

**The Janus-faced relationship between the European Union and the Russian Federation**  
**Cooperation between friendship, strategic partnership and rivalry**

Myriel Sonja Baumgart

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University of Muenster

Student number: 437736

University of Twente

Student number: s2011255

Supervisor 1: Prof. Dr. Ramses A. Wessel

Supervisor 2: Prof. Dr. Thomas Dietz

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**Abstract.** Today the relations between the European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as Russia) are more complex than ever. Geopolitical situations on the global stage, happened in the past as well as going on in the present moment, shape the relationship between the European Union and Russia. However, in a market-dominated world, where the strongest and most stable economy has the biggest say, cooperation (economically and politically) between powerful state (-like) actors is highly favoured. Consequently, the question occurs what factors shape the relationship between these two actors and how can this relationship be titled in a complex and intertwined world.

Divided into four chapters, this research sought to describe the EU-Russia political relations of today in times of tension, which derive from the Ukraine crisis, therefore, the two contrasting sides of cooperation and non-cooperation were highlighted. Concluding, their relations were described as a potential partnership which is, at the present time, on hold. Overall, the relationship between the EU and Russia can be titled Janus-faced, since two sharply contrasting characteristics are carried out simultaneously.

*Key words:* International Relations, EU-Russia relations, Cooperation, Ukraine Crisis, Janusfaced relationship

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*List of abbreviations*

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

EBRD – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

EEAS – European External Action Service

EIB – European Investment Bank

ENP – European Neighbourhood Policy

EU – European Union

IEA – International Energy Agency

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PCA – Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

RF – Russian Federation

TCA – Agreement on trade, commerce and economic co-operation

TEU – Treaty on European Union

TFEU – Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

WTO – World Trade Organisation

*Chapter I: Introduction to the research problem and the process of  
solving it*

## *1. Introduction*

Eighteen year ago, the former as well as current president of the Russian Federation changed the country's foreign policy from one based on balancing against the domination of the West to one expanding cooperation with Western countries (Bukkvoll, 2003). This research will examine to what extent and in which policy areas Russia and the EU cooperate today and which factors and events shape their cooperation or non-cooperation.

It is reasonable that this research considers the relations the European Union (EU) has with Russia since: firstly, Russia is the largest country in the world by area, the 9<sup>th</sup> most populous, whereof the vast majority lives in the European part of the country. Additionally, Russia's capital Moscow is the biggest metropolitan area in Europe. In its northwest, Russia borders with five member states of the European Union (Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland), which makes it a 2,200 km long border between the two actors (Lynch, 2004). Also, Russia is particularly important to research since it is common sense to refer to it as "energy superpower" (Rutland, 2008). Russia is the largest oil, gas, uranium and coal exporter to the EU. Whereas, the EU is by far the largest trade partner of the Russian Federation (EEAS, 2017). Taking the aspect of bilateral trade into account, Russia is the EU's fourth largest trading partner, whereas the EU is Russia's biggest trading partner. However, the EU-Russia trade has decreased since 2012, dropping by 44% between the four years of 2012 and 2016. The number decreased from €339 billion to €191 billion in 2016. (European Commission, 2018).

As described above, Russia and the European Union are two important actors in world politics, Russia's political class perceives its country as a global power and the major regional power in its influence sphere (Averre, 2009). Consequently, Russia is perceived as the main guarantor of security in its immediate neighbourhood. On one hand this leads to conflicting positions between Brussels and Moscow, which often perceives itself as being excluded from the European mainstream, even though the EU recognises Russia as an important geopolitical actor (Averre, 2009). Nevertheless, they are actors of two different backgrounds, with two different world views (Casier, 2013). In the recent past (since 2014), the crisis in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea has manifested the dissimilarity of the two actors and has affected the bilateral political dialogue (EEAS, 2017). The Ukraine crisis is an ongoing conflict both inside the Ukraine and in international relations between Russia and the West.

The West is described as expanding into the former Soviet space since 1999 (Lichtenstein et al., 2019). Those expansions are a thorn in Russia's eyes. The EU and Russia share a common neighbourhood, consisting of European and Eurasian states, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. Those create, according to Löwenhardt (2005), "an economic and diplomatic battlefield" (Löwenhardt, 2005, p. 7). Moscow's view towards the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the concept of a common neighbourhood was characterised by perceiving the Western interference into Russia's selfdeclared traditional sphere of influence as a threat (Gower& Timmins, 2009).

On the other hand, at the St. Petersburg summit in May 2003, the two entities created the four 'Common Spaces' to increase cooperation. The PCA<sup>1</sup> represents the framework therefor, as it is the basis for common values and interests. Which are: the common economic space, the common space of freedom, security and justice, on external security, the common space on research, education and culture (Tumanov et al., 2011).

These different movements of common agreements, cooperation as well as hostile attitudes generate the research question of this thesis:

*Which factors determine the relationship of the European Union and the Russian Federation today, how are the positive and negative dimensions balanced within it and how can, therefore, their kind of relationship be titled?*

To enable this research to devise an adequate answer to the main research question, it was divided into three sub-questions, which will systematically be approached in the following paper. The three sub-questions are:

1. Which relationship has existed between Europe and Russia in the past?

In order to understand a situation as it is today, lessons from the past have to be learned. Looking at the historical context of this relationship, statements on how the relationship used to be can be made. Moreover, the problems that occurred between Russia and the European Union before can be determined, and how those were solved, if so, can be examined and can provide advises for today. Furthermore, the European Union (and its precursors) and the Russian Federation have a rich history, which cannot be factored out. However, despite its relevance and richness of information, it will be rather briefly approached in this research

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<sup>1</sup> See: 2. Legal Basis of relations between the EU and Russia

paper due to its lacking direct influence (in contrast to the following two sub-questions) on the main research question.

2. Which legal and policy instruments aim at enhancing a cooperation in between the EU and the Russian Federation in specific policy areas?

This research does not restrict its analysis to one side of the story. It aims at a balanced outlook on the issue. Thus, the positive likewise the negative dimension will be analysed in the following. Firstly, the instruments enhancing cooperation (the positive dimension) will be examined. These instruments will be investigated within specific policy areas that are important on the positive side of the relationship.

3. Which legal and policy instruments have negative effects on the relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation?

Contrary to sub-question No. 2, the negative aspects and how they are generated through legal documents/ policy documents, will be analysed by the means of this sub-question. Here, geopolitical events will be the core of the analysis since they pose a threat for a peaceful Russia-EU relation.

Furthermore, as part of the introduction, the scientific gap and relevance will be discussed.

New about this research is that recent events, mainly the Ukraine crisis going on since 2014 and its consequences, are considered and how this crisis shapes the long before-established relationship between the Russian Federation (RF) and the European Union. Moreover, when examining the aspects where the two actors cooperate, the factor education is highlighted, which is not extensively part of the current scientific debate on Russia-EU relations yet. Moreover, the extreme contrast between working together and working against each other will be examined within this one paper. This is where a gap in the existing literature can be found.

Trenin concludes in his article “Russia Redefines Itself and Its Relations with the West”, that “the West will not only miss opportunities but may run real risks if it misjudges Russia’s movements” (Trenin, 2007, p. 104). Contrary, Bukkvoll (2003) argues in “Putin’s strategic partnership with the West” that the West needs a democratic and stable Russian state to not fear security risks (Bukkvoll, 2003).

Regarding these researches, it becomes clear that scholars often tend to highlight one side of the story. This approach does not suffice when examining the (in this research called)

multifaceted relationship between the two entities. This thesis contributes to the existing research on how Russia and the European Union approach each other today. Here, the focus on “today” is important, since it is a constantly changing relationship, as Haukkala (2015) claims, too. The scientific relevance especially occurs since this thesis takes the most recent events into account and aims at concluding on what kind of relationship they have based on a balanced content analysis by the means of political documents.

This research will provide an analytical overview over the potentially schizophrenic relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation. This research paper is divided into four chapters; the first chapter consists of the introduction to the research problem, the framing of the theoretical approach and concludes by the presentation of the scientific methods used to conduct it. The second chapter deals with the analytic answer to the first subquestion, here, a historical overview will be drawn to show how the relations between the two actors were processed in the past. The third chapter contains the debate on sub-question two as well as sub-question three. As they ask for the exact opposite circumstances, they are treated within the same chapter to directly put them into comparison, arriving at a chapterspecific discussion before ending on the overall conclusion of this research. The conclusion includes, next to the answer to the main research question, possible future predictions drawn by the author and limitations of this research paper. The overall aim of the research is, after balancing out the negative and positive dimensions, to conclude on what kind of relationship the EU and Russia have today.

## *2. The Legal and Political Bases for Relations between the EU and Russia*

In order to discover the answers to the sub-questions above, asking for legal and policy documents and instruments that shape the relationship between the actors, the fundamental basis of legal and political documents existing in the field of EU-Russia relations will be presented in the following.

The European Union will be examined as a unitary actor. Even though, in the world political reality, the Kremlin favours coping with the European Union member states individually (Trenin, 2007). However, since the EU Eastern enlargement (2004), states dealing with a complicated past with Russia (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland) have become part of the

European Union, which could drastically shape the outcome when regarding the member states separated from each other. However, I am aware that in the certain policy areas (i.e. security), the division of competences between the Union and its Member States remains unclear.

In order to examine the relationship, the EU build up with Russia the legal instruments will be explained based on legal and political documents. Historically, the agreement on trade, commerce and economic co-operation (TCA) started as a legal foundation for the EU–Russia relationship as it was the first agreement in these fields between the two entities.

However, today the relations between these two actors are considered “relations beyond the neighbourhood” (Gower&Timmins, 2010, p. 1). First, title V of the Treaty on European Union (TEU); external action, needs to be considered. Furthermore, articles 206-207 and articles 2016-219 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) are key articles to examine connections between these two actors in regard of trade and international agreements.

In June 1994, shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian president and the heads of state of the EU member states accompanied by the president of the European Commission, held a summit in Corfu. Here they signed the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), the agreement came into force three years later (Tumanov et al., 2011). Since 2007 it has been renewed annually. Until today, it is the most wide-ranging agreement existing between Russia and another state entity. Overall, the PCA covers the following main principles: the strengthening of political and economic freedoms, democratic development, framework building for political dialogues as well as economic, social and cultural cooperation between the involved parties. The PCA is seeks to achieve responsibility, support and mutual benefit (Tumanov et al., 2011).

### *3. Theoretical Framework*

Regarding the relationship between these two actors, many lenses could be applied. As a starting point the existing academic literature on the topic of EU-Russia relations will be summarized and compared. Secondly, the EU’s external governance will be described shortly

in a theoretical approach, followed up by the presentation of a theory on cooperation between states by Fearon (1998).

### *3.1 Literature Analysis*

Primarily, this theoretical lens is to be delimited from the normative theoretical approach that often can be found in the literature, especially when dealing with the European Union (“Normative Power Europe” [Manners, 2002]) and its relation to Third States. The relationship to Russia is based on the partnership agreement of 1997 which is built upon common values and norms (EEAS, 2017). The counterargument here is that Russia and the EU have incompatible world views, value systems or normative agendas. “The essential incompatibility of wider value systems” (Haukkala, 2010, p. 2) is described as one of the core problems which generates European-Russian tensions. Tensions arise from the fact that the EU is predominantly a normative actor, actively promoting (which is in the Russian case also titled “lecturing on values” [Trenin, 2007, p. 95]) norms, while Russia is regarded as driven primarily by interest-related considerations (Casier, 2013). Whereas, Hughes (2007) argues in *EU Relations with Russia: Partnership or Asymmetric Interdependency?* that the relations between the European Union and Russia are mostly centred around costs and benefits of trade interdependencies that those trump concerns over other more value-based issues, such as democratization and human rights (Hughes, 2007).

