

**European Ideas Network - Summer University  
18 - 20 September 2008**

**EIN POLICY ROUNDTABLE ON  
FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES**

**ROLAND FREUDENSTEIN, RAPPORTEUR**

**Conclusions**

**1. Basic Issues:**

- Since the Caucasus war of August 2008, Russia and the question of the EU's eastern strategy have emerged as one of the most important, lasting, and potentially divisive foreign policy challenges to the Union.
  
- A strong and future-oriented transatlantic partnership based on common, or at least compatible, values will be central to this effort, especially in view of the change of administration in Washington in January 2009.
  
- For an efficient EU foreign and security policy, both political will (and that very often presupposes compromise) and the appropriate institutional, diplomatic and military instruments (and that means ratification of the Reform Treaty) are necessary ingredients.

**2. Russia Policy - Consensus and Disagreement:**

- The French Presidency made a strong display of EU foreign policy in the Caucasus crisis. But even though there is consensus on the need to perceive Russia as a new challenge, potential divisions remain on what follows from that for a revised strategy. The new member states in Central and Eastern Europe are among the most vocal in expressing scepticism about Russia's role as a strategic partner for the EU.
  
- Even so, a few principles are shared across the EU:
  - Engaging Russia remains a worthwhile goal.
  
  - Cooperation with Russia is desirable, even indispensable, in fighting terrorism and the proliferation of WMD.

- There is, for the moment, no more question of sanctions against Russia.
- Russian civil society should be supported in efforts to move towards democracy.
- One of the disagreements within the EU concerns the question whether interdependence with Russia is desirable in future, because the Moscow government doesn't seem to share many values with the EU anymore - or indeed whether it is perceived in Moscow today as true interdependence, and not a one-sided dependency which a newly assertive Russia can exploit as a political tool.
- Steps to reduce dependency might entail the unbundling of networks and products, market transparency, abandoning the North Stream and South Stream projects, stronger antitrust policies and the strengthening of nuclear power.

### **3. Next Steps:**

- In October, the EU has to decide how to deal with the future Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia, depending on the question to what extent Russia fulfilled the second ceasefire agreement in Georgia. If pursued, a new PCA might include a commitment on the non-use of force, instead of referring this issue to the Council of Europe or the OSCE.
- The EU Eastern Partnership strategy, addressing Ukraine, Moldova, potentially Belarus and the Caucasus countries, should be further developed, and enriched by regional dimensions (Black Sea, Barents Sea cooperation etc.). In absence of a clear membership perspective for now, future EU accession should not be ruled out altogether.