



EU-Russia Watch 2012



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
CENTRE FOR EU-RUSSIA STUDIES

The EU–Russia Watch is an annual report on the relations between individual EU member states and the Russian Federation. Targeted at policy-makers, academics and the general public, the Watch focuses on dominant themes and recent developments in bilateral relations, and provides an overview of member states' perspectives on issues structuring the EU–Russian relationship. The project is coordinated by the Centre for EU–Russia Studies at the University of Tartu, Estonia (<http://ceurus.ut.ee>).

The rationale for the Watch stems from the often-lamented inability of the European Union to speak to Russia with one voice. The Russian Federation has been one of the most divisive issues on the EU's foreign

policy agenda, with member state objectives ranging from engagement to containment. In the absence of a coherent and consistently implemented common policy, much of the action in EU–Russian relations takes place outside of the framework of the EU–Russian partnership. However, the EU's internal disunity in dealing with Russia is not a constant. Positions and policies change – sometimes rapidly – and the ability of member states to act in concert varies greatly across the spectrum of issues. This dynamism highlights the need for up-to-date, nuanced and comprehensive information about the sources and directions of national policy, as well as the pattern of relations at the bilateral level.

The first issue of the Watch covers nearly two-thirds of EU member states as well as the largest candidate country – Turkey. Due to the diversity of national experiences with Russia, the country reports have a deliberately flexible structure. The contributors to the 2012 edition of the Watch were asked to reflect on:

- themes dominating the relationship between the country in focus and Russia in the context of the broader EU–Russian relationship;
- significant developments in bilateral relations in 2011 (political contacts, economic and commercial links);
- the country's positions on the main issues structuring Russia's relationship with the EU (foreign policy issues, energy policy, visa liberalisation, etc.);
- domestic reactions/debates as regards the Putin–Medvedev switch at the helm of Russia in March 2012 and the December 2011 Duma elections.

The full report is available at <http://ceurus.ut.ee/home/eu-russia-watch/>



The opinions expressed in EU-Russia Watch 2012 are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the organisations with which the authors are affiliated.

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