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Russian Vision of Security in Europe and Serbia

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Serbia should have a balanced approach towards the initiative of the Russian President Medvedev to craft a new European Security Treaty. Such an approach represents a step forward on Serbia's path towards membership in the European Union (EU). The OSCE's Corfu Process has defined the topics for the enhancement of European security, which exceed the original intentions of President Medvedev and the scope of the Draft Treaty published on November 29th, 2009. Due to the fact that Serbia is (or soon will be) both legally and politically obligated to follow the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, it would be wise to promote a careful and balanced approach towards this initiative. Other neighbouring EU candidate and potential candidate countries have pursued firmly this obligation for years. EU formulated its position with regard to this initiative and the Corfu Process as a framework of its further development. By joining the EU's common standpoint issued by the Swedish EU Presidency at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, Serbia began to follow the above mentioned obligation. This move reduced the power of the sceptics' arguments against the accession of the Western Balkans states to the EU, which were mainly related to the strategic partnership of Serbia and Russia. Despite Russia's desire for individual decision-making with regards to this initiative, there is no room for the privatization of security issues neither for the EU members states, nor for Serbia.. What is more, it should also be mentioned that Serbian and Russian security issues are not the same. The main goal of the Russian Initiative is to improve Russia's security. On the other hand, Serbia can answer to its security challenges only through cooperation with other EU states.

Context of Serbia's Position

Serbia took a balanced political approach towards the Russian President Medvedev's initiative on the new security architecture in Europe. During the joint press conference held on October 20th 2009 in Belgrade, President Boris Tadić underlined that Serbia will remain open for *all future initiatives within the same context*² [within the context of the initiative – auth. remark]. This position was far from the one Russia had expected, which would be that Serbia openly supports this initiative. Russia's expectations were not unfounded. At the peak of the 2008 crisis between the West and Russia, caused by the conflict in Georgia, Serbia treated Medvedev's initiative for the new Security Treaty in Europe with *sympathy*³. The same Treaty was again mentioned during the visit of the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vuk Jeremić, to Moscow. On that occasion Mr. Jeremić's Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, expressed his gratitude for the *interest* that Serbia had shown for this initiative⁴.

2) Press release after the Serbia-Russia high level meeting on 20th October 2009. (Заявления для прессы по итогам российско-сербских переговоров на высшем уровне. Available in Russian on: <http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5782>)

3) Interview with Russia's permanent representative to the OSCE, V.I.Voronkov, Rossijskaja gazeta, 20th August 2008. Vladimir Voronkov, the acting representative of Russia to the OSCE, said that Serbia has addressed the initiative with sympathies, along with the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (Russia, Belorussia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). Available in Russian language on: http://www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/62547841B1A28DDCC32574AB0055AC1B?OpenDocument

4) Transcript of statements and answers to the media of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov about the results of the meeting with Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vuk Jeremić, Joint press conference, Moscow, February 20th 2009. (Стенограмма выступления и ответов на вопросы СМИ Министра иностранных дел России С.В.Лаврова на совместной пресс-конференции по итогам переговоров с Министром иностранных дел Сербии В.Еремичем, Москва, 20 февраля 2009 года), Available in Russian language on: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/B38351266782BAE-6C32575670037ABC8

When dealing with the Western countries, Russia prefers bilateral relations to the ones with international alliances or associations of states (NATO and EU). For example, when the NATO-Russia Council was established in 2002, it was created as the *Council of Russia and individual NATO member states*⁵, rather than NATO as a political-military alliance. In his address to the Serbian MPs on October 20th, 2009, President Medvedev stated the following:

*It is important for Russia that the new (...) EU members develop good relations with the Russian Federation, in order to prevent the same membership from causing damage (...) and in order to help the development of close mutual understanding. This goes entirely for Serbia also*⁶.

If we consider the fact that the Draft Treaty⁷ requires its ratification by at least 25 of the OSCE member states, it becomes clear why it is so important for Russia that each individual state, including Serbia, has a positive attitude towards this initiative. Furthermore, one of the key arguments used in favour of this initiative is that there are states which are in need of such an agreement as they are not members of the EU, NATO or the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Certainly, one of those states is Serbia⁸. In addition, the strategy of joint appearances by Serbia and Russia on the international scene in relation to the Kosovo issue⁹, gave boost to Russia's expectations that Serbia would express similar willingness to support an issue of high-priority for Russia – security in Europe.

Nevertheless, the right choice for Serbia is to preserve a balanced approach towards this issue. As an EU aspirant state, Serbia does not and should not have other options for carrying out an independent foreign policy in such an important field as international security¹⁰. In the Article 10 of Serbia's Stabilisation and Association treaty (SAA) it is stated that a political dialogue between Serbia and the EU is going to be developed, and that it will help establish close ties of solidarity and new forms of cooperation including:

Common views on security and stability in Europe, including cooperation in the areas covered by the CFSP of the European Union.

Although the SAA is not yet in force, its Article 10 covers the core of the political dialogue between the EU and Serbia. Furthermore, Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties obliges signatory states to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and

5) *...to bring together NATO member states and Russia to identify and pursue opportunities for joint action at twenty, we hereby establish the NATO-Russia Council. In the framework of the NATO-Russia Council, NATO member states and Russia will work as equal partners in areas of common interest...*, NATO -Russia Relations: A New Quality, Declaration by Heads of States and Governments of the NATO member states and the Russian Federation, 28 May. 2002, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-AD1BF205-ED37B58E/natolive/official_texts_19572.htm

6) Dimitrii Medvedev's address to the Parliament of Serbia, 20th October 2009, (Выступление в Народной скупщине Сербии, 20 октября 2009 года), available in Russian: <http://news.kremlin.ru/news/5783>

7) <http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/docs/2009/11/223072.shtml>

8) See Dr Vladimir Voronkov, *The European Security Treaty After Corfu*, p. 2 www.crep.ch/en/pdf/09-0713+Voronkov+article_ENG.pdf

9) Minister Jeremić spoke about this strategy on the joint press conference with Minister Sergey Lavrov: http://media.mid.ru/video/video_list.html

10) See Article 10 Paragraph 1 Point D of the EU- Serbia Stabilization and Association Treaty: <http://www.delscg.ec.europa.eu/code/navigate.php?id=534>, as well as the Article 18 of Vienna Convention on Law of Treaties ("Sl. list SFRJ - Međunarodni ugovori i drugi sporazumi", br. 30/72).

purpose of a treaty prior to its entry into force. Thus, Serbia is obligated to follow the SAA provisions.

