

## EU-RUSSIA CONTEMPORARY RELATIONS: REASONS FOR OPTIMISM AND THE DARK SIDE

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### INTRODUCTION

Russian state was created in 862 after Christ when prominent European empires like Roman or Greek have already faced a serious downturn. In terms of historical scale Russia is believed to be born quite late. For example, booming of the Hellas was in 3000-1000 B.C while Roman empire started from 27B.C. – 476A.C. Vikings created their settlements in 2500 BC in Greenland with matriarchate where only a woman could apply for divorce or possess a land etc. Slavic tribes at that time were nomadic. At the same time, Russian empire which also appeared only under Peter the Great in 1721 - 1917 existed till the Revolution. It is visible, that the birth gap between European and Russian empires accounts for several centuries. It is also visible that the perception and essence of time is changing. The Hellas existed 2000 years, Rome only 5 centuries, Russia – 200 years, USA – a couple of decades. I am not going into details with approaches to empires. There are Gumilev's "passion theory", Vallertsain approach (world-empires and world-economies), theory of satisfied/unsatisfied empires with the world order etc. But it is high time to mention here a famous Russian scholar and academician Sergey Kapitsa who outlines: "The world history is speeding up and almost running. This will contribute to a new paradigm creation, when many sides of the life will be changed" (S.Kapitsa, 2004). He set up a theory that centuries BC could be equal to decades AC. And it is not surprisingly anymore why the Planet had been created by the Lord only for 7 days since thousands of years ago the time was different. This theory is useful when applying for interdisciplinary approach in order to depict the research question fully.

Despite Kapitsa's theory of time speeding, Russia, just the opposite, has been slowing down its pace during historic cycles. It faced lots of problems during its eminent history which

led to political, economic, social stagnation – the tatar yoke (1237 - 1480), the serfdom 1497-1861 (almost 550 years Russian people were slaves), communism legacy of 70 years. In 1990 after the USSR collapse and failure of communism regime in Europe - I play off “the end of history” approach by Fukuyama - Russia started to introduce capitalism. It has been involved in so far wilder form of capitalism for 20 years already. I don't know any country in the world which is evolving and reforming its political system and political process so dynamically – in this way Russia certainly makes progress.

More or less the same thoughts on Russian mystical circulations were expressed by Russian philosophers in the 19th century. Thus, Petr Chaadaev, a famous Russian philosopher perceived this deep difference between Russia and the EU in terms of mentality. He defined the following Russian way in world politics in his essay “Filosoficheskie pisma”: “One of the sorrowful peculiarities of our unique civilization is that we are still opening the truisms that have become evident to other countries and to other nations even more remote than we are. The thing is that we never went side by side with other nations, we don't belong either to West or to East, we don't have their traditions. We stand beyond the time, and universal bringing-up of human being didn't touch us. We live in the present-day without past or future, in stagnation. Antique European nations like Celts, Scandinavs, Germans had their druids, scalds, bards. If we turn to indigenous people in Northern America which have been discriminated by the US for many years– there are amazingly deep people. Now my question is where are our scholars? Who of us ever thought of something? Who is thinking instead of us? Meanwhile, locating between 2 entities – West and East, putting one elbow on China, another one – on Germany, we should have combined 2 great bases of spiritual nature – imagination and ratio, and to unite our civilization in the whole history of civilization on our planet (P.Chaadaev, 1831).

However, despite this, another brunch of Pan Slavic philosophers, for example, Aleksey Khomakov were grieved over the fact that: “Our estates under the influence of foreign Enlightenment became imitators of everything alien. Imitation starting from external life side penetrates the outlook and actions”(A.Khomakov, 1848). As a result, Khomakov concluded «Development of world history demands from our Saint Russia expressing of its all-sided background that grew her up».

Anyway, it is clear that Russian state is very young comparing to other European states and still now is facing confusions which direction to move. This philosophic approach – Pan-Slavic and Pan-European - explains to large extent the fact why Russia is economically and politically was behind Europe for centuries. Meanwhile, it is difficult to become a prosperous at once. Another example I find in the Soviet Encyclopedia Dictionary where the word cooperation simply didn't exist (Soviet Encyclopedia Dictionary, 1980). Nowadays, the world has changed. And it seems to be strange if a country today isolates or is not eager indeed to cooperate, though there are a few. Fortunately, Russia is not among them.

