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Effects of Contiguity.
The European Union and Russia: the Asymmetry of
Relations.

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Abstract

This paper concentrates on the relations between the EU and Russia. A closer look at these relations shows that one dialogue within them – the energy dialogue – is developing more intensively than the others. This creates an asymmetry in the relations between the two actors. Thus the paper sets out to find the answer to the question, “Why are the EU – Russian relations imbalanced?” The analysis is made within three streams: interdependence, the study of politics and the study of images. Interdependence between the EU and Russia is analysed within the framework of the theory of power and interdependence by Joseph Nye Jr. and Robert Keohane; politics are contrasted using the notions of the governance approach and images are examined through applying the study of images of Robert Jervis in the case of the EU–Russia relations. The paper comes to the conclusion, that the contradictions and ambiguities of politics and images are so big and strong, that the only link that keeps the two actors together is the interdependence link. These are effects of contiguity.

Keywords: EU–Russia relations, asymmetry of relations, interdependence, energy dialogue, polity, image

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Abbreviations

CSP	Country Strategy Paper
ECT	Energy Charter Treaty
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IEA	International Energy Agency
INTAS	The International Association for the Promotion of Co-operation with Scientists from the New Independent States (NIS) of the Former Soviet Union
PCA	Partnership and Co-operation Agreement
RF	Russian Federation
TACIS	Technical Assistance/Aid to the Community of Independent States
TEMPUS	Trans – European mobility scheme for university studies
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
1 The Aim of the Research and its Importance	8
2 The Organisation of the research.....	8
The Outline and Theoretical Background	8
Methodology.....	10
Delimitations	10
1 The Asymmetry of Relations and Interdependence of Russia and the EU	11
1.1 Spheres of Co-operation and the Asymmetry between Them.....	11
1.1.1 The Socio-Cultural Dialogue.....	11
1.1.2 The Political Dialogue.....	12
1.1.3 The Economic Dialogue	13
1.1.4 The Asymmetry	14
1.2 The Interdependence of Russia and the EU	14
1.2.1 The Dependence of Russia on the EU	14
1.2.2 The Dependence of the EU on Russia.....	16
1.2.3 Concepts of Sensitivity and Vulnerability.....	18
2 The Study of Polities.....	20
2.1 Governance of the Polities.....	20
2.1.1 Governance of the EU	20
2.1.2 Governance of Russia.....	22
2.1.3 Contrasts and clashes of the Governance of the EU and Russia	24
2.2 Actorness of the Polities	25
2.2.1 The EU as an Actor	25
2.2.2 Russia as an Actor	26
2.2.3 The Divergence of Actorness	26
2.3 The Role of Culture	26

3 The Study of Images	29
3.1 Identity, Image, and Constructing the ‘Other’	29
3.2 Europe and Russia: Constructing the ‘Other’	29
3.3 The Image of Russia	31
3.3.1 The Image Constructed in Reality among Ordinary People.....	31
3.3.2 The Desired Image and Reality	32
3.4 The Image of the EU	34
3.4.1 The Image Constructed in Reality among Ordinary People.....	34
3.4.2 The Desired Image and Reality	35
Conclusion	37
Appendix I	39
Appendix II	41
Appendix III	43
Appendix IV	45
Appendix V	47
Bibliography	49

List of figures and tables:

Figure 1. Importance of the European market for Russian economy.....	15
Figure 2. The origins of imports into the EU-27	16
Figure 3. Major European Recipients of Russian Natural Gas Exports, 2005	17
Table 1. Governance of the EU and Russia	24

“[The] EU and Russia are still in a state of profound mutual ambiguity. They know that they have to try to make the best of living together in the same European home, but do not yet know how to do it. The partners seem to parody the old Soviet joke from the workplace in the factory: ‘We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us’. The Euro-Ruski variant seems to go like this: ‘We pretend to be converging on common European values and they pretend to be helping us do so’”.

Emerson, Michael, 2005: 1

Introduction

After the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union, the relations of Russia with the outside world had to change and had to be built from the very foundation (though history mattered as well). Nowadays the changes which are taking place in Russia in the last several years have attracted enormous attention from scholars, officials, journalists and ordinary citizens. The attitude of the Russian President towards democratisation and democratic values arises more and more concern in the West:

In the past, in the era of colonialism, colonialist countries talked about their so-called civilizing role. Today, [some countries] use slogans of spreading democracy for the same purpose, and that is to gain unilateral advantages and ensure their own interests.

(Vladimir Putin, cited in Bigg, 2007)

Russia as an actor criticises US politics, puts pressure on the EU concerning new agreements, threatens to break relations with an EU country (example of Estonia's removal of the Bronze soldier statue and the grave of Soviet soldiers on 26th–27th April 2007¹), manipulates oil and natural gas dependants (Ukraine–Russia gas dispute of 2005–2006², and the Russia–Belarus energy dispute³, which influenced the gas and oil supply of the EU greatly), and gets away with it, without being strongly criticised or judged neither by the US, nor by the EU. Thus, a lot of analysts notice that the cooperation between the EU and Russia has developed and is developing with certain asymmetries and peculiarities. Some authors call it simply the “*special relationship*”, (Roberts, 2007: 6-7); others state that the relations between the EU and Russia lack ‘intimacy’ as a result of “the incongruity and a-synchronicity of development of both [European and Russian] civilizations” (Medvedev, 2000: 98). In general, the prevailing opinion is that the relationship between the two sides cannot be called healthy, even and equal, and continues to develop this way.

The dialogue between Europe and Russia started in the beginning of 1990's resulting in the signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1994. It came into force in 1997 and was valid for 10 years. If the new agreement is not signed in 2007, the PCA is simply prolonged automatically. Officially the main strategy for partnership between the EU and Russia is determined at the Summits of Heads of State/Heads of Governments, which take place twice a year. Even the most important for the development of the EU – Russian cooperation Summits do not touch the sensitive subject of human rights and democratic freedoms and values. The Paris Summit in October 2000 established the all-important energy dialogue. At the 2003 Saint Petersburg

¹ See, for example, 2nd Roundup: Estonian move on Soviet memorial sparks Russian wrath. April 26, 2007. Eux.TV – The Europe channel.

² See, for example, Nichol–Woehrel–Gelb, 2006; Stern, 2006; Roberts, 2006; Gazprom to raise gas prices for neighboring countries, Regnum News.

³ See, for example, Russia-Belarus oil row hits supplies to EU countries, January 9, 2007; Konończuk, 2007.

Summit the partnership between the EU and Russia was decided to be developed within 4 ‘common spaces’: a common economic space; a common space of freedom, security and justice; a common space of external security and a common space of research and education (Europa Web “The EU’s Relations With Russia”; Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2007-2013 Russian Federation; De Wilde– Pellon, 2006: 121)⁴. The Moscow Summit in May 2005 resulted in the creation of the Road Maps for implementation of the ‘common spaces’ in the short and medium run.

The three dialogues (socio-cultural, political and economic) will be under attention in this paper. Even a brief look at the development of these dialogues gives a picture of a more intense interaction in the economic sphere (rather the energy dialogue within it), whereas the other two are left far behind. It makes the relations between the countries imbalanced. In this paper this imbalance will be referred to as the ‘*asymmetry in the relations*’ between the EU and Russia.

1 The Aim of the Research and its Importance

This paper will study the asymmetry of the relations between the EU and Russia, trying to find the reasons which underlie its existence. Thus the main question of the paper is

“Why are the EU – Russian relations imbalanced?”

From security reasoning, it is essential to deeply understand the essence of the EU – Russian relations. The answer to the question “Why does the asymmetry exist?” might help both the EU and Russia to better understand each other and their relations. Continuation of the study might as well encourage and shape the further development of this extremely important relationship to a new level of more even cooperation in all spheres, thus making the relations healthier. All the recent events make the research up-to-date, relevant and of current importance for international relations.

2 The Organisation of the research

The Outline and Theoretical Background

The analyses of the asymmetry of relations between the EU and Russia will be held within three parts: Chapter 1 — “*The Asymmetry of Relations and Interdependence of Russia and the EU*”, Chapter 2 — “*The Study of Politics*”, and Chapter 3 — “*The Study of Images*”.

Chapter 1 will look at the asymmetry of relations between the EU and Russia more closely, and then proceed to the interdependence of Russia and the EU which is determined in the most developed dialogue – economic and energy dialogue – which creates the asymmetry. The study of the interdependence will be analysed within the framework of the theory of power and interdependence by Joseph Nye Jr. and Robert Keohane (Keohane–Nye, 1987; Keohane–Nye, 1998; Keohane–Nye, 2000; Keohane–Nye, 2001; Michalak, 1979; Rogerson, 2000).

⁴ In this paper they will be divided into three dialogues: socio-cultural, political and economic.

According to Joseph Nye Jr. and Robert Keohane, “*dependence* means a state of being determined or significantly affected by external forces. *Interdependence*, most simply defined, means *mutual* dependence” (Keohane – Nye, 2001: 7). Complex interdependence emerges when military power becomes less effective and less needed; when interstate relations are accompanied by transgovernmental and transnational links; and when the issues of the relations “are not arranged in a clear or consistent hierarchy” (Keohane – Nye, 2001: 21). Thus, the complex interdependence is present in the context of the complex reality of the information age and globalisation. The discussion on the characteristics of EU–Russia interdependence will be held in Chapter 1. The concepts of *sensitivity* – amenability of costs to the effects from the outside before policies are changed to influence the situation (Keohane – Nye, 2001: 10-17) – and *vulnerability* – “actor’s liability to suffer costs imposed by external events even after policies have been changed” (Keohane – Nye, 2001: 11) – will be added to the analyses of the EU – Russia case.

It will be argued that there are other factors that influence asymmetrical relations, besides the interdependence between the EU and Russia. Thus, Chapter 2 will proceed to the comparison of the EU and Russia as polities. The systemic and cultural differences between the two entities will be proved to be crucial for the underdevelopment of the socio-cultural and political dialogues. The governance approach will be used for handling the analyses, one of the main ideas of which is that “polity determines politics and policy” (Jachtenfuchs – Kohler-Koch, 2004: 101).

The ambiguity found between the EU and Russia while analysing the polities will be challenged by the study of images. Thus, Chapter 3 will move on to analysing the images of both the EU and Russia which will be made through applying the study of images of Robert Jervis (Jervis, 1976; Jervis, 1989; Jervis, 1999; Jervis, 2002;) and the studies of constructing the ‘other’ by Iver Neumann (Neumann, 1996; Neumann, 1997; Neumann, 1999) and Bo Petersson (Petersson, 2001; Petersson, 2006) to the case of the EU – Russia relations. It will be proven that the neglect of the importance of images might change the understanding of the relations and lead to wrong conclusions and actions by the actors. The differences between the “desired images” and “constructed in reality images” will be shown and how this divergence influences the relations between the EU and Russia will be analysed.

The idea of the importance of images for understanding and building the relations between states originates from the notion that any individual’s doings “cannot be explained without some reference to or assumptions about their views about the nature of the world” (Jervis, 1989: 4)⁵. Thus, the perception and an image of the other actor influences the types of policies and strategies that are being taken: “[T]he image of a state can be a major factor in determining whether and how easily the state can reach its goals” (Jervis, 1989: 6). Robert Jervis introduces the notions of signals and images as the main elements of image-building, where

signals are statements or actions the meanings of which are established by tacit or explicit understandings among actors. ... signals are issued mainly to influence the receiver’s image of the sender. ... They do not contain inherent credibility. (Jervis, 1989: 18, 20-21)

⁵ For example, Harold and Margaret Sprout argue that the decisions must be understood in terms of the decision-makers’ “psychological environment” – their beliefs about the world and other actors (Sprout–Sprout, 1957: 311), their “estimate of the situation” (Sprout–Sprout, 1957: 319).

and *indices* are statements or actions that carry some inherent evidence that the image projected is correct because they are believed to be inextricably linked to the actor's capabilities or intentions.

(Jervis, 1989: 18, 26)

After thorough analyses of the asymmetry of relations between the EU and Russia, the paper will come to the conclusion that the images and politics of the EU and Russia are very different and ambiguous, which makes it more and more hard for the two actors to communicate, thus the only link that prevents them from breaking apart is the interdependence.

Methodology

Different methods of research will be undertaken for different parts of the paper, as all parts can not be studied the same way. Thus, for analysing the interdependence and sensitivity/vulnerability of the actors, a qualitative evaluation of statistical data of imports – exports and budget estimates of the two sides of the relationship will be used. The study of politics is complicated by the problem of lack of transparency on the higher levels of political circles. Thus, the second part will include the analysis of secondary sources.

In order to analyse the signals the two actors can make, speeches and documents will be analysed: the qualitative analysis of a number of speeches (see Appendix V) will be made. For understanding the construction of images of one side in the eyes of normal citizens of the other, opinion polls will be used as a base. Due to certain research problems (such as the impossibility to find any opinion polls among EU citizens on their opinions and attitudes towards Russia), the surveys were conducted by the author (in collaboration with a colleague from Moscow State University) among the EU citizens, as well as among the Russian citizens. The data will not be treated statistically/quantitatively, as the data collected can not be considered representative and random, thus the research results will be used for qualitative analysis and rather illustrative purposes (for more technical details about the surveys see Appendix I – IV).

Delimitations

As the topic of the paper is rather vast and difficult to investigate, there are several delimitations that should be made. *First*, the EU will be referred to as the Union in a whole, as the analyses of the bilateral relations of Russia with separate EU countries would complicate the research and be unnecessary for the main purpose of the paper: finding the reasons of the asymmetries of the *EU–Russia* relations, as the bilateral relations might be more or less asymmetrical. *Second*, studying the images of the EU and Russia, the image of the EU is treated as an image of one polity, not of different countries. Moreover, as the image of Russia might be very different within different countries of the EU, it will only complicate the research of studying them separately, thus the compound, general, aggregated image is taken. *Third*, studying the images is strongly intertwined with studying of identities and self-identities, but for the reasons of shortness of this paper (rather not shortness but the impossibility to write about everything) and not much relevance for the research, the author chose not to complicate the research with study of identities as well.

