"COMMON NEIGHBOURHOOD" IN THE CONTEXT OF TWO EUROPES – EASTERN AND WESTERN

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Abstract. The paper seeks to reveal the complex process of the foreign policy specific to the states of the "common neighbourhood" in relation to the Russian Federation, on the one hand, and on the other hand, to the European Union. Therefore, it detects a political phenomenon of diversion of the geo-cardinal directions in the external relations policies of the states in the "common neighbourhood".

Keywords: common neighbourhood, geo-cardinal directions, foreign policy, Russian Federation (RF), European Union (EU).

Geopolitics rules the world and determines the future¹ – the humanity is marked by many geopolitical, historical, social, natural, etc. events. Geography and politics created the struggle for power, the spheres of influence, and a new balance in the current international relations, separating and uniting nations’ borders, creating new states, new neighbours, new organizations, new political projects, events that diverted states from their geo-cardinal directions in the foreign relations policy.

The geopolitical factor – means discrepancies and agreements in the external relations policy of the Russian Federation and of the European Union in relation to the geographical dimension of the "common neighbourhood" (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia), an aspect that leads to rivalry in the European struggle for power RF and the EU. Thus, the states in the "common neighbourhood" have come to a complex process in their foreign policy relations with the Russian Federation, on the one hand, and on the other hand, with the European Union. Therefore, a political phenomenon of diversion of the geo-cardinal directions is detected in the external relations policies of the states in the "common neighbourhood". The political phenomenon of diversion of the geo-cardinal directions in the foreign policy of the states in the "common

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neighbourhood” is caused by the rivalry between RF and EU. Today, the states in EU’s and RF’s “common neighbourhood” indirectly relate to two Europes: Western and Eastern. In the European geopolitical architecture, the perspectives of the states in the “common neighbourhood” will be found, some in the EU structures, others in the new Eurasia project, or regionally fragmented, being divided between the adherence to the EU and to Eurasia – which is a plausible scenario, because the sovereignty and neutrality of the constitutional states that form the “common neighbourhood” (Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia) are not respected under the international law and by the governments of the mentioned states, they become puppets of the foreign policy interests.

Introduction

The setting up of a “common neighbourhood” between the Russian Federation and the European Union is the result of the events on Europe’s political map in the end of 1989 – early 1990. A large number of geopolitical factors during the Cold War have internally and externally eroded the geo-cardinal directions of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It is significant that in the former socialist countries of Europe there took place democratic revolutions, out of which the vast majority was “velvet” revolutions, which led to the fall of the communist totalitarian regimes, to restoring democracy etc. Simultaneously, inside the Soviet socialist republics, there took place national liberation movements for sovereignty and independence from the USSR Empire. The collapse of the Soviet Union Republics generated the “creation of a new decision system – changing the political regime, building a new state apparatus and creating new elites”2, which lacked methodological capability and practice in international relations conduct. This aspect contributed to the recovery of the foreign policy objectives of the geo-cardinal directions and to the policy reconfiguration after the fall of the USSR. Therefore, the republics of: the Baltic States (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia), Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Caucasus (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia), and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan), as well as the Russian Federation, declared their independence and sovereignty, replacing the soviet system of centralized control in politics, economy and society, through the commitment to respect the fundamental rights, a market economy – the transition to the rule of law.

Ipso facto, the USSR exists in the legacy that the Russian Federation acquired and is reconfigured in the Commonwealth of Independence States (CIS).

The EU modern period reflects the art of another creation event on the political map of Europe, namely, the complex process of expanding borders in the geographical dimension of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, and of the European integration. Simultaneously, the European nations, being interested in maintaining peace and defending their independence through political solidarity and through a defensive military force that would respond to all forms of unforeseen aggression against them, joined the North Atlantic Treaty

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(signed on 4 April 1949, Washington) – which interfere with the Russian Federation’s interests in its sphere of influence. Thus, it intends to build a new polycentric international system in which to take control, and with Kremlin as the centre of Eurasia, through “measures to implement the foreign policy of the Russian Federation”.

When Finland, a neutral state, joined the EU in 1995, the geographical and political dimension extended to the East longitude – 30°, the Russian Federation’s western border. The process of expanding borders and of European integration continued, and in 2004, the EU border extended to the East of the former European socialist states – Poland, Slovakia, Hungary (now members of NATO since 12 March 1999 – Poland and Hungary, and Slovakia since March 29, 2004) and the Baltic States – Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia (former USSR republics, today NATO members, since 29 March, 2004) with East longitude – 28°. Thus, the length of EU’s common border with Russia’s has increased, covering about 1520 km from the North, near the Barent Sea coast (the border between the Russian Federation and Norway), to the South, reaching North latitude – 56°, the border between Latvia and Belarus. The accession of the Baltic States to the EU contributed to the geopolitical tension of the Russian Federation for the Baltic Sea, creating a Russian exclave, Kaliningrad.

