

**The Role of Identities and Perceptions in EU-Russian Relations:  
Assessing the Challenges on the Path to the New Agreement**

by Ketevan Kerashvili

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Supervisor: Professor Peter Balazs

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## **Abstract**

In view of the upcoming expiration of the PCA in 2007, it has become widely accepted in the EU and Russia that the construction of the updated coherent strategic document forming the legal basis for the future of EU-Russian relations is necessary. Nevertheless, today, despite the declared commitment of the parties the discussions over the new agreement remain in a stalemate, with little indication of progress in the coming months. Consequently, the aim of the present thesis has been to analyze the reasons for the challenges encountered by the EU and Russia on the path to the new agreement.

Approaching the question through the prism of the constructivist theory, the present study attempted to trace the identities and perceptions of the partners using the method of discourse analysis. Based on the examination of the normative identity of the EU, on the one hand, and the great power identity of Russia, on the other, the study has concluded that the reasons for the existing tensions between the partners are rooted in the identities and perceptions forming the basis for the interests of the partners. Consequently, the great power identity and perceptions derived from the identity leads Russia to request the agreement demonstrating equality of the partners, while based on its normative identity and perceptions, the EU discourse reveals the sustained desire to maintain the commitment to democratic principles and norms as the groundwork for the new agreement, resulting in considerable difficulties for the adoption of the agreement.

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## Introduction

The EU-Russian relations have drawn particular attention during the last decade, notably after the eastern enlargements of the EU incorporating the members of the former Socialist block in the Union, which has led to the intensification of the political dialogue on a broad variety of issues generated by the growing strategic importance of the bilateral relations in the EU, as well as Russian foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> The enhanced geographical proximity and economic interdependence of the EU and Russia have increased the importance of partnership, preventing the actors from underestimating each other and compelling them to engage in cooperation.<sup>2</sup>

The question of transforming the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which forms the legal basis for EU-Russian relations, constitutes one of the most controversial issues on the agenda. It has been widely accepted that the conceptual basis for the EU-Russian relations should reflect the recent changes. Thus, the parties have agreed that the PCA, which is due to expire at the end of 2007, cannot be maintained in the current form and a new arrangement is necessary despite the fact that according to article 106, the agreement will be automatically renewed every year unless either party gives notice about its denunciation six months before its expiry.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, currently, consultations over the new agreement are not progressing. The intended launch of official negotiations during the recent EU-Russia summit in May, 2007, in Samara was once more delayed due to the expansion of the Polish ban.<sup>4</sup> Thus, given the crisis in

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<sup>1</sup> Marius Vahl, *A Privileged Partnership? EU-Russian Relations in a Comparative Perspective*, DIIS working papers no.3,2006, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&v33=60181&id=18578>, 3

<sup>2</sup> Yuri Borko, "rethinking Russia-EU relations" in *Russia in Global Affairs* no.3, 2004, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/8/591.html>

<sup>3</sup> Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation,1997, [http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/ru/images/pText\\_pict/318/pca\\_russia.pdf](http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/ru/images/pText_pict/318/pca_russia.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> *RIA Novosti*, "Wrap: Russia-EU summit highlights divisions with new EU members," 18 may,2007, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20070518/65721570.html>

Russia's relations with the new member states of the union alongside the problems concerning the violation of human rights in Russia and the tensions over the question of energy, the future of the new agreement looks vague.

Accordingly, the question of the adoption of a new agreement has faced presently insuperable obstacles. However, despite the problems impeding the talks, the EU and Russia have been repeatedly declaring their interest in starting the discussion of the issue,<sup>5</sup> which makes the inability to overcome the existing tensions and to instigate the negotiations on the new agreement puzzling.

The issue has received considerable attention from the official circles of the sides. Nevertheless, given that consultations about the question of the adoption of a new agreement between the EU and Russia have started only recently, and the parties have not achieved success in launching official negotiations, academic literature about the new agreement is scarce. No substantial study has been conducted concerning the challenges faced by the parties on the path to the new agreement; although, some scholars refer to the question by identifying the problems existing between the EU and Russia on the path to the new agreement.

The discussion of the question has been initiated by Russian scholars, analyzing the options for the future of EU-Russian relations prior to the official decision of the EU and Russia about the necessity of a new agreement. Examining the problem of hampering the new agreement, Karaganov believes that the identity crisis of the EU, given the accession of the new member states and the bureaucratic structure of the union, as well as the unclearly defined strategy of Russia towards the relations with the union, represent the major reasons for the setbacks.<sup>6</sup> Sokolov has also touched upon the tensions over the character of the new agreement, discussing

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<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

the issue from the Russian point of view and criticizing the request of the EU to include the question of energy and the opening of the Russian market in the agreement.<sup>7</sup>

The differing approaches of the partners on the questions concerning the substance of the new agreement has been also discussed by Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl, who conclude that the interests of the EU towards the new agreement are derived from the values-based approach, while Russia wants the agreement to demonstrate its power in international relations.<sup>8</sup> Bungs also points out that the EU and Russia represent diverse entities having different interests.<sup>9</sup> Besides, according to Cameron, domestic developments in the EU and the resolute stance of Russia on the question of energy lead to tensions about the substance of the new agreement.<sup>10</sup>

All of these scholars discuss the challenges to the new agreement in light of the differing positions of the parties; however, they focus on identifying the problems and the prospects for the adoption of the new agreement and mostly disregard the reasons for the development of the interests and attitudes of the parties concerning the essence of the agreement.

To contribute to the existing literature, the aim of this research is to understand the reasons for the obstacles to achieving progress in developing cooperation between the EU and Russia, particularly on the issue of launching the negotiations over the new agreement. Taking into account the recognition of the importance of a new sustainable arrangement, which coincides

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<sup>6</sup> Sergei Karaganov, "realnie dogovori I pustie deklaracii"(real agreements and empty declarations), *Rossiiskaya gazeta*, 9 April,2007, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/redcol/7225.html>

<sup>7</sup> Sergei Sokolov, "Novii dogovor rossia-ES: kuda rulim," (new agreement between Russia and the EU: where we lead) *Russki Journal*, 25 April,2007, [http://www.russ.ru/politics/reakcii/buduschij\\_dogovor\\_rossiya\\_es\\_kuda\\_rulim](http://www.russ.ru/politics/reakcii/buduschij_dogovor_rossiya_es_kuda_rulim)

<sup>8</sup> Michael Emerson, Fabrizio tassinari and marius Vahl, *A new agreement between the EU and Russia: Why, what and when?* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2006), 2-3, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&v33=60181&id=24419>

<sup>9</sup> Dzintra Bungs, *Toward a new EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation agreement?* In *the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy toward Russia: the partnership and Cooperation agreement as a test case*, ed. Atis Lejins, (Riga: Latvian institute of international affairs, 2006),31-44, [www.am.gov.lv/data/file/r/NATO/toward%20russiaengl.pdf](http://www.am.gov.lv/data/file/r/NATO/toward%20russiaengl.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Frazer Cameron, "prospects for a new EU-Russia agreement," *St. Petersburg times* 1255 no.21,March 20, 2007, [http://www.sptimes.ru/index.php?action\\_id=2&story\\_id=21059](http://www.sptimes.ru/index.php?action_id=2&story_id=21059)

with the interests of both sides, the main objective of the work is to analyze, what is the main reason for the challenges encountered by the EU and Russia on the path to the new agreement.

In order to address the question and justify the analysis the thesis develops a constructivist approach, which implies that the interests and views of the parties derive from their identities, shaping the environment between the EU and Russia. Thus, the study will focus on the discussion of identities and perceptions of the sides, which form the basis for the development of particular interests and stances in connection with the new agreement, in order to test the hypothesis that identities and perceptions of the parties account for the difficulties of EU-Russian relations.

To achieve these objectives, the work of European, as well as Russian scholars will be used to illustrate the perceptions and approaches of both parties. Thus, the thesis takes a bilateral approach, in order to consider the entire framework of this complex relationship. In addition, it tries to trace the identities of the partners through the method of discourse analysis, as according to constructivists, identities and norms can be expressed through discourse<sup>11</sup> and articulated in the language, which is vital in demonstrating what the actors are able to accomplish in the name of identities.<sup>12</sup> Particularly, the present thesis will use document analysis, including the official strategic documents of the parties, such as the Foreign Policy doctrine of the Russian Federation and the European Security strategy to depict the self-identities of the parties. Moreover, bilateral agreements and the strategy documents concerning the relationship adopted by the parties will be considered for the examination of the perceptions of each other and the stances the parties develop about the future of their relations.

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<sup>11</sup> Martha Finnemore, *National interests in international society*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University press, 1996),23

<sup>12</sup> Paul A.Kowert, *Toward a Constructivist theory of foreign policy*, in *Foreign policy in a constructed world*, ed. Vendulka Kubalkova, (Armonk, New-york: M.E.Sharpe, 2001),279



To supplement the research with additional evidence about the self-identities and perceptions of the parties, the present thesis will also draw on content analysis. It will examine the official declarations and communications of the Russian as well as EU officials, mostly dealing with the statements of the president of Russia and other high authorized persons, on the one side, and with the communications of the Commission and the speeches of the Commissioners, on the other.

The study will start by assessing the development of the conceptual basis of the EU-Russian relations, and examining the challenges the two partners face during their attempts to launch official negotiations on the achievement of a new agreement. After showing the necessity of a new legal framework and identifying the problems to cooperation, the second chapter will depict the theoretical framework, analyzing the main premises of neorealism and constructivism. It will demonstrate the limits of neorealist assumptions with respect to explaining the developments in EU-Russian relations and delineate the relevance of the constructivist approach.

The third chapter will be dedicated to the analysis of identities of the EU and Russia, which, according to the constructivist assumptions, determine the vision of the other and form the basis for defining interests of the parties. This part will also examine the structure formed through the interaction between the EU and Russia. Based on the analysis of the identities and perceptions of the parties, the last chapter will draw conclusions about the importance of the differing stances taken by the parties with respect to the substance of the new agreement, which generate tensions over some problematic issues and create obstacles on the path to the new agreement.

## Chapter 1: Assessing the conceptual basis of EU-Russian relations: Toward a new agreement

The Russia-EU relations represent the most institutionalized relationship established by the EU with other countries,<sup>13</sup> revealing the significant importance of partnership in view of the considerable level of interdependence between the actors, however, also showing the importance of a single consistent agreement, which would provide the new institutional basis for the further development of relations. The parties identify the importance of a new arrangement dedicating efforts to the aim of achieving progress in negotiations, although facing considerable challenges.

The following chapter is dedicated to the examination of the development of the Russian-EU relations starting from the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the general framework of the current state of relations, mainly focusing on the assessment of agreements which provide conceptual basis for partnership and cooperation between the actors. It will show the strengths and weaknesses of the agreements functioning today, consequently, identifying the need for a new arrangement forming a legal basis for the adjustment of bilateral relations to the environment that emerged after the last enlargements of the EU and analyze the difficulties of the negotiating process.

### **1.1. Close bilateral ties**

The difficulties of the relations between the EU and Russia present a considerable puzzle in view of the interdependence of the actors, which is based on the development of common interests and aims in different spheres of their relations.<sup>14</sup> As the Russian president stated in his

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<sup>13</sup> Karin Anderman, Eva Hagstrom Frisell and Carolina Vendil Pallin, *Russia-EU external security relations: Russian policy and perceptions*, Stockholm, 2007,61, [www2.foi.se/rapp/foir2243.pdf](http://www2.foi.se/rapp/foir2243.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Katinka Barysch, *the EU and Russia: Strategic partners or squabbling neighbours?* (London: Centre for European Reform, 2004), 2-3, [www.cer.org.uk/pdf/EU\\_russia\\_barysch\\_final\\_10nov06.pdf](http://www.cer.org.uk/pdf/EU_russia_barysch_final_10nov06.pdf)

speech, the relations between the EU and Russia have historically developed through “mutual influence and benefit” given the natural partnership between the parties.<sup>15</sup>

Russia represents the largest neighbour of the EU, having around 2200km long direct borders with five member states, including Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Poland and leaving the Kaliningrad region surrounded by the Union.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the EU is a major trade partner for Russia, while Russia is the fifth in external trade relations of the EU after the US, Switzerland, China and Japan.<sup>17</sup> The EU accounts for more than half of Russia’s external trade and foreign investments and represents the main market for the export of oil and gas, which supplies a quarter of the EU’s energy consumption, making Russia its biggest partner in this sphere.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, both sides are interested in achieving stability and prosperity in Europe by dealing with the security threats in their “common neighbourhood” and cooperating in the area of conflict management. The partners also identify terrorism and weapons proliferation as well as organized crime as the main security concerns, leading to the need of cooperation to respond to the common threats.<sup>19</sup>

Considering the strong interdependence, the two sides term their relations as a “strategic partnership” in the official documents and statements.<sup>20</sup> Yet both have a variety of definitions for this notion,<sup>21</sup> which leads to some confusion. Perovic explains the concept as reflecting the

<sup>15</sup> Vladimir Putin, “Russia is Europe’s natural ally,” *The Sunday Times*, March, 2007,

[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest\\_contributors/article1563806.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/guest_contributors/article1563806.ece)

<sup>16</sup> Borbala Barnahazi, *Russia-EU relations in light of the 2004 enlargement*, in *EU-Russia relations with special emphasis on economic cooperation*, (Budapest: Center for EU enlargement studies, 2006), 1-2,

