

**The European Union and Russia – developing  
our shared European continent**  
**European Studies Institute, Moscow State Insti-  
tute of International Relations (MGIMO – Uni-  
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**Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, European Commissioner for External  
Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy

Dear Rector,  
Your Excellencies,  
Professors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you warmly for this invitation to address you today. It is particularly important for me, as European Commissioner responsible for relations between the European Union and Russia, that we are here today to celebrate the opening of the European Studies Institute. Because the very purpose and meaning of the European Studies Institute is to deepen relations between us, by creating a pool of expertise and knowledge about each other.

I would like to pay tribute to everyone involved in bringing this Institute to life. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs – especially Sergey Lavrov, the Presidential Administration - especially Sergey Yastrzhembski; the Ministries of Economic Development and Trade as well as Education and Science; our Member States who have provided unflagging support and some of whose Ambassadors sit on the Institute's Board of Governors; and our partners in the European Economic Area and Switzerland, who are also here today to support the beginning of this new venture.

And above all the students themselves, who are the real pioneers of this venture.

For me the Institute symbolises the EU's and Russia's desire to develop a new, deeper relationship with each other. We recognise the need to get to know each other better, to understand each other's culture, legal system, politics, and language. We are two global powers inhabiting one continent,

and neither of us can achieve our strategic objectives without each other. Unlike during the Cold War, we are no longer in competition. Our societies are different, but they look more like each other than ever before. And whilst we may not always agree on everything, the difference now is we want each other to succeed and we need each other to succeed.

So the objective of this Institute, to train young Russian students and officials to have a better knowledge of EU institutions and decision making procedures, and to offer EU students and specialists the opportunity to improve their understanding of EU/Russia cooperation, is perfectly in tune with the current state of EU-Russia relations.

The fact that it is co-funded by the EU and the Russian government symbolises our recognition of the mutual benefit we derive from closer relations. And its location here in MGIMO [Moscow State Institute for International Relations], which has played such an important role in fostering Russia's political leadership and providing the country's intellectual powerhouse, fills me with conviction that ESI will be the flourishing academic institution we all want to see.

The ESI is also making an important contribution to the realisation of the four "common spaces" - economy; freedom, security and justice; external security; and research, education and culture – which the EU and Russia are building on our European continent.

#### 1) Research, Education and Culture

I am particularly glad that one of the first projects in this space is the ESI. We now have a sound basis on which to move forward. In many ways this focus on our young people is the most important investment in our common future. Because the more we know about each other, the easier and more productive our cooperation will be.

That is not to say we have not had any cooperation in this area in the past – on the contrary, a great deal has been happening, particularly in the all-important field of education. Through our TEMPUS programme we have enabled teachers and future-teachers to benefit from the experience of teaching elsewhere, learning how other systems work. We have also assisted curriculum development, university management reforms and institution building in the education sector. In fact when I was at Kant State University in Kaliningrad Oblast earlier this year, the Rector told me how valuable he and his staff find Tempus and how pleased they are it will continue.

Through our Erasmus Mundus programme more than 70 Russian students have participated over the last three years in postgraduate studies in

prestigious European Masters programmes. We have also fostered partnerships between universities in the EU and Russia. And we are currently spending  $\square$  3 million a year on scholarships for Russian students.

Only last year we started a new project to make it easier for Russian students to come to Europe, by publishing a guide called “Your Scholarship in Europe” which lists scholarships available from the EU for Russian students. We distribute it at information days, education fairs and on university campuses.

Russia is also one of 45 countries participating in the Bologna Process to build a European Area of Higher Education. The idea is to eliminate all obstacles to students studying in different places in Europe, and to ensure that their study abroad is recognised at home. I know MGIMO [Moscow State Institute for International Relations] has been particularly active in turning this into a reality.

We want to encourage more Russian students to come to Europe. We want young people to make friends, to share their music, parties, and interests. And to go home with warm hearts towards Europe. So we hope to boost the number of scholarships we can provide. We have already decided that in the future the Commission will be spending up to half its financial allocation for Russia on educational cooperation and student mobility.

Giving EU students an opportunity to come and study here in Russia is equally important, so the Russian Government’s scholarship schemes for EU students and scholars will be very welcome.

I know MGIMO [Moscow State Institute for International Relations] also has ambitious plans for the future, including cooperating with the College of Europe (College of Bruges) to develop a curriculum for European Studies. The EU is delighted to support that project, and I am sure the partnership will be a great success.

But what of the other three “common spaces”?

## 2) Economic space

The economic sphere has been dominated by energy this year. In many ways the entire EU-Russia relationship has been focused on energy, as we also saw at the meeting with President Putin in Lahti just two days ago. A mutually reliable energy-partnership is certainly very important for both of us! Our task now is to get down to making our relationship work to our mutual benefit.

Ultimately, the equation is simple: we need Russia’s energy, and Russia needs the enormous energy market Europe provides. Stability, predictability and reciprocity are in both our interests. Your companies want a share in our downstream energy assets, while our companies are looking for investment

opportunities to further develop your resources. You need more investment in new production and infrastructure, and in fact our biggest concern is that without that investment you may not be in a position to meet our future energy needs.

