

A b s t r a c t s

Ivan Blokov

Every Year Again Forest Fires in Russia

In the summer of 2010, Russia was afflicted by devastating fires. These attracted enormous media attention above all due to the peat fires around Moscow. However, large expanses of woods burn every year in Russia. Catastrophes such as the one in 2010 were triggered by extreme climate conditions, but they were nonetheless foreseeable. The area affected by forest fires each year has considerably expanded over the past two decades. Just registering the forest fires is an enormous strain on the state forest authorities. The already sparse funds for fighting forest fires have been cut again, and the authorities have been paralysed ever since an administrative reorganisation.

Reinhold Vetter

Euphoria and Sobriety Poland's Russia Policy before and after Smolensk

The crash of the Polish president's plane outside Smolensk in April 2010 seemed to usher in a new era of relations between Poland and Russia. The scepticism vis-à-vis Russia gave way to hope for friendly relations. In the meantime, sobriety has returned. Differing interests in foreign and energy policy can strain relations in the future as well. Nonetheless, Poland recognises the positive changes: Russia no longer denies the murders at Katyn in 1940 and now pays attention to Poland's increased weight within the European Union. This is also a success of the government under Donald Tusk.

Catherine Defontaine

Strategic Partner? French-Russian Economic Relations

French President Nicolas Sarkozy is calling Russia one of France's strategic partners. However, measured in terms of economic relations, this is wishful thinking. As the French travelling salesman in chief,

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Sarkozy may have engineered an arms deal, but as far as trade partners go, even Belgium is more important for France than Russia. In addition, France is running a steadily growing deficit in its trade with Russia, and, despite all of its efforts, French economic integration with Russia lags behind German-Russian integration.

Focal Point: Institutional Transfer

Petra Stykow

The Choice of the Election System Democratic Rules, Undemocratic Elections

The adoption of technical elements from democratic electoral systems does not necessarily entail the adoption of the "constitutional idea" which lies at the heart of elections in democracies. While the two processes ran parallel in East Central Europe, Russia presents a case of failed institutional transfer. Here, as in most post-Soviet states, formal democratic rules are instrumental in the stabilisation of authoritarian regimes.

Martin Brusis

Institutional Transfer and Regional Studies Considerations from the Point of View of Political Science

In times of dissolving borders, norms, rules, and procedures spread among states and regions. However, during such a transfer, institutions have totally different effects in a new context. What the causes of such unexpected effects are and how institutions can be transferred without losing their function can be studied in Eastern Europe under laboratory conditions. The state socialist past of the region's countries offers a certain degree of homogeneity. At the same time, the region is so heterogeneous that numerous variations and the reasons for them can be observed.

Angelika Nussberger

The Transfer of Constitutional Law from West to East Illusion, Disillusion, New Start

The collapse of Communism left behind a vacuum in constitutional law in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The regimes tried to fill this through a “maximum” adoption of western constitutional models. Even with the new guise, however, old ideas continued to make themselves felt. The regimes reacted to the realisation that western constitutional law could not be transferred to their reality without problems by introducing constitutional amendments and by subcutaneously undermining constitutional postulates. The effects of transfer of law deviated strongly from what was intended.

Carsten Herrmann-Pillath, Joachim Zweynert

Institutional Transfer and Catch-Up Development

To modernise both an economy and society, as well as to boost competitiveness in a given country, institutions from successful countries are transferred to less successful ones. At the same time, local political actors decide to a large extent whether the transfer and expansion of institutions will succeed. For they alone have the cultural knowledge to change institutions in a way so that they fit cultural practices in a new environment. This is seen in a comparison of the introduction of the social market economy in West Germany after 1945 and the carrying out of market reforms in Russia after 1990.

Martin Aust

The Transfer of International Law in the Tsarist Empire Internationalism and Empire in the Work of Fedor F. Martens

The lawyer and diplomat Fedor F. Martens (1845–1909) was networked in the global community of international law specialists and at the same time loyal to the Russian Empire. In terms of transfer history, he acted as receptor and transmitter of concepts of international law.

