



EUROPEAN  
COUNCIL  
ON FOREIGN  
RELATIONS  
ecfr.eu

POLICY  
MEMO

# THE EU AND BELARUS AFTER THE ELECTION

Balázs Jarábik, Jana Kobzova and Andrew Wilson

## SUMMARY

The crackdown that followed the presidential election in Belarus on 19 December 2010 reversed pre-election signals that had promised a relatively liberal atmosphere. After a rigged election result that gave President Alyaksandr Lukashenka an implausible 79 percent of the vote, more than 600 Belarusian citizens were arrested, including eight of Lukashenka's nine opponents in the election. However, although he was able to survive the election, Lukashenka now faces economic pressures and a forthcoming struggle over the privatisation of state assets, which will be the most important test of his ability to keep both the elite and society under control. In that context, the post-election crackdown was a sign not of the regime's strength but of its internal weakness. As the country's internal struggles intensify, it would be a bad time for the European Union to isolate Belarus.

At the same time, however, the EU must react in order to regain credibility in its neighbourhood. In the past, the EU and the United States tried both isolating and engaging the regime. Although neither policy was a complete failure, neither was particularly effective. In addition to expressing solidarity with those still in prison, the EU must now devise a proactive strategy that changes Lukashenka's options. Lukashenka is a great survivor who has shown skill in balancing between Russia and the West, but his position has been weakened. While Russia is also increasingly frustrated with its ally, the interruption of EU dialogue with Minsk increases the chances that Moscow will gain control of its neighbour's economy. The EU now has an opportunity to regain the initiative in its relationship with Belarus. It should raise the stakes for both the regime and Russia through a combination of targeted and 'smart' isolation, selective sanctions and engagement.

## The unexpected crackdown

The crackdown that followed the presidential election in Belarus on 19 December 2010 reversed pre-election signals that had promised a more liberal atmosphere. The European Council had already set the bar low in October 2010 when it declared that "clear and visible progress on the conduct of elections would give new impetus to the EU's engagement policy with Belarus".<sup>1</sup> The election was never going to be completely free and fair, but there were initial signs of the progress the European Council wanted to see: apart from President Alyaksandr Lukashenka, nine other candidates were able to register with relative ease; they could campaign around Belarus with little state interference; and, for the first time, they were allowed to take part in a debate on state television. However, after a rigged election result that gave Lukashenka an improbable 79 percent of the vote, around 15,000 people demonstrated in central Minsk on 19 December – a protest that was, by many accounts, smaller than the one after the previous election in 2006 but bigger than expected. Many of those who participated were young professionals and members of the emerging middle class who came to protest against the way that the election had been

<sup>1</sup> Council of the European Union, "Conclusions on Belarus", news release, 25 October 2010, available at [www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/117326.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/117326.pdf)

rigged rather than to back any of the opposition candidates, who in any case had no co-ordinated agenda.<sup>2</sup>

A minority of demonstrators – which may have included agents provocateurs from the Belarusian state security service (which is still proudly called the KGB) and the Russian secret service, as well as some genuine opposition protesters – produced the scenes of disorder that the regime used as an excuse to crack down. But the regime's reaction went much further than anyone expected. Over 600 people were detained, including eight of Lukashenka's nine opponents in the election. A month after the election, 33 people remain in prison and many of those arrested face sentences of up to 15 years. Offices of human-rights organisations, independent media and political parties were raided. The office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Minsk was closed, apparently indefinitely.

Although it is clear that the post-election crackdown was the result of a decision taken by President Lukashenka, we may never know what kind of information led him to that decision. One possible explanation for the events is that the regime had concluded that it had gone too far in granting even limited political freedom before the election. Lukashenka had also patched up ties with Russia just before the election with a key deal on oil transit, so he no longer felt the need to listen to Western demands. However, relations between Belarus and Russia are unlikely to remain peaceful. Others, however, see the crackdown as an overreaction to provocations during the protests, although it is difficult to believe that, in a country that has the highest number of secret agents per capita in Europe, the authorities were not fully briefed in advance. Moreover, a poll carried out after the election suggests that Lukashenka would have won the election in the first round even if the voting and counting had been carried out transparently.<sup>3</sup>

So, it is likely that what worried the regime was not the opposition itself, which remains weak and fragmented, but the re-emergence of civil society in the run-up to the election.<sup>4</sup> A new belief emerged among Belarusians that social – if not regime – change was possible. In particular, home-grown reform constituencies began to emerge beyond the boundaries of the groups traditionally financed by Western aid. What worried Lukashenka was probably this change of mindset among ordinary citizens more than the opposition. This is confirmed by the fact that while the number of political prisoners remains high, the authorities targeted NGOs'

means of gathering information (e.g. computers) rather than the activists themselves. Moreover, unlike in 2006, when many of those who took part in the post-election protests were expelled from universities, there is no confirmation that this has taken place this time.

Thus the post-election crackdown seems to have been designed to reverse the emerging political awakening. The regime needed to reassert control over society, reinstall the fear factor in daily life and present the powers-that-be as a solid and coherent bloc that was determined to retain power under all circumstances ahead of the upcoming privatisation. Facing growing internal tensions, Lukashenka needed to reaffirm his own position and image as "the last dictator in Europe", as former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice once called him. This image is also important in relations with the West: lacking domestic sources of oil or gas, Lukashenka has few things to attract the EU's attention apart from the negative image of Europe's black hole.

