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The European Union and Russia:
Towards a new *ostpolitik*?

Antje Herrberg

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‘It is time that the European Union and Russia recognised their historical vocation as the two principal European powers and, in the common interest, sought to develop the close and mutually enriching partnership which will reflect their political, social and economic significance, while at the same time demonstrating the responsiveness and respect for human rights without which cooperation will remain unfulfilled and void of substance’ (Com (95) 223 final : 31.05.1995)

Introduction

The EU/Russian relationship is central to an understanding of the European Union’s external capabilities and relations. While during the Cold War, the bipolar competition between the United States and the Soviet Union drove the European internal integration processes, the Post Cold War Era contains economic and political imperatives to integrate the new Europe in the international system. Especially in view of the immediate integration agenda of the European Union, its planned enlargement in Eastern Europe and its Association with the Baltic States, a consistent and constructive relationship to Russia is of crucial importance to the European Union. The interest for a constructive relationship with Russia is important not only because with Finland’s accession it is the EU’s immediate neighbour, but also because Russia, the EU’s main trading partner exhibits enormous economic, commercial and scientific potential. Most important, Russia is and will continue to be a key player in the international political system, and thus will be a key contributor to the stability of the new European security architecture.

The purpose of this article is to describe and explain the relationship between the European Union and Russia, focusing on the period following the 1991 break-up of the former Soviet Union. One issue which this article attempts to highlight is that the bilateral relationship which developed was shaped by Russia’s and the EU’s perceptions of each other in the international system. A second argument is that the changes of the international system and the will of the member states to unify and combine forces to follow a proactive dialogue with Russia gave the Commission an unprecedented opportunity to develop a genuine political dialogue with a third state. The nature and the concrete actions in the process of *rapprochement* between the European Union and Russia, could be tangible indicators of the development towards a genuine policy directed towards third states in the former Soviet Union, or, in other words, a new European *Ostpolitik*.

Because the international system is no longer dominated by an ideologically divided East-West thinking as it was during the Cold War, the usage this term might seem to be inappropriate.¹ However, the reason why this term might be employed here is because one can

draw some useful analogies from this earlier era to the strategy the European Union pursues in relation to Russia. In essence the European Union remains a civilian power, but pursues a policy linked to the architecture of both former Soviet Union and the American Alliance.²

New Thinking in International Relations

The collapse of state socialism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and the consequent dissolution of the Soviet Union seemed like a revolution to many observers in the West.³ The downfall of communism called for new approaches and actions by scholars and practitioners of international relations. But solutions both to assess and analyse the new Europe are not easy to find.

It is clear that the restructuring of the international system since the closing of the Cold War has created immediate problems and implications in relation to the European integration agenda, of which the European Union is the institutionalised core. The study of international politics which presently deals with the uncertainty and volatility of the international structure, faces many dilemmas but also dichotomies. Increasing globalisation, due to intensified interdependency of the economic and political international system, might have created a centripetal drive towards greater homogeneity. On the other hand, increasing fragmentation and clashing interests operate in a parallel fashion. While there appears to be a shift from military means towards economic power (soft power) resources, the term security does regress increasingly to its military dimension.⁴ It appears that actors' capacities to act increase and decrease at the same time, and parallel to this, one can witness the changing nature of the state. Deepening international and regional interdependence have spurred states to opt for multilateral cooperation as a forum to assert influence through collective arrangements in the international arena.

Within the changing nature of the structure and study of international relations, theoretical, public and diplomatic debates about which role the European Union should and is capable of pursuing, have intensified. In this debate, key questions are *whether* the traditional borders of state sovereignty can be trespassed as an option to increase the external security of the European Union, and *what* the role of the co-ordinating security and foreign policy institutions and regimes are.

How to analyse EU - Russian relations ?

Despite the divergent views of whether the European Union can be evaluated as a distinct international actor, there nevertheless appears to be a consensus that the role of the European Union in the international environment can be evaluated in a number of ways. In examining essentially a bilateral relationship, there are two ways in which this could be done.

First, a concrete and substantive option is to describe and document the two countries' policies towards each other in order to reveal the essential goals and strategies pursued by these two units in their relationship. Given the fact that information and events, however dense and intricate they might be, have occurred in a relatively short time frame, such an approach

runs the danger of becoming easily dated. This in turn sets a problems in producing generalisable insights into the European Union's role in the international environment.

It is therefore desirable to complement this contribution with some conceptual considerations which have some implications for further theoretical development. Hence attention will be placed on the dynamic processes of policy formation, evolution and change.⁵

The discussion will be divided into three essential parts. The first part of this article will attempt to highlight some conceptual issues regarding the European Union as an entity in the international system. The second part focuses largely on an empirical record of the EU/Russian relationship, which is based on a review of the past ten years of interactions between the European Union and Soviet Union, and after 1991, its legal heir, Russia. The aim of the third and the final part of this article is to come to some tentative conclusions about the character of this relationship and what this tells us about the development of the EU foreign policy toward this important region.

Foreign and External Policies in Flux

While the European Union's relationship with Russia must be given at least equal importance as the transatlantic relationship, it clearly differs in its nature and content.

As such, an assessment of the relationship must take into account the changing nature of both Russian but also European foreign policy. It needs to be understood that Russian foreign policy has, until at least 1993, reflected the internal turbulence and uncertainty which govern its society and government.⁶ The domestic difficulties associated with the political and economic transformations taking place in Russia have produced a high degree of uncertainty in the conduct of both domestic and foreign policies. It can be argued that a relatively ambiguous and changing Russian foreign policy over the last five years is a reflection of domestic search for a post Soviet identity. This important process has taken many currents, often swinging from one extreme to the other, from total openness to the West to overt endogenous nationalisms, stirring old enemy images.⁷ These processes of identity formulation and the corresponding visions and definitions of Russia's position in the world, have decisive influences on the shaping of its foreign policy.

It is also reasonable to argue that - given its present relatively unstable political structures - Russian foreign policy is influenced by the international context. In particular, prior to 1993, these institutional weaknesses of the Russian foreign policy making system provided little direction for clear success or failure of foreign policies. This allowed multiple ideas about the international environment to permeate Russian foreign policy debates. On these grounds the argument may be made that the nature of the external environment act as powerful influences and factors in determining and shaping Russian foreign policy, as long as uncertainty and instability remain high in Russian foreign policy.⁸ The interaction and bargaining at both the domestic and the international level shape the definition of national interests, the formulations of policies, and the relative potential for international cooperation and conflict.

Two level games,⁹ albeit of a different nature, are also at play in the decision making process concerning the European Unions' actions towards third actors. Here the issue one needs to address concerns the fact that a genuine European foreign policy as it was initially formulated by the European Union has not come into existence. In essence the character of the European Union's relationship with third states remains *sui generis* in nature and cannot be compared to either national foreign policies, or the role which multilateral institutions traditionally assume in the international environment. This has been an important predicament for scholarly inquiry in this area of European integration. An additional caveat to be applied here is that in fact Title J5 in the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) is presently not a clear reflection of the diversity of approaches by which member states would like to see the European Union act.

But such conceptual puzzles and predicaments have not restrained students and practitioners of European integration to assess and to analyse where the barriers of a genuine and full fledged CFSP lie. It is by all means difficult to establish whether the fact that member states do co-ordinate their foreign policy for the sake of European Foreign Policy has a significant impact on third states.¹⁰ For example, Christopher Hill's work has established a framework which has spurred considerable case research.¹¹ In proposing a framework to question actor-like characteristics of the European Union by outlining the gap between capabilities (the ability to agree necessary resources and instruments at its disposal to act) of the European Union as a foreign policy actor on the one hand and expectations (demands) by potential recipient states on the other. In mapping out *which* capabilities a foreign policy actor *should* possess, he comes to the worthwhile conclusion that there is a fundamental gap between capabilities and expectations, and prefers to label the dialogue between the EU and the world as a *system of external relations*.¹²

Questions and frameworks such as the above raise a pivotal question about Europe and its institutional core in regards to third actors. The fact that the EU is often not seen as a series of ad hoc mechanisms but rather as a seamless web of 'Europeanness', has been addressed by Allen and Smith in 1990.¹³ In recognising specific problems in the evaluation of the European Union in a statist perspective, the authors have shifted the definition of the European Union from that of an international actor to that of a *variable and multi-dimensional presence*, which might have more important roles to play in some issues than in others. The work is significant since it integrates an important factors formerly neglected in the study of the European Union's foreign policy. It implies that the EU is an institutional phenomena, but also an economic and cultural one. The way in which the new Europe defines and legitimises its presence within these dimensions has a fundamental impact on the shaping of its relation with 'Others'.

