



Go-Governance at the Economic Forum – Europe and the World Confronting the Crisis

This year the XXII Economic Forum took place on 4-7th September in Krynica Zdroj, Poland. Former President of Poland, Lech Walesa, took part in one of the panels and discussions. The conference was hosted by the Eastern Institute with national and international partners <http://www.forum-ekonomiczne.pl/?lang=en>.

A broad range of topics was covered, starting with medicine and health, concluding with politics and democracy, and of course the economy. More than 100 panel discussions, lectures by renowned experts, workshops and round table discussions were held.

Akper Saryyev, assistant of the Vienna-based Go-Governance initiative, attended the conference with a special focus on panels devoted to democracy, political change in Post-Soviet countries, Virtual Pluralism, Media and his native Ukraine.

► During the panel „Post-Soviet countries – between dreams and reality“ it was pointed out that one of the features of European governance is the culture of compromise, something which is weak in eg. Russia. This culture generates unity, tolerance and stability.

► Naturally the Euro currency crisis was discussed and it was noted that the introduction of the Euro in Slovakia had helped economic growth and thus had better prepared the country for further dialogue with other European Union countries. Today we see that even though Slovakia was once called the «black hole of Europe», the Euro was exactly the instrument, which played a role in giving Slovakia today a relatively good position. With this example in mind panellists argued for a stronger belief in the power of a United Europe.

► How to build democracy and good governance was discussed in the «20 years of Post-Soviet Reality» panel. Director of the Institute of Modern Studies in Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Mukhit Sydyknazarov, mentioned that the term «post-soviet» countries is not so relevant now. Each country of the former Soviet Union goes its own way. There are many different political systems on the territory of the former USSR along the dictatorship-democracy spectrum. People identify more with a particular country rather than with the former USSR.

► A separate panel was devoted to Ukraine and its Association agreement with the EU. Participants looked at how to bring Ukraine closer to the European family. According to some polls only 35% of Ukrainians want to be part of the EU family. Why so little? The answer to this question is pretty simple. The European Union has created borders, which few Ukrainians can overcome. As a result less than 10% of the Ukrainian population has a «taste» of what the European Union is about. All the panellists agreed that visa requirements should be cancelled or at least become simpler.

For further information on political culture in former Soviet countries see, *The Culture of Governance: the Black Sea*, edited by head of Go-Governance, Dr Melanie Sully (project supported by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, City of Vienna, 2012) with contributions, amongst others on Ukraine, the Russian Federation and southern Caucasus. melanie.sully@go-governance.com