DEBATER
A EUROPA

18

jan-jun 2018

RELAÇÕES EXTERNAS DA UNIÃO EUROPEIA A LESTE

EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TOWARDS THE EAST

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EDIÇÃO
Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra
Email: imprensa@uc.pt
URL: http://www.uc.pt/imprensa_uc
Vendas online: http://livrariadaimprensa.uc.pt

INFOGRAFIA
Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra

ISSN Digital
1647-6336

DOI
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18

HTTPS://IMPACTUM.UC.PT/PT-PT/REVISTA?ID=103172&SEC=5
HTTP://DEBATEREUROPA.EUROPE-DIRECT-AVEIRO.AEVA.EU/

JANEIRO, 2018

CENTRO DE ESTUDOS INTERDISCIPLINARES DO SÉCULO XX
DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA – CEIS20-UC

CENTRO DE INFORMAÇÃO EUROPE DIRECT DE AVEIRO

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18

Relações Externas da União Europeia a Leste: nota introdutória

Este número especial da Revista *Debater a Europa* é dedicado às relações externas da União Europeia (UE) com destaque para as relações da UE com a Rússia e com os estados da Parceria Oriental. Num contexto de rivalidade sem precedente após o final da Guerra Fria entre a UE e a Rússia, cujas implicações na área de vizinhança partilhada entre estes dois atores são muito claras, impõe-se analisar estas relações de modo a melhor compreender como chegamos à situação atual e podermos então refletir sobre como avançar numa lógica mais construtiva. O desafio de organizar este número especial surge no contexto dos trabalhos que estou a desenvolver no âmbito da Cátedra Jean Monnet[1], e constitui um momento de reflexão importante sobre as relações externas da UE num momento particularmente desafiador do processo de construção europeia. Agradeço o convite aos editores da Revista e deixo um agradecimento muito particular aos autores que se associaram a esta iniciativa permitindo dar-lhe forma e substância.

Maria Raquel Freire

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[1] Cátedra Jean Monnet *EU External Relations towards the East* (2016-1677/001-001) desenvolvida no quadro do programa Erasmus+ da União Europeia. As visões expressas são dos autores não sendo atribuída qualquer responsabilidade pelas mesmas à Comissão Europeia.

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_1

Introdução: Rússia, União Europeia e espaço de vizinhança – políticas e práticas em análise

Introduction: Russia, European Union and the neighbourhood – politics and practices

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Resumo

Este artigo serve de breve introdução ao número especial da Revista *Debater a Europa* dedicado ao estudo das relações externas da União Europeia com especial ênfase a leste, nomeadamente nas relações com a Federação Russa e com os estados da Parceria Oriental. O artigo contextualiza e mapeia a temática de acordo com os contributos vários que reúne, e que remetem num primeiro momento para a análise da concetualização da ordem internacional pós-Guerra Fria e como os entendimentos desta e do posicionamento dos diferentes atores na mesma ajudam a compreender dinâmicas de cooperação e rivalidade; e num segundo momento analisa estudos de caso que ilustram estas dinâmicas com enfoque na Parceria Oriental através dos estudos sobre a Ucrânia e o Cáucaso do Sul, bem como com o contributo sobre os três estados do Báltico, estados-membros da UE.

Palavras-chave: União Europeia, Rússia, Parceria Oriental, ordem internacional pós-Guerra Fria, rivalidade

Abstract

This brief introduction to the special issue of *Debater a Europa* is dedicated to the study of the European Union's external relations towards the East, focusing on the Russian Federation and the Eastern Partnership. The article contextualizes and maps the topic following the contributions this special issue brings together. In a first moment, the articles contribute to the analysis of the post-Cold War international order and how different understandings about this order assist in shedding light over dynamics of cooperation and rivalry. In a second moment, the contributions analyse case studies that illustrate these dynamics with a focus on the Eastern Partnership, namely the contributions on Ukraine and the South Caucasus, as well as the article on the three EU Baltic countries.

Keywords: European Union, Russia, Eastern Partnership, post-Cold War International order, rivalry

Introdução

Este número temático da Revista *Debater a Europa* visa contribuir para os estudos sobre as relações União Europeia (UE)-Rússia, focando em particular numa perspetiva política e de segurança. Num contexto de grandes desafios que estes dois grandes atores enfrentam, quer a nível interno quer nas relações internacionais, e face à perspetiva de concretização do acordo de saída do Reino Unido da UE e às eleições presidenciais na Rússia que terão lugar em março de 2018, parece-nos este um momento adequado para refletir sobre o estado desta relação. Após mais de duas décadas volvidas desde o final da Guerra Fria, e apesar dos acordos assinados e dos avanços políticos alcançados, muitos são os obstáculos a uma relação de confiança solidamente assente em princípios e objetivos partilhados. A crise na Ucrânia e a consequente anexação da Crimeia acabou por ilustrar de uma forma muito negativa os problemas inerentes a uma relação difícil.

Por um lado, temos uma UE que enfrenta o *Brexit* e cujo alcance da transformação implicada com a saída do Reino Unido não é de todo claro; que está ainda a braços com a crise dos refugiados e migrantes que tem envolvido enorme pressão sobre os governos nacionais e as instituições em Bruxelas, bem como nas relações com estados vizinhos, como a Turquia ou a Líbia, em particular; e que observa governos de orientação conservadora e mesmo de extrema-direita a ganhar terreno, nem sempre respeitando os princípios democráticos consolidados ao longo do próprio processo de construção da União.

Por outro lado, temos uma Rússia que recupera lentamente de uma crise económica e financeira grave, que se prepara para eleições presidenciais, e que se tem vindo a assumir na cena internacional como um ator mais interventivo e agressivo na prossecução dos seus objetivos, particularmente no que toca questões de interesse nacional, como as tradicionais dinâmicas no espaço pós-soviético e questões envolvendo minorias russas. Nas suas relações bilaterais, estes dois atores têm de lidar com constrangimentos internos às suas realidades, bem como com um contexto desfavorável, onde a anexação da Crimeia marca claramente um ponto de viragem cujas consequências são bem visíveis. A heterogeneidade do espaço pós-soviético e das opções políticas que os governos na área têm feito vem adicionar às leituras díspares que a UE e a Rússia fazem deste espaço. Além do mais, a administração Trump nos Estados Unidos e a política errática para a Rússia, não são facilitadoras de relações já de si tensas. Na Ásia, uma China mais presente não só em termos económicos, mas também em matéria política, é também um elemento importante nesta ordem internacional em mudança. Neste quadro de grandes diferenciais, a diplomacia na Europa está bloqueada na sequência da anexação da Crimeia (mesmo que a níveis intermédios os contatos permaneçam, as relações entre a UE e a Rússia estão longe de normalizadas). E um historial que já vinha sendo difícil parece não dar lugar a cenários otimistas.

1. Que ordem internacional?

Os entendimentos sobre o ordenamento internacional e a segurança europeia são distintos. Apesar de quer a Rússia quer a UE serem favoráveis a uma ordem multipolar – policêntrica na terminologia russa –, o entendimento desta é diferenciado. Para a UE envolve o reconhecimento de que os Estados Unidos continuam a ser o parceiro forte no sistema internacional, onde a China se vai procurando afirmar, especialmente em termos económicos. Para a Rússia, os Estados Unidos já não são a potência hegemónica e o policentrismo deve implicar maior igualdade no sistema. As relações com a China não são lineares, mas têm servido de contrapeso ao ocidente. O próprio formato BRICS[1] é revelador desta vontade de maior igualdade e reconhecimento desta, num sistema internacional assimétrico.

O discurso sobre uma ordem inclusiva é também partilhado entre estes dois atores, mas uma vez mais a dimensão normativa tropeça em interpretações distintas. Para a UE um sistema inclusivo reflete-se nas suas políticas e práticas para com os seus vizinhos, para com os seus parceiros estratégicos, para com os países em desenvolvimento, para com atores não-governamentais com quem estabelece relações com base em acordos e instrumentos vários, e ao qual está subjacente a promoção de uma ordem internacional liberal, nas suas configurações políticas e económicas. Para a Rússia, um sistema internacional inclusivo significa igualitário e justo, num alinhamento de participação alargada dos atores nas grandes decisões e instituições internacionais – o Conselho de Segurança é aqui um exemplo, mas instituições como o Banco Mundial ou o Fundo Monetário Internacional são aqui também identificados como personificando esta ordem internacional liberal que se torna excludente. As relações Sul-Sul e o maior espaço reclamado para países em desenvolvimento ou emergentes, como os próprios BRICS se definem, são aqui centrais.

Neste mesmo alinhamento, o entendimento de segurança reflete ideais partilhados de paz e estabilidade, mas define-se por parâmetros e projetos securitários diferentes. A UE é na sua génese uma organização que visa a paz – a sua formação teve por base evitar um novo conflito violento na Europa à escala do que havia sido a Segunda Guerra Mundial. Construindo um projeto económico que gradualmente ganha contornos políticos e de segurança, a UE surge no sistema internacional também como um ator de segurança.

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[1] Brasil, Rússia, Índia, China e África do Sul.

A Estratégia Europeia de Segurança publicada em 2003 é ilustrativa, e à mesma se seguiram documentos e declarações que foram conferindo substância a esta dimensão do projeto europeu. Também por isto, a sua preocupação com uma vizinhança estável e próspera ficou patente na formulação da Política de Vizinhança como uma política ampla, que será uns anos mais tarde explicitada nas suas dimensões leste e sul. Contudo, se a preocupação com os conflitos prolongados no espaço pós-soviético, em particular, está na agenda, a atuação da União tem sido muito limitada no seu papel de mediador ou enquanto interveniente ativo nestes. De facto, os seus mandatos têm sido limitados e o seu envolvimento reduzido. Mas isto não invalida uma participação dinâmica em vários cenários através de missões, sejam estas de cariz civil ou militar, e incluindo também o espaço pós-soviético. A Missão de Monitorização na Geórgia, é um exemplo. Paralelamente a UE desenvolve projetos direcionados para práticas de democratização, apoio ao desenvolvimento institucional e de estado de direito, que visam uma aproximação de procedimentos que facilite dinâmicas reformistas, e eventualmente integração informal entre a UE e os estados parceiros.

Deste modo, nas suas relações externas a UE beneficia de um conjunto de princípios normativos que informam as suas políticas e práticas. Mas é fundamental perceber que a Rússia, enquanto partilhando desta mesma vizinhança, define também políticas e práticas para esta área, que por sua vez é composta por um conjunto de países muito diferentes entre si. Muitas vezes a interseção de visões divergentes é notada, contudo foi na Ucrânia que a colisão de dois projetos assentes em visões distintas e mutuamente exclusivas se tornou visível, nomeadamente na proposta do acordo de associação e de uma área de comércio livre que a UE avançou, e a proposta de adesão à União Económica Euroasiática vinda da Rússia. Estas propostas colocaram a Ucrânia numa posição difícil, forçando-a a fazer uma opção, o que acabou por gerar instabilidade que escalou para violência. Sem entrar nos detalhes da crise na Ucrânia, importa aqui reter o modo como esta crise ilustra a existência de problemas estruturais nas relações entre Bruxelas e Moscovo. A incapacidade de ultrapassar o diferencial, materializado em sanções políticas e económicas é testemunho da necessidade de repensar as fundações desta relação.

2. Relações UE-Rússia: guia de leitura

Neste número especial analisamos as relações da UE com a Rússia e com a vizinhança no formato da Parceria Oriental.[2] Os contributos convergem numa leitura de que estamos perante uma ordem europeia que se foi desenhando de forma assimétrica no período pós-Guerra Fria, e cujo desenho não está ainda terminado. Muitos dos objetivos inicialmente delineados, ainda num contexto de euforia num sentido de integração alargada na

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[2] Os países membros da Parceria Oriental, estabelecida em 2009, são a Arménia, Azerbaijão, Bielorrússia, Geórgia, Moldova e Ucrânia.

Europa sem os muros da Guerra Fria, rapidamente ficaram esquecidos. E hoje vivemos um contexto de tensão e rivalidade sem precedentes desde então. É neste contexto que os contributos para este número especial se inserem.

Numa primeira parte, os textos discutem a concetualização da ordem internacional pós-Guerra Fria e o que esta significa para a UE e a para a Rússia. O texto de Tom Casier revisita as políticas de Mikhail Gorbachev, e em particular o conceito de "casa comum europeia" então marcando um otimismo que parecia abrir novos caminhos políticos. O artigo revisita o conceito e o modo como este foi central à reforma radical da política externa russa encetada por Gorbachev, identificando alterações no discurso político e comparando a concetualização de Europa e o posicionamento russo face à mesma, nos vários Conceitos de Política Externa russos. O autor argumenta que apesar de um contexto muito diferente, alguns dos princípios presentes no então ideário de Gorbachev se encontram ainda hoje plasmados na política externa russa. Quando o então líder soviético enceta um conjunto de reformas profundas que entendia como muito necessárias à manutenção da União das Repúblicas Socialistas Soviéticas (URSS), e que passava por uma política de maior abertura e aproximação ao ocidente, aspirava a um espaço unificado europeu, onde a diversidade seria parte da unidade. O objetivo subjacente na política externa russa de maior aproximação às instituições europeias ocidentais visava uma lógica de inclusão e de partilha de valores e princípios comuns na base da tradição europeia. Contudo, a "casa comum europeia" revelou-se labiríntica e com vários pisos de difícil acesso. Rapidamente se tornou claro que esta estratégia não traria a diversidade visada, mas como o artigo sublinha nem todas as ideias aí veiculadas foram perdidas.

No artigo que se segue, Richard Sakwa analisa a evolução da ordem internacional pós-Guerra Fria e como esta se transformou gradualmente numa ordem que plasma os princípios liberais ocidentais. De forma mais concreta o autor refere-se a um tipo de paz monista que se assumiu como definidora da nova ordem e que acabou por ser imposta e liderada pelas estruturas ocidentais. Esta paz monista revelava-se quer a nível institucional quer ideacional, ou seja, na permanência da Aliança Atlântica, por exemplo, e dos princípios normativos do liberalismo ocidental, e criou uma ordem hermeticamente fechada a crítica. Esta configuração levou a um sentimento de exclusão por parte da Rússia, que permanece hoje bem claro no discurso russo. O autor argumenta que neste processo a Rússia se tornou subalterna, uma realidade com a qual sempre teve dificuldade em lidar. Na dinâmica de construção da ordem pós-Guerra Fria, fragilizada segundo Sakwa por esta lógica excludente, acabou por se gerar um ciclo de rivalidade que, associado a perceções de ameaça, contribuiu para a situação atual de confrontação nas relações da Rússia com o ocidente.

Para Roger E. Kanet parte da explicação para a situação difícil nas relações UE-Rússia prende-se com as visões sobre a Europa e o futuro da mesma, elaborando uma análise centrada nos atores e contextos. Estas visões radicam, segundo o autor, em projetos políticos divergentes, com uma vontade expressa de Moscovo de reconstruir a *greater Russia*, a não coincidir com o objetivo da UE de se rodear de estados democráticos. Nesta leitura da ordem internacional, o confronto na área de vizinhança partilhada torna-se inevitável. Ambos estes atores traduzem nas suas políticas para esta área os pressupostos em que as suas visões assentam, o que leva inevitavelmente a uma colisão de projetos. A política externa russa fortalecida economicamente na década de 2000 devido aos preços favoráveis do gás e petróleo, permitiu-se desenvolver uma diplomacia mais coerciva, que incluiu mesmo intervenção militar no avanço dos seus objetivos. Paralelamente, a Rússia tem vindo a entender as políticas da UE para a vizinhança como interferência numa área que considera de interesse estratégico e como um desafio direto aos interesses, políticas e visão da Rússia para este espaço parte da Europa alargada. O resultado tem sido de confrontação entre as partes, com a Rússia a desafiar a própria natureza do sistema liberal internacional definido pelo ocidente, donde o autor realça também que o papel dos Estados Unidos nesta construção de rivalidade é fundamental.

Estes três primeiros artigos lidam com as dinâmicas inerentes ao processo de transformação da ordem internacional pós-Guerra Fria, e como de um momento de ilusão de que poderíamos estar perante o desenho de uma ordem inclusiva e cooperativa, rapidamente se passou para uma lógica de competição. Os princípios democráticos liberais ocidentais que marcaram a ordem pós Segunda Guerra Mundial são renovados na ordem pós-Guerra Fria. E esta ordem é contestada pela Rússia. Não apenas pelos seus princípios orientadores, mas também pelo modo como a consolidação de uma ordem assente em estruturas ocidentais acaba por excluí-la, com a segurança europeia a marcar de forma muito clara a agenda de contestação (a questão do alargamento da Aliança Atlântica é referida na Doutrina Militar Russa como uma ameaça externa à sua segurança). Esta contestação é visível na forma como o seu discurso de política externa se desenvolveu e evoluiu, no modo como a sua diplomacia se ajusta a contextos entendidos como desfavoráveis, e na crítica a um monismo ocidental excludente.

Numa segunda parte, este número especial olha para o espaço geográfico que é a Europa alargada e procura concretizar algumas das dinâmicas discutidas anteriormente através da análise de estudos de caso. A partir de três casos diferentes, os autores estudam as relações entre a Rússia e a UE e o modo como estas evoluíram para o contexto de tensão atual. No seu texto, Vanda Amaro Dias parte da questão ucraniana para perceber a conjugação de poder e segurança na Europa alargada, numa lógica de indissociabilidade de dinâmicas internas e externas na compreensão destes vetores. A autora argumenta que a crise na Ucrânia, vista numa perspetiva internacional, é resultado de projetos e políticas antagónicas e mutuamente exclusivas para a vizinhança contestada entre a UE e a Rússia, demonstrando a rivalidade entre ambas por poder e segurança no plano regional. Esta é uma dinâmica que se vem desenvolvendo desde a primeira década pós-Guerra Fria e que traduz o entendimento de que segurança no nosso espaço implica segurança no espaço da nossa vizinhança. Ao mesmo tempo, maior projeção de influência neste espaço contíguo reflete dinâmicas de poder que mais facilmente permitirão a estes dois gigantes definir políticas e práticas próximas às suas, com base em lógicas de proximidade política. A autora argumenta assim que a crise na Ucrânia se revela simultaneamente como resultado e catalisador de dinâmicas de poder e de leituras diferenciadas de segurança entre a UE, a Rússia e o espaço da vizinhança, tornado este um triângulo complexo nas suas interações.

Licínia Simão analisa no seu contributo as relações da UE com os países do Cáucaso do Sul – Arménia, Azerbaijão e Geórgia – no âmbito da Política Europeia de Vizinhança. A autora argumenta que os conflitos prolongados que permanecem na região e onde o envolvimento da Rússia é um elemento fundamental, têm demonstrado os limites de atuação da UE ao nível da gestão de conflitos. Os contextos nos três estados do Cáucaso do Sul são diferenciados e os percursos também, pelo que a análise percorre as especificidades inerentes a cada um destes estados nestes processos de relação com a UE face aos desencontros na interação entre a exportação dos modelos de governação e normas europeias e as ambições geopolíticas e de segurança da União, tornando complexo o relacionamento com estes atores. As políticas e dimensão normativa, e os interesses e dimensão geopolítica subjacentes à Parceria Oriental surgem assim como centrais a esta análise. Neste sentido, uma abordagem onde a dimensão política do modelo de estabilização regional da UE seja claramente assumida surge como uma recomendação que eventualmente venha a possibilitar uma ação mais clara da UE na transformação positiva dos conflitos armados na região.

Sandra Fernandes e Daniel Correia tratam as relações entre a UE e a Rússia no contexto do e pós-alargamento da União de 2004, que trouxe para a União os três estados do Báltico, nomeadamente a Estónia, Letónia e Lituânia. O artigo analisa de que modo estes três estados se têm posicionado no quadro relacional UE-Rússia, donde a sua localização de fronteira se tem revelado como um elemento fundamental nos seus alinhamentos políticos e de segurança. O artigo argumenta que as políticas destes estados face à Rússia têm sido marcadas por uma crescente perceção de ameaça, notada quer ao nível do discurso quer das práticas. As ações da Rússia na Geórgia em 2008 ou a crise na Ucrânia que se intensifica em 2014 com a anexação da Crimeia, ou ainda os relatórios de ingerência russa em políticas nacionais, incluindo através de meios digitais ou do uso de meios aéreos e outros, têm claramente contribuído para estas leituras. Centrando-se nos discursos, na formação identitária através de estratégias de definição do 'outro' e em questões de mudança política, os autores argumentam que um processo de (re)securitização está a ter lugar após um período de securitização 'leve' que se seguiu à entrada destes três estados na UE. Isto significa que as relações assumem cada vez mais um caráter de emergência securitária. Para este efeito a análise é temporalmente limitada aos processos de securitização nas três repúblicas e como estes evoluíram após 2004 e 2014, em comparação com o período anterior após a independência em 1991.

Os contributos desta segunda parte, ao recorrerem a estudos de caso concretos informam a análise das relações UE-Rússia de modo complementar aos textos que compõem a primeira parte deste número especial. Os autores concorrem numa análise pouco otimista das relações entre a UE e a Rússia em diferentes dimensões, o que é revelador do nível de tensão e rivalidade sem precedentes que atravessamos nos tempos atuais. A anexação da Crimeia e a instabilidade e violência continuada no leste da Ucrânia contribuem desfavoravelmente para qualquer avanço. De facto, apesar de a UE não ter sido um negociador dos Acordos de Minsk, associou-se aos seus resultados e à implementação dos princípios acordados para o levantamento das sanções políticas e económicas impostas à Rússia. Isto significa que a gestão da violência na Ucrânia e uma solução política para a questão a leste são fundamentais para descongelar as relações UE-Rússia e se poder pensar num novo formato que melhor possa enquadrar esta relação simultaneamente tão relevante e tão complexa.

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_2

Gorbachev's 'Common European Home' and its relevance for Russian foreign policy today

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Abstract:

At the end of the 1980s the Soviet Union's last leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, launched the idea of a 'Common European Home'. It was part of his campaign for New Political Thinking in foreign policy, which aimed to deideologise the Soviet approach to international affairs, and positioned the country firmly within a European political community and civilisation. While the concept Common European Home has faded away with the Soviet Union, many of its supporting ideas resonate in Russia's foreign policy discourse under Putin. Four similarities stand out: the preference for a multipolar Europe without dividing lines, indivisible and collective pan-European security, free trade from Lisbon to Vladivostok and intra-European relations founded on international law. But some fundamental characteristics have changed. First, the context of Russian-European relations has altered substantially and many ideas are now used in an antagonistic context, to reject Euro-Atlantic hegemony. Even if the wording often remains similar, the emphasis is now on Russia's sovereign and independent path. Secondly, the core idea of a unified European civilisation has been replaced by the notion of competition between civilisations. Hereby Russia claims to represent genuine European values, giving the latter a strongly conservative interpretation. Finally, the Eurasian turn in Russian foreign policy has undermined the centrality of Europe in its discourse. Rather than envisaging a collaborative Europe, Russian and EU integration initiatives are seen as rivalling. This evolution of Russia's vision on Europe did not change abruptly with Putin's ascent to power but built up gradually in the decade before the Ukraine crisis, against a background of escalating tensions and growing distrust.

Keywords: Gorbachev, 'Common European Home', New Political Thinking, Putin, Russia, European Union

> “Victor Hugo said that the day would come when you, France, you, Russia, you, Italy, you, England, you Germany — all of you, all the nations of the continent — will, without losing your distinguishing features and your splendid distinctiveness, merge inseparably into some high society and form a European brotherhood (…). The day would come when the only battlefield would be markets open for trade and minds open to ideas.”
> (Mikhail Gorbachev, 1989)

Introduction

In the late 1980s Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev made the headlines launching the concept ‘Common European Home’, a metaphor for a unified pan-European space, in which West and East would cooperate while maintaining their diversity. What is the relevance of this concept for today’s Russian foreign policy discourse? Which lessons can be drawn for contemporary pan-European relations? Since tensions culminated into the Ukraine crisis (Haukkala, 2015), relations between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community have found themselves in the deepest crisis since the end of the Soviet Union. The idea of a Common European Home, an architecture for pan-European security and cooperation based on a balance of interests and common values, seems further than ever. Yet, it makes sense to revisit the concept. Many ideas behind this vaguely defined term have continued to appear in later Russian foreign policy rhetoric. However, as will be argued in this article, the context has changed substantially and with it the meaning that is given to these ideas.

The article starts by revisiting Gorbachev’s concept of Common European Home and situates it in his radical reform of Soviet foreign policy. After that, similarities and differences are explored between this concept and Russia’s European policy under Putin. The emphasis is on the change of foreign policy discourse and relies on a comparative analysis of the conceptualisation of Europe – and Russia’s relative position to it – in various Foreign Policy Concepts of the Russian Federation.

1. Revisiting Gorbachev’s ‘Common European Home’

1.1. New Political Thinking

Gorbachev’s reform policy in the second half of the 1980s was sustained by three different pillars. Two of them still resonate in most languages: *glasnost* and *perestroyka*. The first refers to the Soviet leader’s campaign to create openness and later on democratisation. The second refers to a policy of restructuring, first hesitant economic reforms, later on drastic liberal reforms. The third pillar does not resonate as strongly, in lack of a simple Russian catchword, but was probably the most important of all: New Political Thinking. It was in the field of foreign policy and international relations that the USSR underwent its most spectacular change, leading to a reversal of the Soviet foreign policy doctrine and a far reaching de-ideologisation. Within this broad framework Gorbachev used the concept of ‘Common European Home’, a symbolically powerful term – bordering on utopian – rather than a detailed blueprint for a new pan-European order.

Until Gorbachev’s reforms, Soviet foreign policy had been framed in strong ideological terms. It was dominated by the ‘two camp doctrine’, dating back to the early Soviet years, regarding the world as “definitely and irrevocably split into two camps: the camp of imperialism and the camp of socialism … [and the struggle between them] … constitutes the hub of present-day affairs, determines the whole substance of the present home and foreign policies of the leaders of the old and the new world” (Stalin quoted in Kubálková and Cruickshank, 2015). This doctrine was a projection of the class struggle onto the international level. In the same way as the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie was inevitable, the struggle between capitalism and socialism was unavoidable. Along the same pattern socialism would in the end be victorious. Later on, in particular during the détente, this view was nuanced to that of ‘peaceful coexistence’ between both camps. Rather than overruling the idea of an inevitable struggle, it took it to a new level, that of competition in various domains, including ideological, economic and cultural.

The New Political Thinking of the second half of the 1980s constituted a radical break with this ideological approach. It was built on three assumptions about international relations. First, the world had become increasingly interdependent. Secondly, global problems forced all countries to cooperate. This cooperation had become a matter of survival, because of the threat of nuclear annihilation and common ecological threats. Thirdly, war between capitalist countries was no longer seen as inevitable. Capitalist economies could develop without militarisation and development could be reached through disarmament. As a result, the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism needed to be adjusted.