<http://www.ceu.hu/cens/assets/files/russia>

<sup>17</sup> Kaupo Polissinski, *Relations between the European Union and Russia*, 2006,

[www.eestipank.info/pub/en/dokumentid/publikatsioonid/seeriad/kroon\\_majandus/2006/2006\\_1/full\\_km106.pdf](http://www.eestipank.info/pub/en/dokumentid/publikatsioonid/seeriad/kroon_majandus/2006/2006_1/full_km106.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> European Commission, *European Union-Russia energy dialogue*,

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/russia/overview/objectives\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/russia/overview/objectives_en.htm)

<sup>19</sup> Barysch, 37-43

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 2-4

<sup>21</sup> Konstantin Khudoley, *Russia and the European Union: new opportunities, new challenges*, in *Rethinking the respective strategies of Russia and the European Union*, ed. Moshes (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2003), [www.upi-fia.fi/document.php?DOC\\_ID=29](http://www.upi-fia.fi/document.php?DOC_ID=29), 15

attempt to create a new environment of cooperation against the “negative experience of the past”<sup>22</sup>. Thus, although the question of Russia’s joining the EU, as frequently declared by the former Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, can no more be discussed seriously, at least for the foreseeable future, the EU and Russia have developed close ties in economic and political spheres within the framework of bilateral agreements and treaties and coordinate their work in multiple areas, also initiating new projects for the future.<sup>23</sup>

### **1.2. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement**

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) represents the fundamental document underlying the EU-Russian cooperation thus far. The treaty was signed on Corfu in 1994, but entered into force in 1997 for the period of ten years.<sup>24</sup> The process was delayed due to the criticism of Russia voiced by the EU about the use of force in Chechnya, but was renewed after the peaceful negotiations started in the republic.<sup>25</sup>

The PCA covers an incredible variety of areas.<sup>26</sup> The document is mainly dedicated to economic cooperation, largely focusing on the issues of trade and business, as well as relations between the parties on financial and economic issues, and recognizing Russia as a country with a transition economy and prospect of rapid development of market economy.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the issue of political dialogue is dealt with in only a short section of this substantial document, which reveals less importance of cooperation in this area, the main purpose of which includes the

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<sup>22</sup> Jeronim Perovic, *Coming closer or drifting apart? EU-Russia Partnership and EU enlargement Eastern Europe*, (Zurich: Center for Security Studies, 2003), <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&id=6831>

<sup>23</sup> Khudoley, 14

<sup>24</sup> Barnahazi, 12

<sup>25</sup> European Commission, *about the Partnership and Cooperation agreement*, [http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/ru/p\\_318.htm](http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/ru/p_318.htm)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation,

support to the political and economic transformation of Russia and the rapprochement of the positions on international issues.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.2.1. The role of the PCA

The treaty allowed modifying the principles of interaction between the EU and Russia in view of the changed environment after the collapse of the Soviet Union<sup>29</sup> and, today, the PCA remains the only binding treaty between the EU and Russia, having the highest status in international law. Other documents, adopted by the partners are not subject to ratification, being rather political commitments signed by the two sides.<sup>30</sup>

According to Arbatova and Rizhkov, during its adoption the PCA reflected a technocratic rather than political approach of the Union not taking into account the evolution of the relations and having a static character. At that point, Russia did not have clearly delineated aims and priorities in relation to the EU either.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, the document has provided a political-legal framework and identified the common objectives and principles, as well as the institutions for dialogue. In addition, it has endowed the parties with a legal basis for the shift from the bilateral relations of Russia with the member states of the EU to cooperation with the Union as a whole and for the practice of joint work and mutual understanding.<sup>32</sup>

The agreement has also identified the institutional framework of the partnership by introducing regular meetings between the president of Russia and the head of the Council of the European Union together with the President of the Commission and by creating the Cooperation

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<sup>28</sup> L.N.Shishelina, *Rasshirenie Evropeiskogo soiuza na Vostok i interesy Rossii*, (the enlargement of the European Union and the interests of Russia), (Moskva: Nauka, 2006), 246

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 246

<sup>30</sup> Emerson, tassinari and Vahl, 2-3

<sup>31</sup> Nadejda Arbatova and V.A.Rijkov, "Rossiia i Evrosoiuz: sblizhenie na fone razriva" (Russia and the EU: rapprochement in view of a great divide), *Russia in Global Affairs* no.1, 2005, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/12/3648.html>

Council to monitor the implementation of the agreement.<sup>33</sup> The half-yearly summits have achieved substantial progress, becoming the arena for agenda-setting during the presidency of Putin.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, one of the most important achievements of the PCA has been the successful functioning of the “consultative and collaborative mechanisms”,<sup>35</sup> having played a significant role in the creating, widening and development of the strategic relations between the parties. In addition, the effectiveness of the document is proved by the wide scope of partnership in multiple policy areas.<sup>36</sup> Importance of the treaty also remains crucial in the area of trade relations, considering that Russia’s accession process to the World Trade Organization has been continuously delayed.<sup>37</sup>

### 1.2.2. Current functions of the agreement

Therefore, during the period of its adoption, the agreement played the role of an “anchor” in view of the transformations after the collapse of the Soviet Union.<sup>38</sup> However, today most experts and scholars, as well as the politicians agree that the situation has radically changed in comparison with the period of the adoption of the PCA, thus, making the agreement obsolete and creating the necessity of a more advanced treaty.<sup>39</sup> The transformation occurring within the EU after three enlargements since 1994, as well as in Russian political development since the early

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<sup>32</sup> T.V.Bordachev and D.V.Suslov, *Konceptsiia novovo politico- pravovovo formata otnoshenii Rocii i Evropeiskovo Soiuzu* (Concept of a New political-legal format for the relations between Russia and the EU), <http://inozemtsev.net/news/printitem.php3?m=vert&id=483>

<sup>33</sup> Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation

<sup>34</sup> Michael Emerson, *From an awkward partnership to a greater Europe? A European perspective*, in *Russia and the West*, CEPS Working Papers No.16,2004, <http://aei.pitt.edu/6751>

<sup>35</sup> Khudoley, 14-15

<sup>36</sup> Nadezhda Arbatova, “problema-2007: chto dalshe?”, (problem 2007: what next?), *Russia in global affairs* no.1,2006, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/18/5309.html>

<sup>37</sup> Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl, 7-9

<sup>38</sup> Sokolov, “Novii dogovor”

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Arbatova, Emerson, Bordachev,

post-Soviet era have made the Partnership and cooperation agreement outdated<sup>40</sup> and an inadequate political and legal basis for the relations between the two actors. Thus, despite the existence of the frequently quoted article 106, according to which the agreement can be automatically prolonged every year, it should be completely revised, because it may continue to gradually depart from the reality of relations between the partners.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, it has become widely accepted that today the framework of the PCA does not provide the sides with the environment for formulating the new strategic aims of relations and identifying common values and interests.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, the Russian officials have repeatedly requested modifying or replacing the document; nevertheless, the EU officials believed that radical changes in the treaty were unnecessary.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, In April 2004 the extension of the agreement to the ten new member states of the Union was agreed upon between the two partners.<sup>44</sup>

The limitations of the agreement have also become visible with the further efforts from the EU and Russia to deepen their relations by adopting the strategy documents and the roadmaps on Common Spaces.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, the parties have recognized that the development of the “advanced partnership” needs the formulation of a new legally binding agreement rather than “political commitments”, like the EU-Russia summits and the four Common Spaces.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl, 3-5

<sup>41</sup> Borko, “rethinking Russia-EU relations”

<sup>42</sup> Bordachev and Suslov, *Konceptsiia*

<sup>43</sup> Tatiana Romanova and Natalia Zaslavskaya, “EU-Russia: Towards the four spaces,” *Baltic Defence review* 12,no.2, 2004,86-87, [www.bdcoll.eu/fileadmin/docs/bdreview/bdr-2004-12-sec3-art4.pdf](http://www.bdcoll.eu/fileadmin/docs/bdreview/bdr-2004-12-sec3-art4.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> European Commission, *EU's relations with Russia: overview*, [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/russia/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/russia/intro/index.htm)

<sup>45</sup> Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl,3-4

<sup>46</sup> Arbatova, “problema-2007”

### 1.3. The unilateral strategy documents

The 1999 Common Strategy of the EU on Russia was a unilateral document aiming to underline the main dimensions of the EU relations with Russia.<sup>47</sup> It dealt with the question of democracy promotion and the strengthening of the rule of law and civil society in Russia, integrating Russia in the European economic space and cooperating with Russia to meet the common challenges and to maintain stability on the continent. The strategy declared that “ever closer” and “intensified cooperation” must become the basis for resolving the problems and promoting peace in Europe.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the document has shown the increasing importance of partnership in political sphere alongside with trade and assistance emphasized previously.<sup>49</sup>

The Common Strategy represented the compromise of the EU member states to use qualified majority voting for the decision on smaller issues in foreign policy. Nevertheless, the document did not have factual consequences, lacking the regulation about its implementation, as well as about financial support. In addition, the Strategy was criticized for not providing “added value” and being too general, taking into account the frequent references to PCA and giving the overview of the setbacks and activities.<sup>50</sup>

The Middle-term Strategy for the development of Relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union adopted by the president of Russia, Putin, in October 1999, represented a response to the EU Common Strategy, showing the Russian view of the relations and being specific about the concrete strategic aims and interests of the country. The document determines the strategy of Moscow for the future of the relations with the EU and touches upon cooperation

<sup>47</sup> Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl, 5

<sup>48</sup> Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia, 1999, <http://trade-info.cec.eu.int/doclib/html/114137.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Gozde Yilmaz, *Strategic or pragmatic partnership? EU-Russia relations in the soft security sphere*, 2007, 5-6, <http://www.psa.ac.uk/2007/pps/Yilmaz.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> James Hughes, *EU relations with Russia: Partnership or asymmetric interdependency?*, (London: LSE research online, 2006), 5-6, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000651/01/Hughes.EU-Russia.2006.pdf>



in multiple areas,<sup>51</sup> mentioning the significance of the PCA and the Common strategy of the EU and the importance of the realization of the aims of both documents.<sup>52</sup> It also stresses that the relations will be based on the bilateral agreements, without the aim of Russia's joining the EU.<sup>53</sup>

The unilateral strategy documents have not played significant role in the development of EU-Russia relations - the Common Strategy expired in 2004, being ignored, as well as Russian strategy document, which is seldom considered. Nevertheless, these documents have been important in identifying the interests and views of partners, expressing the views and objectives of the parties.<sup>54</sup> Thus, they will be further discussed in the following chapters.

#### **1.4. The Roadmaps on Common Spaces**

The agreement on the adoption of four Common Spaces was signed by the EU and Russia at the St. Petersburg Summit in 2003. After two years of negotiations, in 2005 the two parties adopted the Roadmaps on Common Spaces. The new arrangement constitutes an attempt to create the new basis for the future development of EU-Russia relations, given that the PCA has not met expectations.<sup>55</sup>

Initially, the agreements facilitated optimism about the prospects of cooperation.<sup>56</sup> They revealed a strong wish of the parties to enhance partnership.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, progress has been slow and the sides encountered a multitude of problems concerning the conditions of the

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<sup>51</sup> Timofei V. Bordachev, *Strategy and Strategies*, in *Rethinking the respective strategies of Russia and the European Union*, ed. Moshes, (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2003), 32-40, [www.upi-fia.fi/document.php?DOC\\_ID=29](http://www.upi-fia.fi/document.php?DOC_ID=29)

<sup>52</sup> The Russian Federation middle term strategy towards the European Union (2000-2010), [http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/p\\_245.htm](http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/p_245.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Shishelina, 247

<sup>54</sup> Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl, 5

<sup>55</sup> Michael Emerson, *EU-Russia: four common spaces and the proliferation of the fuzzy*, CEPS policy brief no.71, 2005, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&id=25727>

<sup>56</sup> Hanna Smith, *Russia and the EU: A new iron curtain or a common European home?* 2005, 5, [www.tukkk.fi/pei/NewEurope/SessionC2/Smith.pdf](http://www.tukkk.fi/pei/NewEurope/SessionC2/Smith.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Arbatova and Rijkov, "Rossiia i Evrosoiuz"

practical execution of the provisions of the agreements.<sup>58</sup> The attempts to the enforcement of the principles adopted in the Spaces demonstrated that a harmonious and equal partnership is difficult to achieve, because, despite the sustainable efforts from both sides, Russia and the EU are not capable of dancing in a synchronous manner<sup>59</sup> and are uncertain about the terms of cooperation. Thus, the spaces are becoming the “Euro-Ruski Diplomatic-bureaucratic Borsch”, not shedding light on the future development of the EU-Russian relations.<sup>60</sup> However, the will of the parties to achieve progress by introducing new proposals for the future and the process of learning<sup>61</sup> leads to the opportunity that the four common spaces can facilitate significant growth in further development of the relations.

