'Building Trust in the Wider Europe'

Brussels, 19-20 February 2015

Meeting Report

Facilitated by: mediateur
european forum for
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Disclaimer: this document collects the main points raised at the 'Building Trust in the Wider Europe' meeting in Brussels on 19-20 February 2015, as well as the main recommendations and suggestions coming out of it. The views expressed in this paper are neither those of the organiser (the Nizami Ganjavi International Center) nor of the facilitator (the European Forum for International Mediation and Dialogue, mediatEUr), and they should at not point be taken as the official position of either of the two organisations or the participants.

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1. Introduction: aim and objectives of the meeting

"For dialogue to be possible there must be a common understanding of where parties are starting from, so that they can eventually meet in the middle "

Vaire Vike-Freiberga

In preparation for the 2015 Global Baku Forum on 28-29 April, the Nizami Ganjavi International Centre convened a group of high-level participants, including former heads of state, and its members to discuss critical issues surrounding peace and security in the wider Europe. During two days the participants shared their experience in an open and frank discussion, and produced a number of ideas on how trust could be re-established in international relations. The meeting was a timely effort against the low levels of trust on — and between — leaders in the Wider Europe. Already at the 2015 Munich Security Conference, Russian, American and German leaders discussed the validity of the Helsinki Act and the Paris Agreement, two formerly unshakable pillars of peace and stability that are now being called into question. It is clear that is a time for responsible action from leaders to reinstill trust and confidence across the continent.

This report is a distillation of the discussions held in Brussels, the challenges identified, and the recommendations that came out of the meeting. It includes a record of suggestions on the way forward, which will inform the 2015 Baku Forum and serve as inspiration for global leaders in rebuilding trust in and beyond Europe.

2. Identifying the main challenges for the wider Europe

2.1.   A Changing World Order

The world order that came about with the collapse of the Soviet Union was an outcome of policies that started after the Second World War with the Schuman Declaration. Heart to this declaration and its vision was the concept of reconciliation, or the ability to live side by side, taking down barriers and gradually building cooperation and collaboration in a continent that had witnessed generations of war and violence. While the world order that resulted from the Declaration succeeded at preventing war in Europe, its capacity to adapt to new times has been limited. More than 25 years have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, but the world order remains fundamentally unchanged.

Today we are thrown back into a scenario reminiscent of the Cold War, in which established rules and norms formulated by the International Community are being

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called into question. We are living the collapse of the international world order. The situation reflects an unwillingness of the 'victorious West' to adapt to new realities, assuming victory and refusing to change.

Have we, participants at the Brussels meeting asked, missed the opportunity to adjust the existing system to the new realities of the world? International rules and norms such as the Helsinki Final Act are being broken, as well as norms on territorial integrity of the state. If the international community disregards this framework, international peace will hardly become a reality.

> "If you make peaceful transformation impossible, violent transformation becomes inevitable."
>
> Alexander Likhotal

Beyond Europe, a restructuring of world politics and economics is taking place: India and China, formerly emerging markets, are firmly setting the economic scene; comparatively the economic power of the United States seems to be fading, and the European Union seems to have lost its position. At the same time, 'probing' — pushing the limits of the international establishment — has become a new political strategy for those countries on the 'losing side': China is probing with Japan; Putin's Russia is probing with Europe; jihadists all over the world are testing how far they can go.

In analysing the state of the world and the nature of foreign policy-making, we should take into account that *foreign* policy cannot be considered in isolation, but needs to be considered an extension of national policy. Can the EU ever build a foreign policy that is acceptable to 28 countries? Today's political situation is a collection of too many different perceptions that do not work well together. The contradiction of these perceptions is remarkable, and it reaches far beyond Europe. For instance, Western powers accuse Putin of trying to build 'a Russian Empire', while in Russia the perception is that it was the US' policy for 'American supremacy' that has caused international instability. From Kyiv, it is clear that Russia created all problems Europe is facing today, while from Donbas the attitude from Kyiv is the source of the current situation.

> "Europe as a whole needs to move more proactively, and be the protagonist of promoting initiatives in countries in crisis."
>
> Franco Frattini

This situation of mistrust among leaders is sourced in a fundamental problem: two geopolitical entities (the West and Russia) are taking care of their own interests, and in doing so they are — perhaps intentionally — provoking fear in the other. In such

scenario, sudden and dramatic crises capture the attention of international actors, who sway from one problem to another without getting time to look at the systems that cause them. For global actors to make a meaningful contribution in responding to the present crisis, it is important to look beyond individual, tactical details, and to put on their 'strategic spectacles' and look at the big picture, beyond immediate politics.