## Shifting alliances

Beneath the surface, however, the picture is more complicated. Splits within the regime have become increasingly visible since the last election in 2006, particularly as growing economic pressure increases the likelihood of a future privatisation spree. The security services – the so-called *siloviki* – stand to lose heavily if there is a successful reconciliation between Belarus and the West, especially if further reforms strengthen their more moderate rivals within the government. For them, the crackdown was therefore a way to send a message to the domestic opposition and their international backers that, despite the pre-election liberalisation, they still determine the boundaries of the acceptable.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, supporters of economic reform – and greater involvement with the EU – remain influential. In a government reshuffle a week after the election, Lukashenka seemed attempted to balance these factions: he brought back some of the 'old guard', such as the new deputy head of the presidential administration Alexander Radkov, but many reformers, including the head of the National Bank of Belarus, Petr Prokopovich, retained their positions. The new prime minister, Mikhail Miasnikovich, is considered the doyen of the Belarusian bureaucracy and could act as an honest broker in the upcoming privatisation process, so important for the nomenklatura.

Thus the brutality used to suppress the post-election protests indicates not the regime's strength but its internal weakness: gaps between the main factions within the regime are deepening and the main pillars of the regime's support are eroding. Each group is increasingly looking to ensure its own survival by all available means and to grab the biggest share of

<sup>2</sup> Dzianis Melyantsou, "Square 2010: Scenario and Preliminary Results", Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, 13 January 2010, available at [www.belinstitute.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=845%3AAnone&catid=11%3Apolitics&Itemid=28&lang=en](http://www.belinstitute.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=845%3AAnone&catid=11%3Apolitics&Itemid=28&lang=en)

<sup>3</sup> A post-election poll carried out by the Vilnius-based Independent Institute of Socio-Economic and Political Studies (IIEPS) indicates that Lukashenka received 51 percent of the vote while opposition candidates Vladimir Neklyayev and Andrei Sannikau received 8.3 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively. Overall, the incumbent would have got 58 percent of the vote. See <http://www.iieps.org/press1.html>

<sup>4</sup> The proliferation of opposition candidates also increased the confusion about their goals. Some announced that they wanted to win or change the regime through peaceful protest; others were much less transparent about their ambitions. The various sources of the opposition's funding were also opaque: while a few received support from Western NGOs, some reports also point at funding from Russia. Others even suggest that the regime funded candidates in order to maintain a tame and weak artificial opposition.

<sup>5</sup> The security services were the strongest pillar in Lukashenka's system from the time of his first constitutional coup in 1996 until he survived the threat of a copycat 'coloured revolution' in 2006. Thereafter, they temporarily lost ground to the new economic pragmatists. However, their most notorious figurehead, Viktor Sheiman, who allegedly played the key role in the 'disappearances' of leading opponents in 1999-2000, suddenly regained prominence just before the election.

the upcoming privatisation of state property. In the absence of fear, people may start asking uncomfortable questions about the transparency of the business deals. Lukashenka has stamped his control on the situation for now, but he will have to cater to an increasing number of vested interests in order to remain in power. Different actors may also perceive the need to begin positioning themselves for a possible post-Lukashenka scenario.

Meanwhile, Belarus has yet to overcome the impact of the economic crisis. External debt has almost doubled and continues to rise, reaching a record 52 percent of GDP in 2010. The annual balance of payments deficit is projected at US\$7 billion. From 1 January 2011, the government increased the price of gas (by 11.9 percent), heat (by 15 percent) and electricity (by 10-15 percent), mainly for businesses. The pre-election deal with Russia, which allowed Russian crude oil to be imported again to Belarus duty-free, was already threatening to unravel in January. Russia is seeking to increase the price of gas to Belarus from the current US\$180 to US\$210-220 per 1,000 cubic metres. Most importantly, Russian businesses have long sought control over key local assets, including the refineries processing Russian crude oil, petrochemicals and machine-building industries.

The government has rushed through several measures since the election aimed at expanding the private sector, especially its under-developed SME side, including a directive that specifies nine areas selected for economic liberalisation. But the government's budget and trade deficits will increase pressure to privatise assets. A new Law on the Privatisation of State Property came into force on 1 January 2011.<sup>6</sup> But despite Lukashenka's attempts to maintain personal control of the process, the likely struggle between the various factions over the sales will strain the stability of the regime during the next five years. If the government wants to avoid losing its economic independence to Russia, Belarus cannot rely solely on Moscow's help. In short, Minsk needs to rebalance its economy, and, by extension, its foreign relations.

## Lukashenka's balancing act

In this context, the West should not rush to interpret the post-election crackdown as a sign that Belarus is returning to Moscow's embrace. In fact, no one knows the fickle nature of Russia's support better than the Belarusian regime: Moscow expects concrete economic returns in exchange for bankrolling its neighbour's unreformed economy, such as better access to key Belarusian companies. Russia is also taking long-term steps to limit Minsk's possibilities for energy blackmail: it has spent the past few years developing

energy transit projects (for example, Nord Stream and the BTS oil terminal near St. Petersburg) which threaten radically to reduce Belarus's importance as a transit state for Russian energy deliveries to Europe.

