

Conference communique

by Alexander Duleba, Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association

Conference	East European crisis: scenarios and EU response
Date	27 October 2014
Venue	Congress Hall of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Hlboká cesta 2, Bratislava
Organizer	Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association
Partners	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, and the EurActiv.sk (media partner)
Aim	The one-day conference was discussing EU strategy towards Russo-Ukrainian crisis, which turned into the most challenging crisis in Europe since the end of the cold war due to unprecedented Russia's interference with Ukrainian domestic affairs in the course of 2014. The conference, first, examined nature of the crisis, including its reasons, as well as the existing EU policy framework for developing relations with Eastern partner countries and Russia; and second, tried to explore scenarios for further development of the crisis, including both potentials and limits of relevant actors for cooperative and/or confrontational projection of their interests. The conference proceedings aimed at outlining answers on the following three key questions: first, what is the crisis about; second, what are the scenarios for its further development; and third, what should be the EU response.
Participants	Leading experts on East European affairs, including EU relations with/policy toward East European countries that came from 12 countries (Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, and United Kingdom) - see the attached conference agenda. Total number of participants got over 140 persons (mostly representatives of NGOs and think tanks from Slovakia, academia, and students, but also state agencies, and diplomatic corps).
Media	<p>Slovak media published a number of articles with reference on the conference proceedings, including interviews with the participated experts (here is a selection of materials available online):</p> <p>V4, Ukrajina a Rusko diskutovali v Bratislave o kríze na východe. <i>Teraz Slovensko</i>, 27.10.2014, http://www.teraz.sk/slovensko/v4-ukrajina-a-rusko-diskutovali-v-brati/103533-clanok.html</p> <p>Petr Kratochvíl: Krym je pre Ukrajinu už nenávratne preč. <i>Rádio Expres</i>, 27.10.2014, http://www.expres.sk/20607/krym-je-pre-ukrajinu-uz-nenavratne-prec/</p> <p>James Sherr: Rusko vníma Západ ako rozdelený a politicky slabší. <i>EurActiv.sk</i>, 4.11.2014, http://www.euractiv.sk/obrana-a-bezpecnost/interview/rusko-vnima-zapad-ako-rozdeleny-a-politicky-slabsi-023057</p> <p>Oleksandr Suško: Ukrajinská spoločnosť odmietla koncentráciu moci. <i>EurActiv.sk</i>, 7.11.2014,</p>

<http://www.euractiv.sk/rozsirovanie/interview/ukrajinska-spolocnost-odmietla-koncentraciu-moci-023080>

Duleba: Čo bude s Ukrajinou po voľbách? *.týždeň*,
<http://video.tyzden.sk/tomas-pristiak/2014/10/27/duleba-co-bude-s-ukrajinou-po-volbach/>

Porošenko a Jaceňuk potvrdili začiatok rokovaní o spoločnej koalícii. *TA3*,
28.10.2014, <http://www.ta3.com/clanok/1049598/porosenko-a-jacenuk-potvrdili-zaciatok-rokovani-o-spolocnej-koalicii.html>

Attachment Agenda of the conference

Summary of the conference proceedings

Juraj Stern, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA), **Mirko Hempel**, Director of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Czech and Slovak Republics, and **Alexander Duleba**, Director of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA) opened the conference by welcome statements on behalf of the organizing institutions. All three of them appreciated long-term cooperation between the FES and SFPA, which started in late 1990s with the aim to support public debate in Slovakia on foreign policy issues, and which gradually evolved into regional format supporting joint research and political dialogue between Germany and Visegrad Four countries on issues related to the EU policy towards/relations with East European neighbours, including Russia. They pointed out importance of the understanding of the current Russo-Ukrainian crisis for both policy planning and decision-making of the EU institutions as well as the EU member states. They highlighted that the way this crisis will be approached will help determine European international order, future shape of East European countries, including the EU itself for years to come.

