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OVERLAPPING NEIGHBOURHOOD – EU AND RUSSIA
COMPETING FOR NORMATIVE SUPREMACY IN THE
WESTERN CIS AND SOUTHERN CAUCASUS

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1. INTRODUCTION

The countries of the Western CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) and Southern Caucasus are of great interest for both the European Union and the Russian Federation, the two major powers in the post-Soviet space. The way they approach those countries, however, differs significantly.

With the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, the European Union introduced a new policy towards its Southern and Eastern neighbours. The ENP was developed as a follow up to the EU accession of the Central and Eastern European countries and the challenges associated with the new neighbourhood. The 2004 and 2007 enlargements brought the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus closer to the Union and therefore, their security, stability and prosperity increasingly affect the EU's own security, stability and prosperity.

The ENP is the core strategy of the European Union to stabilise its neighbourhood by promoting democracy, human rights, rule of law, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development without involving the incentive of becoming a (potential) candidate country. Instead it offers its partner countries participation in various EU activities to increase cooperation on political, security, economic and cultural matters.

In 2009 the Eastern Partnership (EP) was launched to facilitate closer cooperation between the European Union and its partner countries in Eastern Europe (Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) and the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). It shall enable partner countries to move closer towards the EU and increase political, economic and cultural links on an individual basis.

A main challenge to the Union's efforts is the fact that the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus are of great interest to the Russian Federation as well. All these countries were part of the Soviet Union and therefore have a more or less close and more or less complicated relationship with Russia. While immediately after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, president Yeltsin paid little attention to the countries of the "near abroad"¹, the official Foreign Policy Conception from as early as April 1993 already emphasised that Russia had both rights and responsibilities relating to the states of the former Soviet Union.² Soon after the dissolution of the USSR Russia endeavoured to preserve or create close ties to the newly independent states. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed in December 1991 and included until 1993 all countries of the former Soviet Union with the exception of the Baltic States. The CIS is a loose

¹The term „near abroad“ (Ближнее зарубежье) was used by officials and media in the Russian Federation to refer to the other former Soviet republics. Cf. Donaldson (2012: 432)

²Cf. Donaldson (2012: 432)

federation featuring elements of both, a political alliance and an economical community.³ Its main achievement was to ensure a peaceful transformation of its members towards independence.

Russia soon started its efforts to tie the countries of the post-Soviet space closer to itself. One way to preserve its influence on these states is to maintain their strong dependency on Russian energy. Russia was often reproached of that its policy towards this area is led by the idea that these countries are a sphere of influence where Russia has special and privileged interests. The Russian policy towards these states can be situated somewhere between domestic and foreign policy.⁴

Over the past few years president Vladimir Putin increased his efforts to create his own comprehensive integration project supposed to serve as an alternative to EU integration programmes and strengthen Russia's position in this region, towards the European Union and in the global context. Putin suggested the so-called “Greater Europe” concept on several occasions since 2001 but it has not been recast into a detailed political programme. Putin envisages a Europe that consists of a Western bloc (EU) and an Eastern bloc, comprised of the emerging Eurasian Union with Russia in a hegemonic position.⁵ In recent years Russia has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at implementing elements of this concept such as the creation of the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU), a free-trade customs union binding Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, or the Eurasian Economic Union founded in May 2014.

The fact that both the EU and Russia attempt to further integrate with the post-Soviet countries leads to tensions and affects their relationship. From the Russian perspective the European Union's efforts concerning their shared neighbourhood are undermining its own special position among those countries. The EU on the other hand is highly sceptical about Russia trying to gain a hegemonic position among the states of the former Soviet Union. These tensions between the European Union and the Russian Federation over normative supremacy in the region saw their latest culmination in the developments in Euro-Maidan which led to political and social instability in Ukraine and serious tensions between Russia on the one hand, and the EU and the United States on the other.

The current situation in Ukraine shows how important research in this field is and how severe the consequences for all the countries involved are. Without a deeper understanding of the differences between and common ground shared by Russia and the EU it is impossible to truly assess and analyse the events. Due to the complexity of the topic the thesis can only try to discuss it as comprehensively as possible and to avoid a Eurocentric view on Russia and its actions.

There is plenty of literature on the foreign policies of the European Union and the Russian

³Cf. Donaldson (2012: 433)

⁴Cf. Adomeit (2012: 18)

⁵Cf. Menkiszak (2013)

Federation as well as on the relations between Russia and the EU. The works of Elena Korosteleva, Velina Tchakarova, Barbara Lippert and Grzegorz Gromadzki mainly discuss the European Union's foreign policy towards its neighbours in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus.⁶ Academic papers dealing with Russian approaches towards its neighbourhood were written inter alia by Susan Stewart, Velina Tchakarova, Iris Kempe and Marek Menkiszak.⁷ EU-Russian relations are the focus in the works of Sergei Prozorov, Katrin Bastian, Stefan Meister and Alexander Rahr as well as an important part of Cameron Ross's study about Russian politics under Putin.⁸ However, there is a lack of studies dealing with both approaches. Only very few publications present both policy actors' approaches in equal measure and compare them. Examples are the volume edited by Katlijn Malfliet et al. which deals with the challenges arising between the CIS, the EU and Russia⁹, Hannes Adomeit's text¹⁰ about rivalry and conflicts between the EU and Russia in Eastern Europe or Velina Tchakarova's article¹¹ about the tensions between the EU and Russia in the post-Soviet space.

The aim of this MA-thesis is to examine the different approaches of the EU and Russia to integrate the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus. In doing so, the origin and evolution of EU's Eastern policy, its aims, developments and hindrances shall be analysed as well as Russia's ambitions concerning this region. An important part of the thesis is to characterise the differences between Russia and the EU as foreign policy actors which is essential for analysing their motives and actions. Both the EU and Russia have an inherent normative character but their structure as policy actors and their self-representation in international relations differ significantly. While the European Union can be described as a post-Westphalian, non-state foreign policy actor, Russia is a classical neo-Westphalian, "Machtpolitik" foreign policy actor.

Apart from portraying the integration efforts of these two actors, the thesis aims at researching how these approaches influence each other. A third focus is on the relationship between the European Union and Russia and how it is affected by the rivalry in their shared neighbourhood.

The thesis is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the main differences between the integration efforts by the EU and Russia towards their shared neighbourhood? Are these integration concepts incompatible? If yes, in what way?
2. How do the integration efforts influence each other and what consequences does this have on EU-Russian relations?
3. How does Russia react to the EU's attempts to achieve closer cooperation with the EP countries? To what extent does the EU's active policy in the shared neighbourhood facilitate the

⁶Cf. Korosteleva (2012), Tchakarova (2010/1), Lippert (2008), Gromadzki (2011)

⁷Cf. Tchakarova (2013), Stewart (2009), Stewart (2010), Menkiszak (2013), Kempe (2013/1)

⁸Cf. Prozorov (2006), Bastian (2006), Meister/Rahr (2009), Ross (2004)

⁹Cf. Malfliet et al. (2007)

¹⁰Cf. Adomeit (2012)

¹¹Cf. Tchakarova (2010/2)

formation of a Eurasian Union?

The following hypotheses serve as a starting point for this research:

1. The EU and Russia both have an interest in close relations to their neighbouring countries. However, they are two completely different foreign policy actors with diverging views on international relations and different expectations towards their neighbourhood. The European Union's main interest is the neighbouring countries' stability since their security, stability and prosperity directly affect the EU's. The EU pursues this goal by promoting values and offering financial aid, cooperation and the possibility to participate in various EU activities while refusing a membership perspective. Russia aims at gaining a hegemonic position within its own integration project supposed to strengthen its influence in this region and its power in negotiations with the EU. Taking the differences of these approaches into account, the Russian and EU interests in the countries of the European Partnership have to collide at some point.
2. Since Russia considers its neighbourhood a region in which itself should be the main partner, the efforts of the European Union to move the countries of the Eastern Partnership closer to the EU, must appear as an attempt to undermine Russia's hegemony in this area. Therefore, the Russian reactions are supposed to be rather negative.
3. Russia tries to prevent the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus from drifting too far away from itself. Since Russia endeavours a relationship based on its own terms, it has both to undermine the EU's efforts in this region and to attempt to strengthen its political and economic bonds with those countries. Though the EU is not the reason why Russia wants to strengthen its bonds with its neighbourhood, its attempts to export its values and regulations to those countries serve as a catalyst for Russia's efforts.

Due to the complexity of the topic a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will be applied whereby qualitative methods prevail. The thesis will be based mainly on the analysis of primary and secondary literature. The primary sources will be analysed by means of a documentary analysis which focuses on what is being said as well as on the context in which the documents were created.¹² As primary sources serve speeches, statements and articles by political actors of the Russian Federation and the EU as well as official documents from Brussels and Moscow. While neither quantitative or qualitative surveys will be conducted during the research process, the thesis will include and analyse existing data related to the research questions. Those will be re-evaluated in form of secondary analyses.¹³

The thesis will be embedded in the field of international relations theory. Therefore, it at first gives an overview on some of the major theories in international relations, namely Neo-Realism, Neo-

¹²Cf. Harrison / Callan (2013: 34), Burnham et al. (2004: 165ff.)

¹³Cf. Harrison / Callan (2013: 136)

Liberalism, Interdependence and Constructivism whereby Neo-Realism will be especially useful to explain Russia's actions. In a second step, the thesis follows the concept of “normative power Europe”, which was introduced by Ian Manners. This concept assumes that due to a combination of historical context, hybrid polity and legal constitution the EU is a normative power. In its role as a normative power the EU is redefining what is “normal” in international relations.¹⁴

From a neo-realist point of view, the concept of Europe as a normative power has been criticised for different reasons like overlooking the military and economic aspects of the European Union. This critique will be paid attention to in the thesis as well.

The structure of the thesis presents itself as follows: The introduction is followed by a chapter focusing on the theoretical background of the thesis. The third chapter examines the differences between the European Union and the Russian Federation as foreign policy actors. The fourth chapter analyses the relationship between Russia and the European Union and is followed by an overview of the relations the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus conduct with Russia and the EU. The sixth and seventh chapter focus on the approaches of the EU and Russia towards these countries. The eighth chapter compares the approaches of the EU and Russia and examines if and in what sense they are incompatible. Russia's reactions to ENP and EP are inquired as well as the question if the EU's engagement can be perceived as a catalyst for Russian integration projects. The potential conflicts arising from the two integration projects are analysed as well.

2. THEORETICAL CONTEXT

The following chapter portrays some of the main theories in International Relations. The emphasis will be placed on Neo-Realism since it will be used to analyse Russia's behaviour as a foreign-policy actor. Russia tends to consider itself being a very realistic actor and adheres to a mainly interest based foreign policy.¹⁵ The other theories, namely Interdependence, Neo-Liberalism and Constructivism, will also be briefly outlined in this chapter.

¹⁴Cf. Manners (2002), Manners (2009/1), Manners (2009/2), Manners (2012)

¹⁵Cf. Romanova (2009: 56ff.)

2.1. Theories of International Relations

2.1.1. Neo-Realism

Neo-Realism is rooted in the theory of Realism which was developed by Hans Morgenthau and dominated the field of International Relations since the 1940s. The key term for both theoretical movements is power. According to Realism states are conceived as rational actors whose main interest is to gain power. Classical realism believes that states have a natural desire to dominate each other and that they cannot be distinguished by their goals and motives but only by the material capabilities available for pursuing their interest.¹⁶ Realists are convinced that the principle of anarchy prevails in the international system. They assume that whoever wants to act effectively requires a combination of knowledge of existing circumstances and the power to act.¹⁷ The distribution of material capabilities among states is a key factor for understanding world politics.¹⁸ International politics are perceived as a zero-sum game, therefore the gains of one state are the losses of another. Realists believe that politics as well as societies are ruled by objective, persistent laws.¹⁹

Classical realists like John F. Kennan, Edward H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau believe that politics are governed by objective laws ingrained in human nature.²⁰ Their “key to understanding international politics is the concept of political interest defined in terms of power”²¹.

The anarchical, rather constant nature of the international system is seen as the core catalyst of state behaviour.²² National actors are anarchical units focusing on the retention or expansion of power.²³

Unlike Realism, Neo-Realism acknowledges the necessity to form alliances. Its key concept is the balance of power since each state adjusts to the behaviour of other states likely to have any kind of influence on them.²⁴ Balance of power is possible but only exists when states acknowledge their mutual interest and try to maintain an overall equilibrium. It is quite rational for states to accept societal restraints in order to reduce uncertainty but only if they are convinced that others will do so too. However, there remains a certain degree of fear that other states might change their mind.²⁵

A key figure in Neo-Realism is Kenneth Waltz, who distinguishes three possible relations: uni-, bi- and multi-polar systems. The bi-polar system vanished with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and

¹⁶Cf. Beckman et al. (2010: 22), Cf. Casny (2011: 13)

¹⁷Cf. Hyde-Price (2008: 38)

¹⁸Cf. Hyde-Price (2008: 38)

¹⁹Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 73ff.)

²⁰Cf. Harrison / Callan (2013: 125f.)

²¹Harrison / Callan (2013: 126)

²²Cf. Harrison / Callan (2013: 126)

²³Cf. Casny (2011: 14)

²⁴Cf. Lawson (2012: 45)

²⁵Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 85ff.)

made room for a uni-polar system (US as the only remaining superpower). Today a multi-polar constellation can be observed where not only states but also supranational actors like the European Union are of importance.²⁶ Waltz's main interest is not power but security.²⁷

Despite some differences realist thinkers share a common focus on the dynamics of power. A key term in realism is the “security dilemma”, a situation in which the effort by one state to provide for its security provokes insecurity in another state potentially responding with rearmament.²⁸ Problems like this can be avoided when rules and institutions limit the power capabilities of states and state sovereignty is acknowledged. The preservation of sovereignty as well as independence are primary concerns for realists.²⁹ They point out a norm of non-intervention giving states the freedom to pursue their own goals without outside control. Interference in domestic politics may be justified only in exceptional circumstances.³⁰

The core assumptions of Neo-Realism can be summarised as follows: the international system is an anarchical self-help system, in which states are the key actors seeking their own security and survival. They are homogeneous units acting on the basis of self-interest.³¹ The EU is not seen as a sovereign actor in its own right but acts as a vehicle for the collective interests of its member states. States are rational and capable of acting strategically on the basis of calculation of costs and benefits of alternative courses of action.³²

States whose primary concern is security have to rely on their own resources or on those of their allies.³³

2.1.2. Interdependence

Interdependence is a situation of mutual dependence between social actors. In international relations nation-states and national societies are dependent on the activities of other states. Besides, the effects of an action by one government can depend on societal developments taking place outside the government's jurisdiction (e.g. environmental regulation).³⁴ Important scholars of this theory are Davis Baldwin, Richard Cooper, Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and Richard Rosecrance.³⁵

²⁶Cf. Casny (2011: 15f.)

²⁷Cf. Knapp / Krell (2004: 63)

²⁸Cf. Lawson (2012: 45)

²⁹Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 80)

³⁰Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 81)

³¹Cf. Katzenstein / Keohane / Krasner (1998: 659), Cf. Ghimis (2011: 90)

³²Cf. Hyde-Price (2006: 220f.)

³³Cf. Hyde-Price (2006: 221f.)

³⁴Cf. Zürn (2006: 236)

³⁵Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 193)

Interdependence theory examines structures of the international state system beyond the nation-state and asks for possibilities and limits of international politics. It analyses reciprocal dependencies in political constellations and processes in nations as well as the stipulations that affect these systems from outside.³⁶

Keohane and Nye have developed an analytical approach in “Power and Interdependence” (1977). They differentiate two forms of interdependence, which both presume that states are connected via reciprocate dependencies causing changes in military, politics and economy to not only bring benefit to one state but also disadvantages to others.³⁷

Scholars of Interdependence focus mainly on the analysis of political, economic and societal interactions and complex relations.³⁸ They believe that the power of disposition over resources which are characteristic for different areas determines the ability to behave confidently. The room for manoeuvre for state actors is amplified by support or obstruction of developments of interdependence as well as the assignment of international organisations or transnational actors for one's (their) own purpose.³⁹

Interdependence has been criticised for lacking a binding definition of the term interdependence itself.⁴⁰ Richard N. Rosecrance and Arthur Stein refer to the absence of an agreed definition and outline that in its most general sense suggests a relationship of interest such in the way that if a nation changes its position, other states will be affected by this as well. According to another meaning, which was derived from the field of economics, interdependence emerges whenever there is an increased national “sensitivity” to external developments.⁴¹ Rosecrance and Stein identify Kenneth Waltz's definition, who argued that interdependence entails “a relationship that would be costly to break”⁴², as the most stringent.

2.1.3. Neo-Liberalism

Neo-Liberalism, sometimes called pluralism due to its emphasis on the assumed plurality of actors in the international system, has its progenitor in the Interdependence model promoted by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye.⁴³ Neo-Liberalism gathered momentum in the late 1970s and became

³⁶Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 193)

³⁷Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 195f.)

³⁸Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 194)

³⁹Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 197)

⁴⁰Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 197)

⁴¹Cf. Lehmkuhl (2001: 208f.)

⁴²Lehmkuhl (2001: 209)

⁴³Cf. Lawson (2012: 43f.)

hegemonic in the 1980s and 1990s under the label of the Washington Consensus.⁴⁴

The theory acknowledges the predominance of the economic aspect in human life. Political power is interpreted as being managed in a decentralised way by consumers as well as entrepreneurs grouped in transnational elite networks. Neo-Liberalism is based on the principles of individual freedom, competition and globalism. Its implementation has been connected with the diffusion of global governance mechanisms.

Neo-Liberalists have shown how non-state actors and processes play an essential part in world affairs and thus opened up International Relations to a broader range of considerations, thereby challenging the concept of Realism, which fails to take into account non-state factors.⁴⁵ Neo-Liberalism argues that cooperation among states may be difficult but not impossible to achieve. According to them, international institutions and international regimes facilitate cooperation. Neo-liberalism places the focus on the idea that economic interdependence prevents states from using force against each other.⁴⁶

Neo-liberal theory has introduced an analytical shift towards the constitution of preferences. International politics evolve from the meeting of different societal preferences.⁴⁷ Neo-liberal scholars consider states to be rational, unitary, utility-maximising actors. The basic insight of Liberalism is that national characteristics of states matter to their international relations.⁴⁸

2.1.4. Constructivism

Karl Deutsch and Ernst Haas are the forefathers of modern Constructivism. Deutsch's sociological approach concentrates on social transactions and social communication whereas Haas suggested a sociology of international cooperation based on learning.⁴⁹

Constructivism perceives the world as a project under construction and believes that reality is socially constructed and that our perception is not a picture of the world how it really is, but rather the result of our own construction. It assumes that not all statements have the same epistemic value. All strands of constructivism converge on an ontology that “depicts the social world as inter-subjectively and collectively meaningful structures and processes”⁵⁰. Constructivists do not reject

⁴⁴ The term “Washington Consensus, introduced by John Williamson, refers to a set of ten policies which the US government and international financial institutions perceived to be necessary elements for increasing economic growth. Cf. Marchetti (2009: 141)

⁴⁵ Cf. Lawson (2012: 44)

⁴⁶ Cf. Beckman et al. (2010: 22)

⁴⁷ Cf. Knapp / Krell (2004: 69)

⁴⁸ Cf. Slaughter (2011: 3)

⁴⁹ Cf. Adler (2006: 95ff.)

