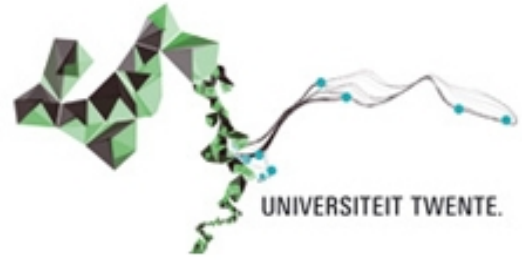




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Bachelor Thesis in European Public Administration (B.A./B.Sc.)

The Ukrainian Crisis:

A Case Study on the EU's Motives for Increased Cooperation

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List of Acronyms

EEAS	European External Action Service
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Council
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organisation
IR	International Relations
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN(O)	United Nations (Organisation)
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1. Introduction

Over two years ago, on 21 November 2013, the pro-Russian Ukrainian government in office decided to cancel the Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union (EU). This step has entailed serious consequences not only for Ukraine but also for the strategic balance of Eastern Europe. Initially peaceful pro-Western protests were subsequently quelled violently by the Ukrainian government, concomitant with tightening of the right to demonstrate. Protests did not stop though, so that the government was finally forced to resign on 28 January 2014. However, these concessions did not contribute to reduce the tensions until the Ukrainian parliament and demonstrators agreed upon a compromise, granting a unity government, elections and constitutional amendments. This convergence between the Ukrainian parliament and pro-European demonstrators brought Russia into the arena, considering its strategic interests endangered. On 27 February 2014, unidentifiable combatants occupied administration offices and crucial strategic locations, e.g. airports, on the Crimean peninsula. Later on, the Russian president Vladimir Putin admitted publicly that those combatants were in fact Russian soldiers (BBC 2015). In mid-March, a referendum was held on Crimea, asking its population to join the Russian Federation. 97% of the voters agreed and one day later, Putin acknowledged Crimea's independence. An armed conflict between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian separatists broke out and has not finally been solved to the present day. The battles even expanded to major parts of eastern Ukraine, that are traditionally assessed Moscow-friendly. Protesting against this offense against international law, the EU set first travel bans on 17 March 2014 (EU Newsroom 2015). Further economic sanctions were adopted and are still active today. The Minsk II agreement, negotiated between the governments of France, Germany, Ukraine, Russia and separatist leaders, led to a ceasefire, that is, despite violations, still active today. Its implementation in terms of a permanent de-escalation however, proceeds with sluggish pace.

Resulting from the EU's expansion to the East, Ukraine has now evolved into the location of a power struggle between the EU on one side and Russia on the opposite, as both players intend to incorporate Ukraine into their sphere of influence. Since the outburst of the crisis, the EU has obviously intensified its collaboration with the Ukraine to the disadvantage of Russia. The full AA between Ukraine and the EU is signed. Even the trade related matters entered into force in

January 2016. A clear tendency from Ukraine towards West is observable and will be verified in the context of this work.

1.1 Presentation of the Problem and Research Question

Having failed to pull away Ukraine from a deeper collaboration with the EU, Russia attempts to establish Moscow-loyal satellites, namely the People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. From the EU's perspective, Russia's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty constitutes on the one hand an offense against the European system of values, but it also poses a severe security threat to "a priority country within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership (EEAS 2014a)", and therefore to the EU itself. Why did the EU increase its cooperation with Ukraine in the course of the crisis? This paper intends to provide answers concerning the EU's motives for increased cooperation as well as the conflict's impact.

Regarding to international relation (IR) theories, there are several explanatory approaches, explicating why the EU has amplified its cooperation with Ukraine. From a neorealist point of view, the EU is expected to adopt policies intensifying the collaboration with Ukraine in order to obtain the pre-conflict balance of power or even ameliorate its position towards Russia. Neoliberal approaches will assume a boost in the level of cooperation in case the EU expects to suffer severe economic losses through the crisis. In 2014, the EU's exports shrunk by 28.8% compared to 2013 (EC 2015a: 3). These numbers provide reasonable motives for increased cooperation from a neoliberal vantage point. As the third major school of thought in IR, constructivism will anticipate a growth of cooperation if the EU seeks to transfer its ideals to Ukraine, as for instance democracy, civil rights or equality before the law. All three significant schools of IR offer substantiated explanations for increased cooperation during the crisis. Therefore this work will analyse why the EU did so by analysing the nature of cooperation. The research question reads as follows:

*Why did the **Ukraine crisis** alter the cooperation
between Ukraine and the EU?*

Ukraine crisis is defined as "*the riots following the refusal of the Association Agreement, the occupation and separation of Crimea and the on-going conflict in East Ukraine*". The concept of **cooperation** describes "*actions between two actors with the goal of adjusting their policies to one another, rather by sharing or by transferring resources*". A precise derivation of this concept can be found in chapter 3.

1.2 Relevance of the Topic

As the Ukraine crisis is still up-to-date, not much has been published yet. Most researchers though agree that “Ukraine in general Crimea in particular is vastly important for the European Union and the Russian Federation (Erdemir 2014: 116)”. After years of convergence between the EU and Ukraine, Russia is “seeking to secure its spheres of influence (Begovic, Vukadinovic 2014: 15)”. According to a number of authors, Ukraine has evolved to a scene of clash of interests between the EU and Russia. The two major European players, Russia and the European Union, are now “in direct competition and like in the Security Dilemma, increasing one’s security means threatening the other’s one (Cumpanasu 2014: 69).” Some researchers consider the events in Ukraine as a “dramatic disruption not only of EU – Russia relations but in the post-Cold War security order as well (Haukkala 2015: 36)”. Inter alia, Haukkala recognises “the EU’s claim of normative hegemony in Europe, built on asymmetrically sovereignty-challenging approaches (ibid.)” as major catalyst for the crisis in Europe. John J. Mearsheimer agrees with this standpoint for the most part insofar as he does not blame Vladimir Putin’s assertive annexation of Crimea but accuses the West for “moving into Russia’s backyard and threatening its core strategic interests (2014: 77).” As “the West’s final tool for peeling Kiev away from Moscow”, he detects “its efforts to spread Western values and promote democracy in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states (ibid.: 79 ff.)”. Seemingly, Ukraine is perceived differently in the EU and Russia. Whereas the security factors plays a greater role from Russia’s perspective, the EU is considered as “an actor which has the sticks and carrots to push for greater openness and democratization in Ukraine (Padureanu 2015: 22)”. On the other hand, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was analysed as “the most essential means for economic integration [...] in the Union’s system (Tyushka 2015: 69).” Different motives for the EU’s increased cooperation with Ukraine are accordingly conceivable.

Neorealist approaches have been partly outstripped by liberal and especially constructivist theories in IR debates after the end of the cold war. In the case of the Ukrainian crisis however, security factors cannot be disregarded, for many authors emphasise on the security threat at Europe’s Eastern border. Analysing the crisis from different vantage points of IR theories will thus add another piece to this controversial debate.

Moreover, this case study will add empirical substance to the potential conflicts in Eastern Europe between the EU and Russia. Several former Soviet Republics, namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, intend to converge themselves rather with the EU than with Russia. If Russia maintains its aggressive nature, when it considers its interests as endangered, it will be interesting to speculate on the EU's behaviour on the basis of case studies. Georgia is already over an armed conflict with Russia in 2008, when two provinces seceded with Moscow's support. Moldova on the other hand is de facto a divided state, with the separated Eastern part Transnistria being supported by Moscow.

