

A Feather in its Cap? The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2013

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Abstract

This article analyses Lithuania's presidency of the Council of the European Union and provides detailed guidelines for a theoretical evaluation of it through the use of a modified contingency management theory. The study recalibrates the assessment of presidencies that can be examined through the relationship between demand and supply, in which an operationalised supply side yields relevant dimensions in the evaluation of a presidency's effectiveness. The analysis revealed a well-executed Lithuanian presidency of the Council of the EU and came up with recommendations of a theoretical and empirical nature.¹

Introduction

Presidencies of the Council of the EU stepped into a brighter scholarly limelight after 12 new states joined the ranks of the EU in 2004 and 2007. A tangible influx of newcomers, mainly in former communist countries raised questions about possible shifts in the EU's agenda and their transformation from 'takers' to 'shakers and shapers'. Naturally, the EU accession process and the logic of EU enlargement *ipso facto* dictated 'take it or leave it' policies of governance among the future EU wannabes.² However, the EU enlargement yielded fully fledged rights among new

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² Grabbe H., "How does Europeanization affect CEE governance? Conditionality, diffusion and diversity", *Journal of European Public Policy* 8(6), 2001, pp. 1013-1031; Schimmelfennig F. and Sedelmeier U., "Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(4), 2004, pp. 669-687.

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and small states of various stripes to affect the formation of the EU agenda.³ New theorising on Europeanisation also grasps the role of member states in the mechanics of the EU's plans and working schedules. Pundits see Europeanisation as having top-down, bottom-up and horizontal facets.⁴ The 'uploading' of national long-term interests, values, political models and mundane concerns can be identified from three perspectives: pro-action, rejection-promotion and usage.⁵ Negotiations, bargaining, socialisation and normative persuasion embody the bottom-up Europeanisation of small states. Assuming the presidency of the Council of the EU provides ample opportunities to upload the EU agenda. Certain scholars categorise countries that adopt this position at the helm as 'amplifiers' or 'silencers'.⁶ Some states exploit their presidencies to promote national interests over those of the EU ('amplifiers'), while others keep their heads down and tend to coordinate and stand for the interests of all EU member states and institutions ('silencers'). The latter function is usually ascribed to small and new EU member states that do not want to stand out as black sheep.

Lithuania was the first ex-USSR country to hold the rotating six-month presidency of the Council of the EU, which it assumed on 1 July 2013. The country also chaired the Council of the Baltic Sea States in 1998-1999 and 2009-2010, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2011 and other multilateral frameworks both regionally and internationally. However, the EU presidency was viewed in the country as a challenge of epic proportions. The presidency permits contribution to the EU's agenda through running and representing the Council in a joint decision-making process. Many expect such a country to coordinate the positions of all EU members. The presidency also presents an opportunity to reprioritise some of the region's established goals. The position involves cooperation with two other member states, with this trio preparing long-term goals and a joint EU agenda for an 18-month timeframe.

³ Björkdahl A., "Norm advocacy: a small state strategy to influence the EU", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(1), 2008, pp. 135-154; Panke D., "The Influence of Small States in the EU: Structural Disadvantages and Counterstrategies", UCD Dublin European Institute Working Paper 08-3, May 2008.

⁴ Flockhart T., "Europeanization or EU-ization? The Transfer of European Norms across Time and Space", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48(4), 2010, pp. 787-810; Radaelli C., "Europeanisation: Solution or problem?", *European Integration online papers* 8(16), 2004.

⁵ McCauley D., "Bottom-Up Europeanization Exposed: Social Movement Theory and Non-state Actors in France", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49(5), 2011, pp. 1019-1042.

⁶ Bengtsson R., Elgström O. and Tallberg J., "Silencer or Amplifier? The European Union Presidency and the Nordic Countries", *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27(3), 2004, pp. 311-334.

Lithuania hammered out a common programme with the preceding presidency of Ireland and the succeeding tenure of Greece, which took over at the start of 2014.

The official slogan of the Lithuanian presidency was a ‘credible, growing and open Europe’. Its main focus areas were the EU’s financial stability and competitiveness, and implementation of the growth agenda. However, four national concerns loomed between the lines of the Vilnius agenda: energy security, protection of the EU’s external borders, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the highly emphasised EU Eastern Partnership initiative.⁷ Lithuania saw its presidency as taking on the role of a political broker and aimed to boost its image as a reliable partner and mediator representing the interests of the whole EU.

From an empirical point of view, the Lithuanian presidency is yet to be written about. Examinations before the presidency naturally comprised *ex ante* evaluations, looking at expectations for the tenure⁸ or researching its potential in the areas of EU common foreign policy and primary security policy interests,⁹ namely energy security and EU eastern neighbourhood policies.¹⁰ An evaluation of the latest presidency has been outlined by Mindaugas Jurkynas.¹¹ This article aims to ascertain the effectiveness of Lithuania’s presidency by applying a modified contingency management model. The study is divided into several parts, initially evaluating theoretical approaches to the presidency and delving into the realm of organisational management by employing the aforementioned contingency management theory and critically examining it. Criteria for a successful presidency are then discussed and organised into an analytical model to be applied to Lithuania’s tenure. Needless to say, conclusions and recommendations duly follow.

⁷ Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, *Resolution on the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2013*, <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=411051&cp_tr2=2>, 2011.

⁸ Šešelgytė M., “The First Leadership Test: What to Expect from the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU”, *SIEPS*, <http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/2013_13epa.pdf>, August 2013.

⁹ Šešelgytė M., “Lisabonos sutarties įtakos Europos sąjungos institucinei sandarai BSGP srityje vertinimas ir Lietuvos sėkmingo pirmininkavimo ES Tarybai šioje srityje veiksmų nustatymas”, Policy paper commissioned by the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, 2011.

¹⁰ Vilpišauskas R., Vandecasteele B. and Vaznonytė A., “The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union: Advancing Energy Policy and Eastern Partnership Goals: Conditions for Exerting Influence”, *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 29, 2013, pp. 11-37.

¹¹ Jurkynas M., “Lithuanian 2013 Presidency at the Council of the EU”, *Žurnāls Latvijas intereses Eiropas Savienībā* 1(13), 2014, pp. 85-96.

1. EU Presidency and Contingency Theory: Towards the Analysis Model

Literature on EU presidencies is not scarce, with different viewpoints on member states' contributions appearing in scholarly radars decades ago. The presidency role has been ascertained as being relevant in EU policymaking.¹² In a similar vein, Metcalfe¹³ and Tallberg¹⁴ have looked at presidency strategies and their effects on general policymaking in the region. Some studies have looked at the functions of the EU Council,¹⁵ while others have examined the results of different presidencies¹⁶ and the potential for countries to influence the EU agenda and content of decisions.¹⁷ Some investigations have argued that the presidency has not been a decisive factor in shaping the EU's agenda.¹⁸ However, most studies

¹² Bunse S., *Small States and EU Governance: Leadership through the Council Presidency*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Elgström O., *Introduction in European Union Council Presidencies. A Comparative Perspective*, London: Routledge, 2003; Hayes-Renshaw F. and Wallace H., *The Council of Ministers*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997; Schout A. and Vanhoonacker S., "Evaluating Presidencies of the Council of the EU: Revisiting Nice", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44(5), 2006, pp. 1051-1077.

¹³ Metcalfe D., "Leadership in European Union Negotiations: The Presidency of the Council", *International Negotiation* 3(3), 1998, pp. 413-434.

¹⁴ Tallberg J., "Bargaining Power in the European Council", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46(3), 2008, pp. 685-708.

¹⁵ Edwards G. and Wallace H., *The Council of Ministers of the European Community and the President-in-Office*, London: The Federal Trust for Education and Research, 1977; Kirchner J., *Decision-making in the European Council: The Council Presidency and European Integration*, Manchester: Manchester University, 1992.

¹⁶ Edwards G. and Wiessala G., "Conscientious Resolve: The Portuguese Presidency of 2000", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 39(s1), 2001, pp. 43-46; Quaglia L., "Italy's Presidency of the European Union: A Good 'Business Manager'?", *South European Society and Politics* 9(3), 2004, pp. 149-165; Quaglia L., Hough D. and Mayhew A., "You Can't Always get What You Want, But Do You Sometimes Get What You Need? The German Presidency of the EU in 2007", SEI Working Paper No. 97, 2007.

¹⁷ Bengtsson R., Elgström O. and Tallberg J., "Silencer or Amplifier? The European Union Presidency and the Nordic Countries", *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27(3), 2004, pp. 311-334; Quaglia L. and Moxon-Browne E., "What Makes a Good EU Presidency? Italy and Ireland Compared", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44(2), 2006, pp. 349-368; Vandecasteele B., Bossuyt F. and Orbie J., "Unpacking the influence of the Council Presidency on European Union external policies: The Polish Council Presidency and the Eastern Partnership" in Ripoll Servent A. and Busby A., eds., *Agency and influence inside the EU institutions, European Integration online papers*, 2013, Special Issue 1, Vol. 17.

¹⁸ Kaniok P., "The Influence of the EU Council Presidency on Public Opinion", *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, Vol. 12, No. 3, September 2012, p. 23.

are still limited in terms of addressing all relevant factors for a presidency's success, while there is no unified formula for the evaluation of an efficient tenure that is anticipated to have results such as quality-oriented outcomes from negotiations, a good atmosphere for trade-offs and the achievement of objectives.

A contingency theory came to light as organisations gained in complexity at the end of the 1970s. Principles and methods for systemic analysis were applied to examinations of decision-making and specific, concrete situations.¹⁹ Problems are thus analysed from two perspectives: an organisation's internal situation in terms of its level of integration and differentiation; and the impact of the environment in which an organisation operates. This contingency theory contends that there is no optimal method for managing an organisation through decision-making because the best course of action is contingent on particular internal and external situations. A leader must employ a certain style of leadership to a specific situation.²⁰ The environment (exogenous variables) can affect the management of an organisation, which needs to fit in with its surroundings to operate smoothly. The organisation's success therefore lies in the method of management meeting the demands of the environment. The style of leadership depends on the assignment's structure (high-level control as a key to success), the strength of leadership (medium-level control and a focus on relations leads to success) and the relationship between a leader and his or her members (low-level control, with a focus on the execution of projects).²¹ In summary, the effectiveness of management hinges on pressure from the environment and the leadership strategy. However, this model has been criticised for its inability to define the environmental impact because the number of situations that the leadership must react to can be uncertain and unique. Another weakness of this contingency theory is the omission of an organisation's potential to affect the environment and thus create a form of two-way interaction. The refined model in this study addresses aspects of an organisation's potential via the supply side, as discussed below.

¹⁹ Luthans F. and Stewart T., "A General Contingency Theory of Management", *The Academy of Management Review* 2(2), 1977.

²⁰ Donaldson L., "The Normal Science of Structural Contingency Theory" in Clegg S. and Hardy C., *Studying Organization: Theory & Method*, London: SAGE Publications, 1999.

²¹ Robbins S., Judge T., *Essentials of Organizational Behavior*, 11th edition, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey, 2011.

1.1. Demand Side of the Presidency

Despite the criticism, contingency theory can be applied in an analysis of a presidency's effectiveness. The presidency faces demands from the environment (expectations and pressure from EU member states and institutions) and supplies its service, which in successful cases adapts to expectations and even surpasses them. A presidency is expected to involve setting short-term goals and offering a creative and compromise-based environment and solutions in the case of political impasses.²² Schout and Vanhoonacker have attributed demand during a presidency to four variables: 1. The complexity of an issue; 2. The level of trust and political support in the country that holds the presidency; 3. The decision-making mechanism; and 4. The sensitivity of a political issue.²³

Examining the complexity of an issue takes into account whether the problem is old or new. An old issue does not call for political leadership because member states' positions are clear and often unchangeable, making the presidency's mediation more complicated. In contrast, a new issue requires the presidency's active involvement. The level of trust and political support for a presidency are significant factors in carrying out the leadership role. As 'amplifiers', large countries can more easily transfer their national interests onto the EU's agenda. However, small countries do not despair because many are trusted as frank mediators and can therefore receive support, especially from other small states.²⁴ Active promotion of national interests and changes in government during a presidency challenge levels of trust. The decision-making mechanism is relevant when there is a qualified majority system because a presidency can actively participate in mustering majority coalitions, whereas the presidency's role is smaller in cases of unanimity.²⁵ The sensitivity of a political issue narrows the opportunities for a presidency to pursue its national interests and raises the need for a mediator, particularly among large EU powers and institutions.

These four criteria for demand from the environment (the EU) should be understood in the light of recent institutional and policy amendments in the region's foreign policy and the presidency's rules. Recent 'constitutional' changes

²² "Pirmininkavimas Europos Sąjungai", *Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo Europos Informacijos Biuras*, <<http://www.eic.lrs.lt/index.php?-1288465814>>, 28 04 2014.

²³ Schout A. and Vanhoonacker S., "Evaluating Presidencies of the Council of the EU: Revisiting Nice", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 44(5), 2006, pp. 1051-1077.

²⁴ Quaglia L., (note 16).

²⁵ Thorhallsson B. and Wivel A., "Small States in the European Union: What Do We Know and What Would We Like to Know?", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19(4), 2006, pp. 651-668.

in the EU after the Lisbon Treaty have made the role of the presidency broader and more developed. EU foreign policy became more unified after the Lisbon Treaty introduced a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and European External Action Service. Common EU foreign policy reduces a presidency's room for manoeuvre, but the presidency can prepare discussion papers before the meetings of Committees of Permanent Representatives (COREPERs), summon coalitions and promote certain common foreign policy options. The creation of rules for the presidency²⁶ almost by default requires a country's mediation and neutrality with regard to its national interests.

1.2. Supply Side of the Presidency

Supply-side or leadership strategies in the management of EU demands during a presidency are no less relevant than the demand side in the search for effectiveness. Schout and Vanhoonacker²⁷ single out three factors in domestic politics that influence the presidency's functions: 1. The importance of the issue for the presidency; 2. The positions of the main policy makers in the presidency; and 3. Readiness for presidency.

The importance of issues for the presidency determines activities for mediation and leadership. If a concern coincides with national interests during a tenure, it is expected that the presidency will take an active role and promote the issue in the decision-making process. The stances of a presidency frequently depend on leading politicians, whose opinions at an EU level must more or less concur. If they do not, neither leadership nor mediation can succeed. As for preparing for a presidency, qualified human resources and chairpeople in working groups, a grasp on the post-Lisbon institutional environment and efficient communication and coordination among EU institutions and member states boost the chances of success. Preparation naturally reveals how ambitious a presidency is.

This analysis adds several variables that expand the supply side and wrap up the analytical model for the examination of a presidency's effectiveness, especially among small states. These factors add new dimensions that can either enhance or weaken the supply: 1. The orientation of foreign policy; 2. Cooperation with

²⁶ *Europos Sąjungos Tarybai pirmininkaujančios valstybės narės procedūrų vadovas*, Liuksemburgas: Europos Sąjungos leidinių biuras, <<http://www.am.lt/VI/files/0.008681001345798367.pdf>>, 2011, pp. 11-13.

²⁷ Schout A. and Vanhoonacker S., (note 22).

the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU; 3. Administrative capacity; and 4. Presidency experience; and 5. Relations with other institutions. The orientation of foreign policy in terms of interests and identities and their potential incompatibility with the values of other member states can hamper the success of a presidency, whereas a high degree of congruence gives promise for a good tenure.²⁸ Cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU is important for small states, especially those that hold the presidency for the first time. The Secretariat organises day-to-day coordination and practical activities for a presidency, files these with institutional memory and other information and assists in finding solutions that are acceptable for all.²⁹ Large states find the General Secretariat less relevant because they rely more on their own capacities. Administrative capacity is perceived as a presidency's strategic, tactical, managerial, diplomatic, political and public-relations resources and qualifications for orientating itself and staying coherent in the face of divergent interests, as well as in areas such as EU institutional policies and strategic documents. Finally, the impact of a presidency's experience can to some extent have a two-fold effect. On the one hand, experienced countries know the drill in terms of assuming the presidency, so they can employ resources more efficiently. On the other hand, experienced countries can allocate fewer resources to their new presidencies, whereas novices exploit their tenures as opportunities to present themselves at their best and are inclined to make significant efforts towards better preparation and execution of duties. The Lisbon Treaty has boosted the presidency's powers with regard to lawmaking, the EU budget and the approval of international agreements. Due to the enhanced influence of the European Parliament, effective cooperation with this institution is a prerequisite for a successful presidency. The Parliament must always be kept informed about issues that are discussed in the Council. This allows work between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission to be better coordinated. However, the intensity of relations with other institutions during the term of a presidency mostly depends on the workload inherited or, in other words, on the number of laws that must be adopted.

²⁸ For instance, Italian support for Russia's policies in Chechnya resulted in tensions among member states and the European Commission (Quaglia, 2005); "EU dismay at Berlusconi comments", *BBC news*, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3251705.stm>>, 07 11 2003.

²⁹ Tarybos Generalinis Sekretoriatas, *Europos Sąjungos Tarybai pirmininkaujančios valstybės narės procedūrų vadovas*, Liuksemburgas: Europos Sąjungos leidinių biuras, 2011, p. 14.

1.3. Operationalisation of Supply Criteria

The supply variables that explain a presidency's effectiveness can be defined in terms of criteria arranged in an ordinal scale. How a country performs during its presidency can be measured by turning these criteria into weighted numerical expressions from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good), thus helping to calculate the weighted average effectiveness of the presidency's performance. A maximum of 5 points are attributed to the country's performance, whereas 2 points at most are given to a presidency's experience because this factor has become less frequent as a result of the EU's enlargement and institutional and constitutional changes. Furthermore, the presidency's institutional memory is not that important at the highest political level because a country's presidency is no longer viable at the EU Council among heads of state or government. Finally, countries without experience of a presidency are inclined to thoroughly analyse the previous tenures of other countries and thereby compensate for their lack of expertise.

Table 1. Operationalisation of Supply of the Presidency

	5 points (Very good)	4 points (Good)	3 points (Average)	2 Points (Satisfactory)	1 point (Poor)
Readiness for presidency	Clear presidency priorities that are acceptable to EU states; preparation in advance; qualified human resources; knowledge of the positions of other states and actions foreseen	Fulfilment of the criterion with minor flaws	Sufficient fulfilment of the criterion, but lacking several components; partial conformity	Weak fulfilment of the criterion (e.g. distrust in priorities)	Poor preparation; low attention to readiness

Cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Council	Accepted, cherished and well-employed assistance of the General Secretariat; active consultations	Accepted assistance of the General Secretariat	Accepted assistance of the General Secretariat, but duty not always taken into consideration	Limited communication with the General Secretariat	No communication with the General Secretariat
Administrative capacity	Investments in administrative capacity (communication, diplomacy, leadership, negotiations, working groups and conflict management)	Good fulfilment of the criterion; close attention to raising qualifications; several minor flaws	Sufficient attention to administrative capacity	Low level of attention to administrative capacity	No attention to administrative capacity (e.g. no seminars or training)
Positions of main policy makers in a presidency	Smooth integration of political leaders into the presidency's activities; horizontal coordination at a national level; agreement on priorities; continuation of activities after elections	Good fulfilment of the criterion; continuity; several minor flaws	Consensus on priorities and continuity; debates and disagreements during presidency	Poor execution due to disagreements regarding political leadership	Internal disagreements about political leadership; no continuity after elections

Relations with other institutions	Intensive cooperation with EU institutions, support from the EU and regular visits to institutions; Parliament is regularly informed about the progress of issues under discussion in the Council	Good relations with EU institutions, but several minor flaws.	Relations with EU institutions are sufficiently maintained, but distrust or hostility from the European Parliament is sometimes noticeable	Limited or complicated communication and disagreements on certain issues	Relations with other institutions is disorderly, with a lack of consensus, poor handling of information and a lack of confidence in the chairing country
Presidency experience	-	-	-	Has presidency experience	Does not have presidency experience
Importance of issues	Presidency seeks to resolve an important national and European issue by including the most important aspects for the presidency in decision-making	Active resolution of an issue; opportunities exploited; several minor flaws	Sufficient involvement in resolving an issue; simultaneous advocacy of national interests	Weak involvement in resolving an issue; simultaneous advocacy of national interests that result in opposing stances of other states	Clear advocacy of national interests through neglecting the European agenda; opposing reactions from other member states; falling trust in a presidency country

<p>Foreign-policy orientation</p>	<p>The state displays pro-European stances, with a high level of trust from citizens in the EU; the presidency's priorities do not conflict with EU policies</p>	<p>The state displays pro-European stances, with a high level of trust from citizens in the EU; several minor flaws</p>	<p>Sufficient pro-European stances, with a medium level of trust from citizens in the EU; the presidency's priorities do not always coincide with the CFSP</p>	<p>The activities or stances of a presidency state are at odds with EU values on some issues; low level of citizen support for the EU</p>	<p>The state advocates stances that are at loggerheads with those of the EU; the state raises opposition to the presidency among other EU members; low level of citizen support for the EU</p>
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2. Measuring the Effectiveness of the 2013 Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU

2.1. Demand for Presidency

On 1 July 2013, Lithuania took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union from Ireland, assuming this role for the first time since joining the EU in 2004. The country's tenure was anticipated to continue the elimination of a symbolic divide between old and new EU member states and served as a litmus test for Lithuania's ability to ensure the Council's smooth operation. In 2013, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė stated that the country would seek the best solutions not only for itself but for all 28 EU members in a period of global problems.³⁰ The start of the presidency was marked with the same challenges that had already been outlined in the Trio programme and Vilnius pledged to carry on with resolving them. At the same time, the economic situation in Europe called for new measures because a number of EU member states had been severely affected by

³⁰ *Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentės Dalios Grybauskaitės metinis pranešimas*, <http://www.president.lt/lt/prezidento_veikla/metinis_pranesimas/2013_m..html>, 11 06 2013.

the financial crisis and the ensuing recession. Many countries introduced socially bittersweet, and thus politically challenging, austerity measures. European leaders focused on reducing poverty and unemployment.³¹

When providing recommendations for economic reforms to EU states, José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, expressed an opinion that inaction and delays to necessary reforms would rapidly lead to poverty and widespread social exclusion. The need for reforms created additional requirements for the Lithuanian presidency to be not only a mediator, but also to show political leadership in the face of economic and social problems. The Vilnius presidency faced an increased legislative workload compared with other EU tenures because 2013 was the final year of the current European Parliament and European Commission. This implied enhanced political and administrative pressure to adopt remaining normative acts before the outbreak of electoral frenzy in 2014. According to the Head of the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU, Ambassador Raimundas Karoblis, Greece had just three months of real presidency because the final legislative acts had to be adopted by February 10 so that the European Parliament had time to approve them.³² Furthermore, 2013 was the last year of the 2007-2013 financial framework. The necessary normative documents, programmes, technical regulations and other relevant elements had to be finalised and agreed upon during the Lithuanian presidency. Decreasing support among citizens for the EU and challenges for solidarity rose in the aftermath of the financial crisis. Pessimistic opinions on the free movement of people and the resulting instability with regard to social policy formed some countries' negative attitudes towards an open Europe. Eurosceptic and populist parties were anticipated to win about a quarter of all seats at the European Parliament elections in May 2014.³³

2.2. Supply of Presidency

2.2.1. Readiness for presidency and results. Comprehensive preparation for Lithuania's presidency took place early.³⁴ Preparatory work began as soon as 2006,

³¹ Strupczewski J., "EU shifts focus to economic reforms in quest for growth", <http://article.wn.com/view/2013/05/29/EU_shifts_focus_to_economic_reforms_in_quest_for_growth_g/>.

³² Interview with Raimundas Karoblis, 22 January 2014.

³³ "Europe goes to the polls", *The Economist*, <<http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21602206-although-economies-around-europe-may-be-mend-voters-disillusion-could-cause-new>>, 17 05 2014.

³⁴ Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.

when the Lithuanian government adopted the first action plan for preparation.³⁵ This was initiated under a left-of-centre Social-Democratic-led government, continued by a right-of-centre Conservative-led government and completed by another left-of-centre Social-Democratic-led cabinet. On 27 August 2008, a new edition of the action plan for preparation was approved.³⁶ In 2010, the government approved basic guidelines for Lithuania's preparation for the presidency and these were approved in 2011 by the government and parliament in their inter-institutional action plan. The final version of the project identified key elements in the preparation for the presidency (including the programme, priorities, administrative capacity, budget and logistics). Lithuania earmarked a budget of 214 million litas for the presidency.

Groundwork for the presidency was detailed, comprehensive and systematic. No previous EU presidencies between 2004 and 2013 had plans as elaborate as Lithuania's.³⁷ There were two stages of political and administrative preparation: 2006-2008 and 2009-2013. The first phase was devoted to training, seminars and an analysis of earlier presidencies; and the second stage involved measures that included devising specific activity programmes, leadership for working groups and discussion topics.³⁸ A report by the National Audit Office of Lithuania that evaluated the country's preparation for the presidency identified the main positive factors: an inter-institutional action plan, intensive regular consultations among the trio of EU presidencies, a developed organisational system, staff training and an upgrade of structures in the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the European Union. The report also noted that Lithuania properly exploited the opportunity to finance part of its preparation for presidency (for logistical and communication strategies) from EU structural funds. Risk factors were identified that comprised possible duplications of measures that might result in some wasted funds, missed opportunities to share the workload among the EU trio and insufficiently developed infrastructure facilities for presidency events.³⁹

In November 2011, the Seimas adopted the resolution 'Project for the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013'.⁴⁰ This set

³⁵ LRV, *Lietuvos Respublikos Nutarimas dėl Lietuvos pasirengimo pirmininkauti Europos Sąjungoje 2006–2009 veiksmų plano patvirtinimo*, 12 04 2006.

³⁶ LR Valstybės kontrolės Valstybinio audito ataskaita kaip rengiamasi pirmininkauti ES Tarybai, Vilnius, 29 March 2012, p. 3.

³⁷ Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ LR Valstybės kontrolės Valstybinio audito ataskaita, p. 4.

