

LSEE Research on South Eastern Europe &
SEESOX South East European Studies at Oxford

Russia in the Balkans



Conference booklet
13 March 2015

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The organisers



LSEE Research on South Eastern Europe
is the LSE's research unit on SEE based at the LSE European Institute
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South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX)
is part of the European Studies Centre St. Antony's College at Oxford
www.sant.ox.ac.uk/seesox/

Acknowledgement



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Speakers

Introduction & welcome



Dr James Ker-Lindsay, LSE

James is Eurobank Senior Research Fellow on South East European Politics at LSEE Research on South Eastern Europe. He is also Visiting Scholar at University of Pristina and University of Ss Cyril and Methodius, Skopje.



Dr Dimitar Bechev, LSE

Dimitar is a Visiting Fellow at LSEE Research on South Eastern Europe. He has obtained his DPhil at Oxford. He teaches international politics at Sofia University. His former posts include the directorship of the ECFR's office in Bulgaria and lectureships at Oxford and Hitotsubashi University (Tokyo).



Dr Othon Anastasakis, Oxford University

Othon is the Director of the European Studies Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford; Director of South East European Studies at Oxford (SEESOX); and Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford.

Opening address



Andrew Rasbash, European Commission

Andrew is a longstanding EU official, working since 1990 on the enlargement of the EU both in Brussels and in EU Delegations in Warsaw, Bucharest, Riga and, most recently, Kyiv. Since 2014 he has been working as an advisor to the director in the European Commission responsible for relations with the Western Balkans.

Panel 1

The Balkans in Russia's Foreign Policy Strategy In the 1990s

YUGOSLAV disintegration placed the Balkans in the middle of Russia's quest to preserve its status as a great power. The Bosnia and Kosovo conflicts highlighted Moscow's relative decline and strained relations with the West.

Now that the region has receded in importance and is firmly on EU enlargement track, what are Russia's long-term goals, perceptions and strategies vis-à-vis Balkan countries? How do the twists and turns in EU-Russian relations, in the aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis, reflect on the Kremlin's policy towards South East Europe?



Konstantin Von Eggert MBE, Kommersant FM

Konstantin is a Russian analyst, consultant and commentator. He is presenting a current affairs programme on Kommersant FM, Russia's 24-hour news station. In 2009-2010 Konstantin worked as Vice-President for Public & Government Affairs for ExxonMobil Russia Inc. He is also a former BBC Correspondent from Moscow and a member of Chatham House. Awarded MBE in 2008.



Dr Dimitar Bechev, Visiting Fellow, LSE

Dimitar has obtained his DPhil at Oxford. He teaches international politics at Sofia University. His former posts include the directorship of the ECFR's office in Bulgaria and lectureships at Oxford and Hitotsubashi University (Tokyo).



Dr Spyros Economides, LSE

Spyros is Senior Lecturer at London School of Economics, and Deputy Director of the Hellenic Observatory. He is a member of LSEE, the European Institute's Research Unit on South Eastern Europe.



Chaired by Professor Roy Allison, Oxford

Roy is Professor of Russian and Eurasian International Relations, Head of Russian and East European Studies after a readership at the London School of Economics. He chairs the Management Committee for Russian and East European Studies at Oxford.

Panel 2

Russia and Conflict Resolution in the Balkans

AS A PERMANENT member of the UN Security Council Russia has played an active part in conflict management and resolution in the Balkans. It is furthermore involved in bodies such as the Peace Implementation Council in Bosnia, and has been a vocal critic of Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence.

The panel will take stock of Moscow's strategies and initiatives in post-conflict areas, its interaction with other major players such as the EU, its member states and the US. The panel will also address the question of how the Kosovo precedent features in Russia's foreign policy more broadly (e.g. the recent annexation of Crimea).



Dr Nadia Arbatova, Russian Academy of Sciences

Nadia is currently Head of Department on European Political Studies at the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russian Academy of Sciences. She is also Director of the Discussion Forum "European Dialogues", and an author of numerous books on Russia's politics.



Dr Nikolay Petrov, formerly at Carnegie Moscow

Nikolay was the chair of the Carnegie Moscow Center's Society and Regions Program. Until 2006, he also worked at the Institute of Geography at the Russian Academy of Sciences, where he started to work in 1982.



Dr Cvete Koneska, Control Risks

Cvete is a former Weidenfeld Scholar at Oxford University, where she examined ethnic power-sharing in post-conflict states in the Balkans. She currently works as a Central and Southeast Europe analyst for Control Risks Group in London, advising companies and governments on political and security risks in the region.

Chaired by Dr James Ker-Lindsay, LSE

Panel 3

The Economic Dimension

RUSSIA matters for South East Europe as a principal supplier of energy (gas, but also oil and nuclear fuel), with observers oftentimes arguing for diversification to avoid excessive dependence and ensure relations are based on market principles, rather than politicised.

