

International Conference

COULD THE CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND EUROPE BE OVERCOME?

ABSTRACTS

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Russia and EU: Issues of Consent and Current Contradictions

The paper deals with brief history and nowadays status of the relations between Russian Federation and the European Union. The author analyses historical dimensions, current economic status, political problems (from Eastern Partnership up to latest development) and prospective of these relations, making special accents on the Eastern European countries' role in this process. The author is deeply convinced that there are much more issues of consent and common interest than points of contradictions between Russia and EU and that the contradictions between Russia and EU might be and should be overcome since this corresponds to the interests of the both sides.

Lyudmila Ilicheva | Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and
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The European Union and Russia: Ratio of Politics and Economy

In modern conditions of crisis development the interaction of politics and economy is an important catalyst for the effectiveness of the investment mechanism for reproduction which must be insured against political risks.

Within the framework of the global integration financial crises are shifting to a qualitatively new system-wide level at which national resources are being integrated, the redistribution of the final universally valid product, services, knowledge, and cultural values. This requires the world community to find and develop adequate preventive, correlating and regulatory measures to influence integration processes.

In the interests of productive diversification of cooperation, first of all, there should be a mutual, politically uninterested interest in this process, without implementing the policy of "double standards", in the line of developing ties aimed at finding direct, open and transparent forms of partnership in various fields. Parameters of economic security and economic sovereignty,

parameters of the quality of life, economic and business interests, measures for suppression of unlawful actions and damaging to society depend to a large extent on the mechanism of functioning of interest. From these positions in many countries political approaches to improving structural policy and removing barriers to the movement of capital in connection with ensuring the economic security of states should change. This is confirmed, for example, by the existing protective mechanisms on procedures for registering the passage of foreign capital.

In modern conditions the establishment of a common economic between the EU and Russia is hardly feasible on the terms on which the European Union is ready to build it. It is necessary to develop and implement a strategy of mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation between the EU and Russia that is part of the Eurasian Economic Union, with due regard for and respect for the specifics of partners and their national interests for the sake of further development of world economic relations and the world economy as a whole.

In modern conditions, the ability to preserve Russia's role as an active subject of world politics and economy has largely been determined by the ability to use the existing national competitive advantages and ensure the growth of production efficiency and competitiveness of domestic producers. Russia needs Europe – a responsible and predictable partner in resolving economic and, in part, political issues. This is also the interest of the EU itself – to become an independent, capable player.

Michael Romancov | Metropolitan University, Prague

Relationship Russia–Europe: Opportunities and Limits of Geopolitical Analysis

If we want to understand the essence of the problems between Russia and the European Union, it makes sense to explore all dimensions, but given the fact that geopolitics degenerated into special form of ideology in present-day Russia, geopolitical analysis can hardly result in major positive shift. Nevertheless it can help us to see the depth of mutual misunderstanding.

Zuzana Lehmannová | Centre of International Studies of Jan Masaryk, University of Economics, Prague

Europe and Russia in the Context of Global Changes: Sociocultural Approach

Paper deals with the theoretical and methodological principles of intercultural analyses with application on cultural similarities and differences of Europe and Russia. It introduces to the specific features of contemporary influential cultures and to the comparative research methods of their value systems, to implementation of cultural research on international relations. It explains cultural determinants of the contemporary interrelations of Europe and Russia. It clarifies the substance of cultural differences and their influence on international relations. It explains research methods of cultural specifics and their application in research of interrelations of different cultures. The paradigm analysis is applied to study cultural plurality, particular cultures in order to compare them. It is focused on application of knowledge of the cultural sciences in West European and East European domains comparison, their cultural paradigms, specific features and value orientations.

Jan Slavíček | Institute of History, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

Russian and European Geopolitics and Approaches to International Relations

The paper deals with the basic factors that shaped the foreign policy, the approach to international relations and the geopolitics of Russia and Europe (understood as part of Western civilization as defined by S. P. Huntington). These approaches are analysed through the idealistic and realist theory of international relations. It also includes a comparison of Russia and Europe in terms of population, GDP and military strength.

