



Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych
Center for International Relations

Reports & Analyses

13/05

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The Policy of Russia towards the European Union

Report was created in the framework of the programme *The East European Agenda and the Transatlantic Relations*, supported by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

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The Policy of Russia towards the European Union

Main theses of the report:

- The foreign policy of the Russian Federation towards the European Union seems to be reactive and devoid of any plan.
- The implementation of the Russian policy concerning the EU has been poor. Its low performance mainly stems from the lack of a strategic view on the objectives that Russia should pursue towards the EU. Russia hesitates whether to support a more integrated Union or to fear that it would make Russia a junior partner. The future development of the relations will, to a large extent, depend on the direction of the evolution of the European integration. In a vision of Europe that Russia would find attractive, supranational authorities would not exert dominance.
- In 1990s, Russian policy towards the EU was subordinated to the relations between the RF and the US, and their rivalry with respect to the shape of the European order. Therefore, it lacked autonomy, despite Russian authorities' official declarations that the European direction of Russian foreign policy was a priority.
- After Vladimir Putin came to power, the European direction started to play a more important role in RF foreign policy, with a Russia-EU rapprochement in the years 2000-2001. However, after September 11, 2001, Russia turned its attention from the EU to the US. Since the crisis which followed the use of power against Iraq in 2002/2003, Russia focused on developing closer relations with Germany and France, at the expense of the EU as a whole.
- The key issue of the Russian policy towards the EU is the Russian perception of the EU and the process of the European integration. The fact that the democratic legal order within the EU is equal to the political order, with all individual members enjoying the same rights, is ignored. Russia supports a strong Europe as a counterbalance to the US dominance on the one hand, but it fears that the integrated Europe would push it out of the European space. Russia demands special treatment of Brussels.
- Russia's approach to the EU involves mainly political instruments. It takes advantage of such assets of a superpower as the permanent membership in the UN Security Council, with a power of veto, geostrategic location, etc. The EU tools chiefly include legal and economic measures. Natural resources of the RF as well as gas pipeline

networks serve to develop closer relations rather than as a means of pressure, due to a strong mutual relationship in this field.

- The political cooperation tends to be rhetoric, which is due to a relative weakness of both actors and their objection to the US dominance. It is therefore easier to cooperate in matters concerning general and extra-European issues rather than direct European issues. The economic cooperation results from the way both actors' economies complement each other. The so-called common economic areas, including: economy, external security, internal security, science, education and culture, are thought to be a more developed form of cooperation; although, there is a risk that the cooperation in these areas will fail to go beyond declarations.
- The rivalry between Russia and the EU primarily stems from a collision of their interests: Russia struggles to protect its sphere of influence whereas Europe continues to expand. Moscow's greatest fears concern the possibility that the European political activity would shift towards the Commonwealth of Independent States and that, in a long-term perspective, some of these states, particularly Ukraine, would accede to the EU. This process is reinforced by the conflicting political values, as both actors' political orders continue to evolve in opposite directions.
- The bilateral relations which Russia has established with France and Germany are of special importance for its policy towards the EU. Good relations with these states are believed to enable Moscow to put pressure on and influence the EU policy. They also result from the view that the EU policy is determined mainly by its individual members (particularly the German-French engine).

1. Russia-EU relations in 1990s

In 1990s, the relations with Europe (including individual states, European Communities and the European Union) were not an autonomous element of the RF foreign policy. To a large extent, they resulted from the fact that the RF subordinated its stance on Europe to a global policy of maintaining a position that would be equal to that of the US in the post-Cold War international order (however, it was meant to be achieved by means of cooperation rather than confrontation). A community of Russia and the West in terms of basic political values emerged (or it seemed to emerge), including democracy, human rights and free market economy. It manifested itself, *inter alia*, in an idea of a common European house, inherited from the Mikhail Gorbachev's era and last years of the Soviet Union.

The Kremlin has repeatedly expressed its hopes concerning the return of the unity of the European continent, which would, by the force of events, make Russia one of key actors in the post-Cold War European order (it also meant that the US would withdraw from the active involvement in European affairs). At the same time, Russian authorities continued to differentiate between Western and Eastern European issues¹. This was the opportunity to see that they lacked any vision on what kind of policy towards the former satellite states of the Soviet Union – the Central European states - should be adopted. Russian policy showed an objective attitude towards these states and Russia hoped that good relations with the West would help it either establish a sort of condominium (or even a former area of influence) or make them a buffer zone, separating it from Western Europe. Such an approach to the issue of Central Europe resulted from the fact that Russia did not believe that they could accede to NATO and the EU.

One could think that during the second half of 1990s the Russian policy should have undergone a sort of 'Europeanization', instead of pursuing a 'global' policy introduced by the Soviet Union. Principally, one could support this idea by the newly established economic ties. The European states became Russia's main creditors. They had the largest share in Russian trade. Russia focused on the relationships with individual European states rather than with the EC/EU as a whole. Although the official documents (such as 'Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation' - 1993) described the European direction as a priority, in 1990s the EU played *de facto* a minor role in Russian foreign policy. The fact that in early 1990s Russia planned to enter into an agreement with the EU, which would be similar to the association agreements signed by Central European states aspiring to EU membership², did not change this policy. Moscow concentrated on international security and the rivalry with the

¹ T. W. Jur'jewa, *Jewropiejskaja politika Rossii*, [w:] A. W. Torkunow, *Sowriemiennyje miezdunarodnyje odnoszenija i mirowaja politika*, Moscow: Proswieszczenije MGIMO 2004, p. 779.

² Nadezhda Arbatova, Wladimir Ryzkov, 'Rossija i EC: sblizenije na fonie razrywa?', *Rossija w globalnoj politieke [Russia in Global Affairs]*, Vol. 3, № 1, January/February 2005, p. 198.

US for the shape of the European order. The central issue of the European direction in the RF policy was the activity and future of NATO and the CSCE/OSCE³.

The key document laying down the framework of the Russia-EU relationships was the 'Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Russia and the European Union' (PCA) adopted June 24, 1994. It entered into force December 1, 1997, and contained a declaration of an intense cooperation of both parties, with no assumption that Russia would become a member of the EU. It is worth pointing out that this document provided for the harmonization of some Russian and EU law. The EU postponed the ratification of the treaty until 1997 because of its negative stance on the war in Chechnya. In its European policy, Moscow focused on the relations with the most important EU states: Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy – and not with the Union itself, which resulted largely from the weakness of this new organization. Russia considered the EU chiefly as the economic partner, underestimating the political dimension of the integration⁴. It expected that if the Union becomes self-dependent, the American position would weaken, although the integration was not seen as a threat to RF interests. Moscow identified the growing autonomy of European security policy only in the context of the deteriorating role of NATO, which made Russia support Western European Union's initiatives, hoping that it would eventually become self-dependent⁵.

2. The European direction in Russia's foreign policy under Vladimir Putin

After Vladimir Putin came to power, Russia's foreign policy changed dramatically. The European direction could not be excluded from this evolution, especially since the Kremlin recognized it as one of its priorities.

a. The evolution of Russia's foreign policy under Vladimir Putin

As Putin was gaining power in Russia (as the Prime Minister in the second half of 1999), the Kremlin had to cope with the consequences of the war in Kosovo. It was a severe defeat in terms of prestige, on the one hand, and the humanitarian legitimization of the intervention was considered a threat to Russia's own security. Russia started to fear that the humanitarian intervention would be a pretext for the introduction, by the West, of 'the new rules', enabling it to use power on the basis of its own view (Russia would thus become a victim of the conflict in Chechnya). Such fears were, of course, exaggerated, because, for instance, Russia's nuclear arsenal still guarantees protection in case of any 'classical'

³ Agnieszka Bryc, *Cele polityki zagranicznej Federacji Rosyjskiej* [The Objectives of Russian Federation's Foreign Policy] Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek 2004, pp. 65-66.