“Concerning Russia’s agreement, any attempt of NATO enlargement means to impose a perpetuation of geopolitical ambiguity to Russia’s Western borders, which will hamper Russia’s own internal development. Undoubtedly, Russia’s disposition to agree with NATO’s unilateral eastward enlargement, especially in the Baltic states, is a litmus test for the sincerity of any option declared by Moscow, for a European and transatlantic link.”

The EU continued to increase the geo-cardinal directions of its expansion policy to new geographical areas within the old continent of Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe, and, at the same time, the process of European integration – the legitimacy provided by the European treaties, established in the agreements between the member states, a process that is becoming increasingly complex and “difficult through heterogeneity: the cause of the economic, political, cultural” ideological, security etc. disparities. However, the continuity of enlargement and integration, with all its decision complexity, has lead EU to new developments, such as Hagen Schulze mentions in his “State and Nation” – “Europe is being built. It is a great hope that will be fulfilled, only if history will be taken into consideration; a Europe without history would be like an orphan, since today comes from yesterday and tomorrow is the fruit of the past. This past should not paralyze the present, but help it to be different in fidelity and new in progress.”

A new dimension of EU’s Eastern frontier expanded with the accession, on 1 January 2007, of the former socialist states (note, not Soviet) in Central and South Eastern Europe – Romania and Bulgaria (currently NATO members, since

29 March 2004), countries bordering the Black Sea. Therefore, a **fierce border** was created—the most controversial in historical, geopolitical, geostrategic (and more) terms, which has "solidified the river Prut" and divided the Romanian nation between East and West, left heartbroken until today (...). "Prut, which was born in the North East Carpathians, flowing into Danube delta, among Moldavia's plateaus and plains, was turned involuntarily, first by the Tsarist Empire in 1812-1917, then by the Soviet empire in 1940-1941, 1944-1991, in a barbed wire barrier, thus separating Romanians on its both sides, and now separating us from the European Union"6 and NATO. It is impossible in this process of enlargement and accession to the European Union, not to have taken full account of all historical, cultural, geopolitical, geostrategic factors of the Romanian nation on both sides of the Prut—a nation on which Western and Eastern policymakers have created two sovereign states, Romania and Moldova, thus diverting their geo-cardinal directions in the geopolitical universalism. The strategies of the Romanian government are directed towards the West (Brussels), while Moldova's strategies are directed both to the East (Moscow) and West (Brussels). The geo-cardinal directions of Moldova's foreign policy intensify depending on the parties that come to govern the country.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski mentions in his Geostrategic Triad, "Russia must admit that this combined expansion of NATO—EU will need to ensure the safety of an enlarged Europe?", but this process leads to the restriction of the Russian Federation's geostrategic interests in the European space. Moreover, this process will direct the Russian Federation to identify new measures of economic coercion, to use a dependence mechanism, for the EU member states to its natural resources.

The listed events and many more, which were left behind the scenes of the Western and Eastern Europe geopolitical stage, were directed towards building the "common neighbourhood" of the Russian Federation and the European Union. A "neighbourhood" that relates to the West and to the East. Thus, the question arose: is this "common neighbourhood" a wide perspective, or is it a geographical dimension, captive between two Europes, the Russian Federation and the European Union?

"**Common Neighbourhood**"8 — in the Game of the European Union's and the Russian Federation's Foreign Policy Interests

The last impetus of the EU enlargement to the Eastern Europe, in 2007, incorporated new members of the EU—Romania and Bulgaria, in the great European family. This expansion increased the EU's geographic and political space with 349,843 km², thus having a total of 4,624,895 km², and also new neighbours to the Eastern border. These territorial dimensions caused deep morpho-structural changes in the foreign policy. During Romania's negotiations for EU accession, the issue of security at the eastern border of the EU was raised, which has over 631.3 kilometres, along Moldova, on whose territory, in Transnistria,

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8 Common Neighbourhood – the concept is used by the EU under the Eastern Partnership, but the same concept, used by Russia, uses the term ближнего зарубежья, which means near abroad.
the 14th Army has illegally stationed – an army that was due to Moldova after the fall of the USSR. Hence, this new border shapes the EU’s and NATO’s security – the conventional line that separates the boundaries from the present Moldova (former territory of the Greater Romania) and the Black Sea. From the perspective of the idealistic concept, it appears that the state border is the result of a need for protection and separation, marking the end of its sovereignty, on the one hand, and of the nation, on the other. In this situation, the idea that the Romanian nation will remain separate is inconceivable, and all these are the result of the irrational decision-making model between Western democracies and the Russian imperialism, only for their benefit and less ... for their neighbours.