On this basis Gorbachev developed a radically new view of international relations in which ‘human values’ and the survival of mankind had absolute priority. International cooperation (not just peaceful coexistence) was to replace the two camp vision. Finally, there was a need for a system of universal security. In terms of military doctrine this was translated into the principle of “reasonable sufficiency” of military capabilities and “defensive defence” (Gorbachev, 1988). Many of these ideas were developed in his speeches and writings, mainly his book *Perestroyka* (Gorbachev, 1987). The rupture with the traditional ideological framing of foreign policy could hardly be bigger. With the change of emphasis from class to humanitarianism, there is no field in which we witnessed a more “dramatic deleninisation” (Sakwa, 1990, p. 322) than in foreign policy. But the New Political Thinking went well beyond words and was translated into unseen diplomatic demarches, such as the far reaching unilateral disarmament the Soviet leader proposed in his speech at the United Nations in 1988 (Gorbachev, 1988). Gorbachev also stressed the need to democratise international relations and the right of any state to make sovereign choices. The latter would lead to no less than the burial of the Brezhnev doctrine, which had served to justify military intervention in socialist countries where socialism was 'threatened'. Tongue-in-cheek the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Gerasimov, stated that the Brezhnev doctrine was replaced by the Sinatra doctrine: as in Frank Sinatra's song 'I did it my way' the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe had the right to do it their own way (Kull, 1992, pp. 139-140). This message was not misunderstood in countries like Poland, where the governments started round table talks with the opposition, or in Hungary, where the authorities dismantled the iron curtain. Both events set into motion the radical changes of 1989 and the eventual collapse of the communist regimes in the satellite states.

1.2. The European Common Home

It is within this context that Gorbachev's proposal for a Common European Home needs to be situated. The term is mostly associated with his address to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in 1989 (Gorbachev 1989), which was entirely devoted to this theme. Yet, he used the term earlier and even prior to becoming Secretary-General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), in a speech in London in 1984 (Rey, 2004, p. 34).[1] Over time the concept developed from an image and a metaphor to a proposal for a pan-European architecture. Yet, it never took the form of a detailed blueprint and "lacked substance" (Sakwa, 2014, p. 252). Like New Political Thinking it reflects the ambition to deideologise international politics (Kull, 1992) and is profoundly idealistic (Rey, 2004, p. 39).

In Strasbourg Gorbachev stated:

> … Europeans can meet the challenges of the coming century only by pooling their efforts. We are convinced that what they need is one Europe — peaceful and democratic, a Europe that maintains all its diversity and common humanistic ideas, a prosperous Europe that extends its hand to the rest of the world. A Europe that confidently advances into the future. It is in such a Europe that we visualise our own future. (Gorbachev, 1989)

The commitment to Europe was in the first place a pro-European stance, a confirmation of the Soviet Union as a European country. "The idea of a Common European Home as presented by Gorbachev may have lacked substance, but it reflected the powerful aspiration of the Soviet leader for his country to join the European political mainstream as part of a shared civilisation and political community" (Sakwa, 2014, p. 252). It was a plea for a united, peaceful, integrated European continent.

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[1] Rey also notes that the term 'Common European Home' has earlier been used by Gromyko in 1972 and Brezhnev in 1981 (Rey, 2004, p. 34).

At the heart of the concept of Common European Home is “a restructuring of the international order existing in Europe that would put the European common values in the forefront and make it possible to replace the traditional balance of forces with a balance of interests” (Gorbachev, 1989). It is a house with several rooms, representing heterogeneity. Unity in diversity is key (Kull, 1992, pp. 146-147). It represents a multipolar, pluralistic vision of Europe, without centre of power (Sakwa, 2014, p. 27).

As stated, the Common European Home concept was all but a blueprint for the aspired pan-European order, but at some instances Gorbachev got into more detail. The house can be represented as consisting of four different levels (Rey, 2004, on the basis of three speeches by Gorbachev). The Helsinki geopolitical order (including the recognition of borders) formed the foundations of the house. The first level was based on collective security and maximal disarmament. In the longer term it provided for the disappearance of alliances, which was later reframed as their transformation “into political organizations that could actively contribute to the rapprochement” (Rey, 2004, p. 40). The second level represented the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the third economic and trade cooperation and the fourth a European cultural community.

In his Strasbourg speech, Gorbachev used a somewhat different metaphor, calling security the foundation of a common European home and “all-round cooperation … its bearing frame” (Gorbachev, 1989). He also suggested that the Common European Home should be thought of “as a community rooted in law” (Gorbachev, 1989). Further, he added ecological, humanitarian, cultural and economic dimensions. As to the latter he called for “the emergence of a vast economic space from the Atlantic to the Urals where Eastern and Western parts would be strongly interlocked” (Gorbachev, 1989). The US and Canada were not part of the Common European Home, but were seen as “fully associated with the project” (Rey, 2004, p. 39). The latter broke with the traditional Soviet ambition to decouple the US and Western Europe (Rey, 2004, p. 37), which would have made the project an easy target for Western critique.

The political translation of Gorbachev’s idea of a Common European Home has been rather weak, despite the fact that it evolved from an image for public diplomacy purposes to more specific proposals to establish a pan-European political organisation and despite the increasingly positive reception in France and Germany. The rapid developments from 1989 to 1991 overtook Gorbachev’s plans. In 1989 regimes changed in Central and Eastern Europe. Post-communist regimes sought membership of NATO and steered towards a rupture with the Soviet Union, rather than aspiring to occupy one of the rooms in the Common European Home. NATO would thus be reinforced rather than dissolved or transformed, as hoped for, while simultaneously the Warsaw Pact crumbled. On top of that, the question of German unification dominated the agenda, leading to disagreements over whether there should be two German rooms in the European house and later whether a united Germany could be a NATO member. On top of that, Gorbachev’s reforms ran into disarray, facing both demands for more drastic change and increasing internal opposition, eventually throwing the USSR into instability in 1991.

Arguably the CSCE 'Charter of Paris for a New Europe' of 1990 reflects some of the ideas of a Common European Home most closely. The preamble stated:

> Europe is liberating itself from the legacy of the past. The courage of men and women, the strength of the will of the peoples and the power of the ideas of the Helsinki Final Act have opened a new era of democracy, peace and unity in Europe. Ours is a time for fulfilling the hopes and expectations our peoples have cherished for decades: steadfast commitment to democracy based on human rights and fundamental freedoms; prosperity through economic liberty and social justice; and equal security for all our countries. (Charter of Paris, 1990)

The charter breathes a spirit of cooperation and unity of Europe. Like the Common European Home project, it went beyond the Helsinki Final Act's ambition of peaceful coexistence, calling for a substantial cooperation. Equally like the Common European Home idea, the Charter remained rather vague. Its real political impact was quickly overshadowed by the bigger items on the agenda: the eastward extension of existing Euro-Atlantic international structures, NATO and the EU. Moreover, the Charter confirmed the participation of the US and Canada as fundamental, not as simply associated as Soviet foreign policy wanted it.

2. The Significance of the Common European Home for Russian Foreign Policy Today

Fast forward from the Gorbachev years to the 25th anniversary of the collapse of the Berlin wall. In the aftermath of the eruption of the Ukraine crisis, earlier in 2014, the architect of the Common European Home held a gloomy speech about the advent of a "new Cold War" and blamed it on Western triumphalism:

> The end of the Cold War was just the beginning of the path towards a new Europe and a safer world order. But, instead of building new mechanisms and institutions of European security and pursuing a major demilitarization of European politics – as promised, incidentally, in NATO's London Declaration – the West, and particularly the United States, declared victory in the Cold War. Euphoria and triumphalism went to the heads of Western leaders. Taking advantage of Russia's weakening and the lack of a counterweight, they claimed monopoly leadership and domination in the world, refusing to heed words of caution from many of those present here. The events of the past few months [related to the Ukraine crisis] are consequences of short-sighted policies, of seeking to impose one's will and faits accomplis while ignoring the interests of one's partners. … To put it metaphorically, a blister has now turned into a bloody, festering wound. … And who

> is suffering the most from what's happening? I think the answer is more than clear: It is Europe, our common home. Instead of becoming a leader of change in a global world, Europe has turned into an arena of political upheaval, of competition for spheres of influence and, finally, of military conflict. (Gorbachev, 2014)

In this context, what is the significance of the Common European Home for Russia's foreign policy discourse on Europe today? To what extent have elements been retained? Despite the disappearance of the concept itself, quite some terms are strikingly similar. But it goes without saying that there are also substantial differences. The next sections compare Russian foreign policy rhetoric under Putin with that of the Common European Home. On the basis of the Foreign Policy Concepts and other central documents it lists similarities and differences. Self-evidently the selection is not exhaustive.

3. Constant ideas

In the Russian Foreign Policy Concept of 2008 – more than 8 years after Putin's ascent to power – it is stated: "Russia calls for building a truly unified Europe without divisive lines through equal interaction between Russia, the European Union and the United States" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2008, p. 20). The phrasing is very similar to that of Gorbachev. But also when we look at some specifics, there are more matches than one would expect. Four in particular need to be mentioned: multipolar Europe, indivisible security, pan-European free trade and a legal basis for intra-European relations.

3.1. Multipolar Europe

The idea of a multipolar European continent has been a constant factor in Russian post-communist foreign policy. The idea that the Russian Federation would be one of the key players in a new Europe went hand in hand with the ambition to regain status after the crumbling of the Soviet Union. Richard Sakwa describes the Russian post-Cold War project as 'Greater Europe'. It is "a vision of a continental Europe, stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok, that has multiple centres, including Brussels, Moscow and Ankara, but with a common purpose in overcoming the divisions that have traditionally plagued the continent" (Sakwa, 2014, p. 27). The similarities with Gorbachev's view of a European continent, united in diversity, consisting of different centres of power stand out. The Greater Europe view is diametrically opposed to the 'Wider Europe' project of the Euro-Atlantic community, seeking to reinforce and extend existing 'western' structures of political, security and economic cooperation. The latter project sees power as unipolar, symbolically concentrated in Brussels (where the headquarters of NATO and most EU institutions are based), from where concentric circles emanate over the continent. Initially Russia was willing to accept Euro-Atlantic leadership, in the early 1990s through an America first policy, later in the same decade by prioritising the EU as its primary partner (Medium-term Strategy, 1989).

Under Putin the ambition of a close partnership with the EU did not really disappear. In his first term as President Russia and the EU entered into a Strategic Partnership and agreed on Four Common Spaces of cooperation at their summit meeting in St. Petersburg in 2003. Yet, increasingly Moscow started to reject Euro-Atlantic leadership. Arguably, the contours of an independent course crystallised around 2004-2007. The emphasis shifted to what Gorbachev called a 'balance of interests', a partnership that promises to recognise mutual interest, rather than based on a community of shared values. One could see this evolution as a different way of Russia to achieve status enhancement (Freire, 2011; Larson ad Shevchenko, 2014). While throughout the 1990s it was aiming to regain great power status by trying to be an acceptable partner within a Euro-Atlantic Community of states, it changed towards a strategy of pursuing its interests more independently. This change of course is partly due to domestic changes in Russia, but to a bigger extent to the increasing frustration of not receiving the recognition as a great power and equal partner.

3.2. Security: indivisible and collective

When it comes to security, the standard in Russian post-communist foreign policy documents is and remains the need for an "equitable and indivisible system of pan-European security" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 62). Also in his Munich speech of 2007 Putin referred to the 'universal, indivisible character of security' (Putin, 2007). This recurring thought in Russian foreign policy mirrors Gorbachev's New Political Thinking. Yet, while in the context of Gorbachev, the point of departure was a bipolar international system, for Putin the concept clearly becomes a way of objecting to the unipolar system, dominated by the US.

The system preferred on these grounds is a pan-European collective security system (see for example Mid-term Strategy, 1999; Foreign Policy Concept, 2008; National Security Concept, 2015). In the Mid-term strategy of 1999, Moscow still saw the OSCE as the platform for such a security system. Yet, soon after that Russia's love for the organisation cooled down and Moscow regularly accused it of applying double standards in favour of the West. Moreover, the OSCE represented a fairly weak collective security system, operating in the shadow of NATO as collective defence organisation. The OSCE's role as a basis for building a collective security system did not disappear from Russian discourse altogether but was accompanied by calls to reform the OSCE.

Under Medvedev's presidency, the emphasis changed. Medvedev presented in 2009 a draft European Security Treaty, where he suggested the merger of NATO and the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) into a pan-European collective security system (European Security Treaty, 2009). This was a largely symbolic proposal, politely received and rapidly shelved by the Euro-Atlantic community. The similarity with Gorbachev's idea to transform the military alliances (then NATO and Warsaw Pact) into organisations for rapprochement in a collective security system is striking. Medvedev's proposal underlined that the idea of a pan-European collective security system without military alliances continued to be high on the Russian wish list.

3.3. Economic and trade cooperation

Ever since the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) came into force in 1997, the creation of a Free Trade Area between Russia and the EU has been declared a formal objective of EU-Russia collaboration (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement 1997). The objective was repeated and reinforced in the framework of a Common Economic Space, one of the Four Common Spaces agreed in 2003 and translated into Roadmaps in 2005. Again, this idea is by no means new. As mentioned above, Gorbachev referred to the creation of an economic space from the Atlantic to the Urals as part of his Common European Home project. The formulation may have been slightly different; the core idea was identical to the later oft used call to establish a common economic space 'from Lisbon to Vladivostok'.

Yet progress in this field has been extremely limited. The PCA, which entered into force in 1997, was agreed for a period of ten years. With the expiry date approaching Moscow and Brussels started negotiating a new, enhanced agreement to replace the PCA. They failed to make tangible progress towards a Free Trade Area and the PCA was therefore silently prolonged, as provided by the treaty.

However far off it may seem now, a pan-European free trade area could have helped to resolve the incompatibility of membership of the Eurasian Economic Union and a free trade deal with the EU. It was this incompatibility that forced countries like Ukraine and Armenia to make a choice *between* Russia and the EU – a choice which in the case of Kyiv contributed to polarisation and turmoil.

3.4. International Law

Gorbachev emphasised the importance of international law as a basis both for international relations and for the Common European Home. This theme keeps on resonating throughout Russian post-communist foreign policy rhetoric. The Foreign Policy Concept of 2016, for example, states: "Russia consistently advocates strengthening the legal foundation of international relations and complies with its international legal obligations in good faith" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2016, art. 26) In the current context the universal respect for international rules and norms is often confronted with the imposition of 'dictates' by "an elite club of [Western] countries" (Lavrov, 2017). It goes without saying that the credibility of the Russian discourse on respect for universal legal principles got seriously damaged by the annexation of Crimea in 2014, despite Putin's attempt to invoke Kosovo as a legal precedent. Russia also referred to the right of self-determination of Crimea and the defence of the rights of the Russian minorities to justify its intervention legally. These ambiguities notwithstanding, respect for international law continues to be a linchpin in Russia's foreign policy discourse (Foreign Policy Concept, 2000, 2008, 2013, 2016). Moscow has repeatedly called to base relations with the EU on a solid legal basis.

4. Differences

Despite the striking similarities in terms of terminology, there are important differences between the Gorbachev project of a Common European Home and the formulation of a post-communist European policy under Putin. Many aspects could be mentioned, such as the decreasing role of disarmament,[2] the ecological dimension or the disappearance of a value-based framing. Three fundamental differences will be underlined. First, the new context of relations between Russia and the EU, which has changed the meaning and purpose of some metaphors. Secondly, the disappearance of the idea of a unified European cultural community or civilisation. Finally, the Eurasian turn in Russian foreign policy, which has changed the importance of Europe in its foreign policy discourse. All these changes have to be understood in a context of gradually escalating tensions with the West, whereby a mutual logic of competition and distrust gained ground and undermined collaborative relations.[3]

4.1. New context, new meaning

Metaphors get a certain meaning in a given context. When Gorbachev spoke about a Common European Home, he did so with the ambition to bridge deep differences in a bipolar system. It was a time of progressive reconciliation between the Soviet Union and the West and of exceptional optimism, in which Gorbachev spoke to a generally well willing Western audience. He framed the project as part of his bigger project of deideologising Russian foreign policy and international relations (Kull, 1992). Today, and clearly since Putin's Munich speech of 2007 (Putin, 2007), the context is substantially different. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the disastrous 1990s, Russia has been seeking to make a comeback, claiming great power status, but got increasingly frustrated over the lack of recognition thereof. The context was one of dwindling trust in relations with the Euro-Atlantic Community, rather than the sharp increase of trust we witnessed in the Gorbachev days. Relations became increasingly determined by a negative "logic of competition" (Casier, 2016), which eventually culminated in the confrontation over Ukraine (Haukkala, 2015). The emphasis in Russian foreign policy discourse was on sovereignty: Russia was no longer prepared to follow the path the West prescribed, but had the right to follow its own path independently. Also domestically, the context changed significantly. Gorbachev's reformist approach was carried by a community of *mezhdunarodniki* (International Relations experts) (Rey, 2006) and foreign policy school of 'Westernizers' (Tsygankov, 2016, p. 5) pushing for substantial reforms. Putin, on the contrary, had to balance a coalition between Statists (to whom state capabilities, sovereignty and status are key) and Civilisationists (who see Russia as culturally distinct from the West), with the latter having become increasingly influential during his current term (Tsygankov, 2016). At the same time the political system had turned increasingly repressive and less democratic. As a result, the debate about pan-European cooperation got decoupled from issues of democracy and human rights – in sharp contrast to the Gorbachev days when both went hand in hand.

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[2] The Foreign Policy Concept of 2016 states that 'the Russian Federation seeks to bring the conventional arms control regime in Europe in line with current realities' (Foreign Policy Concept, 2016, art. 30).

[3] For an analysis of the reasons behind this escalating logic of competition, see Casier, 2016.

In sum, the current context is profoundly negative. Trust is at its deepest since the end of the Soviet Union. Russia and the West tend to read each other's behaviour in negative zero-sum terms. There are few prospects to reverse the spiral of competition. This implies that many of the concepts which Gorbachev used as positive concepts, as platform for collaboration, have now often become defensive vestiges within a broader discourse of rejecting a Western "dictate" and acting against "NATO-centric egotism" (Lavrov, 2016).

4.2. European civilisation

A second substantial difference has to do with the understanding of European civilisation and Russia's place within it. Gorbachev put a strong emphasis on a European cultural community and civilisation, transcending the continent's heterogeneity. Over time also the Russian Foreign Policy Concepts repeatedly refer to civilisations and Russia being an "integral and inseparable part of the European civilization" (example taken from Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 56). But there is a certain ambiguity. At the same time an emphasis is put on inter-civilisational relations and the need to harmonise them. The emphasis is always on dialogue and avoiding dividing lines (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 14). This ambiguity seems to suggest that Russia is situating itself both apart from and within a European civilisation: "Russia stands ready to play a constructive role in ensuring a civilizational compatibility of Europe" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2008, p. 20).[4]

Overall, Russia's relation in or to a European civilisation has taken a more antagonistic turn in recent years, when Russia and Western Europe got presented as competing civilisations. Tsygankov detects "a revival of civilizational thinking" in Russia, where the idea that Russia forms a distinct civilisation gained ground (Tsygankov, 2016, p. 150). As of 2012

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[4] In the post-Ukraine Foreign Policy Concept of 2016, the reference to Russia as part of a European civilisation has disappeared (Foreign Policy Concept, 2016).

Putin started advancing the idea of ‘state-civilization’, in which ethnic Russians form the central and binding force of Russia as civilisation and state, while at the same time recognising the diversity of Russia and rejecting the idea of a mono-ethnic state (Tsygankov, 2016, p. 151). At international level this gets translated into the idea of a “global competition … on a civilizational level, whereby various values and models of development based on the universal principles of democracy and market economy start to clash and compete against each other” (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 13). This approach has been reinforced because of domestic development and as a result of the West’s Ukraine policy and sanctions against Russia in 2014. Putin also started criticising “Europe’s departure from traditional religious and family values” (Tsygankov, 2016, p. 151). In certain elite circles this discourse is even more prominent and radical. Russia presents itself as a defender of Europe’s civilisation. The interpretation of what this European civilisation stands for is a very selective one, emphasising certain traditional and spiritual values. Morozov speaks of a “paleoconservative ideology taking the upperhand in Russian domestic politics” (Morozov, 2018, p. 43). Differently from conservatives, paleoconservatives reject modernity altogether. Morozov states:

> “… the radicalisation of Russia’s position through the espousal of the paleoconservative ideology and the intervention in Ukraine must be interpreted as the decisive break with the pattern of ‘hierarchical inclusion’ of Russia in Europe … While the liberals and the moderate conservatives of the previous decade had been complaining about Russia’s unequal treatment by the EU, today’s paleoconservatives have embraced the image of Russia as a traditionalist sovereign power and, in that sense, the opposite of Europe with its moral decadence and helplessness in the face of repeated crises”. (Morozov, 2018, p. 36)

In other words, today, the idea of European civilisation itself is contested. Russia has started to challenge the EU’s dominant position in determining European identity. Countering this hegemony, Moscow claims that it stands for the ‘genuine’ values of Europe (a very conservative interpretation of these values) reproaching West-European countries of betraying the fundamental values of European civilisation. The latter has thus become an object of competition rather than of unification. This is a very fundamental difference with Gorbachev’s unifying concept of Common European Home.

4.3. Europe first?

The third substantial difference has to do with the importance of Europe in foreign policy. For Gorbachev the Common European Home was a central concept, a frame to reorient the Soviet foreign policy towards close cooperation within greater Europe. The countries of Western Europe and the European Community were the preferred partners and the US and

Canada were to be associated at best. Interregional links between the European Community and the Comecon/CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) played a key role in the common home. A decade later, in 1999, the Mid-term Strategy prioritised the EU as key partner and the relationship between both actors was eventually solidified through the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership. The latter grew into the EU's most institutionalised relationship: with no country did the EU have more frequent high-level meetings than with Russia. Despite rising tensions this link continued to exist until the Ukraine crisis and annexation of Crimea, when the EU suspended the Strategic Partnership.

While the term 'Common European Home' disappeared from official statements, Russia continued for a long time to stress the importance of Europe, the primordiality of relations with the EU and its adherence to the Council of Europe and in a more nuanced way the OSCE. In the Foreign Policy Concept of 2000 relations with European states are called "a traditional foreign policy priority" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2000, p. 7). The Concept of 2008 mentions that "the Russian Federation is interested in strengthening the European Union" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2008, p. 21) as well as the interaction mechanisms with it through the establishment of the Common Spaces agreed in 2003. The Foreign Policy Concept of 2013, shortly before the Ukraine crisis, is an interesting mix. On one hand, in the aftermath of the Partnership for Modernisation, it confirms the Russian interest "in enhancing cooperation with the European Union as its principal trade and economic counterpart and important foreign policy partner" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 57) It is also stated:

> Priority is given to relations with the Euro-Atlantic states which, besides geography, economy and history, have common deep-rooted civilizational ties with Russia. In light of the increased importance of combining efforts of all the states in the face of transborder challenges and threats, Russia stands for building up a truly unified region without dividing lines through developing genuine partnership relations between Russia, the European Union and the United States. (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 54)

On the other hand, the Concept confirms a difference in emphasis, a shift of the world's centres of gravity to the Asia-Pacific: "The ability of the West to dominate world economy and politics continues to diminish. The global power and development potential is now more dispersed and is shifting to the East, primarily to the Asia-Pacific region. The emergence of new global economic and political actors with Western countries trying to preserve their traditional positions enhances global competition, which is manifested in growing instability in international relations" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2013, art. 6). As the US did under the Obama administration, Russia announced its own pivot to Asia. At this point, this remained largely rhetoric. The emphasis changed, but for Asia to take the place of Europe would inevitably be a long term process. Also the driving role Russia plays in the BRICS consultations underlines the shift away from Europe and from the West in general.[5]

In the Foreign Policy Concept of 2016 the EU is still called an important trade partner, but otherwise all positive references to the EU and Euro-Atlantic states disappeared. In the context of the Ukraine crisis the tone of the document now revolves around the responsibility of Western states for the current crisis, because of "the geopolitical expansion pursued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) along with their refusal to begin implementation of political statements regarding the creation of a common European security and cooperation framework" and a "containment policy by the US and their allies" (Foreign Policy Concept, 2016, art. 61).

Of great significance were the Eurasian integration initiatives that took shape as of 2010. Russia had always prioritised integration of the former Soviet states under its regional leadership. Yet the Eurasian integration initiatives signalled an important change. For a long time, Russia had prioritised integration under the umbrella of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), but this had rarely been effective. With the proposal of a Eurasian Union in 2011 Putin changed course to integration initiatives based on coalitions of the willing: Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus in the first place. Importantly, in 2011, Putin did not present the Eurasian Union as a rival or alternative for the EU, but as "a powerful supranational association capable of becoming one of the poles in the modern world and serving as an efficient bridge between Europe and the dynamic Asia-Pacific region" (Putin, 2011).[6] He added:

> Some of our neighbours explain their lack of interest in joining forward-looking integration projects in the post-Soviet space by saying that these projects contradict their pro-European stance. I believe that this is a false antithesis. We do not intend to cut ourselves off, nor do we plan to stand in opposition to anyone. The Eurasian Union will be based on universal integration principles as an essential part of Greater Europe united by shared values of freedom, democracy, and market laws. Russia and the EU agreed to form a common economic space and coordinate economic regulations without the establishment of supranational structures back in 2003. In line with this idea, we proposed setting up a harmonised community of economies stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok, a free trade zone and even employing more sophisticated integration patterns. (Putin 2011)

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[5] It should be noted that the renewed confrontation between Russia and the West differs fundamentally from the Cold War in that bipolarity and power symmetry have given way for a much more complex international system and a major power gap between the Euro-Atlantic Community and Russia.

[6] This thought was repeated in different forms in respective Foreign Policy Concepts, where the Eurasian Economic Union was presented as an "effective link between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region" (Foreign Policy Concept 2013, art. 44) or the priority was mentioned of "harmonizing and aligning interests of European and Eurasian integration processes" (Foreign Policy Concept 2016, art. 63).

In this formulation there is no contradiction with Gorbachev's and later official Russian views on Greater Europe, multipolarity, interregional cooperation, a European-wide free trade area. Nor does Putin backtrack on the importance of the EU as primordial partner.

Yet, this changed as mutual suspicion of the EU and Russia over each other's integration projects increased. With the incompatibility of EU and Russian integration projects arising (see above) the tone shifted and Eurasian integration got presented as an alternative to cooperation with the EU, no longer a bridge. Fuelled by the Ukraine crisis the emphasis was put even more strongly on Eurasian cooperation and rivalling integration projects: the West was accused of "countering integration processes and creating seats of tension in the Eurasian region" (National Security Strategy, 2015, art. 17).

With the increasing use of references to Eurasian, the Euro-Atlantic space stopped being the key point of reference in Russian foreign policy, as it was under Medvedev's presidency. Yet, this as well is fraught with ambiguity. Eurasian economic integration itself is to a large extent modelled after the EU and thus represents a neoliberal template (Morozov, 2018, p. 35). Yet, at the same time the term Eurasian can have geopolitical or civilizational connotations. It is a difficult term to use as it represents many strands, generations and degrees of radicalism. Yet, with an increasing emphasis on Eurasian as a qualifier, the question can be raised whether Eurasianism is still the "metaphorical dog that did not bark" which Natalia Morozova claimed it to be under Putin at the time of writing (Morozova, 2009, p. 683).

