

## WELCOME NOTE

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20 June 2008

Dear friends and colleagues,

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to the *Club of Three* meeting on **Europe and Russia: Defining a New Economic and Strategic Engagement**. The Weidenfeld Institute for Strategic Dialogue organised this conference together with the government of Baden-Württemberg and it is co-hosted by Minister President Günther H. Oettinger, Dr Klaus Mangold, Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation and Lord Weidenfeld, President of the Weidenfeld Institute.

Bringing together senior policymakers, finance and business leaders from Europe and Russia this conference will explore a new economic and strategic relationship between Europe and Russia based on a joint assessment of their vital economic and strategic interests.

The Weidenfeld Institute's discrete meetings, held under the Chatham House rule, are designed to foster a forthright exchange of views on the current challenges facing European-Russian engagement. The conference will assess the impact of post-election changes in Russia on political and business relations with Europe and where geo-strategic interests coincide or complement each other.

## MISSION STATEMENT

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Today's conference on the relationship between Europe and Russia is part of a series of task forces, action programmes and closed policy meetings with head of governments which aims to realign a much need European strategy towards constructive long term engagement with Russia. We hope, that here in Stuttgart, we will have stimulating as well as constructive discussions, providing deeper insight into the new constellation of the Russian leadership and its strategic priorities at home and abroad, her energy politics and broader economic interests.

We hope that this conference will be stimulating as well as constructive and would like to thank you for attending.

Günther H. Oettinger

Minister President,  
State government of  
Baden-Württemberg

Lord Weidenfeld

President,  
Weidenfeld Institute  
for Strategic Dialogue

Dr. Klaus Mangold

Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation &  
Chairman, Committee on Eastern European Economic  
Relations, Federation of German Industries