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The EU – Russia Relations and the Question of Democracy



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List of abbreviations

CES – Common Economic Space

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CSCE – Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe

CSES – Common Space for External Security

EC – European Commission

ENP – European Neighborhood Policy

ESDP – European Security and Defense Policy

EU – European Union

FSJ – Freedom Security and Justice

G8 – Group of 8

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

IMF – International Monetary Fund

KGB – “Komitet Gosudarstvenii Bezopasnosty” – Committee of State Security

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

TACIS – Technical Assistance for Commonwealth of Independent States

UN – United Nations

US – United States

WMD – Weapons of Mass Destruction

WTO – World Trade Organization

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Introduction

*“We welcome change and openness;
for we believe that freedom and security go together,
that the advance of human liberty
can only strengthen the cause of world peace.”*

(Ronald Reagan)¹

Alliances and blocs are disappearing or are re-defined. Some states are looking in the past, some in the future, in expectancy of a new peaceful and prosperous Europe. In the majority of states from the centre and east of the continent the democratic regimes are being installed.² The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980's was a great blow to the hopes of revolutionaries. Why did it collapse? The primary causes were political and economic, and they were the result of the culture of war.³ On 25th of December 1991, the signing of the tripartite declaration (Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia), date which is considered as the end of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet Socialist Russian Republic obtained independence. “The post-communist Russia is in some borders which had no historical precedent. Alike Europe, she will need to spend the biggest part of her energy for defining its identity.”⁴

While Russia has perhaps become a vulnerable “managed democracy”,⁵ Europe advanced and consolidated its positions as a genuine democratic system and also its positions in some former soviet states as the Baltic States are, and a sort of influence in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The EU is trying to assure security by

¹ Reagan R., West Berlin, Germany, 12 June 1987, The Official site of Reagan Foundation, <http://www.reaganfoundation.org/reagan/speeches/wall.asp>, 18/01/2008

² ofransky O, Republic of Moldova: Geopolitical capital, “Republica Moldova: Capital geopolitic”, Cartier, Chi in u, 2002, page 5.

³ Why the Soviet Union Collapsed?, <http://sfr-21.org/collapse.html>, 18/01/2008

⁴ Kissinger H., Diplomacy, Touchstone Rockefeller Centre, New York, page 25.

⁵ Emerson M., Democratization in the European Neighborhood, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2005, page 6.

promoting democracy, which is the hardest and longest way to create a stable Europe. In the meantime Russia is trying to counterpoise with Commonwealth of Independent States, “which was designed initially to ensure a civilized divorce of the former Soviet Republics and eventually assigned by the Russian Federation – as an aspiring hegemonic power”.⁶

Russia today became an energetic power and an ideological alternative to the EU. The Russian revisionism and tendency to regain its power and pride is changing the European security system and is threatening the stability of Europe. As much as Russia increases its power so does Europe have more burdens to host. The “de facto” denial of Russia from its engagements in international organizations, the divide and rule strategy towards the EU, the insistent involvement in the shared neighborhood region and the inability of the EU to apply the conditionality to Russia is challenging the system and the stability of the EU.

The actual circumstances of the EU – Russia relation requests an obvious necessity for new approach. The EU is “sentenced” to develop a new policy towards Russia, as an outcome of the failure of the model it has developed in the 1990s.

The EU – Russia relations is a subject which is current all the time and especially in the period of big changes. The dialogue between the EU and Russia represents a primordial relation accompanied by high responsibility in regard to the European security and to the new independent states from Eastern Europe and Asia. This thesis is not only evaluating the EU – Russia relations, but as well, is analyzing the perspectives of the relations between them and aims to offer an added-value dimension to the main questions involved.

The interest of the academic circles, but as well of the ordinary people in the subject of the EU-Russia relations acquired a new impulse after the big changes which have intervened in the EU and Russia, and as consequence in the EU – Russia relations. On the one hand the EU is busy with institutional reform under the label of Treaty of Lisbon and with digesting the enlargement from 2004 and 2007 and on

⁶ Nemyria H., *The Orange Revolution: Explaining the Unexpected, Democratization in the European Neighborhood*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2005, page 62.

another hand, the Russian Federation became more stronger, economically independent by paying the bills to international creditors and less democratic by building a strong authoritarian regime which in the language of Russian propaganda is called the “sovereign democracy” model. Under these circumstances the dialogue between the EU and Russia dramatically changed, because today Russia is setting the pace in the EU – Russia relations.

In the last decade of the twentieth century the EU have made some efforts to democratize Russia; however the “creeping integration” policy used by the EU was not able to develop a truly consolidated democracy and to prevent the appearance of an authoritarian regime in Russia. “While EU leaders believe that peace and stability are built through interdependence, Russia’s leaders are working to create a situation where the EU needs Russia more than Russia needs the EU, particularly in the energy sector.”⁷

The subject of the EU – Russia relations is much analyzed in the international literature, journals, newspapers, studies, and other accessible media. It is important to mention that very often there are different opinions on this subject and moreover there are different alliances of researchers who defend one model or another, but besides this, the EU – Russia relations represents one of the most discussed topics in Europe and in the whole world.

Through the imminent authors who are writing on the EU – Russia relations we can mention Michael Emerson, Sergei Karaganov, Marius Vahl, Nicu Popescu, Dov Lynch, Mark Leonard, Katinka Barysch, Timofei Bordachev, Yury Fedorov, Fabrizio Tassinari, Nadia Arbatova, Thomas Gomart, Fyodor Lukyanov, Vagif Guseinov, Iris Kempe, Quentin Perret, Rolf Schuette and others.⁸ As for the most active institutions and publications writing on the EU – Russia relations we can emphasize the Centre for European Policy Studies, European Council on Foreign Relations, the EU-Russia Centre, Institut Français des Relations Internationales,

⁷ Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, policy paper, European Council on Foreign Relations, London, November, 2007, page 1.

⁸ For a detailed list of publications please see the bibliography. Some of the footnotes are given in a short version due to their extended title and translation.

Robert Schuman Foundation, Centre for European Reform, the Foreign Policy Centre, Russia in Global Affairs, Institut für Europäische Politik, Chatham House, the Washington Quarterly, the Council of Foreign and Defense Policy, Centre for Applied Policy Research, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation and other institutions which also deserve to be on this list.

The thesis “the EU-Russia Relations and the Question of Democracy” has a multidimensional approach to the issues involved in order to define the basic notions of this relation, to detect the difficulties which the EU and Russia have to overcome, to underline the shortcomings of the existent relation and to come up with new suggestions which can essentially improve the ongoing dialogue between the EU and Russia. In this context the thesis is aiming to answer several questions and consequently, to accomplish several tasks as following:

- ✚ Present the general picture and conjuncture of the EU -Russia relations
- ✚ Analyze the institutional framework and the deficiencies of the existent official dialogue
- ✚ Detect the substance of the EU -Russia relations
- ✚ Identify the technical barriers and the ideological misunderstandings between Russia and the EU
- ✚ Explain the failure of the EU policy towards Russia
- ✚ Suggest a range of improvements for the current approach of the EU towards Russia and
- ✚ Forecast the midterm development of the EU -Russia relations

The methodology of the research can be used at large scale due to the diversity of the aspects of the EU – Russia relations. However, in this thesis the *institutional* method are used for having a comprehensive, detailed and structured approach to the official agreements and engagements between the EU and Russia. Along the same lines we can mention the *historic-statistic* method for gathering the information and for describing the state of development, especially for the economy.

Notably, we have to mention the *comparative* method which gave us an understandable approach to observe the differences between the EU and Russia. In the same context we can refer to the *systemic* method which helped us to analyze and to appreciate the current phenomena in the EU -Russia dialogue and the *forecast* method which served for elaborating suggestions and to preview the possible evolution of the relationship between the EU and Russia.

The thesis is organized in three chapters, each of them having two subchapters according to the analyzed dimension of the EU -Russia relation and is starting with an introduction and respectively is finishing with the conclusions.

In the introduction of the thesis, I conceptualized the topic of the EU-Russia relations, shortly described the sources of the thesis, emphasized the questions and the tasks of the study, underlined the used methodology, and gave a brief overview of the whole work.

The first chapter is designed to analyze the institutional dimension and the functionality of the existing agreements and legal frameworks between the EU and Russia. In the same context the first chapter is offering a detailed description of convergences and divergences of the EU – Russia relations. Chapter I is giving a general picture of the problems and barriers of the EU – Russian dialogue but as well of the interests and of the pursuits both parties.

Chapter II is analyzing a more complex and in the same time flexible dimension of the EU – Russia relations. The second chapter is explaining the role of the values in these relations and how they can contribute to the improvement of the relations between the EU and Russia. As well, I analyzed the substance of the ideologies of the Russian Federation and of the European Union in a comparative and comprehensive form.

The third chapter is giving advantages and disadvantages and is explaining the causes of the failure of the EU's strategy towards Russia and in the same context the efficiency of Russia's strategy towards the EU. The chapter III is largely describing the existing policies which can be applied towards Russia is forecasting the probable

outcomes of these approaches and is suggesting the most appropriate policy which can be used by the EU to consolidate democracy in Russia.

In the end the basic conclusions of the study are expressed. This part of the thesis is offering recommendations and the main political trajectories which can ameliorate the dispute between the EU and Russia and improve the EU's strategy towards Russia.

Using this occasion I would like to express my respect and gratitude to the people who helped me to organize my research in certain logic and shape, who gave me precious advice for having a structured and analytical thesis and who contributed to my professional aggrandizement and interest in the international relations and notably in the selected subject.

Namely, I would like to thank Mr. Matthias WAECHTER, Director of the Institut Européenne des Hautes Etudes Internationales from Nice, Mr. Mathias JOPP, Director of Institut für Europäische Politik from Berlin, Mr. Nicu POPESCU from the European Council on Foreign Relations from London, Mr. Claude NIGOUL, President of the Institut Européenne des Hautes Etudes Internationales from Nice, Mr. Ragnar LEUNIG professor at University of Poznan, Mr. Hartmut MARHOLD, Director of the Centre International de Formation Européenne from Nice and professor at the University of Cologne, Mr. Oleg SEREBRIAN, Director of the European Movement from Moldova, Mr. Igor KLIPPII, Director of the Institute for European Studies from Moldova, Mr. Gheorghe CALDARE, professor of international relations at the Moldova State University and others who surely deserve to be in this list. Special thanks to my parents who supported me in my studies.

Chapter I, What is the substance of EU – Russia partnership?

1.1 Institutional framework – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and Four Common Spaces

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, is “an international document that sets out the basic principles of relations between Russia and European Union, and was signed on the Greek Island of Corfu in 1994”.⁹ “It establishes the institutional framework for bilateral relations, sets the principal common objectives, and calls for activities and dialogue in a number of policy areas.”¹⁰ The ratification took over three years, due to the first war in Chechnya,¹¹ and finally has been ratified on 1st December 1997. The document was signed for a period of ten years and expired on 30 November 2007. However, a special provision of the PCA stresses the automatic prolongation of the treaty in absence of any document which substitutes the current one, consequently the article 106 of the PCA says: “this Agreement is concluded for an initial period of ten years. The Agreement shall be automatically renewed year by year provided that neither Party gives the other Party written notice of denunciation of the Agreement at least six months before it expires.”¹²

The PCA was agreed in a period of big uncertainty in Russia. It was the time when Russia was weak, trying to implement reforms and transformation from the socialist system to the western model of economy and governance. Being in that situation, Russia was not able to claim a lot of things from the European Union.

⁹ Sokolov S., Russia and the EU to negotiate a New Cooperation Agreement, Russia in Global Affairs, vol. 5, No. 3, July – September, Moscow, 2007, page 182.

¹⁰ Brown A., Hanson P., Nuti M., EU – Russia Relations, House of Lords, Select Committee on the European Union, London, December 2002, page 8.

¹¹ Litra L., Russia and the EU towards a new agreement, “Russia și UE spre un nou acord”, Public Policy Weekly Newspaper “Democratia”, year -VIII, nr. 205, 8th April 2008, page 2.

¹² Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Russian Federation, on the other part., Art. 106, page 85, the official site of the European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/ceeca/pca/pca_russia.pdf, 22/02/2008.

That's why the PCA was, as is called by Quentin Perret in a study provided for Schuman Foundation, a "reflet presque exclusif de preoccupation et de conceptions caractérisant la politique extérieure de l'Union Européenne".¹³ "The PCA became a cornerstone for Russia-EU relations and provided pointers as to how the relationship should be developed and how information between the partners should be shared".¹⁴

The PCA is based mostly on economic cooperation, as far as this represents the easiest way to build a relation at the beginning. As well, there is a call to Russia to respect political freedoms and consolidate democracy.¹⁵ In the same context the text is silent about military and strategic questions which represent one of the biggest concerns of the Russian foreign policy. As far as the PCA was negotiated fifteen years ago when the circumstances and world order had a different configuration, we can argue that the "PCA is obsolete",¹⁶ and does not fit anymore with ongoing conjuncture. But despite this the treaty is still applied due to the fact that neither EU, nor Russia did denounce it.

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the future of institutional relations of the European Union and Russia.

Today the great debate between the architects and decision makers of Russian and EU's foreign policy is what is following next? A new PCA, the old in self-extended version, the old with amendments, or maybe retirement of the PCA without replacement? The official voices of the both parts are pleading for a new PCA which is supposed to be negotiated at EU-Russia Summit in Siberia on 26-27 June 2008,¹⁷ but we do not know yet if the EU and Russia will succeed to get an agreement, nevertheless let us look at the different prospects.

¹³ Perret Q., La paix froide : stabiliser les relations entre l'UE et la Russie, Question d'Europe n. 65, Fondation Robert Schuman, 25/06/2007, page 3, the official site of the Robert Schuman Foundation, http://www.robert-schuman.eu/print_qe.php?num=qe-65, 23/03/2008.

¹⁴ Kempe I., Smith H., A Decade of Partnership and Cooperation in Russia -EU relations, Perceptions, Perspectives and Progress – Possibilities for the Next Decade, Centre for Applied Policy Research, Helsinki, 2006, page 5.

¹⁵ Op. Cit., Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the EU and Russia, Art. 1, page 7,

¹⁶ Emerson M., Tassinari F., Vahl M., A New Agreement between the EU and Russia : Why, what and when ?, Centre for European Policy Studies, No. 103, Brussels, May 2006, page 1 .