On the other hand, Lukashenka has never liked the idea of a gradual opening to the West. Instead, he has developed a special talent for balancing between the West and Russia. But 'neo-Titoist' Lukashenka aims not for equidistance between the two but rather to use the West to extract concessions from Moscow (and not the other way round). For more than a decade, Belarus has been remarkably successful in getting others to pay its bills: the upgrade of Belarus's Soviet-style state economy was paid for by Russia, while the opposition was living off Western grants. More recently, Lukashenka has further expanded his room for manoeuvre through cheap credit and other assistance – with few political strings attached – from such countries as Venezuela, Iran, Azerbaijan and China. The IMF and the World Bank have also joined the club of Belarus's creditors, although they made their loans conditional on economic reforms, which the government half-heartedly implemented.

Post-election developments indicate that Minsk is trying to continue this balancing act with scant regard to the damage it has done to its reputation abroad. Within days of the vote, the Belarusian parliament ratified 18 treaties on the creation of the Common Economic Area with Russia and Kazakhstan. Simultaneously, Minsk re-launched a bizarre charm offensive with the West. On 22 December 2010, the then Prime Minister Sergei Sidorski signed the registration of two EU- and USAID-funded technical assistance projects on energy efficiency, which had been pending for two years. As soon as Brussels came back from the Christmas break, Minsk sent its foreign minister to meet top EU officials to explain why engagement should continue. The crackdown, he claimed, was a Russian plot implemented along with part of the opposition.

In the past, the EU and the US have tried both isolating and engaging the regime but have not done so consistently. After a period of isolation from 1996 to 2008, the European Commission started pursuing greater engagement with the Belarusian authorities, while the US, frustrated by the opposition's lack of unity, decreased funding for political campaigns in 2010. Recently, the EU and US official approaches have started to converge: until the election, there seemed to be a gradual rapprochement both between the EU and Belarus (the EU even offered the country a package of loans, grants and assistance worth 3.5 billion euros in exchange for more competitive elections) and the US and Belarus. In fact, the slightly more liberal pre-election atmosphere was a result of this Western engagement. But, despite this convergence, Western policy may still not have appeared coherent to Minsk: while Western governments pursued engagement and dialogue – which, in the eyes of those in Minsk, were meant to produce piecemeal reform – many Western NGOs continued to incite a 'colour revolution' in Belarus.

---

<sup>6</sup> The law was enacted in July 2010 but came into force on 1 January 2011. The law empowers the president (not the parliament) to establish a single state privatisation policy; approve the list of entities subject to privatisation; and determine situations in which a state-owned property can be sold without competition. The funds received from selling state property will go to the state budget, unless the president determines otherwise. Employees of enterprises will no longer be able to buy state-owned shares of the enterprise using privileged procedures. In short, the president will try to control the process.

The post-election crackdown has sent Belarus and the West back to square one and thus temporarily reduced Lukashenka's balancing space. To avoid becoming a hostage to Moscow, he will once again be keen on expanding his room for manoeuvre by reaching out to the EU. Lukashenka argues that Brussels should continue the dialogue with – and assistance to – Minsk in order to prevent the potential loss of Belarus's sovereignty to Russia. It would be tempting to take advantage of this opportunity and give in to Lukashenka-style 'neo-Titoism' – in other words, to re-start the dialogue as soon as the regime releases its political prisoners and continue financing Minsk's economic reforms without any hope of a political opening. But this would tie the West to the opposition candidates in prison, who would be kept behind bars to further induce the West into re-starting the dialogue with Minsk. This would be a mistake: the upcoming conflict between Minsk and Moscow over privatisation of Belarusian assets means the position of the West is actually stronger than it may appear. Having tried both isolation and engagement, there is now a widespread assumption that the West cannot succeed in Belarus. In fact, however, the West has at times – for example, in the pre-election period – shown the right mix of resolve and flexibility at the right time.

Finding the right post-election policy towards Belarus is particularly important because it will also send a signal to the other five Eastern Partnership states, Russia and the EU's neighbourhood in general. Whatever message Brussels sends to Minsk after the crackdown will be closely listened to in Kyiv, Yerevan and Moscow – but also in Tripoli and Algiers. Lukashenka consciously seeks to trade on his special status as the "last dictator in Europe". But this is a misleading label. In fact, there is a broad trend towards democratic rollback in most states of the region – for example, in Russia, Ukraine and Azerbaijan. There will be an inevitable accusation of double standards if the EU picks on Belarus because it is small. On the other hand, if the EU does not act now, when will it?

## Regaining the initiative

The EU now has an opportunity to regain the initiative in its relationship with Belarus. The EU should avoid blanket measures – for example, excluding Belarus from the Eastern Partnership – which would punish not only the regime but also those in the government and society who want Belarus to move closer to the EU. It should take action against those responsible for election fraud and the post-election crackdown rather than against the country as a whole. The main aim of sanctions should not be to advance regime change but to punish individuals involved in concrete actions unacceptable to the international community. At the same time, however, there were signs of a political opening during the pre-election period, which the EU should aim to reinvigorate. In short, it is a time for carrots as well as sticks.