1 The Asymmetry of Relations and Interdependence of Russia and the EU

Chapter 1 combines the Four Common Spaces (Country Strategy Paper RF (CSP) 2007-2013: 3) into three dialogues and analyses them one by one in order to illustrate the asymmetry in detail: what is it and how is it happening. Next, one of them – the economic and energy dialogue – is examined more closely in terms of interdependence.

1.1 Spheres of Co-operation and the Asymmetry between Them.

There are three spheres of co-operation which can be identified: *socio-cultural* which consists of all developments within the Common Space of Research and Education; *political* which could be described by all the actions within the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice and the Common Space of External Security; and the *economic dialogue*, which includes all actions towards the common economic space and within which the energy dialogue is outstanding.

1.1.1 The Socio-Cultural Dialogue

The socio-cultural dialogue is shaped around several spheres: cooperation in research and technology, cooperation in education and popularization of culture. Russian scientists have world fame for being good researchers and possessing ‘know-how’⁶. But nowadays Russia lacks the capacity for developing technology and deep research. Thus the cooperation with the European states in the area of research capacity could be a great opportunity for Russian, as well as European science in some areas.

Despite all measures and funding, the frameworks for research and development, such as TEMPUS, Erasmus Mundus and the Youth Programme remain unknown. Within the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Development including INTAS⁷ the “Russian organizations are participating in 80 research projects together with Western European partners” (Delegation of European Commission to Russia Official Web-site. Areas of co-operation. Science and Technology.

⁶ Especially in “theoretical physics, plasma physics, mathematics, nanotechnologies and nanosciences, aerospace, nuclear science and some areas of biology” (Delegation of European Commission to Russia Official Web-site. Areas of co-operation. Science and Technology. http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/p_227.htm)

⁷ INTAS – “The International Association for the Promotion of Co-operation with Scientists from the New Independent States (NIS) of the Former Soviet Union. Association formed by the European Community, European Union Member States and like-minded countries to promote East-West scientific co-operation between INTAS members and INTAS-NIS partner countries” (INTAS official web site. <http://www.intas.be/>).

http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/p_227.htm), which is not a big number for the quantity of Russian scientists and research organizations.

Within the TEMPUS programme which manages co-operation between the European and Russian Universities in personnel training and exchange, there are only 17 Joint European Projects, only one of which is active nowadays (Delegation of European Commission to Russia Official Web-site. Areas of co-operation. Higher education. http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/ru/p_500.htm). The Erasmus Mundus Programme is not known, and of course is not as widespread as the Erasmus Programme is in Europe. There are certain institutional problems: though Russia has joined the Bologna Process and confirmed her aspirations to reform the education system, there are still a plenty of inconsistencies between the Russian and all European countries' educational standards.

The last aspect of the socio-cultural dialogue is co-operation in cultural matters, which consist mainly of "Film festivals" (which do not have wide publicity), "Culture weeks" in different cities of Russia and Europe, some concerts and exhibitions. Besides, it is stated that one of the objective of the cultural co-operation is

[t]o strengthen and enhance the European identity on the basis of common values, including freedom of expression, democratic functioning of the media, respect for human rights including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity as a basis for vitality of civil society in Europe without dividing lines.

Europa Web. The EU's relations with Russia.

The so-called "common values" are not so common for Russia, what is proven by the 'not-so-free' media, minority rights violation in Chechnya and, for example, violent suppressions of meetings and protests in Moscow and Saint Petersburg in April 2007, when "hundreds were arrested and dozens hospitalized" (Democracy à la russe, 2007. The Economist). But despite all this, the "common values" or their promotion in Russia is not included in most of the agreements on co-operation between the EU and Russia. As well as the new Road Map for the Four Common Spaces does not mention any cultural or democratic values, nor their promotion, nor the respect for human rights, nor the more democratic press and media (CSP RF 2007-2013: 45-47). Thus, the declared objectives of the cultural co-operation do not match the reality: in practice the EU remains silent about the "common values". This silence is fundamentally intertwined with the political dialogue.

1.1.2 The Political Dialogue

The "common values" discussed above could be also seen as a part of the political dialogue, or the absence of the discussion about them as a part of the absence of the political dialogue. This dialogue is mainly shaped around the process of 'visa facilitation', started during the Sochi Summit in May 2006 with the signing of the agreement on May 25, 2006 (Europa Web. The EU's relations with Russia) which would provide "minor changes to the rules for issuing visas, simplifying procedures for certain categories of citizens on both sides" (Roberts, 2007: 41). The discussions about the fight with terrorism and concerning weapons of mass destruction (WMD) are also of high interest, as well as the rather shallow co-operation on 'border issues', human trafficking, fight against drugs and money laundering (Europa Web. The EU's relations with Russia). But when it comes to conflict resolution, to the discussion of the so-called 'frozen conflicts' of Transdnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh and of the Chechen republic, the floor becomes slippery. With these subjects *the dialogue becomes*

too sensitive to talk about it out loud and face to face. Moreover, the problem of “common values” comes into the light again: “Europeans have not been reticent to *raise* questions about Russia’s commitment and ability to uphold core universal and European values and pursue democratic reforms” [emphasis added](Roberts, 2007: 38). But these questions have not been asked.

Co-operation within the sphere of justice and the rule of law could be characterized by the superficial agreements without a clear aim or plan of realization of the goals set. The high level of corruption and the lack of vertical and horizontal accountability and transparency give little chance for judicial reform, which is supposed to “ensure the *independence and the effectiveness of the judiciary* in the EU Member States and Russia based on the rule of law” (CSP RF 2007-2013: 44). But judicial reform still remains mainly on paper and in words, rather than in deeds.

1.1.3 The Economic Dialogue

This is the only dialogue out of the three outlined is discussed and becomes more institutionalised, though with rather vague steps as well: the economic dialogue. Despite the fact that “the road map is less precise than the PCA about progress toward a free trade area” (Roberts, 2007: 42), there are some important bilateral agreements on steels and textiles⁸, the negotiations for the Agreement on Fisheries are ongoing, the negotiations on Russia’s accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has already finished; and nothing in the economic sphere is developing better than the energy dialogue, which was established in 2000. While the EU insists on the adoption and ratification of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) and its Transit Protocol, the relations on energy matters are supervised by the vague road map and bilateral agreements.

Nevertheless, the 50–page long Document on Road maps (EU-Russia: Road map for the 4 Common Spaces), of which 20 pages are devoted to the economic dialogue, does not have a single one actual mention of the term “*free trade*”, even in the long term perspective. The CSP RF 2007–2013 mentions it once in the following context:

Thus the Federal Government [Russian] has emphasised its desire for closer ties with the EU, and the gradual establishment of the Common Economic Space should bring closer the ultimate goal of a free trade area.

CSP RF 2007–2013: 10

Thus, the Russian government is insisting on “equal treatment”, hoping for the creation of the free–trade area, while the EU is purposefully trying to avoid using the “free trade” expression and thus give false promises, getting itself in some kind of a rhetorical entrapment. Instead the vague terms ‘harmonisation’ and ‘convergence’ are used throughout the documents, and it remains unanswered, who is harmonizing what and to what? In general, the economic, or may be it is better to say the energy dialogue is much more institutionalized, frequent and practical, comparing to the other dialogues⁹.

⁸ The Textiles Agreement was concluded in 1998. The Steel Agreement is renewed every year. (Europa Web. The EU’s relations with Russia. http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/russia/intro/)

⁹ For example, the latest meeting of the Russian Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko and Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs took place on the 26th of April 2007 in Brussels, where the parts agreed on the restructuring the EU–Russia energy dialogue thematic groups. Before that the Minister and Commissioner met at the European Council on March 9th 2007 (Europa Press Releases. EU and Russia restructure their energy dialogue with three new working groups).

1.1.4 The Asymmetry

The dialogue between the EU and Russia is becoming more and more frequent comparing to co-operation between the EU and other actors (Lynch, 2005: 25); but this dialogue discusses mainly the Russian exports of gas and oil, its amount and new projects, like the new Baltic pipeline “North Transgas”. Moreover, if one looks at the main documents within the discussed relationship, almost 180 pages of the PCA and, for example, the Communication from the Commission on the relations with Russia in 2004 (COM (2004) 106) cover mostly economic and trade matters – in rather vague form, without giving the precise details and strategies. More recent documents, like the CSP RF 2007–2013 and the Road map for the 4 Common Spaces try to cover all 4 Common spaces, but in a very vague way again: for example, the ‘frozen conflicts’ are not named, the official text can not go beyond the use of the “regions adjacent to the EU and Russian borders” (EU-Russia: Road map for the 4 Common Spaces: 32, 34, 39). Moreover, there is only an objective to generally secure these ‘adjacent regions’, without any strategy, on how *exactly* to co-operate.

Thus, the vivid example of the asymmetrical development of relations could be seen even in official documents. When it comes to political affairs, the dialogue becomes too sensitive: neither of the actors is speaking out loud, or may be they simply do not want to? This rather ambiguous relationship seem to satisfy both the EU and Russia:

The four common spaces are indeed a manifestation of the “proliferation of the fuzzy”.

Emerson, 2005: 3

This is the dilemma of special relationships; they tend to produce second-best or shallow preliminary agreements. Not even growing *economic and energy interdependence* is encouraging Brussels or Moscow to rethink the current paradigm in favor of a deeper commitment to more substantial arrangements [emphasis added].

Roberts, 2007: 48

All in all, the relationship between the EU and Russia is not developing evenly in all spheres. Now the research will turn to the sphere, which renders relations more and more uneven and creates the “economic and energy interdependence”.

1.2 The Interdependence of Russia and the EU

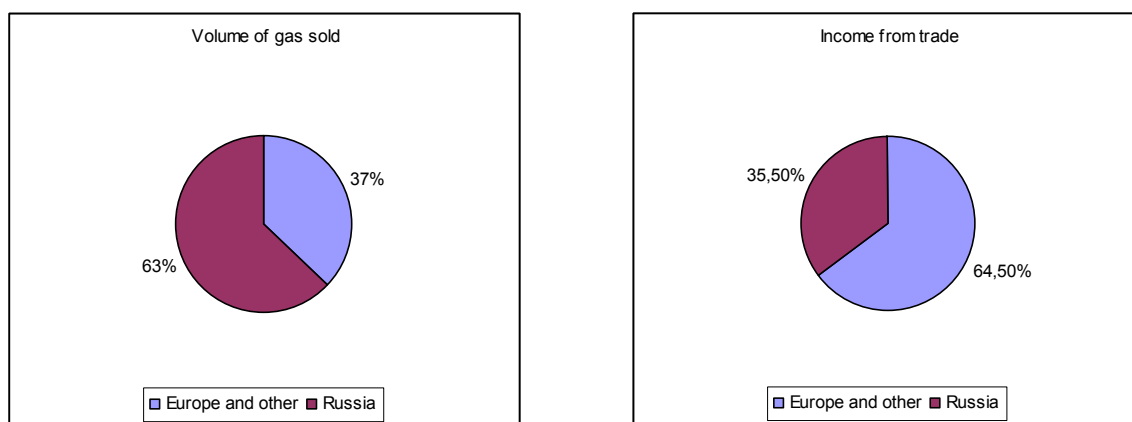
1.2.1 The Dependence of Russia on the EU

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newly born Russian Federation was submerged into the political chaos, economic decline, huge wave of inflation and the necessity to radically reform the economic, political and legal systems. Factories were closing, shelves in the stores were empty and people discouraged. At that time Russia chose to count on rich oil and gas resources and massive imports of food and other goods. The major crisis of 1998 did not wait to happen, when the prices for oil reached their lowest mark in 30 years: the GDP decreased by 6%. It took the Russian economy and ordinary people several years to recover. But nevertheless, the lesson was not learned: the Russian Government still counts on raw materials, oil and gas. Especially with the high prices for oil worldwide, Russia is tempted to earn “easy money” by selling oil and gas (“petrodollars” or “*neftedollary*” in Russian).

To make it more clear, the economic data should be used to illustrate, how much does Russia depend on the oil, fuel and gas exports. In general, the EU today accounts for 48.6% of Russia's foreign trade (Karaganov – Bordachev – Guseinov – Lukyanov – Suslov, 2005: 5). 35.3% of GDP forms through export of goods and services (The World Bank statistics. Russian Federation at a glance), while 65–67.6% of all Russian exports are oil, fuel and gas (Economic structure. Country Profile: Russia. The Economist Intelligence Unit; The World Bank statistics. Data and statistics for the Russian Federation. Macroeconomic Indicators). Some elementary calculations of this data lead us to the following conclusion: the *contribution of the energy exports to GDP of Russia is around 24%*. According to Christian Cleutinix, the European Commission Coordinator of the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue, and the European Commission, the Russian exports to the EU-25 are 63% of all oil exported and 65% of all gas exported (Presentation of Christian Cleutinix, October 2005). Thus, it is possible to make a rough estimation that *15% of Russian GDP depends on exporting oil and gas to the EU*¹⁰.

At first glance this share of EU exports in GDP does not seem to be big enough to claim that Russia depends on EU. But there is another side of the story, which can change the picture radically. Taking into consideration the data for Gazprom¹¹ incomes, we can see that out of all gas production only 37% is exported (mainly to Europe), but these 37% bring almost 65% of income (see Figure 1). Thus, Russian internal usage and trade of energy (gas in this case) gives much less profit if any at all, and is extremely inefficient¹².

Figure 1. Importance of the European market for Russian economy. Sales and income of Gazprom.



Source: Presentation of Christian Cleutinix, Novembre 2006

¹⁰ These numbers might be slightly different if to take into consideration the new member states of the EU – Romania and Bulgaria, but the difference is not crucial, as these countries are not the biggest consumers of Russian oil and gas.

