



SES Senior
Executive
Seminar



Key Themes and Focus:

States and institutions in Europe and elsewhere are trying to understand and adapt to the changing nature of Russia's influence in European affairs. To do so we must focus on:

- Understanding of Russian international policy goals in Europe as well as the ways and means it employs to reach them.
- Understanding Russian strategic communication strategy in Europe and how to measure its impact.
- Analyzing Russian political, economic and strategic goals in Europe and within the international system.
- Establishing a strategic context for the Russian-Western relationship.

Course Outcomes:

- Provide participants with current analyses of Russian goals regarding their European strategic planning in comparison with European and U.S. positions.
- Provide objective assessment of Western unity and disunity concerning Russia's policies towards the West.
- Identify trends and likely future developments as Russia becomes more deeply integrated into European affairs.
- Highlight specific policies and techniques Russia uses to achieve its policy goals in Europe and beyond.
- Facilitate exchange among senior decision-makers.
- Establish networks based on mutual understanding and shared political will to respond to Russian initiatives in a coordinated and internationally supportable manner.

Russia in Europe: The Return of Great Power Competition

22-26 June 2020

Who Should Attend?

The George C. Marshall Center Senior Executive Seminar (SES) is an intensive five-day program tailored to meet the specific needs of national ministers, ambassadors, legislators, general officers and senior government officials who must address the critical issues facing our global and regional security environment.

Participation in this high level and concentrated program is open to senior government officials who will meet experts, analysts and government officials at commensurate level. The seminar combines the sharing of knowledge with interactive seminars that help share best practices among the participants.

About this Seminar

Russia, as an international political actor is interested in acquiring and maintaining its great power status in the international system. Its efforts are two-fold: 1) To divide its self-identified adversary, the West, starting from Europe and its areas of interest, thus weakening western prominence and influence in the international system; and 2) to complement this division by finding strategic partners/allies globally. Even though these actions may eventually result in strategic overstretch, Russia has certainly gained prominence on the international stage with the partially successful combination of the two.

It is essential to present and assess clearly the reality of Russia's actions backing its aspirations, grouped around a number of topics and complemented by seminars that interactively deepen the analysis, and complement it in regional contexts.

The objectives of this seminar are to:

- Create/deepen awareness among international stakeholders on Russia's goals and strategy with an emphasis on areas where its interests intersect with Europe;
- Improve understanding of Russian interests, goals and policy in Europe and other areas beyond its region, and how it uses indirect and asymmetric approaches to realize them;
- Identify trends and commonalities in Russian bilateral and regional initiatives in Europe in order to better understand Russian intentions including competition short of armed conflict;
- Compare how European and other nations perceive and react to Russian diplomatic, informational, economic, and military initiatives in the context of great power competition.

SES 20-15 THEMATIC AND DAILY SCHEDULE

SES 20-15 will consist of a combination of keynote speakers, expert panel presentations and discussions, and time for questions and answers. Participants will also have the opportunity to discuss the issues raised with their peers in small working groups. The topics to be covered are as follows:

22-26 June 2020

MONDAY, 22 JUNE

Introduction to the Marshall Center

SES Program Overview

Opening keynote speakers: Senior Russian and U.S. analysts will set the scene with a comparative perspective on the world vision of Russia, its aspirations, and the effects Moscow generates in the world at large.

TUESDAY, 23 JUNE

SESSION 1: Russia's Alliances and Strategic Partnerships with an Emphasis on China

Will analyze Russian efforts to create strategic partnerships and alliances, including with China, the world's second largest economy and a fast-rising neighbor of particular importance to influence relative power distribution.

SESSION 2: What Russia Has, Needs and Wants

Will analyze the official positions of Moscow and Washington, emphasizing the main points of discord and shared interests, including countering terrorism, managing some regional conflicts and countering the proliferation of WMD.

WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE

SESSION 3: Russia's Northwestern Flank

Will examine Russian activity in the Baltic area and in Belarus, taking into account reactions of the Alliance to provide options and reassurances and, as necessary, to deter Russia.

SESSION 4: Russia and Ukraine: The Decision Point in the BlackSea Region?

Will present Russian-Ukrainian relations since 2014 with an emphasis on the south and south-east of Ukraine and how others around the Black Sea have gained new strategic attention.

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE

SESSION 5: The Military Dimension: Regional Power Balances along the Flank

Will explore regional power balances and the development of military capabilities to understand the consequences of rapid modernization, limited resources, and possible reactions.

SESSION 6: Russia in the Balkans

Will examine Russian engagement, competition, and influence with key Balkan countries and the corresponding western reactions.

FRIDAY, 26 JUNE

SESSION 7: How to Engage with Russia: Response of the West

Will put the Russian-Western Relationship in a strategic context by examining EU-NATO coordination challenges and opportunities.

SESSION 8: What Should Be Done?

Will present the course the West should take in order to achieve the best results for shared benefit, recommending specific areas for policy consistency, adjustment, and revision.

Senior Executive Seminar (SES) Leadership

Program Director: BG Sebastiano Comitini

Deputy Director: Colonel Matt Sousa

Academic Advisor: Pal Dunay, Ph.D.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

E-mail: registrar@marshallcenter.org

Telephone: +49 (0) 8821-750-2656 or -2226

Fax: +49 (0)8821-750-2650



**GEORGE C.
MARSHALL**

EUROPEAN CENTER FOR
SECURITY STUDIES

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PARTNERSHIP