The normative argument will not be further highlighted and not used to analyse the relationship of Russia and the European Union in this thesis, since this paper follows a purely political, international relations approach terminating with a kind of relationship based on political and economic decisions, in line with Hughes (2007) statement. Yet, it was named due to its relevance in the ongoing scientific debate.

In order to understand the state of the current scientific debate on the topic of EU-Russia relations and how other scholars approach the issue, a literature analysis will be carried out in the following. Furthermore, scientific articles written in the past, can provide a historical classification as requested by sub-question number one.

*Russia & the European Union as described by other scholars*

Timmins was one of the scholars who started the debate about the kind of relationship the European Union and Russia have, as early as 2002, only 12 years after the former Soviet Union collapsed. Prior, in times of the Cold War, formal relations between the at this time European Community (EC) and the Soviet Union were almost non-existent (Timmins, 2002). In *Strategic or pragmatic partnership? The European union's policy towards Russia since the end of the Cold War (2002)* the question about what kind of relationship/partnership they have, is raised. Timmins (2002) researched, when the establishment of an EU-Russian partnership just started, which can be dated in 1997, when the PCA came into force. Recognizing the importance of Russia in order to pursue the goal of a creation of European political order beyond the member states, the EU has become aware of the importance of a strategic partnership between itself and Russia (Timmins, 2002). Timmins calls the relationship “pragmatic incrementalism” (Timmins, 2002, p. 92) rather than strategic partnership.

Researchers in this field such as Bukkvoll (2003) concentrate on Russia itself, regarding Putin’s domestic policies to evaluate in the second step how domestic policies shape the overall foreign policy of a state and its goal (namely strategic partnership with the West). Bukkvoll (2003) concludes that Russia’s new strategic partnership with the EU is built on unstable domestic foundations. Furthermore, it is likely that the societal groups who became disappointed in the Kremlin’s political decisions, will increase their noncompliance with the new partnership with the West (Bukkvoll, 2003). However, this research was done in 2003, three years after Putin was first voted into office. The outcome could still hold facts for the current times; however, today’s circumstances are different. The EU Eastern enlargement (2004) did not take place yet, nor did the NATO recorded “soviet-space” countries as member states (from 2004 on). Furthermore, the Georgia war (2008) have not taken place, same as the ongoing Ukraine crisis (start 2014). Scholars such as Trenin (2007) argue differently: “Under President Vladimir Putin’s watch, the Russian state has turned into something like Russia Inc.” (Trenin, 2007, p. 95), since the economic and political sphere are overlapping. Russian leaders are well adjusted to rough competition and will take that mindset to the world stage. He argues: “From Moscow’s perspective, Russian-Western relations are competitive but not antagonistic.” (Trenin, 2007, p. 96). Trenin overall argues that this relations will fail, if the heads of state on both side are not able to provide true statesmanship (Trenin, 2007).

Averre (2009) describes in *Competing Rationalities: Russia, the EU and the 'Shared Neighbourhood'* (this paper was written against the background of the Georgian conflict in 2008), that Russia and the European Union are the most crucial actors in the region, since they are capable of determining structural and normative power. Averre concentrates on norms and values, similar to Haukkala (2010), however, in the context of the situation in the South-Caucasus states and Central Asia. As to expect from the title, Averre portrays Russia and the EU as “competing”, which strongly highlights a negative relationship. The author concludes by stating that their historical pasts are undeniable different, which creates divergent world views today. Russia’s history is characterized by the “messy divorce from the other USSR successor states” (Averre, 2009, p. 1710), the loss of the former “spheres of influence”, the economic crisis in the 1990s, two internal wars and a still incomplete recovery of national identity. Which leads, according to Averre, to Moscow’s resistance to the pressure created by the EU in their shared neighbourhood where state governance is weak in regards to being the normative hegemony (will be further discussed in chapter IV, 1.1). Averre argues that Russia’s governing elite still mistrusts the EU’s “universalist claims”, resulting in mistrust by Russia, hence, Europe’s policymakers have a long way to go to dispel Moscow’s mistrust (Averre, 2009).

Tumanov, Gasparishvili and Romanova (2011) present on the basis of the public opinion of the Russian society a different approach. The relations between the EU and its neighbours are perceived as positive. Over 70 per cent consider EU-Russia relations as very or rather good (the results of this research are undertaken by the means of a survey). However, results conducted by means of the survey show that their relations are not perceived as mutually beneficial, answers show that most survey participants believed that the European Union dominates the relationship (Tumanov et al., 2011). Most participants perceive Russia as an important partner of the EU, whereas the EU is seen in being interested in Russia mostly due to natural resources and energy (over 30 per cent) (Tumanov et al., 2011).

The existing literature on the Russian- European relationship shows the dissimilarity which this topic raises. On the one hand, scholars concentrate on the European perspective (Bukkvoll), whereas Trenin highlights Russia’s action and Russia’s national kind of leadership and its consequences. It is noticeable that before the current events have happened, that will be analysed in chapter III, the term “strategic partnership” was predominant.

### *3.2 EU's External Governance*

The underlying topic of the European Union as a global actor that is capable of having political and economic relations to other states, will be theoretically approached.

There is a broader question to be considered here, and this relates to the nature of the European Union as an international actor. The European Union is willing to establish a world order based upon the rule of law, “where multilateralism rather than unilateralism is the driving force behind collective actions to solve common problems and resolve disputes” (Farrell, 2005, p. 265). For the EU soft powers (normative power) is crucial in world politics (Farrell, 2005). The EU has articulated common foreign policy objectives, which marks its step as an “international actor”. The existence of commonly accepted goals, along with a system for mobilising resources necessary to meet the goals, is an important factor demonstrating international power. Goals are more precise than interests and are principles that would be valid for a relatively long time. The foreign policy objectives in the 1993 Maastricht treaty on the European Union are: to safeguard common values and the independence of the Union, strong security policies, peace preservation, promotion of international cooperation and the importance of the rule of law (Smith, 2008). Lavenex (2004) further argues when taking an “inside-out” view on EU politics, an extension of the regulatory scope of the *acquis* may be conceived of as a form of external governance in which internal and foreign policy goals come together. Rule-extension towards non-Member States may follow functional needs when efficiency of internal policies can be increased. Conversely, it may serve foreign policy goals. Whereas in the case of the CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) countries the conditionality approach acted as a leverage also for unpopular adaptations, the lack of membership prospects or other attractive incentives pose serious limits to external governance (Lavenex, 2004). An example for this is the creation of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

### 3.3 *Cooperation between states<sup>2</sup> in the international system*

In the following, the theoretical framework this research is analysed in, will be generated. As introduced in the title, the cooperation between the European Union and the Russian Federation is sought to be investigated. In order to do so, an International Relations-theory on cooperation between states, or in the case of this research, between unitary actors, will be presented in the following section.

James D. Fearon's theory on "Bargaining, Enforcement, and International Cooperation" (1998) will be presented as a general theory, Fearon's theory is a well-known publication in international relations and often referred to concerning topics about state cooperation, for instance by Narang and Mehta (2019), Kasten et al. (2018), Mattes (2018) and hundreds more (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Besides the wide use of the theory, its relevance also 21 years after publishing becomes evident by looking at the numerous current publications making use of Fearon's theory.

Fearon (1998) focuses on the problems of whether and how states might cooperate for mutual advantage despite the absence of a supranational government (anarchy). Problems of international cooperation have a common strategic structure. Before states can implement, monitor, and enforce an international agreement, they must bargain to decide which of many possible agreements to implement (Fearon, 1998).

In the field of cooperation theories, it is argued that different international issues and issue domains— trade, arms control, the environment, education etc.—may have different strategic structures, and these crucially affect the prospects for international cooperation and the nature of the problems which states must overcome to achieve cooperation (Fearon, 1998). If states interact repeatedly on a particular issue, cooperation in Prisoners' Dilemma-like situations might be sustained by mechanisms of conditional retaliation such as Tit-for-Tat. A key condition for such mechanisms to work is that the "shadow of the future" be long enough—the states must care sufficiently about future payoffs and expect that future interactions are likely enough for the threat of revenge to prevent cheating (Fearon, 1998). Moreover, Fearon developed two main arguments bearing on these central propositions of cooperation theory.

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<sup>2</sup> In this research, the EU will be examined. The European Union is not a state by definition, however, IR theories are formulated based on interactions between *states*. Here, the EU will be considered as a unitary actor, as a system similar to a state, which makes this theory applicable to it

Those arguments are: firstly, he argues that understanding problems of international cooperation as having a common strategic structure is more accurate than conceiving of different issue domains in terms of different strategic structures. Problems of international cooperation typically involve first a bargaining problem and second an enforcement problem (Fearon, 1998). Whereas cooperation theorists argued that a longer shadow of the future makes cooperation sustainable and so more likely, the analysis here suggests that though a long shadow of the future may make enforcing an international agreement easier, it can also give states an incentive to bargain harder, delaying agreement in hopes of getting a better deal. Fearon (1998) argues, the more an international regime creates durable expectations of future interactions on the issues in question, the greater the incentive for states to bargain hard for auspicious terms, possibly making cooperation harder to reach.

Finally, regardless of the specific domain, there will almost always be many possible ways of writing the treaty or agreement that defines the terms of cooperation, and the states involved will surely have conflicting preferences over some subset of these various possibilities. Moreover, uncertainty about the minimum that the other side would accept is often important in international negotiations (Fearon, 1998).

Furthermore regarding state cooperation, the argument stated by Hughes: “The core theoretical assumption that underpins convergence is that the stronger the co-ordination of policy among co-operating states, the greater are the benefits and the more powerful will be the impact of the policy” (Hughes, 2007, p. 76), is depicted. Meaning that, co-ordination of policies is crucial in order to maximize success and power of the co-operating states.

#### *4. Methods*

In the following section, the research question will be presented again and hereafter its type will be classified. This section will explain the method used in order to answer this research question. A justification of the choice of method will be given; why this method is the adequate one to discuss the topic of EU-Russia relations. Overall this research deals with a merely political science topic, viewed through an International Relations lens. This must be clarified since other scientific categories can be chosen apart from that to examine the topic on EU-Russia relations, which can be cultural, societal, purely historical or economic

obstacles. As slightly touched in the section above, the normative discussion, which is prominent in the scientific debate about the European Union and Russia, will not be considered to a great extent since it is a parallel- existing theoretical approach in order to convey understanding for the conflictive actions of the two actors. It is not part of the political analysis, by the means of investigating policy areas, as chosen in this research. In the next parts of this section the research design will be presented, followed by an explanation of how the data for this research was collected.

#### *4.1 Research Design*

In order to conduct this research, an analytical research question is raised embedded in a purely using qualitative methods research paper. The research question, as named in the introduction, is “Which factors determine the relationship of the European Union and the Russian Federation today, how are the positive and negative dimensions balanced within it and how can, therefore, their kind of relationship be titled?”. The question is tripartite, and rhetorically using a climax. Since the significance of the individual parts increases, beginning by asking for the descriptive portrayal of the factors, followed by a rather analytical element asking to weigh the positive and negative dimensions, terminating by what this research is particularly aiming for- a precise name of the relationship between the European Union and Russia. The correct research method to answer the research question depends on the overall aim of the research. Here, a qualitative research is conducted since it is carried out when meanings are sought to be understood, when experiences or ideas are wished to describe (Macmillian Study Skills, n.d.). Furthermore, the qualitative research can be carried out by using triangulation, meaning backing up one set of findings from one source of data, by another different one and again a new one. The triangulation derives due the examination of three different data sources: policy documents provided by the European Union, scientific literature covering EU-Russia relations and sporadically information from the Russian media. The research technique applied in this thesis is *content analysis*. Content analysis is a research technique used in order to make valid inferences by interpreting textual material (University of Georgia, 2012), here in the form of policy documents and academic articles. Moreover, a content analysis indicates working with texts from various sources, where the author has to ensure their reliability and validity, and has to scan them for significant information by

conducting a content analysis manually or computer-aided (University of Georgia, 2012), the process will be further explained in the next section *data collection*. Beyond the evaluation of the relationship, this research strives to give possible future predictions on how the relationship could transform in the next years and which risks could occur, these predictions will be made on the basis of what has been discovered throughout the research paper at hand.

