



Center for EU
Enlargement Studies

CENTRAL
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FRONTIERS OF
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Russia in global politics – driving values and interests

**Central European University, Budapest
Auditorium
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Russia for many years wanted to join the “European club”, but after experiencing the unwillingness of its partners decided that a club based on Western values is not attractive anymore. Since the historic speech of president Putin back in 2007 in Munich, Russia has openly questioned the legitimacy of the unipolar world and claimed the right for Russia to be an equal partner. The constant desire to put Russia on the map as a global player was followed by not only words but acts. As the recent developments show, the gap between role perceptions of Russia and those of the West is widening.

Not only once has Moscow questioned the post-Soviet status quo. Its policy on recognizing breakaway entities as states in the Caucasus and elsewhere seems to be now more of a rule rather than exception. Russia’s vision of a new power division, and the creation of a new economic and political club covering most of the post-Soviet space, the region where Moscow declared to have special interests along with the right to defend them, is seen as a threat by the US and major powers of the European Union. This resulted in a cooling down of its bilateral relations not only with the US but also with the EU.

The sanctions policy against Russia led by the most influential Western countries seriously affects bilateral relations, interdependencies and the performance of the Russian economy itself. Moscow’s ambivalent relations with China and its relations with the Middle East also project the start of a new kind of Russian foreign policy. The conference brings together the most prominent experts from Russia and elsewhere to discuss the prospects of Russian foreign policy, along with its domestic political context as well as Russia’s evolving self-perception.

9. 30 – 9.40 Opening remarks

Péter Balázs, *Director, Center for EU Enlargement Studies*

Jan Niklas Engels, *Director, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Budapest*

9.40 – 10. 00 Keynote speech

Richard Sakwa, *Professor of Russian and European Politics at the University of Kent and Associate Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, UK*

10.00 – 12.00 I. Panel

Big power politics. What values and interests are guiding Russia's policies?

It is becoming clear that the ongoing war in Ukraine have finally put an end to the political frictions and attempts of 'reset' policy between Moscow and Washington. The United States and the majority of the European Union member states declared that there will be no business as usual with Russia. It had been unprecedented over the past 25 years that the Kremlin have reminded many times to the World it has nuclear weapons, what is definitely worrying. Even Germany, which has notable economic interest in Russia and has always been an advocate of Moscow within the EU, started to be more critical on Kremlin and more supportive of the Eastern European countries. However, the cooling down of Moscow's relations with Western powers should not mean that there will be no business at all. The speakers will cover the driving principles of the current and future relationship between Russia and the US, the EU, Russo-German relation, as well as Russo-Chinese relations.

Chair: **Alexander Astrov**, *Acting Head and Associate Professor at the International Relations Department, Central European University, Budapest*

- **Andrei Kortunov**, *Director General, Russian Council on Foreign Relations and President of the New Eurasia Foundation*
- **Derek Averre**, *Senior Lecturer in Russian Foreign and Security Policy, Centre for Russian, European and Eurasian Studies, University of Birmingham United Kingdom*
- **Karsten Voigt**, *Politician, Member of the Board of the German Council on Foreign Relations, Germany*
- **Marcin Kaczmarek**, *Assistant Professor, University of Warsaw, Poland*

12.00 – 13.00 Buffet Lunch

13.00 – 14.30 II. Panel

What values and interests are guiding Russia's policies towards the post-Soviet space?

While many politicians and political analysts are convinced that Russia is trying its long-time dream to revitalize the Soviet Union become a reality, Moscow is saying that its legitimate interests have been ignored and calling for more respect. The Russian recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2008 and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 has completely changed the status quo on the post-Soviet space. The panel seek to answer whether state recognition is a tool in Moscow's hand and how those cases differ. It also intends to compare plans and realities of Russia's integrational projects on the post-Soviet space such as the Eurasian Union. A forward looking perspective would be taken on what lessons the Ukrainian crisis holds for Russia and the future of the post-Soviet space.

Chair: **Csaba Békés**, *Founding Director of the Cold War Research History Research Center and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Political Studies, Hungarian Academy of Sciences*
Budapest, Hungary

- **Donnacha Ó Beacháin** , *Senior Lecturer and Director of Research at the School of Law and Government, Dublin City University, Ireland*
- **Ruslan Grinberg**, *Director, Institute of Economics, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow*
- **James Sherr**, *Associate Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, UK*

14.30 – 15.00 Coffee Break

15.00 – 16.30 III. Panel

Implication of the Western sanctions on Russian economy and society

International sanctions towards Russia proved to have serious implications for the Russian economy as the weakening of the ruble, the enormous loss of foreign capital shows. It also will cause a budget cut for the Russian government. Not only Russian banks feel capital squeeze but the Russian society. The panel will shed a light on how hard sanctions hurts Russia and what can

be the long-term consequence of the economic stagnation, how the society - divided or united – stands on this issue. Some are openly calling for regime change in Russia, but it seems to be more controversial than successful. One speaker will cover why there is a rejection of change in Russian society and how far domestic politics can develop in Putin’s Russia.

Chair: **András Inotai**, *Professor Emeritus, Institute of World Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences*

- **Natalia Zubarevich**, *Professor, Moscow State University and Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia*
- **Yulia Baskakova**, *Project manager at Russian Public Opinion Research Center (WCIOM) and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia*
- **Andrei Ryabov**, *Senior Research Fellow, Institute of World Economics and International Relations, Russian Academy of Sciences*

16.30 – 16.45 Concluding remarks

Péter Balázs, *Director, Center for EU Enlargement Studies*

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