1.3 Theoretical and Methodological Approach

As theoretical framework, this paper draws on IR approaches. The three major theoretical schools of realism, liberalism and constructivism will be presented and applied to the case at hand in order to comprehend the EU's motives for strengthened cooperation. Working theses will be drawn from each strand of thought and later on confronted with the findings of the analysis part. Regarding the methodological approach, the analysis is based on the Ukrainian crisis as a case study. For that purpose, official documents released by the EU and press coverage by the European External Action Service (EEAS) are taken into account. Voices of involved politicians and journalists will be raised, too. The role of the EU will be analysed throughout the crisis, breaking out in November 2013 and lasting until today. Exemplary actions are therefore described and analysed in detail. The analysis will be conducted as qualitative content analysis of EU publications.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

After this introductory section, the theoretical background of this paper will be outlined in chapter 2. For this purpose, the three most relevant streams of IR will be illustrated and applied to the case at hand. Chapter 3 elucidates why the analysis is conducted as case study and likewise goes into detail with the strengths and limitations of case studies as methodological approach in general. In Chapter 4, the observation of increased cooperation throughout the crisis will be briefly substantiated. Then, the actual analysis of the EU's motives for cooperation is undertaken. Relevant acts of cooperation are described and confronted with all three IR theories. The final part of this paper provides a conclusion, answering the research question and discussing its implications, as well as giving an outlook on further research in this area.

2. Theoretical Framework

Theories in political sciences serve as analytical framework for scientific analyses. Depicting a simplified view of reality, they follow certain epistemological interests (cf. Lemke 2008: 5). In this chapter, a number of theoretical approaches will be introduced and applied to the Ukraine crisis. From each theory, a thesis will be drawn as working basis for the analysis part. Classical theories of European integration like federalism or neo-functionalism are not fully applicable as they primarily intend to illuminate European integration processes within the EU. Convergence processes with third countries are usually left out, although official membership negotiations are commenced. Even if “intergovernmentalists may prefer to talk of European co-operation, rather than of integration (Cini 2003: 95)”, the approach lays its focus on examining integration processes, too. Theories of IR seem to provide more appropriate approaches to explain the intensity of cooperation between the EU and a bordering country (cf. Gruber 2010: 141 ff.). Thus, the three major theoretical schools of IR will be presented and thereafter discussed in order to assess their usefulness of explaining relations between the EU and Ukraine in the course of the crisis.

2.1 Realism

Realist approaches in IR date back to antiquity with its most prominent advocate Thucydides. Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes resumed the tradition of classical realist thinkers up to contemporary realists who all have a number of core assumptions in common: (1) a pessimistic anthropology; (2) IR are characterised by conflict that are ultimately solved by war; (3) national security is the highest goal of every state. (cf. Jackson/Sørensen 2010: 59) The so-called neo-realists maintain those core assumptions, although they primarily focus on states’ policy outputs and the nature of the international system. In the following, an overview of the contemporary neo-realist debate, also referred to as structural realism, will be given.

The “leading contemporary neorealist thinker (Jackson/Sørensen 2010: 73)” Kenneth Waltz introduced his major work *Theory of International Politics* in 1979 in order to explain the peaceful post WWII period with the bipolar international system. Neglecting the human nature in his approach, Waltz lays his focus on the anarchic structure of the international system. Due to the absence of a superior supervisory body with a mechanism of sanctions, states’ main goal becomes self-preservation: “The international imperative is: “take care of yourself” (Waltz 1979: 197)”. International Organisations (IOs) such as the EU or North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) are seen as institutions established by powerful states in order

to preserve the current balance of power. Keeping the processes within the states in a black box, the only relevant actors within the international system remain the states. States are independent insofar as they are “the equal of all the others (Waltz 1979: 88)”, but they are still subject to the restraints given by the structure of the international system (cf. Schörnig 2006: 71 f.)

“For realists, international politics is synonymous with power politics (Mearsheimer 2007: 72)”. States, however, differentiate in their level of power, which is considered as the currency of IR (Waltz 1986: 333). The concept of power comprises not only the “tangible military assets that states possess”, but also socio-economic capabilities, the so-called latent power (Mearsheimer 2007: 72). The disparity in power potential determines the structure of the international system. States intend to obtain or even to increase their power in order to ensure their survival. Unlike classic realists, Waltz claims that states strive for more power to guarantee security but not for the sake of power. A balance of power can be achieved albeit war is always within the bounds of possibility. According to Waltz, a bipolar system like that having existed during the Cold War more likely creates a balance of power than a multipolar system (cf. Jackson/Sørensen 2010: 74 f.).

With no superior sanctioning power, cooperation among states is characterised by mistrust so that neo-realists consider collaboration as extremely unlikely. Under three circumstances, cooperation becomes yet possible: (1) Both states gain relative gains, i. e. from their perspective, both states gain more power than the other does. (2) The more powerful state enforces cooperation. (3) Minor states seek for alliances against superior powers (Schörnig 2006: 77).

Contemporary neo-realist thinkers are divided into two factions, differing from each other in the question: how much power is sufficient? Defensive realists with its most prominent supporter Kenneth Waltz assume that states do not challenge the structure of the international system by maximising their power. The risk of being punished by the system is far too big. Offensive realists, on the other hand, argue that states attempt to acquire as much power as possible because “overwhelming power is the best way to ensure one’s own survival (Mearsheimer 2007: 72)”. Hence, the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and as a consequence thereof, the end of a bipolar world, is difficult to explain from a defensive realist point of view.

EU-Ukraine Cooperation from a Neo-Realist Point of View

Prima facie, neorealist theory does not allow deducing a working hypothesis from its core assumptions that supports the initially mentioned thesis of increased cooperation between the EU and Ukraine. First, the EU is regarded as IO, which realists do not perceive as an actor of IR. Second, reasoning cooperation from a realist point of view entails difficulties since cooperation in general is considered highly unlikely.

However, this work will not examine actorness of the EU so that the IO character will be neglected. Especially in Common and Foreign Security Policy (CFSP), the EU has not always acted homogeneously. During the Libyan crisis in 2011, the EU provided only humanitarian support (EEAS 2015a) whilst MS like France or the United Kingdom (UK) autonomously engaged in the international military alliance. In the course of the Ukrainian crisis, EU member states, particularly the powerful states Germany and France, have for the major part acted homogeneously. Considering the EU as accumulation of states with congruent or interests is accordingly valid in this case.

As illustrated in the previous section, the occurrence of cooperation on the other hand faces a lot of constraints in a realist worldview. First, both states gain relative gains. The Ukrainian crisis is not only affecting the member states' economy but also the balance of power in Eastern Europe. After years of convergence between the EU and Ukraine, Russia sees its very own sphere of influence go astray. Having lost the pro-Russian president Viktor Yanukovich as ally, Russia is now actively supporting separatist movements in Eastern Ukraine (Oliphant 2015). The EU on the other hand fears that longstanding commitment in Ukraine was futile. Hence, increased cooperation with Ukraine is imperative, unless the EU does not want to risk a latent security threat, emanating from a bordering country. Cooperation with Ukraine will not instantly entail relative gains for the EU, although it will avoid losses in relation to Russia. Thus, cooperation will at least preserve the balance of power in Eastern Europe. It is therefore appropriate to employ a defensive realist approach like that of Waltz.