#### 1.4.1. The Common Economic Space

The decision to create a Common Economic Space dates back to 2001. In this sphere the Russian market is not so important for the EU as the market of the EU for Russia - the export of the Union to Russia is only 5% of the whole export, and import accounts for 8%. In addition, the EU is one of the strongest economic powers in the world, while though growing, Russian economy still remains underdeveloped.<sup>62</sup> As a result of this asymmetry, the EU is predisposed to emphasize economic issues, while Russia views political relations as the most important area for cooperation.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the difficulties, cooperation in this area has reached the most significant progress.<sup>64</sup> The Common Economic Space represents the legal basis for the formation of the common

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<sup>58</sup> Anderman et al, 63

<sup>59</sup> Sergei Strokan, “Rossiisko-evropeiski foxtrot”(Russian-European foxtrot), *Komersant*, 10 January, 2006, <http://kalininogradexpert.ru/node/2180>

<sup>60</sup> Emerson, *EU-Russia*

<sup>61</sup> Strokan, *Rossiisko-evropeiski foxtrot*

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Smith, 5-7

<sup>64</sup> Strokan, *Rossiisko-evropeiski foxtrot*

market and for regulating the four freedoms of movement.<sup>65</sup> The parties agreed on developing standards and norms for a wide range of economic issues, thus, the document refers to economic cooperation and dialogue in areas ranging from industrial development to environment.<sup>66</sup> In accordance with the principles of transparency, equal treatment and good governance, it aims at removing barriers to trade and investment and promoting the process of reforms.<sup>67</sup>

#### **1.4.2. The Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice**

According to the document, cooperation in the area of internal security has become a precondition for the development of a strategic partnership between the EU and Russia. It includes the issues of migration and visa-regimes and states the importance of the aim of “building a new Europe without dividing lines”. This Space also covers cooperation with respect to the human rights and the principle of non-discrimination, as well as fight against terrorism and organized crime and stresses that the parties adhere to the common values of democracy and the rule of law.<sup>68</sup>

The Common Space of internal security is one the most sensitive areas of cooperation between Russia and the EU.<sup>69</sup> The parties have differing visions about the importance and contents of the issues in this sphere; the question of visa regulations is one of the most important issues for Russia, given that the Schengen treaty affects Kaliningrad region as well as the border with Finland. In view of these problems, Russia demands the establishment of a visa-free regime,<sup>70</sup> which faces resistance from the EU side, considering the creation of such a regime as a

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<sup>65</sup> Arbatova and Rijkov, “Rossiia i Evrosoiuz”

<sup>66</sup> Roadmap for the Common Economic space – building blocks for sustained economic growth, [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/russia/summit\\_05\\_05/finalroadmaps.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/russia/summit_05_05/finalroadmaps.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> European Commission, *EU's relations with Russia*

<sup>68</sup> Roadmap for the Common Space of freedom, security and justice,

<sup>69</sup> Strokan, *Rossiisko-evropeiski foxtrot*

<sup>70</sup> Derek Averre, “Russia and the European Union: Convergence or Divergence?” *European Security* 14,no.2,2005, 185

long-term aim.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, the EU has continuously criticized Russia about the violation of human rights in Chechnya, provoking Russian concerns that the EU is trying to teach Russia how to behave.<sup>72</sup>

### **1.4.3. The Common Space of External Security**

Cooperation in the area of external security has also encountered considerable difficulties. The parties have not received any significant result of their efforts.<sup>73</sup> Considerable discrepancies have arisen in the area of crisis management, given that long negotiations had been held about the expressions used in the document concerning the cooperation in the settlement of regional conflicts in neighbouring regions of the EU and Russia.<sup>74</sup>

Other issues dealt with in the Roadmap include cooperation in fighting against terrorism and the area of civil protection and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. According to the document, the parties pursue their objectives in line with the UN charter and the principles of effective multilateralism.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, thus far they have faced difficulties in the achievement of the coordination of their interests in some areas of this space, therefore, the real discrepancies makes the formation of the common space on external security a long-term prospect.<sup>76</sup>

### **1.4.4. The Common Space of Research and Education, including culture**

The area of research and education is one of the most important areas in Common Spaces, leading to a deeper integration between the two actors<sup>77</sup> and offering the possibility for completely equal cooperation, because the existing differences in this area are much easier to

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<sup>71</sup> European Commission, *EU's relations with Russia*

<sup>72</sup> Smith, 7-8

<sup>73</sup> Strokan, *Rossiisko-evropeiski foxtro*

<sup>74</sup> Emerson, *EU-Russia*

<sup>75</sup> Roadmap for the Common space of external security

<sup>76</sup> Arbatova and Rijkov, "Rossiia i Evrosoiuz"

overcome. Thus, the prospects in this space are the most encouraging;<sup>77</sup> nevertheless, it also encounters several problems, mostly connected to the Russian suspicions about the educational programmes being alarmed by the possibility of “brain drain” from the country.<sup>79</sup>

As shown in the discussion of the Common Spaces, in this initial stage they are very weak and may have modest prospects as commonly described by the experts, because, though they are based on a consensus between the EU and Russia, considerable tensions remain in most of the issue areas. Thus, most analysts, mainly including Russian experts, believe that the Common Spaces are adopted merely for the purpose of covering the accumulated mutual contradictions<sup>80</sup> and also cannot serve as a proper alternative for the PCA, given that the agreements lack a legal basis providing long-term objectives within the broader framework of the Partnership and Cooperation agreement<sup>81</sup> and representing political commitments, rather than being legally binding agreements.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, they can serve as “an interim agenda” until the creation of a new framework,<sup>83</sup> helping the progress of mutual learning and socialization.

### **1.5. Further agreements between the EU and Russia**

Besides the main agreements covering the wide range of areas in EU-Russia relations, the two partners have adopted more specific arrangements touching upon the most important issues of cooperation. Bilateral trade agreements on Steel and Textile between the EU and Russia are adopted and modified regularly. In addition, the parties have developed cooperation in science and technology, as well as agreements on Visa facilitation and on Readmission. They have also

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<sup>77</sup> Emerson, *EU-Russia*

<sup>78</sup> Stokan, *Rossiisko-evropeiski foxtrot*

<sup>79</sup> Smith, 8-9

<sup>80</sup> Bordachev and Suslov, *Konceptsiia*

<sup>81</sup> Hughes, 8-10

<sup>82</sup> Karaganov et al. *Russia-EU relations: the present situation and prospects*, CEPS working document no.225,2005,6, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&id=13590>

<sup>83</sup> Averde, 182-183

achieved specific provisions on cooperation in civil protection and the agreement between Russian police institutions and Europol for fighting against organized crime.<sup>84</sup>

Another arrangement, An Agreement Concerning the Conditions of joining the World Trade Organization, in which the partners have identified the conditions for Russia's joining the WTO, was signed in 2004. According to this agreement, Russia promised to lower its tariffs and increase prices on energy products.<sup>85</sup>

The aims of Energy dialogue, which emerged at the Paris summit in 2000, include enhancing partnership in the energy sector between the parties, who recognize common interests and objectives, including stability of energy markets, improving effectiveness of the supply and providing security for Europe by creating close ties in energy issues between the EU and Russia.<sup>86</sup> The relations in energy area have obtained special value after the crisis connected to the supply of gas to Ukraine in winter 2006, which led to concerns of the EU about the reliability of Russia and attempts to reduce dependence on the supply from Russia.<sup>87</sup> However, Russia remains the largest supplier of energy products to the EU, while for Russia the progress in the energy relations is important for preserving access to the EU market, as well as for initiating foreign investments.<sup>88</sup>

The highly institutionalized nature of EU-Russian relations reveals the confusion between the two parties about developing a consistent approach towards each other, which would be expressed in a single coherent document forming a strong conceptual framework. The multiple agreements that lack judicial basis lead to the implication that the partners encounter difficulties

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<sup>84</sup> Commission, *EU's relations with Russia*

<sup>85</sup> Polisinski, 8

<sup>86</sup> European Commission's delegation to Russia, *Energy*, [http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/p\\_217.htm](http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/p_217.htm)

<sup>87</sup> Barnahazi, 18-19

<sup>88</sup> Euractiv, *EU-Russia energy dialogue*, <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/eu-russia-energy-dialogue/article-150061>

in coordinating their views on the development of bilateral relations in the future. Nevertheless, this complex institutional framework also demonstrates that the parties recognize the importance of achieving cooperation given the interdependence derived from the geographical proximity, as well as the economic needs of both actors. In addition, the existing agreements create the environment for continuous interactions between the parties, maintaining the process of learning about each other and leading to cooperation. Thus, despite the tensions, the parties undertake strong efforts to develop and institutionalize their close ties, leading to the conclusion that cooperation is not only important, but also feasible, though difficult to achieve.

### **1.6. Negotiations on a new agreement – “question 2007”**

The Partnership and Cooperation agreement will be terminated on November 30, 2007, thus, the partners face the necessity to decide upon the future framework for their relations. Preserving the agreement would limit cooperation in existing new circumstances after the enlargement of the EU and changes in Russia’s foreign policy.<sup>89</sup> Initially the discussion about the necessity of the new agreement was launched by the Russian political elites. According to Putin, the path of EU-Russian relations has generated the necessity of a new agreement on strategic partnership, leading to deepening and widening economic and political relations.<sup>90</sup> The EU officials met the proposition with doubts about the need to replace the PCA; nevertheless after 2005 the Commission has become interested in the issue and consultations were launched.<sup>91</sup>

At present, the EU, as well as Russia, recognizes the importance of the adoption of a new agreement reflecting the changes that occurred after the adoption of the PCA and providing “a

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<sup>89</sup> Iris Kempe and Hanna Smith, *a decade of partnership and cooperation in Russia-EU relations: perception, perspectives and progress – possibilities for the next decade*, 2006,9-10, [http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006\\_Kempe\\_Smith.pdf](http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006_Kempe_Smith.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> Putin, “Russia is Europe’s natural ally”

<sup>91</sup> Andrei Zagorski, *negotiating a new EU-Russia agreement*, in *the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy toward Russia: the partnership and Cooperation agreement as a test case*, ed. Atis Lejins, (Riga: Latvian institute of international affairs, 2006),55-56, <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/134524.htm>

“durable and comprehensive framework” for the future cooperation.<sup>92</sup> This issue has been one of the most important agendas intensively discussed during the last summits. At the Sochi summit in May, 2006, the parties agreed upon the adoption of a long-term, legally binding agreement “capable of promoting the future evolution of relations”,<sup>93</sup> and the Commission drafted the negotiating directives.<sup>94</sup>

Consequently, today the question of the necessity to replace the PCA is widely accepted, though the attempts at negotiations of the new agreement have led to the deadlock. Despite the declared goals of creating the new agreement and the intention of dedicating the agenda of the Helsinki summit in November 2006 to the discussion of this question, the EU and Russia faced considerable complications during the preparations for the negotiation on a new agreement, since the member states of the EU were not able to reach consensus given the veto of Poland.<sup>95</sup>

The EU and Russia had been planning to start a closer dialogue at the summit in Samara in May, 2007;<sup>96</sup> nevertheless, this summit further proved that there exist considerable tensions between the parties, which were unable to achieve progress in launching negotiations over the new agreement. At the summit the parties expressed concerns connected to the issues, such as that of the meat ban, energy and the abuses of human rights, though without reaching advancement in their strained relations.<sup>97</sup> Thus, today, the discussions are not progressing and the future of the new agreement remains uncertain.

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<sup>92</sup> European Commission, *EU's relations with Russia*

<sup>93</sup> European Commission delegation to Russia, *EU-Russia Summit in Sochi on 25 May, 2006*, [http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/news\\_801.htm](http://www.delrus.ec.europa.eu/en/news_801.htm)

<sup>94</sup> European Commission delegation to Russia, *European Commission approves terms for negotiating new EU–Russia agreement*, 4 July, 2006, [http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/news\\_810.htm](http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/news_810.htm)

<sup>95</sup> Finland's EU presidency, *Summit deepens cooperation between the EU and Russia*, 24 November, 2006, [http://www.eu2006.fi/news\\_and\\_documents/press\\_releases/vko47/en\\_GB/175543](http://www.eu2006.fi/news_and_documents/press_releases/vko47/en_GB/175543)

<sup>96</sup> *RIA Novosti*, “Preparation for new Russia-EU PCA could start soon”, 17 April, 2007, <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20070417/63802549.html>

<sup>97</sup> Christian Lowe, “Merckel tackles Putin on democracy at the frosty summit,” *Reuters*, 18 May, 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSL1869200820070518>



Subsequent to analyzing the development of EU-Russia relations and some of the weaknesses of the existing agreements leading to the efforts from both sides to develop a new legal framework, the present thesis will try to account for the difficulties of cooperation between the EU and Russia on adopting a new agreement by examining the identities and perceptions of the parties in order to trace the disparities in their outlooks of each other and the nature of the bilateral relations. The study will be accomplished through applying the theoretical framework of constructivism, dedicating the following chapter to the outlining of the main premises of the theory and to contrasting it with neorealism.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

The main theoretical debate currently existing in the scholarly literature in international relations is formed by the rationalist-constructivist divide. In order to assess the challenges existing between the EU and Russia, this study takes constructivist approach. The following chapter is dedicated to the outlining of the main principles of constructivism and neorealism, the most widely recognized rationalist theory, demonstrating the relevance of the former for analyzing the EU-Russian relations.