However, there arises the question: will this “common neighbourhood” – Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, vulnerable countries to their national security, remain forever the “common neighbourhood”, or will they be integrated either in the EU, under the shield of NATO, or in Eurasia, under the shield of the Russian Federation? The struggle for power between the EU + NATO and the Russian Federation will lead to a shift in the geo-cardinal directions of the foreign policy of the actors in the common neighbourhood.

Obviously “the European security architecture reflects the essential features of the geopolitical environment in which there are: a transition to a multi-polar international system, a competition between powers in the Euro—Atlantic space for redistributing roles; an increased integration in the EU; Russian attempts to maintain its great power status on the global arena and to hold key positions in the European security structures”9. The objective of the Russian Federation foreign policy in the Strategic Partnership with the European Union aims at determining the recognition of the Russian Federation’s status of great plenipotentiary power in the former Soviet space, where the Kremlin claims the security monopoly and refuses the transformation of the near abroad (foreign) into a common neighbourhood. There is one thing that international relations researchers ascertained: in order to achieve its objectives, Kremlin uses the “natural geo-strategic weapon”, namely, the energy resource as a tool of constraint, to influence both the states in its close proximity states, and the EU countries.

Each nation tends to increase, enhance and recover the territories of the natural national border area. This concept of border security has become the most discussed topic in the international relations politics since ancient times, and will always be topical, from local to regional, and up to universal levels. Robert Schuman, the initiator of the monetary union and precursor of the European integration, stated that “the boundaries of the political security were the result of impressive historical and ethnic developments, of centuries of striving for national unity and security; no one could ever think to dissolve them. In the beginning, they were changed by bloody conquests, arranged marriages. Today it is enough to cancel them. Our European borders should less hinder the exchange of ideas and experience. In the future, the nations’ feeling of solidarity should stay above the old nationalism. Nationalism’s merit was that it started a

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tradition and a solid internal structure within the state. On this old foundation a new construction of Europe should be placed. The Super state will have a national basis. Hence, the glorious past will have not given up, but the national energies will be reborn through their common use in the service of solidarity" and prudence in diplomacy. These borders have always been in a reconfiguration process, but also in fragmentation, ambiguity, risk, and opportunities.

The border is a line of physical contact between states, drawing the margins of different legal spaces, respectively, limiting a state's action, but giving it opportunities for action in the area of its territories.

The real founder of geopolitics, Rudolf Kjellen – professor of State science at the University of Upsala, developed a real science of neighbourhoods, which is also found at the Romanian philosopher and sociologist Dimitrie Gusti, in what he called the "The Science of Nation". The geopolitical study of neighbourhoods allows the characterization of a country's situation in the world, or compared to its neighbours. Rudolf Kjellen distinguished between "neighbourhoods with large or small states" and "simple or complicated neighbourhoods" between "long or short distances" that separate a state from another or from an empire – described in "the topo-politics study", as a subdivision of geopolitics, which refers to the state settlement. It also refers to the sensitive friction points or regimes and to the "central, intermediate or peripheral position of politics". The concept of "buffer state" is also met throughout Kjellen's topo-politics, an idea that belongs to him. The "buffer state" is defined in geopolitical terms, namely, the intermediate positioning and the conditions of small states between the great powers, such as the states in the common neighbourhood – Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus between the EU and the RF, however, Caucasus states – Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan are located between three major geopolitical taxonomies of the Eurasian continent: to the North: the former Russian Tsarist Empire; to the South – South East, the Ottoman Empire, Mongolian, today, Turkey, Iran; to the West: the European Union, and they still maintain their status quo. Although the concept of buffer state still exists, it is preferred not to be used orally in foreign policy relations. In the hope that the given concept, and Nicolae Iorga's phrase "state of European (i.e., or Russian) necessity" will totally disappear, then the states that will still be in the buffer position will join benevolently and unhindered ... the great union of European states (EU). This will simplify the foreign relations between the EU and RF, of course, after a wave of gaming scenarios of interest, confrontations and reconfigurations that can be both predictable and unpredictable, then, developing a new concept of good frontier neighbourhood or of one that is less good ... between two systems with a different ideology. (...) 

Just a simple visual retrospective on the historical and geopolitical maps of the world, especially of Europe, can determine the role of the geopolitical factor in reshaping and modelling nations' borders. Unfortunately, I found, as well as other researchers did, that international law has turned into an international

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political game in which the rules are set during the game, without taking into account its consequences. For this reason, it is necessary that the research in this field demonstrates the importance of respecting the rules of international law. Otherwise, a national problem turns into an international one that can no longer be solved, but rather creates a multitude of other problems on the agenda of states’ foreign policies. Thus, some countries like Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Belarus – RF and EU neighbouring countries, have become pieces on the chessboard, while the RF and the EU + NATO, the players, are trying to capture from each other, some of them already captured in order to extend the space for political and economic, security, military, etc. manoeuvre, and only through a distorted attitude of the RF in its relations with the mentioned states, it inspires and, at the same time, it complicates the EU dialogue and negotiations with the countries in the common neighbourhood. (...)