As an immediate reaction to the crackdown, the EU is right to interrupt high-level contacts with the regime. These should

not restart as long as political prisoners remain behind bars. The EU was right to postpone the decision about the possible re-imposition of sanctions because it provided Minsk with what the Chinese call the 'Golden Bridge' – that is, time and space for the regime to release its hostages without being seen as giving in to Brussels' demands. But if no sanctions are imposed after this initial pause, the West will not only lose face in Belarus but its credibility in the Eastern neighbourhood will suffer too. Given the lack of clarity about who was actually responsible for the violence during the post-election demonstrations, the EU could also offer to carry out a thorough international investigation.

A visa ban should also apply to those responsible for the election fraud and the post-election crackdown, including Lukashenka. The EU and the US should freeze the assets of these officials, even if this will have little impact because their wealth is mainly kept in Russia and the Middle East. In addition, to raise the stakes for Minsk, the EU should promptly prepare an impact analysis of economic sanctions that would specifically target the main cash-generating industries in Belarus (i.e. the companies involved in the production and export of refined oil and chemical products, and fertilizers). Such a measure would send a very strong signal not only to Belarus but also to the entire region – Russia included. At the same time, the EU must do a better job of explaining its sanctions policy to Minsk through quiet diplomacy. For example, if Brussels really wants to contribute to the release of the political prisoners, an EU envoy should present the impact analysis directly to the Belarusian president before publicly announcing it.

At the same time as showing the regime its stick, the EU should offer carrots to ordinary Belarusians. EU member states should follow the example of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which have abolished fees for national or Schengen visas. But EU countries would do an even greater service to ordinary Belarusians if they also reduced the number of bureaucratic procedures required to obtain Schengen visas in the first place.

Importantly, the EU should take advantage of Russia's increasing frustration with its ally. Moscow is caught in a bind of its own: Russian elites are also unhappy with Lukashenka's 'neo-Titoist' manoeuvring and want to get much more value for money from the regime they subsidise, though they felt compelled to support him in the short term in the run-up to their own 2011-2012 election cycle. The possibility of a direct discussion between Brussels and Moscow about Belarus is precisely what Minsk fears. While it is unrealistic to expect significant convergence between the EU and Russia on Belarus, some dialogue with Moscow is possible but only if the EU respects the 'autonomous relations' that Russia has with its neighbour (i.e. the existence of the Union State Agreement between the two).

In the medium term, the EU's main objective should be to increase its presence in Belarus and expand its circle of friends there, so that it is ultimately less beholden to specific

interlocutors such as Lukashenka and the opposition. At the same time, however, the EU needs to acknowledge that Lukashenka is not an isolated phenomenon. Rather, he reflects to a certain extent the attitudes and beliefs of many Belarusians, as the post-election poll highlighted. Thus, any EU policy needs to focus on changing Belarusian society and not just on shooting at its leader. As the example of Ukraine shows, changing the leadership does not automatically lead to reform. The EU will therefore need to learn to distinguish between partners and opponents. If it is not able or willing to build closer contacts with those who push for greater liberalisation, it will isolate itself from Belarus – not vice versa.

The EU should therefore invest in civil society as much as possible and continue building contacts and influence where it is most lacking, in particular at the level of bureaucracy and business. The EU should not just increase assistance to civil society and independent media but also adjust its strategy to reach out much beyond the current opposition and the NGOs linked to it. The main objectives of assistance should be to overcome the current state of internal isolation of the opposition and civil-society groups from the rest of Belarusian society and to give the Belarusian public greater exposure to the EU. While the EU and the US have co-ordinated their assistance policies for years, they have been slow to implement joint projects. The EU should step up efforts to change the situation.

The election process has shown that President Lukashenka's position is temporarily strong – but only if he resorts to violence. However, the status quo is no longer an option, as Belarus faces hard choices – not least about its economy. This means that the stakes are much higher for everyone involved, including the regime, Russia and the West. However, it also means that the EU has an opportunity to regain the initiative in its relationship with Belarus. But if the West wants to encourage change in Belarus, it must not fall into the trap of focusing solely on Lukashenka and reacting to his geopolitical balancing act. Rather, it should work actively with civil society in Belarus to isolate Lukashenka and the *siloviki*. The task of bringing Belarus in from the cold has become more difficult, but it is not impossible.

## ABOUT ECFR

The **European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)** is the first pan-European think-tank. Launched in October 2007, its objective is to conduct research and promote informed debate across Europe on the development of coherent, effective and values-based European foreign policy.

ECFR has developed a strategy with three distinctive elements that define its activities:

- **A pan-European Council.** ECFR has brought together a distinguished Council of over one hundred Members - politicians, decision makers, thinkers and business people from the EU's member states and candidate countries - which meets once a year as a full body. Through geographical and thematic task forces, members provide ECFR staff with advice and feedback on policy ideas and help with ECFR's activities within their own countries. The Council is chaired by Martti Ahtisaari, Joschka Fischer and Mabel van Oranje.
- **A physical presence in the main EU member states.** ECFR, uniquely among European think-tanks, has offices in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Rome and Sofia. In the future ECFR plans to open offices in Warsaw and Brussels. Our offices are platforms for research, debate, advocacy and communications.
- **A distinctive research and policy development process.** ECFR has brought together a team of distinguished researchers and practitioners from all over Europe to advance its objectives through innovative projects with a pan-European focus. ECFR's activities include primary research, publication of policy reports, private meetings and public debates, 'friends of ECFR' gatherings in EU capitals and outreach to strategic media outlets.

