

Outcomes of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum 2017

The Forum's official programme was developed in collaboration with over 500 leading experts from Russia, Europe, the United States, Asia, and Australia – including academic institutions, development organisations, and business community from all over the world.

The global economy in search of a new balance was the key theme for discussions in the global pillar of the Forum's business programme.

The industrial revolution 4.0 and its impact on the global economy were among the key topics discussed at the Forum. A new digitalization programme has been approved by the Russian government whereby three sectors with a potential for the most impact have been selected for the state's active involvement - public administration, smart cities, and healthcare.

The main topic for the discussions concerning the Russian economy **was Russia's economic development strategy under the new conditions**. An understanding of the need to ensure '**quality growth**' has replaced the previous era of a basic commodities led economy and high economic growth rates. Economic sanctions against Russia have provided a major impetus for the process of import substitution.

Improvements to the investment climate and business conditions in Russia were another common theme of the Forum programme. Reduced pressure on business by the regulatory authorities and work carried out in this regard by the supervisory authorities and the Prosecutor General's Office of the Russian Federation have had a major positive impact on the country's business climate.

Over 900 speakers and moderators took part in the Forum and covered a wide range of topics including socio-economic development, energy, transportation, the environment, healthcare, culture, tourism, education, and science.

The number of business programme events almost doubled compared with last year. A total of 127 events were held in the format of panel sessions, roundtables, TV debates, business breakfasts, and business dialogues. A Russia–US business dialogue was held at SPIEF for the first time in three years and was attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Events on the Forum sidelines included: a meeting of the B20, BRICS and SCO conferences as well as a special session devoted to the upcoming 19th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi in October 2017.

Nobel Prize laureates chose the St. Petersburg Forum as the venue for their traditional meeting and held a special session titled 'New Frontiers in Scientific Advancement' together with the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The 'Made in Russia' national brand attracted huge interest among participants. The session culminated with the Agency for Strategic Initiatives and the Roscongress Foundation proposing the establishment of a national communications strategy to promote Russian manufacturing and exports, cultural heritage, Russia as a tourism destination, and Russian human capital as part of the Roscongress Foundation's 'Made in Russia' national brand project. The strategy aims to harmonize the approaches to the country's promotion as well as the project's concept and strategy, and unify the image of the 'Made in Russia' national brand taking into account the interests of all specialized federal executive authorities as well as development and business

institutions. A proposal was made to implement the strategy in the format of a Priority National Project.

Representatives of numerous foreign countries and companies chose the St. Petersburg Forum as an effective tool for promoting their investment projects. This year, the guest countries India and the Republic of Serbia set up their expositions at the Forum's exhibition.

Among other opportunities, India announced its intention to modernize its armed forces for a total cost of USD 150 billion.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a personal meeting with the heads of the regions of the Russian Federation at the SPIEF venue.

The Forum brought together a record number of participants – over 14,000 business representatives, heads of international organizations, officials, experts, scientists, and media from more than 143 countries. They included heads of 700 Russian companies and 400 foreign companies. Companies from the US, Germany, China, Italy, Japan, and other leading economies were widely represented.

The Forum was also attended by high-ranking foreign politicians: UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Secretary General Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo, Prime Minister of the Gabonese Republic Emmanuel Issoze-Ngondet, Mongolian Prime Minister Jargaltulgyn Erdenebat, Commonwealth of Dominica Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Ivica Dačić, Republic of Zimbabwe Vice President Phelekezela Mphoko, Republic of Burundi Second Vice President Joseph Butore, Republic of South Ossetia President Anatoly Bibilov, President of the Republic of Serbia Milorad Dodik and other officials, as well as 45 ministers from 30 foreign states.

Russian officials at the Forum included six deputy prime ministers of the Government of the Russian Federation, 19 ministers, and 30 heads of federal services and agencies.

The Forum participants had an opportunity to visit the SPIEF Investment & Business Expo, which presented Russian and foreign projects at 25 venues.

The Forum received media coverage from over 3,000 journalists representing 800 media outlets from 45 countries.

The main event of the Forum was the plenary session featuring Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Austrian Federal Chancellor Christian Kern, and Republic of Moldova President Igor Dodon. The SPIEF 2017 plenary session was broadcast by 83 television channels that cover all of Europe and African countries and are members of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). The plenary session was also broadcast by the Indian TV channel Doordarshan (21 national channels and 11 satellite channels). The Forum plenary session was shown throughout the United States via the channels of NBC. Reports from the SPIEF venue were also shown in China. Filming crews from the leading global TV channels of 28 countries provided live reporting from St. Petersburg.

The Forum was attended by a large number of major international organizations such as the United Nations, IAEA, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, the World Energy Council, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the World Bank. The organizations were represented by senior officials.