Why an Eurasian Project?

The neighbourhood problem – a multilateral issue in which only a geopolitical analysis might reveal the strategies used by governments in this context, for the development and control of the geo-cardinal course in their foreign policy. Hence, when analyzing the Decree signed by President Vladimir Putin on “measures to implement the Russian Federation foreign policy”¹² of 7 May 2012, I found that it was Vladimir Putin, this character, who has the ambition to... continue and intensify the efforts in his program, initiated in 2000, since his first presidential term (or does he even want to accomplish an important task for the Russian nation by implementing the Testament left by Peter I, Tsar of Russia?), by all possible means to build a new polycentric international system in which to take control, and the Kremlin to be the centre of Eurasia. Therefore, the RF does not compete, nor is it in rivalry internationally only with the EU, but also with the U.S., considering itself a hegemony that has a new type of integrated democratic system. These were the considerations which determined Kremlin to launch the EURASIA geopolitical project.

Why EURASIA? I believe that it was because of several reasons that Kremlin took into consideration: – the heartland that is occupied by the RF (as a geopolitical division given by Halford Mackinder), the central arena of the world (given in The Grand Chessboard – Zbigniew Brezinski), Russia’s central position in the Eurasian continent full limit, while Europe is just the Western side of Eurasia... (described in the article “Geographical and geopolitical foundations of Erasianism” in 1933 by Pyotr Nikolaečvich Šavički) etc.

One of RF’s foreign policy measures stipulates: the strong contribution to Eurasian integration within the Customs Union, and also the only economic union in the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union, on 1st January 2015, based on opening of accession processes for other countries, especially

members of the Eurasian Economic Community and participants to the Commonwealth of Independent States, promoting the international position in integrating the new structure – obviously, this Eurasian creation process, or model, is inspired from, or even similar to the model used to create the European communities, from ECSC, since Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman. However, it is noteworthy that the RF foreign policy has hidden secret thoughts... and this Eurasian project will be as a “weapon” that will lead to the collapse of the EU, or... of the RF itself... (Because these are unpredictable scenarios...). However, it is clear that the capabilities, strength, and vigilance in supporting the geo-cardinal directions of the Eastern EU foreign policy will depend much more on the will of the personalities leading the EU institutions. It is necessary that within a reasonable period of 2-3 years, Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and maybe Armenia, Belarus (the White Russia) to be fully integrated into EU structures and boundaries. Here, there is no time for “manoeuvre”. The former Soviet republics can be restored overnight to a new “USSR”, called Eurasia, which will be gradually joined by some current EU states.... It is also clear that the national interests of RF are based on pragmatic principles, through which it is trying to divert the geo-cardinal directions of both the EU’s and its neighbour’s foreign policies, and to gradually attract states, or at least important regions in states in its sphere of influence. Thus, the process of a coherent, prosperous, calm foreign policy that would develop friendly relations between the Russian Federation and the EU and neighbouring states continues to be ambiguous. The geopolitical architecture of the old European continent is in a continuous transformation process, due to external and internal factors....

Despite the fact that it is an important economic partner for the EU and for the other non-member countries, including its close proximity, this does not mean that the Russian Federation is developing good “strategic” manners in its foreign policy relations with its partners!

All territorial disputes on the European continent (Kaliningrad, Trans-Nistrian, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Chechnya, former Yugoslavia) are due to the ambition of the Russian Federation to be a “great power” – being nostalgic for the USSR power. In order to determine its imperial intentions and strategies, it is necessary only to know its history, and also to really feel “the air” that the Russian people breathe. (...) Here, I would add the following sentence: I know the Russian culture, history, language very well, and I respect these aspects at their home, but under no circumstances do I respect the imperialistic expansion and aggression foreign policy that the Russian Federation adopts in the modernist 21st century. Hence, it is necessary to strengthen the pillars of the common security in Europe and not to be influenced by illusions or ‘anger’ coming from the Russian Federation. The EU has several things to fix “at home”, or the lack of prudence in diplomacy does not allow it to put the Russian Federation in its place, in order to determine it to obey the international law – its law is valid up to the EU law and to the one of the states in its close proximity, to the infinite universality. (....)

Quite often, the foreign policies do not fully respect the commitments signed by third parties. Example: the OSCE summit in Istanbul in 1999 regarding the complete withdrawal of the Russian military forces and armaments in the Republic
of Moldova. It’s been 10 years without any chances of success. Another example: Russia, during winter, when the climate is very cold in the Northern Hemisphere, triggers an energy war and suspends natural gas, both for its neighbours and its “strategic” partners – the EU.

