

Sergei Lavrov on conditions for Russian co-operation with the West

Towards the end of December, in a text published in *Diplomatichesky Yezhegodnik* (The Diplomatic Yearbook), Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov outlined Moscow's expectations from the West, especially in matters of international security and on post-Soviet territory. The article resembles a policy document, and its content indicates the possibility that Russian policy harden if Western states do not pay heed to Moscow's demands.

Minister Lavrov called for closer cooperation with the European Union in the field of external security, indicating the need to create new institutions, such as the EU-Russia Committee for foreign and security policy which Germany has proposed. He also stated that devising a formula for equal Russia-NATO cooperation in the field of missile defence will be a test of how ready the West is to treat Moscow as its partner. Lavrov also referred to the West's activity in the area of the CIS, suggesting that it should not aim to 'push Russia out' of the region, and also criticising the Eastern Partnership as a non-transparent initiative. At the same time, he declared a readiness to tripartite cooperation in a format of the EU, Russia and their joint neighbours, on condition of Russia's full and equal participation. Lavrov also hinted that Russia would not support the move initiated by Western countries to impose further sanctions on Iran and North Korea, saying that the previous policy of urging these countries to give up their nuclear programmes had not borne any fruit. <MaK>