### 2.1. Neorealism

Neorealism has been developed after 1979 on the basis of the work of Kenneth Waltz, “theory of international politics”, constituting the most widely referred strand of the Realist international theory, which had been dominant in international relations during the Cold War. In contrast to classical realism, which emphasizes the role of human nature, the main assumption of neorealism implies that anarchy constitutes the distinguishing feature of international system, given the absence of a central government. The international structure is created by the “coexistence” of states acting according to self-help, which makes ensuring survival the fundamental motive of states, because that lies in the basis of state existence in the insecure world.<sup>98</sup>

Thus, Anarchy is formed through the interaction among states, which represent unitary actors of international system being similar entities in terms of functions they perform. States remain the main actors of international politics and form sovereign entities, developing their own policies to deal with external and internal issues<sup>99</sup> valuing autonomy in decision-making and

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<sup>98</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of international politics*, (New-York: McGraw-Hill, 1979) 88-91, 111

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.92-97

freedom of action and fear dependence on others.<sup>100</sup> Another factor shaping the structure of the system is the “distribution of capabilities”, which define power of states by determining their place in the system.<sup>101</sup>

According to neorealists, the structure of the international system puts restrictions on cooperation among states because they are concerned about the gains of others from cooperation relative to their own. Increased capabilities of others cause fears about their future intentions,<sup>102</sup> because in the absence of a central authority no force can prevent violence aimed at destroying them. Accordingly, states will not engage in cooperation, if it assures relatively greater gains for others, even in the case of receiving absolute gains from cooperation.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, in the decentralized realm of international politics states realize the necessity to rely on themselves for pursuing their interests, because they are rational actors with the consistent goals. The anarchic international system encourages competition and conflict among its units,<sup>104</sup> rewarding only those states which conform to the accepted practices and constraining the actors to “run the race” for their survival and well-being and to react to threats with the mobilization of powers,<sup>105</sup> increasing their capabilities through internal efforts or through aligning with other states and creating a balance of power.<sup>106</sup>

Based on its main assumptions, neorealism could account for the difficulties of EU-Russian relations stressing that the structure makes the two sides self-interested and concerned about the aims of the other; nevertheless, it would predict the balancing behaviour of Russia, viewing the

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<sup>100</sup> Joseph M. Grieco, *Realist international theory and the study of world politics*, in *New thinking in international relations theory*, ed. Michael W. Doyle and John Ikenberry, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview press, 1997), 168

<sup>101</sup> Waltz, 98-101

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. 104-105

<sup>103</sup> Joseph M. Grieco, “Anarchy and the limits of cooperation: a realist critique of the newest liberal institutionalism,” *International organization* 42, no. 3, 1988, 498-499

<sup>104</sup> Grieco, *Realist international theory*, 165-166, 172

<sup>105</sup> Waltz, 92, 110-113

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 118-126

Eastern enlargement of the EU as a threat to its security. On the other hand, given the rise of the great power status of Russia, the EU would be expected to engage in balancing strengthened Russia. Nevertheless, as shown in the first chapter of this thesis the two sides have not engaged in balancing each other, but rather have dedicated significant efforts to the adoption of multiple agreements forming the institutional framework of their relations. Moreover, despite the challenges that the two parties face on the path to the achievement of genuine strategic partnership, the EU and Russia recognize the need for the strengthening of the legal basis of their relations and attempt to start negotiations on a new agreement. In addition, the systemic account disregards the grounds for the formation of the interests of the parties, being particularly weak in explaining the EU's commitment to promoting norms and values. As demonstrated further in this thesis interests of the EU and Russia are not determined by international system, but rather are constructed through the identities of the actors.

Consequently, in this study, the obstacles to the adoption of a new agreement between the EU and Russia will be approached through applying constructivist theory of international relations, which demonstrates the importance of identities affecting the views of the partners about the most important aspects of the relations and the interpretation of the behaviour of the other.

## **2.2. Constructivism**

Constructivist theory has been recognized as one of the three most important pillars of the study of international relations, alongside neorealism and neoliberalism, only in the late 1990s,<sup>107</sup> Constructivism constitutes a social theory applied to the realm of international relations and

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<sup>107</sup> Vendulka Kubalkova, *Introduction in Foreign policy in a constructed world*, ed. Vendulka Kubalkova, (Armonk, New-york: M.E.Sharpe, 2001),3-4

according to Adler occupying the “middle ground” between rationalism and reflectivism.<sup>108</sup>

During the last decade many different enclaves have emerged within mainstream constructivist theory, however the present chapter will identify the main principles shared by most constructivist scholars, in order to create a framework for approaching EU-Russian relations.

As discussed above, neorealists emphasize the importance of the effects of structure on state behaviour not dealing with changes in identities and interests, while constructivists challenge the view of the anarchic system as exogenously given and maintain that the process of interaction between the states, rather than the structure form the self-help as an institution. Thus, anarchy constitutes the imagined structure,<sup>109</sup> “what states make of it”.<sup>110</sup>

### 2.2.1. The role of interaction

Constructivism focuses on the role of intersubjective knowledge as the factor affecting interaction between the states.<sup>111</sup> States form their identities through participating in the system of “intersubjective understandings”, which affect their perceptions of the “self and the other” and base their views of each other on the experience of the interaction, forming the expectations for the future.<sup>112</sup> The intersubjective knowledge creating identities and interests “is constructed every day” through the processes of interaction and daily practice.<sup>113</sup>

The social practices result in predictability about the actions of others, as a response to certain behaviour, fixing the meanings and producing intersubjective reality.<sup>114</sup> Through

<sup>108</sup> Emanuel Adler, “Seizing the middle ground: constructivism in world politics,” *European journal of International relations* 3,no.3,1997, 321-323

<sup>109</sup> Ted Hopf, “The promise of constructivism in international relations theory”, *International security* 23,no.1,1998, 174

<sup>110</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics,” *International organization* 46,no.2,1992, 393-395

<sup>111</sup> Dale C. Copeland, “The constructivist challenge to structural realism: a review essay,” *International Security* 25,no.2,2000, 189

<sup>112</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy,”397-398

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.402-409

<sup>114</sup> Hopf,179

engaging in contacts actors define and redefine their roles and interests<sup>115</sup> - “alter” starts forming its views on the basis of interpretation of the gestures received from “ego”. The newly formed assumptions about the intentions of “ego” motivate a responsive action, resulting in cyclic interactions, which form the environment for the formation of stable perceptions of the self and the “ego”, as well as of “intersubjective understandings<sup>116</sup>. Ideas about ego can be conflictual, as well as cooperative, giving the role identities of “enemy” or “friend”.<sup>117</sup>

### 2.2.2. Importance of identities and interests

One of the most important notions for constructivists is the identity necessary to ensure predictability and stability, considering its importance in demonstrating the state’s interests and possible behaviour and in forming the perceptions about others. Constructivists challenge the neorealist belief that states have only the identity of self-interested entities, rather treating identity as constructed in the historical and social framework,<sup>118</sup> which can be redefined in the process of interaction.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, identities are shaped through the external as well as internal structures, including the ideas developed about the self and the ideas developed by others.<sup>120</sup>

Moreover, Self-identities form the basis for the definition of interests, because “an actor cannot know, what it wants until it knows who it is”.<sup>121</sup> Great power identity generates different interests<sup>122</sup> than normative power identity. Thus, the EU is expected to develop interests based on its identity as the supporter of European norms and principles, while Russian interests derive from the importance of defending its great power status.

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<sup>115</sup> Copeland, 192-193

<sup>116</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy,” 404-405

<sup>117</sup> Wendt, *Social theory of international politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1999), 228

<sup>118</sup> Hopf, 175-176

<sup>119</sup> Copeland, 190

<sup>120</sup> Wendt, *Social theory*, 224

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 231

<sup>122</sup> Hopf, 176

In addition, the definition of interests depends on the perceptions of the states, acting according to “logic of appropriateness” in accordance with the understanding of the situation.<sup>123</sup> Actors learn about the appropriate behavior through the imitation of already tested practices or socialization, develop a vision of “what is important or valuable” through socially constructed rules and principles, determining the states’ preferences and the means for their achievement.<sup>124</sup> Consequently, identities form the essential foundation for foreign policy making, being the means for translating the visions of national leaders, as well as citizens into the statements on the international arena.<sup>125</sup> In addition, the identities and interests do not constitute sets applied to everybody; they are “relation-specific”, implying the possibility of being competitive in some cases, while harmonious in others,<sup>126</sup> because states differentiate among the “others” not treating them equally.<sup>127</sup>

### **2.2.3. Formation of the political structure**

According to constructivists, the formation of perspectives on the intentions and actions of the other anticipating its behaviour in the future based on social contacts is the necessary precondition for the construction of the security structure,<sup>128</sup> which, on its part, affects the identities and interests of actors.<sup>129</sup> Wendt differentiates between three structures: the Hobbesian anarchic structure is based on the existence of enmity between the actors, who observe each other as having unlimited aggressive intentions; Within the Lockean culture rivals view each other as recognizing the right of sovereignty; violence is constrained and the parties are less

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<sup>123</sup> Finnemore, in Kowert, 275

<sup>124</sup> Finnemore, 11-15, 29

<sup>125</sup> Kowert, 281

<sup>126</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy”, 408-409

<sup>127</sup> Kowert, 269

<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Mercer, “Anarchy and identity”, *International organization* 49, no. 2, 1995, 236

<sup>129</sup> Copeland, 190

worried about their security; While the Kantian culture implies the existence of friendship, when states settle disputes peacefully and work together against the common threats.<sup>130</sup>

Institutions constitute a structure formed by identities and interests and exist only in view of the ideas and beliefs of the actors in international relations, being either cooperative or conflictual depending on the “self-other relations”. Within the conflictual system, which leads to anarchy, states observe each other negatively, being concerned about the security, whereas in the cooperative security system, states view themselves as the part of the community.<sup>131</sup> Thus, self-help and conflict are not unavoidable features of anarchy, but the result of the social practices of states.<sup>132</sup>

Consequently, constructivists consider the identities in order to account for the possibility of cooperation, assuming that during the negotiations of particular agreements states might change their unilateral interests, because social practices lead to reducing uncertainty.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, cooperative behaviour between the states can be explained by the process of learning through interaction, which reconstructs the interests of states, leading to interdependence and to the formation of joint interests over time.<sup>134</sup>

Nevertheless, the process of developing cooperation is slow, given that the achievement of cooperation requires absence of negative identification between the actors, because distrust and doubts may result in concerns about relative gains and in competitive behaviour. Practices introduced by one state and challenging the identities and understandings of other may lead to concerns about the threat and thus, opposition to transformation and to “social change”.<sup>135</sup> Thus,

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<sup>130</sup> Wendt, *Social theory*, 258-263, 279-281, 297-299

<sup>131</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy”, 399-409

<sup>132</sup> Copeland, 198

<sup>133</sup> Hopf, 189-190

<sup>134</sup> Wendt, “Anarchy,” 417

<sup>135</sup> Ibid. 411-418



states, even though realizing the common interests, may not reformulate their identities, because the stability is habitual, and engaging in the creative action requires the emergence of a new social situation impossible to deal with through the existing perceptions and the lower costs of the transformation.<sup>136</sup>

Based on their main assumptions, constructivists realize that change in the once constituted structures is difficult; nevertheless, given that states are diverse, the potential for change always exists.<sup>137</sup> Thus, providing that the world is constructed, it can be reconstructed.<sup>138</sup>

This thesis will approach the intricacies of EU-Russia relations through the theoretical framework of constructivism, considering that the highly developed conceptual basis of EU-Russian relations demonstrates not only the attempts of both parties to achieve progress given the recognition of the high interdependence, but also promotes the development of new images through the regular interaction underlying the socialization process. Consequently, the two sides do not perceive each other as “enemies”; nevertheless, the uncertainties and negative perceptions remain strong, sometimes leading to the “rivalry” and challenging the possibility of cooperation. Based on these perceptions the structure developed between the EU and Russia can be characterized as Lockean. Thus, the aim of the following chapter is to consider complex identities and perceptions of the two actors having significant effects on the prospects of the development of partnership.

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<sup>136</sup> Wendt, 419-420

<sup>137</sup> Hopf, 180-181

<sup>138</sup> Mercer, 231-232

### **Chapter 3: accounting for the difficulties of strategic partnership between the EU and Russia: the role of identities and perceptions**

After assessing the highly institutionalized framework of EU-Russia relations and demonstrating the efforts of the two sides to achieve a new agreement, as well as giving theoretical overview, the present thesis will deal with the evaluation of the reasons of challenges encountered by the two actors in drafting the new strategic document through employing the main arguments of the constructivist theory. As discussed in the previous chapter, according to constructivism state identities are the most important factor in shaping the foreign policy; thus, for the achievement of consistent strategic partnership, required for the adoption and successful functioning of a new legally binding agreement between the EU and Russia, the two actors should perceive each other as “friends” creating a cooperative system.

Recent conceptualization refers to European foreign policy as the values-driven, while Russian policy as based on interests.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, the assumptions of the constructivist theory suggest that ideas and identities always underlie the definition of interests of the actors. Thus, the following chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the identities of the EU and Russia, forming the basis for understanding of each other and for the interpretation of the actions of the other. It will also demonstrate that the interests of the partners are shaped through the identities and perceptions and attempt to analyze the environment created through the interaction.