Moreover, as this initiative is only supported by the member states of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO)¹¹, Russia would need far more votes to underpin it. Serbia's support would do little for its adoption, since this would make only 8 out of the required 56 OSCE member states. Russia undeniably needs such a document. However, it is arguable what the added value of such a treaty would be for the security of Serbia, especially in the light of its European and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Review of Russian security doubts

Being the largest country in the world, Russia's interests cannot be examined only in the post-modern or the context of EU integration. Russia is a heterogeneous country, both ethnically and religiously, and, hence, susceptible to centrifugal tendencies. Moreover, the once praised Soviet system of education (to the point of becoming a myth), does not correspond with modern-day needs. The relatively low quality of modern education influences the way Russian elites perceive the outer world. The dominant categories of this perception are national interest, state sovereignty and Russia's spheres of interest. In his interview to the Russian Channel 1 on August 1st 2008, President Medvedev stated that Russia, like all the other countries, has its *own region of privileged interests*¹². Sergei Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, also spoke of the same concept while criticizing the EU's *Eastern Partnership* initiative, proposed to some of the former USSR member states. He defined the *Eastern Partnership* as nothing more than an expansion of the EU's sphere of influence (in other words, privileged interests of the EU – auth.rem)¹³.

The priorities of the transatlantic community were redefined after the ideological triumph of liberal democracy over socialism/communism. Idealism prevailed over realism, while the foreign policy of the Western countries was, at least in the 1990s, supposedly guided by the values of liberal, representative and competitive democracy, as well as the rule of law and respect for human rights. Right after this concept was challenged for the first time in Bosnia, the Western allies decided to disregard Russia's objections to a military action against the Bosnian Serbs, and carried out limited air strikes on their military positions in February 1994. Five years later, the Western countries continued with the policy of placing their own values over the norms of international law. At the peak of the Kosovo Crisis in 1999, FR Yugoslavia was bombed, despite the firm opposition from Russia.

11) Member states are: Russia, Belorussia, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

12) Dimitrii Medvedev's interview to Chanell 1, Russia chanell and NTV channel, Sochi, 31st August 2008, http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/08/31/1850_type82912type82916_206003.shtml

13) Belorussia, Ukraine, Moldavia, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan are the states that joined EU's *Eastern Partnership*. Poland and Sweden proposed this initiative, and it was adopted later on the EU summit. Lavrov has criticized it as the expansion of the EU interest sphere. See *Russia's Lavrov lashes EU over new 'Eastern Partnership'* 21st March 2009, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1237635122.1/>

Russia quickly got over its protests against the bombing of Yugoslavia, in large part due to its bad internal economic situation, which urged the cooperation with the West. The other reason was Milošević, who was creating problems in Serbia-Russia bilateral relations at the time, as well as endangering Russia's relations with the West. Nevertheless, NATO bombing of Yugoslavia has heavily influenced Russian perception of its own security. It has left a mark on the Russian approach to all security issues in the Euro-Atlantic area to this date, thus remaining the core reason for Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement. The following military action carried out in Iraq in 2003, by the alliance of the US and the UK, was based purely on interests rather than on values. This action has also seriously affected the sense of security in Russia. Western unilateralism was perceived as a direct challenge to its national interests, primarily because there was no real international reaction to it, except few modest statements and actions in the Council of Europe¹⁴. Therefore, the only way Russia could protect itself from such unilateralism was by increasing its own forces.

Besides the period of good relations after the 9/11 and intensified joint cooperation in the fight against terrorism, the period from 1999 to 2005 was not very fruitful for the relations between Russia and the West. In year 2002 the US withdrew from the 1972 Anti-ballistic missile Treaty. The so-called "coloured revolutions" marked the period from 2003 to 2005. Russian authorities perceived it as a threat to its own national interests, primarily because the new political elites in those states set the "Western Course". As such, these political elites were naturally against the interests of Russia. For Russia, the rise to power of pro-Western elites in Georgia (2003) and Ukraine (2004), as well as the attempt to change the nature of regime in Kirgizstan (2005) was part of an ideological struggle and the spread of the western sphere of influence in the moment when Russia abandoned ideology¹⁵. Of course, when analysing the state of international security with a focus on its perception in different countries, it is necessary to put aside the legitimacy issues, i.e. the legitimate right of these new elites to choose freely their foreign policy course.

Russian worries increased with the problems related to the ratification and coming into force of the changed Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Moreover, the US administration refused to discuss the expiration of the START treaty and the limiting of the numbers of nuclear warheads and missiles. The final two moves triggered Russia's concrete action. First was the US plan for stationing the third position of the global anti-missile defence shield to Central-Eastern Europe – radar in the Czech Republic and missile facilities in Poland, with the purpose of defending from the possible missile attack coming from North Korea or Iran. Finally some of the NATO member states hinted the possibility of membership of Ukraine and Georgia in this organisation in the near future. President Putin's *Munich speech*¹⁶, held on 10th February 2007, marked the return into the state of latent confrontation between the Trans-Atlantic community and Russia. In December of the same year Russia suspended the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, and began to actively oppose the idea of

14) *The concept of preventive war and its consequences for international relations*, 8 June 2007, Doc. 11293, available on: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc07/EDOC11293.htm>

15) Sergej Kara-Murza, *Export revolutions (Революции на экспорт)* Eksmo Algoritm Knjiga, 2006.