⁴ It is worth mentioning that the political dimension of the integration was in that time of little importance.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 77; see also: Jur'jewa, *Jewropiejskaja politika...*, op.cit., p. 779.

aggression. Initially, Russia reacted to the Kosovo crisis quite traditionally: it increased anti-Western rhetoric and tightened mutual relations with China. Putin announced the end of 'the younger brother' policy, and at the same time he gave priority to the strengthening of the RF position across the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The withdrawal from the confrontational policy towards the West – regarded as a resignation from the desire to create a multipolar international order – was enabled by a partial change in the way Russian authorities assessed the international environment. The Kosovo crisis, which raised fears of establishing a cold peace between Russia and the Western states, finally ended, despite a threatening dispute over an airport in Pristina. After that, the mutual relations slowly started to warm up.

After Putin was appointed acting president January 1, 2000, his tactics became to wait and not to involve in any official visits outside Russia⁶. In Europe, Russia was almost isolated, due to the economic crash, the second war in Chechnya and the way Putin came to power, which was seen as a threat to democracy. The new leader decided to start rebuilding Russia's position by opening a dialogue with Great Britain. Then, after he was elected president in March 2000, he visited Italy and Spain. One of the first Russian initiatives was a proposal to create a pan-European non-strategic anti-ballistic missile system, that would cover the whole Europe, and attempts to sustain the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty⁷ as the US planned to walk away from it. Such an approach showed that Russia's policy towards Europe still lacked autonomy and it was subordinated to the rivalry with the US, and treated primarily as a means of pressure. The fourth country Putin visited was Germany. France had to wait to welcome the Russian president until October 2000, which was a consequence of its strong criticism regarding the Kremlin's policy in Chechnya – seen as an intervention in the internal affairs of Russia⁸.

The European direction of Russia's foreign policy became a priority from the very beginning of Putin's presidency, overtaking the CIS direction⁹. This 'European choice' was contained in the conception of multipolar world, which would be based on the rules of international law, the UN and attempts to manage globalization. The Russian authorities assumed that the RF would remain an indispensable element of the European order. Such an evolution in foreign policy resulted, to a great extent, from a historical tradition of Russia's

⁶ S. Morozow, *Dyplomacja W. W. Putina. Wnieszniaja politika Rossii 1999-2004 gg.*, Sankt-Peterburg: Izdatielskij Dom <<Izmajłowski>> 2004, p. 32. The official justification was that the prime minister and president cannot leave the country at one time.

⁷ Signed in 1972.

⁸ Morozow, op.cit., pp. 67-72.

⁹ See: Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation, June 28, 2000

permanent presence in European affairs¹⁰. This was emphasized by the deteriorating relations with the US.

In the years 2000-2001, the Russian-European relations underwent a revival. The division between the Western and Eastern European policy remained, with the latter virtually non-existent. No political conception concerning Poland and other Central European states was developed; there was only some hope to again open this territory to Russia's influence. The fact that the official documents concerning Russia's foreign policy, prepared in 2000, include virtually no reference to this area, serves as a good example¹¹.

b. The consequences of the Russian-American rapprochement after September 11, 2001, for the European direction of the RF foreign policy

In late 2001, partly owing to the US reaction to 9/11¹² and the following evolution of the international situation, Russia adopted a new direction of the European foreign policy. Its key elements included a withdrawal both from the rivalry with the US regarding the post-Cold War international order and from the global foreign policy. Putin, feeling unable to defeat the US, chose a strategy, which in Western political commentary was referred to as 'bandwagoning' – joining the stronger party. Simultaneously, he decided to strengthen Russia's position as an Eurasian superpower. Russia resigned as a superpower and gave up prestige in favor of a pragmatic approach to foreign policy. The symbol of giving up both global aspirations and confrontation with the US was the closure in 2001 of the Lourdes surveillance station in Cuba and a naval base in Vietnam's Cam Ranh.

One might expect that the regional emphasis of the RF foreign policy (aiming to make Russia a strong Eurasian superpower) would stop the approach, whereby the relations with the US are superior to European policy. However, the first consequence of the Russian-American rapprochement was a decline in Moscow's interests in the European direction, as well as a stagnation in the Russia-EU relations. For the second time since the Cold War, the Kremlin seemed to be under the illusion that the setting up of the Russian-American 'condominium', acting as an axis of the international order, is highly probable. Such a view on the state of international affairs remained until the end of 2002, when the rising crisis in Iraq resulted in another about-face in Russian foreign policy.

¹⁰ Jur'jewa, op.cit., p. 774.

¹¹ Such as: Foreign Policy Conception of the Russian Federation and Security Conception of the Russian Federation.

¹² Making the war on terror a central element of a new US strategic doctrine.

Russia focused on creating a new formula for its relations with NATO¹³ and the strategic dialogue with the US, as well as intensifying its relations with individual European states, particularly with Great Britain, Germany and France. In 2002, the Russian diplomatic activity apparently revealed a new way of perceiving NATO. Moscow judged that the role of the Alliance was declining (as a natural consequence of the fact that it was ignored by the Americans), on the one hand, and the Russian-NATO relations adopted a new form, putting declarations into practice, on the other.

The Russian-American rapprochement at the expense of Europe partly resulted from a similar view on the world of the Cold-War rivals. Robert Kagan described the EU as living in a post-modern paradise¹⁴. According to this terminology, Russia has remained in the Hobbes' jungle. Despite this paradox – the EU's strength is on the rise (somewhat unintentionally and not at all deliberately) and the RF even more often lacks tools to pursue a real superpower policy – it is Moscow, not Brussels, that is closer to Washington in many issues, including the use of power¹⁵.

c. The rapprochement and disappointment with Europe: from the Iraqi crisis to the Ukrainian one

United States' aiming at the settlement of the Iraqi issue through the use of force, coupled with a lack of true benefits for Moscow – despite its concessions policy towards Washington – made the Kremlin see an opportunity to oppose the US. The way to achieve this was improving relations with France and Germany, which were the most determined opponents of the use of power without UN Security Council's consent. The Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis would remain a permanent element of the European policy¹⁶. Russian representatives' announcements made in 2003 are quite similar to those made in 1998, when Russia still hoped to hold back NATO's enlargement. During the Iraqi crisis, Russia tried to maintain good relations with all key European states, creating an anti-American axis - with France and Germany, as well as cooperating with the states comprising the anti-Iraqi coalition – Great Britain and Italy.

The rise of activity within the European direction still did not mean a breakthrough in Russian policy towards the EU as a whole. It was partly caused by the fact that the Union

¹³ The '19+1' formula (NATO members agree a joint position which is then presented to Russia) was replaced with a '20' formula (within the Joint NATO-Russia Council the RF enjoys the same rights as the members of the Alliance).

¹⁴ Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*.

¹⁵ It is evidenced, for instance, by the statements of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov, in which Russia declares its right to a pre-emptive attack on terrorists' bases outside its territory, which is in fact a copy of the American conception of the pre-emptive use of force.

was entering the last phase of the enlargement (which drew most of European politicians' attention) and that both Russia and the Union had little to offer to each other, with the exception of political declarations. Moscow's superpower rhetoric, which was even stronger in the 2003/2004 pre-election period, played an important role, too¹⁷. In 2003, Russia intensified its campaign for the integration of the post-Soviet area, which was expressed by the conception of a Common Economic Space (CES). As a consequence, an idea emerged to strengthen Russia's position through an activity in the two economic areas: the EU and the CIS, the latter serving also as a way to prevent the CIS members from integrating with the EU.

Two events of 2004 had a great impact on the European direction of Russian foreign policy. In September, a terrorist attack took place in Bieslan. Its consequence, apart from further centralization of power, was the intensification of anti-Western rhetoric, reflecting a growing atmosphere of 'a besieged fortress' among Russian authorities. Ukraine's election crisis in late 2004 had even more serious effect, especially in terms of the policy towards the EU. On the one hand, Poland and Lithuania got involved in it, with the support of Javier Solana, acting on behalf of the EU. On the other hand, the mutual relations between Russia and key EU states, particularly Germany and France, were not strong enough to hold back the EU's involvement in solving this crisis.

