



Forum for Young Professionals

Europe Lab



EU-RUSSIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

ГРАЖДАНСКИЙ ФОРУМ ЕС-РОССИЯ

Europe Lab: July Agreement in Gdańsk

On 27-30 July 2017, the Annual Forum “Europe Lab” brought together around 60 young professionals aged between 25 and 35 from Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and other countries. They work in NGOs, think tanks, universities, business, public administration.

By linking the current Forum and its origins at the Memorial Centre of the History of Political Repressions “Perm-36” in Russia back in 2012, yet another very specific place of remembrance was chosen this year – the **European Solidarity Centre (ESC)** in Gdańsk, Poland. The Forum was opened with keynote speeches by **Adam Bodnar**, Commissioner for Human Rights, and **Adam Michnik**, Editor-in-Chief at “Gazeta Wyborcza”.

” *The spirit of the International Civil Forum “Pilorama” I experienced at “Perm-36” has been transferred to “Europe Lab”, – said **Michael Hunt**, a theatre and opera director, who had staged Ludwig van Beethoven’s “Fidelio” on the territory of the former camp in 2010 and shared his impressions from those times and beyond at the evening talk with participants on 28 July.*

The European Solidarity Centre and Gdańsk are a perfect choice for reflection and inspiration. I personally would love to stage a performance in this city, especially at the famous Gdańsk Shipyard. As for “Europe Lab”, I hope that the combination of creativity and entrepreneurship, evident throughout these days at the Forum in Gdańsk, must return to the territory of “Perm-36” where it surely belongs. Congratulations to the supporters, sponsors, participants and organisers on another successful Forum.

” *When planning “Europe Lab” in Gdańsk about a year ago, we wanted to speak about the values of solidarity among societies and cultures. We did not know we would come to the heart of the civic protest and witness Polish citizens getting to the streets to defend the democratic foundations and civic space in their country, - said **Anna Sevortian**, Executive Director at the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum, an international NGO association and the organiser of “Europe Lab”. - This is what we call solidarity in action. Both keynote speakers made the opening of “Europe Lab” in Gdańsk a moment of realisation how solidarity and the legacy of the Solidarność Movement can unite different generations, the present and the past.*

The participants worked in groups formed according to the topics - **solidarity, climate change, urban space, multimedia storytelling**. At the final presentation, which took place at the historic OSH Building of the Gdańsk Shipyard, where the August Agreement was signed in 1980, they shared their ideas for future projects and initiatives.

” *I am happy that "Europe Lab" came to our Centre and that Director Basil Kerski supported the Forum, - summed up **Kacper Dziekan** of the ESC, a coordinator of the workshop on solidarity. - A diversity of participants, variety of their ideas, full involvement in the workshop programme were very exciting. I liked an approach of working on cultural exchanges between Gdańsk and Kaliningrad formulated by one of the teams, as it is in my opinion utterly important to develop international cooperation in the region.*

Other topics mentioned by participants included **civic education on the Solidarność Movement, promotion of the environment-friendly behaviour among tourists, imagination of the future of the cities, mapping healthy food sites, etc.**

Now the participants are welcome to submit their project proposals in writing. A competent jury will have selected best projects by September 2017. Afterwards, their **results will be presented at the 8th General Assembly of the EU-Russia Civil Society Forum on 16-18 May 2018 in Sofia, Bulgaria.**

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The EU-Russia Civil Society Forum was established in 2011 by non-governmental organisations as a permanent common platform. At the moment, 156 NGOs from Russia and the European Union are members of the Forum. It aims at development of cooperation of civil society organisations from Russia and EU and greater participation of NGOs in the EU-Russia dialogue. The Forum has been actively involved, inter alia, in the questions of facilitation of visa regime, development of civic participation, protection of the environment and human rights, dealing with history, and civic education.