



**Sergei Medvedev**

**Limits of Integration:  
Identities and Institutions  
in EU-Russia Relations**

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# 1.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

20 years ago, when the Soviet Union still existed, and the European Union did not, Mikhail Gorbachev came forward with a vision of a “Common European House”, seeking to unite the divided continent. After two decades of a turbulent relationship, Russia and Europe are still apart, and the “Common House” is constructed without Russia, the suspicious neighbor.<sup>2</sup> It is telling that the first Russian translation of the full text of the EU Constitutional Treaty published in 2004 was titled “Europe without Russia”.<sup>3</sup>

Rather than the Gorbachevian idealism, the EU-Russia relations are now better characterized by a word from the late Brezhnev era: *zastoi*. Literally this means stagnation, or muddling through. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the crisis of the ailing USSR was disguised by the high oil prices and by the inflow of petrodollars, as well as by an immense symbolic economy of the Soviet system: pompous Party congresses and May Day parades, exaggerated five-year plans and triumphant reports. By the same token, the current state of the EU-Russia relations is disguised by the massive East-West hydrocarbon flows, as articulated by the latest Russian impact on “energy security”, and by the huge symbolic activity, including heady summits, strategies, roadmaps, and a ritual invocation of the “strategic partnership”.

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<sup>1</sup> This research has been carried with the help of the grant from the Academic Fund of the State University – Higher School of Economics, Moscow

<sup>2</sup> Katinka Barysch, *The EU and Russia. Strategic partners or squabbling neighbours?* Centre for European Reform, May 2004, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> *Evropa bez Rossii. Dogovor, uchrezhdayushchii Konstitutsiyu dlya Evropy on 20 oktyabrya 2004 goda* [Europe Without Russia. Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, 20 October 2004]. Moscow: Evropa Publishers, 2005.

The oil and gas flows, and the symbolic diplomacy, conceal a hugely problematic relationship which, like any *zastoi*, leads to crisis. Increasingly, there is mistrust, frustration and permanent bureaucratic squabbling over technical issues, from the steel export quotas to payments for the European carriers' flights over Siberia. As grimly observed by Alexander Rahr, "The basis for the EU-Russia partnership is as narrow as it has ever been."<sup>4</sup>

Mutual mistrust is highlighted by the failure to re-open the negotiations between the EU and Russia on the basic treaty governing the relations between them. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed in 1994 and effective since 1997,<sup>5</sup> expired in November 2007, but since early 2007, the start of the negotiations on the new treaty has been vetoed by one of the new EU member states. In 2007, it was Poland that demanded that Russian sanitary ban on the import of Polish meat into Russia were removed. The problem appeared to have been solved with the change of the government in Poland and the arrival of the pragmatic Donald Tusk, but then Lithuania came forward, blocking the Russia-EU Treaty negotiations in April 2008 unless the mandate for negotiations includes the re-opening of the part of the Druzhba oil pipeline from Russia and Russia's compensation for the deportation of Lithuanians during World War 2.<sup>6</sup>

The institutional paralysis and political deadlock in relations between Russia and the European Union is all the more striking, considering the fact that both sides are vitally interdependent in their external and domestic security, joint neighborhood, in humanitarian issues, and that the EU accounts for over 50 percent of Russia's external trade and for most of the FDI in Russia. In defiance of all neoliberal theories of interdependence, the closer the EU and Russia get to each other, territorially or economically, the more problematic their relationship becomes, so that interdependence and contiguity turn into a source of permanent frustration.

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<sup>4</sup> Alexander Rahr, "With each passing day the EU and Russia need each other more and more", *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 26 October 2004, p. 13

<sup>5</sup> The three-year postponement of the PCA implementation was caused by the European Union's objections to Russia's war in Chechnya in 1994-1996.

<sup>6</sup> RIA Novosti, 29 April 2008

Moreover, increased EU demand for Russian oil and gas has become a source of permanent tension, with the EU looking for guarantees of supply (e.g. by securing safe and cheap energy transit through the Russian territory and enforcing the European Energy Charter), and Russia looking for guarantees of demand (e.g. by trying to buy a stake in European distribution chains, “the last mile” to the European customer). Nord Stream and South Stream, Russia’s mega-projects of gas supplies to the EU by pipelines on the seabed in the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea, have become some of the most divisive issues in European politics.

Broadly speaking, the entire decade of the 2000s has been a period of disillusionment in EU-Russia relations. With Putin’s coming to power – and with the rise (or rather, the return) of a semi-authoritarian bureaucratic state in Russia – the EU has become increasingly disappointed about the prospects for “Europeanization” of Russia. For Russia, too, the EU looks much less attractive than in the 1990s: “An over-bureaucratized formation, pursuing socialist economic policies that stifle economic growth”, as Dmitry Trenin has summarized the Russian argument<sup>7</sup>.

Another paradox is that on paper, the relationship looks just fine. There has never been a shortage of framework documents in the EU-Russia relations, from the aforementioned Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), to the various strategies (EU “Common Strategy on Russia” adopted in 1999 and the reciprocal Russia’s “Mid-term Strategy for the relations with the EU”).<sup>8</sup> However, the proclaimed “strategic partnership” has not been supported by the clear mechanisms of implementation, timelines, benchmarks and criteria which, by contrast, characterize the relations of the EU with European applicant countries. Lacking the prospect of Russia’s membership of the Union, the entire EU-Russia paperwork remains mostly a declaration of intent, an instrument of policy avoidance rather than a clear policy guidance.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Dmitry Trenin, *Integratsia i identichnost. Rossiya kak “novyi Zapad”* [Integration and Identity. Russia as the New West], Moscow: Evropa Publishers, 2006, pp. 370-371.

<sup>8</sup> For the analysis of the CSR, see Hiski Haukkala and Sergei Medvedev (eds), *The EU Common Strategy on Russia: Learning the Grammar of the CFSP*, Helsinki: UPI, 2001

<sup>9</sup> Moreover, most provisions of the current PCA will be rendered obsolete by Russia’s eventual membership of the WTO.

The same is largely true of the most recent addition to the EU-Russia body of texts, the four Roadmaps, corresponding to the four Common Spaces: the Common Economic Space, the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Common Space of External Security, and the Common Space of Research, Education and Culture. Adopted at the EU-Russia summit in May 2005, the Roadmaps present some 400 bulleted action points, mostly phrased in the language of “cooperation” and “dialogue” but vague on the implementation mechanisms. Lacking strategic guidance, policy instruments, or even precise definitions, Michael Emerson has called the Common Spaces “the proliferation of the fuzzy” in the EU-Russia relations.<sup>10</sup>

By the same token, Andrei Makarychev has named the language of the Common Spaces “the EU discursive strategy of uncertainty” which presupposes leaving as much room as possible for different interpretations of basic concepts that form the background of the EU-Russia relations,<sup>11</sup> while a report by the Moscow-based Council for Foreign and Defense Policies criticized the Common Spaces as merely a transitory stage in the EU-Russia relations that reflect the lack of vision on both sides.<sup>12</sup>

In this sense, the failure to open negotiations on the new EU-Russia basic treaty does not seem to need to create a legal vacuum. At present, both sides seem content with the idea of renewing the current Agreement (according to Article 106 this can be done infinitely until both sides decide to replace the Agreement), without embarking on a laborious process of re-negotiating and an almost improbable ratification of the new framework document. As observed by Timofei Bordachev,

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<sup>10</sup> Michael Emerson, EU-Russia. “Four Common Spaces and the Proliferation of the Fuzzy”, *CEPS Policy Brief*, No. 71, May 2005, p. 3. To this effect, Emerson quotes a French philosopher Paul Thibaud writing on the EU Constitutional Treaty on the eve of the French referendum: “The constitutional treaty ... turns its back on a history, which it seems, was just a painful experience, and remains indefinitely extensible for its geography and its competences. The proliferation of the fuzzy is a manner of being for the European Union, and something which the Constitution ... did not want to end”. (Paul Thibaud, *Qui sont et où sont les bons européens?*, *Le Monde*, 11 May 2005.)

<sup>11</sup> Andrei S. Makarychev, “The four spaces and the four freedoms: An exercise in semantic deconstruction of the EU discourse”, *Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University Working Paper Series* No. 1-2, p. 31

<sup>12</sup> Sergei Karaganov (ed.) *Otnosheniya Rossii i Evropeiskogo Soyuz: soveremennaya situatsiya i perspektivy* [Russia-EU relations: The current state and prospects], Moscow: Council for Foreign and Defense Policy, 2005, paragraph 1.4.2-1.4.4

“The format of political and legal relations between Russia and the EU does not essentially influence the development of real integration wherever there is mutual interest. Many countries that have much closer and effective ties with the EU than Russia do not seek to formalize their commitments by ratifying them in parliament and making them a part of national law. One of these countries is the United States, which has a visa-free regime and a huge trade turnover with the European Union: Yet, it makes do with general political declarations accompanied by a package of bilateral agreements and binding working plans on specific issues”<sup>13</sup>.

Finally and most importantly, there is the lack of strategic perspective on the future of EU-Russia relations in both Brussels and Moscow. Both sides cannot articulate the long-term goals of their relationship, the common values, norms and interests that underlie the “strategic partnership”. Most notably, by the mid-2000s, the official Russian policy line regarding the EU has boiled down to the statement that “Russia does not seek membership of the European Union”; while it is obvious that such a negativist pronouncement cannot inform a strategic agenda.<sup>14</sup>

The fundamental problem for Russia is that it has not quite figured out how to deal with a new sort of the political animal, the European Union. The EU is a difficult counterpart, described alternately a “unique, not to say strange, political actor, with divided and clashing institutions, unclear sovereignty, a weak sense of common interest and few institutions in the political arena yet able to achieve its declared ends”<sup>15</sup> and as “a bureaucratic body almost without political leadership”<sup>16</sup>. From this perspective, it is not clear to Russia where political power in Europe lies: Is it in the national capitals, the Council or the Commission? Russian decision-makers are sometimes compelled to repeat the frustrated question of Henry Kissinger he used to ask back in the 1970s: “If

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<sup>13</sup> Timofey Bordachev, *Russia and the European Union after 2007*, in Michael Emerson, ed., *The Elephant and the Bear Try Again. Options for a New Agreement between the EU and Russia*. Brussels, CEPS, 2006

<sup>14</sup> Karaganov, 1.2.2

<sup>15</sup> Dov Lynch, “Russia faces Europe”, EU-ISS Brief, May 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Andrei Makarychev, “Russia’s discursive construction of Europe and herself: Towards New Spatial Imagery”, Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University Working Paper Series, No. 1-2, p. 5.



Europe has a foreign policy, I wish someone would tell me its phone number!". Quite often, Russia resorts to tried and tested bilateralism, only to find out that bilateral agreements (e.g. Gazprom's deals with European governments) run into European Union regulations and Russia faces a much less cooperative EU Commission.