In this paper my attention is paid to relations with a “postmodern actor” which is the EU. Whatever leaders of the EU-27 might think of Putin-Medvedev tandem, both actors are operating in the society which is changing rapidly. Thus, the EU-Russian relations today are conditioned on by global downturn, an outbreak of fiscal crises in Greece and Irish serious budget deficit (a real concern is Spain), Turkey’s big ambitions to enter the EU and BRIC: “It wouldn’t be surprising if we start talking about BRIC+T” (Newsweek, November, 2010), American inward turn (it is not promoting democracy and freedom anymore), Kosovo independence, closer bilateral agreements with some EU-member-states, like, Poland, disagreements over gas, visa regime matters, South Ossetia etc.

## Research toolkit

This paper presents analyses on political environment in the EU-Russia contemporary relationship. On the basis of interdisciplinary approach, I play off geopolitics, game theory, political realism, constructivism, a little bit of empire theory and Russian philosophical approach, Kapitsa’s time speeding approach, historic approach, theory of speech acts. As a whole, I apply systemic approach to the current paper.

Research toolkit is the following: analyses of official documents and normative documents both Russian and European, processes tracing, qualitative method, content analyses, statistics. Content-analyses is widely used since it is the prominent method in social inquiry. Processes tracing requires case studies research.

I outline historic approach, which helps me better analyze the origins of Russian foreign policy and mentality of the Russian starting from the year 862 AC when Russian state was created. The empire theory and Russian philosophical approaches to Pan-Slavic and Pan-European together with Kapitsa’s approach of time speeding are also important while theorizing the role of Russia in relationship with the EU.

I also commend geopolitics. The EU and Russia share common juxtaposition, historically a number of hiatus and hurdles took place in cooperation especially under the Cold War. Thus, I found out that Russia is facing the “clash of civilization”. In accordance with Huntington, main clashes happen between states confessing various religions: “The main split runs between Finland and Russia, between the Baltic States and Russia, divides Byelorussia and Ukraine, then turns to the west, separating Transylvania from Romania coming to the former Yugoslavia separating Croatia and Slovenia from the rest. To the west and north from this split protestants and catholic live, to the east and south orthodox and Muslim live” (Huntington, 1995). Another prominent geopolitician L.Gumilev also stated that “Europe (mostly Western) is divided from the rest by the negative isotherm in January” (Gumilev, 1979). This means that countries located to the east from this demarcation line have the average temperature in January below zero. If we turn to famous geopolitician N.Spykman and his concept, we’ll find

out that "Location with reference to the Equator and to oceans and land masses determines nearness to center power, areas of conflict, and established routes of communication, and location" (N.Spykman, 1944). He also mentioned that topography and climate are very important. In his concept he comes to the conclusion that Rimland is much more powerful and significant than Heartland (Siberian vast land). This predominant importance of Rimland is still topical nowadays.

Political realism is also crucial in terms of "hard" and "soft" security issues between the EU and Russia. Still, security matters are inalienable parts of beneficial relations and concentrating upon economic ties only would be deeply wrong.

I also play off speech act theory in the framework of Political Discourse Analysis. It is applied to the part where I am depicting Russia as it is seen by scientists and politicians from the West.

The EU-Russian relations are also seen in the framework of a game theory. As it is well-known, game is a model of people's interaction in a conflict or in cooperation. Games have always existed in economics either latently or openly. In accordance with the game theory, there are three types of games – gambling, combinatory games (for example, chess) and strategic games where a player can't predict what tactics the opponent will choose, thus, the outcome is uncertain (A.Fon Neyman, O.Morgenshtern, 1970). I bet the EU-Russia are playing a strategic game which is a "non-zero sum game" when the parties to the game have common interests, not controversial – they have a common wish how to get benefit and a controversial interest how to share it. The EU-Russia relationship is a coalition of actors for aiming at the goal of economic sustainability, first of all. Neyman and Morgenshtern also stressed that such economic games could be "in the form of cooperation, collusion, treaties and agreements, threats (to make someone leave the business), fraud, probability and trust, honesty and justice, competition, monopolies, oligopolies, cartels, favoritism, discrimination, services for a service, bonuses and premiums, discounts and deductions, return of a part of income as bribes, tips and as well as other additional payments, lost of political events, manipulations with market rules etc" (A.Fon Neyman, O.Morgenshtern, 1970). Theorizing this concept, they highlighted that economic and political games are different by their natures. Political games tend to be unsustainable while economic are. They also claimed that as soon as the coalition being created, a new "powerful" element appears – a struggle how to unite and get more benefits. Such games are latent, they are not like chess where you know all the moves which were done or could be done. And another important factor in game theory is "social rationality". Scholars claim it to exist when all actors are satisfied with the game.