16) President Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference <http://www.securityconference.de/Conference-2007.268.0.html?&L=1>

the Anti-missile shield in Europe, as well as the enlargement of NATO to Ukraine and Georgia. The failed negotiations on the final status of Kosovo, and the resulting unilateral declaration of independence, against Russia's wishes, further alienated the political platforms of Russia and most Western states. The war in Georgia in the summer of 2008 caused a suspension of the negotiations on the new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Russia and the EU, as well as the suspension of the activities of the NATO – Russia Council. Consequences were also noticeable on the bilateral level between Russia and various members of the Trans-Atlantic community, thus the relations between the West and Russia reached the lowest point since the end of the Cold War.

The aforementioned problems can be summed up into two basic questions: the issue of unilateralism of the US and its closest allies¹⁷, and the question of expansion and globalisation of NATO's role and ambitions¹⁸. Moreover, these questions should not be approached without taking into account the security situation in Eurasia as a whole. It is obvious that Russia perceived the American unilateralism, prevalent during President Bush's mandate, as a negation of the previously agreed overall principles of general and cooperative security¹⁹. But, if we take a slightly wider approach, it is possible to single out two main characteristics of the security situation in Eurasia:

(1) The security situation has changed as a result of NATO's enlargement to almost all Eastern European states, as well as some former Soviet Union member states. While the easing of tensions and the improvement of the security climate is felt in the new NATO member states or the states where NATO is present, the post-Soviet space experiences completely opposite tendencies. Considering that Russia is not a part of NATO, and that the NATO - Russia Council is not functioning the way Russia would like it to, this large state feels compelled to once again define its security and national interests in geopolitical terms²⁰, as was the case during the Cold War. Therefore, Russia came up with the idea about the Sphere of privileged interests and influences.

(2) Due to the fact that Russia perceives the so-called *hard security* situation as changed to its own detriment, it has started a more pro-active policy in this sphere for the first time since the end of the Cold War (or perhaps even since the CSCE was created in 1975).

In fact, Russia does not perceive NATO as an existential threat, but as a political opponent that is limiting both the number and the scope of possible military-political options for Russia. Although undesirable, NATO membership of the three Baltic states is not nearly as big of

17) Hard security challenges in the Euro-Atlantic area, Role of the OSCE in creation of the efficient and reliable security system (вызовы жесткой безопасности в евро-атлантике роль обсе в создании устойчивой и эффективной системы безопасности). Available in Russian: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/aded9c34ee795d2bc32575de003decd1

18) Speech of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, A.V. Grushko on the joint session of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the OSCE Permanent Council, Vienna, 18th February 2009 (Выступление заместителя Министра иностранных дел России А.В.Грушко на совместном заседании Форума по сотрудничеству в области безопасности и Постоянного совета ОБСЕ, Вена, 18 февраля 2009 года) available in Russian: http://www.mid.ru/Brp_4.nsf/arh/4B31D15B1DFBDAE6C3257561005D0285?OpenDocument:

19) See *Istanbul Charter*, Istanbul Document 1999, January 2000, PCOEW389, available at: www.osce.org/item/4051.html

20) About the defining of geopolitical national interests see: Dr Andrei Zagorski, *Russia and the West: Revisionism or Status quo?*, International and Security Center- ISAC Fund, pp 9, available: http://www.isac-fund.org/download/Monitoring_Russia-Serbia_relations_Report%20IV.pdf

a problem for Russia as NATO's presence in Ukraine or on Russia's unstable borders in the Caucasus would be. the globalization of NATO's and the value based policy of NATO and its members considerably diminish Russia's *realpolitik* options. Since in *realpolitik* the rules of the game are clear, and less prone to different value interpretations, Russia feels that it has to take a proactive stand in order to resurrect *realpolitik*.

At the same time, the outcome of the widely announced *re-set* in Russia-US relations²¹ has not been completely satisfactory. There have been some achievements, such as the better understanding between Washington and Moscow on the issues of Iranian nuclear programme, cooperation in Afghanistan and the (still obscure) change of plans for the anti-missile shield in Europe, as well as the freezing of the negotiations on NATO enlargement of Ukraine and Georgia. Still, none of the open questions have been solved to this date. Obama and Medvedev both agreed to create the new Treaty to replace START I Treaty, which would be in the interest of both countries. Still, the START I Treaty has expired on December 5th 2009, without a replacement in sight. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that two sides will find a solution to this issue in the near future, despite all the differences.

The New Initiative

On June 5th, in Berlin, Dimitrii Medvedev launched the idea about the new Security Treaty in Europe. On that occasion Russian President also mentioned the possible *European Summit*, where all of the European states would participate²². Political analysts criticized this initiative as yet another attempt to create a division between Europe and North America²³. The idea of a new European security architecture without the participation of the US was immediately dismissed²⁴. This new proposal did not recognise human rights as an element of security. In fact, it seeks to re-establish the balance that was, in Russia's opinion, disturbed by the NATO enlargement and American anti-missile shield plan²⁵. From the very beginning, the proponents of this initiative have used terms *comprehensive, co-operative and indivisible*. The main reason behind this was to demonstrate that exactly these terms, originally defined

21) Two years after President Putin's famous speech, the USA Vice-President Joseph Biden has said in Munich at 45th Annual Security Conference that it is necessary to press *reset* key in Russian-American relations. Available at: <http://www.securityconference.de/Joseph-R-Biden.234.0.html?&L=1>
The USA Secretary of State Hilary Clinton and the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov have proclaimed on 7th March 2009 *resetting* of American-Russian relations. When trying to translate American word *reset* to Russian, the translators made a mistake by translating it as *pereguska*, which means overload. The right word would be *perezagruska*. See: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7930047.stm>

22) Speech at Meeting with German Political, Parliamentary and Civil Leaders, June 5, 2008, Berlin) http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2008/06/05/2203_type82912type82914type84779_202153.shtml

23) Bobby Lo, *Medvedev and the New European Security Architecture*, Centre for European Reform, Policy Brief, pp3, available at: www.cer.org.uk/pdf/pbrief_medvedev_july09.pdf,