3. Russia's perception of the European Union

The fact that Russia regards the EU as a uniform international actor imposes serious ambiguities and shows an appalling lack of strategic vision. On the one hand, Moscow considers the Union to be a potential counterbalance for the US dominance, repeatedly declaring a strategic partnership with the EU¹⁸. On the other hand, it apparently fears that Europe could become too strong and that Russia would be totally excluded from the new European order.

a. The essence of the European integration

One of the main obstacles that inhibit the development of the Europe-Russia relations is Moscow's partial misunderstanding of the European integration. The EU is principally an association of sovereign states, based on the rule of both international and community law.

¹⁶ After Angela Merkel came to power in Germany, this country might less eagerly participate in anti-American actions.

¹⁷ Timofei Bordachev, *Is the Europeanization of Russia Over?*, *Rossija w globalnoj politikie [Russia in Global Affairs]*, Vol. 2, № 2, April/June 2004, p. 88.

¹⁸ One ought to point out that Russian politicians tend to use a term of 'strategic partnership' to refer to the RF's relations not only with the EU, but also with the US, China and Germany.

However, the Russian vision of the world order assumes that the international law should provide for special rights and obligations for the most powerful states, giving them a privileged position¹⁹. The Kremlin fails to understand that Luxemburg enjoys the same voice as Germany does (although their votes have different weights), and, moreover, other states will take it into account. Therefore, Russia has repeated the same failure, hoping that agreements with main EU actors can change the Union's institutional and legal framework in favor of the RF.

Such a view on the EU is quite apparent in the way Russia treats Poland and other Central and Eastern European states. Russian elites assume that Poland serves only as an object of a game played by the strongest states and the Eurobureaucracy, on the assumption that Moscow's 'Big Brother' has been simply replaced by the one seated in Brussels. Another supposition is that the membership in the EU will be harmful to Poland and it will cause economic losses, including increased imports to Poland or a denial to export Polish goods to European markets. The fact that the political cultures of Russia and the EU do not square with each other, coupled with the following mutual misunderstanding, can be a key problem in the long-term process of shaping positive relations²⁰.

What Russian analysts blame as a cause of the present state of the European integration (unfavorable from the Russian interests' point of view) is Brussels' bureaucracy. They would like to see the Europe of de Gaulle, Churchill or Adenauer – an association of sovereign states, but what they actually see is the rising Eurobureaucracy and a new sort of political correctness²¹. The frequently repeated opinion is that bureaucracy plays a disproportionately large role in Europe. It has created a sort of 'political correctness', an egalitarian ideology, that opposes the use of power, supports pro-environmental initiatives and rejects extremism²². Another factor responsible for both developing EU integration and its increasing role in the international arena is, as Russians perceive it, the activity of the European Commission. It has gained many competencies of national governments and parliaments, while its aiming at making the European economy the most competitive in the world (Lisbon Strategy) resulted in that it has seized the bulk of the decisions regarding the common market²³.

¹⁹ It does not refer only to the current vision, as it may be tracked back over the last few centuries.

²⁰ It is worth recalling the opinion of an outstanding practitioner of *Realpolitik*, Henry Kissinger, that a clash of powers is 'manageable', but the clash of values will inevitably cause a conflict.

²¹ Siergiej Karaganow, Second option for Russian-European relations, RIA Novosti, 26.05.2005, Johnson's Russia List #9161, www.cdi.org.

²² Siergiej Karaganow, 'Rossija i Jewropa połuczili <<okno wozmożnostiej>>', *Rossijskaja gazjeta* 21.06.2005, www.globalaffairs.ru/articles/4210.html.

²³ Timofei Bordachev, 'Prizrak swobody', *Rossija w globalnoj politikie [Russia in Global Affairs]*, Vol. 3, № 3, May-Jun 2005, p. 10.

The European kind of political culture is very distant from the Russian model. It is regarded only in terms of *Realpolitik* and a zero-sum game, in which some countries win and some lose. Russia underestimates the 'soft power' of the EU. The increasing understanding of the EU model, observed in recent years among Russians, fails to change this view. There is no department in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs that is responsible for the relations with the EU.

b. Common Foreign and Security Policy and European Security and Defense Policy

Under Putin, Russia's stance towards the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) evolved from support and cooperation to considering the common policy to be only an EU tool, designed to weaken the RF position. The Kremlin has continued to fear that it would be excluded from the decision-making process regarding European issues and that the EU would take actions across the area which is thought to be Russia's sphere of vital interests. If CFSP's efficiency were on the rise, Russia's capabilities of dividing European states would diminish, significantly reducing Moscow's power in the arena of the European politics.

In the connection with the European Constitution crisis²⁴, Russian commentators spotted the decreasing chances for the EU to develop a uniform foreign policy and to become a geopolitical center of the international order²⁵. Moreover, Russia can see that Europe has divided in two as regards the US role in Europe, which consequently diminishes any perspectives for a joint foreign policy. It does not mean, however, that Russia assumes the JSFP to be nothing but an utopian project. Serious Moscow's fears resulted from the setting up of a uniform policy concerning areas outside Europe, as was the case of the European Neighborhood Policy. In the framework of the Wider Europe policy, the EU treats all its neighbors, from Morocco to Russia, equally, with no special policy towards any particular state. Russia fears that it will lose some of its privileged position in the relations with the EU²⁶.

Growing ambitions of the European states regarding defense issues (first within the Western European Union and then within the UE) initially provoked virtually no reaction on the part of Russia, despite the fact that, through an associated membership, the WUE entered the area thought to be the sphere of Russia's influence²⁷. One also have to mention

²⁴ Caused by the rejection of the treaty establishing a constitution. for Europe in referendums in France and the Netherlands.

²⁵ See for instance: Karaganow, *Rossija i Jewropa...*, op.cit.

²⁶ Dmitrij W. Susłow, <<Jewropiejskij wybor>> pod woprosom, *Niezawisimaja gazjeta*, 5.11.2004.

²⁷ The Baltic states joined the WEU as associated members.

Russians' hopes that this will weaken both NATO and trans-Atlantic relations as well. As soon as plans concerning the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) within the framework of CFSP became more concrete, Russia started to react ambiguously. On the one hand, Moscow continued to see this policy as a chance that the European defense policy would separate from NATO and consequently that it would weaken the US role on the European continent. On the other hand, the RF fears that it would be once again pushed out of the newly built European regional security structures. It is heightened by the fact that, so far, Russia has failed to take part in the process of creating a European defense policy. The most significant initiative in this matter was a conception of a common European-Russian Theater Missile Defense, put forward by president Putin in 2000.

Russia hesitates whether to ignore the EU's attempts to build a common foreign, security and defense policy, or to fear that it will be totally excluded from the European security system. The Union is regarded as a threat that is even greater than NATO, because it has been granted access to many areas of cooperation within NATO, while it has remained isolated from the decision-making process within the EU, which in Russians' view lacks transparency. The first option is evidenced by a quiet withdrawal of its peace-keeping forces from Bosnia and Herzegovina short before the EU was to take this mission over²⁸. They ceased to be necessary as an element of a global play with Washington. However, the crisis in Ukraine showed that the influence of such medium-sized countries like Poland may be strengthened by the support of Brussels (i.e. the European Commission or the European Parliament). Russia was even more astonished, as it did not believe that Poland could significantly influence the EU Eastern policy, especially after Warsaw's lasting relations with partners such as Germany have greatly declined following the war in Iraq.

c. The EU enlargement with Central and Eastern European states

Initially, in the first half of 1990s, plans to include the countries of the former Eastern bloc within the EU were not seen by Russia as a threat to its interests. Moreover, in the context of NATO's enlargement, some Russians regarded them as an advantageous alternative. Not before the late 1990s did the awareness emerge among the Russian elites that the new division of Europe might prove more significant and enduring, as a consequence of integration processes within the EU²⁹. Regarding the EU enlargement as an objective process was replaced by tracking new problems, such as an access to the Kaliningrad region or rivalry in the post-Soviet area.