⁴⁰ "Priimtas nutarimo "Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimo Europos Sąjungos Tarybai 2013 m."

out the presidency's main priority areas and objectives, such as energy security, the integration of energy systems, creation of a common EU energy market, the Europeanisation of Eastern Partnership countries and protection of the EU's external borders. Lithuania's priorities in the preparatory stage were selected in line with two main criteria: firstly, issues had to be important to all EU members so that resolutions would provide added value for the whole region; secondly, the selection of priorities presented an opportunity for Lithuania to draw attention to areas that may have been partially overlooked at an EU level or that derived from the country's national interests.⁴¹ The start of Lithuania's presidency coincided with EU enlargement, as Croatia became the 28th member state on 1 July 2013. The country's presidency also ended symbolically, with Latvia's accession to the eurozone.

In a nutshell, the presidency's key achievements were the approval of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-20, the 2014 annual budget and a sharp focus on the EU's Eastern Partnership. Vilnius aimed to enhance the EU's capacity to respond to economic, financial and social challenges. The Lithuanian presidency progressed by completing the first pillar of the banking union – the single supervisory mechanism – which is aimed at avoiding financial and debt crises. Barroso exclaimed: "Today Europe's banks are better capitalised, better regulated to manage risks and better supervised. We are now at the beginning of the end of public bank bail-outs with the welcome agreements reached by the co-legislators in December on the Bank Resolution Directive and Deposit Guarantee Schemes. So it is now imperative to work for agreement on the Single Resolution Mechanism, the remaining building block needed for a genuine European banking union".⁴²

The presidency reached an agreement with the European Parliament on directives for bank recovery and resolution and on deposit guarantee schemes, which ought to create a basis for greater financial stability. In the last days of the presidency, the Council also reached a decision on the single resolution mechanism, another important element of the banking union. The presidency put in place the elements of the so-called budgetary package: voting on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and agreement on related legal acts, as well as on the 2014 annual budget and additional spending for 2013. Negotiations on 59 programmes

projektas", 2011 m. lapkričio 10 d. pranešimas VIR (iš plenarinio posėdžio), <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=4445&p_d=117438&p_k=1>.

⁴¹ LR Valstybės kontrolės Valstybinio audito ataskaita kaip rengiamasi pirmininkauti ES Tarybai, Vilnius, 29 March 2012, p. 25.

⁴² Speech by President Barroso on the review of the Lithuanian Presidency, <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-15_en.htm>, 14 01 2014.

that were essential to implementation of the financial framework must have been the most difficult and important achievement. The agreement on the EU budget guaranteed funds to be allocated for key areas such as the creation of jobs for young people and support for small and medium-sized enterprises.⁴³ Implementation documents for the Multiannual Financial Framework and directives such as those on posted workers and fluorinated gas have been among important sectorial issues that have required not only mediation but have stood for national interests.⁴⁴ The Lithuanian presidency also finished the first three rounds of negotiations in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and free trade talks with Canada. A mandate was received to negotiate investment protection with China, while some also note progress with the enlargement agenda in the cases of Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro.⁴⁵ As for energy security, agreement was reached for the first time on the list of strategic projects for financing from the EU budget. The list included six projects important to Lithuania's energy security.⁴⁶ Agreements about directives on tobacco and employee business trips were stuck in the process of negotiation.

The third Eastern Partnership summit in Vilnius was perhaps the pinnacle of Lithuania's presidency, making bold headlines. The Eastern Partnership initiative was devised as a tailored neighbourhood policy for Eastern European countries to adopt tried and tested European practices, norms and values. The initiative was by no means a road towards a promised land of EU membership, but a strong incentive towards Europeanisation – in other words, reforms under the aegis of the EU in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

There has been a Lithuanian and even broader Baltic, Polish and Swedish interest in Europeanising the EU's Eastern neighbourhood and pushing away the Russian political lifestyle from the area.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Baltic states in particular have seen the eastern neighbourhood as their place of concern, with the

⁴³ Pirmininkaujanti Lietuva pasiekė susitarimą dėl 2014 m. ES biudžeto, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/lt/naujienos/pranesimaispaudai/pirmininkaujanti-lietuva-pasieke-susitarima-del-2014-m-es-biudžeto>>, 12 11 2013.

⁴⁴ A remark by an anonymous reviewer of this article.

⁴⁵ Council of the European Union, *Key achievements of the Lithuanian Presidency*, <<http://www.consilium.europa.eu/homepage/showfocus?focusName=key-achievements-of-the-lithuanian-presidency&lang=en>>, 20 12 2013.

⁴⁶ Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 2013. *Lithuania has justified Europe's trust*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/lithuania-has-justified-europes-trust>>, 30 12 2013.

⁴⁷ Jurkynas M., "Security Concerns of the Baltic States in the 21st century" in Archer C., Bailes A. J. K. and Wivel A., eds., *Small States and International Security: Europe and Beyond*, London: Routledge, 2014.

ability as former Soviet states to share their expertise in successful post-communist transformation into the 'new West'. Possessing the image of small, non-patronising and relatively successful nations has increased their chances of a good reception and the Baltic states have also always been in dire need of rolling Russia's influence and legacies further back from their eastern borders. Ukraine was perceived as a litmus test for the success of the Eastern Partnership.

The Eastern Partnership progressed to some extent at the 2013 Vilnius summit, when agreements were initialised on political association and economic integration with Moldova and Georgia. A visa-facilitation agreement was signed with Azerbaijan and Moldova was offered a visa-free regime. The latter was seen as a frontrunner in the Eastern Partnership, whereas Azerbaijan was barely interested in cooperation with the EU apart from on technical issues. An agreement on participation in EU-led initiatives was signed with Georgia and an aviation agreement with Ukraine was initialised.

However, the summit suffered several let-downs, namely with Belarus, Armenia and Ukraine. Belarus remains practically absent in EU summits after Minsk's suppression of protesters following the presidential election in 2010 and the ensuing persecution of political opponents. Nevertheless, Belarus, represented by foreign minister Vladimir Makei, expressed a wish to start negotiations with the EU about an agreement on visa facilitation and readmission. Armenia, which has made among the most advanced progress in agreements on association and free trade, took almost everyone by surprise. Moldova made an unexpected U-turn by yielding to Russia's pressure and opting for a then Russia-led customs union, which now seems rather nebulous after Ukraine started turning westwards in March 2014.

The Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine was probably the most awaited goal of the Eastern Partnership summit, if not the whole Lithuanian presidency. The EU's negotiations with Ukraine were protracted because the latter was sandwiched between the interests of Europe and Russia. The EU required the release of former Ukraine prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko from jail and called for broader social, economic and judicial reforms, while Moscow pressed Kiev through restrictions on the export of Ukrainian goods to Russia and threatened an embargo should Ukraine sign a free-trade deal with the EU. Just before the Eastern Partnership summit, on 21 November 2013, Ukraine suspended its preparations to sign the Association Agreement. Ukraine was not 'alone' in bullying from Russia, as the Kremlin imposed arbitrary food and safety restrictions that were commercially and politically motivated on different countries before the Eastern Partnership summit. As a zealous advocate for the Eastern Partnership, Lithuania

felt the pressure too. Lithuanian dairy products were announced as not meeting safety standards and increased scrutiny of the country's vehicles and cargo trucks cost some nerves in August 2013.⁴⁸

The then Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign the deal at the Vilnius summit. In the aftermath, mass street protests erupted in Ukraine and toppled Yanukovich's regime in February 2014; Russia's occupation and annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region followed in March 2014. The failure of the Eastern Partnership summit in 2013 to deliver with regard to Ukraine tainted the Lithuanian presidency, but an agreement with the country was beyond the reach of Vilnius. Despite the Ukraine letdown, the Lithuanian presidency did a relatively good job with garnering positive feedback. In opinion polls conducted in December 2013, 65% of respondents evaluated the presidency as successful. Voters for the Social Democrats, Conservatives and Liberals noted its success, whereas the electorate of the Labour, Order and Justice and Polish parties disagreed with this stance.⁴⁹

2.2.2. Positions of main policy makers. Studies of the presidency tend to claim that its success is related to domestic political stability. According to David Kral, groundless ambitions, poor inter-institutional coordination and a lack of professional staff are key features of a failed presidency.⁵⁰ During Lithuania's presidency, stable domestic politics prevailed and no elections were organised. Political parties reached consensus on the presidency's objectives as early as October 2011.⁵¹ On the one hand, such agreement facilitates the presidency's functions; on the other, even without consensus the new government elected during the presidency term would not be able to change much because of previously adopted documents like the EU 18-month Trio programme.⁵² Finally, the politically

⁴⁸ Chaffin J., Weaver C., "Moscow strikes back at former Soviet bloc nations by barring imports", *The Financial Times*, <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/15d68e58-3027-11e3-9eec-001444feab7de.html?siteedition=uk#axzz2uyXaKJoC>>, 08 10 2013.

⁴⁹ "Daugiau nei pusė šalies gyventojų Lietuvos pirmininkavimą ES Tarybai laiko sėkmingu", <http://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/33526/daugiau_nei_puse_salies_gyventoju_lietuvos_pirmininkavima_es_tarybai_laiko_sekmingu>.

⁵⁰ Vilpišauskas R., Vandecasteele B. and Vaznonytė A., "The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union: Advancing Energy Policy and Eastern Partnership Goals: Conditions for Exerting Influence", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* 29, 2013, pp. 11-37.

⁵¹ "Seime atstovaujamos politinės partijos pasirašė susitarimą dėl Lietuvos pirmininkavimo ES Tarybai 2013 m. antrąjį pusmetį", <[⁵² Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.](http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter/w5_show?p_r=8029&p_d=116470&p_k=1> 14 10 2011.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

influential president Dalia Grybauskaitė has been the public ‘face’ of the country’s presidency and a vocal supporter of an active Lithuania within the EU.

2.2.3. Cooperation with the General Secretariat. The success of the General Secretariat strongly depends on the presidency’s willingness to sustain mutual cooperation. Lithuania addressed the Secretariat, but did not fully rely on it because the body was considered to have its own agenda. EU officials and the staff of its institutions have their own ways of thinking, and are often very pro-European and support deep integration, so their proposals are naturally imbued with these institutional values. One cannot rule out the influence of a strong lobby in Brussels.⁵³ Because of limited capacity, the Secretariat does not react equally to the activities of different working groups and its assistance may vary from shared institutional practices to technical help through measures such as the organisation of meetings and assistance with legislative processes.⁵⁴

2.2.4. Administrative capacity. Diplomatic circles noted positive Lithuanian initiatives, organisation, coordination and representation.⁵⁵ Well-prepared and qualified personnel were among the presidency’s strongest pillars. A large amount of training in areas including communication, public speaking, negotiation and stress management was implemented several years in advance. During preparations for the presidency, the number of employees at the Permanent Representation of Lithuania to the EU rose from 85 to 188. Many experts who have worked on EU issues for at least three years and who already have experience in EU institutions joined the ranks.⁵⁶ The main workload was carried out by the foreign ministry, in which several structural units were set up. Between December 2010 and June 2014, the Department of the Presidency of the EU Council was established with an additional 29 employees.⁵⁷ The Governmental Commission on EU Affairs consisting of deputy ministers from all the ministries and chaired by the minister of foreign affairs, worked in parallel with the presidency structure at the foreign ministry. The Governmental Commission and the EU Affairs Department of the foreign ministry jointly coordinated the make-up of the presidency, and all logistics were left to the devices of the European Union Council Presidency Department at

⁵³ Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.

⁵⁴ Interview with Antanas Venckus, 2nd Secretary at the Trade Policy Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 March 2014.

⁵⁵ Interview with the Swedish Ambassador to Lithuania, Cecilia Ruthström-Ruin, 8 January 2014.

⁵⁶ Šešelgytė M., “The First Leadership Test: What to Expect from the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU”, *SIEPS*, <http://www.sieps.se/sites/default/files/2013_13epa.pdf>, August 2013.

⁵⁷ *LR Valstybės kontrolės Valstybinio audito ataskaita kaip rengiamasi pirmininkauti ES Tarybai*, Vilnius, 29 March 2012, p. 22.

the foreign ministry.⁵⁸ The presidency's organisational structure was balanced and did not run into major trouble during the preparation phase. Clear accountability made communication among the institutions in charge more flexible.

Special attention was paid to training staff for the presidency. This was carried out in two ways: a centralised manner, which included almost all civil servants; and a decentralised manner, for only employees of the foreign ministry.⁵⁹ Lithuania chose a 'Brussels-based' organisation model, under which chairs of working groups are relatively independent, possess flexible mandates and most meetings take place in Brussels. The main advantage of this model is the improved use of resources by giving more responsibility to country representatives based in Brussels, who are in touch with day-to-day EU matters. The level of responsibility given to chairpeople in Brussels is higher than that allocated to professionals in the country's capital.⁶⁰

2.2.5. Relations with other EU institutions. Cooperation with the European Parliament was relatively intensive. The workload that Lithuania had to cope with was two-and-a-half times higher than usual because the existing term of the European Parliament and European Commission was drawing to a close. A number of agreements had to be reached to sustain the EU's financial and economic aims and its stance with regard to energy security. Traditionally, communication with the Commission, Council and Parliament constitutes routine action for the chairing country. However, Lithuania entered into a zone of tension because of the number of laws that had to be adopted. Such intense cooperation with the European Parliament was partly determined by existing circumstances.⁶¹ Within half a year, 40 Council sessions and 1,350 meetings of various working groups and committees were organised.⁶² Vilnius tripled the regular legislative workload: 128 legal acts, 250 non-legislative files and 50 Council conclusions were adopted during the presidency, whereas the average workload of a country in the middle of a trio during its tenure is about 50-55 normative EU documents. During its presidency, Lithuania was responsible for 478 European initiatives: negotiations were completed for 261 and progress has been achieved on an additional 113 normative acts. Such a unique situation, in which a chairing country must adopt a

⁵⁸ Šešelgytė M., "The First Leadership Test: What to Expect from the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU", *SIEPS*, August 2013, p. 6.

⁵⁹ Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.

⁶⁰ Lecture by Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU, at Vytautas Magnus University, 27 March 2014.

⁶¹ Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.

⁶² "ES Tarybos sekretoriatas lietuviams: jūs džiaugiatės, kad baigiate pirmininkauti, mes – ne", <<http://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/lietuva/es-tarybos-sekretoriatas-lietuviams-jus-dziaugiates-kad-baigiate-pirmininkauti-mes-ne-56-393392>>.

similarly high number of laws, occurs once in 35 years.⁶³ Mathematically, the level of 'success' was 78%.⁶⁴

2.2.6. Presidency experience. Needless to say, this was Lithuania's first presidency. The country was the first Baltic state to run the political show following accession to the European Union. Practice indicates that smaller countries, particularly those that hold the presidency for the first time and are not among the political heavyweights, can compensate for their lack of experience by choosing appropriate priorities and maintaining a good negotiation strategy. Small and medium-sized presidencies sometimes aspire to 'punch above their weight', seeking to exercise more power on specific issues than a mere assessment of their structural resources would indicate, and thereby trying to increase their visibility and influence.⁶⁵ Lack of experience of a presidency may also pose some challenges. For example, member states that have a large amount of experience in terms of chairing the EU often dismiss the need for detailed preparations and improvements to administrative capabilities by considering that the existing situation suffices despite changes after the Lisbon Treaty came into force. Lithuania compensated for its lack of experience through detailed, systematic and coherent preparation, including analysis of both pre-Lisbon and post-Lisbon presidencies. The biggest obstacle presented by the lack of chairing experience was associated with management of external events. On the opening day of the presidency itself, two-thirds of the questions at the first press conference were about a spy scandal in the United States and free-trade negotiations. These events slightly adjusted the course of the presidency and forced sharper reactions.⁶⁶

2.2.7. Importance of issues. Two radically different arguments about the impact of a presidency on the behaviour of a member state can be found in the literature. Some maintain that the position functions as an 'amplifier', strengthening an already existing tendency to propagate national concerns. Others argue that it functions as a 'silencer', subordinating national material interests to common European concerns.⁶⁷ The Lithuanian tenure falls somewhere between these situations. Although the presidency encompassed its official aims in a pompous verbiage about a 'credible, growing and open Europe' and was well-accepted for

⁶³ Lecture by Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU, at Vytautas Magnus University, 27 March 2014.

⁶⁴ "Pirmininkavimo sėkmės procentas 78 iš 100", *Verslo žinios*, <<http://vz.lt/article/2013/12/18/pirmininkavimo-sekmes-procentas-78-is-100#ixzz2uueOrfzi>>, 18 12 2013.

⁶⁵ Šešelgytė M., 2013 (note 56).

⁶⁶ Lecture by Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU, at Vytautas Magnus University, 27 March 2014.

⁶⁷ Bengtsson R., Elgström, O. and Tallberg J., "Silencer or Amplifier? The European Union Presidency and the Nordic Countries", *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27(3), 2004, pp. 311-334.

its relatively neutral stance, secondary aims that concerned the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, energy security and the EU's Eastern Partnership were directly linked to Lithuania's existing and medium-term interests.⁶⁸ Despite Lithuania selecting a Brussels-based presidency model and acting as a broker for the EU, other interests were also on the mind of Vilnius. Traditionally, 90% of issues are inherited from the previous presidency. A further 5% may be a *force majeure* that cannot really be planned for, with the remaining 5% providing an opening for a presidency to come up with suggestions of a national nature.⁶⁹ A member state must think far ahead to prepare an informal agenda because it takes approximately two years for a normative act to be passed through the EU's legislative procedure. A chairing country may accelerate developments on important issues by asking the Commission to present its conclusions or recommendations on those areas. Vilnius fully used the latter 5% opportunity.⁷⁰ In negotiations on the EU multi-year budget, Lithuania achieved much more than Lithuania had expected. During the Lithuanian presidency, the first set of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) regarding Europe's energy infrastructure was adopted, where the strategic list of energy projects was approved. In a similar vein, the Commission adopted conclusions on the regional energy-strategy review as a result of consistent and systematic work.⁷¹ The EU's Eastern Partnership initiative, as discussed above, has been in the interest of both Lithuania and the EU and has placed a significant focus on the presidency.

2.2.8. Foreign-policy orientation. After re-establishing its independence, Lithuania formulated three main foreign-policy goals: membership of the EU, membership of NATO and good relations with neighbouring countries. NATO was seen at the time as the main guarantor of solid security, while the EU was more associated with 'soft' security through economic reforms and welfare.⁷² The EU's constitutional arrangement prohibited joining any post-Soviet frameworks.⁷³ Membership of both organisations has been logical from a geopolitical perspective

⁶⁸ Jurkynas M., "Lithuanian 2014 Presidency at the Council of the EU", *Žurnāls Latvijas intereses Eiropas Savienībā* 1(13), 2014, p. 7.

⁶⁹ Interview with Julius Pranevičius, 19 March 2014.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Lecture by Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU, at Vytautas Magnus University, 27 March 2014.

⁷² Nekrašas E., "Kritiniai pamąstymai apie Lietuvos užsienio politiką", *Politologija* 2(54), Vilniaus Universitetas, Tarptautinių santykių ir politikos mokslų institutas, 2009, p. 124.

⁷³ *Lietuvos Respublikos Konstitucija, 1992 m. birželio 8 d. Konstitucinis aktas "Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos nesijungimo į postsovietinės Rytų sąjungas"*, <<http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Konstitucija.htm>>.

since Vilnius has sought to reintegrate into the European community, which for many years was prevented because of the Soviet occupation. For Lithuania, a 'return to Europe' meant not only emancipation from Russia's influence but also a move to another geopolitical region based on Western values reflected in Copenhagen's criteria for EU membership. During its 10-year membership, Lithuania has been an active and pro-European member state, supporting deeper EU integration, tight relations with NATO, energy security and active Europeanisation of the EU's Eastern neighbourhood. For instance, Lithuania was the first member state to ratify the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, which unfortunately did not come to fruition after the French and Dutch referenda of 2005 sank the treaty. Support for the EU is also reflected in Lithuanian society, which is more pro-European than average. The country ranks among the most significant recipients of EU financial aid,⁷⁴ and the idea of being a European country, and a eurozone member from 2015, means enhanced security and welfare in a sensitive geopolitical situation close to Russia.⁷⁵

3. Evaluation of the Lithuanian Presidency

The analytical model designed enables the study to provide an evaluation of Lithuania's presidency under the weighted criteria discussed above. Fulfilment of the first, third, fifth and eighth criteria meant that the presidency gained the highest score of 5 points in these categories. Chairing the Council of the EU for the first time, Vilnius paid significant attention to early preparations and set itself an ambitious and targeted agenda. Early planning for the presidency created favourable conditions for training of qualified personnel. Lithuania sought to prepare in a way that would improve the country's representation in EU institutions and strengthen its administrative capacity. Vilnius maintained close contact with the European Parliament and European Commission, as well as various committees and working groups. The second and fourth criteria were attributed 4 points each. There were no elections during the presidency, while Lithuania's mainstream political parties signed a solidarity agreement on the goals of the tenure in 2011 and political leaders worked hand in hand during the presidency, thus maintaining continuity.

⁷⁴ Jurkynas M. in: Beacháin D. Ó., Sheridan V. and Stan S., eds., *Life in Post-Communist Eastern Europe after EU Membership*, Routledge, 2012.

⁷⁵ Jurkynas M., 2012 (note 74).

There were only several domestic disagreements between the president of Lithuania and the government of Lithuania. A lack of bidirectional cooperation with the General Secretariat was also noted. The country’s performance with regard to the seventh criterion can be allocated 3 points. Lithuania was proactive in organising activities of the Trio group and preparing a related 18-month programme. But despite a relatively result-oriented management of the presidency, some important issues were not fully implemented and unexpected obstacles at times remained unresolved by the presidency (such as the results of the EU Eastern Partnership). The presidency scored 1 point from 2 under the sixth criterion. Although experience of a presidency is among the effectiveness criteria, an empirical analysis confirmed that this experience itself can be considered only as a supplement for effectiveness but not a necessary condition. With regard to compliance with the effectiveness criteria, Lithuania’s presidency scored 32 points from a total of 40. In terms of the weighted average of all criteria, the presidency received 4.2 points on a 5-point scale.

Table 2. Evaluation of the Lithuanian Presidency

	5 points	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
1. Readiness for presidency and results	+				
2. Cooperation with the General Secretariat		+			
3. Administrative capacity	+				
4. Positions of main policy makers		+			
5. Relations with other EU institutions	+				
6. Presidency experience					+
7. Importance of issues			+		
8. Foreign-policy orientation	+				

Conclusions

After examining theoretical and empirical literature on presidencies of the Council of the EU and the Lithuanian case, the study singled out a contingency theory in which effectiveness relies on congruence between management strategies (supply) and exogenous factors (demand), and modified it by selecting the most appropriate criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of the presidency.

The analysis of the demand side revealed that Lithuania's presidency was expected to execute functions of political leadership when necessary, as well as being an organiser and mediator. Analysis of the operationalised supply side (readiness for presidency, cooperation with the General Secretariat, administrative capacity, positions of the main policy makers, relations with other EU institutions, presidency experience, importance of issues and foreign-policy orientation) enabled an evaluation of the effectiveness of Lithuania's presidency, which was allocated a weighted average of 4.2 points from 5.

Further studies of the presidency could take into consideration further modification (expansion) of the demand-supply relationship and supply factors such as a country's political size, the motivation and ambition of a presidency team and a comparison of capital-based versus Brussels-based models. An evaluation of international media and assessments by other EU institutions and leading politicians would shed more light on a presidency's effectiveness. As for practicalities, preparation for a presidency requires informal political socialisation and intensive networking long before the tenure commences – this consolidates political cohesion in coalitions and oils the presidency's future effectiveness.

Lithuania's tenure falls somewhere between classification as an 'amplifier' or 'silencer' of national interests. The presidency's official aims produced the slogan of a 'credible, growing and open Europe', and were well-accepted for their unbiased approach. However, the secondary, and perhaps true, objectives on energy security and the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative were directly linked to Lithuania's existing and medium-term interests.

Lithuania became more deeply rooted within the EU: its diplomats, politicians and part of the public sector became more Europeanised through developing their European expertise and networking during the presidency. Lithuania's image was not tainted, with the presidency sustaining Vilnius's trademark of reliability, effectiveness and objectivity as a small state. Although the country is a parliamentary republic with minor features of presidentialism, the politically active incumbent president Dalia Grybauskaitė has been a very active and pro-European face of the country.

The presidency did not engender a Eurosceptic mood, which stays at the political fringes. Support for the country's EU membership remains high and European awareness among the population has risen, especially in the context of Russia's aggression in Ukraine in 2014. The membership and responsibilities of a small state in the EU help to reduce asymmetries in power and in the case of Lithuania have improved the promotion of Vilnius's identity and national interests in the EU agenda. In summary, Lithuania's first presidency has been a positive litmus test of the country's political maturity in the EU.

The Future of the EU's Eastern Partnership: Russia as an Informal Veto Player

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Abstract

'Reordering the order' of European security architecture best describes Russian intentions in the post-Soviet space, which have been highlighted during the crisis in Ukraine. The Eastern partners stand in the crossfire of this geopolitical rivalry, between two rival integration areas: the European Union and the newly formed Eurasian Union. However, it is worth asking whether both of these integration areas are playing in this geopolitical game. Five years of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) have produced only limited progress in EaP countries and the main incentive for transformation – the possibility of membership – is still not evident. Furthermore, some EU countries still search for a form of 'engagement' with Russia, while others are bargaining for a stricter policy of 'containment'. Hence, Russia is moving towards becoming an informal 'veto' player in EU-EaP relations, in that it may be able to control the geopolitical path of the countries in the 'shared neighbourhood'.

Introduction: Five years of the Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership (EaP), which was initiated by Sweden and Poland in 2009, is a joint initiative between the EU, member states and the Eastern European partner countries – namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Being a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), it 'enables partner countries interested in moving towards the EU and increasing political, economic and cultural links to do so. It is underpinned by a shared commitment to international law and fundamental values – democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms – and to the market economy,

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sustainable development and good governance.¹ In other words, it aims to promote EU norms, values and regulations.