⁵⁰ Adler (2006: 100)

the reality of the material world and they do not always rigidly distinguish between the social and ideational on the one hand and the material on the other but do see them as interacting in complex and variable ways.⁵¹ Constructivism shows “the dynamic, contingent and culturally based condition of the social world”⁵², which can transform our understanding of social reality and the grounds on which knowledge is acquired. The theory rejects the idea that anarchy is the dominant condition between states. It focuses on the social context in which international relations occur and emphasises issues of identity and belief.⁵³

Since the 1990s a “constructivist turn” in International Relations can be observed. Nicholas Onuf applied insights of social theory to his early constructivist work and highlighted that individuals and society continually construct each other through rule-making. The sovereign state is seen as a product of this rule-making.⁵⁴ Constructivist scholars are convinced that states have mutable identities.⁵⁵

Social constructivists' perspectives on the European Union stress the significant role norms, identity and socialisation play in European integration.⁵⁶

2.2. *Normative Power Europe*

2.2.1. The Concept

Ian Manners outlined his “Normative Power Europe” (NPE) concept in several articles since the early 2000s. He founds his concept on the assertion, made by François Duchêne in the 1970, that traditional military power had given way to progressive civilian power as a method to exert influence in the area of international relations.⁵⁷ Since then the EU has changed significantly. The Maastricht Treaty indicated intent to move beyond civilian power and to develop a defence dimension when it introduced the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as a second pillar. Prior to that, the European Political Cooperation created in the 1970s aimed at ensuring consultation among the member states on foreign policy issues. This shift from civilian to military power is a

⁵¹Cf. Lawson (2012: 50)

⁵²Lawson (2012: 51)

⁵³Cf. Slaughter (2011: 4)

⁵⁴Cf. Lawson (2012: 50)

⁵⁵Cf. Lawson (2012: 50f.)

⁵⁶Cf. Manners (2012/1: 35)

⁵⁷Cf. Manners (2002: 235f.)

tendency which has become stronger since then.⁵⁸

The idea of normative power is incorporated in the works of Carr (economic power, military power, power over opinion), Duchêne (*idée force*) or Galtung (ideological power as power of ideas).⁵⁹

Manners's main argument is to refocus from the debate over civilian or military power to a perception of the EU as a normative power. According to him the EU's normative power is characterised by common principles and a willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions. He perceives the EU as a “hybrid of supranational and international forms of governance which transcends Westphalian norms”⁶⁰. Its normative difference in relations with others arises from its historical context, hybrid polity and political-legal constitution and pre-disposes it to act in a normative way.⁶¹

The EU is committed to place universal norms and principles at the centre of its relations with its member states and the world.⁶² Furthermore, it wants to be a normative power stylising itself as a force for good in international relations.⁶³ Manners stresses that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or says but what it is.⁶⁴ It has normative power, is a normative power and acts with the purpose of changing norms in the international system.⁶⁵

Manners identifies five core norms within EU laws and policies: the centrality of peace, the ideas of liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Additionally, he formulates four minor norms: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance.⁶⁶

If normative justification is to be convincing, the principles promoted must be seen as legitimate and being promoted in a coherent and consistent way. Legitimacy derives from international conventions, treaties or agreements, coherence can be reached through cogent and non-contradictory principles and practices and consistency comes from uniform and uniformly applied principles and practices.⁶⁷ Credible impact involves socialisation, partnership and ownership. However, the impact of the principles promoted by the EU is difficult to judge.⁶⁸

Manners is confident that “the incorporation of normative power and exercise of normative justification can be increasingly found in much of the EU's relations with the rest of the world”⁶⁹.

⁵⁸Cf. Manners (2002: 237)

⁵⁹Cf. Manners (2002: 238f.)

⁶⁰Manners (2002: 240)

⁶¹Cf. Manners (2002: 239ff.)

⁶²Cf. Manners (2002: 241)

⁶³Cf. Lippert (2011: 10)

⁶⁴Cf. Manners (2002: 252)

⁶⁵Cf. Manners (2012/2: 229f.)

⁶⁶Cf. Manners (2002: 242f.)

⁶⁷Cf. Manners (2012/2: 233f.)

⁶⁸Cf. Manners (2012/2: 238)

⁶⁹Manners (2009/2: 3)

Actions taken within his conception involve persuasion, argumentation and the conferral of prestige or shame. The impact of normative power must involve socialisation, partnership and ownership.⁷⁰

Manners perceives the Lisbon Treaty as a step towards a fusion of the EU's *acquis communautaire* with its external strategy but believes it is likely to fail if the principles are not promoted in a more systematic and sustainable way.⁷¹ The treaty replaced the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) by a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and introduced new provisions which should contribute to establishing a common European defence system. The EU member states can participate in military or humanitarian missions, are bound by a solidarity clause and should cooperate closely in the European Defence Agency.⁷²

He argues that the European integration, in fact, ensured peace and prosperity in Europe but in the moment of achievement lost its way and meaning.⁷³ Finding this meaning again would require an “intellectual return to the creative efforts that lay at the origins of the EU”⁷⁴. He pleads for a return “to the lost treasures of the Schuman Declaration”⁷⁵ and identifies a need to radically rethink world politics in the 21st century as well as the EU's role in it.⁷⁶ The EU's external actions need to “profess normative values and practice pragmatic principles’ at the same time as maintaining ‘a clear sense of long-term objectives’ but acknowledging the limits of the EU’s ‘day-to-day actions’”⁷⁷.

Manners defines his NPE as a interdisciplinary approach to European studies, which is centred on the idea of well being shared by all members of society.⁷⁸ It is important to note that normative power is an ideal type, which the EU tries to approximate, not a description of the actual status quo.⁷⁹

Definitions of normative power vary. De Zutter links it to the diffusion of norms in the international system, while Sjursen stresses its function in strengthening international and cosmopolitan law in order to overcome power politics.⁸⁰ Forsberg detects at least five types of criteria for a normative power which do not presuppose each other: Normative power has a normative identity, normative interests, behaves in a normative way, refers to the means of influence and is able to reach normative ends.⁸¹

⁷⁰Cf. Manners (2009/2: 4f.)

⁷¹Cf. Manners (2009/2: 8)

⁷² Cf. Europa: Common Security and Defence Policy

⁷³Cf. Manners (2009/2: 12f.)

⁷⁴Manners (2009/2: 13)

⁷⁵ The Schuman Declaration by the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman on May 9th, 1950 proposed to place the coal and steel production of Germany and France under the jurisdiction of a common body. This led to the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community. Manners (2009/2: 13)

⁷⁶Cf. Manners (2009/2: 14f.)

⁷⁷Manners (2009/2: 15)

⁷⁸Cf. Manners (2009/1: 562f.)

⁷⁹Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1184)

⁸⁰Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1187)

⁸¹Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1191f.)

Forsberg pleads not to call the EU a normative power, but to either claim that it has normative interests, behaves in normative ways, uses normative power and achieves normative ends or to comprehend normative power as an ideal-type.⁸² Diez argues that the discourse of NPE itself is an important practice of European identity construction.⁸³

Michael Smith perceives the study of “civilian” or “normative” power itself as being normative and prescriptive, presupposing the commitment by the analyst to a particular perspective.⁸⁴ Partly because of this, the critique on the concept is as important as the concept itself.

2.2.2. Criticism

Manner's NPE was broadly discussed within the academic debate and can be found in EU policy papers and public diplomacy.⁸⁵ However, it received multiple criticisms as well. The following main strands of criticism can be distinguished: The first strand includes scholars which have criticised the concept for being a camouflage for European imperialism,⁸⁶ a critique which can be refuted when the values the EU promotes are shared on a global level.⁸⁷ Erik O. Eriksen argues that the EU can be a normative actor only by subjecting its actions to a higher ranking law and criticises that human rights politics often are, in effect, power politics in disguise. In his opinion, there is more emphasis on the protection of civil and political rights as opposed to social and economic ones and commercial interests take precedence.⁸⁸

Another group criticises the self-perception of the European Union. Hyde-Price detects a contradiction between the EU being a vehicle for the collective pursuit of interests and its self-perception as ethical power, since it is not possible to pursue own interests and claim to act as a force for good for others all at the same time.⁸⁹ According to him, the EU does not act as a normative power in relations with its neighbourhood but serves as an instrument of collective hegemony, shaping its external milieu.⁹⁰ Tonra sees a discrepancy between the EU's claim that their political identity is “European” and the claim that these norms are universal in their origins, execution and pursuit.⁹¹ Manners' has been criticised for considering the EU's hybrid nature good

⁸²Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1199)

⁸³Cf. Diez (2005: 635)

⁸⁴Smith (2006: 324)

⁸⁵Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1186)

⁸⁶Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1184)

⁸⁷Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1187)

⁸⁸Cf. Eriksen (2006: 253ff.)

⁸⁹Cf. Hyde-Price (2008: 32)

⁹⁰Cf. Hyde-Price (2006: 225)

⁹¹Cf. Tonra (2012: 59)

and therefore normative and the Westphalian model bad and non-normative. Forsberg questions this assumption partially because the EU in many cases has given more weight to economic than normative interests, especially in relations with Russia.⁹² Johansson-Nogués criticises the notion of the EU acting for virtuous or altruistic reasons, since this might confer legitimacy to take action even if it is resisted by the policy-taker.⁹³

A third strand of criticism concerns one of Manners' key arguments, his assertion that the EU is pre-disposed to act in a normative way due to its hybrid nature. Hyde-Price and Johansson-Nogués, see the EU as an international actor among many others and criticise the neglect of military and economic power within the concept.⁹⁴ Manners, however, counters that militarisation does not necessarily lead to a diminution of the EU's normative power if military power is subordinated to the more fundamental normative ethos.⁹⁵

Thomas Diez criticised Manners's focus on the EU concerning the promotion of universal norms by peaceful means and argues that other actors like the United States use normative argumentation as well. According to him, the difference to civilian power, which he sees as a specific form of normative power, is not made clear enough.⁹⁶ Manners responded to this reproach by defending the EU's special role and stressing the differences between these two concepts.⁹⁷

A neorealist critique comes from Adrian Hyde-Price, who argues that the EU is still ruled by three big states and that its foreign policy therefore can be explained by power politics.⁹⁸ He sees notions of civilian or normative power as attempts to redefine the EU's weakness as an international actor which it has due to its lack of hard power capabilities into strength. Hyde-Price observes that the political elite of the member states has increasingly sought to present the EU as a “force for good” in the world, with an ethical foreign policy, and counters that all states pursue normative or ideological agendas besides other goals.⁹⁹ He perceives the EU as an instrument for collective economic interests, collective milieu-shaping as well as a depot for second-order normative concerns of the member states.¹⁰⁰ Aggestam argues that by accepting the member states' crucial role in empowering of the EU at a global level one has to accept that the EU integration process is driven equally by instrumental reasons and normative ethos.¹⁰¹

Another strand of criticism concerns the existence of double standards between the values the EU

⁹²Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1192f.)

⁹³Cf. Johansson-Nogués (2008: 126ff.)

⁹⁴Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1188), Cf. Johansson-Nogués (2008: 126ff.)

⁹⁵Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1188)

⁹⁶Cf. Diez (2005: 614ff.)

⁹⁷Cf. Beckman et al. (2010: 16ff.)

⁹⁸Cf. Beckman et al. (2010: 18ff.)

⁹⁹Cf. Hyde-Price (2008: 30f.)

¹⁰⁰Cf. Hyde-Price (2008: 31)

¹⁰¹Cf. Aggestam (2009: 34)

exports to and demands from other countries and the situation in the Union itself. Lerch and Schweltnus have examined the EU's normative power in different areas. They conclude that the EU acted as a normative power which relied predominantly on universal rights-based arguments complemented in a coherent way by value- and utility-based arguments in the case of the abolition of the death penalty. When it came to minority rights, however, there was a conceptual discrepancy between the internal non-discrimination approach and the external promotion of special minority rights. Lerch and Schweltnus criticise that the increasingly important external promotion was not followed by the establishment of an internal minority standard and conclude that the EU is not necessarily normative by nature, but acts in certain areas as a normative power.¹⁰² Diez questions the consistency of EU's normative power in terms of not discriminating between different external actors and not undermining norms from inside.¹⁰³

Harsh criticism comes from scholars arguing that the increasing military power of the Union is a contradiction to the perception of the EU as a normative power. Diez argues that the more normative power is building on military force, the more blurred the distinction to traditional forms of power becomes because it no longer relies on the power of norms itself.¹⁰⁴ Helene Sjursen also questions if the EU, which strives for military power, is, in fact, a normative power and notes that the concept lacks a clear analytical method.¹⁰⁵

There is critique on the missing outcomes of the EU's normative attempts. Toje argues that Europe is “simply not as much of an example as it believes itself to be”¹⁰⁶ and criticises that normative power fails to deliver the intended outcomes while only capturing one aspect of EU power.¹⁰⁷ Others criticised that the real impact of the EU has not been analysed enough.¹⁰⁸

Johansson-Nogués calls the concept under-theorized and detects several other problems, since normative power simplifies, overlooks and partially even fails to account for other important reasons behind the EU's foreign policy. As an example she invokes the EU's ambiguous behaviour towards Ukraine in response to the Orange revolution.¹⁰⁹

Russia questions the EU's normative power since the concept conflicts with some of its own fundamental foreign policy ideas.¹¹⁰

¹⁰²Cf. Lerch / Schweltnus (2006: 313ff.)

¹⁰³Cf. Diez (2005: 624)

¹⁰⁴Cf. Diez (2005: 621)

¹⁰⁵Cf. Beckman et al. (2010: 18ff.)

¹⁰⁶Toje (2009: 46)

¹⁰⁷Toje (2009: 47ff.)

¹⁰⁸Cf. Forsberg (2011: 1189)

¹⁰⁹Cf. Johansson-Nogués (2008: 122ff.)

¹¹⁰Cf. Romanova (2009: 51ff.)

„As foreign policy actors the pair are totally different animals.

The EU is a vegetarian elephant, Russia the bear
still cannot resist at times growling out of bad humor
and intimidating smaller neighbors.”¹¹¹

3. EU AND RUSSIA AS FOREIGN POLICY ACTORS

Emerson uses two completely different animal metaphors for Russia and the EU in their roles as foreign-policy actors. He depicts the EU as a peaceful giant whose territory is growing but is still more of a framework organisation than a single foreign-policy actor. It is characterised by Emerson as being governed by values and considered attractive by other states. Russia on the other hand is portrayed as a more coherent foreign-policy actor presenting itself as a realpolitik actor. This is the reason why close relationships with Russia frequently do not seem very desirable for its neighbours.¹¹² Moroff chooses a similar image describing the EU as economic giant but political dwarf and Russia as economic dwarf but politically unified actor and strategic giant.¹¹³

A term used in describing both foreign-policy actors is “hybrid”: Manners calls the EU a “hybrid of supranational and international forms of governance which transcends Westphalian norms”¹¹⁴. Russia is described as a hybrid situated somewhere between authoritarianism and democracy, a hybrid close to the authoritarian pole of semi-authoritarian regimes.¹¹⁵

Awareness of the fundamental divergences between the two policy actors is essential for understanding the stumbling blocks in their relationship. These differences predispose some of their issues, such as the inherent ideological clash or the lack of trust deriving from these ideological differences.¹¹⁶ Despite all the dissimilarities as foreign-policy actors they have similar aims when it comes to shape their external environment.¹¹⁷

There is a gap between the two policy actors in terms of mutual perceptions, levels of development and economic management.¹¹⁸ Another area with huge differences is the political culture. While EU leaders tend to share a rather liberal view in international affairs, focusing on trade, economic relations, Russian leaders are inclined to a more realist view concentrating on the importance of states and power politics. Popescu observes a growing discrepancy between Russia's power politics

¹¹¹Emerson (2004: 1)

¹¹²Cf. Emerson (2004: 1)

¹¹³Cf. Moroff (2007: 97)

¹¹⁴Manners (2002: 240)

¹¹⁵Cf. Hayoz et al. (2005: 54ff.)

¹¹⁶Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 97)

¹¹⁷Cf. Averre (2010: 1696)

¹¹⁸Cf. Popescu (2011: 10)

approach and the EU's normative approach which increases the probability of conflicts.¹¹⁹

Grajauskas and Kasčiūnas propose to conceptualise Russia as a modern and the EU as a postmodern actor in international relations. While the EU is a supranational organization with highly developed interdependencies between its member states, Russia is a nation state aiming at strengthening its domestic and external sovereignty. There are divergences in terms of the political system, economy and foreign policies. While the EU is a liberal democracy, official Russia describes itself as a “sovereign democracy”.¹²⁰ It is a propaganda term proposed and promoted by Vladislav Surkov, Putin's deputy chief of staff, to show that Russia is a democratic state on its own terms.¹²¹ This euphemism was introduced to claim that Russia is a democracy, a “fact” that other countries are not supposed to question. It incorporates the conviction that Russians define their own “democracy” and should protect themselves from values imported from outside.¹²² The term distracts from other descriptions of the Russian political system, like controlled democracy or defective democracy. Defective democracy is used to describe regimes which have democratic elections, but where other essential elements of democracies are missing.

Mendras sums up the meaning of sovereign democracy as follows: „Russia is big and powerful, its economy is in good shape, Russians support their leaders and there is stability; under these conditions, we should no longer follow the injunctions, the influence or even the advice of foreign governments, who rejoiced at our weakness under Yeltsin (and were partly the cause of it); they are wrong and we are right, we are choosing the path of Russian sovereignty, a model that suits us and which is the best. Since the ordinary Russians are not complaining, this model is democratic.”¹²³

Russia perceives itself as a European state but does not recognise the EU's normative agenda. The concepts of Russia as a sovereign democracy and the EU as a normative power are incompatible.

The EU is a market economy with a socially oriented state regulation while Russia has a centralized and elite-controlled economy whose modernisation suffers from clientelism, corruption and a lack of transparency.¹²⁴ In international relations the EU seeks security through interdependence, while Russia perceives interdependence as a weakness and bases its security mainly on the maintenance of balance of power.¹²⁵

Grajauskas and Kasčiūnas, who consider the EU as a postmodern and Russia as a modern actor, describe the foreign policy in the Westphalian modern age as characterised by states as the main actors, a clear distinction between foreign and domestic politics, the protection of sovereignty and a

¹¹⁹Cf. Popescu (2011: 30)

¹²⁰Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 80f.)

¹²¹Cf. Jonsson (2012: 448)

¹²²Cf. Light (2008: 22)

¹²³Mendras (2012 : 151f.)

¹²⁴Cf. Popescu (2011: 10)

¹²⁵Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 80f.)

pursuit of national interests and power using mostly hard power. Within postmodern foreign policy, however, nationalism and national markets are being increasingly replaced by cosmopolitanism and a globalist economy while national interest is complemented by other concerns (e.g. environmental) and pooling of sovereignty is undermining principles of non-interference and sovereignty. Post-Westphalian systems are characterised by the presence of more foreign-policy actors like international (supranational) organisations and non-governmental actors.¹²⁶

Assessments on the role and relevance of Europe in world politics are diverging among scholars. There are two main contradicting discourses. One emphasises the decline of Europe in a multi-polar world characterised by the rise of new powers, the other perceives the EU as one of the main empires of the 21st century and as a hub of developments. Gerrits stresses that the discussion about Europe's global relevance is heavily dominated by European researchers and that those researchers in particular are the ones taking Europe seriously as an international actor. Often the notion of the EU's relevance comes with references to its distinct power. Normative power is used to define, direct and legitimise the international role and relevance of Europe.¹²⁷

The **European Union** is a unique system, whose 28 member states delegated some of their decision-making powers to the European level.¹²⁸ It is a system in constant development and transformation, whose final structure is still unclear and depends on the willingness of its members to strengthen the supranational elements.