Even if this work will examine cooperation from a European perspective, collaboration will solely occur if Ukraine, too, either considers it beneficially or the EU enforces Ukraine to cooperate or Ukraine seeks for an alliance against the superior power Russia. Within realist thinking, survival, equivalent to preserving territorial integrity, is every state's highest goal (Mearsheimer 2007: 74). Ukraine's

territorial integrity is severely damaged after the secession of Crimea and Russia's support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine. Ukraine is accordingly forced to ally itself with the EU, its only hope to overcome the separatist movement. Even if success cannot be foreseen, converging towards the EU remains the only logical step for Ukraine. Hence, neorealism clearly provides a proper theoretical background to support the alleged observation:

*Thesis I: The EU increased its cooperation with Ukraine
due to balance of power motives.*

2.2 Liberalism

Liberal thinkers of IR share assumptions with liberal economists insofar as individuals are considered as self-interested and competitive. However, they also claim that people share plenty interests, which allows a strong basis for cooperation. Thus, neoliberal theories emerged in the 1970ies and 1980ies when realist theories had difficulties in explaining intensified international cooperation. Especially Robert Keohane's work *After Hegemony* (1984) is considered as major step in neoliberal theory, as it acknowledges the importance of IOs due to the increasing interdependence between states.

Whilst nation states remain the dominant players in IR, IOs are assessed a key role when it comes to confining the anarchic character of the international system. Emphasising the importance of international organisations, neoliberalism has become "a prominent approach to studying IOs and patterns of international cooperation more generally (Martin 2007: 110)". Nation states do not limit cooperation to high politics as they expect benefits from collaboration in e. g. economy or science, too. Especially economic profit is considered as major driver of international cooperation. The restraints for cooperation between nation states are substantially lower than in neorealist approaches, insofar as cooperation will occur, too, if both states acquire absolute gains. Hence, neoliberal thinkers tend to work with game theory approaches in order to explain the likelihood of cooperation. Like in realism, the international system is considered as anarchically, even though the anarchic character is constrained by the numerous interdependencies that are induced by a high level of international cooperation (cf. Jackson/Sørensen 2010: 96 f.). There is a number of strands of thought in neo liberalist approaches such as interdependence theory or regime theory. For the purpose of analysing the motives of cooperation however, a more in-depth illustration of different neoliberal

approaches is redundant, as most of the approaches share the presented assumptions on cooperation.

EU-Ukraine Cooperation from a Neoliberal Point of View

Assuming a neoliberal approach, increased cooperation between the EU and Ukraine will probably occur if both parties gain absolute profits from the cooperation. Having suffered from nearly two years of crisis and subsequent war in Eastern Ukraine, the state and people of Ukraine will massively benefit from intensified cooperation with a partner as strong as the EU. However, this work examines cooperation from a European point of view. In the first place, deeper cooperation with the war-ridden Ukraine implies considerable expenses for the EU so that enhanced cooperation due to the conflict is more difficult to justify from a neoliberal vantage point.

Table 1:
EU-Ukraine “trade in goods” statistics (Adapted from: EC 2015)

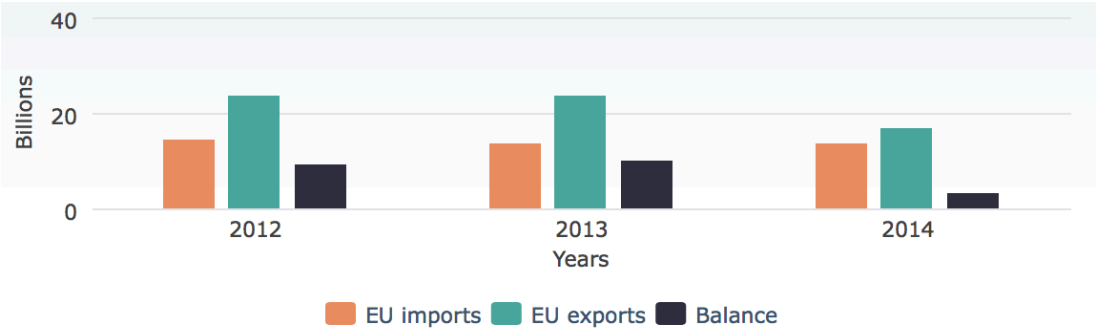


Table 1 shows the development of the EU-Ukraine trade in goods from 2012 to 2014. Having remained at the same level in 2012 and 2013, the EU exports to Ukraine considerably shrunk in 2014 while imports from the Ukraine decreased little. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ukraine’s GDP is expected to contract in 2015 for another 9%, due to the “unresolved conflict in the East, which took a heavier than expected toll on the economy in the first quarter of 2015 (IMF 2015).” The current development will definitely leave its trace on the trade relations with the EU. While exports from the EU to Ukraine continually shrink, the EU on the other hand has considerably boosted its investments by means of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Projects both in private and public sector were funded with €1.21 billion in 2014, compared with 800€ million in the previous year (EBRD 2015).

With economic growth being the major variable for cooperation, liberal approaches do apparently not provide unambiguous theses for the observed increase of

cooperation between the two actors. In this case, however, not only absolute gains may serve as explanation, but also the EU's fear of losing in absolute gains. Provided the EU will not enhance its engagement in Ukraine, the loss in absolute gains will presumably be higher than its current investments. Consequently, neoliberal approaches offer explanations in this context. Thus, cooperative actions, undertaken by both players in the course of the crisis, will be analysed, in order to detect liberal motives as basis for cooperation. The working thesis for liberal approaches therefore reads as follows:

*Thesis II: The EU increased its cooperation with Ukraine
in order to avoid economic losses.*

2.3 Constructivism

Constructivist theories in IR strongly arose in the 1980ies, when it became obvious that neorealist thinkers experienced difficulties in explaining the shifting power balance after the end of the Cold War. Although different constructivist approaches are characterised by major differences, they all share one core assumption: there is no such thing as a given reality. Instead, there is a social world, being constituted both by agents and structures (cf. Ulbert 2006: 409). The most influential constructivist is Alexander Wendt who summarised his findings in his main work *Social Theory of International Politics* in 1999. In this section, his theory of social constructivism will be presented and afterwards employed on the question up to what extent it supports increased cooperation in the examined case.

Similar to realists like Waltz or Mearsheimer, Wendt's admeasures major importance to structures that shape the international system. Yet he adds intangible factors such as ideas and perceptions to material ones. Just like neoliberal thinkers, IOs play a decisive role in IR because they internalise particular conceptions. Transferring those conceptions, IOs even have the power to impact on states' identities and interests (cf. Ulbert 2006: 414 f.)

Even if Wendt assumes an anarchic character of the international system, too, it does not necessarily imply the self-help system, which is claimed by realist thinkers. "Anarchy is what states make of it", he accordingly headlined a much-noticed essay in 1992. Interdependences between states may lead to conversion of states' identities, which has considerable consequences for cooperation: states with shared identities and interests will most likely cooperate. Moreover, constructivist theorists

adopted the concept of “soft power”, which is considered as definatory power through the “emanation of a society’s lifestyle and values into the rest of the world (Hartmann 2001: 69)”. In connection with an actor’s purpose of transferring its ideals, the soft power constitutes a strong potential for international cooperation.

EU-Ukraine Cooperation from a Constructivist Point of View

After the collapse of the USSR, interdependences between the EU and Ukraine increased significantly, not only politically but also economically and socio-culturally. During the Orange Revolution in 2004/2005, pro-European Ukrainians did not accept the alleged electoral fraud that had initially brought the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovich into presidential office. Due to immense public pressure, the election was repeated with the result that the leader of the opposition Viktor Yushchenko was voted president. Eventually, Yanukovich won the following presidential elections after the opposition was divided over the distribution of offices (BBC News 2005). In November 2013, the pro-Russian president drew people’s discontent again, when he refused to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union, due to Russian pressure. Both acts of civil disobedience finally ended with the takeover of pro-European governments (Reuters 2014). Those two events illustrate how far European cultural imperatives have soaked into Ukrainian society. No longer do people tolerate political developments, which they consider as unjustly.