¹¹ Gazprom is a monopolistic Russian company and the biggest extractor of natural gas in the world, which is cherished by V.Putin as a “sole exporter of gas” of Russia (A bear at the throat, 2007. The Economist). It accounts for about 93% of Russian natural oil production and owns 16% of world's gas reserves. <http://www.gazprom.ru/eng/>

¹² The energy intensity of gas consumption in Russia is 23 times bigger than in the EU (though the EU is more than 3 times the population of Russia), and 7 times bigger in electricity consumption (Presentation of Christian Cleutinix, November 2006;). Even if to take into consideration the severe climate conditions on the biggest part of the Russian Federation, the difference in consumption is still shocking.

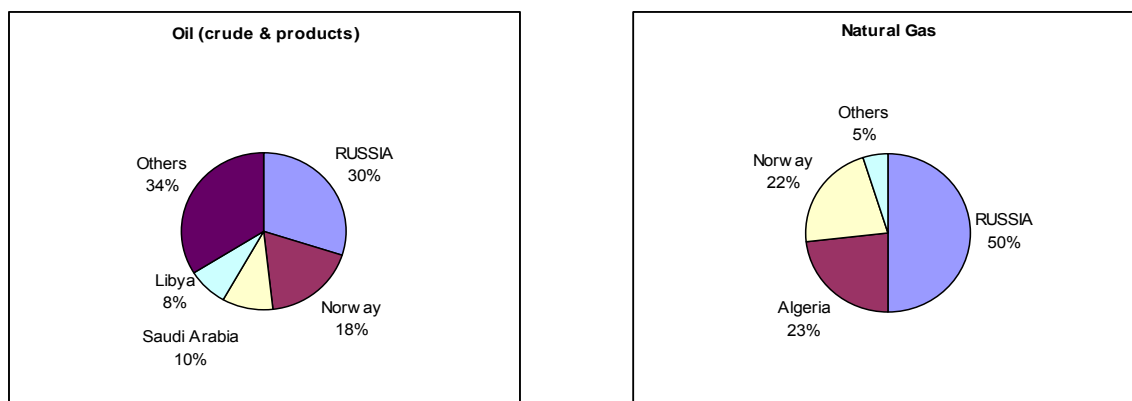
The dependence of Russia on oil and gas becomes more and more important if to take into consideration the World Natural Resources Reserves data: only 6% of all world oil reserves belong to Russia and 26% of gas, but still Russia relies so much on them (Presentation of Christian Cleutin, Novembre 2006). According to the World Bank statistics the GDP growth of Russia has been between 5,1–7,3% from 1999 to 2006 (The World Bank statistics. Data and statistics for the Russian Federation. Macroeconomic Indicators). This growth mostly depended on the oil and gas prices in the world. Meanwhile, some scientists predict that in the forthcoming years the growth of GDP in Russia might reduce to 4,8–5,0% (The World Bank statistics. Russian Federation at a glance). In this situation, the Russian Government still relies on the energy sector.

Analysing the dependence of Russia on energy export, it should be pointed out that there are strong dependence links not only with the EU, but as well with the neighbouring countries, which are involved in transferring gas and oil to the countries of the EU, namely Ukraine and Belarus. These countries play a very important role as the ‘connecting-link’ between the EU and Russia in their energy supplies. Not only Russia depend on these countries: the EU’s dependence is crucial as well.

1.2.2 The Dependence of the EU on Russia

It is a great mistake to look only at the dependence of the Russian state’s budget and GDP on Europe, the other side of the story is the dependence of the European Union on the natural resources (oil and gas) imported from Russia. The statistical data speaks for itself: almost one third of the oil imports and half of natural gas imports into the EU originate from Russia (see Figure 2). This means that Russia provides 20% of the total consumption of gas in the EU (Khaytun, 2006) and 25% of oil (EU-Russia Energy Dialogue. April 24, 2007. AurActiv).

Figure 2. The origins of imports into the EU-27

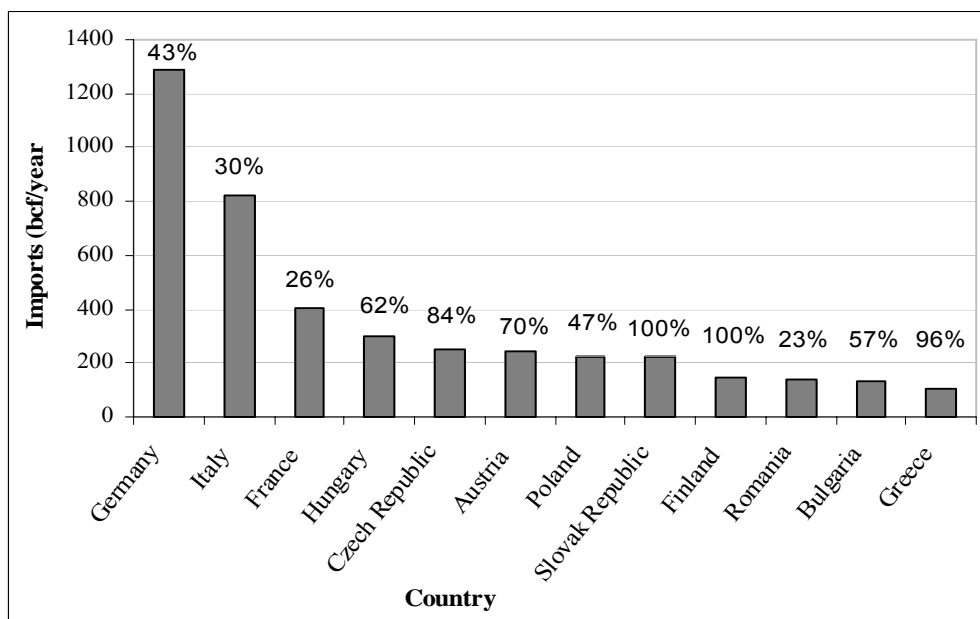


Source: Presentation of Christian Cleutin, Novembre 2006; Presentation of Christian Cleutin, October 2005.

However, the situation of dependence is very different in various countries, as some of the EU states do not depend on Russian gas at all, whereas others fully depend on it¹³ (see Figure 3).

¹³ For example, the dependency on Russian gas of such countries as Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland is 100%, whereas Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and

Figure 3. Major European Recipients of Russian Natural Gas Exports, 2005



Source: DOE. EIA. Country Analysis Briefs. Russia. Natural Gas. April 2007.

The general dependency of the EU on Russian energy turns out to be around 34-40% (DOE. EIA. Country Analysis Briefs. Russia. April 2007). This number increases worries of the EU officials and creates a need to encourage a new agreement with Russia, which would ensure transparency, safety and at least some guarantees in energy dialogue. The Ukrainian – Russian gas dispute in 2005 – beginning of 2006 showed how sensitive the European Union is (at least in the short run) to any changes in the Russian policy and decisions¹⁴. The story somewhat repeated in 2006 – 2007 with the Belarus – Russian energy dispute, which was complicated by the dispute for oil¹⁵. This controversy however did not have a major impact on the European countries (not like the gas supplies the year before that), as each country, a member of the International Energy Agency (IEA), has to have 90-days emergency reserves. Nevertheless, both of these cases give the clear understanding, that the EU depends not solely on Russian decision making, but on the Ukrainian and Belorussian as well¹⁶. At the same time,

Russian-Belarusian negotiations on gas and oil have also proven that not only is a gas customer dependent on the deliveries, but also the supplier is dependent on a transit country.

Konończuk, 2007: 8

United Kingdom do not depend on Russian gas at all (US Department of Energy (DOE). Energy Information Administration (EIA). Country Analysis Briefs. Russia. Natural Gas. April 2007). At the same time, the biggest economy in the EU – Germany – though being the biggest importer of Russian gas (1291 bcf/year), is not the most dependant on it – only by 43% (see Figure 1)

¹⁴ The Ukrainian cutoff of gas by Gazprom in January 2006 for 4 days influenced the gas supply to such countries as Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Austria, Italy, France and Germany (the supply decreases were different from one country to another: from around 24 to 33%). (DOE. EIA. Country Analysis Briefs. Russia. Maps. April 2007)

¹⁵ The sides managed to reach the agreement on gas before the ‘Moscow threatened deadline’ – the 1st of January. Whereas the oil dispute ended with cutoff of Russian oil supplies to Belarus for 3 days in January 2007 and hard negotiations.

¹⁶ In theory Russia gets the profit out of the co-operation with the EU, and thus is expected to act rational, unlike the transit countries, which are not the primary recipients of profit in these relations, and can not be expected to be rational.

The disputes between Russia and its neighbours showed Europe the rough tactics the Russian government is ready to undertake to reach its goals, hence the EU becomes more and more worried because of its dependency on Russian gas and oil. In this light the concepts of sensitivity and vulnerability of the EU and Russia become of crucial importance.

1.2.3 Concepts of Sensitivity and Vulnerability

Both the EU and Russia are rather sensitive towards any changes in the policies of the other part. In the worst case scenario of breaking the relations, both actors would lose radically. Thus, each side of this partnership is definitely sensitive to any changes or events happening within the other, and the level of sensitivity, as it is defined by Joseph Nye Jr. and Robert Keohane, might be somewhat the same. The vulnerability makes the difference. As Nye and Keohane put it, “[the] vulnerability rests on the relative availability and costliness of the alternatives that various actors face” (Keohane–Nye, 2001: 11). In order to analyse the vulnerability of Russia and the EU, it is useful to try to make a prognosis, whether both actors have any other variants of getting gas and oil (in case of the EU) and profits and investments (in the case of Russia).

First, does the EU have other options to provide imports of gas and oil? As it was mentioned before, Russia possesses only 6% of world’s oil and 26% of gas, while the biggest reserves of both gas and oil are in the Middle East (40,8% and 63,3% respectively) (Presentation of Christian Cleutin, October 2005). The Middle East geographically is not further from the EU than Russia is. One can argue that it is a difficult region where a lot of investments are needed in order to develop the capacities. Co-operation with the countries of the Middle East would never be simple, but if one takes into account the worst case scenario of the relations with Russia breaking down (the scenario of confrontation), these relations would definitely not be any more difficult than contacts with Russia. Thus, the EU is definitely sensitive to the changes of Russian policies, but the level of vulnerability is rather arguable. It should be compared to the vulnerability of Russia towards the change in the relations with the EU and halting of trade (as a worse scenario).

It is a mistake for governments in the West to believe that they need Russian energy supplies more than Russia needs the oil and gas revenue that comes from Western markets. Russia does not have the capital or technology to develop its vast energy fields without assistance from the West.

(Smith, 2006: 2)

Europe as a whole and the EU in particular is the wealthiest neighbour of Russia, thus Russia would have rather noticeable difficulties in finding another partner which would be ready to buy as much gas and oil and for the same price. The United States, which is the biggest world consumer of oil, might be interested in tighter co-operation, but transaction costs might be very high. Japan might be the only wealthy country in the neighbourhood of Russia, which does not possess many natural resources by itself. But at present it survives perfectly well without Russian gas, importing most of its gas from Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Qatar and the EAE (DOE. EIA. Country Analysis Briefs. Japan. Natural Gas. December 2006). The only possible options would be China, Mongolia and other countries of Asia, which probably would never make as profitable a

partnership as the EU¹⁷. As Sergei Medvedev says, “[to] put it bluntly, if Russia turns away from the West, she has nowhere else to go, economically or politically” (Medvedev, 2000: 72).

[In] this mutually dependent relationship the EU is not quite mutually dependent. Russia really has nowhere else to sell its gas and certainly no other such rich market. The EU by contrast has the financial capacity to make other arrangements. There is in fact plenty of gas in the world, it can be shipped in by LNG and alternative fuels to gas can be employed. The EU acting in concert has the means to offer Russia a convincing powerful future for its gas industry. However, it also has the means, if Russia refuses the offer to walk away and to reduce Russia to the supplier of last resort.

(Riley, 2006: 8)

Thus, the EU, though vulnerable, seems to be less vulnerable to changes than Russia. As J. Nye and R. Keohane argue, “the ability of the less vulnerable to manipulate or escape the constraints of an interdependent relationship at low cost is an important source of power” (Keohane – Nye, 1998). But we definitely cannot observe the ‘*manipulation*’ from the side of the EU, rather the opposite: EU officials are very delicate and *polite* while Russia undertake such moves as cutting off the gas in Ukraine. As Nye and Keohane continue their argument, saying that the limits of the interdependence between one more vulnerable and one less vulnerable actor are that it “by itself cannot explain bargaining outcomes” (Keohane–Nye, 2001: 16). Thus, there are *other factors* that influence asymmetrical relations, besides the interdependence between the EU and Russia.

In the very end of this part of the paper, it is important to define the interdependence between the EU and Russia more precisely. Taking the “complex interdependence” as a starting point (as this type of interdependence is peculiar to the age of globalisation and information), we can notice that the EU–Russian interdependence lacks some of the essential characteristics of “complex interdependence”: multiple channels are not very well developed between the EU and Russia (though they do exist to some extent); the energy issue is the main subject of co-operation and interdependence, thus the hierarchy of issues *does exist*; and military force remains important for Russia. But as Nye and Keohane argue, though the information age developed the links and channels between the actors,

[military] force still plays a significant role in relations between states, and in a crunch, security still outranks other issues in foreign policy. ... [Outside] the democratic zone of peace, the world of states is not a world of complex interdependence. In many areas, realist assumptions about the dominance of military force and security issues remain valid.

(Keohane – Nye, 1998)

The contradictions between the real-life EU–Russia interdependence and the ideal type of the information age “complex interdependence” brings us to the conclusion that Russia does not fit in the circle of the “democratic zone of peace”. This raises the question: what kind of interdependence and relationship in general can develop *between* the “democratic zone of peace” and its outside? This turns the paper to the discussion of the EU and Russia as polities.

¹⁷ For example, China insists on the price of 40 dollars per cubic meter (Khramchikhin, 2006)

2 The Study of Politics

The “democratic zone of peace” (Keohane – Nye, 1998) or “democratic peace” understood in the sense it was introduced by Kant, is referred today by many scientists to the European Union, where already 27 nations peacefully coexist, and moreover cooperate and unite on many topics. This polity has not much in common with the traditional Russian statehood and understanding of the world.