#### *4.2 Research Process*

Having introduced and classified the main research question and the overall applied research method/technique, the tool of answering will be presented. Here a step-by-step approach will be applied by the division of the research question into three sub-questions. Additionally, as presented in the section before, a theoretical framework will be applied. The theory by Fearon (1998) will be used for two purposes, it represents the guideline of this research, on one hand. However, on the other hand, it will also be tested by using the topic of this research. In order to derive to a meaningful conclusion, the information analysed and gathered by the investigation of the three sub-questions will be used to terminate with an outbalanced answer to the main research question.

In order to make the research question answerable, it is divided into sub-questions as presented in the introduction. In the following, how they will be investigated is presented.

1. Which relationship has existed between Europe and Russia in the past?

The first sub-question will be answered by referring to the prior-generated literature analysis in EU-Russia relations, additional literature will be installed. Literature will be systematically selected according to the years and events they refer to, in order to arise at a historical overview covering the crucial years of Russia-EU relations. This time span has been defined as 1989- today.

2. Which legal and policy instruments aim at enhancing a cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation?

The second sub-question will present factors that shape the EU-Russia relationship in a cooperative (“positive”) sense and will analyse the legal and policy instruments achieving this. The factors have been selected on the basis of the policy areas introduced by the EEAS (2017). Furthermore, the cooperation has been divided into “strong” and “weak”, hereafter only policy areas classified as “strong” are investigated by the means of policy papers (policy instruments) which are represented in a table in the appendix (under 3).

3. Which legal and policy instruments have negative effects on the relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation?

The third sub-question created in order to answer the main research question, seeks to examine the non-cooperative (“negative”) aspects. Therefore, policy areas in which the two actors do not cooperate will be presented likewise. Those areas have been selected due to events mostly referred to in the scientific literature, additionally those events are also discussed in the media and thus, known by the general public. The legal and policy instruments examined will be listed in the table found in the appendix as well.

#### *4.3 Data Collection*

As theoretically introduced in the former section, this research makes use of content analysis. How this is done will be examined in the following. Firstly, the research at hand ensures reliability and validity of the texts examined, by firstly referring to authors only who have been cited a lot and whose names are circulating in the field. Moreover, the policy documents are valid since they are directly found on the official website of the bodies (European Parliament, European Commission, Council of the European Union) of the European Union or via [eur-lex.europa.eu](http://eur-lex.europa.eu), the official online to European Union law.

Overall, 18 policy papers (Council decisions, Council Conclusions, Regulations, Strategies, binding agreements, Briefings by the European Parliament, press releases by the Commission, etc) published by the Union will be examined. For instance, the “EU restrictive measures in response to the crisis in Ukraine”, Council Decisions such as 2014/265/CFSP of 12 May 2014 amending Decision 2014/145/CFSP concerning “restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine”, the action paper published by the European Parliament (09/2017) on “EU-Russia

cooperation on higher education”, and the “roadmap for EU- Russia S&T cooperation” published by the European Commission in October 2017.

The policy documents were chosen since the European bodies referred to them directly, or, found by searching for key words, such as “Georgia 2008”, “Ukraine”, “EU Russia”, “Russia sanction”, through eur-lex.europa.eu. Since the complete documents and their content is crucial for this specific research, no coding scheme has been applied. Key words have only been used in order to find the policy documents, but once found, they were not further investigated by key words only.

Likewise, the literature of the above-presented theoretical framework (Trenin, 2007; Tumanov et al., 2011; Timmins, 2002; Bukkvoll, 2003; Maass, 2019; Lichtenstein et al., 2019; Haukkala, 2015) was found by searching for key words, e.g. “EU Russia relationship”, “cooperation”, “partnership”, however, in the next step, likewise described in the section above, information from the whole article were gathered and interpreted. By the means of doing so, the existing state of the art could be pointed out, and thereafter, the research gap could be identified and, hence, closed.

## *5. Societal Relevance*

Modern society highly depends on scientific research. This research is relevant for society since the relationship that the state (or here the European Union) in which we are living has with other states, determines for example our restrictions for traveling. EU citizens need to apply for a visa at the national Russian embassy in every case (except for diplomats). Furthermore, the relationship ascertains which kind of information we get about the Third State and how it is portrayed in the mass media. It cannot be excluded that based on the kind of relationship the EU has with Russia, the public opinion is defined through the information we obtain by the media. Thus, scientific research examining the EU’s relations towards Third States which provides a balanced outlook on the political situation by being almost certainly unbiased, unlike the mass media, is of important nature. The research at hand aims at analysing and processing data in a way, that an unbiased outcome is created. By means of that aim, this research makes a stand against exaggerated and biased news coverage and hence, is societal relevant.

## *Chapter II: Historical Overview*

Analysing the type of relationship, the European Union and Russia have today, the subquestions are sought to be answered. Starting by summarizing the historical development of the relationship, followed by highlighting the positive sides of their relationship (where cooperation does exist) and how this is stated in legal and policy documents, contrasting these findings by emphasising the negative aspects in the following section concentrating on problems between the two actors. In this chapter, the first sub-question is striven for answering:

*Which relationship has existed between Europe and Russia in the past?*

How the relationship of the two actors differs over time will be examined in this chapter (Chapter II). Theoretically, the various perceptions of the EU- Russia relations were explained in chapter I. Here, scholars, e.g. Timmins (2002) described their relationship by “pragmatic incrementalism”. This chapter is intertwined with the literature analysis, but describes the relationship in historical, chronological terms. Examining the historical development is crucial in order to understand how the relationship could evolve to what it is at the present time, as this research explicitly seeks at ascertaining what kind of relationship exists *today*.

After 1989 the relationship between Russia and the European Union of today has changed drastically. After this year, the political map of the Eastern part of Europe has changed, followed by a period of profound political, socio-economic and cultural transformations in the countries of the former socialist bloc. After 1989, the relations between Russia and the European Union changed, this process is marked by progress as well as difficulties (Tumanov et al., 2011). The two entities are fundamentally different (as in their socio-economic system) which created tensions from the beginning on (Tumanov et al., 2011).

However, a relationship between the two actors came to life and the starting point can be dated in 1994. Since in this year, the main policy tool, the PCA, has been adopted by the EU in its relations with Russia. This agreement was the first step in their relationship which is

marked by mutual cooperation- ambitions. This early stage can be described as a stage of an unbalanced partnership (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung). As described under 2. in this thesis, the PCA had a significant impact on EU–Russia relations. It was supplemented by the Common Strategy on Russia launched in 1999. Overall, the EU's objective was at that time to develop dialogue mechanisms, which will result in constructive engagement with Moscow having the goal of generating a sense of shared norms and values in the future years (Timmins, 2002).

As a next step in the timeline of the relationship between the two actors, the Amsterdam Council summit in June 1997, can be marked. Since the EU introduced a new Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) policy instrument, concerning areas in which the MS share common interests. One common interest was the relations the EU has with Russia, focusing on their tensions (Timmins, 2002). The *Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia* can be perceived as a “vision” for EU-Russian relations, the document by the European Council of the year 1999 (1999/414/CFSP) states in paragraph 5: “Cooperation with Russia: the European Union and its Member States will work closely together with Russia to implement this Common Strategy, in particular through the PCA and its institutions.” It was in favour of a return by Russia to its lawful place in the “European family in a spirit of friendship, cooperation, fair accommodation of interests” (European Council, 1999, Part I) and, as stated frequently, on the foundations of shared values. This common strategy was the first common strategy that was concluded by the EU, including the following principles: firstly, “a stable, open and pluralistic democracy in Russia, governed by the rule of law and developing a market economy benefiting Russia and the EU alike” (European Council, 1999) and, secondly, “maintaining European stability, promoting global security and responding to the common challenges of the continent through intensified cooperation with Russia” (European Council, 1999), (Timmins, 2002). Also, in this document, however, the relationship was titled “strategic partnership”.

On 30 October 2000, at the EU–Russia summit in Paris, a regular dialogue in the field of energy was marked as a goal to establish a form of partnership in this area. Though in 2010, Averre describes the relationship of the two actors as “competing rationalities” (Averre, 2009). Their form of relationship at that time was only of technical nature, described as “strategic partnership” (Averre, 2009).

The development of further political cooperation between the EU and Russia largely depends upon their concordance and interaction on the post-Soviet territory (Tumanov et al., 2011). As described by Tumanov et al.: “Today, the states of the post-Soviet area (except for Georgia<sup>3</sup>) seem to be choosing a balancing strategy directed at deriving advantages from liaising with both Russia and the EU in the spheres of security and the economy. These states are not interested in confrontation with the West and Russia, but instead are keen to find ways to achieve beneficial relations with both” (Tumanov et al., 2011, p. 129).

Summing up, in the beginning of the 1990s, their relationship can be summarized in terms of “approximation”, despite crucial differences regarding political, socio-economic and cultural conditions, the first steps of an establishment of a relationship between the two actors took, indeed, place after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Regarding the Summit in 1997 and the strategy adopted towards Russia, the terms were rather positive, since the spirit of “friendship and cooperation” (European Council, 1999, Part I) is favoured. However, during the following years, the term of “strategic partnership” prevailed, not friendship. This chapter served as a historical overview, whereas in the following chapters, the positive and negative sides of the relationship between the two actors as it is today will be analysed in detail.

### *Chapter III: The positive and negative dimensions*

#### *1. Positive Dimension*

In the following part of chapter III, the first sub-question is aimed to be answered:

*Which legal and policy instruments aim at enhancing a cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation?*

Firstly, the key legal instrument that forms the basis for the relations and cooperation between the EU and Russia will be explained once more: the Partnership and

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<sup>3</sup> This exception will be further explained in chapter IV, 2 *Future predictions*.

Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is the most important binding agreement. Since 2007 it is annually automatically renewed, until replaced by a new agreement. The PCA provides a political, economic and cultural framework for relations between Russia and the EU. In 2005, the four common spaces have been introduced and in 2010, the partnership for modernisation was launched at an EU-Russia summit, stating that cooperation on research and innovation, energy efficiency and other sustainable energy technologies should be extended (Council of the European Union, 2010).

The European Union and the Russian Federation are cooperating in several different policy areas. As shown in the table (1.4), the degree to which the actors cooperate with each other in the particular field, can vary. However, in this paper only the fields marked as “strong” will be examined in detail. Which means economic relations (together with trade relations), education (together with science and technology) and the field of energy are in focus. Theoretically, the approach of investigating policy areas is justified by means of Hughes’ (2007) argument: “The core theoretical assumption that underpins convergence is that the stronger the co-ordination of policy among co-operating states, the greater are the benefits and the more powerful will be the impact of the policy”. Thus, policy-areas are brought into relation with cooperation states. Building on this argument, in the following three policy areas will be examined.