The policy sought to replicate its ‘greatest foreign policy success – the successful transition of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries in the early 2000s.’² Yet the tools are rather different: while the CEE countries were offered the possibility of membership, or a membership perspective, in the early stages of integration, this so-called ‘golden carrot’ was not initially promised to EaP states. As Romano Prodi, the former president of the European Commission, put it, the ENP is based on ‘sharing everything with the Union but institutions’.³

But after five years of the EaP, it can be concluded that without proper incentives the EaP countries have made limited progress. Although some of these countries, such as Moldova and Georgia, signed an Association Agreement in June 2014, others have lagged far behind and Ukraine’s future is still unclear. Even the rise of an alternative integration measure for EaP countries – the Eurasian Customs Union, which came into effect in 2010 – does not seem to have stimulated a review of the EU’s policies and intentions.

It is therefore important to look at how EU members and the region as a whole react in the changed geopolitical environment and evaluate the possible development of events by taking into account different attitudes – containment and engagement – of EU countries towards relations with Russia. The analysis shows that the lack of development of EaP policy and differences in perceptions of Russia in various EU countries may have made the nation an informal veto power in the EaP.

1. Incentives for EaP countries

Incentives on offer from the EU instead of the membership perspective are summed up by David Cadier as the ‘three Ms’: money, markets and mobility. They are offered as part of Association Agreements, which draw up frameworks for

¹ European External Action Service, “Eastern Partnership”, *European External Action Service*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm> , 15 05 2014.

² Cadier D., “Is the European Neighbourhood Policy a substitute for enlargement?” in London School of Economics IDEAS Report, *The Crisis of EU Enlargement*, 2013, p. 52, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR018/Cadier_D.pdf>, 10 05 2014.

³ Prodi R., “A Wider Europe - A Proximity Policy as the key to stability”, *European Commission press release*, 5-6 December 2002, <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm>.

legislative and economic reforms, in exchange for moving towards EU regulations and standards:

- Money is financial aid that is allocated for the implementation of reforms (for example, the total amount available for grants in 2011–2013 was €6.5 billion);
- EU markets might be opened up for partner countries through the signing of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs), which remove tariff and customs barriers; this requires legislative and technical harmonisation, which is considered costly and difficult for partner countries because it necessitates adoption of up to 80% of the EU's trade *acquis*;⁴
- Mobility refers to incremental steps towards visa liberalisation.⁵

During the implementation of the Eastern Partnership Policy, it became clear that the six partner countries had different wishes and/or capacities for adopting European rules and choosing the EU as their main geopolitical focus. It is therefore possible to distinguish at least two blocks of EaP countries with regard to their differing progress in implementing the programme provisions, with more and less advanced partners (Table 1). **Advanced partners** (Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine) signed Association Agreements in the summer of 2014; furthermore, Moldova is part of a liberalised visa regime and Georgia expects to join this in the coming years. **Less advanced** partners consist of Armenia, which decided to join the Eurasian Union, and Azerbaijan, which does not seem to have economic aspirations for integration with the EU and has rejected the signing of an Association Agreement; the transformational progress of Belarus, which is part of the Eurasian Customs Union, is considerably slower.

⁴ Baltang D., Bosse G., “The ENP as an instrument for building a security community? The case of Moldova”, *Norwegian Institute of International Affairs*, 2014, p. 8, <<http://www.nupi.no/content/download/494796/1644873/version/2/file/NUPI+WP-833-Baltag+and+Bosse.pdf>>.

⁵ Cadier, (note 2) p. 55-56.

Table 1. Approximation rates of EaP countries to the EU⁶

Sector cooperation	Approximation indices (1=best performer; 0=worst performer)*					
	Moldova	Georgia	Ukraine	Armenia	Azerbaijan	Belarus
Democracy	0.72	0.54	0.64	0.47	0.31	0.20
Rule of law	0.61	0.63	0.60	0.51	0.42	0.23
Justice, freedom and security	0.94	0.67	0.76	0.47	0.76	0.43
Trade and economic cooperation	0.71	0.54	0.72	0.54	0.57	0.38

* The European Integration Index for Eastern Partnership Countries (EaP Index) serves as a speedometer of European integration for EaP countries. The Index interprets ‘progress in European integration’ as the combination of two separate yet interdependent processes: increased linkages between each of the EaP countries and the European Union and greater approximation between those countries’ institutions, legislation and practices and those of the EU (see “What is the EaP Index?”, <<http://www.eap-index.eu/about>>, 10 05 2014).

In spite of incentives and advances, it is broadly agreed that the EaP has failed to replicate a transformative power of the kind witnessed in the CEE region.⁷ According to Freedom House, the democracy index in partner states stagnated, while in some countries such as Ukraine it even decreased. Furthermore, stability in the region had not been improving even before the recent events in Ukraine, with four separatist regions still remaining (South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, Transnistria within Moldova, and Nagorno-Karabakh, which is controlled by Armenia). Moreover, negotiations with less advanced countries are stagnating and institutions such as Euronest seem to have many flaws.⁸

⁶ Eastern Partnership Index 2013, <<http://www.eap-index.eu>>, (table taken from Baltang D. and Bosse G., p. 10).

⁷ Simm A., “Extending European Union Membership to the Eastern Neighbourhood”, 2 May 2014, <<http://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/02/extending-european-union-membership-to-the-eastern-neighbourhood>>.

⁸ Wiśniewski P., “The Eastern Partnership - it is High Time to Start a Real “Partnership””, *Carnegie Moscow Center*, November 2013, p. 8-9, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Wisniewski_Eng_web.pdf>.

2. In search of ‘new politics’ in the Eastern Partnership: could a membership perspective work?

Even before the Vilnius summit, it was discussed that the EU would need to recalibrate its EaP. This was mainly because of the changed internal and external situation in EaP countries, the different stages reached in the transformation process and the particular needs of specific integration initiatives, on the basis of the most sensitive sectors that may stop European integration in these countries. But the biggest shake-up was the aftermath of the decision by former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich not to sign an Association Agreement with the EU. This later led not only to internal turbulence but also to disastrous international events, with Russia's aggression, the occupation of Crimea and deepening instability in the region. The slow and poor reaction of EU authorities to the Ukraine crisis is thus an indicator that the Eastern Partnership policy should be updated in consideration of the changed geopolitical context.

2.1. Different needs require different tools

It has become clear that the common Eastern Partnership model does not satisfy the interests of all six countries and although *de facto* the programme's implementation continued at a different rate in each country, adaptation of the programme to multi-speed integration into the EU area is necessary.⁹ It is important to provide conditions for the Eastern Partnership's three guiding principles – individual progress, catching up and differentiation – to further serve as driving motives. In this case, the dilemma is what the EU can offer to the ‘advanced’ partnership countries (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) so that they continue seeking to adopt European rules of the game and move closer to the EU. Another factor that is no less important is the type of relationship model that the EU should apply to the other EaP countries. Obviously, different trends in modelling the future of the Eastern Partnership makes us think of applying more flexible and thus dissimilar instruments to countries that have made progress. In other words, sectoral integration that addresses the most complicated issues in a specific country could be the answer for moving to the next stage of the EaP process.

⁹ Lebduska M., Lidl V., “Eastern Partnership: The Next Five Years between Brussels and Moscow”, *Association for International Affairs Policy Paper*, 2/2014, p. 3, <http://www.amo.cz/editor/image/produkty1_soubory/amocz_pp_2014_02_web.pdf>, 20 5 2014.

In Ukraine's case, the Association Agreement and DCFTA offer a broad choice for sectoral cooperation perspectives in many areas such as consumer-protection policy, environmental policy and migration policy, each of which could be treated using different and specific procedures, incentives and costs.¹⁰ However, incentives offered to the partner countries should also be reviewed.

2.2. Association leading to integration: why a membership perspective could be effective

The EU's external relations with Eastern partners are best described by the 'external incentives' model, which was discussed by various authors and comprehensively explained by Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier. The model states that the main condition for success is the level of rewards gained by the influenced country, and therefore 'a state adopts EU rules if the benefits of EU rewards exceed the domestic adoption costs'.¹¹ This rational bargaining model depends on theoretical conditions, the size and speed of rewards, the credibility of threats and promises and the adoption costs.¹² Governing by conditionality must also meet one criterion without which it lacks a strong basis for effectiveness: the EU's bargaining power that comes from the asymmetry between itself and the partner country. Two factors are important in making bargaining power effective: firstly, the EU must be much less dependent on or interested in the agreement than the partner country;¹³ secondly, the credibility of political and economic conditionality is only high when there is no alternative integration space that provides competition. Scholars argue that an alternative integration space lowers the credibility of EU external governance, especially if it offers more 'carrots' and fewer 'sticks'.

¹⁰ Reinhard J., "EU Democracy Promotion Through Conditionality in its Neighbourhood: The Temptation of Membership Perspective or Flexible Integration?", *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 4(3), Summer 2010, p. 211-212, <http://www.cria-online.org/12_1.html>, 20 05 2014.

¹¹ Schimmelfennig F., Sedelmeier U., "Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(4), 2004, p. 672, <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/projekte/typo3/site/fileadmin/research%20groups/1/teamB-reader/Schimmelfennig%20%26%20Sedelmeier_Governance%20by%20conditionality.pdf>, 25 05 2014.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Schimmelfennig F., "Europeanization beyond the member states", *Zeitschrift für Staats- und Europawissenschaften*, 8(3), 2010, p. 319-339, <http://www.eup.ethz.ch/people/schimmelfennig/publications/10_ZSE_Europeanization__manuscript_.pdf>, 15 05 2014.

This is exactly the case in the post-Soviet space. The rules of the game in a 'shared neighbourhood' changed after the Eurasian Union's integration processes started. Since then, Russia has influenced countries in the post-Soviet region not only with 'soft' power, energy conditionality and military strength but also with an 'institutional, rule-based regime'.¹⁴ The idea of a Eurasian Union was initially projected as being complementary to the EU. However, with the events that took place in Armenia and Ukraine, it is now seen as a rival rather than a friend in the 'shared neighbourhood'.¹⁵ The Eurasian Union, which competes for influence with the EU, does not rely on the principle of formal conditionality and can offer EU partner countries a stimulus package, the adoption of which may further reduce the EU's ability to 'tie' neighbouring states to European rules and therefore make them apply the principle of rule of law. This means that strategic planning for the Eastern Partnership policy must consider the geopolitical situation in more depth.

A key element of EU external governance is democratic transformation and the partner country's adoption of the region's standards and norms. Indeed, the most successful cases of achieving this goal are the Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. However, it is worth mentioning that outside the context of enlargement (as many scholars suggest that it was only in the final steps of negotiations that CEE countries made the greatest progress), 'the EU has no stronger track record in changing the domestic political calculus of authoritarian regimes than other international organizations or any state'.¹⁶ The Eurasian Union does not require any democratic conditions and offers highly tangible 'carrots'. Even though EaP countries, particularly Ukraine, would gain more in the long term from European integration, short-term economic, energy and political issues that might arise from cutting ties with Russia make this decision much more complicated. The 'Russia factor' therefore becomes a major issue because Ukraine has to assume 'many costs arising from the accession process itself and additionally from the costs arising from the "Russian factor"',¹⁷ especially with its economy in crisis.

It is therefore argued that larger demands must come with bigger offers. Until there is a well-communicated membership perspective on the table, the bar of

¹⁴ Dragneva R., Wolczuk K., "Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?", *Chatham House Briefing Paper*, August 2012, p. 9, <<http://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/185165>>, 25 05 2014.

¹⁵ Lebduska and Lidl, (note 10) p. 5-6.

¹⁶ Dragneva and Wolczuk, (note 15) p. 12.

¹⁷ Reinhard, (note 11) p. 209-210.

political expectations should be lowered. The EU must reduce its expectations, seeing as partner countries must essentially pass through the same adaptive barrier as in the case of membership, but do not receive the prospect of membership in return. Moreover, they have to use their internal resources to cover the cost of adopting EU regulations. In its model for integration without membership, the EU should focus on strengthening interdependence through the integration of infrastructure and integration of the economies of partner countries into the EU domestic market. The EU's experience shows that the most important pillar for integration in Europe is economic 'convergence', and only after this can the conditions emerge for 'spilling over' into the political arena. This is particularly important because the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative is not the only model on the table, so the incentives and conditions that the EU offers to partner countries should be seen in a geopolitical context. The formula 'deeper integration – greater conditionality', with further intermediate steps, should be used in this case.

In line with the arguments above, the most important and politically discussed statement is as follows: the association process must be treated as a step forward in the integration process. The prospect of membership was the key motivating factor for integration among CEE countries that became fully fledged EU members in 2004 and 2007. It is asserted that the biggest incentive for Ukraine and other participants in the Eastern Partnership for continuing along the path of European integration is the prospect of EU membership.¹⁸ The EU should therefore not only state that the door to membership of the Eastern Partnership remains open, but should also clearly articulate that depending on domestic reforms and the direction of development of partner countries, the EU is willing to start a membership negotiation process. The association process as a significant step towards integration would ensure the EaP's long-term effectiveness.

¹⁸ Read more: Solonenko I., "External democracy promotion in Ukraine: the role of the European Union", *Democratization*, 16(4), 2009, p. 709–731; Dimitrova A., Dragneva R., "Constraining external governance: interdependence with Russia and the CIS as limits to the EU's rule transfer in the Ukraine", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(6), 2009, p. 853–872; Wolczuk K., "Implementation without Coordination: The Impact of EU Conditionality on Ukraine Under the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(2), 2009, p. 187–211.

2.3. Limits of the membership perspective in the transformation process

While the membership perspective is essential during the integration of CEE countries, it might not be that effective in the case of EaP states. According to Börzel and van Hüllen, ‘prospects of EU membership stabilise rather than drive the move towards effective and legitimate governance in candidate countries’. For example, in the case of CEE countries it has been argued that the EU supported the transition process but has not driven it. This is because the ‘shadow of accession’ has hardly been relevant in countries with strong democratic constituencies, which were dominant in the CEE region.¹⁹ It is therefore unclear whether ‘the membership perspective provides the crucial incentive for countries to initiate the domestic changes setting the trend towards effective and democratic governance or whether these countries only receive a membership perspective once they have aligned with the trend and made substantial progress’.²⁰ Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the membership perspective could be effective in a non-democratic political environment. It is highly debatable whether, for instance, ousted Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovich would have chosen to reduce his own non-transparent influence by implementing structural reforms with regard to the judiciary, electoral laws and corruption.²¹ And this is even more unlikely in the face of significant adaptation costs, which are substantially higher for non-democratic polities.²²

Cadier argues that a membership perspective would have a limited impact because only three EaP countries have declared European integration as a foreign-policy objective.²³ Moreover, the time taken to gain membership could be far too long because the EU is currently facing ‘enlargement fatigue’, while EaP countries

¹⁹ Börzel T., van Hüllen V., “Good Governance and Bad Neighbors? The Limits of the Transformative Power of Europe”, *Freie University Working Paper 35*, December 2011, p. 8-9, <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/kfgeu/kfgwp/wpseries/WorkingPaperKFG_35.pdf>.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²¹ Börzel T., “Europe’s Eastern Partnership – a successful failure?”, *Verfassungsblog*, 20 March 2014, <<http://www.verfassungsblog.de/de/europes-eastern-partnership-a-successful-failure/>>.

²² Magen A., “The Shadow of Enlargement: Can the European Neighbourhood Policy Achieve Compliance?”, *The Columbia Journal of European Law*, 12(2), 2006, p. 418-419, <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/22031/CJEL-final-Magen_Offprint_12.2.pdf>.

²³ Cadier, (note 2) p. 54.

would be behind the likes of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania in the line of further integration into the EU.²⁴

In spite of these arguments, the membership perspective could still be considered as an effective tool; even though it is limited in some respects, it has no negative influence and could encourage integration. However, uncertainty in the EU about the EaP's future seems to be determined by geopolitical rather than economic issues: the EU seeks 'to stabilise the periphery rather than running the risk of seeing the periphery destabilise the EU'.²⁵ Because Russia considers the territory of the Eastern Partnership countries its 'sphere of influence' or 'the near abroad',²⁶ determined steps to expand the EU in that direction would offset Russian countermeasures. An example of such destabilising countermeasures is that of Russia's current activities in Ukraine, which started as Kiev moved closer to signing an Association Agreement with the EU.

Russia therefore seems to have an informal and indirect veto power in the future development of EaP policy.

3. EU's Eastern policy after Ukraine: towards business as usual and Russia as an informal veto holder?

The motives behind Russia's military intervention in Ukraine and the process for political settlement of the conflict reveal the former's perception that Ukraine is too independent and sufficiently strong to be absorbed by Russia, yet it is not sufficiently independent to freely choose its geopolitical orientation. Russia may therefore agree to Ukraine's formal independence and statehood, but the latter could always be undermined if the region's traditional power balance starts to change to Russia's detriment. This is how Russia viewed the Maidan revolution and the possible strategic consequences of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement and the signing and implementation of an enhanced free-trade agreement. This would make Ukraine part of a customs union with the EU and Russia would lose

²⁴ Simm A., "Extending European Union Membership to the Eastern Neighbourhood", 2 May 2014, <<http://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/02/extending-european-union-membership-to-the-eastern-neighbourhood/>>.

²⁵ Cadier, (note 2) p. 53.

²⁶ Adomeit H., "Russia and its Near Neighbourhood: Competition and Conflict with the EU", *Natolin Research Papers*, College of Europe, Bruges, 2011, p. 1, <<https://www.coleurope.eu/content/studyprogrammes/eais/research/adomeit.pdf>>.

leverage over its relations with Kiev, which it seeks to gain by including Ukraine in the Customs Union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. Russia perceives this move as a disturbance of the region's geopolitical balance.

According to Russia's logic, Ukraine and other EaP countries should accept the status of a buffer zone. At the same time, Russia is seeking to acquire an informal veto right over further EU and NATO enlargement to the East. It should be noted that the neutrality status imposed on Ukraine at an international level would firstly mean that Russia's ability to use domestic-policy tools to affect the current status quo in Ukraine in ways that are favourable to Russia is much more powerful than the abilities of the EU to do so, let alone the USA (even assuming that the EU has an interest in acting in Ukraine and changing the country's formal and informal rules). To keep Ukraine in the post-Soviet area, Russia only needs to maintain the existing rules of the political and economic game, whereas the EU must challenge these rules fundamentally to expand its European regulation into Ukraine. The status of buffer state would certainly be a factor that would cause stalemate in the current situation. It can already be stated that Russian military intervention in Ukraine 'suspended' the latter's oligarchic political and economic structure (limited possible reforms to a minimum) and thus kept Ukraine in a zone governed by post-Soviet economic and political rules. At the presidential elections of 25 May 2014, Ukraine had to choose between an independent oligarch who could stabilise the country's situation and political turmoil.

'Suspending' the country's political and economic structure is Russia's aim with regard to Ukraine's domestic policy. Meanwhile, the Kremlin's geopolitical interests may be described as follows: to normalise its relations with the West after the conflict, so that the benefits of military intervention in Ukraine outweigh its costs. The situation after the 2008 conflict in Georgia allows Russia to assume that after the end of the conflict in Ukraine, it will in any case hold more leverage than before these events started and relations with the West will eventually revert to a 'business-as-usual' situation. Russia hopes to repeat the scenario that occurred in Georgia. It is important to emphasise that the 'business-as-usual' concept includes not only the normalisation of economic relations, the lifting of sanctions and the renewal of political dialogue, but also the recognition of Russia as a veto holder in Europe's security architecture. The practical manifestation of such recognition could be that the expansion of transatlantic institutions further into the post-Soviet area would not be possible without Russia's approval.

Russia's approach to international relations is based on the 'golden' rule of non-interference by other nations in its internal affairs. This rule is also extended to the country's foreign policy: in relations with various transnational and supranational

organisations, Russia prefers to interact with countries individually rather than within international organisations; the country's participation in joint endeavours with transatlantic institutions is based on the principle of getting involved as much as possible in their decision-making, but refusing to assume obligations that may infiltrate Russia's foreign policy and therefore violate the 'golden' rule of non-interference in its internal affairs.

The issue of an informal Russian veto right with respect to NATO enlargement is thus not new. When Russia raised strong objections to membership of the Baltic states in NATO at the end of the twentieth century, US political analyst Ronald Asmus was the first to raise his voice, saying that Russia should not be granted an informal veto right on further NATO enlargement. Meanwhile, the NATO-Russia Council, which was founded in 2002 as compensation to Russia for NATO's expansion into Eastern Europe, has always been treated by Moscow as a tool to influence transatlantic institutions from the inside. Perhaps Russia's most important interest has always been stopping NATO's expansion into the post-Soviet area. Today we speak not only of NATO expansion, but also that of the EU. There has been a breakthrough in Russia's strategy – if previously its approaches towards the EU and NATO were separate, European integration is today seen as a competing integration area with rules and regulations that may act as transforming factors for the 'Russian' rules of the game entrenched in the post-Soviet region.

The first sign that an informal veto right might be possible for Russia came soon after the Maidan revolution, with the EU's refusal to sign the economic part of the Association Agreement with Ukraine (amounting to an enhanced free-trade agreement) and decision to only sign a political declaration. At that time, some Ukrainian politicians wondered why a few months earlier the EU was ready to sign a comprehensive Association Agreement in Vilnius with the 'autocrat' Yanukovych and now could not achieve this with the leadership of the democratic party. From the moment of signing this contract, Ukraine could no longer become a member of the Eurasian Union founded by Russia, even in theory. The opinion was also more often heard that Russia should be included in the debate on the Eastern Partnership policy (for example, in the debate on the implementation of the Association Agreement). Perhaps Putin's idea about a common economic area from Lisbon to Vladivostok, which had largely been kept secret, could after all see daylight. In practice, this would mean EU negotiations over a free-trade agreement with the Russian-controlled Eurasian Customs Union. Under these conditions, the Eastern Partnership policy would be a complete failure.

4. What makes Russia expect a return to the 'business-as-usual' situation?

We hear the usual claim that relations between the EU and Russia are determined by mutual interdependence. The EU is the largest and most important market for Russian products: 88% of Russia's oil, 70% of its natural gas and 50% of its coal are exported to the EU. These indicators together represent 40% of Russia's budget, with energy exports accounting for 65% of Russian export revenues to the EU. But there is a lack of analysis on why, despite mutual dependence, bilateral relations between the EU and Russia are based on the latter's rules of the game rather than the principle of legal reciprocity. For example, EU-Russia dialogue on energy is not based on the mutual legally fixed liberalisation of energy markets, but the Russian model of bilateral relations. Cameron and Matta²⁷ argue that the EU has two strong levers in the area of mutual interdependence with respect to Russia: the region's domestic market, in which Russia is interested in participating; and the EU's position as the main customer of energy resources from the country. However, these levers are not working. As a result, Forsberg and Seppo have described the EU's relationship with Russia over the past decade as a situation of power without influence.²⁸

One reason for this situation is competing visions for EU relations with Russia. EU member states have differing perceptions of Russia and its interests and geopolitical logic, so they suggest different foreign-policy models with respect to the country. For example, most CEE countries view Russia through the prism of 'realpolitik', under which the country is seen as a revisionist state of the European security system that is seeking to carve out a favourable balance of power. From their point of view, deterrence is the only way to slow its revisionist ambitions, with such an approach supporting the EU's implementation of a 'containment' policy with respect to Russia. The containment concept was coined in the United States during the Cold War, with the aim of stopping the spread of communism. Because the containment strategy was born in the context of a bipolar international system, it has not been examined how this concept works in a multipolar system of international relations, particularly with respect to actors from weaker states that

²⁷ Cameron F., Matta A., "Prospects for EU-Russia relations", *Electronic publications of Pan-European Institute*, 6/2008, p. 18, <http://www.balticseaweb.com/files/files/publications/pan/2008/Cameron%20and%20Matta%2006_08.pdf>

²⁸ Forsberg T., Seppo A., "Power without Influence? The EU and Trade Disputes with Russia", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(10), 2009, p. 1805–1823.

cannot independently assure their safety.²⁹ The essence of containment strategy is to limit the growing influence of another state. Meanwhile, some Western European countries such as Germany and France are seeking a 'coexistence' policy with Russia. This model of relations could be described as an 'engagement' strategy, representing a relatively new concept in international relations. The aim of this concept is to ensure that the growing power of one state does not jeopardise the security of another nation or an entire region rather than to cut off its influence. This aim is achieved through a process of socialisation, with active cooperation between states providing opportunities to influence the direction of a country's development.³⁰ Nations that advocate this approach to Russia suggest 'binding' the country institutionally by developing its energy dialogue with the EU, signing and implementing a new EU-Russia partnership agreement, and recognising or taking into account Russia's neutral geopolitical interests in the post-Soviet region. In other words, 'containment' and 'engagement' are two opposite models for foreign policy that are based on different concepts of the 'other' and prescribe two opposing operation strategies.

These two approaches support differing EU policies towards Russia in terms of resolving the post-conflict situation in Ukraine and building further prospects for relations:

- Advocates of the **containment** model argue that relations between the EU and Eurasian Union are not only associated with competition between two trading blocs, but a rivalry between different political and economic systems and values. In the view of those who advocate containment, post-Soviet countries that are located between these two integration areas must be offered the prospect of EU membership, otherwise Russia will see this as a geopolitical vacuum that it will eventually try to fill. In the case of Ukraine, advocates of containment suggest not only signing an enhanced free-trade agreement with Kiev, but also giving the country the perspective of EU membership. It is believed that this is the most relevant tool in EU relations with EaP countries for the creation of conditions for 'deoligarchisation' of these countries and the dissemination of European standards, thus restricting Russia's influence. In other words, proponents of containment suggest that an EaP policy that has so far offered partner countries only the prospect of integration (a visa-free regime and integration into the EU domestic market)

²⁹ Acharya A., *Containment, Engagement, or Counter-Dominance? Malaysia's Response to the Rise of Chinese Power*, York University, 1997, p. 14-15, <<http://www.amitavacharya.com/sites/default/files/Containment,%20Engagement,%20or%20Counter-Dominance.pdf>>.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

and not formal EU membership must not be the final step. The association process should evolve into a process of integration, which means that EaP partner countries that carry out reforms and implement the package of EU requirements and rules must have a clear membership perspective. Another important consideration is the conditions under which Russia will be able to return to 'business as usual' in its relations with the West. According to containment advocates, the EU should draw very clear lines regarding the lifting of sanctions and talks on this should be resumed only after Russia goes back to the pre-conflict position. From this perspective, de-escalation of the situation in Ukraine and pulling out of the Crimean occupation should therefore be the main conditions. According to representatives of this view, only compelling measures for deterrence will prevent future military provocations by Russia in the European security system.