Constructivism is also important, it goes through the whole paper trying to construct the attitude of the actors – "postmodern" (the EU) and "traditional" (Russian state). Constructivism which implies that international relations depend not only upon certain

objective processes (cooperation, for example) but also on perception of the concept of it (A.Wendt,1999). Sometimes such definitions may seem to be vague. But despite this fact the approach stresses the importance of ideas that people think and talk about. What people say – definitely exists. People talk about Russia-EU cooperation, if they talk about it, then it is real. A vivid example will be Northern region, a prosperous one on the border with the EU and Russian north-western part. Constructing its Northern identity – peace and sustainability - became a bullet point. As a result of creating such common identity, Finland's president Tarja Hallonen is among those high officials who are in favour of visa-regime removal with Russia. Such common identity brought about the "Nord stream", a big gas project which runs over Swedish, Danish, Finnish parts of the Baltic Sea. Lots of Finns start confessing orthodox instead of Protestantism. In my point of view, constructing identity led to constructing reality and such kind of common identity should be also created between the EU and Russia.

## Will Russia broadly fit in with the Western world in the 21st century?

Russia is seen in the West in many ways. It had always had ideology to export to its satellites. It embraces 11 timing zones. The territory is the biggest in the world. Is seen as "mystical, authoritarian" by famous American scientists H.Kissinger (H.Kissinger, 2001). Russia is a gas and oil superpower with GDP estimated at 1.67 trillion dollars (J.Kulhanek, 2010). Russia during 20 years in its foreign policy have been pursuing liberal, nationalist, great power activist and assertivist concepts what confused its foreign policy to some degree (D.Rome Specher, 2010). Russia is having its multivector move, however, some observers claim, that these are only the motos. Thus, for example, in BRIC it has the worse economic indexes among its members for the last year. (The Economist, November 2010). "The EU is perceived quite positively by 42% of Russians, only 15% harbor negative feelings about the European Union. The EU is seen as important world player in the future by 39% of respondents. 96% believe that relationship between Russia and the EU should be strengthened (M.Morini, R.Peruzzi, A.Poletti, 2009). Russia is also perceived having great power status, multipolarity, and quite reluctant developing links with the European Parliament and the European Commission, Russian elite prefers bilateral relations.

This is very true that Russia prefers bilateral relations with the EU countries. It is also evident from Medvedev's address to the Federal Assembly 2010 when only close partners like Germany, France, Italy, Finland were mentioned: "Such partnership will be aimed at 5 steps of Russian modernization" (Poslanie, 2010). Indeed, Germany has seriously turned to Russia, seems it is less interested in the EU nowadays. However, "under Schroeder and Helmut Kohl, Germany sought tight ties with Russia. Under Angela Merkel, relations are still cordial, but Poland has become a lot more important" (The Economist, November 2010). Germany

sometimes keeps talking privately with Russia, for example, on Deauville summit on the 20th of October in 2010: "Both Sarkozy and Merkel agreed that in the post Cold-War era, Europe and Russia face common threats and should reinforce cooperation to jointly tackle them. They expressed support for closer EU-Russia relations and better arrangement of Russia into NATO framework" (Deauville summit, 2010).

A famous American scientist Robert Kagan stressed "Power changes nations. It expands their wants and desires, increases their sense of entitlement, their need for deference and respect. It also makes them more ambitious" (R.Kagan). Russia is ambitious in a way it possess large stocks of oil and gas and has support of the European locomotives. Russia knows that many European countries are severely dependent on its energy supplies. For example, today Latvia pays 30% more than Germany while Estonia pays 50% more than Italy for Russian gas. The law of "Primus inter parum" is still ruling. Germany and Italy are in Russia foreign policy priorities, especially after launching 2 vast projects - "Nordstream" and "South Stream". The "Nordstream" goes through the Baltic Sea to Germany covering Finnish, Swedish, Danish bottoms. The "South stream" will be built by 2015 and aims at Bulgaria, Italy, Austria through the Black Sea.