Miroslav Lajčák, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, delivered key note speech at the opening of the conference. He noted that his professional career throughout last couple of years has been directly tied with Eastern Partnership. As the Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia at the European External Action Service (2010-2012, before he became the Slovak Foreign and European Minister in 2012) he was the EU chief negotiator for talks on association agreements with Ukraine and Moldova. Looking back from a perspective of the current Russo-Ukrainian crisis he noted that the EU has deeply underestimated political dimension of the Eastern Partnership. The EU approached the Eastern Partnership; including deal on association agreements with Eastern partner countries, rather as technocratic exercising while overlooking political consequences of its policy. He pointed out that there is a need to learn lessons from the EU Eastern policy, including shortcomings of the EU diplomacy towards Ukraine from recent years. In this context he referred to the case of former Ukrainian PM Yulia Tymoshenko, which became an argument for many EU governments to block the signature of the association agreement with Ukraine for more than two years. The EU changed its position in 2013 regardless of the fact that Tymoshenko was still in prison and there was no evidence that the then Yanukovich government did reforms in judiciary to rule out selective justice. When it comes to Russia he was open saying that the EU has no policy on Russia. As to his words, the EU should become more realistic in its approach towards Russia. As to EU sanctions (on Russia) debate, he said, Slovakia is being criticized for its anti-sanction position, however, those who are critical of Slovakia should see what are the facts. First, Slovakia never blocked the adoption of sanctions on the EU level, and second, by bringing into operation the reverse flow of gas to Ukraine (40

% of Ukraine's import needs) Slovakia provides the most substantial assistance to Ukraine among the EU member states even if it is being punished by Russia via reduction of gas supply for Slovakia's domestic consumption. When thinking about an upgrade of the EU Eastern policy he raised the following two important points: first, what the EU should resolve is, first, how to bridge Eastern Partnership with EU policy on Russia, and second, he suggested a principle for searching for new EU Eastern policy. i.e. "we should be pro-European (in Eastern Europe), but not anti-Russian".

The panelists at first panel of the conference, chaired by **Pavol Demeš** (Senior Fellow of the GMF and Board Member of the European Endowment for Democracy), have been invited to discuss nature of the crisis. As to **Oleksandr Sushko** (Research Director of the Institute for Euro-Atlantic Cooperation in Kyiv) the current crisis is consisting of the four main levels that determine its substance: local, bilateral, regional, and global. The crucial is the global level of the crisis due to Russia's attempts to revise the post-cold war order in Europe, however, in a way which does not recognize a sovereignty of smaller neighboring states in Eastern Europe. The regional level of the crisis has to do with the fact that at least three post-Soviet states (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) do want to join the EU led European project whereas Russia is trying to build up a new Eurasian regional grouping of former Soviet countries. The post-Soviet states are pressed by having to make a critical choice between the two competing regional integration projects. The third level of the crisis has to do with complex bilateral and rather tense relations between Ukraine and Russia, and finally, the fourth one has a local Ukrainian nature as there are historical, cultural, but also social and economic preconditions for discontent of some groups of Ukrainian population living in the South-Eastern regions with the developments in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In his interpretation of the crisis **Boris Kuznetsov** (Director of the Centre of International and Regional Policy in St. Petersburg) referred to the so called "Valdai speech" of Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered in Sochi on 23 October 2014. He quoted Putin's words that we live in a new reality under which there are no rules for great powers and therefore, there is no need also for Russia to seek for strategic partnership with the West. Following Kuznetsov Russia has changed its strategy towards the West after getting disappointed by inability to set up strategic partnership with the EU. As to President Putin crisis in Ukraine has been caused by misbalance of international order. Concluding his presentation Boris Kuznetsov stressed that regardless of the current shape of Russia's relations with the West there is a need to keep open information channels. He proposed to establish the EU-Russia Commission on problem issues that might be inspired by a model of similar Polish-Russian Commission.