Delcour and Tulmets deem the EU a pluralist actor composed of political and administrative elites, interest groups, economic and non-governmental actors from the member states with significantly different preferences at times.¹²⁹

The principles of the Union's external relations are depicted in Article 3.5 of the Treaty of Lisbon:

In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter.¹³⁰

The main objectives set out in the treaty are the promotion of values and interests as well as the reference to the importance of international law. Foreign-policy actions shall be guided by the “principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks

¹²⁶Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 83f.)

¹²⁷Cf. Gerrits (2009: 1ff.), Aggestam (2009: 25f.)

¹²⁸Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007: 42)

¹²⁹Delcour / Tulmets (2008/1: 13)

¹³⁰Treaty of Lisbon (2007)

to advance in the wider world” (Art. 21/1).

The external relations of the European Union encompass a wide range of policies and are often characterised by divergences in the national preferences of its member states.¹³¹ A critique often directed towards the EU is its incapability to act as a unified actor in foreign-policy which diminishes its power in this area significantly. The determination to increase consistency led to the creation of a new post in the Treaty of Lisbon – the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy assisted by the European External Action Service.

Aggestam sees that with the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and the formulation of the European Security Strategy the European power is becoming more strategic.¹³²

The “capability-expectations gap” is often used to describe the European foreign policy and the discrepancy between the EU's “ability to agree, its resources, and the instruments at its disposal”, on the one hand, and the increasing expectations both within the EU and from third countries vis-à-vis the EU, on the other¹³³.

When discussing the EU's impact on other countries, one has to distinguish between intended and unintentional impact. While the EU actively exports its norms and practises, there is a huge amount of unintentional impact due to internal policies that produce externalization effects as well. The Union acts as a centre of gravitation and a model of integration balancing interests between its member states. It is an example for a group of states that managed to overcome conflicts and attracts other states because of this as well as its wealth.¹³⁴

The **Russian** constitution adopted in 1993 comprised democratic principles and the rule of law. Russian politics are dominated by the president who has far-reaching competences and determines the main directions in domestic and foreign policy.¹³⁵ The constitution states in Article 80/3 that the president shall determine the “basic objectives of the internal and foreign policy of the state”¹³⁶. Foreign policy decision-making is highly centralised around him and his narrow circle.¹³⁷ Since the dissolution of the USSR scholars developed theories on how the Russian transformation to democracy would look like. However, these theories were not turned into practice in Russia which under Putin developed into a “manually controlled democracy”, a term he used in a press conference in October 2007. It is quite similar to the notion of sovereign democracy since it implies

¹³¹Cf. Averde (2010: 1693)

¹³²Cf. Aggestam (2009: 32)

¹³³Delcour / Tulmets (2008/1: 14)

¹³⁴Cf. Casier (2007: 74)

¹³⁵Cf. Mommsen (2010: 422f.)

¹³⁶Constitution of Russia

¹³⁷Cf. Ross (2004: 228f.)

that Russia can be democratic but on its own terms.¹³⁸

Sakwa locates Vladimir Putin's foreign policy within the framework of classical neo-realism.¹³⁹ Likewise, Margot Light understands geopolitical realism focused on the preservation of sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence as well as non-intervention as the dominating strand in Russian foreign policy thinking. She observes a tendency to see international relations as a zero-sum game where an increase of influence by another actor means a diminution of the Russian influence.¹⁴⁰ This observation is backed up by the Foreign Policy Concept from February 2013 where the first foreign-policy goal (Provision 4a) mentioned is the following:

ensuring the security of the country, protecting and strengthening its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and securing its high standing in the international community as one of the influential and competitive poles of the modern world;¹⁴¹

Mendras describes the “new ideology” dominating Russian politics using a few recurring motifs like “sovereign democracy” or “Russia's specific path” which implies that Russia will not follow the path Western Europe had envisaged for it, but its own. Other motives are historical references to the victory of 1945 over Nazism and Stalin's historic role. A motive referring to the time after the dissolution of the USSR is the notion of “revenge” for the 90s. The time after the dissolution of the USSR is perceived as a very difficult one, as a time when Russia was weak and completely willing to develop closer relations with the West. In the Russian understanding this weakness was exploited by the Western states which failed to support the Russian transition.¹⁴² Those terms depict a Russia that is a great power, which does not need to be told by the international community how to act. On the contrary, it has to watch out not to get weakened by other states. An important factor in understanding Russian political thinking is the discrepancy between the loss of its super-power status and a political consciousness guided by the illusion of being a superpower.¹⁴³ Kobrinskaja deems this “super-poweredness” or imperial syndrome the main problem of Russia's deluded self-identification and positioning in international relations.¹⁴⁴

Richard Sakwa argues that Russia is different from other countries of the former USSR or countries comparable in matter of size and population, a difference which derives from its historic dominant position and its geopolitical role in Europe and Eurasia, from its military power, strategic significance as a nuclear power, its political weight as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and its role as an energy supplier. The most important factor, however, is that

¹³⁸Cf. Adomeit (2012: 18)

¹³⁹Cf. Sakwa (2008: 381)

¹⁴⁰Cf. Light (2008: 15)

¹⁴¹Foreign Policy Concept (2013)

¹⁴²Cf. Mendras (2012: 265)

¹⁴³Cf. Umbach (2000: 114)

¹⁴⁴Cf. Kobrinskaja (2007: 13)

Russia is different because it perceives itself as different.¹⁴⁵

4. EU – RUSSIAN RELATIONS

The relationship between Russia and the member states of the European Union has been influenced by “historical and cultural ties, identity-shaping concerns, economic interests, values, and perceptions about friends and foes”¹⁴⁶ While some EU countries have strong economic and political interests in Russia, others tend to a more critical view. Therefore, the Union's attitude and approaches towards the Russian Federation are highly influenced by divergent interests, feelings and behaviour towards Russia, which often impedes a coherent EU foreign policy towards Russia. On the other hand, however, Russia uses this inconsistency for its own purposes, applying the Roman “divide et impera” principle to achieve its goals.¹⁴⁷

The EU's main objectives towards Russia are promoting democracy, integration into a common economic and social space, cooperation directed on reinforcement of stability and security as well as dealing with collective challenges. Russia's economic aims are connected to economic modernisation, achieving competitiveness in the world market and attracting investors.¹⁴⁸ Its main political aims are to occupy a hegemonic position in the post-Soviet space and to weaken the European Union by dividing its member states. It does so by using its special relationships with some of the countries and by concluding bilateral treaties. Since a coherent EU would weaken Russia's position in negotiations, Russia has a natural interest in keeping the EU divided. In order to occupy a hegemonic position, Russia has to prevent the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus from further integrating with the EU. Putin envisages a Eurasian project which has two main objectives: the first is closer integration with the countries of the former USSR and the creation of free trade areas, the second aims at destroying the European Union. For the second objective Putin has the support of Europe's far right which proved to be useful allies and busy promoters of his values.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵Cf. Sakwa (2008: 363)

¹⁴⁶Jonsson (2012: 444)

¹⁴⁷Cf. Popescu (2011: 8)

¹⁴⁸Cf. Mikhaleva (2006: 108)

¹⁴⁹Cf. Snyder (11.05.2014)

4.1. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

The agreements between the European Union and Russia in the early 1990s were characterised by an EU-dominated constellation with Russia accepting most of the EU's proposals. Since the early 1990s, the EU tried to impose its norms and values onto Russia.¹⁵⁰ Russia's cooperative attitude can be explained by Gorbachev's promotion of cooperation with Western Europe, the pro-Western, cooperative attitude during the Yeltsin presidency, propelled by the “Westerners” in his government and by the fear of political isolation. Other, not less important reasons were the weakness of the Russian state at the beginning of the 1990s and the lack of an own grand strategy on how to approach the countries of Western Europe.¹⁵¹ A Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Economic Community, the European Atomic Energy Community and the USSR was concluded in 1989. From 1991 onwards, the TACIS programme, which provided financial help, started in Russia and twelve other CIS countries.

In October 1992, the Council of Ministers officially authorised the European Commission to commence negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia. The preamble of the PCA refers to common values taken from the 1990 Charter of Paris: the commitment to political and economic liberties; the promotion of international security and peace; the appreciation of democratic and constitutional principles as well as the protection of human rights. A major success for the EU was to override Russia by including Paragraph 107 into the PCA which allows both parties to suspend the agreement in case of violations of the common values laid down in the agreement.¹⁵²

The PCA was signed in 1994, but came into power only in December 1997 because the ratification was stopped as a result of the first Chechen war.¹⁵³ It is a bilateral international treaty which institutionalised EU-Russian cooperation. It set up the foundations for economic and trade relations, political and security dialogue and cooperation in the areas of justice and home affairs.¹⁵⁴

In 1999, the EU presented its Common Strategy on Russia, an instrument created by the Amsterdam treaty aimed at increasing the consistency of the EU's external policy. Its goal was to strengthen the strategic partnership between the Union and Russia and to display the expectations the Union has towards Russia. The Common Strategy describes the EU's vision for Russia as follows:

A stable, democratic and prosperous Russia, firmly anchored in a united Europe free of new dividing lines, is essential to lasting peace on the continent. The issues which the whole continent faces can be resolved only through ever closer cooperation between Russia and the

¹⁵⁰Cf. Haukkala (2012: 166)

¹⁵¹Cf. Moroff (2007: 107)

¹⁵²Cf. Moroff (2007: 108f.)

¹⁵³Cf. Bastian (2006: 14)

¹⁵⁴Cf. Bastian (2006: 78)

European-Union. The European Union welcomes Russia's return to its rightful place in the European family in a spirit of friendship, cooperation, fair accommodation of interests and on the foundations of shared values enshrined in the common heritage of European civilisation.¹⁵⁵

The EU stresses its wish for a Russia that shares norms and values similar to the EU's, and uses the metaphor of Russia as the European Family's prodigal son who was absent for some time but is to be welcomed again with open arms if it was willing to comply with the common "European" values. The paragraph further implies that it is up to the European Union and its member states to decide whether Russia is a part of the European Family or not. Hyde-Price criticised the document for being rather strong on declaratory principles, expressing normative concerns regarding democracy and human rights promotion, but negligent in promising Russia things in return and creating effective mechanisms for leverage.¹⁵⁶

In the same year, Russia presented its "Medium-term Strategy for Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union (2000-2010)", a document in which the Federation presents itself as a European country and EU partner. It pleads for a pan-European cooperation system based on collective security and free trade. The document was to demonstrate the importance Russia holds for good relations to the European Union.¹⁵⁷

In October 1999, Javier Solana highlighted the significance of developing a comprehensive partnership with Russia, which he considered "the most important, the most urgent and most challenging task that the EU faces at the beginning of the 21st century."¹⁵⁸ The European Security Strategy from 2003 was written in accordance with those statements and named Russia the second most important international security actor.¹⁵⁹

Russia always occupied a special position within the projects of the EU. It was the first country to which a "Common Strategy" has been applied (1999) and the first former Soviet country to conclude a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with the EU.¹⁶⁰ Russia was the first state which a PCA was negotiated with, the only non-WTO member which received compensation for losses, suffered from trade diversion after Finland's and Sweden's EU accession, and the first country a Common Strategy was designed for. It was also the first CIS country the European Investment Bank became active in.¹⁶¹

A setback for the EU-Russian relations was the European support of the NATO bombing of 1999

¹⁵⁵Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia (1999)

¹⁵⁶Cf. Hyde-Price (2008: 34)

¹⁵⁷Cf. Стратегия развития отношений Российской Федерации с Европейским Союзом на среднесрочную перспективу (2000-2010 гг.); Casier (2007: 82f.)

¹⁵⁸Solana in Bastian (2006: 76)

¹⁵⁹Cf. Dambrauskaite (2007: 17)

¹⁶⁰Cf. Delcour (2008: 171), Timmermann (2000: 1)

¹⁶¹Cf. Moroff (2007: 97)

which, from a Russian perspective, was considered a betrayal of the political ideal of state sovereignty and its substitution with human rights and democracy promotion.¹⁶² Even stronger disagreement between the two actors was triggered by the Chechen wars. While Russia perceived its actions against Chechnya as a purely domestic matter, EU officials and the governments of some member states criticised that Russia's warfare infringed the principles of the PCA and other international agreements. When the second Chechen war started, the EU temporarily suspended its TACIS funding for all programmes except for priority areas including human rights, rule of law, civil society support and nuclear safety. The Russian government in return accused the EU of double standards since it did not condemn Chechens as international terrorists.

Despite the EU's criticism of the developments in Chechnya, Russia-EU relations improved at the beginning of 2000. Lukyanov refers to the time between autumn 2001 and spring 2002 as a kind of „honeymoon“, as the culmination of declarative rapprochement between the two actors.¹⁶³ The years 2002 to 2005 saw a transition from declarative to more practical relations which was accompanied by serious frictions. During this time, oil prices rose and the Russian political system became more and more centralised. Russia put increasing emphasis on gaining an equal place among the other European states and made it more and more clear that it would not comply with the preconceptions of the EU but follow its own path.¹⁶⁴

The St. Petersburg EU-Russia summit in May 2003 decided to replace the annual Cooperation Council by a Permanent Partnership Council (PPC) which should meet more frequently. According to Moroff, this consistency boost was indispensable since the relations between the two actors were highly complex and nearly each new presidency introduced new initiatives.¹⁶⁵

At the St. Petersburg summit in May 2004, the EU and Russia agreed on the creation of four “common spaces” as an instrument for sectoral cooperation. They include a common economic space; a common space of freedom, security and justice; a space of research, education and culture; and a space of external security.¹⁶⁶ An agreement on the common economic space, a long-term project, had been reached in May 2001.¹⁶⁷ The road maps to create these spaces were adopted in 2005.¹⁶⁸ There are similarities between the ENP Action Plans and the road maps for the four common spaces. They differ, however, insofar that the road maps lack political conditionality. There is no consent on economic issues either, while legislative approximation and regulatory convergence are prominent parts in both concepts, even though they are clearer formulated in the

¹⁶²Cf. Prozorov (2006: 5)

¹⁶³Cf. Lukyanov (2008: 1109ff.)

¹⁶⁴Cf. Ochmann (2009: 5)

¹⁶⁵Cf. Moroff (2007: 111)

¹⁶⁶Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007: 46f.)

¹⁶⁷Cf. Bastian (2006: 105)

¹⁶⁸Cf. Casier (2007: 83)

Action Plans. The road maps are less ambitious, less applicable in real life and contain fewer conditions attached to further cooperation. Furthermore, they do not address the key question of the future framework of the bilateral relationship.¹⁶⁹

The Common Spaces initiative serves as an instrument of sectoral cooperation, which, as claimed by the EU, should become the basis of EU-Russian relations and determine the form and content of other cooperation instruments.¹⁷⁰ Russia, however, considers it as an economic cooperation tool supplementing other cooperation formats.¹⁷¹ The period from summer 2005 to autumn 2006 is seen by Lukyanov as the most interesting time since both actors tried to put aside issues related to values and focused on building relations on the basis of interests only. During this time, relations concentrated on energy issues, while the EU barely even mentioned the situation of democracy in Russia.¹⁷² The common spaces dialogue has been reduced to strategic security questions in topics where the EU and Russia have common interests.¹⁷³ The EU's policy towards Russia gave way to a more realist approach based on sectoral interests. Negotiations and dialogue are increasingly conducted within specific areas which made an interest-driven process possible. Jonsson argued that this behaviour weakened the EU's normative power and its leverage on Russia.¹⁷⁴

The relationship between the EU and Russia is characterised by different initiatives having unilateral (Common Strategy on Russia), bilateral (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement) or multilateral character (The Northern Dimension).¹⁷⁵

4.2. *Negotiating a new agreement*

Due to disagreements in the bilateral relations between Russia and the EU (especially concerning the new member states), negotiations on a new agreement replacing the expiring one did not start in 2007.¹⁷⁶ Since then, the agreement has been and will be prolonged automatically every year as long as the contracting parties do not object; it lost, though, much of its political power.¹⁷⁷

The expectations the two foreign-policy actors have in a new agreement are quite different and partly even contradicting. The EU hopes to base the relationship on increasingly interdependent ties with the help of a profound and comprehensive document. Ideally, this document is legally binding and facilitates intense cooperation. Since the EU does not have effective tools to promote economic

¹⁶⁹Cf. Vahl (2007: 129f.)

¹⁷⁰Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007:46)

¹⁷¹Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007:47)

¹⁷²Cf. Lukyanov (2008: 1109ff.)

¹⁷³Cf. Ryngaert (2012: 91)

¹⁷⁴Cf. Jonsson (2012: 449)

¹⁷⁵Cf. Moroff (2007: 113)

¹⁷⁶Cf. Light (2008: 7f)

¹⁷⁷Cf. Kempe (2013/1: 313)

and political reforms in Russia in the framework of one sector, it seeks to expand their cooperation to different sectors where they can exert additional pressure on Russia.¹⁷⁸

Russia has other expectations: It prefers a sovereign approach to security and foreign policy preventing external interference and the adoption of international norms into its policies. It does not want a binding and comprehensive agreement, but prefers selective, sectorised cooperation, ideally on a bilateral basis with different single member states instead of the EU as a whole. Russia perceives interdependence as a vulnerable spot and security threat and therefore tries not to encourage it.¹⁷⁹ However, there are already many interdependencies between the two actors in the field of economy. The EU, still highly dependent on Russian energy resources, is its main trading partner. Russia needs the EU as a buyer of its energy resources and is dependent on foreign capital as well as technology which it needs for modernising its economy.¹⁸⁰ If Russia entered a free trade agreement with the EU, it would have to adapt nearly all of the EU's *acquis communautaire* related to the functioning of the common market.¹⁸¹

A study conducted by the EU-Russia Centre in 2009, in which 200 experts, policy makers and politicians in the EU and Russia were interviewed, identified some main challenges in deepening the relations between the two policy actors. The most controversial issues were related to human rights, the lack of a common historical memory as well as the EU's ENP and potential expansion. The study showed differences with regard to the EU's eastward expansion. While 67 per cent of the Russian respondents believed that this would lead to increased tensions between the EU and Russia, only 37 per cent of EU respondents did so. Areas with very low levels of polarisation were related to economics.¹⁸² A survey from January 2012 showed that only 56 per cent of the Russian respondents view the EU in a positive way, a significant decline from the previous polls.¹⁸³

Russia has been rather successful in dividing the EU member states by preferring bilateral treaties and making use of historical links with certain states.¹⁸⁴ Popescu observes that Russia placed itself in a superior position in the second half of the 2000s by using mainly energy issues.¹⁸⁵ Putin's preference for bilateralism would not be possible without the willingness of the member states to develop bilateral relations with Russia, even when the EU as a whole could address these issues in a better way.¹⁸⁶ The EU-Russian relationship is characterised by the different attitudes of the EU member states towards Russia. European unity, displayed not only in energy relations but in all

¹⁷⁸Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007: 48f.)