It is also visible from the exit palls of 2009 Russia is willing to cooperate with the EU increasingly. In this paper I argue that Europe and Russia have been strategic partners for years already since the important Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was reached in 1994 and took its effect in 1997. I am turning to article 1 of the Agreement, where we could observe the main objectives of this cooperation: "To provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the Parties allowing the development of close relations between them in this field, to promote trade and investment and harmonious economic relations between the Parties based on the principles of market economy and so to foster sustainable development in the Parties, to strengthen political and economic freedoms; to support Russian efforts to consolidate its democracy and to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy, to provide a basis for economic, social, financial and cultural cooperation founded on the principles of mutual advantage, mutual responsibility and mutual support, to promote activities of joint interest" (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, 1994). This agreement was a good start in 1994, afterwards a number of other normative documents was also adopted, they seem to be also very important in perception of mutual relations. Hereby, I mean "The EU Common Strategy on Russia" in 1999 and 4 road maps in 2005 on common economic space; on freedom, security and justice; on external security; on science and education appeared. In 2008 Russian president D.Medvedev initiated a draft of the Treaty on European security. All these documents are aimed at "a stable, democratic, prosperous Russia, firmly anchored in a united Europe free of new dividing lines, is essential to lasting peace on the continent. The issues which the whole continent faces can be resolved only through ever closer cooperation between Russia and the European Union" (The EU

Common Strategy on Russia, 1999). As a result, both parties on the basis of these documents are eager to pursue interests commonality in creating a single European humanitarian and economic space.

## What are the reasons for optimism in the EU-Russia relations?

Today in 2011 new relationship between Russia and the EU should be created. How should they look like? Should they have strong economic and political ties? That is a place for wide discussions because Russia and the EU are geographically and culturally united. Definitely, they will have to cooperate, will have to propose new economic and energetic reforms. New and important strategies are to be found finally. Old thinking should be left behind, re-thinking of these processes is important nowadays. It should finally become clear that Europe without Russia will weaken and cooperation and integration resisting will signify the victory of Chinese and American market. As N.Spykman claimed "In international society as in other social groupings there are observable the 3 basic processes of cooperation, accommodation, and opposition" (Spykman, 1944). I argue that cooperation is the best way to settle a new mutual pattern addressing political and economic issues, to reinvigorate and strengthen ties, to explore more opportunities for cooperation and for market sustaining growth. It is high time for relations rethinking, reestablishing constructive dialogue - Russia expresses the position of maximal openness and willingness to discuss. Even American database Wikileaks claimed that Medvedev struck the EU as a nice, young man (Wikileaks, 2008). There are, of course, thorny issues that have poisoned the relations, like Southern Ossetia or gas, visa disputes which led to lingering hesitate in new agreement reaching, for example. Of course, Russian-EU questions are not softballs, but enough of the period of standoff.

Currently, Russia is satisfied with the world-order. It is re-building its power, in 2000 it was especially evident when new "Security concept" and "Foreign concept" were adopted. Russia started to join international organizations - the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Organization on Collective Treaty Security - as well as participate in the UN peace-keeping missions. Cooperation with institutions like the UN, the NATO, the EU, G8, G20 became especially necessary. As Fukuyama claims it is pretty much conditioned on by the events happened on the globe (Fukuyama, 2001). Such cooperation is especially necessary nowadays in a post Cold war period since international community faced a big financial crises in 2008. Such economic changes led to drastic international shifts and many countries efforts uniting. For example, "Group of 20" made its summits annually and Russia puts a lot of faith in such kind of multinational forums. The quintessence of cooperation with NATO seems to be changing as well. The latest NATO summit in Lisbon on the 19-20th 2010 has also shown the

progress in mutual partnership. New "Strategic concept for the defense and security of the members of the NATO" was adopted. I play off content-analyses as a very widespread and important method of social inquiry. I've counted that in the new Strategy "Russia" is met 10 times and "Russian" –twice. While in the most recent document "Comprehensive Political Guidance" dated by 29.11.2006 Russia is not mentioned at all. It is also outlined in the current Concept: "NATO-Russia cooperation is of strategic importance as it contributes to creating a common space of peace, stability, and security. NATO poses no threat on Russia. On the contrary, we want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, and we'll act accordingly with the expectation of reciprocity from Russia" (New Strategic Concept of the NATO, 2010).