Definitions of 'Self' and 'Other' in Europe

The issue concerning self-(re)definition of Europe provoke the controversial question of how and where to set its boundaries,¹⁴ can be roughly translated into the practice of the politics of inclusion and exclusion. Specifically in reference to Russia, the interchangeable use of

denoting Europe as a way of either describing Europe's cultural boundary (the idea of Europe) and the EU's institutional boundary (the EU as an actor) and where Europe's security boundaries are to be drawn (NATO, WEU, Partnership for Peace), have given rise to misunderstandings and confusion for both policy makers and scholars alike.

As a whole, the present, past and probably future search for Russian identity does not rest in easily identifiable cultural traits but in relations,¹⁵ hence questions of where and how borders towards 'the Other' should be drawn become crucial. In fact, Russian self-definition and its relevance to Europe has been a focus of debate for centuries. During the seven decades following the 1917 upheaval, Russia consistently promoted the myth of its central role as a champion of internationalism in world politics. In this way it latched on to a pro-European political debate - and policy - which can be dated to Peter the Great. On the other hand, Catherine the Great, who cultivated the ideas of Enlightenment, championed the idea of a centralised state to protect the Russian Empire. Accordingly, until today, the Western 'Other' has been a volatile concept in Russian identity constructions. The meanings of 'Europe' are used as to distinguish it from the 'West', notably the United States of America (and NATO). The Russian relationship to the USA in its rhetoric is characterised by love and hate, whereas those with Europe are approached with symbolic gesturing. As indicated beforehand, the way in which Russia will interpret the 'Other' is closely interrelated to the difficulty in coming to terms with the challenges of a changing concept of Russian identity and in which way it integrates the idea of Europe in that process. This is not because there is no 'Russian idea' but rather that there are many of them. It is the above mentioned identity 'crisis' which has tended to reactivate the age old Russian ambiguity vis a vis Europe and the West at large.¹⁶

The issue of identity

'Collective Identity,' according to Bill Mc Sweeney in *the Review of International Affairs*, 'is first a matter of perception, just as security and insecurity also begin in our perception of vulnerability'.¹⁷ From a general historical viewpoint, the very idea of Europe and its identity has been defined at large through images of foes. The present post cold war readjustment of countries in western, eastern and central Europe signifies an attempt to surmount the former 'frontiers' of Europe, and the division between the east and the west. European *Others* have changed over time; the present political processes might well be conducive to further changes, or manifestations of the imagined borders where Europe lies.

In addition, any thinking about European identity has both political and cultural dimensions which, inextricably linked and owning many nuances, are difficult to define in a quantitative way. It is essential to recognise that European identity centres on the idea of the *Other*, where the national 'We' is mirrored itself in the 'Them' which from any national perspective makes up the larger part of the world.¹⁸ This is important to realise because it is here where the European Union as a *Presence* will find the major part of its justification, its naturalisation, but also, its claim for existence. Hence in the context of interpreting the European Union's external relations, the images about *Otherness* might both drive but also

inhibit collaborative behaviour between the east and the west; between Russia and the European Union.

The point in clarifying this issue is that the following study divorces the cultural and institutional dimension of Europe and as such carries three important conceptual considerations: European identity and International identity, the European Union and its external capacity from within, and the upgrading of its external presence.

European identity and European international identity

The first point refers to the *idea of Europe* in the formulations of identities for both third states on the one hand, and those of the EU itself. The above discussion should have pointed out that the integration of the idea of Europe in Russia's identity search forms an important basis of a consciousness of common interests and common values between the European Union and Russia. This might well promote the setting up of common frameworks and institutions, which also point to the formation of an international society.¹⁹ In this vein, it is not merely sufficient to view European external relations as a totality of individual policies, nor as a diffuse idea of what Europe represents. Rather, the European Union needs to be analysed as a distinct unit of identity, which represents discrete capabilities, outputs, and strategy formulations. It is for this reason that it is useful to view the European Union as possessing both a *European identity* and a *European international identity*. While the first term relates to how the both Europe is interpreted by its citizens and reflects a value system, as well as a largely cultural and historical concept,²⁰ the latter concept refers to a more exclusive concept, namely establishing how the presence of the European Union in the development of a system of relations is received by others. The term *European International Identity* reflects perceptions regarding the European Union in the international system which might or might not be overlapping with those of Europe at large. The prime reason why it is employed here is to assess to what extent the European Union - as analysed as an institution - possesses a distinct presence, and accordingly how its interests are perceived by Others. In general it reflects the discourse but also actions on the part of the Russian and EU political and intellectual elite.

One pertinent example of how the interpretations of the role of the European Unions by 'Significant Others' are often confused and misunderstood, can be found in Russian foreign policy rhetoric. As mentioned above, this rhetoric swings and fluctuates from openness and a cooperative stance to antagonistic and increasingly ambiguous foreign policy messages. These messages undoubtedly reflect the Russian wish to reassert itself on the international political scene, after having to experience the devastating effects of economic shock therapy strongly advocated by the West. They are also a response to the tightening of European security structures, especially those of NATO. On the other hand, these messages should not be simply interpreted as a refusal by Russia to integrate in the new international system. In fact, antagonistic messages could well be indicators of how to achieve this goal.²¹

External capacity from within

Correspondingly, no conclusions can be drawn about the EU/Russian relationship if we cannot distinguish the role of the EU Commission in fulfilling an autonomous and executive function for policies and strategies which might have developed both from pillar one issues or genuine CFSP issues. As Jupille and Caporaso point out in this volume it is the 'corporate' rather than the 'collective' identity which matters. One example here refers to the association of the sole will and actions of Germany,²² or those interests defined by the European contingent of the G7. This issue has also some significance regarding the relationship of the EU towards third states. Both as a gradual and dynamic process, where the EU's internal institutional capabilities may slowly adapt to new realities which will give it a greater capacity to deal with them. Such assumptions reflect a neoliberal institutionalism approach which accepts a learning capacity for institutions.²³ As a result, internal integration might provide a greater incentive for cohesive integration of the individual foreign policies of each member state. It could be accordingly argued that individual interests represented within the European Union are influenced by the feedback relating to the EU's international identity in the world provided by third actors.²⁴

A case in point here refers to the dense network of interests and sectors the EU/Russian relationship exhibits. This has resulted from agreements and commitments concluded not solely by the Commission Directorate General for external Relations (DGI, in particular DGIA) as one would expect, but also under competence of other DG's (dealing for example with nuclear energy, energy, environment, scientific cooperation etc.).

As such, competence on certain matters regarding the EU/Russian relationship are not always entirely clear, and might be a sources of portfolio competition within the Commission. In addition multiple competencies produce a certain level of confusion to third actors about where to find suitable interlocutors. The Commission initially responded to this issue by recruiting functionaries from DG VIII (Development) to deal with all issues on technical assistance to the former USSR. Given the increasing scope of the EU/Russian relationship this reflects only a short term solution.

Upgrading its external presence

A third conceptual imperative in viewing the EU and its own international identity refers to how the European Union/Russian relationship has attributed to the EU's role in the international multilateral scene. In essence this supposes that contextual factors have a powerful influence in upgrading the credibility and international identity of the European Union. Not only does this refer to the issue, procedural and output cohesion, addressed by Jupille and Caporaso in this volume, but also to the internal competence and efficiency of the Community institutions to deal with new policy issues. Consideration of such entails an awareness by the observer of how the European Union might be seen as an actor in its own right, not only by (in this case) Russia, but also how other actors respond to its capacity in

dealing with it. This can act as an influence to both strengthen (if seen as a capable actor) or weaken (if seen as an incompetent actor) its autonomy and international identity.

Viewing the European Union as an autonomous entity, possessing both distinct competencies or capabilities, make it also necessary to consider the internal dynamics of the European Union. As will be shown in the case study below, internal competence and willingness of Community institutions other than the Commission such as the European Parliament or the European Court of Auditors, might both act as barriers or as catalysts to the role of the European Union in the World Community. That is to say that some inadequacies on the external level, as for example a slow implementation of technical assistance can be attributed to internal inefficiency, a lack of dialogue or a slow interaction process between the responsible Community institutions.