- Advocates of the **engagement** model seek a policy of 'coexistence' with Russia. This measure is inevitably related to the recognition of Russian interests in the post-Soviet area. Proponents of this model therefore treat the EaP policy not as an EU instrument to compete with the Russian-led Eurasian Union, but as an opportunity to achieve a win-win situation in the region. Arguments that the implementation of EU regulatory standards may disrupt commercial and infrastructure-associated relations with third countries could mean the engagement of Russia in practical implementation of a DCFTA. Russia has repeatedly suggested the idea of tripartite negotiations between itself, the EU and Ukraine over Kiev's aspiration to sign association and free-trade agreements. At the EU-Russia summit in January 2014, an agreement was made to hold consultations on the possible economic consequences of EaP free-trade agreements with the EU for Russia. These events took place at the start of 2014 in the context of a supposedly stricter tone because of pressure from the Kremlin and declarations from EU leaders that no third party had any right to decide the fate of agreements between the EU and its partners.

- Advocates of engagement are likely to discuss another proposal by President Vladimir Putin – the idea of an economic area 'from Lisbon to Vladivostok'. When the customs union was initiated between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, Putin stressed that membership of the Eurasian Union would enable its members to integrate into Europe faster and from a much stronger position.³¹ This could be

³¹ Adomeit H., "Putin's 'Eurasian Union': Russia's integration project and policies on post-Soviet space", *Neighbourhood Policy Paper*, No. 4, 2012, p. 4, <[http://www.khas.edu.tr/cms/cies/dosyalar/files/black_sea_04\(1\).pdf](http://www.khas.edu.tr/cms/cies/dosyalar/files/black_sea_04(1).pdf)>.

related to the vision he publicly expressed a decade ago on a ‘common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok’. According to the Russian president, the Eurasian Economic Union is an opportunity for post-Soviet countries to strengthen their negotiating power by building a common economic zone with the EU.

However, differences in rules and standards between the EU and the emerging Eurasian Economic Union show that European integration and the new project in the post-Soviet area are two parallel processes that are not characterised by the convergence of mutual rules. We can therefore view the two alternatives as ‘centres of attraction’ rather than systems that are seeking to integrate with each other.³²

Nevertheless, proponents of engagement may propose the formation of a free-trade area with the Eurasian Economic Union to ‘appease’ Russia. Such a policy could have negative consequences for EaP policy, one of the pillars of which is the opportunity to participate in the EU domestic market. If such a free-trade agreement took effect, it may lead to a situation in which access to this market would be achieved more easily through Moscow than through direct negotiations with the EU. Such a situation could undermine the functioning of the EaP policy because Moscow would have an opportunity to control relations between post-Soviet countries and the EU.

The following could be seen as factors that determine whether Russia will be presented with the opportunity to block EU and NATO enlargement to the East: firstly, the granting of (or failure to grant) EU membership prospects to Ukraine; and secondly, the granting of (or failure to grant) a NATO Membership Action Plan to Georgia. This will show which of the two approaches – engagement or containment – will have the upper hand.

Conclusions: three future scenarios for the Eastern Partnership

An overview of the first five years of the EU’s Eastern Partnership policy leads to the conclusion that although it is the most developed of the EU’s external-relations tools, it still lacks incentives to be effective enough in the post-Soviet region where the influence of Russia is still so great and where there is a developing alternative integration area.

³² Kasčiūnas L. et al., “Eurasian Union: a Challenge for the European Union and Eastern Partnership Countries”, *Eastern Europe Studies Centre*, 2012, p. 26.

In the context of Russia's foreign policy changing to a more aggressive tone, the fate of EaP policy might determine the EU's ability to act as an international power. Varied reactions of EU member states prove the point that a lack of political will and a single voice towards relations with Russia and the 'shared neighbourhood' makes the situation even more complicated.

We might conceive three scenarios that could occur in the 'shared neighbourhood': (1) Retreat of the EU from the region; (2) Continuation of the status quo; or (3) 'New politics' towards EaP countries. If EU officials were to allow Russia to become a veto player in the geopolitical orientation of neighbouring countries in the ways discussed, it would mean a *de facto* retreat of the EU from the region. Russia would gain even more confidence in recreating the power it previously had in the post-Soviet region and the EU would only be a behind-the-scenes actor – this is the most probable scenario if the EU does not find a 'single-voice' approach towards the situation in Ukraine. The status quo might continue if EaP policy is not fundamentally adapted to the changed geopolitical scene. The EU would continue to declare its willingness to help EaP countries to modernise and democratise, as developed in the original European Neighbourhood Policy and EaP policy. As various studies prove that moderate incentives lead only to limited integration and selective integration,³³ the EaP countries might lose track of their main goal of a membership perspective.

The most positive scenario is a search for 'new politics' towards the EaP region. This scenario must contain a new understanding that the geopolitical vision of EaP countries is in a dilemma following the establishment of the Eurasian Union and Russia's latest moves. From a geopolitical perspective, the three most advanced EaP countries see European integration first of all as a safeguard against Russian dominance.³⁴ The EU should change its stance towards a strengthened political will to provide a membership perspective for the most advanced EaP countries. However, this is only possible if EU members stick to a 'containment' rather than an 'engagement' policy towards Russia. Getting involved in geopolitical rivalry would require a stronger 'common voice' in the EU because this is still not a game that the region is able or willing to play. But a *de facto* retreat from the region that would allow Russia to become an informal 'veto' holder in relations between the EU and EaP would be a big threat to Europe's security architecture.

³³ Schimmelfennig, (note 14) p. 10.

³⁴ Raik K., Tamminen T., "Inclusive and exclusive differentiated integration: Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy" in Jokela J., ed., *Multi-speed Europe? Differentiated integration in the external relations of the European Union*, FIAA Report 38, January 2014, pp. 46-47, <http://www.fiaa.fi/en/publication/392/multi-speed_europe/>, 15 05 2014.

“The high road: Europe and Italy’s role in the world” is a unique essay which explores and analyses, with a comprehensive approach, the political experience of the President of the Republic of Italy, H.E. Giorgio Napolitano, one of the leading actors of the Italian, European and international panorama.

In this intensive conversation with the Italian journalist and opinion leader Federico Rampini, President Giorgio Napolitano describes his point of view on the main European and international issues. The European project is seen as the guiding light for those states which, after the Second World War, chose the path of reconciliation and integration; for Italy, in particular, Europe represents the main reference point in the context of international relations.

The introduction is focused on the personal political experience of President Napolitano, recalling his adherence to the Italian Communist Party, the evolution into the so called “Eurocommunism” until the full support to the European ideals and principles. At the same time the preface presents a deep analysis of the most important and significant foreign policy choices made by the Republic of Italy after the Second World War.

It is therefore my honour and pleasure to present the introduction to “The High Road” in such a prestigious magazine as “Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review”. I am sure that this document will be of great interest not only to foreign policy analysts and researchers, but also to students and young readers who want to deepen their knowledge on the process and values which led to the European Union and on Italian history.

Stefano Taliani de Marchio
Ambassador of Italy to Lithuania

The High Road: Europe and Italy’s Role in the World

Giorgio Napolitano

(A conversation with Federico Rampini)

My conversation with Federico Rampini and my answers to his questions and promptings reflect my seven-years (2006-2013) as President of the Italian Republic, an intense and intensive experience, both domestically and in the international sphere. Under the Italian Constitution, drafted between June 1946 and December 1947 in a country newly liberated from fascism, the

Head of State is a “non-executive” President. This principle was confirmed in later decades through the analysis and interpretation of the Constitution, by political practice and in the decisions of the courts – all of which have shown Italy’s founding charter to be a live constitutional instrument proof against every challenge and test.

The Italian President, therefore, has no powers of government but does have precise functions sanctioned by the Constitution – including that of representing Italy in international life but doing so alongside and in agreement with the government; and with respect for the executive’s powers of decision, underpinned as they are by the confidence of Parliament, both in foreign policy and over security and defence.

So, without any confusion or duplication of powers and responsibilities (except for a handful of cases of friction and disagreement in the last few decades), the President of the Republic is both participant and co-protagonist in a close network of relations, ranging from contacts with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions, whose credentials he accepts, to meetings with the Heads of State, whom he receives in Italy and who, in turn, receive him during State or informal visits abroad.

There are therefore a large number of meetings with an international focus – and this has certainly been the case during my term of office. I have had 112 meetings in Italy with foreign Heads of State, plus many more with government and embassy officials; and I have made 75 visits abroad, including some at the invitation of international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Parliament.

The initiatives and events organised to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Italian Unification, culminating in the grand celebrations held in Rome on 2 June 2011, offered a special opportunity for such meetings. Also of special significance were the annual “United for Europe” gatherings of the eight “non-executive” European Presidents, following a tradition inaugurated by my predecessor Carlo Azeglio Ciampi with his then colleagues.

I mention this institutional framework and my own personal experience in order to clarify that the judgements and views expressed in the following pages are based on the exchanges and discussions, both public and private, which have been the core of my international activities between 2006 and 2013, and on the detailed analysis done both in advance of and after each meeting.

I should add and underline that these activities have brought me into close contact with many key international actors, with whom I was thus able to

develop important personal relationships. It may therefore be of some interest, if I provide some examples and recall some of the events which have held, for me, a special personal and emotional significance. Take, for example, the way my first seven-year term began and the way it ended.

It began – on 21 May 2006, just a few days after my inauguration at the Quirinale – with a visit to the island of Ventotene for a ceremony to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the death of Altiero Spinelli. The ceremony was a fitting tribute to a man from whom I had learnt a most valuable lesson both in ideals and in behaviour.

I am referring here to a distant time in my own political and cultural life, a period (from the end of the 1960s) described as the “European apprenticeship” of the Italian Communist Party (PCI). During those years the PCI shifted from a negative and suspicious view of the nascent European Community to the realization that the Party should not cut itself off from the integration process begun by Italy (with Alcide De Gasperi) and the other five “founding-countries”.

I took part in that evolution within the PCI with wholehearted commitment, though not as directly as figures such as Giorgio Amendola and Nilde Iotti, who experienced it at first hand through their election to the Strasbourg Assembly in 1969. A decisive inspiration to me in this was my personal relationship with Altiero Spinelli (who was elected as an independent Member of Parliament in the PCI group in 1976) and the insight this gave me into his own experience and thinking (about which I wrote in 2007 in a volume of essays, entitled *Altiero Spinelli e l'Europa*).

So it was with heartfelt emotion that, in the clear light of that May morning in 2006, I spoke in Ventotene of Spinelli's ideals and struggles in the following terms: “This is the richest legacy on which our younger generations can draw for their moral development and in their actions, as they look to the future.” I still believe that today. Indeed, I am more than ever convinced of the truth of that statement when I witness how diminishing knowledge and understanding of the European “project” among large sections of citizens and voters has given rise to a growing lack of trust in politics, in democracy and in a common future.

My seven years in office ended on 24 March 2013 with a pilgrimage to Sant'Anna di Stazzema – the scene, towards the end of the Second World War, of one of the worst Nazi atrocities in Italy. I made that pilgrimage, as President of the Republic, with Joachim Gauck, President of the Federal

Republic of Germany. We paid joint tribute to the memory of the victims – defenceless people of all ages, children, entire families. And in that tribute, as we two Presidents embraced and in turn embraced the inhabitants of that small village – the survivors of the massacre and the descendants of the victims, all of them humble and hard-working people – we keenly felt the spirit, and the fullest and highest significance, of European unity.

Overcoming deadly and aggressive forms of nationalism: that was the goal which Altiero Spinelli had taken to heart when, from the island where he was held prisoner, he envisaged the shape of a new Europe. A goal which encompassed rapprochement and reconciliation between nations and peoples whose mutual hostility had dragged Europe, not once, but twice in the 20th century, into the abyss of two increasingly devastating world wars. A goal, therefore, of peace and cooperation, above all between France and Germany, as the essential political framework for a process of European integration inspired by something more than purely economic principles. Europe was not born – and even less today can it be confined – within a purely economic dimension.

That is what we felt, my friend and colleague, Gauck, and I, in the hills of Sant’Anna di Stazzema. And that is why that day seemed to me an ideal final point of arrival after those seven years during which much of my work, both at home and abroad, had been inspired by European ideals and convictions.

I would also like to add that, in watching Germany’s President pay tribute to the tragic victims of the forces of war and oppression unleashed by Nazism in every corner of Europe, I was reminded of the unforgettable and exemplary image of Chancellor Willy Brandt when, himself previously exiled as an opponent of Nazism, he fell to his knees, deeply moved, before the monument to the victims of the Warsaw ghetto.

Brandt’s life and ideas have always, and increasingly, acted as a beacon for me, from the first time I met him until the day, much later, when we discussed the Italian left and its relations with Europe’s Social Democrats. That conversation took place on 9 November 1989, the day which, through a strange coincidence and an unexpected acceleration of history, also witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall.

My mind went back to that magical moment, that personal conversation with Willy Brandt, when I was invited to Berlin’s Humboldt University in 2013 to open its annual “Willy Brandt Lectures” with a talk on Europe. At the University, I once again met Egon Bahr, one of the most eminent and faithful of the *Ostpolitik* Chancellor’s pro-European aides. The last time we had met had been at Brandt’s funeral service at the old *Reichstag* building in Berlin in October 1992 – a moving and emotional occasion for both of us.

Readers will wonder why I keep going back to events which occurred in the distant past when talking about those that took place just a few years or even a few months ago. Well, that past laid the foundations for the way in which I was to fulfil my international responsibilities as President. In performing those duties I of course respected fully and exclusively the tradition and vision of Italy's role and interests in foreign affairs and the international arena.

My many years of experience in international affairs – albeit some of them in party-political roles, though not when I was Speaker of the Italian Chamber of Deputies or chair of the European Parliament's Constitutional Affairs Committee – have meant that I have always felt at ease and was never the least uneasy, when finally I came to represent my country, the entire country, in Europe and throughout the world as President of the Republic.

I was able in effect to pick up, uninterrupted, my friendships and collaboration with people I had first met 20 years before, such as the Presidents of Austria, Heinz Fischer, and of Israel, Shimon Peres. And right from the start I found I had much in common with a far younger generation of pro-Europeans. People like Bronislaw Komorowski, who had become President of Poland following the great tradition of *Solidarność*, whose most eminent representative, in terms of European sensibility and culture, Bronislaw Geremek, I had first met and admired in the 1980s.

Or Danilo Turk, President of Slovenia until 2012 and an expert of the Italian School of international law. Turk worked with me and the new Croatian President, Ivo Josipović, in paving the way for a new era of reconciliation and cooperation in the Adriatic to ease the terrible tensions inherited from the events of World War II in the Balkans. My meetings – not only at the highest institutional levels but also with ordinary people – in Trieste in 2010 and in Pula in 2011 were, and are, among my most vivid experiences in the process of European enlargement and unification.

The unique relationship which developed between me, as President of the Italian Republic, and Pope Benedict XVI, until his resignation in February 2013, also had its roots in that European journey towards unity. Our friendship arose from an immediate, shared interest in getting to know and understand each other and in comparing views and opinions on issues with which we were both engaged in our respective roles.

Of those themes, Europe soon emerged as being of paramount interest. We agreed on the decisive role of integration and unification and of our continent's potential contribution to positive developments in global affairs, starting with the search for a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East.

Spending time in the Pope's company was a new experience for me, made all the more rich and stimulating by the cultural breadth and depth of his personality. But our uncommon trust and fellow feeling cannot be explained simply in terms of personal affinities. What drew us together was the core common backdrop to our lives, both of which had been stamped by the events – events both great and terrible – of the 20th century.

Events which our two countries, Germany and Italy, had, more than any others, experienced in all their drama and trauma right up to the middle of the last century. As individuals, both Joseph Ratzinger and I had drawn from that common experience a drive and determination to identify with the vision of a new, united Europe; and to continue to cherish and pursue that vision even after we had reached positions of the highest responsibility, as leader of the Catholic Church and Head of the Italian State.

This warm and profound relationship between President and Pontiff was also, of course, hugely important in further strengthening the substantial and mutually respectful collaboration between Church and State in Italy. I mention this relationship here not so much as an element of the international policies which I pursued as President but as a core factor in the cohesion of Italian society, a cohesion which must constantly be strengthened and renewed. We have now embarked on the same path with the new Pope, Francis.

That Europeanism which, since the 1950s, has been a key element of Italy's presence in and contribution to international affairs, has at the same time always been inseparable from another cardinal feature: our friendship and alliance with the United States in the broader framework of transatlantic relations. In my experience during my first seven year term as President, these two strategic axes of policy have continued to be as inseparable as they were for the previous three decades.

In 1978, when I was able to pay my first visit to the United States, I did not limit myself just to presenting the political situation in Italy, in which the views of the left were then finding their rightful place. Speaking in some of the most prestigious American universities and opinion-forming institutions, I acted as standard bearer for a vision of a European community which was becoming ever more inclusive and assertive; a Europe which was also starting to develop a more autonomous profile on the international scene but without calling into question its historic ties with the United States. That mission was a far cry from the kind of anti-Americanism which was then still rife among the left wing opposition in Italy.

The vision I set out was perceived at the time – given my position as a senior figure in the Italian Communist Party – as a kind of “Eurocommunism”, a

movement in which the more thoughtful and open-minded political and cultural circles in the United States showed a keen interest. Just as they showed a keen interest not so much in the day-to-day workings of Italian domestic politics as in the singular reality which was the PCI. During my most recent visit to the United States – a State Visit in February 2013 – somewhat to my surprise, I encountered echoes of that interest and memories still live of the role I played in the 1970s and since.

I have gradually gained a deeper and richer understanding of the history and ideals underpinning the relationship between Europe and the United States, of their common roots and of their shared belonging to the “West”, as the heart of democracy. Indeed, I can claim a certain coherence and consistency of understanding, strengthened as it was by the revisions and changes in the cultural and political landscape which I witnessed in the lead-up to the historic turning point of 1989. That continuity, and other fruitful experiences, served me well in the fulfilment of my duties and in the contribution I made, during seven years as President, both on the European political and institutional front and in European-American relations.

One such experience which I like to recall is my participation, in the 1980s and '90s, in a series of twice-yearly events in which the Aspen Institute brought together a small selection of European parliamentarians and a larger group of US representatives and senators to focus on the development of East-West relations in those crucial years.

Another truly formative experience was my ten years, from 1984, as a member of NATO's Parliamentary Assembly. That role taught me a great deal about defence and security issues and brought me into contact with colleagues – Europeans, primarily, and left-wingers in particular, Germans, British and Spanish – whom I would meet later in my career in various roles and on different occasions.

The many experiences and influences I have recalled in these few pages eventually converged in the relationship which developed, at the highest level, with the US leadership: between the President of Italy and the President of the United States. I followed Barack Obama's emergence and election as leader of the United States closely, with fitting institutional neutrality but with personal enthusiasm and hope. The relationship which has grown between us has reached a level of consideration, trust and mutual confidence – and, in human terms, of real friendship - which I could never have foreseen. After all, we come from very different generations and backgrounds. That those differences were not an obstacle, but rather acted as a stimulus, shows how important – in relations between countries and between their leaders – are such affinities of approach and attitude, of ways of thought and

An Analysis of Romania's Foreign Policy Relations in the Context of Ukraine's European Integration

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Abstract

After mass protests in January-February 2014 and the replacement of its central authority, Ukraine reverted to its intention to sign the agreement on association with the EU. The success of the agreement's practical implementation relies on Ukraine's friendly relations with all EU member states. However, among all European states, Ukraine's relations with Romania are the most complex and contradictory. This article attempts to designate direction for making mutually advantageous decisions on existing contradictions. It is based on research into Ukraine's relations with Romania and considers Romania's relations with other states.

Introduction

Romania is a relatively young country. Its history is one of separated lands that, at various times, have been under the control of other states. The fundamentals of the modern Romanian language were formed under the influence of Roman culture in the ancient era. The Orthodox faith was brought from Kievan Rus', and from the second half of the nineteenth century the kings of Romania were representatives of the German dynastic branch. According to language and culture, Romanians tend toward Latin countries; according to faith – toward the East Slavic nations; according to monarchical traditions (although they are not expressed enough) – toward Germany. During the last 150 years Romania as aspired to collect territories with Romanian populations. In many respects, these aspirations, as well as certain problems of economic development, determine disagreements between Romania and Ukraine today. Ukraine intends to sign the

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agreement on association with EU so as to come closer to EU standards in policy, economic and other spheres, to encourage economic development, and also for its own safety. However, without resolving disagreements with its neighbouring European states, in particular Romania, implementing the agreement successfully will be problematic. Therefore, finding mutually advantageous compromises between Ukraine and Romania is vital. This can be based on research into political, economic, military and other relations.

Today, analysts are predominantly paying attention to bilateral relations; however, an analysis of Romania's relations with the third states is also important for the completeness and all-inclusiveness of that research. Firstly, any state has no absolute sovereignty and is compelled to take into account the interests of other states. In other words, the third states have direct influences, which are sometimes strong enough to influence Romania's position. Secondly, research into Romania's relations with the third states is interesting for the purpose of studying analogies of disagreement and resolution and for understanding general trends in relations development. Moreover, it is necessary to take Romania's internal circumstances into account in order to understand its motivations for taking certain positions during problems in relations. However, in scientific and analytical publications such a research context has not yet been used.

The research is based on conceptual model that explains the term 'interstate relations' (see Figure 1). This model reflects interactions between two states. The states each have interests, which are the main stimulators of their actions. The most important interests are connected with basic needs for the states' existence; for example, the need for energy resources. The interests of the states are made concrete in separate problems of relations. Each problem of relations has several options (variants) for resolution. The state determines the conformity of its own interests to each of the variants and chooses that one that as much as possible corresponds to these interests.

However, the state cannot always choose the best variant because it should take into account its own internal circumstances as well as interests of third states. Internal circumstances consist of political, economic and other resource restrictions, and characterise the mental and historical experience of the state and the nation. For example, a 'social resource' can be considered an internal circumstance. In the case of resource insufficiency the state cannot choose the best variant because that state does not have the resources to implement it. In addition, the interests of the third states may be considered as restrictions, as they compel the state not to select the best variant for itself so as to not damage relations with other states. The thick arrow in the figure designates the forced shift in variants chosen by the state.

To achieve its own interests in a solution to a problem, the state forms intentions and carries out corresponding actions, which give rise to relations with regard to this problem. If the two states have chosen different variants of resolution, their relations become contradictory. The states can act in two ways to resolve these contradictions: to eliminate each other (with the help of war), or to negotiate and achieve a compromise. A compromise can be found by coming to a consensus about the common principles of resolving the disagreement and about corresponding compromises in relation to different problems.

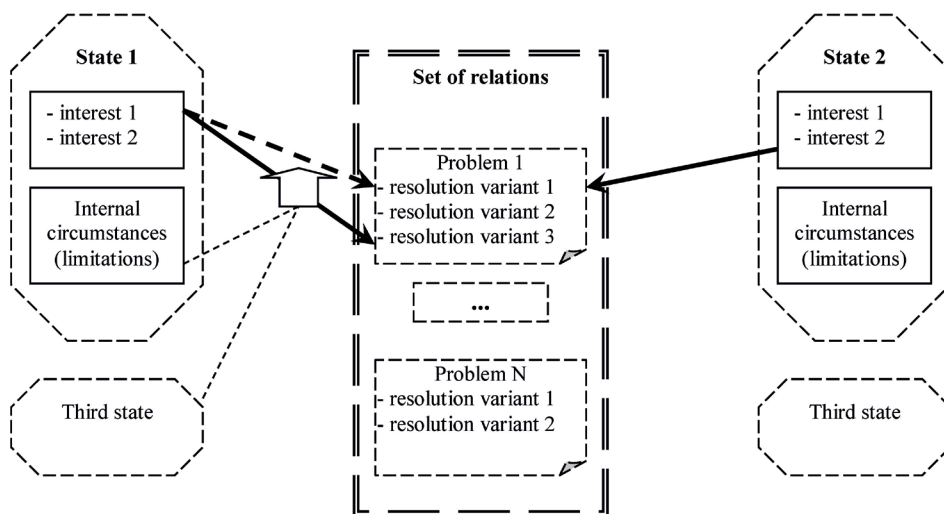


Figure 1. Conceptual research model

We used this conceptual model as the basis of the formation of Ukraine's military doctrine¹ and to model risks in international relations.² According to this model we shall further consider the mental and historical preconditions that are a basis for the formation of Romania's long-term interests and its positions concerning the resolution of modern problems of relations. Informal political concepts, which are being discussed by experts, are such preconditions. Next, we shall consider the actual problems in Romania's foreign policy relations, the position of the third states and the internal circumstances that can influence the

¹ Government of Ukraine, *Воєнна доктрина України* [The military doctrine of Ukraine], <<http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/648/2004>>, 11 06 2014.

² Sveshnikov S., Bocharnikov V., "Modeling risk of international country relations", *Journal of Applied Economic Sciences*, 4 (10), 2009, pp. 558-570.

resolution of contradictions. We have chosen to examine the problems of relations that are considered most frequently in analytical materials, statements of politicians and the mass media.

