increasing divergence in terms of economic interest, which could lead to alienation and estrangement. Common standards are useful, but they should be the same for all in all places and at all times. Europe seems to be interested in importing Russian energy and exporting European goods, while erecting barriers for Russian semi-processed and finished goods. Not to address such and other imbalances now is to run the risk of creating fundamental disagreements and value divergence later (Yuri Rubinsky). Equally, anti-Western or anti-Russian bias in the media could have large-scale effects on the attitude and mentalities of all the countries involved in the EU-Russia relations. What is at stake is not only values but mutual understanding for each other's 'enlightened self-interest' (Vladimir Suprun).

There are however some signs of improvement at the level of values and mutual understanding. Russia's recent signing and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and the EU's subsequent support for Russian membership in the WTO may provide a catalyst in expanding

and diversifying economic relations in such a way as to share the fruits of cooperation (Jean-Marie Frentz). Similarly, the Cold War rhetoric and mindset has largely been abandoned and Russia and the EU are in quest for a common language that enables not only telling the truth to each other's face but also trusting in commonly shared goals (Nicolas Pascual de la Parte). Furthermore, issues of identity and difference can be discussed not only in terms of a values gap (whether widening or narrowing) but also by way of a common sense grounded in experience born from mutual engagement. What this involves is to identify and to develop a common language which arises out of dialogue. Democracy is a set of values which are shared by both Russia and the EU but which require constant critical debate and political, economic and cultural exchange. There is a need to find a number of interfaces to enable such a dialogue and such exchange. The idea of an 'overlapping consensus' (developed by the American political philosopher John Rawls) can provide a framework of communication on values that are shared, not identical, and that can help build a set of common practices based on shared values (Tatyana Alekseeva).

III. The EU's and Russia's 'near-abroad'

The issues surrounding the 'near-abroad' can be divided into five categories:

(1) the absence of a strategic approach to the wider Europe
(2) Russia's 'natural sphere of influence'
(3) the EU's 'New Neighbourhood Policy' (NNP)
(4) the interests and perspectives of the countries in question
(5) possible alternatives to current policies

A number of participants argued that the fundamental reason for the current tensions between Russia and the EU on the question of the 'near-abroad' is the absence on both sides of a genuine strategic approach to the wider Europe. EU-Russia relations have hitherto been conceived in rather narrow terms that do not include a geo-political vision of Europe. In this sense, relations do not have to be re-invented, but simply invented, since they have not existed in the first place (András Balogh). Moreover, the structure of external economic relations favours EU exports to Russia and is therefore imbalanced. While the EU has adapted a more political and strategic approach to its relations with Russia, the latter is not granted the status which its population and culture warrant: for instance, the EU's NNP does not include relations with Russia (Yuri Rubinsky). At the same time, the CIS suffers from a lack of political commitment and is in the process of disintegration. The new geo-political interests of Georgia and the Ukraine are accelerating this process, not least as a result of the growing US military presence in the region, whether under the umbrella of NATO or in the name of the 'war on terror'. All of these factors contribute to an increasing degree of uncertainty and volatility in the EU's and Russia's 'backyard'.

The assessment of Russia's approach to the 'near-abroad' was divided. On the one hand, some participants voiced concern that Russia suffers from a post-imperial syndrome and attempts to shore up its dwindling power and authority by way of a heavy-handed tactics which combines 'carrots and sticks', mixing the prospect of a renewed global power with interference and intimidation, e.g. in Transdniester (Nicolae Chirtoaca). In the eyes of the Ukrainian participants, Russia has so far failed to respect Ukrainian national sovereignty and the legitimate choice of the Ukraine since the so-called 'Orange Revolution' to seek closer ties with the EU and NATO (Serhiy Dzherdzh, Oleg Kokoshinsky, Igor Koval). On the other

hand, other participants contended that Russia's approach to the 'near-abroad' is largely driven by Western initiatives which seek to contain Russia and establish Western hegemony over Eastern Europe and Central Asia. NATO expansion is the main threat to Russia. But Western action in Kosovo and Iraq has had alarm bells ring, not only in Moscow but also in Beijing and other powers in Eurasia (Andranik Migranyan). This view is also linked to the perception in Russia that the Soviet Union was not so much defeated by the West as it cut its own throat (Vladimir Suprun). Perhaps Western attitudes towards Russia have been residually hostile since the time of Alexander I. who said that 'Europe will always hate us for our size' and that Europe loves the Russian culture but not the Russian political system (Sergey Lounev). Yet other participants deemed Russia's approach to the 'near-abroad' incoherent and inadequate to the task of cementing stable relations, as a result of insufficient political and financial resources devoted to the relations with the countries in question (and with the EU), and undue emphasis on bilateral relations (Tatjana Zdanoka).