Another important summit in understanding current shifts in the EU-Russia relations took place on the 8th of December in Brussels. As "Kommersant" wrote immediately, the summit is believed to be successful since Russia is getting ready to enter the World Trade Organization (Kommersant, December 2010). The main topic on the summit was visa-regime removal. The EU wants Russia to diminish corruption rate, first of all, and Russia seems to be ready for that, not institutionally, of course. Also, in December 2010 a number of agreements were signed on cutting timber export tariffs and rail freight fees which pave the way Russia's to WTO.

The results of the last summits with the EU and NATO outline that Russia is becoming really important for these 2 institutions. There is also a prominent shift in mutual perception. Since if we turn to Russian official documents we'll find out that the EU hasn't been a priority for the last couple of years.

For example, in the address of Medvedev to the Federal Assembly in 2009 which is made in November annually in order to conclude with the result of the previous year and settle the goals for the future year both in internal and foreign policies, we will find a lot of information on modernization launched in Russia and nothing is devoted to the EU.

I should retrospect here in the context of modernization. There were actually only two emperors in Russian history known as modernizers or the "Great": Peter I and Catherine II. Thus, Russian empire appeared only under Peter I who had been in favour of Russian modernization and who had shown Russia to Europe and vice versa only in the 17th century. Peter I was the first among all Russian emperors who organized diplomatic mission known as "Velikoe posolstvo" in 1697-1698 to discover Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, England, Germany, current Baltic sea states (Estland, Lifland, Kurland). He also modernized the country technically and economically having changed even traditional Russian dress. During his journey Peter I studied European culture, met prominent scientists, updated skills in shipbuilding, martial art etc. Another prominent and Great empress Catherine II was famous for her 25 years of reigning in Russia which are known as "golden era". Russian territory was seriously expanded thanks to Siberia and southern part nearby the Black sea, a protectorate

over Georgia was also set at that time. She read a lot of Montesquieu, Diderot, Rousseau, Voltaire and consequently brought Enlightenment to Russia. She built up the Hermitage. I doubt that Medvedev with his modernization concept could be equal to Peter I or Catherine II. Time will only show if the Russian will see him as an example of dedication and perseverance. Anyway, five steps of modernization were outlined in Medvedev's address in 2009 as the following: medicine technologies and pharmacy development; usage of energy-efficient lamps; nuclear energy development; space technology and telecommunications development; information technologies development (Poslanie, 2009).

Also, in this address the main foreign policy priorities such as multipolarity together with the role strengthening of the UN and G20 were mentioned, but not a word was devoted to the EU. The same idea can be traced in his article "Rossia, vpered!" published on the 10th of September, 2010. "We have to deepen our cooperation with the Commonwealth of Independent States Countries as well as with the Organization of the Treaty of Collective Security and Euro-Asian Economic Community. These are our strategic and the closest partners. Together we are aiming at economics modernization, regional security and more just world order. We also have to develop cooperation with BRIC (Brazil-Russia-India-China) and the Shanghai Organization on Cooperation" (D.Medvedev, 2010). As a result again nothing was mentioned on the EU. In recent Medvedev's address to the Federal Assembly in 2010, we read that such close partners like Germany, France, Italy, Finland are mentioned in the context: "Such partnership will be aimed at 5 steps of Russian modernization" (Poslanie, 2010). The EU as an entity wasn't popular so much again.

However, the shift towards Europe was made by V.Putin, Russian prime-minister in November 2010 in his interview to German magazine "Zurdeutsche Zeitung". Putin announced of "Russian plans to create a harmonious economics community from Lisbon to Vladivostok, a free trade zone in the future. This will mean that a common continental market will amount to euro trillions. It is clear that it is necessary to remove all the obstacles for Russia to enter the WTO. Then, it is necessary to unify legislation, customary procedures and technical regulation. This should be highly technological, postindustrial epoch. We want more Russian students to study in the EU universities. Academic mobility, mutual internships and other exchange forms are very much important and they help to create a single technological and corporative culture" (V.Putin, 2010). What was stunning is that Putin counted common EU-Russia GDP in euro (more or less it will together amount to 20 trillions euro) with European economy remaining vastly superior.