Kateryna Wolczuk (Deputy Director and Senior Lecturer of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Birmingham) pointed out that revolutions change realities on the ground, and that's what happened in Ukraine. Ukrainian revolution calls for rethinking of the EU policy towards its Eastern neighborhood. She agreed with the point raised by Deputy PM Lajčák, i.e. that Eastern Partnership has been a technocratic response to political problem and that's why the EU's response on crisis has been rather reactive. Moreover, the EU in terms of the narrative of the crisis behaves like it would be more depending on Russia than vice versa. The EU needs a bigger vision on what's going on in Eastern Europe and its own role in the region. It should come to terms with the fact that it competes with Russia when offering association agreements with DCFTA to post-Soviet states. There are two main fronts of this competition: energy and trade. In fact both the EU and Eurasian Union trade regulations are based on WTO rules; therefore, trade problems might be settled. However, the nature of crisis is rather a political than technocratic one as Russia competes with the EU for "who is rules setter" in the region. As to Kateryna Wolczuk

the decision of the EU to postpone implementation of the DCFTA with Ukraine till the end of 2015 opens more questions than gives answers.

Gregorz Gromadzki (Associate Fellow of the Institute of Public Affairs in Warsaw) offered his explanation of the three main reasons of the crisis as follows: first, critical mass of Ukrainian society refused autocratic regime and became the most decisive factor of Ukrainian politics; second, Putin's understanding of the world, including Ukraine's belonging to "Russian world", which predetermines current Russia's policy towards Ukraine; and third, the current crisis is a part ongoing competition between liberal democracy and modern authoritarianism. Putin's Russia tries to prove that authoritarian regimes are more efficient than "declining" Western civilization based on liberal democracy. We should not ignore an ideological component of the current crisis as European values and institutions are at stake; moreover, having in mind the fact that some Visegrad leaders tend to share pro-authoritarian arguments of President Putin. We should understand that we have to do with a long-term crisis, which does not have any easy and quick solutions, he pointed out. Nevertheless, Russia's aggression brought Ukraine closer to West than it ever has been.

Petra Kuchyňková (Lecturer of the Department of International Relations and European Studies at the Masaryk University in Brno) has summarized main explanations and arguments raised by discussants during the panel debate. She concluded that panellists agreed with very complex nature of the crisis, which cannot be explained just by geopolitical factors. This crisis does have both ideological and civilization dimension, including very dangerous propaganda component. She pointed out importance of understanding of what is going on in Russia and supported the idea of creating EU-Russia Commission. She concluded by underlining importance of unity of the EU vis-à-vis the crisis.

Alexander Duleba (Director of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association) said that crisis does have a system nature as the EU is a part of it. He tried to put it into the context of the development of European integration process within the last two decades. The European Communities transformed into the EU in 1993, Schengen became part of the EU Treaty in 1999, the Eurozone exists starting from 2002, the EU expanded from 15 member states before 2004 to the current EU 28, the EU delivered to the solution of the Western Balkan crisis by offering European perspective, etc. His argument was that the EU development over last two decades has been based on gradual expansion of its institutions and the single market. In the current Russo-Ukrainian crisis the EU is confronted for the first time with a reality that the third country tries to stop the expansion of single market (association agreement with DCFTA with Ukraine) by military means. Therefore, the Russo-Ukrainian crisis does have direct implications for the future of the EU project.

Chair of the second panel **Reinhard Krumm** (Head of the Central and Eastern Europe Department of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation) invited panellists and participants to discuss dynamics and scenarios of the crisis. **James Sherr** (Associate Fellow with the Chatham House) started his intervention by stressing that it is difficult to predict scenarios for further development of the crisis due to completely different perception of reality in Russia. Even in case of Kosova conflict there was a base for rational arguments explaining Russia's behaviour, however, this is not the case with the current crisis. He identified the major paradox of the current crisis when it comes to self-perception of the key actors – Russia, the EU and Ukraine. Putin and today's Russia's elite believe Russia is a strong actor whereas they think completely the contrary about the EU, which they believe is weak and divided over the crisis. However, in terms of facts Russia is rather declining power while the EU cannot engage even half of its economic power potential to send clear message to Russia what is acceptable and what is not. He also raised question about readiness of new Ukrainian elite to understand what this crisis is about and first of all whether they are ready to do reforms. He

noted low turnout in the 26 October parliamentary elections in the South-Eastern regions of Ukraine what should make new Ukrainian government awake. He concluded that this crisis is primarily about security order in Europe. We should have a clear understanding whether we want to preserve the existing order or to revise it following Russia's pressure.