²⁸ In December 2004.

²⁹ W. G. Baranowski, *Rossija i formirovanije nowoj jewropejskoj architektury*, [w:] A. W. Torkunow, *Wnieszniaja politika Rossijskoj Federacii 1992-1999*, Moscow: Rosspen 2000, pp. 163-164.

Russia is aware that the EU enlargement with the Central and Eastern European states resulted in a present increase in the number of EU members supporting close trans-Atlantic relations. The accession of Romania and Bulgaria will help strengthen American influence. This process contributes to the weakness of the Union due the increasing number of disputes, on the one hand, and to the growing role of the US in Europe, on the other, which also does not satisfy Moscow. The voice of new members, with deeply rooted fears of Russian imperial policy, may pose an obstacle to the establishment of a strategic Russia-EU partnership. At the same time, Russia aims at maintaining the division between the old and the new members of Western institutions (both the EU and NATO) and supports this division in its policy, for instance, by refusing to extend the PCA agreement to new member states.

Moscow's fears of further EU enlargements were softened due to a dispute that continues to grow within the Union, concerning the rationale and limits of further enlargement, especially as to the Balkan states, Turkey and the CIS states. Moscow expects that the reluctance of European societies towards further enlargement will inhibit this process.

d. The Constitutional Treaty

Russian elites unambiguously negatively assessed the idea of the Constitutional Treaty. The most important accusation was that the Treaty would extend the already great powers of Brussels at the cost of powers of sovereign states. The Commission was accused of releasing itself from Parliament's control and a political self-dependence. If the Treaty was accepted, the EU would become a sort of a state itself, replacing the confederation with a federation. The Commission would then become a government, the Parliament would act as a real parliament and a single minister for foreign affairs would enable a single foreign, security and defense policy³⁰. Russian analysts described the Treaty as unrealistic, complex and strengthening the deficit of democracy.

Russians found the defeat of the current Constitutional Treaty to be the most beneficial for them. Gleb Pawlowsky, a political consultant close to the Kremlin, says that the rejection of the Treaty will limit the ambitions of the Union's bureaucracy and will help improve Russia-EU relations³¹. A consequence of the defeat should be a return to the national model of the EU foreign policy. Much of Russian reluctance to the Constitution is based on a conviction that if it were passed, a pseudo-federal European state would emerge, with no perspectives for Russia to accede to it.

³⁰ Jarosław Szimow, *Jewroutopizm i jewroreakcja*, Polit.ru, www.globalaffairs.ru/articles/4011.html (11.05.2005)

The Russian approach to the strengthening of EU competences is still characterized by fears of the centralization of the decision-making process on the European level, which would significantly diminish Moscow's capabilities in the field of dividing individual member states.

e. Russia's view on the European integration

Establishing close relations with Europe, at the beginning of Putin's presidency, to a certain extent revealed the Russian view on the European integration. The key issue seems to be whether the Kremlin aims at active participation in the integration processes, with a suggestion of its potential membership in the EU. In 1990s, the Russian government did not exclude such a possibility. The RF politics regarding the EU, however, underwent a noteworthy evolution as compared to the era of Boris Yeltsin. Although in 1990s Russia claimed that it observed the same values as the West – under Putin, commentators refer to a Russian variety of democracy and the common interests rather than the shared values³².

In November 1999, Moscow adopted the 'Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy Towards the European Union (2000 –2010)' and presented it during Russia-EU summit in Helsinki October 22, 2000. It was a kind of a response to the 'Common Strategy of The European Union on Russia', adopted at the Cologne European Council in June 1999. Russian priorities included: imparting a strategic dimension to the relations, guarantying Russia's interests in the process of EU enlargement, the inflow of investment and increasing the access of Russian goods to EU markets. Russia's strategy with respect to the required model of its relations with the EU assumed that the partnership will develop on the treaty basis. The RF did not claim to join or to form an association with the EU³³.

Russia has expressed its will to establish the partnership with the EU, but, firstly, the Russian way of understanding a 'partnership' is quite specific, and secondly, the Kremlin would like to build it on the basis of common interests (but not on the basis of shared values). Moscow wants to be treated exceptionally by the EU – as a superpower with a great natural resources potential. In terms of concrete postulates, Russia insisted upon introducing a visa-free regime for Russians in the EU, an access to the common market in the framework of the CES and a voice in the decision-making process³⁴.

³¹ Vladimir Isachenkov, *Kremlin-linked analyst says EU constitution rejections bode well for Russia*, AP 16.06.2005; see also: Bordachev, 'Prizrak swobody', op.cit., pp. 8-14.

³² Igor Torbakov, *Russia faces foreign policy debate for 2005*, EurasiaNet Commentary 18.01.2005, www.eurasianet.org.

³³ Jur'jewa, op.cit., pp. 793-794.

³⁴ EU's Eastern borders, *The Economist*, 25-31.06.2005.

The Russia-EU cooperation should also serve to secure civilization and economic development; the European states are considered to be a source of foreign investment that is indispensable for improving the economic and civilizational standards in Russia. At the same time, the RF intends to support the creation of a common economic space without the loss of sovereignty, which is sometimes thought to be directly associated with the EU membership. Since Russia has to cope with the issue of reducing the negative impact of globalization, the integration with the EU would be the best way of participating in the world economy.

The issue of a possible integration with the EU also constitutes the question of Russia's identity in the international arena. Should one speak of it as the return of a 'prodigal son' to Europe or – due to a unique Eurasian identity, which is a mixture of the East and the West – Russia will never become a real participant of the European order, as other countries (EU members) do. It is partly linked with the question of the relations between the European and other directions in Russian foreign policy.

4. Instruments in mutual relations between Russia and the European Union

Russia and the EU differ in terms of political, economic and cultural potential. They have different strategic culture, the way they act on the international scene is also different: Russia has a tradition of being a superpower while the EU is a new kind of an international community. The wide range of differences implies that the foreign policy instruments used by both actors differ greatly, too. Russia introduces chiefly political measures (although the role of economy is on the rise), whereas the Union uses mostly economic and legal instruments (the latter also uses political measures but they can have weaker impact in case of Russia than, for instance, a promise of association would have in case of smaller countries).

a. Russia

Russia's fundamental asset in its policy towards the EU has been the traditional asset of a superpower – the political potential, including the permanent membership in the UN Security Council; the participation in G-8 (although Russia owes it to the support of the European states); special relations with other superpowers, particularly with the US, China and India; geostrategic location; still existing influence in many countries, including those to which the West has little access.

Despite the loss of the superpower status of the former USSR, Russia has remained an important element of the post-Cold War international order. Therefore, it is a welcome partner in possible international coalitions. If the EU wanted to push a conception that would

be different from the American one in the international arena, then Russia's political support could prove a key factor to help realize it. For instance, the Kyoto Protocol could pass thanks to Russia's ratification, and in exchange for that the EU agreed to Russia's accession to the WTO.

Moscow gives proofs of being a superpower to the leaders of individual states (such as Germany, France or Italy) through a number of declarations on strategic partnership (and *vice versa*). At the same time, the good relations with these states provide the Kremlin with another political instrument: the capacity to weaken the EU by means of boosting its internal divisions. The other way of possible limiting EU powers in the international arena is the cooperation of Russia with other superpowers, particularly with the US.