The convergence of societal identities was received favourably from the EU. Cecilia Malmström, current Commissioner for International Trade and Trade Agreements, demands a European future for Ukraine, referring to “The events of Maidan Square [...] a call for reforms and stronger ties to Europe (2014)”. The official factsheet about the EU-Ukraine relations states that “The EU took note of the unprecedented public support in Ukraine for political association and economic integration with the EU (EEAS 2015b: 2)”. Already in 2009, the EU established the Eastern Partnership in order to enhance cooperation with 6 Eastern Europe countries, Ukraine being one of it. The Association Agreement, too, was signed in 2014 so that there seems to be correlation between pro-European movements in Ukraine and intensified cooperation with the EU. Among Ukrainian citizens, there has been a stable support for its pro European policy over the last months. While 57% prefer to have strong ties with the EU, only 11% rather approach Russia, with 22% undecided. However, there is a great disparity in support between the West (72%) and the East (39%) of Ukraine (Pew Research Center 2015).

Based on these exemplary actions and polls, cooperation from a constructivist vantage point is highly likely. The EU acts as a role model for Western norms and values and intends to transfer them to Ukraine. The government as well as the majority of the citizens of Ukraine on the other hand agree with these ideals over time. Thus, the EU managed to cause a convergence of norms and values of both players by means of soft power. The thesis derived from constructivist theory therefore reads as follows:

Thesis III: The EU increased its cooperation with Ukraine in order to disseminate its norms and values.

3. Methodological Approach

The on-going conflict in Eastern Ukraine has revealed the still existing conflict potential in Eastern Europe. The EU's convergence to former Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) like Ukraine is considered as a threat to Russia's sphere of influence. Thus, a conflict like that in Eastern Ukraine was perhaps not expectable, yet did it not emerge surprisingly. In the course of the crisis, the EU has intensified its cooperation with Ukraine: but for which reason? Were balance of power motives crucial? Did the EU grab the chance to impact on Ukraine's government during a period of helplessness and neediness to enforce policies permeated of Western ideals? Or did the EU expect mid- or long-term economic benefits from a deeper cooperation? In this section, the methodological approach, trying to either prove or falsify the proposed theses, will be described.

3.1 Research Design: Single Case Study

Case studies are considered as a research method being nowadays relevant in most branches of research, e.g. psychology, anthropology, business but also political science. Statistical analysis of cross-case observational data has become subject to increasing scepticism as "this research bears only a faint relationship to the true experiment (Gerring 2009: 1134)", due to a variety of reasons such as the difficulty of identifying causal mechanisms or erroneous data drawn from questionable sources. However, single case studies will not always present the adequate research method. According to Yin (2014: 4), "the more that your questions seek to explain some present circumstance (e.g., "how" or "why" some social phenomenon works) the more that case study research will be relevant." Yin thus emphasizes on the type of the research question (why, how) but also describes

two more conditions that have to be satisfied when using single case study as method (see Table 2 below). According to Yin's conditions, the analysis of the motives for increased cooperation between the EU and Ukraine in the course of the crisis can adequately be conducted as case study.

Table 2:

Relevant Situations for Different Research Methods (Adapted from: Yin 2014: 9)

Method	(1) Form of Research Question	(2) Requires Control of Behavioral Events	(3) Focusses on Contemporary Events
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival Analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/no
History	How, why?	No	No
Case Study	How, why?	No	Yes

3.1.1 Correlations and Causal Relationships

In the course of the Ukrainian crisis, an increase of relations between the EU and Ukraine has been observed. Hence, a causal relationship between the crisis and the EU's relations with Ukraine is assumed. Many researchers however, refuse the verifiability of cause-effect relationships in social sciences, even though, counterfactual tests represents an opportunity to prove causal relationships. When using this method, a distinction between necessary and sufficient conditions is significant. In the case of the Ukraine crisis it is obvious that the crisis cannot constitute a necessary condition for the appearance of intensified collaboration. Numerous different scenarios, leading to enhanced cooperation between the EU and Ukraine, are conceivable such as changes of government in prominent EU Member States or having the EU council Presidency occupied by one of Ukraine's neighbouring countries (cf. Daase, MacKenzie, Moosauer, Stykow 2009: cf. 154 f.).

Thus, the impact of the crisis on can only be assessed, when incorporating the EU's motives for cooperation, which are derived from the different theories of IR. Dependent (Y) and independent (X) variables are therefore determined. The dependent variable relates to the outcome so that the EU-Ukraine relations are Y in this case. X refers to the explanatory factor that Y is supposedly dependent on. It is thus tested in the analysis part, whether power considerations (neorealism), economic interests (neoliberalism) or transfer of norms and values (constructivism)

are determined as X. A potential causality detected in the analysis will be thoroughly evaluated in the conclusion (cf. Gerring 2009: 1137 f.)

3.1.2 Limitations of Case Studies

Another definition of case studies by Gerring (2009: 1138) reads as follows: “A case study may be understood as the intensive study of a single case for the purpose of understanding a larger class of cases.” Transferring this definition to the case at hand reveals the weakness, case studies are often criticised for. There are probably too many conditions in the case of the Ukraine crisis to be matched, so that it will be intricate to apply the findings of this assignment one-to-one on similar cases. (1) Ukraine is a bordering country of the EU. (2) Ukraine is seen as sphere of interest for both the EU and Russia. (3) The EU intensified cooperation with Ukraine for years. (4) Russian minorities in East Ukraine, just to name a few. There are cases with similar parameters such as the Russo-Georgian War in 2008 that may possibly have caused a speed-up of the relations between the EU and Georgia. Comparable scenarios arising prospectively however are easily conceivable. The six countries of the EU’s EaP, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova Ukraine, are invariably former USSR territory and therefore potential centre of conflicts if Russia considers its interests as endangered. The cases of Georgia and recently Ukraine have shown that Russia is ready to make use of military forces. Every case is different, even so this paper provides points of reference what to expect from a similar scenario in the future. Likewise do case studies not necessarily have to be adduced “for understanding a larger class of cases” but may contribute to a deeper understanding of the examined case (cf. Yin 2009: 20 f.). Limitations of cases studies thus have to be considered when assessing the scope of this paper, however they do not invalidate the application of this method in this case.

3.2 Evaluation Method: Qualitative Analysis

The examination of the dependent variable (Y) EU cooperation with Ukraine will be conducted as qualitative analysis as follows. In order to analyse the EU’s motives for cooperation, this work will mainly draw on a database provided by the European External Action Service (EEAS) that lists all actions ensuing from the EU towards Ukraine. In a qualitative analysis, major acts of cooperation (such as the Association Agreement or significant financial aid) will be described and assessed in the examined period of time. Each collaborative action will be confronted with the theoretical approaches described in chapter 2. However, actions due to the conflict such as ceasefire negotiations will be left out, as they distort the result.

A qualitative method to analyse the relevant data was chosen because it ascertains best possible an in-depth examination which is crucial for a single case study. Characteristic terms for quantitative research such as quantity or frequency are no part of the analysis. The difference between both research methods is that quantitative research wants to achieve generalisation while qualitative research methods aim at particularity (cf. Vromen 2010: 255 f.). Thus, a qualitative-interpretive research method can be applied here because this paper intends to (1) detect the EU's motives for cooperation and to (2) reveal the impact of the Ukraine crisis on cooperation between the EU and Ukraine.

