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European Dimensions of Russian Foreign Policy

European values is the result of agitated minds of intellectuals of the North Atlantic propaganda; these values do not exist.

—VLADIMIR MEDINSKY, minister of culture, 2013

We cannot lose Europe. Europe without Russia is not Europe. Russia has time and again saved Europe from Europe itself.

—SERGEY LAVROV, minister of foreign relations, December 2014

On November 12, 2014, millions of curious viewers all over the globe were glued to computer and TV screens with news that just a few decades ago would have seemed directly out of a science fiction movie. The Rosetta Mission spacecraft of the European Space Agency, covering more than 6 billion kilometers in ten years, delivered the robotic lander *Philae* to the surface of the Churyumov-Gerasimenko Comet orbiting between Earth and Jupiter at the unimaginable speed of 84,000 MPH. For the first time in human history, it became possible to have a “feel” for an elusive (and for some a fateful) celestial body, a comet. Even though *Philae*'s mission was not 100 percent successful (its battery life was shortened by several landing and drilling attempts), it managed in a matter of hours to collect very important data on the comet's surface, its composition, and sounds and take some close-ups of the comet's surface. In preparation for more than a decade, this experiment of a few hours proved to be groundbreaking for astronomy.

The reaction from some parts of the Russian political spectrum was interesting. A typical adept of the “Russian world” would say, “The comet is ours, because it was our people who found it in space.” At first glance, this may sound quite funny, as though it were from a piece on the satirical website, the *Onion*. The reality, however, is less amusing. Sergey Malinkovich, chair of the Central Committee of the Communists of the Leningrad District, posted the following statement on that group’s website:

This is . . . a continuation of the Star Wars, or rather, starchy raiding from the European Union. This comet was discovered by the Soviet scientists in 1969 and, therefore, is under the jurisdiction of our country. Any descent of a foreign spacecraft on the comet . . . is illegal. The European Union should pay a large sum to the budget of the Russian Federation for the spy shots of the dark side of the comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko, made by the *Phobos*. . . Russian Space Forces should start patrolling the comet Churyumov-Gerasimenko and detain all offenders!¹

The Russian nationalists (including communists) seem to completely forget that the comet was named for two ethnic Ukrainians and that Churyumov is a professor at Kiev National University.

Political Roller Coaster with Europe

In the aftermath of World War II, Europe was at a crossroads. The atrocities of the war were over, but their long-term effects on the people’s lives were yet to be fully assessed. Yet there was some unexpected optimism about the future of Europe. This “noble continent, comprising on the whole the fairest and the most cultivated regions of the earth,” “the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics,” and the “origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy and science,” according to one of its most prominent sons, had to be consolidated into the “United States of Europe”² or vanish from the face of the earth. The “tragedy of Europe” was to be averted by unification of the European nations and not by their separation, which was the cause of the two world wars.

Less than fifty years later, Europe faced a similar dilemma when the

Soviet Union collapsed. This left Europe with an immense terra incognita to its east with some fifteen previously unheard of nations appearing as snippets of the Soviet ethnic patchwork quilt. Europe was thus faced with a dilemma: to embrace or to cast away the new Russia. Europe chose the first path, but with very slow and gradual integration.

At first, the West and Europe held illusions that Russia would readily embrace the principles of respect for human dignity and fundamental rights and freedoms upon which the European Union was built, but of which Soviet citizens were long deprived. Accepting the normative environment was, in fact, considered a *sine qua non* of future EU-Russia relations. Russia, in the words of Hanna Smith, has three objectives vis-à-vis the European Union: “a common economic area, a visa-free border, and some possibility to participate in EU decision-making.”³ These objectives were initially accepted by the European Union, which at the dusk of the past millennium was open to the idea of bringing Russia and other new eastern nations into the European family.

These illusions quickly vanished in the horror of the first and second Chechen wars and the subsequent limitations imposed by the Russian central governments on their own civil society. The previous European stance of inclusivity was replaced by one of exclusivity; this was clearly visible in the Kosovo crisis of 1999, when Russia was practically neglected in the matters of establishing peace in Europe. The events in Ukraine brought the interactions between the European Union and the Russian Federation below the freezing point where mutually imposed sanctions are only hurting their economies. Europe felt threatened by the growing and potentially insatiable territorial appetite of Putin’s government.

To many in Russia, however, the explanation was reversed: according to Elena Frolova, Europe was “afraid of another Russia—a country which has become stronger and more confident in itself after several years of stability and continuity of economic growth. It has enhanced its reputation as a responsible participant of the international processes, conducting pragmatic policies aimed at satisfying the interests of internal development, dedicated to promoting dialogue with the rest of the world, including in the security issues.”⁴ These milestones, which are

enhancing Russia's multidimensional inclusion in pan-European affairs and which, in principle, should make Europe happy, are viewed in Russia as major irritants for the Brussels supranational governance. So the grand question in EU-Russian relations is whether it is Europe that is deliberately shutting its doors to integration with Russia, or is it Russia's domestic and international actions that are making Europe turn a cold shoulder to Russia and treat it with increasing suspicion?

Partnering for Discontent

There are several communication channels for deliberation and decision making between the European Union and the Russian Federation. True to the spirit of Liberalism, these channels have been flowing in different directions and on multiple levels. The foundation of the EU-Russia relations was laid down by the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) back in 1997.⁵ The Agreement is a framework document defining the main direction of the bilateral interactions in the areas of promoting political dialogue between the Russia and the EC members (at that time, the European Communities); encouraging trade and investment; defending human rights and fundamental freedoms; promoting intercultural exchanges; and fostering cross-border movements of goods and services and other relevant forms of cooperation.⁶ Nine similar PCAs were signed with the remaining former Soviet republics with the same purpose of promoting democracy, political dialogue, and economic development.

Northern Dimension

In addition to the PCA, there are two regional cooperation projects active between the EU and Russia. The first one is Northern Dimension (ND), which the EU initiated in 1999. The ND entails cooperation between the EU and non-allied European countries: Norway, Iceland, and Russia. The goal of the ND is to strengthen the links between these countries in democratic institutionalization, environmental security, transportation, public health, and cultural cooperation.⁷ Participants were involved

in the creation and implementation of its policies. Lannon Erwan and Peter Van Elsuwege noted, “The fact that these partner countries have become involved in the process from the very beginning and participated in the Foreign Ministers’ conferences on the Northern Dimension is rather unusual in the EU context. In other words, the partner countries were expected to be not only policy-takers but also policymakers.”⁸ This is, however, quite understandable, taking into account Russia’s attitude toward retaining its own sovereignty in decision making.

The ND was renewed in 2006 at the EU-Russia Helsinki summit, which defined its evolved goals as “a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthening stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation, promotion of economic integration and competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe.”⁹ For the European countries, the program presented opportunities to foster their own regional agendas: Norway needed to include Russia to promote Norwegian roles in the region; Sweden wished to further complement its bilateral relations with Russia; and Finland wished to normalize bilateral relations with Russia.¹⁰ The program was a good opportunity for Russia as well to promote its view in the region.

For Russia, the ND offered “an additional possibility to attract the attention of partners to the use of resources located in underdeveloped areas, as well as to find joint solutions to the problems of the Russian northwest border crossing areas.”¹¹ Alexander Sergunin gives a rather precise outline of Russia’s stake in the program:

Given Moscow’s growing isolation from Europe because of NATO enlargement and the Kosovo and Chechen wars, this is perhaps the only window of opportunity for Russian cooperation with European countries. Moreover, Russia is concerned about Kaliningrad—detached from the mainland and sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania. With Poland integrated into NATO and both Poland and Lithuania expected to join the EU, Kaliningrad could finally become an exclave rather than an enclave. At the same time, Russia sees the Northern Dimension as a “part of the whole”: regional cooperation should facilitate the pan-European process, including pan-European security.¹²

Black Sea Synergy

The other program is the Black Sea Synergy (BSS), which was created in 2007. The program “aims to bring together different policy elements at EU’s disposal including sectorial partnerships with Black Sea states.”¹³ In many ways this endeavor was caused by the EU enlargement itself. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU in the same year turned the land borders of the EU into the sea frontiers. This also brought the European Union closer to the insecurities that are either directly connected to the Black Sea (for instance, the conflicts in the Caucasus) or are occurring around it (such as the gas wars between Russia and Ukraine). At the inception of the BSS, there were discussions about supplying energy carriers to Europe through the Black Sea (for instance, the currently defunct “South Stream”), which would be enhanced by increased regional cooperation.

The Black Sea Synergy was the EU’s extended hand of regional cooperation. Its program objectives were diverse: fostering democratic institutionalization, economic development, political stability, implementing projects of actual concern to the program participants, and contributing to the peaceful solution of regional conflicts. This was yet another way of including (and not ostracizing) Russia in the European family.

From the beginning, however, Russia’s lack of interest and involvement, as well as its own views on the nature and forms of the regional partnership schemes, “generated concerns over the actual potential of the Synergy. Russia’s lack of support to the Synergy and its insistence that the Synergy develop on an equal basis with BSEC [Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation] and under BSEC- EU partnership has undermined the potential of BSS since its inception. To a large extent, difficulties with BSS implementation mirror those of the EU-Russia partnership.”¹⁴ The implementation of the program was further impeded by the involvement of the EU in regional affairs on the bilateral level: for instance, in color revolutions in Georgia and Ukraine with further slow but deliberate rapprochement of these countries with

the EU. Moscow frowned upon this because it wanted to play the chief role in the policy engine of the region.

Euroregions

Finally, less institutional cooperation between the European Union and Russia is taking place on a subnational level between their bordering regions. The Euroregions' cooperation program entails closer economic and cultural ties between the countries of the EU bordering non-allied states. So far, cooperation with Russia on the regional levels occurs in the following regions: Euroregion Baltic (Russia, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, and Sweden); Barents Euro-Atlantic Council (Russia, Finland, Norway, and Sweden); Euregion Karelia (Russia and Finland); and Neman Euroregion (Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland). Some regions do not include the European countries: Yaroslavna (Russia and Ukraine), Slobozhanshchina (Russia and Ukraine), and Dnepr (Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine).¹⁵ After the worsening of the intergovernmental situation between Russia and Ukraine, future prospects for development of the Euroregions are quite vague.

Even before the Ukrainian crisis, development within the Euroregions left much to be desired, both Russian and EU standpoints. Aleksei Kuznetsov contends,

If the main goal of the EU is to create a more or less safe socioeconomic development area at its borders and the main goal of Russia is to rise to certain local challenges with the help of the EU financing. . . . then the prospects look quite bright. . . . But if we expect Russian society to get close to the societies of the neighboring EU countries in a few years, if we expect the common economic space to be formed on a different basis than that of large corporations, we will only face new problems.¹⁶

Aleksandr Sergunin further develops this pessimistic outlook on the subregional cooperation between the EU and Russia, "The Euroregions are basically reduced to what common Russians call 'bureaucratic tourism' (i.e., exchanged between municipalities). With rare exceptions,

they do not promote economic cooperation and horizontal links at the people-to-people or NGO levels. There is no clear division of labor between Euroregions. . . . In some cases, there is an unhealthy competition for funds (EU and Russian) between different Euroregions. In other words, the Euroregion concept—being a potentially important tool for subregional cooperation—does not work properly.”¹⁷

Evgeny Vinokurov and Alexander Libman agree that the problem was hidden in the design of the Euroregions such as inclusion of the regions with diverse cultural, social, and political contents:

For Euroregions to function successfully, their participants must have sufficient financial capacity to participate actively in the projects and sufficient autonomy to make decisions without oversight by the nation-states. The FSU [Former Soviet Union] countries fail on at least one and usually both counts. Furthermore, the functioning of Euroregions often falls victim to conflict between individual countries. Finally . . . substantial trade restrictions exist in the regions [of Eastern Europe] and rules often change depending upon the current economic situation.¹⁸

Inequality within the Euroregions is of concern to the EU from another standpoint. As Oksana Antonenko and Kathryn Pinnick write, “The border regions are notorious for widening the economic and social gaps that exist along the EU-Russia frontier. . . . For the EU the asymmetry represents not merely an economic and social problem on its external borders, but also a potential security threat in terms of organized crime and illegal migration.”¹⁹ With the Euroregions, the European Union was entering an unknown terrain with diverse laws, practices, and norms.

European Union's Democracy Promotion

With all the pros and cons, the normative proximity was the main purpose of the aforementioned endeavors of the EU. Loyal to the Liberal Neofunctionalism view on the European integration, where “political integration is a more or less inevitable side-effect of economic integration,”²⁰ the process that brought the European countries to the EU was considered to be transferable also during the further stages of the Euro-

pean integration. This is especially true in the case of democratic institutionalization, where the norm of democratic governance is introduced to a new environment from outside. Later, via complex normative spill-overs to other areas (health care, education, urban planning, social security, etc.) it starts to involve increased numbers of institutional actors. The final stage of the democratic normative life cycle is when a norm becomes a part of the political culture of a nation, an inherent component of its “moral fit” and the core of its identity. This fits well within the Constructivists’ take on the European integration, which postulates that the norms, or “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a collectivity of actors,” are socialized among the widest spectrums of institutional actors by looking at each other’s performance and learning from the outcomes in each specific case.²¹

This is essentially what the EU was striving to achieve as a result of its cooperation programs and initiatives involving Russia as well as other former Soviet states. The problem was the different interpretation of those goals in Brussels and Moscow. While the EU was targeting the normative aspect of cooperation, Russia was feeling uneasy with the externally imposed values. Andrey Makarychev and Alexander Sergunin gave good accounts of the inherent incongruence in the EU-Russia dyad from the normative perspective.

Normative unification is based on the presumption of Russia’s acceptance of EU’s values as guiding principles facilitating its inclusion into a wider Europe. In the EU reading, normative unification is a value-ridden model, grounded in a concept of the EU as a “soft power” that ought to “civilise,” “democratise,” “pacify,” and “discipline” its “periphery.” . . . Along these lines, the integration processes in Europe’s new neighbourhood is viewed as an inevitable and natural result of “spill-over” and “ramification” effects. This model was more applicable to EU-Russia relations in the 1990s and is overtly challenged by the Putin regime.²²

This is about thwarting the process of democratic reforms that started in the early 1990s and ended up with Putin’s building the vertical of power. An example of the normative incongruence, which is especially related

to interregional cooperation, was the end to regional self-governance put to sleep twice in its embryonic form by Putin when he revoked elections of regional governors first in 2004 after the terrorist act in Beslan and then again in 2013.

Institutional Grounds for Discord

On the regional level the important political and security issues between the EU and Russia are approached within the institutional framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Established in 1975 during the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE remains the largest regional security organization involving all the European countries. The core functions of OSCE are divided into three “dimensions”: politico-military, economic-environmental, and human security.²³ These wider umbrellas include such activities as arms control, border management, counterterrorism, conflict prevention, democratization, economic development, education, and human rights. Russia has been an active participant in the OSCE ever since its inception. Russian is one of the official languages of the organization.

In 1991 Russia initiated the so-called Moscow Mechanism, which is based on the “human dimension” of the OSCE: protection of human rights and promotion of democracy. This tool for international participation in political issues includes the creation of ad hoc groups of experts with the purpose of “resolution of a particular question or problem relating to the human dimension. . . . Such a mission may gather the information necessary for carrying out its tasks and, as appropriate, use its good offices and mediation services to promote dialogue and cooperation among interested parties.”²⁴ The Moscow Mechanism was enacted several times in relation to the human rights violations committed in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (by the European Community and the United States in 1992) and NATO’s Yugoslavia operations (enacted by Russia in 1999).

The Moscow Mechanism was, without a doubt, a significant step in developing the UN-type form and essence for the OSCE, where teams of experts would resemble those of the UN special rapporteurs, elevat-

ing the prestige of this regional organization on the international arena. The Moscow Mechanism also gave Russia an opportunity to raise its voice in matters related to European political affairs. It was the first real step toward the inclusion of Russia into the post–Cold War European security architecture as a full-fledged member who is relied upon. Finally, OSCE was the only European political organization in which Russia had veto power.

Because it is a nonbinding intergovernmental organization, OSCE offers its member states the opportunity to openly address many issues that other organizations, including the UN, cannot. This is also its major drawback, because to many, including Russia, the organization is viewed as merely paying lip service to the vital issues. Also, as Victor-Yves Ghebali noted “Russian grievances about insufficient military-security dialogue within OSCE, non-updating of the CSBMs regime, and the nonratification of the adapted treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)” as several stumbling blocks in its political interactions with Europe.²⁵

If initially Russia aimed at transforming OSCE into a counterweight to NATO’s involvement on the European continent and possibly beyond, it was greatly disillusioned with the OSCE and its various agencies openly chastising Moscow’s violations of the very principles the organization was based on. OSCE’s subunit, the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) took a highly critical stance on the issues of human rights violations by Russia, especially pertaining to the atrocities of the Russian troops in Chechnya and the elections in Russia.²⁶ The Russian government was outraged because Russia had made significant financial contributions to the organization, which was now criticizing Russia’s domestic conduct. In the Russian view, this was tantamount to biting the hand that feeds you while questioning the very morals and true intentions of this hand and the whereabouts of the food.