A first step in this regard is to understand adversaries, rather than diametrically opposing and 'diabolising' them. That does not necessarily mean agreeing with, accepting or approving of them, but it is fundamental to make a continuous effort to understand what motivates and moves the other side in order to increase the chances for peace.

In light of the above, a new security summit that can address the interconnectedness of different challenges and put them in a broad frame seems timely. The 2015 Baku Forum is a step in this direction, and an opportunity to chart ways to respond to today's challenges.

2.2.   The European Peace Architecture I: Ukraine

The war in Ukraine is an important and urgent symptom of the Global and European geopolitical crisis. In such times of crisis, when lives are at stake, it is difficult to think strategically and long-term. Tragically, it would appear neither the EU nor other actors have a clear strategic plan on how to regulate the conflict. Participants voiced frustration in the face of international actors "wasting time while Putin keeps implementing his doctrine successfully, as he did in other parts of the world." It is clear to all participants that all resources need to be put towards ending the war in Ukraine before further steps can be taken. Overall, there is a perceived lack of action to resolve the crisis, and there are different perceptions of what constitutes fair action in the context of Ukraine.

This concerns for example the way in which the conflict is addressed: "political science says there are two sides to any conflict, but it seems we cannot find a second side in the Ukraine conflict. Putin has presented his own version, saying it is

not an international conflict [with Russia]. It is, they say, simply an internal conflict." In the meantime, Ukraine portrays the conflict entirely in international terms. For some, the way in which the Minsk agreement is negotiated is grossly unfair to the Ukrainian state, claiming that belligerents should not have the same status as the central state: "Giving the so-called Republics the same status as the State, with Russian language as their official language, with Kyiv having to recognise that status, having to provide financial assistance, and at the same time removing any capacity for Kyiv to make any administrative decisions… this means capitulation for Ukraine, especially as any changes to the status would have to go through the Constitution."

The way in which the West provides assistance, both political and economic also came under debate, due to a perceived lack of strategy and systematic thinking:

> "For 14 months we have negotiated financial assistance, but we are not talking about a strategy, a plan, a programme. We only talk about giving money, which is not enough. We fail to discuss a joint strategy for the next 2-5 years."
>
> <div align="right">Viktor Yushchenko</div>

Possible solutions for Ukraine, such as decentralisation and/or federalisation, need to be addressed carefully, taking into account the territorial integrity of the state and the uniqueness of Ukraine, while considering the systemic issue between Ukraine and Russia. Specifically, in thinking about a federal solution, lessons should be distilled from cases like Bosnia and the Dayton agreement, but they should not serve as a model, as their context was entirely different.

Overall there was an impression that the West should concentrate its efforts in supporting Ukraine instead of antagonising Russia.

> "This behaviour from Russia will not change in the next three years, perhaps for longer. It is more important to give financial support to Ukraine than to impose sanctions on Russia."
>
> <div align="right">Peter Medygessy</div>

What does Ukraine need from the West in this regard, according to speakers?

- ★ A coherent and coordinated strategy and action.
- ★ Providing the economic and social advantages of choosing a European path.
- ★ Arms, non-lethal aid, and support to troops.
- ★ International peacekeepers.
- ★ Recognition of Russian occupation.

★ NATO membership and NATO reform.

★ Continued diplomatic and economic sanctions, including the creation of a "Crimean tax" on Russia that keeps increasing the longer Russia keeps holding Crimean territory.

★ Economic support to meet Ukraine's budgetary goals, eliminate corruption, and creating new judicial system. Promotion of FDI for Ukraine.

★ Energy security.

★ Russian democracy and normalisation as a foreign policy actor, respecting international norms.

2.3. European security architecture II: A coherent Russia policy

The last 20 years have witnessed a lack of a coherent Russia policy from the EU towards Russia; Ukraine is a clear symptom of this. If these dynamics continue to progress in this fashion, the trust that has been built in the last 20 years will be destroyed.

It is also clear that Russian society is at risk and suffering from increased international isolation and authoritarian rule. A former research giant, Russia's capacity is now greatly reduced, and basing its economy on raw materials is hardly a good strategy for the future. Isolation and containment might be the wrong medicine for Russia. The greater the propensity for democracy and stability, the more reliable Russia might be as a partner.

