



Press Release

27 January 2006

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Russia in the Spotlight – launching the ‘G8 Scorecard’

The Foreign Policy Centre is pleased to announce the launch of ‘**G8 Scorecard**’: **Russia in the Spotlight, an embargoed copy of which is attached (pdf)**.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently described the G8 nations as “a group of democracies ... fully committed to free market principles, free trade, rule of law”. But are those still its core values? If so, should Russia be a member of the club?

In fact, the G8 Presidency in 2006 is a paradox, with Russia poised for integration and global leadership, but posing fundamental questions about its reliability and responsibility as a great power. The Russian-Ukrainian gas dispute over New Year was merely the wake-up call: President Vladimir Putin marked the beginning of his country’s G8 presidency by cutting off natural gas supplies to much of Europe, brandishing Russia’s vast energy reserves as his Soviet predecessors once flaunted nuclear rockets.

It is therefore a timely moment for the Foreign Policy Centre to be launching the ‘**G8 Scorecard**’, with its innovative scoring system – a major instrument for providing transparent, comparable data annually to help monitor, co-ordinate and improve the policies of the leading industrial nations in the world.

STEPHEN TWIGG, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre, writes in his preface:

“In 2006 Russia holds the presidency of the G8 - a club for the world’s richest, market-driven democracies – until Russia joined. The Foreign Policy Centre believes that this presidency is a significant event because it raises the old question of whether Russia is an open democracy or a free-market economy at all.

“Despite having an economy the size of Portugal’s, Russia was elevated to G8 membership in the hope that a seat at the top table would encourage it towards greater democracy and economic reform. Things did not work out that way. Many of the successes of Vladimir Putin’s leadership – tax reform, balanced budgets, sharply reduced international lending and a booming economy – have been overshadowed by state intervention, particularly in the oil and gas sector, and by an authoritarianism that increasingly challenges the founding principles of the G8.”



Key Findings

The key findings of the G8 Scorecard are that:

- the size of Russia's economy does not merit its inclusion in the G8;
- Russia is neither politically nor economically free, according to the principles set out in the founding declaration of the G6 at Rambouillet in 1975;
- Russia's presidency of the G8 is correspondingly anomalous;
- the other G8 nations must develop a concerted policy to force Putin to live up to his international obligations.

ENDS

Editor's Notes

1. An embargoed copy of the FPC's G8 Scorecard is attached
2. The FPC will launch the G8 Scorecard at the event detailed below:

Launching the G8 Scorecard: Russia in the Spotlight

Speakers

Professor Margot Light, London School of Economics

Andrew Jack, Financial Times

Professor Philip Hanson, University of Birmingham

Monday 30 January 2006, 5.30–7.30 p.m.

The Foreign Press Association
11 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AJ

Refreshments will be served

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