5. Conclusion

Even though Gorbachev's concept of Common European Home was short-lived, many of its central ideas survived the Soviet Union and continued to influence Russian foreign policy rhetoric for many years. Ideas of a multipolar Europe with pan-European indivisible collective security, rooted in law and with a free trade area from Lisbon to Vladivostok continued to be hallmarks of Russia's European policy discourse until fairly recently. But some major changes also occurred. Not least the context. With views of the post-Cold War European security order at loggerheads, relations came to be dominated by a logic of competition and distrust, in contrast to the cooperative atmosphere of the late Gorbachev years. In this context some words obtained substantially new meanings and often became an instrument for defence rather than cooperation. Secondly, the idea of a common European civilisation of which Russia was an essential part disappeared. The interpretation that a civilizational competition is taking place gained ground. The influence of deeply conservative views that Russia represents the genuine values of Europe, which the West has betrayed, has grown strongly. Today Russia sets itself apart from (the rest of) Europe. Finally, Europe has lost its central role and the positive evaluation of the EU as primordial partner has faded away. Moscow announced its own pivot to Asia but also invested in its own Eurasian integration projects. While the latter were introduced as complementary, Russian and EU-driven integration projects have increasingly become rivalling and contentious issues. Several of these developments have occurred in the years before the Ukraine crisis, but the latter has definitely fuelled and radicalised this evolution. The real rupture with the original Common European Home concept is thus not so much Putin's ascent to power, but the tensions leading up to the confrontation over Ukraine and the escalation the crisis itself produced. Within a context of a re-emerging Russia and domestic change, as well as tensions over NATO enlargement and the missile defence shield, trust between Russia and the rest of Europe dwindled and gradually made way for zero-sum thinking. Without abandoning them altogether, some key terms in Russia's vision of Europe were given a new role in a counter-hegemonic discourse, challenging the dominant position of the Euro-Atlantic Community.

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_3

One Europe or None

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Abstract:

The European post-Cold War order assumed monist forms. Instead of the geopolitical and ideological diversity sought by Mikhail Gorbachev as he brought the Cold War to an end in the late 1980s, a type of monist cold peace was imposed in which Atlantic security institutions and ideas were consolidated. The monism was both institutional and ideational, and the two reinforced each other in a hermetic order that sought to insulate itself from critique and transformation. Russia was excluded as anything but subaltern. The post-Cold War European peace order was thus built on weak foundations, provoking a cycle of mimetic rivalry. In Russia the fateful dialectic of external challenge and domestic stultification once again operated, heightening the Kremlin's threat perceptions. Russia's relations with the European Union (EU) and Washington veered between the cooperative and the confrontational, until settling into a conflictual mode in 2014, as it is argued in the article.

Keywords: monism, neo-revisionism, Russia, European Union, United States

It would not be unreasonable to suggest that it was incumbent on those who claimed to have won the Cold War to create the conditions for a viable and enduring peace. Just as there were no real victors after the Great War, yet a punitive peace was imposed on Germany that created the conditions for the renewal of conflict, so too the peace order after 1989 reflected the asymmetrical end to the Cold War. On the one side the institutions that had maintained the Soviet bloc were dismantled, whereas on the other side the Atlantic security system was maintained and in the end enlarged to encompass much of the territory of its former adversary. The European post-Cold War order assumed monist forms. Instead of the geopolitical and ideological diversity sought by Mikhail Gorbachev as he brought the Cold War to an end in the late 1980s, a type of monist cold peace was imposed in which Atlantic security institutions and ideas were consolidated. The monism was both institutional and ideational, and the two reinforced each other in a hermetic order that sought to insulate itself from critique and transformation. Russia was excluded as anything but subaltern. The post-Cold War European peace order was thus built on weak foundations, provoking a cycle of mimetic rivalry. In Russia the fateful dialectic of external challenge and domestic stultification once again operated, heightening the Kremlin's threat perceptions. Russia's relations with the European Union (EU) and Washington veered between the cooperative and the confrontational, until settling into a conflictual mode in 2014.

1. The Many Europes

The countries in between that had formerly been in thrall to Moscow of course jumped at the chance to become part of the alternative security system, but this only reinforced the competitive bloc politics that had been at the heart of the Cold War. In other words, the negative transcendence of the Cold War created a perverse incentive structure that failed to overcome the logic of conflict but only gave it new forms. Gorbachev has been much criticised for the allegedly inept way in which he handled Soviet foreign policy in the final period, above all for having failed to get written agreement to the embargo on NATO enlargement (for a discussion see Sarotte, 2014, pp. 90-97; 2009). This rather misses the point. In launching perestroika and advancing the ideas of the New Political Thinking (NPT), Gorbachev sought to devise policies that would transcend the logic of domestic repression and international confrontation. This was an idealistic politics of transcendence, but in the circumstances this policy was also starkly realist in responding to the fundamental challenges facing Soviet society and European security. It was not unrealistic to expect that in return for Soviet, and later Russian, accommodation to Western security concerns, Russia would be granted a commensurate status in some sort of restructured security order. That at least was Gorbachev's calculation and Russia's anticipation until the breakdown of the cold peace in 2014.

In the post-Cold War era, there were two fundamentally different paths for Europe to follow. The first was to pursue the politics of transcendence outlined by Gorbachev, to create a 'greater West'. The model here is of a genuinely plural Europe, comprising the EU, Russia, Turkey and various lands in between, held together by deepening institutional and other pan-European ties (Sakwa, 2010, p. 21). The 'smaller' EU would have enlarged within the framework of 'wider Europe', but at the same time some sort of special institutionalised partnership arrangement with Russia and other countries, including Turkey, would have been established (Gromyko and Fëdorova, 2014). The Atlantic alliance would have endured but in new forms, now subordinated to the commitment to build an inclusive and equitable pan-European community as one of the pillars of the new continentalism. This is the project for the creation of a transformed historic West, in which Russia would become a founder member with a stake in its perpetuation. This would have created a greater West, which would have provided a framework for the development of the European system of sovereign states, where some unite in deeper regional bodies (notably the EU) while others engage on a selective basis. Iron curtains would have become a thing of the past and the hard edges between divergent forms of association would have been removed. The very idea of security dilemmas in Europe would have become anachronistic.

The greater European option shifts away from Brusello-centric representations of Europe and instead focuses on a pan-continental form of unity, drawing not only on Gorbachev's idea for a Common European Home but also on long-standing Gaullist ideas of a Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok (Gorbachev, 1989). At its most radical, this would entail the dissolution of NATO and the Atlantic security system and the creation of a symmetrical and pluralistic Europe. The CSCE would become the pre-eminent security body, accompanied possibly by the creation of the European Security Council that was mooted in the early 1990s. The EU would assume greater security responsibilities as European security is gradually decoupled from the single Atlantic community. The security association with the US would become redundant as Europe takes control of its own destiny. This over-arching greater European body represents the 'integration of integrations', bringing together what have now become the EU and the EEU, creating both a process and the embryonic institutions under whose aegis the continent could unite. This would represent a way for the EU to escape involution through its continued embedment in the Atlantic system which had given birth to it in the first place.

The second path is the one actually pursued, and has had some demonstrably negative consequences. NATO enlarged to Russia's borders, the 1972 ABM Treaty was unilaterally abrogated in 2002 and elements of ballistic missile defence (BMD) installed in Eastern Europe. The EU became part of a singular 'wider Europe' enlarging also to Russia's borders. Palliative measures operated, including the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council and various EU plans to moderate Russia's exclusion, including the 'four common spaces' and the Partnership for Modernisation. The third path represented an unstable combination that in the end exploded under the weight of its own contradictions. It effectively represented the continuation of the Cold War by other means. This was the period of the cold peace, which as I have argued elsewhere, represented a type of 'mimetic Cold War', in which the arguments and institutions of the Cold War were perpetuated, but recognition of the fact was suppressed (Sakwa, 2013). As in the interwar years, this was another 'twenty years' crisis', in which not a single fundamental problem of European security was resolved (Sakwa, 2008).

This provoked an accumulation of tensions, akin to the years leading up to the Great War, which predictably ended in overt conflict. The Russo-Georgian war of 2008 was the first major sign that armed conflict between European states had not been banished from the continent, but it was only the precursor to the even graver crisis over Ukraine in 2014. We can justifiably talk of the 'death of Europe', in the sense that the aspirations for a new united continent voiced at the end of the Cold War were confounded, and continental Europe as the subject of its own history was once again lost as it became the playground for competing global ambitions (Sakwa, 2015c). There is a vigorous debate over what to call this new era of confrontation following the cold peace, but ultimately whether we call it a 'New Cold War' or something else is less important than recognising the great failure of our generation to create a sustainable and enduring peace order in Europe.[1] This article argues that post-Cold War EU has become involuted – in other words, stunted and incapable of fundamental evolutionary development – because it remained trapped in the Atlantic carapace in which it had been born. Greater Europe or some other construct in the event were rejected in favour of the consolidation of a monist interpretation of the end of the Cold War. The monist Atlantic system then expanded through the enlargement of existing structures and ideas, repudiating the transformative vision outlined at the end of the Cold War by Gorbachev and successive Russian leaders. It is this monist system which now predominates in Western Europe.

2. Euromonism and Involution

The smaller Europe is monistic to the degree that it cannot imagine a legitimate alternative framework for European development. Although the EU claims to be post-modern, that very claim is couched in the form of a classical modernist meta-narrative, and thus repudiates the claim itself. The EU has from the outset been a monist project, although intensely pluralistic internally. The EU's claims to normative universality means that its engagement with neighbours is part of a transformative project to make them more like itself. The practical policies of the EU contain a healthy dose of pragmatism, yet they remain driven by a didactic agenda (Casier, 2013). In the post-Cold War era this monism has intensified. The goal became to transform the continent in the EU's image.

Although the term 'wider Europe' was swiftly discarded by the EU in favour of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) nomenclature, the goal remained much the same – to transform the neighbourhood through conditionality, Association Agreements and in some cases accession. In principle both the smaller Europe and the wider Europe were compatible with the type of pluralist 'greater Europe' advocated by Russia, but this would have required an institutional and diplomatic process. Both sides would have had to find some sort of 'mode of reconciliation', of the sort that transcended the logic of conflict between France and Germany in the post-war years. The 'victory in the Cold War' discourse prevalent in the West precisely precluded even recognition of the need for this reconciliatory process. It was enough for Russia to transform itself in the West's image, and when it failed to do so, recriminations ensued, including the strange discourse of "who lost Russia?" (Stoner and McFaul, 2015).

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[1] For a convincing argument that the use of the term is anachronistic and perverse, see Monaghan (2015).

Moscow's position is predicated on the assumption that there is no intrinsic link between a state's domestic governance arrangements and the pattern of its engagement in international politics. This is one of the central postulates of realist theory, which also suggests that democratic peace theory can be an impediment to normal relations between states with different regime types.[2] This does not mean that Russia has an unbounded commitment to Westphalian sovereignty, since in the post-Cold War era Russia has been a great joiner of bodies that limit sovereignty in one way or another, notably the Council of Europe, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and was even in the process of joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) before the Ukraine storm broke. Undoubtedly there is a governance problem within Russia, with the regime exercising tutelary powers over both civil and political society, leading to developmental and political blockages (Sakwa, 2014). The domestic impasse was both cause and consequence of the impasse in foreign affairs, each amplifying the other.

Russia's advocacy of pluralism at the international level is in an inverse relationship to the monism practiced at home, while the EU's monism in international politics is balanced by extreme internal pluralism. The EU is today typically portrayed as a post-modern entity committed to a post-Westphalian agenda of universal values, accompanied by a commitment to a set of normative principles (Cooper, 2003). These norms are the basis for the EU's conditionality in dealing with external actors and its neighbours. Internally, the EU has assumed the characteristics of a neo-medieval polity, with overlapping jurisdictions and no single sovereign centre (Zielonka, 2007). However, externally in recent years it has assumed an increasingly hard spatial configuration. Its external borders are mostly governed by Schengen regulations, allowing a single visa to operate across the participant countries and the passport-free movement of peoples within the zone. The pressure of refugee and migratory flows from 2015 prompted a wave of suspensions and wall-building. The European Agency for the Protection of the Coastline and Border was formed on the basis of Frontex, the body that coordinated European border management.[3] It is still too early to talk of a 'fortress Europe', especially in light of Germany's decision in 2015 to accept a million refugees from Syria and other conflict zones, yet the crisis threw into sharp relief the tension between socio-economic and normative post-modernism and the securitisation of relations with the neighbourhood and the world. Time and space came into collision.

Decades of enlargement pushed the EU into uncharted territory, in both symbolic and political terms (Zielonka, 2008). The expansionary dynamic through accession has now slowed, but there is no *finalité* in either spatial or normative terms. The EU remains an ambitious transformative agent in what are increasingly contested neighbourhoods (Rumelli, 2004). It is this which brought the EU into confrontation with Russia. This is a conflict that neither wanted, and which both sought to avoid. The EU devised variegated neighbourhood policies to ensure that the outer limits of EU territory did not harden into new lines of division. Romano Prodi's ENP was one of the more imaginative and inclusive attempts to mediate between the ins and outs, as part of the EU's permanent negotiation of boundaries and interactions with neighbours (Whitman and Wolff, 2010). With the mass accession of a number of post-communist countries, most of which had been part of the Soviet bloc or even of the Soviet Union itself, in 2004 and 2007, the character of this 'negotiation' changed, and it became less of an interactive process (to the degree that it ever was), and it became even more didactic. Sergei Prozorov (2016) argues that the relationship was built not on the basis of sovereign equality but on the tutelary principle of teacher and pupil.

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[2] See Waltz (2000) for a demolition of democratic peace theory.

[3] For the work of the agency, see http://frontex.europa.eu.

This was evident in the manner that the EU's Common Strategy on Russia (CSR) was devised in 1999, which despite some early contacts with Russian officials "was nevertheless very much a unilateral exercise". There was not much that was "common", "in the sense that they are the result of mutual consultations between two partners", and instead the "common" referred to was the position of the member states (Maresceau, 2004, p. 183). This applied equally to the earlier Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed in 1994 but which only came into force on 17 December 1997, as well as the Interim Agreement on trade-related matters signed in 1995: "both proved to be inadequate bilateral instruments for the purposes of governing the relations between the two sides" (Maresceau, 2004, p. 184). In the early years official policy accepted that an active EU was the cornerstone of stability in Europe, but dissenting voices were there from the start. The former USSR ambassador to the European Community, Vladimir Shemyatenkov, argued that "despite all the sweeteners of a *partnership*, it [EU enlargement] means the actual exclusion of Russia (and the Russians) from the zone of peace, stability and prosperity" (coted in Maresceau, 2004, p. 183). Thus the perceived exclusionary dynamic in security policy was accompanied by an analogous process in the 'post-modern' sphere. Just as the 'greater West' posited by Russia failed to materialise, so too its greater Europe ambitions were thwarted.

The incorporation of a large cohort of post-communist states only reinforced the EU's didacticism. The claim was now advanced that because of their historical relationship, these countries were in a unique position to understand Russian motivations and behaviour. As Maria Mälksoo (2013, pp. 158-159) puts it, "the 'old' Europe has seemingly preferred (for all sorts of different *Realpolitik* reasons) to continue the ritualistic game of taking the Russian democratic façade as at least a good-willed work in progress"; whereas "The need to demonstrate the dangers of such mutual simulation and to shake the allegedly widespread ignorance about the Russian misuses of democracy among the core of the traditional West/

Europe ... became a priority on the foreign policy agenda of Estonia in the immediate aftermath of EU accession". The specific manifestation of this new didacticism was the launching of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in May 2009, an idea sponsored by some of Russia's most resolute critics in Poland with the assistance of Sweden (Copsey and Pomorska, 2014). Although tempered by the Brussels bureaucracy, the EaP encapsulated the normative challenge that assumed a harshly physical form.

The tension was exacerbated by the universalistic aspirations of the EU as a post-modern norm-based project and the physical manifestation of the EU as a territorially-based entity permanently negotiating its physical engagement with neighbours (Browning, 2005). This engagement deployed a range of traditional diplomatic and other instruments, accompanied by a dynamic of conditionality that tempered realist interactions. As the EU grew and embraced the post-communist region, its dualism became increasingly sharply delineated. The tension between norm and space was exacerbated, and both lost much of their original transformational impetus. The norms were tempered and modified as conditionality itself in certain circumstances became 'conditional', dependent on specific local conditions. This is the charge, for example, directed against Estonia and Latvia, where a large number of predominantly Russian 'non-citizens' remain to this day (Kochenov, 2008). When it came to space, instead of transcending the 'borderness' of borders, as it had so long tried to do and had achieved with such spectacular success among the original members of the EEC, borders were back with a vengeance. They were back not just for pragmatic reasons, such as the management of migrant and refugee flows, but were now manifested as the 'frontier' between the empire of good governance and all that was normatively progressive, and the dark and savage lands of corruption and neo-Sovietism on the other side.

The Helsinki process is considered the cornerstone of the post-Cold War security order. Helsinki in effect represents the missing peace congress of our era. Unlike the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and Yalta/Potsdam in 1945, at the high diplomatic level the end of the Cold War was an un-negotiated peace. The 'third basket' of the Helsinki Final Act placed human rights at the heart of European politics for the first time. This was later formalised in the various follow-conferences and enunciated in the 'Charter of Paris' in November 1990. The Helsinki process inspired a generation of East European dissidents to call on their Communist governments to obey the commitments to which they had agreed at Helsinki. The embedded assumptions of Helsinki even at the time allowed concessions to be seen as something of a victory over the Soviet Union.[4] The Helsinki framework was absolutely crucial for Gorbachev's New Political Thinking (NPT) to take root, but the triumphal inflection continued into the post-Cold War era. The CSCE was institutionalised in a number of specialised agencies, including election-monitoring, focusing in particular on the post-Soviet space, an imbalance that was much criticised by Moscow

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[4] The triumphal tone of having forced concessions on the USSR in the Helsinki follow-up meetings is evident in recently declassified British Cabinet Office papers. See Gorshkov (2016).

This values-based tradition was incorporated into a peculiar strain of Western Europe thinking, which in the end eroded the Egon Bahr tradition of "transformation through rapprochement".[5] It was this line of thinking that sustained West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, but in the end petered out in the fields of the Donbas. The critical line of moral absolutism is particularly strong in the German Greens, who today are among Moscow's harshest critics, accompanied by much of the French left. They are the most enthusiastic interventionists, bringing them into alignment with the liberal hawks in the US and, perhaps less wittingly, with the transformational agenda of American neo-conservatives. This was the framework after 2014 for the 'new Atlanticism', which reinvigorated the military side of the alliance while asserting a virulent and hermetic values-based foreign policy (Sakwa, 2015a; 2005b). The 'new Atlanticism' envisages an ever-deepening Atlantic partnership, reinforced by the mooted Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The didacticism and monism of the EU is now amplified by the Atlantic alliance as a whole. A new ideational iron curtain once again divides Europe, accompanied by the remilitarisation of continental security.

3. Monism, Multipolarity and Neo-Revisionism

Henry Hale (2005) argues that political studies have failed effectively to explain and predict the dynamics of post-communist societies because it tries to examine those dynamics within the framework of a move towards or away from ideal endpoints. The various crises buffeting the western world after the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008-09 once again brought to the surface the orthodox Soviet belief in the inevitable decline of the western system. As the Valdai 2015 briefing materials put it: "The world is standing at a parting of the ways: will the internal problems of the leading countries and the growing strength of the non-western centres bring us to a revolutionary explosion or will changes be slow and systematic". The current dominance of the West was acknowledged, but two trends undermined the status quo: "the relative decline of America's allies, from the EC to Japan, and the narrowing of the gap between them and BRICS countries in terms of influence on global processes". As far as the Valdai paper was concerned, a "revolutionary demolition of the western-centric global order" was not inevitable, but there was "still scope for orderly reform". As far as Russia was concerned, "interdependence is turning into a source of pressure and vulnerability" (Valdai Discussion Club, 2015, p. 2). Such views only strengthened those who sought to insulate Russia from external pressure by creating an alternative framework of international governance, while at the same time reinforcing the traditional instruments of diplomacy and great power behaviour. The presentiment of relative western decline is probably exaggerated, yet the shift in the balance of global power is eagerly seized on by Moscow to reinforce its view that the West to which it had not been able to accede is not a West that it wanted to join anyway.

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[5] The landmark in this respect is Egon Bahr's speech at the Evangelical Academy in Tutzing on 15 July 1963, known as the "Change through Rapprochement" speech, available at http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=81.

The Ukraine crisis reinforced the growing bipolarity in world affairs. On the one side, the Atlantic alliance was reinforced and intensified. On the other, there were signs of a disparate, mostly inchoate, but nevertheless strengthening tide of counter hegemonic arrangements and organisations. Bobo Lo (2015, p. 9) notes that "the Kremlin seeks to build an alternative ideational and political legitimacy that challenges Western notions of global governance and moral universalism". This emerging anti-hegemonic movement is nothing like as formalised or intense as its counterparts during the Cold War, since Russia certainly lacks the attractive power, ideological magnetism and economic resources of the USSR. It made no sense for countries wilfully to antagonise the Atlantic powers. Equally, the dangers of unipolarism were clear to all, above all the threat of coercive violence when countries stepped out of political alignment, as the examples of Iraq, Libya and Syria made clear. There was also the increasing threat of the mobilisation of Western financial and governance institutions in the form of sanctions. Economic warfare by the great powers has become yet another mode of engagement in the absence of an effective peace order (Leonard, 2015). In recent years a new doctrine of the universal applicability of American law has been emerging, providing yet another way of leveraging America's enormous predominance in all significant dimensions of power to the rest of the world (see, for example, Zarate, 2013). Nevertheless, anti-hegemonic movements retain a degree of vitality. There is criticism of "an imposed model that presents itself as universal", provoking a "demand for alternatives" (Valdai Discussion Club, 2015, p. 4). The emergence of the BRICS[6] grouping is often interpreted as one indication of the establishment not so much of a putative counter-hegemonic alliance as an anti-hegemonic force – opposed to the very idea of hegemonism (Kingah and Quiliconi, 2016).

A number of grandiose schemes have been mooted for the construction of super-fast transport links between Europe and Asia, and there has even been talk of building a maglev line from Beijing to Berlin. In the first instance the focus has been on modernising the existing rail links to high-speed specifications. China is investing some \$5.2 billion in a high-speed line, in the first instance to run between Moscow and Kazan (initially planned to open in time for the 2018 FIFA World Cup) accompanied by plans for the line to be extended onwards to China. The projected Trans-Eurasian Belt Development (TEBR from the Russian belt of *razvitie*) "combines a new geo-economics that departs from the current practices of global political economy, with a new geopolitics.

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[6] Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

This geopolitics is based on the cooperative establishment of new human settlements and the accompanying geo-cultural notion of a dialogue of civilisations, derived from Eurasian ideology" (Gromyko, 2015, p. 167). This transcontinental idea was born in Beijing in 1996, and the idea of what Chinese geopolitical thinkers called a 'continental bridge' has been reflected in the Chinese 'Silk Road Economic Belt', a programme of trade and infrastructure investments stretching from Bangkok to Budapest. This is complemented by the 'Twenty-First-Century Maritime Silk Road' a plan to link the waterways between the South China Sea and the Mediterranean. Together they comprise what the Chinese call 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR, latterly renamed the Belt and Road Initiative, BRI), which would draw Central Asia and other countries into a China-centred network of investment in infrastructural projects such as railways, roads, ports, pipelines, and customs facilities.

Normative and geopolitical factors are driving Russia and China together. Neither Russia nor China seeks to impose their ideas about how to live on others out of any particular normative concern, but as Fyodor Lukyanov (2015) notes, "partly due to an arrogance that surpasses even that of the West. China is certain of its own exceptional nature. Beijing believes that because foreigners are incapable of grasping Chinese culture and philosophy, there is no point in trying to instil it into them". More broadly, Lukyanov stresses that with the American imposition of a type of neo-containment on China in the Asia-Pacific region, the situation is more favourable in Eurasia, both in itself and as an alternative route for China to markets in Europe, the Mediterranean and beyond. This is what lay behind the New Silk Road project and its accompanying plan to invest in transport infrastructure to bridge the region between China and the EU. China in Lukyanov's view is not greatly concerned about increasing its political influence in Central Asia, a sphere in which it is willing to concede to Russia, but when it comes to economic matters, China's growing preponderance places it in a league of its own. For Russia there are both opportunities and dangers. Lukyanov dismisses fears that the country would become a "raw materials appendage" of China and "has therefore compromised its freedom is a purely subjective evaluation based on ideological considerations". As he wryly notes, "For some reason, the same observers contend that for Russia to serve as a raw materials appendage of the European Union brings development and progress, but that same relationship to China will inevitably drag Russia into the abyss of backwardness" (Lukyanov, 2015). This may well be a rather too sanguine view. The present failure to achieve a greater West and a greater Europe may well open the door to the creation of a greater Asia.

Russia is very much at the heart of these processes – China for the present prefers to keep its powder dry. This critical stance does not mean that Russia has become a revisionist power. Russia challenges the classical postulates of liberal internationalism while arguing that its participation in anti-hegemonic projects does not repudiate these principles. Russia is instead 'neo-revisionist'. It does not challenge the system of international law and governance, from which it has benefitted so much, but is critical of the practices and their apparent abuse by 'hegemonic' powers. As far as Russia is concerned, it is the West that has become revisionist, not Russia. Equally, it is not the principles of international law and governance that Russia condemns but the practices that accompany their implementation. In its relations with the EU, Russia's neo-revisionist stance means that it was unable to become simply the passive recipient of EU norms, and instead strove to become a co-creator of Europe's destiny (Haukkala, 2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2010). The struggle is not only over contested norms, but also over who has the prerogative to claim their norms as universal in Europe (Haukkala, 2015).

4. Conclusion

Russia's neo-revisionism seeks to temper the practical application of moral universalism in what are perceived to be arbitrary and punitive ways, while ensuring that the instruments of global governance really do reflect global concerns. The clash in Europe is only part of the broader challenge of representing pluralism at the global level. Western sanctions accelerated the trend to find ways to weaken the dollar, such as pricing oil in gold instead of dollars, but this did not entail withdrawal from global economic integration. China helped Russia to withstand the sanctions, while the BRICS countries began to create an alternative to western-dominated international institutions. The emergence of an alternative globalisation does not mean the reproduction of what is increasingly seen as western monism. As the Valdai discussion paper put it, "The Atlantic community is a unique example of value unification. By contrast, non-western states are together in stressing the importance of diversity, insisting that no uniform emblems of a 'modern state and society' are either desirable or possible. This is an approach more in tune with the conditions of a multipolar world" (Valdai Discussion Club, 2015, p. 5). This is the essence of the anti-hegemonic strategy as part of Russia's mounting resistance to monism in European and global politics. These Eurasian and greater Asia developments represent a way for Russia to escape entrapment in the monism of the Atlantic system and the attendant involution of Europe. The failure to create a unified Europe means that Europe can no longer be considered an autonomous subject of global politics. The lack of one Europe means no substantive Europe in global affairs.

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_4

The Russian Challenge to the European Union

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Abstract:

After a decade of sporadic cooperation between newly emergent Russia and the countries of the West, differences have mounted to the point where the two sides now confront one another with alternative visions of a future Europe – especially Central and Eastern Europe – and relations that mirror some of the worst days of the Soviet-Western cold war. The central issues in the dispute include Moscow's commitment to rebuilding 'Greater Russia,' the European Union (EU)'s goal of surrounding itself with stable democratic states, and the fact that these goals conflict in post-Soviet Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. The revival of the Russian economy and political system under Vladimir Putin has enabled Moscow to use various forms of coercive diplomacy, including outright military intervention, to pursue its goals. The EU's support for democratic governances in the region is viewed in Moscow as a direct challenge to Russia's interests and to the Russian state itself. The result has been a confrontation between the two sides, as Russia challenges the very nature of the liberal international system put into place by the EU and its U.S. allies in the post-World War II period. It is important to note that the US-Russian relationship overlaps with and contributes to the standoff in Europe.