In this way, the EU's presence in the world derives from a complex set of internal and external dimensions and interactions. These issues should be taken into account in understanding the actual record of the EU/Russian relationship.

The Record of EU *Ostpolitik*

In all respects it would be difficult to argue that the European Union has taken a passive stance towards those states which belonged to the former USSR. In fact there are some who argue that abrupt changes in the international system have catapulted the EU into leadership²⁵ especially in Eastern Europe. The following description focuses on the process of rapprochement developed by the EU. This has been largely based and executed from DGI, and gives reason to argue the European Union is in the process of developing a new European *Ostpolitik*.

The Cold War: From Ignorance to Adaptation to Realities of the new Europe

Not long after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the European Community was soon confronted with strong opposition from the USSR. Essentially during the Cold War American support towards European integration was seen as an effort to create a counterweight to the Soviet threat, as an 'annihilation of the internal communist threat'²⁶ in Europe. As such, the construction of the EEC could only be seen as an economic arm of NATO. In other words, the attitude of the USSR was that in bipolar competition, Europe should not have a sphere of influence.

If there was a debate which preoccupied the foreign policy elite of the Soviet Union in the 40s and 50s, it concerned itself with the question to what extent the European Community could be seen as an accessory of American imperialism. Most of Soviet apprehension was largely based in politico-military terms: an example of this is the little attention that was paid initially to the Schuman Plan, while the treaty setting up a European Defence Community was a sin in the eyes of the Soviet Union.²⁷ In light of the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, both the 'aggressive character' of the Euroatom treaty and the legal personality of the EEC were denounced by the Soviet Union and consequently ignored.

It was clear that the creation of an internal market, aiming towards a Common Agricultural Policy, the development of external relations, as well as the attraction of the EEC to its neighbours, posed the threat of total exclusion of the USSR. Essentially, such efforts did destroy any hope to create pan-European cooperation to further harmonious development of international relations, which was one of the major objectives initially followed by the USSR.²⁸

It was not by coincidence that the creation of the Warsaw Pact²⁹ was complemented in 1966 by an encompassing plan on Economic Cooperation. The creation and the subsequent reinforcement of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, (CMEA)³⁰ can be read as a clear sign that the Soviet Union unwillingly felt the imperatives of European integration and recognised the first signs of the EEC's international identity. The EEC, for its part, did little to counter the bloc image and reinforced its boundaries with the East by instigating the Common Commercial Policy (art 113).³¹

In addition the successive enlargements of European Economic Community in the 70's and the creation of the European Parliament reinforced the Soviet perception that a more functional approach in its foreign policy conduct was required.

To soften the East-West divide, the European communitarian project needed to be accommodated by Soviet foreign policy; one way how this could be achieved was to recognise its economic realities, which were seen as 'objective' factors of European integration. The only way for the Soviet Union to reintegrate back into the international system was to take a multidimensional approach.³² As such formal bilateral relations with Europe could reinforce both the USSR and the EU and could thus weaken the Atlantic Alliance.

The first efforts toward a commercial agreement between the Soviet Union and the EEC were responded to positively by both, and resulted in meetings between the Commission and the USSR.³³ However, these first bilateral efforts soon failed, since the EEC would not recognise its proclaimed counterpart, the CMEA. Essentially the CMEA was seen as a promoter of separate bilateral cooperation with each of the individual member states rather than as a promoter of relations between the two trade organisation blocs. The twelve remained firm in expressing their will to have the reality of the EEC as a whole recognised, but also wanted at the same time to reduce the dependency from the Eastern European Countries on the CMEA.³⁴ The EEC acted accordingly in suspending the official contacts between the EC and the Soviet Union until October 1980.³⁵

Another strategy taken by the USSR to disregard the realities of the EEC and circumvent negotiation with it was to seek cooperation in the multilateral scene, notably within the CSCE. The Soviet Union attempted to use the basket II³⁶ as a forum for negotiations for commercial questions. However, also here the EEC forced the Soviet Union to recognise its presence, in acting on behalf of its six and later the nine member states on basket II issues. This undoubtedly contributed to the realisation that the EEC had an agenda setting role and a given mandate provided for by its member states. Moscow witnessed the signing of the Helsinki Final Act³⁷ in 1975 by A. Moro, acting both in the Community's capacity in his presidency as well as a representative of Italy.

Seen in retrospect it appears that the Soviet Union's desire to reintegrate in some form in the international system, required that it accept the realities of the EEC. Seeking such a strategy, cooperation could potentially promote the status of the USSR in the increasingly tense bipolar system. But this also meant that the USSR recognise the EEC needed as an economic but also as a political entity. Gradually European integration was seen less as having imperial tendencies but than a peace-building system with economic benefits.

New Thinking and Rapprochement - the Return to Europe

The Soviet 'New Thinking' period of the 80's, can be viewed as a reaction to the realities of the international system and the Soviet Union's increasing interdependence. These circumstances demanded either a policy of forced retreat or could be seen as an attempt to assert influence in the world by changing its domestic situation. It is clear that the return to the world economy was one of the most important interests of the Soviet Union in order to avoid economic collapse. Taking these interests into account, the EC had to be regarded as an entity with common or complementary, rather than hostile, interests. This led the Soviet Union to view the EC as a partner in mutual accommodation. This in turn evoked expressions of an integration of the cultural elements of Europe: the notion of the 'Common European House' was intended to reflect common historical experiences, cultural traditions, economic rationale, and new geographic realities, all of which became a cornerstone for the Soviet Union's post-1985 foreign policy attitude. In addition there appeared to be an increasing concentration on its close neighbours: the EC was seen as an obvious partner. It is here where we can observe the beginnings of a dual perceptual problem which continues until today: The EC could be seen as a logical enhancement of a notion integrated in the 'new thinking', but it could be viewed as a barrier to the return to 'civilisation,' and the opening between the East and the West. From the Atlanticists's perspective, and to the mind of some decision makers within the European Union, the policy most favourable to Russia's own interests seems to be the pursuit of integration which entails a respect for political and economic international standards. Such a strategy would allow Russia to deepen its dialogue with its Western neighbours.

In the mid 80s the *New Thinking* era was reinforced by a period of intensive preoccupation with the European question by the *mezhdunarodnik*³⁸ (which did not preclude an intensive russophile discourse). Lukin had remarked at that time that 'the bloc image had been overtaken by events'.³⁹ It was then that the idea of Europe and European identity returned as a priority in the public and official debate. While Europe was still regarded as a part of the capitalist West, contours of the European Community's international identity appeared, since cooperation with the EC became now a real option, and it could be seen as an important political partner for its foreign policy. To signify the desire of the USSR 'to rejoin Europe' and to show its cultural roots, the year 1987 was labelled the 'Year of Europe'. By displaying and professing its European identity, these strategies brought together multiple thinkers to reflect about which position the USSR should take towards the European Community. It is evident that this rapprochement was based on the conviction that glasnost

needed to co-construct with the European Community a system of international security⁴⁰ in order to survive. In this way the best method to deal with an enemy was to turn him into a friend, the worst would be to make him an ordinary neighbour.⁴¹ Such domestic debates and preoccupations help to explain some of the first elements of the European *Ostpolitik*, which included invitations to Brezhnev and later Gorbachev to visit Brussels with the latter visiting the European Parliament in 1985.

In addition, the ideological relaxation and the consequences of the 'New Thinking' was felt in 1985 after the visit to Moscow by Bettino Craxi (the Italian premier). It was then Gorbachev officially recognised both the political and the economic consequence of Europe's communitarian construction.⁴²

This loosening of tension and ideological boundaries resulted in the proposal by Sytchov (the Secretary General of CMEA) to re-establish official relations between the CMEA and the Community which concluded in a solemn declaration. The dialogue continued between the Commission and the State Commission of the USSR until February 1989, allowing for a strategy to embark on an exploratory phase.