#### **3.1. The foreign policy identity and the worldview of the EU**

The EU has developed particular values which distinguish the European identity in international politics, given that the shared norms and values underlying the external policy of the union are based on the common political culture of the European states. Consequently, the European visions and perceptions of the world and the understanding of human rights,

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<sup>139</sup> See, for example, Vahl; Emerson, *From an awkward partnership*

democracy and the rule of law, which constitute the notable values promoted by the Union, differ considerably from the values of other societies.<sup>140</sup>

Given the distribution of the European political values by the union through external cooperation, the EU has been characterized as a soft power or a civilian power, underlining the importance of civilian over military capabilities. This approach has been criticized after the development of the military capabilities of the union.<sup>141</sup> However, a new approach to the EU as a normative power developed by Ian Manners, understands the foreign policy of the EU through its international identity reflecting norms and values and stresses that the evolution of the Union in the post-Cold War period facilitated the placing of universal norms and principles in its foreign policy, leading the union to become a normative power. Democracy, respect of human rights and the rule of law have been the founding principles of the Union, inspiring external relations. Given that its international role is shaped through the normative identity, the foreign policy of the Union is shaped to change the norms in the international system.<sup>142</sup>

### 3.1.1. Importance of values in the EU discourse

In the discourse commitment to promoting norms and protecting human rights and democratic development are expressed as the distinguishing features of the EU.<sup>143</sup> The Draft treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe declares the commitment of the union to sustain and promote its values and interests in its external relations, guided by the principles of democracy, the rule of law, universality of human rights and solidarity, underlying the creation of the union.

<sup>140</sup> Franck Petiteville, *Exporting 'values'? EU external cooperation as a 'soft diplomacy' in Understanding the European Union's external relations*, ed. Michele Knodt and Sebastian Princen, (New-York: Routledge, 2003), 130-132

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. 133-138

<sup>142</sup> Ian Manners, "Normative power Europe: A contradiction in terms?", *Journal of Common market studies* 40, no. 2, 2002, 241-252

<sup>143</sup> Stefania Panebianco, *the constraints on EU action as a "norm exporter" in the Mediterranean*, in *the European Union's roles in international politics: concepts and analysis*, eds. Ole Elgstrom and Michael Smith, (Abingdon, New-York: Routledge, 2006), 139-141

It also stresses the aim of contributing to peace and security of the world, as well as to the protection of human rights and respect of international law.<sup>144</sup> In addition, the Laeken declaration on the future of the European Union identifies the Union's aim of setting globalization "within a moral framework".<sup>145</sup>

The Union further develops its self-image in the enlarging European Union at the United Nations, in which the status of the Union is described as a significant international actor building its presence in the world in order to commit more effectively to ensuring peace and development in the world and contribute to the diffusion of the values of democracy, solidarity, market-based economy and the rule of law.<sup>146</sup>

The importance of the normative image of the EU is also reflected in the European Security Strategy, demonstrating the motivation to support building a "better world" and emphasizing the importance of the development of a rule-based world order and a stronger international society, which can be promoted through "spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform", "establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights". To support creating a society of well-governed states, the union provides assistance to the countries violating international norms to adhere to international community, through realizing the costs of disobedience.<sup>147</sup>

### 3.1.2. Problems with shaping coherent foreign policy strategy

Thus, the EU acts in a normative way in world politics, as the norms derived from the integration process, serve as a guide for the formulation of foreign policy. The European institutions are keen to emphasize the importance of values in the foreign policy of the Union,

<sup>144</sup> European Convention, *Draft Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe*, 2003, <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00850.en03.pdf>, 6, 154

<sup>145</sup> European Union, *Laeken declaration on the future of the European Union*, 2001, <http://www.euconvention.be/static/LaekenDeclaration.asp>

<sup>146</sup> The European Union, *The Enlarging European Union at the United Nations: making multilateralism matter*, January, 2004, [ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/un/docs/brochure0104.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/un/docs/brochure0104.pdf)

which presents itself as the “force of goodness” focused on ethical behaviour.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, the EU is constructed as a hybrid polity representing different perspectives, which complicates its role in the international politics.<sup>149</sup> The external relations of the Union is characterized by the division of competences between the supranational level and the member states, affecting the incoherent and time-consuming policy-making, which is recognized by the Commission as a challenge to the achievement of EU interests and resulting in the decline of the power of the union in the world.<sup>150</sup>

Consequently, the foreign policy of the union is often described as dispersed and not clearly defined, comprising the principles-based, pacifist features as well as multi-dimensional characteristics,<sup>151</sup> which leads to the difficulties of shaping common strategy and sometimes results in the unclear and vague definition of the objectives of the union only in general terms of promotion of the values and norms.<sup>152</sup>

Thus, despite the problems with shaping coherent strategy, the official documents reveal the self-image of the union, as an actor upholding its values on the international stage and attempting to shape well-governed societies in its neighbourhood.<sup>153</sup> Consequently, the majority of cooperation agreements with third countries and regions are characterized by political conditionality including the provisions concerning democracy and human rights, declared by the

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<sup>147</sup> European Security Strategy, *Secure Europe in a better world*, 2003,

<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>

<sup>148</sup> Knud Erik Jorgensen and Katie Laatikainen, *The EU@ the UN: multilateralism in a new key?* 2004,6-8, [www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/293.pdf](http://www.jhubc.it/ecpr-bologna/docs/293.pdf)

<sup>149</sup> Ian Manners and Richard G. Whitman, “the “difference engine”: constructing and representing the international identity of the European Union,” *Journal of European public policy* 10,no.3,2003, 384-387

<sup>150</sup> European Commission, Communication, *Europe in the world – some practical proposals for greater coherence, effectiveness and visibility*, COM(2006)278, 4-6, [ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/euw\\_com06\\_278\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euw_com06_278_en.pdf); Hiski Haukala, *the relevance of norms and values in the EU’s Russia policy*, FIIA working papers no.52, 2005,5-6, <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&id=14450>

<sup>151</sup> Manners and Whitman,400-401

<sup>152</sup> Jorgensen and Laatikainen,17

Commission as the “essential element” of EU foreign policy.<sup>154</sup> These aspects of the EU external relations are visible in relation to Russia, since the normative identity of the union and the problems with achieving common voice affect the formation of the EU strategy on Russia, which is defined in terms of the diffusion of its values and norms and the achievement of transformation in the country. This policy is based on the vision of Russia as the potential strategic partner, which needs help in the process of transformation to the liberal democracy.

### **3.2. EU perceptions of Russia**

Russia is no more perceived as a threat to European security.<sup>155</sup> Within the European Security strategy, the EU refers to Russia, together with the US and NATO, as an important strategic partner in ensuring security in the neighbouring regions and the Middle East. In addition, the strategic partnership with Russia is discerned as the “major factor in (EU) security and prosperity”.<sup>156</sup> The country remains the key energy supplier for the union, as well as a vital partner in fight against the security threats.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, contradictions remain between the importance of strategic partnership with Russia, on the one hand, and the view of Russia as the weaker neighbour, obliged to accept EU norms and values in order to develop a closer partnership, on the other.<sup>158</sup>

Consequently, the EU faces difficulties in adopting a consistent strategy on Russia, given the uncertainty about the domestic politics of Russia. Europeans view Russia as characterized by a

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<sup>153</sup> Sonia Lucarelli, *Interpreted values: a normative reading of EU role conceptions and performance*, in *the European Union's roles in international politics: concepts and analysis*, eds. Ole Elgstrom and Michael Smith, (Abingdon, New-York: Routledge, 2006), 51-52

<sup>154</sup> European Commission, Communication, *the European Union's role in promoting human rights and democratization in third countries*, COM(2001)252, 4, [www.delidn.cec.eu.int/en/references/pdfs/references\\_2\\_1\\_com\(2001\)252.pdf](http://www.delidn.cec.eu.int/en/references/pdfs/references_2_1_com(2001)252.pdf)

<sup>155</sup> Thomas Forsberg, “the EU-Russia security partnership: why the opportunity was missed,” *European Foreign affairs review* 9, 2004, 250

<sup>156</sup> European Security Strategy

<sup>157</sup> European Commission, *Country strategy paper 2007-2013: Russian federation*, 6, [http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/russia/csp/2007-2013\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/csp/2007-2013_en.pdf)

“politically-biased legal system”, weak civil society and corruption, constituting the authoritarian state controlling economy and opposing the enforcement of the rule of law.<sup>159</sup> The union typically regards Russia from the perspective of democratic underdevelopment and economic weakness. Thus, the trend to the economic and political centralization of Russia is perceived as a significant obstacle for further development of cooperation.<sup>160</sup> The fear of the instability in Russia, which can affect Europe, leads the EU to attempt to bind the country to European norms and values,<sup>161</sup> raising the question of Russia’s democratization, as the precondition for the further enhancement of partnership with Europe.<sup>162</sup>

In addition, nowadays the interdependence have generated frequent tensions, the deficit of trust sometimes leads the union to distance from Russia and perceive it as “oil, gas and nuclear weapon”<sup>163</sup> - an alien country with a huge territory and natural resources<sup>164</sup>. In addition, European public opinion, constraining the EU political circles, is negative in view of the abuses of human rights in Russia,<sup>165</sup> criticizing the authoritarian trends in Russia, which include enhancing the power of the executive branch and the developments in the country,<sup>166</sup> such as conflict in Chechnya, murder of Anna Politkovskaya,<sup>167</sup> as well as the recent detention of protesters opposing the Russian government.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Averre, 181

<sup>159</sup> Country strategy paper, 3-7

<sup>160</sup> Kempe and Smith, 5-6

<sup>161</sup> Forsberg, 250-251, 264

<sup>162</sup> Smith, 3-5

<sup>163</sup> Arbatova and Rijkov, “Rossiia i Evrosoiuz”

<sup>164</sup> Pavel Zhitniuk, “ES – Rossiia: vialoe partnerstvo bez perspektiv?” *IA “Rosbalt”* 2006, <http://globalaffairs.ru/articles/0/5440.html>

<sup>165</sup> Cameron, “prospects”

<sup>166</sup> Marcin Kaczmarek, *the policy of Russia towards the European Union*, (Warsawa: Centre for international relations, 2005), 24-25, [http://www.csm.org.pl/en/files/raports/2005/rap\\_i\\_an\\_1305a.pdf](http://www.csm.org.pl/en/files/raports/2005/rap_i_an_1305a.pdf)

<sup>167</sup> European Parliament, *resolution on the preparations for the 9th EU-Russia Summit in Samara*, 18 May, 2007, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&language=EN&reference=B6-2007-0191>

<sup>168</sup> *BBCnews*, “EU-Russian talks end in acrimony,” 18 May, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6668111.stm>

Benita Ferrero-Waldner summarized the EU vision of Russia by referring to the country as a strategic partner and a noteworthy neighbour, sometimes constituting even an ally, nevertheless, at the same time, it representing an assertive actor in international relations.<sup>169</sup> This vision of Russia motivates the formation of the EU interests and strategy towards the country, which is based on promoting European norms and values.

### 3.2.1. Problems of defining EU interests towards Russia

The vague definition of EU interests in terms of values derives from the normative identity of the EU, which is rooted in the complex character of the union incorporating supranational and intergovernmental features. The institutions and member states of the Union have different views and interests. The new member states express concerns about the assertive policy of Russia, while the older members prefer developing close relations with the country, because of the recognition of mutual benefits. This divide has resulted in delineating the EU interests only in terms of promotion of its fundamental values making the transformation of its neighbour according to European principles the vital element of the EU foreign policy.<sup>170</sup>

Thus, the relations with Russia most clearly reveal the differences in the positions of the actors within the EU.<sup>171</sup> Given the differing views of the actors within the EU affecting the formation of the foreign policy, the Union faces problems in defining consistent joint strategy towards Russia. The EU member states can not speak with one voice given that member states have different interests in relation with Russia and often take differing stance.<sup>172</sup> Accordingly, the achievement of the common policy on Russia is strongly debated by some member states

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<sup>169</sup> *EUobserver*, "EU confident on new strategic deal with Russia," September 4, 2006, [http://www.securitydefenceagenda.org/index.html?http://www.securitydefenceagenda.org/news\\_detail.asp?ID=1198&frame=yes~main](http://www.securitydefenceagenda.org/index.html?http://www.securitydefenceagenda.org/news_detail.asp?ID=1198&frame=yes~main)

<sup>170</sup> Trygve Kalland, *the EU-Russia relationship: what is missing?* SIPRI policy brief, 2004, [http://www.sipri.org/contents/conflict/eu\\_russia.pdf](http://www.sipri.org/contents/conflict/eu_russia.pdf)

<sup>171</sup> Peter Mandelson, *the EU and Russia: our joint political challenge*, Bologna, 20 April, 2007, <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/134524.htm>



making the consensus extremely difficult.<sup>173</sup> The incoherence in coordinating the interests of the actors in the union was revealed during the protests against the war in Chechnya, when some of the EU member states preferred to sustain bilateral relations with Russia, disregarding the joint policy.<sup>174</sup>

### 3.2.2. Shaping the EU strategy towards Russia

The EU has developed two main models of external relations, which are applied to economically advanced countries, on the one side, and the third world countries striving for membership or assistance from the EU, on the other. Nevertheless, these models are not relevant for the Russian case, because of its request for equal treatment, contradicting the country's economic weakness.<sup>175</sup>

Consequently, the common strategy of the EU on Russia distinguishes general and indefinite goals of achieving the democratic development of Russia, maintaining stability in Europe, economic integration and strengthening cooperation to meet the common challenges.<sup>176</sup> The strategy, as well as other documents of the EU, proclaims the aim of promoting democracy, the rule of law and the development of civil society in Russia, achieving its political and economic transformation through sharing the experience and supporting the integration of Russia in the wider Europe.<sup>177</sup> This aspiration to support Russia in the process of the development of civil

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<sup>172</sup> Kalland, *the EU-Russia relationship*

<sup>173</sup> Atis Lejins, *the CFSP and the PCA: between realpolitik and values*, in *the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy toward Russia: the partnership and Cooperation agreement as a test case*, ed. Atis Lejins, (Riga: Latvian institute of international affairs, 2006), 19-21, <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/html/134524.htm>