Why is the study of politics important? Following the argument of Markus Jachtenfuchs and Beate Kohler-Koch that “*polity determines politics and policy*” [emphasis added] (Jachtenfuchs – Kohler-Koch, 2004: 101), we can argue that the relations between the EU and Russia depend a lot on what kind of politics they are.

The politics of the EU and Russia will be analysed within three dimensions: governance, actorness and culture. The *governance*¹⁸ is referred to the political structure, the regime type and decision-making. Discussion of the *actorness* will include the analyses of the EU as a collective actor on the world arena in general and in the relations with Russia in particular: can the EU as a polity be defined as a collective actor in these relations or do the interests of member states still play the most important part in shaping the policies? Within the *cultural paradigm* the values, political culture and historical backgrounds will be analysed.

2.1 Governance of the Politics.

2.1.1 Governance of the EU

There are several distinctive features of the governance of the European Union. *First of all, the EU is a multi-level governance polity.* The EU consists of 27 member states and their role in the existence of the EU is crucial. This paper concentrates on the governance approach in order to better characterise the EU as a polity, using the multi-level governance model (Caporaso, 1996; Caporaso – Keeler, 1995; Hooghe, 1996; Hooghe – Marks, 2001; Jachtenfuchs – Kohler-Koch, 2004; Scharpf, 1994), which states that the EU is a polity, “in which authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government – subnational, national, and supranational” (Hooghe – Marks, 2001: 2). All political arenas are interconnected and none are dominating.

In short, the locus of political control has changed. Individual state sovereignty is diluted in the EU by collective decision making among national governments and by the autonomous

¹⁸ There is a deliberate use of the term ‘governance’, not government. Due to the uniqueness of the EU (“[the] [European] Union is a unique polity, with *no government* or opposition, and powerful policy-makers...”[emphasis added] (Peterson, 2004: 119)), there is, by the highest standards, not much to compare within the notion ‘government’. Moreover, the study of Russian government will not give us much information due to its secrecy and lack of transparency.

role of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice, and the European Central Bank.

Hooghe – Marks, 2001: 3 – 4

At the same time, although the supranational institutions have their share in decision-making, the competition for power usually takes place on the national and sub national levels. Another important characteristic of the EU as a polity in this frame is that “the EU does not possess the two most important sources of power: the legitimate use of physical force and independent taxation” (Jachtenfuchs – Kohler-Koch, 2004: 102).

Second, the EU faces the problem of speaking with one voice. All member states in the Union are equal, and thus have a very strong voice in all matters, making the voice of ‘all-Europe’ for the outside quieter.

Thirty years ago, Henry Kissinger posed the question: “Whom do I call when I want to speak to Europe?” Now, the former U.S. secretary of state says: “I think one knows whom to call; I don't think Europe has yet decided how to give answers to all the questions”.

Bilefsky – Knowlton, 2007

Thus, even appointing the High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, does not solve the ‘problem of voices’: at times contradictory interests of the states and their ‘loud voices’ still do not allow to answer in one voice on matters in foreign affairs. The problem of consistency or coherence is still not solved, both on the level of the supranational institutions (‘horizontal’ and ‘institutional’ consistence), and between the member states (‘vertical’ consistency) (Nuttall, 2005: 91—112).

*Third, one of the main characteristics of the EU is networking*¹⁹. In simple words, in the EU the culture of dialogue and consultation is spread, the decisions are made through “negotiation and the exchange of resources and ideas” (Peterson, 2004: 124), which take place in policy networks.

*Fourth, the EU is based on the democratic values of freedom, equality and justice*²⁰. Although there is a lot of critique of the European Union’s ‘transnational democracy’ (Chrysochoou, 2000) due to the ‘democratic deficit’ (Follesdal – Hix, 2006; Hix, 2005: 175—207; Bellamy, 2006), the European values, the principles of work, the negotiation and decision-making procedures can not be called other than democratic. It is strongly connected to the concept of borders of the EU. *Fifth, the EU has ‘fuzzy borders’* (Christiansen, 2005: 13). The borders become more and more ambiguous inside of the entity (Christiansen – Jørgensen, 2000), and the external borders are becoming blurred as well and are referred to as “fuzzy borders” (Christiansen, 2005: 13; Christiansen–Tonra–Petito, 2000; Friis–Murphy, 1999), and replace the traditional realist ‘frontier politics’:

The meaning of inter-state borders has changed quite radically over the centuries of the Westphalia system.

Brown, 2000: 199

The ‘export’ of integration towards the outside, and the numerous exemptions from integrative measures and policies on the inside, have created a polity with ‘fuzzy borders’.

¹⁹ Policy network is “a cluster of actors, each of which has an interest or “stake” in a given ... policy sector and the capacity to help determine policy success or failure” (Bomberg – Peterson, 1999: 8).

²⁰ “The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law” (Treaty on European Union, Article 6-1)

The launched European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) aims to escape the new dividing lines between Europe and its surroundings. Its goal is to build a “*ring of friends*” (Prodi, 2002) around the Union, and it is willing to help its neighbours to reach “prosperity, stability and security” (Ferrero-Waldner, 2006). Thus, through ENP the EU is using its ‘soft power’ (Nye, 2004) for spreading the values and peace to the surrounding countries, what as well can be considered a smart security move: “The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is founded on the premise that by helping our neighbours we help ourselves” (Ferrero-Waldner, 2005).

All in all, the EU is a unique post-modern polity, based on values of equality, freedom and peace; a polity, in which the notion of borders as such has changed: “borders as spaces rather than lines, that ... bring together rather than divide” (Christiansen, 2005: 16).

2.1.2 Governance of Russia

Comparing, or rather *contrasting* the Russian governance to the European, will be held with the same logic as above, thus making the clear contrasts between the two polities in the terms of governance.

Hence, *first of all, the Russian Federation is the state of centralized governance*. Since the collapse of Communism, it has not always been centralized, but rather opposite in the course of 1990’s (Medvedev, 2000: 23—41). During the presidency of Boris Yeltsin the regions and peripheries were acquiring more and more powers after the famous phrase of Yeltsin in Tatarstan: “Take sovereignty as much as you can swallow” (Pain, 2002) and the “parade of sovereignties” of the regions and republics within the Russian Federation in 1991 – 1994. Nowadays, this has radically changed. Moreover, Nikolai Petrov, a Russian researcher, expresses the following about the ‘Russian Federalism’:

Like Russian democracy, Russian federalism has many elements that are decorative rather than substantive and that appear similar to their Western analogues but have a different essence. Russian federalism serves as a ritual rather than as a function.

Petrov, 2004: 213

Petrov argues that Vladimir Putin was and is pursuing the ‘antifederal reform’, “designed to take away or circumscribe most powers exercised by regional leaders” (Petrov, 2004: 227), making the unitary “vertical” executive power in the own words of Vladimir Putin (Putin, 2000; Putin, 2001). One of the measures for “strengthening the vertical of power” (Putin, 2004) was the abolition of the direct elections of governors of the regions of the Russian Federation in 2004 under the slogan of improving democracy and security (Putin, 2004)²¹. This leads to the *second feature of Russia as a polity: the inside voices are becoming quieter, whereas the single one, central voice is powerful*

²¹ In 2008 the last directly elected governor’s term will be over, putting all the regions under the government of Putin’s/president’s appointees. In Bryansk region the first round of last governor’s elections was held on the 5th of December 2004, whereas the new regulation on appointing the governors came into force on the 15th of December 2004. Thus, Nikolai Denin is the last ‘directly elected governor’ in Russia, who won by 77,83% in the second round on the 23rd of December 2004 (Nikolai Denin becomes the Governor of the Bryansk region. December 23, 2004). The other question arises, were these elections the true free elections: Denin is a member of the party “Edinaya Rossia” (“United Russia”).

both inside of the country and outside. Besides the governor's 'muteness', the voices of the other actors – corporations and companies – are either not heard, or sound in harmony with the leading part²².

Putin's goal to build a "strong vertical of the executive power" also leads to the *third feature of Russia as a polity: strong hierarchy in the governance.* It could be also explained looking at the KGB past of Vladimir Putin, where the main emphasis is made on "discipline, order and hierarchy" (Petrov, 2004: 227). Now the Russian ruling elites are full of what in Russian is called '*siloviki*' (people from military, police or security service), who definitely support the idea of hierarchy and order, seeing the country as an analogue of a big military composition (Roberts, 2007: 37).

Forth, Russia has an ambiguous quasi-democratic regime with authoritarian traits, which can be called "managed democracy", "managed pluralism" (Balzer, 2003: 198–220) or even more than that – "sovereign democracy". "Managed democracy" is denied by Vladimir Putin to exist in Russia only on the basis that "this is a democracy that is controlled from the *outside*" [emphasis added] (Putin, 2006a), but it does not make Russia not being under control from the *inside*, however Putin insists on calling Russia a democracy and not to question it: "Do not worry about how democracy is developing in Russia" (Putin, 2006a).

Nikolai Petrov defines the following characteristics of the managed democracy of Russia: "strong presidency and weak institutions", "state control of the media", "visible short-term effectiveness and long-term inefficiency" and "control over elections which allows elites to legitimize their decisions" (Petrov, 2005). There is no workable party system²³. This is the regime, which whirls around the President, who is the voice, the power, the decision-maker:

Putin's regime is openly czarist, a term more precise than "authoritarian," which evokes the image of a traditional trains-running-on-time dictatorship. The defining element in present-day Russia is that the presidency, or rather the president, a modern czar, is the only functioning institution.

Trenin, Dmitri, 2005

The notion "sovereign democracy" is the new 'ought-to-be national idea'. The formula consists of 'sovereignty' which basically means non-interference from the West (Popescu, 2006: 1) and 'democracy' – another attempt to call the present regime democratic, to convince ordinary people that they are living in a democracy, based on a special set of values. "These values are democratic, but they emerge from Russia's unique historical experience, and they are distinct from what the West understands as democracy" (Popescu, 2006: 1). It is a simple endeavour of the authorities to make people believe in the specialty of Russian history, culture, values, role in the world, and thus assure people that the West is just too ignorant to understand all this typical,

²² For example, there is a certain list of enterprises and joint-stock companies which are of strategic importance for the interests and security of the Russian state and the deals with which could be concluded only with the government's/President's permission: for example, one of the biggest newspapers "Komsomolskaya Pravda" is included in the list (Albats, 2006).

²³ The 'party in power' "United Russia" ('*Edinnaya Rossiya*') always supports all the decision of the President, gets the majority of voters' support and does not have opposition: how can a democratic regime be without parties?

exclusive, exceptionally Russian mentality. It is not simplistic Soviet propaganda anymore:

It is the new face of ‘smart authoritarianism’ that speaks the language of Western norms and is very flexible, but has very little to do with the values of democracy, Eastern- or Western-style.

Popescu, 2006: 3

Finally, *fifth, the Russian state still has the perception of frontiers rather than borders, and definitely not “border spaces”*. The borders should be well defined and fortified, “foreign policy remains dictated by old-fashioned conceptions of national interest (military presence dominates values such as the rule of law)” (Emerson, 2005: 3). Besides, Russia understands its neighbourhood “as an area predominantly marked by enmity and competition” (Makarychev, 2006: 39).

2.1.3 Contrasts and clashes of the Governance of the EU and Russia

The contrasts of the governance of the EU and Russia were brought together in Table 1. There could be only several last comments regarding the governance of polities.

Table 1. Governance of the EU and Russia.

The European Union	The Russian Federation
<i>Multi-level governance</i> : supranational, national, and subnational levels	<i>Centralized governance</i> , with all decision-making powers in Moscow, Kremlin.
Strong voices of the member states, but weak international voice: <i>the dilemma of speaking with one voice</i>	Weak internal voices of the actors, strong voice on international arena: <i>no other voices heard</i>
<i>Policy networks</i>	<i>Strict hierarchy</i> in organizing political process
<i>Democracy</i>	“ <i>Sovereign democracy</i> ”
“ <i>Fuzzy borders</i> ”: spreading the values, neighbourhood of friends	Strict borders, <i>frontiers</i> : spreading the influence, dominance, military is important

First of all, the democratic values are not really spelled out anywhere in the dialogue with Russia. Thus, in the absence of own set of democratic values or values imposed, it is creating its own ‘new’ values – quasi-democratic, or rather dressed in democratic clothes, which mainly provoke nationalism, ethnic chauvinism, protectionism and pride adjoining with ignorance. All these have nothing to do with “being friends” or “peaceful coexistence”. Second, particular attention should be paid to the differences of concepts of borders and views of neighbours:

The ‘symbolic order’ which the EU is seeking to attain presumably boils down to a ‘(European) Self versus (Neighbouring) *Friends*’ scheme, while the Russian constellation seems to be dominated by a ‘(Russian) Self versus (Neighbouring) *Enemy*’ formula. [emphasis added]

Makarychev, 2006: 18

The divergences are most important and “especially deep where the EU’s ‘neighbourhood’ overlaps with Russia’s ‘near abroad’” (Emerson, 2006: 3). Thus it explains the difficult relations of Russia with Ukraine, Baltic states, Belarus, as besides the “enemy formula” it also has the sensitive feeling of possession towards these regions.

Hence, the relations between the EU and Russia become increasingly important for their common neighbourhood: these countries somehow depend on the development of this relationship as they lie geographically and politically right in between the two.

2.2 Actorness of the Polities

2.2.1 The EU as an Actor

The international ‘actorness’ and ‘presence’ of the European Union are broadly analysed, these studies focus on ‘actor capacity and capability’ (Sjöstedt, 1977; Hill, 1996; Caparoso – Jupille, 1998; Rhodes, 1998). Caparoso and Jupille introduce four criteria for evaluating actorness: recognition, authority, autonomy and cohesion (Caparoso – Jupille, 1998; Ginsberg, 2001: 47). It is not relevant for this paper to go deeply into this analysis, but what is important for this research is the *recognition of the EU as an actor*, especially by Russia.

