

MORE TIME FOR DISCUSSION

Adrian Pabst



ADRIAN PABST is a British researcher on politics with a strong interest in a strong interest in global geo-politics and in the complex links between religion, politics and economics. He is a Lecturer in Politics at the University of Kent (UK) and was a participant in the Global Policy Forum in Yaroslavl in 2010

The logistical organisation of the Forum has been conducted very good and efficiently (including the transportation from Moscow to Yaroslavl and from the hotels to the venue). However, what is urgently required is more discussion time allocated in each of the thematic sections. My critical remarks about the 2010 Forum are as follows: there were too many long speeches with little or no time for questions and debate. Some prominent speakers (mostly politicians) gave presentations in more than one thematic section and they spoke for far too long therein.

My suggestions are, therefore, as follows: **first**, the speeches or presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes. This has to be enforced by the chair of each section.

Second, the organisers should designate a discussant for each presentation, who is capable of initiating a discussion. Most experts can respond on the spot and, therefore, do not need to

receive a copy of the speech in advance. Such a system of discussants would provide more time for debate. It would also reduce the number of speeches while still allowing prominent speakers to intervene.

Third, there should be 10 minutes for short questions from the audience after the discussant has spoken. The presenter can respond to those questions and also to the points raised by the discussant.

In regards to topics that require special discussion at the forthcoming Forum.

In terms of the first section ‘Democratic institutions in multi-ethnic societies’, the topics for discussion should cover:

- the limits of multiculturalism and alternatives policies aimed at integrating minorities;
- the problems of state centralisation and ways of ‘pluralising’ the modern state (e.g. through decentralisation and the involvement of citizens, professional associations and businesses with a social purpose);
- the efficiency of democratic institutions and practices: why civic virtues are indispensable to rights and contracts.

In terms of the second section ‘The rich and the poor: where is justice?’, the topics for discussion should include, in particular:

- introducing asset welfare to reduce structural inequalities;
- linking finance to the ‘real economy’ and productive processes (to reduce volatility and instability);
- promoting employee-ownership in the private sector in order to distribute wealth/assets (not just redistribute income via the welfare state);
- introducing cooperatives and mutuals in the public sector in order to boost productivity, innovation, efficiency and the satisfaction of users and employees.

In terms of the third section ‘Global security and local conflicts’, the topics for discussion should include:

- how to build on the 2010 trilateral

summit in Deauville in order to launch a pan-European security community;

- confidence-building measures designed to improve and extend cooperation between Russia, France, Germany and also other key European powers such as Britain, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Ukraine;
- ways to advance political discussions regarding political settlements for Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Intersectional roundtables are also very important. Some of the topics for this year’s Forum could include:

- how civil society can strengthen democratic states and market economies;
- how new technologies can foster economic growth and security communities in the wider European space;
- how to reduce systemic risk (in the spheres of finance, security and health);
- Immigration, welfare and crime: the rights and responsibilities of states and citizens.

At the next Forum, I’d like to see some new types of communications.

First, after the official speeches by the Russian President and the foreign heads of state/government, there should be a plenary discussion between them. Such a discussion could be chaired a non-politician, such as Professor Vladislav Inozemtsev, for instance. It should also include some questions from the audience. If the questions are inappropriate, the chair can always intervene.

Second, at the 2010 Forum, a very interesting meeting was held between the Russian President and a number of experts, but this meeting took place separately. Such a meeting should be public and perhaps should be held immediately after the plenary discussion. Each expert would ask one question and the President would respond. ■

Exclusively for the Yaroslavl Forum