The EU, too, lacks a long-term strategic vision for its relations with Russia. The basic structural impediment is that, for the EU policy planners, Russia does not have a "vocation for membership",<sup>17</sup> and they have not quite figured out what to do with the enormous non-acceding neighbor. After half a century of successful integration and adaptation to the outside world, the EU still essentially remains an integration machine. At its core is a set of bureaucratic rules, procedures and institutions aimed at transforming nations and spaces to a universal standard. However, once a nation does not prove possible to integrate, the technocratic integrationist mentality fails to produce a strategic outlook, and a coherent policy. The EU operational mode is therefore technocratic and bureaucratic, not political and strategic.

At times it appears that both sides speak different languages: Russia's language of sovereignty and inter-state relations versus the EU language of norms, regulations, and conditionality. And here, we come to the issue of identity as, apparently, a key driver of discursive and political incompatibility of the EU and Russia. Both sides act and speak what they are, or rather, what they perceive themselves to be, as well as what they perceive the other side to be. Identity construction is an intersubjective practice: the identity of the Self is defined by the image of the Other and vice versa. Thus, the EU-Russian relations turn into an intersubjective game of identity and mutual perception.

### ***Constructivism and the study of EU-Russian Relations***

It is precisely this idea that underlies this research. Seeking to explain the reasons of the ongoing crisis in the EU-Russian relations, it looks not so much into the political and economic factors and interests of both sides, as into the deep grammar of political discourses and identity structures in Europe (especially in the EU structures in the

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<sup>17</sup> See: Medvedev, Sergei "Catholic Europe, Marginal Russia and Post-Modern North", *Northern Dimensions* 1(1/1998)

European capitals Brussels and Strasbourg) and in Russia. It is here that the images of Self and Other are developed and that the idea of “Europe” and its borders is defined. In this sense, this work is a variation on the perennial theme of “Russia and Europe”. It seeks to answer the “eternal question” (*vechnyi vopros*) of the Russian political philosophy: What are the limits of Europe, defined not only as a historic, economic and political community but also as a social and normative community, a community of values, and whether Russia belongs in this community.<sup>18</sup>

In order to understand *why* Russia and the EU have abandoned the idea of association and even integration that they had entertained in the early 1990s, and are spiraling down to policies of mutual alienation, damage limitation and occasional confrontation, it is important to understand *who* and *how* shapes the idea of Europe, and the conditions of belonging there. In other words, the research examines the social identities and discourses that underlie the current crisis and shape the institutional framework of EU-Russian relations, including the possibility of association and integration.

Politically relevant, the topic of the research is also methodologically up-to-date, rooted in the Constructivist methodology which is not yet widespread in the Russian political thought, and in research on international relations and foreign policy. Most of the current Russian research on EU-Russian relations is either based in the traditional geopolitical thinking (theories of Realism and neo-Realism), or in the various guises of neo-Liberalism (institutionalism, regime theory, theories of modernization and transition). Much attention is given to diplomacy, summitry, strategies and institutions of cooperation, as well as to trade and investment. On the other hand, there exists a wide body of literature in the field of literary and cultural studies, art criticism, cultural anthropology that explored in depth the historic and cultural interaction between Russia and Europe, the mutual perceptions and the mutual influence of cultural practices. Finally, there is a breadth of sociological data, both in Russia and in Europe, concerning values, identities and mutual perceptions of Russia and Europe. These political, cultural

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<sup>18</sup> For a key text on the issue, see: Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other. “The East” in European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998

and sociological studies are often detached from each other, and there's a missing link in the study of EU-Russian relations that would connect institutions and political relations with identity structures and mutual perceptions.

The theory of Constructivism provides the missing link, bridging political practices with social identities. In particular, it helps understand how the relations of power (including EU-Russian relations and institutions) are constructed in the process of social interaction of groups and individuals concerning basic values norms and identities. Following a Schmittean inspiration, the Constructivists explain how, trying to understand who We are, and what makes Us different from the Other, groups perform political acts and draw political borders.

Of the various theories explaining European integration and EU-Russian relations (functionalism, intergovernmentalism, classical economic theory, interest group politics, neoinstitutionalist regime theory, etc.)<sup>19</sup> Constructivism probably comes closest in explaining the limits of EU-Russia integration, and the reasons behind the crisis in the EU-Russia relations. Constructivism, either in its mainstream or more post-structuralist forms<sup>20</sup>, focuses on the necessity of shared informal and implicit values, norms and rules– identities –as a precondition of successful cooperation and integration

As a matter of fact, constructivism starts by focusing on the preconditions of successful integration. Even more, constructivism carries on the tradition of one of the so-called classical integration theories of the 1950s and '60s, later known as the

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<sup>19</sup> For a comprehensive analysis of various integration theories applied to EU-Russian relations, see Christer Pursiainen, "Theories of Integration and the Limits of EU-Russian Relations", in Ted Hopf (ed.), *Russia's European Choice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008

<sup>20</sup> Constructivism is associated with scholars such as Peter Katzenstein, Friedrich Kratochwil, Nicholas Onuf, Alexander Wendt, among many others. See, for instance, Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, New York: Columbia University Press 1996; Friedrich Kratochwil, *Rules, Norms, and Decision. On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*, New York [etc.]: Cambridge University Press 1993; Nicholas Onuf (et.al.), *International Relations in a Constructed World*, Armonk: M.E. Sharpe 1998; Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, New York [etc.]: Cambridge University Press 1999.

*transactionalist* or *communications* school of thought. This approach<sup>21</sup> was not explicitly concerned with European integration and in fact did not presuppose any tight territorial and institutional organization but rather a flow of communication between relevant actors. Its essence was that mutual transactions or communications (travel, trade, telecommunication, etc.) combined with mutual responsiveness might generate a sense of community in certain conditions. This kind of a responsive community would be the result of a complex and slow learning process, which increasingly involved the sharing of symbols, identities, habits, memories, values and norms.

Similarly, some constructivists put a great emphasis on the societal level (the level of citizens and civil societies) as the basis from which state identity grows. At this level, the preconditions for “Russia joining Europe” were laid long before the collapse of the Communist economic and political system. Although the population of the Soviet Union was cut off from spontaneous transnational connections, it did not stop youth movements and dissidents appropriating ideas from the West and for the elite and masses alike to yearn for Western lifestyles and consumer goods. According to some sociologists this especially took hold in the 1970s which was “a period of major social and socio-psychological shifts” with far-reaching consequences in terms of the overall modernisation of society. The essence of these changes was that “an industrial society was definitely formed” in the country such that “the process of urbanization was completed and a new generation grew up, shaped by the conditions of Europeanized city life”<sup>22</sup>.

Currently this Europeanization of standards, values, norms, behavioral cultures etc. in different fields of society is going on in Russia through several “informal” means of transnational communication (tourism, media, the Internet etc.). In terms of formal processes, however, the same development takes place, for instance, through the pan-European higher education integration process (the Bologna process) which ultimately will harmonize or at least make comparable, the higher education systems of Russia and

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<sup>21</sup> This approach is most notably expressed in the work of Karl Deutsch. See, for instance, Karl Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Management*, Garden City: Doubleday and Co. 1954; Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press 1966.

<sup>22</sup> Boris Kagarlitsky, *The Dialectics of Change*, London, New York: Verso 1990, p. 284.

the EU and consequently further academic mobility and convergence of the academic labor market<sup>23</sup>. Nevertheless, there are also negative feedback effects from this Europeanization. From the societal integrationist point of view, one of the main paradoxes is that in spite of its geographic proximity, natural transnational communication between the people of the EU and Russia is still regulated by a rather complicated and expensive visa regime which creates not only cooperation problems in all other fields but also contributes to the isolation and alienation of Russia from Europe.

For some Constructivists, in turn, a shared state identity is often seen as constructed in everyday practices and contacts between individual decision-makers (politicians, officials). This point has undoubted relevance to EU-Russian relations. Indeed, one hears often, especially from the EU side that most significant problems arise not from the inefficiency of the formal institutions between the EU and Russia, but from the behavioural culture of these relations. From the EU point of view, for instance, the Russian approach to the practice of international negotiations differs in many ways from that of the European Union countries. The Russian style of negotiations is seen as very confrontational. From the European perspective there is a “natural Russian tendency” to think about international negotiations and international cooperation as a zero-sum game: If you win, I lose. The Russians, according to many commentators on the EU, do not usually see things so that both the EU and Russia can win in the longer term. Instead, Russia’s focus is on relative and not absolute gains (the latter of which imply focusing on long-term reciprocity in a win-win game). This notion implies that the worldview of Russian and the EU leaders differ in many respects: Russian leaders have adopted a clear realist self-help worldview, while the EU’s policy is shaped on the idea of the importance of international institutions and interdependence.

Thus, one can conclude that both the EU and Russia should pay special attention to the practice and the basic philosophy of their relations. It is important to consider whether the behavioral culture in the cooperation practices are based on or produced by the shared implicit values, norms and rules and in the longer run which bring identities

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<sup>23</sup> Christer Pursiainen and Sergey A. Medvedev (eds.), *The Bologna Process and its Implications for Russia. The European Integration of Higher Education*, Moscow: RECEP, 2005.

closer together. Currently, it might be claimed, the idea of shared values is only rather superficially added to any EU-Russian documents (such as the Common Space Road Maps) but not taken seriously at the level of practice.

### *Outline of research*

The research proceeds in three stages. Firstly, it explores the European and Russian discourses on time and history. The European reading of time is shaped by imaginations of post-modernity. The moral foundations of the EU presuppose a departure from the tenets of modernity such as nationalism, sovereignty and war. The EU sees itself as having arrived at a moral high point of post-history, a normative order that it purports to export to applicant and neighboring countries. It thus sees Russia as a learner and imitator, a nation “in transit” from sovereignty and nationality to presumably higher European standards; in short, in its dealings with Russia, the EU imagines some future Russia, a Russia-to-be, a Russia-in-the-making. On the contrary, Russian imaginations of history in the Putin era are retrospective, rooted in the glorious past of the Great Power and a maker of the European history. Russian tales of the past are profoundly modernist and historic; in its dealings with Europe, Russia refers to Europe of the past – to the Europe of Vienna Congress, Yalta and Potsdam. Two different identity projects, Russian and European, premised on different readings of history, inform a vastly different political agenda and further deepen the cognitive dissonance in EU-Russian relations.

Secondly, the research shows the evolution of identity structures in Europe and in Russia and the dynamics of mutual perception in the past two decades. From the early attempts at positive identification of the Other (especially in Russia), both sides have gradually reverted to the traditional political notion of the Other as an opponent (according to Karl Schmitt) and to the centuries-old image of Russia as Europe’s “constitutive Other”<sup>24</sup> (Iver Neumann). Russia, for its part, has also started to construct its identity in the 2000s on an anti-Western, and partially on an anti-European, basis.

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<sup>24</sup> Neumann, Iver. *Russia and the Idea of Europe. A Study in Identity and International Relations*. London: Routledge, 1996

Thirdly, the research problematizes political discourses that define strategies of both sides. Here, a key contradiction is analyzed, that originates in different readings of sovereignty in Moscow and in Brussels. The Kremlin is bent on the “Westphalian” interpretation of the state, using a theory of “sovereign democracy” and the strategy of bureaucratic centralization. On the contrary, the EU promotes a strategy of “Europeanization” that seeks to transform states and spaces along its external perimeter to EU’s own image and liking. The collision of two bureaucratic projects, Russia’s bureaucratic centralization and EU bureaucratic imperialism, is a key structural impediment in the relations of both sides.

