



## **Minsk Dialogue 2015**

### ***The EU, Russia and the Shared Neighbourhood: Bridging the Divide?***

*26-28 March 2015*

## **CONFERENCE AGENDA**

### **Friday, 27 March**

#### **Session 1. Reviewing the European Neighbourhood Policy: What Reform Options are on the Table?**

- Is the European neighbourhood model still relevant to the EU interests?
- Will the EU be more engaged in the region? Or will it make a de facto retreat?
- Should the “more for more” principle be kept?
- Can there be 2- or 3-speed integration and cooperation within the ENP reflecting different level of engagement and aspiration?
- What might a good balance between EU values and EU interests look like?
- Can the EU use any new instruments (including soft and hard power) to make the ENP more effective?

#### **Session 2. What Caused the Regional Divide?**

- Why did the events in Ukraine catch so many unprepared?
- Could the crisis have been avoided?
- What mistakes did various regional actors and stakeholders make?
- What does Russia want?
- What does the EU want?

- What is the role of external actors (the USA, China, etc.)? What are their real interests?
- What lessons need to be learned?

### **Session 3. The Eurasian Economic Union: Legitimate Grouping or Veil for Revanchism?**

- What are the reasons for and driving forces behind Eurasian integration?
- Is the Eurasian Economic Union a game-changer in the post-Soviet region or is it the old wine in new bottles?
- What does the internal dynamic in the EEU so far tell us about its prospects?
- What do these prospects look like against the backdrop of the economic crisis and the situation in Ukraine?
- How different are the political and economic interests of the member states in the Eurasian Economic Union?
- What implications does the development of the EEU have for the shared neighbourhood?

### **Session 4. The Future of the Eastern Partnership: Is Reform Necessary?**

- Have events in Ukraine changed the EaP rationale?
- Has the Eastern Partnership become redundant now that Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia have signed Association Agreements?
- What do EU member states and partner countries really expect from the EaP?
- Can the fundamental interests of the “neighbours of the neighbours” be accommodated?
- How can sense of shared ownership be promoted within the EaP?
- Can more tailor-made cooperation alternatives within the EaP be developed in order to reflect differing interests and ambitions of the recipient states?
- What can be done to better promote links between business and academic communities within the EaP?

## **Saturday, 28 March**

### **Session 5. The European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union: Looking for Common Denominators**

- Are the two integration projects mutually exclusive or can there be some options for compatibility?
- How realistic is the concept of a Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok?
- What trust-building mechanisms can facilitate dialogue and bridge the divide between the blocs?
- What common denominators can shape a shared vision for cooperation?
- What small steps can promote cooperation and, if possible, greater convergence between the EU and EEU?
- Where can the leadership come from?

Session 6. Round Table: **The Minsk Dialogue Network: Ideas for Future Cooperation**

- Outline of future plans: regular expert meetings, publications, joint events and research projects.
- Ideas from the floor.