### *1.1 Education, Science and Technology*

The fields of education, science and technology will be especially highlighted since they do not find a lot of attention in the existing literature so far. In this field, the cooperation is covered by the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (Article 63) (eur-lex, PCA, Art. 63). Within the European Union, article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) regulates educational aspects and so the EU contributes to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between EU countries and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action. Concerning the policy aspect, it is complemented by the ERASMUS+ programme (2014-2020) which allows students, trainees and staff to spend time abroad to increase their skills and employability; and educational institutions to work together across borders to innovate in and improve the quality of education (PCA, education). As stated in a publication by the European Commission (2019)

*Erasmus+ for higher education in Russia:* “Erasmus+ [...] projects, which last from two to three years, are aimed at modernising and reforming higher education institutions, developing new curricula, improving governance, and building relationships between higher education institutions and enterprises. They can also tackle policy topics and issues, preparing the ground for higher education reform, in cooperation with national authorities” (European Commission, 2019, p. 1).

In the field of education EU-Russia cooperation on higher education is in focus. This cooperation remains close despite current tension (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017). Russia is the largest non-EU partner in the programme and some activities (such as student and staff exchanges) have even increased since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine (2014) (further discussed in III, 2.2) (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017).

The European Union and Russia have close links in the higher education sectors (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017). This is due to Russia’s higher-education sector being actively involved in EU-funded cooperation programmes. Those cooperation programmes between the two actors exist for various reasons; Russian and Western European universities have strong historical and cultural links<sup>4</sup>, or due to the fact that Russia has expertise in competing for EU funding acquired over 24 years, since 1993 when Russia’s participation in European educational projects began (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017). The field of educational cooperation has been (mostly) unaffected by current EU-Russia tensions since areas of importance for people-to-people contacts are exempt from the suspension of most cooperation between Russia and the EU (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017).

The above-mentioned Erasmus+ programme is the most important tool for cooperation in higher education for the two actors. Educational exchanges are best known for Erasmus+ activity, in 2017, there were nearly 4 000 Erasmus+ exchanges with Russia, which is a tenth of the total with non-EU countries. Furthermore, cooperation exists outside the Erasmus+ framework; Russia is a full participant in the Bologna Process since 2003 (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017). The Bologna Process is a standardization programme for tertiary education in 48 mostly European countries. For Russia, this has brought major challenges (Briefing by European Parliament, 2017).

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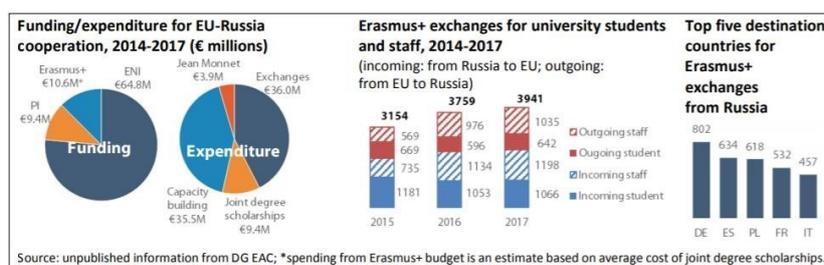
<sup>4</sup> Cashier (2013): “linked by their common civilisation roots, culture, history, and future” (Cashier, 2013, p. 6).

Regarding the field of science and technology, a press release from the European External Action Service from 2018 will be examined. Since 1994, the European Union and Russia have been pursuing cooperation in the field of science and technology (EEAS, 2018). The basis for this bilateral cooperation is the “Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology” (signed in 2000). The EU-Russia Joint Science and Technology Committee meets on an annual basis in either Brussels or Moscow. After 2014, the cooperation in this field is active- since 2014 under the current Horizon 2020 programme Russian organisations have participated more than 100 times in 76 collaborative projects (EEAS, 2018).

Concluding, the field of higher education, science and technology is outstandingly important regarding the positive aspects of the Russian-EU cooperation. This field is not susceptible to political tensions (unlike the following presented fields), which emphasizes its importance. Furthermore, regarding the Bologna process, a European idea, Russia comes close to European visions and subordinates itself under European rules. The field of higher education (science and technology) is (contrary to the other fields) connected to the civil society and ordinary people. This field is not dominated by politicians (as the energy field) or by big concerns (as the economic field). Education is a field closer to everyday life reality and finds encouragement in the society as seen in figure 1 below by the numbers of incoming students, as seen by the inserted graphic.

Figure 1:

*Information Overview on Erasmus+ (European Parliament, 2017).*



Therefore, the legal and policy instruments that enhance cooperation in the field of education are the PCA, the publication by the European Commission “Erasmus+ for higher education in Russia”, and the “at a glance” publication by the European Parliament (2017) “EU-Russia cooperation on higher education”.

## 1.2 Economic/ trade relations

The most important field in terms of cooperation is the field of economic relations and trade relations, since economic conditions are at core for every step following. Well-established economic and trade relations lead to wealth, which leads to possible investments into the sectors of education, health etc. However, this field is examined only after the field of education, technology and science since it documents a strong decrease since the start of the Ukraine crisis (European Commission, 2018). Nevertheless, economic relations are crucial so the times of cooperation are described primarily, subsequently, the change in this field will be examined as well in the next section. As well as the educational sector, economic and trade relations are based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1997. The main objectives in the economic scope are according to the agreement between the EU; its Member States and the Russian Federation: promoting trade relations, foster sustainable development, and creating conditions for a possible future free trade area (PCA, 1997). Regarding their economic relations overall, Russia is the EU's fourth largest trading partner and the EU is Russia's biggest trading partner. However, EU-Russia trade has continuously decreased since 2012, dropping by 44% between 2012 and 2016 from €339 billion in 2012 to €191 billion in 2016 (European Commission, 2019). The main EU-export goods to the Russian Federation are machinery, transport equipment, chemicals, medicines and manufactured products. On the other hand, the main imports from Russia to the European Union are raw materials- especially oil and gas (will be further discussed under 1.3 *Energy*). Regarding investment, the EU is the biggest investor in Russia. Three quarters of Foreign Direct Investment stocks in Russia come from EU Member States, 30% from Cyprus<sup>5</sup> alone (European Commission, 2019). Another factor that needs to be taken into account is that Russia joined the WTO in 2012 meaning EURussian trade relations have also been framed by WTO rules since 2012. The European Union and Russia have strong trade relations; however, trade has dropped since Russia acceded to the World Trade Organization in 2012 – a trend observed with all Russia's main trade partners. At that time there were high expectations that trade with Russia would be liberalised. Besides the WTO, Russia and the EU began negotiating a new agreement aiming at providing a comprehensive framework for bilateral trade and investment relations in 2008.

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<sup>5</sup> Cyprus-Russia relations are special: Cyprus is seen as an EU country which has a very close relationship to Russia, Russia is one of the closest political and economic partners for Cyprus, a significant number of Russian entrepreneurs use Cyprus as their base for their business and investment activities (europeanvalues.net, n.d.)

In March 2014 the European Council suspended the negotiations due to the situation in Ukraine. As new bilateral agreements are not likely to be concluded between the European Union and Russia, their cooperation within the WTO will be examined to understand their economic relations further. Years after Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization, Russia is still not meeting all its commitments. Russia's import substitution policy launched in 2014 puts in question its willingness to comply with World Trade Organization rules. The EU on the other side claims to be willing to continue to use all the available bilateral and multilateral policy instruments, as appropriate, to make sure the World Trade Organization rules are respected (European Commission, 2019). The EU has filed four disputes in the World Trade Organization against Russia since it joined in August 2012. Russia also has filed four disputes against the EU. As of May 2017, however, the difference occurs that the World Trade Organization has not yet ruled on in any of the disputes, namely: 2014 on the EU's third energy package, 2013 and 2015 on gas cost-adjustment in EU anti-dumping investigations, and 2017 on EU anti-dumping measures on imports of certain cold-rolled flat steel products from Russia (European Commission, 2019). One of the EU's disputes with Russia is the dispute about Russia's anti-dumping duties on light commercial vehicles (European Commission, 2019). Regarding this, the Dispute Settlement from January 2017 determined that: A WTO panel declared as illegal the Russian anti-dumping duties that hinder exports of Italian and German light commercial vehicles (European Commission, 2017). Hence, the WTO rules in favour of the EU in dispute on Russian duties on light commercial vehicles.

Concluding, the Russian-EU economic and trade relations are characterized by rapprochement and rejection. The two actors try to find common ground to improve their economic cooperation, for instance by Russia joining the WTO. However, problems occur, as described by the ongoing disputes in the WTO. The economic relations are crucial for both two actors since their economies depend on each other's, hence, they are taken as a tool to put pressure on Russia when not acting in accordance to international law (as described in chapter III, section 2.2.2).

### *1.3 Energy*

As described under 1.2 economic/ trade relations, the economic sphere is particularly important when examining Russian-EU cooperation, additionally energy as a policy area is of

great importance. Russia moved towards an intrinsically political energy strategy, it created de facto interference between foreign trade and foreign policy in energy (Finon&Locatelli, 2007). European states are increasingly concerned about their growing dependence on Russian gas (40% of imports) and the strategy of the quasi-public company Gazprom, which would like to take control of some major gas companies in certain countries (Finon&Locatelli, 2007).

Unlike the cooperation in the educational sector, the energy sector is affected by the Ukraine crisis. Since in reaction to Russia's involvement in the conflict, the European Union (and the US) have launched two-pronged sanctions against the Russian oil sector (Overland, 2015). In response to the crisis in Ukraine, Regulation 2017/1938 provides for enhanced regional cooperation, regional preventive action plans and emergency plans, and a solidarity mechanism to safeguard security of gas supply (European Parliament, 2018).

The European energy policy does not state "Russia" directly, however statements were made regarding external relations in the energy field. Moreover, since the European Union imports over 60% of its gas and over 80% of its oil (European Commission, 2011), thereof 40% from the Russian Federation, it can be assumed that Russia is explicitly meant here.

Furthermore, Article 194 TFEU makes some areas of energy policy a shared competence, signalling a move towards a common energy policy. Nevertheless, each Member State maintains its right to "determine the conditions for exploiting its energy resources, its choice between different energy sources and the general structure of its energy supply" (TFEU, Art. 194(2)). Meaning, the crucial competences are in the hands of the member states. To illustrate this, the case of Nord stream 2 will be investigated. The analysis will concentrate on Germany in particular and its relation to Russia in the field of energy.

However, the Commission works on mechanisms to reduce the possibility of solo attempts of the member states. The Commission set out a Decision including the set-up of an information exchange mechanism on agreements between MS and Third States in this area (European Commission, 2011). Hence, the Member States, the European Parliament and the EU citizens have repeatedly called for the EU to speak with a common voice when it comes to external energy relations. The EU has shown that when it comes together it can achieve results which no Member State alone could reach. These strengths must be further exploited and transformed into a systematic approach. Further steps to enhance the coherence of the EU and Member States' actions are urgently needed, not in the least because of the importance of

energy in the EU's overall political and economic relations with several third countries (European Commission, 2011).

However, this aim is not yet achieved, as seen by the realisation of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project. By examining the process and the creation of Nord Stream 2, the strong dependency European countries (or here Germany) have on Russia will be investigated shortly to provide an example. Since the announcement of the Nord Stream 2 project in June 2015 at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, it has been entangled in controversy (Riley, 2016). The European Union reached a deal on 12 February 2019 on new rules governing import gas pipelines including Russia's planned Nord Stream 2 but added a special loophole to make sure the German-backed project can go ahead (Simon, 2019). On March seventh, 2019 the European Parliament published an interview conducted with Sandra Kalniete, Member of the European Parliament (MEP), stating that "Let's take the Nord Stream 2 pipeline: its only purpose is to avoid Ukraine, causing huge damage to its budget because of a loss of transit payments". Furthermore, she ensures that "We need to stop Nord Stream 2" (European Parliament, 2019). This symbolizes the discord about Nord Stream 2 in the European Union.