Recalling the abovementioned concentration of Russian foreign policy on “old-fashioned conceptions of national interest” (Emerson, 2005: 3), it is possible to make a conclusion that the variables that matter for Russia in becoming/being an actor in the world politics herself – the exact same variables are used for defining other entities as actors. Thus, Russia might look at the EU in geopolitical terms:

While it is clear that the EU is a considerably more powerful economic entity than Russia, the EU is not yet a significant player in terms of geopolitics. ... From a Russian perspective, the “incomplete” nature of the EU as an international actor reduces the relevance of having strategic relations with it “on the basis of equality”. Although the geopolitical situation in Europe continues to be the principal focus of Russia’s foreign policy, it has so far preferred to deal with the bigger EU members on a bilateral or “minilateral” basis ..., rather than the EU as such.

Vahl, 2001: 5–6

At the same time it is all too easy to blame only Russia for creating this view of the EU as an actor. The EU itself definitely lacks coherence and consistency of the strategy towards Russia, as well as the whole Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) suffers from this problem. The simple example is the process of how the Common Strategy on Russia was created:

...the negotiation method used in drafting the document ... can be best described as a ‘*Christmas tree method*’. Once the general principles, the bulk of the tree, were in place the member states were allowed to add their own decorations to the strategy [emphasis added].

Haukkala – Medvedev, 2001: 50

In such a way the most important strategy agreement on Russia in the EU lacks agreements in sensitive issues, as well as a clear definition of priorities, goals and aims. It is as vague as the PCA: the EU still cannot decide unilaterally what to do with its big neighbour and how. There are a lot of answers to this question, almost each country within the EU can answer it, but in its own way. Russia has particularly special relations with Germany; sharing some very discrepant past with Eastern Europe and especially the Baltic states, Russia is on a special list of these countries’ foreign affairs. Thus, everything that is left out by the EU as a collective actor, is managed on a bilateral basis, and it is still probably the biggest part of the co-operation between Russia and Europe.

Besides, the discordance of the member states can be aggravated by the very complex institutional framework of the CFSP, where every institution has its place.

2.2.2 Russia as an Actor

First of all, Russia is perceived as a unitary actor on the world arena, personified in the face of her President. Due to the governance and regime discussed above, all other actors within Russia gradually lose their voice.

Second, there is no doubt that Russia *is* an actor, but what kind of actor? The Russian economy is 20 times smaller than the economy of the EU, thus it cannot claim for itself a position as an important economic actor on the world arena. Moreover, according to Vahl,

[the] only significant remaining source of international influence [of Russia] is ... its weakened but still considerable military forces, in particular its nuclear arsenal which remains the second biggest in the world, and its position in international organisations such as the United Nations Security Council.

Vahl, 2001: 6

2.2.3 The Divergence of Actorness

To sum up the actorness dimensions of the EU and Russia as polities, it should be said that the EU is definitely a strong *economic actor*, but not political or geopolitical, whereas Russia is a very weak economic actor and more a *geopolitical actor*. Thus, from the very beginning the two polities take two different niches on the world arena, which already makes it hard for them to communicate.

2.3 The Role of Culture

All the member states of the EU are very different in their everyday cultures, practices, mentalities, interaction between people, worldview, Christian traditions and so on (“unity in diversity”). But all of them share the same *democratic values* of freedom, equality, respect for human rights and the rule of law. Thus the main uniting culture of Europe is the culture of democracy.

The case of Russia is different. First of all, the culture can definitely not be called democratic. Some scientists argue that the Russian culture is authoritarian or czarist by nature: the Russian history knows only czarist, then Communist totalitarian and now quasi-democratic/semi-authoritarian regimes. Before the Soviet Union czar or emperor was looked at and was called ‘a father’, later on Lenin was ‘a grandfather’ and Stalin ‘a father’ again, shall we call Putin a ‘big brother’ now?

Second, scientists both from the EU and Russia “emphasise the ‘special Russian mentality’” (Karaganov – Bordachev – Guseinov – Lukyanov – Suslov, 2005: 3), and the Russian mentality includes the mysterious term ‘the Russian idea’ (Helleman, 2004; Petro, 1995: 88–112), which could not be rationally explained by Russians themselves (but rather on the level of senses and feelings), and of course impossible to be fully understood by foreigners. As far as the beginning of the 19th century the official national idea/motto was brought into every day life: “*samoderzhavie – pravoslavie – narodnost*” (Autocracy – Orthodoxy – Nationality) (Kantor, 1998: 23). It is easy to note that the formula lack the democratic component completely, moreover as Bibler argues, these are

“purely negative concepts” (Bibler, 1993: 63), which are always defining an enemy in the face of democracy in the whole (Bibler, 1993: 62).

Keeping this idea in mind, some light could be shed on the somewhat understanding, why the Russian foreign policy is still driven by national interests and geopolitical claims for superiority; why the regime is turning more and more towards authoritarianism and Russian people do not protest it; why the culture of individualism (which could be a peculiar feature of the Western civilisation) has never been able to settle down in the Russian society and thus the outbreaks of individualism in the society of ‘narodnost’ and ‘community/collective values’ result in unequal practices of oligarchy and robbery.

[They] [Russian people] always worked for “the stranger”, for Tatars, for a state budget, for the tsars, for lords, or for the Communist Party. Inability to do what one is not accustomed to, namely organizing the day’s affairs, leads to a desire for living by “the present moment”, at least until the fruit of one’s work is taken away.

Kantor, 1998: 27

This could also explain the inefficiency of Russian politics and economics in the long run, when the main goal is stability and prosperity in the present. This could also explain the little care for the environment and nature.

Another feature of Russian culture is the historical ambiguity of Russia between the East and the West:

Russia’s Eurasian nature and its position “as a world power situated on two continents” are commonly heard arguments against closer co-operation with Western Europe.

Vahl, 2001: 16

The construction of Russian identity throughout history shaped around the question, whether Russia is Western or Eastern? The answer to this question is till the present day undecided, and this causes the ambivalence and ambiguity of the Russian foreign strategy and internal reform as well.

Several final remarks should be made in the analyses of Russia and the EU as polities. The differences of the two polities could be seen even without any deep analysis. But nevertheless, this analysis was carried out in order to try to locate any *similarities* between the two, which unfortunately failed. *First* of all, the governance is managed in very different, almost contrasting ways. This concerns first and foremost the democratic versus undemocratic regime of the polity. *Second*, the EU and Russia are both actors on the world arena, but they are occupying different niches, which makes it harder to communicate. *Third*, the cultural differences are striking, but again there is a pattern of democratic values versus somewhat anti-democratic values.

Thus, the “post-modern” order of the European Union and a very realist, “modern” order of Russia are incredibly divergent; if there is nothing in common, it is probably almost impossible to find common grounds for ensuring trust between each other. Vahl argues that the acceptance by Russia of the Northern Dimension, and participation in the OSCE and the Council of Europe can be seen as “certain openness in Russia towards “post-modern” mechanisms of co-operation” (Vahl, 2001: 8). But how can be the withdrawal from the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) be seen then?

Following an argument that “polity determines politics and policy” (Jachtenfuchs – Kohler-Koch, 2004: 101), it is logical that the uniqueness of the EU as a polity influences the kind of policies it produces; the same could be noticed about Russia: its governance, culture and understanding of world politics as a polity result in certain policy outcomes. However, this is not all. Even more important is that the polity determines not only its *internal* policies and politics, but the policies and politics on world arena *that are made by other actors* of world politics. Thus, the EU polity influences the policies of Russia concerning its cooperation with EU and vice versa, the very essence of polity of Russia has an impact on the way the EU treats and builds relationship with Russia:

The nature and direction of the evolution of the European Union, its institutional structure and the decision-making process have immense significance for the formulation by Russia of its ultimate goal with regard to its relations with the EU.

Karaganov – Bordachev – Guseinov – Lukyanov – Suslov, 2005: 2

Now if we look at the kind of strategies both of the observed parts have towards each other, it could be noticed that the only word which can describe them is *ambiguity*, moreover, it is *dual ambiguity*. Both the EU’s and Russia’s strategy lack clarity in their goals and aims, they do not have adequate strategic agendas. *One of the reasons is the polities*. As both of them influence the policy outcomes of each other, and these outcomes are ambiguous in both cases, this means that both the EU sees Russia as a polity rather ambiguously, and vice versa, Russia does not understand the EU as a polity. The Russian openness towards the “post-modern” nature seems very unlikely, as living in a *modern* reality, *post-modernism* cannot be fully understood. Meanwhile, the EU cannot understand the Russian culture, the ‘Russian idea’, the Russian place in Europe, constructing a rather *ambiguous image* of it for Europe. Thus, the second reason could be the *clash and ambiguity of images*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

3 The Study of Images

In the world ruled by mass media it is perceptions and images that count, not the actual territorial/strategic wins and losses.

Medvedev, 2000: 60

In interpersonal communication the image of a person in the eyes of others is the main determinant of their attitudes towards him or her. The same assumption could be made in the field of the World Politics, where states are actors and images of each other among other things determine the relations between them. Moreover, in order to understand the mutual relations between two actors, it is essential to figure out the difference between the ‘desired image’ of an actor and the ‘constructed in the reality’ image, thus, the perception of the image by outside actors. In this discussion the study of constructing ‘the other’ is as well essential.

3.1 Identity, Image, and Constructing the ‘Other’

The main attention in the paper will be paid to *the images*, which are part of the construction of identity²⁴. Identity and images do not just exist “out there”, they are being constructed by social interactions and historical outcomes, people’s cognitive and affective interpretations of the reality around them. According to Bo Petersson, national self-images are “*cognitive and affective conceptual lenses, organizing devices and information filters which partly represent, and partly inform national identity*” (Petersson, 2001: 7). The self-images will be only briefly touched upon, with the main emphasis on the ‘ought-to-be self images’, or rather ‘*desired self-images*’ – the image of the polity that the citizens and officials would like to have projected on other countries of the world – and the way these images are perceived, what image does the polity has in the eyes of the other polity.

Thus, the study of images will proceed as follows. First, their historical importance of images will be analysed: the construction of ‘other’ throughout history, based on research of Iver Neumann, will be explored. Second, taking off from the ground of ‘self/other’ analysis, both the desired and constructed in reality images of the EU and Russia will be researched.

3.2 Europe and Russia: Constructing the ‘Other’

If we look back in history, the relations between Russia and Europe has never been simple: Russia has always been close to the territories of the European states, but never

²⁴ The analyses of identities is not in the centre of attention in this paper, though is important for understanding the subtle and ambiguous field of images, and will be referred to in the course of analyses.

close enough. The debate on the place of Russia in Europe has been present for more than five centuries. Interestingly, in the 16th–17th centuries the main questions and doubts were shaping around three determinants of Russia: *Christianity, civility and the regime type* (Neumann, 1999: 67–69). The only factor which was bringing Russia closer to Europe was Christianity, but at the same time it was Orthodox Christianity, which was in general also observed as the ‘other’. In general, Russia was considered more “Asiatic”, barbarous and despotic (Neumann, 1999: 69). Peter the Great changed the course of Russia in direction of more towards Europe and newly found Saint Petersburg became a symbolic “window on the West” (Neumann, 1999: 76).

Interestingly enough, it is easy to notice, that to these days the debate on Russia has not stopped, moreover if to summarise all modern trends, they still proceed within the same questions of ‘Christianity, civility and regime’. The idea of “barbarian at the gate” of Europe (Neumann, 1997: 167) did not disappear from the discussion. The question of regime – too authoritarian, despotic, totalitarian? – is as well bothering all Westerners and Europeans. From the European point of view, Russia has always been catching up, backward, and still remains to be so (Medvedev, 2000: 98). The most important and most mentioned is the image of Russia as a ‘learner’:

The view of Russia as a reticent and even unwilling learner, one who grudgingly adopts what he needs and turns his back on the rest, now seems to be ascendant. ... [The] core idea remains that of a learner who lacks insight into his own need to learn...

Neumann, 1997: 167

Talking about the Russian construction of Europe, we can point out the long debate between ‘Slavophiles’ and ‘Westernizers’. Whereas Westernizers consider Russia European and think that Russia is and should be a part of Europe,

[to] *Slavophile* thinking Russia is culturally and intellectually very different from Western Europe, which is regarded as individualistic and superficial compared to the collectivist Russian spirit and the profundity of the famous “Russian soul”.

Herslund, 2007: 164

These two quite opposite movements and ideas have always been present in the debate in Russia, whether Russia is European or not; moreover these movements have never been equal, as the westernizers have always been outpowered by slavophiles²⁵.

Using Ola Tunander’s term of ‘constructing walls’ (Tunander, 1997: 26–31), the Russian–European and European–Russian views can be defined as constructing the *walls* between the two. Slavophiles acknowledge them and are happy about their existence, as in their view Russia has never belonged to Europe. Westernizers acknowledge the existence of these walls, but think “that walls are negotiable, that relations between Russia and Europe are characterized by the existence not only of walls but also of networks, and that one should follow a policy of maximizing the latter and minimizing the former” (Neumann, 1997: 157). Meanwhile, there has not been an “explicit wall imagery in European discourse on Russia” (Neumann, 1997: 168), but rather Russia as a periphery, a “barbarian”, the ‘other’. Thus, both in the Russian and European discourses the views of each other are the views of the ‘Other’, a ‘stranger’ (Pettersson, 2006); the

²⁵ Even today, President Putin talks about Russia’s special way, about the impossibility of simple projecting of western institutions and values on Russian realities (Putin, 2000; Putin, 2004).

image might be friendly or not, depending on the time in history, but the separation from each other is evident.

3.3 The Image of Russia

The image of Russia is very controversial. As it was shown above, the image and place of Russia has been controversial and ambiguous throughout history, nothing changed nowadays. Thus, the attempt will be made to understand what image in general does Russia have within the European officials' circle (as at the end of the day, they form the policy and strategy and lead negotiations) and among usual citizens (as the interaction of civil societies is essential for relations). At the same time there is a crucial difference between the desired image and the real-life constructed image.

3.3.1 The Image Constructed in Reality among Ordinary People

The starting point for the discussion of images will be the analyses of the common EU citizens' attitudes and images towards Russia. For this purpose the opinion polls will be used. Trying to find information concerning this, the author met a dead end: there were no clear surveys made among the European citizens on their attitudes towards Russia by any major European opinion polls measuring programs, including Eurobarometer²⁶.