¹⁷⁹Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 86ff.)

¹⁸⁰Cf. Casier (2007: 84)

¹⁸¹Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 95)

¹⁸²Cf. Jonsson (2012: 448f.)

¹⁸³Cf. Utkin / Baranovski (2012: 68)

¹⁸⁴Cf. Ghimis (2011: 92)

¹⁸⁵Cf. Popescu (2011: 8)

¹⁸⁶Cf. Light (2008: 25)

areas, would strengthen the EU's position towards Russia enormously. Rotaru certifies that the EU's own disunity is one of its main challenges and a powerful catalyst for strengthening Russia's position.¹⁸⁷

It can generally be stated that EU-Russian relations grew more and more conflictive in the second half of the 2000s. Prozorov argues that by 2005, EU-Russian relations had moved to a condition of mutual suspicion and hostility.¹⁸⁸ Russia increasingly viewed the EU as an overly intrusive actor trying to infringe its sovereignty.¹⁸⁹ EU voices critical of Russia's authoritarian tendencies grew louder after the tragedy of Beslan (2004) and shifts in Russian domestic and foreign policy. The reform of the electoral laws and the limits imposed on participation by opposition parties provoked the strongest reactions. Much criticism has been raised about the Russian-Georgian war and the Russian interference in the elections in Ukraine and Moldova.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, the EU has reiterated complaints of Russia failing to implement agreements.

The Russian-Georgian war served as a strategic wake-up call exposing the limits and challenges of the EU's external action capacities.¹⁹¹ It showed the Union's need to take deeper into consideration the regional role of Russia and to find an acceptable way to deal with it.¹⁹² Ochmann argues that the international situation changed significantly with the outbreak of this war. It was the first time that the EU acted as a mediator between Russia and an ally of the United States and a regional peacekeeping power.¹⁹³ The war shocked the Western countries and questioned Russia's reliability on the international arena. Afterwards, Russia made an effort to improve its image and its relations with the European Union, for example, by finally ratifying Protocol 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights after having been delaying it for more than three years.¹⁹⁴ The gas crisis of 2009 was another important event in the EU-Russian relationship and again, the EU acted as a mediator.¹⁹⁵

Despite all differences, there are needs and interest of both actors which can only be satisfied through cooperation. The EU wants a stable neighbourhood and secured energy supply, Russia is interested in economic modernisation.¹⁹⁶ Susan Stewart observes a dichotomy in EU-Russian relations. While economic relations developed further and further over the years, the political relationship stagnated and even sowed mistrust. She explains this by Russia's perception of the EU

¹⁸⁷Cf. Rotaru (2012: 477f.)

¹⁸⁸Cf. Prozorov (2006: 8)

¹⁸⁹Cf. Haukkala (2012: 165)

¹⁹⁰Cf. Mikhaleva (2006: 109)

¹⁹¹Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 3)

¹⁹²Cf. Delcour (2008: 175)

¹⁹³Cf. Ochmann (2009: 6)

¹⁹⁴Cf. Rotaru (2012: 470f.)

¹⁹⁵Cf. Mommsen (2010: 472), Cf. Meister / Rahr (2009: 1)

¹⁹⁶Cf. Popescu (2011: 9)

as a weak political actor and by the EU's doubts about Russia's willingness to follow rules.¹⁹⁷ Significant progress has been achieved mainly on secondary issues.¹⁹⁸ Biscop and many others are convinced that in the long run, only cooperation with Russia can create a mutually beneficial relationship.¹⁹⁹ Since Russia's interference in Ukraine's domestic affairs and its involvement in and following the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, EU-Russian relations steadily deteriorated.

4.3. *Partnership for Modernisation*

The initiative to create a Partnership for Modernisation (P4M) between Russia and the European Union was put forward in 2009 and contained tasks such as the modernisation of Russia's economy and the enhancing of cooperation.²⁰⁰ It was launched at the summit in Rostov-on-Don in 2010. The Joint Declaration on the Partnership stated that

The European Union and Russia, as long-standing strategic partners in a changing multipolar world, are committed to working together to address common challenges with a balanced and result-oriented approach, based on democracy and the rule of law, both at the national and international level.²⁰¹

The two main tasks of the Partnership are the strengthening of the rule of law and trade facilitation through harmonisation of technical regulations and standardisations. The agreement promotes a sustainable low-carbon economy and energy efficiency as well as cooperation in terms of innovation, research and development. Besides economic and judicial reform, it should support the civil society. The EU hoped that political liberalisation would go hand in hand with economic growth in Russia.²⁰² A work plan, approved by the EU and Russia, serves as an informal tool for activities within the Partnership. Partnership Reports are published regularly.²⁰³

Utkin and Baranovski criticise that the partnership, which was supposed to help economic and civil society actors willing to contribute to the progressive developments of the economic environment, has barely been noticed by its addressees.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷Cf. Stewart (2008: 3)

¹⁹⁸Cf. Vahl (2007: 121)

¹⁹⁹Cf. Biscop (2012: 84)

²⁰⁰Partnership for Modernisation (EEAS)

²⁰¹Partnership for Modernisation (EEAS)

²⁰²Cf. Rotaru (2012: 475)

²⁰³Cf. Partnership for Modernisation (EEAS)

²⁰⁴Cf. Utkin / Baranovski (2012: 70)

4.4. Energy relations

Energy is one of the core topics of EU-Russian relations. In 2000, the Russian-EU Energy Dialogue was established in order to guarantee security of supply and an Energy Forum was set up as a supplementation of intergovernmental energy co-operation. The Energy Charter was signed by many states in December 1991. However, the Energy Charter Treaty, a binding international treaty which applied a set of rules to the energy sector, was signed by 51 states in December 1994, but never ratified by many states, including Russia.²⁰⁵

Russia prefers bilateral relations over a common EU energy policy because the latter would lead to an increase of the EU's influence on Russia's energy policy, allow the Union to exert pressure on Russia and even force it to ratify documents like the Energy Charter or the Transit Protocol.²⁰⁶ Grajauskas and Kasčiūnas argue that fostering internal integration in the area of energy was the only way how the EU could strengthen its position vis-à-vis Russia.²⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the EU member states signed bilateral energy agreements with Russia and by doing so, handed over much of the EU's power.

De Haas proposes that the EU should sign one gas contract with Russia and support gas pipelines to bypass the Russian ones. He is convinced that, with a genuinely cohesive energy policy, the EU would strengthen its position and thus reinforce its efforts in the field of human rights and democracy.²⁰⁸ The Nabucco pipeline, a project which should bring gas to Europe without crossing the territory of Russia, could have guaranteed greater independence, but failed in 2013.

5. THE COUNTRIES OF THE WESTERN CIS AND SOUTHERN CAUCASUS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EU AND RUSSIA

The following chapter will give an overview of the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus. It includes an outline of the respective countries' development from the dissolution of the Soviet Union onwards as well as a characterisation of their bonds with the Russian Federation and the European Union. It is important to note that the chapter does not claim to be fully comprehensive since an all factors and aspects encompassing analysis would go beyond the scope of a master thesis, whose focus in this case lies on the description and comparison of the EU's and

²⁰⁵Cf. Light (2008: 18), Bastian (2006: 110)

²⁰⁶Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007: 66), Grošelj (2009: 14f.)

²⁰⁷Cf. Grajauskas / Kasčiūnas (2009: 96)

²⁰⁸Cf. De Haas (11.02.2014)

Russia's approaches.

5.1. Western CIS

The countries summarised hereafter as the Western CIS include Belarus, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. It is a politically and economically heterogeneous region of great interest both for the EU and Russia.

5.1.1. Belarus

Belarus, located between the Baltic states, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, has been close to Russia for a long time.

A model republic with high GDP and without a national independence movement during Soviet times, Belarus encountered enormous economic problems after gaining independence in 1991.²⁰⁹ Politically, the early 1990s saw a short period of reforms. A rather neutral foreign-policy aimed at distancing oneself from Russia and instead approaching the West. When Alexander Lukashenko came to power in 1994, he tried to reintegrate with Russia.²¹⁰ After the 1996 referendum Lukashenko changed the political system, which led to the abolition of separation of powers, infringements of the rule of law and eventually to international isolation. Due to continuing support by a large group of its citizens, the authoritarian regime, which managed to overcome the catastrophic economic situation of the 1990s, is still relatively stable. Surveys, however, show that the support among the population is declining and the potential for protests is growing. Belarus is an authoritarian regime whose civil society is quite developed. It is characterised by the existence of many NGOs in different areas.²¹¹ Russia remains Belarus's main economic and political partner whereas Belarus, an important transit country, holds great military importance for Russia. Russia has military bases in Belarus and the two countries formed a Single Air Defence System.²¹²

There are multiple factors supporting the close relations between the two countries. There is a tight connection between them on a cultural and identity-defining level. Moreover, Belarus is highly dependent on Russian energy and the massive subventions it is granted by Moscow. Other reasons for the considerable dependence on Russia are Belarus's isolation on the political map, its poor

²⁰⁹Cf. Von Steinsdorff (2010: 481)

²¹⁰Cf. Stewart (2010: 17), Von Steinsdorff (2010: 519)

²¹¹Cf. Von Steinsdorff (2010: 479ff.)

²¹²Cf. Cebotari et al (2014: 16)

economic structures and its critical financial conditions.²¹³

Russia and Belarus signed many bilateral and multilateral treaties in the fields of politics and economics. They are both members of the Customs Union (together with Kazakhstan), introduced a Single Economic Space in 2012 (agreed in 2003) and signed the founding treaty for the Eurasian Economic Union in May 2014. The Union will come into force on January 1st, 2015.²¹⁴

However, the relationship between Russia and Belarus was not free of crises whereby frictions often coincided with calls by Belarus for a stronger cooperation with the European Union. Since 2008, Belarus is increasingly trying to re-balance its relations with Russia and the EU.²¹⁵

The relationship with the EU is constrained because of the political situation in Belarus which is characterised by human rights violations, violations of electoral standards, suppression of civil society, the political opposition and the media.²¹⁶ EU-Belarus relations are currently governed by the Conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council from 15th October 2012.²¹⁷ A Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was negotiated in 1995 but the ratification is frozen since 1997 in response to the political situation. Belarus is covered by the ENP but did not receive an action plan and is a member of the EP. It participates only in its multilateral track. Emphasis is put on strengthening civil society and other initiatives that support the population. In 2009, the Council Conclusions reaffirmed the EU's willingness to deepen relations with Belarus, subject to the condition of an increased effort to promote democratisation.²¹⁸

5.1.2. Ukraine

Ukraine, which was, due to its vast population and economic power, the second most important county of the USSR, tried to fully distance itself from Russia after their independence has been restored.²¹⁹ The country's second president, Leonid Kuchma, followed a multi-track approach by both trying to normalise the relationship with Russia and further integrating with the West at the same time.²²⁰ Ukraine has always been a key state for the Russian efforts towards its neighbourhood.²²¹ However, the relationship between Ukraine and Russia is a difficult one. They have tight connections concerning their geography, history and culture as well as economic and military relations established during Soviet times that make it even harder for Ukrainian elites to

²¹³Cf. Adomeit (2012: 43ff.)

²¹⁴Cf. Stewart (2010: 18f.), Vahl (2007: 133f.)

²¹⁵Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 63)

²¹⁶European Union External Action (22.07.2014)

²¹⁷Cf. EEAS: Belarus

²¹⁸Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 68)

²¹⁹Cf. Bos (2010: 527)

²²⁰Cf. Bos (2010: 573)

²²¹Cf. Vinokurov (2007: 33)

distance themselves from Russia.²²²

When Viktor Yanukovych declared himself winner of the elections in November 2004, massive protests against election manipulation followed, which led to the so-called Orange Revolution. The Orange Revolution was the beginning of a second democratic transformation and EU integration was re-instated as foreign-policy priority.²²³ Russia's perceptions of the country were changed due to the fact that its attempt to interfere in Ukraine's domestic politics failed and the country's more Western centred foreign-policy.²²⁴ However, Russia managed to preserve its influence even after 2004. In 2008, Ukraine joined the World Trade Organisation and continued its struggle for closer relations to the EU and NATO membership. These events led to ill feelings between Ukraine and Russia which inter alia culminated in the 2006 and 2009 gas crises.²²⁵ The fear of losing its influence on Ukraine, which equalled a loss of strategic options, has been an important factor in Russian foreign-policy.²²⁶ Russia hoped for Ukraine's accession to the Customs Union as well as the Eurasian Economic Union.²²⁷

Crimea, which was given to Ukraine in 1954, was the only region in Ukraine with a constitution and a regional parliament. A contentious issue between Ukraine and Russia was the stationing of the black sea fleet in Crimea. In 2010, an agreement which prolonged the lease contract for the Russian Black Sea Fleet in exchange for cheaper gas deliveries was signed. Conflicts arose when Russia raised prices anyway.²²⁸ Russia profited from the lack of coherent policies towards Crimea and distributed Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens and thus created the necessity to “protect” its citizens abroad.²²⁹ It officially annexed Crimea in March 2014.

Ukrainian foreign-policy is determined by its geopolitical position between the West and Russia. Domestic factors influencing foreign-policy are the strong Russian minority as well as the regional division of the country in terms of their foreign and security policy.²³⁰

For a long time, Ukraine was the front-runner in the EU's neighbourhood policy. It was one of the first countries of the former USSR which officially affirmed its allegiance to European integration in 1998 by a presidential degree, but again retreated from it in 2000.²³¹ Ukraine reacted with disappointment to the introduction of the ENP, which included it in a single policy framework along with other countries that clearly had no accession perspective at all.²³² A visa facilitation agreement

²²²Cf. Stewart (2010: 17)

²²³Cf. Bos (2010: 528), Astrov (2010: 7)

²²⁴Cf. Adomeit (2012: 14)

²²⁵Cf. Stewart (2010: 20)

²²⁶Cf. Cebotari et al. (2014: 17ff.)

²²⁷Cf. Adomeit (2012: 54)

²²⁸Cf. Adomeit (2012: 50)

²²⁹Cf. Stewart (2010: 21)

²³⁰Cf. Bos (2010:573)

²³¹Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 83)

²³²Cf. Delcour (2008: 167)

was signed in 2007 and in 2010 Ukraine joined the Energy Community.

Despite president's Yanukovych's claim to acknowledge the priority of the European integration, his inauguration marked the beginning of a further retreat from democracy and rule of law.²³³ Instead, from 2010 onwards, the Ukrainian-Russian relations were strengthened again which led to intensified dialogue.²³⁴ In 2011, the bilateral Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU was concluded, but not signed as planned on the summit in Kiev in December 2011 because the EU demanded reforms regarding international standards as well as freedom of media and assemblage.²³⁵ The EU had high hopes for the Vilnius summit in November 2013, where Ukraine and the EU were appointed to sign an Association Agreement supposed to further deepen their relations. Russia, however, reinforced the pressure on Ukraine causing Yanukovych to not sign the agreement and thus leading to mass protests and his deposition.

The PCA, which governed relations since 1998, was replaced by an Association Agreement including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), the political section of which was signed in March 2014. The EU itself calls Ukraine a key partner in the ENP and the EP. Due to its size, huge population and strategic position as well as significance as a transit country, Ukraine is the key state in the political rivalry between the Russian Federation and the European Union in the European part of the post-Soviet space.²³⁶

5.1.3. Republic of Moldova

In times of the USSR, Moldova had military and strategic importance as a bridgehead towards the Balkans, Greece, Turkey, the Suez Canal and North Africa.²³⁷ After gaining its independence, however, the country experienced the secession of Transnistria as well as an economic collapse and the pauperisation of large parts of the population. Economic growth started only at the turn of the millennium.²³⁸ The separatist war left behind a frozen conflict and deprived Moldova of its major energy resources 90 per cent of which were located in the territory of Transnistria. This region made up a third of the country's industrial output in the early 1990s.²³⁹ A small and poor country without important natural resources, Moldova profits from EU projects and financial aid. Its dependence on Russia results from the dependence on Russian energy and the yet unsolved conflict in

²³³Cf. Adomeit (2012: 47f.)

²³⁴Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 88)

²³⁵Cf. Adomeit (2012: 48ff.)

²³⁶Cf. Adomeit (2012: 46f.)

²³⁷Cf. Cebotari et al. (2014: 22)

²³⁸Cf. Büscher (2010: 583f.)

²³⁹Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 106)

Transnistria.²⁴⁰

Russian politics towards Moldova are determined by the Transnistrian conflict. Russia, which perceives Transnistria as “a zone of special strategic interest”²⁴¹, insists on its role as mediator and peace provider. Russia's influence on Moldavia can be maintained due to the unclear status of the region and the presence of Russian military.²⁴² Transnistria is an industrialised region, highly dependent on Russia.²⁴³ As in other conflict-laden regions, Russia pursued its passportisation policy in Transnistria in order to secure its right to intervene due the justification of protecting the interests of Russian citizens living there.²⁴⁴

Two distinctive features of the Moldavian transformation were the success of the Communist party which came to power in 2001 and the comparably democratic character of the country's transformation. It was one of the few post-Soviet states that established parliamentary-presidential system, since 2000 it is a parliamentary system.²⁴⁵ However, civil society is developing slowly and societal mobilization is weak.²⁴⁶ Since 2010, the country is led by a pro-European government actively struggling for closer relations with the EU.²⁴⁷

Moldova became a member of UN and OSCE in 1992 and was the first CIS state to join the Council of Europe in 1995. Its foreign-policy options are limited by its power-political and economic weakness. Moldova's foreign-policy is characterised by neutrality and the abstinence of military alliances.²⁴⁸

The European Union is eager to enhance a close relationship with Moldova. It is a partner in the ENP and the EP. Visa facilitation and readmission agreements entered into force in January 2008 and a wider Mobility Partnership was signed in June 2008. Moldova is a full member of the Energy Community Treaty since 2010. In the same year, the EU launched a high level advisory group which is supposed to assist the Moldovian and negotiations on an Association Agreement were launched.²⁴⁹ The AA was initialled on the EP Summit in Vilnius and includes the gradual implementation of a DCFTA.

²⁴⁰Cf. Stewart (2010: 17)

²⁴¹Korosteleva (2012: 106)

²⁴²Cf. Stewart (2010: 22f.), Cf. Cebotari et al. (2014: 23)

²⁴³Cf. Büscher (2010: 613ff.)

²⁴⁴Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 117)

²⁴⁵Cf. Büscher (2010: 584f.)

²⁴⁶Cf. Büscher (2010: 609)

²⁴⁷Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2014: 41)

²⁴⁸Cf. Büscher (2010: 618f.)