Presidential elections of 2004 in Russia marked the beginning of an open conflict with the OSCE. At the CIS summit in Moscow in July 2004, Russia accused the OSCE of practicing “double standards” and showing “unwillingness to take into account the realities and peculiar-

ities of individual states.” Russia further urged the OSCE to reorganize in order to “bring it back to first principles,” which were, in its view, the collective security without the unnecessary burden of human rights.²⁷ At the end, for three months Moscow had been blocking approval of the OSCE budget for 2005 under the pretext that it refused to fund activities contrary to its interests and principles. During his last presidential press conference in 2008, before giving the supreme seat to his substitute, Dmitri Medvedev, Putin blasted the ODIHR for imposing its terms and conditions on Russia. He even suggested that its election observers should stay at home and teach their wives how to cook *shchi* (a Russian vegetable soup) instead of coming to Russia and teaching it how to live.²⁸ As a result, the OSCE election monitors were unable to enter Russia because of unresolved visa issues, which Russia used as a pretext to prevent the OSCE from doing its mandated job.²⁹

Continuing to resent OSCE’s involvement in Russia’s domestic political matters, in 2005 Foreign Minister Lavrov repeated the mantra of Russia’s “double standards” toward the OSCE and its leadership and said he had enough “grounds to suspect that electoral monitoring under the OSCE roof is used as a trigger to destabilize the situation in a particular country,” that country being, of course, Russia.³⁰ To reinforce its argument, according to Thomas Ambrosio, “Russia has even gone so far as to call into question the core mission of the CoF and the OSCE to spread and consolidate the liberal values in Europe.”³¹ Further extending the line of political alienation from the organization it had helped, established, and supported, during the December 2006 meeting of OSCE foreign ministers, for the first time Lavrov made threats about the possibility of Russia leaving the OSCE. He said that this could happen if the OSCE did not shift the focus of activity with human rights monitoring in the military-political and economic cooperation.³² Perhaps the biggest boiling point in the Russia-OSCE relations was the so-called Vilnius Resolution of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in 2009, where the parliamentarians mentioned the Nazi and Soviet regimes as “two major totalitarian regimes . . . which brought about genocide, violations of human rights and freedoms, war crimes and crimes against human-

ity.”³³ Needless to say, this was negatively received in Russia, which had already made the necessary changes in its criminal law that make the “rehabilitation of Nazism” punishable with three years in prison.

Because it resents the OSCE’s criticism, the Russian political establishment is unable or unwilling to comprehend that in contemporary political times, collective institutionalized security is impossible without the joint compliance with the democratic principles, norms, and standards from which the very organization derives its existence. Historically, Russia had no problem in fulfilling the institutional requirements of collective political decision making. Even when collective security had been based on the principles of totalitarian intimidation, such as the Warsaw Pact, the Soviet Union had to satisfy its ideational cravings by strictly monitoring compliance of its members with the principles and postulates of communism. Yet now the principles were imposed by the USSR on its followers, whereas within the OSCE Russia had to take a parity standing with others. The cognitive dissonance in the Russian political culture was growing deep. Whereas in the Warsaw Pact the USSR was the producer and creator of institutional frameworks, in the OSCE Russia was a mere actor in the institution of the European collective security. The switch from being the leader of the whole institution to being one of the many followers seems to be very difficult for the Russian political culture.

In practice, Russia refused to comply with the OSCE’s foundation principles (for which it was mandated and endorsed by Russia itself) because it saw them as encroachments on its sovereignty. Complaints that the OSCE had “departed from its original mission to act as a pan-European security agency and had become little more than the self-appointed monitor of elections and judge on the state of democracy in the post-Communist era” are devoid of any grounds.³⁴ Overreliance on the spirit of collective action and overemphasis of the domestic human dimensions of the regional security were what made the organization unique and internally impartial. Had the OSCE not engaged in Russia’s criticism, this would mean the failure of fulfillment of the very mandate by which the organization was guided. The OSCE had not cre-

ated the violations: it was merely reporting them. Thinking of NATO as America's pet project in Europe, Russia wanted to do the same with the OSCE. However, NATO's view of European security and its collective nature facilitated Russia's participation in the OSCE. As Adler held, "To make the enlargement process more palatable to Russia . . . NATO has engaged the latter in cooperative security dialogue, which includes military, political, economic and environmental OSCE-like community-building activities."³⁵ The problem was that Russia wanted "to enter a foreign monastery with its own statute," as the Russian proverb goes, namely, to change the rules of the same. It would not agree that "when in Rome, do as the Romans do," and it wanted to impose its own vision on the institutional actors.

The discord between Russia, the OSCE, and the European Union brought results that may not be what Russia expected, but to a certain degree they favored the Russian side. As Vladimir Shkolnikov states, "Russia, despite the crudeness of its methods, has achieved some of its objectives. As further bureaucratization forced staff turnover, the Russian veto on the extension of the OSCE Mission to Georgia and the successful change of mandate of the OSCE Office in Tashkent which could monitor and report on internal developments, meant that it changed to become merely a project office, focusing on assistance to government structures. Therefore, it is clear that the OSCE is in decline, not only in the human dimension, but overall."³⁶ Indeed, part of Russia's success in its war against Georgia in 2008 was the absence of strong international monitoring mechanisms. Russia refused to include any other side in the multilateral commission that it has co-chaired to add a more "impartial" arbiter status.

The biggest blow to the OSCE, however, happened in 2007, when Russia denounced the CFE treaty. Concluded in the final months of the Soviet Union, the CFE treaty set limits on the ceilings and "flanks" of the NATO and Warsaw treaty's military deployment in Europe. The flanks contain five groups of heavy conventional weapons: tanks, armored combat vehicles, artillery, aircrafts, and helicopters, which, as the Russian side admitted, it was in violation of by the time of its entry into

force in 1995 for deployment of its troops in Chechnya.³⁷ As a successor state to the USSR, Russia undertook the same responsibilities, but was on numerous occasions, such as in 1998, found in violation of the “flank” limits.³⁸ As some form of concession to Russia, the United States and NATO decided “to update the CFE treaty in a significant and constructive way to ensure its continued viability and its stabilizing influence.”³⁹ The adapted CFE, presented to its signatories in 1999, reviewed the structure and essence of the flank limitations per countries instead of per blocks (one of which was already extinct). Together with that, at the OSCE Istanbul summit of 1999, Russia pledged to remove its troops from Moldova and Georgia, which it never did. Consequently, the adapted CFE never entered into force, since “the NATO states committed themselves not to ratify the . . . Treaty until Russia had fulfilled these obligations.”⁴⁰ The reason given was that the treaty required full legal ratification by its signatories.

This impasse from unwillingness of Russia to accept the proposed frameworks of the new CFE treaty resulted in Russia’s withdrawal in 1999.⁴¹ The Russian side justified this move by “extraordinary circumstances . . . which affect the security of the Russian Federation and require immediate measures”: the advance of the antimissile defense in Eastern Europe and the failure of the NATO countries to ratify the adapted treaty (caused by non-fulfillment of Russia’s obligations in the first place).⁴² Some Russian scholars saw this move as a completely justified act of a nation that wanted to protect itself in the face of impending political disasters. For instance, C. V. Arapina and C. A. Pfetzer called the CFE a “political misunderstanding” and concluded, “The decision to suspend Russia’s participation in . . . [the CFE] is a completely natural act entirely within the national interest of the Russian Federation. . . . Its formal existence meets the main military and political objectives of the West: removal of the Soviet troops from Europe, the maximum reduction in military capabilities, and instating western control over it.”⁴³ As for the Adapted CFE, some call the U.S. and NATO concessions in it, such as more than 80 percent increase in the flank quotas for Russia, “political blackmailing from the Russian government on every minor

issue, such as removal of the Russian forces from Georgia and Transnistria.⁴⁴ Azhdar Kurtov also saw the elements of security dilemma in the increase of quotas for Russia: according to him, this was not an important compromise, because under the adapted treaty, NATO would still have three times more military troops than Russia,⁴⁵ and this cannot be balanced by the increase in flanks.

Back in the early 2000s with the climate of the EU-Russia relations being rather optimistic, such a confrontational stance was difficult to foresee. There were even talks of possible Russian membership in the EU. Commenting on the future place of Russia within the European family, Swedish ambassador Sven Hirdman gave the following scenario: "I have a firm conviction that Russia's integration into the European structures should continue and deepen. . . . The globalization processes, unifications of the world economies, information revolution, freedom of movement, geography, and also history and culture push Russia in this direction."⁴⁶ In 2006 such elevated discussions were common: Putin's Munich speech would be made in a year; Russia would attack Georgia in two years, and the prospects of further integration of Russia into the European community would suffer an almost lethal blow with Russia's Crimean Anschluss and the following turmoil in eastern Ukraine.

Intergovernmental Forum for Cooperation

The programs between the European Union and Russia were designed and implemented within the general political intergovernmental cooperation between the EU and Russia. The umbrella medium of the EU-Russia relations are the biennial summits where the parties talk about the results achieved, lessons learned, the issues that can be improved, and future milestones. The most recent EU-Russia summit took place in January 2014, very close to the start of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy tried to assure the Russian leadership that the next level of integration of the former Soviet Union nations within the European family, the conclusion of the Eastern Partnership Association Agreements, was in no way threatening Russia's vital strategic and economic interests. Van Rompuy stated,

A more stable economic and institutional environment, improved market access and intensified trade relations will strengthen demand and create new business opportunities for all. . . . The Eastern Partnership does not affect Russia's economic, trade, social, human and cultural links to many of our common neighbours. These links will not be put at risk, but on the contrary, stimulated by more dynamic and successful economic development in the partner countries.⁴⁷

Essentially these agreements, as subsequent attempts to harmonize the vital areas of politics and economy of the post-Soviet countries, were directly based on the same APCs that Russia concluded, too, with the European Union. Russia, however, believed that these agreements, especially between the EU and Ukraine, were threatening its interests and decided to act appropriately, leading to its alleged participation in the Ukrainian crisis.

In 2008 the EU-Russia summit in Khanty-Mansiysk started the negotiations over a substantially new agreement. The proposed agreement would expand the previous PCA to reflect a more comprehensive nature of the relations between the European Union, as a supranational entity, and the Russian Federation, as the largest country on the European continent. The progress of the new legal document cementing the relationships between the parties, however, was slowed down by some issues of concern to the EU that were present from the beginning of negotiations and due to the past and present complications of the interactions with Russia. Apart from the purely legal quandary of the nonexistence of legal guidelines and references in the European Constitutional Treaty and the European Court on any compatible documents, there are substantial political concerns related to the feasibility of the new agreement.

EU's reservations about the potential agreement follow domestic and international political lines. Sami Andoura and Marius Vahl draw attention to the fact that "the EU has never concluded such an ambitious and comprehensive agreement with any third country, and the EU treaties do not provide any clear guidance as to how such an agreement might be concluded. Second, the bilateral relationship has become closer and

more challenging in the last few years, and the numerous contentious issues encountered will have to be addressed by the new agreement.”⁴⁸ Third, the newly concluded Customs Union between Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Armenia also impeded the economic part of the treaty with regard to the harmonization of the investment and trade procedures in the Customs Union and the EU.⁴⁹ These and other issues of concern resonate with the domestic situation in Russia with regard to the quality of fulfillment (or, rather, lack thereof) of the human rights and the conditions of the civil society, as well as the war against Georgia and its questionable involvement in the conflict in Ukraine. Instead of the new agreement, the PCAs have been annually renewed to keep the relations between the EU and Russia running.

The EU-Russia St. Petersburg summit 2003 launched sectorial cooperation between the EU and Russia and builds on the four “common spaces” where the EU and Russia overlap. These spaces include economy and the environment (trade and economic cooperation); freedom, security, and justice (enhancing the cross-border cooperation with regard to the movements of goods, services, and personnel; and also partnership in the counterterrorism activities); external security (multilateral cooperation in the field of regional security entailing nonproliferation, crisis management, and civil protection), and research and education (enhancing cooperation in joint research endeavors, cultural exchanges, language learning, and academic interactions).⁵⁰ In 2005, the parties at the Moscow summit agreed to further develop the instruments, or so-called road maps, which would allow the European Union and Russia to implement the “common spaces.”

Development of cooperation in some of these “common spaces” was fruitful, such as in the economic space. An example of successful cooperation is Russia’s accession to the World Trade Organization in August 2012 after years of painful negotiations with the WTO member countries “striving to achieve favorable access conditions to the internal Russian market, maximum lowering of tariff barriers . . . [and] Russia pressing on keeping the level of tariff and non-tariff protection of own producers.”⁵¹ Also, Ukraine and Georgia were blocking Russia’s WTO mem-

bership due to their own problems with Russia, which was overcome upon successful negotiations with these states.

In other “spaces,” however, cooperation was stalled by concerns the European Union had with numerous “reports of violence by law enforcement authorities in the North Caucasus, no progress in media pluralism, difficulties in holding public demonstrations, torture and ill treatment in detention centres and increased racism, xenophobia and homophobia . . . the situation of human rights defenders and independent journalists,”⁵² noncompliance with the ECHR’s judgments, and failure to ratify Protocol 6 of the ECHR on the abolition of the death penalty. Resolution 2789 of the European Parliament showed concern about the cases of “intimidation, harassment, and arrests of the representatives of opposition forces and non-governmental organisations, the recent adoption of a law on the financing of NGOs, on the right of assembly, the law on defamation, the law on the internet restrictions as well as the increasing pressure on free and independent media and minorities in sexual orientation and religious belief.”⁵³ The domestic political situation in Russia, including imprisonment of the human rights activists (Mikhail Khodorkovsky’s trial and punishment); breaches of the due process of law (in the Magnitsky case); unresolved assassinations of known journalists (Anna Politkovskaya), and the treatment of civil society organizations continue to bear negative inputs in EU-Russia relations.

Tensions over Extended Cooperation with Others

In the new millennium the European Union launched several regional partnership programs with other former Soviet nations. The most important of them were the European Neighborhood Policy (2004) and the Eastern Partnership (2009), both of which the Russian Federation viewed negatively. The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) aimed at “avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and our neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all. It is based on the values of democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights.”⁵⁴ The ENP was offered to six former Soviet republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine), but

not to Russia. Through the EPN the European Union offers its participants cooperation in specific sectors, such as closer economic ties and trade with the EU, transfer of expertise and sharing of experience in democratic institutionalization, as well as technical harmonization with the EU standards.

In 2009 the EPN was further enriched by the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative to the same countries, which was considered by many as the next step toward their further integration in the European Union's economic, political, and cultural structures with the ultimate purpose of their possible membership. To some, "The EaP was a direct product not just of the EU's internal inability to form a consensus on any 'single' way forward . . . but also of the increased perception of insecurity, threat, and risk resulting from events such as the Russia-Georgia war of August 2008, the violence in the Moldovan elections (2009), and the Ukraine-Russia gas crisis (2009)."⁵⁵ To tackle these possible challenges to Europe's security emanating from its eastern borders, the EU decided to act in the only way acceptable to its multilateralism: to further tighten the mutually beneficial web of liberal economic interdependence. The cooperation flew along multiple channels, most important of which were democratic and social development, energy security, and various sector-specific reforms.

In many respects, the ENP and the EaP were considered the necessary parts of the potential EU membership, although the EU accession process is free from exclusions. The closest the European Union ever came to integrating the former Soviet republics were the Association Agreements offered to their governments. The purpose of these agreements is to establish closer relations with the EU and the third states, including economic liberalization and political cooperation. In general, according to Vassilis Monastiriotis et al., "Signing of such agreements became in a way a kind of endorsement by the EU of the transition policies deployed in each of these countries and transmitted strong signals to the markets, at home and abroad, about the position of each country in its path to post-communist transition and accession to the EU."⁵⁶ The agreements essentially meant privileged relations with the EU while

not offering any tangible or promising guarantees for becoming its member per se. Nothing precludes, however, the countries that have Association Agreements with the EU from gaining full membership. At some point, even the United Kingdom, before becoming an EU member, was offered an Association Agreement, but rejected it.⁵⁷ The countries that joined the European Union after the Cold War, including Hungary, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Latvia, and Lithuania, all went through the stage of the agreement. There were others, too, including Turkey, which remained under the agreement for decades, never making it to full EU membership.

Russia rejected attempts by the European Union to extend the hand of friendship to former communist nations. The ENP/EaP did not offer more or less tangible answers to the Eastern European countries, especially those farther away from Brussels, related to their potential membership. In essence, it was a small carrot that carried no specific promise of potentially bigger carrots in the future. To worsen the matter, as Elena Korosteleva noted, “This positive experience [was] counter-balanced by the increasing anxiety in relation to the choice the partner countries feel they have to make: a closer integration with the EU or with Russia?”⁵⁸ The closer the countries were to Moscow, their former center of Soviet gravity, the more difficult it was for them to make a pro-Europe or pro-Russia choice, especially when the benefits and end results of at least the first direction, the uber-vague European conditionality applied to them were not fully and clearly visible. The benefits of the second direction, too, were not specific at that point, but the potential losses incurred by moving away from Russia and closer to Europe, especially from a political standpoint, loomed large. Some of the ENP/EaP countries, including Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, had the “weak points”—the unresolved conflicts on their territories—which Russia can use as political leverage in case of their “dwindling” away.

Given this effete character of the ENP/EaP initiatives, they were nevertheless viewed similarly to other “encroachments” on Russia’s own, as the NATO enlargement, happening almost the same time. As stated by Michael Johns, “Russia sees the Eastern partnership as the EU attempt-

ing to become involved in a part of the world that it sees as their sphere of influence.”⁵⁹ The perceptual security dilemma present in Russia’s approach to the politics of the United States in Europe also tainted Russia’s ability to correctly understand the nature of the EU’s extended cooperation. The main reason perhaps was the coincidental parallel in the developments of the two regional multinational organizations, one of which, for being a past military adversary of the USSR, was augmenting its influence in Europe at the expense of the territories that formerly were under Russian/USSR control.

