

**RUSSIA'S ELECTIONS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR RUSSIAN-LATVIAN RELATIONS
IN A WIDER EURO-ATLANTIC CONTEXT**

Roundtable Discussion

Riga, 18 May 2012

Venue: Hotel Bergs

Parliamentary and presidential elections have taken place in Russia. This has raised the questions whether political and economic agenda of “modernization” supported by the president Dmitri Medvedev may experience major changes and be reduced to purely “bridging the technological gap” agenda. Post-electoral period is also becoming a barometer for a depth and maturity of Russia’s democratic system and the soundness of the “social contract” between political elite and society. Moreover, there are both windows of opportunities and concerns pertaining to the prospective Russia’s foreign policy. Would the recent Russia’s “reset” with the West be sustainable after political changes take place in Russia?

The rapprochement between the Euro-Atlantic community and Russia has clearly contributed to the considerable improvement of political atmosphere in Latvian-Russian relations. The interstate economic relations have been flourishing as a result of mutual willingness to slow down political rhetoric and to accelerate pragmatic, interests-based economic cooperation. However, post-electoral politics both in Latvia and Russia may have implications for the mutual interaction. Latvia’s policy towards Russia has until recently been shaped by mixture of security and internal national debates on Russia’s image and role in the past and since the beginning of the 1990s. On the other hand, the winner of the Russian presidential elections Vladimir Putin has actively re-launched the idea of integration of neighboring geopolitical space. May this have repercussions for mutual trust and sustainability of positive relationship? What could and should be done to avoid tensions? What role the EU-Russia dialogue may play in sustaining “modernization” and “reset” agendas?

PROGRAMME

- 9.30- 10.00 Arrival of speakers and participants. Registration.
Welcoming coffee served in the venue foyer
- 10.00- 10.15 **Welcome**
- Deniss Hanovs**, Deputy Coordinator of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in the Baltic States, Latvia
- Andris Spruds**, Director, Latvian Institute of International Affairs
- 10.15- 11.45 **Panel 1: Russia's relations with the EU and NATO: continuity of "modernization" and "reset"?**
- Moderator: **Imants Liegis**, Ambassador; Fellow, Latvian Institute of International Affairs
- Viktoria Panova**, Associate Professor, MGIMO
- Sergey Utkin**, Head of Unit, Institute of World Economy and International Relations, (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences
- Olaf Osica**, Director, Polish Center for Eastern Studies
- Kai-Olaf Lang**, Head of Research Unit, SWP (confirmed)
- Comments by**
Jakub Korejba, Researcher, MGIMO
- 11.45-12.00 Coffee & snacks served in the conference foyer
- 12.00-12.30 Key note address by **Ojārs Kalniņš**, Member of Latvian Parliament, Chairman of Committee for International Affairs
- 12.30-14.00 **Panel 2: The prospects for Latvian-Russian relations in a Euro-Atlantic context**
- Moderator: **Andris Sprūds**, Director, Latvian Institute of International Affairs, Riga
- Viktors Makarovs**, Parliamentary Secretary, Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Andrey Riabov**, Scholar-in-Residence, Carnegie Moscow Center
- Gatis Pelnēns**, Associate Fellow, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

Ahto Lobjakas, Research Fellow, Centre for EU-Russia Studies, Tartu University

Comments by
Kārlis Bukovskis, Fellow, Latvian Institute of International Affairs

14.00-14.15

Concluding Remarks