The energy security strategy by the European Commission (2014) states that the EU imports more than half of all the energy it consumes. Hence, high important dependencies arise. Those dependencies are especially high for crude oil (90%) and natural gas (69%). For six of the European Member States Russia is the only source for their entire gas imports (Energy security strategy, 2014). The Russian Federation exported over 70% of its gas to Europe, the biggest relying countries on the Russian supply are Germany and Italy (Energy security strategy, 2014). Overall, the European Union imports more than €300 billion of crude oil and other oil products, one third of this import is coming from the Russian Federation. Hence, a new more strategic coordination of the EU's oil policy is needed, including the issues of the high dependence and the concentration on the Russian supplier (Energy security strategy, 2014).

For Russia (considered together with Gazprom) on the other hand, energy is an important tool in its foreign policy (European Parliament, 2018<sup>6</sup>). The author of the study, Korteweg, claims that Russia and other energy-rich authoritarian states use their energy exports for economic gains but also as a tool of foreign policy leverage. Furthermore, most energy-rich

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<sup>6</sup> A study requested by the AFET committee published by the European Parliament, policy department for external relations, by Rem Korteweg (April, 2018).

authoritarian states use their energy wealth to ensure regime survival. But, more than others, Russia uses its energy wealth as well to protect and promote its interests in its “near abroad” and to further establish its geopolitical influence in Europe. It uses gas supplies to punish and to reward, affecting both transit states and end-consumers (European Parliament, 2018), as described by Kalniete by the example of Ukraine (European Parliament, 2019).

Gazprom’s policies are shaped by both commercial considerations, and, at times, as well by Russia’s foreign policy objectives. Russia’s energy policy can exert political pressure through the following means: manipulating the pricing policy of energy supplies to third countries, controlling energy assets; such as pipelines and gas operators in key countries, cutting; or disrupting; gas supplies, agreeing restrictive supply contracts, developing alternative supply routes to divert gas flows. By building dependency relations, Russia has been able to pursue monopolistic practices in Europe (European Parliament, 2018).

Concluding, from a European perspective, long-term, the EU’s oil dependency, in particular in transport, needs to be reduced. Increasing energy production in the EU and diversifying supplier countries and routes. It also entails negotiating effectively with current major energy partners such as Russia (Energy security strategy, 2014).

By contrasting the European energy policy and the factual and legal position of the policies implemented and ideologised by the Russian Federation, crucial differences can be found. The European Union state that they depend on Russia’s oil and gas to a great extent and so in a next step, strategies against this matter are willing to be found. On the other hand, Russia is aware of its power regarding the energy supply to other states and so uses its natural resources for political prestige. The field of energy in the relationship of the two actors is highly important, yet non-transparent and entangled. After all, it should be expected that Russia continues to remain Europe’s main external supplier of natural gas (Korteweg, 2018). In a liberalised energy market, as a result of Gazprom’s ability to compete on price, and as a result of a declining demand in gas, Russia’s share of European gas imports will increase.

Finalizing, today, energy security is not only an economic issue, it captures also a political dimension. Furthermore, the distribution of energy resources is also subject to geopolitics and power politics between states. Here, a strong cooperation has been determined by the author due to the interdependent character this policy field holds. The interdependence creates a strong kind of cooperation, negatively connoted whatsoever.

1.4 Policy areas in table overview

In the following graphic (table 1), generated by the author based on information gathered by the European External Action Service (2017) that introduced policy areas in which a cooperation is recognisable, the findings will be visualized. Doing so in respect of key factors, underlying documents and the degree of cooperation. The latter will be done by categorizing into either “weak” or “strong”. The categorization will be done by the author by means of the current conditions carved out from policy documents and academic literature. Policy areas that remain crucial for both sides in times of conflict, will be marked as “strong”. In the analysis, only policy areas marked as “strong” were analysed. However, also the areas marked as “weak” show a degree of cooperation, though, their degree does not contribute to determining the kind of relationship the EU and Russia have. It should be noted that the *weak* category has to be differentiated from chapter IV, in which *opposing* acts from the European Union towards Russia and vice versa will be picked out as a central theme.

Table 1:  
Policy areas in overview

<b>Economic relations</b>	EU is by far Russia's Partnership and Cooperation investment partner	Partnership and Agreement (1997)	<del>Weak</del> Strong main
<b>Trade relations</b>	The EU is by far the	Partnership and	Strong
<b>Energy</b>	Russia is the largest oil, gas, uranium and coal exporter to the EU	Concept of Energy Union	Strong
<b>Education</b>	Russia among the leading non-EU countries	Guided by principles from the Bologna Process in EU academic programmes	Strong
<b>Human rights dialogue</b>	The EU committed to promoting human	European Instrument for Democracy and	Weak

**Justice, freedom,** Consists of “Common Spaces” Weak **security**  
migration and Agreement (2005)  
asylum, border  
management, the  
fight against  
organized crime

**Science and** participation of Agreement on Strong **technology** Russian  
scientists in cooperation in  
the EU's Framework science and

<p><b>Technical and financial cooperation</b></p>	<p>available EU-funding for cooperation with Russia has been largely channelled to support ongoing policy dialogues in the framework of EU-Russia common spaces and the partnership for modernisation</p>	<p>TACIS programme (1991-2006)</p>	<p>Weak</p>

### *1.5 Conclusion*

Regarding the positive aspects of the Russian-EU relationship, nine policy fields are mentioned. In these fields, cooperation takes place, whereof three are further investigated. By means of education, economic relations and energy, it becomes clear how interdependent the two actors are, especially in the economic sphere and in the energy sector. Despite cultural and historical links, which have not been further examined, but are nevertheless important regarding the positive relationship the two actors have. Since cultural and historical links are the ground for ambitious cooperation. The educational sector is of particular importance, since the Russian Federation is the EU's biggest non-European partner in the field of higher education. Here, it should be highlighted that people-to-people contacts (of which education is a part) do not suffer from the crisis in Ukraine. Hence, the educational sector is the fulcrum in ongoing cooperation in times of tensions. However, the interdependence and thus, cooperation in the fields of economy and energy are much more crucial. They contribute extensively to the GDPs of the two actors. The European Union relies on the gas/oil supply from the Russian Federation, whereas Russia's economy is closely intertwined to the European economic actions (imports, exports). These two fields are more important for the economic stand of the two actors. However, the field of economy is not immune against the political tensions and hence economic trade is declining since 2014. Overall, the Russian Federation and the European Union have (as illustrated in the table above) several agreements in different spheres showing that good and effective cooperation between the two actors is possible and encouraged by them.

### *2. Negative Dimension*

By the means of the second part of chapter III, the second sub-question:

*Which legal and policy instruments have negative effects on the relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation?*

is sought to be answered. Unlike section 1, section 2 focuses on a policy area in which the Russian Federation and the European Union do not cooperate and could not find any common ground over the last years. This policy area is the area of security (especially geopolitical in

the “post-Soviet space”<sup>7</sup>). Section 2 concentrates specifically on the Ukraine crisis and its consequences, since it affects the cooperation introduced in the former part of chapter III, after the overall rivalry between Russia and the EU in the “post-Soviet space” was- by means of the Georgian conflict of 2008- illustrated. However, the Ukraine conflict is the most current one and is determining the Russian-EU relationship of the moment. Listing additional issues which the EU and Russia face, one could name the military operation in Chechnya, the problem of Kaliningrad after the 2004 round of EU enlargement and the concerns about democracy and freedom of speech in Russia (Prozorov, 2006). This thesis will, however, exclusively concentrate on geopolitical problems as the South Ossetia War (2008) and the current crisis in Eastern Ukraine.

### *2.1 Rivalry in the “Post-Soviet Space”*

The issues examined in this part are explained chronologically starting with the crisis in Georgia in 2008, followed up by the crisis currently happening in Ukraine. Which is the central theme of this section, as various points about this crisis will be discussed, starting with its background, the Russian hybrid warfare and ending by the consequences imposed by the EU as a response to Russia’s activism in Eastern Ukraine.

Regarding actions undertaken in the area summarised in terms as “post-Soviet space” or the “near abroad”, meaning Central Asia and the Caucasus countries, the differences between Russia and the European Union have become evident once more. More fundamentally approached, The EU is called normative power or civilian power by various scholars (Manners, 2002). Contrary, Russia is perceived as a traditional, realist state seeking to manifest its power in the “post-Soviet space”. Russia and the EU have different opinions about this space, “due to differences in political culture, Russians find it very difficult to understand the complex post-modernist logic which Europe declares. For Russia, this is the traditional understanding of force, based on economic and military–political levers; whereas for the European Union, it is soft power used to expand the European legal space and make the European model more attractive to neighbouring countries.” (Lukyanov, 2008, p. 1114).

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<sup>7</sup> The term „post-Soviet space“ will be put in quotation marks throughout the paper, since it is a misleading term established by the Russian Federation, based on the traditional Russian idea of the “sphere of influence” and thus, a special responsibility leading to the “right to interfere” (Reisinger&Golts, 2014).

The “post-Soviet space” is additionally phrased as the “shared neighbourhood”. Since the EU views this as a common neighbourhood, first tentative steps have been taken to stabilise this neighbourhood approach (Averre, 2009). The EU adopted a Strategy for a “New Partnership with Central Asia in June 2007”- which “strengthens the perception of the EU as a political and even strategic actor in the region” (Kassenova 2008, p. 2). The approaches towards the shared neighbourhood by the two entities are fundamentally different. The European Union on one hand, is concentrating to extend a security community including the wider Europe and to thus, creating an area of “well governed countries” (Averre, 2009, 1690). The EU is an interesting partner for the former Soviet republics since it offers trade and assistance programmes (Averre, 2009). Moscow, on the other hand, relied for a long time on nonmilitary instruments to reinforce its influence, however, in the conflict of Georgia (as examined in the next section), Moscow uses military force again.

### *2.1.1 Example of rivalry in the “post-Soviet space”: South-Ossetia War of 2008*

Firstly, what the war and the reshaping of the geopolitical situation that came with the conflict of 2008 in the South Caucasus are about will be presented as described by Dag Sourander (2008). Sourander is in the position of an author for the European Parliament, in the Department of External Policies for the Union. In his document for the European Parliament (*The Consequences of the South Ossetia War- First Tentative Conclusions*), the following causes for the conflict are named: Russia’s coercive capacity vis-à-vis its ex-Soviet neighbours in general, its ability to stop further NATO expansion in particular, its overall capacity to shape events on the global stage, as well as the degree to which its actions will further undermine the already damaged status of international law. Furthermore, prior to the war, Russia dramatically accelerated its policy of creeping annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This could be explained in particular by: the ever more assertive character of Russia's foreign policy: Russia’s aversion to Georgian (as well as Ukrainian) NATO membership and the Kremlin’s quite openly admitted hostage-taking tactics to stop this development, and to make clear Russia is back as a great power (Sourander, 2008).