ECFR is backed by the Soros Foundations Network, the Spanish foundation FRIDE (La Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior), the Bulgarian Communitas Foundation, the Italian UniCredit group, the Stiftung Mercator and Steven Heinz. ECFR works in partnership with other organisations but does not make grants to individuals or institutions.

[www.ecfr.eu](http://www.ecfr.eu)

Among members of the European Council on Foreign Relations are former prime ministers, presidents, European commissioners, current and former parliamentarians and ministers, public intellectuals, business leaders, activists and cultural figures from the EU member states and candidate countries.

### **Asger Aamund (Denmark)**

President and CEO, A. J. Aamund A/S and Chairman of Bavarian Nordic A/S

### **Urban Ahlin (Sweden)**

Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee and foreign policy spokesperson for the Social Democratic Party

### **Martti Ahtisaari (Finland)**

Chairman of the Board, Crisis Management Initiative; former President

### **Giuliano Amato (Italy)**

Former Prime Minister and vice President of the European Convention

### **Dora Bakoyannis (Greece)**

MP; former Foreign Minister

### **Luis Basset (Spain)**

Deputy Director, El País

### **Marek Belka (Poland)**

Governor, National Bank of Poland; former Prime Minister

### **Roland Berger (Germany)**

Founder and Honorary Chairman, Roland Berger Strategy Consultants GmbH

### **Erik Berglöf (Sweden)**

Chief Economist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

### **Boris Bianchieri (Italy)**

Former Ambassador to Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

### **Jan Krzysztof Bielecki (Poland)**

Chairman, Prime Minister's Economic Council; former Prime Minister

### **Carl Bildt (Sweden)**

Foreign Minister

### **Henryka Bochniarz (Poland)**

Economist. President of the Polish Confederation of Private Employers-Lewiatan

### **Svetoslav Bojilov (Bulgaria)**

Founder, Communitas Foundation and President of Venture Equity Bulgaria Ltd

### **Emma Bonino (Italy)**

Vice President of the Senate; former EU Commissioner

### **John Bruton (Ireland)**

Former European Commission Ambassador to the USA; former Prime Minister (Taoiseach)

### **Ian Buruma (The Netherlands)**

Writer and academic

### **Erhard Busek (Austria)**

Chairman of the Institute for the Danube and Central Europe

### **Jerzy Buzek (Poland)**

President of the European Parliament; former Prime Minister

### **Gunilla Carlsson (Sweden)**

Minister for International Development Cooperation

### **Manuel Castells (Spain)**

Professor, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and University of Southern California

### **İpek Cem Taha (Turkey)**

Director of Melak Investments / Journalist

### **Charles Clarke (United Kingdom)**

Visiting Professor of Politics, University of East Anglia; former Home Secretary

### **Nicola Cise (Sweden)**

Ambassador to the United Kingdom; former State Secretary

### **Daniel Cohn-Bendit (Germany)**

Member of European Parliament

### **Robert Cooper (United Kingdom)**

Counsellor of the European External Action Service

### **Massimo D'Alema (Italy)**

President, Italianeuropei Foundation; President, Foundation for European Progressive Studies; former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

### **Marta Dassù (Italy)**

Director General International Activities, Aspen Institute Italia

### **Etienne Davignon (Belgium)**

President, Friends of Europe; former Vice President of the European Commission

### **Ahmet Davutoglu (Turkey)**

Foreign Minister

### **Aleš Debeljak (Slovenia)**

Poet and Cultural Critic

### **Jean-Luc Dehaene (Belgium)**

Member of European Parliament; former Prime Minister

### **Gianfranco Dell'Alba (Italy)**

Director, Confederation of Italian Industry (Confindustria) - Brussels office; former Member of European Parliament

### **Pavol Demeš (Slovakia)**

Senior Transatlantic Fellow, German Marshall Fund of the United States (Bratislava)

### **Kemal Dervis (Turkey)**

Vice-President and Director of Global Economy and Development

### **Tibor Dessewffy (Hungary)**

President, DEMOS Hungary

### **Andrew Duff (United Kingdom)**

Member of European Parliament

### **Hans Eichel (Germany)**

Former Finance Minister

### **Uffe Ellemann-Jensen (Denmark)**

Chairman, Baltic Development Forum; former Foreign Minister

### **Steven Everts (The Netherlands)**

Adviser to the Vice President of the European Commission/ EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy

### **Gianfranco Fini (Italy)**

President, Chamber of Deputies; former Foreign Minister

### **Joschka Fischer (Germany)**

Former Foreign Minister and vice-Chancellor

### **Karin Forseke (Sweden/USA)**

Business Leader; former CEO Carnegie Investment Bank

### **Jaime Gama (Portugal)**

Speaker of the Parliament; former Foreign Minister

### **Timothy Garton Ash (United Kingdom)**

Professor of European Studies, Oxford University

### **Carlos Gaspar (Portugal)**

Chairman of the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI)

