

András RÁCZ

EU-Russia Relations:

Confrontation or Cooperation in the 'Common Neighbourhood'?

Abstract

The project intends to analyze a special dimension of the EU-Russia relations, namely the foreign policy approach of the European Union (EU) and Russia towards the Western countries of the 'common neighbourhood', e.g. towards Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. Russia has constantly perceived the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) as a threat from the side of the EU, as an intrusion effort to its own sphere of special interests.

The main argument is that, while the EU has been developing its neighbourhood policy practically since 2003, Russia still did not manage to elaborate a coherent, comprehensive approach to its own 'near-abroad'. Moscow has been managing the core relations with these three countries mostly on a bilateral basis, which naturally has only limited efficiency, if compared to the comprehensive nature of the ENP, and especially of the new Eastern Partnership. On the Russian side the discussion on the elaboration of a 'Russian Neighbourhood Policy' has just been started in the academic sphere, however, no significant policy echoes are visible yet.

Besides, while the EU is a sole actor, the institutional landscape of the Russian-led integration is fragmented, as it is composed of numerous, rather single-issue organizations. The Commonwealth of Independent States has the role of a political coordination forum, possessing limited powers in trade, finance and lawmaking; the Eurasian Economic Community deals with questions of economic cooperation (together with the new Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, signed on the eve of 2010), while the Collective Security Treaty Organization covers security issues. Even the Union State of Belarus and Russia is not a comprehensive one: besides its obviously limited geographic aspect, only its defense sphere is functioning efficiently, together with a few economic and infrastructural projects – moreover, this organization has long been missing its own *finalité* politique.

Following a short introduction on the development of the ENP, the paper analyzes the above mentioned dichotomy between the EU and Russia, starting with an overview of the general Russian perception of the EU Neighbourhood Policy, and especially of its eastern dimension, including the Eastern Partnership. In the next three chapters the state of play of the EU-Russia relations is going to be studied, focusing on Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova individually.

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction
	1.1 Research agenda 1.2 Research focus (by geography): Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova
2.	General political frameworks
	2.1 Development of the EU's neighbourhood policy: initiatives from the ENP Strategy Paper to the 'Eastern Partnership' 2.1.1 Short chronological overview, main documents, main initiatives 2.1.2 Policies outside the ENP framework: crisis management missions, cooperation with WTO, World Bank, etc. 2.1.3 Intensified EU Eastern policy following the war in Georgia 2.2 Russian reactions and counter-action efforts to the EU initiatives 2.2.1 Analysis of the main Russian strategic documents focusing on the relations toward countries of the Western-CIS region: the current and the previous foreign policy concept, the current and the previous security policy doctrine, the Russian strategy on the development of the EU-Russia relations, the strategy towards the CIS-states, the relevant documents of the CIS, CES, EurAsEC, CSTO 2.2.2 Russian policy reactions: from oil price war to real war 2.2.3 Russian approach toward the Eastern Partnership
3.	Belarus: EU and Russian policies
	3.1 The EU and Belarus EU 1992-2006 3.2 Russia and Belarus 1992-2006: from the Common State to the 'oil war' 3.3 The 'half-turn' of the Lukashenko-regime in 2006: balancing between the EU and Russia. From 2006 till the Prague Summit in 2009 3.4 Limited Russian objectives: 'focused integration' instead of the Union State 3.5 The EU as a tolerant 'big brother'
4.	Ukraine
	4.1 The EU and Ukraine 1992-2004: the era of 'multivectorial foreign policy' 4.2 Russia and Ukraine 1992-2004: preserving the illusion of brotherhood 4.3 Disabled by internal instability: the slowdown of the EU-Ukraine relations 4.4 Failed Russian re-integration efforts and the role of the GU(U)AM 4.5 The current stalemate and the ways out of it
5.	Moldova
	5.1 The EU and Moldova 1992-2003: the 'multivectorialism' of Voronin 5.2 Russia and Moldova 1992-2003: instead of settling, rather prolonging the Transnistrian conflict 5.3 Increasing EU commitment vs. decreasing Moldovan enthusiasm. Discrepancies around the ENP Action Plan 5.4 Destructive ways of motivation: Russian policy toward Moldova after 2003
6.	Conclusions and recommendations