¹⁷ EU optimistic about new Russian administration, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1206736324.96>

The less probable scenario is retirement without replacement which is hard to imagine in the actual context of political and especially economic ties between EU and Russia. We should exclude this option because it would bring two essential changes in the EU – Russia relations. First, the PCA is the “legal basis of EU – Russia trade relations” and “scrapping the PCA without replacing it would risk signaling or being interpreted as a political rupture, especially in the current uneasy atmosphere between the two parties.”¹⁸

The old PCA in self-extended version is the easiest way to keep the EU – Russia relations in the institutional framework, and doing nothing is also a choice. However, this scenario would not help in any way to improve the cooperation and will deepen the crisis in EU – Russia relations. In the same time, behind the bad features of this option, maintaining the status quo has also an advantage, more precisely this will “avoid the long, exhausting and painful process of renegotiating a new formalized document.”¹⁹

The old PCA with amendments is one of the means which will allow the replacement of the irrelevant components of the document and will update it in accordance with nowadays challenges. The problems which can appear in this scenario concerns the worries of the EU on democracy and political freedoms in Russia, and inasmuch as the PCA was built on an economic dimension, the engagement in political field is inappropriate for a sincere and developed relation between Russia and European Union, because for “strengthen the value of the agreement, economic goals should be supplemented with political targets.”²⁰

The new PCA is probably the most desired but in the same time the most difficult and ambitious option. Russia would like to see an agreement that “would

¹⁸ Op. Cit., Emerson M., Tassinari F., Vahl M., A New Agreement between the EU and Russia : Why, what and when ?, May 2006, page 8.

¹⁹ Op. Cit., Kempe I., Smith H., A Decade of Partnership and Cooperation in Russia -EU relations, Perceptions, Perspectives and Progress – Possibilities for the Next Decade, 2006, page 10 .

²⁰ Op. Cit., Kempe I., Smith H., A Decade of Partnership and Cooperation in Russia -EU relations, Perceptions, Perspectives and Progress – Possibilities for the Next Decade, 2006, page 13.

reflect its specificity – its size, geopolitical significance and unwillingness to be an EU associate that automatically accepts alignment on the EU norms.”²¹

The divergences of philosophy between Russia and EU is not the unique obstacle in deployment of Russian – European cooperation, there are as well a lot of institutional barriers.²² Despite the fact that Poland expressed its will to take out its veto which has been put on EU – Russia negotiations,²³ there is not very substantial progress in reaching a new agreement.

The new PCA and WTO

One of the aspects which bring some questions marks on the new agreement is the pending membership of Russia in WTO. This is an important factor for the PCA, inasmuch as the PCA is mostly based on the economic dimension. After Russian accession to WTO, the PCA would not have the same relevance and consistency due to the possibilities granted by WTO membership. That’s why we can suppose that Russian accession to WTO decreases the willingness to negotiate a new treaty.

The new PCA and the Lisbon Treaty

The Russian intelligentsia claims that the European Union became weak and is passing through a deep crisis after the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty. The revision of the European constitution and agreement on Reform Treaty, named Lisbon Treaty, on 13th December 2007 introduces a new variable in the Russian equation of measuring the EU’s capacity in foreign policy. This is due to the fact that the provisions of CFSP and High Representative from Constitutional Treaty and those from the Lisbon Treaty are almost unchanged, except the retirement of some

²¹ Bordachev T., *Toward a Strategic Alliance, Russia in Global Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 2, April – June, Moscow, 2006, cited by Emerson M., Tassinari F., Vahl M., *A New Agreement between the EU and Russia : Why, what and when ?*, Centre for European Policy Studies, No. 103, Brussels, May 2006, page 2

²² Op. Cit., Perret Q., *La paix froide : stabiliser les relations entre l’UE et la Russie*, 25/06/2007, page 3.

²³ Poland could lift veto on Russia-EU partnership deal talks – Tusk, RIA Novosti, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20071213/92193179.html>, 24/04/2008.

terms as “Minister of Foreign Affairs of EU”;²⁴ meanwhile the competences are practically the same.

The new PCA, Energy Charter Treaty and Protocol on Transit

The European Energy Charter Treaty was supposed to ensure political, technical and legal foundations for East-West cooperation in the energy sector.²⁵ Russian signed the treaty but did not ratify it yet,²⁶ bringing into force the commitments of the treaty on a provisional basis. This treaty is setting clear rules on how should be made deals in the energy sector. Playing the same rules in such important area as the energy, means to get a better convergence on economic issues. As well this can represent a good fundament for future spill-over on political questions. The fact is that “soaring prices of gas and oil have made energy-rich Russia more powerful, less cooperative and more intransigent.”²⁷ This can be a cause why Russia does not want to ratify the Treaty. The voice of Russia is heard by two channels, the Ministry of Energy and Gazprom. First is saying that there are just several technical issues which have to be fixed and second is clearly showing its unwillingness to approve it.²⁸ The Transit Protocol is as well an interesting document. “The key articles of the draft Transit Protocol (...) are, Art. 8, which would require Gazprom to make its pipeline capacity open for transit for third country suppliers, such as from Turkmenistan to Ukraine or the EU. Art 20 is effectively addressing obligations to the EU to make its internal distribution networks available to third country suppliers on no less favorable terms than for domestic suppliers.”²⁹

²⁴ Treaty of Lisbon, Official Journal of the European Union C 306, Volume 50, 17/12/2007, EU – Russia Charter deal in the autumn, <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/eu-russia-energy-charter-deal-autumn/article-156253>, 23/04/2008

²⁵ Op. Cit., Emerson M., Tassinari F., Vahl M., A New Agreement between the EU and Russia: Why, what and when?, May 2006, page 7.

²⁶ EU – Russia Charter deal in the autumn, <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/eu-russia-energy-charter-deal-autumn/article-156253>

²⁷ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, November, 2007, page 7.

²⁸ Op. Cit., Emerson M., Tassinari F., Vahl M., A New Agreement between the EU and Russia: Why, what and when?, May 2006, page 7.

²⁹ Ibid.. page 7.

The new PCA and Four Common Spaces

From the 2005, the moment when the Four Common Spaces have been adopted, both sides had in mind the idea of including the Road Maps in the newly negotiated PCA, because like this, the PCA will provide a large legal basis focused mostly on principles and general directions of cooperation, while the Common Spaces will integrate Russia into Europe more in sectoral way.³⁰ If Russia and EU will insert the Four Common Spaces in the new PCA and will develop them, “this will be the first example for the EU of a ‘multi -pillar’ agreement”³¹ Maybe some may ask why to introduce the Road Maps in PCA and not in other way? The argument is that the PCA is a treaty and has to be ratified, and the Road Maps are agreements and don’t have to be ratified, same, in international relations, the treaty is considered to stay higher than an agreement.

The new PCA and its ratification

Before mentioning the ratification difficulties, it should be underlined that Russian experts usually says that EU has better capacities and during the negotiations they “play the game of the ‘third missing party’ in refusing to adopt a particular proposal, Brussels cites the position of ‘certain member countries’ (who are never identified), who in turn cites the EC’s position, express concern, and promise to do something, but never do.”³² The procedure of entering into force of a treaty is ratification. Is easy to imagine how long and dangerous is this process. Long because it has to be ratified by all member states, which will take a lot of time, and dangerous because some states from the “new Europe”³³, especially for those which have a sort of “difficult” relation with Russia, like Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania, Latvia but as well United Kingdom and Denmark from “old Europe”.

³⁰ Op. Cit., Kempe I., Smith H., A Decade of Partnership and Cooperation in Russia -EU relations, Perceptions, Perspectives and Progress – Possibilities for the Next Decade, 2006, page 11 -16.

³¹ Op. Cit., Emerson M., Tassinari F., Vahl M. , A New Agreement between the EU and Russia: Why, what and when?, May 2006, page 4.

³² Op. Cit., Sokolov S., Russia and the EU to negotiate a New Cooperation Agreement, 2007, page 191.

³³ New Europe is considered to be the states which joined the EU in 2004 and 2007.

The most desired things by Russia in the new PCA are free-trade zone and free-visa regime. These are representing two of the carrots of the EU,³⁴ which has to be used in the EU – Russia negotiations. At this moment the EU is not able to promise this to Russia, but as long-term objectives these can be mentioned introducing the conditionality that Russia will consolidate the democracy, political freedoms and will not use hard and soft power in states from ENP.

The Four Common Spaces

After the decision of the EU – Russia Summit in St. Petersburg from May 2003, when was decided to create Four Common Spaces as following: (1) Common Economic Space, (2) Freedom Security and Justice, (3) External Security, (4) Research, Education and Culture, the European Union and Russia developed a new institutional framework which later, at the Moscow's EU – Russia Summit from May 2005 was signed.³⁵ This was the result of the EU – Russia negotiations, as far as Russia is against of the European Union's approach through the European Neighborhood Policy and pleads to have “une relation d'égal à égal”.³⁶ “It was intended also to give new momentum to the relationship, after seeing that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1994 had not become a motor for anything very substantial, while the subsequent phase (in 1999) of swapping common strategy documents also led nowhere in particular.”³⁷

As far as the cooperation between the EU and Russia before 2005 was weak and mistrustful sometimes from both sides, but mostly from the part of Russia, while the EU was trying to use as a guide for its actions the “creeping integration”³⁸ policy. The subscription of the Four Road Maps was supposed to reinforce the mechanism of

³⁴ Op. Cit., Kempe I., Smith H., A Decade of Partnership and Cooperation in Russia -EU relations, Perceptions, Perspectives and Progress – Possibilities for the Next Decade, 2006, page 16-18.

³⁵ Press release, 15th EU – Russia Summit, Moscow, 10 May 2005, <http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/communiqués/2005/05/10eu-ru/index.html> , 28/03/2008.

³⁶ Gomart T., Paris et le dialogue UE – Russie : nouvel élan avec Nicolas Sarkozy ?, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Russie.Nei.Visions n. 23, Octobre 2007, Paris, page 12 .

³⁷ Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, No 71, May 2005, page 1.

³⁸ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 5.

creeping integration and was perceived as a “shift towards pragmatic cooperation”³⁹ which finally moved the EU – Russia relations from dead point, but did not bring the forecasted effect.

Before analyzing the Four Common Spaces, the question which appears inevitably is what was the cause that the EU and Russia sat at the same table for negotiations? According to Dov Lynch⁴⁰ there were three basic preconditions for negotiating a new institutional framework:

Enlargement pressures

“First, enlargement of the EU in 2004 carried the objective requirement for Brussels and Moscow to review relations. The impact of enlargement on Russia is felt at several levels, ranging from economic/trade questions to social/humanitarian questions. Enlargement has also altered Europe’s political geography – the EU and Russia now stand much closer to each other.”⁴¹ As well, enlargement have changed the situation in the Eastern Europe, by “creating the shared region in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova”⁴².

Rising differences

The different vision on policies between the EU and Russia raised a lot of questions, “within the EU, member states had become concerned with developments inside Russian politics that call into doubt the existence of shared values”.⁴³ From the other side the Putin regime was worried that the EU is not listening Russia on issues related on enlargement and in the same line , EU’s growing influence in the former Soviet states.

A new Europe arising

„The OSCE has fallen into the deep crisis that had always been predicted for it. For its part, since Prague in November 2002, NATO is undergoing a profound

³⁹ Barysch K., The EU and Russia: From principle to pragmatism?, Centre for European Reform, Policy Brief, London, November 2006, page 2 .

⁴⁰ Dr Dov Lynch is a Senior Research Fellow at the EU Institute for Security Studies in Paris and member of the Advisory Board of Eurojournal.org

⁴¹ Lynch D., EU – Russia: Prospects for a Common Security Space, Eurojournal.org, June 2005, page 2.

⁴² Ibid., page 2.

transformation. The operation in Afghanistan and the mission in Iraq are presages of a more global NATO with less direct engagement in Europe. Meanwhile, a new security actor is emerging – with difficulty – but with ambitions, increasing capabilities and responsibilities as a security provider.”⁴⁴ In the meantime the EU, even being in a crisis, has been able to develop itself as a global player by showing more responsibility to transcontinental issues and by presenting the ENP.

Road Map for the Common Economic Space

The Four Common Spaces is starting with the Road Map on Common Economic Space which seems to be the most consistent from all of them. Of course this Road Map reflects a lot of technical issues, and the general message of the CES is “based on non-discrimination, transparency and good governance”⁴⁵, also within the document is emphasized “predictability and stability”⁴⁶.

The most interesting is Energy, which claims to establish a sort of rules in the EU – Russia dialogue which partially has been acknowledged by Russia and partially by European Union. Why partially? Behind democracy and security the EU is seeking in Russia a reliable partner which is able to provide stable supply with energy, vision which was damaged twice on a large scale, once in January 2006 with Ukraine⁴⁷, and second in the same year with Belorussia.⁴⁸ In the same context Russia is not opening its own energy market for investments, while opening the both sides energy market is an important standing point of CES.⁴⁹ Or maybe is better to say that Russia allows sometimes investments in Russian energy projects, but this allowance is conditional: here we can count the example when Russia allowed “Total” to invest

⁴³ Op. Cit., Lynch D., EU – Russia: Prospects for a Common Security Space, 2005, page 2.

⁴⁴ Ibid., page 3.

⁴⁵ Road Map for the Common Economic Space, Building Blocks for Sustained Economic Growth, Annex 1, May 2005, Moscow, page 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., page 1.

⁴⁷ Op. Cit., Gomart T., Paris et le dialogue UE – Russie : nouvel élan avec Nicolas Sarkozy ?, 2007, page 10.

⁴⁸ Dempsey J., Belarus – Russia oil dispute highlights Europe’s vulnerability, International Herald Tribune, 9/01/2007, <http://www.ihf.com/articles/2007/01/09/business/secure.php?page=1>

⁴⁹ Op. Cit., Road Map for the Common Economic Space, 2005, page 7.

in Stockman⁵⁰ Project; in return France signed a long-term contract on Russian gas supply and promised to Russia to help to buy shares in Suez SA and Gaz de France.⁵¹

Generally speaking the document shows that it should be harmonization and convergence, that the EU and Russia has to cooperate in every field which touches economy, starting from investments, energy and telecommunications and finishing with space, environment and forestry,⁵² whereas the “texts are evasive on who is harmonizing or converging on whom”⁵³ which gives the impression that the document represents regulatory norms and standardization guideline.