A total of 475 investment agreements, memorandums, and agreements of intent were concluded at the St. Petersburg Forum this year for a total of RUB 1.818 trillion (taking into account agreements whose amounts are not a commercial secret).

Some of the most significant agreements included:

- An agreement between the German chemical concern Linde Group and Russia's TAIF Group for the construction of a new ethylene complex on the core of Nizhnekamskneftekhim for a total of RUB **600** billion
- An Agreement between Rosatom State Corporation and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India on the construction of the fifth and sixth power units at the Kudankulam NPP for a total of RUB **239.4** billion (USD **4.2** billion)
- Agreements of intent between St. Petersburg and the Eurasian Development Bank, VTB Bank on participation in the implementation of a project to build a high-speed highway with a bridge across the Neva River at the section of Fayansovaya and Zolnaya Streets – the Eastern Speed Diameter for a total of RUB **150** billion
- An agreement between Rosavtodor Russian Highways and Southeast Highway on the financing, construction, and toll-based operation of the Central Ring Road of the Moscow region for a total of RUB **78.5** billion
- An agreement between Vodokanal of St. Petersburg and the Eurasian Development Bank on cooperation in the implementation and financing of the investment programme of Vodokanal of St. Petersburg for a total of RUB **60** billion
- Agreement between the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Tulachermet-Steel and the Tula region on participation in an investment project to build a casting and rolling complex for a total of RUB **43.7** billion
- An agreement between VEB and Transholdingleasing on the acquisition of 770 railcars for the Moscow Metro for a total of RUB **38.6**billion
- An agreement between EuroChem and the Chinese corporation ChemChina on the establishment of joint industrial production in Russia for a total of RUB **28.5** billion

Reference: 205 agreements were concluded in 2015 and 356 in 2016.

The Roscongress Foundation signed a number of agreements in an effort to develop new international communication platforms. In particular, strategic partnership agreements were signed with the agency Invest India, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (in the presence of the Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern and Adviser to the President of the Russian Federation Anton Kobyakov), the World Economic Forum, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Serbia and Belarus, the Institute for the Promotion of Exports and Investments of Ecuador, the Canada Eurasia Russia Business Association (CERBA), Finnish and Swedish business associations (East Office of Finnish Industries and Business Sweden), the Foundation for Development and Support of the Valdai Discussion Club.

In accordance with the decision by the President of Russia a separate youth section will be organized as part of the Forum programme on a permanent basis starting this year.

The Forum has become a traditional platform to broadly represent the investment opportunities in the Russian regions. Representatives from all 85 constituent entities of the Russian Federation took part in the Forum's business programme this year, with 76 of them represented at the level of regional leaders.

At the Forum, an important agreement was signed on establishing and promoting a joint platform which will aggregate and select, on the basis of analysis, state support measures for a specific recipient. It will be a type of 'smart navigator for support measures' and will involve the Roscongress Foundation and Russian news agency TASS, with support from the main development institutions: the Agency for Strategic Initiatives, Vnesheconombank, the SME Corporation, the Industrial Development Fund, and the Russian Direct Investment Fund.

In addition, the issue of creating a Russian National Convention Bureau was raised at the Forum. The main goal of the Russian National Convention Bureau is to form and promote a positive image of the Russian Federation as a country with a favourable business and investment climate through the development and support of the national event industry. The Russian National Convention Bureau will undertake several key responsibilities, including the development of the country's marketing strategy and the promotion of territories at the international level; forming a one-stop shop for potential international organizers of meetings and convention and exhibition events to hold them in the Russian Federation; promoting the national brand of Russia as a convenient and favourable place for holding international congress and exhibition events; and implementing educational projects with a focus on representatives of the event industry.

In addition, the Russian National Convention Bureau plans to participate in various specialized international events and associations as well as represent various destinations and infrastructure opportunities offered by the regions and the country as a whole at a single booth of Russia. Study tours for foreign buyers and organizers of international convention and exhibition events will also be arranged.

The Russian National Convention Bureau is being established with the organizational and legal form of an association whose work allows each participant in the event market to be involved in the process of forming the relevant agenda.

Along with the Forum's saturated business programme, 88 cultural and sporting events were held on the SPIEF sidelines. Such an extensive programme enabled Forum participants to work in a more trusting and productive manner, and also created a comfortable atmosphere for informal dialogue. Notably this year featured an expansion of the sporting programme and the coverage of sports topics in the Forum's business agenda. The Forum has become a new space for confidence in the effective interaction of Russian and international sports leaders, the heads of global companies, organizing committees, and the regions directly involved in the implementation of major sports projects.

The Forum of 2017 was once again an efficient platform for discussions and deliberations in search of solutions to global, regional, and national challenges and pressing issues in a large number of areas.

The next St. Petersburg International Economic Forum will take place on May 24–26, 2018.