Keywords: Russia, European Union, United States, 'Greater Russia', liberal international system, confrontation

A quarter century after the end of the cold war and the collapse of the USSR relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union (EU) are frozen, in large part as a result of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine and the ensuing economic and political sanctions imposed on Russia by both the EU and the United States. But, the friction between the two sides extends much further than to issues related to Russia's policy toward Ukraine. Over the course of the past decade Russia has increasingly challenged the existing global order to which the member states of the EU have been strongly committed for more than half a century. It has also begun to challenge the Union itself, as well as the democratic institutions upon which the national governments of the EU are based.[1]

The focus of most of the other essays in this special issue centers on the foreign policy of the EU and their approach to relations with the Russian Federation. Here, however, the primary questions concern the factors that explain the shifts in Russian policy from the early to mid-1990s, when Russian leaders were committed to joining the international system dominated by the European Union and the United States, to the present confrontation between Russia and the West.[2] Why has the relationship deteriorated as it has? The argument developed to respond to this question will unfold as follows. I will first discuss briefly the essentially unsatisfactory nature of relations, from the Russian perspective, between the Russian Federation and the West in the 1990s and their role in determining the central goals that have driven Russia's evolving sense of identity and ensuing policy since Vladimir Putin came to power at the turn of the century. I will note the aspects of Western policy that seemingly led to the decision in Moscow around 2005 that cooperation with the West on terms of equality was impossible and that Russia should forge ahead to achieve its own objectives, even if that resulted in confrontation with the West. This decision resulted in the so-called 'gas wars' with Ukraine in 2006 and 2009, the Russo-Georgian war of August 2008, and more recently the intervention in Ukraine, including the absorption of Crimea, since 2013 and the ongoing military support for the government of President Bashar Hafez al-Assad of Syria, an assessment of which will comprise the final substantive section of the article. All of these Russian policies contributed to the growing confrontation in relations between Russia and the EU.

1. From the Short-lived Honeymoon to the Policy Shift under Putin

During the 1990s, when Russia was attempting to adjust to its new and reduced post-Soviet status and seemed willing to join with the West, Europe and the U.S. generally ignored Russia's interests and expanded their own involvement into what had been the Soviet sphere of domination. This expansionist approach, which included NATO intervention in former Yugoslavia despite strong Russian opposition and growing criticism of political developments in Russia itself, culminated in the middle of the 2000s with the extension of both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU into Central Europe and the Baltic region, the EU's commitment to a new Eastern Neighbourhood Policy even further east, and

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[1] Evidence of this effort can be seen in the recent meddling in the electoral process of some countries in the EU, support for right-wing political movements that are nationalistic and authoritarian in orientation, and similar attacks against the United States. See Schindler (2016) and Browstein (2017).

[2] It is important to note that it is impossible to discuss Russian-EU relations without taking into account the impact of the United States and of US-Russian relations on the former. See Kanet (2012), pp. 147-177. The current article, in part, builds on this earlier analysis.

Western support for the 'colour revolutions' that deposed Moscow's allies in Kyiv, Tbilisi, and Bishkek and brought to power groups committed to closer ties with the West.

Although Russian policy toward the West began to shift already by the mid-1990s, as the United States and its NATO allies intervened militarily in former Yugoslavia and otherwise ignored or challenged Russian interests[3], it was not until Vladimir Putin became president – and most clearly, after the Bush Administration's largely unilateral decision to invade Iraq, the expansion of both NATO and the EU eastward, and the challenge of the 'colour revolutions' – that Moscow decided that achieving its priority foreign policy objectives on the basis of cooperation with the West was impossible. The result has been a shifting sense of identity that differentiates Russia from Europe and a growing challenge to the dominant position of the West, both in Central and Eastern Europe and globally, as Russia has pursued the goal of reestablishing its position as the preeminent regional power across Eurasia and as a top global actor.

The Western initiatives that impacted relations with Russia so very strongly had their roots in the 1990s, but expanded with the decisions of the United States to intervene militarily in Iraq as part of the new 'war on terror'. Moscow, as well as several U.S. allies, strongly opposed that policy, which set the stage for a broader deterioration of East-West relations. The second set of developments that more directly impacted Russian relations with the European Union negatively included EU and NATO expansion, the EU's Eastern neighbourhood policy, and EU support for the colour revolutions. Initially, although Russian leaders strongly opposed NATO's expansion eastward, they did not oppose post-communist states joining the EU in a similar fashion.

By the early 2000s, however, the Russians recognized that EU membership not only would cut into future markets for Russian exports, but was also part of a much more comprehensive economic-political-social approach – part of the European Union's game plan for integrating East European states and societies into the Western order and, thus, undercutting Russian long-term interests in the region. The development of the Eastern Neighbourhood program, which aimed at tying six former Soviet republics closely to the EU, without granting full membership, along with visible support for the political uprisings in several post-Soviet states referred to as the colour revolutions were important factors in the evolving tensions in Russo-EU relations. As viewed in Moscow, these were but barely disguised efforts of Western governments and Western NGO's to shift the political orientation of these countries toward closer ties with the West.[4] As Vladimir Putin has noted much more recently, "We see what tragic consequences the wave of so-called color revolutions led to. For us this is a lesson and a warning. We should do everything necessary so that nothing similar ever happens in Russia" (Korsunskaya, 2014). Thus, by about 2005 the leadership in Moscow viewed the continued entrance of post-communist states into Western political, economic and security institutions as a long-term challenge to Russia's commitment to reestablish its dominant position in Eurasia and to reclaim its role as a major global power. This development impacted directly on relations between the two sides. President Putin's commitment that his government would reestablish Russia's role as a global power through a combination of assertive domestic and foreign policy initiatives and the good luck of exploding world market prices for energy Russia began to reemerge as a major player in Eurasian and world politics. It was about this time, as well, that Putin noted that the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) had been the most catastrophic geopolitical event of the twentieth century and that he began asserting that NATO and the United States were serious threats to Russian and international security.[5]

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[3] For a detailed discussion of this change see Kanet and Ibryamova (2001), pp. 985-1001.

[4] On Russian resistance to colour revolutions see Polese and Ó Beachán (2011), pp. 111-132; on the argument that the West *de facto* manipulated the colour revolutions see Roberts (2014); on the role of Poland in supporting democratic elements in Ukraine see Petrova (2014); and on the growing ideological divide between Moscow and the West see DeBardeleben (2015).

President Putin's wide-ranging attack on the United States and the West at the Munich Security Conference in 2007 represents a rhetorical watershed in Russian foreign policy, for it announced that Russia was once again a major international actor and would no longer follow the lead of the West in pursuing its foreign and security policy interests. But, it also indicated that Russia saw itself as a pole in the international system separate from and in conflict with the West. It is at roughly this time that Moscow also began to assert itself rhetorically in response to Western charges that it was corrupting or abandoning democracy (Putin, 2007). For example, in response to EU and US criticisms of the quality of Russian democracy, the Russians argued that they had their own special form of 'sovereign democracy' that was much stronger on the sovereignty aspect, what Nigel Gould-Davies terms 'sovereign globalization' (Gould-Davies, 2016). But, concrete Russian policy actions targeting Western interests, including those of the EU, began to emerge at the same time.

The initial major confrontation with the European Union concerned the 'gas wars' of 2006 and 2009 between Russia and Ukraine, which included the cut-off of natural gas supplies to EU member countries in mid-winter as a spillover result from the conflict between Russia and Ukraine; the military intervention in Georgia in 2008, when the Georgian president decided to use his new US-built military to force the reintegration of secessionist territories; and economic boycotts and cyberattacks against new EU member states with which Russia was in increasing political disagreement. All of these conflicts had their roots in the West's push eastward and Russia's determination that further

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[5] In a speech to the Russian people in 2005 President Vladimir Putin stated: "The collapse of the Soviet Union was the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the century. For the Russian people, it became a real drama. Tens of millions of our citizens and countrymen found themselves outside Russian territory. The epidemic of disintegration also spread to Russia itself" (Putin, 2005).

Western encroachment into what Moscow viewed as its legitimate sphere of influence had to be stopped – and reversed.

In the case of the gas wars the issue was the longstanding division over both costs of Russian supplies to Ukraine and Ukrainian transit charges for Russian gas being marketed to Europe. Until the overthrow of the pro-Russian government in Kyiv as a result of the Orange Revolution, this issue had been worked out each year. Now, however, with an EU-friendly government in Ukraine, this issue became one of relative political status of the two countries and resulted in a showdown in which Moscow accepted the costs to its longer term economic relations with the EU for failure to deliver gas supplies that resulted from the complete shutdown of gas flowing to Ukraine that was part of Moscow's goal of showing Ukraine who was the dominant actor in the dispute.[6] As part of the commitment to reestablishing Russian dominance in post-Soviet space, Russia could not be seen as backing down in the dispute with Ukraine, even if that resulted in the longer-term cost of the EU's pursuing a strategy of diversification of its sources of energy away from such heavy reliance on Russia (Umbach, 2010, pp. 122-140) and contributed to the deterioration of relations between Russia and EU.

In many respects the underlying issue that led to the five-day war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 and its contribution to the deterioration of Russian-EU relations had similar roots, Russia's total opposition to the continued shift of former Soviet republics toward integration into Western-dominated institutions. The Rose Revolution had brought to power in Tbilisi a government committed to closer ties to the West, including first and foremost NATO membership and expanded ties to the EU. In other words, from Moscow's perspective, developments were likely to move directly counter to Russia's reestablishing its preeminent position within former Soviet space. Even though NATO was not yet prepared to accede to President Bush's desire to admit Georgia to membership in 2008, Georgian president Saakashvili decided that the refurbished military that NATO and the United States had provided through the Partnership for Peace program could be used to resolve the longstanding problems associated with the secession by and 'frozen conflicts' with both South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The result for Georgia was a total disaster. Russian forces overwhelmed the new Georgian army, the secessionist provinces declared their formal independence, emulating the Kosovo example, and the Russian Federation officially recognized that independence. The Russian military intervention sent a clear message to several audiences – the Georgians, the Ukrainians, and the Americans most clearly – that after more than a decade of verbal opposition to NATO expansion, Russia was now in a position, and willing, to use military means to prevent it, even if this meant a further deterioration in relations with both the United States and the countries of Western Europe, including Western sanctions imposed to 'encourage' Russia to reconsider the wisdom of its policy.[7]

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[6] For a discussion of Russian policy in the gas wars see Moulioukova and Kanet (2017), pp. 275-298.

Besides these broad negative developments in East-West relations that impacted negatively on the Russian-EU relationship, several other factors contributed to the increasing frigidity of the relationship. Most important was the entrance of former communist states which brought with them concerns about and animosities toward Russia based on decades, or centuries, of past dealings (DeBardeleben, 2009, pp. 93-112; Schmidt-Felzman, 2014, pp, 40-60). Russia's willingness to coerce and bully small neighbors revived serious fears among new EU members about the prospects for their longer-term security in the face of an increasingly assertive Russia. In 2007, for example, after the Estonian government decided to move a Soviet war memorial from the center of Tallinn to its international military cemetery, Russians – in both Estonia and in the Russian Federation – mounted attacks on the Estonian government in Tallinn and its embassy in Moscow. This was followed by the cut off of Russian oil and coal deliveries and a massive cyber-attack that virtually closed down the entire information technology sector of this former Soviet colony. In addition, after bilateral disagreements with Russia Poland and Lithuania used their 'veto' power to prevent reopening the negotiation of a new partnership agreement between the EU and Russia for more than a year and a half. At a joint meeting between the EU and Russia in May 2007, these and other issues split the two sides and precluded any meaningful agreement on issues deemed important by either side (Lowe, 2007).[8]

Thus, during the period of Putin's second term as Russian President and into the Medvedev presidency Russian relations with the European Union and with its major member countries had deteriorated significantly. Russia no longer saw the EU as a largely irrelevant institution around which it was easily able to maneuver. Even though the European Union lacked a unified response to relations with Russia at this time on issues such as energy dependence, overall relations declined significantly. Despite various efforts on both sides, relations did not improve significantly during the four years of the Medvedev presidency. Russian challenges to the EU's claims to moral authority and the charge that the EU pursued a double standard expanded during this period (see Neumann, 2016; Kanet, 2015, pp. 503-522; and Facon, 2008).

Thus, by the time that Vladimir Putin turned over the presidency to Dimitri Medvedev in 2008 relations between the Russian Federation and the EU had deteriorated significantly – both as part of the general developments in East-West relations that included the US, but also for reasons independent of the Russo-American confrontation. The four years of the Medvedev presidency did little to change the overall nature of

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[7] For a discussion of Russian policy leading to the five-day war in August 2005 see Nygren (2011), pp. 101-120.

[8] See also Dempsey (2007b); Dempsey (2007a) and The Economist (2007).

Russian-EU relations, even though Medvedev was able to pursue a somewhat more liberal foreign policy (Trenin, 2014).

2. The Ukraine Crisis and the Collapse of EU-Russian Relations

In a series of articles published prior to the 2012 presidential elections in Russia, then prime minister and presidential candidate Putin laid out his new foreign policy program which was now focused on “preserving Russia’s distinct identity in a highly competitive global environment” (Putin, 2011; 2012). Abandoning the remnants of earlier efforts to integrate into the West-dominated international system, Putin emphasized the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Russian civilization and how Russia represented the core of a special Russian world composed of people who associate themselves with traditional Russian values, such as the Eastern Slavs of Belarus and Ukraine. He also argued that Russia should be the center of a large geo-economic unit, or Eurasian Union, consisting of political, cultural, economic and security ties between the states of the former Soviet republics. Putin argued the importance of defending indigenous values in a highly-globalized world and highlighted how this new vision promotes that path. He maintained that Europe has taken a negative turn from its historical model that existed prior to the 1960s and now possesses a ‘post-Christian’ identity that values moral relativism, a vague sense of identity and excessive political correctness (Gessen, 2014). Putin concluded that European countries have begun “renouncing their roots, including Christian values, which underlie Western civilization” (Voice of Russia, 2013). Putin rather emphasizes the values of old Europe, while stressing Russia’s unique ones rooted in the Orthodox Christian tradition. These values include the union between a man and a woman and the sanctity of family, religion, the centrality of the state and patriotism (Trenin, 2014). This set of arguments is relevant to relations with the West, and the EU in particular, since it lays the ideological groundwork for Russia’s merger with post-Soviet states into a Eurasian political and economic union, in direct competition with the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood Policy and the incorporation of countries in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus into a broad EU-centred political-economic system.

By the time of the presidential election campaign of 2012, Russian leaders clearly viewed the emergence of a special relationship between the EU and additional post-Soviet states such as Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia as a direct challenge to long-term Russian interests in the region and a threat to the campaign to reestablish Russia’s role as the dominant regional power and a major global actor. In part, as noted by Mikhail Molchanov, this confrontation between Russia and the EU resulted from the latter’s decision that those countries that opted for involvement in the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood Policy had to forego any special economic ties with other international institutions, such as Mr. Putin’s proposed Eurasian Union. In many respects, closer economic ties to the EU were actually economically disadvantageous to countries like Ukraine which could market its industrial products in the emerging Eurasian Union, but was hardly competitive in industrial production when dealing with the countries of the European Union (Molchanov, 2016, pp. 380-395; Molchanov, 2017, pp. 211-34).[9] Since the EU insisted on an 'all or nothing' approach from those to whom they offered Neighbourhood status, countries such as Ukraine were forced to make a choice between a westward or eastward orientation.[10]

Therefore, when Russia began to push its Eurasian integration project, the geopolitical confrontation with the EU escalated.[11] This is important for our understanding of the Russian explanation of their policy in the Ukraine crisis and its impact on overall relations with the European Union. As Foreign Minister Lavrov has stated in repeating the points already made by President Putin, "The EU Eastern Partnership program was also designed to expand the West-controlled geopolitical space to the east…. There is a policy to confront the CIS countries with a hard, absolutely contrived and artificial choice – either you are with the EU or with Russia. It was the use of this approach to Ukraine that pushed that country…to a profound internal political crisis" (Lavrov, 2014).

After Vladimir Putin resumed the presidency of the Russian Federation in 2012 he moved forcefully to implement plans for the consolidation of the Eurasian Union. In the western portion of former Soviet territory this meant that Russia and the EU were both actively pursuing six states – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In reality, the competition focused on Armenia and Ukraine and, to a lesser extent Moldova. Russia initiated a major pressure campaign to 'encourage' these countries to opt for EEU membership – from economic and security threats targeted against Armenia, should the latter decline to join the organization, to major loans to Ukraine as part of a membership package (Blank, 2013). By summer 2013 it was clear that Georgia and Moldova were prepared to counter Moscow and to strengthen their ties with the European Union, that Belarus and Armenia would join Russia's Eurasian Union, and that Azerbaijan would remain outside both organisations. Ukraine, under the government of President Yanukovych, attempted to play off the EU and the EEU as long as possible and eventually scheduled a signing ceremony with the European Union for fall 2013. When Yanukovych announced in November 2013 that Ukraine would, instead, join the Eurasian Union (Grytsenko, 2013) massive demonstrations against his government broke out that eventually resulted in his fleeing the country, in a new Western-oriented government coming to power and to direct Russian military intervention in Ukrainian affairs, including the Russian incorporation of Crimea and support for Russian and Russophone secessionist elements in southeastern Ukraine (Barkanov, 2015, pp. 228-230).

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[9] As Putin argued in his speech in Sevastopol justifying the occupation of Crimea, the West's actions in eastern Europe such as support for the colour revolutions and the NATO membership promise to Georgia and Ukraine were offensive in nature. BBC News (2014).

[10] The dramatic deterioration of US-Russian relations at this same time also contributed to the general decline of the EU's relations with the EU. For example, U.S. legislation passed in 2012 targeting Russian political leaders associated with President Putin for their presumed role in the death of the Russian civil rights lawyer Sergei Magnitsky received a very hostile response in Moscow. (Seddon and Buckley, 2016)

[11] Richard Sakwa maintains that EU policy has consistently attempted to exclude Russian from Europe. See Sakwa (2015b) and Sakwa (2015a).

Almost immediately the European Union and the United States introduced sanctions against Russia as punishment for its military intervention in Ukraine and in the hope of convincing the Russians to rethink their policy and to withdraw their support and their troops from the *de facto* Ukrainian civil war. As Peter van Ham has noted,

> Since Russia's annexation of Crimea (in March 2014) and its on-going support for anti-government rebels in eastern Ukraine, relations with the EU have deteriorated. The EU no longer considers Russia a strategic partner and has made it clear that its sanctions policy will remain in place until Russia is prepared to recognize the integrity and sovereignty of its neighbours. (Van Ham, 2015, p. 3)

3. The Russian Challenge to the European Order

More than three years after the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine, of Russian intervention in that crisis, and the introduction of Western sanctions, little has changed in the overall relationship. Russia has proven to be more resilient than many in the West had expected and, despite the collapse in international energy prices and the costs associated with the sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States, the Russian economy appears to be in the process stabilizing, with growth of 1.1 and 1.2 percent predicted for 2017 and 2018 (Nelson, 2017, p. 6). More important, the sanctions and the ensuing domestic economic problems in Russia have not influenced the political leadership – or the general population, for that matter – to initiate a significant shift in Russian policy. In fact, Russia's assertive policy in Ukraine, as well as more recently in Syria, have become an important part of the Putin regime's strengthening of is political support among a large portion of the population – this is despite the economic malaise already noted as a result of the economic sanctions.

As we have demonstrated throughout this discussion, Russian relations with the EU have declined precipitously since the turn of the century and the commitment under President Putin to reestablish Russia's dominant role in regional and global affairs. Given the Russian political elite's commitment to re-establishing Russia's place as a major global power, as well as its own control over the Russian domestic political system, assertive nationalism by the Russian Federation has become an important instrument in accomplishing both of those objectives. The EU, which a quarter century ago was viewed in Moscow as a benign development, is now seen as a competitor for influence in post-Soviet space and as an impediment to Russia's reestablishing itself as the dominant actor in Eurasia and as a major player in global affairs. This competition lay at the root of the confrontation that exploded in Ukraine in 2013-14 and that continues to sour relations four years later.

Prospects for a significant improvement in relations in the foreseeable future are not good, since the longer-term goals of Russia and those of the EU contradict one another.[12] The Russian leadership's commitment to reestablish a dominant position across as much of Eurasia as possible come into direct conflict with the specific EU objectives of stabilizing post-Soviet space in eastern Europe and the more general objectives that have been in place ever since the Second World War of establishing and strengthening, along with the United States, the liberal international order that has been dominant for the past quarter century.

As Russian leaders from Vladimir Putin to Sergei Lavrov have made most clear in recent years, Moscow does not accept the fundamental principles that underlie the current international system and will do whatever it can to undermine that system. Military intervention in Georgia and Ukraine, cyber attacks against a range of post-communist states, support for radical nationalist groups in EU member countries, meddling in the electoral processes of democratic states in Europe and North America are all tools that Russia has used in recent years to help to weaken the Western-dominated international system in place since the end of the cold war.[13] The confrontation between Russia and the European Union will continue until one side or the other abandons some of the objectives that have been central to its policy – in effect, to its sense of identity – which is highly unlikely to occur in the near future.

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[12] The following argument is based on the assumption that the commitment to an integrated Europe that has characterized the EU for the past half century continues to flourish. The author is well aware of the negative implications of the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom and the rise of authoritarian and nationalist political movements across many EU countries for the continued strengthening of integration.

[13] For a more complete discussion of this issue see Kanet (2017).

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_5

The battle of giants: the collision of EU and Russian foreign policies towards the contested neighbourhood and the Ukrainian crisis

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Abstract:

This paper critically interprets the international dimension of the Ukrainian crisis to reflect upon dynamics of power and security in the broader European space. It argues this crisis to be simultaneously the result and the intensifier of the collision of antagonist and mutually exclusive foreign policies towards the contested neighbourhood by the EU and Russia. For that purpose, it provides an overview of EU and Russian policies towards this region, followed by the discussion of the Ukrainian crisis in the midst of what can be considered to be a battle of giants for regional power and security.

Keywords: Contested neighbourhood; European Union; Russia; Security; Ukrainian crisis.

Introduction

The Ukrainian crisis is arguably one of the most pressing events in the broader framework of post-Cold War European security. It challenged the argument that the Nobel-awarded European Union (EU) had successfully maintained peace in Europe and triggered fears about the possibility of violence escalation at the regional level. Notwithstanding its internal dimension related to the incomplete transition of the country after its independence and the persistence of structural problems, such as nepotism, corruption, abuse of power and human rights' violations, this paper argues that the Ukrainian crisis has a clear international dimension to it. When analysed from an international perspective, the tumultuous events that started in Kiev in November 2013 cannot be dissociated from the competition between the EU and Russia for power and security in their shared neighbourhood.

Arguably, countries in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus have been central to the regional strategies of both Brussels and Moscow from the early 1990s onwards. The end of the Cold War induced significant changes on dynamics of power and security across the broader European space. As the EU and Russia developed mechanisms to cope with this new reality and redefine their regional and security agendas it became clear that internal and external security were indissociably linked. Therefore, new frameworks for relations were developed aiming at assuring that external threats would not destabilise their respective internal orders, and that their power could create sources of influence beyond their borders thus allowing for the regional projection of these actors and the establishment of a first line of defence from the outer world. During the 1990s, EU and Russian policies towards this region were rather low profile mainly due to internal dynamics. Whereas the EU was very much focused on developing its foreign policy competences and preparing the Eastern enlargement; Russia was engaged in solving issues inherited from more than 40 years of global bipolar confrontation and the manifold challenges deriving from the disintegration of the Soviet Union – including political instability, economic crisis, social turmoil and the lack of agreement between political elites (e.g. Eurasianists, Atlanticists and Nationalists) (White, 2012, pp. 305-318).

Since the EU's Eastern enlargement in 2004, the EU and Russia share a common neighbourhood in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. If until then their projection of power towards these regions had been secondary to other political and security concerns, now this space becomes an area of contested interests by the EU and Russia something that has had important consequences for the dynamics of power produced by and reflected in interactions between these two regional giants. As a result, the EU-Russia-shared neighbourhood triangle has been marred by several struggles for power conferring and antagonistic tone to relations between Brussels and Moscow. This paper envisages to critically analysing these struggles for power by focusing on the Ukrainian crisis as simultaneously the result and the intensifier of dynamics of power and security in the EU-Russia-contested neighbourhood triangle.

In order to delve into this complex topic, the paper starts by providing an overview of EU frameworks for relations with countries in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. The second part of the paper presents the main foreign policy tools used by Russia to engage countries in its near abroad and boost its regional influence. The third part of the paper puts these conflicting approaches into comparison and uses the Ukrainian crisis to illustrate how antagonistic interests and strategies towards the same drove the EU and Russia into a route of collision. The final part of the paper focuses on the Ukrainian crisis as an event leading to the intensification of the EU-Russia dispute for influence over an area of common interests and a more vocal mutual-demonization that has increasingly gained the contours of a regional battle of giants between Brussels and Moscow.

1. EU Neighbouring Policies Eastwards: From Subtle Partnerships to Powerful Associations

The post-Cold War geopolitical landscape posed important challenges to the EU and encouraged the development and consolidation of a foreign policy dimension in order to prevent eventual scenarios of political volatility and economic chaos to contaminate its internal stability. However, during the 1990s and early 2000s, EU foreign policies were at a very embryonic stage and the great bulk of attention on regional issues was devoted to the Enlargement process. For these reasons, EU political and economic relations with the post-Soviet space were essentially kept at a technical level and security issues seldom figured on the agenda.

Relations with countries within this area were legally framed by Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) signed during the 1990s. Based on a commitment to promote international peace and security, PCAs provided frameworks for cooperation in several areas, from political dialogue and economic cooperation, to culture, science and technical assistance (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, and Ukraine, 1998). At a first glance, PCAs are mainly technical and economic documents. A more in-depth analysis, however, makes visible their entrenched political nature operationalised by a number of evolutionistic and conditionality-driven clauses aiming at promoting greater integration into the EU. Conditionality mechanisms worked along a socialising axis promoting the internalization of EU norms and values by partner states. Together, these strategies gave PCAs the potential to become a powerful tool shaping the Union's political environment in its vicinity (Börzel, Stahn, & Pamuk, 2010, pp. 140-142). Due to EU internal political dynamics – focus on the development of new foreign policy instruments and on the Enlargement process –, and to internal challenges experienced by post-Soviet states following their independence – the arduous quadruple transition they had to engage with (Kuzio, 2001) –, PCAs never reached their full potential, thus failing to achieve their political and economic goals (Ghazaryan, 2010, p. 226).

Despite the initial impetus to develop channels for relations with countries in the post-Soviet space, the EU remained a rather subtle player in the region until the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2003. As the Eastern enlargement came to completion, the EU started to shift its focus of attention on foreign policy issues to countries in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus (Casier, 2012, pp. 32-33). Awareness of the – perceived – risk of contagion of security issues in the EU's new neighbourhood gradually paved the way for affirming the EU as a regional player and security provider.

The reasoning was straightforward. The EU needs to assume its responsibility as a 'real global player' by developing a 'proximity policy' centred on the Union's power of attraction (Prodi, 2002) in order to secure the environment at its new vicinity. This was due to the fact that 'stability, prosperity, shared values and the rule of law along our borders are fundamental for our own security' and thus 'failure in any of these areas will lead to increased risks of negative spill over on the Union' (Patten & Solana, 2002, pp. 1-2). Progressively, a trend emphasising the indissoluble nature of internal and external aspects of security (European Council, 2003) became more pronounced in EU discourses and official documents cementing the central rationale of EU neighbouring strategies as an extension of inner security concerns for the promotion of prosperity, stability and security abroad is seemingly driven by the necessity to prevent regional events and disturbances from contaminating the EU's internal order (Averre, 2009, pp. 1693-1694).