3.3 Concept of Cooperation

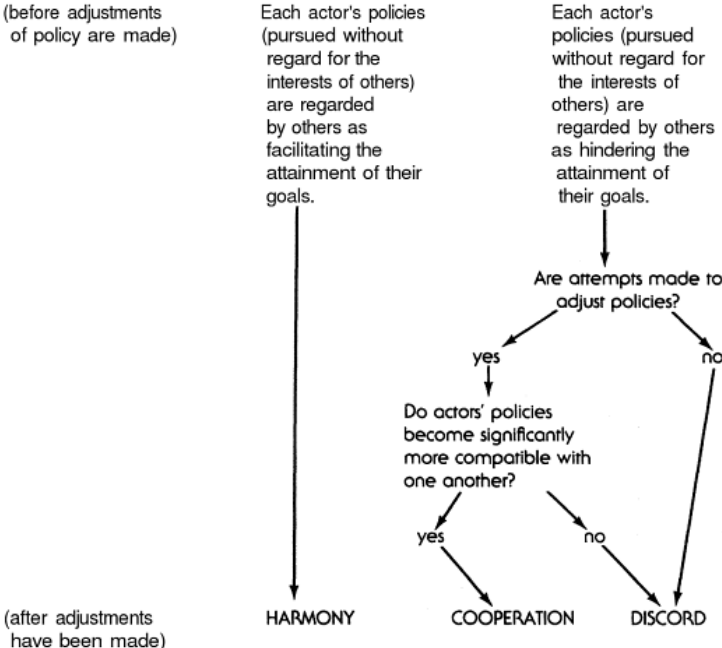
In order to analyse the cooperation between Ukraine and the EU, an appropriate concept of cooperation has to be determined. Cooperation is a major component of IR theories, although “we still do not adequately [...] explain international cooperation (Sterling-Folker 2002: 1)”. Theoretical approaches primarily focus on explanations under which circumstances cooperation occurs but often lack clear definitions of what cooperation in the first place means. More economic approaches like that of Mancur Olson who published pioneering works dealing with collective action do neither go into detail on what cooperation actually is. However, this work will not examine if appropriate circumstances for cooperation prevailed in this case but why increased cooperation took place in the analysed period.

Still, definitions can be deduced from what theories of IR state about the emergence of cooperation. Robert Keohane (1984: 50) claims that “when shared interests are sufficiently important [...], cooperation can emerge” and he delineates the term of cooperation from harmony and discord. The figure below shows that “cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behaviour to the actual or anticipated preferences of others (Axelrod/Keohane 1985: 226)”, which forms a suitable starting point for postulating a self-created definition of what cooperation encompasses. When adjusting policies, states usually share resources such as time, effort, material, money or human capital (cf. Lengfelder). But cooperation may occur, too, if no exchange of resources takes places as in the case of development cooperation. It appears reasonably to incorporate development cooperation for this work as well because Ukraine is considerably less industrialised than most parts of the EU.

As shown in the figure, Keohane takes the view that cooperation will only take place after “the actor's policies become significantly more compatible with one another”.

Even if Keohane assumes that “cooperation [...] does not imply an absence of conflict (1984: 53), his definition is expedient for this paper as he refers conflict to “policies (that) are actually or potentially in conflict (1984:54)” but not to a conflictual scenario in high politics between two actors. This paper though will moderate Keohane’s definition by taking away “significantly” and add components described above. Consequently, cooperation will be defined as *all actions between two actors with the goal of adjusting their policies to one another, rather by sharing or by transferring resources.*

Table 3:
„Harmony, Cooperation & Discord (Keohane 1984: 53)“



4. Analysis

In this section, the boosted relations between the EU and Ukraine in the course of the crisis are being depicted and then analysed. An abstract on EU-Ukraine relations will introduce to this chapter on the one hand to provide an overview on the state of affairs. On the other hand, this abstract will illustrate the improved cooperation since outburst of the Ukrainian crisis in late 2013. This abstract is deemed necessarily for drawing an appropriate conclusion. In order to detect the EU’s main purposes for strengthening its relations, a number of major acts of cooperation are tested against the three theoretical approaches of IR, which were introduced in chapter 2. This analysis does not only cover countable progress in the form of treaties or binding decisions, but also official statements to allow a better

insight into both actors' relationship during the examined period of time. This chapter will conclude with an interim result of the analysis.

4.1 Abstract EU-Ukraine Relations

The relations between Ukraine and the EU began with the collapse of the USSR and, as a consequence thereof, the independence of Ukraine in 1991. Under the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States programme (TACIS), collaboration in terms of technical assistance took place from 1991 on. The EU and Ukraine signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) in 1994 in order to establish a further-reaching framework for cooperation. Despite expressing the claim for improving civil rights and public government, the contract primarily focused on economic issues. After it came into force in 1998, the document was the basis for both actors' relations. Replacing the PCA, another action plan was finalised in 2005, concentrating mainly on judicial convergence, the establishment of a stable market economy and political development but leaving out the opportunity of a future entry into the EU. Talks on a prospective free trade area were initiated in 2007 and marked the beginning of pre-negotiations for the AA. The Russo-Georgian War in 2008 accelerated those talks once again. In 2009, Ukraine joined the EaP as one of six former SSR. The EaP intends to complement the bilateral talks and contracts with the goal of political and economic association (cf. ENPI 2007). With the newly elected president Viktor Yanukovych, the convergence process was slowed down considerably in 2010 despite his reaffirmation of further convergence. Due to Russian pressure, negotiations were delayed.

In March 2012, the text of the AA was finalised so that the way for politicians both in Ukraine and the EU Member States was paved to adopt the AA in the national parliaments. Functioning as successor of the CPA, the contract was considered as milestone in EU-Ukraine relations (cf. EC 2012a). After the realisation of the AA slowed down in the following months, the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council urged Ukraine "to give urgent attention to accelerating its implementation (Consilium 2012a)". Due to a "strong concern over the state of the rule of law in Ukraine", the EU warned that "any progress towards political association and economic integration will depend on Ukraine's performance (ibid.)". Stefan Füle, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood, took the same line a little later: "respect for common values and the rule of law will be of crucial importance to the speed of political association and economic integration with the European Union (EC 2012b)".

In July 2012, the signing of the amended Visa Facilitation Agreement certifies again the then different relation of both sides. For the major part, this agreement facilitates travelling for those Ukrainians who belong to NGOs or work as journalists. Both groups represent in a large part advocates of the convergence with the EU (cf. EC 2015b). Thus, an improvement of visa requirements, limited to a typically government critical group, can easily be considered as shot across the bows. After the parliamentary election in September 2012, both Commissioner Füle and High Representative Ashton expressed their “concern about the conduct of the post electoral process, which was marred by irregularities, delays in the vote count and lack of transparency in the electoral commissions (Consilium 2012b)”, assessing this vote a “deterioration in several areas compared to standards previously achieved (ibid.)”. According to international observers, the government supposedly manipulated the elections (cf. Hermann 2012). Consequently, the Country Progress Report 2012 for Ukraine, issued by the EU in March 2013, turned out to be sobering because despite of achievements in some fields, “these steps were largely overshadowed by instances of selective justice and the conduct of the October 2012 parliamentary elections (EC 2013a).” In June 2013, the EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council welcomed Ukraine’s progress. The government of Ukraine eventually initiated the implementation of reforms, which were jointly defined in the Association Agenda, so that “the shared objective of the possible signing of the AA including DCFTA by the time of the Eastern Partnership Summit in November (Consilium 2013)” seemed reasonably. After a period of cooperative standstill, the Ukrainian government had obviously initialled processes to be able to sign the AA in the near future. However, not least due to Russian pressure, the signing of the AA was adjourned sine die, only one week prior to the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. This decision by the Moscow-close Ukrainian government marked the beginning of the Ukrainian crisis, as it triggered the first mass protests against the government, called the Euromaidan¹ movement.