²⁴⁹Cf. Gromadzki (2011: 20)

5.2. *The Southern Caucasus*

The Southern Caucasus is exposed to the influence of a large variety of actors. Besides Russia and the EU, Turkey, Iran, the United States, the OSCE, NATO and UN as well as multinationals try to influence this region. Therefore, the countries have a wide range of partners to choose from.²⁵⁰ The EU established relations with the countries of the Southern Caucasus from the beginning of the 1990s on, but lacked a comprehensive policy towards this region. During the mid-1990s, the countries of the Southern Caucasus liberalised their energy markets rekindling the EU's interest in the region regarding energy security and transit routes.²⁵¹ The cooperation became more strategic and security-oriented from 2003 onwards.²⁵²

Russia's interest in the Southern Caucasus stems from the presumption of North and South Caucasus being part of one and the same security system. By assuming a dominant and powerful position in the Southern Caucasus, Russia calculates on the stabilisation of the Northern Caucasus as a result.²⁵³

5.2.1. Armenia

Armenia is geographically located between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey. Its relationship with Azerbaijan is practically non-existent since the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The two countries began fighting about the region, primarily populated by Armenians, in the late 1980s. Both countries suffered from their inability to resolve the conflict and Russia seized the opportunity to apply pressure on both of them.²⁵⁴

Armenia's strong dependence on Russia ranges over multiple economic branches and especially affects the country's gas supply. Apart from this, Russia also has a few military bases on Armenian territory. Since Armenia is rather isolated in its neighbourhood, it relies mainly on Russia.²⁵⁵ Until 2013, the country was economically and militarily dependent on Russia while its leadership tried to develop good relations to the EU. It initially decided not to join the Russian Customs Union in order to keep the door open for further cooperation with the EU. Ahead of the Vilnius summit in 2013, however, Russia enforced the pressure and in September the Armenian president declared the decision to join the Custom Unions.²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰Cf. Stewart (2010: 25)

²⁵¹Cf. Maurer (2011: 149)

²⁵²Cf. Ghazaryan (2012: 223)

²⁵³Cf. Souleimanov (2013: 147)

²⁵⁴Cf. Souleimanov (2013: 151)

²⁵⁵Cf. Stewart (2010: 27f.)

²⁵⁶Cf. Kempe (2013/1: 316)

EU-Armenia relations are governed by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement from 1999. The country is included in the ENP and the EP. Negotiations on an Association Agreement, including a DCFTA, were finalised in July 2013. Ever since the country announced its wish to join the Customs Union whose membership is incompatible with an EU Association Agreement, though, it will neither be initialled nor signed. Cooperation will be continued, but only in areas compatible with Armenia's future membership in the Customs Union. A Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement came into force on 1st January 2014.²⁵⁷

5.2.2. Georgia

Georgia has access to the Black Sea and holds strategic importance for Russia and the European Union because its territory covers one of the two routes running through the North Caucasus to the Black Sea. It is an important energy corridor to the West the usage of which could help to reduce the dependency on Russian supplies.²⁵⁸

The early 1990s were characterised by ethnic violence and an economic collapse.²⁵⁹ Discontent over a corrupt and inefficiently run government as well as attempts to manipulate national elections in 2003 erupted in protests leading to the resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze. Russia reacted negatively to the so-called “Rose Revolution”, which cleared the way for a new, pro-western government. The relationship between Russia and Georgia deteriorated steadily and culminated in the Russian-Georgian war started in August 2008.²⁶⁰ When Georgian forces responded to attacks in South Ossetia and tried to retake the territory, Russia which has supported the region for years invaded large parts of Georgian territory and unilaterally acknowledged the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where Russian military forces remained stationed. Those two regions which declared their independence in the early 1990s, are officially part of Georgia, but have separate, unrecognised governments and are being supported by Russia.

A rapprochement between Georgia and Russia had been very unlikely for some time. However, president Ivanishvili, elected in autumn 2013, tried to approach Russia while concurrently declaring Georgia's unchanged willingness to be part of the European integration project.²⁶¹ Georgia, which perceives the Eurasian Union as a reunion of the USSR, harbours a rather critical attitude towards Russia but is not fully satisfied with the EU's offers either.²⁶²

Relations between the European Union and Georgia started in the 1990s and intensified since the

²⁵⁷Cf. EEAS: Armenia

²⁵⁸Cf. Cebotari (2014: 24ff.)

²⁵⁹Cf. Schweickert et al. (2008: 38)

²⁶⁰Cf. Stewart (2010: 25ff.)

²⁶¹Cf. Kempe (2013/1: 316)

²⁶²Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 4)

"Rose Revolution". They are regulated by a PCA, which entered into force on July 1st, 1999. In July 2003, a EU Special Representative for the Southern Caucasus has been appointed. An ENP Action Plan was endorsed in 2006. Besides the ENP, Georgia is part of the Eastern Partnership. Negotiations of an Association Agreement, including a DCFTA, were concluded in July 2013 and initialled at the Vilnius Summit in November 2013.

5.2.3. Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan is the largest state in the Caucasus and, mainly because of the oil reserves in the Caspian Sea, of great strategic importance. It profits from rich energy resources, its security-political situation, however, suffers under the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Therefore, the country depends on assistance from other international actors.²⁶³ Due to its oil and gas resources, Azerbaijan's energy politics are gaining more and more independence. It is the main economic power in the Southern Caucasus and could potentially play a leading role in this region.

Azerbaijan's relationship with Russia is ambivalent and is dominated by energy politics and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Since 1992 the "Minsk Group" chaired by Russia, France and the United States since 1997 under the leadership of the OSCE tries to mediate in the conflict.²⁶⁴ The conflict, though, remains the main obstacle to the increase of the region's stability and prosperity.

The political elite of Azerbaijan is not inclined to the idea of the Eurasian Union, does, however, not want to damage its relations with Russia either.²⁶⁵ The country is developing ties with Western countries²⁶⁶ but shows no interest in an Association Agreement or in commitments for political or economic reforms.²⁶⁷

The European Union concluded a PCA with Azerbaijan in 1999, which provided the legal framework for their bilateral relations. A number of joint institutions were set up under this agreement. In 2013, a Visa Facilitation Agreement, a Readmission Agreement, and a Mobility Partnership were established aimed to facilitate travel and manage migration. Azerbaijan is part of the ENP and EP. An Action Plan was adopted in 2006 and negotiations on an Association Agreement started in 2010. In 2006, the EU and Azerbaijan signed a Memorandum of Understanding in terms of energy politics.

²⁶³Cf. Kempe (2013/1: 316)

²⁶⁴Cf. Stewart (2010: 29f.)

²⁶⁵Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 4)

²⁶⁶Cf. Cebotari (2014: 27f.)

²⁶⁷Cf. Boonstra/Shapovalova (2014: 42)

6. THE EU'S APPROACHES TOWARDS ITS EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

6.1. *Early Approaches*

During the 1990s the European Union's policy towards its neighbours in Eastern Europe circled mainly around the question of future membership. If a country's membership was realistic, the EU had a set of policy instruments and the opening of membership negotiations as an important incentive to support reforms. If EU membership was not on the table in the foreseeable future, the EU lacked a comprehensive policy towards its neighbours. Its approaches towards the countries of the Western CIS and the Southern Caucasus were often limited to providing financial and technical assistance.²⁶⁸

In the mid-1990s the European Union endeavoured to build its relationship with the countries of the former USSR on a legal basis. Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) have been negotiated with all countries. The PCAs with Ukraine and Moldova came into force in 1998, those with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in 1999. A PCA with Belarus was negotiated in 1995, but its ratification has been frozen since 1997 due to the political situation in the country. The PCAs institutionalised the relations with the respective countries, but most scholars agree that they did not provide the desired push for a new cooperation since both incentives and political will from the EU and the partner countries were lacking. One weakness was related to the fact that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements treated the countries of the Southern Caucasus as one region without considering the large discrepancies between the single countries. All in all, the PCA framework was considered too weak, not complex enough and too superficial to be a real support for reform processes.²⁶⁹

Most of the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus are either endowed with rich natural resources or have important energy transit routes and, subsequently, are of interest for the European Union as well as for other political actors. However, many of those countries are restricted by frozen conflicts, instability and severe security problems.²⁷⁰ The prospect of further EU enlargement, which would make those countries direct neighbours who are increasingly effecting the Union, made a more coherent approach necessary.

²⁶⁸Cf. Triantaphyllou / Tsantoulis (2009: 9)

²⁶⁹Cf. Maurer (2011: 149ff.)

²⁷⁰Cf. Moga (2012: 390f.)

6.2. *The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)*

The 2004 and 2007 enlargements brought the need for the EU to “redefine and rediscover the essential Europeaness of its own new members while at the same time coming to terms with the new geopolitical neighbourhood into which it has been thrust.”²⁷¹ This demanded major reforms both within the European Union and in its relations with other states. EU leaders became more and more convinced that the Union could as well as should play a more decisive role as a foreign policy actor both in its neighbourhood and in the international system. During this time, the term “neighbourhood” entered the political agenda of the European Union as a concept.²⁷²

In 2002 Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, began conceptualising the EU strategy towards its future neighbourhood. He prepared a memorandum concerning the so-called “Wider Europe” initiative. In the same year, Romano Prodi outlined the foundations for the new initiative in a public statement.²⁷³ As early as 2003, the Commission communicated the final draft of the proposal titled “Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours” to the Council and the European Parliament.²⁷⁴

The European Neighbourhood Policy was introduced in 2004 in order to create a “ring of friends” around the Union. By creating such a policy, the EU aimed at avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines after the 2004 enlargement. The policy seeks to strengthen prosperity, stability and security in its neighbouring countries since they increasingly affect the EU's.²⁷⁵ The ENP should be a system which enables the EU to set its external limits without risking new dividing lines, to pursue expansion of its norms, values and parts of its *acquis communautaire* without enlargement and to deal with feelings of exclusion by states which do not have a membership perspective (in the foreseeable future).²⁷⁶

The ENP strategy paper, adopted as a Commission Communication in May 2004, did not follow a fixed plan, but was developed in a process shaped by different mechanisms and actors. The first official EU document outlining the plan to consider a special relationship with the future neighbours of the Union was the Council Conclusions of the General Affairs Council in April 2002 (“Wider Europe: Relations between the future enlarged EU and its Eastern Neighbourhood”).²⁷⁷ The initial plan did not include the countries of the Southern Caucasus. The suggestion to integrate these

²⁷¹Cf. Tonra (2012: 61)

²⁷²Cf. Johansson-Nogués (2007: 23)

²⁷³Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 2)

²⁷⁴Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 3)

²⁷⁵Cf. Whitman / Wolff (2012: 5)

²⁷⁶Cf. Ritt (2011: 38), Cf. Pascariu / Frunză (2009: 388-393. 388)

²⁷⁷Cf. Maurer (2011: 87)

countries as well was put forward by the External Relations Council in January 2004.²⁷⁸ The Commission Communication “European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper” from May 2004 is considered the founding document of the ENP. In June 2004, the General Affairs Council gave its approval and the ENP was launched.²⁷⁹

The Commission was the major actor in creating the European Neighbourhood Policy. It was conceptualised within the DG Enlargement and bears a strong resemblance to enlargement policy, for example, the logic of conditionality. Incentives are granted for the fulfilment of agreed objectives, but since membership is not an option, the EU's leverage over those countries is less powerful than the one it had in the enlargement process.²⁸⁰ The ENP serves as an instrument for rule or norm transfer, which is aimed to change the institutional practices, policies and behaviour of the partner countries.²⁸¹ The possibility that the chosen instruments will not work when membership is not an option, was the main difficulty detected in connection with the application of pre-accession conditionality in relations with the neighbouring states.²⁸²

Besides the Commission, the main parties contributing ideas to the creation of the new policy were the Council and the member states, especially in the Council Working Groups. The European Council acted mainly as a supervisor.²⁸³

The European Neighbourhood Policy comprises 16 Southern and Eastern neighbours, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Ukraine, Algeria, Belarus, Libya and Syria. The twelve first countries mentioned are fully participating in the ENP. Algeria is currently negotiating an Action Plan, while Belarus, Libya and Syria remain outside of most of the ENP structures due to their internal political situation.²⁸⁴

Huge emphasis within the documents of the neighbourhood policy is put on the “commitment to shared values” and joint ownership.²⁸⁵ The Communication of the ENP Strategy Paper lists seven core values worth strengthening: democracy and rule of law; reform of the judiciary and fight against corruption and organised crime; respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms; support for the development of civil society; commitment to fight against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and abidance by international law and efforts to achieve conflict resolution.²⁸⁶

The EU saw the ENP as an opportunity for its new neighbours for “deeper political and economic

²⁷⁸Cf. Maurer (2011: 103)

²⁷⁹Cf. Maurer (2011: 104)

²⁸⁰Cf. Marchetti (2008: 27)

²⁸¹Cf. Casier (2007: 78f.)

²⁸²Cf. Kochenov (2008: 107)

²⁸³Cf. Maurer (2011: 105)

²⁸⁴Cf. EEAS: European Neighbourhood Policy

²⁸⁵Cf. Ritt (2011: 47)

²⁸⁶Bosse (2008: 45f.)

integration in exchange for progress in reforms in different fields supporting democracy, the rule of law and a market-oriented economy.”²⁸⁷ It builds upon existing legal agreements (Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or Association Agreements). The central element the work within the ENP is based on are bilateral Action Plans or Association Agendas, which set out an agenda of political and economic reforms with short and medium-term priorities of 3 to 5 years. The implementation of these reforms is promoted and monitored through Committees and sub-Committees.²⁸⁸ Furthermore, the EU offers financial assistance programmes, expert advice and tools such as TAIEX and Twinning.²⁸⁹

Much scepticism was raised with regard to the question whether the practical short-time benefits including financial assistance and the prospect of visa facilitation would be enough to encourage the extensive and costly reforms demanded by the European Union. Whitman and Wolff mention a reversed logic of conditionality since the EU considers deepening its relations with its partners only after a variety of reforms. They observe a lack of political will among the member states and reluctance to discuss the strategic finality of the relations with the neighbourhood. The essential question of possible membership was avoided by the European Union.²⁹⁰

There are close interconnections between the ENP and the European Security Strategy (ESS), which was adopted by the Council in 2003.²⁹¹ The ESS states that it

is in the European interest that countries on our own borders are well-governed. Neighbours who are engaged in violent conflict, weak states where organised crime flourished, dysfunctional societies or exploding population growth on its borders all pose problems for Europe.²⁹²

Boosting security in its neighbourhood is one of the three strategic objectives of EU foreign policy, others are supporting an international order based on effective multilateralism and addressing key threats.²⁹³ One of the objectives dominating EU's security agenda is to deal with frozen conflicts in its neighbourhood. Those conflicts, which have not been solved for years, are a major security threat not only to the countries directly involved, but also to their neighbours. The EU was often criticised for not engaging enough in finding solutions for the conflicts. Russia's support for those breakaway regions caused the EU to proceed with a more cautious approach, nurtured by the fear of going on a collision course with Russia. However, the EU makes increasing efforts to more actively position itself in conflict resolution. A rule of law mission for Georgia (EUJUST Themis) was

²⁸⁷Whitman / Wolff (2012: 6)

²⁸⁸Cf. EEAS: European Neighbourhood Policy

²⁸⁹Cf. Whitman / Wolff (2012: 9)

²⁹⁰Cf. Whitman / Wolff (2012: 13f.)

²⁹¹Cf. Ritt (2011: 41f.)

²⁹²Biscop (2012: 73)

²⁹³Cf. European Security Strategy

launched in 2004 and an EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM) to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, which aimed at supporting capacity building for border management on the Moldova-Ukraine border, was deployed in 2005. In 2008, a European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM), a civilian mission led by the EU, was established in Georgia and a Special Representative for the Southern Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia was appointed in 2011.²⁹⁴

An ENP Progress Report is published each year by the European External Action Service and the European Commission. The ENP is financed under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) which, in 2007, replaced the cooperation programmes TACIS and MEDA and will be succeeded by a new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for the period of 2014 to 2020. The ENI should enable greater differentiation based on the “more for more” principle.²⁹⁵

Since the European Neighbourhood Policy does not include countries with a clear membership perspective, there have been many discussions whether participation in this policy is equivalent to an exclusion from future EU membership. However, the EU emphasises that the ENP does not interfere with the enlargement process and does not prejudge how the neighbours' relations with the EU will evolve.²⁹⁶

In 2007, the Commission's revised version, titled “A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy”, included three conceptual modifications: the pursuance of further differentiation, decentring of ownership and the promotion of regional cooperation.²⁹⁷ With this revision the EU reacted to growing criticism towards its policy. The Black Sea Synergy, a regional cooperation initiative open to all Black Sea states, was formally launched in 2008 and should complement other policies like the EP, the partnership with Russia or the pre-accession strategy with Turkey.²⁹⁸

Among the positive changes the ENP brought were the improvement of cross-border cooperation, the guaranteed access to financial assistance as well as the support for existing regional and sub-regional cooperation initiatives and processes. Its main weaknesses, however, included the failure to introduce a strong regional component and the fact that the ENP covers a very large geographical area.²⁹⁹ Soon there has been criticism for the EU's uniform approach towards such a diverse and heterogeneous group of countries, that ideas to intensify relations with certain countries were raised. In 2007, the German EU presidency proposed “ENP plus”, an initiative to deepen the relationship with the countries of Eastern Europe, but without success.³⁰⁰ A country highly active in strengthening the relations with the Eastern neighbourhood is Poland, which presented its own

²⁹⁴Cf. Biscop (2012: 83)

²⁹⁵Cf. EU Neighbourhood Info Centre

²⁹⁶Cf. EEAS European Neighbourhood Policy

²⁹⁷Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 6)

²⁹⁸Cf. Triantaphyllou / Tsantoulis (2009: 8)

²⁹⁹Cf. Simionov (2013: 113f.)

³⁰⁰Cf. Peters et al. (2009: 6)

proposals for the EU's approaches towards its Eastern neighbours even before accessing to the EU.³⁰¹ In April 2008, the EU declared its wish to upgrade its relations with and provide increased aid to two Southern and two Eastern countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Morocco, Israel).³⁰²

6.3. *The Eastern Partnership (EP)*

In May 2008, a joint Polish-Swedish proposal suggested the development of a more region-focused and tailor-made approach towards the Eastern neighbourhood. The Eastern Partnership was officially launched in May 2009 at the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit as a joint initiative between the EU, EU member states and the Eastern European partner countries. It should enable the Union to tie closer relations with the Eastern neighbours and increase political, economic and cultural connections. As a basis for the Eastern Partnership the EU presented a shared commitment to international law and fundamental values. The EP envisaged the creation of Association Agreements which should include Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA) with some of the participating countries. These should replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements concluded in the 1990s.³⁰³

The Eastern Partnership's development was further spurred by the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean, which was proposed by France, and the Russian-Georgian war in the summer of 2008.³⁰⁴

The new initiative envisaged a two-track approach by combining the ENP's mainly bilateral approach with a multilateral dimension.³⁰⁵ The Eastern Partnership should allow the EU to create Association Agreements with the front-runners while approaching other partners on a needs-serving basis. Another innovation was the EU's declaration to step up its efforts to deal with frozen conflicts and engage with civil society, a respond to the criticism of the Union's sloth in this respect.³⁰⁶ The EU aims for promoting political association and economic integration of its Eastern neighbours through legislative and regulatory approximation. The EP is based on the negotiation of new AAs, the establishment of DCFTAs, the conclusion of mobility and security pacts and close cooperation in the area of energy security.³⁰⁷ Peters et al. argue that the multilateral track of the EP could develop into a useful, overarching framework which coordinates and streamlines the existing

³⁰¹Cf. Natorski (2008: 62f.)