As a result, the ENP emerged as the new framework for relations with neighbouring countries from a clear security standpoint, something that represented a move forward regarding the subtle nature of political and security issues as framed by PCAs. The security-oriented nature of the ENP is something hardly contested in the literature on the topic (see e.g. Attinà, 2004; Averre, 2010; Christou, 2010; Dias, 2013). This becomes clear in the analysis of its foundational documents were the goals of creating a 'ring of friends', 'avoid new dividing lines in Europe' and 'promote stability and prosperity' across the broader European space are clearly stated, thus rendering visible the primary intention of protecting the EU from external threats (European Commission, 2003). The evolution of the ENP has also confirmed this emphasis on security as it appears as the dominant narrative, thus performing a structural role in the development and deployment of this policy and related initiatives from inception (Cianciara, 2017).

This self-interested ambition to secure the environment at the EU's borders has an important transformative dimension. Privileged relations promoting political and economic stability in the neighbourhood were based on the export of the Union's liberal model and on the EU's ability to unilaterally dictate what is normal and acceptable (Boedeltje & van Houtum, 2011; Nilsson & Silander, 2016). Nonetheless, the potential to do so was compromised by the unwillingness of European elites to include any membership prospects under the framework of the ENP (European Commission, 2004, p. 3) or to accommodate a more agential role by neighbouring countries in the design and development of this policy.

Such transformative impetus sheds light on the structural and powerful nature of the ENP. However, limited political achievements under this framework for relations – e.g. the lack of democratic improvements in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, the Russian-Georgian war in 2008, the dire economic crises experienced by countries in the region in 2009, as well as the vulnerability of energy supplies from the mid-2000s onwards – reinforced EU claims that security, stability and economic development remained key challenges in its Eastern vicinity (Boonstra & Shapovalova, 2010).

Against this fragile contextual environment, the EU endorsed the Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative in 2009. The purpose was to reinforce its footprint in the region as a means to better accomplish the security goals underpinning EU policies eastwards. The main novelty of the EaP is its dual-track approach combining bilateral relations – envisaging EU neighbours' political association with and economic integration into the EU – with a multilateral track – supporting regional cooperation and stronger interdependence links amongst EaP partners (European Council, 2009). Of most relevance to power and security relations in the broader European space is the introduction of Association Agreements (AAs), a new political instrument aiming at superseding PCAs as the legal basis for EU relations with the neighbourhood. The underlying goal was "to create a closer relationship between the EU and each of the partner countries to foster their stability and prosperity in our mutual interests" (European Commission, 2008b, p. 3). Far from representing a break with the *modus operandi* of the ENP, as it continued the tradition of forging relation based on conditionality and socialisation mechanisms conveying the EU's structural power over the neighbourhood, the EaP voices clearly the Union's ambition of becoming a more "proactive and unequivocal actor in the region for security reasons" (European Commission, 2008b, p. 2).

AAs enhanced by Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) are arguably instruments of EU structural power with strong impacts on the domestic systems of signatory countries and on their regional setting (Tyushka, 2016). These documents contain detailed and binding provisions on associated countries to align their policies with around 80-90% of the *acquis communautaire*, including economic, legal and regulatory convergence with EU standards. Moving far beyond technicalities, AAs are mostly about transforming the quality of democracy, governance and the rule of law of neighbouring countries. Even if no membership is envisaged, associated countries are expected to become EU shadow member states (Wolczuk, 2014). The fact that DCFTAs are hardly beneficial to the EU – since eastern neighbours are relatively insignificant trade partners in the broader scope of EU commercial relations –, sheds light on the political and security-oriented nature of AAs and their ultimate purpose of dragging neighbouring countries into the EU's orbit of influence, something that clashes with Russia's own policies towards the contested neighbourhood, to which this paper now turns.

2. Russian Policies towards the Post-Soviet Space: In Defence of Moscow's Traditional Sphere of Influence

Following the dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia engaged on complex and simultaneous processes of political, economic, social and identity transition. In the foreign policy domain, an internal debate emerged on what role Russia should perform at the regional and global levels in the post-Cold War context (Dias, 2013, p. 261). After a short period where the willingness to foster close relations with the West and an introspective stance towards the post-Soviet space featured more prominently in Moscow's agenda (Trenin, 2009, p. 8), two clear axis started to give structure to Russia's foreign policies. On the one hand, Russian policies should play to the overarching goal of counterbalancing Western powers' influence in regional and global affairs and of dissuading their interference in its traditional sphere of influence. On the other hand, Russia needed to engage in strategies and political arrangements to consolidate its leverage in the post-Soviet space (Russian Federation, 1993).

Steadily, Russia developed an assertive and pragmatic foreign policy aiming at reinforcing its hegemonic status in the region by supporting cooperation between member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). This focus on its near abroad reflects Russian understandings that domestic and regional security and stability work in tandem and therefore, Moscow can only reach its full potential as a great power if surrounded by friendly regimes, regardless of their political orientations (Joenniemi, 2008; Selezneva, 2003, p. 26). The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation is clear in this regard, stating that "differences between domestic and external means of ensuring national interests and security are gradually disappearing [… and thus the] development of […] cooperation with CIS member states constitutes a priority area of Russia's foreign policy" (Russian Federation, 2008).

Here we can identify an important commonality between EU and Russian regional strategies, as both actors rely on the premise of the indissoluble interconnection of internal and external dimensions of security to give body to their foreign policy agendas. Furthermore, as Russia identifies the post-Soviet space as its principal area of influence, it is concerned about external interferences within this region capable of inducing domestic changes unfavourable to Moscow's interests (Judah, Kobzova, & Popescu, 2011, p. 23). It is in this level of analysis that we can understand Russia's reluctance before the EU's increasing involvement eastwards, as it fears the ability of Brussels to persuade countries in the contested neighbourhood to gravitate around the EU (Dias, 2013, p. 262), something that clashes with Russian ambitions to retain the monopoly of strategic influence in its near abroad (Herd, 2010, p. 14).

Overall, Russia's relations with its vicinity have been based on its comparative advantages and on strategies crosscutting the military, political and economic fields aiming at maximizing gains and minimizing perceived geopolitical losses from the expansion of Western institutions – the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Relations with the near abroad are highly asymmetrical and envisage to perpetrate dependencies in the region favouring the maintenance of Russia as the hegemonic power in the post-Soviet space (Baev, 2007; Dias, 2014). Examples of asymmetric relations of power in the region include the presence of Russian troops in the post-Soviet space and Russia's crucial, though not impartial, role in all the protracted conflicts in the region as a means to provide Moscow with the levers to influence domestic politics in its vicinity and constrain their foreign policy choices (Trenin, 2009, p. 11).

These goals are reinforced by strong and highly unbalanced economic links between Russia and its neighbours. Here attempts at economic integration and increasing interdependence have been reinforced by the acquisition of large shares on the main economic sectors in the region and the accentuation of Russia as its neighbours' preferential market and major employer of labour migrants in the post-Soviet space (Tsygankov, 2006, pp. 147-148). Within this more economic-oriented seduction strategy, energy has been playing a major role as a toll of positive and negative conditionality. This means that Russia has had a record of rewarding friendly regimes with price reductions and debt pardons, whereas unfriendly regimes have faced consequences such as energy embargoes and enormous price rises (Wolczuk, 2016, p. 3). The politization of energy by Russia had become clear following the gas crises with Ukraine and Belarus since the mid-2000s. Despite arguments presenting these contentions as natural flows of market-related fluctuations, the fact that energy crises in the post-Soviet places tend to match political events unfavourable to Russian interests – e.g. the colourful revolutions of 2004 and 2005 – and that the Russian president often appears as the main interlocutor in the resolution of tensions in this sector, suggests that energy has been used by the Kremlin as a political tool to reinforce its footprint in regional affairs and either reward or punish its neighbouring countries for their foreign policies (Closson, 2009; Makarychev, 2008; Perovic, 2009).

Other important strategies by Russia include the support to pro-Russian political parties and non-governmental organizations in its vicinity and a more recent emphasis on the concept of sovereign democracy as an alternative to the liberal agenda enforced by the EU (Tolstrup, 2009, pp. 932-933). The goal is to present a normative agenda – based on a combination of authoritarian rule, a minimalist understanding of democracy, and the ability to deploy foreign policy strategies regardless of the perceptions and interests of powers outside the post-Soviet space – that can rival with the EU's increasing interference in Russia's traditional area of influence and interests (Finkel & Brudny, 2012; White, 2012, p. 358) –, thus conferring a strong socialising axis to Russian foreign policies.

Regional integration initiatives reflecting a certain degree of mimicry of EU approaches towards the contested neighbourhood also play a meaningful role in preserving Russian regional advantages by acting as vehicles promoting its interests (Stent, 2008). The first initiative of sorts was the CIS established in 1991 as a means of forging a special socioeconomic and security relations in the former Soviet space. Despite the limited record of regional integration promotion – with only a limited number of member-states endorsing all CIS initiatives –, this organisation has proven to have immense resilience and adaptability to its broader regional environment. Over time its competencies grew in scope and depth and the CIS has now supranational powers in several areas and has opened important avenues for the gradual deepening of economic and military integration in the region. In 2007, a far-reaching concept for the development of this organization was approved to promote long-term political and economic integration in the post-Soviet space, even though only Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Armenia have signed this document (White, 2012, pp. 293).

The CIS mission has been strictly articulated with other Russian-led regional integration initiatives, such as the Common Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Union (EaU). Whereas the former is a political-military alliance relying on the principle of collective security with a paramount role as the motor of security integration in the post-Soviet space, the latter represents a more holistic approach to regional integration. Largely inspired by the EU integration process, the EaU started as a free trade area agreement between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia in 1996, but has soon enlarged its objectives to include the creation of a customs union and a single economic space managed at the supranational level, which has come into existence in 2012, as part of a more inclusive project. Officially launched in 2015, the EaU is a regional organisation of economic cooperation envisaging to place Russia at the centre of integration processes in the post-Soviet space and turn it into the privileged rule maker as a means of protecting Russia's hegemonic status in the region – from EU interferences – and of bolstering its identity as the uncontested and historical leader in the former Soviet space. As contended by Tsygankov (2015, p. 291), the EaU is "not strictly an economic arrangement, but also an alternative means of defending sovereignty and national identity from encroachment by the EU". In this regard, Russia is seemingly reproducing the EU model for regional integration by creating opportunities for cooperation spillover into new areas and fostering the transference of powers from the national to the supranational level – a level where Moscow has a stronger bargaining chip than its neighbours – aiming at reversing the perception that, contrary to the EU, Russia does not provide an attractive model for regional integration and modernization (Averre, 2005, p. 187).

Overall, Russian foreign policies towards the near abroad have combined different instruments and strategies to preserve asymmetrical relations in the post-Soviet space and reaffirm Russia as the uncontested leader in this area. Even if Russian-led initiatives are far from delivering the desired levels of regional integration they are clear in conveying the fundamental strategic role of the post-Soviet space to Moscow's political identity – it is only by controlling and securing events beyond its borders that Russia can assure its internal stability and its affirmation as a meaningful and powerful global player. For this understanding is very similar to that enforced by the EU, it has had important consequences for the unfolding of regional dynamics of power and security, especially in the context of EU-Russia competition over a common area of interests and desired influence, something that the next section argues climaxed into the Ukrainian crisis.

3. The Collision of EU and Russian Policies towards the Contested Neighbourhood and the Ukrainian Crisis

Notwithstanding clear differences between the EU and Russia – as the former is a regional organisation with a complex and multi-level system of decision-making and the latter is a traditional power with well-defined and focused foreign interests (Casier, 2016, p. 27) – the previous sections revealed both these actors to pursue a very similar approach towards their shared neighbourhood. As the EU and Russia embrace a broad understanding of security, whereby their internal stability and their reliability as global powers are dependent on their ability to control and influence what happens beyond their borders (Nitoiu, 2011, p. 462), their common vicinity emerges as a contested field marred by struggles for power and competing agendas.

This is not to say that the EU and Russia have their backs turn on each other permanently. On the opposite, Brussels and Moscow are keen to recognise the interdependent nature of European security and are willing to cooperate in a number of fields (Headley, 2012, p. 445). Cooperation between the EU and Russia has been initially framed by the PCA ratified in 1997, and has been reinforced by instruments such as the EU Northern Dimension launched in 1999, the EU Common Strategy on Russia approved in 1999, the Russian Medium Term Strategy for Development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union presented in 1999, and the Four Common Spaces established in 2003 under the framework of the existing PCA. These frameworks for relations reflect the understanding that the EU and Russia are strategic partners and that European challenges cannot be addressed without a cooperative and working relationship (Flenley, 2008, pp. 198-199). As a result, since the early 1990s EU-Russia relations have become highly institutionalised and were enlarged to include cooperation in a number of fields, including economic issues, energy, science, technology, education and security (Potemkina, 2010).

However, in areas relating to their common vicinity relations have not been smooth. To initial focus of tension associated with Russian concerns about being treated as a junior partner by the EU, the post-Enlargement regional configuration and Brussels increasing focus on Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, along Moscow's more assertive and pragmatic agenda under the rule of Vladimir Putin inserted a considerable dose of complexity and contention in EU-Russia relations (Haukkala, 2015). EU neighbouring policies caused considerable distrust amongst political elites in Moscow who saw them as an attempt to extend the EU's power eastwards. This view was derived from and exacerbated by the colourful revolutions in the post-Soviet space signalling a significant shift in terms of EU democracy promotion policies in the region (Gromadzki, *et al.*, 2005, p. 15). EU support to these movements was perceived in Moscow as a revival of the Cold War geopolitical thinking in Europe and EU neighbouring policies were perceived as the source of new challenges and rivalry in the post-Soviet space (Barysch & Grant, 2004). As Russia is itself eager to strengthen its power and influence towards the region, the ENP and the EaP became cornerstone causes of tension and a motor of tension escalation between Brussels and Moscow. This directed Russia to adopt more assertive and pragmatic approaches towards the region (Trenin, 2008, p. 106), including several energy crisis with neighbours whenever they committed themselves to the path of European integration (Mangott & Westphal, 2008).

Russia's negative reaction to the ENP and its related initiatives, and the EU's negative attitude towards Russian-led regional initiatives, confirms the common vicinity as a place of contention where a mutually exclusive understanding of regional integration in this area prevails (Dias, 2013). The speech delivered by Vladimir Putin at the Munich Security Conference in 2007 illustrates an increasing level of tension between Russia and the EU. Expressing dissatisfaction with the existing situation in Kosovo and the United Stated-led anti-missile defence system in Europe, he criticised the civilizational discourse that often supports West interventions and the powerful ambitions underpinning EU and NATO expansion towards Russia's traditional sphere of influence (Putin, 2007).

Another focus of tension emerged with the Russia-Georgia war of 2008. Consequently, the EU suspended negotiations on the new PCA with Russia. However, political dialogue was soon resumed as the EU assumed a mediating role in the conflict (Freire, 2014, p. 44), revealing Brussels' intention to maintain a cooperative string in relations with Russia. At this point, negotiations on a New Basic Agreement were launched in order to provide a more comprehensive framework for EU-Russia cooperation.

Despite this attempt to revive EU-Russia relations, competing trends and discursive practices were now clearly voiced by Brussels and Moscow. At the EU level, it is noticeable a gradual construction of Russia as a threat to European security leading to harsher discourses. In this regard, the Review of EU-Russia relations provides important insights on how the EU perceives its positioning in the ladder of power at the regional level: "The EU can approach its relationship with Russia with a certain confidence. Economically, Russia needs the EU. […] Russia needs to modernize and diversify its economy. The EU is a natural partner for this process" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 2). This excerpt exposes the asymmetrical nature of EU-Russia relations and the fact that, from the EU's standpoint, Brussels should assume the role of front-runner not only due to Moscow's economic and energy dependence, but also because the Union envisaged to play a meaningful in guiding Russia into proper behaviour at the national, regional and international levels. Furthermore, this document states that the EU should actively pursue its own interests in the context of relations with Russia, while simultaneously condemning the "disproportionate Russian reaction" in Georgia (European Commission, 2008a), thus further acknowledging a contested field in the shared neighbourhood.

The war between Georgia and Russia marked a turning point in EU perceptions of its role in regional security. By reinforcing the image of Russia as a regional threat, it allowed for a greater internal prioritization of the frozen conflicts in the Eastern neighbourhood in the EU's agenda, something that had remain highly under-securitised until that point (Simão & Dias, 2016, p. 106). As a result, the EU deployed the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia and took a leading mediating role in the Geneva peace talks. Besides the EU was now willing to promote a strategy of engagement without recognition with the separatist states of Eurasia aiming at undermining Russia's strategy of isolating these entities from the international community (Semneby, 2012).

These reinforcement of the EU's footprint in the Eastern neighbourhood triggered more assertive Russian responses in the region and harsher positioning regarding the EU. Moscow was now more vocal in its condemnation of EU neighbouring policies and initiatives concerning their common vicinity. Regarding the launch of the EaP in 2009 as a response to events in the region, then Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov accused the EU of carving out a new sphere of influence in Russia's own backyard and creating new dividing lines in Europe (Ria Novosti, 2009). The EU-Russia summit of 2009 exposed even further the mistrust and disagreement between the two sides, when President Medvedev suggested that "the EU itself did not know yet why it needs the Eastern Partnership", even if stressing that he did not want the initiative "to turn into a partnership against Russia" (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2009). This echoed in the EU and consolidated a trend labelling Russia as a hostile power relying on Cold War notions of spheres of influence, particularly whenever it tries to block EU neighbouring policies and initiatives (Trenin, 2009, pp. 3-4).

Competition over the contested neighbourhood was revived in March 2012, when Vladimir Putin announced its ambition of creating the EaU as an alternative to European integration and a means to obstruct the Union's growing engagement in its near abroad (Emerson, 2014, p. 5). This competition reached its high point in the context of the Ukrainian crisis. Ukraine's last minute withdrawal from signing the AA/DCFTA with the EU at the EaP summit in Vilnius in November 2013, following a non-transparent meeting with President Vladimir Putin, was mostly perceived in the EU as a flagrant interference by Russia on the country's process of European integration. This caused great frustration in Ukraine's civil society triggering the Euromaidan movement and ultimately leading to the dismissal of President Viktor Yanukovitch and the election of a more pro-European government (Sotiriou, 2016, p. 58). This crisis was perceived by Moscow as a Western-driven "anti-constitutional takeover, an armed seizure of power" (Putin, 2014) directed against Russian interests in the region.

Fierce dissatisfaction in Moscow regarding the Euromaidan movement and claims for further engagement with the EU in Ukraine were translated into increasing support to separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. To a perceived loss of influence in its neighbourhood, Moscow countered by taking full military control of Crimea, which was followed by a hastily organised referendum on March 16. As a result of this referendum, the peninsula was incorporated into Russian territory thus making Ukraine's loss of this region a *fait accompli*. A series of uprisings in Eastern Ukraine followed, contributing to the ongoing destabilisation of the country, which was accompanied by an international campaign whereby

Russia constructed and spread the image of Kiev as a source of regional insecurity with the intended aim to make EU support to and investments in the country less attractive (Haukkala, 2015, p. 34).

Perceiving these events as an EU-led coup aiming at undermining Russian influence in the region, Moscow took an active role in the internal conflict between pro-Europeans and pro-Russians in the country, and provided support to separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine. Along with the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, this enabled Russia to send a clear message to their neighbours – full control of their territories can only be achieved by aligning with Russia, whereas further integration into the EU and NATO will have serious consequences to their territorial integrity (Simão, 2016; Sirbiladze, 2015).

In this regard, the Ukrainian crisis appears as the culmination of a long drift between the EU and Russia regarding their power strategies in the contested neighbourhood. Notwithstanding, the internal dimension of this crisis related to the fragile economic record of the country and a profound popular dissatisfaction with what they perceive to be corrupt political elites, the broader regional scenario cannot be disregarded. Ultimately, the Ukrainian crisis is the clashing point of processes of development and enforcement of two conflicting agendas regarding a common sphere of influence. It is a battle of two regional giants for power and influence in the contested neighbourhood.

Far from representing the end of a process, the Ukrainian crisis has played a pivotal role to the unfolding of competing trends at the regional level. The next section reflects upon this evolution in order to shed light on the features of a new stage of EU-Russia relations and dispute for power in the contested neighbourhood. A stage where the antagonism of EU and Russia regional agendas is now clearly assumed and the demonization of the other becomes clear in political discourses, with serious consequences for the future of European security *lato sensu.*

4. EU-Russia Relations During and After the Ukrainian Crisis

Previous sections reflected upon the competing nature of EU and Russia regional agendas and the dynamics of power and security they produce and reproduce. In that regard, and from a critical standpoint, the Ukrainian crisis is arguably the point where EU and Russia antagonistic projects collided. However, rather than representing the end of a process, events in Ukraine inaugurated a new stage of confrontation between two regional giants. In the post-Ukrainian crisis scenario security concerns and powerful agendas are now more clearly assumed by the EU and Russia. This has had influences in their bilateral relationship, which is currently underpinned by mutual distrust, and perceptions of each other as their respective significant opponent, thus reinforcing the mutually exclusive nature of EU and Russian regional endeavours. As such, a focus on the international dimension of the Ukrainian crisis reveals the moment when the EU and Russia security approaches towards the contested neighbourhood clashed, turning the broader European space into a more insecure space.

Ukraine's imposed choice between closer integration with either Moscow or Brussels in 2013 thus took a symbolic dimension. Although both sides denied they were exerting any pressure on Kyiv, in practice a clear and mutually exclusive choice was put to the country: closer European integration meant losing Russia; and closer integration with Moscow meant losing the path of European integration (Casier, 2016, p. 21; Nilsson & Silander, 2016, p. 55). This is all the most visible in Russian President Vladimir Putin statement when questioned about the possibility of Ukraine simultaneously joining the DCFTA with the EU and the Customs Union with Russia

> No, it would not be possible. It would be impossible because that association assumes the creation of a free trade zone between the European Union and Ukraine. Within the framework of that zone, Ukraine takes on the responsibility to implement the European Union's trade rules and trade policy within its territory (Putin, 2013).

The Ukrainian crisis seriously undermined EU-Russia relations and translated itself into the suspension of bilateral cooperation, irregular EU-Russia summits and the interruption of negotiations on a New Basic Agreement superseding the PCA. Furthermore, it instigated the application of a three-tier strategy of sanctions against Russia, to which Moscow responded with a range of counter-sanctions to the EU, thus turning the sanctions dance into an economic warfare. Following the Ukrainian crisis and the applications of sanctions to Russia, developments in the economy of the country were mainly negative with a significant role also played by the fall of oil prices (Davis, 2016). However, the official discourse in the Kremlin undervalues the negative impact of EU sanctions preferring to see them as an opportunity to revamp Russian agricultural and resource output, and domestic production (Euronews, 2017).

More than expanding Russia's effective control beyond its borders, more muscular initiatives in the neighbourhood as a response to perceived strategic advances of external powers – e.g. the Russian-Georgian War of August 2008, the ensuing recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the ongoing support to rebels in Luhansk and Donetsk – are sending a clear message to the EU that Moscow will not tolerate any interference in its traditional sphere of influence (Laenen, 2012, p. 26).

Against this scenario, the EU was keen to adapt its discursive practices. The trend has been to reinforce the EU's hegemonic regional role, for it believes this is the only route to strengthen its global actorness and to preserve regional security essential to its internal prosperity. Tumultuous events in the neighbourhood are now portrayed not as a failure of EU foreign and neighbourhood policies or of insufficient instruments and ineffective application, but as the result of lacking and insufficiently strong engagement in the EU's vicinity – "if we want to promote a more peaceful world, we will need more Europe and more Union in our foreign policy" (Juncker, 2015, p. 20). The EU's commitment to promoting peace and security across Europe, assumes now a more confrontational tone regarding Russia's interventions in the shared neighbourhood. The European Commission makes clear that "the security and the borders of EU Member States are untouchable" and that this should "be understood very clearly in Moscow" (Juncker, 2015, p. 21). Whenever Russia endangers the European political environment, the EU will be prepared to show it the cost of confrontation, namely via sanctions. With this bold and pragmatic line of action, the EU envisages to take a leading role on regional matters and reinforce the Europeanisation of its neighbours. The latest review of the ENP consolidated the understanding of Russia as a threat to European security and takes notice of the deterioration of EU-Russia relations as a result of the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilisation of Eastern Ukraine (European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015).

Against a scenario of increasing instability at its borders the EU responded with mechanisms of political stabilisation and economic aid but also with the deployment of an Advisory Mission on civilian security reform under the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (European Council, 2015, p. 8), although the EU's overall response to the Ukrainian crisis can be interpreted as too little, too late, particularly from the perspective of Ukrainian elites, who have been demanding a more active role by the EU in the resolution of this crisis and in adopting a more punitive stance towards Russia's aggressive regional manoeuvres (Yushchenko, 2014).

5. Conclusion

EU-Russia relations have been traditionally characterised by a dichotomy between strategic cooperation and rising antagonism over their common neighbourhood (Averre, 2009; Nitoiu, 2016). Political dialogue appears to be trapped on Russian accusations of EU interferences in its internal affairs and its traditional area of influence, and EU uneasiness about Russian undemocratic practices and muscular approach towards its near abroad. The mixing of competing and cooperative strings in EU-Russia relations means that both Russia and the EU acknowledge the relevance of the other and strategic benefits from mutual understanding and cooperation, but they also recognise entrenched differences and incompatibilities on their understandings and regional approaches (Freire, 2008, p. 54). One of the greatest causes of tension between Brussels and Moscow is the shared neighbourhood, which appears as a contested field of struggles for power and the ultimate stage of competition between their respective regional initiatives.

Contentions over the shared neighbourhood do not mean that the EU and Russia have their backs turned on each other permanently, for both sides recognise the need to cooperate in strategic fields due to the intricate nature of security threats. However, struggles for power and security dynamics between the EU and Russia have often been more visible in forms different from a cooperative one, whenever their privileged interests – the need to secure their regional setting as a condition for internal security and stability – are on the table, revealing that EU-Russia relations result from the sensitive and difficult balance between a strategic partnership with a cooperative tone and a regional competition for power and security.

Both parties understand their own policies as an inevitable response to the threatening initiatives of the other. EU and Russian policies thus come across as manoeuvres of adjustment to an evolving political, economic and security context at their borders. Consequently, both Brussels and Moscow attempt to block each other strategies in the region because they perceive their approaches towards this space as mutually exclusive. In that regard, EU and Russian foreign policies are created in tandem, resulting from a complex process of cooperation in key sectors and a strategic competition over a common area of influence. This simultaneously reinforces the hegemonic nature of their regional processes, propels the ongoing processes of securitisation of their shared neighbourhood and adds to the competitiveness and mutual distrust that underpins their relations and regional dynamics of power and security. The outcome is a struggle for power in the region resulting from, and intensifying, processes of securitisation in the shared neighbourhood, that reached its peak during the Ukrainian crisis, something that rather than fulfilling the security interests of the EU and Russia has raised awareness for the fragility of European security and the need for an open and working dialogue between these two regional giants if European peace is to be preserved.

This is particularly conspicuous in the post-Ukrainian crisis context, which triggered a move from tense but cooperative relations to a much more antagonistic pattern of relations. To some degree, events in Ukraine can be interpreted as a proxy conflict between the EU and Russia (Haukkala, 2015, p. 37). This sheds light on the interconnectedness, multiple and often clashing articulations of power and security dynamics in the EU-Russia-shared neighbourhood triangle, not without consequences to the unfolding of EU and Russian hegemonic agendas and the broader European security.