24) During the meeting with the President of Russia Dimitrii Medvedev at the World Policy Conference in Evian on 8th October 2008, French President Nicolas Sarkozy has clearly pointed out that the issue of security reforms must be discussed within the OSCE framework, i.e. in the format that includes participation of the USA. See: *World Policy Conference – Speech by M. Nicolas Sarkozy*, President of the Republic, <http://www.ambafrance-uk.org/President-Sarkozy-s-World-Policy.html>

25) President Medvedev's speech at the World Policy Conference in Evian, 8th October 2008, http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2008/10/08/1619_type63374type63377type82634_207422.html

by the Helsinki Final Act and various other OSCE documents, have lost their importance. Furthermore, Russia insists that this initiative should be discussed in a variety of international forums, such as NATO-Russia Council, EU-Russia Summit, as well as through bilateral contacts. However, any discussion outside the OSCE framework is unacceptable for most Western Countries. According to certain reports, there was a misunderstanding on the Russia – Canada line during the preparatory meeting for the latest NATO-Russia Council (on 4th December). This was the first official NATO-Russia Council after the Georgian crisis in 2008. On that occasion, Russia tried to include the new initiative of President Medvedev into the Council's agenda²⁶. Although this misunderstanding was quickly solved, and despite the fact that Russia has managed to raise this question at the Council, it seems that the member states are not going to debate this initiative outside of the OSCE framework²⁷.

At the World Policy Conference held in Evian (France) on October 8th 2008, President Medvedev explained for the first time the concept of the Initiative in detail. It includes 5 principles. The first principle presumes the respect of international law, sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of states. The second principle should guarantee the unique interpretation of the principle of the non-threat and non-use of force and to provide a unified approach to prevention and peaceful settlement of conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic space. The third principle should provide equal security, based on the three NOs: 1) states that have signed the treaty should not reinforce their own security by violating the security of others; 2) actions (taken by military alliances or coalitions) that undermine the unity of the common security area should not be permitted; 3) military alliances should not be developed if they can endanger the security of the other signatories. The fourth principle acknowledges that neither states nor international organisations have an exclusive mandate to maintain peace and order in Europe. The fifth principle is devoted to arms control, prevention of arms proliferation and drug trafficking, terrorism etc. In addition, it would be necessary to revise the adequacy of the existing structures created for this purpose.

This initiative quickly came into spotlight. Already in December 2008 during an informal lunch at the OSCE Ministerial Council, Minister Lavrov got the opportunity to present the need for the new European Security Treaty. Again, on February 18th, 2009 in Vienna, during the meeting of the OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation, Lavrov's deputy Aleksander Grushko underlined the necessity of mutual cooperation. He emphasized the need for the respect of sovereignty, respect of the existing borders and territorial integrity, avoiding use of force, devotion to peaceful conflict resolution and control of arms proliferation. Grushko also gave examples when that cooperation was unsatisfactory, by pointing out military actions in the Balkans during the 1990s, recognition of Kosovo, and the Caucasus catastrophe. However, his focus was limited to the *hard security* issues. Lavrov's deputy failed to address the *human*

26) Interfax 1st December 2009, <http://www.interfax.ru/politics/news.asp?id=112666&sw=%D0%EE%E3%EE%E7%E8%ED&bd=2&bm=11&by=2009&ed=2&em=12&ey=2009&secid=0&mp=1&p=1>; NATO has slowed down Medvedev's Initiative (НАТО притормозила инициативу Медведева), http://www.ng.ru/world/2009-12-02/1_nato.html

27) Meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the Foreign Ministers level in NATO Headquarters, Brussels, available at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_59699.htm?mode=pressrelease;

NATO-Russia – very limited renaissance (НАТО-Россия: сильно ограниченный ренессанс) <http://www.rian.ru/analitics/20091204/197028730.html>; NATO was threatening at the beginning, but soon after its representatives have signed all, available at: <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1287688&NodesID=5>;

See also AFP news: <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iQ8CKg-DrHQ3P0nRcAc281RfYtGQ>

security issues (free elections, democratic institutions, human rights and freedoms), as well as the economic and ecological issues. By doing so, he excluded two OSCE baskets. In this way Russia has clearly defined its priorities in international cooperation.

By promoting this new initiative Russia has emphasized two issues. One was that it is not happy with NATO enlargement and its global role. In Russia's view, NATO is perceived as being dominated by the US whose unilateralist tendencies are seen as a threat. Secondly, and most importantly, with this initiative, Russia has clearly emphasized the importance that military-political aspects of security have for this state. Value aspects, prevalent in the OSCE's third basket (human security dimension, promotion and protection of human rights, free elections), are something that Russia considers much less important. Furthermore, in his address to the Russian Federal Duma in October 2007, president Medvedev said that there are some specific Russian values that are not necessarily overlapping with the Western ones²⁸.

On November 29th, 2009, right before the OSCE's Ministerial Council was held in Athens, the Draft of the *New Security Treaty in Europe* was published on the web page of the Russian President. The main aim of this Draft is to build effective *mechanisms of cooperation* which should solve *threats and challenges in the security sphere*. With reference to the five existing international documents²⁹, this Draft document emphasizes the creation of the cooperative security, based on the principles of *comprehensive, equal and common security*³⁰. The very core of this Draft is represented by the Article 2, Paragraph 1, which prohibits all of the signatory states from undertaking, joining or supporting any action or activity that would have a significant impact on the security of the other signatories. The Paragraph 2 obliges the signatories, who are at the same time members of military coalitions, alliances or organisations, to follow the principles from the five documents mentioned above. The last Paragraph 3, prohibits the signatories from the use of its own, or the territory of another signatory, for the planning or execution of an armed attack against any other signatory state, or any other form of action which affects the security of other signatories. Furthermore, in case of certain misunderstandings or disputes about the provisions and their interpretation, this document establishes the following mechanism among signatories: 1) Consultations; 2) Conference; 3) Extraordinary conference. The first formal step can be done through *consultations*. If one of the signatories estimates that the Treaty has been violated, or that there is a threat of its violation (only by signatories, and not by a third party), it can call for consultations. The depositary state has the right to schedule a conference, provided that at least two signatories call for it. The Conference shall have the quorum if two thirds of all signatory states are present, while the decisions will be adopted by a consensus; and shall be of a binding character. Extraordinary conference can be held only in the case of an armed attack or a threat. Unlike for the "regular" conference, the proposed quorum for the "extraordinary conference" requires the presence of 4/5 of all signatory states. The decisions would be brought by a "consensus minus one" (without the vote of the aggressor state or the state threatening to

28) Address to the Federal Parliament of the Russian Federation, 5th November 2008 godine (Послание Федеральному Собранию Российской Федерации, 5 ноября 2008 года), available in Russian: <http://www.kremlin.ru/transcripts/1968>

29) The UN Charter, The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (1970), The Helsinki Final Act (1975) Maniila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes (1982) and Charter for European Security (1999).