1. Political concept of 'Greater Romania' ('Romania Mare')

The concept of Greater Romania has been formed gradually over the last 150 years. The concept first appeared in an orthodox environment during the rise of the national liberation movement in south-eastern Europe with support from the Russian Empire and Russian Orthodoxy.³ It presupposed a consolidation of all territories inhabited by orthodox Romanians. Russia was interested in strengthening the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church as opposed to the influence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which were related to Catholic Austria. However, after Romania obtained independence the Orthodox context was replaced by an ethnic one. In other words the concept of Greater Romania was transformed into collection of territories inhabited by ethnic Romanians. Some researchers consider the concept as a reflection of Romanian nationalism.⁴

Strictly speaking, Greater Romania can hardly be called a geopolitical concept because it does not define its civilisation sources, political principles, allies and policy instruments. However, some comprehension of the concept is possible thanks to the views and analysis of Romanian politicians and the press concerning the ownership of territories, evaluation of historical events and ethnic identity. Today we can consider the concept of Greater Romania on two levels: the ethnic identity of Moldovans, and the historical assessment of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

1.1. Ethnic identity of Moldovans

According to the official position of Romania, Moldova is the 'second Romanian state': Moldovans are Romanians and the Moldovan language is the Romanian language. Therefore, Moldova should approach Romania in order for the two states to be united. The ethnic identity of the populations of Moldova and

³ Дугин А., Основы геополитики. Великая Румыния [*The foundations of geopolitics, Greater Romania*], <http://society.polbu.ru/dugin_geopolitics/ch132_i.html>, 10 11 2013.

⁴ Livezeanu I., *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation Building and Ethnic Struggle*, New York: Cornell University Press, 2000, pp. 1918-1930.

Romania, and the Romanian citizenship of a significant part of Moldova's citizens, should form a basis for rapprochement between the two states. Romania has similar policies with respect to other states.⁵ It has reacted immediately to Ukraine's cancellation of the law on regional languages and has demanded protection for the rights of national minorities.⁶ Such actions can be considered as an intention to create the preconditions for the requirements to protect the rights of Romanians, strengthen Romania's influence in some territories of neighbouring states and stimulate aspirations of Romanians who live abroad concerning a uniting with the *alma mater*.

1.2. Historical assessment of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact

In June 1991 the Romanian Parliament adopted a declaration on the consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which authorised the annexation of Bessarabia and North Bukovina in 1940.⁷ Denial of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact makes it necessary to revise the borders that are established according to this pact. With regard to Ukraine this would lead to the transfer of North Bukovina and South Bessarabia to Romania. However, according to international law, the effect of the pact ended automatically after Germany attacked the USSR, and the modern borders in Eastern Europe were established after 1945, when the pact was no longer in force. Therefore, cancelling the pact cannot affect the current borders.

It is necessary to emphasise that Romanian political science also develops other political concepts; for example, the concept of 'noopolitics' – the politics of merging geopolitical spaces.⁸ Noopolitics supposes a strengthening of cooperation between Romania and Bessarabia, Romania and Ukraine. However, the concept also proclaims the necessity of identity protection of Romanians who live abroad.

⁵ *Официальный Бухарест 'отменил' молдаван*, [Official Bucharest "has cancelled" Moldovans], <http://rus.ruvr.ru/2013_05_27/Oficialnij-Buharest-otmenil-moldavan/>, 11 06 2014.

⁶ *Agentia Nationala de Presa, Comunicat de presă – MAE [MAE press release]*, <<http://www.agerpres.ro/comunicate/2014/02/24/comunicat-de-presa-mae-16-05-36>>, 11 06 2014.

⁷ *Parliament Palace, Nicolae Ceausescu*, <<http://www.parliamentpalace.ro/article/27911/Nicolae-Ceausescu/5>>, 10 11 2013.

⁸ *Badescu I., Noopolitica: Sociologie noologica. Teoria fenomenelor asincrone: Incercari de reconstructie crestina in sociologie si in geopolitica [Sociological Noologic. The asynchronism phenomenon theory: Christian reconstruction in sociology and geopolitics]*, Bucharest: Mica Valahie, 2006, p. 588.

2. Problematic issues in Romania's foreign relationships

The implementation of the concept of Greater Romania, directly or indirectly, can be traced in Romanian foreign relations reflected in the media. From Ukraine's perspective, the most serious problem of relations is the possibility of territorial claims from Romania. From Romania's perspective, the following problems⁹ have top priority.

- The European integration of Moldova, support for the Romanian identity of Moldovans, and relations with the Romanian minority in Ukraine and Serbia.
- Settlement of the 'frozen' conflicts.
- Energy security.

Romania has a large community of ethnic Hungarians, who also aspire to self-determination. In a twist of fate, Hungary's attitude to this minority is analogous to Romania's attitude to its own ethnic minorities abroad. Relations with Hungary cause great anxiety for Romania and, therefore, have interest for research. Moreover, because of disagreements with other members of the EU, Romania is not fully satisfied with its own membership of the EU. These disagreements are compelling Romania to look for support from other influential states, in particular the USA. The exclusive attention paid by the USA to Romania is influenced by Romania's great geopolitical importance in the Black Sea region.

2.1. Territorial issues with Ukraine

Implicit territorial issues between Romania and Ukraine emerged almost immediately after the collapse of the USSR and the Romanian Parliament's adoption of the declaration concerning the consequences of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Although officially Romania has not put forward territorial claims to Ukraine (except for ownership of the Black Sea shelf), its actions permit us to assume the presence of territorial claims. These actions affect several areas.

⁹ Соаре В., *Центральная Азия в целом, и Казахстан в частности, являются ключевыми факторами для ЕС в области энергоресурсов [Central Asia as a whole, and Kazakhstan in particular, are key factors for the EU in the sphere of energy resources]*, <<http://www.iimp.kz/bullets/bullet15/005.html>>, 10 11 2013.

2.1.1. Ukraine's economic activity in the Danube Delta

The economic activity of Ukraine in the Danube Delta is based on Ukraine's desire to redirect to itself a part of the freight flow (through the Chilia River) that passes from Western Europe through the Romanian part of the Danube Delta along the Sulina and George rivers. The fact that Ukraine has provided Moldova with access to the Danube and the Black Sea, and the construction of the port by Moldova in the village of Giurgiulești, caused the decline of the Ukrainian port of Reni (in 2010 this port processed only 10–15% of its designed capacity) and the economic decline of the region south of Odessa. It has the potential to increase discontent among the Ukrainian population in the Danube region (approximately 140,000 inhabitants) and the internal instability of the border areas. Thus, the construction of ship canal by Ukraine in the Danube's Chilia riverbed is reasonably considered to be an effective instrument for economic development and strengthening of sovereignty over border areas. The canal is a part of the Main–Rhine–Danube–Black Sea 7th international transport corridor, with total length of 2,415 km and transit potential of about 20 million tons of cargo annually. According to economists' assessments, \$1 of investment in the development of the waterways attracts \$25 of private investment in the industry of the riverine areas. To the present day, the Ukrainian tariffs are 40% lower than the Romanian tariffs. According to expert assessments, Romania lost about 50% of its transit charges after the Ukrainian canal opened.

Earlier, Romania hampered the construction of the ship canal. In 2004 the Romanian Border Service motor boat blocked the passage of the Ukrainian Danube Shipping Company's *Volga* cruise passenger liner, which had tourists from Germany on board.¹⁰ The boat anchored in the middle of the ship canal. Probably, the Romanian side thought that this would scare carriers by creating instability in the area of the Ukrainian canal. In 2010 Romania controlled the flow of water through its own dams in such way that it caused the siltation of the Ukrainian ship canal, resulting in the canal depth being reduced to 3.3 metres. In addition, Romania unilaterally, without the consent of Ukraine, decided to widen part of the Chilia River. Romania imposed higher tariffs for empty vessels that entered the Danube through the Ukrainian canal, and exited, loaded, through the deeper

¹⁰ РОССИЙСКИЙ РЕЧНОЙ ФЛОТ И ТУРИЗМ INFOFLOT.RU, “Румынский катер чуть не протаранил украинский пассажирский теплоход ‘Волга’” [‘Romanian boat almost rammed the Ukrainian passenger steam-ship “Volga”’], 12 10 2004 <<http://www.infoflot.ru/news/1832.html>>, 10 11 2013.

Sulina river.¹¹ Today territorial contradictions between Romania and Ukraine can be seen in the Romanian attempt to move the international border behind the Ukrainian island of Maikan, even though, according to international treaties, this island belongs to Ukraine. If Romania is successful in this attempt, a part of the Ukrainian canal will be Romanian-Ukrainian and Romania will have the potential to completely block the Ukrainian canal.

2.1.2. European integration of Ukraine

Romania showed no interest in Ukraine's accession to the EU. In June 2011 the president of Romania, after consultations in Britain, announced¹² that he considered the possible enlargement of the EU by 2018 to include only eight countries: those of the Western Balkans, as well as Moldova and Turkey. Obviously, there is no Ukraine on this list.

2.1.3. Granting Romanian citizenship to residents of Ukraine's border areas

Granting Romanian citizenship to Ukraine's border residents is an effective tool to strengthen the Romanian identity and create a positive attitude toward joining the EU throughout Romania. This undermines Ukraine's sovereignty in the border areas. The effectiveness of this instrument would increase many times if the border area of Ukraine was in economic depression. Granting Romanian citizenship to residents of North Bukovina, who traditionally seek work abroad and seek to live in the EU, has caused particular concern in Ukraine. Romania's accession to the Schengen Zone, which is planned for the near future, will considerably increase the attractiveness of the Romanian citizenship because for Ukrainian citizens it will mean it is easier to cross the border and to migrate within the EU. In 2011, according to various estimates, more than 30,000 passports were issued to citizens of Ukraine by the Romanian diplomatic missions. According to the Ukrainian legislation dual citizenship directly contradicts the Constitution of Ukraine. In addition, foreign diplomatic missions, according to Article 41 of the

¹¹ Media International Group, *Бухарест подставил Киеву подножку* [Bucharest has tripped Kiev up], <<http://mignews.com.ua/ru/articles/38529.html>>, 10 11 2013.

¹² Last World News, *President of Romania does not see Ukraine in EU next seven years*, <<http://news.sevrugin.com/node/18851>>, 10 11 2013.

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations in 1961,¹³ must comply with the constitution and laws of the host country.

Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine publicly demonstrated fears concerning the mass distribution of the Romanian and Hungarian citizenship for citizens of Ukraine. According to a declaration by M. Tomenko, Vice-President of the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine,¹⁴ organisations being financed from abroad used financial incentives to encourage citizens of Ukraine to state their nationality as that of one of the neighbouring states at the time of the 2012 population census. In the middle of 2011 the Odessa Regional Advice {council} asked the Cabinet of Ukraine to deploy in the regional city of Bolgrad a battalion of internal forces of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in connection with 'deterioration of the criminal situation in the Odessa area, and also in connection with existing geopolitical contradictions in the south of the area'¹⁵.

Ukraine's official position as expressed by the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine was to develop relationships on the issue in a 'soft' way: the organisation of citizens local border traffic; de-politicisation of the problem of protection of minorities in both countries; and joint monitoring of the problem of protecting minorities.

2.1.4. Russia's military presence in Crimea

Taking into account geopolitical concepts concerning the Black Sea region, Crimea is one of the most important anchor points. Therefore, basing the Russian Black Sea Fleet and other troops there provides control over the entire north-western part of the Black Sea. The combat potential of the Black Sea Fleet considerably exceeds the combat potential of the naval forces of Romania. The strengthening of Romania does not correspond with Russian interests. Therefore, Romania considers the Russian Black Sea Fleet as a counterbalance to its own naval forces and is concerned about Russia's presence in Crimea.¹⁶

¹³ United Nations, *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations*, <http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/9_1_1961.pdf>, 10 11 2013.

¹⁴ Комментарий, *Януковича просят разобраться с угрозой со стороны Румынии и Венгрии* [*Deputies ask Yanukovich to investigate with threat from Romania and Hungary*], <<http://politics.comments.ua/2011/03/21/240226/yanukovicha-prosyat-razobratsya.html>>, 10 11 2013.

¹⁵ Восточный корреспондент, *Одесса просит разместить войска в Бессарабии* [*Odessa asks for troops to be placed in Bessarabia*], <<http://www.eastkorr.net/power/odessa-prosit-razmestit-voiska-v-bessarabii>>, 10 11 2013.

¹⁶ Popescu O., *Fortele rusesti din Transnistria ii deranjeaza doar pe cei care ar vrea sa vada acolo soldatii romani - prim-vicepresedintele Dumei* [*Russian troops in Transnistria only irritate those who would like*

2.1.5. Informal opinions of the political elite

The informal opinions of the political elite represent a special interest in the research into problems, because informal opinions often contain what politicians cannot say officially. These opinions can bring about changes in state policy and act as an experimental probe to assess the possible response of the international community. In this context the opinions of the radical opposition media are interesting, because they are often used for the same purpose. Of course, we should be cautious about relying on such thoughts, but to ignore these opinions would be a mistake.

Concerning territorial claims the most typical thought was expressed by C. Tudor, Romanian Member of the European Parliament:¹⁷ 'Keep in mind that in Romania there are political forces that can support the legitimate aspirations of Russia to return Crimea in exchange for Russia's recognition of the illegal division of Romania in 1940 into Moldova and Romania.' C. Tudor believes that Ukraine 'got the best piece of all the republics of the former USSR'. The 'Ziua Veche' edition is expressed in a slightly different way:¹⁸ 'Ukraine, if it still exists, will have the border on the south with the Crimea, the Tatarian independent state, or possibly with Turkey.'

Thus, we can see one idea concerning Ukraine: Ukraine is to be divided. There are reasons to believe that Romania could be interested in the Ukraine's division as a state, if Romania's territorial and regional interests are satisfied. From Romania's point of view, this idea seems to be quite rational. Of course, there are some complications with using of military force against Ukraine. Firstly, there is the possibility of military support from Russia. Secondly, the EU does not want a military conflict on its borders. And thirdly, Ukraine would never agree to the annexation of its own territories and on any suitable occasion would try to get them back, which would cause permanent conflict. The division of Ukraine would avoid these complications. According to a media reports, Romania illegally

to see the Romanian soldiers there' - Vice-Speaker of the State Duma], <<http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-8088138-fortele-rusesti-din-transnistria-deranjeaza-doar-cei-care-vrea-vada-acolo-soldatii-romani-prim-vicepresedintele-dumei.htm>>, 10 11 2013.

¹⁷ ИА REGNUM, *Европарламентарий от Румынии: Украина – искусственное государство, своровавшее чужие территории* [*The Europarliamentarian from Romania: Ukraine – the artificial state that has stolen the territories of others*], <<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1242576.html>>, 10 11 2013.

¹⁸ ИА REGNUM, *Румыния воссоединится вопреки КГБистским динозаврам, их хохляцким наемникам и манкуртам в Кишиневе: обзор СМИ Румынии* [*Romania will reunite, contrary to KGB dinosaurs, their Ukrainian mercenaries and mankurts in Kishinev: review of the Romanian mass media*], <<http://regnum.ru/news/fd-abroad/romania/1430634.html#ixzz1XGFxWOgQ>>, 10 11 2013.

supplied weapons to rebels in the former Yugoslavia;¹⁹ i.e., the Romanian secret services have some experience in escalating internal instability and arming illegal formations in other states.

Certainly, Romania would fail to implement this scenario on its own and without the support of leading world powers. However, Romania could be a mediator or initiator of events. The described scenario is the result of a hypothetical combination of extremely negative conditions and circumstances, which is why its possibility may be controversial. However, the scenario has not been rejected by experts in geopolitics of the USA, EU, and Russian Federation.^{20, 21, 22}

2.2. The problem of rapprochement of Romania with Moldova, and settlement of the Transnistrian conflict

The problem of Romania's rapprochement with Moldova is inseparably linked to the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, as Transnistria is an integral part of Moldova so it is difficult to talk about changing the 'state' status of the Republic of Moldova without restoring its political sovereignty over the territory of Transnistria. The source of the Transnistrian conflict is the Parliament of Moldova's adoption of the Law on the Moldovan language and the Declaration of Independence, which nullify the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and declare the USSR law 'on the establishment of the Union of the Moldovan SSR' invalid, as well as cancelling 'the division of the national territory Acts of 1775 and 1812.' De jure, the Declaration of Independence cancels Transnistria as a part of the Republic of Moldova and also cancels the Moldovan-Ukrainian and Moldovan-Romanian modern borders.²³

¹⁹ Moldnews, *Румынию обвиняют в незаконных поставках оружия бывшим республикам Югославии, ведущим войну за независимость с Белградом* [Romania is accused of supplying illegal arms to the former republic of Yugoslavia, which has waged war with Belgrad for independence], <<http://moldnews.md/rus/news/42945>>, 10 11 2013.

²⁰ Каратнишки А., *Раздел Украины. Как это видят в США* [The Division of Ukraine. How it is seen in the USA], <<http://www.ua-pravda.com/argumenti-i-fakti/razdel-ukraini.-kak-eto-vidyat-v-ssha.html>>, 10 11 2013.

²¹ Дугин А.Г., *Основы геополитики* [The Foundations of Geopolitics], Москва: Арктогея, 1997, <http://royallib.ru/read/dugin_aleksandr/osnovi_geopolitiki.html#0>, 10 11 2013.

²² ИА REGNUM, "Украина распалется на три части, а Россия с Германией перекроют карту Европы: итальянский журнал" [Ukraine will disintegrate into three parts, and Russia with Germany will remake the map of Europe], <<http://www.regnum.ru/news/1200177.html>>, 10 11 2013.

²³ Moldova Foundation, *Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Moldova*, <<http://www.moldova.org/page/declaration-of-independence-of-the-republic-of-moldova-487-eng.html>>, 10 11 2013.

While analysing the problem we should also take into account that: Moldovans do not recognise the Romanian identity; Moldovans and Romanians are orthodox and pertain to competing confessions; Transnistrians do not recognise themselves as either Moldovans or Romanians; and the large part of the Moldovan political elite are oriented toward Romania. In addition, we should take into account the possible consequences of unification, the chief of which is the possibility of strengthening Romania and raising its resoluteness to use force, which could encourage Romania to activate policies toward the east. Territorial claims to Bulgaria²⁴ and claims to some Ukrainian islands in the Danube Delta can be considered examples of this, as they appeared almost immediately after the partition of Ukrainian-Romanian territorial waters according to the decision of the International Court.

2.2.1. Romania's position

In September 2011, after his visit to the USA, the president of Romania, T. Băsescu, gave a detailed interview on Romanian politics.²⁵ In particular, he declared that: Romania is not striving for the annexation of Moldova, but wants its accession to the EU; in 1941 Romania crossed the Prut legally, but illegally crossed the Dniester; and Moldova was, and still is, Romanian land. This position has an obvious paradox: on the one hand, Romania supports the territorial integrity of Moldova; on the other hand, it refuses to sign the border treaty with Moldova. According to the Romanian president, that would mean recognition of the legitimacy of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.²⁶ However, the president's opinion is not supported by everyone in Romania. Many Romanian opposition publications consider Transnistria 'a stone around the neck of Bessarabia' due to significant corruption, the incompatible mentality of the people and the great influence of Russia, which can use Transnistria as a tool to counter Romania. Romanian media, in a veiled form, have discussed the independence of Transnistria.

²⁴ *Proiectele urgente ale României și Bulgariei: Platoul maritim și o hidrocentrală [Urgent projects in Romania and Bulgaria: ocean plateau and hydropower]*, <<http://www.ziare.com/articole/delimitare+platou+maritim+bulgaria+romania>>, 30 06 2014.

²⁵ Băsescu T, *Republica Moldova a fost și este pământ românesc [The Republic of Moldova has been and remains the Romanian land]*, <http://www.adevarul.ro/la_masa_adevarului/Traian_Basescu-presedintele_romaniei_-_Republica_Moldova_a_fost_si_este_pamant_romanesc_0_554945145.html>, 10 11 2013.

²⁶ OMEGA, *Romania does not wish to sign a Border Treaty with Moldova any more*, <<http://archive.omg.md/Content.aspx?id=4102&lang=2>>, 30 06 2014.

Romania promotes the approximation of Moldova through cultural exchange aimed at educating young people in the spirit of pan-Romania. Romanian citizenship is the most important instrument for bringing about Moldova's incorporation. Just before Romania's accession to the EU, the Romanian president urged government agencies to accelerate the process of issuing Romanian passports to Moldovan residents. After accusations of organising riots in Chisinau in 2009, the Romanian president issued a decree on rapidly granting Romanian citizenship to residents of Moldova who had lived in Romania before 1940, including the third generations of their descendants.²⁷ The decree accelerated the process of obtaining citizenship and does not require knowledge of the Romanian language from new citizens. Thus, residents of Transnistria are recognised by citizens of Moldova. With regard to settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, Romania considers that there is a need to replace Russian troops with international civil peacekeepers, while expanding the EU's involvement in settlement of the conflict.²⁸

2.2.2. Moldova's position

Moldova's position is determined mainly by the ratio of internal political forces. The Communist Party supports the Moldovenism concept. Other parties support unity with Romania. Concerning the Transnistrian problem, Moldova adheres to the principle of territorial integrity and supports the removal of Russian troops from Transnistria.

2.2.3. Russian Federation's position

The position of the Russian Federation is fully characterised by the words of General A. Lebed, the former commander of the 14th Army: 'When Russia loses Transnistria, it will lose influence in the region.' Judging from Russia's actions concerning Moldova and Transnistria, Russia's main interest is to maintain the independence, neutrality and demilitarisation of Moldova. Russia supports Moldova's territorial integrity; i.e., the reunification of Transnistria and a special autonomous status, details of which should be clarified in negotiations with Moldova. In 2003 Russia put forward the initiative to settle the Transnistrian conflict and

²⁷ Romanian Government, *Закон о гражданстве Румынии* [*The law on citizenship of Romania*], <<http://rumuniya.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html>>, 10 11 2013.

²⁸ Inciteful Studios, *Geoana presence 'anachronistic' of Russian troops in Transnistria to be solved*, <<http://incitefulstudios.com/article.jsp?id=767>>, 10 11 2013.

issued the Kozak memorandum²⁹ (Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation). The memorandum was signed by the president of Moldova, but it was not implemented due to the disagreement of Moldova concerning Russia's military presence and the disagreement of Transnistria concerning the loss of independence. However, recently, Moldova showed signs of consenting to abandon Transnistria in exchange for EU membership. In particular, in late 2011 the leader of one of the parliamentary parties announced that 'Transnistria is the obstacle to Moldova's European integration'.³⁰

2.2.4. The EU's position

In general it can be assumed that the EU's main interest is to ensure the stability of neighbouring states while preserving an influence on their foreign policies. The main features of the EU's policy on the problem are determined by the principle of the territorial integrity of Moldova and a negative attitude toward the deployment of Russian troops in Transnistria, as well as any attempt to extend the Russian military presence. The EU considers association with Moldova in a positive light, but does not consider the possibility of Moldova's accession in the near future. This position disables the complete unification of Moldova with Romania. The main instrument of the EU is advisory and financial assistance to support reform in Moldova in the areas of interest to the EU: infrastructure and the environment. Today, EU policy is beginning to cover Transnistria. In particular, the EU demands that Romania and Moldova provide grants to Transnistria, is considering Transnistria in financial plans for Moldova and is implementing a programme of small grants in Transnistria. We can see various attempts to activate policy toward Transnistria and create a Russia-EU committee on foreign policy and security;³¹ however, the answers to most questions remain undecided.

²⁹ Ольвия-пресс, *Проект Меморандума 'Об основных принципах государственного устройства объединенного государства* [Project of the Memorandum 'About the main principles of a state system of the incorporated state'], <<http://www.olvia.idknet.com/ol107-11-03.htm>>, 10 11 2013.

³⁰ Новая Молдавия, *Гимпу отпускает Приднестровье* [Ghimpu releases Transnistria], <<http://www.moldovanova.md/ru/events/show/452>>, 10 11 2013.

³¹ RIA Novosti, *Medvedev, Merkel suggest considering Russia-EU security committee creation*, <<http://en.ria.ru/world/20100605/159316872.html>>, 10 11 2013.

2.3. The problem of self-determination of ethnic Hungarians in Romania

It is not only Romania that aspires to unite territories with ethnically kindred populations; Hungary also aspires to it.³² The Hungarian question is actively being discussed in Romania. According to the media messages in recent years, there has been no election campaign without discussion about the threat of the separation of Transylvania by Hungarians. Today, about 1.5 million Hungarians live in Romania, which amounts to about 6.6% of the total population. The main section of the Hungarian minorities live in Transylvania and are called 'Sekui'.

2.3.1. Position of Romanian Hungarians

In September 2009 in the town of Odorheul Sekuyesk, the Congress of the Sekui region's local authority representatives proclaimed the establishment of Sekui's autonomy. In March 2010, in the town of Saint George, the second congress of mayors and councillors of the Sekui region assembled. The main decision of the congress was to grant the Hungarian language an official status at a regional level. Romanian Hungarians have several political parties, which compete with one another. The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania was a member of the coalition of government parties. It supports the creation of autonomy, with the town of Targu Muresh being the capital and the Hungarian regional language being recognised. The People's Party of Hungarians of Transylvania, headed by the famous pastor L. Tokesha (one of the initiators of the overthrow of M. Chaushesku) operates without paying attention to the official authorities of Romania. With support from Hungary the Party's leader created a representative office in the Sekui region. Thanks to this, various districts of Transylvania will have access to European funds. The Romanian authorities do not recognise this office.

2.3.2. Hungary's position

Romanian Hungarians are being supported by their mother country – Hungary. Some Hungarian politicians discuss the revision of the Trianon Treaty's provisions

³² Венгрия и Молдова активизируют деятельность, направленную на возвращение своих исторических территорий, [Hungary and Moldova stir up activity directed at returning the historical territories], <enews.md/news/view/14061/>, 11 06 2014.

concerning Transylvania;³³ the most active are the representatives of the Yobbyk Radical Party. The World Federation of Hungarians also supports the revision of Trianon. In 2011 Hungary passed a law granting dual Hungarian citizenship to members of the Diaspora. According to some assessments, thousands of Romanian citizens submitted documents to obtain Hungarian citizenship. Officially Hungary has no territorial claims to Romania.³⁴

Recently Hungarian pressure has increased. The Prime Minister of Hungary, V. Orbán, said:³⁵ ‘the Hungarian government to interfere in the administrative reorganisation of Romania has not yet arrived’. In other words, it is possible to assume that Hungary does not agree with the loss of Transylvania and, under favourable conditions, can still lay claim to it.