The EU’s wish to come closer to the non-allied members of the European family was assessed as highly negative and threatening in Russia. Its political establishment thought of them as a challenge presented to it by the EU in the region that the Russian Federation considers a zone of its own interests. According to Irina Busigina and Mikhail Filippov, there was a widespread view in Russia that the EU, while openly advocating for the elimination of dividing lines in Europe, was actually drawing them again and forcing the post-Soviet countries, which have certain political and legal obligations with Moscow, to make a strategic choice: to follow the EU or Russia.⁶⁰ This view is essentially oxymoronic: why would Russia, who was striving for closer integration with the EU and promoting the contextually deeper association with the EU, deny essentially the same thing for other post-Soviet nations?

There is only one possible answer to this question: Russia still regards post-Soviet space as essentially neo-Russian. Otherwise, Putin would not have declared that the EU’s “Eastern Partnership” was “an alternative to NATO’s expansion to the East” and “a partnership against Russia.”⁶¹ Neither would Foreign Minister Lavrov have commented that the Eastern Partnership was an EU attempt to expand its “sphere of influence” in the quest for hydrocarbons.⁶² The ultimate goal of Russian foreign policy in the European direction is the removal of the prefix “post” in the adjectives describing the political past of the newly independent states. This is the very reason for Russia’s rejections of the EU mediations during the conflict in Georgia, its current stance vis-à-vis the unresolved fate of the Transdnistria part of Moldova, the start of tensions

with Ukraine over the vectors of its economic development, and the attempts to create the Customs Union as a direct contender to the EU.

Europe in Russian Foreign Policy and National Security

The European direction has traditionally been one of the most important in Russian foreign policy. Its 2000 concept paper calls the relations with the European countries “traditional priority direction of Russia’s foreign policy. The main goal of Russian foreign policy in Europe is to create a stable and democratic system pan-European security and cooperation.” Further along its narrative, the document mentioned, “The relations with the European Union (EU) are of paramount importance. The processes taking place in the EU have an increasing impact on the dynamics of the situation in Europe. These include enlargement of the EU the transition to a single currency, institutional reforms, and establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and Defense Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI). Regarding these processes as an objective component of the European development, Russia will seek due respect for its interests.”⁶³ The keyword here is the “objective development,” which means that in 2000 Russia was opposed neither to the European integration processes nor its eastward enlargement. At the break of the new millennium, these processes were viewed as a normal outcome of the decade following the collapse of the bipolar system in the European continent. The foreign policy discourse at the end of Yeltsin’s era and the beginning of Putin’s era placed Russia as an interested, engaged, but not disruptive participant of the rapidly changing European security architecture.

Similarly pro-active was the Russian stance in its midterm strategy toward Europe, which defined the main priorities of the bilateral relations as “creation a reliable European collective security system, attraction of the economic potential and managerial experience of the European Union to promote socially oriented market economy in Russia.” Among other aims of the strategy are “creation and strengthening of the partnership between Russia and the European Union in European and world affairs; prevention and resolution of local conflicts through

joint efforts in Europe with a focus on international law and the use of force . . . [c]onstruction of a united Europe without dividing lines.”⁶⁴ All these priorities that seemed quite legitimate and understandable, taking into account strong economic ties between Russia and many of the European Union members, were tossed away as a result of the Russian actions in Ukraine. The analysis of the latter shows either dual standards in approaching the matter of the European integration at least in economic terms or pure deception from the very start. For the Associated Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, which the former was about to sign in November 2013 and which became the stumbling block in its relations with Russia, was nothing but what it was striving to achieve with the EU. If, of course, the aforementioned policy guidelines were taken seriously by the Russian leadership and not just the smokescreen western direction of Russia.

The National Security Concept Paper 2000 presents a different outlook on the relations with Europe. The European direction was mentioned there as the very ground zero of the hostile forces trying to hurt Russia and damage its international prestige. The Concept Paper lists “the attempts of other states to oppose the strengthening of Russia as one of the centers of influence in the multipolar world; to prevent exercise of its national interests and to weaken its positions in Europe.”⁶⁵ This makes Europe not the place of natural habitat for Russian but the birthplace and the battleground of hostile forces for Russia. The dual character of the Russian foreign policy also extends in the rift between its visions on the international system per se and its place there, on the one hand, and the construction of perception of threats to its vital national interests, on the other. In Putin’s first two presidential terms, Russia attempted to embrace Europe; it strived to become a full-fledged member of the European family, but viewed the actions of the European NATO members (and the United States, too) as threatening its national security.

The Foreign Policy Concept Paper of 2008 was drafted when Medvedev replaced Putin as president of Russia. Its language and spirit are far more liberal than its predecessors and any of other successors. The Concept Paper defined Russia’s main aim in the European direction as “cre-

ation of a truly open, democratic system of collective regional security and cooperation ensuring the unity of the Euro-Atlantic region—from Vancouver to Vladivostok, without its fragmentation and reproduction of bloc approaches still persisting in the European architecture, developed as a result of the Cold War. The collective security thinking permeates the whole document, with references to the commitment of Russia to play an active role in strengthening the “positions of the Euro-Atlantic region in the global competition” and fortifying the roles of the inter-governmental organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (where Russia has a membership), in the matter of provision of the regional security, economy, and humanitarian affairs.

European Security Treaty: From Success to Failure

The Russian translation of the spirit of liberalism was presented to the European countries during the June 2008 visit of President Medvedev to Germany, at which he proposed reorganization of the whole architecture of the European security. As the result of the preliminary proposal, the document further produced the name “European Security Treaty” advocated for the close integration of Russia within the political and economic institutional frameworks of the EU. Most of its key postulates, such as the “principles of indivisible and equal security; not endangering the security of each other, taking into account the security interests of all its Members,” respect for territorial integrity, including nondeployment on its own territory of the military personnel or equipment that might endanger the sovereignty of the member states, arms control, and the variety of the consultation channels were, in principle, dear to the highly liberal environment of the EU.⁶⁶

There were several reasons why the treaty was doomed from its very deliberation stages. First, there was no practical need for it because it was not going to threaten Russian security in the perceivable future. The European security architecture was set up as a result of the intergovernmental negotiations, discussions at the Brussels level, domestic deliberations, and voting, which was embodied in various common security

documents, including the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defense Policy. Besides, the first enlargement of NATO by bringing in the three Visegrad states (Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic) happened in 1999 as a result of the years of negotiations of these aspirant countries with NATO HQ. Their decisions to join NATO were not forcefully imposed upon them by the Alliance but by revelations of their sovereign national principle, the very societal pillar Russia proposed to withhold. Denying the notion of sovereignty to others while striving to uphold one's own was something that threw the European countries into the inexplicable cognitive dissonance.

Second, two months after Medvedev's visit, the war between Russia and Georgia broke out, for which many in the West placed the blame on Russia's shoulders. If Russia were sincere in proposing open and peaceful relations with the European countries based on the principles discussed in the proposed treaty, then its own actions in Georgia in support of the separatist movements in Abkhazia and South Ossetia (both of which were on numerous occasions proclaimed by the European Union to be indivisible parts of Georgia) did an incredibly poor job of assuring the EU of its peaceful intentions.⁶⁷ As President Medvedev explained during his visit to Evian, France, on October 8, 2008, it was the current system of the European security that failed in Georgia and not the Russian support to the separatists and irredentists starting from the first conflict in 1991–92 in South Ossetia and 1992–94 in Abkhazia. As a result, according to the Russian side, the “existing security system in Europe is unable to adequately respond to the contemporary challenges.”⁶⁸ Thus the new basis for the joint security on the European continent should be developed. However, the only failure of the existing European security architecture was NATO's shilly-shallying about potential membership of Georgia (and Ukraine, for that matter), which might have given false hopes to these countries but very correct hopes to Russia in its lack of action.

If closely scrutinized, the proposed text of the treaty, according to its drafters, should bear “clear statement of the basic principles of security and intergovernmental relations in the Euro-Atlantic area. These should

include the commitment to the good faith fulfillment of the international obligations; respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the States . . . inadmissibility of the use of force or threat of its use in international relations.”⁶⁹ To extend Medvedev’s proposal for the treaty, in October 2012 the Russian Council of Federations issued a separate decree eulogizing Russia’s role in upholding the European collective security. The decree read,

The Russian Federation efforts to transform the relations on the European continent; overcome the legacy of the Cold War, cessation of ideological confrontation expanded the possibilities of cooperation in the European space and significantly reduced the risk of military conflicts in Europe. . . . The Council of Federations . . . declares inadmissibility of erosion of the key principles of international law . . . exclusion from the world practice of the actions aimed at suppressing the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, interfering in the internal affairs of States, and attempts to solve internal conflicts and crises through military actions not authorized by the UN Security Council.⁷⁰

The main and true recipient of the decree was the local public, however, which the Russian government tried to assure of its peaceful intentions of the proposed institutional rapprochement with the European Union by convoluting their true meaning. The international public and especially its European part were presented with a completely opposite picture of “sovereignty and territorial integrity” of Georgia in 2008 and later in Ukraine. These instances of application of the international law by Russia in practice went against the very spirit of the EST it was proposing. At the end, Russia presented the treaty to the EU countries as the solution to the problems on the European continent it had created in the first place.

Another probable reason for the EU’s rejection of the EST was that in case of its approval the EU was *ex post facto* endorsing the Russian intervention in Georgia. Loyal to the spirit of “it was long time ago and never happened anyway” of the Russian political culture, the preliminary design of the treaty proposed to the EU to prohibit all the actions that Russia already had committed in 2008 against another member of

the Council of Europe. Quite possibly, this specific part of the treaty was influenced by the thought that the EU had largely “forgiven” Russia for its Georgia war and showed, as the Russians thought, all signs it was ready to start from a clear slate with it. Alexei Smirnov verbalized these expectations, stating, “Even the August war between Russia and Georgia in 2008 should have become to be a new landmark of confrontation between Russia and the West. However, not only did the EU not reject Russia, but itself proposed to begin negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Russia.”⁷¹ In the language of the Russian political culture it meant that the EU was content, at least nominally, with the status quo ensuing after the war and was understood as Europe’s conniving attitude toward Russia’s *de facto* territorial gains. Thus if something worked once (in Georgia), why not repeat it a second time (in Crimea) and even a third time (somewhere else)?

The war in Georgia cast seriously negative shadows on the future of the EU-Russia security treaty, where the institutional role of NATO, as a political-military, intergovernmental organization, was concerned. There was a part in the treaty directly related to the notion of collective security and Russian potential participation in the European security architecture: “Not to provide for own security at the expense of security of others. Not to allow the actions (within military alliances or coalitions), which would undermine the unity of common security space. . . . Not to allow the development of military alliances to happen to the detriment of the other parties to the treaty.”⁷² This very passage, according to some, contained the no-no’s for the Euro-Atlantic views on security. Atayan and Cherepova gave the following explanation of the lack of success of the treaty: “Comprehensive security in the Western interpretation includes military-political, economic, and humanitarian blocks. Since the last two were ignored, the treaty was not comprehensive enough in the eyes of the Euro-Atlantic partners.”⁷³ In other words, the proposed treaty focused only on the military aspect of the alliance/non-allied member interactions and would not allow for inclusion of other aspects of the aforementioned relations.

In reality, however, it was the potential stance toward the collective

European security, where the allied actions of the European Union members of the NATO would be scrutinized by a non-NATO member (and a priori hostile to it) that gave the grounds for yet another explanation for not accepting the treaty. As Marcel de Haas noted with regard to NATO's view of the EST, "The emphasis on legally binding decisions by the signatories' conference of the proposed treaty would make any independent Western actions in the realm of security virtually impossible."⁷⁴ Inclusion of the NATO countries in the European Security Treaty "would effectively give Moscow a veto over further NATO expansion and would de facto recognize Moscow's self-proclaimed sphere of privileged interests. . . . [It] would prevent NATO from acting independently of Moscow," as McNamara from the Heritage Foundation explained.⁷⁵

Having a blocking say in the political matters on the European continent was exactly Russia's core aim at proposing the European Security Treaty, to start with. Danilov considers the Treaty a result of Russia's dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs within the NATO-Russia Council. According to him, "Russia's claims are, first of all, directed to the fact that the NATO countries are still present in Council not in their national capacities . . . but from preliminarily agreed upon positions. Often Russia cannot make the [Council] partners to include the topics that it wants to discuss into the agenda. According to Moscow, the Council failed to reach the level of large-scale cooperation projects."⁷⁶ Russia continues to accuse the United States of meddling in European affairs, which was perhaps the main reason for the proposed treaty.

For Russia, Europe will always be the battleground for American imperialism. This is the main and concurrent message coming from the Russian political establishment to its domestic audience with the purpose of consolidating it around Putin's leadership and against the constructed West/European/NATO threat. Andrei Isayev, Vice Speaker of the Russian Duma, when addressing the National Front, a French nationalist political organization, further developed this viewpoint: "We regret to see how the sovereignty of our esteemed nation-states of Europe . . . is lost in the name of so-called Atlantic integration; we see how the will of the peoples of the European countries is being

replaced by the will of little-known EU officials who are essentially the American puppets.”⁷⁷ Russia’s ideal image of Europe is the continent without the United States and NATO without its main actor and contributor. This is what Naryshkin proposed: “I have a fantastic offer: I would suggest to our European partners to expel the United States from the [NATO] block. And I am sure that [after that] the level of stability and security in Europe will quickly return to its proper condition.”⁷⁸ In return, Russia aspires to fit into the NATO shoes and play the leading role in European security. This wish is not fully verbalized or documented yet, but it is in the air surrounding the messages Russia sends to Europe concerning the future of its security architecture.

Europe under America

Europe is increasingly viewed as losing its identity and sovereignty to the onslaught of Americanism. The first loss is greatly lamented by Russia while the second is considered as irreparable. Europe is considered as devoid of any significantly strong voice on the international arena, and even if it does say something, it does so under the insurmountable pressure from the United States. A good example of the sanctions the EU imposed on Russia is the case of the Russian railroads, whose owner, Vladimir Yakunin, fell among the first victims of the Ukrainian situation. Commenting on Russian banks filing a lawsuit against the EU for the sanctions in October 2014, the Russian tycoon sees both Russia and the EU as “bearing the burden of a hawkish and unilateral U.S. policy that is being dictated to leading EU nations over the Ukrainian crisis.”⁷⁹ Absence of the single potent voice in the European multilateralism proves the pressure from outside: this is the opinion of the Russian political elites that praises sovereignty higher than any other virtue.

Russia’s paternalistic attitude toward Europe being a victim of American imperialism extends to seemingly bizarre grounds that are merely borderline normal. For instance, when Europe “dares to raise its voice” against American politics, it gets punished by the former: the terrorist attacks in France in early 2015 were increasingly presented in the Russian mainstream media and social networking as an act of the vindic-

tive CIA. The source of this statement, Russian political scientist Alexey Martinov, building on the argument that Islamic terrorism is the creature of the Central Intelligence Agency, presents national sovereignty as the biggest loathed target for the United States: “We know last year many European countries limited their cooperation with Russia in the fight against international terrorism under U.S. pressure. If you give up your sovereignty in the area of security, be prepared to be treated as France was,” referring to the terrorists attacks.⁸⁰

On the institutional level, notwithstanding the fact that the NATO-Russian Council had resumed its routine after the reset, NATO leadership had a very clear view of Russia’s “king’s pawn” move with the treaty.⁸¹ Soon it was presented with another proof of Russia’s hostile intentions in Europe. The National Security Strategy 2020, drafted during the second year of Medvedev’s reign, identified potential deployment of the missile defense systems in Eastern Europe as a direct threat to Russia’s national security interests and the regional stability in Europe. With this, Russia wanted to contribute to “comprehensive strengthening of cooperation with the European Union, including the establishment of common spaces in economy, external and internal security, education, science, and culture.” It was also striving “to develop relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on the basis of equality and to strengthen global security in the Euro-Atlantic area, the depth and breadth of which would be determined by the willingness of the Alliance to take into account the legitimate interests of Russia in the implementation of the military and political planning.”⁸² Thus Russia pledged to become a responsible member of the European community of states and uphold the common issues of security concern on the Euro-Atlantic space on its own terms only—in stark contrast to the omnipresent spirit of supranationalism in the EU and multilateralism in the NATO.

Legitimacy and Justice

The part on the “legitimate interests” of Russia is quite tricky here. To start with, in the context of international relations, semantically the word “legitimate” is vague and subjective. From the point of view of

the domestic politics, the relations between citizens and their government is a clear-cut controlled environment where the former give portions of their sovereignty to the latter to define what is legitimate and what is not. On the level of the international system, states enter the gray area of quasi-supranationalism in its form but not fully in the content. There, what is legitimate for one state can be illegitimate for others, unless, of course, the states are part of international/supranational governance, which extends the frameworks of legitimacy equally over its members. Russia, however, shuns any alliances, which would limit its sovereignty, thus allowing for the contradiction in understanding of the notion of legitimacy on the international level.

To many, Russia's "legitimate interests" remained obscure until March 18, 2014, when Putin lifted the veil of uncertainty convoluting this term. In his speech to the Federal Assembly, Putin based his decision to annex Crimea on his "convictions based on truth and justice."⁸³ He also made the reference to just and legitimate interests of his country in the Seliger patriotic camp in summer 2014: "We must restore historical justice, which was broken with the transfer—the illicit transfer, I should emphasize—of Crimea to Ukraine."⁸⁴ Apart from taking it upon himself to judge in retrospect on the legality of the internal normative acts of the currently derelict country (the Soviet Union), Putin heralded the start of a contextually new revisionist policy of Russia in Europe. This policy stance rejects multilateralism as a form of governance inherently deleterious to Russia's understanding of its own sovereignty.