In general, the research is driven by the Constructivist belief that identity structures and deep grammar of political discourses have a direct bearing on strategic documents, institutes of partnership and quality of relations between the EU and Russia. The hollowing out of documents and institutions, and the current crisis in EU-Russian relations, are explained by relations of identity concerning the limits and the contents of the idea of “Europe”. It is in the same Constructivist spirit that the research treats the opportunities and the limits of integration between Russia and the European Union, and the possible institutional forms of their relations.

# 2.

## The European Project: From Humility to Hegemony

The construction of the European identity was largely premised on the idea that the EU is something fundamentally new and historically unique. There is a distinct temporal dimension to be traced in the various constitutive stories such as the ones that take the Union for something ‘post-national’, ‘post-sovereign’ and/or ‘post-modern’. John Gerard Ruggie, for one, argues that “the [European] Community may constitute nothing less than the emergence of the first truly postmodern international political form”.<sup>25</sup> The novelty pertains, in his view, to increased ‘fluidity’ and changes in the time-space configuration underpinning more generally the sphere of international politics.

This view of the EU has been premised on assumptions of a *break* rather than riding on linearity. In that context, the notorious past of two world wars, colonialism, the Holocaust as well as the Fascist and Stalinist variations of totalitarianism have not just been viewed as aberrations and temporary respites. Instead, they have been seen as

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<sup>25</sup> Ruggie, John, Gerard, ‘Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations’. *International Organization*, Vol. 47, no. 1(1993), p. 140. Robert Cooper (2003) could similarly be cited as an author arguing that the EU represents a radical temporal shift and stands for moves of progress. In dating the alleged change, he singles out the year 1989 and more generally points to the end of the Cold War as the formative moment. In his view, Europe ‘has moved beyond’ a world order based on the balance of power with the previous order being replaced by a new one premised on transnational openness and self-imposed rules of behavior. See Cooper, Robert, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Atlantic Books, 2003



expressions of something more profound, i.e. a ‘true’ Europe to be circumvented and escaped from. Some authors talk in his context about Europe’s “alienation from its own origins”<sup>26</sup>. In particular the Second World War has been perceived as an expression of Europe’s self-destructing as well as divisive tendencies. Such depictions, substituting the previous talk about Europe as *avant-garde* and progressive due to the construction of nation-states, have then laid the ground for an aspiring for a future united Europe.

This is to say that the rather commonly used narrative has rested on a past/present dichotomy. As argued by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, the fears part of Europe-making have pertained to “a generalized fear of ‘back to the future’ rather than any concrete fear of a specific and spatial Other”.<sup>27</sup> Such a narrative has clearly broken with the standard differentiation and depiction of otherness. It has deviated from the standard modern narrative, one premised on spatial-external difference. The basic move has consisted of the spatial-external rendition being substituted with a temporal-internal one. Such a temporally based differentiation, with the (negative) past turned into a determinant of the understanding of the present, has then been expected to provide an opening towards less antagonistic and violent articulations of identity. The EU has, in this context of such a Grand Narrative, amounted to a *peace project* based on trading Europe’s past identity for something quite different.

Ontologically the EU has appeared as inferior to others, in particular the United States (and less in regard to the East and the Orient). It has boiled down to a *moral space of self-critique, redemption and learning* from past errors. Being a ‘sinner’, it has not had any authority to draw other than temporal lines, and merely lines outlining the EU as a learner aspiring to catch up in order to re-gain a legitimate position on the international scene.

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<sup>26</sup> Boon, Vivienne and Delanty, Gerard (2007), ‘Europe and Its Histories. A Cosmopolitan Perspective’, in Persson, Hans-Åke and Stråth, Bo (eds.), *Reflections on Europe. Defining Political Order in Time and Place*. Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007, p.161.

<sup>27</sup> Buzan, Barry and Wæver, Ole, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 353

The move of trying to turn the EU into an anti-self, compared to the one located in the past, has been meant to facilitate a reading of otherness that has historically resided in European, i.e. the European inter-state relations of the power political era. Such a state of affairs has, however, not been viewed as anything fixed and entrenched. It has instead been approached as something to be transcended and as, in this sense, formed a kind of self-centered civilizational intervention against the usual temporal immobility. This temporally premised and spatially inwards-oriented, although not strictly bounded construction of difference, has remained integral to the production of a collective EU-identity and within this context – with identity resting on stories pertaining to an avoidance of past errors – the question of Europe’s future could be kept open.

The temporally premised horizon of conversion as to the construction of the European identity has consequently been harvested by a critical reading of the previous ontology and the various elements part of it – whether consisting of power politics, aspirations for strict sovereignty, excessive liberalism and democracy or a problematic combination of these various elements. Operationally, integration has turned into a key remedy and a concrete political project, one aimed at facilitating self-transformation in the name of security.

Overall, the endeavor of creating communality across previous lines of radical otherness has been carried by an ontological shift, this then amounting to an explicitly self-critical stance and integration as the political manifestation of the temporal as well as spatial change and conversion aspired for.

However, radical changes have taken place over the recent years in the articulations of the European identity. In effect, the very spatio-temporal matrix underlying the EU has been altered with crucial changes as to the ways of othering and articulating difference.

The EU appears to be inclined to fix its meaning in quite categorical terms. In the first place, there is less tolerance for diversity and openness as to the deeper meaning of the European idea. And secondly, the temporal othering is no longer as self-reflexive as previously and it is less geared toward the self’s own past. As a consequence, a different hegemony comes into being. It still grounds the EU as a moral space, though now superior rather than inferior. The latter comprehension is based new tales of time

premised on the assertion that the EU has reached its temporal goal. The Union has done so in having successfully dealt with its past; the transformative efforts have yielded dividend.

As noted by Thomas Christiansen, it has over the recent years been possible to discern various moves within the EU that aspire at narrowing down notions of ambiguity.<sup>28</sup> The aim has been one of providing the EU with a more firm being, and accordingly such moves detract from what used to be called ‘the ethos of pluralisation’<sup>29</sup>. Christiansen also claims that the EU is on its way of becoming less post-Westfalian than before, i.e. the various assertions pertaining to the Union’s nature as being ‘post’, ‘ahead’ and ‘different’ are losing in strength. Along these lines, he contends, various rather statist themes, previously off-limits in the EU-debate have over the recent years come to the fore.

One further turn to be traced consists, Christiansen argues, of rendering the EU in terms of a *finalité politique*. It is then increasingly viewed as being ready-made, seen as an entity aspiring for an ultimate external border and thus no longer open in the way it used to be. He finds, more generally, that the EU seems to have turned more security-aware, territorially integrated and identity-conscious. He furthermore points out that the crucial trends consist of constitutionalization and territorialization, i.e. trends embedded in quite statist logic. Establishing the post of a President of the European Council, a European Union Minister of Foreign Affairs, a European External Action service and strengthening further the status of a defense establishment all testify to this. The previous tolerance of “fuzzy” borders, lengthy transition periods, opt-out arrangements and differentiated integration is no more there. What is in train consists, in his view, of nothing less than a remaking of Europe with the EU showing signs of developing into an increasingly bounded political space.<sup>30</sup> His observations imply, in a broader perspective, that the spatio-temporal matrix underpinning the Union has been altered. They also

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<sup>28</sup> Christiansen, Thomas, ‘Constitutionalising the European Union, Constructing EU Borders’, in Browning, Christopher, S. (ed.), *Remaking Europe in the Margins. Northern Europe after the Enlargements*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 69-84

<sup>29</sup> See: Conolly, William .E., *The Ethos of Pluralization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

<sup>30</sup> Christiansen, Ibid.

signal, in one of their aspects, that the EU has turned temporally less *avant-garde* and subsequently also transformed into a far more standard polity as to its spatial parameters and territorial features.

Thomas Diez presents a similar analysis, although his analysis is explicitly post-structuralist in nature.<sup>31</sup> He goes as far as arguing that there is a return to geopolitics to be traced as to the discourses pertaining to the EU and more broadly European identity. The Union's trademarks of a self-reflexive and temporally based othering have grown weaker, and consequently various spatially based forms of difference have grown in eminence. European integration has, according to Diez, been undermined "as a fundamental challenge to the world of nation-states" and "to the modern territorial state".<sup>32</sup> What Diez views as a 'geopolitisation' of the European identity constructions testifies, in his view, that there is regress to be traced in the way the EU's identity gets constructed.<sup>33</sup> Actually, it points to a circular kind of backlash. The more recent efforts of narrowing down the Union's ambiguity display, he thinks, the re-appearance of some "modern traits". In other words, features and properties supposedly overcome seem to be back on stage.

### ***The ENP as an identity project***

The European Neighbourhood Policy, an EU-initiative developed over the recent years to manage countries belonging to the Union's geographical vicinity, largely follows a similar logic. The EU is rendered, in the documents grounding the initiative, as having the *duty* to reach out but there is an even stronger emphasis on various *threat-related* narratives. The latter are conducive to an image of the EU as a security-oriented actor *vis-à-vis* its own exterior.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Diez, Thomas, 'Europe's Others and the Return to Geopolitics'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, no. 2, 2004, pp. 319-335.

<sup>32</sup> Diez, Op. cit., pp. 319-20

<sup>33</sup> By the use of the term geopolitics Diez does not refer to the classical geopolitical school of international politics but uses the terms in order to point more generally to spatial and territorial factors.

<sup>34</sup> See Jeandesboz, Julien, 'The European Neighbourhood Policy: Analysing the Securitisation(s) of the Union's External Border'. Paper presented to the COST doctoral training school. Paris, June 2005

It then also follows, with attention being directed towards spatial-external difference, that the boundedness of the EU turns into a major issue. Notably, the border devised through the ENP is not premised on a categorical exclusion even if membership is out of question. It is rather one of coping with ambiguity through policies of *engagement*. This takes place in the form of the ‘neighbors’ being invited “to share everything but institutions”, in the words of Romano Prodi.<sup>35</sup> As noted by Ifversen and Kølvråa, the Europeanness of the ‘neighbors’ is neither *denied* nor *confirmed*: “it is continually postponed”.<sup>36</sup> As such, they are bound to remain outside, although at the same time assumed to be longing to become part of the EU-family. The time’s arrow concerning the ‘neighbors’ is drawn and settled rather one-sidedly by the EU itself. They are positioned outside Europe-proper in temporal terms – with the Union now having the authority to define what Europe is and where it is located – in a quite abrupt and authoritative manner.

