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## **Farewell to Intersection - it's been a good run**



Dear Readers of *Intersection*,

As the editor-in-chief of this project I would like to announce two pieces of news: one bad and one good.

Let me start with the bad news. I regret to inform you about my decision to suspend *Intersection: Russia/Europe/World*. The site will remain accessible for everyone interested in searching our archives, but it will not be updated.

Why have we taken this difficult decision? From the outset, all financing for the project was provided by the publisher, the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding ([www.cprdip.pl](http://www.cprdip.pl)), a Polish public institution that I have had the privilege to lead since 2016. The Centre was established by an act of the Polish parliament in 2011, to foster dialogue between Poles and Russians. In 2014, Russian aggression against Ukraine, the annexation of Crimea and the ongoing war in Eastern Ukraine changed the Centre's modus operandi and *Intersection* was part of this evolution. However, from the very beginning we were aware that

without additional resources we would not be able to ensure the stability and longevity of the project, due to a limited budget and our numerous statutory tasks such as historical research, publishing, scholarships, conferences and youth exchange. The last two years were marked by a never-ending story of searching for funds, which ended in failure mainly because public institutions of our kind are typically barred from most grant opportunities.

Still, I dare say we managed to achieve quite a lot. We launched this online journal to provide in-depth analysis of political, economic, legal and social developments in Russia, and their regional, European and global ramifications. We explained the reasons for this [here](#), and they remain valid. Our aim was to reach both Russian- and English-speaking audiences interested in Russia's development. We wanted to offer a platform for all those interested in participating in a debate with Russia and about Russia. Whether it worked or not is up to our readers to decide. Yet the increasing number of followers and critical commentators, and the growing number of authors (both experienced and aspiring), as well as regular trolling, convinced us that we did a good job of providing competent analysis.

The project was financed by the Centre but managed by an international team of experts with Olga Irisova, Anton Barbashin and Fabian Burkhardt forming the core since the very beginning. It would not be an exaggeration to say that what *Intersection* achieved was almost entirely thanks to their hard work and commitment. And here we are with almost 500 articles, each published in English and Russian, with over 140 authors from Russia, Poland, Germany, Ukraine, the U.S., the UK, France, Hungary and Estonia, and a growing number of readers. The digital sphere is highly competitive, with a plethora of outlets fighting for more and more limited attention, so we are proud that we managed to earn the trust of thousands of people who regularly read, commented on and reposted our content.

We have faced many challenges. As we explained in our mission statement in 2015 we decided to provide space for an honest exchange of ideas, provided they were based upon a commitment to democratic principles and views. The only way to fight the flood of disinformation, propaganda and trolling is to stick to your values, even if it gives your opponents fuel for accusations of bias. And in fact it did lead to fierce attacks on us, both personal and institutional. Some adversaries thought that 'nothing was what it seemed' and started to spread false accusations that the project must have been a sinister pro-Kremlin operation. Initially, we thought that the name of the sponsor - the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding - was creating confusion, so we tried to explain patiently the idea and the purpose of this institution. However, it took us some time to realize (let me apologize for our naiveté) that we were simply facing the multi-layered reality of the digital information struggle. We got over our initial frustration shortly after we started to be targeted by the factory of Kremlin trolls itself: not only through aggressive and foolish comments but also by DDoS and phishing attacks. We simply came to the conclusion that we must have been doing the right thing.

Although this is a sad moment for the Centre and the phantoms pains will remain with us for a long time, I also have a piece of good news to deliver. Our editors Olga Irisova, Anton Barbashin and Fabian Burkhardt have decided to launch a new project that will keep the legacy of *Intersection* alive and will take it in new directions, providing the same quality of Russia analysis and expanding the network of authors that *Intersection* has gathered. Their new online journal, [Riddle](#), will go live shortly, so stay tuned. On behalf of the Centre for Polish-Russian Dialogue and Understanding let me say thank you to all of you who followed *Intersection*. It has been a great time for us. Obviously, our main mission has not been accomplished yet, so if you are interested in Russia and Polish-Russian relations please continue to follow what we do (and we do quite a lot) on our website and social media accounts.

Yours

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