As a consequence the Commission saw it fit to submit a set of directives for commercial economic and business relations to the Council, the content of which had yet to be decided.⁴³ Consequently, the Commission also accommodated the interests of the Soviet Union in tolerating specific agreements with the CMEA members and the Community in recognising the bilateral relations which already existed between their member states and those of the Community. To follow such a strategy allowed the Community a certain bargaining space to conduct negotiations with Eastern Europe without being severely constrained by Moscow.

It was already by 1989 during the period of Perestroika when the first agreement with the USSR on trade and commercial and economic cooperation was signed. Initially reactive and pragmatic in nature rather than a mobilising project, forming a foundation for future agreements.

Thus, during the late 80s throughout the end of 1993 the European international identity was shaped by the factors of ideological transformation in the Soviet Union/Russia. Cooperation with the EC was seen as an attractive foreign policy option which had no immediate dangers. The relatively weak political cooperation structure, and its largely civilian nature, prevented a potential military threat toward the USSR. However, the issue of political-military cooperation within the EC was received with serious doubts on the part of the USSR. It is here where a second pre-cursor to present attitudes can be seen: a security identity where the US remained was seen as a serious impediment for opening a dialogue for any new security schemes on a Pan-European Structure.

The events of the 1980s demonstrated also the process that rapprochement was rationalised in the USSR by focusing on cultural imperatives. Emphasis was placed on a constructive approach, interests were based on the learning experience, accruing from cooperation. Certainly there was a clear bifurcation of opinions in the debate on Europe, and also evidence of the growing criticism of Russia's unequivocal attachment to Western values.

It is here where the question reverted to where the place of the European Russian was exactly in the structure of the European Other, namely the European Community. Therefore, the processes of Glas'nost and Perestroika, which led to the collapse of the Soviet and the Communist empire, deepened and continued the debate as to how the former USSR, particularly Russia should 'fit itself in' with Europe.

Disintegration and Integration in the Reshaping of Europe

The period between 1990 and 1993 could be described as the decisive years of the EU/Russian relationship which produced the first outputs and indicated a rapprochement by a way of an *Ostpolitik*. It signified an era of change both for the EU - which responded to the new realities in preparing and ratifying the Treaty of European Union (TEU) and the consequent formulation of a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) - and a policy of openness by the newly establishing Russian Federation. At the same time, this period signified both internal and external institutional adaptation to new realities and in parallel displayed also the decisiveness to put forward an international identity as part of the European idea.

As discussed before, the Atlanticist approach taken by Russian foreign policy was driven by the desire to find its way back to civilised society, gaining further personal and economic freedom, sound functioning of democratic institutions, and a full array of mechanisms of the civic culture formerly reserved to the West. The European Community incorporated all these values, and thus, the corresponding deepening of integration in the late 80s was seen as a favourable process, to which Russian foreign policy could open itself.

In 1990, the European Community, after having sent a group of economic experts, decided that economic reform would be one of the ways to stabilise the transition period for the former USSR. Following visits from President Gorbachev's advisors to the European Commission, Brussels began to see its opportunities to make its international identity felt. The fact that the USSR was trying to recognise and cope with the multiple changes in the international system and the end of the Cold War, could give the European Community a leadership niche⁴⁴ if it could respond adequately to the changing political situation in Moscow.

It therefore took the initiative to work towards a new cooperation agreement and correspondingly set up a joint committee consisting of both EC and USSR officials. In addition the Commission decided to open an official EC delegation consisting of five functionaries in Moscow in the spring of 1991,⁴⁵ which was a strategic but also a dangerous tactic. An agreement from the EC side to set up common embassies for the former Soviet Union could not be found. The recognition of the European Community in the diplomatic sphere could have been a countermove against the perceived pressure by the US towards other powers to work towards the collapse of the USSR as a superpower. It is interesting to note that at that time, a KGB file authored by Vladimir Kryuchov issued to the President, Mr. Gorbachev stated: [...] 'the stability of the political situation in the country today, also depends to a significant extent on the international position of the USSR' but [...] 'according to reliable information, the United States is putting pressure on Japan and Western Europe to limit the

possible scale of their cooperation with the USSR' the strategy should therefore be [that] 'in the international arena it is important to do everything possible in order to mitigate the acuteness of the situation that is taking shape around the USSR'.⁴⁶

In setting up its diplomatic representation the European Community made sure to communicate what the idea of Europe and cooperation - both in the European and in the international context - entailed. As Michael Emerson, head of the EC delegation in Moscow remarked in an international conference on the European idea and European civilisation that year: 'Institutions matter. That is also part of the European idea. It is also prepared to defend the argument that the other qualities of the European idea [...] - openness and diversity combined with increasingly intense integration - require a sufficient common force to avert either hegemonies or centrifugal tendencies'.⁴⁷ As such, it appeared that international identity of the European Community was increasingly recognised and understood by Moscow. In some ways the European Community was considered a model for the Soviet Union in transformation. This was stressed in visits by Gorbachev and by President Yeltsin during his visit in April to the Socialist group to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Particularly during the Moscow August 1991 coup, it was noted by the head of the EC delegation, Michael Emerson that interest in '[...]copies of the Treaty of Rome became intense'.⁴⁸

Along with increased efforts and arguably the efficiency of the Community to negotiate both on technical and political concerns with Russia arose also interest in the developments towards deepening European integration, in particular in regarding to the progresses made in terms of the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. As Kozyrev stated :[...] 'the prospects of ratification directly affect our external political and economic interest. Internal stability and peace, and the dynamism of the Community's development, will, to a great extent, determine the nature, depth and real possibilities of our cooperation and joint action with the EC [...]'⁴⁹

First responses and outputs and new assertiveness

Following the conclusions of the Rome European Council in December 1991, the European Community and its member states increased their efforts to strengthen and establish a working relationship with Moscow, while at the same time supporting a dissolution of the USSR. It was the EC's support for independence for the Baltic countries which created first frictions between Brussels and Moscow.⁵⁰ One can also see in this issue the first contours of a policy line taken by the Commission.

In order to formulate ways and methods how Europe could assist in the peaceful transformation of the former Soviet Union, an active shuttle diplomacy involving visits to the Baltics, Ukraine and Russia by the Community Troika, members of the European Parliament, and also by many European heads of state evolved.

The European Community's support for the independence of, and association with Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltics was initially responded by cautious stance by the Moscow leadership, but cooperation continued in exploratory talks. The creation of a system of triangular operations in order to establishing credit guarantees amounting to \$10.2 billion,

for the export of agricultural and food products; was a method of aid welcomed by Moscow.⁵¹ On the other hand, funds for emergency food aid, technical assistance, as well as short and medium terms loans in total amounting to roughly one billion ECU's, could only be released after some considerable delay.⁵⁴ The reason was largely due to the resistance in Moscow of the movements towards independence of the Baltic States. By December 1991, the European Council pledged substantial funds for food aid and technical assistance for temporary relief, granting 200 million ECU's worth of food and medical supplies as a response to appeals for emergency help by the mayors of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The EC remained firm in exerting influence by attaching to its political objectives: the events associated with the Soviet military pressure in the Baltics, resulted in an initial suspension of programmes concerning food aid and technical assistance.⁵⁵

Vice President Yananov remarked that the Soviet-European relationship had cooled as a result of such unfriendly gestures⁵⁶ while President Gorbachev succeeded in persuading the West that the Baltic events had not been a reversion to old ways but only a passing disturbance to his pursuit of reform and enlightenment. The European Union suspended its help for the second time during the August coup in 1991, when the political future of the Soviet Union became so uncertain.⁵⁹

On the level of declaratory diplomacy, the twelve member states of the EC produced by the end of 1991 a declaration on guidelines for recognition of new States in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, with the objective of providing the foundation for its future relationship with the dissolving USSR. In this way it was prepared to adopt a statement indicating its readiness to recognise eight republics of the CIS by the time the Soviet Union officially ceased to exist (1.2.1992). In 1992 Russia took over the former Soviet Mission to the European Community in Brussels. The significance Yeltsin attached to this post is exemplified by his appointment of Ivan Siliyev, the Soviet Prime Minister after the August coup, as a permanent representative to the European Community.⁶⁰

In sum, the uncertainty of the political scene during the end of 1991 and 1992 in Russia made it difficult for the European Commission to work on a set of strategies regarding Russia. Furthermore, it was soon realised by the Community that technical cooperation needed to be complemented by a political dialogue. It pursued this under the umbrella and in preparation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

Post Cold War Europe and Russia: towards Partnership

Deepened and ambitious cooperation strategies within a rapidly changing international political environment entailed for the EU both institutional adaptation and learning, but also capacity and credibility-building in the multilateral fora. For Russia, the EC was its prime ally in its effort to integrate in the international political system.