Road Map for the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice

Starting from the preamble of the Road Map for the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice the both parts are pleading for “enhanced cooperation on border management and migration issues”⁵⁴ As well, there is a peculiar interest in combating international crime, terrorism, human and drug -trafficking⁵⁵ and some other illegal activities.

The document calls area of FSJ “a key component in developing a strategic partnership”.⁵⁶ In the same context there are “numerous points for concrete cooperation between Russia security agencies and the growing number of EU agencies, such as Europol, Eurojust and the anti-terrorism special representative”.⁵⁷

One very important aspect in the agreement on FSJ is in the subchapter which underlines the principles of the EU – Russia cooperation in this field. Notably, within the document are mentioned such principles as “equality between partners, adherence to common values, rule of law, democracy, independent judicial system, respect to

⁵⁰ Inozemtsev V., Russia Today, <http://russiatoday.ru/guests/detail/486>

⁵¹ Diaconu A., Germania cel mai apropiat partener al Gazprom, « Germany the closest partner of Gazprom », Adevarul, 25/01/2008, nr. 5454, Bucharest

⁵² Op. Cit., Road Map for the Common Economic Space, 2005, page 3, 7, 9, 11, 17, 18.

⁵³ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 2.

⁵⁴ Road Map for the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, Annex 2, May 2005, Moscow, page 21.

⁵⁵ Ibid., page 27, 29, 31.

⁵⁶ Ibid., page 21.

human rights, fundamental freedoms and independent media.”⁵⁸ As far as there is no activity designed to reach cooperation on above mentioned principles, we can count this as a symbolic reference to what should be the fundamental basis of the EU – Russia agreement – the promotion of democracy. Or security and democracy go together, and if the EU sees Russia as a stable and cooperative partner, then there is no another way except the way to have an agreement based on acquiring a better model of Russian democracy and on bringing the gap in terms of sharing the common values. Furthermore, if we compare the Individual Actions Plans signed by EU with countries from European Neighborhood Policy which puts rule of law, human rights and democracy above all, then we can conclude that Road Map on FSJ is a failure in persuading Russia to have a clear delimited engagement in advancing of democracy.⁵⁹

In the same Space as a long-term objective is mentioned a visa-free travel regime which engages Russia to have a better management of borders and to finish all necessary juridical aspects on starting negotiations on such issue. In the meantime there has been some achievements in this field, mostly is about the EU – Russia agreement on “visa facilitation and readmission which have been concluded in early 2007 and entered into force on 1 June 2007.”⁶⁰

The Road Map for the Common Space of External Security

The Road Map for the Common Space of External Security seems to be an interesting document as far as is representing a new dimension of political engagement of the European Union and Russia in security matters.

As a basis for cooperation on External Security issues, is mentioned: “terrorism, the proliferation of the WMD, existing and potential regional and local

⁵⁷ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 2.

⁵⁸ Op. Cit., Road Map for the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, 2005, page 22 .

⁵⁹ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 2.

⁶⁰ European Commission, DG of External Relations, The European Union and Russia: Close Neighbors, Global Players, Strategic Partners, Brussels 2007, page 15 .

conflicts”.⁶¹ The document is aiming to contribute “effectively to creating a greater Europe without dividing lines”, “for a more just and secure world”⁶² As well, all over the document there is emphasized that the character of the EU – Russia dialogue in external security should be in line with the objectives and resolutions of the United Nations and relevant international organizations such as the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

Particular attention should be paid to the statement which refers to the East European and Caucasus conflicts, which telegraphically mentions that “they (EU and Russia) will give particular attention to securing international stability, including in the regions adjacent to the EU and Russia borders”,⁶³ in times when the “EU Presidency press release talks explicitly about the frozen conflicts of Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Osetia and Nagorno-Karabakh, but the official text could not go beyond the ‘adjacent regions’”.⁶⁴

Michael Emerson,⁶⁵ the former ambassador of European Union to Russian Federation says that “in these circumstances the third common space about external security with respect to crisis management is empty. Russia’s ruling elite appear not to have digested how costly this is for its political influence – in the whole of wider European space”.⁶⁶ Another conclusion can be traced from the 20th EU – Russia summit, which points the successes and activities of the Four Common Spaces, except the CSES where they just say that “the leaders stressed the cooperation in the common neighbourhood. They reiterated the importance both the EU and the Russian Federation attach to effective multilateralism”,⁶⁷ fact which proves once again the weak convergence on the external security dimension. The CSES is showing the

⁶¹ Road Map for the Common Space of External Security, Annex 3, May 2005, Moscow, page 35.

⁶² Op. Cit., Road Map for the Common Space of External Security, 2005, page 35.

⁶³ Ibid., page 35.

⁶⁴ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 2.

⁶⁵ Michael Emerson is a Senior Research Fellow within the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels.

⁶⁶ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 3.

incapability to converge the Russian and European vision on international relations, but in the same time it shows “les insuffisances persistantes de l’Union européenne en tant qu’acteur extérieur”.⁶⁸ However the Common Space for External Security has to be considered as first step forward in discussing the security issues between the EU and Russia.

Road Map for the Common Space of Research and Education, Including Cultural Aspects

The Research, Education and Cultural Common Space is slightly different from other three common spaces, not just because is the shortest and most complex agreement, but also due to the fact that it avoids political questions and pretends to be the most convergent thanks to both sides interests and overlap of the opinions. The document shows soft a higher potential of the EU and a clear openness of the European Union in helping Russian Federation to overcome financial difficulties by granting a large palette of opportunities for Russian scientists and researchers and a facilitation of visa regime⁶⁹ for the categories belonging to this common space.

Another clear dimension of the document is that the EU is trying to align Russia and its system of education. Here we can underline Bologna Process, Erasmus Mundus Program, seminars, workshops and other related components to the academic area. But “it will doubtless take a generation or two for Russia and the EU to genuinely converge in terms of mindsets and political values perceived across society as a whole”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Press release of the 20th EU – Russia Summit, Marfa, 26 October 2007, the official site of the European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/summit_10_07/index.htm, 11/02/2008.

⁶⁸ Op. Cit., Perret Q., La paix froide : stabiliser les relations entre l’UE et la Russie, 2007, page 5.

⁶⁹ Road Map for the Common Space of Research and Education, Including Cultural Aspects, Annex 4, Moscow, May 2005. Page 44-52.

1.2 Common perceptions within the European Union – Russia relations

At the beginning of the early 1990, European Union and Russia knew a little about each other and expected a lot, now they know a lot about each other but do not expect too much.⁷¹ In the meantime there have been a lot of events in the EU – Russia relations, but not many of them we can classify as having the same perception from the both sides. Evidently there are many achievements in economic sphere and in the field of freedom, security⁷² and justice. Whiles in the political and external security dimensions there is not too much to say. It's difficult to speak about something which almost does not exist. But despite of the complicate situation between Russia and the EU there are still some examples of cooperation and convergence between them.

Despite of several disputes on energy issues, in the economic field the European Union and Russia achieved the highest level of convergence. The EU gas imports represent 40% and 25%⁷³ out of this are supplied by the Russian Federation. “The EU buys 56% of Russia’s exports and supplies 44% of its imports, while Russia buys only 6% of what the EU sells, and supplies just 10% of what the Union buys from abroad”.⁷⁴ The numbers are showing that the economy of the EU is much stronger and competitive even without having the natural resources in such quantities that they need to sell them. The gas and oil trade represents a win-win situation. The EU needs gas and oil, the Russian Federation needs to sell their natural resources, inasmuch as Russia does not have any possibilities, at least at medium term, to sell its production in Asia, and especially in China, because there are no pipelines, the supply to the EU countries is the unique stable trade opportunity. In the same context, the EU needs stability in energy supplies and Russia needs the EU for “modernizing the Russian economy and diversifying it away from its current overdependence on

⁷⁰ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 3.

⁷¹ Op. Cit., Barysch K., The EU and Russia: From Principle to Pragmatism?, 2006, page 1.

⁷² Security in terms of border management, drug trafficking and other illegal activities.

⁷³ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid., page 8.

hydrocarbons”⁷⁵ and money. Interesting is the fact that Russia’s rulers are hardly working to create such situation where “the EU needs Russia, more than Russia needs the EU”.⁷⁶ This tendency can be explained by the Russia’s effort to buy the distribution pipelines in the EU and shares in the energy companies from the EU, while Russian authorities do not allow European companies to invest in Russian energy sector. Another interesting dimension of this energy question can be underlined when we analyze the convergence of the EU member states and Russia. The state in state “Gazprom” is willing to sign long-term bilateral contracts just with the Russia’s strategic partners, which encompass Germany, Italy, France and Spain, the last one being less dependent on Russian energy supply. Russia is developing two big energy projects: one with Germany - Nord Stream headed by the former German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and one with Italy, where Putin proposed to the former president of the European Commission and former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi to lead this project, but Prodi rejected the Putin’s proposal.⁷⁷ In this energy projects the new member states of the EU are most concerned. For example after the announcement of the North Stream pipeline which is going to be build on the floor of the Baltic Sea and avoids Poland, the last one stated that the North Stream project is another Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact,⁷⁸ and Lithuania vetoed the decision of the EU Council to attribute the mandate for Commission for starting the negotiations on the new PCA with Russia because it searches for energy guaranties and cooperation of Russia in solving conflicts from Moldova and Georgia.⁷⁹

In the economic field of cooperation it is important to mention the support of the EU for Russian accession to the WTO. The EU has supported the Russian membership to WTO in both ways, declarative and in practice. By declarative I mean

⁷⁵ Ferrero-Waldner B., The European Union and Russia – Future Prospects, Salzburg Global Seminar – Russia: The 2020 Perspective, Salzburg, 6th of April, 2008, page 4.

⁷⁶ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 1.

⁷⁷ Prodi declined Putin’s offer to head South Stream, <http://www.integrum.com/ArticlesByCategoryPage.aspx?oid=367&tid=7>, 28/04/2008.

⁷⁸ Foreign policy implications for the Nord Stream pipeline, Fine -Kaper Consulting for the German Government, December 5, 2006, http://classes.maxwell.syr.edu/PSC783/2006/German_y/, 29/04/2008.

the countless declarations of support of Russia by the EU with every occasion and in the dialogue with the WTO partners. By the practical support I mean especially the TACIS program which contributed to the Russian transition to market economy. Nevertheless there are some Russian opinions which say that “in spite of the fact that Russia and the EU signed the Protocol about the end of the bilateral negotiations between Russia and the EU on Russian membership in WTO, Brussels is getting from Moscow a range of concessions, trying to link them with the perspectives of joining of WTO”.⁸⁰

The EU and Russia consider each other as a strategic partner and raise their relation to the strategic partnership. A more underlined discussion about strategic partnership appeared at the end of 1990s, after the Russian Federation ratified the PCA. After the Cologne meeting of the European Council in July 1999, the EU adopts a framework document for dealing with Russia which is called “the Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia”. This nine pages text adopted for four years is emphasizing the importance of Russia as a global actor and energy player, the role of the EU in helping Russia to overcome the difficulties in the transformation process, to apply the measures for converging in normative terms and gives competences to be implemented by the European Commission and to be guided by the High Representative for the CFSP of the EU. Besides the above mentioned chapters of cooperation, the EU is clearly stating that Russia represents a strategic partner and the EU and Russia will develop a privileged relation.⁸¹

In return the Russian Federation adopts “the Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy towards the European Union” for the period of 2000 -2010. The Russian Strategy is shaped in terms of a classic conception with visible military features like the “multi-polar world” and “collective security system”. The document is referring

⁷⁹ Zygar M., A New Euro-opponent of Russia, Kommersant – Russia’s Daily Online, http://www.kommersant.com/p888125/r_527/Talks_between_the_EU_and_Russia_stalled_because_of_Lithuania/, 30/04/2008.

⁸⁰ Suslov D., To win Russia: the EU is attempting to dictate conditions to Russian Federation, “Pobediti Rossii: ES pitaetsea diktavati uslovia RF”, 31/10/2007, <http://www.cceis.ru/rus/euro/41.html>, 23/03/2008.

as well to the EU as a strategic partner of Russia. Interesting is the fact that Russia is trying to give a message to the EU. The idea of the message is that the Commonwealth of Independent States represents the Russia's zone of influence and in a soft manner directs attention to the EU that the countries from the CIS represents the Russia's sphere of influence and the EU should not interfere in these countries "to the detriment of Russia's interests".⁸² It is important to mention that in the Conception of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation is mentioned the same tendency towards CIS.⁸³ As well, in the Russian Strategy on the EU we can observe the Russia's position of imposing itself and first attempts of building of what is called now the "sovereign democracy" doctrine.

The strategic partnership between Russia and the EU consists more in declarations than in practice, especially in the external security issues. While at the beginning of launching by the EU of the European Security and Defense Policy the Russian Federation tried to support the EU hoping that the EU will create a balance to the US-NATO power. Russia was seeing the ESDP as a "project with uncertain future"⁸⁴ and by the ESDP Russia was thinking to make its voice heard in Europe, while the EU is seeing the ESDP as a "limited instrument of EU foreign policy".⁸⁵ From 1999 Russia was supporting the ESDP, and was constantly arguing that ESDP needs Russia in order to become a power. After a diplomatic explanation from the EU to Russia saying that the ESDP is a tool for the EU, in 2001 Russia stopped to speak in very positive terms about the ESDP,⁸⁶ especially after seeing that the ESDP is converging very well with the NATO policy. In the last long, in 2002 the EU and Russia engaged themselves in a strategic partnership on combating the international

⁸¹ Common Strategy of the European Union of 4 June 1999 on Russia, Official Journal of the European Communities, 24/06/1999.

⁸² The Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy towards the European Union (2000-2010), http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/p_245.htm, 24/04/2008.

⁸³ Conception of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation – "Conceptia Vneshnii Politiki Rosiskoi Federatii" of 22/06/2000, <http://www.in.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/0e9272bfa34209743256c630042d1aa/fd86620b371b0cf7432569fb004872a7?OpenDocument>, 21/03/2008.