What we need is reciprocity, transparency and a truly level playing field, covering market opening and market access, fair competition, environmental protection and safety.

But the economic space is about more than energy. One important area of our cooperation is the environment. Many of Europe's environmental problems straddle the EU and Russian borders. As parties to the Kyoto Protocol we are global partners in tackling the immense challenge of climate change. We must work together to secure a better environment for our continent and to prepare for the post-Kyoto regime.

### 3) Freedom, Security and Justice

As for the "common space" of freedom, security and justice, the most tangible sign of progress is visa facilitation and readmission. We know how much it means to travel freely, and how irritating and time-consuming it is to go through some of the visa procedures currently in place. So we are making considerable efforts to get the visa facilitation agreement in place as quickly as possible, hopefully by the end of the year. Then Russian students, businessmen, academics and others will be able to build up the kinds of European connections we want.

We also have frank exchanges about the implementation of our common European values. It is no secret that the EU is worried about some developments in the field of democracy and human rights and media freedom. The murder of Anna Politkovskaya, who for many in Europe was a model of courageous journalistic investigation in the public interest, has shocked us. Guarantees of media freedom are essential for a healthy society. Independent media play a vital role in holding the executive and others to account. We hope the investigation into the murder of this fearless and respected figure is both thorough and objective, and justice is seen to be done.

Democracy needs a vibrant civil society – naturally with the necessary check and balances in place.

### 4) External Security

Finally, external security. As two global powers we face many of the same security threats, and it is essential that we work together to tackle them. Russia and the EU are both members of the Middle East Quartet, where we still face enormous challenges to bringing the parties back to the negotiating table. Our absolute priority must be to bring an end to the violence

in the Palestinian territories and return to the calm that held for most of 2005, return to the road map and help to create progress towards a «2 States' Solution».

On Iran, Russia has played a very constructive role with France, Germany and the UK in pushing diplomacy as far as possible and exploring every opportunity to bring Iran back to the negotiating table. Nobody wants to go down the route of sanctions, but I fear that we may find ourselves with little alternative, since Iran, unfortunately, up to now has not responded positively to our broad offer.

I know Secretary Rice was here over the weekend to discuss implementing the UN Security Council sanctions against North Korea, and again we very much appreciate the good cooperation we have had with Russia over this issue. We strongly urge the DPRK to return to the Six-Party talks, where Russia is present, and to refrain from conducting any further nuclear test or missile launch.

Closer to home, our cooperation in tackling regional security threats is no less important. The European Union is really concerned by the escalating tensions between Georgia and Russia, and has repeatedly called on both sides to tone down their rhetoric and to act in a manner consistent with their international commitments and obligations.

We stand ready to do what we can to facilitate mutual confidence building and contribute to a peaceful resolution of the crisis. We have a strategic partnership with Russia, and work with Georgia through our European Neighbourhood Policy.

More generally, we would like to work more closely with Russia in our common neighbourhood. We both have a strong interest in the stability and prosperity of our neighbours: we face the security threats of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and organised crime. Other challenges like HIV, pollution, an ageing population, and the need for economic success, respect no borders. Cooperating more closely on issues like Transnistria and the frozen conflicts in the Caucasus would only be beneficial.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have given you a snapshot of the current shape of EU-Russia relations, but what does the future hold? We still have much work to do in implementing the road maps we set for ourselves in each of the four common spaces.

But we also feel the need for a more substantive upgrading of our relationship. Despite the occasional misunderstandings between us, we have an enormous amount in common. And it's clear that the need to work closely

together will only increase in the future. So what better way of cementing the ties between us, and bringing the European continent together, than through a common project for our strategic partnership – a new EU/Russia Framework Agreement.

This Agreement would reflect the changes both the EU and Russia have undergone in the past 10 years and give new impetus to our cooperation. It should encompass a substantial agreement on energy – providing more liberal access on the basis of reciprocity; further measures on justice, human rights and security; more student mobility and educational cooperation; and increased foreign policy cooperation.

The agreement should also help the gradual integration of the EU and Russian economies. For that, the first step is Russia's WTO accession, which we strongly support.

I hope we are in a position to launch negotiations for the new EU-Russia Agreement at our Summit in Helsinki next month. That would be a truly important signal that we are taking our relations to a new level of intensity.

I expect this audience, and particularly those of you involved in the European Studies Institute, will watch developments with great interest.

After all, many of you are just starting out on your careers in different ministries, services and agencies dealing with EU-Russia relations. And so you can expect to be putting the knowledge you gain to practical use in the very near future. With a new agreement, there will be new legal and political instruments to negotiate, and strategic decisions to be made on new areas of cooperation. Who will be better placed to participate in those negotiations and policy discussions than you – with your newly gained knowledge of the way European institutions operate and the thinking that guides us.

I am delighted that the ESI is fully functioning and I warmly congratulate the 62 participants in this year's programme who are blazing a trail for better EU-Russia relations.

I am sure those of you involved in setting up this institute will look back in a few years time, see the impact your work has already had in bringing us closer together, and rightly congratulate yourselves for your foresight and perseverance!

Thank you once again for this opportunity to talk to you, and I look forward to a fruitful cooperation.