Ironically, and despite the security-oriented rationale underpinning both EU and Russian strategies towards the contested neighbourhood, struggles for power in this space raised regional insecurity to more dangerous levels. Attempts made to provide a solution to the annexation of Crimea and the confrontations in Donetsk and Luhansk, namely under the so-called Minsk agreements, failed to provide any working schemes for conflict resolution and transformation. So far levels of tension in Eastern Ukraine remain high, and the death toll from mid-April 2014 stands at nearly 10 000 with another almost 23 000 people injured (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2016; Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016). This pressing scenario makes it urgent to critically think about the results of antagonistic views on the future of Europe and on the need to create new mechanisms for dialogue and effective cooperation based on a comprehensive and inclusive – rather than self-centred and exclusive – understanding of security and the interconnected relationship between internal and external stability, not only between Brussels and Moscow, but also between them and the subject of their powerful strategies: the countries in the shared neighbourhood.

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_6

Desafios da Política Externa Europeia no Cáucaso do Sul: Os Limites da Geopolítica de Base Normativa

European Foreign Policy Challenges in the South Caucasus: The Limits of a Normative-Based Geopolitics

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Resumo:

Este artigo analisa as relações da União Europeia (UE) com os países do Cáucaso do Sul, Arménia, Azerbaijão e Geórgia, no âmbito da Política Europeia de Vizinhança (PEV). A análise centra-se na interação entre a exportação dos modelos de governação e normas europeias e as ambições geopolíticas e de segurança da União. O argumento central defende que a ação securitária da UE, nomeadamente na transformação positiva dos conflitos armados da região, tem sido limitada pela abordagem despolitizada que a PEV promove e que beneficiaria de uma abordagem onde a dimensão política do modelo de estabilização regional da UE fosse assumida.

Palavras chave: União Europeia, Cáucaso do Sul, Política Europeia de Vizinhança, governação, geopolítica

Abstract:

This article analyses EU relations with the South Caucasus countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The analysis centers on the interaction between the export of governance models and European norms and the security and geopolitical ambitions of the Union. The central argument states that the security action of the EU, namely in the positive transformation of the armed conflicts in the region, has been limited by a depoliticized approach that the ENP promotes and that would benefit from an approach where the political dimension of the regional stabilization model of the EU would be acknowledged.

Keywords: European Union, South Caucasus, European Neighbourhood Policy, governance, geopolitics

Introdução

As relações da União Europeia (UE) com os países do Cáucaso do Sul, Arménia, Azerbaijão e Geórgia iniciaram-se logo na década de 1990, com as declarações formais de independência que anunciavam o colapso da União Soviética.[1] Nesta fase inicial, que se estende até ao final da década, a política externa das Comunidades Europeias para a região refletiu simultaneamente as suas limitações políticas e institucionais e alguma divisão de trabalho com a Federação Russa na gestão da instabilidade no espaço pan-Europeu. Assim, até à inclusão destes três países na Política Europeia de Vizinhança (PEV), em 2004, as relações da UE com a região limitaram-se à ação humanitária e reabilitação, nomeadamente nas zonas envolventes aos conflitos na Abecásia, Ossétia do Sul e Nagorno-Karabakh, ao apoio indireto à mediação promovida pela Organização das Nações Unidas (ONU) e pela Organização para a Segurança e Cooperação na Europa (OSCE)[2], bem como à celebração de acordos bilaterais, os Acordos de Parceria e Cooperação, que definiriam a base do relacionamento futuro.

No final da década de 1990, a situação securitária na região do Cáucaso deteriorou-se significativamente, fruto da segunda guerra da Chechénia, na Federação Russa, e da forte instabilidade dos regimes da região, afetando o seu desenvolvimento político, económico e social. Gradualmente, alguns Estados membros da UE, assim como o Parlamento Europeu, iniciaram um conjunto de reflexões internas sobre a necessidade de desenvolver um pacto de estabilidade para o Cáucaso do Sul. Este interesse europeu reflete também a crescente importância estratégica que os países da região ganharam com o desenvolvimento dos primeiros projetos que ligavam as reservas energéticas do Cáspio aos mercados europeus, sem transitar por território russo. O futuro alargamento da UE a leste, previsto para 2004, exigia também algum envolvimento com a região e a sua estabilização.

Contudo, e apesar deste interesse estratégico, no lançamento da PEV em 2003, os países do Cáucaso do Sul não foram incluídos, "devido à sua localização geográfica" (Comissão Europeia, 2003: 4). Esta explicação formal algo simplista torna opacas as razões pelas quais a região foi considerada como não-elegível para a PEV, em 2003. Estas incluem as complexas relações securitárias da região e o entendimento, em vários Estados membros, de que o Cáucaso do Sul era parte de uma área de interesses privilegiados da Rússia (Popescu, 2011). Até à Revolução das Rosas na Geórgia em 2003, não existiam incentivos claros para a inclusão da região na PEV, já que esta iniciativa se centrava na promoção de padrões de governação democrática e de modernização económica. A partir de 2003, a perspetiva de estabilização da Geórgia permitia agora abrir corredores de escoamento da produção energética do Cáspio para mercados europeus, suscitando interesse renovado dos Estados da UE e das suas instituições.

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[1] Para uma introdução à região do Cáucaso do Sul ver de Waal (2010).

[2] Para uma análise bem informada sobre os conflitos armados do Cáucaso do Sul ver de Waal (2003), Lynch (2004), Cornell (2000) e Welt (2004).

A mudança de regime na Geórgia, iniciada em novembro de 2003 e confirmada com a eleição de Mikheil Saakashvili como Presidente do país em janeiro de 2004, instigou a UE a envolver-se de forma mais visível. Num primeiro momento, destacou o Alto Representante para a Política Europeia de Segurança Comum (PESC), Javier Solana, para Tbilisi para mediar a crise política (Solana, 2004) e posteriormente autorizou uma missão da Política Europeia de Segurança e Defesa (PESD) de Estado de Direito, a EUJUST THEMIS, para apoiar o governo georgiano na reforma do seu sistema judiciário (Conselho da UE, 2004a; Helly, 2006). A UE disponibilizou também fundos de emergência através do Instrumento para a Estabilidade, que visavam atenuar as consequências imediatas da crise política. A um nível mais estrutural, articularam-se argumentos no Conselho sobre a importância de apoiar a democratização da região do Cáucaso do Sul através da sua inclusão na PEV (Lynch, 2006). Numa fase inicial, a UE privilegiou uma abordagem regional, ilustrada pela nomeação de um Representante Especial da UE (REUE) para o Cáucaso do Sul, em julho de 2003, cujo mandato foi renovado e reforçado nos meses e anos seguintes (Conselho da UE, 2003a, 2003b, 2004b, 2005). A Comissão Europeia, encarregue de gerir a PEV, e alguns Estados membros passaram a ver a Geórgia como um líder regional na sua relação com Bruxelas, esperando-se que pudesse atuar como um incentivo nas relações da UE com a Arménia e o Azerbaijão (Simão, 2013). Para além disso, a abordagem regional da UE justificava-se também pela perceção de que o Cáucaso constitui um complexo regional de segurança (Coppieters, 1996; Simão e Freire, 2008), requerendo uma ação concertada no que toca à transformação dos conflitos regionais – uma área onde o maior envolvimento da UE poderia ter efeitos positivos.

Assim, no Documento Estratégico da PEV de 2004, a Comissão Europeia recomendava a inclusão dos países do Cáucaso do Sul nesta política e iniciou negociações bilaterais com vista à definição de uma abordagem diferenciada às necessidades de cada um destes Estados (Comissão Europeia, 2004: 10). O Parlamento Europeu promoveu ativamente um envolvimento da UE à escala regional, recomendando que a União prestasse mais atenção aos conflitos (Parlamento Europeu, 2006; 2010). Efetivamente, apesar da relutância da UE em se envolver de forma mais direta nos processos de mediação e de manutenção da paz em vigor, a verdade é que a ajuda humanitária e de reabilitação da UE lhe tinham garantido, já em 2001, um lugar de observadora na Comissão de Controlo Partilhado para a Ossétia do Sul[3] (Popescu, 2011; Simão, 2014). Um relatório do *International Crisis Group* de 2006 sublinhava o potencial de resolução de conflitos dos diferentes instrumentos e políticas da PEV (ICG, 2006), incluindo as sinergias positivas que poderiam resultar da articulação dos objetivos da PEV com o trabalho do REUE. Depois da guerra de 2008 na Geórgia, a Presidência francesa da UE liderou o processo negocial que conduziu à assinatura de um cessar-fogo entre a Geórgia e a Federação Russa e, perante o veto russo relativo à renovação do mandato da Missão de Observação das Nações Unidas na Geórgia (UNOMIG), o Conselho autorizou de forma célere a formação de uma missão de observação para a Geórgia, a *EU Monitoring Mission* (EUMM). Para além disso, o REUE passou a ter um papel central nas Negociações Internacionais de Genebra.[4] Com estes passos, podemos dizer que Bruxelas assumiu assim um papel mais prominente nas dinâmicas de resolução de conflitos na Geórgia (Whitman e Wolff, 2010).

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[3] Este é o formato oficial de mediação do conflito da Ossétia do Sul. Foi estabelecido em 1992, após a assinatura do acordo de cessar-fogo, e junta o Governo da Geórgia, a Federação Russa, as autoridades

Desde o estabelecimento da PEV em 2003, a UE tem sido incapaz de desenvolver uma parceria sólida com a Federação Russa. Moscovo recusou participar na PEV e, em vez disso, procurou instituir uma parceria estratégica com a UE, com base na negociação de quatro espaços comuns (Federação Russa e União Europeia, 2003). Contudo, esta iniciativa tem vindo a esvaziar-se à medida que a UE aprofunda as suas relações com os países da ex-União Soviética, onde a Rússia considera ter interesses privilegiados. Assim, após a revolução Laranja na Ucrânia em 2004, as relações de Moscovo com Bruxelas e com várias capitais europeias tornaram-se ainda mais tensas, impossibilitando quaisquer avanços significativos no âmbito do terceiro espaço comum, de Cooperação no campo da Segurança Externa, nomeadamente no que toca aos conflitos regionais (Samokhvalov, 2007). Para além disso, a abertura do oleoduto Bacu-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) e do gasoduto Bacu-Tbilisi-Erzurum (BTE), fornecendo petróleo e gás natural, respetivamente, aos mercados europeus sem passar por território russo, contribuiu ainda mais para a acumulação de frustrações e tensões nas relações da UE com Moscovo (Starr e Cornell, 2005).

É neste contexto que as relações da UE com a Arménia, o Azerbaijão e a Geórgia têm evoluído ao longo da última década. Na secção seguinte olhamos para os acordos políticos que foram celebrados, começando com a negociação dos Planos de Ação (PA) da PEV e os Acordos de Associação (AA), assim como as iniciativas regionais, para entender a natureza das relações entre estes Estados e Bruxelas. O artigo olha depois para as relações na área económica e para as negociações em torno da liberalização de vistos, como dois aspetos centrais na forma como a UE é percecionada pelos seus vizinhos, nas dinâmicas dos conflitos e na exportação de influência da UE para a vizinhança partilhada com a Rússia. Ao longo da análise, o artigo procura entender de que forma a PEV tem

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não-reconhecidas da Ossétia do Sul e representantes da Ossétia do Norte. Em 2008, o Governo da Geórgia abandonou formalmente este formato negocial, por considerá-lo ultrapassado e desajustado.

[4] Este formato negocial é presidido pela OSCE, a UE e a ONU. Participam nas discussões o Governo da Geórgia, da Ossétia do Sul e da Abecásia, bem como a Rússia e os Estados Unidos.

dado resposta às ambições geopolíticas da UE e tem permitido à União ser coerente com o seu discurso normativo.

1. Definição da Base Legal e Política das Relações UE-Cáucaso do Sul

As relações da UE com a Arménia, Azerbaijão e Geórgia têm como base legal os Acordos bilaterais de Parceria e Cooperação (APC), negociados e assinados na década de 1990. Os APC, negociados entre a UE e todos os países da ex-União Soviética, são acordos amplos, centrados na promoção de reformas democráticas e da economia de mercado, bem como no desenvolvimento de cooperação multissetorial. No âmbito da PEV, em 2003, foram negociados Planos de Ação bilaterais, definindo passos concretos que permitissem aos vizinhos da UE aproximar-se do quadro legislativo, normativo e político da UE. Contudo, estes documentos não constituem uma nova base legal para a relação, já que os APC se mantêm vigentes, e por isso o futuro estatuto destes Estados face à União manteve-se muito ambíguo. Na medida em que a inclusão na PEV criou expetativas nos países do Cáucaso do Sul face a uma possível adesão à UE, este processo manteve-se aberto, indefinido e claramente baseado numa base política e legal que não reflete os novos contextos locais, regionais e internacionais, em mudança acelerada.

No que toca à resolução de conflitos, os APC são extremamente vagos (Conselho da UE e Comissão Europeia, 1999a; 1999b; 1999c). Os Planos de Ação da PEV foram apenas ligeiramente mais ambiciosos neste aspeto, normalmente referindo a conflitualidade como um obstáculo à cooperação económica regional, incluindo em matérias energéticas e de transportes. Na ausência de um acordo político forte e vinculativo com a UE, a condicionalidade ligada ao progresso nos processos de paz foi extremamente fraca (Sasse, 2008). Na revisão da PEV de 2015, a UE defende que quer a União, quer os seus vizinhos devem estar comprometidos na promoção da cooperação no setor da segurança, com potenciais impactos nas dinâmicas dos conflitos regionais (Comissão Europeia e Alta Representante da União Europeia para os Negócios Estrangeiros e a Política de Segurança, 2015b: 4).

Os Planos de Ação são, portanto, ferramentas políticas fracas que lidam com as dinâmicas dos conflitos apenas na medida em que os Governos da Arménia, do Azerbaijão e da Geórgia o consideraram urgente e necessário. Para o Governo da Geórgia, a partir da Revolução das Rosas, o envolvimento da UE nos conflitos da Abecásia e da Ossétia do Sul passou a ser visto como um passo fundamental para reequilibrar os formatos negociais existentes, que Tbilisi entendia serem injustos e desfavoráveis. Para o Presidente Saakashvili, da Geórgia, a internacionalização dos conflitos e o apoio da UE à integridade territorial da Geórgia foram objetivos centrais dos seus mandatos (IIFFMCG, 2009). Assim, o Plano de Ação UE-Geórgia inclui a prioridade número seis como sendo a “Promoção da resolução pacífica dos conflitos internos” (Comissão Europeia, 2006c).

No caso da Arménia e do Azerbaijão, uma prioridade sobre "resolução pacífica do conflito de Nagorno-Karabakh" também foi incluída, sendo que no Plano de Ação da Arménia é a prioridade número sete e para o Azerbaijão é a prioridade número um (Comissão Europeia, 2006a; 2006b). Se no caso da Geórgia a UE se comprometeu com uma série de passos importantes com potencial impacto nas dinâmicas dos conflitos, incluindo um aumento da assistência económica à Geórgia e diálogo político com a Federação Russa e outros atores relevantes; no caso do conflito de Nagorno-Karabakh, os esforços da UE visaram apoiar o trabalho do REUE e do Grupo de Minsk da OSCE.[5]

De uma forma geral, o contributo da UE para a resolução de conflitos através dos Planos de Ação da PEV tem sido bastante limitado (Helly, 2007; Sasse, 2009). Na realidade, ao aprofundar as suas relações com a Geórgia, a UE ficou refém das posições de Tbilisi no que toca aos conflitos, nomeadamente ao reconhecer a integridade territorial da Geórgia, e foi incapaz de ser um mediador neutro entre o Governo georgiano e as autoridades na Abecásia e na Ossétia do Sul (Coppieters, 2007), ou entre a Geórgia e a Federação Russa. No caso de Nagorno-Karabakh, nenhum REUE conseguiu visitar a região devido à pressão exercida pelo Governo do Azerbaijão e o envolvimento da UE em termos de reabilitação e assistência tem sido marginal, com fraco impacto nas dinâmicas de transformação positiva dos conflitos. Para além disso, ao tentar manter uma posição equidistante entre a Arménia e o Azerbaijão, a UE tenta reconciliar os princípios da integridade territorial (do Azerbaijão) e da autodeterminação (do Nagorno-Karabakh), sem explicar de que forma isso permite avançar o processo de paz.

No âmbito da negociação dos novos Acordos de Associação, a UE teve uma oportunidade importante de ligar os avanços na integração europeia dos países vizinhos a avanços na resolução destes conflitos. Os AA preveem passos concretos com vista à associação política e à integração económica, nomeadamente a celebração de Acordos de Comércio Livre Aprofundados e Abrangentes (DFCTA) entre a UE e os Estados da Parceria Oriental (PO) que cumpram os critérios relevantes. Incluem também passos importantes com vista à liberalização de vistos, prevendo-se um impacto real na vida dos cidadãos (esta questão é desenvolvida em mais pormenor em baixo). No entanto, tendo em conta a diversidade de ambições da região nas relações com a UE e a competição crescente entre as políticas de vizinhança da UE e da Rússia, no Cáucaso do Sul, apenas a Geórgia assinou o Acordo de Associação com a UE, enquanto a Arménia decidiu abandonar as negociações do AA e participar na União Económica da Eurásia (UEE), tendo assinado com a UE apenas um Acordo de Parceria Abrangente e Avançado. O Azerbaijão, por seu lado, está também em negociações para um acordo estratégico, mais limitado, que reflita os interesses específicos do país nas relações com a UE e a sua política multivetorial. A revisão da PEV em 2015 sublinhou essa necessidade de flexibilizar e ajustar as ofertas da UE às necessidades de cada parceiro (Comissão Europeia e Alta Representante da União Europeia para os Negócios Estrangeiros e a Política de Segurança, 2015b), procurando ultrapassar as limitações criadas pela fraca adesão dos Estados da região aos AA.

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[5] O Grupo de Minsk da OSCE é o formato negocial oficial para o conflito do Nagorno-Karabakh, criado em 1992 pela então Conferência para a Segurança e Cooperação na Europa (CSCE). O grupo é copresidido pela França, a Federação Russa e os Estados Unidos e os membros permanentes são a Alemanha, a Bielorrússia, a Itália, a Finlândia, a Suécia e a Turquia, bem como a Arménia e o Azerbaijão. Numa base rotativa, a Presidência da OSCE é também um membro permanente do Grupo de Minsk. Não estão incluídos representantes de Nagorno-Karabakh.

2. Difusão de Influência Regional pelo Comércio e a Liberalização de Vistos

A liberalização do comércio e dos vistos é um dos incentivos mais apelativos à participação na PEV e, em particular, na sua dimensão leste, a PO.[6] Uma possível participação no mercado interno da UE representaria uma possibilidade importante de crescimento económico e modernização para estas sociedades. Por outro lado, a remoção de vistos para estadias curtas no espaço da UE tem um impacto concreto na vida dos cidadãos. Num contexto regional de competição com a Rússia, em que a autoridade moral, democrática e financeira da UE se encontra fragilizada pelas múltiplas crises que a têm abalado, a capacidade da PO incentivar reformas e de promover medidas de apoio ao bem-estar social e à democratização é bastante incerta.

2.1. Geórgia

A Geórgia é o parceiro mais avançado da UE na PO e no Cáucaso do Sul. O apoio popular à opção da integração Euro-atlântica do país permanece elevado e mantém-se o consenso entre as elites de diferentes quadrantes políticos sobre esta opção de política externa, que um membro do governo apelidou de "Europeização irreversível" (Zalkaliani, 2004. Ver também Kakachia, 2015). Apesar das dificuldades de implementação e dos potenciais impactos negativos que a liberalização do comércio pode ter para a Geórgia (Manoli, 2013), a integração Euro-Atlântica funciona como um elemento de coesão política face à ameaça externa da Rússia (Tsutskiridze, 2011). A insegurança política e militar tem sido um incentivo importante nas relações de Tbilisi com Bruxelas, uma vez que estas se têm desenvolvido de forma paralela com a NATO. Mais de dez anos depois da inclusão da Geórgia e os restantes Estados da região na PEV, a assinatura dos AA permite finalmente desenvolver estas relações políticas num novo patamar. A implementação inicial dos AA e dos Planos de Ação com vista à Liberalização de Vistos por parte dos países parceiros abrangidos pelos AA, mesmo antes da sua ratificação pelos 28 Estados membros da UE, ilustra bem o nível de compromisso das partes. As trocas comerciais entre a UE e a Geórgia aumentaram 7 por cento desde que a DCFTA entrou em vigor (Comissão Europeia, 2015) e em 2017 a UE liberalizou os vistos para cidadãos georgianos em visitas curtas aos países da UE. Para além disso, a UE é o maior doador à Geórgia, providenciando assistência financeira e técnica num número amplo de áreas,[7] tornando assim a assistência da UE às reformas da Geórgia num aspeto crucial da sua modernização e da manutenção de padrões elevados de democracia e direitos humanos.

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[6] A Parceria Oriental foi criada em 2009 e engloba os seis Estados da Europa de Leste e Cáucaso do Sul participantes na PEV, nomeadamente: Arménia, Azerbaijão, Bielorrússia, Geórgia, Moldova e Ucrânia.

Procurando avançar esta agenda de reformas, o Relatório de Progresso de 2014 sobre a Geórgia sublinha a necessidade de apoiar o desenvolvimento de capacidades autónomas, assistindo o país no desenvolvimento de competências técnicas e institucionais necessárias à implementação das regulamentações europeias (Comissão Europeia e Alta Representante da UE para os Negócios Estrangeiros e Política de Segurança, 2015a). Este é um dos desafios maiores que se colocam aos parceiros da UE, especialmente num contexto de competição com a Rússia (Piet e Simão, 2016; Delcour, 2015). Por exemplo, as alterações necessárias na gestão fronteiriça da Geórgia têm impacto na forma como o comércio com os países vizinhos é feito (nomeadamente com a Arménia, o Azerbaijão e a Rússia), mas também com as regiões separatistas da Abecásia e da Ossétia do Sul. Nesse sentido, apesar das relações difíceis, o comércio continua entre as duas margens do rio Ingur/i, que separa a Abecásia do território georgiano, e há aqui importantes oportunidades de regulamentação, que poderiam servir como elementos de criação de confiança entre as partes (Mirimanova, 2015). O aprofundamento das relações comerciais entre a Geórgia e a UE, por um lado, e entre a Abecásia e a Ossétia do Sul com a Rússia, por outro, marcam duas direções opostas, levantando questões de compatibilidade das regras que definem as interações económicas e comerciais transfronteiriças. Na ausência de regras compatíveis e caso a UE não seja capaz de contribuir para soluções comuns, isso poderá diminuir o potencial impacto positivo do comércio e da própria PEV na transformação dos conflitos.

Um argumento semelhante pode ser feito relativamente aos potenciais impactos negativos que a atual política de vistos da UE pode ter nas dinâmicas dos conflitos na Geórgia. Logo em 2007, o Governo da Geórgia manifestou a sua preocupação com as negociações da UE com a Rússia relativas a um futuro acordo de facilitação de vistos, que previa pudesse vir a ter um impacto negativo nas relações de Tbilisi com as regiões separatistas da Abecásia e da Ossétia do Sul (Burjanadze, 2007). Devido à política russa de atribuição de passaportes aos habitantes destas duas regiões, o Governo da Geórgia temia que a facilitação de vistos para a UE a quem possuísse um passaporte russo viesse a constituir um incentivo negativo à aproximação destas regiões a Tbilisi. Este argumento teve um papel central no avanço do diálogo UE-Geórgia sobre facilitação de vistos, que resultou na adoção de uma Parceria para a Mobilidade, assinada em novembro de 2009. A cooperação com a UE em matéria de Justiça e Assuntos Internos tem sido um incentivo importante para a delimitação das fronteiras no Cáucaso do Sul, uma área central para a estabilidade regional. No caso da Geórgia, a delimitação da fronteira com a Rússia tem um impacto direto nas dinâmicas dos conflitos, não só porque os territórios da Abecásia e da Ossétia do Sul se situam nessa fronteira, mas também porque implicam um reconhecimento das práticas de criação de fronteiras por parte da Rússia (Kakachia, 2013).[8]

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[7] Informação detalhada sobre os diferentes esquemas de financiamento da UE à Geórgia, disponível em http://eeas.europa.eu/factsheets/news/eu-georgia_factsheet_en.htm

A guerra na Geórgia em 2008 foi um ponto de viragem nas relações da UE com os seus vizinhos de leste, criando as condições para um consenso interno sobre a necessidade de apresentar incentivos mais significativos à aproximação destes países à UE. No centro da condicionalidade da UE permanecem as reformas políticas e económicas, mas a importância de apoiar um parceiro estratégico e entusiasta da integração euro-atlântica tem permitido ultrapassar as dificuldades ligadas às limitações e divergências com Tbilisi nos dois campos. A Geórgia foi um dos estados da PO mais penalizados pela Federação Russa devido à sua orientação pró-ocidental, incluindo boicotes aos produtos georgianos, a expulsão de migrantes ilegais a viver na Rússia e até uma intervenção militar, entre outras medidas punitivas (Nygren, 2010). Em parte, estas medidas aceleraram a diminuição da dependência da economia georgiana no mercado russo, facilitando assim a decisão de Tbilisi de abandonar a Comunidade de Estados Independentes (CEI) em 2009 (RFE/RL, 2009). Em 2007, a Geórgia terminou os acordos com a Rússia para a permanência de bases militares russas no seu território, em Akhlkalaki e Batumi. Estas escolhas acarretaram um preço elevado, uma vez que, após a guerra dos cinco dias em agosto de 2008, a Rússia decidiu reconhecer as declarações de independência da Abecásia e da Ossétia do Sul e desenvolveu medidas que levaram à sua integração *de facto* na Federação Russa, incluindo novos acordos de cooperação militar que reforçaram a presença militar russa nessas regiões. Assim, podemos dizer que a PO se tem revelado uma ferramenta fraca na promoção da segurança do território georgiano (Whitman e Wolff, 2010), ao passo que as reformas internas permanecem frágeis e as desigualdades económicas elevadas.

2.2. *Azerbaijão*

A base legal das relações da UE com o Azerbaijão permanece o APC de 1999, uma vez que as duas partes não conseguiram ainda definir um novo acordo político. Apesar da importância estratégica do Azerbaijão para a estratégia europeia de diversificação energética, incluindo no âmbito do Corredor Energético Sul, as relações entre os dois parceiros permanecem difíceis. Em 2006 foi assinado um memorando de entendimento no campo energético, estabelecendo uma Parceria Estratégica no campo da Energia, e tem sido mantido um diálogo regular no âmbito das instituições bilaterais criadas pelo APC. No entanto, a natureza autoritária e repressiva do regime em Bacu e as crescentes tensões relativas a prisioneiros políticos e a violações de direitos humanos, bem como a perspetiva instrumental de Bacu relativamente às relações com a UE têm criado dificuldades nas relações entre os dois atores (TOL, 2015). Ilustrando estas dificuldades, a inclusão na PEV em 2004 e a implementação do Plano de Ação bilateral tiveram um impacto limitado na capacidade da UE influenciar o contexto político do país. Para além disso, os líderes europeus apreciam genuinamente a política externa multivetorial do Azerbaijão e a sua procura de autonomia face a Moscovo, limitando a capacidade de a União impor condicionalidade política (Yunusov, 2007). Desde 2013 estão em curso negociações para um novo acordo que o Azerbaijão gostaria que fosse uma Parceria Estratégica de Modernização, onde o equilíbrio entre condicionalidade política e reformas democráticas, por um lado, e a apoio à integridade territorial e acesso a tecnologia de ponta, por outro, procura ser alcançado (Rettman, 2013). Esta abordagem ilustra bem as ambições divergentes que sustentam estas relações.