The EU's NNP was judged severely by many participants. Some argued that it fails to address the needs and ambitions of a number of countries, including Moldova and Russia (Yuri Rubinsky). Others lamented the bureaucratic and legalistic approach which offers no immediate perspectives or means to stabilise the region and to promote effective military and security cooperation. This contrasts sharply with the US approach that combines a certain vision with sufficient means to foster ties and offer a future (Nicolae Chirtoaca). Yet others claimed that the EU has so far failed to adopt a new paradigm that is appropriate to the geo-political context since 1989. Both Russia and the EU need to formulate a coherent vision for the future of the wider Europe, combining legitimate interests with common values (Andrey Volodin, Mark Entin).

However, there were also participants who defended EU policies and EU member-states. First of all, it was emphasized that the EU is neither a federation nor a superstate but a community and common space of political rights, democracy and the rule of law which does not seek to deploy 'hard power' in order to secure a sphere of influence at the expense of Russia. Much rather, the EU has a stake in helping Russia to stabilise in the interest of common security and prosperity. The EU is not an extension of the USA or NATO, but a framework *sui generis* and an actor in its own right. This is why the forthcoming EU-Russia summit not only concerns the 4 common spaces but is also aimed at confidence-building measures on both sides (Nicolas Pascual de la Parte). Contrary to a common accusation, there is no Russophobia in the 10 new member-states. All these countries have a stake in a strategic partnership with Russia, but not at the expense of common values such as respect for national sovereignty. Even if there are national moves away from Moscow towards Brussels and Washington, the EU has a decisive influence on the bilateral relations of the new member-states with Moscow. Recent events in the Ukraine may perhaps provide a starting point for dialogue to resolve the crisis in Moldova and Georgia (Mariusz Kazana).

Participants from some of the countries that are part of the 'near-abroad' voiced their disappointment about Russia and the EU because both offer cooperation exclusively on their own terms. Russia clings to old methods but wrongly interprets its legitimate right of involvement as a *carte blanche* for interference. The EU has repeatedly failed to offer a vision for the future coupled with devoting adequate means now. The countries of the 'near-abroad' seek to forge closer ties with the EU and NATO with the eventual prospect of full membership, while also maintaining and extending cooperation with Russia with the

possibility of forming a customs union that is compatible with the EU's common market (Igor Koval). According to some empirical evidence, it seems as though the Ukrainian population has a much stronger inclination towards EU membership than NATO membership, while expert communities tend to favour NATO over EU membership (Serhiy Dzerdzh). But there was also much emphasis on the need for genuine reforms in the countries in question, above all a clear definition of key political and socio-economic priorities and the association of civil society to the decision- and policy-making process (Oleg Kokoshinsky).

Among possible alternatives to current policies, a number of participants advocated that Russia focus on developing its own political and socio-economic model and in this way define its role in Europe and in the world. Rather than behaving like a poor relative that asks for assistance, Russia should adopt a constructive approach vis-à-vis both the EU and the USA and seek to work towards the realisation of mutual interests (Andrey Kortunov). In the face of two rival empires, the USA and the EU, Russia's choice is either to join one of the extant imperial projects or to set up its own empire. The latter is the more desirable position, not least because the expansion of the EU project has put constraints on Russia, which is exacerbated by the demographical decline within Russia and the pressures from China and Central Asia. If the USA pursues its policy of containing Russia in this region and if the EU does not propose a common framework, then Russia could enter a strategic alliance with China (Andranik Migranyan).

IV. The rationale for stronger relations and possible areas of mutually rewarding cooperation

The rationale for stronger relations is grounded first and foremost in the current condition that applies both to Russia and to the EU. The overall demographic and environmental trends are a potential threat to the dynamism and vitality of Western, Central and Eastern Europe alike. This threat is transnational and therefore requires transnational strategies to overcome it. The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol provides an important opportunity to transcend the politics of national interests and to inaugurate an all-encompassing cooperation with strong mutual political, commercial and environmental gains. Cooperation in the area of environmental protection is also a good basis to build trust and to work together on an equal footing and in a spirit of commonality, not competition. This could be an example for closer Eurasian cooperation that spans Russia and the countries of the CIS. It also involves a more important role for actors of the civil society and fosters the capacity-building of institutions that blend the state, the market and civil society (Jean-Marie Frentz).