Inevitably, despite this shift, there have been and there are still disputes and differences. Besides, South Ossetia, gas and visa disputes, the Customary Union was created with Belarus and Kazakhstan, former USSR republics, in 2010. Ukraine is also expected to enter the Union. It was also announced that only such entity from now on could enter the WTO. Kremlin has shown again that Europe is not the priority. Historically, Russia has always

been very involved in the post-soviet space being though absolutely inactive there for the last 20 years (for example, Kyrgyzstan leader Roza Otunbaeva turned to Russia for help since there were ethnic cleansing in 2009 and Russia together with the Organization on Collective Treaty Security did nothing). Despite this fact, Russia still preserves its ambitions in the satellites. In this context, the East European Partnership launched in 2008 is important to discuss. Some scholars claim that Russian government is perceiving this Initiative as a danger not due to the fact it will lose its influence in this 6 countries, but due to the fact that Russia will be excluded from Europe (O.Gaman-Golutvina). However, there is another point of view – Kremlin doesn't like the EU involvement in a post-soviet space (J.Kulhanek). So far this pivotal area is and will be an area of contradictions. Visa regime is another sensitive issue in mutual relations. French president N.Sarcozy has mentioned recently that only in 10-15 years the regime will be removed. As a result, the EU wants to resist Russia but continues trading with it. This is quite a difficult trick to pull off. Gas disputes in terms of the Energy Charter are also widely known. Russia was under pressure to adopt this Charter, but in 2009 it refused to ratify it showing off that Russia is not eager to face any restrictions to energy policy.

Despite these contradictions, the main road is still strategic partnership and trust. The smiling diplomacy, so unpopular in Asia, still is on and helps to resolve many issues. Meetings are not superficial and leaders tend to think what is real. Day-to-day human traffic between Russia and the EU flows smoothly. What is also common is a topic of security. If we ask Russian high officials on the common enemy, they will reply that this is terrorism, at the same time European officials do. It is already a progress that we are not treating each other as a threat anymore. Hereby, I outline the "European Security Strategy" adopted on a summit in Brussels in December 2003. This prominent summit led to the EU's strengthening its positions as a global actor in economics and politics in the world. This strategy adoption was a big success in terms that common European security policy has always been unsuccessful (the Pleuven plan 1950; the Fouchet plans 1961 and 1962). This document adoption was conditioned on by upcoming enlargement in 2004 as well as by war in Iraq in 2003, which in its turn provoked disputes among EU member-states. Thus, high commissioner on Common Foreign and Defense Policy, Javier Solana, was in charge of this document elaboration. This project is a conceptual, pivotal basis where the second EU pillar - Common Foreign and Defense Policy – could be developed further: "Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. As a union of 25 states with over 450 million people producing a quarter of the world's Gross National Product (GNP), and with a wide range of instruments at its disposal, the European Union is inevitably a global player" (European Security Strategy, 2003). In conclusion, it is stated that a more tight cooperation is necessary not only among the EU actors but also among actors on the international arena: "An active and capable European Union would make an impact on a global scale. In doing so, it would contribute to an effective multilateral system leading to a fairer, safer and more united world" (European Security Strategy, 2003). This argument led to the fact that Russia became more and more interested

in mutual security issues with the EU. It is important to remember Medvedev's proposals for a Pan-European Security Pact in 2008. The NATO secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that there is no need for such treaty so that the initiative remains unpopular while the EU-Russia put much more efforts into non-traditional security, in such areas as climate change, health, education (the Bologna process, The Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window, for example). In this context, political realism seems hasn't been forgotten – hard and soft security still matter.