### **Anthony Giddens (United Kingdom)**

Emeritus Professor, London School of Economics

### **Teresa Patricio Gouveia (Portugal)**

Trustee to the Board of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; former Foreign Minister

**Heather Grabbe****(United Kingdom)**

Executive Director, Open Society Institute – Brussels

**Jean-Marie Guéhenno (France)**

Director of the Centre on International Conflict Resolution, Columbia University (New York); Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution; former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations at the UN Operations at the UN

**Fernando Andresen Guimarães (Portugal)**

Deputy Political Director, Directorate General for External Relations, European Commission

**Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (Germany)**

Defence Minister

**István Gyarmati (Hungary)**

President and CEO, International Centre for Democratic Transition

**Hans Hækkerup (Denmark)**

Chairman, Defence Commission; former Defence Minister

**Pierre Hassner (France)**

Research Director emeritus, CERI (Sciences-PO)

**Vaclav Havel (Czech Republic)**

Former President

**Steven Heinz (Austria)**

Co-Founder &amp; Co-Chairman, Lansdowne Partners Ltd

**Annette Heuser (Germany)**

Executive Director, Bertelsmann Foundation Washington DC

**Diego Hidalgo (Spain)**

Co-founder of Spanish newspaper El País; President, FRIDE

**Jaap de Hoop Scheffer****(The Netherlands)**

Former NATO Secretary General

**Danuta Hübner (Poland)**

Politician, former EU Commissioner and professor of economics and since 2009 Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Regional Development Committee.

**Michiel van Hulten****(The Netherlands)**

Former Member of European Parliament

**Anna Ibrisagic (Sweden)**

Member of European Parliament

**Jaakko Itoniemi (Finland)**

Former Ambassador and former Executive Director, Crisis Management Initiative

**Wolfgang Ischinger (Germany)**

Chairman, Munich Security Conference; Global Head of Government Affairs Allianz SE

**Lionel Jospin (France)**

Former Prime Minister

**Mary Kaldor (United Kingdom)**

Professor, London School of Economics

**Sylvie Kauffmann (France)**

Executive Editor of Le Monde

**Glenys Kinnock****(United Kingdom)**

Former Member of European Parliament; Shadow Lords Spokesperson on International Development

**Olli Kivinen (Finland)**

Writer and columnist

**Gerald Knaus (Austria)**

Chairman of the European Stability Initiative and Carr Center Fellow

**Caijo Koch-Weser (Germany)**

Vice Chairman, Deutsche Bank Group; former State Secretary

**Rem Koolhaas (The Netherlands)**

Architect and urbanist; Professor at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University

**Ivan Krastev (Bulgaria)**

Chair of Board, Centre for Liberal Strategies

**Aleksander Kwasniewski (Poland)**

Former President of Poland

**Mart Laar (Estonia)**

MP; former Prime Minister

**Miroslav Lajčák (Slovakia)**

Managing Director for Russia, Eastern Neighbourhood &amp; Western Balkans, European External Action Service; former Foreign Minister

**Pascal Lamy (France)**

Honorary President, Notre Europe and Director-General of WTO; former EU Commissioner

**Mark Leonard (United Kingdom)**

Director, European Council on Foreign Relations

**Juan Fernando López Aguilar (Spain)**

Member of European Parliament; former Minister of Justice

**Adam Lury (United Kingdom)**

CEO, Menemsha Ltd

**David Miliband****(United Kingdom)**

MP, Former Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

**Alain Minc (France)**

Head of AM Conseil; former chairman, Le Monde

**Nickolay Mladenov (Bulgaria)**

Foreign Minister; former Defence Minister; former Member of European Parliament

**Dominique Moisi (France)**

Senior Adviser, IFRI

**Pierre Moscovici (France)**

MP; former Minister for European Affairs

**Nils Muiznieks (Latvia)**

Director, Advanced Social and Political Research Institute, University of Latvia

**Hildegard Müller (Germany)**

Chairwoman, BDEW Bundesverband der Energie- und Wasserwirtschaft

**Wolfgang Münchau (Germany)**

President, Eurointelligence ASBL

**Kalypso Nicolaidis (Greece/France)**

Professor of International Relations, University of Oxford

**Daithí O'Ceallaigh (Ireland)**

Director-General, Institute of International and European Affairs

**Christine Ockrent (Belgium)**

CEO, Audiovisuel Extérieur de la France

**Andrzej Olechowski (Poland)**

Former Foreign Minister

**Dick Oosting (The Netherlands)**

CEO, European Council on Foreign Relations; former Europe Director, Amnesty International

**Mabel van Oranje****(The Netherlands)**

CEO, the Elders

**Marcelino Oreja Aguirre (Spain)**

Member of the Board, Fomento de Construcciones y Contratas; former EU Commissioner

**Cem Özdemir (Germany)**

Leader, Bündnis90/Die Grünen (Green Party)

**Ana Palacio (Spain)**

Former Foreign Minister; former Senior President and General Counsel of the World Bank Group

**Simon Panek (Czech Republic)**

Chairman, People in Need Foundation

**Chris Patten (United Kingdom)**

Chancellor of Oxford University and co-chair of the International Crisis Group; former EU Commissioner

**Diana Pinto (France)**

Historian and author

**Jean Pisani-Ferry (France)**

Director, Bruegel and Professor at Université Paris-Dauphine

**Ruprecht Polenz (Germany)**

MP and Chairman of the Bundestag Foreign Affairs Committee

**Lydie Polfer (Luxembourg)**

MP; former Foreign Minister

**Andrew Pudddephatt****(United Kingdom)**

Director, Global Partners &amp; Associated Ltd.