For a country such as Russia, which cherishes its sovereignty (i.e., the ability of rulers to take any domestic and international actions without external judgments or interference) above all other values, the mere thought of giving it up to a supranational entity even with the purpose of higher individual benefits is quite egoistic. Makarychev and Sergunin noted this visionary incongruence in their following comment on the ideational clashes between the EU and Russia: "Brussels's approach, being intrinsically contradictory, is split between normative unification and multi-regionalist models and spheres of influence. Yet Moscow either denies or ignores the normative components in EU policies,

and views them as an undue expansion into Russia's presumed sphere of interests. Meanwhile, the EU views Russia as a revisionist power trying to regain its former control over the post-Soviet space.⁸⁵ Russia wants to be a part of the multilateral European governance, including in the security, politics, economy, and culture, while rejecting its supranationalism by individual definitions of what is just and unjust.

Current Views on European Security

Currently active Russian Foreign Policy Concept 2013 is a much broader document in terms of the issue-area coverage as well as the depth of Russia's proposed involvement in regional and global politics. It was written during Putin's third presidential term and aimed at consolidating the responses to new challenges for Russian statehood. For the first time, European economic problems, including the debt crisis and possible dive of the Eurozone into recession, were listed among the threats to Russia's stable future of building a common market with the EU. Here, too, Russia strived to become an "integral and organic part of the European civilization" within the four common spaces on the basis of a newly proposed partnership agreement with the EU. With specific emphasis on the political component of partnership, Russia pledged to uphold European security by "maintaining an intensive and mutually beneficial political dialogue with the European Union on the major issues of foreign policy agenda . . . in order to foster collaborative decision making with their subsequent joint implementation."⁸⁶ The expressed wish to become a part of Europe's common governance by participation and collaboration in political deliberations is clearly visible in this part of the concept paper, yet again based on Russia's unilateral understanding of legitimacy and justice.

The latest document that raised waves of concerns in wider circles in the Russian political spectrum was the controversial military doctrine prepared as a political retort to the Western reaction to Russia's alleged involvement in the crisis in Ukraine. With the general anti-NATO rhetoric, Russia's new military outlook rejects the European direction and participatory and inclusive cohabitation within the European secu-

rity architecture as framed by previous policy papers. Instead, it limits interactions with the EU and NATO to “maintaining equal dialogue in the field of European security . . . based on collective non-block principles.”⁸⁷ The main emphasis is on the role of NATO expansion as a growing threat to Russian national security.

Russia’s muscling in with the EU and NATO over the scope and form of participation in European politics is a symptom of much deeper issues. This rift has been artificially created by the contemporary Russian leadership with regard to the differences on the views on the political place of Russia in Europe. The conflict is the incompatibility of Russia’s wish to play the solo violin in the Concert of Europe and the EU/NATO ensemble approach to the same performance. While Russia strives to closely participate in the political, cultural, and economic processes in Europe, it wants to so do on its own terms and based on its political culture, which is not always compatible with the cardinal values that “Europeanness” is based on.

Clashes of Values

There is no single view on the nature of the inputs of Europe in the Russian national identity and the role Russia plays among the European nations. For some, it is quite positive: Russia is an integral member of the European family, both contributing to its diversity and solidifying it beyond its geographic borders. Smitienko presents the following tribute to EU-Russia relations from the historical and cultural perspectives: “Ideas of united Europe are inconceivable without Russia, because the history of our country is closely intertwined with the history of Europe. Russia is the most important part of Europe. . . . Russia’s significance to the rest of Europe . . . cannot be overestimated. . . . [The] European civilization would never have gotten to its present level without Russia’s contribution to its culture, science and education, medicine, literature, music and art. . . . We have civilizational, cultural, and . . . religious kinship, mutual interdependence and common interests in ensuring national, European, and global security.”⁸⁸ For the advocates of this viewpoint, Russia is indeed a part of Europe.

The other diametrically opposed view rests on the premise of Russia as an organism separate from Europe with its distinct history, culture, economics, and politics, which overlap those of Europe but never merge with them. Such a view is rooted in the belief that “the dialogue between Russia and the EU based on the common values has lost its momentum, if it ever had it.”⁸⁹ Yevgeni Shestakov contends, “Russia no longer sees itself as part of modern Europe. The idea of creating a common European space from Vladivostok to Brest has failed. The ongoing rapid change of the European model prompts Moscow to take any long-term projects involving Europe with a big pinch of salt.”⁹⁰ Living on the outskirts of European civilization gave Russia the distinctive air of sovereignty that extends well beyond the political realm. It is the identity sovereignty that drives Russia in a direction away from the European world and finds its embodiment in the irreconcilable political tensions between the EU, as a postmodernist supranational entity, on the one hand, and the Russian Federation, as a primordialist state, on the other.

Eurocentric Values

There was a time at the end of the sixteenth century when a young Russian tsar (quite an accidental one, to be more precise) decided to link the fate of his country with Europe. Pyotr Alexeyevich Romanov, later to become Peter the Great, first official emperor of Russia, built St. Petersburg, the city on the Neva River to fast forward the country into the modernity that it had been deprived of by over 250 years of Mongol rule. It took the titanic efforts of thousands of Russians serfs and hired labor to build the true pearl of Renaissance architecture, which stood out among larger Russian cities, including Moscow, due to its ultramodern design.

Even more exceptional was the true purpose of the city. In the words of the Italian encyclopedian Count Francesco Algarotti, St. Petersburg became a “great window . . . opened in the north through which Russia looks on Europe.”⁹¹ The great Russian poet Pushkin used the parlance “hacked through the window” when he referred to Peter’s building of the city. The word choice here is not accidental: according to Joost van

Baak, this phrase “suggests the prior existence of some less open building, or at least a wall, rather than a construction of a completely new house, and thus implies a symbolic and paradigmatic ‘opening up’ of the closed, defensive wall of the old House of Russian Culture.”⁹² In other words, the building of St. Petersburg signified a providence-predestined future for the Russian nation, which is directed toward Europe.

The “window” allegory also means that Peter’s decision to revolutionize Russian society was not accidental or forced upon him by some uncontrollable convergence of outside events. It was a conscious decision to pull the country out of the centuries of darkness imposed externally by the numerous conquerors and domestically cultivated by the *boyare* ultratraditionalist landlord elites shunning change. It was, in a way, a long-awaited continuation of the Europeanization of the country initiated by Vladimir Svyatoslavovich at the end of the tenth century with the conversion of the Kievan Rus’ to Christianity, stipulated, as Thomson claims, by “the close commercial and political ties that Kiev had developed with Byzantium over the preceding hundred years.”⁹³ Peter I conducted rigorous reforms aimed at boosting the centuries-dormant enormous economic, cultural, and political potential of the Russian nation. P. A. Krotov described Peter’s vision as “turning a backward country into the great power with flourishing culture, advanced science, modern and highly developed economy and powerful professional military . . . to attach the due weight to the actions of the Russian state on the international arena.”⁹⁴ The vision required gigantic institutional change, and Peter was not afraid to impose his will to implement such monumental transformations in Russian society.

The modernizing vision of Peter translated into a number of reforms in the spheres of public administration, directed toward building an essentially different type of the social contract, in which, as E. S. Kul’pin noted, “the government is recognized as the main value and is delegated the main decision-making rights.”⁹⁵ This was perhaps the first example of regime mimicry in the Russian society. Externally proposed institutional frameworks were imposed in the recipient country’s domestic political, cultural, and economic environment with the insurmount-

able force of the autocrat. The monetary and financial reforms, leading to completely new forms of taxation; the regional reform dividing Russia into the provinces with the governors appointed by the emperor; the legal reform creating the Supreme Court and lower-level provincial courts; the epochal military reforms, rebuilding the Russian army and creating the Russian navy from scratch; the educational reform, creating higher educational institutions in hard sciences; the cultural reform, one of the most notable of which was switching Russia off its traditional Byzantine chronology (since the creation of Adam) to the European (since the Birth of Christ, or Anno Domini) Julian calendar—all were mimicked, this way or another, from the parts of the governance regimes existing in the European countries, which Peter visited during his Grand Embassy trip to Europe in 1697 and 1698.

Peter's reforms in almost all sectors of society were fortified by hundreds of expats from Europe, whom he invited to come to Russia and to educate its population in their respective fields. These Europeans enjoyed considerable privileges, including highly paid jobs and even legally and spiritually: as Robert Massie notes, "Foreigners in Russia were permitted to have their own councils to rule on marriage and other ecclesiastical matters without being subject to Russian laws or the control of the Russian church."⁹⁶ The foreign experience combined with Peter's enormous energy and coercive force brought the unseen titanic industrialization to Russia; according to Evgenii Anisimov, "The industrial build-up of the Peterine epoch proceeded at a tempo never seen before that time: over the years 1695–1725 no fewer than two hundred enterprises of different sorts arose—that is, ten times more than there had been at the end of the seventeenth century."⁹⁷ In a century after Peter's reforms, Russia became one of the most powerful states in Europe, militarily and economically speaking.

But there was much more to erecting the Western-oriented city-outpost for the Russian state and modernizing its economy and society: it was the identity transformations that Peter forced upon its subjects. The societal changes were enormous, ranging from ordering the *boyare* to shave their "long beards and [get rid of] oriental costumes which sym-

bolized the arch-conservatism of old Russia⁹⁸ to re-creating the Russian military in accordance with European standards. The new Russia of the eighteenth century was no longer a backward country; it was on strong rails of rapid Europeanization in many spheres of life, including its identity.

It was Peter the Great who created the primary foundation of the Europeanization project in Russia, which with different degrees of success continued until the second and third terms of President Putin. Under different rulers, Russia participated in the European affairs not as an outcast but as its integral and closely integrated part. A cursory examination of Russia-Europe interactions reveals a steady pattern of the Western orientation of the former in most of the spheres, including political, economic, and military. Even the Russian ruling class had more European blood in them than Russian. For instance, Prussian-born Carl Peter Ulrich, Peter's grandson, became Peter III. Peter III's paternal great-uncle was the Swedish king Charles XII, and he was initially raised to be the heir to the Swedish throne. In 1762 he was replaced on the Russian throne by his wife, a Prussian, Sophie Auguste Friederike von Anhalt-Zerbst-Dornburg, aka Catherine II, as a result of a coup. Their son, Paul I, who was deposed as a result of a military coup in 1801, was technically more Prussian (3/4) than Russian.⁹⁹ The last Russian tsar, Nicolas II, was half-Danish on his mother's side: she was a daughter of King Christian IX of Denmark and sister of Britain's Queen Alexandra and King George I of Greece. Nicolas's paternal grandmother, Marie von Hessen und bei Rhein, was German, and so was his wife, Victoria Alix Helena Louise Beatrice von Hessen und bei Rhein, aka Alexandra Fedorovna, as her Russianized name goes.

In the military sector, Peter's reforms were continued by his successors with increased rigor. With some minor bumps along the road, such as the overthrow of Paul I as too much pro-Prussian, the European-style military continued to exist in tsarist Russia up until the October 1917 revolution. Close economic integration with Europe also continued. Although even before Peter Russia was trading with Europe, it still, as Fernand Braudel defined, remained inward-looking because of "her

unmanageable size, her still sparse population, her limited interest in the West. . . . Russia was the victim neither of her deliberate action, nor of some categorical exclusion on the part of the outside world. It was simply that Russia tended to manage her affairs on the margins of the rest of Europe."¹⁰⁰ With Peter breaching the mental borders between Russia and Europe, "18th century Russian trade with the rest of Europe, expanded . . . 15-fold to 26-fold," as noted by Victor Lieberman.¹⁰¹

Politically, too, Russia remained tightly involved in the vital internal affairs of the European countries and even beyond. Empress Catherine II established the First League of Neutrality in 1780 to ensure the rights of neutral American colonies to trade with the rest of the world without British intervention.¹⁰² This may be considered "mediation with muscles" to a certain extent. The Russian government sent its ships in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, and North Seas to protect the American colonies from the assaults from the British in high seas. Paul's successor, Alexander I, brought Russia into the Quadruple Alliance with the United Kingdom, Austria, and Prussia, which defeated Napoleon and laid down the basis for the Concert of Europe. It was the balance-of-power-based peace on the European continent, based on "self-restraint . . . if the good of 'Europe,' as an entity was to prevail over the conflicting national interests of the individual powers."¹⁰³ The alliance, of which Russia was one of the main actors, lasted for almost a hundred years until World War I broke out in 1914.

With the close ties with Europe, Russia brought its own palate to the European "melting pot," if you will, of multiculturalism: it was always a bit different, a bit off-the-grid—although integrated in Europe, still a bit separate. Iver Neumann gives a very good overview of the European integration of Russia after Peter the Great: "The Russian state spent the eighteenth century copying contemporary European models, the nineteenth century representing the Europe of the *anciens régimes*, which the rest of Europe had abandoned, and the twentieth century representing a European socialist model which most of the rest of Europe never chose to implement."¹⁰⁴ Russia always had its "own path," which lay in the Euclidian parallel world with Europe.

Differences in cultural identity lines were exacerbated during the Soviet Union, which claimed to be building a better future for its own people and for most of the Eastern European countries, but still viewed Europe as its natural “place of residence.” As Dostoyevsky noted, “Yes, beyond all doubt, the destiny of a Russian is pan-European and universal. For a true Russian Europe . . . is as dear to his heart as Russia, as the fate of his motherland. . . . To become a true Russian means to reconcile the European differences.”¹⁰⁵ Latynina echoes Dostoyevsky in the twenty-first century by stating, “. . . the Russian culture became great only after Russian became Europe . . . [H]ad not Peter I made Russia a part of the European world, there would have been no Tolstoy-Turgenev. There would have been no Russian Empire, so cherished by our [Russian] patriots. It would simply have not existed.”¹⁰⁶ These passages show the intangible link between the Russian nation and its identity, on the one hand, and the European values, on the other, which proved to be fragile under the constructs of the new “Russian world.”

Eurasianism

In the middle of the nineteenth century, however, Russia began slowly drifting away from its European orientation and towards Asia. It started from a new perspective in Russian philosophical thought, according to which the elite viewed their country as having a noble destiny of uniting in itself the qualities of the two words: European and Asian, but eventually producing a new identity product. The birth of the idea of *Eurasianism* largely happened as a result of the defeat in the Crimean War of 1855, when the tsarist Russian authorities decided to abandon their course of European alignment and to turn to Asia for spiritual and cultural comfort and enlightenment.¹⁰⁷

In its essence, Eurasianism advocates for a “return to the East” and proposes to view the Russian identity as the unique amalgamation of the Eastern and Western cultures.¹⁰⁸ However, this notion had territorial connotation: it located Russia between the two geographic extremes and adds to its cultural context. According to Yelena Nikitenko, Eurasianists view Russia as “a special cultural-historical world, which syn-

thesizes the features of Eastern and Western cultures; the link between these worlds. . . . Russia as a geopolitical, political, and cultural entity . . . belongs both to Europe and Asia.”¹⁰⁹ For them, “there was an organic link between the geographical area, the specifics of each culture, and the people living in the area. . . . Russia is neither Europe nor Asia, and therefore there is no European and Asian Russia, but only parts that lie to the west and east of the Urals.”¹¹⁰

After the October 1917 revolution, when the Soviets came to power, Eurasianism received a boost from numerous Russian émigrés and refugees to the European countries and the United States led by Nikolai Trubetskoi, Petr Savitsky, and George Florovsky. As Sergei Nizhnikov notes, “Eurasianists emphasized the role of the Turan-Asian element in the history of formation of the Russian culture and statehood. All of them occupied anti-Western, but not all—anti-Soviet stance. . . . The Russian Revolution, some of them thought, “hacked through a window to Asia.” They rejected cultural and historical “eurocentrism,” based on the pluralist perception of culture and rejection of existence of universal progress.”¹¹¹ This brought along the depiction of Russia as cultural interaction of the continent, whether or not other parts of it consented to such geospiritual leadership in Russia.

With its Asian-centric move, the Eurasianists’ vision also emphasizes the quality of the discourse equal to the concept of the “Third Rome” developed by the medieval Russia priest and philosopher Filaret. According to this Slavophil vision, the Russian nation has a larger geopolitical meaning and a messianic destiny. Matthew Johnson claims that in this identity vision, “Rome did not refer to a place. . . . Rome was a concept; it was historical, legal, theological and, certainly, in the poetic sense, mythical and mystical.”¹¹² It was the receptacle of the most developed civilization among its contemporaries, and Russia was meant to inherit this engine of progress and spread it around to lesser cultures under its influence. From this standpoint, “the Eurasianists synthesized old Slavophil views on the ‘people’s truth’ and the contemporary theories of public democracy of the twentieth century,” which later became a very peculiar form of Russian nationalism.¹¹³

As inherited from Slavophiles, a special place in Eurasianism was given to Russian Orthodoxy as the governing religion of the nation, but with a twist. George Florovsky defines the view of the Eurasianists of their Christian origins as their “cultural and everyday need; as historical heritage of Russia. Eurasians feel the Orthodox elements, experience and understand Orthodoxy as historical and everyday fact; as the subconscious ‘center of gravity’ of the Eurasian world; as (only) its potency. And yet . . . Russia is turning in their minds into the ‘legacy of Genghis Khan.’ Thus Russia is taken out of ‘from the prospects of the history of Christian, baptized the world’ and its ‘Byzantine heritage’ becomes obscured by a ‘Mongol’ one.”¹¹⁴ Spiritually Russia becomes an idiosyncratic amalgamation of Christianity, as a faith, with Asia, as a geohistorical point of reference.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and rebirth of Russia, the Eurasianist school of thought acquired a strong scent of nationalist identity. This, however, was not a novel embodiment for the Eurasianists. Back in the 1920s, a prominent Russian thinker and minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Provisional Government after the Revolution of February 1917, Pavel Milyukov, named political concepts of Eurasianism as the “Russian racism.”¹¹⁵ The neo-Eurasianists reanimated century-old vistas of their predecessors on “the problems of choosing an original social and cultural strategy for Russia; return to the social-ontological cultural grounds; definition of the primary purpose of the value-based worldview potential of the Russian mentality; return to the cultural-aesthetic space; quest for new meanings in the fundamentals of art and many more.”¹¹⁶ The central part of the neo-Eurasianism became the Russian neo-nationalism. Europe was philosophically but not territorially left out from this quest.

