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EIN Seminar on Russia and Turkey as key actors in EU external policy

Chair:

- **Elmar Brok MEP**, *Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the European Parliament*

Guest Speakers:

- **Steven Blockmans**, *Senior Research Fellow & Head of the EU Foreign Policy Unit, Centre for European Policy Studies, Professor of EU External Relations Law and Governance, University of Amsterdam*
- **Ambassador Zoltán MARTINUSZ**, *Director Foreign Affairs, Enlargement and Civil Protection Enlargement, Security, Civil Protection, Foreign Affairs Council Support, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union*
- **Eka Tkeshelashvili**, *President of the Georgian Institute for Strategic Studies and former Foreign Minister*
- **Konrad Zasztowt**, *Senior Research Fellow at the Polish Institute of International Affairs*

Rapporteur:

Alexander Barkhudaryants, *PhD Candidate, Institut Français de Géopolitique (Université Paris VIII)*

- Russia and Turkey are both former empires characterized by their current strong leadership. Erdogan is on his way of becoming the longest serving and the most influential Turkish leader since Mustapha Kemal Atatürk. Turkish leader is deeply polarising Turkish society. At the same time, Russia is an example of how democracy can be replaced with a national autocracy managed by former KGB powers.
- For the EU, Russia is an ideological and security challenge. Russia imposes a combination of security and soft power. Russia is fundamentally interested in cooperation with the European Union, which is Russia's main economic and trade partner. NATO's enlargement and military infrastructure deployment next to Russia is considered as the first and the foremost danger.
- Turkey idea of becoming a major power in the Middle East has failed. The alternative is to become closer to NATO and to the EU. The European Union cannot solve the migration question without Turkey and the EU needs Turkey to diversify its energy supply. The framework of the relations between EU and Turkey has been for a long time the enlargement. There is a need of closer cooperation which does not mean that Turkey will become a member of the EU.
- Five years ago we would not combine relations with Russia and Turkey in a Seminar. The rising role of Russia which remains both a regional and global player while Turkey just is a regional one leads to the need of reformulating the EU common policy since there are member states different approaches. Unity of EU external policy is essential.
- The differences between Russia and Turkey are no more than similarities. EU has to change and develop a new vision for relations with those two countries.
- EU should be committed to get back to a partnership agreement if Russia reintroduce International law and accept to implement the Minsk agreement. EU needs Turkey more than ever regarding immigration and security issues but we need a strategic and realistic assessment of the situation.