Peter Kremer | The Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, Moscow, alumnus

Potential of Partnership between Russia and the EU

Historically, Russia's main economic partner was Western Europe. Europe for Russia is not only the most important economic partner, Europe is the supplier of new technologies for Russia and the basis of further development.

As the world experience shows in the area of crises, the conflict of interests comes to the fore, and most importantly, the ability of the parties to listen and understand each other sharply decreases, and the willingness to search for mutually acceptable solutions decreases. In our case, the conflict of interests is not so much a conflict between Russia and Europe but Russia and the United States in which Europe is "drawn in as much" as possible.

In the interpretation of the Russian establishment and most of the experts, the essence of the conflict is as follows: the United States, as the only superpower on earth, regards as its mission the management of the world order, including ignoring the national interests of other countries, the violent reorganization of political regimes until the state borders change, which often leads to casualties and blood, artificial the cultivation of illusions, the imposition of their system of values and meanings on "uncivilized countries" to which they include Russia.

The Russian establishment believes that the time of unipolar world remains in the past, that in the world there are several centres of power and influence and Russia is one of such centres, and not an ordinary regional power as the former US president mentioned. It is quite obvious that contradictions of this type are "seriously and for a long time", that even in the medium term, their termination is not visible. Although the EU, in general, follows in the waters of US policy, this, of course, does not mean that the EU has no interests in its relations with Russia that are different from the interests of the United States. It suffices to refer to the fact that Russia's trade with the EU prior to the imposition of sanctions was approaching half a billion dollars, while the US trade with Russia was several times less. It has to be notice: Russia delivers to Europe a good portion of energy, Europe to Russia – machinery and equipment. A large number of European companies, amongst others famous ones (BMW, Siemens, etc.) have their branches and production in Russia, i.e. economy of the two sides are mutually complementary. The mutual economic benefits of cooperation are obvious which cannot be said about political cooperation.

In Western Europe, Russia is often accused of imperial ambitions. But, at least, this kind of reproaches can be addressed also to the EU. Like any empire (and even a quasi-empire), the EU seeks to expand its zone of influence, including new countries. In the post-Soviet regions, the Eastern Partnership Agreements of the EU became the mechanism providing for the inclusion of new countries into its sphere of influence. In order to implement these agreements, the EU

undertook a number of actions and activities aimed among others, breaking the historically established ties of countries like Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus with Russia. Russia views these actions as an encroachment of its national interests and countering the strategic line of the country's political leadership – restoring Russia's status as a Great Power. With its military actions in Syria, Russia demonstrated to the world that it will not change its strategic line and it has the resources and the political will to defend it.

Are there any possibilities for resolving this conflict of interest? Like any conflict of interest, a geo-economic conflict can be resolved by seeking a compromise, mutual concessions, and the depth of these concessions, in turn, is determined by the correlation of the opposing parties. Unfortunately, at the moment we do not see any harmonization.

Zbyněk Dubský | Centre of International Studies of Jan Masaryk, University of Economics, Prague

EU–Russia Relations: Dependence without Partnership?

The development of relations between the EU and Russia has experienced several phases of optimism and pessimism. A specific form of dependence and both more assertive actorness (accompanied by the emergence of conflicts) give these relationships dynamics. At present, both actors have diametrically different positions in terms of their role not only in European space, but also in international politics. It seems that EU–Russia linkage and its character is one of the fundamental (de)stabilization factor in the wider European area.

Martina Varkočková | Metropolitan University, Prague

Perception of International Security and Its Evaluation

Two measures of international security are compared: the arguably Western Doomsday Clock and the Index of International Security developed by the Russian think-tank PIR Centre. By concentrating on the methodology of both indexes, similarities and differences of the Western and Russian perceptions of international security are deduced.

Miloslav Had | Institute of International Relations, Prague, emeritus fellow

Current EU–Russia Trade Relations

The EU and Russia recognise each other as key partners on the international scene and cooperate on a number of issues of mutual interest. Trade between the two economies showed growth rates until mid-2008 when the trend was interrupted. Following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and its role in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine, the EU imposed restrictive measures, including targeted economic ones, against Russia. In turn, Russia imposed restrictions on the import of agricultural and food products from the EU. The EU's programmatic documents reveal a search for a consensus formula acceptable to member states that could provide a basis for further EU–Russia mutual relations.