

**EURUCM Network Coordinators and Members took part in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference “Transformation of International Relations in the XXI Century: Challenges and Prospects” in the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 27 – 28 April, 2017 with the support of Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund**

A wide range of issues related to security problems in Latin America, EU and Russia were on the agenda. The speakers paid attention to conceptions of national and international security, military dependency in the context of historical development, psychological warfare amid social instability and geopolitical games, environmental problems and conflict, ways of selective engagement and etc.

After the plenary session the conference continued with 4 sections and 8 round tables.



**At the Plenary Session.** Photo submitted by P. Karpova

In total the conference was attended by more than a hundred academics and practitioners from 15 countries, including such European countries as Bulgaria, Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Switzerland, Slovenia. Many of them continued to discuss the problems of the EU–Russia relations at the round tables.



**Round Table “The Relations between EU Countries and Russia: The Communications Aspects”.** Photo by P. Karpova

Today the relations between Russia and the EU have naturally become the subject of a lively scientific debate. Thus the topic was the key focus of the Conference.

On 28 April within the framework of the Conference a round table on the communicational aspects of the EU–Russia relations was held, with English used as a working language. It was organized by the Institute for Contemporary International Studies of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Cooperation with Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund. EURUCM Network Coordinators – leading researcher at the Diplomatic Academy Evgeny PASHENTSEV and general secretary of the Institute for Political, Social and Economic studies EURISPES and honorary doctor of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences Marco RICCERI – were the moderators of the event.

The papers of the researchers from Russia, Germany, Italy, England and France provoked long and excited debate. During his speech honorary doctor of the University of London, former director of Chatham House Victor BULMER-THOMAS underlined that the strategic cooperation between the key political actors cannot be subordinate to inevitable disagreements on foreign policies. He gave the example of the EU-US relations: sometimes their differences of opinions are even bigger than those with Russia, but it does not pose any threat to the bilateral strategic partnership.



**Victor Bulmer-Thomas.** Photo by P. Karpova

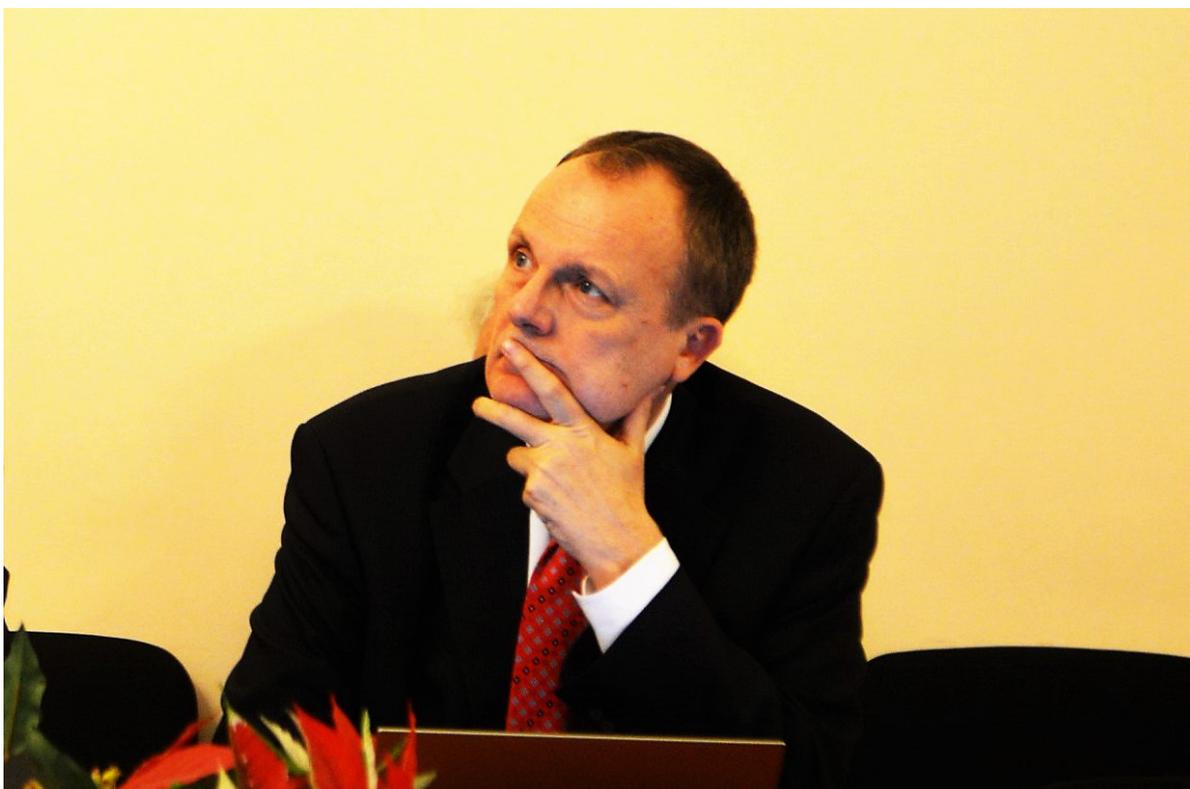
The issue of pragmatic cooperation in areas of common interest, known as “selective engagement”, was raised by the Vice Rector of Research of the Diplomatic Academy Professor Oleg Ivanov. According to his paper, together with prevention of mutual demonization and focusing on the the shared concerns, this measure might contribute to the normalization of the relations between Russia and the West.