A peculiar kind of instrument which the Kremlin can use in its policy towards the EU is the Russian natural resources potential. The Union needs to diversify the sources of oil and natural gas, but Russia can manage this instrument as a means of political pressure only to a very limited extent. Supplying energy resources to the EU states has remained the main source of financing the present and future development of Russia but one should remember about the principle of mutual balance between the two sides. Therefore, natural resources supplies can hardly be treated as an instrument used only by Russia, due to a strong and quite symmetrical mutual relation in this matter. Also, both the existing and planned pipelines designed to deliver the resources to the European market can hardly serve as a means of pressure on Russia. It can change in a longer-term perspective, as volume of available resources shrinks significantly and losing only some of its consumers would do harm to RF financial interests. The efficiency of the gas tap control policy also depends on the rate of supplies diversification in a particular country. Most EU member states are not as unilaterally dependent on Russia's supplies, as Poland and Central-Eastern European states. Moreover, the Western states do not fear of cutting off the supplies: in the peak period of the Cold War, in 1980s, a construction of the USSR/West Europe pipeline began, despite a strong American protest. The cohesion of the European Union still has to cope with the different goals of Western and Central European states: the former want to diversify their supplies by means of Russian resources, whereas the latter aim at freeing themselves from the Russian monopoly.

b. The European Union

The basic tool of EU policy towards Russia (which, as one should emphasize, need not be used in a conscious and planned manner, due to a specific Union's political culture) remains the law, both international and that created by the EU. A condition for the practical Russian-EU cooperation is bringing the two legal systems closer to each other. The

resolutions to gradually adjust the Russian economic legislation to that of the Union were already contained in the Russian-EU PCA Agreement. Adopting European regulations provokes protests in Russia, where the law is thought to be an element of Russian tradition. The implementation of the common spaces will imply even more harmonization of Russian law with the European regulations. At the same time, Russia has not been granted (and nothing indicates that it will be) the right to participate in the decision-making process regarding the legal instruments that concern this country. This process supports a one-sided EU advantage. As Russian political scientists point out, the real adjustment of Russian law to the Union's law, chiefly regarding the economic sphere, is performed without a strategic vision for the Russian-EU relations³⁵.

An important EU's asset as to the relations with Russia (the one which Russia lacks) is the efficient bureaucracy, which turns out to be very useful during the negotiations. It was apparent both during the negotiations on the EU enlargement effects for Russia as well as in the case of the so-called road maps for the creation of the common spaces, negotiated and adopted in May 2005. At the same time, engagement in the talks with the European Commission to a certain extent diminishes Moscow's capabilities of exploiting political measures in order to be granted concessions in legal and institutional matters. By pursuing negotiations with the Commission, Russia has also been deprived of the capacity to divide EU states.

Another EU instrument useful in the relations with Russia is the Union's economic potential, as well as the demand, on the part of Russia, for foreign investment. The EU remains the RF's main trade partner (55% of Russian trade, after the enlargement) and one of the most important consumer of Russian resources. The fact that the Union had to grant its consent to Russia's membership in the WTO also proved an essential tool, but the EU lost this asset as soon as the agreement was reached in 2004. However, before Russia accedes to the WTO, limiting its access to the Union's market will still remain an instrument of the EU economic policy.

Last but not least, regulations governing the movement of persons across the EU-Russian border are also the Union's policy tool. The issue of free movement concerning the Kaliningrad region was not settled in favor of Moscow, which expected that the visa regime between Russia and the EU could be facilitated or a visa-free regime for Russian citizens could be introduced. Similarly, in the Kremlin's view, the Schengen system will remain an obstacle for the free movement of Russian citizens across the RF. However, some countries (including Germany and Italy) introduced a simplified visa regime in relations with the RF. The lack of readmission arrangements between Russia and the EU remained a problem, but

³⁵ Arbatova, Ryzkov, op.cit., p. 200.

both parties managed to solve it in October 2005. The issue of a visa-free regime is chiefly a matter of prestige for Russia.

Another political instrument that the EU has at its disposal may be the Union's aid for the CIS states, introduced in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy. It is another case in which an EU instrument is linked with the dynamics of the international system. The Union is a center that attracts post-communist countries, due to its economic and civilizational potential, which is not at all weakened by an apparent EU opposition to further enlargement.

5. Areas of Russian-EU cooperation

Russia's cooperation with the EU mainly results from a strong mutual relationship between the two actors. In the political sphere, it manifests itself in the ambitions of participation in shaping the international order, dominated by the US, whereas both the actors are still relatively weak. In the economic sphere, this is a specific complementarity: Russia needs the Union's investments and technologies, while the latter needs Russian natural resources.

a. The political sphere

The community of both players' interests stems from the vision of the international order that they desire. It should remain polycentric (multipolar), with a dominance of the UN and the international law. Both Russia and the EU are not capable to oppose the US dominance on their own. Moreover, both the actors might prove too weak in comparison with the growing power of China.

The official relations with the EU are a priority for Russia³⁶. The EU also recognized Russia's role in the 'European Security Strategy' adopted in December 2003. In this document, the Union described Russia as 'a major factor in our security and prosperity'. Since October 2001 Russia got involved in the CFSP to an extent that is incomparable with other states. Regular meetings of the representatives from Russia and the Political and Security Committee (PSC) have taken place, as well as consultations within CFSP Troika Working Groups. The close cooperation manifested itself in the setting up of the Russian-EU Permanent Partnership Council in 2004. The similarities between both actors' visions of the international order were also apparent when Russia adopted the Kyoto Protocol, which made it possible for the Protocol to enter into force despite the US opposition.

³⁶ *Opening address at the Russia-European Union Summit, Moscow, 10.05.2005, <http://president.kremlin.ru> (11.05.2005).*

However, the efficiency of this cooperation has been low and in fact it failed to go beyond rhetoric declarations. The verbal objection against the unilateral US policy will not substitute for concrete actions. It is easier to reach an agreement with regard to extra-European issues, which do not involve both actors' interests at the same time. It stems from the specific EU approach to Russia, with the latter regarded as a desired partner in a global cooperation, while the European order should be shaped by means of the Union's rules. Therefore, some Russian commentators refer to it as a system crisis of mutual relations, resulting from the lack of a vision and a strategic objective of both the actors³⁷.

The aforementioned cooperation regarding non-European regions, limited to declarations, will not help both actors meet their political objectives. The best example is the issue of the Greater Middle East. Both the actors border on this area and are vulnerable to threats that come from it; they also cooperate in the framework of the Middle East quartet. And again, the cooperation has resulted from weakness and attempts to influence American decisions regarding this region. Russia and the EU agree as to the post-war normalization in Iraq and the developments in the Middle East. At the same time however, they cannot force any significant changes in US policy. It is remarkable that the Russian-EU convergence of views proves incomplete on concrete issues, such as Iran and its nuclear program. The EU would like to stop Iran from gaining nuclear capabilities, while Russia does not intend to give up the cooperation in nuclear program, which provides it with significant financial benefits. Moreover, Iran is Russia's strategic partner in the region.

A good example of the aforementioned limitations of the cooperation is the European security area, which failed to be a breakthrough. In October 2001, a declaration of dialogue and cooperation in this area was adopted. In October 2001, regular meetings of representatives from Russia and the Political and Security Committee (the main body as regards the ESDP) to serve as a forum for cooperation. However, the balance of cooperation in military matters has remained poor. The conception of the Russian-European Theater Missile Defense (based on Russian S-300 and S-400 missiles) has also failed to go beyond declarations. Joint mine clearance activities were planned but they have not yet been undertaken. Russia suggested that the EU use Russian air transport forces, but this proposal was actually turned down (the EU only declared to consider it; however, it will soon have A-400M airlift carriers at its disposal and the use of Ukrainian air forces is also under consideration). In August 2003, five representatives from the RF ministry of internal affairs participated in the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The EU consistently rejects Russia's cooperation proposals, offering political consultations on various levels instead. The establishing of closer contacts between the Russian and EU military

³⁷ Arbatova, Ryzkov, op.cit., p. 196.

bodies, particularly with the European Defense Agency, has been declared, however, the so far performance gives little hope for successful developments.