<sup>174</sup> Haukala, 11-12

<sup>175</sup> Romanova and Zaslavskaya, 99

<sup>176</sup> Hughes, 5-7

<sup>177</sup> The Common Strategy, 2-3

institutions and market economy, emphasized throughout the document, is seen in Russia as the underestimation of Russian power.<sup>178</sup>

Based on its view of Russia as an authoritarian state, the discourse of the EU demonstrates its general and patronizing goals of achieving democracy in the country, though having defined few practical objectives.<sup>179</sup> This view was reflected in the inclusion of Russia in the European Neighbourhood Policy together with other CIS states, referring to these countries as having the experience of non-democratic governance and weak protection of human rights. Thus, in the initial document on neighbourhood policy, Russia was included as one of the weak eastern neighbours of the EU, without indicating its special role. Today, Russia's insistence on being treated as an equal partner led the EU to launch a separate document on Common Spaces<sup>180</sup>, nevertheless, the union maintains that the framework of common spaces falls within the line of rapprochement based on common values and interests.<sup>181</sup>

Thus, the EU perception of the achievement of a privileged partnership leads to unequal relations and asymmetric interdependence requiring Russia's commitment to European principles and norms,<sup>182</sup> given its view of the country as the recipient, object of EU policy.<sup>183</sup> Consequently, the union declares the aim to engage in close cooperation in order to achieve socialization of the country through spreading the European values,<sup>184</sup> which is revealed in the agreements adopted by the partners. The PCA refers to the values of democratic principles and human rights as the vital element of cooperation, stating Russia's duty to ensure the compatibility of its legislation with the European laws and the reformation in the political and

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<sup>178</sup> Anatolii Utkin, "o perspektivax otnoshenii mezhdru rossiiei I ES" (about the perspectives of the relations between the EU and Russia), *Novaia politika*, 24 November, 2006, <http://www.novopol.ru/article959.html>

<sup>179</sup> Lejins, 22

<sup>180</sup> Averre, 178-179

<sup>181</sup> Country strategy paper, 6

<sup>182</sup> Vahl, 21-22

<sup>183</sup> Haukala, 9

economic sphere, for the maintenance of partnership.<sup>185</sup> The Common spaces also frequently point out the commitment of the parties to these common values,<sup>186</sup> implying that the further enhancement of cooperation is possible through the changes in the domestic politics of Russia and the convergence of the country's regulations with the standards and norms of the EU.<sup>187</sup>

To sum up, The EU interests with respect to its relations with Russia are guided by the normative identity of the union. As Jose Manuel Barroso declared at the last summit in Samara, the European countries should defend the principles of democracy and human rights and provided that Russia represents a European state,<sup>188</sup> the partnership relations of the EU with Russia should be based on the fundamental values and norms, without the possibility to compromise on the issue.<sup>189</sup> Thus, from the EU perspective Russia can become a good partner in the case of the development of democracy, human rights and open market economy.

However, though the EU has been successful in promoting its values in the countries appealing for membership, Russia constitutes a big political player with different perceptions of the rule of law and convinced in the uniqueness of the country.<sup>190</sup> Thus, the EU attempts to base agreements on compliance with its norms and values, while Moscow refuses to accept any agreement which implies EU conditionality. The normative aspects of the EU's foreign policy and the Russian identity of a great power creates tensions given that the Russian administration has become more concerned about the interference in its internal affairs and observes negatively

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<sup>184</sup> Lejins,19

<sup>185</sup> Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

<sup>186</sup> Roadmap for the Common Space of freedom, security and justice

<sup>187</sup> Vahl,22-23

<sup>188</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, "Russian, EU leaders trade barbs at fractious summit", 17 May,2007, <http://www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2007/05/18/europe/EU-GEN-Russia-EU-Summit.php>

<sup>189</sup> José Manuel Barroso, *speech at the Opening ceremony for International Green Week*, Berlin, 18 January,2007, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/07/26&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>190</sup> Barysch,4-7

the possibility of becoming the object for the promotion of the EU values and norms.<sup>191</sup> Russian scholars emphasize that the EU should abandon the practice of imposing the principles and standards of the union – *acquis communautaire* - on the partners, which leads to a rise in the mutual distrust and tensions.<sup>192</sup> Consequently, the normative presumptions, underlying the definition of EU approach in terms of notions of transformation, do not lead to genuine cooperation.<sup>193</sup>

### **3.3. The foreign policy identity and the worldview of Russia**

At the beginning of 1990s, Russia was slowly and awkwardly, but steadily moving to transformation in accordance with the European principles and norms, being a beneficiary of the western aid. Thus, the PCA was developed in view of these trends, nevertheless, Russian attempts to develop a new identity on the world stage and reclaim its powerful international status based on the historical experience, led to the revival of its self-image as a great power and the requests for an equal standing with other great powers.<sup>194</sup> At present, the path of the development of Russia does not coincide with the vector of the EU, sometimes even contradicting it and departing from the positions taken during the 90s, particularly from the concept of the “common European house”.<sup>195</sup>

Modern Russian foreign policy comprises the legacies of the past and the new outlooks of the elite, which are formed through radical changes within the country and worldwide.<sup>196</sup> Russian leaders are leading the country to competitive relations with the west, no longer recognizing the moral superiority of western values and demonstrating its power through the energy relations,

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<sup>191</sup> Averre, 194

<sup>192</sup> Bordachev and Suslov, *Konceptsiia*

<sup>193</sup> Bobo Lo, *Russia and the West: problems and opportunities*, UNISCI discussing papers, May, 2005, [www.ucm.es/info/unisci/Lo.pdf](http://www.ucm.es/info/unisci/Lo.pdf), 4-5

<sup>194</sup> Anderman et al. 30-31

<sup>195</sup> Zhitniuk, “ES I Rossiia”

although not taking antagonistic stance either.<sup>197</sup> Thus, current Russian discourse emphasizes the desire to achieve pragmatic rather than the values-based cooperation, requested by the EU.<sup>198</sup> President Putin is regularly declaring in his speeches at federal assembly that modern Russian politics is based on the principles of pragmatism.<sup>199</sup>

### 3.3.1. Great power identity of Russia

The Russian federation has evolved as the continuation rather than the dismissal of the Soviet inheritance, but with the nature of a nation state. The Russian identity represents historical continuum,<sup>200</sup> given that the legacy of the Soviet Union and the super power status inherited from the past is still alive, which leads to the conviction in the uniqueness of the country and to demands of exclusive and equal treatment from its partners.<sup>201</sup> Hence, the country resists the prospect of being inferior and stresses the importance of independent foreign policy,<sup>202</sup> because it identifies itself as the powerful autonomous state.<sup>203</sup>

The great power image and the importance of ensuring one of the leading positions in the world has strengthened in Russia since 2000, which is reflected in strategic documents adopted during the presidency of Putin and demonstrate the new trends of the Russian foreign policy.<sup>204</sup> According to the Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation the major objectives of the federation include protecting and strengthening the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity

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<sup>196</sup> Igor Ivanov, "The new Russian identity: Innovation and continuity in Russian foreign policy" *The Washington Quarterly* 24,no.3,2001, [www.twq.com/01summer/ivanov.pdf](http://www.twq.com/01summer/ivanov.pdf), 12

<sup>197</sup> Lo, 5

<sup>198</sup> Alexander Rahr, "Russia wants pragmatic, business-like cooperation," *Deutsche Welle*, 14 May, 2007, <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,2144,2513428,00.html>

<sup>199</sup> President of Russia, *addresses to the Federal assembly*, 2006, [http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/05/10/1357\\_type63372type63374type82634\\_105546.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2006/05/10/1357_type63372type63374type82634_105546.shtml)

<sup>200</sup> Dmitri Trenin, *Integracia I identichnost: Rossiia kak "novii zapad"* (integration and identity: Russia as the "new west"), (Moskva: Evropa, 2006), 155-156

<sup>201</sup> Romanova and Zaslavskaya, 99

<sup>202</sup> Ivanov, 13

<sup>203</sup> Perovic, 9

<sup>204</sup> Petr Kratochvil, *Elite resistance to Europeanization: the case of EU-Russian relations*, 2006, 2-3 [www2.politik.uni-halle.de/vog/tagung2006/Panel%201%20Kratochvil%20paper.pdf](http://www2.politik.uni-halle.de/vog/tagung2006/Panel%201%20Kratochvil%20paper.pdf)

and maintaining a powerful position in the world, which is “consistent with the interests of the Russian Federation as a great power, as one of the most influential centers of the modern world”. From this role derives “Russia’s responsibility for maintaining security in the world both on a global and regional level”.<sup>205</sup> Consequently, in the Russian political circles the great power status is considered as a natural character of Russia, objectively playing a vital role in international processes.<sup>206</sup>

In addition, according to the Russian view, international politics is characterized by competition for achieving influence and preserving the importance of military force. The concepts refer to the trend of ascendancy of the developed Western countries and disregarding Russian interests on the international arena, which is observed in Russia as undermining security and stability in the world.<sup>207</sup> In addition, the foreign policy concept denotes the tendency towards the development of a unipolar structure of the world can create destabilization leading Russia to seek the achievement of multipolarity in the world<sup>208</sup>, which will assure and maintain the country’s position as one of the influential centers.<sup>209</sup>

Therefore, Russia has developed great power identity and the state-centric worldview. Russian political circles still think in terms of maintaining existing “balance of power” and fear the broadening of the military alliances which could threaten Russian military security,<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Foreign policy concept of the Russian federation, 2000,

<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>

<sup>206</sup> National security Concept of the Russian Federation, 2000,

<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/gazeta012400.htm>

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Foreign policy concept

<sup>209</sup> National security concept

<sup>210</sup> Voennaia doktrina rossiiskoi federacii, (military doctrine of the Russian federation), 2000,

<http://www.nationalsecurity.ru/library/00003/00003concept1.htm>; Kratochvil, 6-7

although, they recognize the importance of the development of “mutually beneficial relations” with other countries.<sup>211</sup>

Under the rule of Putin Russian interests have often been described as pragmatic and realistic, nevertheless, national interests derive from the identities of the country and the values of promoting the great power image.<sup>212</sup> However, Arbatova and Rizhkov believe that Russia has not completely determined its national and political identity. During the period of Yeltsin the country attempted to transform into liberal democracy; nevertheless, modern Russia is again moving towards authoritarianism, increasing the gap between the external policy of Russia, oriented to interact with the EU, and internal policy, which is directed towards the centralization of power, limiting prospects of developing partnership relations.<sup>213</sup> Yet, the value of stability in Russia has led to the acceptance of the “managed democracy” constructed by Putin.<sup>214</sup>

Consequently, the development path of Russia, particularly during the period of Putin’s presidency reveals that the EU and Russian worldview and the understanding of democracy and human rights differ considerably, leading to the implication that the sustained “superpower mentality” of Russia and the self-confidence due to its growing energy power and the interests of the EU in promoting its norms and values in Russia, hamper the development of cooperation.<sup>215</sup>

### **3.4. Russian perceptions of the EU**

Given that Russian discourse concentrates on the importance of sovereignty and equality between the partners, the idea of integration with Europe has vanished<sup>216</sup> and although Karaganov believes that the public opinion and the business circles in Russia favour full

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<sup>211</sup> National Security Concept

<sup>212</sup> Kratochvil, 2-3

<sup>213</sup> Arbatova and Rizhkov, “Rossiia i Evrosoiuz”

<sup>214</sup> Barysch, 11-13

<sup>215</sup> Lo, 3-4

<sup>216</sup> Dmitri Trenin, “Russia redefines itself and its relations with the west”, *the Washington Quarterly* 30, no.2, 2007, 98-99

integration with the EU,<sup>217</sup> the main objective of the foreign policy of Russia under Putin encompasses the construction of the country as a modern power (Derzhava), which implies political independence, economic welfare, authority in the CIS and the recognition of its international status. In this context the “European choice” of president Putin, repeatedly emphasized in his statements and the aim of “construction of Europe without dividing lines”, denoted in the Middle Term Strategy demonstrates the vision of the bipolar big Europe, comprising the EU, on the one hand, and Russia surrounded with the CIS states, on the other.<sup>218</sup>

### 3.4.1. Russian view of the importance of cooperation with the EU

The relations with the EU are recognized as of key importance by the Foreign policy concept of Russia, declaring the union one of the major political and economic partners of the country and having the aim of developing long-term partnership relations.<sup>219</sup> This vision is also reflected in the official statements of Russian politicians. In his speeches president Putin always declares the importance of a constructive partnership with the Union emphasizing the importance of the adoption of a new strategic agreement.<sup>220</sup> In addition, Ryzhkov has stated that the relationship with the EU is of primary importance for Russia<sup>221</sup>.