The Eurasianist discourse was taken to an extreme in its “neo-” form by Alexander Dugin, one of the main ideological gurus of the contemporary, revived Russian nationalism. Dugin asserts, “The presence of the Western *logos* to universality refuses to recognize this universality as inevitable. . . . It considers Western culture as a local and temporary phenomenon and affirms a multiplicity of cultures and civilizations

which coexist at different moments of a cycle.”¹¹⁷ I. A. Smaznov defined two main directions in the contemporary “neo-Eurasianism”: *theoretical Eurasianism*, which develops the concept of “the Eurasian empire built on the territory of the former Soviet Union,” and *economic Eurasianism* with the aim of “rebuilding of the economic interactions of the former Soviet Union republics.”¹¹⁸ Dugin belongs to the first category, which heralds the revival of Russia not only as *primus inter pares* on the post-Soviet space, as it was during the USSR, but as the main potent actor in the whole Eurasian space, stretching from Lisbon to the Ural Mountains.

In more practical terms, the recently reemerged concept of “Third Rome” is translated into the “Russian world,” which has the goals, as defined by Dugin, of “restoration of a Greater Russia, crushing American hegemony, creation of the multipolar world; liberation of Russia from its fifth and sixth columns, the triumph of the Russian spirit, and the flourishing of Russian civilization,” which is promoted as an anti-pode of the Western civilizations.¹¹⁹ Dugin’s Eurasianism is linked to the quest for defining the “Great Russian Idea”: the Russian identity. Here is where the geographic dimensions of Europe come to light. In one of his interviews, Dugin gave the following definition of the Russian idea: “We need to take over Europe! Conquer her! And annex her! . . . And then, if we define the national idea as the annexation of the European Union into the Eurasian Union and our expansion into Europe—only then can we actually, by and large, get together around a great goal. Just imagine: to annex Europe! This would be so Russian of us! . . . We would just establish a protectorate over them—that’s all!”¹²⁰ Opponents of such a view on the Russian civilization as destined to rule the world are those who consider the Russian way of life to be “compensatory” in which its routine failures in most aspects of life, including agriculture and industry, are compensated for by the “bully” logic of intimidation of those who succeeded.¹²¹

With the ascent of Putin to power, neo-Eurasianism undertook a slow but deliberate crossing of the very cultural Rubicon separating Russia and Europe. According to Jeffrey Mankoff, “Eurasianism in con-

temporary Russia is in many ways the recipe for the reconstruction of a state looking very much like the USSR, both in terms of frontiers and in terms of its authoritarian political system."¹²² The regime, beyond the identity divide, artificially created and cultivated by the contemporary Russian political establishment, exacerbated the us-versus-them separation between Russia and Europe proper. Every subsequent clash between Russia and the European nations, be that in the cultural, economic, political, or military fields, became much worse than the previous one. Putin, in a sense, became an antipode of Peter the Great: he is on the path towards closing the circle of Europeanization of Russia by bolting the window, once hacked through by Peter, with the iron dowels of misunderstanding, prejudice, and envy.

Eurovision's "Gay" Fallout

Loyal to the Russian political culture's tradition of accusing others of their own deeds, the present-day Russian mainstream thinks it was betrayed by Europe, which, having been misguided by America, placed it on the edges of its identity, culture, and politics. A seminal example of the clashes of identities and values between Europe and Russia happened at the 2014 Eurovision Song Contest. This televised vocal competition is less known to the American public but is highly renowned in the music field in Europe, watched by millions of TV viewers all over the continent. Every year, European nations send their musicians to the Eurovision, where their musical talents are judged as well as the prestige and "weight" of the countries of Europe.

Through several stages of the selection process, the jury, together with the citizens of the contesting countries who, voting via phone calls and text messages, choose the country-winner, which will host the Eurovision in the following year. A peculiar character of the Eurovision voting is its ethnic polarization, where the representatives of a given nation, who cannot vote for their own representative, give their votes to their ethnic or otherwise cultural brethren. Gad Yair was the first academic to point out the political nature of the Eurovision contest, where the voting "bias represents the underlying political and cultural structure

of Europe; European unity and solidarity, national rifts and ethnic conflict are reflected in the result of the contest.”¹²³ Further along the same lines, Derek Gatherer’s statistical analysis identified several “voting blocs” who traditionally vote for each other: the “Western Block” (Western Europe); the “Viking Empire” (Ireland, Scandinavian, and Baltic States); the “Warsaw Pact” (Russia, Romania, and the former Yugoslavia); the “Balkan Bloc” (Romania, Serbia, and Albania), and the “Pyrenean Axis” (Andorra and Spain).¹²⁴ Within these blocs, according to Victor Ginsburgh and Abdul Noury, “vote trading” is a “sincere voting based on the “quality,” and linguistic and cultural proximities.”¹²⁵ Regardless of the quality of the song and the *artistique* of the performers, the citizens of the European countries traditionally give their votes to the singer they consider as their identity kin.

The winners of Eurovision have been such world-class musicians as ABBA, Céline Dion, and Toto Cutugno. For them, winning the contest was a door opening to the larger musical stage. The Soviet Union never participated at the Eurovision; Russia entered the contest for the first time in 1994. In 2008 Russian singer Dima Bilan (originally from North Caucasus) assisted by Yevgeny Plyushchenko (four-time Olympic medalist in figure skating, three-time world champion, seven-time European champion, and ten-time Russian national champion) and world-class Hungarian violinist Edvin Marton won the Eurovision.

In 2014 Russia was represented by seventeen-year-old twins Maria and Anastasiya Tolmachevs, winners of the Junior Eurovision Song Contest in 2006. To many Russians the Tolmachev sisters embodied traditional virtues of purity and chastity that are ascribed to the Russian nation at large. The sisters ended up taking seventh place. The winner of Eurovision 2014 was Thomas Neuwirth, aka Conchita Wurst, an Austrian bearded drag queen and a LGBT activist. The outrage of representatives of the Russian establishment (actors, musicians, politicians, and general audience) gathered at the studio of the Russia 1 TV channel airing live had no limits. Zhirinovskiy was yelling, “This is the end of Europe! It has rotted! They do not have ‘a man’ and ‘a woman’ anymore: they have ‘it’: Europe of the neutral gender!”

The cacophonous audience echoed him: “This is degeneration of Europe! This is the end of Europe! It has finally revealed its true face! It is a requiem for Europe, European Union, and traditional values in Europe!” Zhirinovsky crowned the overwhelming uproar of the audience by yelling, “This is the diagnosis for Europe: Europe has diarrhea with blood and foam!”¹²⁶

A defeat in any prestigious international competition is an unfortunate occurrence but still is within the limits of normalcy, and the Eurovision contest is no exception. But the defeat to the openly gay and flamboyant European over the two true Russian “innocent beauties” sent a powerful message to the supporters of the Russian world: the emasculate and effeminate Europe (or what the Russian mainstream calls the *Gay-ropé*) had finally come out of the closet. It is not the future habitat for the macho and spiritual Russian identity. A Russian nationalist organization, Sputnik and Pogrom (deriving its name from the two most commonly used Russian words in a Western world) even blamed Peter the Great for switching the Russian “spiritual time” to the “spiritless” European: “Prior to 1696, Russia was the Holy Russia, the land of sweetness and sanctity, awarded God’s blessings for its holiness, and, therefore, having no need for time, since any change, any violation of the holy order is blasphemy and the reason for the deprivation of God’s blessing.”¹²⁷ The progress, economic development, state strengthening, and consolidation of the Russian society under Peter thus violated the perfect balance of the Russian people’s communion with God, currently hinging on the feeble and ephemeral “staples.”

The danger for the Russian identity, be that Slavophil or Eurasianist, is that these “staples” are now being pulled apart from the Russian identity by the Europeans, and this is happening not only in the musical sphere. In November 2013, the TV program *Special Correspondent* on Russia 1 discussed the danger of the European gay expansion into Russia: “The European sodomites are trying to infiltrate Russia and organize the political protest movement here, among our Russian perverts. This increasingly strong minority—by the way, very aggressive and impertinent—is holding by the throat the governments of France, Den-

mark, Britain . . . and now comes our turn. . . . Normalcy is in opposition; abnormalcy is in opposition to all humanity.”¹²⁸ The anti-gay law with the lengthy title “On Amendments to Article 5 of the Federal Law, On protection of children from the information harmful to their health and development,” and some other legislative acts of the Russian Federation in order to protect children from information that promotes the negation of traditional family values gave immediate results. Several days after its adoption in June 2013, gay activists from the Netherlands were arrested in Murmansk for assisting the Russian gays in organizing protest actions against violations of human rights. To make matters even worse, at the end of 2014 Medvedev’s government issued a decree “On the List of Medical Contraindications, Medical Conditions and Medical Restrictions to Driving,” which banned driving rights to people with adult personality and behavioral disorders.¹²⁹ This category, according to the Association of Lawyers of Russia for Human Rights, can include “all transgender, bi-gender and asexual people, transvestites, cross-dressers, and those seeking gender realignment,” which would widen the population gap in Russia.¹³⁰

The normative acts and the general anti-gay stance in Russia boiled down to inclusion of the following passage in the new Russian Military Doctrine, which defined “actions with intended information impact on the population, especially young citizens of the country, with the aim of undermining the historical, spiritual, and patriotic traditions in the matter of defense of the Fatherland” as one of the national security threats.¹³¹ This paragraph, with extremely obscure wording, gives quite a liberal interpretation of the national security threats. It essentially allows Russian authorities to view a hypothetical visit of Conchita Wurst to their country as engendering the historically developed pillars of the edifice of the Russian nation and its national security by pulling apart the spiritual staples this edifice is based on. Wurst was, indeed, planning to visit Russia in 2014 to meet with Putin, but received very cold treatment from the Russian officialdom. As one of the hard-core apologists of the principal Russian values and a member of the St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly, Vitaly Milonov commented on her proposed

visit: “I think we should send her as some kind of a comfort start sent to the CTO (Counter-Terrorist Operation of the Ukrainian officials in the South-Eastern Ukraine), where the soldiers from the National Guard and the volunteer will actually Euro-integrate themselves with her . . . and to better understand what the real modern European trends are.”¹³² Needless to say, after such a “warm” welcome, Ms. Wurst should think more than twice before being willing to commit herself to the charms of the Russian world.

Division between “us” versus “them” based on the value context is not a novelty in the Soviet/Russian political discourse. What is new, however, is the pace within the negative vision on Europe being the center for unholy defilement and infernal profanation of Christianity, and traditional Russian family values had been created, cultivated, and promoted within the ordinary Russian citizens by the state propaganda. Dmitri Trenin et al. note, “Moscow has not only accepted the values gap between itself and the EU but has begun to proudly advertise its own more conservative values, such as national sovereignty, religious faith, and traditional family. These priorities stand in contrast to Europe’s unchecked freedoms which, in the Kremlin’s view, erode society and will eventually doom it.”¹³³ To withstand the negative vibes coming from the European capitals, various Russian nationalist movements, inspired by Dugin, are promoting the idea of “the full Russian Renaissance, the ‘Russian Spring.’ [They] are starting to feel pride for our country. The Russians are starting to realize that they are not only as passive objects in the world but also the subjects of history.”¹³⁴ Even in this particular case of the Eurovision contest, giving the first place to a representative from Austria—on the basis of politicized voting (plus the performance “quality,” of course)—was viewed as an organized conspiracy against Russia with the aim of eroding its traditional family and Christian values. The problem with this statement is that no one actually has ousted Russia from Europe or has infringed upon its identity or even denied them the basis for their pride. No one except the Russian political establishment itself, which—once again, as so often in Russian history—is attempting to turn its wheels backward and stall the natural societal and cultural evolution.

The idea of separation from Europe on the basis of the value conflict is currently being cultivated at the highest echelons of power in Russia. The apogee of this “unique Russia” perspective was given in two forms: one of the preparatory versions of the document “The Bases for the State Cultural Politics” prepared by the Russian Minister of Culture in 2014, which is supposed to define the state’s vision on the place and role of the country in the world; and the other is being developed by the World Russian National Sobor. The initial text of the “Bases” contained the following passage: “Russia should be considered as a unique and a distinctive civilization, which cannot be reduced either to the West (Europe) or to the East. A brief statement of this position is the thesis: ‘Russia is not Europe,’ confirmed by the entire history of the country and its people.”¹³⁵ After being leaked to the press, the “Bases” caused hurricanes of negative feedback in the mass media. Eventually, under pressure from the civil society, this paragraph was removed.

The image of Conchita Wurst will continue to haunt the traditionally wired minds in Russia. Immediately after the Eurovision finals, the Russia Church issued a statement in which it called the result of the Eurovision the “process of legalization of what the Bible calls none other than abomination.”¹³⁶ Even on a higher political level, the disruptive role of European Union vis-à-vis Russia is seen, according to Glaz’ev, in “pursuit of its own expansionism by the EU, which applies the methodology of double standards, uses force, uses deception and political technologies. . . . They are ready to use violence, including organization of coups in order to absorb countries. . . . The European Union behaves as a bureaucratic empire utterly unscrupulous to use any means to expand its power and territory. It seems a vestige of the 21st century!”¹³⁷ On the popular level the anti-European stance is translated in the overwhelming rejection of the idea of the European Union and even (hypothetically) membership.

In a video program, *Polite Nastya* (the reference here is to the “polite people” of the Russian military in Crimea), the reporter presented the Swedish children’s song about sex education. Happy characters “Snipp” and “Snopp”—the male and female genitals—of the song were ridiculed

in the program as “absolutely normal for Europeans who are already accustomed to such kinds of sex-education and perversions of the tender children’s souls. This is how monsters grow up, win the Eurovision contests, and teach us how to live. Thank God, we are smart enough not to accept mindlessly those Western ‘values.’”¹³⁸ Such views on the incompatibility and even conflict between European values and Russian traditional lifestyles seem to be shared by the wider societal layers in Russia. The public opinion poll conducted by the Levada Center in September 2014 revealed massive (68 percent of the respondents) discontent with the EU, with approximately the same numbers of respondents (64 percent) believing that Russia should abstain from seeking membership in this organization in the future.¹³⁹

Supranational Threats to Russia

The value rift between the European and Russian lies on a much deeper existential level and is based on the clashes between the two nations’ sovereignty, two outlooks on political deliberation, two engines of development. The very spirit and letter of the contemporary political and economic processes in Europe are based on the notion of supranationalism. The heart and soul of this endeavor is the voluntary membership of the countries obtained as the result of the years of bringing their domestic political, cultural, and economic parameters into compliance with the commonly shared European standards. John Van Oudenaren defines this peculiar governance regime in Europe as “an approach to international integration under which national government cede sovereignty over certain matters to transnational institutions. These institutions then can make laws and policies that are binding upon those governments. Key features of supranationalist . . . integration include an executive authority independent of national government control.”¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the supranational institutions of the European nations “are based on a particular mandate, which grants them a certain degree of institutional independence from the member states. This involves the competence to make decisions and command over autonomous bureaucratic resources.”¹⁴¹ This stance on the decision-making process comes

into direct conflict with the traditional and strictly hierarchical national bureaucracy that the Russian governance has been returned into by Putin.

The European supranationalism is offered to its potential member states through the lengthy process of harmonizing their legal, political, economic, and cultural environments with those already existing in and shared by the countries of the European Union. In the literature of the European Union, this process is called “the European conditionality,” including the *acquis communautaire*, the enormous body of the European legislature, comprising “all the EU’s treaties and laws . . . , declarations and resolutions, international agreements and the judgments of the Court of Justice. It also includes action that EU governments take together in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice and under the Common Foreign and Security Policy.”¹⁴² Within the process of their accession to the European Union, the aspirant countries have to accept the European conditionality and the prevalence of the *acquis* in their domestic legislature.

The very idea of allowing someone from outside to control the domestic political environment in Russia is appalling to its current establishment, which takes pride in their country’s nonalignment with any alliance or union. To a limited extent this is already done by the European Court of Human Rights, where the Russian citizens can submit claims against the violations of their rights by the Russian state. In case of closer integration of Russia with the European Union, supranational intrusions into Russia’s domestic politics would happen on more systemic grounds. The following are some of Putin’s statements on the democracy in Europe, supranationalism, and the *acquis* in the European Union, which he denies exists: “Protection of the so-called common European and Western values to the detriment of one’s own national interests usually carries a few problems. First, what are those interests? There are no criteria. These are some general discussions on democracy; it’s not the right for a coup or genocide.”¹⁴³ The spirit of the Europeanness and its supranationalism, the purpose of which is to solve the problems common for diverse nations living on a limited territory of the Continental Europe, is clearly misunderstood in Russian political circles.

During the value clashes with Europe, the Russian norm entrepreneurs, those who “are turning individually held ideas into broader normative beliefs,”¹⁴⁴ present the European norms, values, and standards to their supporters as inherently detrimental to the notion of the Russian sovereignty and the infallible right of its government to act on its own discretion within its borders. In return, the majority of Russians view the European values as fundamentally alien to the traditionally Russian ones. In the country where the central authorities in Moscow keep strong domestic political control, including cancellation of the elections of the governors between 2005 and 2011, any intrusion and advice from outside into the internal public administration processes in Russia are rejected. In other words, in the area of Moscow supranationalism upon its regions and federative entities, there is no place for other forms of supranationalism, European or any other for that matter.