In the Kremlin's view, a notable issue of the Russian-EU cooperation should be the war on Islamic terror, particularly after the 2004 attacks in Madrid and the 2005 attacks in London. Russia has repeatedly emphasized the community of interests with the EU in this area. In this perspective, Russia's activities in the Caucasus are referred to as 'solving a common European problem'³⁸. Russia considers itself as an 'antemurale' that protects Europe from the Islamic terror. The EU did not quite accepted such a stance, although it started to recognize some Chechen organizations as terrorist groups, and also the approach to Chechen emigrants changed negatively.

b. The economic sphere

The EU is Russia's largest trading partner. This relation is asymmetric, since trade with Russia accounts for only 5% of the EU's overall trade. What matters is the character of the trade, which involves natural resources supplies. In 2000, the EU accounted for 40% of Russian trade. Russia provides over 20% of the EU's needs in natural gas and 16% in oil. In 2001, 79% of foreign investments in Russia came from EU states, with a total value of almost \$30 billion. In May 2004, 25 EU states accounted for more than a half of the Russian foreign trade (55%). Moreover, these states may be partners in the Russian industries, which retained competitiveness in global markets: space, energy, chemistry and metallurgy industries. Today's apparent lack of stable trade balance may become a problem for Russia in a longer-term perspective. In fact, Russia exports mostly natural resources to the EU and imports finished goods.

A further economic Russian-EU cooperation may encounter obstacles if Russia does not become a member of the WTO. In this connection, the EU demanded that Russia *inter alia* introduce liberalization of its gas market. Another obstacle for Russia on its way to the WTO is, in the Union's view, the development of Russia's ambitious plans to pursue the economic cooperation within the CIS. Eventually, the EU forwent some requirements as to Russia's accession to the WTO; the agreement on this issue was signed May 21, 2004, in Moscow.

The development of the Russian natural resources distribution infrastructure has remained a problem. Russia expects that the Union's members can be divided with respect to resources supplies. The best example here is a developing project of a gas pipeline across the Baltic Sea, which would link Russia with Germany. Poland would lose transit fees,

³⁸ See for instance: *Interview of the President Vladimir Putin with German television channels ARD and ZDF*, 5.05.2005, <http://president.kremlin.ru> (8.05.2005).

although from the economic point of view the construction of a second leg of the Yamal pipeline would be a cheaper solution, as some experts say (one should bear in mind that Russia committed itself to doing so). Russia aims at diversifying its distribution routes.

At the same time, cooperation in the economic sphere has apparently encountered limitations. Russia regards the EU as forcing every possible trade concessions. For instance, it demanded that Russia cancel payments it collects from foreign airlines flying along the Trans-Siberian air corridor. The fact that Russia has to adopt European regulations, without participation in its making, is also a contentious issue. Both sides hold grudges against each other as regards access limitations concerning each other's market. The EU demands that Russia liberalize individual sectors, such as air transport, gas industry, etc.

In the first months after the 2004 EU enlargement, another dispute emerged, regarding the extension of the 'Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Russia and the European Union' on the new member states. It was settled April 27, 2004. Russia's main argument concerned financial losses incurred due to the enlargement.

c. Common spaces as a deepened Russia-EU cooperation

A conception of a deepened cooperation between Russia and the EU for the first time emerged in May 2001. In practice, a formula of the so-called Russia-EU common spaces emerged, covering four areas: economy; external security; freedom, security and justice (internal security); research, education and culture. It was meant to replace the impractical formula of the Russia-EU partnership and to fill the vacuum that appeared after the Central and Eastern European countries have joined the EU. During the Russia-EU summit in Rome in 2003, the first proposal concerning such a conception was put forward. The growing discrepancy of opinion between the two partners postponed the practical implementation of the common spaces. Not until the Moscow summit May 10, 2005, were the so-called roadmaps adopted, regarding the four common spaces of the Russia-EU cooperation.

The first version of a common European economic space was presented in November 2003 by External Relations Commissioner Christopher Patten and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Victor Khristenko. The common economic space is meant to help develop 'an open integrated market', based on the four freedoms of movement of goods, persons, capital and services. It would force Russia to adopt some European law, which – due to a lack of Russia's participation in the decision-making process – would provide the Union with a powerful means of pressure on Moscow³⁹. At the same time, the common

³⁹ Dmitrij W. Susłow, 'Kolonija Jewropy ili jejo czast', *Niezawisimaja gazeta* 23.05.2005. The author compared the creation of Russian law to the influence of the International Monetary Fund in 1990s. See also: Bordachev, *Is the Europeanization of Russia Over?*, op.cit., p. 89.

economic space, setting up a single internal market, could not function properly without common legal platform.

The common external security space reflected the desired vision of the world order. It declared aiming at establishing a multipolar international order, recognizing the common responsibility for international security, especially in the close neighborhood of the EU and Russia, and emphasizing the community of values. The priority areas of cooperation included:

- war on terror;
- non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and preventing the movement thereof;
- cooperation in crisis management;
- cooperation in civil defense.

The Russia-EU dialogue on security is also the most developed one in comparison with the dialogues that the EU pursues with other international actors, including the United States. At the same time, the dynamics of the Russia-EU relations regarding security is, to a great extent, determined by very close ties between Europe and the US, stemming from the membership in NATO. It provides the EU with a defense umbrella, thanks to which it can undertake actions to regulate the security environment with the aid of non-military measures (NATO enlargement preceded the EU enlargement).

The common internal security space seems impossible to establish without the community of values (there is, however, no such community between Russia and the EU). It covers juridical cooperation and organized crime prevention, which is in fact impossible without courts' independence or incorruptible legal protection bodies. Also, a high degree of trust between the partners seems indispensable⁴⁰. Russia underestimates the so-called 'soft security' issues, which are crucial to internal security cooperation.

The common space in terms of education, science and culture seems the most realistic. Russia is anxious to establish the mutual recognition of degrees, which would accelerate the harmonization of education systems (in fact it would mean the adoption, by Russia, of the formal rules of the Bologna process⁴¹).

Since Russia does not in fact participate in the decision-making process in the EU, Russian commentators point out possible benefits of the conception of the four spaces. Firstly, the cooperation would support the 'Europeanization' of Russian officials, who would get acquainted with the decision-making mechanism of the EU. Secondly, the Brussels officials would become more aware of Russia's problems, and therefore they could start

⁴⁰ Arbatova, Ryzkov, op.cit., p. 200.

taking them into account in the decision-making process⁴². Some commentators consider the adoption of the aforementioned roadmaps to be Russia's final step towards the integration with the rest of Europe.

6. Areas of rivalry between Russia and the European Union

The Russian-EU rivalry primarily results from the dynamics of developments on the European continent. The conflict of interests between the politically developing EU and Russia – struggling to protect its former sphere of influence – seems inevitable. It is heightened by the mutual misunderstanding and differences in political values. The rivalry also stems from the lack of vision of the other side's role and the deep transformation that both actors have to cope with.

a. The shape of the European order

The rivalry between Russia and the EU follows the clash of two superpowers: one that has already failed and one that is probably emerging. The European integration so far, coupled with the EU enlargement with the former Eastern bloc states, caused a fundamental change in Russia's geostrategic position. For the first time in a few centuries a powerful actor has emerged just next to Russia. It tends to block Russia's expansion (not always intentionally) and, in a long-term perspective, it may even pose a threat of eliminating Russia from the European order. Russia has never faced a single Europe (even in Napoleon's era it allied itself with Great Britain and Sweden); it has always remained a crucial component of the European balance of power. The EU, which has no traditional strategic culture, typical for a superpower with a uniform political center, unconsciously behaves like a predator state – creating an enduring sphere of influence, based on economy. At the same time it does not leave any space or a buffer zone for Russia. The EU strength is based on the legal and economic unification of new members, rather than on its armed forces or foreign policy. From this point of view, the Union becomes a postmodern empire.