Arkadiy Moshes (Director of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia Research Programme at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs in Helsinki) pointed out a cautiously optimistic perspective (for Ukraine) based on the assessment of what happened in Ukraine and around it over the last six months against the background of Russia's strategic interests. Ukraine as "no man land" has been an acceptable scenario for Moscow whereas European integration of Ukraine was not. The Moscow plan for Ukraine after Maydan has been a federalization (or bosniaisation) scenario that would prove Ukraine is a failed state. However, it became clear after Presidential elections in Ukraine on 25 May and consequent mobilization that Ukraine does have options relying on its own potential regardless of the West's response on the crisis. It was Russian Spring and/or Novorossiia scenario supported by Moscow after the Maydan which failed. Minsk agreement of 5 September proved that Ukraine and majority of Ukrainians can move where they want regardless of developments taking place in LPR and DPR. Moreover, leaders running show on the ground in LPR and DNR know that Moscow does not have an option, but accept and support them. When it comes to Moscow's further policy we might expect rather combination of two tactical approaches, first, "damage limitation" policy aimed at restoring relations with the West (e.g. talks on new gas deal with Ukraine), and second, "racking of Ukraine", including demonstration of a capacity to make Ukraine a collapsed state so that the West believes that's the case. In conclusion Arkadiy Moshes said that we should not believe that what we have today is an end of the story, rather we should be prepared for escalation of the crisis.

Marek Menkiszak (Head of the Russia Department at the Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw) approached the topic of the panel via highlighting Russia's gains within the crisis. First, it was a bloodless occupation and annexation of Crimea that has been de facto recognized by the West as there are no demands on Russia calling for her withdrawal from Crimea; second, a tactical win in Donbass in terms that both the West and Kyiv accept the state of affairs under which the conflict has no military solution as Russia is ready to support separatists so long and so much as needed to prevent Ukrainian forces to get under control of the whole territory of Donbass; third, Russia succeeded in creating several formats of negotiations, including positioning itself rather as mediator than aggressor; and fourth, EU and Ukraine agreed with the postponement of the DCFTA application what proves that Russia does have an influence on the EU's policy on/relations with Ukraine. In a sum, Russia proved that she is consistent in her strategy as well as flexible in her tactics. He concluded that what we can expect from Russia is her continuing seeking for political, economic and energy leverages aimed at destabilizing Ukraine. Russia is not interesting in freezing the conflict in Donbass. If she will find that non-military measures do not work she will return to the use of military ones having in mind that what is happening in Donbass cannot block Ukraine in her move towards democratic transition and closer to the EU.

Cornelius Ochmann (Director of the Foundation for German-Polish Cooperation) noted that in order to understand the current crisis we should all to mind the way the EU adopted Eastern Partnership. The latter was rather the EU response on Georgian war in August 2008 than a strategic concept being carefully prepared on the base of weighing all the pluses and minuses. Vilnius summit looked like a funeral of the Eastern Partnership and no one in the EU knows what Riga summit should be about. He agreed with point raised by Minister Lajčák who said that EU should move from a reactive approach to preventive strategy towards the Eastern Europe. He pointed out that there is a growing gap in German discourse on the current crisis

between the two almost parallel worlds, i.e. world of politics and world of business. German businesses exert gradually growing pressure against economic sanctions on Russia. The EU should develop a new strategy for next months to come considering messages Russian President Putin voiced in his Valdai speech.