30) In Russian: (ненанесения ущерба безопасности друг друга), in English translation: *undiminished*;

attack). The Draft leaves in force the existing treaties, the UN system and mechanisms, as well as the right of the participating signatory states to neutrality. Finally, this Treaty will come into power ten days after the 25th ratification (by a state or international organization) is stored.

Even the brief analysis of the Draft points to document's special characteristics. Firstly, the Draft neither addresses a common approach towards prevention and peaceful solution of conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic Area, nor the issues of arms control, arms proliferation, drug trafficking and terrorism. Also, it is obvious that the Draft focuses on two basic Russian worries: 1) unilateralism of certain states, which with this Treaty would be restrained; 2) although there is no explicit mention of the enlargement of military alliances, i.e. of further NATO expansion, such activities could be viewed according to the Article 2, Paragraph 2 line *activities which seriously affect security etc.*, and therefore found eligible for the Draft's procedure; (3) the relatively small number of signatories, required for the Treaty to come into force, suggests that Russia is still attempting to persuade other countries to make decisions individually, and not within the framework of military-political alliances or the EU. The 25 signatories form a sufficient critical mass for reaching a considerable political weight. Once the Treaty is in power, the application procedure for the new signatories is more complicated; 180 days after the actual signing of this document, the signatory can become a full member of the Treaty, and only if there is no complaint by the other signatories to the accession of the state in question; 4) This Draft also leaves the possibility for international organisations to accede to the Treaty, such as NATO, EU, OSCE (Russia has been advocating for the OSCE subjectivity for a long time, but in its current status the OSCE still cannot sign the Treaty), the CSTO and the Commonwealth of the Independent States (CIS). This undoubtedly represents Russia's attempt to increase the importance of its own integration projects (CSTO, CIS), which have stumbled upon some problems regarding the purpose of their existence and the lack of inner coherence among the member states. Finally, what is in Russia's main interest is the insistence on legally binding decisions of the conference. It sees the current system of political obligations as not sufficiently guaranteeing the main security principles, which would, supposedly, be qualitatively changed by the legally binding obligations.³¹

The initiative itself is modest in comparison to the principles and thinking that the Russian officials have presented in the public. The Draft's 14 Articles are focusing on the issues of hard security, NATO expansion, and to the prevention of unilateral actions. The absence of any attempts for the regulation of ethnic conflicts in the Euro-Atlantic zone is noticeable, especially since the Russian officials used to stress this in their speeches prior to the Draft's publication. This could be interpreted in two ways; either Russia has lost the real interest for the legal regulation of ethnic and territorial disputes, thus sending the message that the issues of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (and therefore Kosovo) are resolved, or Russia does not consider ethnic and territorial conflicts as part of its hard security issues. If the latter is correct, then the existing territorial and ethnic conflicts (Nagorno-Karabakh and Transnistria) and the potential ones (Crimea in Ukraine) would not belong to the discussion on the security issues. In this way, the most important security issues of three states (Azerbaijan, Moldavia, and to an extent Ukraine) are already excluded from the Treaty's Draft.

31) President Medvedev's speech at the Helsinki University and answers to the questions, 20th April 2009. Available at: http://eng.kremlin.ru/speeches/2009/04/20/1919_type82912type82914type84779_215323.shtml

Finally, the question is what is the novelty that this initiative brings to international security, apart from introducing legally binding decisions in the Euro-Atlantic space and raising the importance of Russian integration projects? If compared to the views of the OSCE'S Permanent Council in Vienna, which is a similar discussion forum, the decisions of these conferences and extraordinary conferences would not substantially differ. In the end, the majority of the five documents that the initiative is based on (especially the UN Charter) already have a legally binding character, and it remains unclear what the essential difference between the legally binding character of the Treaty and the obligations arising from these five documents is.

Corfu Process

From June 27-28th, 2009, Greece, the presiding OSCE country, has organised an informal Ministerial Council meeting at the Greek island of Corfu. This event, the first of its kind, has provided a chance for Russia to further present its initiative. The summit launched the *Corfu Process*, a framework for the further development of this initiative. However, Ms. Dora Bakojanis, the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time, has stated already in her opening remarks that the participants should first define *the goal, content and framework* of the dialogue, which suggested that the whole process was still in its initial phase³². Prior to this event, at the OSCE annual conference³³ held in Vienna on June 23rd, 2009, Minister Lavrov emphasized that since the end of Cold War there has been no reason for the division of the euro-atlantic space, which, in his opinion, was being created by the gradual disintegration of the former Warsaw Pact's territory and the advancement towards the Russian borders. He also repeated the principles mentioned by President Medvedev in Evian, and explained several of them in further detail. The first principle, which presumes respect of international obligations and *the political independence of states*, Lavrov has expanded by adding the principle of non-intervention into the internal affairs of sovereign states. Hence, he once again indirectly compared Kosovo with Abkhazia and South Ossetia with the goal of emphasizing the Western inconsistency, rather than calling for the revision of the existing situation. At the end of his presentation, Lavrov was clear in saying that if such a vision of security cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic space does not become realized, then there is a clear threat to full *re-nationalisation or privatisation of military-political security, with all its unpleasant consequences*.

The Western political commentators all agree that this initiative had been launched primarily to stop further NATO enlargement, and to strengthen the role of Russia in European security issues³⁴. Russia has never agreed to discuss this initiative only within the OSCE framework³⁵.