In addition, Russia stresses that the future strategic partnership should be based on the mutual responsibility of the EU and Russia, “the greatest economic and political players on the continent” to ensure the security and prosperity in Europe. Such partnership is possible only on the basis of equality, without the attempts to distribute the roles of superior and inferior,

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<sup>217</sup> Sergei Karaganov, “Russia, Europe, and New Challenges,” *Russia in Global affairs* no.2,2003, <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/numbers/2/460.html>

<sup>218</sup> Trenin, *Integracia I identichnost*,182-184;

<sup>219</sup> Foreign policy concept

<sup>220</sup> President of Russia, *annual addresses to the federal assembly*, 2007, [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/04/26/1209\\_type70029\\_125494.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/04/26/1209_type70029_125494.shtml)

<sup>221</sup> Vladimir Ryzhkov, “we need a big new treaty with the European Union,” *eurussia center*, 2007, <http://www.eu-russiacentre.org/default.asp?id=119&lng=en>



emphasizing that Russia does not constitute the object of the EU policies.<sup>222</sup> Thus, although recognizing the importance of closer ties, Russia anticipates the respect for its sovereignty, reflected in the Middle-term strategy,<sup>223</sup> stressing that the country is unwilling to be treated as an object for the imposition of EU norms. Consequently, cooperation should develop on equal footing with the most powerful European states,<sup>224</sup> and the attempts at forcing the standards are unacceptable, because the partners should respect the cultural diversity.<sup>225</sup>

Thus, the self-identity of Russia as a great power leads to concentration on the achievement of equal treatment from its partners, particularly the EU<sup>226</sup> and forms the vision, that the aim of Europeanizing the country connected to the unilateral spread of EU ideas, for instance, the issue of harmonization of Russian legal system with the EU law, is based on the underestimation of Russia's importance.<sup>227</sup> Consequently, though the power of the EU is not perceived as military threat for Russia, which is revealed through the absence of indication of the EU in the military documents of the country,<sup>228</sup> European commitment to the promotion of values in its neighbourhood, including in Russia, is often believed to have the aim of undermining Russian power and transforming it into the "smaller partner",<sup>229</sup> which leads to observing EU interests, especially in the "common neighbourhood", with distrust and suspicion.<sup>230</sup> As a result, even the liberal elites are resisting the possibility of the "imposition" of EU norms.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Vladimir Chizhov, "vseobimliushee strategicheskoe partnerstvo kak cel,"(all-containing strategic partnership as aim), *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 23 October, 2006, [http://www.ng.ru/courier/2006-10-23/13\\_partners.html](http://www.ng.ru/courier/2006-10-23/13_partners.html)

<sup>223</sup> Bordachev, *Strategy and strategies*, 51-52

<sup>224</sup> Anderman et al, 35

<sup>225</sup> Vladimir Putin, "Europe has nothing to fear from Russia's aspirations," *Financial times*, 22 November, 2006, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/c60e9d12-7a01-11db-8d70-0000779e2340.html>

<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 3-4, 9-10

<sup>227</sup> Kratochvil, 16-19

<sup>228</sup> Forbsberg, 252-253

<sup>229</sup> Bordachev and Suslov, *Konceptsiia*

<sup>230</sup> Mandelson, *the EU and Russia*

<sup>231</sup> Averde, 177-180

### 3.4.2. Russia's State-centric Understanding of the European integration

The perceptions of the Russian political circles reveal the importance of a state-centric vision and the vague understanding of supranational characters of the Union.<sup>232</sup> They believe that the vast enlargements made the EU fragile and the prospects for the future of the union as a unified entity on the international arena remain unclear, given that the EU has reached the acceptable margins of supranational integration.<sup>233</sup> Consequently, the foreign policy concept of the country declares the importance of cooperation with the EU after pointing out the priority of the relations with the European states, as well as the OSCE and the Council of Europe and, moreover, emphasizing the promotion of its interests through bilateral relations with the member states of the union.<sup>234</sup>

The state-centric vision of Russia is also revealed in its understanding of the position of small member states within the union, observing them as objects of the political game among the influential states with privileged positions.<sup>235</sup> Consequently, Russia recognizes the development of bilateral relations with the most powerful EU member states as the effective way for promoting its interests<sup>236</sup> and uses bilateral links with these countries to reduce the influence of the new member states, which according to Moscow complicate shaping of EU's policy towards Russia.<sup>237</sup>

Thus, Russia is worried about the influence of the new member states calling the situation structural crisis of the union, which results in the negative view of the effectiveness of the European bureaucracy.<sup>238</sup> The country calls for the maintenance of stability and predictability of

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<sup>232</sup> Kratochvil, 2-19

<sup>233</sup> Bordachev and Suslov, *Konceptsiia*

<sup>234</sup> The Foreign Policy Concept

<sup>235</sup> Kaczmarzski, 8-9

<sup>236</sup> Averre, 180

<sup>237</sup> Trenin, "Russia redefines itself," 98

<sup>238</sup> Arbatova et al. *konceptiia modernizacii SPS mezhdu Rossiiei I ES i zakliuchenia sogloshenia o prodvinutom partnerstve, uchrejdaiushem asociaciiu* (Concept for modernization of PCA between Russia and the EU and

the union policy,<sup>239</sup> considering the view of the Poland's veto concerning the negotiations over the new agreement as the internal crisis of the EU, undermining trust in the EU capacity to develop common position.<sup>240</sup>

### 3.4.3. Russian approach to the development of relations with the EU

Given the vague understanding of the supranational features of the EU and the importance of its great power identity, alongside with the recognition of the importance of partnership, the Russian approach to the relations with the EU may seem contradictory, because the country puts an emphasis on the importance of integration with Europe; conversely, it is concerned about its sovereignty and the great power status and regards cooperation with the union from the viewpoint of an independent power,<sup>241</sup> which is not willing to accept the European norms and values "imposed" by the union and believes that the EU is trying to receive one-sided concessions from the country. Consequently, though stressing the importance of the European choice, Russia prefers the political declarations to the implementation of the adopted agreements, which disturbs Brussels.<sup>242</sup>

The frequent emphasis on Russia, as a part of the "European family",<sup>243</sup> implies the preference of the prospect of being European great power in wider Europe and a strong strategic partner for the EU, rather than the integration with the EU. In his statements and official documents Russian president stresses that the country has no aspiration for membership of any

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adoption of an agreement on advanced partnership, creating association),70,

[http://www.msps.ru/docs/Tetr\\_4\\_05\\_full.pdf](http://www.msps.ru/docs/Tetr_4_05_full.pdf)

<sup>239</sup> Putin, "Russia is Europe's natural ally"

<sup>240</sup> Sergei Iastrzhembski, interview, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 21 November,2006, [http://www.ng.ru/politics/2006-11-21/4\\_es.html](http://www.ng.ru/politics/2006-11-21/4_es.html)

<sup>241</sup> Anderman et al.3-4, 9-10

<sup>242</sup> Dmitri Suslov, "Evropeiskii vibor" pod voprosom," ("European choice" questioned), *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 5 December,2004, <http://www.svop.ru/upload/contents/364/1.zip.doc>

<sup>243</sup> Vladimir Putin, *cherez partnerstvo rossii I ES k stoitelstvu edinoi evropy, k novim vozmozhnostiam dlia vsekh evropeitsev*, (through the partnership of the EU and Russia to building the united Europe for new opportunities of all Europeans),2006, <http://www.kremlin.ru/text/appears/2006/11/114329.shtml>

kind of association with the EU, building the relations on the basis of agreements.<sup>244</sup> Consequently, the country has developed apparent stand about the benefits of its relations with the EU, perceiving it as a strong economic partner and the constituent of the multipolar world,<sup>245</sup> able to support the country in sustaining its modernization process and strengthening Russia's role in international relations.<sup>246</sup>

Russia identifies common interests in increasing the importance of strategic, but equal, cooperation,<sup>247</sup> though not through the interference in the internal affairs of the country. These interests are articulated in the Middle Term Strategy, which constitutes a comprehensive document, demonstrating the aims of the country,<sup>248</sup> such as the enhancement of the role of Russia on the continent and in the world through utilizing the experience of the EU for the development of market economy and the democratic rule of law. The document stresses the importance of partnership with the EU on equal terms to achieve common strategic aims of strengthening the positions of both actors in international community and establishing the system of collective security. Considering the country's status as a "world power situated on two continents" and the absence of the official goals of joining the EU,<sup>249</sup> it also underlines the importance of preserving freedom of action in determining its domestic and foreign policies and the right of the country to protect particular areas of its economy.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>244</sup> See Vladimir Putin, *polveka evropeiskoi integracii I rossiia*, (the half a century of the European integration and Russia), 2007, [http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/03/25/1121\\_type63382\\_120754.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/appears/2007/03/25/1121_type63382_120754.shtml) ; BBC Russian "Vladimir Putin: v obozrimom budushem Rossiia v ES ne vstupit ;" (Russia will not join the EU in the near future), 25 march, 2007, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/russia/newsid\\_6492000/6492855.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/russian/russia/newsid_6492000/6492855.stm)

<sup>245</sup> Dov Lynch, "Russia's strategic partnership with Europe," *the Washington quarterly* 27, no. 2, 103-104, [www.twq.com/04spring/docs/04spring\\_lynch.pdf](http://www.twq.com/04spring/docs/04spring_lynch.pdf)

<sup>246</sup> Yilmaz, 16

<sup>247</sup> Putin, "Russia is Europe's natural ally"

<sup>248</sup> Kalland, *the EU-Russia relationship*

<sup>249</sup> Middle term strategy

<sup>250</sup> Lynch, 103

To sum up, Russia's insistence on a special treatment from the EU is based on the identity of a great power having unique historical experience and no aspiration of EU membership. The country repeatedly emphasizes its opposition to the unilateral adjustment to EU norms and principles and the readiness to cooperate on equal footing.<sup>251</sup> Thus, according to the Russian vision, the EU can become a good partner after abandoning the practice of interference in the internal affairs of the country and dealing with divergences between the member states.<sup>252</sup>

### ***3.5. Atmosphere between the EU and Russia – competitive structure***

The present chapter has discussed the importance of self identities of the EU and Russia and the views of each other resulting in the creation of an environment which is not conflictual and can be developed in a cooperative system in the case of overcoming the problems of the formation of consistent strategies towards each other, which is rooted in the perceptions of the actors. The self-identities of the parties do not coincide with the interpretations by the other, creating the competitive (or Lockean) structure, where parties respect each other and perceive as competitors in particular areas, never engaging in conflict, although finding it difficult to achieve sustainable cooperation.

The normative identity of the EU and the problems with shaping the common strategy towards Russia leads to the definition of EU interests in terms of the promotion of European norms and values. The union aspires to influence Russia's internal development and transform the country, because of perceiving it as an authoritarian and weak state with a developing economy. Nevertheless, after 2000 Russia identifies itself with the great power legacy of its imperial past and shapes its worldview on the basis of the identity as one of the strong powers of the multipolar world, which leads to concerns about the EU policy towards the country.

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<sup>251</sup> Anderman et al.50-76

<sup>252</sup> Barysch,5-10

Perceiving the demonstration of its independence and power in relations with the EU vital, Russia emphasizes that it is unwilling to accept the one-sided approach of the union. On its part, the Russian view of the EU, derived from its self-identity, is ambiguous, facing difficulties with understanding the normative and supranational character of the union and thus, emphasizing the importance of equal partnership and requesting to be treated as an influential actor in the world.

According to Mandelson EU-Russian relations are experiencing difficulties, given the distrust between the sides, which have developed different understandings of the conceptions of sovereignty, interference in internal affairs and the role of the state and power in international relations.<sup>253</sup> In view of such different understanding of the world the EU and Russia have developed divergent conceptions about their strategic partnership. The EU believes that the cooperation should include the common vision of the fundamental European norms and values, while Russian position is based on more realist understanding of developments.<sup>254</sup>

Nevertheless, Russia and the EU are condemned to partnership given the economic and political interdependence and common long-term interests, which do not permit antagonism.<sup>255</sup> Chizhov believes that ten years of cooperation on the basis of the PCA has radically changed the EU-Russian relations from cautious and distrustful view of each other to the strategic partnership.<sup>256</sup> They are less worried about their security than in the conflictual system; however, concerns about the intentions of the other still exist;<sup>257</sup> the partners are often distrustful, finding a common language with great difficulty, because of not viewing each other as “brothers”.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Mandelson, *the EU and Russia*

<sup>254</sup> Yilmaz, 1-3

<sup>255</sup> Yuri Borko, “dvusmislennoe partnerctvo” (ambiguous partnership), *gazeta.ru*, January, 2004, <http://www.gazeta.ru/comments/expert/82280.shtml>

<sup>256</sup> Vladimir Chizhov, *address to the European communities*, 9-10 october, 2006, <http://www.eu-russia.net/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=38>

<sup>257</sup> Wendt, 280-282

<sup>258</sup> Borko, “dvusmislennoe partnerstvo”

Thus, the EU and Russia can be characterized as “partners-competitors”.<sup>259</sup> The interaction between the two actors developed from 90s led to the perceptions of each other, as possible partners, nevertheless the conceptions of the sides were changing sometimes resulting in concerns about the intentions of the other and creating the conviction, “that the other is not to be trusted.”<sup>260</sup> Consequently, the structure created through the interaction and domestic developments between the EU and Russia can be characterized as competitive, where the parties realize the importance of their partnership, although finding the achievement of the friendly relationship difficult, because the diverse interests derived from the identities of the partners lead to the competition in some respects.<sup>261</sup> Thus, the atmosphere between the partners has given rise to the complications for adopting the new agreement. The aim of the following chapter is to show how this environment affects the path to the new agreement and to assess the role of identities and perceptions in the challenges faced by the EU and Russia on this route.