In this light, civil society acquires particular importance for extending and enhancing EU-Russia relations. It was argued that civil society is both a platform for improving existing cooperation and a forum for promoting relations in new areas like trans-national, cross-border cooperation. Implementing greater civil society involvement in EU-Russia relations could draw on successful forms of civil society involvement in decision- and policy-making, e.g. in the framework of the EU's multi-level cooperation with the ACP, national governments and civil society representatives discuss together proposals and strategies before they are adopted by the EU-ACP assembly. Civil society is equally indispensable to implementing the objective of 'good governance', which in different ways is a challenge for both the EU and Russia (Miguel Amado).

However, greater civil society involvement faces a number of serious challenges. First of all, in the wake of events in Georgia, the Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan, the Russian authorities are deeply suspicious about foreign civil society promotion in Russia and the CIS. Secondly, many technical assistance programmes are channelled through state institutions, which have a vested interested in maintaining their primacy, with the effect that civil society becomes more dependent on the state, not more autonomous. Thirdly, the effectiveness of EU-funded programmes is ambiguous at best and disappointing at worst, because they are often expensive and ill-matched to functioning without continuous public funding. What is more, according to some estimates, 60% of EU funds goes to European consultants, 20% to the recipient organisation and 20% are unaccounted for (Andrey Kortunov).

Alternatives to the current strategy are two-fold. One possibility is to draw on the experience of some Central and Eastern European countries that have a buoyant civil society which deals with the EU and has learnt how to make good use of the instruments provided by Brussels (David Stulik). The second possibility is to adopt a multi-level approach. The first element of such an approach should be to take into account the genuine demand, i.e. identify areas of potential tension (education, public health, the environment and human rights) and design policies that provide points of entry to cooperation. The second element should be to adopt a bottom-up approach that channels initiatives in such a way as to make a difference to the decision- and policy-making process. Thirdly, assessing foreign experience and pinpoint examples of successful policy-making that could be applied to Russia, e.g. how to configure local government. Finally, empowering civil society institutions by way of capacity-building in order to cope with social issues, which both the market and the state have already abandoned or will abandon in the near future. The aim is not public activism based on philanthropy but social entrepreneurship grounded in human and social capital (Andrey Kortunov).

Education, research and culture represent one of the areas in which closer cooperation between the EU and Russia is paramount. Exchange at the level of pupils and students is very effective in fostering mutual understanding, as evinced by the experience of the German-French relations: reconciliation on a large scale was only achieved after years of personal, cultural and scientific exchange. Moreover, there are many instruments available to Russia in order to prevent brain-drain, for instance scholarships that cover fees and offer a living stipend (Witold Gnauck). Russia's signature of the Bologna protocol is in this respect critical. But the enormous differential in the level of education among EU member-states and between regions within member-states illustrates the level of difficulty and the scope of resources needed to make a significant difference. Precisely because implementation of the Bologna provisions will be an arduous task for all countries involved, there are enormous gains to be had from exchanging information and experience on 'best practices' (Evgeniy Kalinkin).

With respect to cooperation in the field of education and research, several aspects can be distinguished. First of all, economic competition, whether the Lisbon Agenda for the EU or WTO membership for Russia, involves the division of labour and competitiveness based on specialisation, which requires significant investment in skills. Secondly, the TACIS programme is excessively complex (on account of a double bureaucracy) and could be simplified by being redirected to clear educational programmes, e.g. Masters and PhD programmes in social sciences, which would respond to a lack of social scientists in Russia and also avoid exorbitant consultancy fees (Michael Emerson). Thirdly, current initiatives on

student exchange like ERASMUS need to be extended, and US universities can offer crucial lessons on two-way legal tools, as can the systems of loans and grants set up by the Alpha Group and oil corporations. Finally, in terms of the law, the priority is harmonisation at the level of product standards, which the first common space deals with. Other forms of necessary legal harmonisation are, first of all, the tax code, secondly, the application of law and finally the adoption of common regulation. This is part of a long-term process, which should consist in making common decisions based on international law rather than extending EU legislation to Russia (Mark Entin).

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