32) Sunday 28th June 2009 - Plenary Session Minister Bakoyannis Opening Remarks. Available at: http://www.osce.org/cio/item_1_38493.html

33) Complete text of the speech in Russian: Hard security challenges in the Euro-Atlantic area, Role of the OSCE in creation of the efficient and reliable security system (вызовы жесткой безопасности в евро-атлантике роль обсе в создании устойчивой и эффективной системы безопасности). Available at: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/aded9c34ee795d2bc32575de003dec1

34) See: Michael Emerson, *The Struggle for a Civilised Wider European Order, Elements for European Security Strategy*, CEPS Working Document No. 307/October 2008. Available at: http://shop.ceps.eu/BookDetail.php?item_id=1752

35) Dov Lynch, senior consultant to the OSCE General Secretary, *The EU – Russia Centre Review*, 12th edition, Russia, the OSCE and European Security, November 2009, pp 6. Available at: <http://www.eu-russiacentre.org/reviews>

Indeed, Russian representatives had initiated this debate also within the NATO-Russia Council, EU-Russia Summit and within bilateral contacts. The earlier position of the EU, stated on February 18th, 2009 in Vienna, was that the OSCE was the place where the EU was willing to discuss this initiative³⁶. The Czech EU Presidency also outlined that, in today's security system, all three security dimensions of the OSCE are of equal importance. By confirming its commitment to the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter, the EU presidency at the time stated that it would be guided by its own security strategy during the debates on security strengthening. All other EU aspirant countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Turkey, Lichtenstein, Iceland, Ukraine and Moldavia have joined this statement, except Serbia! The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, the country which also held OSCE presidency at the time, stressed that it is necessary to *hurry slowly* and that security requires political-military cooperation among states, management of healthy economies, environment protection, and the protection of human rights and basic freedoms.

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One of the positive effects of this initiative is that this new topic brings the breath of fresh air for the OSCE, which is increasingly facing a dead end in its work. Still, the stance of Russia, as well as some other post-soviet states, is that the OSCE has practically focused on the space *eastwards from Vienna*, and that it is mainly devoted to the spreading of western ideas regardless of local issues and values. Also up until the OSCE Ministerial Council was held in Athens in December 2009, there had been 10 informal discussions at the ambassadorial level, all focusing on security challenges from the perspective of all three dimensions³⁸. The future of this Initiative is not clear, but it is widely considered that it should focus on an open discussion within OSCE, that it should include all three dimensions of the OSCE, and be led without predictions of its final outcome. Russia is not satisfied with the progress made. At the 595th session of the OSCE Forum for Security and Cooperation, on November 18th 2009, SCTO member states supported this Russian Initiative³⁹.

The Corfu Process and the new European security architecture were the dominant topics discussed at the OSCE Ministerial Council, held in Athens in December 2007. Russia's stance was in accordance with the Initiative, which was submitted to all the presidents and international organisations' secretariats, who were included in the discussion on the Initiative merely several days prior to this event. Thus, the Russian Draft was basically not discussed, as Western countries refused to talk about the Initiative that has been delivered to them right before the Council's seating.

The Russian position was presented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Sergey Lavrov. Claiming that the reforms within the OSCE were overdue, he also emphasized the necessity

36) Czech EU Presidency, FSC-PC.DEL/8/09, 18th February 2009

37) Opening address of the OSCE Chairman, H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Greece Ms Dora Bakoianis at the winter session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Vienna, 19th February 2009, CIO.GAL/25/09, 19 February 2009.

38) Dov Lynch, senior consultant to the OSCE General Secretary, The EU – Russia Centre Review, 12th edition, Russia, the OSCE and European Security, November 2009, pp 12. Available at: <http://www.eu-russiacentre.org/reviews>

39) 38 FSC.JOUR/601, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 18 November 2009, available at: <http://www.osce.org/fsc/documents.html>

for its work to be more balanced⁴⁰. He did not focus as much on the content of the Initiative, as he did on the need for its serious consideration in the future. Although Lavrov supported other OSCE dimensions: the economy, environment, and the human dimension, he stressed, especially for the last one, that it should not be developed in a sort of a vacuum, where the activities of other international organisations are not being taken into account, such as those of the Human Rights Council and the Council of Europe. Lavrov emphasized the need for negotiations on security measures, and measures for improving trust, outlined by the Vienna document. He has also advocated the necessity for the revival of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, prevention and conflict resolution including trans-national threats, terrorism, organised crime and drug trafficking. However, in his speech there was no room for the issues of energy. Again, Russian approach was more or less supported by the CSTO member states.

The EU's common stance was presented by the Swedish Presidency. Stressing the need for a comprehensive, co-operative, and indivisible security, as well as the impact EU enlargement had on security in Europe, the Presidency emphasized that the dialogue within the framework of the Corfu Process has a potential, if based on OSCE principles. The EU is devoted to constructive cooperation with all states so as to reach an essential and balanced goal, without compromise over the basic principles. The EU representatives emphasized the need to point out the *real security threats* in Europe and formulate five topics that should offer a strategic orientation for all those threats: (1) strengthening of conflict prevention and resolution; (2) strengthening the ability to respond to trans-national threats and challenges; (3) means for improvement of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law; (4) arms control, security measures and raising the level of trust; (5) means to ameliorate the shortcomings in the application of current OSCE obligations within its three dimensions. Within these principles, the EU emphasized the necessity of working on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, on the existing territorial and ethnic conflicts in Moldavia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, and it also supported Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Finally, the EU supported the autonomous functioning of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the media freedom representative. Serbia has joined the EU on this statement.