Cornel Ciurea (Research Fellow of the Institute for Development and Social Initiatives in Chisinau) pointed out that there are growing political tensions in Moldova related to the current crisis, including Moldova's relations with the EU closer to the parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of November. The fact is that recent public opinion polls show that public support for the EU course is diminishing whereas there are growing sympathies towards a pro-Eurasian option of the country. Moldovan economy and especially farmers suffer from Russian economic sanctions; however, they believe they are victims of the EU sanctions on Russia. The ruling government is communicating as the main benefit of the EU course the implementation of Association Agreement; however, it is too abstract deal to be absorbed by electorate. There are a lot of unanswered questions in Moldova, e.g. is the implementation of AA technical or ideological process? The EU officials argue that is technical process, nevertheless it is understood by public as an ideological one; is it purely economic or geopolitical process? The EU officials argue that it is economic process, however, public understands that it has also geopolitical aspects. And finally, is it reversible or irreversible process? There is high probability than pro-Russian parties will enter the parliament after the November elections. Moldovan communists declared they want to renegotiate AA/DCFTA with the EU. Is that possible? Definitely, there is number of questions in case of Moldova, however, we do have no answers, he concluded.

Zsuzsanna Vegh (Research Fellow of the Center for the EU Enlargement Studies at the CEU in Budapest) summarized the panel discussion pointing out that discussants agreed that what we have seen in Donbass is still not the worst scenario and we cannot exclude military escalation of the crisis. The reason for such estimation is the fact that frozen conflict in Donbass cannot stop Ukraine in moving towards the EU. Russia will try to use non-military means to prevent Ukraine; however, if they will not work she will apply again military ones. The EU should come up with the EU narrative of the crisis, which should add a substantial political dimension to existing technical approach, including how to proceed with the implementation of association agreements and to cope with securitized agenda in Eastern Europe. The Riga summit 2015 of the Eastern Partnership should be a momentum for the upgrade of the EU policy towards Eastern Europe.

The third panel chaired by **Vladimír Bilčík** (Senior Fellow of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association) was examining the EU and member states response on the East European crisis. In his presentation **Peter Kratochvíl** (Director of the Institute of International Relations in Prague) referred on the findings of the research on V4 countries national discourses on EU sanctions against Russia carried out by IIR. He summarized that national debates in the V4 countries are being characterized by the three main features: first, deep division concerning evaluation of nature of the conflict and its possible solutions (starting from assessments saying it was Russia's invasion which led to the crisis against assessments that it goes about a civil war in Ukraine); second, national discourses in the V4 are focused on economic damages that V4 countries might suffer as the consequence of the EU sanctions on Russia. There are some studies which examine eventual economic loss of V4 countries, however, there is neither study nor relevant attention in the discourse is being paid to what are consequences for Russia; and finally, one can see further erosion of solidarity principle within the EU/V4 debates. There are three main positions in the V4 sanctions debate as follows: first, sanctions are not effective and should be cancelled (friends of Russia); second, sanctions are somewhat effective but they should be cancelled and diplomatic

solutions to the crisis should be found (pragmatists); and third, sanctions are not enough and the EU should adopt further measures to stop Russia's aggression in Ukraine (hawks). If prevailing position in Hungary tends to be closer to the first option, discourse in Poland tends to prefer the third one whereas Czech Republic and Slovakia are somewhere in between. In the conclusion he said that he is rather pessimist when it comes to attainability of united position of the V4 countries. As to Peter Kratochvíl there should be a clear difference between discussing what the EU should do and what the EU can do. Definitely, following public opinion polls it would be hardly possible to imagine that V4 countries will fully support the EU membership for and visa free regime with Ukraine. The only area where a unity of the V4 countries might be attainable is the implementation of DCFTA with Ukraine.

Mirja Peterson (Head of the Eastern Europe Unit at the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) stressed that Swedish policy towards the crisis has been developed in a line with the EU policy, including SIDA development aid strategy. Sweden has adopted a development strategy for Eastern partnership countries in March 2014, which complements the EU policy; however, it should be adjusted to the situation on the ground. She pointed out in her presentation the need for better coordination of the aid policy between the EU member states, including between the development policy of a given member state and the EU institutions. The priority areas for the SIDA program for Ukraine include support for civil society and anticorruption policy and reforms. She said it is important for donors to have a partner and/or a person to speak to and to agree about development assistance. She said another issue that should be improved is the coordination between donors active in the Eastern partnership countries. The donor conference for Ukraine scheduled for January 2015 does represent an occasion for donor countries to bring more stability and predictability to Ukraine, including for improving delivery of aid to Ukraine.