⁸⁴ Lynch D., Russia's strategic partnership with Europe, Centre for Strategic and International Studies and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Washington Quarterly, Washington, 2004, page 108.

⁸⁵ Ibid., page 112.

terrorism, which made some progress, especially at the level of cooperation between the special agencies of the EU and Russia and the exchange of the data about all related issues to international terrorism.⁸⁷

On the external security issues the EU and Russia have a good cooperation in the issues which are less vital for Russia. The logic of this cooperation and convergence is following the idea of geographical proximity and weight of interest, as far as is the conflict, as easy is to converge with Russia. One of the examples could represent the Middle East Quartet, also known as Madrid Quartet, in which is participating the European Union, Russia, the United States and the United Nations. The Quartet was established at the Madrid meeting by above mentioned parties in 2002. This international body is designed to amplification of the negotiations in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a peaceful settlement of this. A particular attention should be paid to the role of the EU in bringing Russia into this format. Expressly the European Union diplomacy made a big effort in having Russia in the Middle East Quartet. In a lot of cases the position of the EU and Russia are the same in this conflict and the “cooperation in the Middle East has been relatively greater and more equal, even if both stand in the shade of the United States”.⁸⁸ The Russian Federation and notably the EU have a very difficult mission; they “must save the Palestinians from falling hostage to an interminable process of negotiations”.⁸⁹

From recent successful cooperation between the EU and Russia in the external security field and notably in crisis management it is important to mention the consent of Russia in deploying together with the European Union a peacekeeping operation in Chad and Central African Republic⁹⁰ to stabilize the situation in the region.

⁸⁶ Op. Cit., Lynch D., Russia's strategic partnership with Europe, 2004, page 99 -118.

⁸⁷ Joint Statement on the fight against terrorism, Russia -EU Summit, 11 November 2002, Brussels, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation, <http://www.in.mid.ru/bl.nsf/5d5fc0348b8b2d26c3256def0051fa20/1dba9cc6f2b5466743256c71004a5f2b?OpenDocument>, 22/04/2008.

⁸⁸ Op. Cit., Lynch D., Russia's strategic partnership with Europe, 2004, page 110.

⁸⁹ Alvarez-Ossorio Alvarino I., The European Strategy for the Middle East, Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman paper series, Vol. 4, No. 19, December 2004, Miami European Union Centre, page 10.

⁹⁰ Joint communiqué of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation Lavrov S. V. and General Secretary of Council of European Union/High Representative of EU for Common Foreign and

Another important arena for the EU – Russia cooperation is the G8. Russia was willing to become a part of the G7 and was attending the Summits as an observer since the Gorbachev times. When Yeltsin was providing the economic and political reforms, Russia started to attend permanently the G7, but still as an observer. Since 1998, these meetings were called P8 (Political 8) or G7 plus one. In 2002, at the Kananaskis summit in Canada, Russia received full membership for economic and democratic transformation and it was offered to Russia to hold the presidency in 2006. In the western media and political circles were a lot of critics addressed to Russia, but primarily to the G7 members for tolerance of the Russian authority's negative actions in the field of human rights and economic tutelage. For example in 2005 several American senators protested saying that Russian membership has to be cancelled until Putin will ensure the democracy and political freedoms.⁹¹ Inside the G8 the EU was supporting the Russian Federation during the disagreements especially with the United States and tried to keep a neutral constructive position, but it is important do not to forget, as the former Director-General of RELEX Günter Burghardt said that “the European Commission had advocated new Russia's invitation to the G7”.⁹²

In the framework of the United Nations the situation is more delicate than in the above mentioned structures. There are several reasons for disputes, but notably with the two of them the members of the EU, which are members of the UN Security Council, and Russia are dealing. The issues of Kosovo independence and the Iranian enrichment of uranium. Both of them have a great significance for the future development in two important areas to which the United Nations is concerned: the auto-determination of the people and the nuclear disarmament, the last one being a supposition that Iran is trying to develop its own nuclear weapon.

Security Policy Solana J., Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30/04/2008, http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/sps/6F75BFC61B65FE19C325743B0026B995_1/05/2008.

⁹¹ Barnes H, Owen J., Russia in the spotlight: G8 Scorecard, The Foreign Policy Centre, January 2006, London, page 1-14.

⁹² Burghardt G., EU-Russia Relations a troubled strategic partnership?, EU -Russia Centre, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 2008, page 2.

In the Kosovo question the EU and Russia are totally opposite. The main part of the EU member states has recognized the independence of Kosovo. Several EU members until now do not want to recognize its independence, but generally as an institution the EU is perceived as being in favor of Kosovo independence. While the Russia's official position was reminding that the Kosovo's independence is breaking the UN rules and can bring in the nearest future to unpredicted changes on the world map, expressing stating that the Russian Federation will recognize the self-proclaimed republics from Transnistria (Moldova), Osetia and Abkhazia (Georgia),⁹³ forgetting about that in this way some countries can recognize the independence of the Chechnya.

The problem of Iran is more complex and with shorter political gap between the EU and Russia. Nevertheless the EU is trying to persuade Russia to get their support in the Security Council of the United Nations. I was saying that is more complex because there is no a clear proof that Iran is elaborating a nuclear weapon. However, the unwillingness of Iran to accept the UN inspections is bringing the idea that Iran is preparing such a project. The EU needs Russia in this question, and Russians will finally support the EU but they have to receive something in return. This could represent a guaranty from the EU that in case of war, the EU will not support and contribute to the military operations in this region, or some advantages at the level of EU – Russia relations. Another reason why Russia is not willing to cooperate in the framework of United Nations on Iran question is the Russian contribution to the building of a big nuclear power plant in Iran. By this Russia is worried that it can lose the contract and the trust of Iran. As well, Russia is selling military armament to Iran and in case of a resolution of the United Nations on Iran which can sanction the supply of Iran with armament; again Russia is going to lose.⁹⁴ Besides stability in the region EU needs Iran for the liquefied natural gas supply

⁹³ Will Kosovo independence open Pandora's Box in the Caucasus? 29/01/2008, http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/europe/features/article_1388954.php/Will_Kosovo_independence_open_Pandoras_box_in_the_Caucasus, 2/05/2008.

⁹⁴ Roberts A.C., Russia and the European Union: The Sources and Limits of "Special Relationships", The Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, United States, February 2007, page 13 -14.

which is going to come to the European Union through the Nabucco pipeline.⁹⁵ Anyway a big step was done in this question after that Russia accepted to be represented in the negotiations on Iran question by the High Representative of EU for CFSP. However the convergence and even cooperation of the EU and Russia in the External Security field is decreasing, for example in the Commission report for 2007 on Four Common Spaces, in the chapter of external security cooperation achievements is mentioned just the “EU joint Action in support of chemical weapons destructions in Russia”⁹⁶ which in my opinion is not enough for a strategic partnership, because a strategic partnership must go beyond personal ambitions and technical provisions in order to ensure a sustainability of the EU – Russia cooperation.

After the accession in 2004 of the new ten countries to the EU, including Baltic countries, Russia and the EU met the problem of Russian enclave Kaliningrad. The issue of Kaliningrad was elaborately debated by the parties involved. Russia was asking for the all inhabitants from the Kaliningrad “oblasti” a free -visa regime. However, at the end Russian citizens received a special perm it to transit the Baltic countries, while Russia was asking for derogation from the Schengen Agreement for the people who are living in Kaliningrad. The leading Russian experts including Karaganov think that “the problem of transit and free travel between Kaliningrad and the rest of Russia is impossible without solving the problem of free travel between Russia and the European Union as a whole.”⁹⁷

Through another fields of cooperation we can mention the Freedom, Security and Justice, with the starting dialogue on visa, the readmission agreement, the cooperation in the drug trafficking and the joint action plan between FRONTEX and Russian Border Guard Service. In the common space of Research, Education and

⁹⁵ Roberts A.C., Russia and the European Union: The Sources and Limits of “Special Relationships”, 2007, page 63.

⁹⁶ EU-Russia Common Spaces – Progress Report 2007, European Commission, Brussels, 11 April 2008, in CEPS – European Neighborhood Watch, Issue 37, April 2008, page 10.

⁹⁷ Karaganov S., Bordachev T., Guseinov V., Lukyanov F., Suslov D., Russia – EU Relations, The present Situation and Prospects, Centre for European Policy Studies, No 225, July 2005, Brussels, page 14.

Culture we can emphasize the adjustment of Russia to the Bologna Process and new priorities in the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus education programs. As well on the economic dimension there has been made progress on gradual abolition of Siberian over-flight payments, the lift of Russian ban on Poland's meat exports and the agreement of establishment an early warning energy mechanism.⁹⁸

After passing through all these events and circumstances there is need just to define what is the substance of EU - Russia cooperation? The substance is trade. At least, until now, this is the unique clear dimension which we can assume, as far as there is no convergence in the values matters, except some attempts in terrorism field and freedom, security and justice. This mutual mistrust between Russia and the EU appears as a result that, besides the economic cooperation, the both parts have different interests. To this contributes the obsolete PCA which does not encompass the today's realities, and even the relative recent Four Common Spaces, which are seen as evasive and as a register of the technical standards. To this, we can add the fact that both of the actors are following their own trajectory. For a real convergence in all the fields Russia and the EU have to agree especially on External Security Common Space and on the Road Map of Freedom Security and Justice. It is not just about the different views on the world order but it is about communication as well, as the Head of the Russia Unit in the DG RELEX Gunnar Wiegand said: "it is important to stop talking about each other and start talking to each other."⁹⁹

⁹⁸Op. Cit., EU-Russia Common Spaces – Progress Report 2007, 2008, page 10.

⁹⁹Wiegand G., EU-Russia Relations a troubled strategic partnership?, EU-Russia Centre, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 2008, page 5.

Chapter II, Convergences and divergences between the European Union and Russia

2.1 Values and principles in EU – Russia relations

Starting with the second part of '80, the Soviet Union began crucial reforms which later will lead to disintegration of the communist bloc. The Gorbachiov's perestroika and glasnost' will change the fundamentals of the Eastern Europe, moving towards a system based on the western values. Beginning with the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union the Europe and United States revised their policy towards the newly appeared Russia. Since these events, which transformed the political situation in Europe, the imperatives of security have been changed. The danger for peace and stability has disappeared.¹⁰⁰ The values have played one of the most important roles in shaping state policies. On the values is based the political action, the policies and implementation, the behavior and the discourse. Tanguy de Wilde d'Estmael is defining values as a "ensemble de conceptions d'ordre philosophique, politique, juridique, socio-économique, moral ou religieux, auquel adhère un groupe d'individus, en l'estimant digne d'être défendu, promu, voire exporté",¹⁰¹ so, the values are basically founding the society and the state.

As a successor of the Soviet Union, Russia and its governing elite have engaged several times to respect the values of the western democracies on the model of United Nations and the European Union. First with agreements within UN, then with Helsinki Final Act of CSCE and then the Charter of Paris for a New Europe between Soviet Union and European Union. Engagement in these international agreements does not stick just to foreign policy but primarily to domestic affairs.

The EU has been created on the values and engagements in such areas like human rights, democracy, and freedom of individuals, market economy and

¹⁰⁰ Manuel de l'OTAN, L'OTAN aujourd'hui, OTAN – Bureau de l'Information et de la Presse, Bruxelles, juin 1996, page 22.

interdependence as one of the best ways to establish peace and assure stability. The modern principles of the state generate safety by assuring a stable political and economic climate. There is a link between democracy and security. The Democratic Peace theory says that democratic states are not fighting between them. This message is promoted very much by American politicians and after the reconciliation of Europe by the European leaders. In one of his messages Bill Clinton was saying that “the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere. Democracies don’t attack each other.”¹⁰² But sometimes democracies attack non-democracies; again the Americans have an explication. Elihu Root during the First World War was addressing to American Society of International Law: “so long as military autocracy continues, democracy is not safe from attacks, which are certain to come and certain to find it unprepared. The conflict is inevitable and universal; and it is à l’outrance. To be safe democracy must kill its enemy when it can and where it can. The world can not be half democratic and half autocratic. (...) If it’s all democratic, international law honored and observed may well be expected as a natural development of the principles which make democratic self-government possible.”¹⁰³ This incursion into history wants to show that democratic values create stability and security and that cooperation can not be guided just by interests, there should be taken into account the principles, because the “common democratic values and rule of law is the main guarantor of the continent’s peace and well-being,”¹⁰⁴ The development of relations based on common values must reflect the necessary balance between security, on the one hand, and justice and freedom, on the other.¹⁰⁵

The presidency of Yeltsin, which was a chaotic but more or less democratic period, helped the Occident to ensure a “soft” security in Europe according to the

¹⁰¹ Wilde d’Estmael T., *Russie – Occident : un choc des valeurs ? Où va la Russie?* Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Paris, 2005, page 72.

¹⁰² Bill Clinton in Reiter D., Stam A., *Democracies at War*, Princeton University Press, 2002, page 2 .

¹⁰³ Root E., in Russett B., *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press, 1993, page 32-33.

¹⁰⁴ Ermerson M., Arbatova N., Broadchev T., Makarychev A. S., Tassinari F., Vahl M., *The European Round Table of Industrialists, The Elephant and the Bear try again, Options for New Agreement between EU and Russia*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, 2006, page 8.

¹⁰⁵ *EU-Russia Relations, EU Policy Aims*, European Commission, Brussels, May 2007, page 7 .

European values.¹⁰⁶ The Agreement for Partnership and Cooperation starts with the assertion that “considering the importance of historical links existing between the Community, its member states and Russia and the common values that they share”,¹⁰⁷ so Russia has been considered by European leaders as an incipient democracy which stick to the European values. But this is not all. Russia has engaged itself to advance in democracy by respecting the western values and to adjust itself to European meaning of democracy. This can be seen in the art. 55 of the same document, which says: “Russia shall endeavor to ensure that its legislation will be gradually made compatible with that of the Community”.¹⁰⁸ This is far from what is doing Russia today. Instead of aligning to European values, Russia is developing an own system of values, based on so called “sovereign democracy”¹⁰⁹. The EU – Russia summits stress all the time the problems with Russia democracy. In this respect, one the most consolidated vision of the values between them was the joint statement of the seventh summit which held in Moscow 2001. The statement reads that “a strong civil society is necessary in a modern democratic state. The continued development of independent media is a cornerstone of democratic societies. Freedom of speech and pluralism in the media are essential democratic principles and core values for a genuine EU – Russia partnership.”¹¹⁰ Therefore the importance of common values in a relationship is obvious: “values provide the glue which holds a relationship together when interests do not coincide. Russia and the EU, despite happy words, do not currently share common values”.¹¹¹

Today, the level of democracy in Russia is “botanique”¹¹² as said the former ambassador of Belgium in Russia. The thing is that Russia even doesn’t try to get

¹⁰⁶ Op. Cit., Barnes H., Owen J., Russia in the spotlight: G8 scorecard, 2006, page 21.