³⁰²Cf. Johansson-Nogués (2008: 126)

³⁰³Cf. EEAS : Eastern Partnership

³⁰⁴Cf. Ritt (2011: 80)

³⁰⁵Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 7)

³⁰⁶Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 7)

³⁰⁷Cf. Van Elsuwege (2010: 205)

dispersed initiatives. Challenges within the multilateral dimension will most likely appear concerning the extent to which the partners will manage to cooperate as a group, the participation of third states and possible tensions with the bilateral track.³⁰⁸

The operational structure of the multilateral track is organised at four levels. The Heads of State and Government meet every two years, the Foreign Affairs Ministers annually and each policy platform meets at least biannually. Working panels are supposed to support the policy platforms and meet frequently.³⁰⁹ The thematic platforms are: democracy, good governance and stability; economic integration and convergence with EU policies; energy security and contacts between people.³¹⁰ Different flagship initiatives were launched to assist with country-specific interests and offer additional financial support.³¹¹

The Eastern Partnership is a more flexible approach because it includes fewer countries and can be tailored to each country's individual needs and capacities. Hence, the key notion of the programme is differentiation. Strong incentives for the participating countries are the creation of a free trade area, the creation of a neighbourhood economic community and visa facilitation.³¹² The most significant proposals are the option of signing an Association Agreement, which includes accords on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, the proposal of membership of the Energy Community and the suspension of visa requirements in the long term.³¹³

Russia is not involved in the EP but could, as other third countries, participate in concrete projects, activities and meetings of thematic platforms.³¹⁴ Third countries' participation is a largely unexplored part of the Eastern Partnership.³¹⁵

Additional and non-governmental initiatives are, for example, the Civil Society Forum and the Parliamentary dimension (EURONEST). The Civil Society Forum, first held in November 2013, aims for representing civil society actors from the EP and the EU member states as well as interested third countries.³¹⁶ After its launch, Belarus was very active in the Civil Society Forum.³¹⁷ The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly was constituted in May 2011 and is made up of representatives of the European Parliament and national assemblies of the Eastern Partnership countries (Belarus has only an observer status). It will operate via committees whose task it is to link up with the EP thematic platforms.³¹⁸

³⁰⁸Cf. Peters et al. (2009: 11ff.)

³⁰⁹Cf. Peters et al. (2009: 11)

³¹⁰Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 6)

³¹¹Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 8)

³¹²Cf. Triantaphyllou / Tsantoulis (2009: 13)

³¹³Cf. Gromadzki (2011: 14)

³¹⁴Cf. Van Elsuwege (2010: 208)

³¹⁵Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 8)

³¹⁶Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 7)

³¹⁷Cf. Kempe (2013/1: 315)

³¹⁸Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 7)

The EU hopes for its partners to adopt its policy and to gradually comply with its norms, although membership is not offered in the foreseeable future.³¹⁹ The EU's relations with the neighbourhood are characterised by calculated inclusion. Calculated inclusion „follows the logic of self-interested aid. In the transnational context, self-interested aid is motivated by the interest of the country providing assistance in finding ways to solve problems that spread across borders in the foreign locations where they first arise.“³²⁰ The European Union pursues a combined policy of exclusion and inclusion towards its periphery.

How the EU's normative claim is perceived by its neighbours depends on how strongly those countries depend on the EU economically and politically and what they hope to gain from the EU as well as which alternatives they see for EU integration.³²¹ The countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus have different expectations in the EP and ENP. While Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine aim for a membership perspective, Armenia and Azerbaijan are more interested in the potential economic help of the ENP than in integration into European structures. Belarus tries to attract European investors and hopes for a way out of isolation.³²²

6.4. *Criticism of the EU's approaches*

The EU's approaches towards its neighbourhood have received a lot of criticism, the main strands of which will be outlined below. The ENP has been accused of being a “hegemonic strategy” creating a semi-periphery or privileged buffer between the EU and its periphery. The severe economic and political asymmetries have been stressed as well as the EU's tendency to neglect the security concerns of its neighbours compared to its own.³²³ Meloni argues that the EU fails to take into consideration how its policies might be perceived by its partners and Whitman and Wolff doubt that the ENP really offers a partnership as such, since it is clearly biased towards EU interests.³²⁴ Other authors called the ENP a form of (post-modern) empire or a soft hegemon.³²⁵ Tonra criticises that the ENP is structured in a way that did not consider the neighbours as co-equal objects but turned them into subjects of EU policy.³²⁶ Simionov refers to the asymmetry dominating the ENP as a very mild form of imperialism and criticises the lack of consistency in applying conditionality which

³¹⁹Cf. Moga (2012: 387)

³²⁰Vobruha (2007: 4)

³²¹Cf. Lippert (2011: 10)

³²²Cf. Simionov (2013: 112)

³²³Cf. Marchetti (2008: 26ff.), Cf. Whitmann / Wolff (2012: 15)

³²⁴Cf. Whitmann / Wolff (2012: 15)

³²⁵Cf. Tulmets (2008:133)

³²⁶Cf. Tonra (2012: 66)

damages EU's credibility.³²⁷ She observes a relatively low impact in the Eastern neighbourhood and sees the emergence of a multi-polar world as a facilitator for the neighbouring states to increasingly balance its foreign-policy between different external actors. The countries, the EU has to compete with in its Eastern neighbourhood, are Russia, Turkey, Iran and China.³²⁸ Simionov argues that the union's influence on its neighbourhood was marginal in terms of trajectories of democratization, foreign-policy and conflict management and that the EU failed to turn its “presence” in these countries into “power”.³²⁹ According to her, the ENP can, to a certain degree, function in countries that aim for gaining a membership perspective, but does not work in countries with no intention of joining the EU.³³⁰

Kochenov criticised that the Action Plans are not always coherent, that they lack clarity and reform vision for the partner countries. He considers the value-based conditionality to be dysfunctional when it comes to countries whose implementation of democracy and rule of law basically necessitate a regime change.³³¹

Bosse argues that the emphasis on “shared values” in the Country Reports is “not necessarily a sign or outcome of an inclusive and values-based policy-making process, but rather a Commission-centric and heavily path-dependent mode of policy formulation”.³³² Korosteleva identifies two major difficulties with the ENP. The first can be summed up as the question whether the shared values should rather be the basis or the consequence of the relationship with the EU, the second is the missing explanation of what exactly the difference between universal and specifically EU values is.³³³ Karen Smith criticised the Eurocentric nature of the ENP and argues that it lacks appropriate incentives to motivate the partner countries.³³⁴

Johansson-Nogués stresses that commercial interest, geopolitical considerations and “special relationships” frequently urge the EU member states to make internal trade-offs due to which the consistency of its policies suffers.³³⁵

Boonstra and Shapovalova detect a contradiction between the principles of joint ownership and conditionality and point out that the EU's offers will not appeal to all partners to the same extent if conditionality is equally applied.³³⁶ Another aspect they criticise is the lack of funding.³³⁷ They argue that the EP did not manage to overcome the weakness of the ENP, since its bilateral offers are

³²⁷Cf. Simionov (2013: 115)

³²⁸Cf. Simionov (2013: 116f.)

³²⁹Cf. Simionov (2013: 126f.)

³³⁰Cf. Simionov (2013: 125)

³³¹Cf. Kochenov (2008: 116ff.)

³³²Cf. Bosse (2008: 47)

³³³Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 4)

³³⁴Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 9)

³³⁵Cf. Johansson-Nogués (2008: 125)

³³⁶Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 4f.)

³³⁷Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 7)

too distant and vague, its incentives weak and the gap between the institutions and policies of the EU and the EP countries remained far too big.³³⁸

Korosteleva criticises that the EU frequently takes its soft power appeal for granted, forgetting that reforms are often extremely costly, and does not offer certain guarantees of the future.³³⁹ In her opinion, EU rhetoric is often pervaded, even though in a subtle way, by references to the EU's superiority and its natural right to global governance, justified by its history of cooperation and achievements.³⁴⁰

Another harshly and frequently criticised action was the EU's unchanged approach towards Ukraine after the Orange Revolution. Despite the countries' wish for membership perspective, there was no consensus within the EU if Ukraine should be granted a membership perspective or not.³⁴¹

7. RUSSIAN APPROACHES TOWARDS ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

7.1. Relations to the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus before 2000

The dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), one of the two superpowers during the Cold War and the leading force in Eastern Europe for decades, changed the geopolitical constellation radically. It left fifteen newly independent states, including the Russian Federation, which had to redefine their identity and find a place in the post-Cold War setting. Russia, as former centre of the bloc, became the legal successor of the USSR, which ceased to exist at the end of 1991. It inherited most assets of the former Soviet Union and soon made efforts to reorganise its relations to its neighbours.³⁴²

Considering power politics, Russia suffered a major setback at the end of the Cold War. It lost almost half of its ports and territories, which were declared being of tremendous importance for the formation of Russian identity. The most valuable country in this regard is Ukraine, which shares a long and often conflicting history with Russia. Both states emerged from this territory (Kievan Rus') and many famous Russians too were born within the geographical borders of today's Ukraine.³⁴³ Russia experienced a massive economic transformation in the 1990s, which was accompanied by

³³⁸Cf. Boonstra / Shapovalova (2010: 12)

³³⁹Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 117f.)

³⁴⁰Cf. Korosteleva (2012: 127)

³⁴¹Cf. Kasčiūnas / Vaičiūnas (2007: 41)

³⁴²Cf. Popescu (2011: 5)

³⁴³Cf. Sakwa (2008: 213)

decreasing living standards, high inflation, budget deficits and capital flights.³⁴⁴ The political transformation was impeded by strong sentiments of defeat, resignation, loss and humiliation within the Russian elite as well as the population.³⁴⁵

Most scholars agree that since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been aiming at building new forms of integration directed towards the countries of the former USSR. They disagree, however, on whether its objectives were solely geopolitical – for the purpose of strengthening Russia's position in the world and regaining its great power status – or whether other intentions were equally important.³⁴⁶

Altogether, three different foreign policy schools emerged in the 1990s. The liberal-Atlanticist school wanted Russia to arise from the political turmoil as a prosperous democratic country with intense and positive relations to the West. The Eurasianist perspective is characterised by stressing the importance of the post-Soviet space for Russian security and distancing Russia from the Western heritage which led to the declaration that the “Near Abroad” was a zone of vital interest for Russia in the mid-1990s. The third orientation, the centrists, sought to normalise relations with the West but at the same time considered the countries of the CIS the linchpin of foreign policy making.³⁴⁷

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was founded on December 21, 1991 by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine and included all former Soviet republics except the Baltic States. Originally conceived by Russia as a military bloc under Russian leadership, it is neither a political alliance nor an economic community (though it has elements of both), but a loose federation without independent powers of governance, whose decisions require unanimous consent. So far, most of the decisions reached, however, have not been put into effect and members have been frequently staying away from summit meetings at all.³⁴⁸ Even if only a few objectives proclaimed in the founding treaty were actually achieved, the CIS would play an important role in managing the transition to independent statehood and ensuring this to happen in a peaceful way.³⁴⁹ It varied to what extent the participating countries were willing to integrate with Russia and the other members. Russia hesitated to take on a leading role mainly because it wanted to evade accusations of neo-imperialism, but soon took over this position within the Commonwealth nonetheless. The CIS served as a tool to coordinate its members' policies and to provide Russia with the opportunity to maintain its influence on the other states.³⁵⁰ The members of the CIS agreed that Russia should be

³⁴⁴Cf. Sakwa (2008: 285)

³⁴⁵Cf. Sakwa (2008: 213)

³⁴⁶Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 3), Lukyanov (2013: 8), Popescu (2011: 5), Kasčiūnas / Šukytė (2013: 63), Tchakarova (2010: 3)

³⁴⁷Cf. Bowker (2004: 271f.)

³⁴⁸Cf. Donaldson (2012: 433f.)

³⁴⁹Cf. Sakwa (2008: 420ff.)

³⁵⁰Cf. Donaldson (2012: 433)

the only nuclear power and take over the USSR's position as permanent member in the United Nations Security Council.³⁵¹

Within the CIS, interests were often colliding. That was one of the reasons why occasionally some member states organised themselves into smaller groups in order to realise their objectives. One example was the agreement to create a customs union, signed by Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1996, which was expanded in 1999 and became the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) in 2000.³⁵²

Another step was the creation of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) in 1992 which includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia. It should provide an effective mechanism for security in the CIS area and offer an alternative to joining the NATO.³⁵³ Many bilateral, trilateral and multilateral networks between different members of the CIS emerged, mainly in the spheres of economy and trade.³⁵⁴

During the first years after the collapse of the USSR the Russian leadership focused mainly on deepening its relations to the countries of Western Europe, the United States, and, to a lesser extent, China, as well as trying to create friendly relations with its neighbours. Especially the time between January 1992 and February 1993 was marked by a pronounced pro-Western attitude.³⁵⁵

There are several reasons why Russia deviated from this policy and increasingly focused on the countries of the former Soviet Union. Concerns about trade and security as well as boundary disputes did their bit. Another aspect concerned the Russian population in these states. With the dissolution of the USSR 25 million ethnic Russians became citizens of other countries without changing their geographic settlement.³⁵⁶ Moreover, Russia was disappointed about the difficult and slow-moving integration with Western Europe which did not resemble what the Russian leadership had expected in any way, shape or form.³⁵⁷ Soon, a certain grade of disillusionment set in since the initial hopes of a rapid transformation with the help of the West were eventually shattered.

Whenever Russia discussed its relations with the former Soviet republics, the distinction between foreign and domestic policy was often blurred.

The term “near abroad” (Ближнее зарубежье) used to refer to the countries in question is a good example: The expression implies that they are – in the Russian political elite's thinking – not genuinely foreign countries but are politically positioned somewhere between truly sovereign and

³⁵¹Cf. Mommsen (2010: 419)

³⁵²Cf. Hoffmann (2012: 4)

³⁵³Cf. Laruelle / Tafuro (2014: 57)

³⁵⁴Cf. Tchakarova (2013: 1)

³⁵⁵Cf. Sakwa (2008: 368)

³⁵⁶Cf. Lukyanov (2013: 8)

³⁵⁷Cf. Donaldson (2012: 432), Bastian (2006: 12)

dependent states.³⁵⁸

Until the mid-1990s, Russian policy focused mainly on international economic integration and recognition of its great power status. This period was characterised by increasingly hegemonic attitudes towards those former Soviet countries which were of “vital national interests”³⁵⁹. In the presidential decree “on Russia's Strategic Course in its Relations with the CIS States” from September 1995, the development of the CIS is viewed as corresponding to the vital interests of the Russian Federation.³⁶⁰ The spheres of interests can be divided into two categories: the first and most unconcealed consisted of former Soviet republics, while the second covered the former Warsaw Pact states of Central and Eastern Europe.³⁶¹ Yeltsin claimed that Russia had a special interest in the region of the CIS and that it would defend the rights of ethnic Russians living in those countries. During this period “geopolitics successfully replaced communist ideology as the conceptual basis for Russia's foreign policy”³⁶², while at the same time Gorbachev's concept of a “Common European Home” became more and more associated with capitulation and retreat.³⁶³ The idea of the Common European Home surfaced in the second half of the 1980s and has never been transformed into a detailed concept. It demanded that rivalry should give way to “co-operation in the name of shared values, aimed at solving joint problems, and especially at ensuring durable security and prosperity 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok’”.³⁶⁴

After an initial phase of turning towards the West, remarks about the pursue of autonomy and regaining recognition as a global player can be found in many documents from this time and it got increasingly incorporated into Russian policy. This went hand in hand with economic growth and increased self-confidence, to which the Western states reacted mainly with suspicion.³⁶⁵

It was in 1993 when Yeltsin claimed for the first time that Russia had a “vital interest in the cessation of all armed conflicts on the territory of the former USSR” and appealed to the United Nations to “grant Russia special powers as the guarantor of peace and stability in this region.”³⁶⁶ The “Foreign Policy Concept”, drafted by the Security Council in the same year, formalised this new line. The “liberal Westernising” policy made room for a stance emphasising Russia's claims in the states of the former USSR without specifying how its hegemonic position should look like.³⁶⁷ Yeltsin's regime insisted that Russia's interest in these regions should be taken into account by the

³⁵⁸Cf. Sakwa (2008: 368ff.)

³⁵⁹Sakwa (2008: 369)

³⁶⁰Cf. Vinokurov (2007: 28)

³⁶¹Cf. Lo (2003: 81)

³⁶²Baev quoted in Sakwa (2008: 369)

³⁶³Cf. Sakwa (2008: 369)

³⁶⁴Menkiszak (2013: 8)

³⁶⁵Cf. Sakwa (2008: 363)

³⁶⁶Sakwa (2008: 370), Cf. Adomeit (2012: 7)

³⁶⁷Cf. Donaldson (2012: 432)

international community.³⁶⁸ The CIS region gained special importance for Russia every time NATO conducted joint exercises with the respective countries. Similarly, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe were important mainly due Eastern Europe's growing interest in integrating with the West.³⁶⁹ At a G7 summit in 1998 Yeltsin demanded that NATO and EU should not interfere in this region and that the boundaries of the former USSR should serve as a red line the NATO must not overstep.³⁷⁰

Russia's self-image as a great power seriously suffered in the aftermath of the economic and financial crisis in 1998 and the marginalisation Russia experienced at the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999.³⁷¹ In December 1999, Vladimir Putin declared that Russia was prepared to cooperate with the CIS countries which were perceived as natural allies in the post-Soviet area without any great power ambitions and on the basis of equality.³⁷²

7.2. Russian approaches since 2000

The 2000 Foreign Policy Concept combined a commitment to international integration with assertions about Russia's great power status. It was marked by a “more sober appreciation of reality and of Russia's real opposed to idealised interpretations of its interests”³⁷³. The concept emphasised the dangers of globalisation and criticised attempts to “belittle the role of the sovereign state as the fundamental element of international relations [which] generate a threat of arbitrary interference in internal affairs”³⁷⁴. Putin's “new realism” conceived Russia as a great power but realised that the country was not able to maintain its “rightful” place in the world. The need to strengthen the economy and build on diplomacy was stressed.³⁷⁵ Russia linked its great power status increasingly to its role as an important energy supplier and benefited from rising energy prices.³⁷⁶ It used the dependency of many of its neighbours as a means of influencing the countries in question and keeping them close to oneself.³⁷⁷

The National Security Concept stated in 2000 that “Russia's national interests in the international sphere lie in upholding its sovereignty and strengthening its positions as a great power and as one of

³⁶⁸Cf. Lo (2003: 81)

³⁶⁹Cf. Lo (2003: 82)

³⁷⁰Cf. Adomeit (2012: 10)

³⁷¹Cf. Mommsen (2010: 470)

³⁷²Cf. Adomeit (2012: 10)

³⁷³Sakwa (2008: 372)

³⁷⁴Kuhrt (2012: 423)

³⁷⁵Cf. Sakwa (2008: 371f.)