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<sup>259</sup> Timofei Bordachev and Arkadii Moshes, “Rossiia I evropa: vzaimnaia neudovletvarionnost” (Russia and Europe: mutual dissatisfaction), *Vedomosti*, 22 March, 2004, <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/articles/2504.html>

<sup>260</sup> Wendt, “anarchy”, 406

<sup>261</sup> Bungs, 34-35

## **Chapter 4: Challenges on the path to the new agreement: assessing the importance of perceptions and attitudes**

The previous chapter has dealt with identifying the environment created between the EU and Russia, in view of the difference in their self-identities and how they are perceived by the partner and concluding that though the sides understand the importance of partnership, they view each other as competitors in particular cases, which leads to challenges. Thus, the reasons for the existing tensions between the partners are rooted in the identities and perceptions of the parties.

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the issues connected to the negotiations of a new agreement, examining the positions taken by the EU and Russia and their interests with respect to the new agreement. It will also analyze the problematic issues connected to negotiating the agreement in order to demonstrate the importance of identities in determining the course of the relationship and examine the sustained tensions making the discussion and negotiations complex in view of the competitive environment formed between the EU and Russia.

### ***4.1. Differing approaches to the new agreement***

The propositions of the EU and Russia for the new agreement demonstrate that their interests originate from the identities and perceptions of the parties. Both actors accept the importance of the agreement and attempt to achieve progress in the preparation for the negotiations and the consultation process. According to the statements after the Sochi summit in May 2006, the sides have agreed to negotiate a comprehensive new agreement forming a strong basis of future cooperation.<sup>262</sup> The agreement would be the sign of an upgrade in the relationship and reflect the

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<sup>262</sup> Austrian Presidency Statement: *17th EU-Russia Summit in Sochi*, 26 May, 2006, [http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/news\\_802.htm](http://www.delrus.cec.eu.int/en/news_802.htm)



transformations that have taken place during the last ten years.<sup>263</sup> Nevertheless, the parties have developed different interests connected to the substance of the treaty.

The new framework agreement, as the Commission proposes, is expected to cover wide range of issues overloading the agenda of EU-Russian relations and included in the previous agreements adopted after the PCA.<sup>264</sup> Russia's official position implies that the PCA, which was concluded during the decline of Russian power, should be replaced by the treaty adopted between equal partners. On the other hand, the EU stresses that a new agreement should deal with the sensitive areas, such as energy policy.<sup>265</sup>

According to Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the new agreement should reflect the interdependence and the importance of a strategic partnership for peace and security in Europe.<sup>266</sup> The document will concentrate on the development of trade relations, particularly dealing with the energy question, and include the issues of external security, fight against terrorism and organized crime, as well as migration. In addition, the commission desires to put the commitment to common values and norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law in the basis of the document,<sup>267</sup> preserving its discourse connected to promotion of democratic principles.<sup>268</sup>

Moreover, the EU believes that real partnership is possible only in the case of transforming Russia into a market economy and sustainable democracy.<sup>269</sup> Thus, some EU officials suggest delaying the decision till the transformation in Russia with respect to democracy and human rights, because public opinion is becoming increasingly negative about the authoritarian trends

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<sup>263</sup> Benita Ferrero-Waldner, *The European Union and Russia – developing our shared European continent*, Moscow, 23 October, 2006, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/06/623&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>264</sup> Bungs, 45-46

<sup>265</sup> Cameron, "prospects"

<sup>266</sup> Ferrero-Waldner, *The European Union and Russia*

<sup>267</sup> EU delegation to Russia, *European Commission approves terms*

<sup>268</sup> Zagorski, 75

and human rights violations in Russia, as well as about Russia's stance concerning its neighbouring countries.<sup>270</sup>

Russia has also expressed its approach to the issues to be dealt with in the document, proposing the adoption of a Contract which has a higher status as an international legal document than an Agreement.<sup>271</sup> In addition, Russia is willing to adopt the capacious document, comprising of basic declarations which can be amended through the sectoral agreements, creating flexible system of mechanisms<sup>272</sup> to regulate the specific questions of the relations, in order to avoid being drawn into long consultations. Nevertheless, the EU prefers a more detailed document including the question of energy and the opening of Russian market, which leads Russians to criticize Brussels for the attempts to receive concessions from the Russian side.<sup>273</sup>

Besides, the country takes a resolute stance over the establishment of a binding joint decision-making procedure and over the indication of the global role of the EU and Russia. Such a standpoint shows the importance of the advancement of the political dialogue to a new level<sup>274</sup>, in order to give an expression of the equal status of Russia with other great powers. Therefore, Russia no more accepts the insistence on the transformation implied in the PCA.<sup>275</sup> According to Putin, modern Russia, restoring its economic potential, aspires to achieve equal relations with the countries of the world<sup>276</sup> and, thus, requests the new agreement with the EU to demonstrate its status as an equal partner.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Borko, "dvusmislennoe partnerstvo"

<sup>270</sup> Cameron, "prospects"

<sup>271</sup> Nevertheless, according to the established practice, the EU member states conclude contracts only with each other. Sokolov, "Novii dogovor"

<sup>272</sup> Chizhov, "vseobimlitshee strategicheskoe partnerstvo"

<sup>273</sup> Sokolov, "Novii dogovor"

<sup>274</sup> Zagorski, 51-52

<sup>275</sup> M.L.Entin, "SPS2: neopredelonnnoe budushee," (PCA2: uncertain future), *Vsja Evropa.ru* no.2, 2006, [http://alleuropa.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=58](http://alleuropa.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=58)

<sup>276</sup> President of Russia, *annual address*, 2007

<sup>277</sup> zagorski, 63

Thus, the normative identity of the EU and the problems of defining the common strategy leads to the sustained desire to base the agreement on the democratic principles and values of the union, while given its great power identity, Russia requests the agreement, which demonstrates equality of the partners. The differing views on the questions intended to be dealt with by the agreement in view of the formed perceptions of each other constitute the main reason for the thorny path towards the new agreement.

#### **4.2. New agreement - old problems<sup>278</sup>**

Although the EU and Russia have some common interests, they mostly lack the common understanding of problems and the character of their future relations, given their divergent identities forming the basis for the interests of the actors. The four Common Spaces are acceptable for both parties because the documents do not imply concrete responsibilities. Nevertheless, the proposed new document requires ratification, making such an arrangement problematic because it should completely meet the requirements of the parties. Thus, depending on how the parties overcome their tensions, the new agreement may develop into a substantial framework for future cooperation or represent the mere expression of the good will of sides.<sup>279</sup>

The problems on the path to the new agreement include the decision-making of the EU. Given the inclusion of the questions from different pillars of the Union which mix the areas of exclusive competence of the Commission and those falling in the competence of the member states, a new agreement would require the participation of the Commission dealing with the Community pillar and the Presidency.<sup>280</sup> The difficulties of achieving the consistent strategy

<sup>278</sup> Expression from Andrei Goriukhin, “sogloshenie novoe, problemi starie,” (agreement is new, problems - old), *vsia evropa.ru* no.3,2006, [http://alleuropa.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=76](http://alleuropa.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=76)

<sup>279</sup> Zhitniuk, “Rossiia I ES”

<sup>280</sup> Emerson, Tassinari and Vahl, 4-5

have been revealed during the last summits, when Russia's dispute with the new member states, and particularly, the Polish ban hampered the launch of the negotiations.

In addition, the question of human rights abuses in Russia has become one of the most widely discussed issues, given the criticisms expressed by the EU concerning the onslaught on political opposition. The stance taken by the president of Russia shows, that the Russian government is unwilling to accept criticisms from the union and to appease the concerns about the political course of the country.<sup>281</sup>

Energy relations represent one of the most contentious issues between the partners. The question of achieving concrete obligations in the area of energy is repeatedly stressed in the statements of the EU officials.<sup>282</sup> The union is seeking a means to reduce the energy dependence on Russia and include the issue in the new agreement, being particularly concerned about the dependence after the disruptions in the energy supply to several European countries at the beginning of 2007<sup>283</sup> and Gazprom's warning to seek other markets in the case of the decline in investment opportunities in Europe.<sup>284</sup> Nevertheless, the purpose of the Commission to create a legal basis for the relations in the energy sector through the new agreement appears unacceptable for Russian officials,<sup>285</sup> using Russia's influence as an energy supplier to demonstrate its power.<sup>286</sup> Thus, some Russian experts believe that the union policy towards the new agreement is guided by the aim to receive the assurance of the supply of energy resources from Russia, leaving other parts of partnership without adequate attention.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> *International Herald Tribune*, "Russian, EU leaders"

<sup>282</sup> See, Ferrero-Waldner, *The European Union and Russia*; Barroso, *speech at the Opening ceremony for International Green Week*

<sup>283</sup> Cameron, "prospects"

<sup>284</sup> *EUobserver*, "EU confident on new strategic deal"

<sup>285</sup> Zagorski, 72-73; Cameron, "prospects"

<sup>286</sup> Kempe and Smith, 3-4

<sup>287</sup> Goriukhin, "sogloshenie"

Consequently, the route to negotiations demonstrate that though the parties do not view each other as enemies on the international arena, they engage in competition, having different views of the future of their relations and the strategic partnership. In practice, the partnership is often obstructed by competition on the concrete, mostly economic questions,<sup>288</sup> making the path to the new cooperation agreement thorny.<sup>289</sup>

In view of the difficulty of coordinating the agenda for cooperation and the pre-eminence of the competitive elements, Karaganov is pessimistic about the new agreement believing that the negotiations will lead to new problems, and does not expect rapid results.<sup>290</sup> Nevertheless, in the competitive culture the prospect of absolute gains may overcome the fear of relative losses,<sup>291</sup> leading to the implication that the adoption of the new agreement is not only important, but also feasible, though difficult to achieve.

To sum up, the recent difficulties with the question of changing the PCA with a new agreement can be explained by the importance of the identities of actors shaping the basis for their perceptions of each other and interests with respect to the adoption of the new agreement and the future of their relations. The path to the new agreement also demonstrates that the competitive structure created by the identities and views of the parties impedes the development of closer relations between the EU and Russia, resulting in considerable difficulties for the adoption of the agreement.

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<sup>288</sup> Bordachev and Suslov, *Konceptsii*

<sup>289</sup> Cameron, “prospects”

<sup>290</sup> Karaganov, “realnie dogovori”

<sup>291</sup> Wendt, *social theory*, 280-282

## Conclusion

The aim of the present thesis has been to analyze the reasons for the challenges encountered by the EU and Russia on the path to the new agreement. The findings of this study have contributed to the analysis of the EU-Russian relations through discussing the reasons for the challenges from a constructivist perspective and analyzing the perceptions and attitudes taken by both parties. Based on the research conducted in this study several conclusions can be drawn.

The highly institutionalized nature of the EU-Russian relations promotes the socialization process of the parties preventing them from developing conflictual relations and demonstrates the recognition of interdependence by the EU and Russia, who attempt to construct the conceptual basis in line with the importance of their relationship. Yet, in view of the upcoming expiration of the PCA, recognized as obsolete, it has become widely accepted in the EU and Russia that the construction of an updated coherent strategic document forming the legal basis for the future of EU-Russian relations is necessary. Nevertheless, today, despite the declared commitment of the parties to create a new arrangement, the discussions over the new agreement remain in a stalemate, with little indication of progress in the coming months.

The present study has approached the question through the prism of the constructivist theory, discussing the self-identities and perceptions of the parties, after analyzing the limits of neorealism in assessing the reasons for challenges, which, given the underestimation of the role of identities of the parties, would predict balancing behaviour, being inadequate in explaining the persistent attempts of the parties to engage in cooperation, as well as in analyzing the formation of EU interests in promoting norms and values.

Based on the main premises of constructivism, the interests and approaches of the actors derive from their identities. The normative power image of the EU and the problems encountered in developing the common position towards Russia leads to the definition of EU interests in

terms of the promotion of European norms and values, reflected in the discourse of the union. Thus, although the union views Russia as a potential partner, given its worldview, it is concerned about the trend to centralization within the country and about the assertive policy of Russia, particularly in the energy sphere. In order to achieve transforming Russia through the diffusion of European norms and values, the union attempts to include the question of commitment to common values in the agreements.

On the other hand, Russia identifies itself with a great power legacy and shapes its worldview on the basis of its identity as one of the influential centers in international relations. Given the state-centric vision of the world, the Russian understanding of the normative and supranational features of the EU is rather bleak, leading to concerns about the possibility of interference in its internal affairs and becoming the object of EU policies, though the country recognizes the mutual benefits of cooperation with the union. Consequently, discourse analysis reveals that Russian interests, which are defined in terms of strengthening the country's role and focused on the importance of achieving equal partnership with the EU, derive from the self-identity of the country.

Based on the analysis of EU-Russian relations and their perceptions of the self and the other, the structure created through the interaction between the EU and Russia can be characterized as competitive, where parties respect each other and recognize the importance of partnership, although they are predisposed to competing in particular respects, facing a multitude of controversies. Thus, though never engaging in conflict, the parties find it difficult to achieve sustainable cooperation.

In conclusion, the reasons for the existing tensions between the partners are rooted in their identities and perceptions, leading Russia to request a new agreement demonstrating equality of

the partners, while the EU discourse reveals the sustained desire to maintain the commitment to democratic principles and norms as the groundwork for the new agreement. Consequently, though both partners accept the necessity for the new arrangement and have agreed on launching negotiations, differing visions of the relationship lead to the development of divergent interests with respect to the substance of the document and instigate problems connected to the question of energy, respect of human rights, etc. Concisely, the path to the new agreement demonstrates that the identities and perceptions of the partners have a major affect on the development of EU-Russian relations.



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