Laurynas Kasčiūnas (Head of Policy Analysis and Research Division of the Eastern Europe Studies Centre in Vilnius) pointed out that the question today does not sound how to recalibrate Eastern Partnership (EaP), but how to save it. He identified the following three challenges for further development of EaP: first, the need finally to resolve dilemma of the EaP end game - political association versus membership perspective; second, eliminate Russia's effort to get over the control of EaP process via establishing trilateral format as it happened recently in case of Ukraine when the EU and Ukraine accepted the postponement of the implementation of AA/DCFTA; and third, cleavages between the EU member states towards EaP. Russia's strategy is to dismiss the EaP process and/or to get veto over it following the lesson she learned from the Georgian war in 2008, i.e. the West will make a lot of noise although nothing will happen in the end. In fact Russia has succeeded in making EaP a trilateral project in case of Ukraine due to, first, the EU acceptance with the postponement of implementation of Ukrainian AA/DCFTA till the end of 2015; and second, the EU acceptance with the creation of a trilateral format for talks on Ukrainian AA/DCFTA. As to Laurynas Kasčiūnas, the EU response should include the following key points: first, the EU should offer membership perspective for EaP countries what will neutralize Russia's ambitious to vetoing the EaP process; second, the EU should eliminate Russia's strategy to use frozen conflicts on the territories of EaP countries aimed at blocking their European integration by considering a Cyprus scenario; third, the EU should offer Russia talks on FTA "from Vladivostok to Vancouver"; and fourth, the EU should create a single gas purchasing agency and/or to establish regional groups of countries, which will negotiate energy deals with Russia together.

Nat Copley (Director of the Aston Centre for Europe at the University of Aston in Birmingham) responding on Laurynas Kasčiūnas' presentation raised doubts that Cyprus scenario for EaP countries might be accepted by the UK and many other EU member states.

He agreed that the EU has not been showing a coherent response on Ukrainian crisis. As to him the key problem is that the EU reached the limits of technocratic governance based on single market. Intergovernmental model of the EU governance cannot produce coherent EU policy. The situation on the ground in Ukraine is changing rapidly and the EU with its institutional design cannot respond flexibly. Russia is the state; however, the EU is not and that's the difference when it comes how both actors deal with the crisis. Moreover, Ukrainian crisis is important for Russia whereas it is not important equally to all 28 EU member states. The EU cannot assign tens of billions of euros to Ukraine due to budgetary constraints. The EU develops responding to radical challenges that shake up it. Ukrainian crisis could become an opportunity to remake the EU in the field of external relations; however, we see it is still not the case. There are a lot of crises the EU deals with currently, including financial crisis, ISIL state, post-Spring situation in Arab countries, Ukrainian crisis, etc. He concluded that what we need is a grand bargain or series of grand bargains in order to reshape the EU institutionally. There is a time for intergovernmental conference in order to redesign EU institutions and to improve its capacity to master all challenges, he concluded.