2.3.3. Romania’s position

Formerly, Romania ignored the problem and did not pay attention to it. Romania did not often respond to harsh comments from Hungarian officials. Romania categorically rejects the main demand of ethnic Hungarians – the formation of territorial autonomy – but is ready to make concessions, primarily in the humanitarian sphere. In Spring 2012, under pressure from the Democratic Union of Hungarians, the Romanian Government established a faculty in a medical university in the town of Tirgu Muresh where students are trained only in Hungarian. Following that, the Romanian Parliament expressed a lack of trust in the government.³⁶ In September 2012 the Romanian Parliament rejected a bill to grant autonomy to the Sekui region. Romanian Hungarians then illegally began to hang Sekui flags on the state institutions. These events caused diplomatic scandal in early 2013.³⁷ According to the publication *Der Spiegel*, relations between Hungary and Romania have been transformed into a state of cold war.

³³ Hungarian Spectrum, *A Fidesz MP’s encounter with the Treaty of Trianon and revisionism*, <<http://hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2012/08/19/a-fidesz-mps-encounter-with-the-treaty-of-trianon-and-revisionism/>>, 10 11 2013.

³⁴ The All-Hungary Media Group, *Revision of Trianon Treaty absurd, says Hungary FM*, <<http://www.politics.hu/20100614/revision-of-trianon-treaty-absurd-says-hungary-fm/>>, 10 11 2013.

³⁵ German Foreign Policy, “*From Speculation to Option*”, <<http://www.german-foreign-policy.com/en/fulltext/58492>>, 30 06 2014.

³⁶ Romania News Watch, *Romania’s Three-Month Old Cabinet Faces First No-Confidence Vote*, <http://www.romanianewswatch.com/2012_04_01_archive.html>, 10 11 2013.

³⁷ The Economist, *Hungary and Romania. Flag wars*, <<http://www.economist.com/blogs/easternapproaches/2013/02/hungary-and-romania>>, 10 11 2013.

2.4. Supply and transit of energy

Diversification of energy supplies is one of Romania's foreign policy priorities. Today, the major Romanian energy fields are almost exhausted. The decision of the International Court on the division of the Black Sea shelf with Ukraine provides some capabilities in relation to increasing domestic production in Romania. However, Romania's domestic energy resources are insufficient and therefore it is vital for the state to import them. On the other hand, Romania is on the transit route of Russian, Central Asian and Trans-Caucasian energy and this is the cause of its interest in participating in transit projects.

2.4.1. Supply and transit of Russian energy

Oil supplies. Romania produces about 4 million tons of oil per year and consumes 13 million tons per year. Transit of Russian oil via the Black Sea has traditionally been carried out by tankers from the ports of Russia and Ukraine through the Bosphorus Strait to Europe. Today Russia is trying to focus transit through the port of Novorossiysk, which the Caspian Pipeline Consortium pipeline from Kazakhstan passes through. The companies Rompetrol (fully owned by the Kazakh state company KazMunayGas) and Lukoil supply oil to Romania. In Romania, Rompetrol owns an oil refinery and two petrochemical plants, as well as more than 1,000 automatic petrol station in neighbouring European countries. In 2009 this company put into operation a modern oil terminal in the port of N'vodari (Romania) with a maximum capacity of 25 million tons per year. In 2010 the company's supplies amounted 4 million tons. Lukoil owns a refinery in Ploiesti and supplies up to 2.5 million tons to Romania annually. Taking into account the apparent discrepancy between the capacity of the terminal in N'vodari and the volume of domestic oil consumption in Romania, we can confidently assume that Romania has a great interest in the transit routes of Russian and Caspian oil to Europe.

Gas supplies. Russian gas is being supplied to Romania via the Ukrainian pipeline in amounts of more than 2 billion cubic metres per year. Domestic consumption of gas is about 8 billion cubic metres per year. Russian gas is transported through Romania to Turkey, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Greece in amounts of 12 to 15 billion cubic metres per year.

Russian energy transit through the Black Sea beyond the region's borders is limited by the physical capacity of the Bosphorus. To bypass the Bosphorus the

interested countries continue to promote many projects for bypass routes, in which Bulgaria is the main competitor for Romania's.

In 2007 Kazakhstan and Romania proposed the initiative to lay a Constanta (Romania) – Trieste (Italy) pipeline together with Russia. The states recognised the effectiveness of the project. The project is attractive for Romania due to incomplete oil loading of the terminal in N'vodari. Among the projects concerning the expansion of the Russian gas transit pipeline the project known as South Stream is the most considerable. The project begins on Russia's Black Sea coast, passes along the Black Sea seabed to Varna (Bulgaria) and could continue to Romania and Hungary. Russia has begun to build the overland part of the pipeline, but the project is not a priority for the EU.

2.4.2. Supply and transit of Central Asian and Trans-Caucasian energy

The main obstacle to transit through the Caspian Sea is the uncertainty of its legal status. Additional costs are required for trans-shipment of energy by sea. To lay pipelines along the southern edge of the Caspian Sea is almost impossible because of political disagreements between Iran, the EU and the USA. That is why transit through the port of Novorossiysk remains the only viable method.

Oil supplies. The supply of oil from Azerbaijan to the Black Sea area is complicated due to the partial loading of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline. Azerbaijan is expected to load most of the oil that goes into this pipeline after the Shah Deniz field reaches full production capacity. Fully loading the pipeline is of interest to American, French, Italian and Turkish companies – members of the consortium of producers. There is also an upgraded Baku-Supsa pipeline. However, only small quantities of oil are transited through this pipeline.

Gas supplies. Gas supplies from Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are now less promising due to the uncertainty of the legal status of the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijani gas will be transported through Turkey through the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline, which is being built by the Turkish-Azerbaijani consortium, and to Bulgaria and Romania through the Nabucco-West pipeline. The project is due to be completed in 2018. When this project is complete, Romania can refuse to use Russian gas that has passed through Ukraine.

2.5. Romania's integration problems within the EU frameworks

In 2007, Romania and Bulgaria joined the EU after long and difficult reforms determined by the EU. Today Western media sometimes expresses the opinion that the decision to allow Romania and Bulgaria to join was premature.³⁸ Most frequently, Romania is accused of high levels of corruption (see, for an example, an article from 2012 in *The Economist*³⁹). Some media reports talk about the high crime rate that Romania exports to more prosperous EU countries and about the strong influence of the USA on Romanian politics. Romania certainly considers EU membership a positive step. However, there are some issues in which Romanians feel resentful.

Romania is in the top ten states that make major contributions to the European budget, along with Germany, France and the Netherlands. However, Germany, France and the Netherlands give back an excess of domestic production, but Romania's deficit is increasing, which is gradually increasing the risk of underdevelopment. There is also a difficult situation in agriculture. Under the accession conditions Romania has opened its borders to import agricultural goods, but has received only 20% of the subsidies determined for the founding EU countries. In an emotional statement, V. Vozganyan, former Minister of Economy and Finance of Romania, said:⁴⁰ 'Hungry Romania in the EU is sitting with the rest at the table, but does not touch the food.' The depth of degradation in agriculture follows from the fact that today Romania is interested in importing cheap fruit and grapes from Moldova (domestic production covers only 40% of demand).

On the one hand, Romania's dissatisfaction with the conditions of union with the EU is compelling the state to search for support from the USA. On the other hand, the difficult economic situation is forcing Romania to search for resolutions to its internal problems with the help of an active foreign policy and strengthening its influence in region.

³⁸ Spillius A., "Turkey 'will probably never be EU member'", *The Telegraph*, 21 09 2013, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/10325218/Turkey-will-probably-never-be-EU-member.html>>, 10 11 2013.

³⁹ *The Economist*, *Corruption in Romania. Năstase nailed*, <<http://www.economist.com/node/21544821>>, 10 11 2013.

⁴⁰ DzD, *Экс-министр: вступление в ЕС сделало Румынию беднее [Ex-minister: 'Accession to the EU made Romania poorer']*, <<http://www.dzd.ee/654390/jeks-ministr-vstuplenie-v-es-sdelalo-rumyniju-bednee>>, 10 11 2013.

2.6. Romania's relations with the USA

As mentioned previously, the attitude of the USA to Romania is determined mainly by the geopolitical context.

In 1997 the Project for the New American Century think tank (its members were George W. Bush, R. Cheney, D. Rumsfeld and P. Wolfowitz) identified the position and importance of the Black Sea in American politics.⁴¹ This group, together with the USA Committee on NATO association, presented a geopolitical perspective to the USA Senate's Committee on Foreign Affairs: 'The Black Sea was a black hole in the history of Europe. Today this region has the greatest strategic interest for the United States and Europe. Nowadays, the EU imports about 50% of consumer energy, by 2020 it will import more than 70 %. This increase of import can be carried out only via the Black Sea.'

The main obstacle to allow access for warships to the Black Sea is the Montreux Convention of 1936, the participants of which are Australia, Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Romania, Russia, Turkey and France. Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova as the countries that emerged in consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union do not participate in the Convention due to the unwillingness of Russia and Turkey to expand the number of signatories. It is typical that after the 2008 war in South Ossetia, Turkey banned the passage of the USA's fleet of ships, referring to the Montreux Treaty.⁴²

The USA considers Romania the friendliest state supporting the USA's aspirations to change the convention. The Romanian president, T. B'sescu, has offered the 'Black Sea is Russia's Lake' doctrine, the main idea of which was expressed by the Prime Minister of Romania in 1939: 'it's the door that trapped Romania's fingers'.⁴³

Moreover, Romania has agreed to deploy elements of the USA's missile defence system in its own territory.⁴⁴ According to the mass media, Romania considers this

⁴¹ Cohen A., Irwin C., *US Strategy in the Black Sea Region*, <<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2006/12/us-strategy-in-the-black-sea-region>>, 10 11 2013.

⁴² Morrison D., *Turkey restricts US access to the Black Sea*, <<http://www.david-morrison.org.uk/turkey-restricts-us-access.htm>>, 10 11 2013.

⁴³ Moldova Nova, *Россия была и остается врагом [Russia was and is still the enemy]*, <<http://www.moldovanova.md/ru/publications/show/524>>, 10 11 2013.

⁴⁴ Государственный департамент США, *Информационный бюллетень Госдепартамента: американо-румынское соглашение по ПРО [Newsletter of the State Department: the American-Romanian agreement on missile defence system]*, <<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/russian/texttrans/2011/09/20110914150153x0.921455.html#axzz1gVBvGREq>>, 10 11 2013.

deployment a guarantee of non-aggression from Russia, an opportunity to receive financial support and an opportunity to be involved in future economic projects in the region, primarily concerning energy. It is possible that Romania also hopes to receive support from the USA in relation to a wider range of international issues, including a joining together with Moldova and controversial issues with Ukraine.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Ukraine's diplomatic politics are not active concerning problems in relations with Romania. The two states' ministers for foreign affairs last met in May 2011 after a six-year break. However, problems of these mutual relations are very serious. They claim constant attention and a continuous search for resolutions. It is necessary to understand that if we do not find any resolutions, others will find them for us. Active efforts, first of all diplomatic, are necessary.

From Ukraine's point of view, the most serious problem is the possibility of territorial claims from Romania. Protecting the rights of ethnic Romanians may become a pretext for intervention in internal affairs and for aggression, by analogy with the situation in Crimea and in the south-east of Ukraine. Romania demands observance of the rights of ethnic Romanians in Ukraine and gives Romanian citizenship to ethnic Romanians who are citizens of Ukraine. These actions quite correspond to the political concept of Greater Romania. Some Romanian politicians consider that there is an opportunity for the division of Ukraine, which reflects the mood in some sections of society.

On the other hand, Romania's relations with other members of the EU do not always develop positively. Therefore, Romania is looking for support from the USA. Romania is actively developing political and military-technical cooperation with the USA. It has agreed to deploy elements of the USA's missile defence system in its own territory and supports the USA in the problem of internationalising the Black Sea. The USA has high appreciation for Romania's geopolitical location and wants a trustworthy ally in the Black Sea region. Therefore, Romania can hope to gain the political support of the USA to resolve its own problems. Romania also plans to refuse the Russian gas that would have reduced its dependence on the Ukrainian transit, thanks to gas from the Caucasian states. From Ukraine's

⁴⁵ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, *Clinton, Romanian Foreign Minister on Missile Defense Agreement*, Office of the Spokesperson, <<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2011/09/20110913164611su0.2718731.html#axzz36KXGleHB>>, 03 07 2014.

point of view, these relations of Romania with the third states can be considered as potentially negative factors. Failure to resolve the problems of rights protection of Hungarians in Romania is a potentially positive factor, which Ukraine can use to begin active multilateral negotiations and search for a resolution.

For many years Ukraine has not been able to improve relations with Romania on a bilateral level. Hence, resolution of the problem resolution should be moved to a multilateral level. Signing the agreement on association with the EU is a good pretext for this. Ukraine can offer to Romania and Hungary to lead multilateral negotiations (under the aegis of the EU) on the implementation of EU standards for the rights protection of national minorities. These negotiations should be based on the understanding that Ukraine, Romania and Hungary have similar problems that are preventing the development of friendship between the states.

The problem of joint use of the transit potential of the Danube can be solved in the same way. Taking into account the difficult economic situation, Ukraine can hope for EU aid to organise negotiations with Romania about joint tariff regulation concerning the transportation of cargoes through the Danube Delta. A mutually advantageous resolution also would reduce tension in relations.

Ukraine should avoid using force to resolve the conflict in Transnistria. An armed attack on the Russian peace-making contingent will be regarded as aggression against the Russian Federation and will cause the necessity of the use of force from Russia's side. Military transit from the Russian Federation in Transnistria is possible only through Ukraine. In this case, Ukraine can be involved in the conflict.

Influence of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council on EU Relations with Countries of the Eastern Partnership

Bruno Vandecasteele*

Abstract

The Eastern Partnership initiative has run a bumpy course during its first five years of existence. It has not yet reached its goal of stabilising the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, and drawbacks in relation to each of the Eastern Partnership countries might even lead to the conclusion that the partnership no longer exists. The results are far short of what was expected, with many EU member states having lost their interest in the Eastern Neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian presidency of the Council in the second half of 2013 identified the Eastern Partnership as one of its key priorities, aiming to reinvigorate the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbours. This article discusses the efforts of the Lithuanian presidency to maintain and strengthen EU-Eastern Partnership relations and analyses the extent to which Lithuania has been influential in this regard. In doing so, it assesses three interlinked indicators: (i) Lithuania's achievement of goals; (ii) the extent to which the achievement of goals can be ascribed to the presidency; and (iii) the political relevance of Eastern Partnership-related developments in 2013. The article concludes that the presidency is not usually influential in existing frameworks for cooperation, but does exert influence in establishing and consolidating cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries in specific policy areas, as well as in providing political backing to push certain measures forward.

Introduction

The Eastern Partnership (EaP), the framework for the EU's multilateral and bilateral relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, has not been overwhelmingly successful up until 2014. One might even

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argue that the EaP no longer exists. Azerbaijan prefers a strategic partnership with the EU over the multilateral path; Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan decided to cancel his country's participation in a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), one of the EaP's most important pillars; the Ukrainian government has in the last two decades navigated between a Russia-oriented and EU-oriented foreign-policy vector, and the refusal of former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich to sign an Association Agreement triggered a series of events that are difficult to control; Belarus simply does not participate in most of the programme; only Georgia and Moldova seem more or less 'on track' in terms of moving in the direction foreseen by the EaP, even though the EU feels a constant need to support pro-EU forces in both countries. Although the scope of the EaP expanded to different policy areas between 2009 and 2013, the results were far short of what was expected, and many EU member states lost their interest in the region. In this context, Lithuania identified the EaP as one of its priorities during its presidency of the Council of the EU (hereinafter the presidency) in the second half of 2013.¹

It is not surprising that Lithuania prioritised this region and that the EaP Summit of November in Vilnius was expected to be the presidency's main event: the country's support for closer relations between the EU and EaP countries is widely documented.² The EaP received special attention throughout the preparatory documents for the presidency, from the 2011 Seimas resolution on presidency priorities up to the final programme.³ Lithuania's EaP-related political

¹ Lithuanian presidency website, "Programme of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union 1 July to 31 December 2013: For a Credible, Growing and Open Europe", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <http://static.eu2013.lt/uploads/documents/Programos/Programa_EN.pdf>, 01 07 2013; Vilpišauskas R., Vandecasteele B. and Vaznonytė A., "The Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Advancing energy policy and Eastern Partnership goals: conditions for exerting influence", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* (29), 2013, p. 11-37.

² Janeliūnas T. et al., "The EU New Member States as Agenda Setters in the Enlarged European Union", Lithuania, Sofia: Open Society Institute, 2009; Kesa K., "Latvian and Lithuanian Policy in the Eastern Neighbourhood: Between Solidarity and Self Promotion", *Perspectives*, 19(2, Special Issue, Identity and Solidarity in Foreign Policy: Investigating East Central European Relations with the Eastern Neighbourhood), 2000, p. 81-100; Vilpišauskas R., "National Preferences and Bargaining of the New Member States Since the Enlargement of the EU: the Baltic States - Still Policy Takers?", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review* (25), 2011, p. 9-32; Väisse J., Dennison S., Kundnani H., eds., *European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013*. London: European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR), 2013; see e.g. Vilpišauskas R., "Lithuanian foreign policy since EU accession: torn between history and interdependence", in Baun M., Marek D., eds., *The New Member States and the European Union: Foreign policy and Europeanization*, New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 127-141.

³ Seimas, "Seimo Nutarimo Dėl Lietuvos Respublikos pirmininkavimo Europos Sąjungos Tarybai 2013 m. Projektas (XIP-3550)", *Seimas*, <http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=409464&cp_query=&cp_tr2=>>, 30 03 2012; The Lithuania Tribune, "E. Zingeris: Lithuania's

goals were twofold. On the one hand, the country envisaged the signing of an Association Agreement with Ukraine, the conclusion of negotiations and initialling of Association Agreements with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, and progress in the association process with Azerbaijan.⁴ On the other hand, Lithuania wanted to ‘upgrade’ EaP cooperation by broadening and consolidating EU-EaP collaboration in a broad array of policy areas.

The main research question to be addressed in this article is the extent to which Lithuania has influenced EaP policies during its presidency. To answer this question, I apply an analytical framework that was first proposed by Arts and Verschuren⁵ and later applied to the influence of the Polish presidency of 2011.⁶ The article assesses three interlinked indicators for influence: (i) Lithuania’s achievement of goals associated with EaP issues; (ii) the extent to which the achievement of these goals can be ascribed to the presidency; and (iii) the political relevance of EaP-related policy developments in the second half of 2013. The main sources for this article are official documents, news articles and 25 interviews – mostly with Lithuanian civil servants, but also with a member-state diplomat and officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission.

The remainder of this article consists of two parts. First, I outline the analytical framework of the article and point to its benefits in analysing political influence. The second and main part reviews the key developments in EaP policies during the Lithuanian presidency, indicating the country’s influence herein. This part is divided into two sections: one on the EU’s bilateral relations with individual EaP countries, and the other on multilateral relations in each policy area. The conclusion

EU presidency will focus on energy security and Eastern neighbourhood”, *The Lithuania Tribune*, <<http://www.lithuaniatribune.com/11617/e-zingeris-lithuanias-eu-presidency-will-focus-on-energy-security-and-eastern-neighbourhood-201211617/>>, 15 02 2013; Lithuanian presidency website, (note 1).

⁴ Interview 1, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 6 March 2013; Interview 2, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 7 March 2013; Interview 5, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 5 April 2013; Interview 6, Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 19 June 2013; EUObserver, “EU countries split on Ukraine treaty”, *EUObserver*, <<http://euobserver.com/foreign/118316>>, 10 12 2012; Lithuanian presidency website, (note 1), p. 17.

⁵ Arts B., Verschuren P., “Assessing Political Influence in Complex Decision-making: An Instrument Based on Triangulation”, *International Political Science Review*, No. 20(4), 1999, p. 411-424.

⁶ Vandecasteele B., Bossuyt, F. and Orbie, J., 2013. “Unpacking the influence of the Council Presidency on European Union external policies: The Polish Council Presidency and the Eastern Partnership”, *European Integration online Papers*, No. 17(Special Issue 1: Agency and influence inside the EU institutions), 2013, p. 1-28.

reflects on the article's findings and implications for both the EaP initiative and the role of the presidency in external policies. The scholarly contribution of this article is both empirical and methodological. Empirically, it provides a detailed account of Lithuania's efforts and influence in promoting EaP policies during its presidency. Methodologically, the article attempts to further advance tools for measuring the influence of the presidency and, by extension, other actors in the EU as well.

1. Analytical framework: measuring influence through goal achievement, ascription and political relevance

The definition of influence in this article is inspired by the work of Bunse.⁷ For the purposes of this study, I classify presidency influence as *intentionally changing a policy from what it would have been in the absence of an action*. This definition is modified in two ways from that proposed by Bunse. Firstly, the word 'intentionally' is added to indicate that influence is only considered as the possible result of deliberate actions. Secondly, the word 'outcome' from the original definition is replaced by 'policy' to emphasise that only concrete developments in EU-EaP relations are taken into account. Indeed, not all 'outcomes' have a real impact on those policies.

The influence of the Lithuanian presidency is studied through a review of EaP-related outputs and 'non-outputs' in the second semester of 2013. The terms 'output' and 'non-output' in this context refer to any topic that is, or is not, placed on the agenda, and any decision that is, or is not, taken. The method for measuring influence is largely based on the method used in an earlier study on the Polish presidency of 2011,⁸ which in turn drew from the framework developed by Arts and Verschuren.⁹ The presidency's political influence (PI) is assessed using three indicators: the degree of goal achievement (GA), the extent to which GA can be ascribed to the presidency (AS), and the political relevance (PR) of the output. In line with what Arts and Verschuren proposed, the data on these indicators are gathered using the EAR method, which comprises a triangulation of 'Ego', 'Alter' and 'Researcher's analysis'. Information on Ego (the perception of the actors

⁷ Bunse S., *Small states and EU governance: leadership through the Council presidency*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 5.

⁸ Vandecasteele B. et al., (note 6).

⁹ Arts B., Verschuren P., (note 5), p. 411-424.

whose influence is studied) and Alter (the perception of other actors who were involved in the decision-making process) assessments of political influence is often obtained through expert interviews. The ‘Researcher’s analysis’, which is usually based on written primary and secondary sources, complements these Ego and Alter assessments.

The operationalisation of the indicators for influence is shown in Table 1. Definitions of the first two indicators speak for themselves: GA refers to the extent to which the presidency’s goals were attained, with AS showing the contribution of the presidency to output. PR in turn encompasses three criteria: the political importance, novelty and tangibility of an output. ‘Political importance’ is the political and symbolic value of an output. For example, it would be politically important if EU and EaP countries announced that they would deploy joint police operations: this would indicate the ‘European’ orientation of governments in EaP countries and the EU’s readiness to cooperate more closely with these nations. ‘Novelty’ refers to new issues being put on the EU’s agenda or changes to the nature of EU policies. The establishment of new forums for cooperation or the consolidation of existing relations in binding treaties would be novel policy outputs. ‘Tangibility’ reflects the extent to which an output has real effects. To cite the example of police operations again: a declaration of intent for joint deployment is not necessarily tangible, but becomes so if made official in a written document and/or implemented. In sum, ‘political relevance’ refers to much more than what would be intuitively understood as something ‘relevant’ for EaP policies. Taken together, the GA, AS and PR indicators capture the extent to which an actor exerts influence on a policy.

In comparison with the article on the Polish presidency by Vandecasteele et al.,¹⁰ I have changed the method in two ways. The first difference is the use of tangibility as a concept to express the political relevance of an output: ‘tangibility’ replaces ‘political impact’, because the former more accurately captures the meaning of political relevance. The second modification lies in the expression of indicators and levels of political influence. Instead of using verbal categories (‘none’, ‘limited’, ‘substantial’ and ‘high’), I use numbers from 0 to 3 for GA, AS and PR. The number 0 replaces ‘none’, 1 means ‘limited’, 2 is ‘substantial’ and 3 is ‘high’. The level of PI can then be expressed as a number between 0 and 1, based on the average of GA, AS and PR: the scores of the three indicators are summed up and divided by 9. The use of numbers has two main advantages: it allows finer-tuned assessments of PI and the results can be more easily employed in comparative research by using

¹⁰ Vandecasteele B. et al., (note 6).

methods such as Qualitative Comparative Analysis. The formula for calculating the PI level is $(GA+AS+PR)/9$. This produces one of ten possible values: 0, 0.11, 0.22, 0.33, 0.44, 0.56, 0.67, 0.78, 0.89, and 1. If reformulated in verbal terms, scores below half equate to ‘no influence’; 0.56 indicates ‘limited influence’; 0.67 and 0.78 show ‘substantial influence’; and 0.89 and 1 are expressions of ‘high influence’.

Three issues should be clarified before we move on to analysing the data. Firstly, a score of 0 for any of the three PI indicators means that either the goals of the presidency were not achieved, the output was politically irrelevant, or the output cannot be ascribed to the presidency; in these cases, one cannot claim that the presidency has influenced EaP policies. A GA, AS or PR of 0 automatically implies that PI is also 0, so the scores 0.11 and 0.22 are not used in practice. Secondly, because influence is defined as an intentional process, I assign particular importance to ascription of goal achievement as an indicator on influence. The PI level can therefore not be higher than the AS level: if AS is limited (a score of 1), PI cannot be higher than limited (0.56); if AS is substantial (a score of 2), PI cannot be higher than substantial (0.78). Thirdly, it is important to note that the numbers and scores in this paper serve to describe presidency influence as accurately as possible on an ordinal, not on an interval scale. The numbers should not be interpreted as reflecting exact values.