Indeed, the new orientation of the European Community towards the East and the Russian rapprochement toward Europe and the European Union in particular provided important frames of reference in which state building was pursued for Russia and integration

furthered for the European Union. The EU Ambassador to Russia Michael Emerson remarked in 1994:

‘Thus the twin magnetic poles of Europe- centred in the EU and Russia - began also to see their powers and attraction tidy up the geographic organisation of post Cold War Europe. Increasingly more countries formerly part of the USSR now look to Europe. Russia desires to play a full part in European civilisation, as well as to reverse much of the recent disintegration of its links with other CIS countries, and the EU had important interests in building deeper links with Russia, in addition to pursuing its own integration’.⁶¹

Internal and External Institutional Adaptation

‘[...] [W]e must start again from zero [...] ‘we had a structure and it is not working’.⁶² So noted the Commissions’ Vice President Andriessen in reference to implementing goals with the changing Soviet Union. The collapse of the Soviet Union gave rise to frustration in the Commission since, as Andriessen put it, one had to work on the basis of ‘bricolage’.⁶³ It was repeatedly noted that the Commission’s human resources were inadequate to work with such an enlarged and complex portfolio. The ill-prepared functionaries with little diplomatic experience faced the problem of finding suitable interlocutors in order to establish a dialogue and to practically negotiate methods of implementing the decision of the Council of Rome.⁶⁴ Despite these shortcomings, it appeared that its capacity to act was soon recognised by other third actors. The European Community was increasingly seen as a capable interlocutor, not only continued and heavy interaction in forms of visits by the Commission to Moscow, but also in the multilateral setting such as the G7 and the World Bank.

Within the G7 framework both member states of the Community (most notably Germany and the United Kingdom), and Commission President Delors stressed the need for the international community to integrate Russia and to enlarge the G7 to a G8 at least on the political level. The G7 took an active role and co-operated with the Community in the assessment and co-ordination of aid and loans given to the former USSR. The financial commitment which the European Union gave to the former Soviet Union, amounting to 80% of total humanitarian aid to Russia, gave the Community a certain kind of recognition, as it also represented the interests of those member states who were not formally included in the G7 negotiations. In addition, the European contingent of the G7 used also agreements with other third states, notably the United States to show its presence. By calling on the spirit of the Transatlantic declaration it promoted the European Union’s international identity, while also making clear that as a partner, the United States had some responsibilities to fulfil toward the Soviet successor states. Such demands were to some extent and hesitantly complied to. Previous to the first aid coordination conference organised by the U.S., the Council President Pinheiro recalled that the EC provides 80% of the humanitarian aid to the USSR, and that the role of the EC in its own right should be emphasised. President Bush declared at the opening of Washington aid conference to top the US contribution of \$ 645 million, to put a halt to the

European criticism of the inconsistency between the U.S. convening the conference and the size of the initial US contribution.⁶⁵

In recognising the European Community's capacity to act it received the mandate to organise a follow up conference on aid in Lisbon the same year, in which the Russian side expressed its wish to be included in the preparatory work.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the Community was included in the workings of the World Bank, to ensure efficiency in the co-ordination of international aid. Particularly during 1992, when quick reactions by the international community to market changes within Russia occurring were needed, the Commission received the mandate to consolidate the Community's programme for technical assistance.

Towards Partnership and Cooperation :

With the aim of conducting a political dialogue, the European Union instigated negotiations for the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement by the fall of 1992.⁶⁷ The EU came to realise that Russia could offer immense opportunities. The EU 15 is Russia's main trading partner, with a trade volume of \$ 31.123 million as compared to China, the USA and Japan taken together, amounting to \$ 10.835 million.⁶⁸ Yet, the building of Partnership and the Cooperation Agreement proved to be a difficult enterprise, not at least because it has been from the beginning very ambitious in its content and scope. In the second round of bilateral negotiations it was accepted that the new relations between the European Union and Russia needed to be based on common values.⁶⁹ While both parties confirmed and reaffirmed consistently their will to conclude negotiations, divergences between the European Union and Russia persisted, in particular to the clause regarding human rights and the provisions to be applied to the exchange of goods in sensitive sectors.

Russia viewed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement as a way to integrate itself into the international political system, in particular in reference to trade issues. Russia stressed the need to no longer be considered as a centralised state planned economy but as an equal partner and demanded from the EC that it must be treated on equal footing with GATT countries. The EC for its part was not willing at that time to grant complete access to GATT type trade policy rules to Russia, whose cost and price structures were not transparent enough and where some industries could inflict severe damage on EC producers. Three meetings between EC leaders and President Yeltsin had ended without fundamental agreement. In the end the bargaining focused on primarily economic issues, and, after two years of negotiation the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in Corfu in June 1994. It is here when Yeltsin made the grand statement that 'Our country has made a strategic choice in favour of integration into the world community, and, in the first instance, with the European Union'.⁷⁰ While the agreement is still pending ratification of the national parliaments⁷¹ of the member states of the European Union, the PCA (valid for an initial period of ten years) spells out important rules of trade and business with Russian principal economic partners, while creating a body of trade and business law which binds Russia to a combination of EU international market law and the international trading system (GATT/WTO) with

enough flexibility for future negotiation for a Free Trade Area (planned to start in 1998). It is also an agreement on political integration, in the sense that it includes a human rights premise, expressed through its suspension clause (Art 170) taken in accordance with international law. (This suspension clause was invoked and resulted in a suspension of the interim agreement in response to the Russian military response to the Chechnyan crisis). The significance of this agreement will be further discussed in the third part of this.

Parallel to the negotiations of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the European Commission implemented the Tacis programme toward the former Soviet Union, with the main purpose of using EU economic competence and expertise directed towards helping market mechanisms. The Commission sees Tacis as an 'inseparable part of western Europe's present and future strategy towards the emerging democracies' whose main aim is 'to build bridges' between the East and the West, and to provide 'collective response to a collective lesson learned from history'.⁷² In its first year Tacis alone amounted to 400 million ECU's, even though implementation was severely backlogged due to coordination problems, which will be discussed below. Russia is by far the main recipient, in receiving 60% of the annual 450 million ECU's. This technical assistance proved to be a powerful tool in the relationship between Russia and the European Union. From the total 1, 756.84 million ECU contributed to the CIS between 1991-1994, representing 56% of total economic and humanitarian aid to the CIS countries, Russia received the largest share: 630.89 million ECU.⁷³ In justifying this aid stress was placed on the maintenance of 'European' values regarding human rights and democracy, by the European Parliament.

New integrative efforts. With the European Union as its prime advocate, Russia became increasingly interested in participating in European Cooperation. Results of this were its participation in the EU's Stability Pact conference in Paris in May 1994, its application to GATT in March 1994, in 1992 to the Council of Europe (of which it became a member in early 1996), and its active membership of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Cooperative participation with the European Energy Charter, and a conclusion of the cooperation agreement with the OECD in June 1994 can be read as important signs that Russia wants to be seen as a normal state, and as such it wants to become an equal partner in the international political fora. Further efforts included participation in several regional mechanisms intended to integrate complicated border areas, such as the Barents and Baltic Sea Regional Cooperation Council, seen by the EU as an important factor for ensuring that future enlargements of the European Union will not create a bloc mentality. In the security and foreign policy field, Russia pushed for an upgrading of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) which transformed into the Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE) in 1994. It is largely the NATO debate that remains a source of division for both the Russian President and the EU foreign ministers.

Action and Support in Uncertainty. The European Union, for its side, showed its political character in supporting the status quo of the political leadership in Russia. For

example, when the Russian Parliament attempted to strip Yeltsin of his powers, the Community continued - in the framework of Political Cooperation - to support President Yeltsin. While the political climate slowed down shuttle diplomacy, and postponed meetings between Delors and Yeltsin, the Community continued to offer its support and was even willing to accelerate negotiations of the partnership agreement.⁷⁴

As a recognition to its efforts and also as a gesture of openness and commitment to western values, the foreign Minister Kozyrev invited EU observers for the 1993 elections. The European Parliament subsequently approved the funding for technical support for the elections. The first EU joint action (under J.3, Title V of the TEU) was taken on EU election observation, in the winter of 1993, at a time when Russia's political situation was dangerously unstable.

