

## THE SUBJECT OF THE FORUM IS OF IMMEDIATE INTEREST



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Exclusively for the Yaroslavl Forum

I was invited to participate in the upcoming Yaroslavl Forum and I do hope I can be there. I am familiar with the conference programme and **I regard the subject matter of the Forum to be of immediate interest, and am confident that it can produce thoughtful discussion.**

If the organisers can spare ten minutes for my address, I would be pleased to present a report on the Ukrainian thematic. Before anything else, I would speak about the formation of civil society in Ukraine within a situation of sharp conflict regarding the politics of memory and the politics of identity.

**This year will mark twenty years of Ukrainian independence. Summing up the results of state building is nowadays a popular genre in the sphere of public affairs.** There are also current attempts at conducting a scientific analysis of developments in the past two decades.

The issue of the division between East and West in Ukraine is also increasingly gaining prominence. Most experts consider the fact of the existence of such a split to be a major challenge for Ukrainian statehood according to its present borders.

A number of prominent Ukrainians are earnestly considering abandoning part of the country (meaning the Crimea and the Donets Basin or as much as all of New Russia) for the sake of preserving a 'true Ukrainian identity', an ideology that is promoted by the Western Ukrainian intelligentsia. Yet other Ukrainian intellectuals are trying to find models of integration for Ukrainian society and ways to form a unified Ukrainian identity.

In my address, **I intend to formulate ideas as to the possibility (both the feasibility and chances) of finding a major compromise between Eastern and Western Ukraine**, as well as demarking the possible outlines of such a compromise.

I also intend to address the problem of 'multiple identities' within Ukraine (whether or not a synthesis thereof is possible and desirable). I will also address the role of the politics of memory, as well as confessional (religious) and language problems. Finally, I will speak about the role of the 'external factor': namely Russia and Europe within the context of forming a united Ukrainian civil (political) nation. ■

## YAROSLAVL FORUM IS OF INTEREST TO KIEV



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The Global Policy Forum in Yaroslavl is a milestone event in terms of the post-Soviet sphere. The issues that are discussed there are crucial - not only for Russia but also for its partners. **The Yaroslavl Forum was launched as a specific event with the aim of 'exchanging experience', effectively turning into a 'creative springboard' in the process**, where the modernisation discourse is formulated not only for Russia but for the entire post-Soviet sphere. Last year, a very substantive discussion took place during the section on the 'Standards of democracy and the diversity of the democratic experience'. A diversity of practices in terms of democratic modernisation is what the entire post-Soviet sphere so badly needs. It's not about importing western models but about creating our own. The upcoming Forum will be dedicated to social diversity and the new role played by the state.

**The Yaroslavl Forum occupies a leading place among the political and expert events in the region.** Moreover, the Yaroslavl format allows engaging leading scientists, politicians, and world leaders, as well as addressing global problems. However, the focus on local issues is not sufficient. There's not enough accompanying events that would bring the problematic generated by the Forum to a

practical level, to the level of discussions occurring at universities, among students and the third sector. As was noted last year at the Forum, the most productive forms of democracy are horizontal initiatives involving a self-organising population.

There is significant interest in the Yaroslavl Forum in Ukraine. It represents an important communication platform for Kiev, whereby it would be possible to take part in the elaboration on issues that are of interest for Ukraine. For example, this extends to such issues as building a common European security platform, OSCE reform, and creating common standards for election monitoring, etc.

**Besides, the Yaroslavl Forum is also of interest to Kiev with respect to the intellectual testing of its own innovations.** If we speak of the participation of Ukrainian citizens in the Forum, this is obviously insufficient. It would be more productive to see representatives of Ukraine's expert community, including political engineers, political scientists and international experts taking part in the Forum. Moreover, within the framework of preparations for this upcoming event, preliminary Forum sections are being held in different cities. It would be great to also hold such a conference in Kiev. ■