Table 1. Indicators for the presidency’s political influence

Indicator	Level	Description
Goal Achievement (GA)	0	The (non-)output entirely contradicts the presidency’s preferences.
	1	The (non-)output partly contradicts the presidency’s preferences.
	2	The (non-)output does not contradict the presidency’s preferences, but is not its most preferred result.
	3	The (non-)output reflects the presidency’s preferences as much as was legally and practically feasible.

Ascription of goal achievement (AS)	0	The presidency was not involved as a chair, or was involved as a chair but had no role in developing the (non-)output.
	1	The presidency was involved as a chair to a limited extent, but the (non-)output was mainly developed by other actors.
	2	The presidency was involved as a chair and steered the (non-)output, but other actors also played a role in developing the (non-)output.
	3	The presidency was involved as a chair and it is unlikely that the (non-)output would have been the same if another country was chairing.
Political Relevance (PR)	0	The (non-)output is of little or no political importance, is not novel among EU policies and is not tangible.
	1	The (non-)output is politically important or novel among EU policies, but is not tangible.
	2	The (non-)output is tangible, but of limited political importance and novelty among EU policies.
	3	The (non-)output is tangible and politically important or novel among EU policies.

2. EU-Eastern Partnership relations during the Lithuanian presidency

2.1. Bilateral relations

In the second half of 2013, bilateral relations with each of the EaP countries were developed in different ways and in several areas. The most significant progress was notable in EU relations with Georgia and Moldova. Although Lithuania was sympathetic to closer relations with EaP countries, the analysis below shows that much of this was led by the European Commission and the presidency was often not (directly) involved.

When the presidency did play a role, developments could not always be considered the result of its influence. For example, Lithuanian foreign minister Linas Linkevičius co-chaired the Cooperation Councils with the South Caucasus countries: Armenia,¹¹ Azerbaijan¹² and Georgia.¹³ Cooperation Councils are officially chaired by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Štefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy. However, Ashton has the habit of delegating the chairmanship of this body to the incumbent presidency. The main function of Cooperation Councils is setting political deadlines and providing policy-makers with the chance to regularly review bilateral relations.¹⁴ Because these meetings are not decisive in EU policy towards EaP countries, the presidency that chairs them cannot be seen as politically relevant in these cases (PR=0).

Armenia

Until summer 2013, the EU and Armenia seemed on track in terms of strengthening their relations: talks on an Association Agreement, including a DCFTA, were concluded in July.¹⁵ However, in a move that surprised many in the EU, President Sargsyan announced on 3 September that his country would join a customs union with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan instead of establishing a free-trade area with the EU. The announcement was followed by intense high-level consultations between the EU and Armenia on the way forward.¹⁶ Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian travelled to Brussels for talks with Füle, after which the latter stated that it was ‘difficult to imagine the initialling at Vilnius summit in November of the Association Agreement with Armenia as it had been

¹¹ Council of the European Union, *Press release, Fourteenth Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Armenia (17529/13)*, Council of the European Union, 9 December 2013.

¹² Council of the European Union, *Press release, Fourteenth Cooperation Council between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan (17530/13)*, Council of the European Union, 9 December 2013.

¹³ Council of the European Union, *Press release, 14th EU-Georgia Cooperation Council (17693/13)*, Council of the European Union, 12 December 2013.

¹⁴ Interview 22, European External Action Service, Brussels, 9 April 2014.

¹⁵ ENPI info centre, “EU-Armenia: Ashton and Füle hail completion of talks on Association Agreement and Free Trade Agreement”, *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=34077&lang_id=450>, 30 07 2013.

¹⁶ See e.g. ENPI info centre, “Ashton meets Armenian foreign minister ahead of Vilnius summit”, *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=34730&lang_id=450>, 08 10 2013.

negotiated'.¹⁷ Indeed, the DCFTA and the rest of the Association Agreement are deeply interconnected and it would be impossible to simply remove one part.¹⁸ Nalbandian then travelled to Vilnius for a meeting with Linkevičius. The latter said afterwards that 'the decision to join the Customs Union diminishes Armenia's ambitions of integration in and cooperation with the EU'.¹⁹ In summary, failure to sign the Association Agreement meant that Lithuania did not achieve its main goal stated for Armenia (GA=0), even though this cannot be ascribed to the presidency (AS=0) but to Sargsyan's decision.

Relations between the EU and Armenia developed more successfully in the area of mobility. The European Parliament (EP) approved visa facilitation and readmission agreements on 9 October.²⁰ This could not be ascribed to Lithuania (AS=0), as the agreements had been negotiated by the European Commission and the presidency did not intervene to convince MEPs to vote for them.²¹

Azerbaijan

The Azeri presidential elections of 9 October put relations between the EU and Azerbaijan to the test. In the run-up to the elections, EU representatives noted pressure on opposition activists, civil society and the media through intimidation, arrests and detentions.²² The election itself was disturbed by the 'appgate' scandal: the Central Election Commission (CEC) hired the firm Happy Baku to create a phone app to publish the outcome. The 'result' was published on 8 October, one day before the election, with incumbent president Ilham Aliyev shown as receiving 73% of the votes. The CEC explained that this was a test using data from previous elections, but the names of new candidates also appeared in the list

¹⁷ Füle Š., "EU-Armenia: About decision to join the Customs Union", *European Commission*, <http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/fule/headlines/news/2013/09/20130906_en.htm>, 10 09 2013.

¹⁸ Interview 22, (note 14); Interview 23, Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 9 April 2014.

¹⁹ The Lithuania Tribune, "Lithuanian and Armenian foreign ministers discussed Armenia's decision to seek Customs Union membership", *The Lithuania Tribune*, <<http://www.lithuaniantribune.com/49939/lithuanian-and-armenian-foreign-ministers-discussed-armenias-decision-to-seek-customs-union-membership-201349939/>>, 10 09 2013.

²⁰ ENPI info centre, "European Parliament gives green light to EU-Armenia visa facilitation agreement", *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=34757&clang_id=450>, 16 10 2013.

²¹ Interview 22, (note 14).

²² European Commission, *Azerbaijan: EU concerned by developments in the pre-election period*, European Commission, 3 October 2013.

of results. Aliyev finally won the election with 85% of the vote,²³ and reactions to the result were mixed. The EP and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe called the election process ‘free, fair and transparent’,²⁴ while the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) found that the election was ‘undermined by limitations on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association that did not guarantee a level playing field for candidates’.²⁵ Spokespeople for Ashton and Füle praised the high voter turnout, but also pointed to problems raised by OSCE observers.²⁶ Lithuania was absent from these reactions and was not involved in the statements made on the Azeri elections (AS=0). Officials gave two explanations for Lithuania’s attitude: on the one hand, an interviewee stated that ‘Azerbaijan has a very low ambition on the EaP, it doesn’t need our carrots and using sticks is difficult’,²⁷ and a harsh reaction was thus deemed unnecessary; on the other hand, there is an ‘Armenian factor’, with Lithuanians cautious not to criticise Azerbaijan more than Armenia or vice versa.²⁸

Vilnius hosted the signing ceremony for the agreement on visa facilitation between the EU and Azerbaijan on 29 November, with Linkevičius and Füle signing the document on behalf of the EU.²⁹ A week later, Azerbaijan signed a Mobility Partnership with eight EU member states, including Lithuania.³⁰ The former agreement cannot be ascribed to the Lithuanian presidency (AS=0) because negotiations were conducted by the European Commission. The latter is not seen as EU policy, as it involves only a limited number of member states.

²³ EUObserver, “EU ponders reaction to Azerbaijan’s ‘appgate’“, *EUObserver*, <<http://euobserver.com/foreign/121741>>, 11 10 2013.

²⁴ Council of Europe, *Presidential election in Azerbaijan: joint statement by PACE and EP delegations*, Council of Europe, 2013.

²⁵ OSCE, *International Election Observation Mission, Republic of Azerbaijan, Presidential Election, 9 October 2013: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions*, OSCE, 2013.

²⁶ European Commission, “Statement by the Spokespersons of EU High Representative Catherine Ashton and Commissioner Štefan Füle on Presidential elections in Azerbaijan (MEMO/13/879)”, *European Commission*, <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-879_en.htm>, 11 10 2013.

²⁷ Interview 11, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 21 February 2014.

²⁸ Interview 11 (note 27); Interview 16, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 12 March 2014.

²⁹ Council of the European Union, *Press release, EU-Azerbaijan agreement on facilitating the issuing of visas (17088/13)*, Council of the European Union, 29 November 2013.

³⁰ European Commission, *Mobility Partnership signed between the EU and Azerbaijan (IP/13/1215)*, European Commission, 5 December 2013.

Belarus

Although Lithuania would be in favour of further developing EU-Belarus relations, it did not expect much progress during its presidency. The most important aim was to have a high-level Belarusian representative at the EaP Summit; some interviewees for this study said that foreign minister Vladimir Makey could be an option to represent the country.³¹ The visa ban against Makey was suspended in June³² to make such a visit possible and he attended the EU-EaP meeting of foreign ministers in Brussels on 22 July. The Council extended sanctions against Belarus in October, but maintained the exemption for Makey.³³ Lithuania achieved its goal (GA=3) in this regard because, in contrast with 2011, there was a high-level Belarusian delegation at the EaP Summit.³⁴ The presence of Makey was however of limited political relevance (PR=1). As discussed below, the presence of a Belarusian delegation cannot be ascribed to Lithuania in particular (AS=0).

During the EaP Summit, Belarus showed its willingness to start negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements.³⁵ This good news however ‘drowned’ in the more important news about Ukrainian President Yanukovich’s refusal to sign the Association Agreement (see below). The move was preceded by several meetings between the Lithuanian and Belarusian vice-ministers for foreign affairs, at which the subject of visa facilitation was consistently raised.³⁶ It could thus be ascribed to Lithuania to a limited extent (AS=1). Given the previous reluctance of Belarus on this issue, Lithuania’s goals were achieved in that there was a concrete step forward in bilateral relations between the EU and Belarus (GA=3). Interestingly, Lithuania did not influence *EU policies*, but rather the Belarusian government’s *receptiveness* to these policies. The declaration of intent to start negotiations was of limited

³¹ Interview 3, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 12 March 2013; Interview 5, (note 4); Interview 6, (note 4).

³² Council of the European Union, *Press release, Council eases diplomatic contacts between EU and Belarus (11371/13)*, Council of the European Union, 24 June 2013.

³³ European External Action Service, “EU extends restrictive measures against Belarus”, *European External Action Service*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/belarus/press_corner/all_news/news/2013/20131031_en.htm>, 29 01 2014.

³⁴ European Commission, “Factsheet: Eastern Partnership summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013 (MEMO/13/1057)”, European Commission, < http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1057_en.htm>, 11 02 2014.

³⁵ Council of the European Union, *Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013. Eastern Partnership: the way ahead (17130/13)*, Council of the European Union, 2013; Lithuanian presidency website, “Achievements of the Lithuanian Presidency: open Europe”, *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/open-europe>>, 15 01 2013.

³⁶ Interview 8, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 18 February 2014.

political relevance (PR=1); negotiations were initiated in February 2014,³⁷ but an agreement is not expected any time soon.³⁸

Georgia

Negotiations on the key issue in relations between the EU and Georgia – an Association Agreement, including a DCFTA – were completed in July.³⁹ The preamble to the agreement states that Georgia is an ‘Eastern European country’,⁴⁰ differing slightly from the wording in Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) that ‘European States’ can become EU members, and thus not entirely as Lithuania would have liked. At the EaP Summit (see below), the Association Agreement was initialled, as well as a Framework Participation Agreement between the EU and Georgia for Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions.⁴¹ The latter agreement is important both legally and politically. In legal terms, it is indispensable because without such an agreement there can be no cooperation in this area. Politically, it signifies mutual trust, with the EU considering the EaP country worthy of participating in its missions.⁴² Lithuania’s goals were largely achieved with regard to the Association Agreement – except for the formulation in the preamble (GA=2) – and the Framework Participation Agreement (GA=3), and the initialling and signature of the agreements were of high political relevance (PR= 3). However, Lithuania was not involved in the negotiations on both agreements,⁴³ so their initialling cannot be ascribed to the country (AS=0).

³⁷ ENPI info centre, “EU-Belarus: negotiations launched on visa facilitation and readmission agreements”, *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=36037&clang_id=450>, 07 02 2014.

³⁸ Interview 10, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 21 February 2014.

³⁹ ENPI info centre, “EU-Georgia: completion of talks on Association Agreement a ‘very important milestone’”, *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=34056&clang_id=450>, 30 07 2013.

⁴⁰ European External Action Service, *Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part: Preamble*, European External Action Service, 2013, p. 2.

⁴¹ European External Action Service, *Press release, EU and Georgia sign Framework Agreement on participation in EU crisis management operations (131129/02)*, European External Action Service, 29 November 2013.

⁴² Interview 17, Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, Vilnius, 14 March 2014; Interview 21, Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 9 April 2014.

⁴³ Interview 17, (note 42); Interview 22, (note 14).

Moldova

Moldova's pro-European course was supported and encouraged by Lithuanian high-ranking officials on several occasions.⁴⁴ The EU as a whole also strongly supported pro-European forces in Moldova. Most importantly, the EU initialled an Association Agreement, including a DCFTA, with Moldova at the EaP Summit (see below). As a reaction to a Russian wine embargo, the EU also revoked the autonomous-trade-preferences scheme with quotas and fully opened its market for Moldovan wines.⁴⁵ Both developments fully reflected Lithuania's goals (GA=3) and were respectively of high and limited political relevance (PR=3 and PR=1). However, they could not be ascribed to the presidency (AS=0). Negotiations on the Association Agreement had been concluded by the European Commission in June 2013.⁴⁶ The decision to open the EU market for Moldovan wines would have been taken regardless of the country that held the presidency, as it reflected broad consensus in the EU.⁴⁷

Lithuania's goal on visa liberalisation was also fully achieved (GA=3) and was of high political relevance (PR=3). In its November report on the implementation of the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP), the European Commission announced that the visa requirement for Moldovan citizens could be lifted.⁴⁸ In a *tour de force*, the presidency rushed the file through the necessary procedural steps and obtained formal backing from the member states during the final Coreper meeting of 2013 to establish a visa-free regime for Moldovans.⁴⁹ Several member states had formulated

⁴⁴ see e.g. Lithuanian presidency website, "Minister of Foreign Affairs and Speaker of the Parliament of Moldova discuss preparations for the Vilnius Summit", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en//news/pressreleases/minister-of-foreign-affairs-and-speaker-of-the-parliament-of-moldova-discuss-preparations-for-the-vilnius-summit>>, 26 08 2013; Lithuanian presidency website, "Vilnius Summit – a new beginning for Moldova", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/vilnius-summit-a-new-beginning-for-moldova>>, 02 10 2013.

⁴⁵ European Parliament, "MEPs back freeing wine trade with Moldova to offset Russian trade sanctions", *European Parliament*, <<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/content/20131206IPR30026/html/MEPs-back-freeing-wine-trade-with-Moldova-to-offset-Russian-trade-sanctions>>, 29 01 2014.

⁴⁶ Council of the European Union, *EU - Republic of Moldova Cooperation Council, fifteenth meeting (11472/13)*, *Council of the European Union*, 25 June 2013.

⁴⁷ Interview 23, (note 18); Interview 25, European Commission, Brussels, 6 May 2014.

⁴⁸ European Commission, *Press release, Commission assesses the implementation of Visa Liberalisation Action Plans by Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia (IP/13/1085)*, European Commission, 15 November 2013.

⁴⁹ Lithuanian presidency website, "Lithuanian Presidency reaches agreement on visa free travels for the Republic of Moldova", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/>

reservations about this quick decision because of discussions on whether Moldova should issue third- or fourth-generation biometric passports. With the European Commission's support, the presidency convinced these delegations to agree on a third generation – the VLAP had never required the issuance of fourth-generation biometric passports.⁵⁰ The agreement can be partly ascribed to the Lithuanian presidency, especially the speed with which it was adopted (AS=1).

Ukraine

Throughout 2013, the (conditions for) signing of an Association Agreement dominated the agenda of bilateral relations between the EU and Ukraine. The EU and its member states tried several means to convince Yanukovich of the benefits that an Association Agreement could bring to Ukraine, in terms of withstanding the pressure exerted by Russia and stepping up efforts to meet the requirements, defined in 2012, on selective justice, electoral regulations, and the mutually agreed association agenda. The duration of the informal mission of former Polish president Aleksander Kwaśniewski and former EP president Pat Cox to Kiev was prolonged several times,⁵¹ and some high-ranking European politicians, including Lithuanian president Dalia Grybauskaitė, held meetings and consultations with Yanukovich.⁵²

lithuanian-presidency-reaches-agreement-on-visa-free-travels-for-the-republic-of-moldova>, 30 12 2013.

⁵⁰ Interview 10, (note 38).

⁵¹ see e.g. European Parliament, “EP monitoring mission to Ukraine – Key observations to the Conference of Presidents of the European Parliament”, *European Parliament*, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/press/press_release_speeches/press_release/2013/2013-october/html/ep-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine--key-observations-to-the-conference-of-presidents-of-the-european-parliament>, 16 10 2013; European Parliament, “European Parliament Monitoring Mission to Ukraine - Mission statement”, *European Parliament*, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/fa/press/press_release_speeches/press_release/2013/2013-november/html/european-parliament-monitoring-mission-to-ukraine--mission-statement>, 15 11 2013; EurActiv, “Suspense grows in EU-Ukraine gamble”, *EurActiv*, <<http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/suspense-grows-eu-ukraine-gamble-news-531131>>, 17 10 2013.

⁵² Interfax, “German president urging Yanukovich to release Tymoshenko to enable signing of Association Agreement with EU”, *Interfax*, <<http://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/169669.html>>, 08 10 2013; Lithuanian presidency website, “Dalia Grybauskaitė spoke by the phone with the President of Ukraine”, *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/dalia-grybauskaitė-spoke-by-the-phone-with-the-president-of-ukraine->>>, 10 07 2013; EUObserver, “EU-Ukraine deal to be decided at the ‘last minute’”, *EUObserver*, <<http://euobserver.com/foreign/122153>>, 19 11 2013; EurActiv, “EU ministers urge Ukraine to stop bluffing on Tymoshenko”, *EurActiv*, <<http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/eu-ministers-urge-ukraine-bluffing-news-531247>>, 07 11 2013.

The EU tried to make its offer of an Association Agreement even more attractive, when on 26 July the Trade Policy Committee decided that the DCFTA would be provisionally applied upon signature, before it was fully ratified.⁵³ This step was in line with Lithuania's preferences (GA=3) and of high political relevance (PR=3), and can be ascribed to Lithuania to a limited extent (AS=1). Some member states objected to the move; this was not because of its content, with everyone agreeing that free trade with Ukraine was a good thing, but rather because of concerns about the distribution of competences between the European Commission and member states. The European Commission played a key role in negotiating with the reluctant countries, but Lithuania also played a part in finding formulations that would accommodate these concerns.⁵⁴

Although it initially seemed that Ukraine would implement the requested reforms in order to sign the Association Agreement,⁵⁵ EU diplomats started to give up hope in November that an agreement would be signed during the Vilnius Summit.⁵⁶ On 21 November, the Ukrainian parliament passed a law on electoral reform but not on judicial reform and the release of prisoners for treatment abroad. On the same day, the country's government adopted a resolution that suspended the preparation process for signing the Association Agreement.⁵⁷ Yanukovich reportedly told Grybauskaitė in a phone conversation that this decision was taken because Russia threatened to limit imports from Ukraine if the agreement was signed.⁵⁸ In response, European Commission president José Manuel Barroso

⁵³ Lithuanian presidency website, "The Lithuanian Presidency's first month: Council agreements for the benefit of the European Union", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en//news/pressreleases/the-lithuanian-presidencys-first-month-council-agreements-for-the-benefit-of-the-european-union>>, 06 08 2013.

⁵⁴ Interview 16, (note 28); Interview 23, (note 18); Interview 25, (note 47).

⁵⁵ Konończuk W., Olszański, T., "Ukrainian parliament adopts part of European laws", *Centre for Eastern Studies*, <<http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/eastweek/2013-09-25/ukrainian-parliament-adopts-part-european-laws>>, 27 09 2013; Ukrainian Government, "Government endorses unanimously draft Association Agreement with EU", *Ukrainian Government*, <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article;jsessionid=D44AD74C822CA0E86537DB8AB730F637?art_id=246687905&cat_id=244314975>, 19 09 2013.

⁵⁶ EUObserver, "EU gives up hope on Ukraine deal at Vilnius summit", *EUObserver*, <<http://euobserver.com/foreign/122088>>, 13 11 2013.

⁵⁷ EUObserver, "Ukraine pulls the plug on EU treaty", *EUObserver*, <<http://euobserver.com/foreign/122190>>, 25 11 2013; Ukrainian Government, "Government adopted resolution on suspension of preparation process to conclude Association Agreement with EU", *Ukrainian Government*, <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/en/publish/article?art_id=246867400&cat_id=244314971>, 25 11 2013.

⁵⁸ Delfi.lt, "V. Janukovyčius prisipažino D. Grybauskaitėi: Ukraina priremta", *Delfi.lt*, <<http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/v-janukovycius-prisipazino-d-grybauskaitėi-ukraina-priremta.d?id=63349578>>, 25 11 2013.

and European Council president Herman Van Rompuy stated that the offer of association was still on the table and disapproved of Russia's position in this respect.⁵⁹ Lithuanian politicians strongly criticised Ukraine's decision⁶⁰ and hoped that Yanukovych would change his mind at the last minute. During the summit, an informal offer was even made for the signing of the Association Agreement without Yulia Tymoshenko being released – which had been one of the key conditions for signing the agreement.⁶¹ An official from the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs commented that 'up until the very last moment we had scenarios A and B. If Yanukovych signed the agreement, we were ready to hold a huge signing ceremony. We even prepared special pens for this event.'⁶²

In the end, despite the efforts of Lithuania and other EU institutions and officials, the presidency's goal of signing an Association Agreement with Ukraine was not achieved (GA=0). This triggered a chain of events in Ukraine that has continued into 2014, including regime change, early presidential elections and annexation of part of Ukraine's territory by Russia.

The most tangible development in the EU's relations with Ukraine was perhaps the initialling of an Air Services Agreement to pave the way towards an EU-Ukrainian Common Aviation Area. Although this was not mentioned in the presidency's programme, it did correspond with Lithuania's goal to deepen cooperation between the EU and Ukraine (GA=3). However, the agreement was negotiated by the European Commission without Lithuania being involved (AS=0).⁶³

⁵⁹ European Commission, *Joint statement by the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy on Ukraine (MEMO/13/1052)*, European Commission, 25 November 2013.

⁶⁰ Lithuanian presidency website, "Statement of Foreign Minister of Lithuania Linas Linkevičius on Decision of Ukrainian Government", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/statements/statement-of-foreign-minister-of-lithuania-linas-linkevicius-on-decision-of-ukrainian-government>>, 23 11 2013; EUObserver, "EU to Yanukovych: You are taking Ukraine 'nowhere'", *EUObserver*, <<http://euobserver.com/foreign/122292>>, 02 12 2013.

⁶¹ Interview 11, (note 27); Interview 16, (note 28); EurActiv, "EU seeks 'time for reflection' after Vilnius summit failure", *EurActiv*, <<http://www.euractiv.com/global-europe/vilnius-summit-time-reflection-news-532048>>, 02 12 2013.

⁶² Interview 14, Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 3 March 2014.

⁶³ Interview 20, Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications, Vilnius, 26 March 2014; Interview 24, Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 11 April 2014.

2.2. Multilateral relations

Whereas with bilateral relations the Lithuanian presidency sought, with varying success, to advance political association and mobility between the EU and individual EaP countries, its main aim with multilateral policies was to broaden EU-EaP cooperation to new policy areas, and to consolidate existing formats for collaboration. Its priority programme⁶⁴ foresaw activities in an array of fields, including business, defence, education, research, justice, home affairs, transport and youth. In addition to objectives in these areas, Lithuania wanted to launch a reflection on the question ‘what next?’ at the EaP Summit in November.⁶⁵ Until then, most attention had been given to negotiating Association Agreements. Once the agreements are signed, how much is the EU prepared to contribute financially and politically to their implementation?

The Eastern Partnership Summit

Most of the presidency’s actions and priorities were directed towards confirming and formalising the achievements of the EaP initiative at the EaP Summit in Vilnius on 28-29 November. The main expected results were the initialling of Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Armenia, the signature of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, and completion of work for provisional application of the DCFTA with Ukraine.

Preparations for the summit differed from those for earlier ones, in that EaP countries were involved from an early stage in drafting the summit’s joint declaration. EU member states and institutions first defined the main topics to be included in the declaration, with the text then jointly negotiated at two meetings between senior EU and EaP officials. This process ensured a more cooperative stance among EaP countries.⁶⁶ Invitations to the summit were handed by the Lithuanian vice-minister of foreign affairs, Andrius Krivas, to the EaP countries’ heads of diplomatic missions to Lithuania⁶⁷ and were not addressed to specific people, but to states. The main aim was to avoid the scenario of 2011, when Belarus boycotted

⁶⁴ Lithuanian presidency website, (note 1).

⁶⁵ Interview 5, (note 4); Lithuanian presidency website, (note 1), p. 17.

⁶⁶ Interview 4, Diplomat from EU country, Vilnius, 19 March 2013; Interview 5, (note 4); Interview 11, (note 27).

⁶⁷ Lithuanian presidency website, “Invitations to Vilnius summit handed out to heads of diplomatic missions of Eastern Partnership countries”, Lithuanian presidency website, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/invitations-to-vilnius-summit-handed-out-to-heads-of-diplomatic-missions-of-eastern-partnership-countries->>, 21 10 2013.

the summit. The EU wanted to give the impression that the EaP countries, and Belarus in particular, could ‘choose’ who to send to the summit.⁶⁸ None of the interviewees remembered exactly who came up with the idea, but it was clear that this strategy was undisputed in the EU⁶⁹ and there are thus no reasons to ascribe this to the presidency (AS=0). In any case, it was a successful *modus operandi*: in contrast with the 2011 summit, all EaP countries were represented.⁷⁰

The EaP Summit took stock of EU-EaP relations since the 2011 summit in Warsaw: the first part⁷¹ of the joint declaration discussed progress made in different policy areas, including the numerous multilateral events that took place during the Lithuanian presidency. The meeting also produced a number of tangible results.⁷² A series of important documents were initialled (including EU-Moldova and EU-Georgia Association Agreements and an EU-Ukraine Air Services Agreement) or signed (including an EU-Azerbaijan visa facilitation agreement and a CSDP Framework Participation Agreement with Georgia), and Ukraine agreed to contribute to the EU NAVFOR Atalanta mission from January 2014 and to participate in EU Battlegroups in 2014 and 2016.