By 1995 the initial international integration of Russia disappeared under a rubble of domestic problems as exemplified by numerous banking scandals, and the massive military force used in response to the ethnic conflict in Chechnya. Fronts increasingly hardened between the East and the West. The war in Chechnya had wide ranging international repercussions. After a visit by a delegation led by the Hungarian Prime Minister Kovacs to Chechnya, the OSCE protested in Moscow against the violation of human rights. The Assembly of the Council of Europe postponed the decision about Russia's membership. The response of the European Union, who was backing the OSCE in its fact finding missions, was the harshest in suspending the procedure for the signing of the Interim Agreement, an action which was supported and called for by the European Parliament.

Towards Security Concerns

Multiple signs that the route of Atlanticism and openness slowly abated were also evidenced in the production of the 1993 Russian foreign policy doctrine, which demonstrated the re-emergence of a hardened political will to vocalise strong Russian statehood in tandem with a strong nationalistic policy. This became particularly evident in the concept paper 'Strategy for Russia' published by the non-governmental Council for Foreign and Defence Policy in March 1994, which affirmed that Russia must pursue a policy of balancing between the centres of power on the also focusing its efforts toward establishing a new security system in Europe.⁷⁵ The report which followed the Lisbon conference on aid coordination, demonstrated a realisation that the European Union carried only little leverage in the security field, and could do little to respond to a more endogenous Russian foreign policy and the hardening of security fronts. In a press conference following the first Russian EU meeting after the signing of the interim agreement, Commission President Santer stressed that the EU was not to seek to 'establish a new frontier' in Europe,⁷⁶ and maintained the importance of the Russians' role in the construction of a new European Security Architecture. Thus, despite these frictions the EU ministers saw the need to strengthen the relationship with Russia further. This became particularly evident at the informal meeting of the EU ministers in Carcassonne in the Spring of 1995, who discussed in depth the actual events in Russia. In general this meeting was

important to ensure the member states' commitment and to upgrade the political dialogue with Russia already foreseen in the Partnership Agreement. It was here when the EU/Russian strategy exercise was launched, in order to provide an analysis of EU/Russian interests and to provide guidelines for policy but also to identify future areas of cooperation in all pillars of the TEU. Consequently, the Commission produced a Communication to the Council titled 'The European Union and Russia: the future relationship.' In doing so, it had for the first time made use of the rights of initiative it holds with member states in CFSP under J.8 of the TEU. The paper recommends that a political dialogue be established on issues of security, 'comprising such questions as NATO enlargement, Partnership for Peace, OSCE strengthening and the development of relations between the Russian Federation and the Western European Union'.⁷⁷ It emphasises in particular a rapprochement and intensified dialogue between Russia and NATO in the context of Partnership for Peace and the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC).

The Russian authorities welcomed this initiative but regretted the lack of consultation in the preparation of this document, which in their view was at times lacking in 'clarity, substance and comprehension for certain Russian realities'.⁷⁸ They thus proposed that the Commission and the Council include Russian experts in the work for concrete and practical implementation of the new Community policy towards Russia. The Russian delegation also complained that Russia was still not considered a market economy by the EU, and also that it was not able to benefit from loans from the European Investment Bank. On the political side a greater involvement with the EU and on the WEU on question that affect security and stability in Europe was demanded. The process of the action plan exercise is significant as it created a dynamic towards an implementation of a concrete working policy with identified actions adopted by the General Affairs Council on May 13.

Throughout 1995 and 1996, the European Union maintained its technical assistance programmes and coordinated with the OSCE the international observations for State Duma and Presidential elections, while taking a cautious approach in awaiting the outcome of the elections. Perhaps due to the Communist victory in the election of the State Duma, the Commission and most of the member states strongly vocalised their support of the candidacy of Yeltsin in the Presidential elections, with a view to maintaining the status quo of the relations established. During this time, the preparation and setting up of a strategy towards Russia a major preoccupation in the political unit in Brussels, while technical assistance and support for reform continued to flow into the Russian Federation.

Due to the ambiguity of the Russian foreign policy, particularly prior to the elections, a proactive political dialogue was slowed considerably. Furthermore, actions, such as discriminatory legislation for foreigners and legislations on foreign banks which are in contradiction of the basic principles set down in the PCA, gave rise to frustration in Brussels and in the member states of the EU. Given its relatively limited amount of capabilities, in influencing Russian domestic policy, but also due to the member states' desire to take a 'wait

and see' approach in the prevailing context of such fluidity and instability, the European Union was incapacitated but also less willing to take a more proactive position towards Russia.

Three 'Pillars' of the new European *Ostpolitik*.

Having reviewed the complex dynamics of the EU-Russian relationship it is useful to outline the loci of competence, autonomy and internal capacity in identifying the three main elements on which the European Union conducted its relationship with the Russian Federation.

The first element concerns the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. On a fundamental level, the negotiations revolving around the agreement allowed the European Union and Russia to reflect on each other's priorities toward each other. It is evident that the agreement has not, as Delors noted 'the same physiognomy as an agreement with the US',⁷⁹ as long as the reform process in Russia has not advanced more. But at the same time it was also recognised that 'Russia is a great power, and we want agreements with her on the same political intensity as with the United States and Japan'. The agreement is of importance because it marked a vital change, bringing together key political and economic issues previously held separate. Its significance lies in the instigation of a political dialogue on the presidential level at least twice a year, a procedure that the EU until then only shared with the G7 countries. Furthermore, on Russia's part, an economic will towards approaching European standards and a rapprochement towards the GATT system became apparent. The agreement might be seen as a landmark in the relationship between the West and in particular the European Union and Russia because many of the provisions set out in the PCA had far reaching implication for domestic legislation entailing legally binding obligations. As such it brought together the desires of two 'actors' representing the first part of the new mosaic of European and Russian integration of the international system. On the institutional level, the agreement also signifies the capability of the Commission to act as a competent interlocutor with a third state. Due to its increased interaction with authorities of the Russian Federation it acquired increasing autonomy in negotiating this agreement. During the period between 1991 and 1995 it received mandates to balance the agreement between the desires of the member states and Russia. Examples of this are the mandate given by the Council to negotiate a clause concerning the establishment of a Free Trade Zone, the content of the democracy clause, and also the way in which the Russian economy should be treated by the European Union. Other important mandates include specific negotiations in reference to trade and cooperation in nuclear materials and issues concerning the banking sector. Due to the largely pragmatic approach taken by the Commission as to the conclusion of this agreement, negotiations progressed regardless of the political events which took place in Russia.

The second element concerns the EU's role as an advocate for Russia in the international political system, as a way to promote its own international identity. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and (the above) mentioned Communication of the Commission, demonstrate that the European Union can be seen as Russia's closest advocate in integrating more fully into the international political-economic system including the G7 and the Council of

Europe, and the World Trade Organisation. Germany, in particular, has been a strong advocate of tying Russia in the international political system. On the other hand, Russian's demands to upgrade the CSCE promoted and strengthened the role of the European Union in the security arena. The European Union has relied on and cooperated with the OSCE, both in the Russian parliamentary elections in 1995 and also in the presidential elections in 1996. In regards to the Chechen crisis, the European Union has relied on the OSCE in fact finding missions. The European Union's efforts, in particular the Commission's efforts in strengthening and working towards a relationship with the Soviet Union, and later with Russia carry implications for the mediation of crises and conflicts. For example, already during the Gulf crisis, the European Community recognised that its structure impeded it to play an active political role, where political cooperation with the Soviet Union could have been an important asset. As van den Broek noted: 'we should perhaps accept the fact that Moscow is better placed at this precise moment to have direct discussions with Baghdad than we are in Europe, or perhaps even the U.S. but this does not mean that the basic positions are different'.⁷⁷ Concerning the Bosnian crisis, the European Union has attempted to promote an integrative attitude with the Russian delegation.