**Vesna Pusić (Croatia)**

MP, President of the National Committee for Monitoring the EU Accession Negotiations and Professor of Sociology, University of Zagreb

**George Robertson****(United Kingdom)**

Former Secretary General of NATO

**Albert Rohan (Austria)**

Former Secretary General for Foreign Affairs

**Dariusz Rosati (Poland)**

Former Foreign Minister

**Adam D. Rotfeld (Poland)**

Former Foreign Minister; Co-Chairman of Polish-Russian Group on Difficult Matters, Commissioner of Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative

**Daniel Sachs (Sweden)**

CEO, Proventus

**Stefano Sannino (Italy)**

Deputy Director General for Enlargement, European Commission

**Pierre Schori (Sweden)**

Chair of Olof Palme Memorial Fund; former Director General, FRIDE; former SRSg to Cote d'Ivoire

**Wolfgang Schüssel (Austria)**

MP; former Chancellor

**Karel Schwarzenberg****(Czech Republic)**

Foreign Minister

**Giuseppe Scognamiglio (Italy)**

Head of Institutional and International Relations, UniCredit

**Narcís Serra (Spain)**

Chair of CIDOB Foundation; former Vice President of the Spanish Government

**Radosław Sikorski (Poland)**

Foreign Minister

**Aleksander Smolar (Poland)**

Chairman of the Board, Stefan Batory Foundation

**Javier Solana (Spain)**

Former EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy &amp; Secretary-General of the Council of the EU; former Secretary General of NATO

**George Soros (Hungary/USA)**

Founder and Chairman, Open Society Institute

**Goran Stefanovski (Macedonia)**

Playwright and Academic

**Rory Stewart (United Kingdom)**

Member of Parliament

**Dominique Strauss-Kahn (France)**

Managing Director, International Monetary Fund; former Finance Minister

**Alexander Stubb (Finland)**

Foreign Minister

**Michael Stürmer (Germany)**

Chief Correspondent, Die Welt

**Ion Sturza (Romania)**

President, GreenLight Invest.; former Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova

**Helle Thorning Schmidt (Denmark)**

Leader of the Social Democratic Party

**Teija Tiilikainen (Finland)**

Director at the Finnish Institute for International relations

**Loukas Tsoukalis (Greece)**

Professor, University of Athens and President, ELIAMEP

**Erkki Tuomioja (Finland)**

MP; former Foreign Minister

**Daniel Valtchev (Bulgaria)**

Former deputy PM and Minister of Education

**Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga (Latvia)**

Former President

**Antonio Vitorino (Portugal)**

Lawyer; former EU Commissioner

**Andre Wilkens (Germany)**

Director for International Relations, Stiftung Mercator

**Shirley Williams****(United Kingdom)**

Professor Emeritus, Kennedy School of Government; former Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords

**Carlos Alonso Zaldívar (Spain)**

Ambassador to Brazil

## About the authors

*Balázs Jarábik* is an international development executive as well as political analyst, strategist and adviser. He heads the Kiev based office of Pact, Inc. overseeing civil society and independent media development projects in Belarus and Ukraine. He writes extensively as Associate Fellow at the Madrid based pan-European think tank FRIDE. He combines international development, particularly in democracy and governance, with applied policy analysis and enriching both international development projects and political analysis with field based perspectives. He has consulted and advised civic organisations, political parties and campaigns in the number of countries of the Balkans and Eurasia, national bodies such as the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia as well as international institutions such as the European Parliament, Freedom House or OSCE. He has also participated in international elections observation missions in Eurasia, the Balkans and South-east Asia.

*Jana Kobzova* is ECFR's Russia & Wider Europe Programme Coordinator. In 2006-2009, she headed the Belarus democratisation programme at the Bratislava-based Pontis Foundation. Before that, she helped establish the Slovak branch of the European webzine 'Café Babel'. She studied in Bratislava, Vilnius and London and holds a MA in Politics, Security and Integration (specialisation Russia and Central Asia) from the University College London and MA in political science from Comenius University in Bratislava. Jana co-authored a book on a Slovak foreign policy (2010) and has written articles and book chapters on Eastern Europe and EU Eastern policy. She co-authored the ECFR publication *The Spectre of a Multipolar Europe* (2010).

*Andrew Wilson* is a Senior Policy Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations. He has previously held academic positions at the London School of Economics, Cambridge, and University College London, where he was Reader in Ukrainian Studies at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES). His publications for ECFR include *The Limits of Enlargement-lite: EU and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood* (with Nicu Popescu), *The Spectre of a Multipolar Europe* (with Ivan Krastev, Mark Leonard, Dimitar Bechev and Jana Kobzova). His most recent books are *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (third edition, 2009), *Ukraine's Orange Revolution* (2005) and *Virtual Politics: Faking democracy in the Post-Soviet World* (2005). His next book, *Belarus – The Last Dictatorship in Europe*, will be published in 2011.