An extremely striking case occurred in the EU regarding Moldova, during the events of April 7, 2009, Kishinev, EU’s Eastern border. Europe was silent (...), I refer to the professional incapacity that the EU commission showed at that time (was that abstention due to the fact that they could not predict Russia’s reaction...?), while citizens of the Republic of Moldova, with a pro-European mentality, were wondering “What is going on? Why is the EU silent?” Then, Brussels quickly recognized the election results of April 5, 2009, without taking into account all the signals coming from the observers. Concerns about this event had been previously presented by Benita Ferrero – Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations, by Mr. Kalman Miszei, EU Special Representative for Moldova, by the EU ambassador accredited in Chişinău. Prof. Univ. Mircea Ion Pascu, member of the European parliament, requested by the “Voice of Russia”, stated that the violent protests in Kishinev “are the result of the lack of dialogue between authorities and society, including the opposition”. It is true, that only in a society that is governed by communists, dialogue and negotiation with the opposition are impossible, being very well known that the Communists prefer only the ideology of an imperative policy, defending only the interest of the party, and in no case the national interest of the people. Moreover, there was no dialogue with the protesters. They did not go to protest for the sake of opposition parties, each came to protest because a large part of the population could no longer be fooled and abused, downtrodden by the communist government for being Romanian, and for not sharing the communist ideology. (...)

However, citizens of Moldova expected far more moral support from the EU, because the EU has become a symbol of aspiration, which could help them reach a much desired wealth, an ideal of real democracy (not only verbally, as Communists promoted in the period 2001-2009), but a “land of promises” for many Moldovans. Regardless of nationality, they want to live in a democratic country where there is a rule of law supremacy, not a mandatory ideology, arrogance and intolerance, parties with interest groups. Citizens of Moldova, as well as other nations in the EU neighbourhood, are hoping that the EU is the best partner to achieve these aspirations.

Representation of the Geo-Cardinal Directions and of the Foreign Policy Objectives of the European Union and Russian Federation from a Geographical Perspective of the Common Neighbourhood

Both the political map of the world and the geopolitical map of Europe have passed through a long history of changes.

The European Union is mapping new cardinal directions to Eastern Europe, for expansion, integration and geopolitical reconfiguration. EU – a political, social, and economic entity, with 27 integrated states, is considered a sui generis construction, a confederation. From 1st December 2009, the Lisbon Treaty gives the EU international legal personality.
By increasing the degree of stability, security and prosperity of the EU and of the Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe neighbouring countries, especially by offering countries a relationship that is closer to the EU policy, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) should prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbouring states. The political directions are based on commitments to shared values, including democracy, the rule of law, good governance and human rights and the principles of market economy, free trade and sustainable development, poverty reduction, etc.. With the ENP, the EU strives, among others, to counteract or prevent the emergence of threats to "soft security" such as large-scale illegal immigration, stopping energy imports, environmental degradation, terrorism and organized crime. Part of the reason for the European Neighbourhood Policy is also reflected in the European Security Strategy. In the light of the current major changes, the new EU foreign policy, taking advantage of the opportunity created by the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS)\(^{13}\) and by the position of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, aims to redefine and update its strategy, both in terms of policies and priority areas of intervention. Achieving this goal is possible only through sharing common interests and through a broad collaboration and coordination action.

Despite the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, the Russian-European relation (RF and EU) continued to be problematic, especially since Moscow is hostile regarding the EU enlargement eastwards and the commitments set by Brussels in the European Neighbourhood Policy, and further developed through an Eastern Partnership. This is also the sensitive geopolitical context in which RF leaders realized that, at their western borders "near abroad", there is a powerful economic and geopolitical cooperation system between numerous states, having the force of half a billion people and an economy comparable to the U.S.

In this context, it is important to point out the relations between the EU and the RF, and the situation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (CPA) in which Brussels is trying to put Kremlin in its place. As the researchers from the French Institute of Geopolitics described... the ability of Brussels' Courts to denounce, through a single voice, the frauds in the Ukrainian presidential elections of November 2004, surprised the Russian diplomacy exactly when Vladimir Putin publicly welcomed the victory.

CPA had expired on December 11, 2007 due to difficulties in negotiations, and was not renewed. After a deadlock, negotiations were reopened on June 27, 2008, at the summit of Khanty - Mansiysk: Europeans understood the negotiation of an accurate and detailed agreement, while the Russians did not want a text that would be complicated by practical issues. The war in Georgia was next, leading the EU to suspend its relations with the RF, reopening them on November 13, 2008, with the summit in Nice, but not being able to mask the absence of common values and of a similar vision for the future”.