"Ordinary Russians would not like to see Russia back to the Soviet system, but they would like to see Russia as the superpower it used to be — Putin wants to be seen as the leader of such a superpower."

Peter Stoyanov

2.4.   Radicalisation around and in Europe

Within the geopolitical tensions in Europe, radicalisation and how to deal with it present a pressing challenge for world leaders. Sometimes when working on transition processes radicalisation posses a direct threat to the integrity of the international communities' efforts.

> "The international community recognises the government, but they have created heroes out of the terrorists, pushing us to talk to those who have killed our people. Internationals are not actually talking to us; they only listen to what themselves and what they want to do with us."
>
> Farida Allaghi

It is difficult to imagine a rational policy that could help deal with people whose motivations are not for this world, but transcend it. To respond to the issue of radicalisation, churches and religious leaders, who can appeal to that transcendence, should become partners in discouraging violence and its consequences. Within the context of radicalisation, an important discussion is to be held on freedom of speech and 'the freedom to offend'.

Participants identified several issues supporting radicalization:

★ Lack of religious authority or hierarchy.

★ The renaissance of Islam and its politisation.

★ The exclusion of Islamic countries.

★ Failure of integration and cooperation with Muslim communities, especially in Europe.

★ Security policies and free market policies.

★ Social issues create anger: unemployment, poverty, housing.

★ Education and cultural engagement.

Areas of focus and recommendations for future action include:

★ Urban Poverty.

★ Youth and Unemployment.

★ Safety, Security and Sustainability.

★ Economy, environment.

★ Health.

★ Promote international scholarship on radicalisation by Islamic scholars.

★ Empower and involve women in the search for adequate solutions dealing with radicalisation

Overall, within the international system, the question of radicalisation also pertains as to how the international system is sustained and run. A reform of the UN could assist to address the disequilibrium in global governance, moving away from international interventionism to supporting transitions (take Lybia as an example).

Box 1: Lessons from the history of peace in Europe

According to Emil Constantinescu, several lessons can be drawn from the history of peace in Europe:

★ *Lesson 1*: not only from modern history, it is a lesson from the distant past and for the distant future. In contrast with the US or Australia, Europe is not an autonomous continent. Europe has depended on the Near East for trade and resources, and will continue to depend on its neighbours in the future.

★ *Lesson 2*: in the last quarter of the century, local actions have had strong geopolitical consequences. Suddenly, after the fall of the Wall, Europe and its friends were confronted with a situation where any action in its borders had a great impact on the whole of Europe. Security in today's world is shared and indivisible.

★ *Lesson 3*: the last 25 years have taught us that liberty and democracy are universal values, not standardised commodities. They have to be nurtured, not exported. Every society has to develop its own democracy and liberty; it cannot be sold in a standard pattern that does not correspond to each nation. We can debate rights, but we cannot impose them. We must understand and respect the set of values unique to each culture, and work with them, not against them.

★ *Lesson 4*: we must seek the convergence of cultures, not their uniformity. It is the only way to build a peaceful European Space.

3. Ways forward to respond to building trust

In light of the major challenges identified, there are several aspects that world leaders need to take into account in their action. The following is a recollection of the main recommendations and suggestions from the meeting, touching on different points of opportunity in order to build trust and respond to global security issues.

3.1. The human dimension as the common denominator of all global challenges.

★ *In economic crises*: leaders should consider the millions of people who lost their jobs and livelihood, and ask themselves what the EU has done to offer them a solution.

★ *In the face of terrorism*: there is the willingness to indoctrinate young people living in Europe to wear an explosive belt and detonate in a city where their friends live. The same people are ready to join the clashes in the broader Middle East. How is it possible? We talk about an aberration, a blasphemous view of Islam, but we do not take into consideration the human dimension and the root causes for it: poverty, desperation, and the feeling of lack of protection or future.

3.2. Dialogue and reconciliation

★ *Dialogues*: whilst the international community endorses the need for dialogue to support transition and transformation, imposed dialogue recipes have proved a failure; Yemen, Lybia and Ukraine are good examples of the need for a tailored approach to dialogue.