Jana Kobzová (Program Officer of the European Endowment for Democracy and the Associate Fellow of the European Council on Foreign Relations in London). She started her presentation reflecting on criticism addressed to the EU that it was too late with its response to the Ukrainian crisis. However, she wondered, when the EU was fast in reacting on crisis noting the situation in Yugoslavia at the beginning of 1990s, Georgia 2008, and pointed out that it is nothing new. Russia has been much more determined to invest in Ukraine politically and economically, therefore, Russia was faster in responding to developments in Ukraine. She stressed that annexation of Crimea and Russia's support for military insurgency in Donbass exposed EU's own vulnerability towards Russia, in terms of energy supply, foreign trade, defence supply from Russia to some EU member states, including that the crisis has been having an impact on political discourses in member states, etc. All that made the Ukrainian crisis also the EU crisis, which the EU simply cannot escape. The EU should learn lessons from the past (e.g. Orange coalition) and to support those political forces in Ukraine that are dedicated to implement reforms. Good news is that there is high domestic pressure on the new government to implement reforms thanks to maturing Ukrainian civil society. She stressed that the EU should include security component into EaP concept. In addition to debate about opening European perspective for EaP countries, we need also serious debate about our interests in the region, including towards Russia. If we agree that sovereignty of EaP countries, including their capacity to protect their own borders, complies with EU interests, we should have capacity and tools to deliver.

Iris Kempe (Senior Advisor to the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in Stockholm) summarized the main arguments raised by panellists as well as she added her own comments and ideas. The EU has responded on crisis by adopting sanctions, however, there is no unity among the member states due to different historical perception of the Eastern Europe, values and interests. The EU is in deep crisis, including its policy concept towards the countries beyond its Eastern border. She asked how realistic or even dangerous might be opening European perspective for EaP countries. As to her this issue could be addressed by considering prospects for sectorial integration of the EaP countries. She stressed unused potential of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum that might serve as a platform for drafting strategy but also for identification of practical tools of the EU policy. The strategic task of the upcoming Riga summit of EaP is to address issue of bridging EU EaP agenda with the EU-Russia relations. She pointed out there is a need in more discourse about EU's Eastern policy; she proposed to establish a Group of Friends of the EU's Eastern Policy based on respective regular conferences held in Bratislava. The task of such group should be to develop

strategic toolbox for the new leaders of the EU institutions, including Chairman of the Council Donald Tusk and the Commissioner Johannes Hahn.

Alexander Duleba (Director of the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association) in his concluding remarks he briefly summarized key points and arguments raised during the three-panel conference debate. When it comes to understanding of a nature of the crisis, and that's the basic precondition for thinking about a policy how the EU can approach it, he stressed it is important to understand what the EU is and how it works. He pointed out a system and objective nature of the crisis which is rather an outcome of the developments in Europe for more than last 20 years. We have been witnessing completely different picture and dynamics of the development in the Western part of Europe and in its Eastern post-Soviet part within the given period. The European Communities learned for the first time that their best foreign policy is an enlargement one when they managed to settle accession of the South European countries in the 1980s that were suffering from fascist regimes yet in the 1970s, e.g. Greece, Portugal and Spain. The EU is a legalistic project based on the single market. The expansion of the single market in the 1990s with eight post-communist countries via association agreements followed up the grand enlargement in 2004-2007, which has been a sort of repetition what the EU did towards South-East Europe in the 1980s. Through the stabilization and association process of the Western Balkan countries it was the EU who delivered a solution to the Yugoslavian crisis in the 2000s. In fact the EU as we know it today became a reality in 1993. The Schengen became a part of the EU project in 1999, the Eurozone exists since 2002. The EU became qualitatively different project within the course of last two decades in comparison with what it has been at the beginning of 1990s. Association agreements with DCFTA offered to EaP countries has been the EU response on Russia's military intervention to Georgia in August 2008, fully in line with the last 30 years of the development of the (West) European integration process with the expansion of the single market at its core. In Ukraine 2014 it happened for the first time over last 3 decades that the expansion of the single market and area of four freedoms has been confronted by third country with military means. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to look for any other solution the EU can offer dramatically different to what it offered to post-fascist South Europe in the 1980s, post-communist Central Europe in the 1990s, post-war Balkans in the 2000s, and EaP Eastern Europe as from 2008. This is the track where the EU can deliver and it proved in the past several times that it can.