To get an idea of the opinion of the EU citizens of Russia, the author conducted a survey among European citizens (see Appendix I and Appendix II). Most of the respondents have at least a Bachelor degree or are in the process of acquiring one (80%): thus, the survey will be used mainly as an illustration, but definitely not as a hard data for statistical evaluation. There are several main conclusions or rather ideas which could be figured out from the survey. *First of all, there is definitely an interest in Russia*: only 14% of respondents stated that they would never want to visit Russia, 66% have never been there but would like to go²⁷. *Second, the personal attitudes of the Europeans are not as negative as it could have been expected* or discussed in media: only 23% of the respondents have very negative or rather negative personal attitudes towards Russia, 36% are neutral and 41% are very positive or somewhat positive. Besides, the opinion of whether Russia should become a part of the European Union is rather dispersed: 45% are against and 40% are for it (at least in the long time perspective). *Third, the image of the Russian President turns out to be very negative in most of respondents opinions*, which probably influences the opinion on general attitude towards Russia in the EU: 69% of respondents have a very negative or rather negative attitudes towards Vladimir Putin, and 64% think that general attitude among Europeans towards Russia is negative²⁸.

²⁶ The only slight mentioning of Russia in the European surveys was the survey on the ENP, where though Russia is voluntarily not a part of ENP, 57% of EU citizens still consider it a neighbour (The European Union and its Neighbours. Special Eurobarometer 259: 9–11).

²⁷ As the survey was conducted by a joint effort of two people (for two somewhat different research projects), not all questions are relevant for this study. But nevertheless, a question in the survey on the Russian campaign of the bid for the Winter Olympics 2014 is a good illustration of interest as well: only 31% of respondents didn't want to know more about it, all the rest either knew something or were interested in it.

²⁸ There is a vivid dissonance between the personal attitudes and the general attitudes of other EU's citizens, which could mean that despite all media talks and discussions on authoritarian regime in Russia,

Though it is really hard (and would be a mistake) to generalize this survey, it nevertheless gives several ideas on the image of Russia in general. At the very same time, taking the associations of Russia into consideration, the picture becomes even more controversial: there are only two positive associations (it of course depends on what to consider positive or not): 19% of respondents mentioned Russian potential and opportunities for positive development and 16% touched upon rich culture and mystic nature, not understood Russian soul. Whereas the main associations are undemocratic regime (and no freedom of press) (35% mentioning), high rates of corruption (32%) (see Appendix II for more).

All these observations and contradictions raise the question: why are there no official surveys on the Europeans' attitudes towards Russia if Russia is a rather big case in the European political and economic life? There are several assumptions that could be made. *First* of all, the issue is so sensitive, that the officials do not want to bring the discussion to the very surface. *Second*, there is probably a fear of getting more negative results from a more representative sample (equivalents of those on attitudes towards Putin), which rather not be brought in public: the relations with Russia are sensitive and dependent.

3.3.2 The Desired Image and Reality

To analyse the 'desired image' of Russia, the speeches and official documents were reviewed for determining signals, which the Russian officials are making. As it was mentioned above, "*signals* are statements or actions the meanings of which are established by tacit or explicit understandings among actors" (Jervis, 1989: 18, 20-21). Several findings were made.

First of all, Russian officials and rather Putin²⁹ are always talking about Russia being *democratic* and following democratic principles and values:

Russia is building its statehood on the basis of democratic values and freedoms, strengthening the civil society institutions consistently.

Putin, 2006b

Russia has made its choice in favor of democracy. Fourteen years ago, independently, without any pressure from outside, it made that decision in the interests of itself and the interests of its people – of its citizens. This is our final choice, and we have no way back. There can be no return to what we used to have before. And the guarantee for this is the choice of the Russian people, themselves.

Putin, 2005a

If the state is as democratic as Putin says, why is he still trying to persuade the Russian and foreign societies and officials, that Russia follows democratic values? The only answer could be because someone is still doubting, still questioning the fact which seems so obvious for Mr. Putin, for instance, the European and American politicians, ordinary people, scientists. The truth is that in reality Russia for several years is considered to be undemocratic, no matter what Putin is saying, no matter what signals he is trying to send. Since 2005 Freedomhouse put Russia in the list among 'not free'

and officials' delicate expressions concerning Russia, the personal opinions of the Europeans on Russia itself, its culture and people might be positive.

²⁹ As it was mentioned before, Putin is a face and voice of Russia, thus mainly his speeches were analysed.

countries (Freedom in the world 2007), and mentioned in Chapter 2 reforms of regional and parliament elections, which are carried out under the slogan of ‘improving democracy’ (Putin, 2006a), do not encourage enthusiasm in the Western countries³⁰.

Second, Vladimir Putin in lots of cases seems to chose a more *convenient* way of presenting the Russian view and place in the world, depending on a situation, which sometimes create direct contradictions, for example, it is not new that V. Putin always states a special place for Russia in the world, considers it historically and culturally different from both Europe and Asia, but at the same time when talking about sensitive issues (migration policies, Chechnya, relations with Georgia, murder of Anna Politkovskaya), he tends to generalize Russia within Europe, saying that these issues are problems of all European countries (and Russia is among them) and sometimes even directly accusing Europe of something, making it easier to justify the doings of government (Putin, 2006b; Putin, 2005a; Putin, 2006c). This only adds to the confusion and dilemma on where to put Russia in the world: to the East or to the West?

Third, in all speeches on most press conferences and in official statements Vladimir Putin vividly emphasizes the readiness of Russia and Russian government for *compromise*:

We have every intention of engaging in a dialogue on an equal footing with our partners and of looking for compromise solutions where we think it possible, taking into account that our European partners will also give consideration to our national interests.

Putin, 2005b

I repeat that we are ready to look for solutions to this problem together with our Polish colleagues and friends [about the ban of Polish meat]. We do not want to dramatize or politicize this issue unduly.

Putin, 2006c

Nevertheless, the readiness for compromise does not seem to turn into action, as compromise means making some concessions, having to lose something and gain the other. Whereas it seems that the Russian government is not ready to give up anything. Even talking about visa facilitation, the dialogue is better to be called a monologue: Russia is asking for visa facilitation in the Schengen zone, while the Russian visa remains one of the most difficult to obtain (Schröder, 2003). And despite all the words being said, the compromises in gas and oil spheres are even less likely: strong protectionism is taking place.

Fourth, Russia really longs to *be trusted*, wants to be seen as a trustworthy partner rather than a “messed-up” neighbour who needs help. That is why, Russia has always been trying to draw attention to the dependence of the EU on Russian gas and oil; recently it started to change, and the *interdependence* between the EU and Russia is now emphasized by Vladimir Putin.

Europe, the European economy, covers one third of its total demand for oil with oil supplies from Russia – supplies that are delivered either directly or through intermediaries. ... I would remind you that some European Union members cover 90 percent of their gas consumption needs with gas from Russia – 90 percent – but no one has complained so far. Everyone is

³⁰ Even the ‘not-very-transparent’ (at least according to the European standard) energy sphere of Russian economy is argued to be for the reasons of democracy (Putin, 2006c); and probably the reasons of need for economic development and some protectionism would be understood, but ‘democratic argument’ is perceived simply preposterous.

happy. ... Russia is a reliable partner and even during the most difficult periods in its economic development it never let down its partners in Europe.

Putin, 2005b

In reality, Putin has to say all these words for some reason. If the partners would consider Russia reliable and trustworthy, there would be no need in wasting words trying to convince someone of something. Besides, the investment climate is speaking for itself: Russia has huge potential, but investors just do not want to risk with the Russian uncertainty and unstableness (Presentation of Christian Cleutinx, Novembre 2006)³¹.

To sum up all the findings and the reality attitudes, it is easy to see that the ‘sent’ image and the ‘perceived’ image of Russia are radically different, the ‘desired image’ remains the one only in words, and these words do not have an expected effect. Meanwhile, the actions and deeds of Russian government are better signs and even indices; in this case, actions, deeds and historical links and experiences (of Russia as the ‘Other’) create the image, whereas the explanation of them does not matter. In general, Russia wants to be seen to be democratic, strong and powerful economically,³² a trustworthy and reliable partner, and in the eyes of European people and European officials it is neither. Too delicate to say it straight (or may be the situation is too sensitive?), the European officials follow the game of accepting the words, but not believing them, having an absolutely different image in reality: they have never developed a way to discuss ‘sensitive cases’.

3.4 The Image of the EU

Being a very complex polity, the EU has a rather compound image in the world. The image which will be of interest in this paper is the image of the EU in the eyes of Russian people – officials and common citizens. The analyses will follow the same logic as the analysis of the image of Russia: starting off with the citizens’ opinion, moving to signals and indices made by the officials.

3.4.1 The Image Constructed in Reality among Ordinary People

Building an image of the EU in the eyes of Russia must start off with the overview of Russian citizens’ opinion. This task turned out to be less difficult than to find opinion polls of European citizens concerning Russia: a lot of Russian research centres on conduct research of public opinion concerning the EU and the place of Russia in Europe – Levada-Centre, WCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Centre), FOM (Public Opinion Foundation). Nevertheless the survey was conducted by the author as well (it will be referred to as the Survey), in order to compare results and at the same time to have the same ground for reasoning as in the case of attitudes towards Russia (see Appendix III and Appendix IV).

The *first* conclusion which could be made out of all opinion polls is that *the general personal attitude towards the EU is more positive than negative*: in the Survey

³¹ The case of Dutch Royal Shell on “Sakhalin 2” is an example of co-operation with Russia, when the alteration of conditions can radically change the Russian government attitude (Putin, 2006d).

³² Russia wants to be seen not only military, as nowadays the hard power is becoming less and less favourable.

51% of respondents have positive or somewhat positive attitudes towards the EU and 42% are neutral. According to Levada Centre opinion polls of 2006, 67% of people are positive towards the EU (Russia and the European Community Opinion Polls. Levada Centre)³³. *Second, the EU is not considered a unitary polity, but only an economic union* (51% of respondents of the Survey), most people still prefer to refer to single countries, out of which the most friendly ones are Germany and France (Modern Germany with the eyes of Russia. Press release 436. WCIOM). Even looking at the associations connected with the EU, the most frequent one is the common market and euro as a single currency (30% mentioning). *Third, nevertheless, 56% of respondents of the Survey consider the EU an important player in world politics*, which can probably mean that for many Russians economics and economic strength defines world politics. Politically, the EU is not considered to be a threat for Russia (69%) and the findings of Bo Petersson, that “the traditional external threats from the days of the Cold War still seemed to hold sway” (Petersson, 2001: 95), are also proved by the public opinion (Russians about Europeans and Americans. FOM Database).

In spite of the overall positive attitude of common Russian citizens towards the EU, one peculiarity can be noticed. Among the European names of businessmen and companies in the Survey such names as Bill Gates, Microsoft and Coca-Cola can be seen pretty often, which can definitely not be defined as European. Moreover, according to FOM opinion polls, only 48% of Russian population/respondents can answer correctly the question whether Russia is a part of the EU or not, 24% answer that it is and another 28% do not know (Perspectives of European Integration: Russia and the European Union. FOM. 05.04.2007). This can not be called stupidity³⁴, but rather ignorance and self-absorption. Russian people in the majority are not interested in the European Union, in world politics, in politics in general. The research made by FOM also shows the dependence of the income and the answer: the smaller the income, the less percentage of correct answers. Thus, in lots of cases Russian people are too concerned with their economic situation and living standards, and the image of the EU among ordinary people might be positive, but rather colourless, “interestless”, empty.

3.4.2 The Desired Image and Reality

Analyses of the desired image was studied through examining speeches of EU representatives and statements of Russian officials, as well as the Russian officials attitudes were analysed for depicting the image of the EU in reality. Thus the following findings were made.

First of all, the EU officials try hard make the EU seem independent, try to escape any ‘dependence bondage’:

I do not think the relationship is one of dependence either on the Russian side or on the European side. It is a recognition of a very strong set of mutual interests today. If there are issues that may arise from time to time between us, we can discuss and resolve those.

Blair, 2005

³³ Besides, according to the results of the Survey, 41% of respondents think that European values have a positive influence on the Russian society.

³⁴ Out of the respondents with higher education, the correct answer is given only by 71% which is not a lot for educated people.

Both sides agree that mutual interests are at stake, but then Putin comes in and stresses again, how much is the EU *dependant* on Russian oil and gas; and very rarely is stated by Mr. Putin, that Russia is also dependent. At the same time, it is important to notice, that the diplomatic language as such does not really include the term “dependence”, it is usually masked under terms such as “special relationship” or “special co-operation”. In the EU–Russia relations the language is changing: lately even the EU officials, though unwillingly and very rarely, are starting to use the term of “positive interdependence” as the notion “dependence” itself is understood rather negative and does not reflect a healthy, equal relationship:

[Our] energy partnership is based on strong positive interdependence and we are ready to develop these relations for the good of both parties.

Vanhanen, 2006

The *second finding* turned out to be rather controversial. The speeches of the EU officials distinguished from, for instance, Russian officials’ in the way that they were less open, more formal, *polite*. The speeches turned out to be hard to analyse, as they were impersonalized and emotionless, covered with a delicacy and political correctness. The signals, if there were any, were hidden beside the diplomatic shield, creating an image of diplomatic and not too harsh actor. When Vladimir Putin would be asked a question on democracy, besides just stating that Russia *is* democratic, he would start rather undiplomatic attack on the other democracies, thus trying to defend himself. Nothing like that would ever do any of the EU officials. The image of diplomatic coldness and accuracy does not allow the EU officials to respond in a firm, strong voice. Thus, in the eyes of Russia the EU is created as a delicate and even timid actor, not weak due to all the economic strength, but not politically forceful either. Probably, the EU did not want to get this result, but rather wanted to be seen as a fair, constructive and reliable partner, who is ready for compromise. Meanwhile, Russia still is experiencing difficulties in talking to Europe, as it does not always speak with one voice, and the Russian President says: “We will wait” (Putin, 2006c).