As stated above, Moscow used military forces again, which culminated in the stationing of a Russian military presence (Averre, 2009). Russia’s alleged responsibility to protect “Russian citizens”, a core justification (which can be find in chapter III, 2.2 again) of the intervention in

Georgia, has principally served as a device to speed up military intervention that had other strategic purposes (Averre, 2009). This phenomenon let scholars question whether there is a new determination in the Russian political sphere to use military power as an instrument to enforce compliance by the neighbouring states (Averre, 2009). Moreover, Russian elites and European elites have engaged in the “battle of ideas” in which the EU defends the legitimacy of European norms and values (Averre, 2009). The “battle of ideas” is a crucial element in the tensions between Russia and the European Union, this battle is also of great importance in this conflict at hand. Further, regarding the European Union, the “New Partnership with Central Asia” is created upon the subliminal slogan “be more like us”. Furthermore, the “New Partnership” is based on a normative agenda set by the EU. Subsequently it can be claimed, that Moscow’s aim is similar to that of Brussels, both actors are willing to interfere in their external environment in order to create states that stable and friendly and thus generate a security area for the both actors (Averre, 2009). Although the European Union and Russia are technically pursuing the same aim here, they have opposing views and ways on how to achieve this, which leads to opposing actions in the geopolitical field.

### *2.1.2 Results of this Conflict for the Russian Federation and the European Union*

As a result of the conflict of 2008, a new geopolitical situation in the South Caucasus was created, in which Russia gained a much stronger position, which it is likely to use to gain influence on oil and gas transit through the region. Since Georgia lost the war and has been driven out of South Ossetia, as well as of the small area in Abkhazia that it controlled. Depriving Georgia of any control of South Ossetia is mainly a tool to reach other objectives, rather than an important objective in itself (Sourander, 2008). Russian policy objectives with a link to the South Ossetia war include, e.g. a halt to further NATO enlargement. According to Sourander (2008), the focus is now on Ukraine (since the document is from 2008, this was a future prediction, but as it will be shown in III, 2.2), Ukraine is indeed the new battle field of Russia’s influence sphere), since Georgian NATO accession must have become politically and strategically even more difficult, as well as practically impossible for a considerable time to come, given Russia's destruction of Georgia's military apparatus. In return for a halt to NATO enlargement, the Kremlin might make some concession in relation to South Ossetia, together with other concessions. The USA and other NATO powers are, however, likely to

regard South Ossetia as significant in a deal with Russia. NATO wants arrangements in relation to this region that ensure the viability of Georgia as a sovereign state (Sourander, 2008).

Overall, the EU opposes Russia and vice versa. Russia has always rejected the notion of a “common neighbourhood”. Through the South Ossetia War, it made its claim to a “sphere of influence”, a term often used by Russian authorities, clearer. The war has further sharpened the confrontation between this claim and policies for Western integration conducted by the West and, even more strongly, by Georgia. Russia has demonstrated its capacity to impose its will. Unless the West and its most interested partners in Russia's self-claimed “sphere of influence” now endeavour to demonstrate their capacity to advance on the paths they have chosen and succeed in this, the conclusion will tend to be that this de facto is Russia's “sphere of influence”. And Russia may feel encouraged to build on that victory by dealing more forcefully also with other neighbours (Sourander, 2008). Sourander concluded, in the document for internal use of the European Parliament, that “The EU, as well as the US, will have to rethink their policies towards all the countries of the South Caucasus, as well as Ukraine - not to mention our policies towards Russia.” (Sourander, 2008, p. 8).

As examined in this section, their diverging positions are manifested in their approaches to the shared neighbourhood. The conflict between Russia and Georgia concerning the region of South Ossetia in August 2008, and predominantly its result being Moscow's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, had effects on their relationship. The outbreak and outcome of the conflict, as Averre (2009) claims in *Competing Rationalities: Russia, the EU and the 'Shared Neighbourhood'*, only indicated the superficiality of the “strategic partnership” (Averre, 2009). Indeed, it led to the conclusion in Brussels that “relations between the EU and Russia have reached a crossroads” (Council of the European Union, 2008). Regarding this conflict, the position of the European Union is stated in a conclusion from the extraordinary European Council on September first, 2008. In this document, the EU (the Council of the European Union) it is stated that: “The European Council is gravely concerned by the open conflict which has broken out in Georgia, by the resulting violence and by the disproportionate reaction of Russia. This conflict has led to great suffering on both sides. Military action of this kind is not a solution and is not acceptable. The European Council deplores the loss of human life, the suffering inflicted on the population, the number of displaced persons and refugees, and the considerable material damage” (Council of the European Union, 2008, par. 1). Furthermore, it becomes clear that the EU

does not favour the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (“This decision is unacceptable”, Council of the European Union, 2008, par. 2). In paragraph 10 and 11 of the Conclusion, the Council aims directly at the Russian state, stating that “given the interdependence between the European Union and Russia, and the global problems they are facing, there is no desirable alternative to a strong relationship, based on cooperation, trust and dialogue, respect for the rule of law” (Council of the European Union, 2008, par. 10). Moreover, the Council calls on Russia “to join with us in making this fundamental choice in favour of mutual interest, understanding and cooperation. We are convinced that it is in Russia's own interest not to isolate itself from Europe. For its part, the European Union has shown itself willing to engage in partnership and cooperation” (Council of the European Union, 2008, par. 11).

Concluding, there are massive discrepancies between the two entities in geopolitical actions. In the next section, this is emphasised again by the investigation of the most recent conflict.

## *2.2 The Ukraine Crisis and the Annexation of Crimea*

Firstly, the background of how the crisis occurred will be described briefly. In November 2013, at the Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius, Ukraine's then President Viktor Yanukovich decided against signing the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). Instead, President Yanukovich received a US\$15 billion loan and a beneficial gas deal from Moscow. The decision triggered major pro-European popular protests in Ukraine. In February 2014, the Ukrainian parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, voted to impeach President Yanukovich, who then fled Kyiv. Russia perceived the power shift as a coup d'état and responded by annexing the Crimean peninsula in March 2014 in violation of international law (as perceived by the European Union), and by launching an undeclared “hybrid war” – involving strong economic pressure and targeted disinformation measures – against Ukraine (Briefing by the European Parliament, 2016).

The different responses and ambitions of the two actors in this conflict and for the Ukrainian state are crucial. The EU responded by means of a “Conclusion on Ukraine” approved by the European Council on 20 March 2014. This conclusion contains the EU's main answers to the

Ukraine crisis. In the following, the paragraphs will be cited. Firstly, the European Council declares that “the European Union supports the Ukrainian people and their right to choose their own future. The European Union stands by the Ukrainian government in its efforts to stabilise Ukraine and undertake reforms. In this context the European Union will pursue further efforts with the international community to assist Ukraine” (European Council, 2014c, par. 1). Furthermore, paragraph five of the document describes that “the European Union remains committed to uphold the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The European Council does not recognise the illegal referendum in Crimea, which is in clear violation of the Ukrainian Constitution. It strongly condemns the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol to the Russian Federation and will not recognise it.” (European Council, 2014c, par. 5). The document of the European Council mentions Russia by name, by claiming “The Russian actions are in clear breach of the Helsinki process, which in the past 40 years has contributed to overcoming divisions in Europe and building a peaceful and united continent. The European Council deplores that Russia has still not taken steps to de-escalate the crisis and that negotiations between Ukraine and the Russian Federation have still not started” (European Council, 2014c, par. 7). These paragraphs show the great nonconformance of the European Union with the actions undertaken by the Russian state in Ukraine.

Contrasting, in Russian media channels, the annexation of Crimea is portrayed as a logical consequence after the events happened as a prologue to the annexation, and as wanted by the population of Crimea (РИА новости<sup>8</sup>, 2015). РИА новости reported in February 2016 that “Крым является частью российской территории, на полуострове был проведен референдум, были внесены изменения в Конституцию” [English: “Crimea is part of the Russian Federation, a referendum was made in the peninsula, changes were made to the constitution”], which shows the matter of fact attitude the Russian media wants to present to the public. Additionally, in view of the legal arguments that the Russian Federation has articulated in defence of its actions, Russia characterized the separation of Crimea from Ukraine as the result of a referendum taking place in the Crimean area of Ukraine, and its annexation as the result of a treaty between an independent Crimea and Russia (Grant, 2017).

Russia justifies the secession of Crimea as necessary, by claiming that the human rights of the Russian-speaking population of the peninsula are at risk. Grant (2017) argues that Russia

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<sup>8</sup> РИА Новости is part of Россия Сегодня since 2013, which is Russia’s biggest (and state-operated) news agency, hence, as claimed by the author, a reasonable source in order to portray Russia’s opinion.

takes the position that the conditions of the Russian ethnic population in Crimea supported the exercise of self-determination by means of secession. Grant (2017) concludes that it is unclear how “the very existence of the people” could have been threatened if only a small number were involved. As stated in a press release by Astrid Thors (OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities) on her recent visits to Ukraine (Apr. 4, 2014): the OSCE high commissioner on national minorities, on the basis of a visit to Crimea from March 4 – 6, 2014, reported no human rights problem affecting the ethnic Russian population (United Nations, 2014).

Furthermore, Russian authorities reported the result as 96.77 percent voted for “Do you support the reunification of the Crimea with Russia as a subject of the Russian Federation?”, with 83.1 percent of eligible inhabitants, not including the city of Sevastopol, casting votes (Grant, 2017), (PIA новости, 2015), which pictures the justification of the annexation by Russian authorities.

Overall, the events of the Crimea Crisis of 2014 continue to shape Ukrainian politics and EURussia relations. For five years, the war in Eastern Ukraine is going on- resulted in more than

10,000 dead, from the European perspective due to Russia’s initiative to implement a separation movement in the region which Russia is supporting to this day in order to prevent the Western integration and Europeanisation of Ukraine (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2019).

### *2.2.1 Russia’s Hybrid Warfare*

Russia’s current actions (in Eastern Ukraine in particular) and its behavior is often referred to as “hybrid warfare” as by Reisinger and Golts (2014)<sup>9</sup>, the following section is based on their study. Hybrid warfare describes a mix of military and non-military, conventional and irregular components including elements such as cyber and information operations. The combination of the different actions creates ambiguity and handicaps an adequate reaction, especially for multinational organizations that act on the consensus principle. In the conflict examined,

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<sup>9</sup> Researchers for NATO, of the NATO Defense College

Moscow relies on the use of special forces and its “soft power” meaning propaganda and technical assistance. The latter occurred for instance, when the power supply in the Luhansk region was shut down by the Ukrainian government since they do not want to supply separatist-controlled territories any longer, Russia came to “repair” it by supplying the region with Russian electricity (Voice of America News, 2017).

In the Ukraine crisis, Russia’s hybrid warfare consists of five elements. Firstly, actions “with an appearance of legality” are carried out. In Russia several laws and regulations have been introduced or simplified in order to facilitate Crimea’s integration into the Russian Federation. The second hybrid warfare element is “military show of force and readiness”. Russia built up a troop of 30,000-40,000 at the border to Ukraine (according to the NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe), showing their readiness to invade Ukraine if necessary. However, having armed forces continually ready for deployment is contrary to the many international efforts to make security more predictable. The Russian Minister of Defense justified the process by claiming that the troops are part of a “intensive combat training” according to a schedule of spring and summer exercises. Although officially, Moscow did not even recognise the military troop build-up along the border. Furthermore, the use of Putin’s “little green men” is an instrument of the new Russian warfare strategy. These men are Russian special forces in their standard-green gear, acting, however, as “local security forces” without national tags (this procedure has been used by the Russians in the Chechen war of 1994 as well). By means of the “little green men”, psychological warfare is pursued. Since the civil population does not know, if they would answer questions or shoot immediately. The most distinctive feature about these gunmen are, that they operate with zero political responsibility, since they are not from the official Russian military, but “local defense forces”. The fourth technique is called “taking advantage of local tensions and local militias”, for the outside world named “Protecting Russians abroad”. At first, Russian special forces acted as “experts and trainers”, until the Ukrainian military began to push back the separatists and threatening to cut off the border with Russia, Moscow sent official military troops across the border to support the separatists. Moscow needed to adapt its narrative, since the denial of Russia’s participation was no longer bearable. The last hybrid warfare element of the Russian state is the use of propaganda. The Kremlin is aware of how to use the press, social media, tv channels to implement systematic disinformation, as well as how to conduct PR campaigns worldwide. Next to systematic disinformation, plausible denial is undertaken by Russian authorities hiding their real aims and ambitions. To this counts Russia’s inexorable denial of

involvement in Eastern Ukraine, even when evidence increased. Furthermore, in this specific case, Russia makes use of “branding” showing how this contributes to achieving a certain goal. The self-claimed “People’s Governor” of the Donetsk region, Pavel Gubarev, calls Eastern Ukraine “New Russia”, a term used by Putin before (Reisinger&Golts, 2014).

