

## **About the Forum**

The Association of Schools of Political Studies, at the initiative of the Moscow School of Civic Education, is organizing a major civic forum in Berlin on the 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> of October. It marks the beginning of a mission: to spread the ideals and practice of the Moscow School – the ideals of a civic society, the practice of discussing and teaching them, so that what Jean Monnet called “a civilized state of mind” is made more possible.

The Moscow School of Political Studies was founded in 1992, the idea of two people: Lena Nemirovskaya and her husband Yuri Senokosov, which found support of the Council of Europe. It was launched as the Soviet Union collapsed, and has for nearly a quarter of a century built a centre for learning, debate and publication. In that time, thousands of Russian and other former Soviet citizens have attended seminars in Moscow, Russian regions, countries of Europe and the USA; hundreds of experts, Russian and foreign, have come to the school to speak and learn; and the School has been recognised internationally – with awards in the CE, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the UK to the School and personally to Lena Nemirovskaya.

In that past quarter of a century, over twenty schools modeled on the MSCE have been established in a number of countries.

The Moscow School has – with many other civic organizations in Russia since the end of the Soviet Union – sought to help embed civic values and concepts into the Russian society. Its experience should now be tested in the larger world: a world in which both authoritarian rule, and a fading belief in the public virtues of human civilization, call for the active intervention of citizens.

The Berlin forum starts from the presumption that there are many cultures – but one civilization based on human rights, freedom, the rule of law and democracy. That civilization needs to be constantly refreshed by conscious action and projects.

After the destruction of the Second World War, citizens in Europe and around the world initiated the creation of important new international organizations, including the UN, the World Council of Churches, the Council of Europe and the European

Court of Human Rights. A universal perception of justice emerged, reflected in key international documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Charter of the Council of Europe, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

In the following decade, this universal energy and civic spirit became embodied in the 1955 Russell-Einstein Manifesto, which laid the foundation in 1957 for the Pugwash movement. The Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs is still active today as a forum for scientists working for peace. The Manifesto also led to the Non-Aligned Movement (1961) and to the formation in 1968 of the Club of Rome, also concerned with global problems. Its ethos underpins the Helsinki Final Act at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975), the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the establishment of the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights in 1999.

The Berlin forum is designed to rejuvenate the spirit of global civics. Russia is today increasingly seen by many in the world through the lens of the cold war. But it is more than that. It is a different and proud culture; but millions of Russians yearn to be part of a common civilization. We invite you to be part of that project.