To make the interim conclusions, it is easy to notice that there are certain contradictions within the images of Russia and the EU. The image of Russia the way it is perceived in the eyes of Europeans contradicts radically with the desired image. Whereas the EU suffers from the lack of the desired image as such, thus making the image perceived by Russians depict EU as diplomatically weak and indecisive, which is definitely not the plan. Turning back to the study of Robert Jervis, we can say that in this case probably history matters a lot. *First* of all, historically the construction of the ‘Other’ created the somewhat distance between the two actors. *Second*, the history of relations between the EU and the new modern Russia are rather young – only about 16 years, thus the signals and indices are still not understood completely, or in case of the EU are not decided on. Probably the process of learning and adjustment between the EU and Russia is still on the way, but until today the images have huge contradictions which imbalance perceptions of each other and relations in general.

Conclusion

This thesis concentrated on the asymmetry of the EU–Russia relations and an attempt was made to find the reasons of it. Thus, the relations were examined within three streams. Firstly, the interdependence link between the EU and Russia was analysed through application of the theory of power and interdependence of Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane to the case of EU and Russia relations. The analysis showed that both of the actors are *equally* dependent on each other. Thus, the analysis of sensitivity and vulnerability, the way they are defined by Nye and Keohane turned out to be essential for the application of the interdependence concept. It was found that the vulnerability of the EU to any change is somewhat smaller than the vulnerability of Russia. But nevertheless, the EU seems to not realise it and not use it. The reason for this lies within other spheres of relations.

Thus, polities and images were analysed to figure out these inconsistencies. The study of polities was held within the framework of a governance approach, one of the main ideas of which is that “polity defines policy and politics”. The analysis showed that the EU and Russia do not have any similarities between each other in terms of polities. Moreover, the EU as a polity influences the decisions of Russia towards the EU and vice versa; but as they have no similarities and are not able to understand and comprehend each other (due to cultural characteristics and modernity versus post–modernity concept), it creates *dual ambiguity* of their relations: neither the EU nor Russia can decide on a certain strategy towards the other.

This ambiguity becomes even more vivid after analyzing the images of both actors in the relationship, which was based on the study of images of Robert Jervis and the concept of “construction the ‘Other’” of Iver Neumann. The inconsistency between the ‘desired image’ of Russia and the real one creates a problem for the EU of talking to Russia: it silently accepts the sent image, but does not believe it; the EU considers it as signals, which are not working, while the real image is very different. At the same time, due to the ambiguity of the image of Russia, its polity and the EU strategy, the EU is unable to send any particular image at all, remaining simply politically correct and delicate. This in turn creates an image of the EU as a not–so–forceful actor, and thus allows the Russian side be less polite than the EU is and allows Russia to argue that the EU is extremely dependent on Russia (and this actually works).

Thus in general, the conceptualisation of polities and images turn out to be of crucial importance in building and understanding the relations, especially between what is considered to be the ‘democratic zone of peace’ and its outside. The polities of the EU and Russia are fundamentally different, even contrasting, which sets them apart. The ambiguity of images is so strong, it creates an ocean between them and does not allow them to hear each other correctly. But despite all these differences and ambiguities, misperceptions and misunderstandings, they *have to talk*. The interdependence link ties the two actors together and makes it impossible for them to escape each other or convert the relationship into unbinding meetings once or twice a year for discussions of the

weather and tennis tournaments. That is why, the only dialogue which is institutionalized, set and has some kind of strategies is the energy dialogue (as the interdependence is within the energy sphere). That is why political and cultural dialogues are not possible: the EU and Russia are not interdependent in these spheres, and politics and images are so complex and not understood by each of the actors. That is why the asymmetry exists and will probably not change until the changes within the dimensions of politics and images will happen. As long as the EU does not have a certain image it wants to send and Russia stays with the same regime and modern understandings of world politics, the asymmetry would probably only deepen.

Thus, through the practical implications this paper challenged to theorise the EU–Russia relations within three dimensions: interdependence, politics and images. The general pattern of “politics and images matter in world politics” was proven by this research. This case is the example of negative/ambiguous links between the politics and between the images of two actors, what sets them apart, whereas positive images could have driven them closer. In the meantime, the only tie that remains between the two actors (Russia and the EU) is economic interdependence, which in turn cannot be seen as a “positive development in the relations” in the long run. This all are the *effects of contiguity*: the two actors would even want to escape each other, but they cannot; they are interconnected, tied together.

To conclude, it can be noticed, that probably this study might be applied to other cases as well and explain the relations between the EU as a post-modern polity with some other modern big states, like China or India. In both of these cases, the politics and images differ and have certain misunderstandings, but these relations are not bound with the *effects of contiguity* – interdependence link – and thus are less institutionalized, less frequent and more ‘symmetrical’. These two cases could create a contrast for the EU–Russia relations and a further study for the relations between the post-modern and modern politics. However this is the case of a separate research programme.

Appendix I

The Form of the Survey “What do you think about Russia?”

The Survey was conducted within the student community in different countries of the European Union. It was made by joint effort of two students from Lund University (Sweden) Liubov Borisova and from the State University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia) Nikolai Kolegov. The results of the survey were used for two thesis dissertations written in the abovementioned universities on the topics of “The asymmetry of the EU-Russia relations” and “Image and brand of Russia”. The respondents were asked to fill in the following form and return it back. Only one answer was possible.

1. Have you ever been to Russia?
 - A. Yes, more than once.
 - B. Yes, once.
 - C. No, but I’m planning/would like to go.
 - D. No and I don’t even want to go.

2. What is your personal attitude towards Russia?
 - A. Very positive attitude.
 - B. Somewhat positive attitude.
 - C. Neutral.
 - D. Rather negative than positive attitude.
 - E. Very negative.

3. In your opinion, what is a general attitude towards Russia in the countries of the European Union?
 - A. Very positive attitude.
 - B. Somewhat positive attitude.
 - C. Neutral.
 - D. Rather negative than positive attitude.
 - E. Very negative.

4. The President of Russian Federation is Vladimir Putin. What is your personal attitude towards him?
 - A. Positive attitude.
 - B. Somewhat positive.
 - C. Neutral.
 - D. Rather negative than positive.
 - E. Negative attitude.

F. No definite answer.

5. Would you like Russia to become a part of the European Union one day?

- A. Definitely yes.
- B. May be in some longtime perspective.
- C. I do not know, have never thought about it.
- D. Rather no, than yes.
- E. Definitely no.

6. The International Olympic Committee in July 2007 will make a decision about the country and city which will host the Winter Olympic Games 2014. The Russian city of Sochi is participating in the bid for Winter Olympics 2014. How well do you know about it?

- A. I know a lot about it. I know about the measures which are taken by Sochi, about the city itself and its pluses and minuses.
- B. I don't know a lot, but I have heard some facts.
- C. Well, I have heard something about it.
- D. I don't know anything, but I would like to find out more.
- E. I don't know about it and don't even want to know.

7. What Russian companies and businessmen do you know (have you heard of)?
Could you please give three examples?

8. Please, write three notions which are associated for you with nowadays Russia.

9. What EU country are you citizen of? _____

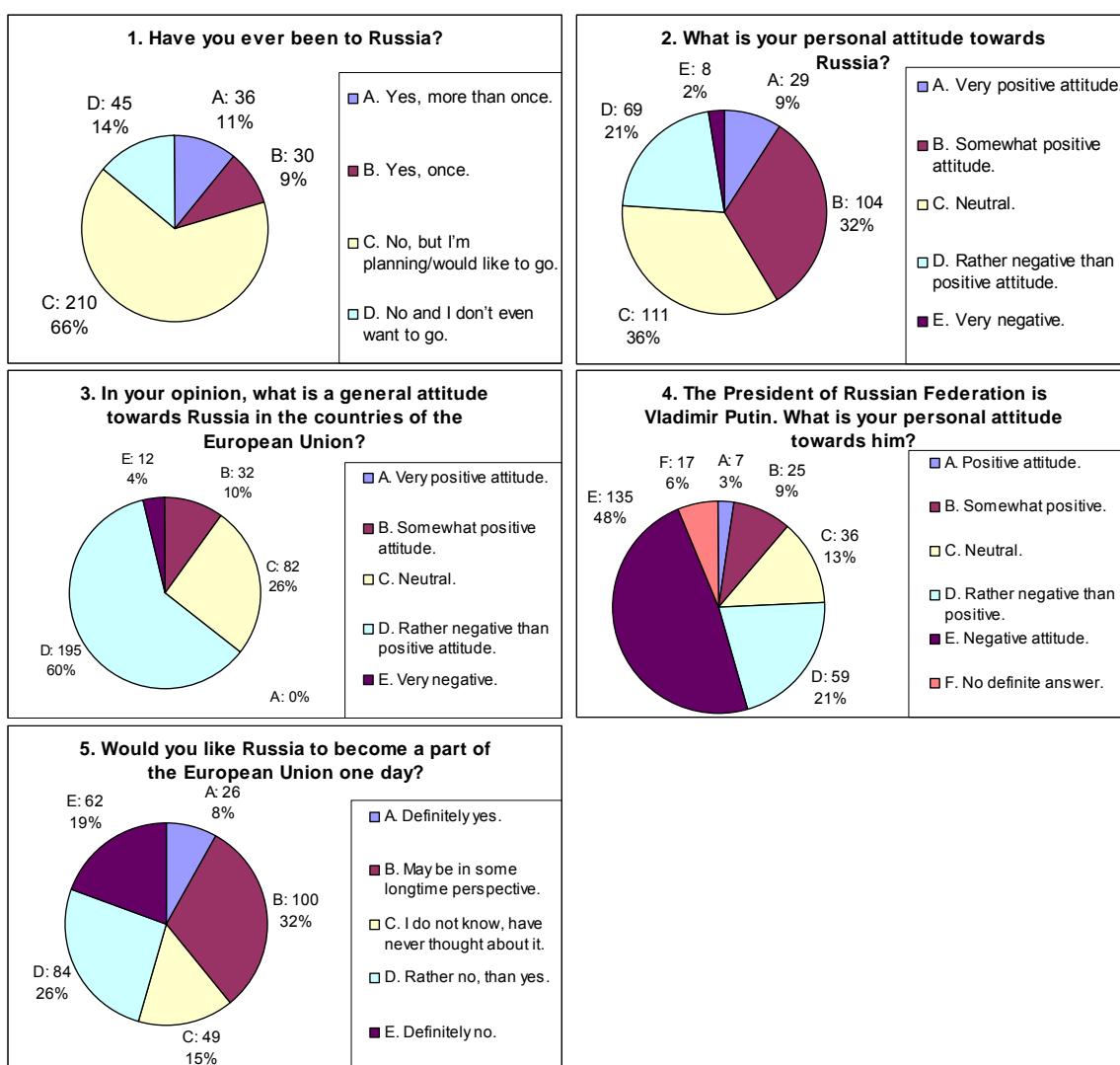
10. What is your age? _____

11. What is your level of education? _____

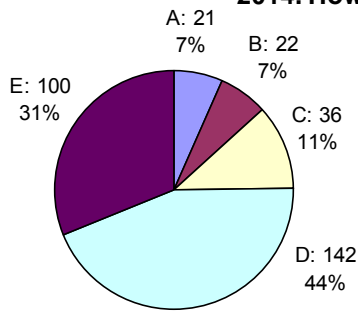
Appendix II

Results of the survey “What do you think about Russia?”

Total number of respondents: 321. Age: 15–61. Average age: 24,2. Majority has Bachelor degree or in the process of achieving one (80%). Representatives of all 27 EU member states. Fieldwork: 23.04–09.05.2007.

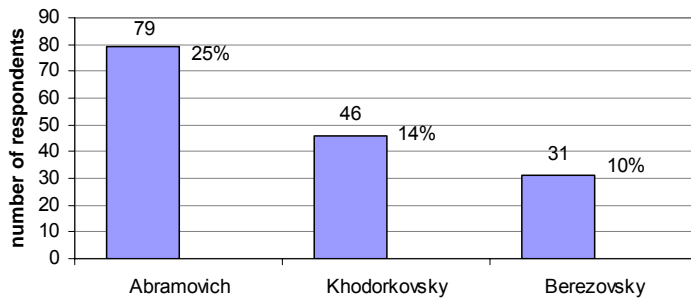


6. The Russian city of Sochi is participating in the bid for Winter Olympics 2014. How well do you know about it?

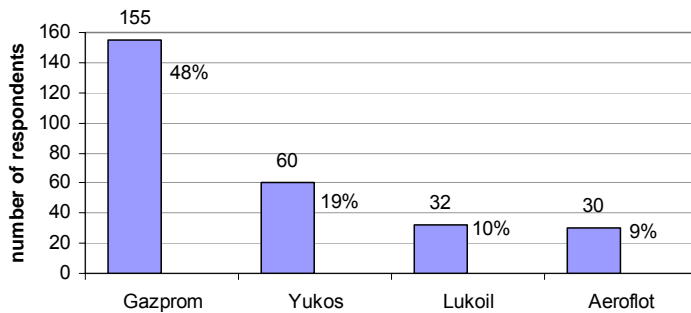


- A. I know a lot about it. I know about the measures which are taken by Sochi, about the city itself and its pluses and minuses.
- B. I don't know a lot, but I have heard some facts.
- C. Well, I have heard something about it.
- D. I don't know anything, but I would like to find out more.
- E. I don't know about it and don't even want to know.