¹⁰⁷ Op. Cit., Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation between the EU and Russia, page 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Art. 55, page 48.

¹⁰⁹ Sovereign Democracy represents the model of Russian democracy developed by Putin and Surkov and is going to be largely explained in the third chapter of this study.

¹¹⁰ Schuette R., EU-Russia Relations: Interests and Values – A European Perspective, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, 2004, page 20 .

¹¹¹ Monaghan A., Russian Perspectives of Russia-EU Security Relations, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, London, 2005, page 12 .

¹¹² Op. Cit., Wilde d’Estmael T., Russie – Occident : un choc des valeurs ? Où va la Russie? 2005, page 71.

closer to European Union. Maybe the Russian Federation really wants to get closer to the EU, but for sure they don't know how to do this. Today their relation can be explained by one phrase "We (Russia) pretend to be converging on common European values and they (EU) pretend to be helping us do so."¹¹³ The problem with Russia is almost clear. They are not really willing to "hug" the European system of values, because they are trying to consolidate their own. But what about the European Union?

After the enlargement from 2004 and 2007 EU has increased territorially but in the same time met new challenges. How to build and to solidify a common position of 27 states towards Russia? It is very difficult. There is no doubt that all 27 states plead for a democratic Russia and respect of rule of law, but there are different approaches. Since the Vilnius meeting of NATO when Donald Rumsfeld divided the Europe in "Old Europe" and "New Europe"¹¹⁴ there has been different opinions on how to deal with Russia. The "New Europe" is saying all the time that EU should be cautious with Russia; they are saying that they know Russia better. Their message is that they must cooperate with Russia but in the same time they are pleading for a "soft containment" approach until Russia will behave according to the European rules. The break of opinions inside the EU on what kind of policy should be developed towards Russia is becoming more evident in the last years. In time when the "strategic partners"¹¹⁵ of Russia, meaning Germany, France, Italy and Spain are in favor of a strong relation with Russia,¹¹⁶ the main part of the member states have a reserved opinion about this subject or a critical and very critical position on Russia. Some of them think that trying to say to Russia that everything is going well and they achieved the highest level of EU – Russia relation is a wrong approach. For example the former president of Czech Republic, Vaclav Havel, said that it should be a "normality" in EU – Russia relations and from his perspective there is no need to

¹¹³ Op. Cit., Emerson M., EU – Russia Four Common Spaces and Proliferation of the Fuzzy, 2005, page 1.

¹¹⁴ Old Europe represents the first 15 states and New Europe represents the 10 states which joined the EU on 1st May 2004 and Romania and Bulgaria which joined the EU on 1st January 2007.

¹¹⁵ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 31.

¹¹⁶ Facon I., Où va la Russie? Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Paris, 2005, page 75.

speak with Moscow authorities like with “handicapés” members of the family, but there is need to say the truth all the time.¹¹⁷

The Russia diplomacy has as well different approaches particularly towards EU member states and generally towards global politics. They regularly use the double standards method in their discourses on international arena,¹¹⁸ and they try to divide the opinions of the states by using the bilateral negotiations with the EU member states. But Russia underestimate the power of European values as a label proper to both Europes, because “for the EU this values are fundamental since they are what the member states have in common, they have no common language or national culture.”¹¹⁹

Three very important dimensions should be taken into account analyzing the questions why there is no convergence in the values between Moscow and Brussels and what is the barrier in achieving a convergence at the values level.

First would be the governing elite of EU and Russia. The European Union is taking decision by consensus and European leaders are changing, but at the basis, they are conducting their policies on the same values. While in Russia there are several schools of thinking. Yury Fedorov from Chatham House distinguishes four models of Russian school of thinking: Hard Traditionalists, Pragmatists, the Multi-polar Concept and Neo-imperialists. The Hard Traditionalists were the core of soviet conservatism. They are pleading in favor of rebuilding the Soviet Union on the basis of the concepts from soviet times which should manifest a strong antagonism to the West, especially to US and NATO who are seen as a means of domination over Europe and in the same time they perceive the Iran, Cuba and North Korea as the natural allies of Russia. The second school of Pragmatists is represented by intellectuals, media, academia and a part of business people. They appeal for overcoming the soviet stereotypes, develop relations and cooperate with the west, and

¹¹⁷ Op. Cit., Wilde d’Estmael T., *Russie – Occident : un choc des valeurs ? Où va la Russie?* 2005, page 74.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., page 71.

¹¹⁹ Op. Cit., Ermerson M., Arbatova N., Broadchev T., Makarychev A. S., Tassinari F., Vahl M., *The European Round Table of Industrialists, The Elephant and the Bear try again, Options for New Agreement between EU and Russia*, 2006, page 8.

they believe that technological and social innovations should be the priority of the country. As well, they see just two options for Russia today: either to align with democracies from the world or Russia will be pushed to periphery and will become a third world country. The Multi-polar Concept School of thinking is mostly composed by bureaucratic clans. They tend to avoid extremes in the foreign policy. On the international arena the Multi-polar concept are advocating two geopolitical scenarios: to create a coalition with China and leading European states or to create the so called “Big Triangle” with China and India. The both are designed to counterbalance US and NATO. The Neo-Imperialists is representing the nowadays foreign policy and it has born mainly in 2000 and crystallized after the 9/11. They support the idea that the Russian Federation should reinforce its sovereignty and regain the status of superpower in the world. They are shoring up the fight against terrorism, they look for a special relationship with Europe, they sustain the idea of Big Triangle and they see the US as partner and as a rival in the same time.¹²⁰

The second important aspect which can not be neglected is that Russia is not willing to become an EU member.¹²¹ In this case the European Union can not apply the conditionality system above Russia, in order to “persuade” it to behave in accordance with European values and agreements signed before. Here we can count as an example the case of Turkey which is an official candidate to join EU. Consequently, the European Union asks regularly the Turkish government for fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria which serve as a solid base for associate countries to converge to European standards.

Last, but not least is Russian tendency to develop its own system of values proper for the needs of the citizens. This “soft power” bias is designed to help psychologically the population to mobilize for reaching the today’s ambitions of Russia - to become a superpower. This trend seems to be dangerous. While EU has invested some time, money and energy to transform the Russian declarative

¹²⁰ Fedorov Y. E., “Boffins” and “Buffoons”: Different Strains of Thought in Russia’s Strategic Thinking, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 2006, page 1 -7

¹²¹ Op. Cit., The Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy towards the European Union (2000 -2010), page 2.

democracy into a functional one, Russia is creating its own system of values. There is no doubt that in every country and especially in Russia there are some national parameters which can bring soft differences in comparison with the average standard of EU democracies, but in the last long democracy must encompass some obligatory criteria like separation of the powers, judicial independency, free and universal vote, respect for human rights, freedom of expression and others, in order to be able to call the applied system a real democracy.

There would be one more question to analyze, the strategic partnership on terrorism between European Union and Russia. This mutual engagement in combating the international terrorism has to be commended, because this effort is designed to create a safer Europe. But there is one more feature. An aspect which can not be omitted. Is Russia engaged in this partnership because it sincerely cares about the terrorism? The answer would be yes and no. From the one hand, Russia experienced its own the problems with terrorism in two resonant events: the Nord -Ost with taking hostages the whole theater and the Beslan tragedy where there has been taken hostages the children from school. From another hand, there is a supposal that Russia is trying to cover the wars from Chechnya and from other parts of the federation where can appear some problems.¹²² There is still one unanswered question. If Russia is really interested in combating the international terrorism, why it still supports the illegal regimes from secessionist self-proclaimed republics from Moldova and Georgia? In the last long the conclusion can be traced as such as the cooperation in combating international terrorism is good, but, there should be cooperation not just in the EU and Russia, but as well in the shared neighborhood, or like this the presence of a strategic partnership in this area is not achieving the aims and could be considered as a “symptôme d’une crise des valeurs entre la Russie et l’UE”.¹²³

¹²² Vinatier L., Les relations UE-Russie: Moscou pose ses conditions, policy paper nr. 20, Notre Europe, Paris, March 2006, page 26-29.

¹²³ Op. Cit., Vinatier L., Les relations UE-Russie: Moscou pose ses conditions, March 2006, page 26-29.

The EU and Russia see their interests different, and even when they are speaking about the same thing, for example values, they understand it in different way. Perhaps until now, Russia was trying to act when EU was pointing on Russian democracy problems, but after the second term of V. Putin Russia is not acting, moreover, they clearly declared that they have their own values and democracy coming from the heritage and specificity of Russia. So, can we say that the taking into account the each others opinion and cooperation will last until Russia has gas? I think this is not a solution, or results and solutions are coming from economic interdependency just accompanied by political commitments.

2.2 The ideological differences between the EU and Russia

Russia's new challenge to the EU runs deeper than the threat of energy cut-offs or blockages in the UN.

It is setting itself up as an ideological alternative to the EU, with a different approach to sovereignty, power and world order.¹²⁴

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian Federation has no practically a unifying ideology, except some attempts as it was "Statism"¹²⁵ ideology. It rather has some concepts in different sectors of the state which lack communication between them. Nevertheless the Russian Federation was passing through a transition which was moving with difficulties to a democracy. In this time the European Union, from the end of Soviet Union to nowadays, was moving through the processes of deepening and widening of a *sui generis* system. Together with the European Single Act, the Maastricht Treaty, the Amsterdam Treaty, the Treaty of Nice and maybe the Lisbon Treaty the European Union, slow but confident, was emerging as a global player with a more or less clear vision to the world and position and attitudes to the problems faced by the 21st century.

After Vladimir Putin came to power, in 2000, the Russian Federation started to stabilize in economic terms, to strengthen the authoritarian regime and to produce an ideology. "Russia is back, and this is a fact of life".¹²⁶ This was possible due to several factors. The Putin appointment is one of these factors. Being a former eminent KGB agent, he was able to "liberate" the country from oligarchs, for those

¹²⁴ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 1.

¹²⁵ 'Statism' is the political ideology that emerged in Russia in the late 1980 and early 1990s, mainly within the officer core of the Army and the KGB. It attempted to adjust to new circumstances but was not able to adopt democratic values. Its basic ideas include the following: the state is seen as the main consolidating force of Russian society; the state's interests dominate over the interests of the individual or social groups; the core and principal pillar of the state is the security sector. In Soviet days, according to the adherents of these views, the armed forces and security organizations were instruments not of the Communist Party but of the Russian state. See Fedorov Y. E., "Boffins" and "Buffoons": Different Strains of Thought in Russia's Strategic Thinking, Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 2006, page 7.

¹²⁶ Champenois P., EU-Russia Relations a troubled strategic partnership?, EU -Russia Centre, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 2008, page 1.

who rejected the supremacy of Putin, and to subordinate the others who managed to create a kind of peaceful coexistence, like is the case of Abramovich. In a very difficult economic situation the prices on gas and oil boosted which also helped Putin a lot to strengthen his position. Putin knows very well how to manage the natural resources. His dissertation was entitled “Strategic Planning of the Reproduction of the Mineral Resource Base of a Region”.¹²⁷ And finally, the psychological state of Russian citizens in 2000, who were remembering with nostalgia the Soviet times. Putin set up a mission for himself: to save Russia from the chaos left by Yeltsin. All these activities are having a strong determined aim – “to create Great Russia.”¹²⁸ Lately, in regard to the Soviet times Putin said that the collapse of Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.¹²⁹ He is the person who was able to incarnate the country’s thirst for a new hero, who will be able to reestablish the power and pride of Russia. At the beginning of his mandate, the policies of Russia started to be changed by new ones. The new Conception of Foreign Policy of Russian Federation appeared. Then, the new Conception of National Defense of Russian Federation. Then, the medium term Strategy towards the European Union. Inside of the country he started to subordinate the governors of the regions of the Russian Federation, to control the media, and other documents and actions which started to shape the Russian domestic and external activity.

Today the ideology of Russia is shaped by the governing party “United Russia” and is conducted by Vladimir Putin. The basis of the new ideology of Russia has been developed mainly by the deputy chief of presidential administration Vladislav Surkov, and some other contributors as Veceslav Nikonov, Gleb Pavlovsky, Modest Kolerov and Sergei Markov. These people started to produce the new ideology, or how is called in the language of propaganda, a national idea. The

¹²⁷ Gaddy S. G., Kuchins A. C., Putin’s Plan, The Centre for Strategic and International Studies and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Washington Quarterly, 2008, page 119.

¹²⁸ Yavlinski G., The Putin System, CBC News, The passionate eye, 2006

¹²⁹ Putin deplores the collapse of USSR, 25/04/2005, The official site of BBC, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4480745.stm> 22/04/2008.

national idea consists by two main concepts: the sovereign democracy and the Putin's Plan.

The "sovereign democracy" is a concept designed for internal use, to mobilize the society, but the message is also addressed to foreign actors which are dealing with Russia. The sovereign democracy speaks the language of Western norms but implement the standards of Eastern realities.

Nicu Popescu from the European Council on Foreign Relations sees the "sovereign democracy" as a "soft power" ambition of Russia. Joseph Nye is defining "soft power" as the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion" and which can "be cultivated through relations with allies, economic assistance, and cultural exchanges".¹³⁰ The concept of "sovereign democracy" was confusing and was debated in Russia. For example the actual president of Russia, Dimitri Medvedev in 2006 was arguing that the term of sovereign democracy is leaving a weird aftertaste and is not yet clear whether this is proper description of the direction followed by Russia.¹³¹ Today when Medvedev is president he accepted the term and promised to continue the policies of Putin.