Therefore, a market relationship is not sufficient to establish a genuine partnership between Brussels and Moscow. Thus, the relations between the EU and RF are

\(^{13}\) The European Economic and Social Committee, REX/319. The new foreign policy of the EU and the role of civil society. Brussels, 18 May 2011. Rapporteur: Mr. Carmelo CEDRONE.
marked by background differences and oppositions. However, the EU is interested in a partnership with the RF, having the perspective of building universal stability, liberalization and democratization. This perception of the EU model, meant to include the RF, is rejected by Moscow because their strategic objective is to determine the recognition of the Russian Federation as a great plenipotentiary power. In order to reach its goals, Moscow uses natural resources as an instrument of coercion to influence Europe and Brussels. For these reasons, Moscow does not hope for a post-national era, based on soft power, but rather to assert its internal and external sovereignty, and also to promote what they consider to be the interests of the state, and to arrange a force policy on the universal geopolitical stage, and in its close proximity. According to the Kremlin reason, it is a big power in the classical meaning of the word, and it considers itself to be an alternative to the EU.

"Russia has survived and prospered because of its ability to overcome the weaknesses through excesses in any field".

George Sokoloff

- Geo-cardinal directions of the EU external policy in the geographical dimension of the East proximity (Please see Annex I)*

The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – the Russian Federation (Moscow)
The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – Belarus (Minsk)
The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – Ukraine (Kiev)
The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – Moldova (Kishinev), Transnistria
The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – Georgia (Tbilisi)
The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – Azerbaijan (Baku, Caspian Sea)
The geo-cardinal direction: EU (Brussels) – Armenia (Yerevan)

- The objectives of the EU's external policy geo-cardinal directions in the geographical dimension of the East proximity

By establishing the strategic Partnership – the EU is interested in a partnership with the RF in order to build a universal stability, liberalization and democratization. The EU and the RF agreed to further develop the existing strategic partnership by creating four common spaces, as decided at a summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, in May 2003. The RF has clearly stated that it does not want to take part in the developing ENP.

The EU's foreign policy relations with neighbouring countries in the East (representing the Eastern Partnership) take the form of association agreements, which would mean a higher level of the relationships between third parties:
- progressively allowing these countries into the EU economy, through free trade zones that would admit every commercial exchange, including energy trade, but also a regional economic integration, by creating a neighbourhood economic community, through bilateral agreements;
- the EU offers its partners "mobility and security pacts" that involve the fight against migration, upgrading asylum systems, integrated border management
structures to achieve the ultimate goal, and probably the most important, visa-free travel;
- concerning visas, some successive steps are followed, starting with visa facilitation, continued by the removal of the visa fee, and establishing a greater number of consulates and visa centers in the region, so that, with the effective enforcement of agreements to facilitate visa and readmission, negotiations to eliminate visa will start;
- greater labour mobility by promptly opening the EU labour market;
- enhanced energy security for the EU and its partners through a range of both multilateral and bilateral instruments, with Eastern Partnership countries;
- programs that support economic and social development in partner countries, etc.

EU’s European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP and Eastern Partnership (AP))

- The setting up of a framework to strengthen neighbourhood relations aims at enhancing cooperation with neighbouring countries, economic and social development, as well as the possibility of getting access to the domestic market, and integration in other European policies: Education, training and youth; Research; Environmental issues; Culture, Audiovisual policy.

The Action Plan represents the key political document for developing the relations between the EU and its neighbours and for promoting the priorities of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and of the European Security and Defence Policy.

In November 2007, the Eastern Partnership imposed association agreements with Ukraine and Moldova, which opened the possibility of EU membership. Belarus did not meet the required level for a bilateral agreement.

Due to President Lukashenko’s totalitarian ideology, the EU is reluctant and has postponed the cooperation relations regarding the Neighbourhood Policy with Belarus, which should have the same perspective “once it embraces democracy, human rights and freedom, and strengthens the rule of law”.

Through the EU – Moldova Action Plan, signed in February 2005, the relations between the EU and Moldova have increased and deepened. The European Parliament adopted on September 15, 2011, the Resolution regarding the negotiations on an Association Agreement between Moldova and the European Union, on visa liberalization, free trade area negotiations, sectoral cooperation, Moldova’s advancement to the second phase of the dialogue on visa liberalization, and the EU – Moldova agreement on the common aviation area, signed in June 2012, the first bilateral sector agreement signed between Moldova and the EU. For solving the Transnistrian conflict in the “5+2” Negotiation format, funds were allocated, there were €11,181 billion available for this instrument, from 2007 until 2013. The benefit of concessional loans from the European Investment Bank (EIB) was also offered. In the period between 2007 and 2013, there were € 3.7 billion available for ENP / East (including South Caucasus countries, which were not included in the previous loan tlem of EIB) and Russia.
The European Neighbourhood Policy clearly states that “it does not offer the concerned states prospects of EU admission, instead, it allows a privileged relationship with neighbours and a better focus of the efforts in areas of vital importance for the concerned states to get closer to the European standards”, which means that the concerned states could not hope for an eventual EU membership.