While the European Union and its member states could be seen as the closest allies Russia has in regards to its integration with the international system, this process can also be viewed as one where the European Union has promoted its own role in the international system itself. Lastly, the increasing competence of the Commission, which gradually evolved into a regular set of interactions with the Russian Federation, has given the European Union a profile to allow it to participate more closely in the negotiation, preparation and policy formulation of international institutions to support the transformation of Russia. For example the European Union has strongly supported the application of Russia to the World Trade Organisation.

The third element relates to issues of institutional cooperation within the framework of technical assistance programmes. The establishment of the programmes in 1991 to provide economic assistance to the reform process served both as an important policy tool but also provided an important function in the promotion of cooperation between the Community institutions, in particular between the European Parliament and the European Commission. The European Parliament since the 80s has had a very supportive attitude toward promoting democratic and economic reform in the former USSR. Later, by having established a delegation for relations with Russia, it was able to engage in a constructive dialogue with the deputies of the Russian State Duma, and as such it was better informed about current political events and trends than the Commission.

The European Parliament had a considerable interest in the humanitarian aspects of Community aid and called for increasing EC financial support from early 1991.⁸⁰ As such it can be seen as an important influence in ensuring that EU cooperation with Russia reflected and communicated a set of European values. The insistence of the European parliament on maintaining European practices regarding human rights and democracy provided for the

rationale under which the Tacis Democracy Programme was founded. The wish to support the political nature of transition and to provide the expertise and know how necessary to support the development of democratic practices in the Russian Federation represented a qualitative enlargement of the scope of technical assistance. As a 'watchdog' of the expenditures of the EU's budget, and thus also of technical assistance, the European Parliament was able to shape to influence the content and the outlook of Tacis. While Tacis was beneficial in promoting a (at times controversial) debate between the EU institutions, it did however uncover the drawbacks of the 'lethargy' of the EU bureaucracy when it comes to agree funding for some urgently required technical assistance projects. However, the building of a sense of trust between the two institutions is decisive if Community aid needs to be dispensed at short time notice.

It appears that the DGIA and European Parliament delegation for Relations with Russia, have strengthened their relationship by more regular contact and consultations.⁸¹

The expenditure of Tacis funds and the program's management received a certain degree of criticism not only from the parliament, but also from the Court of Auditors, as well as from some of its beneficiaries. This refers in particular to the slow rate at which commitments and payments have been made, the poor liaison between the Commission and contractors to execute technical assistance, the poor co-ordination with other donors, and a poor assessment of needs of the recipient country. The slow implementation and unrealistic rule setting for projects, point to serious shortcomings within the Commission for coordinating the programme. Overall, some of these problems are due to with very limited staff resources, but also to the low priority given by the Commission to follow up, control and evaluate Tacis funds.⁸² While these problems are fundamental ones from the political point of view, there are efforts in the Commission to improve the working methods of this programme. The short time frame in which the programme had to develop the expertise and distinct working methods acquired during the past six years point to a learning effect and to a more realistic and adequate implementation of these funds in the future. An important improvement concerns the increasing attachment to the importance of horizontal themes (i.e. technical assistance given to sectors not to specific regions only) of the programme, and a considerable increase of staff. Lastly, the inclusion of town twinning programmes between the European Union and NIS to the programme, and the increased decentralisation of Tacis promote also a rapprochement in cultural terms, giving incentives to built networks with cities of the European Union reaching beyond technical assistance only.

Competencies, capabilities - questions and gaps: International Action reconsidered

The above account should have highlighted that both the content and the quality of the EU-Russian relationship has contributed to the role of the European Union in the World. As we have seen, this relationship has been strongly influenced by historical, but also powerful cultural imperatives. As such Russia was, is, and will remain Europe's most 'significant Other'.

To recapitulate, it might be useful to reflect, on the basis of the three initial conceptual issues on pages 10-12, on how the European Union has developed its new competencies and capabilities, in its role as a developing 'international actor'. The case study gives also rise to important questions which need responding to if its 'action gaps' want to be filled.

Images of 'self' and 'other'. First of all, in considering in the progress of the EU/Russian relationship, it appears that the European Union had an opportunity to strengthen its International Identity when both the Russian foreign policy system and the structure of the international system showed most flexibility and openness, - this was particularly evident from 1987 to about 1993. Notably during this time-frame, images about the 'Other' have tended to drive collaborative behaviour because the European Union could be seen as an independent presence within the newly shaping structure of international relations.

Particularly during 'the heat of the Cold War', the Soviet opposition to the EEC and the EC was mainly due to ideological competition. European integration then was seen as an 'accessory' to American imperialism. To a different degree, one can note that the increasing association of the EU within the transatlantic security dimension has produced a similar behaviour. In this context, mirror images of the European 'We' and the Russian 'Them' might have acquired clearer contours, but, at the same time have inhibited collaborative behaviour.

This creates an obvious and much discussed dilemma: Does the European Union really need a strong security and defence identity, whose entanglement with NATO would call its international identity back into question? Can a European foreign policy separate itself from this dimension?

Capabilities from within? Hegel claimed: 'An interior with no exterior could itself hardly constitute an interior'. The above account should also have shown that external capability requires internal competence. The international changes in the political system were coupled with a reshaping of the European integration agenda. This provided the European Union with a 'competitive advantage' to restructure its internal competencies which allowed the Commission to initiate important strategies towards rapprochement. But at the same time its initial lack of experience in dealing with a complex external relationship slowed down the dialogue to a considerable extent. While this could be attributed in some part to the extremely uncertain political situation following the break up of the Soviet Union, the initial lack of inter-institutional cooperation between the European Parliament and the European Union exacerbated this problem. This raises also the much debate of inter-institutional transparency and decision making innovation in the context of a European Foreign Policy.

A workable strategy. Clearly enough, the working towards the conclusion of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, provided the European Union with both a strategy and a rationale on which it could work with. This final goal provided the means on which the relationship could progress. The means were progressively more bargaining mandates to bring the negotiations to a close. In using its means (despite some minor drawbacks), the member states invested a certain degree of trust to the Commission in its role as a 'diplomatic

interface'. As stressed above, this gained the European Union respect within the multilateral fora, but also and very importantly to its partner, Russia.

This raises two issues. First, that the European Union requires also the invested trust not *only* to pursue its ends. Interactions are dynamic and need maintenance in form of a continuous dialogue, reaching beyond the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements. Second, this also points to the pertinent question of whether the European Union would not in future gain from being represented by a foreign policy secretary or a 'Mr. and Mrs. CFSP', which would provide partner countries to interact with one distinct authority, rather than multiple diffused authorities.

Future research agendas. Lastly, on a brief note, this case study points out also the necessity to respond to new theoretical imperatives concerning the EU's role in the international environment.

This concerns a deepening of the agent - structure debate forcefully put forward Carlsnaeus and Smith⁸³ which might give us clearer directions as to under which condition the European Union might be shaped by the international context or its agency, or even both. Second, one would benefit from a re-focusing and expansion of the neo-liberal institutional approaches.⁸⁴ This would give us greater conclusive understanding of how internal institutional dynamics influence and shape the European Union's actions in the international system.

Last, and may be most important, because most neglected, we need to open our approaches to the concept of culture and the outsiders' perceptual attitudes towards Europe and the European Union.⁸⁵

An integration of the above conceptual and theoretical issues will certainly provide a rich and exiting research agenda in the examination of Europe and its significant 'Others'.