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[8] A prática de criação de fronteiras refere-se a um conjunto de atividades promovidas pela Federação Russa que incluem a deslocação da sinalética de fronteira administrativa entre as regiões separatistas e a Geórgia, bem como a instalação de equipamentos como arame farpado, criando uma presença física da fronteira que não existia antes.

As relações comerciais da UE com o Azerbaijão permanecem limitadas, uma vez que Bacu não é ainda membro da Organização Mundial do Comércio (OMC) e que a sua economia depende em larga medida da exportação de energia (Valiyev, 2011). Assim, apesar do crescente volume de comércio bilateral e investimento, o interesse do Azerbaijão em estabelecer uma DCFTA com a UE permanece muito limitado. Tal como a ideia de uma Parceria Estratégica para a Modernização sugere, o maior interesse do Azerbaijão é garantir acesso a fundos e tecnologia europeias, bem como garantir algum nível de diversificação da economia. As relações económicas com a Rússia são também fundamentais para o Azerbaijão, quer em termos energéticos, quer em produtos não-energéticos. Apesar do impacto negativo das sanções impostas a Moscovo pela UE e outros Estados desde 2014, Bacu tem defendido uma política externa que evita compromissos exclusivos com um qualquer projeto de integração regional. Assim, a PEV e a DCFTA prevista no âmbito da PO têm tido uma capacidade limitada de ancorar o país à integração europeia.

Relativamente às questões fronteiriças e de vistos, a UE e o Azerbaijão celebraram três acordos bilaterais sobre facilitação de vistos, readmissão e uma parceria para a mobilidade. Os controlos fronteiriços têm sido uma preocupação crescente do Azerbaijão desde a adoção da Estratégia de Segurança Nacional de 2007. O Governo reconhece que o Azerbaijão está localizado num cruzamento estratégico, tornando-se uma rota privilegiada para o crime organizado (Ministério da Segurança Nacional da República do Azerbaijão, 2014). Procurando responder a estes desafios, o Azerbaijão adotou uma nova política migratória, modernizou os seus serviços migratórios e fronteiriços e aprofundou a sua cooperação com organizações internacionais, incluindo com a UE (Ceccorulli, 2015). O apoio da UE à criação de uma Estratégia Integrada de Gestão de Fronteiras foi uma ferramenta importante para o Governo do Azerbaijão. A criação de capacidades nestas matérias é fundamental para a facilitação do comércio, mas também para questões securitárias, permitindo um aumento de trocas de informação entre a UE e os seus parceiros regionais. A demarcação de fronteiras com a Rússia e a Geórgia avançou, mas devido à disputa com a Arménia pelo território de Nagorno-Karabakh, não tem sido possível qualquer avanço na demarcação desta fronteira comum.

Em parte, as relações delicadas, mas simultaneamente estratégicas, da UE com o Azerbaijão explicam o envolvimento limitado da União no processo de mediação do conflito de Nagorno-Karabakh. Ao passo que a Arménia tem procurado manter os atuais três co-presidentes do Grupo de Minsk (a França, a Rússia e os EUA), o Azerbaijão tem discutido a possibilidade de a UE ser incluída na mediação, uma vez que o atual formato lhe parece claramente favorável aos interesses da Arménia (Shiriyev, 2013).[9] No entanto, o Azerbaijão continua sem permitir que a UE visite a região do Nagorno-Karabakh, nomeadamente o seu REUE, impedindo o desenvolvimento de uma política mais focada na criação de confiança. Por seu lado, a UE tem hesitado em colocar de forma central o tema do conflito na agenda bilateral com o Azerbaijão, uma vez que considera não ter influência sobre a política do governo do Azerbaijão. Com o aumento dos orçamentos de defesa a disparar na região (SIPRI, 2014) e a retórica provocatória a ser usada para manter elevados níveis de apoio popular aos regimes, a UE precisa trabalhar de forma mais próxima com os seus parceiros em medidas de criação de confiança para evitar a escalada dos conflitos.

2.3. *Arménia*

As relações da Arménia com a UE têm a sua base legal no APC de 1999 e foram revistas e atualizadas com a adoção do Plano de Ação bilateral no âmbito da PEV, em 2006. Apesar do estado avançado das negociações entre os dois parceiros para um novo Acordo de Associação, incluindo uma DCFTA, em 2013 o governo arménio decidiu não se comprometer com o acordo negociado. Em vez disso, foi anunciada a decisão (surpresa) de aderir à UEE, incluindo à sua União Aduaneira, a partir de janeiro de 2015. Este volte-face tem impacto significativo na capacidade da UE influenciar as dinâmicas regionais do Cáucaso do Sul e na possibilidade de a PO se traduzir em influência significativa na região. Na realidade, ao centrar-se na promoção de reformas sectoriais e aplicando condicionalidade política muito limitada, a PO tem-se posicionado como um instrumento de influência regional com enfoque na lógica de extensão da governação da UE. O Governo arménio tem, assim, beneficiado amplamente da cooperação sectorial com a UE em áreas chave das reformas económicas e administrativas, sem assumir os custos que essas reformas implicaram para as elites no governo (Delcour e Wolczuk, 2015). Para além disso, as relações próximas da Arménia com a UE têm também oferecido importantes alternativas à política externa do país, num contexto geopolítico difícil. Ilustrando a sensibilidade da

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[9] O Governo do Azerbaijão sublinha a presença de importantes diásporas arménias em França, na Rússia e nos EUA, fazendo lobby ativo para que a posição destes países seja favorável a Erevan.

UE para esta questão, apesar de abandonarem o Acordo de Associação, Bruxelas e Erevan conseguiram concluir um novo acordo bilateral que respeite os novos compromissos do país no âmbito da UEE.

A Arménia apresenta-se assim como um estudo de caso sobre a capacidade da PO permitir à UE exercer influência regional na ausência de acordos comerciais compreensivos. Uma vez que o Governo arménio continua muito interessado em desenvolver relações próximas com a UE e em beneficiar do leque amplo de programas de apoio e financiamento de reformas, a Comissão Europeia tem aqui um incentivo extra para desenvolver um acordo comercial que seja compatível com a UEE. Isto refletiria também as prioridades estabelecidas na revisão da PEV, de 2015, sobre a necessidade de desenhar acordos comerciais flexíveis e seria um passo importante para reduzir tensões na vizinhança partilhada com a Federação Russa. No atual contexto, a UE mantém um perfil de doador na Arménia, com capacidade limitada de exercer influência política ou de desenvolver uma parceria de longo prazo com as autoridades do país (Babayan, 2011). De facto, a dependência da Arménia em relação à Rússia, ao nível económico, financeiro e militar é exacerbada pela permanência do conflito de Nagorno-Karabakh, impedindo o governo arménio de prosseguir mudanças significativas na sua política externa que possam por em causa o *status quo* (de Waal, 2015). Para a Arménia, assinar o AA com a UE representaria uma opção muito mais complexa do que a dimensão económica sugere. As razões de segurança evocadas pelo Presidente Arménio para não assinar o AA e optar pela adesão à UEE tornaram claro o nível de influência da Rússia sobre o país.[10] Esta escolha impos custos económicos pesados à Arménia, já que a economia russa vive um período de desaceleração, devido aos preços baixos do petróleo e às sanções internacionais de que é alvo desde a anexação da Crimeia, em Março de 2014. Contudo, a Arménia tem beneficiado de assistência financeira da UE e outras organizações internacionais, como o Fundo Monetário Internacional e o Banco Mundial.

A guerra na Geórgia, em 2008, afetou negativamente uma das artérias principais ligando a Arménia à Rússia. Aproveitando este contexto, o Presidente arménio e o Presidente turco iniciaram uma série de encontros diplomáticos com vista à normalização das relações entre os dois países e que ficaram conhecidos como a "diplomacia de futebol". Apesar de o objetivo de normalização das relações bilaterais não ter sido atingido, nomeadamente devido à questão do genocídio arménio de 1915 e à pressão do Azerbaijão sobre a Turquia para que não levantasse o bloqueio à Arménia ligado ao conflito de Nagorno-Karabakh, foram iniciadas importante mudanças em ambas as sociedades facilitando as trocas transfronteiriças (Hill, Kirişci e Moffatt, 2015; ESI, 2009). A UE apoiou estes esforços diplomáticos[11], mas foi incapaz de usar o já frágil processo de adesão da Turquia à União e a participação da Arménia e do Azerbaijão na PEV/PO para criar incentivos significativos para todas as partes com vista a sustentar a mudança de *status quo* na região.

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[10] Para além da Abecásia e da Ossétia do Sul, a Arménia é agora o único país do Cáucaso do Sul onde a Rússia tem bases militares, tornando-a num elemento de grande valor estratégico para a política externa e de segurança da Rússia.

Apesar da falta de progresso nas relações políticas com a UE, foram concluídos acordos de facilitação de vistos e de readmissão com a Arménia, que entraram em vigor em janeiro de 2014, preparando assim o caminho para a futura liberalização de vistos. Para a Arménia, a liberalização de vistos é um aspeto importante, já que uma parte significativa da sua diáspora vive em países da UE. Para além disso, a Arménia tem duas fronteiras fechadas, com a Turquia e o Azerbaijão, e a fronteira com o Irão teve uma importância marginal em termos económicos, durante a maior parte da sua independência, devido à imposição de sanções internacionais ao regime de Teerão. Assim, a fronteira com a Geórgia assume uma importância fulcral, apesar das flutuações nas relações de Tbilisi com Moscovo.

3. Conclusões

As relações da UE com os países do Cáucaso do Sul ilustram perfeitamente os dilemas da PEV/PO em promover estabilidade na periferia da UE com base na exportação do modelo de governação da UE, na ausência de perspetivas de adesão e num contexto de grande contestação e competição regional (Simão, 2018). Efetivamente, o enfoque em reformas técnicas tem permitido à UE manter relações com parceiros cuja base normativa é altamente divergente da sua, mas tem também com isso reduzido a sua capacidade de alcançar os seus objetivos estratégicos de se afirmar como o principal parceiro da região. Embora a UE rejeite a linguagem das esferas de influência e não se veja como uma potência hegemónica, a realidade é que os seus modelos governativos, regulatórios e normativos visam criar condições favoráveis ao exercício de poder. Isso significa que, em última análise, a PEV/PO é um instrumento altamente político (Simão, 2017) que se deve assumir como tal.

A politização da PEV/PO permitiria uma discussão mais abrangente e construtiva sobre as prioridades comuns que a parceria da UE com os seus vizinhos a leste permite avançar. Tal como está desenhada e implementada, neste momento, a PEV/PO não permite ainda uma definição das prioridades de reforma pelos vizinhos e reflete acima de tudo a visão que a própria União tem do espaço pan-europeu. Não só isso representa um imenso desperdício de capital inovador, como acaba por deslegitimar e desmotivar alguns dos seus parceiros. Assim, a abertura, ainda que tardia e difícil, à liberalização do comércio e de vistos é um passo positivo, mas que peca pela sua insuficiência. Em particular, é notória a ausência de uma visão clara sobre o futuro dos conflitos regionais, onde este envolvimento crescente da UE se traduza na sua transformação positiva.

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[11] Nomeadamente através do programa “Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalisation Process”, financiado pelo Instrumento para a Estabilidade. Informação disponível em http://www.armenia-turkey.net/en/programme.

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DEBATER A EUROPA
Periódico do CIEDA e do CEIS20 , em parceria com GPE e a RCE.
N.18 jan/jun 2018 – Semestral
ISSN 1647-6336
Disponível em: http://www.europe-direct-aveiro.aeva.eu/debatereuropa/
https://doi.org/10.14195/1647-6336_18_7

(Re)securitisation in Europe: the Baltic States and Russia

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Abstract:

Relations between the European Union (EU) and Russia have entered a more difficult era with the 2004 enlargement and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The three Baltic states are new EU member states that share threat perceptions vis-à-vis Moscow. The article unpacks securitisation processes in the three Republics and how they have evolved after 2004 and 2014, as compared to the previous period of independence initialled in 1991. By exploring discourses, identity formation by strategies of othering and policy changes, we argue that re-securitisation is currently undergoing after a period of softer securitisation in the aftermath of EU accession.

Keywords: securitisation, othering, Baltic States, European Union, Russia

Introduction

Concerns about new wars in Europe have gained impetus since the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in March 2014. This state of play is particularly acute for the three Baltic Republics and Russia as they form a "regional security complex", i.e a geographically coherent set of two or more states whose security perceptions are closely interlinked (Buzan and Wæver, 2003, p. 415). Despite the accession to the Euro-Atlantic structures, "at the opening of the twenty-first century, the Baltics states are in the Russia-centred complex irrespective of how much they dislike this" (2003, p. 415). Even if they are part of the West for most purposes, "security-wise they are not" (2003, p. 413). With their cultural differences, the three states located on the Eastern coast of the Baltic Sea belong to the same geopolitical space, have a recent shared history and, above all, similar security concerns informing their foreign policy priorities (Praks, 2015, p. 189; Miniotaite, 2003, pp. 211-13; Made, 2011, p. 185).

“Securitisation” vis-à-vis Russia has profoundly marked the process of independence of the three Baltic states. The reference to the occupation by Nazi and Soviet troops during the Second World War and from 1945 to 1991 has informed their path. The mutually exclusive views about whether the Baltic states are newly independent states or the continuation of the interwar Baltic republics is one of the major points of contention in the Baltic-Russian relations (Visek, 1997, p. 330). The existence of mutually irreconcilable narratives regarding their shared history during the conflict (Kattago, 2008, p. 432; Grigas, 2013, p. 127) is a core issue as Moscow rejects the fact that the former Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) occupied the Republics. Instead, the Kremlin values its role as a liberator from Nazi domination.

The article aims at analysing securitisation by the Baltic Republics after their accession to the European Union (EU) in 2004 and raises the question whether the phenomenon has changed as consequence of the Ukrainian crisis initialled in late 2013. It aims at identifying the intensity of securitisation as one may hypothesize that the EU [and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)] enlargements have decreased negative perceptions and improved security perceptions vis-à-vis the Kremlin.

We aim at exploring securitisation as both an evolutive phenomenon and a perennial dynamic affecting negatively Baltic-Russian relations. Although the analysis of “desecuritisation”[1] (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 29) falls out of the scope of this article, we put under perspective the evolution of threat perceptions and identity and their impact on policy change. Furthermore, we unpack three core dimensions that are interconnected in this particular process of securitisation: security, history and normative considerations.

Firstly, we explore the theoretical framing of “securitisation” as a form of “othering” in order to identify categories of analysis. Secondly, we analyse the main dimensions of securitisation from 2004 onwards, having as a comparison the 1991-2004 period. Thirdly, we give emphasis to the political changes that have occurred after 2014 in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea by Russia.

1. Securitisation: The Construction of Identities under Threat

Securitisation theory is premised on a constructivist notion of security, in the sense that “security is a quality actors inject into issues by securitising them” (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, 1998, p. 204). Therefore, the focus of the analyst is not to determine if a threat is “real” (Sheehan, 2005, p. 53), but rather to determine if something is successfully articulated as such.

A process of securitisation involves a referent object and a securitising agent, and it occurs when the latter portrays the former as being existentially threatened, thereby legitimising the adoption of extraordinary measures aimed at ensuring its survival (Emmers, 2013, p. 133; Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 36). The rhetorical structure of securitisation or, in other words, the "internal" conditions of the speech act, must follow "a plot that includes an existential threat, a point of no return and a possible way out" (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 33). Therefore, the distinctiveness of security issues rests on the sense of urgency and absolute priority that is attached to them (Hough, 2008, p. 18; Mälksoo, 2006, p. 278).

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[1] “Desecuritization” refers broadly to the return of normal politics after an emergency period.

In addition to presenting an issue as an imminent threat, a successful securitisation only takes place if a relevant audience also acknowledges the existence of an ostensible threat to a valued referent object. If that recognition does not take place, the discursive construction would merely constitute a securitising move (Mälksoo, 2015, p. 223; Emmers, 2013, p. 124; Brandão, 2015, p. 47). In other words, the securitisation model involves two stages: (1) presenting an imminent and existential threat to a valued referent object and (2) an acceptance by a relevant audience of the threat articulated by the securitising agent.

As pointed out by Buzan, Waever and Wilde (1998, p. 36) and Roe (2008, p. 632), a security action is always taken on behalf of a collectivity. In light of that, it must be noted that securitisation processes tend to be dominated by powerful actors that occupy a privileged position within the state, particularly its authorised representatives (Emmers, 2013, p. 134). In fact, the greater the power and influence wielded by the securitising agent, the more likely is the securitising move to be successful. The state's political elites, particularly in western liberal democracies, tend to predominate over other potential securitising actors by virtue of the legitimacy derived from having been chosen by the electorate (Emmers, 2013, p. 134).

According to the original securitisation model (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998), the success of the securitising move does not hinge on the implementation of extraordinary measures.[2] However, "resonance" has been considered a problematic category (Salter, 2011). As a matter of fact, if the above-mentioned category is taken as the fundamental criterion to determine whether the audience has validated the claim articulated by the securitiser, a fundamental question would inevitably arise: how can "resonance" be adequately assessed (Williams, 2011, p. 217)? Acknowledging that limitation, Salter (2011, p. 121) maintains that policy change is an inseparable part and the touchstone of every successful securitisation process:

> There must be some public policy change, either in discourse, budget, or in actual policy: resonance is simply too unstable a category to really evaluate, and can lead

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[2] "We do not push the demand so high as to say that an emergency measure has to be adopted, only that the existential threat has to be argued with enough resonance for a platform to be made which it is possible to legitimise emergency measures or other steps that would not have been possible had the discourse not taken the form of existential threats, points of no return, and necessity" (Buzan, Wæver and Wilde, 1998, p. 25).

to analysis by counter-factual (though no measure was taken, there might have been, would have been, could have been).

Consequently, a successful securitisation would, thus, be comprised of both discursive (speech act and a shared understanding between securitising agent and audience) and non-discursive (policy implementation) components (Emmers, 2013, p. 135; Floyd, 2010, pp. 52-54).

Our analysis will explore empirical evidences of both components of securitisation: on the one hand, we will locate the identification of threats in discourses; on the other hand, we will verify if policy changes have occurred accordingly. We define here "policy changes" as changes that have not been contested by a significative part of the "audience". We base our choice on one of the most problematic aspects of the Copenhagen School's securitisation framework that is "the under-theorised conceptualisation of the audience and its role in securitisation processes" (Léonard and Kaunert, 2011, p. 74). While it can be argued that the motives for not providing a rigid definition stem from the fact that every audience is case specific, it can also be contended that it is vital to establish the characteristics common to all audiences owing to the essential role they play in the securitisation framework (Vaughn, 2009, p. 273).

In that context, we use the definition provided by Balzacq (2011, pp. 8-9), according to which an "empowering audience" has two main characteristics: a direct relationship with the issue being discussed as a threat and the power to authorise the adoption of measures aimed at tackling that threat. As noted by Roe (2008), the audience can be divided into the general public, which provides "moral" support, and policy-makers – in particular parliaments – that can provide the "formal" support to implement exceptional measures (Roe, 2008). The main objective of the analyst is not to assess whether there is indeed a "real" threat to the very existence of a valued referent object, but rather to assess, not only if the securitising actor was successful in staging something as an existential threat, but also if that depiction has been accepted by a relevant audience and translated into relevant policy change.

As emphasised by Buzan, Wæver and Wilde (1998, p. 120), threats are premised on an inherent depiction of something as posing a threat to some "we"– and often thereby contributing to the construction or reproduction of "us". In other words, securitisation is a form of "othering" (Jaeger, 2000), in the sense that it presupposes an unambiguous demarcation between what we aim to protect and the "other" that presents a threat to it. Therefore, "to speak security is to employ a discourse of danger inter-subjectively depicting that which is different from self as an existential threat – and therefore as other to self" (Jaeger, 2000). Williams (2003, pp. 519-520) also stresses that the ability to establish the limit of a given identity, to contrast it to what is not, "to cast this as a relationship of threat or even enmity" is indispensable to a successful securitisation.

However, practices of othering do not inevitably entail the articulation of difference as an existential threat. As noted by Hansen (2006, p. 5), "constructions of identity can take on different degrees of 'Otherness,' ranging from fundamental difference between Self and Other to constructions of less than radical difference". Mälksoo (2009, p. 66) makes a similar point, stressing that it is possible to differentiate "between shades of otherness in the scale between difference and outright threat to self's identity".

Central to all practices of "othering" is the notion of identities. The concept of national identity refers to relatively stable set of conceptualisations and expectations about the self (Ehin and Berg, 2008, p. 9). Some authors, particularly McSweeney (1996, p. 83), contend that the Copenhagen School reifies identities, treating them as mere "objective realities, out there to be discovered and analysed". As stressed by Booth, the core of the disagreement between McSweeney (1996) and Buzan and Waever (1997) is the notion of identity: while the former sees it as a process, the latter, while not treating it as fixed, claim that they tend to become relatively constant and sedimented (Booth, 2005, p. 36). While it is accepted that identities are not fixed and, therefore, are subject to change, we concur with Buzan and Waever (1998, p. 205): "identities as other social constructions can petrify and become relatively constant elements to be reckoned with". Once identities become sedimented, beliefs and institutions change only slowly (Theiler, 2003, p. 254).

Despite the debate regarding the notion of identity, there is still a lack of consensus on how to understand the relations between self and other (Berenskoetter, 2007, p. 657), namely whether (1) a spatial/external other is needed for the construction of identity and (2) if othering invariably leads to the construction of the other as an outright threat (Morozov and Rumelili, 2012, p. 29). Diez (2004, pp. 325-333) underlines that forms of "geopolitical" (or "traditional") othering, in which identity, politics and geography are closely interlinked, have become more and more frequent since the 1990s, including in the EU, citing the othering of Islam and Turkey as prime examples.

In order to further illustrate the different forms of othering, Diez (2005, pp. 628-629) proposes the existence of four categories to demonstrate the existence of multiple strategies of constructing "self" and "other" in international politics: (1) representation of the other as an existential threat (securitisation); (2) representation of the other as inferior; (3) representation of the other as violating universal principles; (4) representation of the other as different.

Taking into consideration the existence of multiple forms of othering, we assess below the Baltic states' security discourses and practices vis-à-vis Russia. In particular, we aim at evaluating if securitisation, understood as the intersubjective articulation of a threat and correspondent policy change, has been the most prevalent form of othering Russia in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania since their accession to the EU in 2004.

2. Securitising Russia after EU Accession: The Continuation of Existential Politics in Other Ways

The pre-enlargement foreign policies of the Baltic states had three major components: "restoration, redress and deterrence" (Galbreath, Lasas and Lamoreaux, 2008,

p. 59). More concretely, the main objectives of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were to restore their interwar republics, rectify to the extent possible the effects of their forced incorporation into the Soviet Union and preclude their inclusion in Russia's sphere of influence. After regaining their independence, the Baltics' decision to adopt an unambiguous pro-Western foreign policy and seek the full integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, particularly the EU and the Atlantic Alliance, was only clearly expressed in the mid-1990s, after the idea of neutrality was discarded (Miniotaite, 2003, p. 214; Scerbinskis, 2005, p. 165).

According to Auers (2015, p. 198), even though the goal of Western integration was soon agreed upon, the three Baltic republics "maintained a façade of neutrality" until the last Russian troops left their countries in 1993 (Lithuania) and 1994 (Estonia and Latvia), "in order to avoid antagonising" the Kremlin. The Baltics' rejection of neutrality is intimately connected with their recent history, as their neutral stance in World War II did not avoid their occupations by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union (Meri, 1995).

The normalisation of the Baltic-Russian relations has been hindered by the tendency to frame historical narratives as security issues or, in other words, to secure certain historical remembrances through the complete rejection, delegitimisation or even criminalisation of alternative interpretations (Mälksoo, 2015, p. 222). The existence of "conflicting historical narratives" have a profound impact on relations because they "directly concern the foundational principles of each nation involved" (Fofanova and Morozov, 2009, pp. 15-16). As stressed by Ehin and Berg (2009, p. 9)

> The national identity construction of the Baltic states and Russia, together with the historical narratives they are based on, are incompatible, and, indeed, antagonistic. The constituting narratives of self of the Baltic states and Russia include truth claims that are mutually exclusive. The differences are not in details but pertain to central elements of the respective narratives – the events of Second World War, the role of the Red Army, assessment of the Soviet regime and its collapse, the termination and restoration of Baltic independence.

According to Mälksoo (2006, p. 275), "the shift from existential politics to normal politics by the Baltic states is far from being accomplished". In that regard, the notion of "existential politics" can have two main dimensions: the quest for "physical" survival, which led to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania's pursuit of Euro-Atlantic integration, but also for "meaningful" survival, or alternatively stated, to be recognised as a certain sort of being (Mälksoo, 2006, p. 278). In that context, after becoming EU and NATO members, the three Baltic republics have sought not only Western Europe's acknowledgment of their historical subjectivity, but also to "enlarge the mnemonic vision of the united Europe" by seeking to incorporate their wartime experiences into a common European historical consciousness (Mälksoo, 2009, p. 84). The premise of the Baltic historical narrative regarding World War II is that there is no fundamental distinction between the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany and the ones perpetrated by the Soviet Union. By drawing a comparison between both regimes' crimes, the Baltic historical narrative "clearly challenges the paradigm of the singularity of the Holocaust against which Europe has been defined so far" (Onken, 2009, p. 38).

In 1991, following more than four decades under Moscow's control, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have proclaimed their independence on the basis of legal continuity (Onken, 2009, p. 40). In other words, the Baltic republics do not consider themselves as newly independent states, but rather as a continuation of the interwar republics that existed between 1918 and the beginning of the first Soviet occupation in June 1940 (Vikotorova, 2007, pp. 46-47). As a corollary, rather than having seceded from the USSR, the Baltic republics regained their independence following 50 years of foreign occupation (Zalimas, 1999, p. 7). Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius base their argumentation on the *ex injuria jus non oritur* principle, which postulates that illegal acts under international law cannot have legal consequences. Therefore, they were never legitimately part of the Soviet Union (Elsuwege, 2015; Annus, 2012, p. 26).

In addition to the de facto loss of independence, the Soviet occupations, in particular the longest one (1944-1991), were translated into territorial changes and markedly altered the demographic composition of Latvia and Estonia (Aalto, 2005, p. 260; Viktorova, 2007; Kasekamp, 2010, p. 140; Auers, 2015, pp. 29-30; Mole, 2012, pp. 128-138). Lithuania, on its side, regained territory after its incorporation into the Soviet Union, namely its historical capital, Vilnius, which was occupied and annexed by Poland in 1920 and 1922, respectively, as well as the coastal city of Klaipeda (also known as Memel) from Germany.

In addition to the above-mentioned territorial changes, the decades of Soviet occupation were marked by forced population transfers that led to significant changes in the ethnic composition of the Estonian and Latvian populations. The first massive deportation took already place in 1941 and its "main objective was to eliminate the nation's cultural, business, political, and military elite" (Altau, 2015). In the second massive deportation (March, 1949), also known as Operation "Coastal Surf", over 90,000 Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonian citizens were expelled from their countries (Strods and Kott, 2002).