Summing up, as Reisinger and Golts (2014) state it, it is not possible to answer to Russia’s hybrid warfare by means of a military alliance alone. NATO can have the right forces available, however, the main threats of the Russian model are non-military and need to be addressed with economic and information campaigns. Here, the nation states are in charge, as they carry major responsibility to prepare and prevent becoming a target of Russia’s hybrid methods. The counter-element is good governance and appropriate minority rights (Reisinger&Golts, 2014).

### *2.2.2 Economic and Political Consequences*

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2014, the European Union, in form of the European Council, passed a regulation concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia’s actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine.

The measures were adopted in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and the deliberate destabilisation of Ukraine (European Council, 2014b). Different measures have been implemented by the EU: diplomatic measures, individual restrictive measures (asset freeze and travel restrictions), restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol, economic sanctions, restrictions on economic cooperation. By means for diplomatic measures, the European Union cancelled the EU-Russia summit of 2014, additionally EU member states decided not to hold regular bilateral summits. Bilateral talks with Russia on visa issues as well as on the new agreement between the EU and Russia were suspended (European Council, 2014b). Furthermore, EU countries supported the suspension of negotiations over Russia's joining the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Regarding individual restrictive measures, the European Union made 170 people and 44 entities subject to an asset freeze and a travel ban because their actions undermined Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence. The measures were introduced in March 2014, and last extended in March 2019 until 15 September 2019. In detail, the EU published a list of persons and entities in the EU Official Journal. In form of a Decision: Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/415 of 14 March 2019 amending Decision 2014/145/CFSP titled: “concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine”. The Decision lists twenty private persons; their names, identifying information, reasons and the date of listing. For instance, Aleksandr Victorovich Vitko is on the list because he is responsible for commanding Russian forces that have occupied Ukrainian sovereign territory (European Council, 2014a). Furthermore, in March 2014, the Council decided to freeze the assets of individuals responsible for the misappropriation of Ukrainian state funds. These measures were last extended in March 2019 until 6 March 2020 (European Council, 2014a).

Regarding economic sanctions, the EU implemented sanctions from summer 2014 on targeting exchanges with Russia in specific economic sectors. The economic sanctions have been extended for six months successively since 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2016. The extension was decided each time following an assessment of the Minsk agreements<sup>10</sup> implementation. The economic sanctions are currently extended until 31 July 2019. These restrictive measures contain of limiting access to EU primary and secondary capital markets for certain Russian banks and companies, imposing an export and import ban on trade in arms, establishing an export ban for dual-use goods for military use or military end users in Russia, curtailing Russian access to certain sensitive technologies and services that can be used for oil production and exploration (European Council, 2014b).

Moreover, restrictions on economic cooperation were introduced by EU leaders in July 2014. Here, the European Investment Bank (EIB) was requested to suspend the signature of new financing operations in the Russian Federation, EU Member States agreed to coordinate their positions within the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) Board of Directors with a view to also suspend the financing of new operations, the implementation of

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<sup>10</sup> On 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2015 leaders from France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia agreed to a new ceasefire, the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements (the 'Minsk II' agreement), concerning peace building in Eastern Ukraine which entered into force on 15 February (Briefing by European Parliament, 2016).

EU bilateral and regional cooperation programmes with Russia was re-assessed and certain programmes suspended (European Council, 2014b).

Russia responded with countermeasures to the European sanctions. Russia has retaliated with an embargo on certain EU agricultural products (Briefing by the European Parliament, 2015). However, the overall impact on the European economy has been limited, although certain sectors and countries are more significantly affected. Overall indications show that the European economy is resilient to the adverse effects of falling trade with Russia. Importantly, the EU's financial sector is not considered to be systemically threatened by its exposure. The most visible direct effect is the substantial fall in EU agri-food exports to Russia. The losses are, however, mitigated to a large extent by redirecting exports to alternative markets (Briefing by the European Parliament, 2015). As described by the Parliament, Russian countersanctions do not have a strong effect on the European economy, however, Russia's president Vladimir Putin warns the European Union, since the EU will suffer likewise from the economic default. This is due to the fact that, every product that a Member State used to export to Russia, but does not do so any longer, causes defaults. This default in the European companies can lead to the loss of jobs. From January to August 2014, German exports to Russia decreased by 16.6 percent. This is the biggest slump since the financial crisis in 2009 (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, n.d.). Regarding Russia's point of view, one can look at a paper by the Institute of Economic Forecasting of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the effect of sanctions in both Russia and the EU. They estimate that European financial institutions suffer annual losses of US\$8-10 billion from a reduction in interest payments (Briefing by the European Parliament, 2015). Moreover, the Russian study claims that in the long term, and if sanctions escalate, oil production in Russia may fall by 1015% by 2030, which would then lead to a hike in energy costs of US\$3 billion annually in the EU (Briefing by the European Parliament, 2015). The paper terminates stating unlike direct effects, total effects from sanctions are macroeconomically significant both for Russia and the EU. The potential adverse impact of sanctions on the Russian economy is estimated at 8-10% of GDP and that on the EU economy at some 0.5% of GDP (Briefing by the European Parliament, 2015).

Additional to economic sanctions, the European Council froze cooperation with Russia on the political level. Russia's intervention in Crimea led to the suspension of talks on processes on the "Common Spaces" (introduced at the St. Petersburg summit in 2003), on negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement to include "legally binding commitments" in certain areas (such

as the area of political dialogue) initiated in July 2018, on the “Partnership for Modernisation” which has launched in 2010, as well as on negotiations on visa facilitations (European Parliament, 2018).

### *2.3 Conclusion*

This chapter focused on the negative aspects of the Russian-European relationship where crucial issues can be found. Whereas on the one hand, Russia and the member states of the European Union are able to cooperate on various policy areas as presented in chapter III, 1 their perception of geopolitics and warfare are not able to synergize. In chapter III, 2 the rivalry about the “neighbourhood” is the central theme, more detailed spoken, the conflicts in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014-today). The illegal annexation of Crimea and the conflict in Eastern Ukraine have seriously affected the bilateral political dialogue. As a result, some of the policy dialogues and mechanisms of cooperation are temporarily frozen, and sanctions directed at promoting a change in Russia's actions in Ukraine have been adopted. Concluding, the European Union and Russia want to establish a “neighbourhood” which is similar to them, meaning being either European(ised) or under Russian influence. The way Russia chose to pursue its goal is incomprehensible for the European Union and thus, the fundamental different character of the two actors is shown. The European Union is a “normative actor” and tries to establish European-like liberal democracies in the near and wider abroad. Whereas Russia does not act on the basis of being a “normative power”, but a “great power” (Mankoff, 2009). Meaning warfare, military forces and propaganda are instruments used by the latter. Here, Russia and the EU are not able to find common ground.

The European Union decided to react in form of economic sanctions and a political freeze of dialogues. The Ukraine crisis and the different roles of the two actors in it marks an end to peaceful cooperation.

### *3. Discussion*

In the following, a chapter-specific (of chapter II and III) discussion will be drawn. By means of chapter III the first two elements of the tripartite research question can be answered. The research question aims at finding an answer to “Which factors determine the relationship of the European Union and the Russian Federation today [and] how are the positive and negative dimensions balanced within it [...]?”. This chapter proved, that there are numerous factors that shape the relationship of the two entities. In the first section of the chapter, the positive dimension has been investigated, here, the following factors have been identified as determinations for their relationship: (higher) education (in form of Erasmus+), science and technology, economic and trade relations and energy supply. Furthermore, the graphic under III 1.4 shows further factors, which have not been investigated in detail since the EU and Russia either do not depend on the cooperation within this field, or (as contrasting to the field of education) these acts of cooperation do not remain important in times of tensions (Ukraine crisis). Those factors are: environment and climate change, human rights dialogue, justice, freedom and security and technical and financial cooperation. For instance, the cooperation in human rights dialogue has been marked as “weak”, since the EEAS states “The EU is committed to promoting human rights and the rule of law in Russia”, which includes the underlying assumption that Russia is not (yet) on the same level as the EU regarding the importance and advocacy of human rights, which lowers possible cooperation. Furthermore, chapter II portrays the historical past of the two actors, by means of this overview, it is recognisable that the EU and Russia worked on establishing a cooperative relationship since 1989. Thus, historically -and culturally- a strong connection between Europe and Russia is existing. The importance of history is undeniable and shows how long the time span can be until two state (-like) actors, that are based on different political and societal systems (here: post-communist Russia aiming at being a great power again and normative, soft power Europe) arrive at a mutually beneficial and accepted status of cooperation.

On the other hand, the negative dimension has been investigated by looking at the factors of their rivalry in the “post-Soviet space” and the current Ukraine crisis and its consequences. As briefly addressed before, there are numerous additional factors that could have been used to illustrate the negative dimension, which will be discussed in IV, 3. The chosen factors determine the relationship investigated, since they show the fundamental divergence between the two actors. Moscow is of the opinion to remain influential in its self-declared “sphere of influence” meaning the former Soviet republics. The Kremlin does not flinch of using hybrid warfare, containing military (since 2008 again) as well as non-military instruments (e.g.

propaganda). This assumption leads to disagreements with the EU, as examined in this research by the examples of Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014-today). Both in Georgia and in Ukraine, Russia intervened militarily to achieve one goal: determining their space, which ends in actions contrary to international law, e.g. the annexation of Crimea. The European Union is against the annexation of Crimea, Russia's military presence in Eastern Ukraine (and reacted with economic and political sanctions, which claims the low point of their relationship), the Union is also against the autonomy of South Ossetia and Abkhazia since it views the two regions as parts of Georgia.

The European Union is not in favour of Moscow's "realist, traditionalist" (Averre, 2009, p. 1690) approach in their (as the EU calls it) "common neighbourhood". Here, the EU is, whatsoever, willing to establish its own way on how states should develop and be governed. The EU does so by means of trade agreements. Overall, the negative factors demonstrate that there are areas, the EU and Russia cannot find any common ground in, what they would need in order to be described as irreproachable cooperative states.

Summing up, the introduced factors of this research show that there is, indeed, a strong positive as well as a strong negative side. To conclude on the question of "how the positive and negative dimensions are balanced within it", the answer, possible to be given by purely taking into account what this research paper demonstrates, is that they are balanced relatively sufficiently. This is due to strong interdependencies and the extension of people-to-people contacts, on one side, but the opposing views in geopolitics and the sanctions imposed by the EU towards Russia, on the other side.

#### *Chapter IV: Conclusion, Future Predictions and Limitations*

In the last chapter of this research paper the overall conclusion of this thesis will be drawn, followed up by hypothetically proposed future predictions that could occur, ending on the presentation of the limitations of this research.