The panel will explore the political implications of interdependence, focus on the impact of infrastructure projects such as the South Stream pipeline, and also look at other sectors of the economy where Russian presence is increasingly felt: real estate, tourism, banking, transport. How does the regional governments' pursuit of energy deals and FDI affect EU's policies on enlargement as well as on deepening the Single Market (e.g. the proposed Energy Union)?



Laza Kekic, independent consultant

Laza is an independent consultant specialising in European affairs, Russia, the Balkans and other transition economies, foreign direct investment, economic forecasting, growth economics and political development. Until 2015 he was Regional Director for Europe at the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), London, which he originally joined in 1993.



Nicolaus Petri, advisor to L1 Energy

Nicolaus is an advisor to L1 Energy since January 2014, having previously worked at Gazprom-Neft as Head of Foreign Asset Investments and Group Head of M&A. Before joining Gazprom, he worked for Bain Capital, McKinsey & Co., and Sibur.



Andrei Tarnea, Aspen Institute Romania

Andrei is the executive director of Aspen Romania. He is a career diplomat having joined the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1998. His diplomatic career includes working in bilateral affairs, serving with the ministry's spokesperson and at numerous diplomatic posts abroad, including Brussels.



Dr Adnan Vatansever, King's College London

Adnan is a Senior Lecturer at King's Russia Institute. He is also the Associate Director of the European Center for Energy and Resource Security (EUCERS) at King's, Senior Fellow at the Washington-based Atlantic Council, and Fellow at the Istanbul-based Global Relations Forum. His prior experience includes the Carnegie Endowment, IHS Cambridge Energy Research Associates, the World Bank and US Department of Energy.

Chaired by Dr Dimitar Bechev, LSE

Panel 4

Russian Soft Power

RUSSIA has historically appealed to the region because of Slav links and Orthodox faith. In addition, Putin's experiment with managed/sovereign democracy and strong men rule is said to command attention in more than one Balkan country. With the crisis in Ukraine, the Kremlin has toughened its rhetoric against "decadent Europe" and sought to project Russia as a harbinger of conservative values.

How strong is the buy-in by elites and publics across the Balkans? Do the views of Putin's critics, whether liberal or nationalists, find resonance in the region? What is the role played by non-state actors such as the Orthodox Churches, NGOs, activists?



Kyril Drezov, Keele University

Kyril is Lecturer in Politics at Keele University and director of the Keele Southeast Europe Unit. He has contributed extensively on Balkan and East European affairs to BBC World Service and Oxford Analytica, and has advised international consultancies, banks and governments.



Jelena Milic, Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies

Jelena is the Director of the Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies (CEAS). She has previously worked as a political analyst and researcher for the International Crisis Group and the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia.



Dusan Spasojevic, diplomat

Dušan is a Serbian politician and diplomat. He has served in the cabinet of the President of the Republic of Serbia and as Deputy Defence Minister. From 2011 to 2013 Dusan served as Serbian Ambassador to Turkey. He is an LSE alumnus.



Chaired by Dr Tomila Lankina, LSE

Tomila is a Senior Lecturer in International Relations in LSE Government Department. Before joining the School, she held research and teaching appointments in the UK, America, and Germany— including: the Humboldt University in Berlin, and Stanford University.

Programme

8:45 **Registration**

9:15 **Introduction and welcome**

Dr James Ker-Lindsay, LSE

Dr Dimitar Bechev, LSE

Dr Othon Anastasakis, Oxford University

9:30 **Opening address**

Andrew Rasbash, DG European Neighbourhood Policy
and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission

9:45 **Panel 1: The Balkans in Russia's Foreign Policy Strategy**

Konstantin Von Eggert, Kommersant FM

Dr Dimitar Bechev, LSE

Dr Spyros Economides, LSE

Chair: Professor Roy Allison, Oxford University

11:00 **Coffee break**

11:30 **Panel 2: Russia and Conflict Resolution in the Balkans**

Dr Nadia Arbatova, Russian Academy of Sciences

Dr Nikolay Petrov, Carnegie Moscow

Dr Cvete Koneska, Control Risks

Chair: Dr James Ker-Lindsay, LSE

13:00 **Lunch (not provided)**

14:00 **Panel 3: The Economic Dimension**

Laza Kekic, independent consultant and analyst

Nicolaus Petri, advisor to L1 Energy

Andrei Tarnea, Aspen Institute Romania

Adnan Vatansever, King's College

Chair: Dr Dimitar Bechev, LSE

15:30 **Coffee break**

16:00 **Panel 4: Russian Soft Power**

Kyril Drezov, Keele University

Jelena Milic, Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies

Dusan Spasojevic, former Deputy Defence Minister of Serbia

Chair: Dr Tomila Lankina, LSE

17:15 **Wrap-up session**

Chaired by Othon Anastasakis, Oxford University