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Notes

- 1 See Ash, *Im Namen Europas*, 1993.
- 2 The term Ostpolitik, was one coined by post W.W. II Germany, who, between the point of two global and antagonistic systems, was faced with the partition of its nation state, and pursued a policy to question the moral and political impact of such. Ostpolitik, focused both on the internal developments in the FRG on the one hand, but pursue also a policy linked to the architecture of the Soviet Empire and the American Alliance (external dimension). Ostpolitik, as pursued by Willy Brandt had as its main aim to open the FRG to the East, and then bring it into balance from a 'Frontstaat' of NATO to a 'Land in der Mitte' of Europe. Germany, a civilian power, searched for the route of being supported by other member states of the European Union. The German desire to find multilateral support for its Ostpolitik, resulted in fact in one of the first successes of European Political Cooperation.
- 3 See Bryant and Mokrzycki, 1994, Chapter 1.
4. See Jäger and Kümmel, 1995.
5. See Wallander, 1996, for theoretical reflections on the sources of Russian foreign Policy.
6. See Kurtunov, Volodin *Contemporary Russia*, 1996.
7. See for example, Carlton, Ingram and Tenaglia, *Russian Tension*, 1996.
8. Wallander, 1996, *Sources of Russian Foreign Policy After the Cold War*, p. 215.
9. For a discussion on two level games refer to Putnam, *Diplomacy and Domestic Politics*, 1988.
10. See also, Guelke, *Book Review*, 1995.
11. See for example Holland, *Bridging the Capability-Expectations Gap*, 1995.
12. Refer to Hill, *The Capabilities-Expectations Gap*, 1993.
13. Allan and Smith, *Western Europe's Presence in the Contemporary International Arena*, 1990.
14. Refer to the very relevant article from Michael Smith, *The European Union and a Changing Europe*, 1996.
15. See Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, 1995.
16. See Lester, *Modern Tsars and Princes*, 1995; Malcolm, *Russia and Europe*, 1994; Mommsen, *Wohin treibt Russland*, 1996; Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, 1995.
17. Mc Sweeney, *Identity and Security*, 1996, p. 87.
18. Hedetoft, *Signs of Nations*, 1995.
19. Refer to Bull, *The Anarchical Society*, 1977; Bull, *Civilian Power Europe*, 1982-83.
20. See Anderson, 1983; Allan and Smith, 1990; Hedetoft, 1995; Smith, A., 1991; Mc Sweeney, 1996, for discussions on this topic.
21. As such, the foreign policy rhetoric might be swinging between integration, antagonism and ambiguity. Integration in international relations here refers to a consensus of 'we' feeling, close to the conception of a pluralistic security community with fundamental common values to facilitate mutual openness for movement of goods, services, labour, capital and private persons. Deutsch, *Political Community*, 1957.

Antagonism as seen in the realist paradigm, can be referred to a non-recognition or express hostility to reinforce hegemonic status. An anarchic polity is anarchic to the extent that it lacks society wide rule making and rule enforcing institutions, while this might not exclude co-operation (Brown, 1992). As such it concerns a fundamentally different set of values and ideology to other members in the international system. It represents closed societies which protect themselves against foreign policy infiltration. Protection can be defensive in intent, with a country which is introvert due to weak internal structure.

Ambiguity refers to a mode of interaction which lies between integration and antagonism. It is at worst so ambiguous that other actors might resort to antagonistic behaviour. Adherence to common international values are in fluctuation. Here, a state might be veering towards integration in the international system because it seeks to protect itself against antagonism, in aspiring to a certain system of political and economic values, compatible with others. On the other hand, its domestic status might be weakened to such an extent that it will automatically follow a protectionist mode as a way to shield its domestic environment from the perceived threats deriving from the international system.

22. Herrberg, *The security triangle: Germany, Russia and Europe*, 1996.
23. Keohane, R.O., *International Institutions: Two approaches*, 1989, pp. 158-179.
24. Herrberg, *The European Union in its International Environment*, 1996.
25. Pelkmans and Murphy, *Catapulted into Leadership*, 1991.
26. IMEMO AN SSR quoted in Neumann, 1995.
27. Baranovsky, *The European Community as seen from Moscow*, 1994.
28. De la Serre, *L'Union Européenne*, 1994, p. 13.
29. The Warsaw pact was concluded on the 14.5.1955 to establish a defense community encompassing the Soviet Union and Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the German Democratic Republic.
30. The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance established in 1947 was a system used to integrate the Communist economies. The CMEA was formally abolished in 1991, but it ceased to have a real operative function during the 80's.
31. The CCP was named in Article 3 of the Treaty of Rome as one of the activities of the EEC. As a customs union, it was essential for the member states to draw up common policies with respect to their trading relations with the rest of the world. Article 113 EEC required the need for uniform principles to underpin the CCP with regard to tariff rates, the conclusion of trade agreements, liberalisation measures, the promotion of exports and instruments of commercial defence against dumping and subsidies. Today, the European Union is by far the biggest trading bloc in the world.
32. Baranovsky, *The European Community as seen from Moscow*, 1994.
33. Most notably from Directorate General of external relations (Director Genral of external relations, Mr. Wallerstein) in 1974 to prepare a formal meeting with the President of the Commission (Ortoli).
34. De la Serre, *A la recherche d'une Ostpolitik*, 1994, pp. 14-16.
35. The result was an initial doctrinal hostility, especially from the Soviet Union, which has not impeded Poland, Romania, and Hungary to conclude between 1965-1980 sectoral agreements on agricultural imports and exports which could be interpreted as the first signs of the so-called 'socialist realism'.
36. The CSCE (now OSCE) divides its work into three baskets. Basket II refers to recommendations to cooperate in economics, science and environmental protection.
37. Signed on the 1.8.1975 by 35 states of the CSCE in Helsinki. The final act was the legal basis for the CSCE system of cooperation. On the 21.11.1990, the Final Act was complemented with the Charter of Paris, which presently encompasses 53 states.

38. The term *mezhdunarodnik* refers to foreign affairs specialists, but also consist of intellectuals from a wider range of leading intellectuals engaged in the discourse concerning the USSR's and Russia's integration in the international system.
39. Lukin, *Russia and its Interests*, 1994.
40. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, 1995; Hedetoft and Herrberg, *Russia and the European Other*, 1996.
41. Shakhnazarov, *East-West*, 1995.
42. Baranovsky, *The European Community as seen from Moscow*, 1994.
43. De la Serre, *A la recherche d'une Ostpolitik*, 1994.
44. The Commission was chaired by Willy de Clercq.
45. De la Serre, *L'Union Européenne*, 1994.
46. Emerson, *Un peu d'histoire*, 1994.
47. Today the approximate staff in the delegation in Moscow is around 65 interview with Catherine Magnant, August 1996.
48. Kryuchov, *Top Secret Memorandum*, 1991.
49. Emerson, *A Common European Idea*, 1991, p. 5.
50. Emerson, *ibid*.
51. Agence Europe, 5.8.1992.
52. Emerson, *Un peu d'histoire*, 1994.
53. Triangular operations is a form of aid given in loans which allowed the former Soviet Union to purchase food and agricultural produce from each other. The advantage of such an operation is that they provided the stated of the former CMEA an export incentive and to continue production.
54. Agence Europe, 8.10.1994.
55. See also Emerson, *Un peu d'histoire*, 1994.
56. *Ibid*.
59. This was a relatively quick decision, following an emergency session of EC foreign ministers at The Hague on th 20th of August.
60. Agence Europe, 20.12.1991.
61. Emerson, *Un peu d'histoire*, 1994.
62. Agence Europe, 20.9.1991. Andriessen gave this comment at a meeting with the enlarged bureau of the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee.
63. Agence Europe, 19.12.1991.
64. See for example Agence Europe, 29.8.1991; Agence Europe, 19.9.1991.
65. See also Agence Europe, 13.1.1992; Agence Europe, 22.1.1992.
66. Agence Europe, 12.3.1992.
67. Russia was the first country to engage in negotiations for a partnership agreement since it took over the rights and obligations of the former agreements concluded with the Soviet Union.
68. Out of a total 70.018 mio. \$ (1993 figures) (Illarionov quoted in Emerson, 1994).
69. Agence Europe, 28.11.1992.
70. Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, 1994.
71. The interim Agreement entered into force on the 1.2.1996.
72. Brittan, *Tacis. A long term answer*, 1994.
73. Followed by a multi-country programme (591.24 million ECU's) and by the Ukraine (170.93 million ECU's).
74. See for example Agence Europe, 16.7.1993; Agence Europe 23.9.1993.

75. Krause and Jahr, 1995, p. 16; Nezavisimaha Gazeta, 1994.
76. Agence Europe, 8.9.1995.
77. (Com (95): 9).
78. See Agence Europe, 11.7.1995.
79. See Agence Europe, 31.10.1993.
80. Agence Europe, 14.3.1991.
81. Interview with Joseph Dunne, 1996.
82. See Hansen, *Political Control of EU Assistance*, 1995.
83. Carlnaus and Smith, *European Foreign Policy*, 1993.
84. See as a good starting point Keohane, *International Institutions*, 1989.
85. Katzensteins edited volume provides an excellent starting point for conceptual integration of the cultural dimensions, Katzenstein, P., *The Culture of National Security*, 1996.

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