## Acknowledgements

While writing this paper, we have greatly benefited from the advice and insight of our partners and colleagues in Belarus. They know who they are; given the current situation, it may be better for us not to mention them by name. The authors would also like to thank Matthew Rojansky, Samuel Charap and Alastair Rabagliati; debates with them have led us to test our assumptions and sharpen our arguments. For their advice and support, we are deeply indebted to our colleagues at ECFR and FRIDE, including Dimitar Bechev, Susi Dennison, Anthony Dworkin, Ben Judah, Ana Martingui, Alba Lamberti, Mark Leonard, Dick Oosting, Nicu Popescu, José Ignacio Torreblanca, Nicholas Walton, Fran Yeoman and Richard Youngs. Last but definitely not least, this memo would be far from readable without the involvement of our skilful editor Hans Kundnani.

**ALSO AVAILABLE FROM ECFR**

**New World Order: The Balance of Soft Power and the Rise of Herbivorous Powers**

by Ivan Krastev and Mark Leonard, October 2007 (ECFR/01)

**A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations**

by Mark Leonard and Nicu Popescu, November 2007 (ECFR/02)

**Poland's second return to Europe?**

Paweł Swieboda, December 2007 (ECFR/03)

**Afghanistan: Europe's forgotten war**

by Daniel Korski, January 2008 (ECFR/04)

**Meeting Medvedev: The Politics of the Putin Succession**

by Andrew Wilson, February 2008 (ECFR/05)

**Re-energising Europe's Security and Defence Policy**

by Nick Witney, July 2008 (ECFR/06)

**Can the EU win the Peace in Georgia?**

by Nicu Popescu, Mark Leonard and Andrew Wilson, August 2008 (ECFR/07)

**A Global Force for Human Rights? An Audit of European Power at the UN**

by Richard Gowan and Franziska Brantner, September 2008 (ECFR/08)

**Beyond Dependence: How to deal with Russian Gas**

by Pierre Noel, November 2008 (ECFR/09)

**Re-wiring the US-EU relationship**

by Daniel Korski, Ulrike Guerot and Mark Leonard, December 2008 (ECFR/10)

**Shaping Europe's Afghan Surge**

by Daniel Korski, March 2009 (ECFR/11)

**A Power Audit of EU-China Relations**

by John Fox and Francois Godement, April 2009 (ECFR/12)

**Beyond the "War on Terror": Towards a New Transatlantic Framework for Counterterrorism**

Anthony Dworkin, May 2009 (ECFR/13)

**The Limits of Enlargement-lite: European and Russian Power in the Troubled Neighbourhood**

Nicu Popescu and Andrew Wilson, June 2009 (ECFR/14)

**The EU and human rights at the UN: 2009 annual review**

Richard Gowan and Franziska Brantner, September 2009 (ECFR/15)

**What does Russia think?**

edited by Ivan Krastev, Mark Leonard and Andrew Wilson, September 2009 (ECFR/16)

**Supporting Moldova's Democratic Transition**

Nicu Popescu, October 2009 (ECFR/17)

**Can the EU rebuild failing states? A review of Europe's Civilian Capacities**

by Daniel Korski and Richard Gowan, October 2009 (ECFR/18)

**Towards a Post-American Europe: A Power Audit of EU-US Relations**

by Jeremy Shapiro and Nick Witney, October 2009 (ECFR/19)

**Dealing with Yanukovich's Ukraine**

by Andrew Wilson, March 2010 (ECFR/20)

**Beyond Wait-and-See: The Way Forward for EU Balkan Policy**

by Heather Grabbe, Gerald Knaus and Daniel Korski, May 2010 (ECFR/21)

**A Global China Policy**

by François Godement, June 2010 (ECFR/22)

**Towards an EU Human Rights Strategy for a Post-Western World**

by Susi Dennison and Anthony Dworkin, September 2010 (ECFR/23)

**The EU and Human Rights at the UN: 2010 Review**

by Richard Gowan and Franziska Brantner, September 2010 (ECFR/24)

**The Spectre of a Multipolar Europe**

by Ivan Krastev & Mark Leonard with Dimitar Bechev, Jana Kobzova & Andrew Wilson, October 2010 (ECFR/25)

**Beyond Maastricht: a New Deal for the Eurozone**

by Thomas Klau and François Godement, December 2010 (ECFR/26)

The European Council on Foreign Relations does not take collective positions. This paper, like all publications of the European Council on Foreign Relations, represents only the views of its authors. It does not represent the views of the Green Group in the European Parliament or other parties and institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

© ECFR January 2011.

ISBN: 978-1-906538-27-9

Published by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR),  
35 Old Queen Street, London, SW1H 9JA, United Kingdom

[london@ecfr.eu](mailto:london@ecfr.eu)

Published in association with

**FRIDE**  
A EUROPEAN  
THINK TANK FOR GLOBAL ACTION

Copyright of this publication is held by the European Council on Foreign Relations.

You may not copy, reproduce, republish or circulate in any way the content from this publication except for your own personal and non-commercial use. Any other use requires the prior written permission of the European Council on Foreign Relations.