In general, the ENP is premised on the idea that the Union constitutes a model for others. The EU is taken to be ahead in temporal terms in having won the battle against its own past. It has matured, owing to its transformative and interpretative capabilities, into an entity markedly different from its environs. Romano Prodi, then heading the Commission, viewed the EU as something for others to emulate. He did so while announcing, in his first speech to the European Parliament in February 2000, a shift in focus towards external relations. There is a need for the EU, he declared, “to project its model of society into the wider world”.<sup>37</sup> The model which Prodi spoke about, one rooted in the sometimes bitter lessons of the past and Europe’s civilizational values, provided in his view the basis for action in the world. He argued that Europe has an obligation “to

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<sup>35</sup> See, Prodi, Romano, *A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as a Key to Stability*. Speech delivered at the conference “Peace, Security and Stability. International Dialogue and the Role of the EU”, Sixth ECSA World Conference. Brussels, 5-6 December 2002

<sup>36</sup> Ifversen, Jan and Kølvråa, Christoffer (2007), ‘European Neighbourhood Policy as Identity Politics’. Paper presented at the EUSA conference. Montreal, May 2007, p. 18

<sup>37</sup> Prodi, Romano, ‘Shaping the New Europe’. Speech to the European Parliament, 15 February 2000

project its model”, an obligation grounded in experience and departures as well as processes of learning that have proved their worth in Europe<sup>38</sup>.

Clearly, then, the main arguments underpinning the new constitutive moves are about success. Arguably, the EU-Europe has in this sense turned even increasingly *post*, be it post-national, post-Westphalian or more generally post-modern. It has done so by stepping beyond its previous being. Or as stated by Prodi in 2003: “We have learnt to our cost the madness of war, of racism and the rejection of the other and diversity. Peace, rejection of abuse of power, conflict and war are the underlying and unifying values of the European project”.<sup>39</sup> The EU is in this regard taken to be more advanced – and therefore also of model-value – than actors on the international scene in general. Owing to learning, the outcome premised on moves in time has cumulatively added – so it is frequently claimed in the constitutive discourse – to the EU’s potential and authority to figure as a rather exemplary entity on the international scene.

Another aspect of this re-telling and re-configuring consists of coining concepts such as the one of ‘normative power Europe’.<sup>40</sup> Such a departure, indicating that the EU

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<sup>38</sup> Ifversen, Jan (2007), ‘It’s About Time: is Europe Old or New?’ in Mole, Richard, C. M. (ed.), *Discursive Constructions of Identity in European Politics*. Palgrave: Hampshire, 2007, p. 184.

<sup>39</sup> Prodi, Romano, Speech to the New York University Law School, 4 November 2003

<sup>40</sup> This concept was evoked by Hedley Bull as early as 1982. (See Bull, Hedley, “Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 21 (1982), no. 2, pp. 149-164). Twenty years later, it was launched into the scholarly debate above all by Ian Manners (see Manners, Ian, ‘Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?’ *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40 (2002), no. 2, pp. 235-258; Manners, Ian, ‘Normative power Europe reconsidered: beyond the crossroads’. *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13(2006), no. 2, pp. 182-199). The concept aims at depicting the EU in humanitarian, civilian and civilizing terms. The EU’s power lies, according to Manners, in its ability to set the standards and then project its core values beyond its borders. The concept seems to be taken for an essentialist one in the sense there is no reference to previous experiences of war and moral break-down. See also Helene Sjursen, ‘What kind of power?’ *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 13(2006), no. 2, pp. 169-181, for an effort to explore the approach further in relation to the Union’s foreign and security policies. Jürgen Habermas (‘Towards a Cosmopolitan Europe’. *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14(2003), no. 4, pp. 86-100) and Ulrich Beck (‘Understanding the real Europe’. *Dissent*, Summer 2003, pp. 32-38) have, for their part, used the related concept of ‘cosmopolitan society’ in their renditions. The concept

may rightfully define set the standards for others to follow, has been flying high during the recent years. It is, in being ahead, entitled to show the way. Notably, the EU's turning into an assertive and virtuous actor is something quite new. With the Union no longer seen as inferior to others owing to Europe's rather problematic past – consisting of a long list of various sins – but now on level if not superior to other actors on the international scene, a potent hierarchy and order of progression comes into being. In essence, the stories told tend to claim that a *turning-point* has been reached. It implies among other things that the Union is no longer compelled – with the danger of its excessively nationalist and power-political past also influencing the Union's future having now been overcome – to restrain itself merely to talk on utility and governance. It turns free to legitimate itself as positive moral space. It may do so by taking its cue from the break and assumedly successful transformation and hence also figure openly in a far more political and actor-oriented manner.

In this vein, with the new temporality grounded in images of Europe being healed, the pursuance of policies premised on 'conditionality' and 'socialisation' seems quite natural (on 'socialization' see below). The EU turns into a model and appears as a repository of considerable political, symbolic and moral capital, i.e. capital to be used in molding the environs to its own image. The Union does not appear as a puzzle and a rather open configuration with relations to be negotiated in the context of discourses such as the one on 'neighborhood' but rather figures as a morally mature and established entity. It is seen as given in qualitative and consequently also in quantitative terms. Temporal and spatial changes are interlinked in the sense that the claims of newness premised on a temporal border-drawing also invite for spatial closure. The EU-Europe thus appears in a more distinct manner. It figures as an entity to be encircled by substitute formations and alternative configurations.

Being defined as a 'neighbor' amounts, against this background, basically to being slotted into the category of 'non-us'. Those positioned by the use of such a concept land in a group of countries not eligible for future membership and are thereby left

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undoubtedly points to rather broadly, if not universally valid values that go beyond national and regional outlooks.

outside Europe proper. To express it somewhat differently: the ‘neighbors’ are coded as being in Europe, although not fully of Europe.

### *The ENP and Russia*

At the initial stages of the ENP – when it was still called the “Wider Europe” initiative – the European Union and especially the European Commission intended to make Russia an integral part of the overall policy approach. This was reflected in statements implying that the reach of the initiative would include all the neighbors from “Murmansk to Marrakech.” It became clear very early on, however, that Russia itself was less than enthusiastic of prospects of becoming one of the Union’s many “neighbors.” For example, the then Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov noted how:

this [the ENP] is an attempt to reduce to the least common denominator groups of countries and individual states that are entirely different in their level of development and that, in addition to this, have different objectives with respect to the EU itself – objectives that are oftentimes incompatible with one another.<sup>41</sup>

In essence, Russia felt insulted that it was grouped together with Moldova, Morocco and other countries in the southern Mediterranean in the same basket of “neighborhood.”<sup>42</sup> Instead of becoming part of ENP, Russia has insisted that its relations with the European Union must rest on a separate basis of equal and mutually beneficial strategic partnership.<sup>43</sup> Chizhov’s later words neatly summarize the official Russian thinking:

Russia is a large self-sufficient country with its own views on European and Euro-Atlantic integration. In contrast to some smaller Eastern European or South

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<sup>41</sup> Chizhov, Vladimir. “European Union: A Partnership Strategy”, *International Affairs* (Moscow), Vol. 50, no. 6 (2004), p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> For a discussion, see Averre, Derek. “Russia and the European Union: Convergence or Divergence?” *European Security*, Vol. 14, no. 2 (2005), pp. 175–202.

<sup>43</sup> Chizhov, “European Union: A Partnership Strategy”, p. 81.



Caucasus countries striving for EU-membership Russia is neither a subject nor an object of the European Neighborhood Policy.<sup>44</sup>

As a result, Russia has chosen to opt out of the ENP.<sup>45</sup> The EU's proposal to join was rejected in favor of trying to develop a separate and more equal relation of 'strategic partnership'.<sup>46</sup> Such a relation aims at signaling Russia's distinctiveness and greater importance in comparison to the ENP countries. Russia hence refrains, in viewing itself as a major actor and great power on the scene of international politics, from being exposed to the teacher/pupil dichotomy part of the ENP-discourse. In a broader perspective, the spatio-temporal matrix underpinning Russia's self-understanding differs distinctly from the one projected by the EU into its exterior. It then also follows that any concept of 'neighborhood' unavoidably turns into a battle-ground rather than figures as shared space and a basis for reciprocal and mutually reinforcing constructions of identity.

Instead of rejecting its own past, Russia has more recently upgraded history and uses it as a core departure.<sup>47</sup> The past is in this sense very much alive and the connectedness allows Russia to articulate what it is basically about also under the post-Cold War conditions. The identity that has been on offer in the context of the ENP is, once viewed against this background, quite problematic. It was bound to be rejected in

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<sup>44</sup> Chizhov, V. Remarks at the 135<sup>th</sup> Bergedorf Round Table, "Interests and Partners of German Foreign Policy," Berlin, 29 September–1 October 2006, [http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/bg/recherche/pdf\\_protokoll/bnd\\_135\\_en\\_text.pdf](http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/bg/recherche/pdf_protokoll/bnd_135_en_text.pdf), p. 90.

<sup>45</sup> There appears, interestingly, to be tensions between Russia's identity-related needs and its more economic and material needs as the latter have been conducive to Russia joining the ENP-related financial instrument, the ENPI.

<sup>46</sup> On the planning stages of the ENP, see Batt, Judy, Lynch, Don, Misseroli, Antonio, Ortega, Martin and Triantahyllou, Dimitros, 'Partners and Neighbours: A CFSP for a Wider Europe'. *Chaillot Paper* No. 64. Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2003 and Smith, Karen, 'The outsiders: the European neighbourhood policy'. *International Affairs*, vol. 81(2005), no. 4, pp. 757-773.

<sup>47</sup> On Russia located in time and space, see Morozov, Viatcheslav, 'Sovereignty and Democracy in Contemporary Russia: A Modern Subject Faces the Post-Modern World'. Special issue on Russia as a Narrative of the *Journal of International Relations and Development* (forthcoming 2008) and Secrieru, Stanislav, 'Russia's Quest for Strategic Identity'. *NDC Occasional Paper*, No. 18, NATO Defense College. Rome. November 2006.

running opposite to Russia's own sense of being. Abiding to the conditionality and approving the socialization part of the ENP would imply the acceptance of an altered construction of identity, one premised on moving beyond past history.

It then also follows that Russia does seem to be prepared, in regard to its location in time, to let its own Grand Narrative to be undermined. Acquiesce in face of the ENP-related temporality would imply that the various tales of Russia having in various ways saved Europe during various junctures of history – above all in the context of fighting Nazism during World War II – and having therewith gained a positive normative standing as well as a legitimacy to act in Europe on terms of its own (including the constitution of a neighborhood reflecting Russia's essence) would have to be toned down.

Therefore, rather than abiding to the conditions set by the EU, Russia has aspired to retain its established subjectivity. It uses, in a sense, the bordering part of the ENP in articulating what it is not and in outlining a different spatial location. In this perspective, the invitation to join the ENP allows Russia to express that it is more than an ENP-related 'friend'. Moreover, Russia does not think of itself as being located outside Europe-proper but claims, instead, centrality and insists on being positioned as one the key Europe-makers.