The notion of "sovereign democracy" is composed by two fundamental ideas. The first one is to counter the interference of the foreign forces, mainly meaning the Western forces. This fear is alimented by the idea that Russia is able to manage the policies by itself, and to counter any tendency of "orange revolution", suggesting that the revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia were managed by foreign forces and nowadays these countries are governed from abroad. Second, is the idea that "Russia has its own set of values. These values are democratic, but they emerge from Russia's unique historical experience, and they are distinct from what the West understands as democracy".¹³² As the Head of the Russian National Security Council Sergei Ivanov said; "you must be talking about your model, your idea of Western democracy, but if

¹³⁰ Nye J., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, NY: Public Affairs, 2004, in Popescu N., *Russia's Soft Power Ambitions*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Policy brief, No 115, October, 2006, page 1.

¹³¹ Popescu N., *Russia's Soft Power Ambitions*, Centre for European Policy Studies, Policy brief, No 115, October, 2006, page 1.

¹³² Op. Cit., Popescu N., *Russia's Soft Power Ambitions*, 2006, page 1.

Western democracy exists, there should be Eastern and Southern democracies.”¹³³ The doctrine of “sovereign democracy” has two functions. One is to legitimize the strengthening of authoritarian regime of Putin and to combat the international critics about democracy problems in Russia. Second is to “challenge the West’s idea of democracy and human rights as a set of universal values and practices”¹³⁴ It is an interesting fact that religion also plays an important role in this debate. Some of the experts were arguing that the religion, the Christianity, can serve as a convergence basis between the EU and Russia.¹³⁵ However, the main ideologue of Russian Church Mitropolit Kiril argues: “Russia should develop its own version of what human rights are and promote it internationally in order to oppose the West’s dictatorial stance that all other traditions must be silenced and subdued.”¹³⁶ In addition to this we can bring the opinion of father Tikhon, the Putin’s spiritual guide, who said that Christianity couldn’t be considered common ground between the EU and Russia.¹³⁷ Personally I don’t understand how the Russian Church can provide the necessary support for a real democracy while the Patriarch of Russia is a former KGB agent, who worked for 40 years in KGB.¹³⁸

The second component of national idea of Russia is a rather recent phenomenon. The Putin’s Plan appeared before the beginning of the Duma’s electoral campaign in 2007. The Putin’s Plan has five core directions:

- ✚ The continuity of development of Russia as a unique civilization, the protection of: the common cultural area, of the Russian language and of the historic traditions.
- ✚ Increasing the competitive economy through the development of innovations, support of science, development of infrastructure,

¹³³ Emerson M., Noutcheva G., Europeanization as a Gravity Model of Democratization, Centre for European Policy Studies, Working Document No. 214, November, 2004, page 15.

¹³⁴ Op. Cit., Popescu N., Russia’s Soft Power Ambitions, 2006, page 2.

¹³⁵ Sheimatenkov V., EU-Russia: The Sociology of Approximation, Moscow, 2006, page 3.
<http://www.ecsanet.org/ecsaworld6/contributions/session2/Shemiatenkov.doc> , 21/04/2008.

¹³⁶ Op. Cit., Popescu N., Russia’s Soft Power Ambitions, 2006, page 2.

¹³⁷ Bovt G., EU-Russia Relations a troubled strategic partnership?, EU -Russia Centre, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 2008, page 3.

increasing the investments primarily in the high technologies, in state branches – locomotive of economic growth.

- ✚ Assurance of a new quality of life of the citizens through continuing the implementation of priority national projects, continuation of significant increasing of salaries, pensions and scholarships, provide help for citizens in housing problems.
- ✚ Support of the institutions of civil society, stimulation of social mobility and activity, support for civil initiatives.
- ✚ Strengthening of Russian sovereignty, defense capacity of the country, insurance of country distinct place in the multi -polar world.¹³⁹

The Putin's Plan can be summed to five general aspects: culture, economy, education and innovations, civil society and Russia's place in the world. It represents a vision of a half "capitalist" and half of "communist-populist" program. The main ideological distinct conclusion out of this plan is the separation of Russia from the European culture as an individual genuine civilization combined from cultural heritage and contemporaneous state phenomena as innovations and civil society. The half "capitalist" means the approach to the innovations and economy, and the half "communist-populist" meaning the messages for strengthening of vertical authority of the power, increasing of salaries and of "hard power" aspects like defense. In one sentence this situation is described by the former Prime -minister of Russian Federation Boris Nemtsov who said: "they want to rule like communists and to have a life-style like Abramovich".¹⁴⁰

The Putin's Plan (United Russia Party) was voted by the almost 65%¹⁴¹ of the population which means that is accepted as a main guide in Russia's transformation,

¹³⁸ Gordievsky O., (former secret agent, KGB – MI6), The Putin System, CBC News, The passionate eye, 2006.

¹³⁹ Electoral Program of All -Russian political party "United Russia". The Putin Plan – Worthy Future of a Great Country, "Predvibornaya Programa Vserossiskoi politiceski partii "Edinaia Rossia". Plan Putina – Dostoinoie Budusheie Velikoi Strani", page 2, <http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?rid=3144>, 2/05/2008.

¹⁴⁰ Nemtsov B., NTV News, 23/12/2007.

¹⁴¹ Central Electoral Commission of Russian Federation, <http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru/region/region/izbirkom?action=show&root=1&tvd=100100021960186>

even if the elections were declared by the Council of Europe and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe as being “not fair”.¹⁴² The Plan has several functions. To fill the vacuum of ideological spectrum and the lack of ideas on the future of Russia’s development, this in my opinion is crucial factor. To define the national interests and priorities, this will guide the later policies and behavior. To provide a psychological comfort in order to form a confident society and to get the support of the people. To emphasize its status in the world and to show that Russia is claiming to become the world economic and military power, and to decrease the heterogeneity of population in respect to create a more homogenous society. Here we can bring the example from Putin’s Plan of “development and protection of Russian language”; while in Russia there are tens of people and languages. These functions need a medium or even a long term implementation, reality which is almost assured after Putin became the Prime-minister of Russia, and before leaving the presidency he “advised” the Duma to pass the bill that subordinate the governors of the regions to the Prime-minister. This was done; the Prime-minister is becoming more important than the president.

On the foreign policy dimension Russia has two main tasks: to guaranty its unconditional sovereignty and to reestablish the pride and status of Russia as a superpower. Today Russia is not missing any chance to say that there is no any longer a single superpower in the world. This conception is largely explained in an article in the journal “Russia in Global Affairs” of Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov. He is stating “that the unipolar world has not taken shape for lack of military, political, financial, economic and other resources required for imperial construction in the age of globalization”.¹⁴³ Sometimes we can have the feeling that the Russia’s statements about the multi-polar world and the counterbalance to the United States and other declarations on the adjacent issues are

<http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/19/1102.html>, 11/05/2008.

¹⁴² Monitors denounce Russia election, 3/12/2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7124585.stm>, 4/05/2008.

¹⁴³ Lavrov S., The Present and the Future of Global Politics, Russia in Global Affairs, No. 2, April – June 2007, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/19/1102.html>, 22/03/2008.

perfectly fitting the Congress of Vienna from 1815. “To these ends Russia has to maintain a substantial nuclear force, use its unique position as a major energy - exporting country, establish a strategic partnership with China, (...) and restore its domination over the new independent states (CIS), except the three Baltic States.”¹⁴⁴

The European Union ideology is something which is very easy to understand but very hard to explain. First we have to address the question if the EU has an ideology? From the one hand we have the European Commission, European Parliament and other supranational institutions which express the position on the EU in the world, and from the other hand we have the member states which are trying to defend their interests and are acting differently in diverse circumstances. For example the war in Iraq was perfect evidence of this phenomenon. While Great Britain, Poland, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy and other countries were supporting the alliance lead by the United States in Iraq, Germany and France were opposing to this military operations. Here we can mention as well the support of Germany and France by Russian Federation.

The EU has full competence on trade decisions, on agriculture, on fishery, but we all have the sentiment that the EU does not have a clear position in many international issues. The EU is a great power in economic domain and is considered to be a superpower in “soft power” terms. For instance the EU combined GDP is 15 times bigger than the Russian GDP, and Russia’s GDP is as big as the GDP of Netherlands and Belgium combined.¹⁴⁵ However, the last decade of the EU history records a significant deepening of the EU in terms of Common Foreign and Security Policy.

The EU has a strong dimension of human rights and ecology. That’s why we hear a lot of times that the EU is a “norms” player . Nevertheless the last development of foreign policy and involvement in international issues makes from the EU a more important player with a political dimension of the European “club”. In spite of all the critics addressed to the EU that it lacks political involvement in global affairs, the EU

¹⁴⁴ Op. Cit., Fedorov Y. E., “Boffins” and “Buffoons”: Different Strains of Thought in Russia’s Strategic Thinking, 2006, page 4.

can outrank a lot the global players, and especially Russia, but there is a condition to this matter, the EU should be united. The common position of 27 states is making flexible any opponent power.

In regard to Russia, the analysts have the tendency to believe that the EU has a policy of integration; in return Russia has a primacy of geopolitics.¹⁴⁶ This different approach to the international situation and norms and values makes the EU and Russia to have difficulties in their communication. The compromises are found very slow, everyone have to make concessions. Although the last evolutions in Russia makes the EU do not to be able any longer to make steps back, reality which is seen in the last changes of the EU-Russia relations.

¹⁴⁵ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 8.

¹⁴⁶ Vahl M., Just Good Friends? The EU-Russian “Strategic Partnership” and the Northern Dimension, Centre for European Policy Studies, No. 166, March, 2001, page 9 -15.

Chapter III, The failure of the EU's strategy of democratizing Russia and options for the future

3.1 Why the model failed in recent years?

*Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible,
but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.*¹⁴⁷

“After the demise of communism in Central and Eastern Europe, European regional organizations have launched a large-scale operation of promoting and consolidating human rights, the rule of law, and democracy in the transformation countries.”¹⁴⁸ One of the main concerns of the EU was and is Russia. From the 1991 the EU has insistently tried to guide and to help Russia in its transformation, in order to achieve high standards of good governance, respect of human rights and durable economic development in a secure and safe statehood. In the last long the EU effort failed to change Russia, and now for the EU is “abundantly clear that the initial blueprint was not working”.¹⁴⁹

The EU is promoting democracy due to its engagement in creation of a safe and democratic world. In the academic language this phenomenon is called the democratic peace theory, which can be summed to the definition: as much as more democracies exist, as safer is the world we live in. Every state, every alliance of states is trying to promote what they actually represent. The article 6(1) of the Treaty of European Union says that “the Union is founded on the principles of the liberty, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law”.¹⁵⁰ Later the article 49 of the same Treaty says that “any European state which respects the

¹⁴⁷ Niebuhr R., in Ferrero-Waldner B., European Strategy for Promoting Democracy in Post-Communist Countries, International Conference, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, 2006, page 1.

¹⁴⁸ Schimmelfennig F., European Regional Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Transformation in Eastern Europe, Centre for Comparative and International Studies, Prague, 2005, page 2.

¹⁴⁹ Op. Cit., Barysch K., The EU and Russia: From principle to pragmatism?, 2006, page 1.

¹⁵⁰ European Union, Consolidated Versions of the Treaty of European Union and of the Treaty establishing the European Community, Official Journal of the European Union, C321, 29/12/2006, page 12.

principles set out in article 6(1) may apply to become a member of the Union”.¹⁵¹ By this the EU is trying to align the countries which declared their priority the integration in the European Union. In the Russian Federation constitution, these principles are also emphasized, but the Russians have a slightly different approach to them, they say that they act according to the circumstances and in relation to their culture and peculiar heritage. The EU is not able to apply the above mentioned conditionality to Russia, because according to Russia’s ideology, they have their own way of development, and maybe more important is that Russia clearly declared that they are not willing to join the EU.

The political conditionality is a toll used by the EU and is defined as “a strategy of reinforcement used by international organizations and other international actors to bring about and stabilize political change at the state level. (...) In applying political conditionality, they set the adoption of liberal -democratic norms by the target states as conditions for rewards by the Western international community. Rewards can be social, such as international recognition or public praise by the international organization, or material – such as financial assistance, trade liberalization, or military protection.”¹⁵²

Lacking the instruments for applying the political conditionality on Russia, the EU decided to apply the positive conditionality which is perceived as “the EU offers and withholds carrots but does not carry a big stick”.¹⁵³ The EU offered access for Russia to TACIS funds, and the West was giving credits for Russia in order to assure economic stability, but in return the EU was asking for human rights respect and adjustment to the western model of democracy. In general the EU approach was perceived as a “creeping integration” doctrine, which is mainly advocated by Frank -Walter Steinmeier, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs. The doctrine in essence

¹⁵¹ Op. Cit., European Union, Consolidated Versions of the Treaty of European Union and of the Treaty establishing the European Community , page 34.

¹⁵² Op. Cit., Schimmelfennig F., European Regional Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Transformation in Eastern Europe, 2005, page 3.

¹⁵³ Schimmelfennig F., Scholtz H., EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood: Political Conditionality, Economic Development, and Transnational Exchange, National Centre for

represents the idea “Wandel durch Verflechtung”, which has its roots from the post-war period and stays at the basis of creating peace in Europe, and from the approach of West Germany in the 1970s to engage the East Bloc, reference can serve the “Wandel durch Annäherung”.¹⁵⁴ The creeping integration policy was a policy of including Russia in all European and international organizations, allowing Russians to invest in European business, and even when Russia was breaking the rules of the game, the EU was closing the eyes, having the courage to make just several statements which Russia fully deserved in relation to Chechnya and freedom of speech and human rights breakings. However, the creeping integration policy was not able to push Russia on Western democracy “railways”. The contrary evolution of Russia is a sign of failure of European policy on Russia.¹⁵⁵ The Russian Federation became less democratic, more prosperous and more unforeseeable.¹⁵⁶

The EU tried to export democracy in Russia, but the question is if it is possible to export democracy? The experts say that it is naive to believe in exporting democracy to such big country as Russia is.¹⁵⁷ The export of democracy is possible just when the target country has the will to change the system. At this moment the EU has acknowledged this rule. Benita Ferrero-Waldner says that: “we understand that democracy can never be imposed from outside: genuine democratic transition must come always from within.”¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Russia is not willing a democratic system, and the EU can not accept this. There is a great opposition to the EU effort to democratize Russia, and even the young generation is not really willing to be the “avant-garde” of Russian democracy. Moreover, the Russian young population has a very hostile opinion on democracy. A study shows that if next week in Russia would be presidential elections and one of the candidates would be Stalin then nearly 19%

Competence in Research, Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century, Working paper No. 9, August 2007, Zürich, page 5.