The following stipulation of the European Neighbourhood Policy must be also mentioned—“There is a possibility that, with the accomplishing of Action Plans priorities, the current generation of bilateral agreements would be replaced by a new form of privileged partnership, represented by the “European Neighbourhood Agreements”. As a result the states in case cannot hope for a possible accession. On the other hand, the Lisbon Treaty opens new ascension perspectives for the states in the East neighborhood.

• The RF’s geo-cardinal directions and foreign policy objectives in the geographical dimension of the Western and South-Western neighbourhood

“After the victory of the liberal-democratic capitalism in the Cold War, it seemed that this victory would be final. Ten – fifteen years later, it proved that this competition had not ended.”

Sergei Karaganov, 2007

What was the RF doing when the European Constitutional Treaty was rejected in 2005? Following this failure, the RF benefited from a longer period in which to speculate disputes between member states, especially the relations between France, Germany and Italy, to counter-influence the European near abroad: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia. Now, this EU-FR common neighbourhood has important topics to analyze and solve... in order to determine itself, and by its own will to shape its geo-cardinal directions within Europe, to the West, East...or neutral. In this context, the states should weigh the favourable and unfavourable factors of the EU and of the RF, in order to decide the position and the perspective of the national future.

• The RF’s foreign policy geo-cardinal directions in the geographical dimension of the Western and South-Western neighbourhood (Please see Annex 1)∗

The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – European Union (Brussels)
The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – Belarus (Minsk)
The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – Ukraine (Kiev)
The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – Moldova (Kishinev), Transnistria
The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – Georgia (Tbilisi)
The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – Azerbaijan (Baku)
The geo-cardinal direction: RF (Moscow) – Armenia (Yerevan)

• The RF’s objectives of the foreign policy geo-cardinal directions in the geographical dimension of the Western and South-Western neighbourhood
The Russian Federation saw the “Eastern Partnership” as a new formula to advance the Euro-Atlantic border, therefore, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrovsperia, declared that the EU project should not compel member states to choose between the Russian Federation and the European Union – such an event determines the character of a rivalry and also of the ideological imperatives of the Russian Federation foreign policy.

The RF’s objectives of the foreign policy geo-cardinal directions in the geographical dimension of the Western and South-Western neighbourhood are the following:

The Strategic Partnership with the European Union.

Enhancing the relations and keeping the control over the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Maintaining the Russian naval base in Crimea and Ukraine. Diverting the Ukrainian direction and intentions to join NATO.

Monopolizing sales, transport and gas supplies by Gazprom. Expansion of corporations by private businessmen.

Supporting separatism in Transnistria and the 14th Army in the area.

The natural gas in the North Sea has already been exploited beyond the maximum level, which will leave part of the EU countries dependent on imports, especially from the Russian Federation. Oil prices have recently reached historic peaks. The claim that energy is now a cardinal tool in international politics is not at all exaggerated. Oil and natural gas are the raw material for the strategic resources in the energy industry of the contemporary world. In Europe, the greatest potential in electricity production is the Russian Federation.

• NATURAL GAS 570 – billion m3 I
• OIL 306 – million tons III
• ELECTRICITY 870 – billion kwh IV

To a certain extent, those methods of the Russian Federation are already known to the Europeans that are worried about their dependence on the Russian gas and oil. In 2003, oil supplies had been stopped in Latvia because of the political tensions with these state’s authorities, but motivated by the reduced capacity of the pipeline. In 2006 it stopped the supplies to Lithuania, the reason being a problem with the transport infrastructure. Russia’s disputes with Ukraine and Belarus also alarmed the EU citizens, fearing the repercussions of gas supply. The Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that – he wants to go “as far as possible” in the partnership with the EU, but advised Europeans “not to seek political intentions behind a pure economic dynamic, nor to put ideological labels, taken from the Cold War arsenal, on the legitimate actions to protect national interests.”

So, it is clear that the Russian natural gas giant Gazprom is intended to be imposed on the European market with monopoly status, and to take control over pipelines. At the same time the RF approved a bill that limits the access of foreign investors in the Russian strategic sectors, including energy. After the Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis, which led to a lower pressure in the EU pipelines, tensions have increased between Russia, which was covering 26% of EU’s gas needs, and Europe, which was eager to diversify its suppliers. Russia does not hide its desire for expansion in this sector, Gazprom seeking to enter the capital of the distribution networks in Western Europe.
ANNEX I

The geopolitical map of Europe. EU's and RF's geo-cardinal directions in the geographical dimension of the common neighbourhood: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia
"Post-Communist Russia was within some borders that did not have a historical precedent. Like Europe, it will have to devote most of its energy to define its identity."