The Euromaidan protesters lay the foundation for the Ukrainian revolution in February 2014. President Yanukovich was forced to flee from Kyiv so that the way for an interim government was paved (cf. The Telegraph 2014). Facing the recent events in Ukraine, High Representative Ashton convened a high level meeting to mobilise EU support for Ukraine in order to “support the stability of Ukraine, both economically and politically (cf. EEAS 2014b).” In March 2014, the European

¹ The Euromaidan movement was called after the name of the central Maidan square in Kyiv, where the pro-European protesters used to gather.

Council (EC) endorsed a financial support package for Ukraine, worth at least €11 billion. This package on the one hand aims at stabilizing the economic and financial situation in Ukraine, but will also “assist the transition, encourage political and economic reforms [...], including those set out in the Association Agreement /Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (EC 2014a)”. Even though large parts of the support are owed to the political and economic instability caused by the riots, this massive support is an obvious sign from the EU, not to drop the convergence process but undertake serious efforts to advance it. In March 2014, the political provisions of the AA were signed, to demonstrate “both sides attach to this relationship and our joint will to take it further (Consilium 2014a)”. As important parts of the AA were left out, this signature must rather be considered as a symbolic procedure, showing both partners’ commitment to follow a common path. Already in June 2014, the remaining provisions of the AA were signed. However, after several trilateral meetings between representatives from EU, Ukraine and Russia, it was decided to delay the commencement of the DCFTA until 1 January 2016 so that Russian concerns regarding economic losses can be cleared out adequately (cf. Consilium 2014b). Trade preferences for Ukraine will though be extended until the end of 2015. (cf. Consilium 2014c). However, “this decision paves the way for the provisional application of much of the remainder of the Agreement to start on 1 November (Consilium 2014b).” In March 2015, the updated Association Agenda was signed which will be instrumental in guiding the process of enhanced reforms and economic modernisation in Ukraine. This document constitutes “the main political tool for the implementation and monitoring of the Association Agreement (Consilium 2015a).” It not only provides a list of reform priorities such as election reform or taxation reform, but also concrete measures (cf. EEAS 2015c). After the second meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Council in December 2015, the Council “welcomed the significant progress” and both sides welcomed “their continued commitment to deepening the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the EU (Consilium 2015b)”.

Aside from profound progress concerning the implementation of the AA, numerous small projects were established in Ukraine over the course of the last two years. A Support Group for Ukraine was created to ensure that immediate benefits can be obtained from EU resources (cf. EC 2014b). The State Building Contract was concluded to help Ukraine’s transition and improve the role of civil society (cf. EC 2014c). The EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine) was formed in 2014 in order to establish revised security strategies, so that this mission “contributes to strengthening the rule of law in

Ukraine (Consilium 2014d)”. For the purpose of supporting national, regional and local authorities to develop and implement effective economic policies, the EU Support to Re-Launch the Economy programme (EU SURE) was launched in 2015 (cf. EC 2015c). All these acts of cooperation over the last two years exceed the level of cooperation between the EU and Ukraine in the previous years by far.

4.2 Analysis of the Cooperation

In the analysis section, major acts of cooperation since outburst of the crisis are analysed insofar as the EU’s motives for increased cooperation are examined against the three theoretical approaches of IR. The signing of the AA plus subsequent actions is considered as primary act of cooperation, as it lifted the relations between the EU and Ukraine on a new level. The massive support package, adopted in 2014, will be scrutinised, too. The volume of up to €12.8 billion exceeds any third country support from the EU by far. Press releases, statements of politicians and the actual content of the cooperative action will be taken into account.

4.2.1 Analysis of the Association Agreement

The AA depicts the foundation of the boosted cooperation between the EU and Ukraine. After years of negotiating, the political provisions of the AA were finally signed on 21 March 2014, only 4 months after the former Ukraine government blew the signing ceremony at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. The remainder of the contract was signed three months later. Even though, the AA does not imply future EU membership, the then newly elected Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko called this event “the first but most decisive step (Deutsche Welle 2014)” towards EU membership. On 1 November 2014, the AA came into force provisionally. The agreement has yet to be ratified in a few EU Member States, whose national law requires referenda. As soon as this has happened, the agreement will enter into force effectively. As “main political tool for the implementation and monitoring of the Association Agreement (Consilium 2015b)”, the Association Agenda was signed in March 2015. In June 2015, the first meeting of the Association Committee eventually took place. Due to Russian concerns, the entry into force of the DCFTA was delayed until 1 January 2016. These cooperative acts will now be analysed from the different theoretical vantage points.

The Signing of the Political Provisions of the AA

Hermann van Rompuy, President of the European Council issued a press release on this occasion. He states that this gesture “recognises the aspirations of the

people of Ukraine to live in a country, governed by values, by democracy and the rule of law [...] and the popular yearning [...] for a European way of life (Consilium 2014e).” Furthermore, van Rompuy thinks, the AA will “support and strengthen the political resolve of the leaders and citizens who want to build a democratic and inclusive Ukraine, protecting all groups and minorities (ibid.).” He emphasises that the economic provisions of the AA are soon to be signed, as they form a single instrument. “The European Union also stands ready to help restore macro-economic stability in the country and to remove custom duties on Ukrainian exports to the EU [...], so as to advance some of the full Agreement’s trade benefits (ibid.).” The independent non-profit organisation EUobserver gives more in-depth insights from different angles. For the Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, “this deal meets the aspirations of millions of Ukrainians that want to be part of the European Union (Rettmann 2014)”, even though, only 21 out of 1378 pages were signed. These pages however, contain passages that are crucial in Ukraine’s conflict with Russia, as the EU declares itself as “committed to promoting the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders (EC Treaties Office 2014: 2).” The EU’s commitment came only one day after the Russian Duma approved Crimea’s annexation (cf. Englund, Lally & Branigin 2014). EU diplomats were concerned though about some Ukrainian’s frustration, since “people have died for the EU (Rettmann 2014).”

Considering these statements, it becomes obvious that, on the one hand, the EU is the driver for improved relations. On the other hand, the EU’s motives for a symbolic signing gesture are slightly unveiled. First, the EU assumes that the people of Ukraine yearn for approaching to their lifestyle, values and norms more closely. Second, the EU also intends to accelerate such a convergence process. Thus, the EU intends to operate as a definatory power so as to impact on states’ identities and interests. Constructivist approaches explain in a major part the EU’s motives for increased cooperation in this case. There are further statements however, who lead to different explanatory approaches. Van Rompuy stresses the importance not of the remainder but explicitly the economic provisions of the AA. Trade benefits will self-evidently benefit both sides. Supporting Ukraine’s macro-economic stability however, will impose high costs on the EU. The EU is obviously pursuing economic benefits from a deeper collaboration with Ukraine, but is initially willing to stabilise the country with considerable financial expenses. The EU seems to improve its relations to Ukraine not because of economic benefits but employs promises of economic benefits as means to a deeper political cooperation. Power of balance factors do play a secondary role, insofar as the EU commits to Ukraine’s territorial

integrity. Constructivist approaches however, offer the best explanation for the EU motives in this case.

The Signing of the Remainder of the AA

On 27 June 2014, the EU not only signed the remainder of the AA with Ukraine but also AAs with Moldova and Georgia. The president of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso referred to this event as “a historic day: for the three countries, for the European Union and for the whole of Europe (EC 2014d).” According to him, it is a solemn commitment for the EU, to support these countries “along the road of transforming their countries into stable, prosperous democracies (ibid.).” The AA will enable the countries to drive reforms, to consolidate the rule of law and good governance as well as give an impetus to economic growth by granting access to the world’s largest internal market. In his statement, Barroso stresses that these agreements are “not to compete with – or intrude in – our partner’s relations with any neighbour (ibid).”