**Presentation of Oleg Ivanov.** Photo by P. Karpova

In his statement O. Ivanov also identified some aspects of the false perception of Russia currently dominating in western countries, all of them seriously affecting its relations with the European Union and the United States.

EURUCM Network Member, Director of the Institute of Media and Communication Science of the Technische Universität Ilmenau (Germany) Professor Martin LÖFFELHOLZ gave a presentation with detailed analysis of the complex multi-level structure of the European public diplomacy, which combines both national and EU-wide institutions, first of all, European External Action Service (EEAS). Professor Löffelholz also stated that in a situation where government-to-government (g2g) interaction gets weak, it is necessary to maintain person-to-person (p2p) contacts and looked forward to further rapprochement between Russian people and EU citizens.



**Martin Löffelholz.** Photo by P. Karpova

After a short break the floor was taken by EURUCM Network Coordinator, leading researcher at the Diplomatic Academy, the director of the International Center for Socio-Political Studies and Consulting Professor Evgeny Pashentsev. His paper was focused on the world's geopolitical, political, social and economic shifts and their effect on the relations between the EU and Russia. According to Professor Pashentsev, the main geopolitical shift is a shift in favour of emerging powers, which may eventually reach the first positions in different areas displacing the leaders of nowadays; this process can be seen in the case of the US and China. The consequences of these shifts influence the European foreign-policy orientation, and this influence will only get stronger with time. Projects of the Earth's largest continent integration, will not properly work without Russia. It is

understood both in the East (better) and in the West (temporarily worse). Therefore Russia should work on this front, projecting its objective significance to internal and external audiences through deeds, words and images.



**Evgeny Pashentsev's speech.** Photo by P. Karpova

The other moderator of the round table, EURUCM Network Coordinator, general secretary of the Institute for Political, Social and Economic Studies (EURISPES) Marco RICCERI was the next speaker. He examined various scenarios of future interaction between Russia and the EU in terms of the strategic communications, taking into account the current situation. He illustrated the ongoing rhetoric of the EU towards Russia. M. Ricceri mentioned a number of documents adopted by the European Parliament in the period of the last two years. Among them was the resolution on creation of East StratCom Task Force aiming at countering the informational war allegedly waged by Russia.

M. Ricceri believes the current scenario of the relations between the EU and Russia to be absolutely irrational, lacking in pragmatism, with the use of strategic communications being pointless. In his opinion, the most optimal scenario of all that now exist is the one called “shared home”, which again implies cooperation based on common concerns and excludes any influence of ideology or values.



**Marco Ricceri answers the questions of his colleagues.** Photo by P. Karpova

The devastating impact of the ideological approach was also addressed by Professor Pierre-Emmanuel Thomann, founder of an international association (EUROCONTINENT) specializing in geopolitical analysis. At the beginning of his speech, Professor Thomann shared his experience of participation in different scientific conferences within the EU and noted an amazing unanimity of his European colleagues concerning Russia. According to his presentation, the cause of this endemic criticism of Russia lies in nothing else but an ideology which has replaced the real geopolitical interests. The ideology consists in a strong confidence in the world's unipolarity and a refusal to recognize the growing role of emerging powers; this is an illusion with no future. Another enlargement of NATO or the EU is impossible, otherwise there will be a war; moreover, there are less and less adherents of the European paradigm within the Union itself.



**Pierre-Emmanuel Thomann.** Photo by P. Karpova

The last speaker to give a presentation at the round table was the head of Centre for Marketing and Public Relations at the University of Ljubljana Professor Dejan Verčič with a paper on the new ways of understanding communications. He estimates the current situation in the relations between Russia and the EU as an attempt of the latter to counter Russian communication attack through economic measures and insists that so as to overcome the crisis it is necessary to regulate the use of communications in the same way as the use of the military force. In order to do it he proposed to adjust the experience of the Soviet-American détente to the informational environment.



**Dejan Verčič.** Photo by P. Karpova

In conclusion it is important to underline that in spite of differences in approaches and opinions all the researchers recognize the essentiality of renovation of the bilateral cooperation at least in the areas of common interest.