There are hence scant reasons for Russia, in viewing itself as a victim of foreign aggression and an entity that fought bravely back in the context of World War II and in the end defeated the aggressor, to capitulate. The anchorage in history has, in other words, to be preserved as abandonment would entail a belittlement of Russia's historically based Europeanness. Invitations to step beyond history are not viewed as 'progress' or seen as moving ahead but tend, instead, to activate feelings of decline and lost grandeur. The constitutive stories are not about unequivocal success. Russia has thus not been set free, and owing to time being told with emphasis on the past, also borders and spatial delineations become viewed differently. With the ideal Russia located in history and exceeding the boundaries of its own possibility, borders are often perceived as being virtual and memory-based rather than real and actual.

Obviously, this turns 'neighborhood' into an issue difficult to agree upon for both ontological and epistemological reasons. This is so as the Russian conceptualizations tend to overlap with those very geographic areas in Europe's East where also the EU aims,

primarily through the ENP, to assert its authority of drawing crucial lines of demarcation. The space becomes in some sense shared, although not agreed upon and viewed similarly. In fact, as indicated by Russia's refusal to join the ENP, the readings are far apart and the relationship in the context of the 'neighborhoods' tends to boil down to a clash between two very different stories pertaining to identity and subjectivity.

### *The Logic of "Europeanization"*

The discourse of temporal finality and political and moral hegemony employed by the EU largely explains the "intrusive" nature of the EU's policy towards Russia that so often irritates the Russian side. In an apparent desire to shape Russia in its own image, the EU projects its values, norms and regulations (but also fosters its material interests), expecting Russia to comply with the EU-defined code of conduct. In short, this is an extension of the EU's internal logic –the EU acted the same way with respect to Slovakia or Estonia– but without the added benefit of EU membership.

The extrapolation of the EU's internal logic is evident throughout the documents intended to govern its relations with Russia, such as the PCA, the Common Strategy on Russia, the ENP, and Roadmaps for the EU-Russian Common Spaces. All these documents have been written using EU bureaucratic language. Starting from the original PCA, prepared during the early 1990s when Russia was seen as a "nation in transit", in need of advice, assistance and mentorship, these documents are all based on a purely EU conception of how its neighborhood relations should be organized. According to Emerson, the long text of the PCA was a watered-down derivative of the 'Europe Agreements' signed with the newly independent Central and East European countries that were seeking accession to the EU: Russia was then one of the new boys in the class of post-Communist states<sup>48</sup>. By the same token, The European Neighborhood Policy

“is itself a weak and fuzzy derivative of the EU's enlargement process. This neighbourhood policy is embracing the same comprehensive agenda of the EU's

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<sup>48</sup> Michel Emerson, Introduction, in Michael Emerson (ed.) *The Elephant and the Bear Try Agan: Options for the New Agreement between the EU and Russia*, Brussels: CEPS, 2006

internal policy competences and political values, but without the mega-incentive of accession. The four common spaces [between Russia and the EU – SM] are now a weaker and fuzzier still derivative of the neighbourhood policy<sup>49</sup>”.

The entire set of EU policies and instruments intended to govern its relations with its external environment can be summarised under the heading of *Europeanization*. By this term, the Brussels-based Center for European Policy Studies means the “transformation of national politics and policy making in line with modern European values and standards” through:

- Legal and institutional obligations flowing from the norms and rules of the EU and the Council of Europe
- Objective changes in economic structures and the interests of individuals as a result of integration
- Subjective changes in beliefs, expectations and identity<sup>50</sup>.

Europeanisation is a traditional Eurocentric discourse that falls in line with the historical constructions of Westernness (positing Western values and practices as universal and non-negotiable, with a civilising mission incumbent on the West) and Easternness (positing the East as barbarian, devoid of morality and rule of law, a space to be converted and transformed)<sup>51</sup>. According to Jutta Weldes, something of a compulsion is entailed within the Western cultural frame that sees the West to have the ‘right’, even the ‘obligation’, to intervene in the social development of others and to ‘assist’ them in finding the true Western path to social justice and prosperity. Armed with such an ‘obligation’, the West is therefore seen to have every justification to insist on the

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<sup>49</sup> Emerson, p. 3. As the author further concedes, the EU “has worked out for itself a well-identified corpus of law, norms and values. But it does not have a well-defined model for exporting these”. (Ibid., p. 4.)

<sup>50</sup> The Wider Europe Matrix, Presentation by the Center for European Policy Studies, November 2005, Moscow

<sup>51</sup> Marko Lehti, ‘Competing or Complementary Images: The North and the Baltic World from the Historical Perspective’, in Hiski Haukkala (ed.), *Dynamic Aspects of the Northern Dimension* (Turku: Jean Monnet Unit, University of Turku 1999), p. 22

reproduction of its values and institutions elsewhere<sup>52</sup>. In this context, Slavoj Žižek speaks of the “Eurocentric procedure of imposing its own hegemony by means of the exclusionary discursive strategy of devaluating the Other”<sup>53</sup>.

For all its postmodern imagery and the “rejection of power”<sup>54</sup>, the European Union is a direct descendant of the Western missionary tradition<sup>55</sup>. Looking at the very origins of the EU, one finds Western notions of democratic peace theory— the idea that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other. The EU was constructed in order to reconcile France and Germany, the two nations that stood at the origins of three European wars in a span of seventy years (1870-1939). This ‘peace mission’ has been central to subsequent enlargements of the EU and provides a rationale for the further extension of EU borders and the dissemination of liberal democratic values across its external frontiers<sup>56</sup>. To quote former EU Commission President, Romano Prodi:

“Europe needs to project its model of society into the wider world. We are not simply here to defend our own interests: We have a unique historic experience to offer. The experience of liberating people from poverty, war, oppression and intolerance. We have forged a model of development and continental integration based on the principles of democracy, freedom and solidarity and it is a model that works”<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Jutta Weldes, ‘Going Cultural: *Star Trek*, State Action and Popular Culture’, *Millennium* 28/1 (1999) p.131.

<sup>53</sup> Slavoj Žižek. “Da capo senza fine”. In: Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek (eds) *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality. Contemporary Dialogue on the Left*. London and New York, Verso, 2000, p. 231

<sup>54</sup> Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness”, *Policy Review*, June 2002, <http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html>

<sup>55</sup> For an analysis highlighting the missionary elements of the EU in world politics, see Henrik Larsen, ‘The Discourse on the EU’s Role in the World’, in Birthe Hansen and Bertel Heurlin (eds), *The New World Order: Contrasting Theories* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan 2000) pp.217–44.

<sup>56</sup> Christopher S. Browning, “The Region-Building Approach Revisited: The Continued Othering of Russia in Discourses of Region-Building in the European North”, *Geopolitics*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Spring 2003), p. 45.

<sup>57</sup> Romano Prodi, ‘2000–2005: Shaping the New Europe’, European Parliament, Strasbourg, 15 February 2000. Available at <<http://europa.int/>>.

In this respect, Christopher Browning describes Europeanization as ‘developing’ outsiders up to ‘our standards’, and entails a representation of others as somehow devoid or lacking in moral fiber, irrespective of empirical reality. This is further inscribed by the fact that membership of the EU requires applicant states be vetted against established criteria of democracy, the rule of law, Human Rights, economic structures and so forth, in order to assess their ‘fitness’ as potential members<sup>58</sup>. Failure to live up to these standards, in turn, represents a failure to achieve equal subjectivity with EU members and condemns one to remain excluded<sup>59</sup>. This is precisely what happened to the EU’s image of Russia as soon as it had become clear that it no longer fitted the ideal “European” normative model and moved towards a semi-authoritarian bureaucratic state. Disillusionment in the Europeanization of Russia has led to its subsequent marginalization and isolation in EU discourses and practices.

In response to the EU discursive offensive, Russia has come up with the idea of “exceptionality”. As put by Gleb Pavlovsky, “the state entity with its centers located in Strasbourg and Brussels is not a hotbed for those living in Kiev or Moscow, even if they think of themselves as Europeans”<sup>60</sup>. However, even if this discursive defense succeeds, portraying Russia as an “exception”, a “special case” argument leads to the implicit acceptance of Europeanization as the hegemonic “norm”. In this model, the “exceptional” Russia will be tolerated rather than accepted in its otherness.

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<sup>58</sup> Thomas Christiansen and Pertti Joenniemi, ‘Politics on the Edge: On the Restructuring of Borders in the North of Europe’, in Heikki Eskelinen, Ilkka Liikanen and Jukka Oksa (eds), *Curtains of Iron and Gold: Reconstructing Borders and Scales of Interaction* (Aldershot: Ashgate 1999) p. 90.

<sup>59</sup> Browning, p. 57.

<sup>60</sup> Gleb Pavlovsky, “Rossia vse eshche ishche svoyu rol’ v mire” [Russia is still looking for its place in the world], *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 31 May 2004

# 3.

## Russia's Narratives of Sovereignty

While much attention has traditionally been paid to the norms underlying the EU's foreign policy, the investigation of the norms of the EU's external partners, particularly those beyond candidate status, have been neglected. This one-sided analysis of the link between norms and foreign policy has led to a fallacy abundant in studies of the EU's policy towards both the European East and the Mediterranean: Countries outside the EU are seen solely as objects transformed by the normative pressure radiating from the EU.<sup>61</sup> As discussed below, this fallacy is inherent in the traditional European, and generally in the Western belief, that countries outside of the core West somehow lack in subjectivity, personality and moral fiber, representing a normative void, to be filled by Western values, institutions and practices.

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<sup>61</sup> See the vast literature on socialization and Europeanization, e.g. Schimmelfennig, Frank. "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union". *International Organization*, Vol. 55, Issue 1 (2001), pp. 47–80; Schimmelfennig, Frank. *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe: Rules and Rhetoric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; Cowles, M. G., J. A. Caporaso, and T. Risse (eds.) *Transforming Europe. Europeanization and Domestic Change*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003; Olsen, J. P. "The Many Faces of Europeanization". *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 40 (2002), no. 5, pp. 921-952; Emerson, Michael et al. (2005) *The Reluctant Debutante. The European Union as Promoter of Democracy in its Neighbourhood. CEPS Working Document No. 223*, Centre for European Policy Studies, July 2005, [http://shop.ceps.be/downfree.php?item\\_id=1242](http://shop.ceps.be/downfree.php?item_id=1242); Obydenkova, Anastassia, "Democratization, Europeanization and Regionalization beyond the European Union: Search for Empirical Evidence". *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)*, Vol. 10 (2006), No. 1, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2006-001a.htm>.

As a result, even though the existence of a different set of norms is recognized in some special cases (such as the Trans-Atlantic relations), the foreign policy norms of non-EU actors are usually taken as dependent variables waiting to be transformed<sup>62</sup>. This is quite surprising given that the clashing norms and identities of the EU and its member states have often been explored in European studies of the EU<sup>63</sup>.

All of the abovementioned deficiencies could be seen in analyses of one of the European Union's key external links: its relations with Russia. Most importantly, the imbalance in favor of studies analyzing the EU values and norms present in EU-Russian relations could not be greater – little thorough research focusing on Russian norms in its policy towards the EU has been carried out. Although a number of monographs do examine the impact of Russia on the European West<sup>64</sup> and some older ones analyze Russian foreign policy norms<sup>65</sup>, their current impact has not yet been critically evaluated.