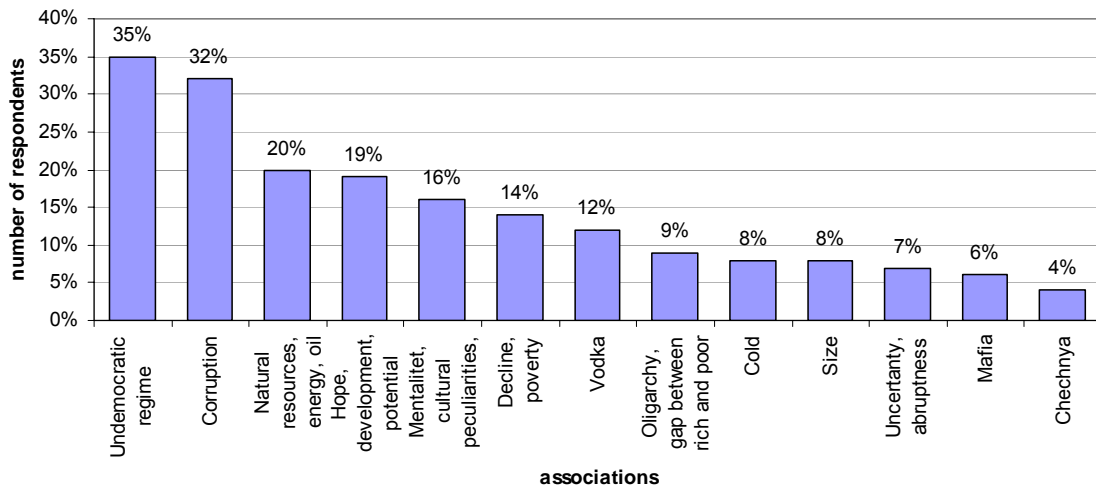
7.1 Most mentioned Russian businessmen



7.2 Most mentioned Russian companies



8. Associations with Russia



Appendix III

The Form of the Survey “What do you think about European Union?”

The Survey was conducted within the student community in Russia. It was conducted by the student from Lund University (Sweden) Liubov Borisova. The results of the survey were used for the thesis dissertations written in Lund University on the topic of “The asymmetry of the EU-Russia relations”. The respondents were asked to fill in the following form and send it back. Only one answer was possible.

Your age: _____ Your education: _____

1. Have you ever been to the countries of the EU?
 - A. Yes, in many of them
 - B. Yes, in one/several
 - C. Have never been to any, but would like/planning to go
 - D. Have never been to any and do not want to go

2. Do you perceive EU as a united polity?
 - A. The EU is a real united polity
 - B. No, EU is only an economic union
 - C. No, EU is only a political union
 - D. EU is not really a union at all EC, far from being a united entity
 - E. I do not know, have never thought about it

3. What is your personal attitude towards the EU?
 - A. Positive attitude.
 - B. Somewhat positive attitude.
 - C. Neutral.
 - D. Rather negative than positive attitude.
 - E. Negative.

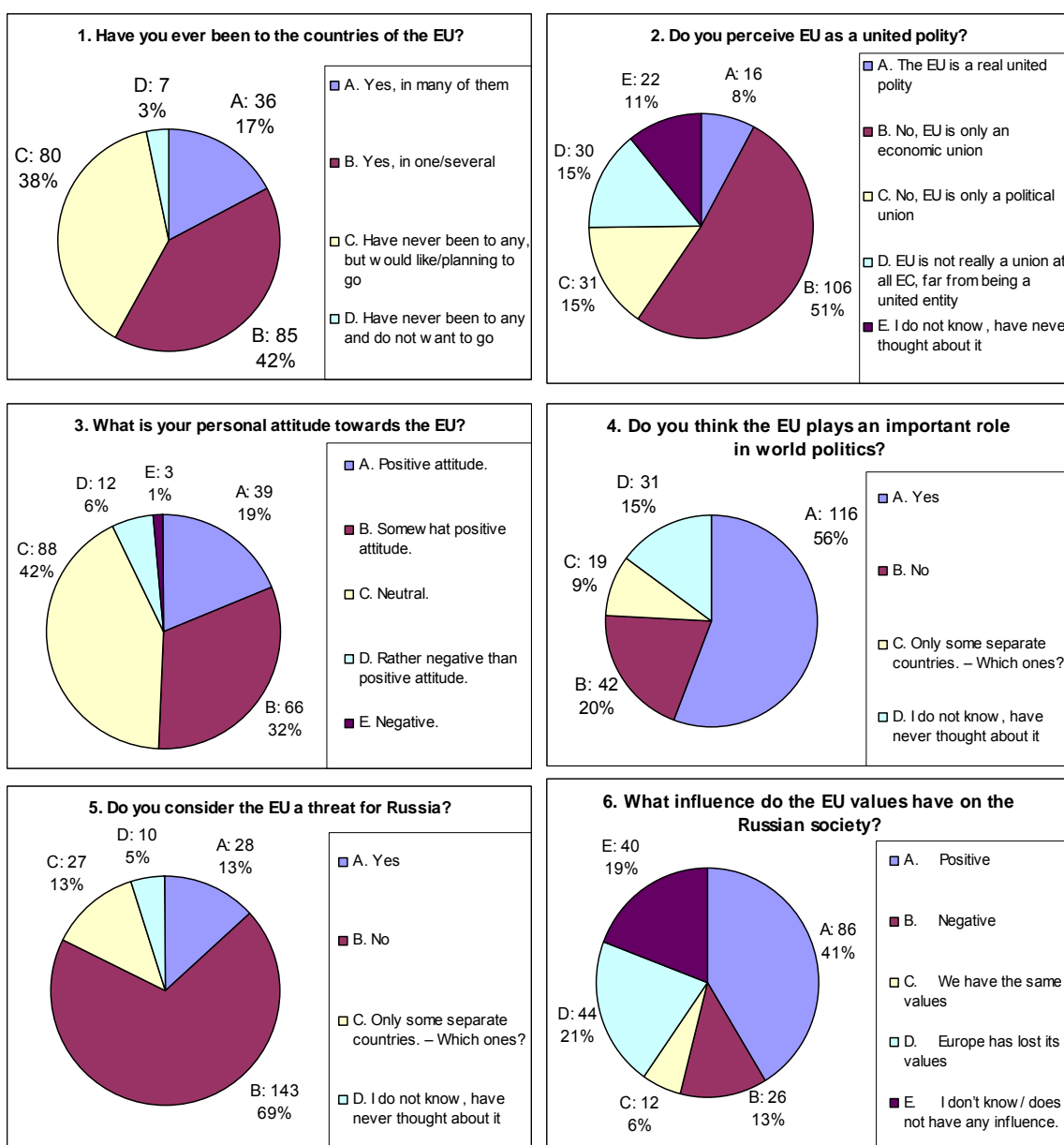
4. Do you think the EU plays an important role in world politics?
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Only some separate countries. – Which ones? _____
 - D. I do not know, have never thought about it

5. Do you consider the EU a threat for Russia?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. Only some separate countries. – Which ones? _____
 - D. I do not know, have never thought about it
6. What influence do the EU values have on the Russian society?
- A. Positive
 - B. Negative
 - C. We have the same values
 - D. Europe has lost its values
 - E. I don't know/ does not have any influence.
7. What European companies and businessmen do you know (have you heard of)?
Could you please give three examples?
8. Please, write three notions which are associated for you with the European Union.

Appendix IV

Results of the survey “What do you think of the European Union?”

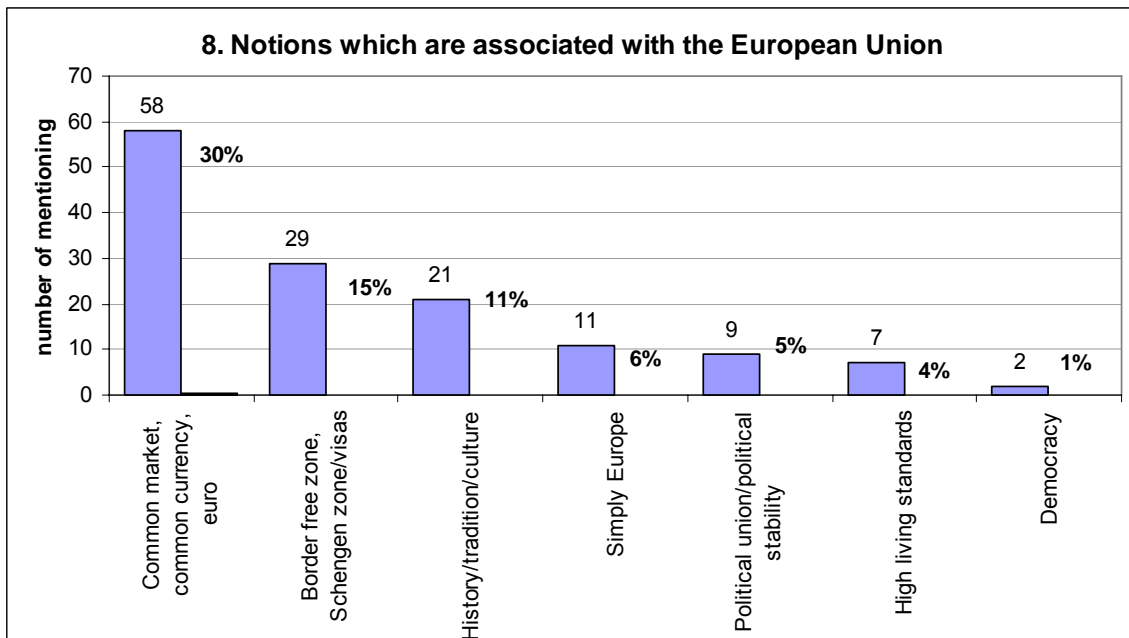
Held among Russian citizens. Total number of respondents: 208. Representatives of 17 Russian regions. Age range: 16–57. Average age: 23,6. Majority has Higher education and are in the process of achieving one (85%). Fieldwork: 23.04–09.05.2007.



7. What European businessmen and companies do you know?

It is impossible to make statistics in this question. First of all, very few people named *any businessmen at all*. Such names could be found: Silvio Berlusconi, lord John Brown, Daniel Vasella, Nathaniel Rothschild, Bill Gates, out of which Berlusconi is the most popular (about 2,5% of mentioning)

Second, there are a lot of companies mentioned, but neither of them has got 10% or more of mentioning. The following companies are mentioned: Volkswagen, BMW, Ikea, Siemens, Philips, Lancome, Opel, Electrolux, TetraPak, Renault, Ford, Schwarzkopf, Samsung, Oriflame, Audi, Bosch, Alcatel, Air France, British Petroleum, Peugeot, Mercedes, Porsche, L'Oreal, Max Factor, Vichy, Adidas, Danone, Shell, Nokia (9%), Unilever, Volvo, SAAB, Lloyd, Nike, Deloitte and Touche, Vodafone, Nestle, Ferrari, Raiffeisen Group, Braun, McDonalds, Levi's, Ernst and Young, PriceWaterhouse Coopers, Fiat, Versace, Rolandberger, Guinness, Rolex, British Airways, Daimler-Benz, Tuborg, Skoda, Societe Generale, Ariston, Swatch, Lufthansa, Gucci, DHL, Dolce & Gabana, Easy Jet, Microsoft, Coca-cola, Prada, Oggi, Aerobus, Citroen, Gas de France.



Appendix V

In the process of analysis of images the following speeches/conferences (both texts and video recordings) were under attention:

1. Ferrero-Waldner, Benita, 2005. The European Neighbourhood Policy: helping ourselves through helping our neighbours. Speech. Conference of Foreign Affairs Committee Chairmen of EU member and candidate states. London, October 31, 2005.
2. Ferrero-Waldner, Benita, 2006. The European Neighbourhood Policy: bringing our neighbours close. Speech. Giving the Neighbours a stake in the EU internal market, 10th Euro-Mediterranean Economic Transition Conference. Brussels, June 6, 2006.
3. Joint Press Conference of Vladimir Putin, British Prime Minister Anthony Blair, President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso and European Union High representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana Following the Russian-EU Summit in London, October 4, 2005.
http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/10/04/2211_type82914type82915_94933.shtm
4. Joint Press Conference of Vladimir Putin, Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen and President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso after the Informal Meeting in Lahti, Finland. October 20, 2006.
http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2006/10/20/1739_type82914type82915_112793.shtml
5. Joint Press Conference of Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Finland Matti Vanhanen, President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso, Secretary General of the EU Council and EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, Prime Minister of Norway Jens Stoltenberg and Prime Minister of Iceland Geir Haarde following the Russia-EU summit meeting in Helsinki, November 24, 2006.
http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/11/24/1958_type63377type63380type82634_114447.shtml
6. Press Conference on the Results of Russian-American Talks. US – Russia Bratislava Summit. February 24, 2005.
http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2005/02/24/2357_type63377type63380type82634_84527.shtml
7. Press Statements and Answers to Journalists' Questions Following Russian-Italian Intergovernmental Consultations. Bari. March 14, 2007.
http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/03/14/2049_type82914type82915_119984.shtml
8. Press Statements and Answers to Questions Following Russian-Czech Talks. Moscow. April 28, 2007.

http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/04/28/1208_type82914type82915_125947.shtml

9. Prodi, Romano, 2002. A Wider Europe – A Proximity Policy as the key to stability. Speech. “Peace, Security And Stability – International Dialogue and the Role of the EU” Sixth ECSA-World Conference. Jean Monnet Project. Brussels, December 5–6, 2002.
10. Putin, Vladimir, 2000. Annual Federal Assembly speech. July 8, 2000. Moscow, Kremlin.
http://president.kremlin.ru/appears/2000/07/08/0000_type63372type63374_28782.shtml
11. Putin, Vladimir, 2001. Annual Federal Assembly speech. April 3, 2001. Moscow, Kremlin.
http://president.kremlin.ru/appears/2001/04/03/0000_type63372type63374_28514.shtml
12. Putin, Vladimir, 2004. Speech at the enlarged session of the Government with the participations of the heads of the administrative divisions of the Russian Federation. September 13, 2004. Moscow.
http://president.kremlin.ru/appears/2004/09/13/1514_type63374type63378type82634_76651.shtml
13. Putin, Vladimir, 2006a. Interview with ZDF Television Channel (Germany).
http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/07/13/0852_type63379_108559.shtml
14. Putin, Vladimir, 2006b. Interview for the newspaper “Russian thought” (“Russkaya Mysl”). 23.11.2006.
http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/11/23/0742_type63379_114330.shtml
15. Record of the content of the Russia–EU Summit in Saint Petersburg, May 31, 2003. http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2003/05/31/1430_type63377_47580.shtml

The selection was made by date, by importance: thus the latest speeches were chosen and the press conferences of latest EU–Russia Summits.

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