Russian Energy Politics: The Weapons of Choice

In the early twentieth century, Halford Mackinder developed the “Heartland” theory of regional politics, which he presented at a meeting of the British Royal Geographical Society. Further elaborated on in his later works, the Heartland theory explains the mechanics of the political processes in Europe by the following: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland: Who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island: Who rules the World-Island commands the World.”¹⁴⁵ The reality of Russia’s energy politics in Europe that started with the increase in the world’s oil prices in the beginning of the new millennium, brought forth a customized definition of the Heartland theory. The new wording applies in relation to the ongoing gas battles with Ukraine and the rest of Europe: “Who controls the export routes controls the oil and gas; who controls the oil and gas controls the Heartland,” the Heartland being Europe.¹⁴⁶ Putin turned out to be a good student of both Mackinder’s and the revised theories. With regard to oil and gas exports to Europe, Putin strives to prove that his country is a reliable and indispensable trade partner for Europe and may use coercion, if needed, to keep Europe buying oil and gas from it. The Russian Federation has

been in the process of spreading its economic influence in the region of wider Europe, which it considers within its historical area of interests and which falls within the general line of the post-Soviet Great Russia's revival. This resurrection includes imposition of its policies on the countries of the European Union, especially via energy carriers, which Russia uses as a weapon (not a tool) of its foreign policy.

Fluctuating Oil Dynamics

Currently Russia is one of the largest world energy producers, with its 87.2 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, which constitute 5.2 percent of the total share of the oil existing on Earth. In 2012 it produced 10,643 million barrels a day, which is 12.8 percent of global oil production. Out of this amount, it exported 240 million barrels of oil worth \$181 billion; 88 percent went to European countries and the rest to CSI countries.¹⁴⁷ In terms of natural gas deposits and production, Russia, too, is the second largest owner in the world (next only to Iran): in 2012 its proven gas reserves amounted to 32.9 trillion cubic meters (tcm), or 17.6 percent of the global oil reserves. In 2012 it produced 592.3 billion cubic meters (bcm), which is a slight decline (-2.7 percent) from the previous year, but still about 17.6 percent of the share of the total production.¹⁴⁸ This is what the supply side looks like, which makes Russia a very powerful player on the European and global markets of energy carriers, enabling it to apply the energy-centric view in its foreign policy when dealing with the countries and regions that are dependent on Russian imports.

Abundance of the natural resources that are its main trade commodities puts Russia in a vulnerable position within the supply and demand equation. In late 1990, the market odds were not in new Russia's favor. Global oil prices fluctuated between \$20 and \$30 per gallon.¹⁴⁹ With that, as Peter Oppenheimer and Sergei Maslichenko noted, "At the world prices and ruble exchange rate . . . Russian oil exports were not strongly profitable. The high oil prices prevailing from 2000 were unforeseeable; in their absence the lower ruble exchange rate would have been decisive in underpinning production."¹⁵⁰ Between 1999 and 2003, the budgetary revenue shares from sales of oil and gas as a percentage of the GDP

fluctuated between 3.2 to 5.9 percent. By 2003, Russia was one of the least dependent members of OPEC on the oil export in its GDPs: 12 percent.¹⁵¹ Although the oil prices were comparatively high at that time, Russia also faced one of the most severe economic crises so far when it was forced “to default on both its public debts (valued at around \$45 billion on the peg), and private external debt. . . . Russian debt, \$36 billion at the start of the year, had leapt by \$16 billion between 1 and 24 July alone.”¹⁵² Late twentieth-century economic prospects, coupled with skyrocketing corruption and organized crime, looked precarious for Russia.

Putin’s entry into the political scene coincided with the rise of oil prices and market stabilization. Russia’s oil sales slowly took an upward turn reaching, on average, \$100 to \$115 per gallon by 2013.¹⁵³ However, during his first presidential term, oil revenues were not the main source of funding for the state budget. For instance, Olga Oliker et al. claim that “non-oil revenues amount for the bulk of government revenues (they accounted for 61.4 percent of total government revenues in 2006).”¹⁵⁴ The second term saw an increased realignment of the country’s foreign trade pattern and the budgetary revenue structure toward energy carriers, which made Russia’s economy overly dependent of their principal trading stock. Already in 2008, “oil and gas exports accounted for two-thirds of all Russian exports by value, while oil and gas revenue amounted to a third of general government revenue.”¹⁵⁵ It was not accidental that the budgetary division into “non-oil” and “oil” revenues (with the latter aggregating mineral extraction tax and export duties and oil and gas products-related tax proceeds) in Russia happened in 2008, the year that Russian sales of energy carriers started to gain momentum.¹⁵⁶ In more recent data from the Russian Federal State Statistics Service, only in the first quarter of 2012, the share of oil exports in the total volume of Russian exports was 35.2 percent and the share of exports of energy products was 48.3 percent.¹⁵⁷ When the revenues from the extracting industry are prevalent in a country’s GDP and, more important, when they do not go to the development of other industrial or service sectors (depending on the countries’ specificities), the country is suffering from what is called the “Dutch Disease.”

Coming Down with It?

This state of economy is associated with the Dutch economy in 1960. According to Mwanza Nkusu, the “Dutch Disease refers to the “adverse structural changes that economies undergo as a result of sectoral booms associated with factors such as positive external terms of trade shocks and large capital inflows, including aid.”¹⁵⁸ Rudiger Ahrend describes the situations “where the discovery and subsequent export of large quantities of natural resources raises the equilibrium exchange rate and/or general wage level, thereby putting pressure on the competitiveness of the other tradable sectors in the economy.”¹⁵⁹ In simple terms, the Dutch Disease occurs, according to Giancarlo Gandolfo, during “the contraction of the traditional manufacturing sector, due to the rapid expansion of the extractive sector,” and the lack of reinvestment of the revenues from the sales of the extractive commodities into other sectors.¹⁶⁰

In many respects, the Dutch Disease in Russia has been caused by skyrocketing oil prices. They were so high that they skewed the production balance to its favor overshadowing the other sectors of the Russian economy and not letting them fully and properly evolve. Marco Fantini confirms, “Largely because of the strong increase of oil prices, the ruble has appreciated strongly since 1999. Although non-extractive industrial output and productivity have risen, industry is under pressure from foreign imports.”¹⁶¹ In case of oil and gas exports, rates usually increase, which makes them less competitive on the international markets. Indeed, why develop the industries, which would generate lower and longer returns on investments from the sale of their relevant commodities when the ones with much higher and quicker yields can be given priority? Capital, on the other hand, is attracted by higher returns, which is in the aforementioned extractive industries. As long as oil and gas prices stay high, the economic situation is easier to control; things change rapidly and for the worse when the prices on international markets for those commodities go down. This is exactly what happened in 2014 when the oil prices on the global markets fell from \$130 in June to \$57 per barrel in December. Coupled with the refusal of the OPEC members to decrease

their oil sales in the world market, this led to the spiraling downfall of the Russian ruble, which by December 2014 had “lost half of its weight” vis-à-vis the U.S. dollar and even more to the euro.

The possibility of the Russian economy’s coming down with the Dutch Disease have been putting out red flags for the Russian governance for quite some time. In 2009 in his article “Russia, Forward!” then president Medvedev raised well-substantiated concerns about oil and gas dependence on Russia. He complained, “Twenty years of tumultuous change have not spared our country from its humiliating dependence on raw materials. . . . Domestic business with a few exceptions does not invent anything; it does not create the necessary commodities and technologies for people. It sells what it has not created: raw materials or imported goods.”¹⁶² Four years later, Medvedev, now prime minister, made the same comment on the dire need of Russia to get rid of its over-reliance on revenue from the sale of energy carriers. In an interview to the Brazilian channel Globo, he foretold, “Indeed, we have a very high degree of dependence on the export of raw materials, including hydrocarbons, oil, and gas. This is not a critical situation, but it is very difficult for us. We now have a little less than 50 percent of budget revenues created by the oil and gas sales—it is too large a degree of dependence,” and he expressed the need to decrease this by 25 percent.¹⁶³

Demand and Supply Battle

The demand side of the energy equation in Europe looks equally impressive but not in favor of the latter. According to the European Commission’s report “EU Energy in Figures” for 2011, Europe consumed 1,698 Mtoe (millions of tons of oil equivalent—a common denominator of energy usage), out of which the largest share (35 percent) was of oil and oil products followed by gas (24 percent) and solid fuels (17 percent). Most of it Europe had to import: 84.9 percent of oil and oil products, 67 percent of gas, and 41 percent of solid fuels. Most of it comes from Russia: 35 percent of oil, 30 percent of natural gas, and 26 percent of solid fuels.¹⁶⁴ These figures alone do not tell much, especially if the uneven import patterns across Europe are considered. Since the Euro-

pean Union is a unique supranational institution that deals with such important issues in its member states' lives, as the foreign and security policies, not individual but joint pan-EU oil and gas vulnerabilities should be considered.

Three issues should be paid particular attention in the matter of defying European dependence on the Russian energy carriers. First, the absolute (or unified) and not relative (or individual) energy dependence should be defined. Otherwise, the uneven distribution of the Russian energy carriers throughout Europe will skew the calculation of the overall energy dependence of Europe on Russian supplies as in the situation with a hospital report giving a median indicator of the patients' temperature, as the famous Russian saying goes. Thus, while several European countries are highly dependent on the energy commodities coming from Russia, others are getting their energy fix elsewhere. For instance, Lithuania gets 92 percent of its gas from Russia; Poland, 91 percent, Slovakia, 98 percent, Bulgaria, 90 percent, Hungary, 86 percent, Finland, 76 percent, Sweden, 46 percent, Greece, 40 percent, and Germany, 30 percent.¹⁶⁵ Other EU states are less dependent on Russia: Spain, 14 percent; Portugal, 10 percent; the United Kingdom, 13 percent, and France, 17 percent. Uneven distribution of the volumes of Russian gas also created political rifts within different EU members, where the attitudes toward Russia depend on the degree of its energy supplies: those who see Russia as a security threat are opposed by those who view it as a partner in potentially other spheres.¹⁶⁶

Another consideration in determining the nature of EU-Russia energy relations is that the imports of energy carriers from Russia to Europe have been steadily declining since the collapse of the Soviet Union. According to Casier, "the Russian share in the EU's import of gas has declined drastically. In the late Soviet years, in 1990, the Russian share in EU imports was 55 percent . . . a lot higher than it is today."¹⁶⁷ To a certain degree, this decline is a general theme in the contemporary Europe, which is committed to limiting its consumption of fossil fuels by 2050 and to slowly substituting them for renewable energy, such as wind and solar, and the automobiles' hybrid engines revolution in the early

2000s.¹⁶⁸ Finally, a part of Russia's imported oil and gas to Europe is a transit from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan via the Baku-Novorossiisk, Atyrau-Samara, and Tengiz-Novorossiisk pipelines, sometimes even to its short-term economic loss, but long-term political gain. For instance, in 2006, according to Tomberg, the Russian state gas giant Gazprom signed a sales agreement with Turkmenistan, where it "overpaid \$6 billion for the Turkmen gas than it planned but would control all export of the Central Asian gas to Europe till 2010," which will make it as a de-factor monopolist on the European gas market.¹⁶⁹

Complex Energy Interdependence

In the buyer-seller relations in which most of the importing side's imports and the exporting side's exports come from the same sources lead to the situations where, in principle, all the parties should mutually benefit. Both the buyer and the seller would have stable supply and demand markets, leading to long-term interconnectedness from an economic standpoint, which could possibly bring them to political stability, too. According to Debra Johnson, "Whilst the EU's main concern in its energy links with Russia is security of supply, Russia's main strategic priority is security of markets."¹⁷⁰ Nataliya Esakova noted, "The Russian side is highly dependent on the revenues from energy imports and in particular its dependence on the EU's energy market. A substantial part of Russia's energy goes to the EU, which constitutes a large part of state revenues. Therefore, supply disruptions to the EU would be costly to Russia."¹⁷¹ The settings where both sides of the trade equation, the market and the supplier, can equally hurt each other belong to the realm of a midrange liberalist theory of Complex Economic Interdependence. According to the founding fathers of this specific outlook on the geopolitical economy, disruptions in supplies or demands can lead to the "situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries."¹⁷² Situations like these are almost always negative, where both sides lose to different degrees, depending on their comparative economic strengths and availability of the substitute sales or import markets.

Complex interdependence decreases the possibility of conflicts between the parties, since both the supplier and the market would prefer to cooperate in order to avoid the costly process of looking for mutual substitutes. Specifically in the Russia-EU energy relations, there are two views on the application of this theory in the actual context. According to a largely optimistic view for Europe, “The Russian exports . . . take the form of undramatic business relations and technical cooperation from which both Russia and the EU profit. . . . The main threat is not that Russia, for political reasons, would deliberately disrupt its gas supplies to Europe, but rather that its gas industry might fail.”¹⁷³ Under such circumstances, it is in Europe’s best interests to prevent such instances of market failures in Russia by further cooperating with its extracting sector in the matters of technical support and innovations. Ilya Matveev gave another argument in support of interdependence: he explained the fears of the Russian side in that “most of the oil and gas pipelines connect Russia with the countries of the European Union, which puts the buyer (EU) in a more advantageous position: Russia has no alternative markets for such large amounts of energy resources, while the EU can import gas and oil from other countries in significant volumes.”¹⁷⁴ Under such circumstances, the European Union, as a major buyer, has considerable leverage over Russia, as a supplier, and can put the latter in a vulnerable situation by forcing upon it its own terms of sales of energy carriers.

The second viewpoint conceptualizes the rather negative impact of the Russian energy policy on Europe, which uses oil and gas as a “soft weapon.” Notwithstanding the mutual benefits that the peculiar settings can bring all the participants of the energy game, Russia uses combination of several coercive strategies directed at making Europe, as a whole, and separate countries victims or hostage of its parochial strategies of energy carriers. First, according to Richard Weitz, “Moscow’s EU energy policy is to approach the different EU states on an individual basis in order to price discriminate and get the maximum price possible from each. Additionally, Russia attempts to lock in supply by consolidating control over strategic energy infrastructure throughout Europe and Eurasia.”¹⁷⁵ For instance, Russia charges the Eastern Euro-

pean countries the highest among the EU members, with Macedonia topping the list with \$564 per thousand cubic meters (tcm) while the Western European countries, like Germany, Austria, and France, all pay less than \$400.

Such price discrimination, as James Henderson at Oxford Institute for Energy Studies defined, is based on “what the [gas] alternatives in those countries are. . . . It [Russia] essentially acts as a discriminating monopolist. If it has a significant market share in a country, or if it can see that a country has limited alternatives, then it prices accordingly.”¹⁷⁶ From this perspective, Russia treats Europe within the macroeconomic laws of supply and demand, which is quite understandable given the fact that the sale of energy carriers constitutes a significant part of its aggregate revenues. In 2013 the share of the oil and gas revenues in the Russian federal budget was 68 percent.¹⁷⁷ The problem is that on top of that, Russia uses energy carriers to put pressure on Europe for different purposes, be that political or economic, which is a very peculiar understanding of the complex economic interdependence.

The other side of the “soft weapon” usage of the energy carriers is the policy of blackmailing with the power to turn on and off the oil and gas pipelines’ valves at will. Currently Russia supplies external energy sources to the European Union through the export pipelines of Druzhba, Baltic Pipeline System, North-West Pipeline System, Tengiz-Novorossiysk, and Baku-Novorossiysk. Natural gas is also being transported through the recently opened Nord Stream, an underwater pipeline in the Baltics, connecting Russian with Germany directly, bypassing Ukraine and carrying 40 to 50 percent of Europe’s gas imports.

The issue of transit of gas through the territory of Ukraine has been the matter of tensions between Ukraine and Russia. There are several major pipelines connecting Russia with Europe through Ukraine: the Bratstvo (Brotherhood), Soyuz (Union), and Trans-Balkan. Since the early 1990s, Russia has repeatedly accused Ukraine of stealing its transit gas, which is, of course, refuted by the latter.¹⁷⁸ In fact, the former prime minister of Ukraine, Timoshenko, was accused of “smuggling Russian natural gas, tax evasion in especially large sizes, forgery” in 2001

and even was imprisoned for several years by the ousted president, Yanukovich, for signing the energy carriers' contract with Russia, which, according to the latter, was a betrayal of Ukraine's national interests.¹⁷⁹

It was the winter of 2006 when Europe felt for the first time the result of its dependence on Russian energy supplies. To punish Ukraine for allegedly stealing transit gas, Russia completely cut off the transit of gas via its pipelines to Europe. Several days without gas nearly resulted in almost a complete energy collapse in Eastern Europe. The European Commission had to act as a mediator between Russia and Ukraine, urging the former to resume gas supplies. Nevertheless, the problems with uninterrupted gas supply through Ukraine continue. According to the European Commission's Directorate General for Economic and Financial Affairs, "The Russia-Ukraine gas disputes over natural gas supplies, prices, and debts have threatened natural gas supplies in numerous European countries dependent on imports from Russian suppliers, transported through Ukraine. In January 2009, eighteen European countries reported major drops in or complete cut-offs of their gas supplies."¹⁸⁰ The regime of international sanctions imposed on Russia by the United States, the European Union, and their partner states and also self-imposed by Russia on itself in 2014 would only aggravate the situation and may endanger the interdependence between Russia and the EU with regard to supplies of energy carriers.