As early as in 1999, Russia provided the European Commission with a list of economic losses it would incur due the 2004 EU enlargement. The crucial issue – chiefly for prestigious reasons – became the communication between the Kaliningrad enclave and Russia. Some Russian authorities regarded this issue as a litmus test to assess the value of the Russian-EU partnership⁴³. Eventually, the European view prevailed, based on the

⁴¹ The Bologna process leads to the adoption by all European states a uniform model of education, which would simplify *inter alia* the education exchange.

⁴² Bordachev, *Is the Europeanization of Russia Over?*, op.cit., p. 91.

⁴³ Jur'jewa, *Jewropiejskaja politika...*, op.cit., pp. 795-796.

Union's law cohesion; it also proved that the Kremlin failed to understand the way the EU works. The heads of Western states are also to be blamed; Jacques Chirac, for instance, gave hope to Russia that this issue could be politically settled, not necessarily in accordance with the Union's law⁴⁴.

The aforementioned sphere of European security serves a good example of the new situation. The Union did not directly reject Russia's participation in the ESDP, but clearly demanded that Russia comply with the rules set out by the Union. On this basis, Russia can actively contribute to military actions pursued by the EU but has to comply with the same rules as other non-EU states do, i.e. with no voice. Even the areas of cooperation with Russia contained in the roadmap reflect the Union's perception of international security (manifested by the 'European Security Strategy'). It means that Russia is actually excluded from the decision-making process concerning the European security system.

b. The European Union's involvement in the post-Soviet area

Russia considers the EU as a potential center that may attract post-USSR states, which directly weakens Moscow's power to integrate the post-Soviet area. Russia is not an attractive center in political, economic or civilizational sense. The Common Economic Space, launched in 2003, serves as a good example. Ukraine's commitment to this conception has significantly declined after the government change following the Orange Revolution. Russia thought the CES to be a way of retaining its influence in key post-Soviet states (especially in Ukraine and Kazakhstan) and of strengthening its position in the international arena by the creation of a powerful economic bloc that would support Moscow. The EU is Russia's serious rival as far as economic and civilizational potential is concerned, even though it officially denies that the CIS states could join the EU. These states are aware that it is impossible to function simultaneously within two economic blocs that promote supranational integration (the CES was designed to meet these characteristics). Fears that the CIS states would accede to the EU, although the Union's political plans do not currently provide for it, are the most crucial potential reason of a dispute with the EU. The change in Russian politics is evidenced by a declining opposition against Ukraine's possible accession to NATO. The possibility of Ukraine's accession to the EU causes fears that a new iron curtain between Russia and the West could emerge⁴⁵.

Moreover, Russia considers the European Union's involvement in Ukraine or Moldova a potential intervention of the West in Russia's exclusive competencies. In 2003, the Russian

⁴⁴ Chirac's proposal was that the RF citizens traveling across Poland and Lithuania from and to Kaliningrad would not have to hold visas.

peace plan for the settlement of the crisis in Transdnestria was rejected, which in some Russian politics' view was due to the EU intervention. Russians think that Western policy in Eastern Europe is either isolationist or it aims at restraining Russia⁴⁶. However, in the EU's view, the borderland between the EU and Russia is a source of potential crises and political confrontation. Both Russia and the EU are interested in maintaining stability in their close neighborhood. Russia seems to have believed that it would maintain its dominance in the CIS region and that the EU could accept it in exchange for the stability. For instance, however, at the OSCE meeting in Maastricht in December 2003 the Union demanded that Russia fulfill its commitments (to withdraw military bases from Georgia and Moldova until the end of 2003), which showed that the Union was not going to respect the Russian sphere of influence.

Russia's policy towards Poland can be seen as a consequence of its policy towards the EU. Poland is thought to be vitally interested in establishing even closer relations between the Union and Ukraine and to be consistently supporting Ukrainian accession to the EU. Similarly, Polish actions that back up the whole Union's involvement in Byelorussian affairs are seen as posing a threat to Russian interests in the CIS. The European Neighborhood Policy is another contentious issue. Russia regards it as an introduction to extend the EU's power over this area and to link it with the EU legal and institutional network.

c. The conflict between political values of Russia and the European Union

Another reason for Russian-EU rivalry is a lack of trust in mutual relations. In the case of the EU it stems from uncertainty as to where the political and economic order of Russia will evolve. Under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, Russia declared the will to rebuild democracy and a free market economy, which was at least partly reflected in political practice. Ten years ago it seemed that Russia shared the common European values, such as human and civil rights, regionalism, etc.⁴⁷ Currently, however, the Russian government is even more openly aiming to introduce the authoritarian order, with the authorities interfering in the economic sphere, for instance, by means of a selective fiscal policy.

An ongoing evolution of Russia's political system towards increasing the competencies of the executive power at the expense of the legislative authority has provoked criticism on the part of EU bodies. At the same time, it is a consequence of the approach which Russia itself has adopted, repeatedly emphasizing that it belongs to the European

⁴⁵ Dmitri Trenin, *Russia, the EU and the common neighbourhood*, Centre for European Reform: September 2005, www.cer.org.uk.

⁴⁶ An interview with Andrei Iszczuk, 'Russia must protect its interests in the post-Soviet zone', *Vremya Novostei*, 27.05.2005, [w:] Johnson's Russia List #9161, www.cdi.org.

⁴⁷ Arbatova, Ryzkov, op.cit., p. 196.

civilization. Since the end of 2003 Western states more often judge the Russian democratization process to have been stopped or even reversed. The arrest and detention of Yukos owner Mikhail Khodorkovsky largely supported such an assessment⁴⁸.

Although individual EU states could agree a compromise with Russia as regards law and order, democracy and human rights, the European Commission and the European Parliament have adopted an essentially more principal stance. Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, is thought by Russians as 'demanding' in matters concerning the observance of democratic standards (which she announced already at the hearing in the European Parliament). The conflict in Chechnya and the Kremlin's policy therein, which reflect the conflict of values, have played a rather secondary role in mutual relations. Individual states yield to Russia's pressure, reducing their criticism of the Chechen war. The EU bodies express criticism more often, as they are less vulnerable to Russian foreign policy tools.

7. The role of cooperation with France and Germany at the background of Russia's policy towards the European Union

The consequence of closer political cooperation within the EU is that Russia is more often negotiating with a single political partner, which significantly reduces possible diplomatic maneuvers. Therefore, the relations with key EU states, particularly with France and Germany, play a crucial role in Russian policy towards the EU. Creating an 'alliance' with them has become a permanent element of Russian post-Cold War policy.

Russia's policy towards Germany has always been a crucial element of the European direction. Both states considered the mutual relations as particularly important for the overall European order, which is evidenced by a history of cooperation and conflicts with regard to primacy in Europe. The current policy has been strongly influenced by Germany's gratitude for the former USSR's consent to its reunification. This factor did not disappear along with the end of Helmut Kohl's rule; it has only evolved. Both states have shown 'proofs of being a superpower' to each other, which is to mask the fact that they have been losing their influence on the international order. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder gained support to boost the role of Germany in the international agenda⁴⁹.