Although the Corfu Process was supported by all of the OSCE member states, they in fact perceive it differently. While for Russia and the states closest to it, this process should resolve the issues of security deficit and security fragmentation⁴¹, for Western states it has a wider meaning. In fact, Western countries do not consider this process to be urgent, but *open ended*⁴². Additionally, the majority of these countries consider the process to be oriented towards the improvement of trust among states, implicitly referring to the outcomes of the Russia-Georgia war in 2008 and the Russian suspension of the Treaty on Conventional Armed

40) Sergey Lavrov's statement to the XVII meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, 1st December 2009 in Athens, MC.DEL/19/09, 1 December 2009, available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=542

41) See - statement by Sergey Martinov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, MC.DEL/35/09, available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=543

42) See - statements by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Romania (MC.DEL/32/09) and the Republic of Estonia (MC.DEL/44/09), available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=543

Forces in Europe⁴³. Regarding the Corfu Process, most Western countries have stressed the following: (1) OSCE is the only (natural) forum for the discussion about this Initiative; (2) Human security dimension cannot be disregarded, and the promotion and respect of human rights are an integral part of every discussion about security (3) Prevention and resolution of territorial and ethnic conflicts must be an integral part of European security; (4) the overall discussion about the European security should be developed in addition to the existing Helsinki principles and obligations, not as its alternative; (5) The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe should be revived (the UK even pointed at Russia as the state that does not follow the obligations derived from this treaty). France⁴⁴, Germany⁴⁵ and Finland⁴⁶ had concrete and constructive proposals for the Corfu Process to continue on the path it is on. Canada emphasized that the process should strive towards *wider perspectives and should be focused on the most important security issues including the new trans-national threats and the threats outside of the OSCE region*. The USA addressed the need for the continuation of efforts in the adjustment to the new challenges and threats to the European security. In addition, its representatives emphasized each state's right to opt for its own alliances and security structures, as well as the necessity of the host country's consent to the presence of foreign troops on its territory – a clear insinuation of the situation of Russian troops in Moldavia (Transnistria) and Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)⁴⁷. The UK representatives pushed for the non-proliferation of nuclear arms as an agenda for European security. They drew a parallel between the fact that in the UK they have never felt safer, while, on the other hand, the present perception in Russia, be it accurate or not, demonstrates that the existing European structures do not satisfy Russian needs, but also that many other OSCE member states, for example *in Central and South-eastern Europe and Caucasus also feel a certain degree of uncertainty about their security*.⁴⁸ . Poland's standpoint was that it is necessary to focus on existing security mechanisms in Europe, which have already proved their efficiency, while the Corfu Process represents a suitable framework for a debate on new ideas on European security⁴⁹. Few other states, including the US, have stressed energy as an important factor of European security.

The OSCE Ministerial Declaration on the Corfu process⁵⁰ emphasized that this process has already contributed to the improvement of security and helped the revitalization of dialogue in the OSCE area, from Vancouver to Vladivostok. This process should be based on the principles of equality, cooperation, partnership, inclusiveness and transparency. The Decision

43) For example see – statement by Romyana Jeleva, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=542

44) (MC.DEL/17/09) available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=

45) Statement by Werner Hoyer, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Germany, (MC.DEL/74/09), http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=543

46) (MC.DEL/38/09) http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=543

47) (MC.DEL/61/09) http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=542

48) (MC.DEL/45/09) http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=543

49) Statement by Grazyna Bernatowicz, Under Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Poland, (MC.DEL/31/09) available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=543

50) „Reconfirm-Review-Reinvigorate Security and Co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok,, MC.DOC/1/09, 2 December 2009

No 1/09 on the Furthering of the Corfu Process⁵¹ has defined that the future dialogue will focus on: (1) Implementation of all OSCE norms, principles and commitments (2) the OSCE role in early warning, conflict prevention and resolution, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation; (3) role of the arms control and security and trust building measures; (4) transnational and multidimensional threats and challenges; (5) economic and environmental challenges; (6) human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as democracy and the rule of law; (7) enhancing the OSCE's effectiveness; (8) interaction with other organizations and institutions, on the basis of the 1999 Platform for Co-operative Security, and other issues that the states consider pertinent. The next report regarding the Corfu Process is expected by the end of June 2010, when new suggestions are expected to be given for consideration, at the joint meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council and Forum for Security and Cooperation.

In Russia's view, the results of the Ministerial Council in Athens were not completely satisfactory. Even though it is clear that the Corfu Process will continue, the content of the Decision 1/09 went beyond the original Russian idea, with the scope much wider than the one proposed by the Russian Draft. Western countries have sent a message that there would be no return to former geopolitical nature of international relations in Eurasia. Insistence on the human dimension of security and the new challenges, the revitalization of Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and even energy security, seems more as Western countries' initiative to use the Corfu Process as a tool to strengthen the OSCE's work, and to interact with Russia, rather than to simply fulfil Russia's wishes. The issue of conflict resolution, once an integral part of the second principle from Evian, has now become a part of the Western agenda, while in the Russian new Draft Treaty there was no space for it. Finally, the EU member states, the Swedish Presidency, as well as some other states, have again supported the Georgian territorial integrity, while on the other hand, Lavrov has not even once mentioned Kosovo, thus suggesting that the issue of Kosovo does not present a part of the Russian Initiative. At the same time, by rejecting to discuss the initiative solely within the OSCE framework (i.e. in the framework of the *Corfu Process*), Russia indicated that this process and the Treaty itself are two close but separate processes⁵².

Serbia and the Russian Initiative

After the initial *sympathy/interest* for this initiative, Serbia began taking a more moderate policy approach. The aforementioned statement of the Serbian President Tadić distanced Serbia from this Initiative, at least until things begin to take shape and until Russia and the Western countries reach a somewhat common position.

51) MC.DEL/1/09, 2. decembar 2009. godine, available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=549

52) Dr. Vladimir Voronkov, The European Security Treaty After Corfu, str. 5 www.crep.ch/en/pdf/09-07-13+Voronkov+article_ENG.pdf

At the same time, Serbia joined its neighbouring states in supporting the introductory⁵³ and final⁵⁴ statement of the Swedish EU Presidency at the Ministerial Council in Athens, which surely presents a step forward, considering that Serbia was the only country from the region which had not joined the final statement of the French EU Presidency at the previous Ministerial Council in Helsinki⁵⁵. Minister Jeremić's statement at the Ministerial Council was also quite balanced⁵⁶. While supporting the *Corfu Process*, Jeremić addressed the inconsistency and change of the basic principles and common values within the OSCE area, primarily aiming at Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. However, he did not explicitly mention the Russian initiative. While underlining the need for the open and honest dialogue on the improvement of security agenda, Minister Jeremić did not make any specific proposals, as others did, thus sending the message that Serbia supports the statements of the Swedish EU Presidency (except those on the Kosovo issue).