Europe is under severe stress from the situation in Ukraine, and potential disruption of energy supplies looms large. The EU countries, especially those who have high dependence on Russian oil and gas, face the daunting task of enhancing their energy security via diversification of the sources of energy supplies and exploring domestic and foreign alternative types of energy. There are several ways to achieve this. One option is to buy gas from the United States, which is quickly becoming a world leader in oil and gas production. According to the BP Statistical Review 2014, oil production in the United States amounted to 10.8 percent of the total world's production in 2014 (only by 2.1 percent less than Russia's). With its proved natural gas deposits of "only" 9.3 trillion cubic meters (which is three times less than 1,103.6 trillion in Russia),

in 2013 the United States produced more gas than Russia in comparative terms (20.6 percent of the global production in the United States versus 17.9 percent in Russia).¹⁸¹ With regard to its gas production, the United States is in a good position to fine-tune its energy policy and programs in support of the European Union's energy security by not compromising its own. However, taking into account high cost calculations of transportation of the American gas to the European markets, buying American gas will be more expensive than continuing to procure it from Russia. The European Union needs to look for additional alternative energy sources.

Another possible solution is lifting the sanctions and trade embargo imposed on Iran by the United States and the European Union. As a part of the "Critical Dialogue" policy adopted in 1992, the EU had been trading with Iran while keeping watch over the issues vital to its normative fields, such as "the MEPP [the Middle East Peace Projects], human rights, terrorism, WMDs, and the *fatwa*, or death sentence, against Salman Rushdie."¹⁸² The dialogue was halted with the assassinations of prominent Kurdish opposition leaders in Berlin in the same year, for which the Iranian side was blamed. A decade later, with more moderate forces in power in Iran, the EU renewed its collaboration with Iran under the "Comprehensive Dialogue" by offering it the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.¹⁸³ This rapprochement also was abandoned when in 2005 the IAEA decided that Iran was not complying with nuclear disarmament and the NPT. In January 2012 the EU banned Iranian oil imports to the EU and also froze the assets of the Iranian Central Bank.¹⁸⁴ Too many variables are at play in the EU-Iran relations, and the Russian factor is one of them. Others, according to Adebahr, include regional dimensions of security, which have the aim "to deter Israel from a unilateral military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities," which would inflict serious human and economic damage in the Middle East.¹⁸⁵

Moving away from the Iranian sanctions to opening up cooperation would allow Iran to increase its sales of oil and gas to Europe. This would also help Europe switch from Russia to Iran as its main suppliers of energy carriers. In 2011, for example, 18 percent of the European

oil imports came from Iran—about half a million barrels daily.¹⁸⁶ This would also mean closer integration of Iran into the European energy markets, which is fraught with possible repetition of the current dependency problems with Russia due to the political unpredictability of Iran.

Another avenue would be to continue negotiations with the OPEC countries to increase their oil outputs to the world markets with the purpose of dropping the overall price on this commodity. This could have been one of the negotiating points of President Obama's recent visit to Saudi Arabia, which was followed by one notable occurrence. Putin called Obama on his initiative and, among other things, "mentioned the actual blockade of Transdnistria." Bringing up an unrelated but disputed region of Europe with the similar issue—ethnic Russians in a third country—could mean strengthening the assumption of high vulnerability of Russia when faced with the potential of losing its oil and gas revenues and that it is willing to extend its militaristic rhetoric to blackmail the West with the purpose of retaining its influence in Europe.

The final option is perhaps the most viable: to contribute to strengthening political stability in Ukraine with the ultimate purpose of developing its fracking gas resources. Removal of some of the Russian troops from the vicinity of the Ukrainian eastern border is a positive development, but in light of Russia's recent erratic behavior, we should not raise hopes for trusting it. The United States should undertake similar steps as it did in Azerbaijan and Georgia; it should lobby exploration of the Ukrainian gas while, at the same time, pacifying Russia's possible aggression against Ukraine by strengthening defense and security along the NATO lines in its eastern member states.

True to the spirit of liberalism in its regional politics, as embodied by the economic interdependence with Russia, the European Union had been urging Russia to sign the treaties that would limit its further involvement in the European region, which Russia has been systematically rejecting. According to Vladimir Milov, "Considering the opportunistic instincts and severe lack of institutionalism in the approaches in the current Russian administration, it is very hard to imagine that Russia would suddenly wish to join any long-term, comprehensive, legally bind-

ing international agreements in the area of energy. Realistically, Russia would continue to prefer opportunistic behavior.¹⁸⁷ Such an attitude is very much in line with Russia's views on any possible infringements upon its own sovereignty by the European *acquis* and thus detrimental to its vital national interests. This was one of the most important reasons why the deal with the South Stream fell through.

Originally, the South Stream gas pipeline was meant to provide another gas tributary from Russia to Europe. According to its blueprint, the pipeline would have been built on the Black Sea bed from the Russian port of Anapa to Bulgaria and then through the Eastern European countries to Austria. Projected capacity of the offshore part of the pipeline was 63 billion cubic meters of natural gas per year.¹⁸⁸ However, in December 2014 the South Stream project was officially closed by the European Union, not even having started. This happened notwithstanding the objections of the government of Bulgaria, which would lose some 400 million euros annually for the transit of Russian gas through its territory to the rest of Europe. Arkadii Rotenberg's company Stroygazmontaj was supposed to be in charge of the construction of the pipeline, for which it had already received a sizable down payment of \$5 billion from the Russian government, which can be already counted toward its losses.¹⁸⁹

From the very beginning of the talks on the pipeline's construction, the EU raised serious concerns about the political motivation of Russia and its feasibility. On the one hand, as Krišjānis Karins, a Latvian MP of the European Parliament, stated, "South Stream is dead because it was a political project, not based on economics, but on the wish of the Putin government to circumvent Ukraine vis-à-vis gas supplies to Europe."¹⁹⁰ It was a political project designed to punish Ukraine by leaving her out of the energy transit revenues for its unwillingness to follow the general course of aligning its policies with those of the Russian leadership. Besides, the South Stream would rival another projected pipeline, the Nabucco West, planned to run from Turkey through Bulgaria to Austria with the starting capacity of 10 billion cubic meters of gas per year, reaching the ultimate projected 30 bcm.¹⁹¹ Finally, the EU's own anti-

monopoly laws embodied in its “Third Energy Package” the rules that do not allow a gas supplier to be both an exclusive owner of the pipeline capacities as well as the controller of such an infrastructure.

Not willing to abandon plans for energy domination in Europe, the Russian government, immediately after the announcement of the closure of the South Stream, declared that it would build yet another pipeline to Turkey with the same throughput capacity as the failed South Stream. Economic profits for Russia from this endeavor (let alone much lesser political benefits) would be considerably lower than in the former, since Turkey has traditionally insisted on a special role of a transit country. It does not merely offer its territory, as Georgia did, for the transit of energy carriers; it buys them and later resells them as its own. The European Union, too, did not sit idle; after the fiasco with the South Stream, it decided to expand the currently working Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline to *ТАНАП-ТАР* (Trans-Anatolian Pipeline/Trans-Adriatic Pipeline), eventually rejuvenating the Nabucco West pipeline project. These pipelines would bring the gas from the Caspian Sea port of Shah-Deniz to Italy through Georgia, Turkey, Greece, and Albania by 2019.

Ukrainian Apple of Discord

Starting from the very onset of the destabilization of the situation in Ukraine, the EU and its selected countries were highly critical of any Russian involvement there. The matter, again, boils down to the identity clashes among the European countries, the family of which Ukraine has been striving to join since its Orange Revolution. Russia, on the other hand, was promoting the archaic imperial vision on the “Russian world.” This hypothetical ethno-territorial could, in principle, be expanded to include other Slavs, Ukrainians the most, which flourish under the wing of an elder brother, Russia. Several factors were at play in the worsening of Europe-Russia relations in 2014. The primordial memory of the Russian political culture strives to keep the Russian ethnos placed as *primus inter pares* in the post-Soviet space, just as it was during the Soviet Union. Russia wants to retain leadership in the post-Soviet world and very emotionally approaches any dwindling of its for-

mer communist brethren toward the West, purely in terms of personal human betrayal. Several post-Soviet republics showed their desires for Westernization, including Georgia and, at some point, Armenia, but the situation is even worse with the Ukrainians, who are largely considered the same as Russians but with an accent. By offering the agreement of association with Ukraine, the EU is viewed in the mainstream Russian culture as an evil neighbor driving a wedge between two twin brothers, one of which is older.

The tendency of the former Soviet nations to integrate themselves with the EU is not a new phenomenon. First, Georgia and then Ukraine on various occasions expressed political aspirations for close integration with the political, economic, and military structures of the West, broadly defined, and the EU, in particular. The political course of Ukraine, under Yushenko and, since 2014, Poroshenko, was strongly pro-European, which is even reflected in the popular name for the 2013–14 revolution: EuroMaidan. In a highly suspicious Russian political culture seeing its enemies at every corner, the facts of closeness of the former Soviet nations with the EU and the United States were approached, quite literally, from territorial and geopolitical perspectives: every single step taken toward the West means a step away from the East.

For the post-Soviet countries, integration with Europe may also mean potential membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and vice versa, just as for the Eastern European countries, NATO membership was the forerunner to their EU membership. Georgian ex-president Shevardnadze in his election campaign in 2000 made the promise to bring his country to NATO in 2005. Ukraine is trying to accomplish the same by abandoning its non-bloc status that was proclaimed in its Declaration on State Sovereignty of Ukraine adopted in 1990. In August 2014, Prime Minister Arsenii Yacenuk submitted a draft law to the Ukrainian parliament on revoking the non-bloc status and potential membership of the country in NATO. The two organizations—the European Union and NATO—although inherently different, are thus recognized as the two heads of the same evil hydra by the Russian political culture engulfed in the perceptual security dilemma deadlock.

The European Union views Russia's actions in Crimea and Ukraine as "illegal annexation of territory and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country [that] cannot be accepted in 21st century Europe."¹⁹² After Russia's alleged military and economic support for the illegal armed militia bringing turmoil in eastern Ukraine with subsequent shooting down in its skies of the Malaysian flight MH17, the EU launched its own line of sanctions. This is not the first time the EU had introduced restrictive measures against certain countries that were acting contrary to the EU normative environment. Traditionally, the purpose of the sanctions within the European Union's contest, as defined by its External Action Service, is "to bring about a change in activities or policies such as violations of international law or human rights, or policies that do not respect the rule of law or democratic principles" that the European supranationalism is based upon.¹⁹³ With regard to the regional and international peace, the Council of the EU's view on the sanctions is to "maintain and restore international peace and security . . . [to] reduce to the maximum extent possible any adverse humanitarian effects or unintended consequences for persons not targeted or neighbouring countries."¹⁹⁴ Such an outlook means application of the liberalist "soft power" with the purpose of altering the utility calculation of the state under the sanctions by making its current course of actions prohibitively costly.

As a part of the EU's "soft power" approach, it uses the political and economic sticks to promote the Common Foreign and Security Policy postulates of its supranational governance. Introduced as early as March 17, 2014, the European sanctions against Russia aimed at compelling Russia to change its course of actions in Ukraine.¹⁹⁵ Eight months later, British prime minister David Cameron verbalized the EU's stance toward the sanctions: "We should keep those sanctions in place until Russia changes its behaviour and stops the aggression in Ukraine." German Chancellor Merkel added, "The measure for lifting sanctions will be [the] territorial integrity [of Ukraine]."¹⁹⁶ Both statements of the high-level EU member states' officials referred to the unwillingness of Putin's government to completely fulfill the terms of the Minsk Protocols of September 2014.

From their start, the sanctions targeted economic interests of those who the EU thought were responsible for the Ukrainian debacle, and not the wider Russian population or economy, wholly or in part: Putin's pocket oligarchs (132 individuals and 28 companies); suspensions of the banking loans and credits to several major Russian state-controlled banks (Sberbank, VTB, Gazprombank, Vneshekonombank, and Rossel'khozbank); embargos on arms trade with Russia as well as financing and transfer of specific energy installations and equipment that can be used for oil extraction by Rosneft, Transneft, and Gazpromneft.¹⁹⁷ The last step was taken to a considerable dislike of the major American and European oil producers. British Petroleum, for instance, which owns 19.75 percent of the Russian oil giant Rosneft, warned its stockholders in July 2014 that the sanctions "could adversely impact our business and strategic objectives in Russia."¹⁹⁸ The decisions of the EU in relation to enacting sanctions against Russia are based on the principles of the European supranationalism and its view toward nondemocratic states. Anatolii Pronin notes that the provisions of the March 17 decision of the EU are "semantically similar to the previously adopted acts of the European Union on the sanctions against other countries and do not contain any fundamentally . . . new regulations," in particular, to the European Union sanctions of October 2012 against Belarus.¹⁹⁹

Perhaps the most sizable targets of sanctions were designated the extractive sectors of the Russian economy. According to Michael A. Levi from the Council of Foreign Relations, "The biggest edge that Western energy companies still have is their technological edge—that's why these sanctions have the potential to have significant impact."²⁰⁰ Coupled with the decrease of the oil prices in 2014, the rapid devaluation of the Russian currency exchange rate from 50 rubles per euro in September 2014 to 84 in December 2014, the fall of the Russian Trading System Index by 40 percent since July 2014, and the effects of the European sanctions against Russia aggravated by its own self-embargo against the European companies trading with it, this could become quite serious. The trade interdependence between the EU and Russia places the latter in a more vulnerable position. The Russian Federal Customs Agency of

the Russian Federation statistics reflects almost half (49.2 percent) of its total foreign trade turnover between January and August 2014 with the EU.²⁰¹ The same is confirmed by the other side: Russia is the EU's second largest food export market holding 10 percent of its food trade translating into €11.8 billion in 2013.²⁰² This means that the mutual sanctions imposed by the EU and the Russian government will hurt the Russian demand side more, which is the export-oriented extractive industry.

There was also an institutional component to the EU sanctions. In January 2015 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which Russia joined in 1996, suspended Russian membership as part of the common vision of the Council on Russia's involvement in the prolonged hostilities in Ukraine. By this, the Council extended the suspension imposed on Russia earlier in April 2014.²⁰³ In response, the head of the Russian delegation, Alexey Pushkov, declared that Russia is voluntarily leaving the CoE until the end of 2015.²⁰⁴ The reaction from the Russian legislators was even more startling. As a response to the EU "punishing" Russia for Crimea (as the whole matter of sanctions is considered in Russia), Speaker of the Russian Duma Naryshkin initiated a parliamentary statement, introduced by a communist MP to one of the Duma committees, condemning "the annexation of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) by the Federative Republic of Germany" in 1989.²⁰⁵ Another MP, Mikhail Degtyarev from the Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), initiated creation of a working group in the State Duma with the purpose of developing legal grounds for demanding reparations from Germany with the sum of €3 trillion for the damage the Soviet Union suffered from Hitler's Germany.²⁰⁶ If accepted, this statement goes contrary to all previously existing international agreements and treaties between Russia and Germany, as well as, technically, between Russia and the EU, whose integral part the unified Germany was ever since the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

Others were even more ecstatic at the prospects of Russia leaving the PACE: Aleksei Didenko, an MP and deputy head of the LDPR, declared, "Exit of the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe would lead to denunciation of several international conventions; we would

have, among others, legal grounds to revoke the death sentence moratorium. . . . All we need is 24 hours to leave the Council of Europe to execute millions and millions of perverts, rapists, and pedophiles in our prisons. This will give us enough groups to reopen the case. . . . Most Russians are in favor of the death sentence.”²⁰⁷ If nothing else, this is a clear sign of the irreconcilable value and identity differences between the European Union and Russia, which needed some political shocks to reveal their true colors.

Responding to the European sanctions, Russia imposed the ban on a number of high-end food commodities from the EU plus Norway, which includes such items as wines, meats, seafood, various processed food, cheeses, and fruits and vegetables (which are mostly luxury items, like the Spanish *jamon*, French *foie gras*, Norwegian salmon, and the Italian *Parmigiano-Reggiano*). On August 6, 2014, Putin issued Decree #560 banning and/or restricting “foreign economic operations on the imports into the territory of the Russian Federation of certain types of agricultural products, raw materials, and foodstuffs from the countries of origin, which had to impose economic sanctions against Russian legal or physical entities or joined such decisions.”²⁰⁸ The government followed up with its own Decree #791 that limited the governmental purchases of light industrial commodities from foreign suppliers with the aim of protecting the vital national interests of the Russian state.²⁰⁹

The effectiveness of these self-embargos measured by the overall damage to the economy of the EU is, in fact, insignificant. Although Deputy Foreign Minister Alexey Meshkov estimated the loss of €40 billion in 2014 and another €50 billion in 2015 for the EU, the share of food and life animals (as embargoed by Russia) in the combined export of twenty-eight European countries is only 4.3 percent.²¹⁰ With this, the EU-28 has a negative trade balance with Russia, which before the mutual sanctions in 2013 was \$86 billion, most of which was achieved by importing energy carriers from Russia.²¹¹ Besides, the share of the exports to Russia in the combined export of the EU is only 6.9 percent. The largest exporting commodity to Russia is machinery and transport equipment: 47.4 percent.²¹² The statistics on trade between the EU and Russia

sends several analytical messages, among which the most important is the fact that most of the non-oil and gas trade between the EU and Russia is quite limited.

By imposing restrictions on the access of the European food products to the tables of Russian citizens, their government does not target the economy of the EU per se. It does not want to punish the European countries it trades with for supporting the American sanctions or tacitly following them. Had it wished to do so, the Russian government would have either bumped up the prices for energy carriers for European consumers or would have severely cut the amounts of oil and gas sold to them. It would have “turned the valve off,” thus putting to life Mackinder’s worst nightmare of controlling the European Heartland from outside. Its aim here is to punish its own citizens and to present it as the deed of the evil West.