Russia's foreign policy discourse in the past fifteen years has been depicted as taking two rather incompatible basic forms, one of which we can label "Westphalian Russia", and the other "pragmatic Russia."

The Westphalian Russia image in the Western academic community experienced its heyday after Yevgeny Primakov became Russia's foreign minister in 1996. At that time Russia was being described as backsliding into "Cold War thinking", manifested mainly by a strong anti-Americanism and a related tendency to build-up anti-hegemony coalitions with China and other powers, e.g. Primakov's famous doctrine of

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<sup>62</sup> For a different perspective, see: Bordachev, Timofei and Arkady Moshes. "Is the Europeanization of Russia over?" *Russia in Global Affairs*, 13 April 2004, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/7/526.html>

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Waever, Ole. "European Security Identities." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 34 (1996), no. 1, pp. 103-132; Börzel, Tanja and Thomas Risse, "When Europe Hits Home. Europeanization and Domestic Change", *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, Vol. 4 (2000), No. 15, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-015a.htm>

<sup>64</sup> See e.g. Neumann, Iver, *Uses of the Other. The "East" in European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998; Diligenskiy, German and Sergei Chugrov. *Der "Westen" im russischen Bewusstsein. Bericht des Bundesinstitutes für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*. Köln: BIOST, 2000.

<sup>65</sup> Checkel, Jeffrey, "Ideas, Institutions, and the Gorbachev Foreign Policy Revolution". *World Politics*, Vol. 45 (1993), No. 2, pp. 271-300



multipolarity<sup>66</sup>. Broadly speaking, this image was also connected with a stress on the centralized nation-state with exclusive territorial sovereignty, the importance of military force as the ultimate expression of national power, and the conviction that in international relations, as a rule, a zero-sum game prevails.

With Putin's coming to power, the strategic thinking in Moscow has become even more deeply embedded in Westphalian notions of sovereignty. The comeback and consolidation of the nation-state has been the key issue on the agenda of both Putin's presidential terms. The visions of a "sovereign democracy" and "nationalization of the future" have been made public by the Kremlin's chief ideologist, Vladislav Surkov<sup>67</sup>. As Derek Averre has put it,

"the current drive to strengthen state power, accepted by the majority of Russian political elites as necessary both as an instrument for national reconstruction and as a corrective to the disorder of the Yeltsin years, produces neither the internal stimulus to reform nor the external point of reference which would allow multifaceted engagement with Europe, especially in the context of a changing international system and developing notions of sovereignty"<sup>68</sup>.

This image stands in a stark contrast to the depiction of Europe as a "post-Westphalian" or "post-modern" entity, representing a set of values radically different from those ascribed to Russia. The notion of civilian power<sup>69</sup> differs substantially from the Westphalian concept, indeed can be seen as its opposite: a waning of the nation-state

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<sup>66</sup> Arbatov, Alexei "Natsionalnaya bezopasnost Rossii v mnogopolyarnom mire" [Russia's National Security in a Multipolar World]. *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 10, 2000, pp. 21-28

<sup>67</sup> Vladislav Surkov, "Suverenitet – eto politicheskii sinonim konkurentosposobnosti" [Sovereignty is a political synonym of competitiveness], Speech to United Russia activists, 7 February 2006, [www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=111148](http://www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=111148). Vladislav Surkov, Natsionalizatsia budushchego [Nationalization of the Future], *Expert*, No. 43, 20 November 2006. A in-depth expose of the contemporary Russian discourse on sovereignty can be found in: Polyakov, Leonid (ed.) *PRO Suverennuyu demokratiyu* [PRO Sovereign Democracy]. Moscow: Evropa Publishers, 2007

<sup>68</sup> Derek Averre, "Russia and the European Union: Convergence of Divergence?", *European Security*, Vol. 14, no. 2, June 2005, p. 175.

<sup>69</sup> On the origins of this concept, as discussed by Hedley Bull and Ian Manners, see Footnote 39.

and the return of medieval multiple overlapping sovereignties, a decline in the importance of hard power, which is replaced by economic factors, and, perhaps most importantly, the possibility or even necessity of cooperating peacefully.

In recent years, both the discursive images of Russia's foreign policy and those of the EU have undergone another change that, nevertheless, leaves the opposition between the ideologies intact, if not more entrenched: Putin's period has frequently been described as abandoning the old Russia and embracing a "pragmatic" approach aiming at a utilitarian maximization of the country's aggregate power, particularly economically. In this vein, Paul Flenley argues that "Putin finally rejected the remnants of Cold War thinking which infected Russia-Western relations under Yeltsin and adopted a policy of pragmatic nationalism"<sup>70</sup>. The EU's corresponding shift, according to the analysts, is then towards a "value community" or "normative power" that prioritizes the promotion of its norms abroad over its economic interests.<sup>71</sup> While in the first image Russia is believed to behave "irrationally", following the old-fashioned Cold War mentality, in the second it is almost miraculously transformed into rational utility-maximising entity.

Interestingly, the underlying assumption here is that the pursuit of "pragmatic" interests can be based on a value- and norms-free foreign policy. Even if we set aside the question how such a rapid metamorphosis from a system so heavily relying on anti-Western ideology could have discarded that ideology without being profoundly shattered, we face the problem of determining national interests which do not depend on the normative underpinnings of state and society.

Paradoxically, both the old concept of Westphalian Russia and the new one of pragmatic Russia were believed to be in Russia's national interests: "Counterbalancing American aspirations for a global monopoly, the concept of multipolarity as the best expression of the country's national interests has received strong support in Russia."<sup>72</sup>. Similarly, many analyses of the new Russian foreign policy under Putin extolled the new

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<sup>70</sup> Flenley, Paul. "Russia and the EU: Pragmatic and Contradictory Partnership". *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 2005, p. 435

<sup>71</sup> See Manners, Ian, 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?' *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 40 (2002), no. 2, pp. 235-258

<sup>72</sup> Arbatov, Alexei "Natsionalnaya bezopasnost Rossii v mnogopolyarnom mire" [Russia's National Security in a Multipolar World]. *Mirovaya ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, No. 10, 2000, pp. 21-28

course as “logical and realistic”<sup>73</sup>. In both cases, Russian policies have clashed with the EU’s primarily on the level of values: either as one set of values against another or as a value-free policy against a value-loaded one.

The question of normative discordance between the EU and Russia can be rephrased as an exploration of one of the basic conditions for a successful socialization. Jeffrey Checkel, in his famous article on social learning and identity change, specifies five conditions “under which agents should be especially open to argumentative persuasion and thus compliance explained by preference change”<sup>74</sup>. For instance, one of the conditions states that argumentation will be more successful in a new environment for the persuadee, another points to the importance of a sense of belonging to the in-group, and two others stress the importance of a deliberative and non-politicized environment as relevant factors conducive to socialization.

While all of these conditions are probably relevant for the study of the normative underpinnings of Russia’s foreign policy, the most important is Checkel’s hypothesis is that “Argumentative persuasion is more likely to be effective when the persuadee has few prior, ingrained beliefs that are inconsistent with the persuader’s message. Put differently, novice agents with few cognitive priors will be relatively open to persuasion”<sup>75</sup>. This condition is linked to historical institutionalism, which stresses the importance of constraints on political actors related to the historical context of decision-making.<sup>76</sup>

Translated into the discussion about Russian political elites, this makes the prospects for the EU-defined socialization even weaker. If the general norms of Russian foreign policy starkly contrast with those of the EU, then strategies derived from

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<sup>73</sup> Pushkov, Alexey. “Putin at the Helm”. In Dov Lynch (ed.) *What Russia Sees. Chaillot Paper* No. 74, January 2005, Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, p. 53.

<sup>74</sup> Checkel, Jeffrey. “Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change”. *International Organization* Vol. 55, No. 3 (Summer 2001), p. 562.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 563

<sup>76</sup> See Thelen, Kathleen. “Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2, June 1999 pp. 369-404; Paul Pierson and Theda Skocpol “Historical Institutionalism in Contemporary Political Science”, Harvard University, 2002, <http://scholar.google.com/url?sa=U&q=http://www.polisci.berkeley.edu/faculty/bio/permanent/Pierson,P/Discipline.pdf>

deliberation or persuasion based on rational arguments cannot succeed. For instance, if Russia's views of international relations rely heavily on states as the basic actors on international stage, it is highly improbable that Moscow would be willing to give up its special ties to key EU member states like Germany, France and Great Britain and replace them with relations to the (from the Russian view) incomprehensible Union. Similarly, if Russia defines herself as a great power different from or even opposite to the West, then we cannot possibly expect her to agree with a one-sided approximation of her legal system to that of the EU, as persuasive and logical as the European Union's arguments may be.

### *Coping with Globalization*

For all their obvious differences, Russia's discourse on sovereignty and EU's discourse on Europeanization have one thing in common: They are two different reactions to the forces of globalization, two different ways to manage ambiguity and global risks that have emerged in the 2000s. In short, the current stage of globalization puts to test the key parameters of modern politics: Sovereignty, stateness and bureaucracy, while the EU and Russia are coming up with their respective responses.

Indeed, globalization is Janus-faced: At first sight it appears to be a force for unification, integration and standardization. It is heralded by the universal spread of free markets and information networks, accompanied by a specifically American face of Western culture ("Coca-Colonization") and legitimized by the acceptance of democracy and Human Rights as universal values. One obvious political corollary of globalization is "de-sovereignization" and the decline of the nation-state as the basic unit of international relations.

But there is the other face of globalization, like international terrorism, global criminal networks, and flows of illegal migrants that necessitate mobilization of the residual powers of nation-states. And finally, there are all sorts of identity movements that emerge by resisting globalization, and yet are themselves invariably global: Chechen separatists, Mexican Zapatistas, and Aum Shinrikyo, just like the anti-globalists themselves, all go online, create global networks and transcend state borders.

The name of the game is globalization versus adaptation (or outright resistance). This collision has been called different names by different authors: The Net and Self (Manuel Castells)<sup>77</sup>; McWorld and Jihad (Benjamin Barber)<sup>78</sup>; and the Lexus and the Olive Tree (Thomas Friedman)<sup>79</sup>. Almost any trend towards unification and integration is offset by the adaptation strategies of nation-states, indigenous cultures, groups and individuals, and by the emergence of various resistance identities:

- De-nationalization, de-sovereignisation and de-bordering are counterbalanced by re-nationalization, the nation-state's reclamation of its inherent monopoly on violence, security and borders.
- Integration (as manifested, for example, by EU enlargement) is counterbalanced by the forces of fragmentation (e.g. in the former Yugoslavia, or in Georgia).
- Global markets' strive towards homogeneity and the universal applicability of neo-liberal strategies is offset by the re-emergence of the nation-state as an anchor of identity and the focal point of cultural resistance to globalization. There is also a clear drive towards greater protectionism and even re-nationalization of strategic industries ("resource nationalism"), as happened recently with the oil industry in Bolivia.
- The Americanization of global culture is met with increasing anti-Americanism, in Europe, Russia and the Third World.
- The rise and fall of the "New Economy" is matched by the heavy weight of the Old Economy, and its main commodity, oil, which is just as important today as it was in the twentieth century. In all likelihood, the importance of hydrocarbons for the economy will grow, even in developed countries, with the attendant global patterns of competition and dependence;

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<sup>77</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Information Age. Economy, Society and Culture*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Benjamin Barber, *Jihad versus McWorld. How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*, New York: Random House, 1996,

<sup>79</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1999.