Prior to the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, more than 2400 negotiation meetings were held. Therefore, it is quite obvious that this initiative is far from its realization. However, Russia is in a hurry, since it does not want to live in uncertainty with regards to its own security. Hence, Russia is looking for allies among individual states, especially those which are not oriented towards NATO membership. Besides, from the onset of the lobbying for the Initiative, the very essence of the Russian position was that such treaty is necessary for those states that do not belong to any bloc and do not wish to become part of it. And finally, Russian position has always been that the states should be individually deciding about this initiative, and not as members of any of the blocs. However, it is difficult to imagine this happening as both NATO and EU member states cannot privatize such an important issue as European security is; all of these states are already obliged by NATO and EU norms.

Nevertheless, the Russian influence in Serbia is still increasing. It is manifested through both the Russian support to Serbia on the Kosovo issue, and the declared intention to help Serbia become a regional leader in energy production⁵⁷. Additionally, the Russian support to Bosnian Serbs in Butmir process represents yet another significant boost to the Russian influence in the Western Balkans. This influence could be easily transformed into important political capital which could be invested at times when the Russian side estimates that such investment is in its outmost national interest. This has not been the case so far, but such scenario cannot be excluded.

53) Statement by Carl Bildt, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden/EU, http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=542

54) Swedish Presidency of the European Union - EU Closing Statement, http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2009.html?page=documents&session_id=545

55) Statement by The European Union at the Closing Session of the Sixteenth Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council, MC.DEL/80/08, 5 December 2008, available at: http://www.osce.org/conferences/mc_2008.html?page=documents&session_id=343

56) Vuk Jeremić's statement at the XVII meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, 1st December 2009 in Athens, MC.DEL/19/09, 1 December 2009, available at

57) Within the same context falls the recent statement of the Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Serbia, Alexander Konuzin – *Russia would like to build a nuclear plant in Serbia*, 30th November 2009, available at: http://www.b92.net/biz/komentari.php?nav_id=395464

Due to its proclaimed military neutrality, Serbia could, at first sight, support this Initiative. That would certainly contribute to faster implementation of the Russian loan arrangements. Nonetheless, Serbia's support for this initiative would place Serbia on the opposite side of the table from the EU, and together with Russia. This position is currently also held by Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. With all due respect, none of them has defined EU membership as its foreign political goal, nor does it have a chance for it.

There is a difference between the Russian approach towards security issues and means of improving them, and Serbia's position and its security challenges. Aside from the issue of Kosovo (and possibly the situation in Bosnia), Serbia shares security threats and challenges with its neighbouring countries in the region. Even though Serbia and Russia share a common security problem reflected in unilateralism (real or imagined) of certain states, the second main Russian security problem of the potential Ukrainian and Georgian membership in NATO has almost no repercussions for Serbia since it is already surrounded by NATO members and NATO aspirant countries. Therefore, Serbian foreign policy would have to take into account its cooperation with EU and NATO. In addition, Serbia's *Strategy of Defence* does not recognize any state or alliance as an enemy⁵⁸, and, for some time now, there has been an open debate in Serbia whether it should become a member of NATO. One of the standpoints of that debate is that Serbia should not be dealing with *throwing out Russia from Central Asia* and similar NATO actions⁵⁹. A similar logic could be applied to the Russian Initiative, considering that, by supporting this initiative, Serbia would support Russian security, at the price of frictions with EU member states, a company it wishes to join.

Unlike at the last year's OSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki, at this year's Council in Athens, Serbia has joined twice the common standpoint of the EU issued by the Swedish Presidency. This move represents the right choice made by the Serbian representatives, and it is a step forward towards the fulfilment of the provisions from the Article 10 of the SAA.

Conclusion

A responsible approach of Serbian leadership towards this Initiative implies long-term consequences. On the one hand, Serbia is clearly sending a message to the enlargement sceptics in Europe that it does not want to enter the Russian sphere of influence, regardless of how good the bilateral relations between Serbia and Russia are. On the other hand, Serbia is offering an example of moderate politics to all the euro-sceptics in Serbia, especially those who are advocating tightening or even integration with Russia. Finally, at the peak of warming of relations between Serbia and Russia and the creation of strategic partnership (in the energy sector), Serbian President Boris Tadić has drawn clear borders. Russia knows or should know that Serbia does not have an option to lead an independent policy and give support to this Initiative. Therefore, bearing in mind Serbia's striving towards European

58) Strategy of Defense of the Republic of Serbia, April 2009, Belgrade, available at: <http://www.mod.gov.rs/lat/dokumenta/strategije/strategije.php>

59) Boško Mijatović, NATO? (op-ed), available at: <http://www.politika.rs/pogledi/Bosko-Mijatovic/NATO.sr.html>

(declaratively supported by Russia⁶⁰) and Euro-Atlantic integrations (Partnership for Peace), Russia should not perceive the lack of Serbian support for this Initiative as a non-friendly act or an obstacle for their good bilateral cooperation. Despite the fact that Russia has numerous legitimate complaints about the current situation in the international security scene, Serbia is not a country which could help significantly to improve this situation. She could only be, and probably will be, a constructive bilateral and multilateral partner, but never beyond the framework of its priorities of EU integration.

Minister Vuk Jeremić's speech in Athens, in which he underlined Serbia's co-sponsorship of the Ministerial Declaration Draft on the 65th Anniversary of the end of World War II, represents a good example of memories of the collective past, which is important for both Serbia and Russia. Alongside the good economic and cultural cooperation, that stands as the most appropriate measure of coordination between Serbia and Russia.

60) President Medvedev's speech at the Parliament of Serbia, 20th October 2009, <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/5783>