³⁷⁶Cf. Kuhrt (2012: 424)

³⁷⁷Cf. Ciobanu (2008: 47)

the influential centres of a multipolar world, in development of equal and mutually advantageous relations with all countries and integrative associations and primarily with the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Russia's traditional partners, in universal observance of human rights and freedoms and the impermissibility of double standards in this respect.”³⁷⁸

The newly elected Vladimir Putin initiated the Eurasian Economic Community, which was replaced by the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) in July 2012. The EEC was based on common customs tariffs, a common customs code and a joint commission.³⁷⁹ Kempe observes the increasing role of the EEC in the normative rivalry with the EU in their shared neighbourhood as well as in bilateral relations with the EU.³⁸⁰ The main goal of Russia's CIS politics is defined as the creation of an economically and politically integrated union of states able to claim its place in the international community.³⁸¹ The Customs Union, proposed in 2009 and confirmed during Putin's election campaign in 2011-2012, was a first attempt to offer an economic model appealing to others as well.³⁸² The Customs Union introduced a free trade area, a common import taxation structure and a common external tariff, as well as the harmonisation of product quality and other standards.³⁸³

The proposal to create a Eurasian Union as a new integration concept was announced by Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus in 2011. The focus on society, welfare and the inclusion of non-state actors in the integration process were as much a novelty as the emphasis that was put on the creation of a value-based community.³⁸⁴ Putin comments on the Eurasian Union in an interview in the *Izvestia daily* on 4th October, 2011 as follows:

The Eurasian Union will be built on universal integration principles as an essential part of Greater Europe, united by shared values of freedom, democracy and market laws. (...) Soon, the Customs Union, and later the Eurasian Union, will join the dialogue with the EU.³⁸⁵

Comparable levels of economic development, similarities in culture, history and society as well as the existence of connections, transportation networks and energy infrastructure were expected to be to the project's advantage.³⁸⁶ For the EU, the plans would implicate two major consequences: On the one hand, the concept would interfere with its own integration objectives, and, on the other, Russia wanting the Eurasian Union to negotiate with the EU would cause considerable changes. Putin made efforts to claim that the “entry into the Eurasian Union allows each of its participants to,

³⁷⁸National Security Concept of the Russian Federation (2000)

³⁷⁹Cf. Tchakarova (2013: 1)

³⁸⁰Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 3f.)

³⁸¹Cf. Vinokurov (2007: 28)

³⁸²Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 8)

³⁸³Cf. Kasčiūnas & Šukytė (2013: 64)

³⁸⁴Cf. Hoffmann (2012: 2)

³⁸⁵Menkiszak (2013: 15)

³⁸⁶Cf. Tchakarova (2013: 2)

more quickly and from a stronger position, integrate into Europe.”³⁸⁷ The Eurasian Union is seen as an opportunity to strengthen the bargaining position in negotiations with the EU.³⁸⁸ Another aspect implies Russia's plans of the Eurasian integration project to act as a counterweight to regional integration projects in Asia.³⁸⁹ The Western European countries and the United States watched the Russian plans with a certain degree of concern regarding long-term implications for the countries of the CIS area.³⁹⁰ Kasčiūnas and Šukytė argue that, despite the huge number of scholars emphasising the importance of the Russian integration projects in increasing the country's stance in international politics, the economic impact of the Eurasian Union has been undervalued.³⁹¹

Stewart analyses Putin's presidency and stresses that, while in the first term pragmatic relations towards Russia's neighbours based on shared interests were predominant, other aspects such as the mentioning of Russia's civilising mission on the Eurasian continent were added in the second term.³⁹² During Putin's two term presidency, geopolitical considerations became increasingly important. From the Russian perspective they were confirmed by Western actions like the 1999 NATO bombing in Yugoslavia, the US presence in Central Asia/Afghanistan and the support for the “coloured revolutions” by the US and EU, which was conceived as an action against Russia.³⁹³ Russia demanded its status as a global power more and more openly.³⁹⁴

After the war with Georgia in 2008, Medvedev formulated the following five foreign policy principles: the primacy of international law; the emphasis on the world being multi-polar; the assurance that Russia does not seek confrontation or isolation; the protection of new Russian citizens and the acknowledgement of having regions of privileged interests.³⁹⁵ Priority is given to the protection of Russians regardless of their residency. It was no coincidence that Russia officially declared these principles shortly after the war in which Russia had used the necessity to protect Russian citizens living in South Ossetia as a justification for its intervention. The policy priorities already implied that Russia would use the justification of protecting Russian citizens as an excuse to interfere in other states as well. The group to be protected lists ethnic Russians, Russian-speaking people and people who received the Russian citizenship irrespective of their ethnic or cultural affiliation.³⁹⁶ Citizenships were given preferably to people living in conflicted regions and regions in which Russia had special interests. Russia distributed passports to citizens in Abkhazia and South

³⁸⁷ Putin, cited in Kasčiūnas & Šukytė (2013: 66)

³⁸⁸ Cf. Kasčiūnas & Šukytė (2013: 69)

³⁸⁹ Cf. Tchakarova (2013: 2)

³⁹⁰ Cf. Tchakarova (2013: 1)

³⁹¹ Cf. Kasčiūnas & Šukytė (2013: 66)

³⁹² Cf. Stewart (2010: 8)

³⁹³ Cf. Kuhrt (2012: 426)

³⁹⁴ Cf. Mommsen (2010: 472)

³⁹⁵ Cf. Reynolds (01.09.2008)

³⁹⁶ Cf. Adomeit (2012: 3f.)

Ossetia, Transnistria as well as Crimea (Паспортизация). This policy was used to create a need for protection of Russian citizens. This need was used as a justification for military interventions and as a way to exert influence on other countries.³⁹⁷ Russia has declared its responsibility for Russian citizens living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as well as in Transnistria and Crimea, a responsibility which was created partly by Russia offering citizenships en masse for the population of these regions and partly by intensive Russian propaganda.³⁹⁸

Since the beginning of Putin's third term as president in March 2012, his foreign policy became more and more engaged in normative rivalry with the European Union over their shared neighbourhood.³⁹⁹ Marcel de Haas argued that the attempts to restore Russia's status as a superpower were aimed mainly at distracting from domestic problems manifesting themselves, for example, in the anti-Putin protests from 2011 onwards.⁴⁰⁰

The 2013 Foreign Policy Concept demands partnership relations on the basis of “respect for independence and sovereignty, pragmatism [...]”⁴⁰¹ and promotes “good-neighbourly relations with adjoining states”⁴⁰². As in the Russian National Security Concept (2000), the CIS is designated as a priority area and upholding sovereignty described as a dogma of Russian foreign policy. Other aspects mentioned are once again the need to protect the rights and interests of Russian citizens living abroad and the wish to promote Russia's approach to human rights issues, which differs significantly from the Western European understanding of human rights.⁴⁰³

The document stresses the importance of soft power, but also warns about the “risk of destructive and unlawful use of 'soft power' and human rights concepts to exert political pressure on sovereign states, interfere in their internal affairs, destabilize their political situation, manipulate public opinion, including under the pretext of financing cultural and human rights projects abroad”⁴⁰⁴. This paragraph quite openly criticises the interference of other actors, quite obviously referring to the EU and the United States, which tend to use their normative human rights policy as a way to hide other interests.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Oldberg (2010:13)

³⁹⁸ Cf. Ciobanu (2008: 39)

³⁹⁹ Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 2)

⁴⁰⁰ Cf. De Haas (11.02.2014)

⁴⁰¹ Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (2013: Art 4)

⁴⁰² Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (2013: Art 4)

⁴⁰³ Cf. Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (2013: Art 4)

⁴⁰⁴ Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (2013: Art 20)

7.3. Greater Europe - Eurasian Union

Since 2001 Putin has raised a concept called “Greater Europe” on several occasions. It consists of a partly integrated common space comprising mainly the Russian controlled Eurasian Union and the European Union. The idea of Greater Europe has its roots in the 1980s and derives from the long Soviet/Russian tradition of attempting to draw Europe nearer to Russia by including Russia into Europe while excluding the United States from it.⁴⁰⁵ Yeltsin used the term in 1997 during a Council of Europe summit in Strasbourg as he talked about the need for building a “new greater Europe without dividing lines”.⁴⁰⁶

In September 2001, Putin presented his idea in a speech to the German Bundestag. He argued that Europe could, by joining together Russia's and its own potential, “reinforce its reputation of a strong and truly independent centre of the world politics.”⁴⁰⁷ The most dominant aspect of his idea was the strong focus on Europe's independence, a measure directed primarily against the United States. In an article in *Le Figaro* (May 2005) he suggested a Greater Europe consisting of two pillars: the Western pillar (EU) and the Eastern pillar managed by Russia. Menkiszak sees the article primarily as a call on Europe to recognise that “Russia's hegemonic role in the CIS area did not contradict the idea of all-European integration”.⁴⁰⁸ The fact that the concept was addressed to Germany and France highlights the significance those countries have for the implementation of Putin's idea.

Some years later, in 2010, Putin once again emphasised the positive aspects of a strong Russia-EU partnership and presented a five-point plan for Greater Europe. This plan included a harmonised community of economies (from Lisbon to Vladivostok), a common industrial policy, a common energy complex, co-operation in science and education and the elimination of barriers in human and business contacts. What was missing was a direct reference to the place the countries of the shared neighbourhood would occupy within this concept. In an article published by the *Izvestia daily* in 2011 Putin claimed that the creation of a Eurasian Union would not contradict the idea of European integration, but on the opposite was an important element of it. A new aspect raised by Putin in this article implied the economic rather than political integration of Greater Europe. Thereby, Russia's autonomy to make its own decisions would not be restricted by others.⁴⁰⁹

According to an article in *Moskovskie Novosti* from 2012, Greater Europe was to be created to strengthen Russia's capabilities and its economic position towards the “new Asia”.⁴¹⁰ Moscow made an effort to prompt the EU to recognise the Customs Union and later the Common Economic Space

⁴⁰⁵Cf. Tchakarova (2013: 1)

⁴⁰⁶Menkiszak (2013: 9)

⁴⁰⁷Menkiszak (2013: 11)

⁴⁰⁸Menkiszak (2013: 12)

⁴⁰⁹Cf. Menkiszak (2013: 14f.)

⁴¹⁰Menkiszak (2013: 17)

and the Eurasian Union as partners for dialogue in order to conclude formal agreements with the EU as a bloc. This would strengthen Russia's position in negotiations, while the EU would find itself confronted with political and legal problems.⁴¹¹

For Moscow the EU's recognition of Russia as the centre of its own regional integration project in the CIS area was essential. Menkiszak goes as far as to argue that Putin's concept emerged in part as a response to the EU's rising activity in the shared neighbourhood.⁴¹² The concept should strengthen the potential and independence of Russia as a global power and “offer it instruments to influence European politics in line with its own interests, while at the same time preventing European actors from trying to influence Russia's internal and foreign policy”⁴¹³.

In January 2012, the Common Economic Space (CES) between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan was inaugurated.⁴¹⁴ Russia deems the Common Economic Space a suitable partner for the EU regarding dialogue, co-operation and partial integration.

In July 2012, the Eurasian Economic Community was replaced by the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC). The EEC has the mandate in areas of trade policy, customs, external tariffs and non-tariff barriers, trade protection instruments and technical regulations. There are expansion plans to the areas of energy policy, public procurement, sale of services, competition and investment.⁴¹⁵

The “Treaty on the Creation of the Eurasian Economic Union” arising from the Customs Union was signed on May 29th, 2014 by Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

With initiatives like the EEC or the Customs Union, Russia takes steps towards supranationalism, even if it is characterised by a dominant Russian position.⁴¹⁶

Potential obstacles for the Eurasian Union could derive from the standard approach of those countries to cooperation in international organisations, which is characterized by a dominant *realpolitik* approach and the priority of non-interference.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹¹Cf. Menkiszak (2013: 23)

⁴¹²Cf. Menkiszak (2013: 31ff.)

⁴¹³Menkiszak (2013: 36)

⁴¹⁴Cf. Chufrin (2012: 5)

⁴¹⁵Cf. Kasčiūnas & Šukytė (2013: 64)

⁴¹⁶Cf. Kempe (2013/2: 3)

⁴¹⁷Kasčiūnas / Šukytė (2013: 70)

No-one wants to admit that good old geopolitical competition has not vanished with the collapse of communism.⁴¹⁸

8. THE EU'S AND RUSSIA'S APPROACHES

8.1. *Contradicting integration concepts?*

As set out before in the chapter about the EU and Russia as foreign-policy actors, there are huge differences between the European Union and the Russian Federation in terms of their internal structure, the way they understand international relations and the expectations they have towards their shared neighbourhood. This predisposes that the integration concepts towards their neighbours, which have been discussed in the previous two chapters, are quite different.

The question remains whether and to what extent those concepts are contradicting or even incompatible. Russia relies mainly on coercive means of power by benefiting from the dependency of the neighbouring states, giving financial and economic support as well as using military power when necessary. Especially since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine and with the annexation of Crimea, Russia was increasingly criticised for having imperialistic ambitions in the neighbourhood.⁴¹⁹ In comparison, the instruments used by the EU's ENP and EP are rather persuasive, offering benefits in return for reforms in the areas where the EU is demanding them. Despite the absence of physical force or economic sanctions towards its neighbourhood, the EU's policy is not necessarily a milder or less calculated foreign policy.⁴²⁰

The European Union and Russia are the most important actors in the shared neighbourhood, exercising influence on the global, regional and national level.⁴²¹ They are both sources of “carrots and sticks”⁴²² strongly affecting domestic politics and policies in their neighbourhood. Both actors are exercising structural as well as normative power and try to shape their neighbouring environment and coordinate the external challenges emanating from the respective region.⁴²³ The interdependencies caused by the triangle formed by the EU, the Eastern Partnership states and Russia shape the context within which the EU and Russia “compete to export their legislative, structural, institutional, geopolitical and economic policies”.⁴²⁴ For both, the European Union and the Russian Federation, the respective other cooperation concepts represent serious challenges to their own concepts.

⁴¹⁸Lukyanov (2008: 1115)

⁴¹⁹Cf. Hille (14.03.2013)

⁴²⁰Cf. Casier (2007: 88)

⁴²¹Cf. Moga (2012: 389)

⁴²²Casier (2007: 75)

⁴²³Cf. Moga (2012: 393)

⁴²⁴Moga (2012: 391)

While the EU's integration projects emphasise the benefits gained from increasing interdependencies between the states, the Russian integration projects stress the importance of sovereignty and independence. An example was the press conference the presidents of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan gave after signing the founding treaty of the Eurasian Economic Union at which Nazarbayev, president of Kazakhstan declared that the Union will not inflict the countries' independence or political sovereignty on its member states:

Прежде всего Союз является экономическим и не затрагивает вопросы независимости, политического суверенитета государств – участников интеграционного процесса.⁴²⁵

[In the first place, it is an economic Union and will not touch upon questions of independence and the political sovereignty of the member states of the integration process.]⁴²⁶

Common to both foreign-policy actors is their hope to expand their own concept of international relationships. Another common ground is that both actors pursue mainly their own interests, even if they say differently. Simionov states that the external pressures on the sovereignty of the neighbouring states are very high since neither the European Union nor Russia treat those countries as truly sovereign states; both parties instead claim to know what is best for those countries.⁴²⁷ The neighbouring countries, caught in the middle between European economic integration and Eurasian integration, suffer from the lack of constructive cooperation between Russia and the European Union.⁴²⁸

There are certain areas where Brussels' and Moscow's concepts are truly incompatible. An example is the incompatibility of joining together the Russian-led customs union or the Eurasian Economic Union with the conclusion of an Association Agreement including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements. This and other unbridgeable differences force the countries of the shared neighbourhood to choose between further integration with the European Union or Russia. Armenia, which was put under pressure by Russia, decided to join the Russian integration process instead of signing a free trade agreement with the EU. Moreover, Moscow succeeded at first in putting Ukraine off signing a DCFTA with the EU which led to mass protests, and caused massive instability in Ukraine. While in Armenia Russia's strategy was successful, it caused Ukraine to move further in the direction of the European Union.⁴²⁹ These events, taking place in the run-up of and since the Vilnius summit in 2013, showed how the Russian capabilities were underestimated by the European Union and how the incentives proposed by the EU (AAs and DCFTAs) were not attractive enough for some countries, or rather their political leaders, to resist both the Russian

⁴²⁵Президент России (29.05.2014)

⁴²⁶Translated by the author.

⁴²⁷Cf. Simionov (2013: 124)

⁴²⁸Cf. Kasčiūnas / Šukytė (2013: 67)

⁴²⁹Cf. European Foreign Policy Scorecard (2014: 44)

pressure and the incentives it promised them for refraining from the signing of agreements with the EU.⁴³⁰

Besides the decision for one integration concept, there is also another, third, option for the countries of the shared neighbour, which would imply finding a balanced position between East and West and ideally profiting from both partners' offers.⁴³¹

A major difference between the approaches of the EU and Russia concerns their demands from and offers to their partner countries. The EU demands costly and often difficult reforms from its partner countries and offers mostly long-term gains in return. Comprehensive free trade with the EU is possible and promises growth in the fields of economy and trade, but also requires adaptation to EU standards, bringing along a lot of short-term costs. Russia does not demand major structural changes or higher standards in the political and economic systems of the neighbouring states, but offers mostly short-term benefits such as discounts in the energy sector.⁴³²

A major difference lies in the fact that Russia is a very coherent and independent foreign-policy actor, not fearing conflict with the EU, while the EU relies on the legitimacy of the values and norms it promotes and is therefore restricted in its actions. Another hindrance the EU meets on the way to becoming a coherent foreign-policy actor are the varying preferences of its member states.

The EU is primarily interested in its own stability, guaranteed by a “ring of friends” which wards off security threats from the periphery in exchange for participation in various programmes. It sees political and legal reform and European integration, based on legal harmonisation, as a prerequisite for stability in the region. Moscow's strategy, however, rests on informal political and military influence and economic pressure, mainly in the field of energy, combined with efforts to destabilise neighbours and even, as in the case of Georgia, direct military intervention. It does not see the point in creating integration projects within the post-Soviet space unless it asserts a leading role in them itself.⁴³³ Therefore, Russia is keen on keeping the regimes in its neighbourhood comparably weak and isolated.⁴³⁴

The EU was for quite some time the only international actor with a comprehensive strategy for its immediate neighbours, defying the difficulties it regularly encounters in bringing together the interests and priorities of its member states. Russia relied mainly on a range of hard and soft power demonstration to exploit its strength in the countries of the former USSR.⁴³⁵ However, for a few years now, Russia tries to come up with its own integration concept conceptualised as a seriously considerable alternative to the EU's offers towards the neighbouring countries. An important step

⁴³⁰Cf. European Foreign Policy Scorecard (2014: 44)

⁴³¹Cf. Simionov (2013: 124)

⁴³²Cf. Cf. Kasčiūnas / Šukytė (2013: 76)

⁴³³Cf. Vinokurov (2007: 19)

⁴³⁴Cf. Casier (2007: 88)

⁴³⁵Cf. Moga (2012: 393)

for Russia was to include supranational elements in its regional cooperation projects. A major event in this respect is the creation of an Eurasian Economic Union which is appointed to be launched on January 1st, 2015. Russia keeps stressing that this project is not an attempt to re-create the Soviet Union, but will be based on “universal principles of integration, as an integral part of greater Europe, united by common values of freedom, democracy and market laws”⁴³⁶.

Although this situation is partially used by the neighbouring states to enhance their freedom of action towards the respective other actor, altogether, this situation brings with it more disadvantages than advantages. The rivalry causes instability in the shared neighbourhood and, furthermore, impedes conflict resolution.