- The rise of “liberal imperialism” of the West<sup>80</sup> and the promotion of the New World Order (as seen, for example in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq) is met with the increasing force of global terrorism and the threat of “Coming Anarchy” (Robert Kaplan)<sup>81</sup>, while regional instability emerges in Europe’s turbulent neighborhoods.

In all these cases, the key variable, and point of contention, is the role of the nation-state: Is it being fragmented, diminished and dissolved by the forces of globalization, marketization and integration, or is it being reinstated and reinvented by the forces of resistance, localism, protectionism and identity? What strategies of adaptation are available to the nation-state? Does it consolidate sovereignty, enhance stateness and emphasize traditional nationhood, or does it pool sovereignty with other nations, yield to supranational governance and develop new identities?

These questions strike at the heart of the current transformations of the relationship between the EU and Russia. The EU is going through a difficult period of coming to grips with the level of integration achieved by 2007, when the Union expanded to 27 and stood on the verge of becoming a quasi-federative state by adopting a Constitutional Treaty. Debates about the “Old Europe” versus the “New Europe”, the caricature images of the “Polish plumber” stealing jobs in the West, Ukraine’s emerging bid to join the EU and especially the controversy around the idea of including Turkey in the EU have all overstretched and questioned the limits of the European project.

Meanwhile, the Islamic factor came to the fore with the heated debate about headscarves (*hijab*) in French schools in 2004, race riots in major European cities in November 2005, and the imminent threat of Islamic terrorism in Europe following the Madrid and London bombings in 2004-2005. What was previously seen as an external challenge to Europe turned into a domestic social, security and identity issue. With the image of a “clash of civilizations” brought back home, the Turkish bid for EU membership has become even more problematic.

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<sup>80</sup> Robert Cooper, “The New Liberal Imperialism”, *Observer*, 7 April 2002

<sup>81</sup> Robert Kaplan, *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dream of the Post-Cold War*, New York: Vintage, 2001.

Against this background, Europeanization can be seen as the strategy of global risk management. The EU wants to minimize the ambiguity of its external environment (Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, North Africa, energy security) by extending its own bureaucratic norms and regulations. Under the guise of European values, the EU pursues a peculiar kind of *bureaucratic imperialism* that seeks to modify and partially control EU's neighborhood through various instruments like the ENP, the Common Spaces, the Energy Charter, etc. This is a rather old-fashioned strategy of risk management aimed at controlling contingencies rather than adapting to them.

Russia, too, is going through a difficult period of adaptation to global risks that makes it re-define sovereignty and government. During the revolutionary 1990s, the Russian state retreated and shrunk to levels unseen since the Civil War of 1918-1921. At the same time, the country had opened itself to globalization in an unprecedented manner. Ideas of joining the EU and NATO were given serious consideration in the early 1990s, while Russia's regions were allowed, according to President Yeltsin, "to take as much sovereignty as they could swallow". At some points, the situation deteriorated into pure anarchy, as the state lost its monopoly on violence (e.g. Chechnya), and became corrupted by the oligarchs. This was accompanied by social atomization and ideological chaos, with traditional Russian ideas of statehood being marginalized by the ruling liberal ideology.

There was increasingly a quest for order and stability in the late 1990s, which eventually paved the way for the rise of Vladimir Putin. On becoming president on 31 December 1999, he headed Thermidor, a classic counterrevolutionary act, heralding the return of the state. Both of Putin's terms in office have been devoted to rebuilding the Russian state, and to reclaiming lost ground from business elites, civil society, the press and the West.

The State is the key to understanding the Putin phenomenon. Initially, he treated the state as a means of modernizing Russia and for adapting it to globalization: For him, Russia's national idea was 'competitiveness'. Analyzing Putin's agenda back in 2000, Peter Rutland observed that his task

"was to adapt the Russian state to the challenges of the global environment: to "customize" global practices and requirements to suit Russian conditions... All

around the world, national leaders have been struggling to protect vulnerable social groups and preserve national cultures while adapting to the competitive pressures of the global market place. In the East, it led to the opening of China and sparked the “Asian values” debate. In the West, it caused liberals and socialists to embrace free trade and fiscal conservatism. The “Putin enigma” can be understood as part of an arc of political transformation that stretches from Mohammed Mohatir and Deng Xiaoping to Tony Blair and Bill Clinton”<sup>82</sup>.

However, after the YUKOS affair in 2003, and especially after the terrorist act in Beslan in 2004 that prompted a sweeping campaign for centralization, the state for Putin has become an end in itself, a means of preserving power, a self-propelled bureaucratic enterprise. While it is likely that the Putin regime (and probably himself personally) will stay in power after the 2007-2008 elections, the state will most likely remain the key player in determining the future of Russia in the medium-term.

Bringing the state back in and stressing sovereignty, Russia displays a different strategy of global risk management, a bureaucratic-conservative strategy of centralization, aimed at minimizing or excluding external risks (e.g. prohibiting any involvement of the West with Civil Society in Russia, as seen in the infamous NGO law, or in limiting the access of Western companies to key oil and gas deposits like Shtokman and Sakhalin-2).

“Sovereignty” and “Europeanization” are two competing bureaucratic strategies of managing globalization, one aimed at *protecting* internal order, and another aimed at *projecting* internal order. Russia is reinforcing domestic stateness as a conservative means to minimize the ambiguity of global challenges, while the EU projects its domestic structures as a means to manage ambiguity along its periphery. In fact, Russia and the EU have inverted their global roles they have played during the second half of the 20th century, when the USSR sought to export its model, and the EC was inward-oriented, and refrained from any foreign policy initiative. These days, it is vice versa: Russia, for the first time in 500 years, refrains from territorial ambitions and concentrates on domestic

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<sup>82</sup> Peter Rutland, “Putin’s Path to Power”, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 16, no. 4 (December 2000), p. 316.



issues<sup>83</sup>, while it is the EU that turns into a revisionist player and seeks to remodel its neighborhood. Katinka Barysch has called this a “paradigm shift in the EU”:

“Looking internally for the past 50 years, [it is] now turning outwards, seeks to define its role in the world and will see to have more influence on developments within its immediate neighborhood (without, however, ‘internalizing’ that challenge through further enlargement)”<sup>84</sup>.

Both strategies of risk management are essentially modern, aimed at eliminating or minimizing ambiguity (a truly postmodern strategy would have been to integrate and internalize ambiguity in a pluralist way). The modern *modus operandi* is largely explained by the fact that both strategies have bureaucracies at their core that seek to reproduce and reinforce their influence by eliminating difference (Putin’s authoritarian project) or by transforming difference according to one’s own model (the EU’s bureaucratic imperialism). Andrei Makarychev has observed the paradoxical symmetry of political logics in Moscow and in Brussels, quoting to this effect Jef Huysmans’ reasoning that the “most radical form of political articulation is ... a desire to overcome all estrangement– that is, the fact that we have to live with others who are not like us– either by eliminating or radically marginalizing those who are different or by turning those who are different into the same as us”<sup>85</sup>. This is exactly what makes one perceive European and Russian policies as two poles of the same chain of political options, opposing each other but being subsumed to the same political logic<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>83</sup> Russia “attempts a reformulation of the national interest from a spatial definition to a functional definition”. For the first time in Russian history, national interest is not linked to sheer power and territorial control, but rather to domestic reform, prosperity and the efficiency of governance” (Sergei Medvedev, *Rethinking the National Interest. Putin’s Turn in Russian Foreign Policy. Marshall Center Paper* no. 6, Garmisch, 2004, pp. 55-56). At least these are the proclaimed objectives of the Kremlin, and even if in real life the efficiency of governance is falling dramatically, Russia is definitely inward-looking, compared to the Soviet period.

<sup>84</sup> Katinka Barysch, “The future of EU-Russia relations – do we need a new agreement after the PCA?” Notes from the roundtable of December 5-6, 2005 in Potsdam

<sup>85</sup> Jeff Huysmans, “International Politics of Insecurity: Normativity, Inwardness and the Exception”, *Security Dialogue* No. 37 (2006), p. 21.

<sup>86</sup> Andrey Makarychev, *Neighbors, Exceptions and the Political: A Vocabulary of EU-Russia Inter-Subjective (Dis)Connections*, in Michael Emerson (ed.) *The Elephant*

While it is commonplace to list Russia, along with China and India, as the key global players that follow the political script of modernity, the EU, too, for all its alleged political postmodernism, is engaged in a typically modern practice of othering and transforming the Other (or, at a minimum, tolerating the Other), rather than accommodating and integrating difference.

# 4.

## Conclusions

### *An Enduring Stalemate*

The collision of two identity projects, two various concepts of the past and two imaginations of Europe, and most importantly, the clash of two modernist bureaucratic enterprises is a key structural impediment in EU-Russia relations, and a background of recent crises. Thus, the mid-term forecast for EU-Russia relations is not particularly optimistic. Most likely, we are in for a protracted stalemate. The EU-Russian dialogue will be plagued by loose institutions, hollow summits and a bureaucratic tug-of-war. The rhetorical heading of this ambiguous policy setting will be the four “Common Spaces” with their non-obligatory Road Maps. Indeed, new policy documents may appear, like a re-negotiated PCA when the current vetoes are lifted, but, given the long tradition of non-committal EU-Russia paperwork, they will hardly change much.

The key problem will remain the systemic incompatibility between a semi-authoritarian Russia bent on “sovereignty” and “hard power”, and the EU integration machine, with its “bureaucratic imperialism”, which is structurally incapable of accommodating a Russia disinclined to submit itself to Western normative hegemony. Unless significant changes occur in Russia’s internal and external policy, as well as in the EU’s approach to Russia, their relationship will remain stagnant and crisis-prone.

On both sides, policy will lack consistency and cohesion and will be reactive rather than proactive. EU policy towards Russia will be decentralized, and competing visions of Russia will proliferate, from the traditional and personalized approaches of France, Germany and Italy, to the historical mistrust of Russia on the part of new member

states from Eastern Europe. As a result, bilateral policies will come to the fore. A good example is current disagreement within the EU concerning the Nord Stream (North European Gas Pipeline), seen as favoring Germany and other nations of “old” Europe, whilst undermining the position of the East Europeans and the common EU stance vis-à-vis Russia.

Russia, too, lacks a long-term vision of its relations with the EU and will pursue a reactive policy of damage limitation. Moscow will warily watch, and try to counterbalance, EU policies in their joint neighbourhood, considering the potential of Ukrainian and Moldovan membership as a threat to Russian national interests. Meanwhile, it will be happy to explore the benefits of bilateralism trying to exploit internal EU disputes and differences between Europe and the United States (e.g. over Iraq).