On the other hand, what we got in the post-Soviet Eastern Europe is rather a series of failed integration projects, including CIS, federal state of Russia-Belarus, etc., including series of conflicts between Russia and her neighbours starting from gas wars (Belarus 2004, Ukraine 2007 and 2009) via (military) war against Georgia 2008 and Ukraine 2014. Having in mind the completely two different and opposite integration dynamics in the Western part of Europe against Eastern Europe over more than 2 last decades one can assume that the current crisis has a system and objective nature. In other words, its military form became first a reality in 2008 in Georgia. It is a conflict between the EU led European project via the expansion of single market and the failing projection of Russia's European policy, including inability of Russia to come in terms with the fact that post-Soviet states in Eastern Europe are sovereign European states that want to join European EU led project. The key difference between the EU and Russia is a quality of modernization offer to third countries. Russia has lost arguments against expanding EU legislation and institutions therefore she applied tanks to stop the process. The use of force by Russia shows rather her weakness than strength. This crisis does matter very much for the EU as it raises question about how the EU led European project will function next two decades, but also it puts under question if the EU project can continue in line with the logic of last 3 decades. It is the first European crisis which has to do

also with the reflection and/or interpretation of the EU's past and that means it has an impact on European identity. It is a test the EU has not been confronted with over last 3 decades.

When it comes to the assessment of dynamics and scenarios of the crisis Duleba agreed with those speakers who argued that Russia has not received what she expected when it comes to "anti-Maydan revolution" in 8 South-East Ukrainian regions in March-May 2014. Russia started to support military insurgency in Donbass in April; however, she had to intervene robustly at the end of August to stop Ukrainian forces. Should majority of Russian-speaking population of Donbass be dedicated to ideas of "Russian world" Ukrainian troops would never succeeded in eliminating territory controlled by separatists to around one third of size at the mid of August in comparison with territory they controlled yet in June. The dynamics on the ground changed dramatically after Presidential elections in Ukraine of 25 May. In the end Russia received in summer what it hardly expected it might happen at all, i.e. consolidation of Ukrainian nation, including with politically legitimized new post-Maydan leadership via both presidential and parliamentary elections. Russia took over Crimea however she lost Ukraine. Nevertheless, Duleba agreed with those speakers who were arguing in favour of high probability of new escalation of the crisis once non-military means Russia has in her disposal will not help her to destabilize Ukraine during the upcoming winter.

As to the EU response he pointed out that the only track along which one can seek for an effective EU policy towards the crisis is the expansion of the single market. The EU cannot resign on what it is and the way it has been delivering to European integration process for more than last two decades. The main task is to identify a contractual arrangement or set of arrangements that will facilitate the expansion of the EU single market in Eastern Europe. The key issue that should be discussed currently in the EU capitals is member states' standing on trilateral talks with Russia and Ukraine over Ukrainian AA/DCFTA. First, the EU and Ukraine should not resign on the substance of the association agreement or accept any change of any agreed provision of the AA/DCFTA. The political part of AA should not become a subject to any trilateral talks. What might be discussed is a prolongation of transitional periods in case of selected commodities included into DCFTA should Russia have reasonable arguments. Second, the challenging task for the EU diplomacy is to use trilateral talks with the aim to bring more realistic perspective for a launch of FTA talks with Russia/Eurasian Union. The diplomatic task should be two-tiered; first, the EU should be able to sustain the association agreement with Ukraine, and second, to motivate Russia to engage with the EU on FTA deal. The EU can do nothing but to behave against its nature, in other words, by offering a positive agenda to Russia, however, exclusively within prospects of moving Russia closer to the contract with the EU that might facilitate expansion of the EU single market. In addition, the EU should also consider a combination of AA/DCFTA with partner countries with an option for concluding sectorial agreements should Ukraine or any other willing partner country be ready to go faster with harmonization with EU *acquis* in a given sectorial policy. The full implementation of AA/DCFTA will take rather a longer time period for EaP countries than it did in case of Visegrad countries, e.g. 7-8 years. If realistically it will take around 10 years what is too long period of time. It would be a strategic mistake of the EU not to strengthen its contractual relations with partners in the meantime.

In conclusion he expressed his thanks to the speakers, participants, and first of all to the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of SR for supporting the conference, including EurActiv.sk for media partnership.