H. Kissinger

Conclusion

It has been found that Neo-Eurasianism highlights the Kremlin leadership ambition to impose a different geopolitical project between Western Europe, on the one hand, and the Eastern powers, on the other hand – this platitude is a purely geopolitical valence to divert the foreign policy geo-cardinal directions of the countries in its close proximity, as well as some countries in the EU and Asia.

Therefore, de facto, the RF and the EU are regional rivals because of their common geography, exit to the Baltic Sea – the Black Sea – Caucasus – the Caspian Lake. On the one hand, these geo-strategic and geo-economic taxonomies on which states are positioned, attract the presence of the RF through its sphere of influence, and on the other hand of the EU, through its rich and attractive neighbourhood policies, but also due to the aspirations of some states from the common neighbourhood to join the great European family. From a universal geopolitical perspective, the RF opposes the EU by creating bluff conflicts, and it is very hard to convince ourselves of the real progress in the EU common horizons. However, despite the efforts of RF, it did not, to reorganize, recreate and restructure the common neighbourhood after the rules of the game that it imposed. On the other hand, the EU Neighbourhood Policy succeeded to redirect the foreign policy geo-cardinal directions of the states in its Eastern proximity to the West, except for Belarus and Armenia.

Through its security policy based on cooperation (as OSCE specified) – it promotes cooperation to prevent conflicts in the political sphere, and reduce the danger of armed confrontation. It also aims to avoid the escalation of potential conflicts, especially emphasising the importance of promoting openness and transparency – this type of policy will help to solve the conflicts in the Eastern and South Eastern proximity of Europe.

Moscow aims to separate Europe from the United States under the promise of establishing an integrated economic bloc, as well as friendly energy pricing policies, but also to paralyse the European Union due to intractable disputes between advocates of a friendly, “soft” attitude, and those of a firm, “hard” position.

– The confirmation of the Eurasian geopolitical project.

It is necessary for the EU, first of all, to keep their foreign policy values, by defining common policies and actions for peace keeping, conflict prevention, development of stabilisation actions, to strengthen international security, in accordance with the UN Charter, and also to strengthen and support democracy.

\footnote{Henry Kissinger, Diplomacia, All Publishing House, 2010, p. 25.}
\footnote{Petre Anghel, Instituţii Europene şi Tehnice de negociere în procesul integrării. http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/StiintePOL/anghel/8.htm}
the rule of law, the fundamental human rights, the principles of international law, including the fundamental labour standards, and also to support populations that are facing natural disasters, or caused by human activity.  

If the EU accepts commitments beyond its borders, it will accomplish them, not only out of humanitarian spirit or love for its neighbour, but by virtue of its own interests, to keep itself prosperous and flexible.

It is obvious that the EU initiative in the development of its own security and defence dimension is not very easy, and cannot be completed and implemented in the short term. The European Security Strategy, and all the other instruments directly related to this, can be considered a response to the U.S. National Security Strategy, or to the Strategic Concept of NATO, but, in fact, it is nothing but evidence that the European policy makers believe that Europe’s defence must be developed and supported with its own resources and efforts. Knowing all these aspects, we believe that there can be drawn some conclusions:

— ESDP should also integrate the eastern neighbourhood states, like Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia with a special status in its security strategies.

As the German political thinker, Ernst Jünger, writes: “One cannot draw rigid boundaries between Eastern and Western visions. There is a perpetual exchange of ideas and forms between the two. This has happened year after year. The great problems of history guide us without being elucidated; they determine action without being silent. They behave like rocks in the waves”. This way, we will not be able to change the ambition, nor the ideology of the Russian foreign policy, as well as its concept of considering itself a universal power which would have the right to control territories that do not belong to it, to monitor or to divert the foreign policy geo-cardinal directions of the states or their regions, both in its near abroad, and other countries with farther geographical coordinates, and more than that, to threaten. (...)

Highly alarming are Kremlin’s declarations according to which: ‘... if Moldova changes its status and becomes a block state, if it tries to erode the existing peacekeeping format, if Russia and other countries with non-regional power get involved in the conflict, we will realize our own national interests outside the regulatory context... Russia will absolutely have other purposes’ or “If they are Romanians, the limits of the border will be different” — a statement that is an authentic expression of the character of the Russian foreign policy, of the imperialist status quo ideology.

“A functional assembly consisting of elements and relationships that are aimed at achieving common goals” in the geopolitical context and the foreign
policy geo-cardinal directions for the “common neighbourhood” in relations with the EU can be a major prospect in the enlargement and integration process of the EU. A “common neighbourhood” will continue to be trapped between two Europes, the Russian Federation and the European Union, only because of continuing geopolitical disputes in the bilateral and multilateral relations of the EU, the RF, and the common neighbourhood states. Only if all universal and regional actors respect the international law, and do not impose political games, they will contribute to the prosperity and harmony of the relations between neighbouring countries, to the construction of a new improving Europe.

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