Of the areas of cooperation between Russia and the EU, some substance will be left in the economic sphere – if only to solve issues arising from Russian energy and raw materials exports and food imports from the EU, though much of those will be covered in the WTO framework, as Russia is preparing for accession in 2007. Humanitarian issues will be high on the agenda, although these will fade as they lack a solid institutional and legal foundation. Meanwhile, questions of internal and external security will become increasingly contentious, with issues like visas, migration and re-admission, and EU-Russian rivalry in the CIS coming to the fore. This rivalry will be all the more problematic, since Russia has excluded itself from the ENP, which is now seen as aimed against Russia, in an area perceived as Russia’s natural sphere of interest. In fact, many of Russia’s commentators view the ENP as an attempt by Brussels to erect a *cordon sanitaire* on its eastern border, further isolating Russia.

Various types of EU “dimensionalism” (“Northern Dimension”, “Eastern Dimension”) and cross-border regionalism, especially in the peripheral Black Sea, Baltic and Nordic areas might provide some compensation for the decay in the relationship. However, given the current policy setting in Moscow and Brussels, neither of these projects will be given high priority, and different regional initiatives will remain in the same low profile and under-financed condition they have been in for a good part of the past fifteen years.

Time-wise, the gridlock in EU-Russian relations will continue at least through 2008, with no incentives, actors, or political will to break it. Domestic entanglements on both sides will most probably prevent Moscow and Brussels from starting a serious dialogue on the future of their relationship any time soon. Russia is busy with the ongoing change of the guard, with Dmitry Medvedev becoming the President and Vladimir Putin the Prime Minister, and the attendant change of policy elites. In the current atmosphere of uncertainty, no major foreign policy change is likely to be expected during Medvedev's first year in office.

Meanwhile, the EU will be too busy with domestic developments, accommodating the "Big Bang" enlargement with twelve new states (including Romania and Bulgaria in 2007) and re-considering its own institutional format following the signing of the Lisbon Treaty on 13 December 2007. Given these rapidly changing conditions, Russia will not be at the top of the EU's priority list: Rather, it will be viewed as yet another external threat, the impact of which has to be minimized.

In other words, both sides, preoccupied with domestic developments, will see the other's actions as a threat: Russia will see the EU as an "orange" challenge to its internal undemocratic system, whilst the EU will see Russia as a threat to its energy security, democracy promotion and enlargement plans. This naturally leads to a policy of damage limitation on both sides. However, both sides also have to show tolerance and restraint. Moscow has to be tolerated by Brussels for the sake of energy supplies (especially as the North Sea deposits are almost exhausted, the Middle East is becoming increasingly volatile, and Caspian reserves turn out to be overvalued) and global security (weapons of mass destruction, terrorism). Brussels has to be tolerated by Moscow for the sake of energy demand, issues of joint neighborhood, and, in general, because Brussels is an important gateway to the West. Mutual irritation and damage limitation, combined with forced toleration and the need to avoid major crises, leads to the phenomenon of an "enforced partnership" between Russia and the EU<sup>87</sup>, heavy on rhetoric but light on implementation.

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<sup>87</sup> Graeme P. Herd, "Russia and the EU", in Julie Smith and Charles Jenkins (eds.), *Through the paper curtain*, RIIA, 2003.

Looking beyond 2008-2009, change will not come easily. The problem is not of a passing nature, and is not only connected with Russia's authoritarian drift, or with the EU's current travails of enlargement and constitutional reform. Nor does the problem lie in the poor quality of EU-Russian relations, which could be corrected by some good policies and proper documents. Once again, the real issue is the systemic incompatibility of the EU and Russia, which undergo different cycles in the evolution of their spatial governance<sup>88</sup>, display contrasting reactions to globalization and engage in modern rituals of othering.

### ***Recommendations***

A more positive outlook for the EU-Russian partnership requires a mental change on both sides. The Russian elite needs a less isolationist and securitized imagination of the outside world, getting rid of various conspiracy theories and fears of the "orange revolution" coming from the West. In this sense, rather than policies of fear and damage limitation, Russia should be looking for ways to accept the European Other, and for institutionalized forms of cooperation.

The EU, too, will have to do its homework. In particular, the mechanisms of foreign policy-making will have to be detached from the ideology of integration, and from the practice of offering weak derivatives of enlargement as a substitute for a strategy for external relations. Like Russia, the EU foreign policy machine needs to be de-bureaucratized and given a bold political vision, based on Europe's interests, not on "European values", defined in terms of civilization.

The magnitude of change seems all the greater since it involves mechanisms of identity formation. By the mid-2000s, after the accession of the (largely Russophobic)

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<sup>88</sup> According to Andrei Makarychev, "Both Russia and the EU are entities in a state of flux. In Vladimir Kaganski's analysis, Russia herself is an example of unformed space, which needs to be reassembled. Though in a different sense, the EU is far from being based upon a well established spatial structure of governance. Therefore, one may wonder whether the two entities in transition are in a position to constitute a durable set of spatial arrangements." (Andrei S. Makarychev, "The four spaces and the four freedoms: An exercise in semantic deconstruction of the EU discourse", *Nizhny Novgorod Linguistic University Working Paper Series* No. 1-2, p. 43.)

East European nations to the EU and after the “colored revolutions” in the post-Soviet space, the EU and Russia have returned to the opposing positions of constitutive Others in their respective identity projects. Russia’s new Great Power identity is increasingly formed in opposition to the West (e.g. the official state holiday, the National Unity Day, is now 4 November, the day the Poles were expelled from Moscow in 1612, and this holiday has a decidedly anti-Western sound). For Europeans, too, discourses othering Russia are evoked at every opportunity, be it World War Two Victory celebrations in Russia in 2005, the 2006 G8 summit in St. Petersburg, or the Litvinenko poisoning affair later the same year. In this sense, any realistic prospect of an EU-Russian partnership needs a change in identity patterns.

Considering that stagnation in EU-Russian relations will prevail in the short run and that partnership is not likely to occur without systemic political and psychological change in both the EU and Russia, the obvious policy advice is to avoid the structures and rhetoric of partnership, or, indeed, any permanent arrangement, or legally binding framework, for EU-Russian relations. One needs to lower expectations in order to avoid disappointment.

In fact, the question may arise whether the entire complex of interactions between Russia and the European countries is bound by EU-Russian relations, or, indeed, by the heavily bureaucratized dialogue between Moscow and Brussels. EU-Russian relations are too important (one could say existential) to be left to the bureaucracies on either side. Other avenues of dialogue exist, first of all the traditional web of bilateral relationships: Russia-Germany, Russia-France, Russia-Italy, Russia-Finland. Fears that these relationships might ruin a “common” EU approach are groundless since there is no common approach to begin with.

Likewise, dormant regional initiatives, like the EU’s Northern Dimension, as well as the non-EU CBSS and the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation could become useful interfaces for engaging regions, local communities and groups of people across borders. So far, these initiatives have been under-resourced on both sides, but, given the overall loose EU-Russian institutional framework, they should be given a second chance.

The tool kit of EU-Russian relations is clearly not adequate for overcoming the stalemate. Apart from the bilateral and regional diplomacy, some innovative “out-of-the-

box” thinking is needed to jump-start the relationship from its current stasis. This may seem far-fetched, idealistic and politically suicidal for the incumbents, but at some point one has to question the fundamentals which underlie the policy thinking in Moscow and Brussels, namely, “sovereignty” for Russia and “Europeanization” for the EU.

For Russia, problematizing its cherished “sovereignty” (defined in strictly security terms) could mean the abolition of visa requirements for EU citizens, the “unilateral visa disarmament”<sup>89</sup>. This could have a groundbreaking effect on EU-Russian relations, and Brussels will feel obliged to reciprocate, significantly simplifying the Schengen visa regime for Russian citizens, with a view to abolishing visas altogether.

By the same token, Russia and the EU could experiment with the establishment of “pilot regions” along the common border, which could become test grounds for the adaptation of EU legislation and for visa-free exchanges. The first of such regions could be Kaliningrad. The idea of the Kaliningrad enclave assuming the status of an “overseas territory” of Russia was briefly entertained in early 2005, but dumped by the Kremlin, which feared the loss of sovereignty it would entail, and by Brussels, which was unwilling to grant Russia any kind of “exceptionality”. Still, the idea of a voluntary adaptation by parts of Russia of some of the EU *acquis*, not because of pressure from Brussels but for purely pragmatic reasons, merits consideration<sup>90</sup>.

As for the EU, the key problem in its relations with Russia is the “sacred cow” of Europeanization that “offers Russia the option, either of being imperialized within its [Europe’s] folds, or, alternatively, remaining marginalized on the periphery of Europe”<sup>91</sup>. Whether authoritarian or democratic, Russia will never feel comfortable as the subject of a “civilizing”, “educational” discourse. In this sense, “Europeanization” can hardly become a solid foundation for an equal relationship.

By the same token, Russia’s “exceptionality” cannot be a good foundation for EU-Russian relations either, since it will rest on the implicit acceptance of the hegemonic European “norm” within which Russia will not be accepted, but tolerated.

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<sup>89</sup> Robert Skidelsky and Pavel Erochkin, “Unilateral visa disarmament”, *The Moscow Times*, 28 May 2003.

<sup>90</sup> Christer Pursiainen, Sergei Medvedev (eds), *The Kaliningrad Partnership in EU-Russian Relations*. Moscow: RECEP, 2005

<sup>91</sup> Browning, p. 45.



This brings us back to the question of globalization. In adapting to its risks and challenges, Russia and Europe default into traditional modernist discourses. For Russia, the return to “sovereignty” in the 2000s means falling back on the modern origins of Russian statehood of the past five centuries, formed in opposition to the West<sup>92</sup>. Meanwhile, for the EU, “Europeanization” may sound postmodern but in practice means a retreat to an essentially modern teleology of progress and to a colonialist interpretation of Westernness as goodness. In questioning “sovereignty” and “Europeanization,” Russia and Europe will have to go beyond their modern thinking and the rituals of othering and try to accept the Other as a given, rather than something to be opposed or transformed. The result could be Euro-pluralism, a new discursive foundation for a durable EU-Russian partnership.

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<sup>92</sup> Marshall Poe, *The Russian Moment in World History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

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## About the Author

Sergei MEDVEDEV is Professor and Associate Dean at the State University – Higher School of Economics in Moscow. Born in Moscow, he studied at Universities in Moscow, Prague, and New York City, and holds a Ph. D. in history.

In the past 15 years, he has held research positions and professorships in Russia, Germany, Italy and Finland. He specializes in Russian and post-Communist studies, political geography, international relations and cultural anthropology.

Apart from numerous articles, his recent books include: *Good Governance in Europe and Russia* (Moscow, 2008); *EU-Russia Relations: Alternative Futures* (Helsinki, 2006), *The Kaliningrad Partnership in EU-Russia Relations* (Moscow, 2005); *Russia and the West at the Millennium* (Berlin, 2003) and *Mapping European Security After Kosovo* (Manchester, 2002, with Peter van Ham)