**After the round table. From left to right: Victor Bulmer-Thomas (Great Britain), Marco Ricceri (Italy), Pierre-Emmanuel Thomann (France), Veysel Batmaz (Turkey), Martin Löffelholz (Germany), Oleg Ivanov (Russia), Barbara Thomass (Germany), Oliver Hahn (Germany), Evgeny Pashentsev (Russia), Marius Vacarelu (Romania), Anna Velikaya (Russia).** Photo by D. Bazarkina

There was also a remark about a positive trend: person-to-person contacts had proved to be independent of the political matters and remain close. In this case, the dialogue between the academic communities, in particular, conferences and round tables represent a clear manifestation of the fact that the hope of overcoming the crisis and the restoration of relations yet has not been lost.

Issues of strategic communication and international security were also discussed in the section "Strategic Communication and the Media" and round tables "Perspectives on Italy-Russia Relations beyond Brexit" and "Security Issues in Latin America: Top Priorities for the 21st Century".

The round table "Security Issues in Latin America: Top Priorities for the 21st Century" held by Institute for Contemporary International Studies of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Cooperation with Associação Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa (ABED), Associação Brasileira de Relações Internacionais (ABRI) and International Centre for Social and Political Studies and Consulting has attracted the participation of experts from Brazil, UK, Russia, Romania, Turkey and Sweden.

The round table was moderated by an international team of experts – EU-RU-CM Network Coordinator, Professor, leading researcher of the Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of Russia, Director of the International Centre for Social and Political Studies and Consulting Evgeny PASHENTSEV and doctor of political Sciences, a member of the Defense and International Security Studies Group Samuel ALVES SOARES.



**Round Table Moderators Evgeny PASHENTSEV and Samuel ALVES SOARES. Photo by A. Vasina.**

Prof. E. Pashentsev presented the paper “Psychological Warfare in Latin America in the Context of Social Instability and Geopolitical Tensions”. EU-RU-CM Network Member, Associate Professor Olga S. POLUNINA presented a paper “Social Networks in Latin America: Challenges and Perspectives for Psychological Security” and raised the question of whether the development of ICT in Latin America access to new features or brings new problems.

Present and future of Russian-Italian relations in the light of Brexit was devoted to another round table, also organized by Institute for Contemporary International Studies of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Cooperation with the International Centre for Social and Political Studies and Consulting. EU-RU-CM Network Member Alessandro FIGUS, Professor of political science and chair of the Department Erasmus+, Link Campus University, Rome, and Tatyana ZVEREVA, DSc in Politics and Director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic studies and International Security by Institute for Contemporary International Studies were the moderators of the discussion.

In his speech A. Figus described the situation in the relations between Italy and Russia in light of recent events: the election of the President of the United States, Brexit, the Ukrainian conflict and other negative factors in international

development. He stressed that the Republic of Italy is the long-standing partner of Russia, which will try to further develop bilateral relations.

General theoretical and practical issues of strategic communication have been analyzed in papers by other EU-RU-CM Network Members. Dr. Greg SIMONS, Senior Researcher at the Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies of the Uppsala University, Sweden, presented a paper on the Role of 'NGOs' in Knowledge Management of Conflicts. According to Dr. Simons 'NGOs' use the psychological warfare, even if its perception and public opinion are not grounded in real life processes and events.

Dr. Darya BAZARKINA, PhD, Post-Doctorate at the Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences (IERAS), Research Coordinator on Communication Management and Strategic Communication at the International Centre for Social and Political Studies and Consulting, Russia, discussed in her paper the experience of the Europol as an Actor of the EU Strategic Communication. According to her paper, authoritarianism in which, for example, the government of Russia is accused, and anti-authoritarianism of far-left in the EU discourse are equally negative phenomena. This conclusion provides certain controversy in strategic communication of the European Union.

**See more:**

Italian and Russian: [Problemi di Sicurezza in America Latina: priorità principali nel XXI secolo // Centro Studi Eurasia Mediterraneo. Roma. 8 giugno 2017.](#)

Дегтярев С. И., Пашенцев Е. Н. Безопасность в Латинской Америке: Pro u contra // Латинская Америка. – 2017. – №7. – С. 61 – 67.

[Базаркина Д.Ю., Иванов О.П., Карпова П.П., Пашенцев Е.Н. РОССИЯ - ЕС: QUO VADIS? // Современная Европа. – 2017. – №4. – С. 151 – 154.](#)

[Базаркина Д.Ю., Дегтярев С.И., Карпова П.П., Куликова Л.Л., Полунина О.С. Серия круглых столов и секций по вопросам стратегической коммуникации и международной безопасности на III международной научно-практической конференции «Трансформация международных отношений в XXI столетии: вызовы и перспективы» в Дипломатической Академии МИД РФ // Государственное управление. Электронный вестник. Выпуск № 63. Август 2017 г.](#)