



The Imperative of an EU–Russia strategic Reset

Peter Haider
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The **Universal Peace Federation** (UPF) in cooperation with International Institute for Middle East and Balkan Studies (**IFIMES**), Permanent Representation to Austria and the Vienna-based IOs, cordially invites you to a panel discussion on the theme

The Imperative of an EU–Russia strategic Reset

Thursday, February 26th 2015, 18:30
Seidengasse 28 im Hof rechts, 1070 Wien



Welcome: Peter Haider, President, UPF Austria

Introduction: Prof. Anis Bajrektarevic, IFIMES Vienna

Panelists:

H.E. Anwar S. Azimov, Moscow, former Russian ambassador to the OSCE HQ Vienna, and the RF's (Visa) Delegation Head, the EU – Russia Strategic Dialogue, currently Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Dr. Walter Schwimmer, Vienna, former Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Co-chair of the World Public Forum-Dialogue of Civilizations (WPFDC).

The lonely superpower (US) vs. the bear of the permafrost (Russia), with the world's last cosmopolite (EU) in between. Is the ongoing calamity at the eastern flank of the EU a conflict, recalibration, impetuous imperialism, exaggerated anti-Russian xenophobia or last gasp of confrontational nostalgia?

Just 20 years ago, the distance between Moscow and NATO troops stationed in Central Europe (e.g., Berlin) was more than 1.600 km. Today, it is only 120 km from St. Petersburg. Is this a time to sleep or to worry? “Russia no longer represents anything that appeals to anyone other than ethnic Russians, and as a result, the geopolitical troubles it can cause will remain on Europe’s periphery, without touching the continent’s core” – was the line of argumentation recently used by Richard N. Haass, President of the US Council of Foreign Relations. Is it really so?

Is there any intellectually appealing call originating from Russia? Is it a lonely champion of antifascism and (pan-)Slavism? Is Slavism, identity, secularism and antifascism being abandoned in Eastern Europe, confused perhaps by the mixed signals from the austerity-tired Southern Europe and über-performing Central Europe?

For the EU, Ukraine is (though important) an item of the Neighborhood Policy and for the US it is a geopolitical pivot. And for Russia, it is all this plus emotional attachment. Without Ukraine, to what extent is Russia Christian and European? Is the EU a subject or a hostage (like Ukraine) of the mega-geopolitical drama whose main stage is in the Asia-Pacific theater? What is the objective here – the final score (territorial gain) or an altered style of the game (new emotional charge added to the international relations)? What is a road map, an exit, a future perspective – relaxation or escalation? Hegemony, hegemony, or a global (post-dollar) honeymoon?

Starting from April 2012 with a conference in Moscow, Russia on the topic “[Peace and Security in Multicultural Societies](#)” followed by a conference on “[Europe and Russia – Partners in a Globalized World](#)” in Vienna, Austria in October 2012 and in Paris, France in December 2013 on “[Eurasia and Europe: Cooperating for a Culture of Peace and Human Development](#)” the Universal Peace Federation tried to contribute to an EU/Europe and Russia/Eurasia dialogue. More recently a conference entitled “[Eurasia-Europe Dialogue for Peace](#)” took place in Dec. 2014 in Chisinau, Moldova. Understanding that this is an exceptionally difficult time to foster a much needed dialogue between Russia and the EU, we at the Universal Peace Federation still believe that peace and cooperation has no alternative. We also believe that dialogue should be promoted for the sake of well-being of the citizens of Ukraine, Russia and all other European nations.

Further Information: Peter Haider