¹⁵⁴ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 52.

¹⁵⁵ Op. Cit., Perret Q., La paix froide : stabiliser les relations entre l’UE et la Russie, 2007, page 3.

¹⁵⁶ Joannin P., Les relations UE – Russie : quels enjeux? Fondation Robert Schuman, Entretiens d’Europe No. 17, mai 2007, page 1.

¹⁵⁷ BBC Monitoring, Rzeczpospolita News Agency, http://www.gateway2russia.com/st/art_275177.php, 6/04/2008.

would definitely and probably vote for him, as well 57% of young Russians declared that Stalin did more good than bad. In the same study, 26% from the young respondents said that they would prefer a complete or mostly authoritarian rule, 40% said that they would prefer a democratic regime with elements of authoritarianism and only 22% would be in favor of a pure democracy.¹⁵⁹ We can argue that this example gives us no hopes that in the future it will be easy to persuade Russia to follow the democratic path. Especially, after that Russian parliament changed the law of financing the NGO's from Russia. The interdictions imposed to the NGO's, but as well to some foreign governmental agencies (British Council), were presented under the threat of an Orange Revolution in Russia, actions which were qualified by both, external public opinion and Russia's intelligentsia, as being designed ly oriented to "keep Putin in, the population down, and the Western donors out."¹⁶⁰

The failure to democratize Russia can be explained through five factors which made this possible: the illusion that Russia's democracy is irreversible, the soaring prices on gas and oil, the claim of Russia that they have a genuine system of democracy, the division of the EU in groups of states which have different approach to Russia, the previous experience of Russia in implementing democracy, the psychological state of society and the confrontation in the East European neighborhood after the enlargement from 2004.

The European Union had an illusion that the democratic development is irreversible.¹⁶¹ The EU thought that after all suffered during the Soviet Union times, the population from Russia will never accept a return to the authoritarian regime. The EU was almost convinced that the freedoms given after the collapse of socialist bloc are certainly leading to the establishment of a true democracy in Russia. The EU was cooperating very well with Russia in the post-Soviet period, but mainly with the

¹⁵⁸ Ferrero-Waldner B., *European Strategy for Promoting Democracy in Post -Communist Countries*, International Conference, Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, 2006, page 2.

¹⁵⁹ Mendelson S. E., Gerber T. P., *Soviet Nostalgia: An Impediment to Russian Democratization*, The Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Massachusetts Institute for Technology, The Washington Quarterly, Winter 2005 -2006, page 83-96.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, page 83-96.

¹⁶¹ *Op. Cit.*, Perret Q., *La paix froide : stabiliser les relations entre l'UE et la Russie*, 2007, page 2.

administration of Russia and not with the people, especially after the beginning of Putin's era. One of the main leaders of Russian opposition Grigory Yavlinsky is explaining the failure of the EU in Russia through missing to implement two strategies: "first, to engage with the Russian people, along with the Ukrainians, in a spirit of full cooperation. Second, to openly condemn the anti-democratic, bureaucratic, and in some cases the imperialist tendencies of the new Russian state."¹⁶²

After a while since Putin became the President there has been a dramatic rise of the gas and oil prices. The boost of the prices was creating the perfect conditions for Putin to start claim Russia's "independence" on international arena. In 1999 when Putin was appointed as a Prime-Minister Russia had 16.5\$ billions debts to IMF, and owed money to Paris Club and other financial groups.¹⁶³ From the 15\$ the barrel in 1998, after Putin came in 1999 the barrel became 20\$, than in 2000 became 35\$, than dropped in 2002 under 17\$ and in the mid 2004 grew under 40\$ barrel. Under these circumstances, Russia paid in 2005 the debt to IMF three and a half years ahead the schedule, and in 2006 the 23\$ billions to Paris Club.¹⁶⁴ After 2006 there is no country which can ask Russia to implement some political reforms in return to financial help. Russia assured its financial independence and since this moment will not accept any conditionality from the West. Before Putin era every one was speaking about the Russian dependence on Western money, now everyone is speaking about the Western dependence on Russian gas.

Due to economic stability, the political independence of Russia was maximally strengthened. The doctrine of sovereign democracy represents the saving argument for Russian political elite, it's like gas and oil for economy of Russia. The sovereign democracy concept has been quickly learned by the population after the successful campaign of Putin and his team, and very soon started to be perceived as a

¹⁶² Yavlinsky G., Kogan-Yasny V., Resurrecting Dostoyevsky's dictum: Why Russia and Europe need each other?, <http://www.europesworld.org/EWSettings/Article/tabid/78/Default.aspx?Id=21eb9bb1-fc70-4943-9082-85e367ceb5e4>, 14/03/2008

¹⁶³ Op. Cit., Gaddy S. G., Kuchins A. C., Putin's Plan, 2008, page 123.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., page 124.

counterbalance to Western model of democracy and as a genuine system of Russian democracy. The Russian opposition says that: “naturally a state’s history and local traditions have an undeniable impact on shaping its political culture, as do factors like the size of its territory and its climate. But the main aspects of democracy are universal and unvarying: freedom, the rule of law, and respect for the dignity of the individual...”¹⁶⁵ while the Russian power has a different opinion, covered by the “sovereign democracy”. Moreover, Russia already considers itself a superpower, and argues that the sovereignty of countries which are willing to join the EU is being violated. The Head of International Relations Committee of Russian Duma, Kostantin Kosachev thinks that “for countries that want to be members, it’s okay to violate their sovereignty. That cannot work with Russia. Russians think they are a great power and for a great power it is completely unacceptable to ask for something and not get it.”¹⁶⁶

Despite of the adoption by the EU of a Common Strategy towards Russia, the EU started increasingly to divide from within.¹⁶⁷ This phenomenon has been possible due to internal EU misunderstandings and thanks to Russian efforts led by the principle “divide and rule”. The study “A Power Audit of EU-Russia Relations” is shaping 5 groups of states within the European Union in relation to their policy towards Russia. From the very cooperative side to the very opponent extreme the groups are the “Trojan Horses”, “Strategic Partners”, “Friendly Pragmatists”, “Frosty Pragmatists” and “New Cold Warriors”.¹⁶⁸

The “Trojan Horses” group is composed by Greece and Cyprus. These two countries have strong historical links with Russia and there are staying at its service. Russia helped the Greeks to “fight” against Turkey; in return Greece is participating in two important energy projects, “Burgas-Alexandropolis” and the future “South Stream” pipeline. As well Greece is willing to veto the EU decisions which are

¹⁶⁵ Op. Cit., Yavlinsky G., Kogan-Yasny V., Resurrecting Dostoyevsky’s dictum: Why Russia and Europe need each other?

¹⁶⁶ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 26.

¹⁶⁷ Op. Cit., Perret Q., La paix froide : stabiliser les relations entre l’UE et la Russie, 2007, page 3.

¹⁶⁸ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 2.

disturbing Russia. The most eloquent example is the veto of Greece to the EU decision to send a mission for border management in Georgia.¹⁶⁹

The second group of “Strategic Partners” encompasses Germany, Italy, France and Spain. This group is enjoying the relation with Russia. They make big business deals and usually are trying not to step on each others interests. However, after in Germany Angela Merkel became the chancellor, in France Nicolas Sarkozy became the president, in Spain Jose Luis Zapatero became the Prime-Minister and during the Romani Prodi as the Prime-Minister of Italy, these countries started to be more vocal in regard to Russia’s unwillingness to respect human rights and independence of countries from shared neighborhood.

The “Friendly Pragmatists” group includes Belgium, Austria, Finland, Portugal, Hungary, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Bulgaria, the last one being on the way to become the member of the “Trojan Horses” group. These countries are trying to develop a realistic relation with Russia. They are willing to be focused on business affairs with less political substance. Many of them are supplied with Russian gas and oil and this group is avoiding criticizing Russian behavior on human rights issues.

The group of “Frosty Pragmatists” is represented by Romania, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Netherlands and Sweden. This group is aimed on economic activity but as well is concerned about the democracy in Russia and is “willing to challenge Russia when it violates commercial interests as well as diplomatic norms.”¹⁷⁰ In my opinion this group is going to increase soon due to Russian strengthening of authoritarian regime.

The last group of states is the “New Cold Warriors” composed by Poland and Lithuania. The both have the same difficulties and opinions about Russia and are considered as the initiators of the “cold war” between the EU and Russia. The both have suffered from Russian actions; Poland export of meat has been banned by Russia, and on Lithuania Russia applied high tariffs for railways transit, oil supply

¹⁶⁹ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 28.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., page 42.

cuts. The both are avoided by the “North Stream” pipeline; the both vetoed the rendering of mandate for the Commission to start negotiations on the new ACP; the both are strongly supporting the membership of Ukraine and the enlargement to the east as whole. This group is the most hostile to Russia and according to their disputes with Russia I think that this category will still remain several years and will lead the “avant-garde” for fighting with Russia.

Another reason for the failure of the EU’s policy in Russia is the previous experience with the democracy and the psychological state of the society. In the early 1990s when Russia’s leaders were convincing the population that Russia is following the path of democracy the population has trusted the Russia’s rulers. The confidence in democracy broke together with the default from 1998. After that there was a big skepticism towards democracy, and the word “democracy” became a cursed word. The population started to become nostalgic for Soviet Union and was willing to see someone who is able to restore the power and the pride of Russia.

At the mid of 1990s Russia was not paying to much attention to the EU and its plans for enlargement. The unique great rival was the NATO. After the enlargement from 2004 and 2007, Russia started to pay particular attention to this phenomenon. The increasing power of the EU and the birth of a common foreign policy made Russia to become hostile to the EU as well. Today the problem of shared neighborhood, which includes Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia become a subject for dispute between the EU and Russia which are representing two poles of gravitation. The EU is offering the four liberties and a large “palette” of instruments to help the national economies and the political system to become more reliable and functional. While Russia offers reduced prices on gas, the labor market is opened without having too many rules, visa-free regime, etc., and definitely the both of them offer two different systems. Interesting is the fact that the EU is involved in this region mainly to the requests of the country governments and in regard to their aspiration to join the EU, while Russia says that there is a important Russian minority (which is true) and due to their strategic interests. The chief of Duma’s Committee for Foreign Relations say that for him “the situation is absurd, when post-Soviet

states enjoy more benefits from cooperating with Russia and still they want to enter into the straitjacket of European institutions and to fall under the diktat of Brussels.”¹⁷¹ The situation between the EU and Russia is getting worse on the issue of shared neighborhood because of the geographical proximity after the enlargement from 2004 and 2007, but Russia and the EU do not have any other options than cooperate, as Dostoyevsky said, Europe and Russia need each other.

In the last long we can argue that the failure of the EU democracy promotion in Russia is persisted by mutual causes. One side of the coin is the economic capacity of Russia as an individual actor and its unwillingness to advance the democratic system, and another side of the coin is the incapability of the EU to have a united opinion and a coherent policy towards Russia.

¹⁷¹Op. Cit., Popescu N., Russia’s Soft Power Ambitions, 2006, page 1.

3.2 The EU in 2008: “Realpolitik” or future efforts to democratize Russia

*Yesterday is yesterday. If we try to recapture it,
we will only lose tomorrow.*¹⁷²

After the above presented arguments it is obvious that the EU strategy towards Russia is not working. There is need for an updated or even a new approach towards the problems faced by the EU and Russia in their relation. A lot of voices are arguing in favor of a more hard policy towards Russia. In the academic circles this policy is called the “soft containment” approach.

The policy of “soft containment” is advocated mainly by the countries which met and are continuing to meet different problems with Russia. Throughout these countries we can mention Poland, Lithuania, Great Britain, Estonia, Denmark, Netherlands, Czech Republic and somehow Romania. The aim of this policy is to start an opened confrontation with Russia on the issues it does not respect and to decrease the influence of Russia in the European space. It is not just about the democracy and human rights, but also about the military dimension, energy and business. The experts suggest that under the “soft containment” approach the EU should involve such practical actions as: “excluding Russia from the G8, expanding NATO to include Georgia and Ukraine, supporting anti-Russian regimes in the neighborhood, building missile shields, developing an ‘Energy NATO’, and excluding Russian investments from the European energy sector.”¹⁷³

The scenario of “soft containment” is a very courageous but, in my opinion, less efficient, which will bring a dramatic change in the EU -Russia relations. After the implementation of such policy the EU is going to have a big impact on Russia, but alongside the positive changes which can appear, there are going to emerge more negative repercussions. In the era of globalization the containment policy, especially in economic terms, is going to have a huge feedback on EU member states and on EU

¹⁷² Clinton B., http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton, 11/05/2008.

¹⁷³ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 51.

as whole. There are several consequences which can appear as an outcome after the EU's attempt to implement the "soft containment" policy .

First consequence would be the difficulties of the EU to manage the problems with Russia. These difficulties are linked to big issues like terrorism, gas supply, but as well to border management shared with Russia, and some specific questions like Iran's enrichment of uranium, Middle East settlement, frozen conflicts solutions, global warming and accession to WTO. Second, in the actual situation of interdependence between the EU and Russia , the "soft containment" approach is going to bring repercussions on both sides. Notably, the non-state actors have a lot to say in this dispute. Russia with its actual authoritarian regime can easily submit the private business to control, particularly when the most part of the Russian business is already controlled by the state. While the EU will not be able to impose the non-state actors to quit the activity in Russia, the EU can not step on its values and practices, and Russia knows this. Third, the shared neighborhood is going to become a battlefield for them. While the EU will provide a lot of incentives like free-visa regime, funding NGO's and applying "light" trade tariffs for the Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, in this context Russia will strengthen political pressure, will ban the import of some products which is difficult to sell in the EU, will continue to strongly support the separatist republics from Moldova and Georgia, and the transformation of the conflict of Crimea into an active conflict.