Despite the fact that the EU and Russia have a common interest in ensuring regional stability, Moga observes an increase in zero-sum thinking between these two actors in terms of geopolitics and competition in the course of the last years. Many analysts and especially Western politicians constantly argue that Russia has to give up its zero-sum thinking in international relations and open its eyes for the potential of win-win models. These judgements, however, are incoherent, since they, on the one hand, do not take into account the EU's unflickering conviction of the superiority of its own political model and, on the other, disparage Russia's efforts as mere attempts to gain a dominant position within this geographical area.⁴³⁷

Future developments in the discussed region will depend both on the attractiveness of the Russian and European integration offers as well as on the self-definition of the countries concerned.⁴³⁸ Another decisive aspect will be the extent to which the European Union and Russia manage to find a common language and reduce their rivalry.

8.2. *Russian reactions to ENP and EP*

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, both the European Union and the Russian Federation tried to come up with concepts of how the relationships with the countries of the former USSR and Central and Eastern Europe should look like. Relatively soon, the EU decided to consider Central and Eastern European countries candidates for potential membership. Those countries joined the EU in the enlargements of 2004 and 2007. Russia was suspicious of this enlargements and some conflictive issues emerged (one was concerning Kaliningrad), which, however, were solved quickly. Russia did not condemn the enlargement per se, although it did criticise the negative impact the

⁴³⁶Rotaru (2012: 480)

⁴³⁷Cf. Moga (2012: 393)

⁴³⁸Cf. Kempe 2013/2: 4)

feelings of some of the new members towards Russia had on the EU-Russian relations, a criticism which was not completely unjustified.

Unlike the idea to create European Neighbourhood Policy, which did not cause many negative reactions from Russian side, the possible membership of these countries in NATO evoked a lot of ill feelings in the Federation.⁴³⁹ It seemed as if Moscow did not perceive the ENP as a threat to its own relations with or position in those countries.

The changed behaviour of the Russian Federation coincided with the launch of the Eastern Partnership and the increasing efforts of the European Union to promote changes in the political and economic structure of the respective countries. However, the increased interest of the EU in this region was not the main reason that the Russian behaviour changed, but is based on internal Russian developments. The increased interest of the EU was accompanied by a general willingness of the Union to position itself more actively as a major political player in the region. The Russian response to the EP was quite negative and its criticism has been aggravated even more as the EU positioned itself as an active power. This was a bit surprising since the EP, in many aspects, is a continuation of the ENP, but, as mentioned, went along with a general increase of EU interest in the region. An example was the EU's involvement in the Orange Revolution, which was seen by Moscow as an "attempt to install pro-Western regimes in the neighbourhood and perhaps ultimately in Russia itself"⁴⁴⁰. After this, Russia began to speak of the EU as an "empire of a new type"⁴⁴¹, an unfriendly force seeking to extend its influence into areas of Russian interest.⁴⁴² In the aftermath of the Russian-Georgian war Russia more and more realised that the interests of the European Union challenged its interests in the "near abroad". Russia increasingly feels driven out of its neighbourhood and tries to secure its position by creating a buffer zone to the EU.⁴⁴³ Already in 2008, the vice-president of the Duma demanded of the EU to consult with Russia before launching any initiatives concerning Russia's traditional interests.⁴⁴⁴

The idea of equality and sovereignty has always been central for Russia. However, the idea that the EU might prove to be a serious challenger to the Russian position in the countries of the shared neighbourhood grew and with it the fear that European integration might progress without Russia, leaving the country isolated.⁴⁴⁵ Russia fears to lose its influence, a fear not unfounded according to Mendras, who adds to consideration that if countries like Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine would all prepare for the long-term goal to join the EU, the Russian's regime's legitimacy and

⁴³⁹Cf. Adomeit (2012: 23f.)

⁴⁴⁰Beckman et al. (2010: 38)

⁴⁴¹Lukyanov (2008: 1115)

⁴⁴²Cf. Lukyanov (2008: 1115)

⁴⁴³Cf. Tchakarova (2010: 3f.)

⁴⁴⁴Cf. Stewart (2009: 2)

⁴⁴⁵Cf. Haukkala (2012: 168)

authority would be destroyed.⁴⁴⁶

In March 2009, Sergej Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Affairs minister criticised the EU's engagement in the shared neighbourhood at the Brussels Forum in very plain words:

We are accused of having spheres of influence. But what is the Eastern Partnership, if not an attempt to extend the EU's sphere of influence, including to Belarus?⁴⁴⁷

The Eastern Partnership caused fears in Russia that the EU tries to extend its own influence at the expense of the Russian influence and thereby doing exactly what it has been criticising Russia for.⁴⁴⁸ Sergej Lavrov condemned the formation of the Eastern Partnership on other occasions as well.⁴⁴⁹ There have been comments from the Russian foreign ministry, accusing the European Union of forcing the countries of the shared neighbourhood to choose between the EU and Russia. The Russian press is also dominated by a negative discourse about the Eastern Partnership.⁴⁵⁰

It can be observed that whenever the European Union stepped up its efforts to cooperate with the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus, especially in areas where Russia maintains a dominant position, Russian reactions were extremely negative. One example is the negative Russian response to the plan of the European Commission to cooperate with Ukraine in modernising the countries' gas transit routes.⁴⁵¹

Russia reacts quite sceptically to EU missions in regions suffering from frozen conflicts, since Russia rejects all military presence there besides its own. The frozen conflicts have been a topic with much potential for conflicts for the bilateral relations between Russia and the EU.⁴⁵² Influence and initiatives by the European Union in the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus run the risk of being perceived as unjustified intrusions by Russia.⁴⁵³

8.3. *EU's engagement as a catalyst?*

The question in how far the European Union's engagement in the countries of the shared neighbourhood acts as a facilitator for Russia's own approaches towards these countries is difficult to answer since Russia's relations with its neighbours depend on multiple factors. The EU's increased interest in the region is definitely not the reason why Russia attempts at reintegrating the

⁴⁴⁶Cf. Mendras (2012: 265)

⁴⁴⁷Triantaphyllou / Tsantoulis (2009: 15)

⁴⁴⁸Cf. Tchakarova (2010: 4)

⁴⁴⁹Cf. Meister / May (2009: 2)

⁴⁵⁰Cf. Stewart (2009: 1f.)

⁴⁵¹Cf. Stewart (2012: 20)

⁴⁵²Cf. Tchakarova (2010: 4)

⁴⁵³Cf. Tchakarova (2010: 3)

CIS area, for this is something it attempted already in 1991. However, it can be assumed that the European Union's increased interest in this region contributed to facilitate Russia's own integration projects, at least to a certain degree.

Two months after the European Commission adopted a Communication on the ENP and one day after the EU Council adopted its Conclusions on the ENP, the Russian deputy prime minister sent a letter to Brussels containing a proposal to analyse the compatibility of the EU integration process with the Common Economic Space. Menkiszak sees this letter as a political signal to the EU, indicating that that contacts with the CIS countries are not per se rejected but are to be mediated by Russia and take place under its supervision. He argues that the initiative of Greater Europe and the connected integration concepts had emerged partially as a response to the EU's activity in the Eastern neighbourhood.⁴⁵⁴

Kempe does not focus on the question whether the EU's engagement in this region served as a catalyst for Moscow, but argues that it was the deep crisis within the EU itself which acted as a catalyst for Moscow's projects. The EU was at that time more occupied with its own domestic problems and therefore paid less attention to its neighbouring states.⁴⁵⁵

Adomeit analysed a statement by Vladimir Putin at a conference with Russian ambassadors in Moscow 2004 according to which vacuum does not exist in international relations. He describes how the lack of an active policy towards the countries of the former USSR would lead to a situation where other, more active countries would gain a dominant position.⁴⁵⁶

Kasčiūnas and Šukytė refer to the Russian awareness of that the incentives the EU offered to the countries in the shared neighbourhood would restrict its own opportunities to keep political control over those countries. According to them, this was one of the reasons why Putin aimed for establishing an alternative integration model with more favourable conditions of access and participation.⁴⁵⁷ Moreover, they point at the time correspondence between the announcement of the idea of creating a Eurasian Union and the plans to sign Association Agreements between the European Union and some of its member states.⁴⁵⁸

Although the EU's engagement in the countries of the shared neighbourhood to a certain degree facilitates Russia's integration projects, it would be oversimplified to see this as a one-way process. The reality is that the integration efforts of the two foreign-policy actors influence each other.

⁴⁵⁴Cf. Menkiszak (2013: 32f.)

⁴⁵⁵Cf. Lukyanov (2013: 8f.)

⁴⁵⁶Cf. Adomeit (2012: 10f)

⁴⁵⁷Cf. Kasčiūnas / Šukytė (2013: 66)

⁴⁵⁸Cf. Kasčiūnas / Šukytė (2013: 71)

8.4. *Potential for Conflicts*

The relationship within the triangle EU, Russia and their shared neighbourhood is a topic with a lot of potential for conflicts. The rivalry over Ukraine had destabilising effects on the country and, by now, led to violent fights between pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian army. The European Union and the United States responded to Russia's contribution to the crisis, its annexation of Crimea and massive support for pro-Russian separatists, with sanctions and the demand to stop the support of pro-Russian separatists. The Ukrainian case is the most current one and a resolution of the conflict is still out of sight.

However, there are other sources of conflicts as well. The appropriateness of liberal models, which dominated the post-Cold War era, is increasingly being challenged by other powers.⁴⁵⁹ Biscop argues that especially Russia and China have recently been the main actors questioning the viability of these ideals, but failed to put forward explicit normative agendas of their own.⁴⁶⁰ The EU, on the other hand, challenges the traditional nation-state order since its decentralised and multilevel decision-making process runs counter to the idea of states as territorially contiguous, sovereign and hierarchically governed entities.⁴⁶¹

Especially the so-called “colour revolutions” fed Russia's mistrust towards the European Union. It perceives the EU's support for NGOs and civil society actors in those countries as a purely interest based instrument to influence them. New laws concerning NGOs have been passed and, in the cause of the Orange Revolution, Putin spoke of NGOs as being “fed by an alien hand”⁴⁶². This statement implies that NGOs are believed to be purposefully supported from abroad (not only by the EU but also by the US) in order to cause regime changes in those countries.

Gromadzki suggests seeing the rivalry in the neighbourhood less as a geopolitical game than as a competition between two models of governance – the liberal democracy and the modern autocracy. In this respect, the countries of the shared neighbourhood are essential factors.⁴⁶³

Russia and the EU, which have been described as very different types of animals in a previous chapter, do not even seem to share the same language and are therefore not able to agree on any interests.⁴⁶⁴ The right for external actors to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries in the case of human rights violations has been consensus in Europe for decades and is something that is inherent in the EU's approach as well. This and the EU's attempts to include the possibility of unilaterally freezing agreements because of massive human rights violations in partner countries is

⁴⁵⁹Haukkala (2012: 161)

⁴⁶⁰Cf. Haukkala (2012: 161)

⁴⁶¹Cf. Diez et al (2011: 118)

⁴⁶²Sakwa (2008: 343)

⁴⁶³Cf. Gromadzki (2010: 67)

⁴⁶⁴Cf. Lukyanov (2008: 1113)

perceived by Russia as an illegitimate interference regarding the countries' sovereignty.⁴⁶⁵ This, however, does not apply for Russia which presumes to interfere in regions of its special interests. All in all, the contradicting approaches of the two foreign-policy actors contain large potential for conflicts between them.

9. CONCLUSION

The master thesis aimed at portraying the approaches of the European Union and the Russian Federations towards the countries of their shared neighbourhood, namely Belarus, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and analysing if to what extent they are incompatible. The analysis and comparison of the two approaches showed that they are incompatible, at least in their present shape. The EU and Russia have much more differences than common interests and their expectations concerning the future institutional set-up for the European continent differ significantly. This does not only complicate EU-Russian relations, but also puts the countries of the shared neighbourhood in a difficult situation and under the pressure to decide for one integration concept, even though most could be gained by assuming a middle position between the two actors.

An important aspect is the fact that the EU has not granted the countries in its neighbourhood a real accession perspective which would constitute a major incentive for reforms. By not granting this perspective, the European Union loses much of its potential influence in those countries. This concerns especially countries which are determined to follow the European path, but are under Russian pressure. Another possible consequence of the EU's hesitation is the destabilisation of the countries which are torn between the two foreign-policy actors. On the other hand, the tensions between the EU and Russia would likely grow if the EU would grant some countries of their shared neighbourhood a real membership perspective.

The Russian Federation and the European Union are the major political players in the countries of the Western CIS and Southern Caucasus. Since they both strive to integrate their shared neighbourhood and those integration efforts are at least partially incompatible, their integration efforts automatically influence the actions of the respective other actor, because both want to realize their own integration concept and therefore try to prevent the countries from integrating with the other. This led, especially since the second half of the 2000s, to a continuous worsening of EU-

⁴⁶⁵Cf. Romanova (2009: 56)

Russian relations, interrupted only by short phases of rapprochement.

The harshness of Russia's reactions to the EU's attempts to achieve closer cooperation with the countries of their shared neighbourhood correlated with the EU's increased endeavour in bringing those countries closer to itself and positioning itself as a leading power within the countries of the Eastern Partnership. The analysis demonstrated that Russia's reservations towards the EU's actions remained small only as long as it did not perceive the EU as a real threat of its own position in those countries. Whenever these countries started to move further away from Russia, partially strongly relying on the EU in this respect, Russia's relations with them as well as with the EU worsened.

It can be assumed that, to some extent, the European Union's engagement in the neighbourhood facilitated the creation of a Eurasian Union, while at the same time Russian attempts to keep the countries close to itself, facilitated the realisation of the EU's wish to develop stronger ties with these countries. Therefore, the EU and Russia, to a certain degree, act as catalysts for the respective other actor's approaches towards their shared neighbourhood.

The first two hypotheses about the inevitable collision of these two approaches and the negative reactions of the Russian Federation towards the EU's attempts to strengthen its relations with the neighbouring countries were verified in the thesis. The third one, which suggested that the EU's efforts act as a catalyst for Russia's own integration project, was not falsified, but requires modification since the Russian efforts within the neighbourhood lead to an increased interest of the EU in those countries as well. The current structure in the shared neighbourhood is characterised by normative rivalry and competition between the two foreign-policy actors.

Many scholars argued that only a comprehensive and strong partnership could solve conflicts and lead to security and stability in Europe. However, the prospects for such a partnership are currently worse than ever. The recent developments in Ukraine showed what the rivalry in the shared neighbourhood can lead to. While Ukraine lost Crimea, is highly destabilised and tries to fight pro-Russian forces in the East, the EU-Russian relations have reached a low point. Ivan Krastev points out that there is a dangerous asymmetry in the EU-Russian conflict, referring to the EU's (as well as the US's) underestimating of Russia's determination to assert itself and Russia's perfect awareness of the EU's boundaries.⁴⁶⁶ Russia's preparedness to violate the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine in the case of the annexation of Crimea challenged the global post-1945 and the European order⁴⁶⁷ and a solution of the crisis is not yet in sight.

⁴⁶⁶Cf. Krastev (01.04.2014)

⁴⁶⁷Cf. Krastev (03.03.2014)

APPENDIX

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GERMAN ABSTRACT

Die vorliegende Masterthesis analysiert die Integrationsbestrebungen der Europäischen Union und der Russischen Föderation gegenüber den Ländern in ihrer Nachbarschaft und stellt diese einander gegenüber. Die westlichen Länder der GUS (Weißrussland, Ukraine, Republik Moldau) und des Südkaukasus (Armenien, Georgien, Aserbaidshan) zählen traditionell zu den Interessensphären Russlands. Die Russische Föderation bemühte sich seit dem Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion darum, ihre früheren „Bruderstaaten“ möglichst eng an sich zu binden und in einer gewissen Abhängigkeit zu halten, was durch deren Bedarf an russischem Gas erleichtert wurde. Seit einigen Jahren bemüht sich Russland verstärkt, den Ländern in seiner Nachbarschaft eigene Kooperationsprojekte anzubieten, die eine ernsthafte Alternative zur intensivierten Kooperation und Assoziierung mit der EU darstellen sollen.

Mit den EU-Erweiterungen in den Jahren 2004 und 2007 wuchs das Interesse der Europäischen Union an den neuen Nachbarn. Mit der Europäischen Nachbarschaftspolitik wurde 2004 ein Rahmen für die Beziehungen der EU zu ihren östlichen und südlichen Nachbarländern geschaffen. Die 2009 ins Leben gerufene Östliche Partnerschaft soll die Vertiefung der Beziehungen zu den Ländern der westlichen GUS und des Südkaukasus fördern und mit besonders reformbereiten Ländern die Unterzeichnung von Assoziierungsabkommen ermöglichen, die im Kern umfassende Freihandelsabkommen sind.

Die Tatsache, dass sowohl die EU als auch Russland danach streben, die Länder der gemeinsamen Nachbarschaft in ihren eigenen Integrationsbereich zu ziehen, birgt hohes Konfliktpotenzial in sich. Dies wird dadurch verstärkt, dass die beiden Integrationskonzepte teilweise nicht miteinander vereinbar sind. Ein Fokus der Masterthesis liegt auf dem Vergleich der beiden Integrationskonzepte und orientiert sich an drei zentralen Fragestellungen:

1. Was sind die Hauptunterschiede zwischen den Integrationskonzepten der beiden außenpolitischen Akteure und inwiefern sind diese Konzepte inkompatibel?
2. Inwiefern beeinflussen sich die beiden Integrationskonzepte und welche Konsequenzen hat das für die Beziehungen zwischen der EU und Russland?
3. Wie reagiert Russland auf das Streben der EU nach engerer Zusammenarbeit mit den Ländern der Östlichen Partnerschaft? In welchem Ausmaß kann die Politik der EU in der gemeinsamen Nachbarschaft als Katalysator für die Gründung der Eurasischen Union angesehen werden?

In Bezug auf Theorie und Methoden ist die Arbeit in den Kontext der Internationalen Beziehungen eingebettet und orientiert sich an der Theorie des Neorealismus sowie an Ian Manners „Normative

Power Europe“-Konzept.

Russland und die Europäische Union sind zwei außenpolitische Akteure, die sich in ihrer Struktur, ihren Interessen und Erwartungen an die Kooperation mit den Ländern ihrer gemeinsamen Nachbarschaft signifikant unterscheiden. Dies erschwert einerseits das Verhältnis der beiden Akteure, andererseits stellt die Unvereinbarkeit der beiden Integrationsprojekte die benachbarten Länder vor die Herausforderung, sich für einen der beiden Integrationswege entscheiden zu müssen. Die Russische Föderation und die Europäische Union beeinflussen daher einander gegenseitig mit ihren Integrationsvorhaben.

Die Reaktionen Russlands auf die Integrationsbestrebungen der EU gegenüber den Nachbarländern fielen immer negativer aus, je aktiver sich die EU in diesem Raum positionierte und je enger ihre Beziehungen mit diesen Ländern wurden. Indem Russland die EU vermehrt als einen geopolitischen Akteur wahrnahm, der russische Interessen in diesen Ländern gefährdet, wurde das Verhältnis der beiden immer stärker von Rivalität geprägt, wobei beide Akteure darauf beharren, dass ihre Initiativen im Interesse der Partnerländer seien. Die gesteigerte Rivalität und der darauf folgende verstärkte Druck auf die Länder der gemeinsamen Nachbarschaft kulminierten in der Ukraine-Krise die nicht nur die Stabilität des Landes erschütterte und es an den Rande eines Bürgerkrieges trieb, sondern auch das Verhältnis zwischen der EU und Russland massiv schädigte.

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