Virtually nothing spoils the Russian-German relations, such as historical issues, territorial disputes, returning national art, rehabilitation of the German minority in Russia. The relations with Germany provoke no emotional reactions in Russia. Some German politicians,

⁴⁸ Carl Bildt, 'Sobytija w Rossii smutili jejo partnerow', *Rossija w globalnoj politieke*, Vol. 2, № 1, Jan-Feb 2004, pp. 64-65.

particularly from CDU/CSU, oppose pursuing a cooperation policy with Russia at the expense of other partners of Germany. Also in the case of Germany, cooperation cannot be based on common values. However, the range of common interests is wide, including a significant role of trade: the Russian-German trade amount to almost 30 billion euro. On the other hand, Germany is the fourth foreign investor as regards direct investment and the largest recipient of Russian fuels (20% of Russian exports). The project of a gas pipeline across the Baltic Sea will strengthen this mutual relationship⁵⁰. Both players' views on the international order are quite convergent, particularly as regards providing the UN with a decisive role in such issues as the UN Security Council's authorization for the use of force in the international relations

Germans think that Russia should be a part of European politics, regardless of its internal problems. Europe should help Russia create an efficient market economy. It is Russia's stability that is most important. Russia and Germany should play a decisive role in a final unification of Europe and account for a concrete base for the so-called four common spaces⁵¹. In 2005, the Russian-German relations have been intensified, with the culmination during the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the 750th anniversary of the city of Kaliningrad. President Putin repeatedly underlined the role of Russian-German cooperation for the successful developments on the European continent⁵².

A draft analysis of Russian-French relations create an impression that their level is the same as in the case of Russian relations with Germany. Summit meetings take place with the same frequency. Moreover, in 2002 Russia and France set up the Security Cooperation Council (at the level of foreign and security ministers). Military cooperation proposals include ammunition production, heavy-lift helicopter production and space cooperation⁵³.

However, the Russian-French rapprochement is a matter of tactics⁵⁴. The directions of both states' internal and external policies are not at all convergent. In the case of Russia, it is about the concentration of power and geopolitics. In the case of France, it is a multicultural society as far as internal policy is concerned, and a multicultural globalization (contrary to the

⁴⁹ *Interview of the President Vladimir Putin with German television channels ARD and ZDF, 5.05.2005, <http://president.kremlin.ru> (8.05.2005).*

⁵⁰ Katrin Bastian, Roland Götz, 'Unter Freunden? Die deutsch-russische Interessenallianz', *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, № 5/2005, p. 583.

⁵¹ Interview with William Wallis '<<Wlast' w Rossii protivostoit wsiemu, czto ona rasceniwajet daże kak potencialnoje wmiestielstwo Zapada>>', *Profil*, www.globalaffairs.ru/articles/3761.html (11.05.2005).

⁵² *Interview of the President Vladimir Putin with German television channels ARD and ZDF, 5.05.2005, <http://president.kremlin.ru> (8.05.2005).*

⁵³ 'French Agree to Military Project', *The Moscow Times*, 21.01.2005.

⁵⁴ This view was presented by Igor Tschernov, Saint-Petersburg State University, at a lecture delivered in the Institute for International Relations, Warsaw University, in May 2005.

American model of globalization). One could say that there is nothing new about the cooperation between Paris and Moscow (or St. Petersburg): in 1894, the republican France established a close military alliance with the tsarist Russia. The level of mutual relations is lower due to a lack of strong economic cooperation. France regards Russia in the first place as a geopolitical partner, who can help counterbalance the US dominance.

Russian policy towards Germany and France was to provide the Kremlin with an instrument to influence the EU policy and privileged relations with this organization. Such an approach stems from the view that mutual relations are more important than the relations with the EU as a whole and can serve as a means of cementing the divisions within the EU. What is characteristic is that Russia has held strategic talks (concerning such issues as the natural resources supplies) only with individual states, exploiting the lack of a coherent EU policy on energy security. At the same time Germany and Russia are seen as 'advocates' of Russian interests in the EU. Both these states use the privileged relations with Russia to strengthen their own position in the Union.

8. Effectiveness of Russia's policy towards the European Union so far and prospects of the Russia-EU relations (also after 2008)

Russia seems to misunderstand the change in the European order over the past quarter of century. The problem it has faced since the end of the Second World War is that it has been too weak to gain power over Europe, but also too strong to become an 'average' European superpower, like Great Britain or France.

The cooperation with the EU as a whole and support for the deepened European integration could accelerate the emergence of a partner for the Russian Federation. Russia's approach to the EU as an independent international partner is split between seeking an anti-American partner and fearing that the integrated Europe will become a dominating power on the European continent and deprive Russia of its influence in the western part of the CIS. Russia will continue to conduct the policy of dividing European states, apparently fearing that today's Union may transform into a uniform political actor. This strategy is based on the fact that the unity of the European Union makes any negotiations more difficult for Russia. Tightening political ties would mean the end of Russia's capabilities of interfering with Europe.

Russia's problem is the actual lack of a strategic vision of the European direction in its foreign policy. Russia is mostly reacting to Brussels activities. It cannot decide whether it is interested in a limited cooperation in a long-term perspective or in a future integration. The Kremlin has only declared that it does not want to join the EU. Moreover, Russia's foreign policy instruments (generally political) seem to have limitations when used towards the EU.

The Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis have failed to improve the effectiveness of the European dimension of Russian foreign policy. Moscow has neither negotiated a privileged status for the Kaliningrad region nor prevented the participation of the Union's representative in the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. Putin failed to persuade Europe that Russia has exclusive rights to Central Europe and in the CIS. In specific issues (*vide* Kaliningrad) it is Russia that more often made concessions.

As European policy became more autonomous, Russia got more concerned that the EU would transform into an independent geopolitical actor. Even the prospective weakening of the US position, following deepening trans-Atlantic disputes, does not reduce Russia's fears about the future position of the Union. Undoubtedly, the European direction of Russian policy has become more independent and less subordinated to the Russian-American relations (which was a fact after the Cold War).

Russia and the European Union will have to work out a new agreement, because the current one will expire in 2007. Russia will have to decide whether to prolong the current one (whereby some provisions have not yet entered into force or are already obsolete) or to negotiate a completely new agreement. The conflict between the external and internal Russian policy poses a serious problem. The former has already focused, to a large extent, on the cooperation with the EU; the latter is evolving in a direction that is opposite to that introduced by the EU. It creates a serious obstacle for the establishment of a true partnership and reduces the range of potential solutions to the limited cooperation⁵⁵.

Russia has repeatedly declared a strategic partnership with the EU. On such occasions a term of Great Europe emerges, which is considered by Russians as an end of Cold War divisions⁵⁶. In fact, this conception provides Russia with an equal right to shape the international order. Russia fears that a model of 'association without integration' would force it into adopting the Union's regulations, and provide no influence on decisions regarding these regulations. In this way, without membership in the Union, Russia would become a sort of the Union's colony.

Failing to pursue close integration could provide Russia with essential benefits, mainly due to good bilateral relations with individual states (such as Germany, France or Italy) and worse relations with EU bodies. Therefore, the strengthening of individual states is convenient to Moscow. However, a loose model of European integration (a Europe of different speeds) would give those states which have EU aspirations (rejected by Brussels, as in the case of Ukraine) more opportunities to tighten cooperation, which in turn would result in imposing further limitations to Russia's influence.

⁵⁵ Arbatova, Ryzkov, op.cit., p. 197.

A decreasing share in the world GDP coupled with a demographic crisis can limit Russia's self-dependance as a geopolitical center. If present trends remain unchanged, within 20 years Russia will cease to be a self-dependent center of power and will have to join the stronger party, the European Union being the best choice. China and the US are out of the question, since Russia could be nothing but a 'younger brother' of these states. The united and at the same time flexible Europe, providing much economic freedom and little supranational component, could be a form of cooperation to which Russia could aspire in the future⁵⁷. The Russian perception allows for two basic models: quasi-federation or an alliance with a common law, currency and values. Some Russian political scientists fear that within 15-25 years Russia will not be able to act in the international order as an independent partner. In this case, the EU membership, though impossible within the following decade, could be a way to retain, at least partly, the position of a superpower.

⁵⁶ See for instance: *Opening address at the Russia-European Union Summit*, Moscow, 10.05.2005, <http://president.kremlin.ru> (11.05.2005).

⁵⁷ *Russia should exploit failure of European constitution*, RIA Novosti, 17.06.2005.

Center for International Relations

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The president of the Center for International Relations is Mr Eugeniusz Smolar.

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A number of projects implemented by the Center have been sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland and Ministry of Defence.

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