## *1. Conclusion*

This thesis aimed at answering the research question as raised in the introduction: “Which factors determine the relationship of the European Union and the Russian Federation today, how are the positive and negative dimensions balanced within it and how can, therefore, their kind of relationship be titled?” In order to answer this question a theoretical framing was generated which was applied upon the topic of the relationship between the EU and the Third State Russia. Here, the cooperation- theory by Fearon (1998) was introduced. Fearon’s core statement can be summarised as: in the international system the problem occurs of whether and how states might cooperate for mutual advantage despite the absence of a supranational government (anarchy). Meaning; since every state is governing in an anarchic world order, cooperation could be useless. However, as seen by investigating EU-Russia political relations, cooperation between state entities does take place and can lead to mutual advantages, despite hostile attitudes in other areas. Predominantly, states cooperate in the economic sector, as seen by the examined example. Political hostile attitudes are likewise expressed in making use of economic interdependencies - namely economic sanctions. Furthermore, Fearon’s theory indicates, that “in the field of cooperation theories, it is argued that different international issues and issue domains— trade, arms control, the environment, education etc.—may have different strategic structures, and these crucially affect the prospects for international cooperation and the nature of the problems which states must overcome to achieve cooperation” (Fearon, 1998, p. 1). Applying this statement onto the relations of the two actors, its validity can be proved. Since the different strategic structures present an urgent problem. Moscow’s and Brussels’ perception on how to create cooperation in specific issue domains (geopolitics) diverge to a great extent. Thus, the prospects for international cooperation is affected and has, in the EU-Russia case, to be limited to only certain issue domains. Additionally, as described above, Fearon argues, the nature of the problems which states must overcome to achieve cooperation has to be identified. This can be considered as a next step which the EU and Russia must undertake in order to broaden the areas in which they can cooperate.

Subsequently, three sub-questions were formulated. In chapter II and III, these sub-questions were answered. In chapter III this thesis concentrated on the factors that determine the relationship and on the positive (III, part 1) and negative (III, part 2) dimensions of it.

As this research and the discussion above show, the relationship of the European Union and the Russian Federation is determined by the interdependencies and cooperation in various policy areas. Their strong interdependencies in the areas of economic and trade relations as well as in energy trade were examined in chapter III part 1, additionally to the portrayal of their strong cooperation in the field of education and science. Consequently, the positive side of the relationship between the two actors is strong, however, the negative dimension cannot be disregarded. The negative side of their relationship is shaped by the geopolitical actions undertaken by Russia and Russia's perception of the former Soviet republics, which are, in the Russian sense, their "sphere of influence". Here, the two actors have opposing maxims and divergent historical pasts, which makes it, until today, impossible to stand on one side in the fields of military, security and geopolitics. Russia is afraid of losing its regained status of being a "regional power" or even a "great power" after experiencing the rough years of the 1990s. Nevertheless, "rivalry" is taking it a step too far and is not sufficiently explaining the complexity of EU-Russia relations.

Overall, the EU-Russia relationship has been characterized by asymmetric interdependency due to the high degree of the EU's high dependency on Russian energy exports and the EU's need for security and stability in this policy domain.

Noticeable is that the relationship has been described as "strategic partnership" throughout the years (Beginning in 1997). Only recently, this term has become reluctant, as it can be seen by the interview of Kalniete, MEP, "Russia can no longer be considered a strategic partner of the EU" (Kalniete, 2019). Russia and the European Union have been called strategic partners, based on the PCA, the four common grounds and additional common strategies, for almost twenty years. Today, the relationship must be rephrased, which this research seeks to perform. The current urgency thereof can be exemplified by the fact that the publication of the European Parliament on the "state of EU-Russia political relations" has very recently been published; in February this year. The parliament emphasizes the need to fundamental reorientation of the EU's policy towards Russia. Due to, as described by the MEPs Scholz and Lösing, tensions, arms race and a growing political and military confrontation. Those are characterizing today's EU-RF relationship, which decreases peace and stability in the EU (European Parliament, 2019).

However, EU-Russia relations have been on a good track, numerous agreements (chapter I, 2.) have been concluded, various summits have been held in the past years, improvements

such as visa-facilitation have been discussed, however, stopped since 2014. The relationship between the European Union and Russia has potential to become greater yet gets destroyed by discrepancies taking place on the international playing field. By the means of this thesis, the complexity and balance between positive and negative dimensions of the relationship becomes clear. Concluding, the relationship can be described as a potential partnership which is, at the present time, on hold. As Haukkala (2015) states: the development of relations between the EU and Russia has experienced several ups and downs, between phases of optimism and pessimism (Haukkala, 2015). Hence, according to Haukkala, today one could speak of a “down” phase.

As carved out in this research as well as stated by the Parliament (2019), the EU and Russia should “address their differences without preconditions and start a result-oriented dialogue” (European Parliament, 2019, Report 2018/2158(INI)). In order to do so, the existing relations must be put on reset. Overall, EU-Russia relations have to contribute to build up an European peace order that will guarantee the security of all, including the states in the “common neighborhood”, strengthening democracy, rule of law, guaranteeing all human rights, facilitate civil society contacts and promote trade and economic cooperation.

Overall, the EU-RF relationship of today can be described as problematic, but not hopeless. Furthermore, regarding the great discrepancy between working *together* (being historically intertwined, cooperation and interdependencies equally on both sides in education, economy, energy) and working *against* (in the “shared neighbourhood”, imposing sanctions) and each other simultaneously, as it is happening today, the relationship can be called Janus-faced meaning having two sharply contrasting aspects or characteristics. Taking it a step further the term schizophrenic can be used, as the absolute contraries are carried out together, without the total collapse of either one.

Today, the relations are to a large extent on freeze, however, when both actors venture rapprochement, their relations can be reopened.

## 2. *Future Predictions*

After portraying what the relationship is today, future predictions can be drawn.

Complicated times can be ahead regarding the future relations the EU will have with Georgia.

The case of Georgia has been examined in chapter III, part 2 regarding the crisis of 2008. However, Georgia's aim to be part of NATO and thus being able to militarily oppose Russia, is stronger than ever (European Parliament, 2015<sup>11</sup>). As it can be followed in the recent events covered in the mass media, Georgians heavily protested and called for a change in politics, due to a Russian politician visiting the country and given the right to speak in Parliament (not about a political topic whatsoever). The Georgian population felt the Russian influence and wants to put a sign against it (Goncharenko, 2019). Furthermore regarding Georgia, Sourander (2008) stated that "for our policy towards Georgia, the new situation should probably lead us to concentrate on making the Georgian state as able as possible to withstand further Russian attempts to weaken and destabilise it in order to bring it to heel", also in the conclusion from the council it becomes clear, that the EU is standing on Georgia's side and wants to Europeanise the Republic of Georgia, what the country itself is interested in (European Parliament, 2015).

The future events taking place in Georgia and Ukraine can heavily reshape EU-Russia relations, here NATO's role and the possible membership of these two states is significantly relevant (Sukhankin, 2019).

On the other hand, if the EU and the Russian Federation manage to consolidate in a result-oriented dialogue, to find a solution for the situation of Crimea that pleases the EU, Russia and Ukraine equally, the political dialogue can revive and topics like visa facilitations can be on the table again.

### *3. Limitations*

In the last section of this research paper the limitations of the research will be presented, as well as proposals what future researches on the topic of EU-Russia relations could additionally consider.

Various aspects additionally existing in the field of EU-Russia relations, could not be taken into account, for the sake of completeness, those aspects will be briefly explained, and their absence will be reasoned.

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<sup>11</sup> Briefing by the European Parliament on "Georgia: political parties and the EU"

As continuously approached within this research, the analysis of the normative debate was not included. When discussing the normative argument, often raised in EU-Russia relations, numerous factors have to be considered. The normative argument concerns their overall perception of the world order and tries to explain their actions within it. The normative debate is often conducted when examining political heavy weights such as human rights and the rule of law. The European Union committed itself to promote human rights and the rule of law in the Russian territory. This superior- thinking and offer of assistance is a thorn in Russia's eyes and does not receive traction by Russian authorities.

Moreover, giving prospects for future research in the field of EU-Russia relations, the role of the media should be investigated. See, for instance, Lichtenstein et al. who examined the framing of the Ukraine crisis compared in Russian and German television (Lichtenstein et al., 2019). Russian, and likewise European, media channels heavily portray the respective other in a specific way of how they want the public to perceive the other actor. A media analysis in the first step could lead to statements regarding the society; how they are influenced (and thus, also the scholars cited within this research could possibly be influenced) and how they view the political relationship between the two. Moreover, the societal aspect was not examined in this paper, however, it would be a logical next step after analysing political relations- how they are perceived and reacted to by the European and Russian public. Hence, some aspects that degraded the perception of Russia in the West mostly investigated by the media could not be considered in chapter III, part 2. One of those aspects is the (allegedly) cyber-influence (The New Yorker, 2018) by Russia on political elections taking place in the US or in the European Union. However, as there is no sufficient scientific proof, this explosive topic could not be considered.

Furthermore, due to the word and time limit of this thesis, and the language (Russian) constraint, the research could not take additional aspects, such as societal circumstances and reactions from the public, or the debate of human rights and the rule of law in Russia, into account. Overall, a balanced, totally unbiased analysis was constrained to achieve since Russian authorities do not publish the same amount of policy documents as European political bodies do. A more balanced analysis could have been conducted if policy papers about the policy domains examined here, would have been available correspondingly from both sides. Additionally, due to the limited scope of this research, the Member States could not be considered individually, what in turn could have demonstrated crucial differences. Since, for

instance, Germany/Italy/France-Russia relations could considerably differ from Lithuania/Poland/Latvia-Russia relations.

Summing up, the research experienced some constraints and based on those, it advises other scholars what interesting additional aspects could be in the field of EU-Russia relations.

### *1. Appendix*

#### *Policy and Legal Documents used for Analysis*

Type of Document	Name of Document	Publisher
Briefing	EU-Russia cooperation on higher education	European Parliament
Regulation	Erasmus+ for higher education in Russia	European Commission
Interview	Sandra Kalniete: “Russia can no longer be considered a strategic partner of the EU”	European Parliament
Briefing	Economic impact on the EU of sanctions over Ukraine conflict	European Parliament
Briefing	Ukraine and the Minsk II agreement on a frozen path to peace?	European Parliament
Regulation (No 833/20149	concerning restrictive measures in view of Russia's actions destabilising the situation in Ukraine	European Council

Council Decision (2014/145/CFSP)	concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine	European Council
Communication (COM (2011) 539 final)	On security of energy supply and international cooperation - "The EU Energy Policy: Engaging with Partners beyond Our Borders"	European Commission
Report; Motion for a European Parliament Resolution (2018/2158(INI))	on the state of EU-Russia political relations	European Parliament
Agreement (L 327/3)	Agreement on partnership and cooperation establishing a partnership between the European Communities and their	European Union
	Member States, of one part, and the Russian Federation, of the other part	
Report (A/HRC/25/G/19)	Note verbale dated 19 March 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva addressed to the secretariat of the Human Rights Council	United Nations, General Assembly, Human rights council
Note (DGExPo/B/PolDep/Note/2008_XX)	The Consequences of the South Ossetia War First Tentative Conclusions	European Parliament
Common Strategy (1999/414/CFSP)	Common strategy of the European Union of 4 June 1999 on Russia	European Council

Presidency Conclusion (12594/2/08 REV 2)	Extraordinary European Council [on conflict in Georgia 2008]	The Council of the European Union
Report (2018/2158(INI))	On the state of EU-Russia political relations	European Parliament
Conclusion	Conclusion on Ukraine	European Council
Press Release	EU-Russia Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee meets in Moscow	European Commission
Paper	Energy as a tool of foreign policy of authoritarian states	European Parliament

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