Whereas the ethnic composition of the Baltic States was considerably homogeneous in 1945, the lasting Russian occupation of Estonia and Latvia changed the ethnic makeup of those countries. At the end of World War II, the percentage of indigenous population was high in Latvia (80%), and even higher in Estonia (94%) (Kasekamp, 2010, pp. 154-155). However, the massive influx of industrial workers from Russia led to a sharp decline in the number of ethnic Estonians and Latvians. By the year 1989, the percentage of titular Estonians and Latvians was only 62% and 52%, respectively (Kasekamp, 2010, pp. 154-155; Kattago, 2008, p. 432; Plakans, 2011, pp. 153-158). With regard to Lithuania, the percentage of ethnic Russians is significantly lower in comparison to the other two

Baltics[3] (Galbreath, Lašas and Lamoreaux, 2008, p. 28). Unlike Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania's ethnic composition did not change drastically during the last decades, as ethnic Lithuanians made up 78% and 80% of the total population in 1945 and 1989, respectively (Kasekamp, 2010, p. 155).

Not only does the principle of legal continuity constitute the bedrock of the Baltics' statehood, but it is also the background against which the current Baltic-Russian takes place. As Jaeger (2000) stresses, the Baltics' practices of inscribing the principle of historical continuity in state foundations can be defined as a kind of securitisation, "as they cast the entire state project as precarious if not firmly connected to the historic one". In other words, non-recognition of their legal continuity is perceived in the Baltic capitals as a threat to their very independence and statehood legitimacy.

The mutually exclusive views about whether the Baltic states are newly independent states or the continuation of the interwar Baltic republics is one of the major points of contention in the Baltic-Russian relations. In that regard, one of the most important corollaries of the principle of legal continuity was the citizenship laws adopted by Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The Estonian and the Latvian citizenship laws, adopted in 1995 and in 1994, respectively, are based upon the principle of *jus sanguinis*. As a consequence, only the citizens of the interwar republics and their descendants were granted automatic citizenship. The other residents, who became stateless when the Soviet Union ceased to exist, were required to go through a naturalization process in order to become Estonian and Latvian citizens[4] or, in alternative, adopt the citizenship of a third state (for example, Russia).

As Herd and Lofgren (2001, pp. 276-278) have noted, Estonia and Latvia have securitised the threat posed by their Russian-speaking "colonial" minorities[5] to the "dominant position of the titular nation" and also to their very independence as sovereign states. The implicit aim of those laws was to assure that the first post-occupation legislative elections had "overwhelmingly ethnic Estonian and Latvian electorates" (Auers, 2015, p. 81). In order to consolidate their national identities after almost five decades under Soviet control, the Baltic republics, in particular Latvia and Estonia, needed to cement the Soviet/Russian "Other", which led to the exclusion of the Russian-speaking minority and Russian language and culture as far as possible (Mole, 2012, p. 83).

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[3] However, the Russian minority living in Lithuania is still significant, numbering 176,900 and thus representing 5,8% of the total population (Lithuania Statistics, 2013).

[4] In Latvia, the percentage of non-citizens has dropped from 29% (approximately 730 000) in 1995 – when the naturalization process began – to 12% (257 377) in July 2015. Therefore, 84% of Latvia's residents are now citizens (Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015). In Estonia, the share of persons of undetermined citizenship has drastically decreased from 32% in 1992 to 6.1% in January 2016. The majority of these residents chose naturalisation during the 1990s (Estonia.eu, 2016).

[5] For a discussion about whether it is appropriate to speak about the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states as colonisation, see (Annus, 2012).

The integration into the Atlantic Alliance and the EU was also framed as a central component of the Baltics' broader "return" to Europe (Herd and Lofgren, 2001). As noted by Pavlovaite (2005, p. 199), the "return to Europe" rhetoric was not merely a way of asserting these countries' "Europeaness", as it has also served the purpose of distancing themselves from their significant "other", epitomized by Russia. "After regaining their independence, the Baltic states have been constructing their political identities in terms of the East/West opposition. They have been creating narratives of belonging to the West, with the East as their threatening other" (Miniotaite, 2003, p. 214).

As a consequence, only by joining the two organizations that symbolise the West can the Baltic republics avoid their past irreversibly (Lehti, 2005, p. 37). Owing to the civilizational affinity between these states and the West, the "return to Europe" is depicted as an essential step: "we acknowledge a certain civilization as our own, a certain political culture, certain intellectual and spiritual values and general principles" (Meri, 1998). Joining the Western institutions was perceived in the Baltic republics as a move that would confirm and solidify "their belonging to the Western civilization" and the final act of liberation from Moscow rule (Fofanova and Morozov, 2009, p. 24).

The perception of Russia as the most significant "other" and a potential threat to the Baltic states clearly attest that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been above all united "by a construction of a common danger from the East", which was one of the major rationales for the Baltics' pursuit of NATO and EU membership (Miniotaite, 2003, p. 213 and p. 220). As pointed out by Mälksoo (2006, p. 277), the Baltic republics' quest for NATO and EU membership, premised on the perceived danger posed by the "historically aggressive and unstable neighbouring Russia", has constituted "the politics of survival par excellence". Whereas Europe is associated with positive connotations, Russia is "othered", being described as unstable, aggressive and, implicitly, as inferior. In addition to that, the recurrent claims of the need to "protect" the Russian-speaking minority have fuelled the Baltic states (in this case, Latvia and Estonia) fears and strengthened the essentialist notion of embedding political loyalty in ethnicity, leading to the depiction of the Russian-speaking minority as a potential "fifth column" (Jaeger, 2000).

After having refused the Russian offer for security guarantees in 1997 (Mereckis and Morkvenas, 1998; Morozov, 2001, p. 221), the Baltics overtly ignored Russia's strong opposition to their NATO membership and signed the Baltic Charter with the United States. While the Baltics' accession to the Alliance was constructed as an existential quest in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius, the Kremlin perceived it as a threat (Morozov, 2005). The Euro-Atlantic integration of these countries was fundamentally perceived and depicted as the ultimate test to the West's credibility and guarantee that the Yalta and Munich mistakes would not be repeated.

According to Galbreath, Lasas and Lamoreaux (2008, p. 59), the Baltics' key challenge after ensuring their Euro-Atlantic integration has been to "overcome the post-soviet tendencies of restoration, redress and deterrence and move towards the post-existential policies of consolidation, stability and expansion". In other words, the three republics sought further integration into the Euro-Atlantic community, to increase regional stability in the Baltic sea and to foster their relations with the most Western-oriented post-Soviet countries, particularly with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

"Expansion" has been observable in the EU realm in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP).[6] The support towards greater democratisation and towards Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the EaP states can be justified on security grounds. Owing to the Baltic republics' threat perceptions vis-à-vis the Kremlin, the EaP is perceived by Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius as part of a containment strategy aimed at mitigating and challenging the Moscow's influence in the shared neighbourhood of the EU and Russia (Made, 2011; Kesa, 2011, pp. 87-88). As noted by Auers (2015, p. 210), by helping to strengthen the democratic institutions of those countries, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have sought to "create geopolitical security buffers in the same way the Nordic countries did for the Baltic states" during the 1990s.

The moral responsibility to support the former Soviet republics might be illustrated by the former Lithuanian head of state:

> Lithuania is eager to provide practical advice and support for your reforms. In fact, we have a lot to share, as we went through similar reforms just few years ago and now we know its "nuts and bolts". (…) Europe has neither moral nor historical right to deny the nations in the Black Sea Region the possibility to share the same transatlantic institutions. On the contrary, we have a responsibility to bring these nations back to Europe (Adamkus, 2005).

Whereas threat perceptions regarding Moscow's intentions and a sense of moral responsibility have indisputably played the major role in explaining the Baltic republics' conduct, they have not only aim to contain Russia's influence and counter what they perceive as its expansionist impulses in the EaP region (Jakniunaite, 2009, p. 125 and p. 128). Their active support towards the Eastern dimension of the ENP is also closely related to their intention of increasing their participation in the EU's decision-making process (Made, 2011, p. 68; Lamoreaux and Galbreath, 2008). This aspect is an example of the "consolidation" dimension of their post-2004 foreign policy, as above-mentioned. One effective way of meeting that objective is through a strong focus on the Eastern dimension of the ENP because the post-Soviet countries "are quite harmless policy areas demanding little domestic, including financial, input (…), but offering, at the same time, rather wide and risk-free opportunities to increase the image profile" within the EU (Made, 2011, p. 74).

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[6] The ENP was launched in 2004 and includes Southern Mediterranean countries and six former Soviet Republics participating in the EU's Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The Eastern Partnership was created in 2009 in the context of the ENP to give new impetus to relations with these countries.

In addition to prioritising the EaP, the Baltic states have stressed the need for a EU policy vis-à-vis Russia based on values and not merely on economic considerations.[7] The Baltic republics' reactions to the possible sale of four French Mistral-class amphibious assault ships illustrate this point. According to the then undersecretary for political affairs at the Estonian Foreign Ministry, the sale of those ships to Russia "would not add to the security of the region" and "the nations around the Baltic Sea in that case might have to see what they have to do to change their defense planning" (Tiido, 2010, quoted in Lobjakas, 2010). The former Minister of National Defence of Lithuania, Rasa Jukneviciene (2008-2012), pointed out that the sale was an "obvious mistake", because "when a NATO and EU member sells offensive weaponry to a country whose democracy is not at a level that would make us feel calm" it sets a dangerous precedent (Jukneviciene, 2011, quoted in Iskauskas, 2011). Russia is thus subjected to practices of normative "othering"[8] depicting Moscow as an undemocratic and potentially aggressive country.

Processes of normative othering were particularly prevalent during the "Bronze Soldier" crisis. The Estonian government's decision to relocate on the night of 26-27 April the so-called "Bronze Soldier" (previously called "Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn"), a Soviet World War II memorial, from the centre of Tallinn to the Estonian Defence Forces Cemetery, provoked violent riots among the Russian minority and marked a new low in the relations between the two countries (Fernandes, 2013). The Kremlin has sought to expose the Baltic states (and also Poland) as an embodiment of "false Europe", depicting them as being unworthy to be part of the West on normative grounds. During the "Bronze Soldier" crisis, Estonia's conduct was depicted as being counter "to modern European civilisation, to the entire civilized world" (Kosachev, quoted in Pelnens, 2009, p. 60). As emphasised by Morozov (2005, p. 224):

> By proclaiming their adherence to European values such as human rights and the anti-fascist legacy, Russian political actors attempted to single out the Baltics as the black sheep of the European family, thereby increasing their own legacy by assuming the right to speak on behalf of the true Europe.

During the "Bronze Soldier" episode, Tallinn also engaged in processes of normative othering. In that regard, the then Estonian head of state advised Moscow to "remain civilised", and stressed that "it is customary in Europe that differences are solved by diplomats and politicians, not on the streets or by computer attacks. Those are ways of other countries, somewhere else, not in Europe" (Ilves, 2007, quoted in McLaughin, 2007). The Estonian president thus sought to both widen and deepen the discursive border between "civilised" Europe, to which Estonia is part, and the "violent", "unstable" and "barbaric" Russia, whose conduct and principles are not consistent with the European civilisation (Kaiser, 2016, p. 529).

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[7] For an analysis of EU-Russia relations see Fernandes (2010).

[8] See the strategies of othering presented in the first section.

Owing to what they perceive as the willingness of some EU members, in particular Germany and France, to prioritise commercial interests over a value-driven foreign policy towards Russia, the Baltic republics have been staunchly opposed to the dilution of NATO's role in Europe, and simultaneously, they have been cautious towards the evolving European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) (Mälksoo, 2008, p. 39). As pointed out by the Latvian National Armed Forces' Commander, "every initiative concerning security in Europe should be adding to NATO's security capabilities", and therefore "duplicating the alliance's capacities would be unacceptable" (Graube, 2016, quoted in Latvian Information Agency, 2016).

In that regard, the Baltics have pursued a "NATO first" defence policy and stressed the major importance of their bilateral relationship with Washington, widely perceived as the ultimate guarantee of their security and the only effective way of deterring Moscow (Rublovskis, 2014, p. 175). In addition to the United States' role, the security guarantees enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty are widely perceived as more reliable than the mutual defence clause introduced in 2009 under Article 42 (7) of the Treaty of the European Union. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have sought to gain diplomatic and political importance with their allies, in particular the United States, by actively participating in all major Atlantic Alliance's "out-of-area" missions. For instance, in addition to serving in Afghanistan without caveats, a very rare occurrence among NATO allies, Estonian troops have been deployed to the Helmand province — "one of the most deadly areas in the country" – and suffered the second-highest number of deadly casualties per capita of all NATO members (Coffey, 2013).

3. More than words: military and non-military changes after 2014

The paper has underlined, above, that securitisation has been visible before 2014, particularly at the discourse level. This has contributed to both justify statehood and independence and to enhance the Baltics' role as EU members, namely concerning its policies towards the post-soviet space. After EU accession in 2004, othering of Russia has been more focused on normative differentiation than on the need to justify and protect the existence of the three states. In that sense, securitisation has continued but in a less urgent way. In this section, we address how the process has evolved in front of the deterioration of relations with the Kremlin in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea in March 2014. According to Hyndle-Hussein (2015), whereas the Russian military intervention in Georgia have diminished the Baltic republics' sense of security, the annexation of Crimea and the outburst of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have greatly increased Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania's fears vis-à-vis Russia. We will unpack how changes have occurred by exploring major policy changes (implementation level) beyond discourses.

The sense of urgency provoked by the events in Ukraine has been particularly observable in Lithuania. In a speech at the United Nations, the head of state asked: "how much time do we have" in the face of a country that "seeks to rewrite history and redraw the borders of post-war Europe" (Grybauskaite, 2015). After decades of disinvestment, Lithuanian's defence budget has been markedly increased since 2014. In that year, Lithuania's defence budget was the second smallest among NATO countries, standing at only 0,8% (Dudzinska, 2014, p. 1; Hyndle-Hussein, 2015, p. 3). In 2015 and 2016 the defence budget amounted to 1.15 % of GDP and 1.48 % of GDP, respectively (Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania, 2015). In 2017, the sum is expected to be further raised to 1.77% of GDP. The defence expenditures is expected to meet the 2% NATO guideline next year and it will be further on steadily increased (Lithuanian Ministry of Defence, 2017).

Vilnius has introduced changes both at the military level and in other domains. The normative aspect of othering is also visible in the new military strategy approved in 2016 as it emphasises that Moscow is "undermining the rule-based European security architecture", and therefore "the security environment of Lithuania has worsened and become less predictable in the long-term" (Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, 2016). The annexation of Crimea in March 2014 has served as a "catalyst to implement practical decisions to strengthen military capabilities" in Lithuania (Kojara and Kersanskas, 2015, p. 183). Vilnius is the only NATO member that has reinstated military conscription in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The compulsory military service, which had been abolished in 2008, was firstly reinstated on a temporary basis (5 years) in 2015. However, on March 14, 2016, the State Defence Council unanimously approved permanent conscription (The Baltic Times, 2016a) and, in June, the Parliament adopted "amendments to the Law on Military Conscription" (Seimas, 2016). Both the Head of State and Chief of Defence of the Republic justified the decision by alluding to Russia's actions in Ukraine and its significant impact in the region geopolitical environment (Zukas, 2015, quoted in The Guardian, 2015; Grybauskaite, 2015, quoted in Deutsche Welle, 2015a).

In addition to conscription, Vilnius has also taken decisive steps to augment combat readiness with the aim of precluding a "fait accompli" similar to the one Russia has created in the Crimea peninsula. Lithuania has, thus, altered the armed forces structures and invested in modern military equipment. The Rapid Reaction Force, that is indispensable to respond to "non-conventional threats" (Grybauskaite, 2014, quoted in DELFI, 2014), and the 2500 military personnel training was justified on the grounds that the conflict in Ukraine demonstrates the "need to be able to deploy forces in hours, not weeks and months" (Tamosaitis, 2014, quoted in Lyman, 2014).

As regards military equipment, the most significant investment was the purchase of 88 Boxer Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV) armed with 30mm gun and Spike-LR anti-tank missiles. The purchase amounts to €386 million and is the largest defence investment ever made by Vilnius (Malyasov, 2016). To fully assess the enormous dimension of the investment, one may note that Vilnius' total defence budget stood at €425 million and €575 in 2015 and 2016, respectively (Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, 2015a).

Lithuania's securitisation of Moscow has not been confined to policy changes in the defence and military spheres. The country has also addressed what it has perceived as the Kremlin's "information warfare". In April 2015, the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania suspended RTR Planeta broadcast for three months for "inciting discord, warmongering, spreading biased information" (Deutsche Welle, 2015b). More concretely, the channel was accused of "inciting hatred" and "showing contempt for Ukraine's territorial integrity" (Kropaite, 2015). Prior to the annexation of Crimea, Lithuania had already imposed temporary bans on the broadcasts from Gazprom-owned NTV Mir, in March 2014, and from the First Baltic Channel (PBK), in October 2013 (Auers, 2015, p. 226; Reuters, 2014). The suspension of NTV Mir and PBK can be considered as a form of securitising the country's historical narrative (existential politics), on the grounds that both channels were accused of "spreading lies about the events in Vilnius in January 1991" (Reuters, 2014).

Latvia has also identified Russia as an aggressor country with a particular focus on its ability to conduct hybrid warfare.[9] The defense minister claimed that owing to "Russia's unpredictable nature, current relations (…) are based on mistrust and suspicion" and a thaw in Russian-West relations must only occur once the Kremlin "obeys international law, stops threatening its neighbours with weapons and restores the status quo of Ukraine's territorial integrity" (Bergmanis 2016, quoted in Tomkiw, 2016). Former prime minister also accused Moscow of attempting to undermine Riga's security through "(a)ggressive propaganda, economic sanctions, the demonstration of military power, and the unprecedented concentration of troops close to the Baltic borders" (Straujuma, 2016, quoted in The Baltic Times, 2016). Russia's military build-up is perceived as a threat, because "(w) e have already seen in Georgia and Ukraine how such exercises can turn into aggression, occupation, and annexation" (Vejonis, 2016).

As a consequence, Riga has also undertaken military and other policy changes. Defense expenditures have arisen from 1,2% of GDP (2015) to 1,7% (2017) (Marrone, France and Fattibene, 2016, p. 13; Sargs, 2016). Concerning the military sphere, although it has not invested as much as its southern neighbour, Latvia has also sought to modernise its armed forces and adapt them to the challenges posed by Moscow's conduct in Ukraine.

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[9] We define "hybrid warfare" as "the use of military and non-military tools in an integrated campaign designed to achieve surprise, seize the initiative and gain psychological as well as physical advantages utilizing diplomatic means; sophisticated and rapid information, electronic and cyber operations; covert and occasionally overt military and intelligence action; and economic pressure" (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2015). For a detailed discussion of the concept see Galeotti (2016).

In that regard, the most significant decision was the €48.1 million euros purchase of 123 surplus Combat Reconnaissance Armoured vehicles – which will be equipped with Spike fourth-generation anti-tank missile systems from the United Kingdom (UK Government, 2014). As noted by Turnbull (2014):

> A hundred 1970s-era vehicles might not sound significant (...) but in relative terms it is. Latvia's army is one of the smallest in Europe, numbering around 1,500, and has historically lacked any serious armoured capabilities. The government's build-up of an armoured vehicle fleet, albeit small, is a sign of shifting priorities in Eastern Europe.

In other domains, changes have concerned "information warfare" and constitutional amendments. Defensive capabilities to counter Russia's "information warfare" include the establishment of the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga, launched in 2014. After signing a Memory of Understanding with representatives from Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, the UK and Germany on the creation of the above-mentioned centre, the then Minister of Defence justified the decision with Russia's actions in Ukraine: "The conflict between Russia and Ukraine clearly shows how important an information campaign can be in gaining the upper hand in a military conflict" (Vejonis 2014, quoted in Atlantic Council, 2014).

Riga has also securitised Russia's narrative about the conflict in Ukraine, namely by shutting down the local website of Russia's channel Sputnik in March 2016. The Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that the decision was justified on the grounds that the channel is a "propaganda tool" used by the Kremlin (Jansons, 2016, quoted in EURACTIV, 2016). The Latvia's Network Information Center (NIC), which carried out the suspension, explained the decision by noting that "continuing operations of the sputniknews.lv website was at odds with the March 17, 2014 EU regulation that stipulates sanctions against activities endangering the territorial integrity and independence of the Ukrainian state" (Public Broadcasting of Latvia, 2016a).

Shortly after ordering the suspension of Sputnik, the Latvia National Electronic Mass Media Council placed a six-month ban on the Rossiya RTR Russian TV channel (Public Broadcasting of Latvia, 2016b). The Russian channel was accused of inciting hatred or calling for war or military conflict, following contentious claims by the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia and member of the Russian Parliament, Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

The securitisation of Russia in Latvia has also been materialised in constitutional amendments. The main aim of the bills, submitted to the Latvian parliament by president Vejonis, was to expedite both government and military decision-making in case of conflict (Public Broadcasting of Latvia, 2015). The amendments to the National Security Law give greater flexibility to local commanders, stipulating that, should the country come under serious military threat, the Latvian Armed Forces are authorised to immediately launch self-defence measures without having to wait for an order from the Commander-in-Chief. Amendments also include a new and broader definition of "wartime", now described as being a consequence of any attack, be it conventional (military) or not, or any other actions aimed against the country's independence, constitutional order or territorial integrity (Baltic News Network, 2016).

The National Armed Forces Law has also been amended to guarantee the swift and efficient cooperation and exchange of information between the Cabinet of Ministers and the National Armed Forces' command during wartime. In order to achieve that objective, the amendment indicates that the Armed Forces commander shall, in the event of a war, participate in the meetings of the cabinet of ministers as an advisor.

Finally, the amendment to the Law on the Structure of the Cabinet of Ministers – whose aim is "to ensure decisive action in the event of a national threat" – will enable the Cabinet to make decisions in the event of a state of war or a state of exception if the Prime Minister and at least three other Members of the Cabinet attend the meeting (President of Latvia, 2016).

As far as Estonia is concerned, although sharp condemnation of Russia's actions in Ukraine have been voiced, securitisation has happened in a more balanced way. While avoiding portraying the Russian neighbour as an eminent threat, Tallinn has insisted on a more positive discourse underlying capacities and resilience. That way, although former president Toomas Ilves was one of the first EU heads of state to draw a comparison between Moscow's intervention in Ukraine and the crimes perpetrated by Nazi Germany, he also considered "silly" to even suggest that Russia could invade the bordering city of Narva (2014, quoted in Weymouth, 2014).

Rather than portraying itself as a vulnerable country in the face of an ostensible threat posed by Russia's revisionism, the Estonian political elite has instead opted for stressing the state's military, social and economic resilience. Former defense minister stated that:

> I would not say Estonia is nervous about the current situation in our neighbourhood, but we are concerned. Many things are working well for us, including the NATO Response Force and our response plans. Our professional Army, together with our reserve forces and our volunteer-based Defence League, are all working well. Combined, this gives us a substantial defence force. So our own forces, along with the commitment of allies, provide a credible deterrent. Naturally, we have historically very painful memories of being occupied by the Soviet Union, and that makes independence and sovereignty even more valuable for us. The security situation could always be better, but we are making the best of our situation. Our economy is growing, and Estonia is a safe and attractive place to invest in and conduct business. Our tax system is very favourable, and corruption levels are very low (Hanso 2016, quoted in Defence News, 2016).

Whereas Estonia's defence expenditures did increase after the annexation of Crimea, they have not increased as significantly as in Latvia and Lithuania. However, Tallinn's defence investment was already high, as the country had already been one of the few NATO countries to spend 2% of GDP in defence since 2013 (Dudzinska, 2014). In spite of already meeting NATO's benchmark, Tallinn's defence budget have been steadily growing in the last two years, increasing from 2,07% in 2016 to 2,2% of GDP in 2017 (Business Insider, 2016).

Significant defense expenditures include the purchase of 80 third generation systems Javelins with the aim of reinforcing the army's anti-tank capabilities, in a deal worth 40 million euros (Palowski, 2016). Sven Mikser, former Minister of Defence (2014-2015) and Minister of Foreign Affairs since November 2016, stressed the procurement's urgency by noting that "due to the changed security circumstances, we decided to proceed with the procurement as soon as possible" (Mikser, 2014, quoted in Estonian Public Broadcasting, 2014b).

Despite the urgency attached to the moment of the purchase, the decision to buy the above-mentioned missile systems was made before Russia launched its intervention in Ukraine. In fact, boosting the armed forces' anti-tank capabilities had already been established as a key goal in the 2013-2022 National Defence Development Plan (Estonian Defence Forces, 2012). While it can be contended that the Russian annexation of Crimea may have added urgency to the upgrade of the Defence Forces' equipment, the need to do so had already been stressed.

Concerning the development of the Army's "armoured manoeuvre capability", Tallinn has taken significant decisions to increase battlefield mobility. Former Minister of Defence has indicated that Estonia has bought CV90 infantry fighting vehicles from the Netherlands, highlighting that it is "a large project with a total cost of €200 million (US $218 million)" that will "have a serious deterrent impact on potential adversaries" (Hanso, 2016).

Like the other two Baltic republics, Estonia also considers that Moscow has been conducting disinformation campaigns aimed at destabilising the republic and tarnishing its international reputation. However, Tallinn response has drastically differed from Latvia and Lithuania's. Instead of securitising the Kremlin's official narrative by suspending Russian-language channels, the Estonian government has decided, for the first time since 1991, to create a new TV channel targeting the Russian-speaking minority. The Estonian Public Broadcasting Company (Eesti Rahvusringhääling, known as ERR) has, thus, decided to launch for the very first time a Russian language television channel (ETV+) on September 25, 2015 (Nielsen, 2015). The former Estonian head of state has emphasised that freedom of speech is one of Tallinn's core values and, therefore, banning TV channels should not be an option to be considered (Ilves, 2014, quoted in Milne, 2014).

4. Conclusion

The ongoing instability in Ukraine and the perceived engagement of Russia has brought significant changes in the three Baltic States. Negative perceptions had been already deeply informing the independence of the three Republics since 1991. Independence has been based on the core understanding of national security as being guaranteed by a proper memory of history and a normative commitment to European values, as embodied by the EU (and NATO). The connection between security, history and values has marked these processes of securitisation where the significant other is Russia. The security perceptions of the three Baltic States heavily hinge, thus, on their historical past with Russia.

Taking the securitisation dynamics of the pre-enlargement period (1991-2004) as a comparison, the paper has used the categories of "securitisation" available in the literature with emphasis on both the discursive and implementation dimensions. Additionally, three strategies of "self" and "othering" (Diez, 2015) have been explored in the case of the securitisation of Russia by the Baltic States. The first one (the other as an existential threat) has informed massively the independence in 1991 because the legal continuity of the state is the basis of its security. It has been implemented in other changes such as the nationality laws. The second and third category (the other as inferior and as violating universal principles) have also operated in the formation of identity vis-à-vis Russia that is viewed as not belonging to Western normative framework.

Although NATO has assumed greater importance in the security and defense realm, as compared to the EU, securitisation has been pursed after EU accession in 2004. With a lesser focus on existential politics that relate directly to the integrity of the state as such and to the first strategy of othering, securitisation has been continued in other forms. The focus on the strategy of othering through values has been visible in the support to the EU policies directed to the countries of the post-Soviet space. After 2014, the three strategies of othering are visible, depicting Russia not only as a threat but also as "inferior" because it does not adhere to European values. Beyond discursive practices that fall into these dimensions of securitisation, the three Baltic states have introduced significant policy changes both at the military and non-military level.

With nuances among the three countries and in a softer manner (with less existential underpinnings), securitisation has, thus, clearly continued as member states of the EU. As a consequence of the annexation of Crimea in 2014, a new process of re-securitisation has emerged with the combination of different categories of othering materialised into significant policy changes meant to address the perceived Russian threat.

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