The scenario of "soft containment" will transform Russia politically in the second China, fact which is slowly happening without the EU's contribution. As well the EU will suffer a change in its behavior in foreign policy dimension; it will be a switch from the soft power practices, to hard power tools, which seems to be very unusual for the EU of our days.

The crisis in the EU-Russia relationship advices a new approach which is differentiated from the both policies. The "creeping integration" doctrine and the "soft containment" policy seem to be foredoomed to failure. The policy of "realpolitik" would appropriately fit the nowadays state of affairs. The "realpolitik" approach can be defined as a merit-based policy in strong connection with the actual

circumstances and trends of the EU-Russia relations from one hand, and the Russia internal and external actions and behavior from another hand. Speaking in other words the “realpolitik” should be based on the interests of the EU which should act according to its interest and in relation with its principles.

Russia represents an interest for the EU. “In 2003, the Wider Europe initiative and the European Security Strategy clarified that the EU aimed to create prosperity and security on its borders and highlighted the importance of its relations with Russia.”¹⁷⁴ These documents emphasized clearly what is the EU’s interest in Eastern dimension – to have prosperity and security – and for having this; the EU clearly stated that they have to promote democracy, rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and human rights in Russia. The policy of “realpolitik” would include a large spectrum of activities on behalf of the EU.

The EU should focus on strengthening the interdependence with Russia in order not to allow Russia to move away from the European and international standards. The EU experience of interdependence should be used for overcoming the political divergences through the spill-over effect from the economic activity. The EU needs a faster feedback to Russia’s behavior and a unity in opinion. Michael Emerson argued that “the EU should be more transparent, united and quick in taking decisions and replying to Russia’s actions, especially concerning areas where the EU has already stated positions.”¹⁷⁵

For the convergence of the EU’s opinions towards Russia, it is crucial to overcome the divergences of the positions between EU and Russia. This fact is confirmed by the EU Commissioner on Trade who argued: “No other country reveals our differences as does Russia. This is a failure of Europe as a whole, not any member states in particular.”¹⁷⁶ Notably, the European Union should define within itself the rules concerning the most important tool of Russia – energy. The sector of

¹⁷⁴ Fernandes S., The European Union as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, January 2008, page 9.

¹⁷⁵ Emerson M., EU-Russia Relations a troubled strategic partnership?, EU -Russia Centre, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 2008, page 1.

¹⁷⁶ Mendelson P., The EU and Russia : Our Joint Political Challenge, Bologna, 20 April 2007

energy is the guaranty of influence of Russia in Europe,¹⁷⁷ and as long as there would be different opinions on energy issues as long will last the crisis in the EU -Russia relations. “This pushes even more substantive cooperation on energy or political dialogue down bilateral channels between Russia and individual member states.”¹⁷⁸ The role of energy in the EU – Russia relations should be minimized and treated as an important aspect of their relation, but in the first place as a trade issue which has to be depoliticized. The diminishment of the energy question in the EU – Russia relations will contribute to get focused on the real issues which Russia is avoiding to discuss with its European partners.

The new paradigm of “realpolitik” should include several tools which will adjust the actual approach of “creeping integration”. The enforcement of rule of law, rebalancing of the EU – Russia relation and implementation of law in the EU neighborhood are seen as central means for a functional strategy towards Russia.¹⁷⁹ The enforcement of rule of law is seen by the experts as most appropriate and authentic instrument to ameliorate the state of affairs at the present day . The objective of such paradigm is to “define stable rules as the basis of the EU – Russia partnership.”¹⁸⁰ Under the “realpolitik” policy the long-term outcome should be the democratic Russia and cooperative partner on the international arena, while the mid-term should be the enforcement of rule of law which will influence Russia to become a trustworthy partner. The Russian society is still suspicious to the Western democracy, but the Russian citizens are concerned about the corruption and low level of functionality of institutions, these premises will allow the EU to conduct a policy based on respect of rule of law.¹⁸¹ As well the EU has to remind to Russia that it has to respect the independence and choice of countries from the shared neighborhood. At the EU-Russia Centre conference a representative of the embassy of Ukraine to

¹⁷⁷ Op. Cit., Joannin P., Les relations UE – Russie : quels enjeux?, 2007, page 2.

¹⁷⁸ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 16.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., page 57.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., page 57.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., page 56.

the EU stated that “Ukraine had decided to pursue integration with Europe and Russia should learn to live with this.”¹⁸²

We can argue that EU develops a normative approach towards Russia, while for the Russians the primacy of geopolitics is much more evident in their external activity. A recent study of Russian pioneers on EU – Russia relations shows that the EU and Russia has a “generally friendly” relation, “but political cooperation is rather ineffective and there are strong elements of competition.”¹⁸³ For instance the Russian experts are arguing that the EU is exhausted and weak after the enlargement and after the fail of adopting the EU Constitution. In their opinion the main clash of interests between Russia and the EU are the Kaliningrad issue, the Ukrainian elections from 2004, the energy cooperation since 2006, the frozen conflicts, especially the Transnistria conflict, and the accession of Russia to WTO where the EU through negotiations tries to abolish the taxes of Russian government for the transit of Russian airspace.¹⁸⁴ Another important issue which has to be added here is the article of Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs where he states that the EU is playing the game of US, meaning the anti-missiles shields and the attempt of NATO to encircle Russia.¹⁸⁵

In the same context, the Russian forecast for the next ten years is mostly pessimist for the EU. The study reveal that the next five years of EU – Russia cooperation is going to have a economic-based relation, and more important, the Russia will continue to play the divide and rule game, fact confirmed by the following argumentation of Russian experts: “Over the five to seven years, it would be expedient, without stopping dialog with Brussels, to intensify bilateral cooperation with the leading EU countries, as well as with the more promising partners among its

¹⁸² EU-Russia Relations a troubled strategic partnership?, EU-Russia Centre, Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations, Brussels, 2008, page 6.

¹⁸³ Karaganov S., Bordachev T., Guseinov V., Lukyanov F., Radayev V., Yurgens I., *The World Around Russia: 2017, An Outlook of Midterm Future*, The Council of Foreign and Defense Policy, State University – Higher School of Economics, RIO – Centre, Moscow 2007, page 108.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, page 108.

¹⁸⁵ *Op. Cit.*, Lavrov S., *The Present and the Future of Global Politics*, 2007.

newly admitted member states.”¹⁸⁶ Expressly for this reason the EU should rebalance the relation and to develop the dialogue with Russia through principled bilateralism, which will facilitate the EU – Russia cooperation. In line with the same issue it is good to quote the opinion of the EU Trade Commissioner who stated: “The EU complains that Russia plays divide and rule between individual member states. But Russia can hardly be blamed for such behavior when some in Europe appear to invite it, and fail to deliver a unified message. Russia is one of the examples of where the EU needs to apply stronger shared continental weight.”¹⁸⁷

The policy of “realpolitik” should not be perceived as a patronage from the part of the EU. It should be clearly explained that the “realpolitik” approach is based on the engagements which Russia took voluntarily under the international treaties. Notably there should be a comprehensible policy which reiterates the respect of the Council of Europe engagements and the treaties to which Russia submitted. This paradigm will permit to avoid the Russian “shield” of “sovereign democracy” which is successfully implemented by Putin.

The security on European continent can not be assured without Russia, and notably without a democratic Russia. Under the current globalization and level of interdependence security and democracy became twins in Europe. The EU has to address the question of security as a shared competence of all the actors in Europe, and mainly to Russia, as a key-country in solving many issues. “Russia today is trying to revise the commercial deals with Western oil companies, military agreements such as Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, and diplomatic codes of conduct like the Vienna Convention.”¹⁸⁸ The policy of “realpolitik” seems to be the most appropriate trajectory to the difficulties met today by the EU and Russia. The paradigm of “realpolitik” is perfectly fitting the statement of Benita Ferrero -Waldner

¹⁸⁶ Op. Cit., Karaganov S., Bordachev T., Guseinov V., Lukyanov F., Radayev V., Yurgens I., The World Around Russia: 2017, An Outlook of Midterm Future, 2007, page 108.

¹⁸⁷ Mendelson P., Russia and the EU, EU -Russia Centre, Brussels, 17 October 2007, page 6, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/mandelson/speeches_articles/sppm172_en.htm , 22/04/2007.

¹⁸⁸ Op. Cit., Leonard M., Popescu N., A power audit of EU – Russia relations, 2007, page 1.

who asserted that: “when we talk to Russia, we should be sure to talk to Russia as it is, rather than with Russia as we would like it to be.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Ferrero-Waldner B., *The European Union and Russia – Future Prospects*, 2008, page 5.

Conclusions

*There are no facts,
only interpretations*¹⁹⁰

The relationship between the EU and Russia trembles in the balance after the disagreements and mistrust in their opinions and actions. This relationship became crucial for the European security and for the future of Europe as whole. However, the EU and Russia are sitting at the same table and negotiating the divergences and misunderstandings which appeared in their dialogue. At least until they discuss there are hopes that the discrepancies can be endorsed and the positions can merge.

The institutional framework between the EU and Russia is well established but in my opinion, it still lacks some features or some of them have to be updated. The new PCA, for which the both parties are in favor, should include a vision towards the military and strategic questions in order to clarify the EU-Russia position concerning the imminent security threats and conflicts, and to publicly declare the engagement of both parties for the settlement of the questions involved, to emphasize the means and the final desired result. In spite of a good economic cooperation the political dimension of EU-Russia relations is perceived as sub-represented and avoided. In this context I would like to mention that the economic goals should be supplemented with political targets in order to ensure a durable and open relationship between the EU and Russia.

The Four Common Spaces represent an appreciable additional tool, for creating a functional relation, which cause the dialogue to start to move forward but did not bring the forecasted effect. Notably, the Four Common Spaces are requiring mechanisms for reaching the political engagements and particularly the Common Space on External Security needs a bigger commitment in the conflicts, especially those from the shared neighborhood and the Common Space for Freedom, Security

¹⁹⁰ Nietzsche F., http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche, 12/05/2008.

and Justice needs to be based on advancing democracy, respecting human rights and ensuring the rule of law.

The exchange of strategies by both actors and the declaration of a strategic partnership did not heighten the EU-Russia cooperation, and the strategic partnership for combating terrorism is perceived as a success and at the same time as a failure. The success is seen as the trust of both parties exchanging the data of border agencies. The failure comes from the fact that a strategic partnership should encompass many dimensions, not just the aspect of combating the terrorism, because this actually means a crisis of values between them and a mutual mistrust. The strategic partnership must go beyond personal ambitions and technical provisions in order to ensure a sustainability of the EU -Russia cooperation.

In spite of some small successes in the external security field like the Middle East Quartet and Iran question, this sphere of the EU -Russia relations is the most underdeveloped. While the substance of the EU – Russia cooperation is trade. Here, in the economic field, the EU and Russia have the highest level of convergence, while in the field of foreign policy each actor follows its own trajectory.

A genuine EU-Russia partnership can be achieved through convergence in democratic principles, core values and ideology. Values provide the glue which holds a relationship together when interests do not coincide. Nowadays, in spite of countless reference of the EU and Russia to the shared common values, the EU and Russia are dealing with a different set of values which allow us to argue that the subject of common values in the EU-Russia dialogue represents a symbolic dimension. The real way the convergence of values can now be described is “we (Russia) pretend to be converging on common European values and they (the EU) pretend to be helping us do so.”

The topic of values should be discussed in line with the ideology dimension. While the EU ideology is partly visible and partly belongs to each member state, the EU members are not able to change radically their ideological basis, inasmuch as the

member states are law-abiding on the EU treaties. As for Russia, it is developing a new ideology which is highly opposed to the European principles. The Russian ideology is based on two dimensions: the “sovereign democracy” policy and the “Putin plan”. These two concepts are advocating an independent Russia in terms of economy, a genuine democratic system which takes into account the Russian traditions, past experiences and national heritage. The Russian ideology prevents any involvement of foreign forces, rejects any conditionality imposed by actors from outside, mobilizes the society for overcoming the transition, legitimates the reinforcement of authoritative political system and aims to restore the pride of Russia and to become a superpower.

The EU failed to promote democracy in Russia, but this failure is persisted by mutual causes rather than by unilateral mistakes. First, I would mention the incapability of the EU to unify around a policy towards Russia, which led to providing an incoherent policy towards Russia and to the forming of different groups which advocates different approaches. However the core policy of the EU towards Russia – “creeping integration” – failed to reach its purpose not just from the incoherence of the EU, but as well from Russian unwillingness to reform itself in the style of Western standards. Second, Russia did not accept the idea of foreign domination and conditionality, which made Russia play the divide and rule game with the EU member states through energy means and diplomacy. Last but not least, the financial independence and the emergence of the concept of “sovereign democracy” do not accept any involvement from outside.

Today the EU basically has three approaches: the “creeping integration” policy which can be summed up to the definition of integration at any price, the “soft containment” concept which can be shortly described as pressure at all levels for any Russian breach, including the rendering of special privileges by the EU to the countries from shared neighborhood and “realpolitik” paradigm which seems to be best suited under the circumstances at the present day.

The “realpolitik” approach is characterized by the EU’s actions which fully coincide with the European Union’s and its member states’ interests and with their belief, ideas and vision of how a democracy and a state should look. The “realpolitik” should be based on pressing Russia when it does not respect the international engagements which it has voluntarily accepted and when it steps on EU’s interests and its member states (for instance the case of banning the Polish export of meat). In addition, Russia has to be submitted to public praise when it is cooperating and is contributing in solving different issues. Under the “realpolitik” paradigm the EU should reach a common opinion of member states on energy issue, which is the main tool used by Russia for dividing the European Union. Second, it should use the Russian membership to the Council of Europe, OSCE and soon the WTO for avoiding the “shield” of “sovereign democracy” used by Putin to cover his actions. Third, the EU should apply its continental weight on Russia for solving the conflicts from the shared neighborhood and to stabilize the region.

I strongly believe that the EU has to continue building a relation of interdependence with Russia and I am convinced that the democracy in Russia represents an interest for the EU because the EU needs a stable and secure Eastern hemisphere. The security on the European continent will remain vulnerable and can not be assured without Russia, and notably without a democratic Russia. Under the current globalization and level of interdependence security and democracy became twins in Europe. The EU has to address the question of security as a shared competence of all the actors in Europe, and mainly to Russia, as a key-country in solving many issues.

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