★ *Reconciliation:* The future can only grow on the basis of the past. Reconciliation needs to be emphasised as part of overall peacebuilding. For reconciliation to be successful, leaders should seek to:
  ✓ Build Empathy of the 'Other'
  ✓ Understand the history the respective region and their actors
  ✓ 'Think outside the box' and develop innovative thinking

"Reconciliation for the long term peace requires understanding not only one's own interest, but also the interest of the other interlocutors and partners in the process."

Boris Tadic

3.3.   Sustainable Transitions

★ Leadership in reconciliation is a challenge. Those who assume it will be faced with the problem of being taken as a traitor by actors opposing the transition, and with the challenge of managing the expectations from the people. At the same time, they will certainly lack the experience required by their new responsibilities. Transitions and their leaders will thus inevitably come under tremendous pressure, and require the continued support of the international community to secure the sustainability of the new democracy.

Many international institutions work to support democratic forces to end dictatorships, but not enough is done to continue supporting the process after a democratic system has been put in place. For many transition countries, democracy is a completely new reality — institutions have to be established and supported.

"The Dayton agreement stopped the war, but it did not allow for the creation of mechanisms that would allow Bosnia-Herzegovina to function as a State and society."

Stjepan Mesić

3.4.   Innovative policy-making

In the current crisis, the world needs innovative politics and bold thinking. New skills are needed: negotiation and facilitation skills, and the ability to understand the other and take into consideration their interests, limits and challenges.

3.5.   Energy diplomacy

According to some, in the last 5 years the European Neighbourhood project has not been an example of success. Not all is dark, however; Azerbaijan and its energy relationship with Europe through the Southern Gas Corridor represent "a real achievement." This Corridor is important for energy and commercial purposes, and it adds a new dimension to the political dialogue. Azerbaijan's approach is clear: a new gas network is a foundation for renewed dialogue with the East, and will approach Europe to its neighbourhood and Central Asia.

"Gas cooperation with Azerbaijan is beneficial for everyone. We should work together. Azerbaijan wants strategic partnerships in the European space that enhances peace and stability"

Fuad Isgandarov

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4. The NGIC 2015 Baku Forum as a venue for proposing bold change for the new World Order

4.1. Thematic Focus for the Baku Forum

Participants agreed to work on six different strands at the Global Shared Societies Forum:

1. *Europe-Russia policy.* This includes question such as what is the best forum for decision-making on a new EU-Russia policy? Which could be the areas of cooperation? Can Russia be "healed"? Can the war in Ukraine be stopped once and for all? How? How can any similar confrontations be prevented?

2. *Partnership policy for European Space*. Can the Helsinki Final Act be reinvented? Should there be a new European Neighbourhood Policy?

3. *International legal order*. Should there be a revisiting/reaffirmation of the norm on self-determination? What are the enforcement mechanisms?

4. *What are the most adequate mechanisms for conflict resolution?* Negotiation mechanisms and how they work. Policies for reconciliation Energy Diplomacy and Security? How can energy cooperation be an instrument for peacemaking in Europe and beyond?

5. UN SCR 1325, and the role of women in peace processes

6. Radicalisation.

4.2. Format of the 2015 Baku Forum.

As chairwomen, Vaira Vike Freiberga points out that the Baku Forum will discuss are matters that concern civil society and inclusive society, societies where "everyone has the same rights as everyone else". As such, the Baku Forum will be an idea-

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based forum rather than a collection and network of leaders and former politicians. The key is to generate sound ideas that can then influence decision-making.

The following key suggestions were made to help the Forum deliver on its objectives:

★ Highlight the importance of the role of women as a strategic issue to world politics.

★ Include religious leaders from different parts of the world to better address radicalisation.

★ Openly discuss the challenges and opportunities in coordinated global governance.

★ Take into account the dynamics of demographic and economic development and their impact on global politics.

★ Embed the discussions also within the context of Transatlantic relations, whilst also considering the perspective of Eastern and Arab neighbours within the wider Europe.

★ Overall approaches to conflict resolution. How can we thaw the seemingly frozen conflicts?

★ Follow up by the NGIC to engage in the analysis of the topics at work as a follow up of the Baku Summit.

★ Redefine a new vision of the World Order, also in the context of self-determination and borders.

★ Hold separate focused breakout sessions, and help speakers keep to the assigned topics and their questions.

★ Discussions should be professionally facilitated.

★ Produce a meaningful follow-up report that can be used as a tool for meetings in the future.

★ The Baku Forum is not an end in itself; rather it is a summit and key point for leadership discussion to be followed up through regional meetings and initiatives.

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