



## Conference European Foreign Policy ASSESSING EU'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

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### Abstract

The Soviet rejection of the idea of European economic integration after World War II had been as important for the future of the continent, as the end of the American tradition of “isolationism” and the decision of the Truman Administration to create an all-European assistance programme in 1947 (the so-called Marshall Plan or European Recovery Program – ERP). The clash between Soviet and American priorities split Europe into two “camps” and caused a protracted period of polarisation in Europe. Yet, that polarisation, in its turn, became a catalyst of powerful integrationist forces on both sides of the Cold War divide, in particular in Western Europe. In a sense, the Cold War polarisation was the “midwife” of the European Community. At the same time, in the later stages, all-European integration became a most popular symbol for the peoples in Eastern Europe, who felt increasingly isolated and unhappy in their Soviet-style “bloc”. Finally, since the end of the Eighties the Gorbachev leadership, reversing the old policy pattern, also began to associate itself with that symbol. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the European Union has pursued a patient and determined long-term strategy aimed at integrating Russia into Europe. Beginning with the “Partnership and Co-operation Agreement” (PCA) signed in June 1994 and in force since December 1997, EU-Russia relations have been gaining increased momentum. In December 1997, further to an initiative of the prime minister of Finland (Lipponen, 1997), the European Council of Luxembourg asked the Commission to prepare an interim Report on the “Northern Dimension for the policies of the Union” (Commission of the European Communities, 1998), which was welcomed in Vienna in December 1998 and which is now a EU’s initiative. Later on, in June 1999, the European Union adopted a “Common Strategy towards Russia” which represents the most challenging program of the long-term engagement of the EU in Russia and which is the current framework for the future development of their relations. Bilateral institutional contacts determined by the PCA produced some results and brought to the launch of the EU-Russia co-operation. But the PCA hasn’t been renewed by Putin presidency. What the new Russian president is going to do?