The final contraction encompasses the following objectives: (a) the gradual rapprochement based on common values. (b) The establishment of an appropriate framework for political dialogue. (c) The promotion and preservation of peace and stability. (d) The integration into the EU internal market. (e) Enhanced cooperation in the field of justice, freedom and security. (f) Establishment of increasingly close cooperation in other areas of mutual interest (cf. EC Treaties Office 2014: 4). Economically, this contract will require considerably more financial investments from the EU, than it can expect from trade facilitations over the course of the next several years. In fact, Ukraine will “enjoy better access to the bloc than the EU will get in return in the first few years (Emmott 2014).”

Regarding the sole number of pages, the AA appears as primarily economic contract. This does not imply however that the AA is an EU tool for first and foremost generating more economic benefits. Instead, the rapprochement of European perceptions of human rights, environmental standards, the legal system, democracy etc. constitutes the emphasis of the AA with regard to the substance. “Neither political and economic pressure, nor direct military intervention, have managed to compete with Europe’s soft power (Samadashvili 2014)”, an article comments after the signing ceremony. It directly refers to Russia’s inability to pull Ukraine away from Europe. Steve Rosenberg, BBC’s correspondent in Moscow, accordingly detects “irritation or even anger here that Moscow has failed to convince Ukraine not to sign this historic deal with the EU (Rosenberg 2014).” The reciprocity

of Europe's soft power and definatory power regarding its perceptions constitutes a strong instrument of power. The language of EU politicians, statements and documents is permeated with terms like freedom, democracy independence, prosperity, individuality and such. Even if the EU seeks to cooperate in high politics as well, it is not the trigger for increased cooperation. After Russian complaints, the DCFTA was again delayed until 2016. Tariffs abolitions for Ukrainian exports into the EU were extended until this date so that the Ukrainian economy would not suffer severely from this delay. The EU economy on the other hand would not directly benefit from a deeper collaboration with Ukraine for another period.

The Association Process

The final Association Agenda was endorsed in March 2015 as "the principal vehicle for monitoring and assessment of Ukraine's progress in the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (EEAS 2015d: 3)." The agenda contains a list of short-term priorities for action that gives hints at the EU's priorities. The constitution will be reformed "through an inclusive and participatory process including active consultations with civil society (ibid.: 5)." Due to inconsistencies during previous ballots, the electoral legislation will be harmonised with European standards. The judicial system as well as public administration has to undergo reforms, "focusing on European principles of public administration (ibid.: 6)." In order to fight corruption, "the list of exceptions from the sphere of public procurement [will be brought in line] with the EU public procurement directives (ibid.: 7)." As only short-term priority, directly connected to economy, the regulatory burden for businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, is going to be reduced. Security issues do not appear on this list at all (cf. EEAS: 2015). Moreover, there is a shift of content in the Association Agenda, compared to that of the AA. Only 10 of 58 pages deal with economic or trade related issues, whereas political issues dominate the actual contract.

During the meetings of the Association Committee, European and Ukrainian diplomats discussed the implementation progress of the AA. The first meeting of the Association Council was held in December 2014, one month after the AA entered into force provisionally. In its press release, the EU and Ukraine reconfirmed "the common objective to build a democratic, stable and prosperous country (Consilium 2014f)" as well as the council "acknowledged the importance of intensifying the much needed political and economic reforms in Ukraine (ibid.)." After another year, the second meeting took place in December 2015 with another press release, held in a more positive tone. The council "welcomed the significant progress (EEAS

2015e)” since the last meeting, as well as their “continued commitment to deepening the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the EU on the basis of respect for common values and their effective promotion (ibid.).” The EU welcomed the “strong political commitment of the Ukrainian authorities to bring the reform process forward (ibid.).” Both parties are not at eye level but they converged within the process of association. High Representative Federica Mogherini also welcomed Ukraine’s efforts towards visa liberalisation. She “encourages Ukraine to continue the efforts to fulfil the remaining recommendations, notably on anti-corruption (EEAS 2015f)”, knowing, how important visa liberalisation for the Ukrainian people is.

The official EU documents on the association process give some indication of the EU’s primary motives for cooperation. Even though the Ukrainian crisis is not solved yet, security aspects are rarely addressed, not to mention tangible actions. Economic reforms are encouraged by the EU and will benefit the European economy with certainty on a long-term basis. Short-term effects are rather unlikely. The EU’s main focus of harmonisation however, lies in the realms of legal justice, human rights, civil rights and related topics. The EU transfers its perceptions not only via means of soft power but also considers itself consciously as definatory power. The above-cited press releases create the impression that the EU deems its standards and regulations superior to that of Ukraine and thus worth disseminating. Ukraine apparently agrees with this view. The analysed sources regarding the association process offer obviously constructivist explanatory approaches for the EU’s motives.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Financial Support Package

In addition to political backing, the EU has also committed a €12.8 billion support package for the next few years to support the reform process. Over €7 billion are already either disbursed or committed by the EU and European financial institutions. €500 million of €1.565 billion of grants are distributed already. The EU and Ukraine agreed on a state building contract worth €355 million, intended for the fight against corruption as well as reforms of the public administration, the judiciary, the constitution and electoral framework. A €10 million civil society programme to reinforce its capacity to support and monitor the reform process was funded by grants, too. Another €110 million programme aims at developing the private sector and fostering Ukraine’s economic recovery. Table 4 outlines, from which EU budget the grants stem from. €2.21 billion in loans as macro-financial assistance were provided out of the EU budget. The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the EBRD

added €3.3 billion “to help, inter alia, the transport, energy, agriculture, SMEs, municipal, environment, banking and natural resource sectors (EEAS 2015g).”

Table 4:
Support to Ukraine: Grants (Adapted from EEAS 2015g)

Source	Indicative Amount (in € million)
Annual Action Programme (AAP) 2014	140-200
AAPs (average) for 2015-2020	780
Umbrella programme (“more for more”) for 2015-2020	240-300
Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF)	200-250
Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)	20
CFSP	15
Overall development assistance (grants)	1,565

A significant part of the financial support is targeted at stabilising the difficult economic situation of Ukraine, not least due to the conflict in the East. Economic support is primarily backed up in the form of loans. The same applies for investments in tangible sectors such as infrastructure or energy that are primarily executed by the European financial institutions EIB and EBRD. Yet, the state contract was funded exclusively with grants. Thus, the allocation of grants and loans gives a hint at the EU’s primary motives for cooperation with Ukraine. Considering the massive economic support then again attests the EU’s economic ambitions in Ukraine on a long-term basis. Power politics however, play a subordinated role in the context of this support package.

4.3 Interim Result

In this analysis part, the EU’s motives for increased cooperation were scrutinised in order to detect, which theoretical approach serves best for explaining the EU’s motives. Neorealist theorists emphasise the superior role of high politics due to states’ main goal of preserving their territorial integrity. States therefore act according to balance of power motives. In the case of EU-Ukraine cooperation, the Ukrainian crisis endangered the fragile balance of power in Eastern Europe to the disfavour of the EU, so that a strengthened cooperation, especially in high politics, was expected. The analysis of documents and statements has yet displayed that major components of cooperative actions marginalised high politics, but focussed on administrative, judicial, economic and environmental topics. Cooperation in terms of high politics proceeded primarily in the form of trilateral talks between the EU,

Ukraine and Russia. Only secondarily, EU politicians hinted at the Ukraine's strategic relevance as bordering country of the EU. Thus, strategic considerations can be considered as minor driver for increased cooperation in this case. Nevertheless, it is a fallacy to underestimate power considerations when looking at cooperation during the conflict. Even though, power politics are rarely addressed, the EU is certainly highly interested in a stable Ukraine. Otherwise, cooperation of any kind can hardly be realised.