In addition to seriously damaging the economic situation in the European countries that are highly dependent on the Russian energy supplies, cutting them off from oil supplies would have put the EU in the textbook condition of vulnerable, complex economic interdependence, under which Brussels would have been forced to rapidly look for alternative sources of energy supplies. Instead, the Russian government pursues a single aim: by essentially punishing its own people by banning European foods, it tries to consolidate the Russian society around the perceptual security and identity threat that the EU poses to Russia and to amalgamate its support to the political course chosen by the current leadership under Putin.

Contrary to the expected effects of the Russian self-embargo on the economy of the European countries, their impact on Russian citizens, although not fully evaluated yet, shows the clear signs of heading toward the negative side of the economic spectrum. Stagnation of the Russian economy caused by the Western sanctions and its own was admitted by the Russian side as early as in July 2014 with the decrease of its GDP by 0.5 percent and the flight of \$75 billion outside of Russia since January 2014.²¹³ As reported by CNN’s Ivana Kottasova, quoting the Russian Ministry of Finances, “Economic sanctions imposed over the crisis

in Ukraine have triggered huge capital outflows—estimated at \$125 billion this year. As much as \$80 billion could flow out of Russia in 2015, according to new official forecasts. Inflation in 2014 is expected to hit 9.7 percent, as opposed to an earlier forecast of 7.5 percent, and around 9 percent in 2015.²¹⁴ The Central Bank of Russia published an increased figure: net export of capital by banks and enterprises in 2014 reached the record figure of \$151 billion, which is 2.5 times more than in a previous year.²¹⁵ Individually, entrepreneurs, as estimated by the Bloomberg's Billionaires Index, also suffered substantially from the sanctions; in just two days of the most severe downfall of the Russian ruble in December 2014, the top twenty Russian billionaires lost \$10 billion.²¹⁶

A part of the view on the sanctions explains their success from the point of impacting the political decisions on the highest level. The combined U.S. and European sanctions triggered by the Russian aggression against Ukraine deterred the former from expanding its presence in Ukraine beyond Crimea. The pro-Russian separatists in the southeastern Ukraine are confined to a small portion of two mining areas of Lugansk and Donetsk. No further moves of the Novorossiia militia have been made beyond their initial stronghold, including thwarting plans to take the strategic port of Mariupol. No official Russian military forces have started *de jure* intervention into Ukraine within Novorossiia by establishing an active corridor of the military equipment, machinery, and manpower, nor further beyond, to the nominal areas of Novorossiia (as claimed by the separatists) that extend to surpass Odessa on the Black Sea.

Even more so, Putin's reference to Moldova's breakaway Transdnistria region as having the "pro-Russian population and a lot of Russian citizens with their own vision on how to build their future and their lives" immediately threw out red flags but had no further consequences.

There is yet a pessimistic outlook on the success of the sanctions on the Russian political actions in Ukraine, which is backed up by a substantial bulk of literature on the effectiveness of economic sanctions used as a tool for interstate compellence. Sanctions are applied by different countries against other countries with diverse economies, polit-

ical cultures, domestic power settings, and governing regimes, which makes all talk about the effectiveness of sanctions moot. For instance, the success of the sanctions against the South African apartheid regime in the 1980s is applicable only in the case of South Africa and only in that timeframe; therefore, the failure of the sanctions against North Korea cannot be explained by their success in South Africa on the basis of general scientific falsifiability. In simple terms, if certain sanctions (with specific scope and content) have been successfully applied against country A, this does not mean that the sanctions (with the same or different scope and content) would necessarily work against country B.

Nevertheless, some generalization can still be drawn between these diverse cases. David Leyton-Brown put it well: “Compellant purposes of sanctions are the most difficult to achieve,” keeping in mind the differences between other purposes of sanctions, such as symbolic or signaling.²¹⁷ While acknowledging the positive role of sanctions as one of the tools of state foreign policies, Gary Hufbauer et al. are of a similar opinion about the utility of economic sanctions. In their seminal work, *Economic Sanctions Reconsidered*, they concluded, “Sanctions are of limited utility in achieving foreign policy goals that depend on compelling the target country to take actions it stoutly resists. In some cases, the security, political, or other costs of complying with the sender’s demands may simply be higher than any pain that can be imposed with sanctions.”²¹⁸ One can also add to this list the role of identity and national prestige in withstanding the external economic pressure.

Extending the discussion into the positivist field, some scholars present their vision on the design of successful sanctions. Among others, George Lopez gives the following criteria for the success of the sanctions: first, the multilateral nature of the sanctions will greatly contribute to their success; second, sanctions as “sticks” should be combined with the “carrots,” including offering possible economic assistance in case of altering the course of actions in favor of the sanction-sender; third, economic sanctions alone will not work—they should be applied in conjunction with other measures, including political and military pressure; finally, “the structure of sanctions must be clear and credible. Both the impos-

ers and the target must be in a reasonably tight agreement on what constitutes compliance.”²¹⁹ Kenneth Rogoff is more pessimistic: “Economic sanctions usually have only modest effects, even if they can be an essential means of demonstrating moral resolve.”²²⁰ This reasoning is based on the fact that in the modern globalized environment only strong multilateral resolve can push the sanctions toward their success. Hufbauer et al. state that sanctions “sometimes fail because sender countries have cross-cutting interests and conflicting goals in their overall relations with the target country. Tensions among economic interests in the sender country that could either benefit or lose from a disruption in trade, finance, and investment often lead to tepid measures timidly imposed.”²²¹ There are countries which, due to growing interdependence, are disproportionately affected by the negative influence of the sanctions on the recipient countries. In this case they would act as “strikebreakers” within the multilateral efforts slowing down or even backstabbing the very spirit of sanctions by threatening to leave or leaving the senders’ coalition.

Current state of affairs with the European sanctions against Russia backs up the scholarly dualism on this subject. For starters, as German intelligence found out, the foreign currency reserves of Russia amount to \$620 billion, which constitutes 162 percent of its budgetary expenditures for 2014. Such a gigantic sum means that even if hypothetically Russia remains without any possible revenues, it can survive off its accumulated savings for four years.²²² The veracity of this statement is subject to careful economic calculations, but the mere fact of the Russian reserves questions the effectiveness of the sanctions, at least in the short run. Besides, the longer the sanctions are imposed on Russia, the more damage will be inflicted on the European side of the interdependence dyad, putting it in a vulnerable position looking for replacements in the import markets of energy carriers (in case Russia retaliates and stops pumping oil and gas in the European direction) and the export markets of food and other commodities. These will not be easy to find, taking into account the nature of the trading links of the EU.

Last, but not least, the sanctions have hurt Russian and European tourist industries, which had become interdependent. The collateral

effect of the Western sanctions on the Russian economy has been shrinking the consumer baskets of the ordinary Russian citizens who were used to traveling to Europe for holidays. Thomas Frellesen and Clelia Rontoyanni noted, “Millions of Russians visit the EU as tourists annually making Russia the most important new source of income for the European tourist industry.”²²³ The statistics from the EU corroborates on the gloomy future of Russian tourism in Europe. The European Travel Commission’s statistics show the remarkable figure of 41.1 million Russians tourists in 2013. Before the sanctions, the ETC estimated the increase between 25 and 50 percent of the Russian tourists in different geographic parts of Europe.²²⁴

In 2001 the European Environmental Agency’s forecast concerning tourism in Europe was quite optimistic. By the Agency’s estimates, “Tourism will be soon the largest service industry in the EU, generating more than 13 percent of GDP (direct and indirect), 6 percent of employment and 30 percent of external trade. . . . Tourism demand will grow by almost 50 percent by 2010 in comparison with 1996 while capital investment in the sector will double to about 13 percent of national accounts (EU average).”²²⁵ According to the data of the *Invest in EU*, a European development and investment magazine, “The European Union tourism sector is a major industry in EU that generates a lot of foreign revenue and contributes significantly to the EU GDP, the sector accounts for more than 5 percent of the total EU union. More than 1.8 million enterprises are engaged in the business and the sector accounts for providing employment to more than 5.2 percent of the total labor force in European Union. The sector is responsible for generating more than 9.7 million jobs in the European Union.”²²⁶ These indicators show how vulnerable the European tourism industry is to the potential decrease of the demand. The Russian side also confirms the worst worries of the European countries that become accustomed to hosting high-spender Russians: according to Alla Manilova, Russian deputy minister of culture, “The sanctions regime has resulted in a decline of the number of Russian citizens visiting Europe. . . . The scale will be defined by the end of the season. The decline can reach from 15 to 30 percent in some

countries.”²²⁷ These were the estimates at the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, and the real impact of the decline of the Russia tourism in Europe has yet to be evaluated.

With the low level of demand for major tourist routes, the well-off Russians who were used to spending their summers in Spain and Greece and winters in Austria and Switzerland have to look for alternative places to spend their money. This, in turn, would negatively affect the economies of tourism-oriented European countries. For instance, in Finland, according to the estimates of its government, “about 30 percent of tourists come from Russia and in 2013 they brought over €1.2 billion in revenue to Finland.”²²⁸ In Austria, too, “A major role in bilateral relations belongs to tourism. Austria has become a favourite tourism destination for well-to-do Russians. While in 2005 about 530,000 visited Austria, the number soared to 1.2 million in 2010; in 2011 alone, tourism increased by about 30 percent.”²²⁹ In the longer run, severely contracted revenues from tourism from Russia would be detrimental both to the European economies and to the average Russians. Yet, as presented in the previous chapter, 78 percent of Russians have never been abroad, which decreases significantly the impact of the declining tourist industry.²³⁰ Just as with the self-embargo, only the thin upper-middle-class layer of Russian society will appear the most vulnerable from the sanctions.

Another part of the pessimistic view of the efficiency of the sanctions against Russia is rooted in the knowledge of the Russian political culture and domestic politics of the elites and their supporters. In the opinion of the European security experts Yana Dreyer and Nicu Popescu, economic sanctions would not “make Russian concessions on Ukraine any more likely: the worse the economic pressure, the more the Kremlin’s propaganda will drum home the message that it is the Evil West, denying Russia its holy Crimean birthright, that is to blame.”²³¹ History knows this phenomenal Russian trait: whenever the external pressure either in the form of economic or political influence would seem to be overwhelming and aim at undermining Russian statehood, the Russian nation would consolidate around its leadership, tighten its belt, and continue pushing through. The current autocratic governance would

only contribute to tacit approval of the austerity measures imposed by Putin on Russia.

Finally, a real danger for the EU's economy is the possible complete stoppage of supplies of energy carriers to Europe from Russia. Europe is far from being immune to such an act of a desperate man. A study by the French energy giant Total finds that "by scrambling, Europe could cope with a cutoff of Russian gas exports through Ukraine this winter. But it would be severely affected by a halt in Russian deliveries. . . . If Russia interrupted these Ukraine flows, the study forecast[s] that it would be 'feasible' to compensate through adjustments. . . . Unless Gazprom agrees, it would be impossible to reroute flows through the Baltic and Belarus pipelines, for example."²³² The same fears were expressed by the British wholesaler Wingas, which warned the EU of "potentially some additional risk premium on the back of the recent sanctions being built into prices over fears of any impact this may have on Russian supplies into western Europe."²³³ These forecasts look especially true taking into account Europe's dependence on Russian gas supplies. Pushed to the wall, Russia could completely stop supplies of energy carriers to the European countries, which would lead to expansion of the austerity measures the government had sentenced its population to since the Ukraine crisis.

Instead of fortifying the Western leverage over Russia aiming at igniting the people's push for their government to take corresponding actions to stop the sanctions, they would only reinforce Putin's rule. There is a Russian saying that became popular after the sanctions: "If everyone is against us, this means that we are doing everything right." Given this logic, the 84 percent of Putin's electorate would be very difficult to be persuaded otherwise. On the one hand, if Europe drops its sanctions, this move would only prove to those living by the saying above that they succeeded in their righteous stance toward Ukraine, including annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the involvement on the Russian troops there, and their past actions, including the wars in Georgia. The biggest danger, however, is that loosening or removing the sanctions would free their hands for similar actions in the future. The Russian world, as it is presented, has no boundaries. It is where Rus-

sians live, which means that Russia could possibly use the same tactics of “gathering” the Russian/Soviet land in other parts of Europe: in the Moldovan Transdnistria and possibly in the Baltic countries with a high percentage of Russians and Russian speakers (26 percent in Latvia and 25 percent in Estonia in 2014).²³⁴

Conclusion

If Europe continues its policy of toughening sanctions, it will also lose, at least in the short run. In order for the sanctions to be efficient and not to lose their momentum, they cannot be static. They may start from the lowest level possible, but in case of lack of compellence power, they would increase in the depth and breadth of their application. This is exactly where the West began by targeting Putin’s closest entourage. Later, seeing Russia’s adamant and uncompromising behavior in Ukraine, the sanctions increased their scope, targeting institutions as well as individuals. So far, this has not worked as intended, either. If the sanctions continue on their level, there will grow the aura of normalcy for an average Russian and become a part of their daily routine. The initial shock from sanctions will wither away, especially if they are stalled for longer periods or are withdrawn completely.

The future of Russia- EU relations remains under the transparent guise of political, economic, and cultural incongruences. Europe is important for Russia just as Russia is important for Europe. The root cause of the problems is hidden in the misconception regarding the modus of the relations, which is present in the both dyadic parties. Technically speaking, Russia is not against the settings of interdependence with Europe: it does not reject the notion of mutually beneficial economic relations with the latter and is highly surprised to see the EU endangering this balance by following the collective action. In the Russian political culture, placing sovereignty in *SAModerjavie* (literally translated as SELF rule) in the hands of collective management is next to impossible. The EU, too, is stunned in disbelief at how Russia could place its own citizens in economic peril under the conditions of growing international resolve against Russia’s actions in Ukraine.

The ongoing quagmire in EU and Russia relations is purely theoretical. According to Stephen Wegner, “The EU is simultaneously Russia’s most important economic partner and a multilateral, sovereignty-questioning, value-based organization that fits uncomfortably with Moscow’s state-centric view on international relations. . . . [T]he organizing principles of Russian politics and foreign policy are far removed from those at the heart of the EU.”²³⁵ For the EU, its interdependence with Russia (or any other non- EU partner, for that matter) is fully *complex*, embracing multiple aspects and areas of interstate interactions. It is hardly just economic: it does stem from the neofunctionalist logic of having “pragmatic goal(s) of practically organising good-neighbourly relations and selecting the institutions, programmes, instruments, and procedures that better serve the bilateral agenda,” but extends into the normative context.²³⁶ On top of the purely rational choice arguments for the tangible benefits for the EU, as a supranational institution, it seeks also normative compliance with its core principles that are enshrined in the foundation of various treaties, starting from Maastricht and ending with Lisbon, and the EU conditionality given in the bulk of *acquis*.

For Russia, the situation is much simpler. It employs the interdependence based on the cost-and-benefit analysis. Even if the larger synergy between the EU and Russia can be visualized in the future (for instance, the latter playing the key political role on the European continent and the former following it), this will happen in detachment from its normative meaning. Russia is not and will not sacrifice its individual sovereignty, its precious generational achievement, for some ephemeral collective security. The very notion of collective security embodied in the CFSP, as the second pillar of the European Union, is utterly alien to the Russian political culture and unacceptable by mere definition.²³⁷

Divergence of the views on cooperation leads to disagreements where the boiling point is when the parties’ actions are deemed mutually unacceptable. Russia’s resentment of the EU’s overemphasis on its domestic situation, especially with regard to the human rights violations and the EU’s nonacceptance of Russia’s current revisionist foreign policy stance, would inevitably tear the dyad apart. Two scenarios of possible

future of the Russian steps towards the EU can be envisaged: pessimistic and optimistic (with regard to the peace and security on the European continent). Both scenarios are equally credible and hypothetical at the same time.

The first direction in Russian foreign policy is continuation of reshaping the European map, at minimum, within the borders of the former Soviet Union. This rather retrograde action could include additional chunks of the former Soviet Union brethren, either in part or as a whole. After all, if a sovereign ownership of a portion of land can be considered illegal (such as, in case of the Crimea, the Novorossiya [which includes southeastern Ukraine], Abkhazia, and Ossetia), nothing prevents Russia from applying the same logic to the fact of decomposition of the Soviet Union as an illegal act in its entirety. The revisions politics in the Western direction could possibly include also the Transdnistria region of Moldova, whose marionette government has been dying to join Russia even since the conflict broke in 1989. In this case Russia would be filling the role of Dr. Frankenstein in the most bizarre attempt to put together the bits and pieces of the decaying body of the Cold War giant.

The second possible scenario is more malleable to European security. In this world Russia would stop at the point of annexation of Crimea and hope for another form of détente with Europe. The report of the Carnegie Center Moscow presents the following picture: "In the foreseeable future, Moscow is unlikely to emerge as a security risk to Europe, either because of its domestic developments or its foreign policy. The country will neither implode nor explode, and a Russian invasion of EU territory can be safely ruled out."²³⁸ This will happen only if the logic of economic interdependence would prevail between the EU and Russia over the sanction rhetoric of the former and territorial encroachments of the latter. The reality, however, shows that this option is less probable, at least at this stage. The Russian Bear, as eulogized by Putin in his Valdai speech, has awakened. Retired Major-General Alexander Nikitin, currently the prominent member of the nationalist Party of Defense of the Russian Constitution, gave a vivid depiction of the Russian views on Europe: "The Bear is big and strong. It is much stronger

than any other forest dwellers and can tear all apart, individually or as a group. It is difficult and scary for the Europeans to live with such a neighbor to the east."²³⁹ The Bear itself, however, is deeply puzzled by seeing such an odd reaction from his neighbors to the west: it thinks it has done nothing wrong to scare the Europeans and was just protecting what it believed belonged to him.

