

## THE PURPOSE OF THE YAROSLAVL FORUM



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Exclusively for the Yaroslavl Forum

Such forums as the Yaroslavl Global Policy Forum are important due to two key factors. First, they make us more intelligent people. Second, we make new friends there, meet old colleagues and exchange opinions on what's new on the international political science, in the sphere of economics, etc. I think that this year's Yaroslavl Forum will fully accomplish its purpose, all the more so because its **problematic reflects the actual challenges that we are facing in the modern world.**

I am going to moderate a section at the Forum related to the development of democratic institutions in multi-ethnic societies. In fact, this is one of the most pressing problems to be addressed there. In the course of the past year, we have witnessed German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicola Sarkozy and British Prime Minister David Cameron claiming the death of multiculturalism. It's a poignant fact that these statements have come from the leaders of major democratic states. At the same time, many other multicultural states are making earnest efforts to become truly democratic societies. I am referring to Indonesia and Philippines, for instance, which are among the most ethnically diverse countries in the world.

India has a greater number of ethnic groups than is the case even in the Russian Federation.

Russia has yet to find a solution to this complex problem. Although we are used to regarding our country as a multi-ethnic one, we do not qualify as one of the major ones according to international standards. **In Russia, we are talking about some 130-160 different ethnic groups, while in China they number over 250, while India is home to no less than 450 ethnic groups and Indonesia has 580 different peoples.** These societies are certainly more multi-ethnic than ours. However, it is clear that the development of democratic institutions in such countries is quite a complicated process due to a great variety of interests that need to be taken into account when formulating state policy. Today this is done though a mechanism within the Federation Council, where regions and national republics are represented at the federal level.

Russia is a young democracy. We are entering the third decade of the country's democratic construction. The experience of different countries – both developed and evolving democracies – is, of course, of great importance for us. ■

## INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS ARE MOST USEFUL



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I do not have any critical remarks with regard to the 2010 Global Policy Forum. While it is true that not everyone who wanted to speak was given this opportunity, given the huge number of participants, it is obviously impossible for everyone to have that chance. There were many informal discussions happening on the sidelines. Frankly, I found them to be more useful than the formal sections. However, I think that **the thematic of the Forum should be given more acute consideration. The titles of some of the sections overlapped and it was hard to decide where to go.** All possible discussion formats were available, including round tables, panel discussions and plenary sessions. I am not aware of any other conference formats apart from these. Of course, there is also the video-conference option, allowing one to stay at home. Employing additional video formats with direct access on the Internet would also be a good idea, because many people are simply unable to attend this event in person.

A whole range of celebrities was represented at this event. I think that all the key fig-

ures, acknowledged by the media and recognised in other spheres, were also present. I did not observe any gaps, at least, not that I am aware of.

I think the organisers did a good job. As usual, there were lapses at the time of registration. This procedure should probably be improved upon for the next Forum. **Some logistical shortcomings did take place concerning arrivals and departures. There was also some confusion with regard to protocol due to the high level of the participants.** At the beginning, they set up the security checkpoint far from the arena and later on, it was moved closer, almost to the entrance. On the whole, the technical arrangements and the venue itself were favourable. There was maximum access to information and communication opportunities. The recreation opportunities were also good. I think that we can congratulate Yaroslavl for a job well done. Last year, the success of the Forum had a lot to do with the city's anniversary and this year, the resources might not be as plentiful. But then again, I want to stress that everything was indeed very well done. ■