The second working thesis draws on neoliberal theories of IR and expects increased cooperation for the purpose of economic profits. In chapter 2, the presumably minor explanatory potential of neoliberal approaches was insinuated. The crisis-shaken Ukraine does not yet constitute a profitable trading partner for the EU Member States. Cooperation however, did also occur in the fields of economic and trade related matters in the analysed period of time. In short-term considerations, the EU aimed at establishing peace and security in Ukraine, so that economic issues were removed from the top of reform lists. In fact, the DCFTA was delayed for several times until its enactment in January 2016, even though the Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko stated, that "Ukraine is ready to pay the price (EurActiv 2015)" for the trade pact with Europe. Ukrainian export to Europe however, was facilitated already in March 2014 with the removal of tariffs. By help of macro-financial loans, the EU contributed to stabilising Ukraine's economy. Step by step, Ukraine will be integrated in the internal market of the EU. By the time this process is carried out, the European economy will unquestionably benefit from deeper collaboration with Ukraine. Thus far, cooperation in economic matters implied substantial expenses for the EU and its institutions. Hence, neoliberal theory offers explanatory approaches for increased cooperation, but only to a certain extent.

The third explanatory approach refers to constructivist theory. In this context, concepts of soft power and definatory power were introduced. According to the constructivist thesis, the EU increased cooperation in order to spread its norms and values. This thesis seems to offer the most reasonable explanation for the EU's activities. Throughout the analysis, both the EU and Ukraine indicated the necessity of harmonising Ukraine's democracy approach, administration, legal system, tax system etc. with that of the EU. The continuous language of both parties finds its expression in the AA. Terms like "focussing on European principles (EEAS 2015h: 6)" can be detected consistently. Both partner's commitment shows on the one hand the EU's readiness to act as definatory power. On the other hand, Ukraine's willingness to consider the EU's norms, values, standards and regulations as worth

copying, illustrates the EU's soft power. Thus, constructivist approaches are capable of providing reasonable explanations for the EU's boosted cooperation with Ukraine.

5. Conclusion

For more than two years, the situation in Ukraine has been precarious. Even though the ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine proves to be stable for the last months, the yet uncertain political state prevents Ukraine from recovering economically. The provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk "exist in a state of limbo (Kramer: 2015)." During this period, the EU intensified its cooperation with Ukraine. The AA was signed and with the entry into force of the DCFTA in January 2016, the last chapters of the agreement became operative.

Why did the Ukrainian crisis alter the cooperation between the EU and Ukraine? In the previous section, the EU's motives for increased cooperation were carved out. Certainly, security considerations mattered, albeit they played a subordinated role in the two parties' bilateral relations. Neoliberal explanatory approaches illustrate some of the EU's actions, although they were not detected as the primary driver for increased cooperation. Constructivist approaches on the other hand offer plausible explanations for the EU's motives. First and foremost, the EU seeks to disseminate its norms and values. Currently, Ukraine is undergoing a reform process according to European perceptions. The EU's motives for cooperation however, answer only one part of the research question. Which role does the Ukrainian crisis play for the execution of the EU's ambitions? There is a behavioural pattern which can be detected when looking closely at how the EU acts in the case of Ukraine. Support in financial aspects but also regarding transfers of knowledge is usually bound to Ukrainian reforms. Before the crisis, a number of funding programmes were accessed only partly because Ukraine did not fully meet the EU's demands. During the crisis, the EU was able to intensify its pressure on Ukrainian government concerning structural reforms so that funds were obtained more effectively. This on the other hand supports the finding that the EU's main goal is to promote its values. Cooperation from a constructivist view does not only occur when both players have similar moral concepts but also to adjust moral values, in this case according to the EU's perceptions. The EU attaches cooperation to conditions. "The EU is not just a donor for Ukraine. We need something in return (EC 2014e)", states Commissioner Hahn accordingly. Thus, the Ukrainian crisis put the EU in the position to enforce its perceptions and reformatory approaches towards a weakened Ukraine.

The methodological part of this work posed the question after causality between the crisis and cooperation. Considering the findings, causality is probable, though the change of government has to be taken into account when evaluating the impact of the crisis. The former president Yanukovich was viewed as rather Pro-Russian, even though he reaffirmed his desire to let Ukraine become part of the EU. When he came to power in 2010, reforms were in parts reversed and the EU-Ukraine relations became delicately. Yanukovich was banished and replaced by a EU-friendly government after the revolution in February 2014. Increased cooperation can thus easily be explained with a change of government as well. However, facing severe financial, economical, political and humanitarian troubles, the Ukrainian government was forced to carry out reforms more profound and faster than they would probably have otherwise executed them. The crisis thus induced a dependence on the EU's cooperation which was utilised by the EU to enforce reforms according to its perceptions.

The Ukraine crisis impacted on the cooperation between EU and Ukraine to the effect that the EU was able to advance the convergence of both actors to its own perceptions. Yet, this case study can hardly be generalised as it represents a rather specific case. Ukraine is a former SSR and borders both the EU and Russia. These conditions eliminate many cases from being compared to that of Ukraine. There are, however, comparable cases in the past and similar scenarios that may emerge prospectively. Georgia as a former SSR waged war against Russia in 2008 for the two republics Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both republics declared independence afterwards but are still claimed as part of its territory by Georgia, even if both republics are still occupied by Russian troops. Relations between EU and Georgia have accelerated in the aftermath of the war, as Georgia signed an AA with the EU in 2014. Moldova on the other hand represents a potential similar case for the future. Through the Russian supported breakaway of Transnistria, a conflictual scenario is highly likely to emerge, as Moldova intends to become part of the EU prospectively. Like Ukraine and Georgia, Moldova signed an AA with the EU in 2014. Nevertheless, the case of the Ukraine crisis can only be very carefully adopted on similar cases due to the high number of specific conditions.

This work offers insights into the impact of crises on the cooperation between the EU and neighbouring countries. Especially the former SSR's, that evolved into border regions between the EU and Russia after the 2004 enlargement of the EU, develop more and more into "frozen zones (Kramer 2015)". In those frozen zones, ceasefire agreements are stipulated, a final settlement is lacking though. This

manner represents a “common arc of post-Soviet conflict, visible in the Georgian enclaves of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan and in Transnistria (ibid.)”. So far, the EU permitted such behaviour by Russia in exchange for closer cooperation with the core country.

Secondly, this work adds another piece to the current IR debate, as it proves right the constructivist “critique of neo-realists and neoliberals [...] what they ignore: the content and sources of state interests and the social fabric of world politics (Checkel 1998: 324).” The sociological approach of constructivist theory “leads to new and meaningful interpretation of international politics (ibid.: 325)”. However, this does not imply that constructivist approaches replaced realist and liberal theory in IR. They solely add another perspective. Maintaining all the different vantage points is yet crucial for a holistic analysis and interpretation of IR.

In this case, constructivism proved to be powerful as explanatory source. However, this work poses a few unanswered questions. Will the EU permanently allow the existence of those frozen zones? Russia obviously violates international law by ignoring Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Advocating the compliance with international law, the EU will supposedly not tolerate these acts of violation permanently. Observing and analysing the situation in Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova prospectively will help to gain more insights in this regard. Did the EU also utilise the Georgian war for the purpose of increased cooperation? Will the speed of convergence between the EU and Ukraine decelerate as soon as the conflict is over? Will the EU’s commitment to transferring its norms and values to its bordering countries lead to a loss of significance of Russia in world politics? Answering those questions will help to cast more light on the impact of crises at Europe’s Eastern borders on cooperation.

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that the work in this assignment is completely my own work. No part of this assignment is taken from other people’s work without giving them credit. All references have been clearly cited.

Berlin, 14 February 2016

Place, date



Signature