## The dark side of mutual relations

The influence of a single party known as "United Russia" is great and overwhelming in Russia. It is seriously criticized for weak and fragmented opposition. However, seems that the opposition on the 13th of December, 2010 got united under its new name "People's freedom party". Its main goal is to struggle against corruption. Four opposition leaders – V.Ryzhkov, B.Nemtsov, M.Kasianov, V.Milov soon will decide upon the candidate who will participate in presidential elections in Russia in 2012. The fact of opposition strengthening is a good fact, however, there was an incident with Nemtsov coalition called "Solidarnost" that received money from the USA. Nemtsov sent the money back in order not to be compromised. Professor of American University in Washington, A.Lihtman outlines that such transfers are equal to political death. That is the way to make someone be criminal, to discredit him. But as we can see from this history with Nemtsov, it is clear that he is wanted to cross up, giving him this foreign money (A.Lihtman's interview, 2010). It is absolutely evident that it is difficult for opposition to survive. As a result, tradition of a strong party seems is in DNA of Russia. However, there were several dissenters marches in Moscow, St.Petersburg, Samara and Chelyabinsk in 2006-2007. For 3 years no marches had been organized anymore, this could be linked to the fact that Medvedev became a new president and citizens became more relaxed. Anyway, the authorities can still put down pretty much any demonstration if they choose.

Russian TV channels, mostly state owned, is another acute problem of Russian society. Indeed, Russian elite which is very small and narrow is trying to control information and TV in Russia. Speech by a prominent journalist Leonid Parfenov on the ceremony of Vladislav Listyev prize in November, 2010 proves that: "It is clear that Russia is using internet mostly where it is possible to sort out information, while TV is fully pro-governmental. What is made by journalists - summits of the president and the prime-minister, but it reminds us of the USSR. Nothing has changed" (Parfenov speech, 2010). Afterwards, Parfenov, a journalist №1 in Russia, was seriously blamed by other Russian journalists, they even laughed at his arms shaking etc. I'd like to turn also to the recent events happened with O.Kashin, a famous journalist of the "Kommersant" magazine who was seriously beaten in the yard of his house in

Moscow. Kashin was writing a lot on the reform of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (its upcoming rename into Police), on opponents' meetings on the Triumphal square, authorities shift in Kaliningrad, death rate plummet in Moscow in summer 2010. Being too "talkative" he was severely beaten with a rod. How did authorities react? For example, Russian high official, Chair of ROSmolodezh (Russian youth organization) and co-chair of "Transneft" Vasily Yakimenko wrote in his blog: "Kashin is a zombie, an invisible man, lizard and yogi". Kashin's finger was almost torn off, in hospital medicals made everything they could in order to get it back to normal, and V.Yakimenko claimed Kashin to be a lizard? Such high official blaming of a seriously beaten person is absolutely inhuman and unethical. This provoked a burst of indignation in Russian internet. The next week Yakimenko was reporting to Putin - Russian prime-minister didn't say a word what also provoked certain disputes (Vlast, 2010; Internazionale, 2010). Meanwhile, Russian President Medvedev was blogging that the criminals will be found and convicted (Medvedev's blog, 2010). Other eminent Russian officials also condemned case with Kashin - N.Svanidze, a journalist, member of the Public Chamber; M.Gaidar, deputy prime-minister in Kirovskaya oblast; M.Fedotov, chair of the Council on civil society institutions and human rights development; V.Ryazanskyi, first deputy leader of the "United Russia"; M.Boyarsky, prominent Russia actor.

Another prominent example of a freedom of speech controlled by authorities happened with a governor of Tverskaya oblast, Mikhail Zelenin who wrote in his blog in Twitter: "Such happens in the Aleksandrovsky hall. Together with beef they served salad with a rainworm alive!". In several hours the post disappeared, and President's assistant in international relations Sergey Prihodko reprimanded a serious warning and called for Zelenin's resignation. Such things can't happen in the Kremlin Prihodko argued. (Vlast, 2010) But Medvedev greeted Zelenin with his upcoming birthday and joked on the rainworm again in his blog (Medvedev's blog, 2010).

## Conclusion

In my opinion, the EU-Russia common goals such as economics, energy, sustainability buy a certain amount of goodwill, but to focus on economics and forget about security makes no sense at all. It is important to continue not to treat each other as a threat. Moreover, the EU wants Russia to become active, responsible, sustainable power in world affairs. The hope is that in years to come Russia will grow to be more democratic and the "Untied Russia" would stop using censor and force. But as R.Armitage, deputy secretary of state under George Bush claimed: "The hope is not a policy".

Good solution will be also to try to do as much business as they can through multinational forums like G20 and the UN. Bilateral dealings are easier and less time-consuming but they are opaque and leave the rest of the world wondering what is going on.

The future, like the story, what we make it.