The second part⁷³ of the joint declaration outlined a number of steps to be taken to deepen relations between the EU and EaP countries until 2015, including further reforms of the judiciary and the strengthening of law enforcement, the signature by autumn 2014 of Association Agreements or establishment of an association agenda ‘where applicable’, and progress in cooperation on a number of policy areas such as visa liberalisation, business, knowledge and innovation, agriculture, the environment, transport, defence, and energy. The declaration also foresaw the strengthening of the multilateral dimension through a continuation of multilateral platforms and other multilateral forms of cooperation, as well as regular ministerial meetings on relevant policy areas. Participants agreed that the EU’s political and financial institutions would continue to support reforms and projects with financial assistance through an incentive-based approach, taking into account the provisional application and implementation of Association Agreements.

⁶⁸ Interview 8, (note 36); Interview 11, (note 27); Interview 16, (note 28).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Belta, (note 34); European Commission, “Factsheet: Eastern Partnership summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013 (MEMO/13/1057)”, *European Commission*, <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-1057_en.htm>, 11 02 2014.

⁷¹ Council of the European Union, (note 35), p. 1-13.

⁷² For an overview, see e.g. Council of the European Union, (note 71); ENPI info centre, “Eastern Partnership in Vilnius writing history”, *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=35365&lang_id=450>, 02 12 2013.

⁷³ Council of the European Union, (note 35), p. 4-5.

Despite these tangible results, most attention from the media and politicians was on issues that were *not* achieved. The joint declaration stated that the participants at the summit ‘reaffirm their acknowledgement of the European aspirations and the European choice of some partners and their commitment to build deep and sustainable democracy’,⁷⁴ which was weaker than what Lithuania and other pro-enlargement countries would have liked.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, one interviewee noted some progress: in contrast with the joint declarations of 2009 and 2011, the EaP countries were no longer just referred to as ‘Eastern European partners’ or ‘partner countries’, but as ‘Eastern European countries, States participating in the Eastern Partnership’. The EaP countries were thus still not called ‘European states’, which would resemble Article 49 of the TEU too closely, but the word ‘state’ was mentioned immediately after ‘Eastern European countries’.⁷⁶

The summit’s main failure was the refusal of Yanukovych to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, which was a major disappointment for the EU in general and for Lithuania in particular. Relations between the EU and Armenia also cooled after Sargsyan announced that his country would join a customs union with Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus instead of signing a DCFTA with the EU.

Taken as a whole, Lithuania’s goals set for the EaP Summit were achieved to a limited extent (GA=1). However, the summit’s successes and failures can hardly be ascribed to the Lithuanian presidency (AS=0). On the one hand, much was prepared under the auspices of the EEAS and the European Commission. On the other hand, decisions by authorities in partner countries could not be controlled by Lithuania.

Other regular multilateral EaP-related events: the Business Forum, CORLEAP and civil-society cooperation

The Lithuanian presidency hosted a number of other regular multilateral events related to the EaP. However, these did not amount to increased presidency influence. Neither the EaP Business Forum⁷⁷ – organised in parallel with the EaP

⁷⁴ Council of the European Union, (note 35), p. 3.

⁷⁵ On the discussions about the joint declaration; see also Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty, “Draft EU Summit Text Acknowledges ‘Aspirations’ Of Eastern Neighbors”, *Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty*, <<http://www.rferl.org/content/eu-neighbors-eastern-statement/25153908.html>>, 02 11 2013.

⁷⁶ Interview 11, (note 27).

⁷⁷ Lithuanian presidency website, “Declaration of the 2nd Eastern Partnership Business Forum”, *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en//news/statements/declaration-of-the-2nd-eastern-partnership-business-forum>>, 02 12 2013.

Summit in Vilnius – nor the third meeting of the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), which took place in Vilnius on 3 September and adopted a number of recommendations for the EaP Summit,⁷⁸ could be ascribed to the presidency (AS=0). Both events take place regularly, independently from the incumbent presidency. The annual EaP Civil Society Forum, which took place on 4-5 October in Chisinau, Moldova, and made several recommendations to the EaP Summit,⁷⁹ is also a regular event that cannot be ascribed to individual presidencies. Lithuania followed the same approach as Poland in 2011 by organising a Civil Society Conference in Vilnius, in parallel with the EaP Summit. The event united some 300 participants,⁸⁰ but had no political relevance as understood in this research (PR=0); it was of low political importance and did not produce tangible results.

Defence

The Lithuanian presidency wished to engage EaP countries in the EU's CSDP by strengthening mutual dialogue and operational collaboration, leading to a number of related multilateral actions and results.

On 2-3 July, the presidency held a high-level seminar on EU-EaP defence cooperation in Vilnius. More than 100 participants from member states, EaP countries, EU institutions and non-governmental organisations discussed common security threats and contributions of EaP countries to the region's CSDP.⁸¹ There had been a dialogue between the EU and EaP on defence before, but the special

⁷⁸ Committee of the Regions, *Annual Meeting of the Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), Vilnius 3 September 2013. Recommendations to the Heads of State and Government gathering in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013 for the EaP Summit*, Committee of the Regions, 2013; Committee of the Regions, *Time to rethink the Eastern Partnership – Report from Local and Regional Authorities for the Eastern Partnership to the Heads of State and Government at the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, Lithuania*, Committee of the Regions, 2013.

⁷⁹ EaP Civil Society Forum, *Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum*, EaP Civil Society Forum, 2013; Kostanyan H., Vandecasteele B., "The socialization potential of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum," *Eastern Journal of European Studies*, 2013, No. 4(2), p. 95-110.

⁸⁰ ENPI info centre, "Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum conference in Vilnius: thinking ahead for a stronger partnership", *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=35330&lang_id=450>, 30 11 2013.

⁸¹ Interview 15, Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, Vilnius, 3 March 2014; Interview 17, Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, Vilnius, 14 March 2014; ENPI info centre, "Lithuanian Presidency stresses role of cooperation with Eastern Partners for European security", *ENPI info centre*, <http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id_type=1&id=33769&lang_id=450>, 05 07 2013.

focus on the CSDP was to a certain extent because of Lithuania's prioritisation of this issue (AS=1) and the presidency achieved its goals in this respect (GA=3). The meeting did not lead to tangible decisions – which is normal because concrete cooperation takes place only at a bilateral level – but was important for exploring cooperation on the CSDP.⁸² The presence of delegations from EaP countries also contributed to the (limited) political relevance of the event (PR=1).

In parallel with the traditional informal Foreign Affairs Council of 4-6 September, Vilnius hosted the biannual Inter-parliamentary Conference for the CFSP and CSDP, which was also attended by High Representative Ashton and NATO secretary-general Anders Fogh Rasmussen.⁸³ This series of conferences was launched in 2012, in the aftermath of the Polish presidency of the Council, and takes place every semester. The occurrence and outcome of the meeting can thus not be ascribed to the presidency (AS=0).

Lithuania also put cooperation with the EaP on the agenda on several other occasions. On 17-18 September, Vilnius hosted an informal meeting of EU security-policy directors that was co-chaired by the EEAS and the presidency. One issue discussed was political dialogue and practical cooperation with EaP countries on security and defence, including the EaP's participation in training and crisis management and support for security-sector reform in these countries.⁸⁴ Lithuania achieved its goals (GA=3) and the agenda was to a large extent set by the presidency (AS=2). However, because this meeting was a mere moment for reflection on the way ahead,⁸⁵ it was not politically relevant (PR=0).

Also in September, the EU-EaP CSDP panel held its first meeting, under the scope of multilateral platform 1 (democracy, good governance and stability). The idea of establishing such a panel was advanced in the EaP's roadmap for 2012,⁸⁶

⁸² Interview 17, (note 42).

⁸³ Seimas, "Key event of the parliamentary dimension of the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU takes place in the Seimas", *Seimas*, <<http://www.lrs.lt/intl/presidency.show?theme=125&lang=2&doc=1182>>, 09 09 2013.

⁸⁴ Interview 15, (note 81); Lithuanian presidency website, "Vilnius hosts informal meeting of EU Security Policy Directors", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/vilnius-hosts-informal-meeting-of-eu-security-policy-directors>>, 24 09 2013.

⁸⁵ Interview 21, (note 42).

⁸⁶ European Commission/HRVP, *Joint staff working document Eastern Partnership Roadmap 2012-13: the multilateral dimension; Accompanying the document Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the autumn 2013 Summit* {JOIN(2012) 13 final}, {SWD(2012) 109 final} (SWD(2012) 108 final), European Commission/HRVP, 2012.

with the EEAS taking the decision to set it up in spring 2013.⁸⁷ Panel members exchange experiences and best practice on EU Battlegroups, joint operations and missions, training, and security-sector reform. The panel's role is therefore mainly informative rather than operational; as stated above, concrete cooperation is discussed and agreed at a bilateral level. The panel runs permanently, independently of presidencies, and is able to cater for all EaP countries with very different expectations. Although this corresponds to Lithuania's preferences and goals (GA=3), establishment of the CSDP panel cannot be ascribed to the presidency (AS=0).

Lithuania also co-hosted a CSDP orientation course of the European Security and Defence College in Brussels on 4-8 November.⁸⁸ It is common practice for the presidency to invite non-EU countries to these trainings, and it was unsurprising that Lithuania invited EaP representatives.⁸⁹ The country achieved its goals (GA=3) and the presence of EaP countries could to a large extent be ascribed to the presidency (AS=2), but the training course had no political relevance (PR=0).

Because *costs lie where they fall* in CSDP missions, Lithuania also promoted the establishment of a Trust Fund. This was set up by the end of the presidency and is supported by France, the UK, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania.⁹⁰ The fund will provide financial support to EaP countries for training and the organisational expenses of mission personnel. The presidency's goals in this area were also fully achieved (GA=3) and the establishment of the fund could to a large extent be ascribed to Lithuania's efforts (AS=2). However, the fund's political relevance (PR) is 0: it involves only a few EU members and cannot be considered an *EU policy*.

Contrary to what Lithuania had hoped, cooperation with the EaP on defence was not central to the agendas of the informal meeting of defence ministers on 5-6 September in Vilnius.⁹¹ The presidency wanted to hold a separate session on the EaP during the meeting, but the EEAS objected and the request was dropped in the end.⁹² The December meeting of the European Council also paid little attention to the EaP.⁹³ Lithuania's goals in both cases were not achieved (GA=0).

⁸⁷ Interview 15, (note 81); Interview 17, (note 42).

⁸⁸ European External Action Service, "Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) orientation Course", *European External Action Service*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/structures-instruments-agencies/eumc/news/archives/2013/20131104_en.htm>, 23 01 2014.

⁸⁹ Interview 15, (note 81); Interview 17, (note 42).

⁹⁰ Interview 21, (note 42).

⁹¹ Lithuanian MFA, "Lithuanian EU Presidency. Unpublished document," 2013.

⁹² Interview 15, (note 81); Interview 17, (note 42).

⁹³ European Council, *European Council conclusions 19/20 December 2013 (EUCO 217/13)*, European Council, 20 December 2013.

Education and research

To advance EU-EaP cooperation in higher education, research and innovation, Lithuania's Ministry of Education and Science and Vilnius University organised and hosted a conference on this topic on 30 September-1 October. The event was attended by policy-makers from the EU and EaP countries, as well as other stakeholders such as research institutions and the European Commission.⁹⁴ All EaP countries were represented apart from Belarus, 'probably because Lukashenko didn't allow anyone to come'.⁹⁵ Participants adopted a joint declaration that, *inter alia*, stressed the importance of drawing up a roadmap for cooperation between the EU and EaP on research under the Horizon 2020 programme.⁹⁶ They also agreed to launch a panel on research and innovation under the scope of multilateral platform 4 (contacts between people), which will among other things discuss the possible association of the EaP countries to Horizon 2020. Belarus did participate in this panel's first meeting in November 2013. The presidency also organised a round-table discussion with political representatives from the EaP and some EU member states, which was aimed at giving the conference political backing and including a reference to research cooperation in the joint declaration of the EaP Summit.⁹⁷ Lithuania fully achieved its goals in these policy areas (GA=3) and organisation of the conference could to a large extent be ascribed to the presidency (AS=2), but the event was of limited political relevance (PR=1).

During the EaP Youth Forum (see below), Kaunas University of Technology also hosted information days on the Erasmus+ programme on 24-25 October. Erasmus+ became operational in 2014 and provides increased funding for mobility and academic partnerships for students and higher-education institutions in EaP countries.⁹⁸ The programme was prepared by the European Commission and most of its content had been agreed in the first half of 2013,⁹⁹ so its launch cannot be ascribed to Lithuanian (AS=0).

⁹⁴ Lithuanian presidency website, "Focus of Lithuanian Presidency in research – strengthening ties with Eastern Partnership countries", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/focus-of-lithuanian-presidency-in-researchstrengthening-ties-with-eastern-partnership-countries>>, 01 10 2013.

⁹⁵ Interview 12, Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius, 26 February 2014.

⁹⁶ European Commission, *Declaration: Towards a Common Knowledge and Innovation Space Between the EU and Eastern Partnership Countries*, European Commission, 1 October 2013.

⁹⁷ Interview 12, (note 95).

⁹⁸ European Commission, "Information Day on Erasmus+ for Eastern Partnership countries - 24-25 October 2013 - Kaunas, Lithuania", European Commission, <<http://www.infodaykaunas.com/>>, 24 10 2013.

⁹⁹ Interview 18, Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius, 18 March 2014.

Justice and home affairs

The presidency invested much in strengthening police cooperation between the EU and EaP. Lithuania hosted the annual presidency conference of the European Police College (CEPOL) on 17-19 September and organised two preparatory events for it:¹⁰⁰ one of these was held at the Lithuanian Embassy in Kiev on 3 July with Polish, German and Czech liaison officers and Ukrainian law-enforcement officials,¹⁰¹ and one on 16 July at the EU's Horizontal Working Party on Drugs that included participation from EaP countries.¹⁰² EaP countries were invited to the CEPOL conference in September, which is rather unusual.¹⁰³ Participants discussed several aspects of existing and future police cooperation, with special attention on the fight against organised crime, drugs, cybercrime and smuggling.¹⁰⁴ The involvement of EaP countries in the CEPOL conference was of limited political relevance (PR=1) and Lithuania achieved its goal of enhancing police cooperation (GA=3). This could to a large extent be ascribed to the presidency's efforts (AS=2).

The main event in cooperation on justice and home affairs (JHA) was the EU-EaP meeting of justice and home-affairs ministers – the first of its kind – on 7-8 October in parallel with the EU's regular JHA Council. All EaP countries and EU members were represented, but not all at ministerial level. Azerbaijan sent its ambassador to Belgium to the justice- and home-affairs parts of the meeting, while Belarus was represented by its deputy ministers of justice and home affairs. Participants at the meeting endorsed a joint declaration that focused mainly on practical concerns and not on fundamental issues such as respect for human rights. They welcomed progress made in the respective policy areas, especially under platform 1, and emphasised that all judicial systems should meet European standards. They also stressed the importance of continuing and strengthening judicial cooperation between the EU and EaP on civil and criminal matters, as well as collaboration on issues related to organised and transnational crime, corruption, drug crime, data protection, cybercrime, migration and mobility. Finally, participants undertook to meet regularly to monitor progress and further

¹⁰⁰ Interview 13, Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior, Vilnius, 27 February 2014.

¹⁰¹ Council of the European Union, *Outcome of the Meeting of EU Law Enforcement Liaison Officers posted in Kiev, 3 July 2013, Kiev (12867/13)*, Council of the European Union, 3 July 2013.

¹⁰² Council of the European Union, *Summary of discussions of EU-Eastern partnership dialogue on drugs (12789/13)*, Council of the European Union, 9 September 2013.

¹⁰³ Interview 13, (note 100).

¹⁰⁴ CEPOL, "The international dimension of law enforcement cooperation: The Lithuanian Presidency conference", *CEPOL*, <<https://www.cepol.europa.eu/media/news/20130927/international-dimension-law-enforcement-cooperation-lithuanian-presidency>>, 27 01 2014.

shape their cooperation.¹⁰⁵ Interviewees mentioned that there had been discussions on the necessity of the meeting, its format, the status of its outcome, and the division of labour. Lithuanian officials felt that they had to convince the European Commission and member states that the meeting should be held in the first place, and that it should aim at broad participation and adopt a joint declaration. The Commission was apparently the most reluctant to participate: it first proposed holding a meeting in the ‘Western Balkans format’,¹⁰⁶ meaning that it would be attended by EU institutions and the presidency on the one hand, and EaP countries on the other. Lithuania wanted a fully-fledged ministerial meeting in a 28+6 format – comprising all EU member states and EaP countries – in order to ensure more political backing. Furthermore, the Commission planned to conclude with presidency conclusions rather than a joint declaration.¹⁰⁷ A final issue was who would chair the meeting – the Commission or the presidency –¹⁰⁸ and the compromise solution was to co-chair the event. In summary, Lithuania fully achieved its goals with regard to this ministerial meeting in terms of content and formal aspects (GA=3). The meeting would not have been organised – at least not at this level – if the presidency had not pushed it (AS=3). The results of the meeting were novel and politically important, but have not had tangible results so far (PR=1).

Transport

The highlight of multilateral cooperation on transport between the EU and EaP was the meeting of EU and EaP transport ministers in Luxembourg on 9 October, prior to the EU’s regular Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council. Four EaP countries were represented at a ministerial level, while Belarus sent its director of the relevant department at the transport ministry and Azerbaijan delegated a ministry chancellor. The presidency’s push to organise this meeting was met with lukewarm reactions from EU institutions, especially the Council Secretariat. The latter even refused to provide space at its premises for the meeting, citing a lack of staff even though this had been no problem at the EU-EaP JHA meeting. The Lithuanian presidency therefore had to look for an alternative venue,

¹⁰⁵ Council of the European Union, *Joint Declaration on Eastern Partnership Justice and Home Affairs (14558/13)*, Council of the European Union, 8 October 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Interview 9, Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior, Vilnius, 20 February 2014; Interview 19, Lithuanian Ministry of Justice, Vilnius, 26 March 2014.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 7, Lithuanian Ministry of Justice, Vilnius, 18 February 2014; Interview 13, (note 100).

¹⁰⁸ Interview 19, (note 106).

which it found at the premises of the European Investment Bank three weeks before the meeting took place.¹⁰⁹

At the meeting itself, bilateral disputes between Azerbaijan and Armenia threatened to undermine the outcome: both countries proposed amendments that explicitly or implicitly referred to the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, and Azerbaijan threatened not to support the joint declaration if its amendments were not inserted. The presidency convinced the Azeri delegation to endorse the declaration without amendments and the country's remarks were included in the minutes of the meeting, with both Armenia and Azerbaijan adding individual statements to the minutes.¹¹⁰ In the joint declaration,¹¹¹ participants took stock of the progress made in transport cooperation over the last two years, committed to strengthening their cooperation towards gradual legislative approximation and agreed to speed up the implementation of agreements on all main modes of transport. They also aimed to more closely involve EU and other international financial institutions in carrying out transport projects. In addition, delegates approved a map for an EaP Transport Network¹¹² and a list of priority projects located across the network. They recommended that the European Commission include it in the guidelines for the development of Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), and promote coordination between the EU's core network and key transport corridors in the EaP area. This would imply a *de facto* extension of TEN-T to EaP countries.

Lithuania achieved most of its goals through this meeting (GA=2), although it would have liked stronger political support from the EU side and more guarantees that transport cooperation would become a permanent issue in EU-EaP relations.¹¹³ Even though the European Commission played a role in negotiating the EaP Transport Network and financing the related event, the meeting would not have taken place without the presidency's efforts (AS=3). The event led to novel and tangible results and was therefore of high political relevance (PR=3).

¹⁰⁹ Interview 20, (note 63); Interview 24, (note 63).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ European Commission, *Press release, Strengthening the Eastern Partnership through transport: key results and next steps (IP/13/920)*, European Commission, 9 October 2013.

¹¹² Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications, "Joint Declaration - Future of Eastern Partnership transport cooperation", *Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications*, <<http://www.sumin.lt/files/uploads/Rytu%20partnerystes%20deklaracija.pdf>>, 10 10 2013.

¹¹³ Interview 20, (note 63).

Youth

Finally, Lithuania wanted to enhance cooperation on youth policy with EaP countries. To this end, the presidency organised an EaP Youth Forum on 22-25 October in Kaunas, bringing together more than 200 representatives of the EaP and the EU.¹¹⁴ Participants adopted joint conclusions on, *inter alia*, the importance of non-formal and formal education, youth organisations' links with other sectors of civil society and the labour market, and the professionalisation and maximisation of the visibility and impact of youth work.¹¹⁵ The Youth Forum's establishment was also mentioned in the joint declaration of the EaP Summit.¹¹⁶ The event was organised under the initiative of Lithuania in cooperation with the European Commission and several pan-European youth organisations. Its occurrence could to a large extent be ascribed to the presidency (AS=2). With the conference, Lithuania achieved most of its goals in expanding EU-EaP cooperation to other sectors (GA=2), even though it is not clear whether the forum will continue to be part of relations between the EU and EaP. The outcome of the forum is of limited political relevance (PR=1).

Discussion and conclusions

This article reviews the most important events and developments in the EU's EaP-related policies during the Lithuanian presidency. In exploring the main research area – to what extent Lithuania influenced these policies – I assessed goal achievement, ascription of achievements to the presidency, and the political relevance of each case. A summary of the results is provided in Table 2, ranked from the highest to the lowest observed level of political influence. Some scores for PI are lower than GA+AS+PR/9. This is because of the importance attached to ascription as an indicator of influence, as explained above. Where applicable, the score for AS is underlined in the table to indicate that this is the reason why PI scores lower. The table includes 34 EaP-related cases in a broad range of policy areas and illustrates that, despite several major disappointments and important tensions,

¹¹⁴ Lithuanian presidency website, "Youth conclusions on informal education will be discussed by representatives of Eastern Partnership countries", *Lithuanian presidency website*, <<http://www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/youth-conclusions-on-informal-education-will-be-discussed-by-representatives-of-eastern-partnership-countries>>, 30 10 2013.

¹¹⁵ EaP Youth Forum, "Frequently Asked Questions about Eastern Partnership Youth Forum", *EaP Youth Forum*, <<http://www.youthforum2013.eu/F-A-Q->>, 30 10 2013; EaP Youth Forum, "The Eastern Partnership Youth Forum: Joint Conclusions", *EaP Youth Forum*, <http://www.youthforum2013.eu/f/12-11-13_EaP%20Youth%20Forum%20Joint%20Conclusions.pdf>, 27 01 2014.

¹¹⁶ Council of the European Union, (note 35).

the EU and EaP regions continue to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally and this cooperation is intensifying.

Table 2. Influence of the Lithuanian presidency on EaP policies

Case	Political influence (GA+AS+PR)/9
Transport: ministerial meeting	(2+3+3)/9=high (0.89)
JHA: ministerial meeting	(3+3+1)/9=substantial (0.78)
CEPOL annual presidency conference	(3+2+1)/9=substantial (0.67)
Education, science and research conference	(3+2+1)/9=substantial (0.67)
Belarus: visa facilitation and readmission	(3+1+1)/9=limited (0.56)
Defence: high-level conference on EU-EaP cooperation	(3+1+1)/9=limited (0.56)
EaP Youth Forum	(2+2+1)/9=limited (0.56)
Moldova: visa liberalisation	(3+1+3)/9=limited (0.56)
Ukraine: DCFTA provisional application	(3+1+3)/9=limited (0.56)
Armenia: Association Agreement	GA & AS=0.00 (no influence)
Armenia: Cooperation Council	PR=0.00 (no)
Armenia: visa-facilitation agreement (EP approval)	AS=0.00 (no)
Azerbaijan: Cooperation Council	PR=0.00 (no)
Azerbaijan: reaction to elections	AS=0.00 (no)
Azerbaijan: visa-facilitation agreement	AS=0.00 (no)
CORLEAP: annual meeting	AS=0.00 (no)
Defence: European Council conclusions	GA=0.00 (no)
EaP Business Forum	AS=0.00 (no)
EaP Civil Society Conference	PR=0.00 (no)
EaP Civil Society Forum	AS=0.00 (no)
EaP Summit: format of invitations	AS=0.00 (no)
EaP Summit: results	AS=0.00 (no)
Erasmus+ launch	AS=0.00 (no)
EU-EaP CSDP Panel	AS=0.00 (no)
Georgia: Association Agreement	AS=0.00 (no)

Georgia: Cooperation Council	PR=0.00 (no)
Georgia: CSDP Framework Participation Agreement	AS=0.00 (no)
Informal defence ministers' meeting	GA=0.00 (no)
Inter-parliamentary Conference for CFSP and CSDP	AS & PR=0.00 (no)
Moldova: Association Agreement	AS=0.00 (no)
Moldova: opening up of the wine market	AS=0.00 (no)
Security policy directors' informal meeting	PR=0.00 (no)
Ukraine: Air Services Agreement	AS=0.00 (no)
Ukraine: Association Agreement	GA & AS=0.00 (no)

The analysis shows that the Lithuanian presidency exerted an influence in 9 cases out of 34. In the other 25 cases, the lack of influence was mainly attributable to an AS of 0. Such cases would also have occurred if another country was chairing, mostly because these are related to permanent structures for cooperation or pushed by other actors in the EU. A few cases lacked political relevance (PR=0): these are developments that cannot be considered to stem from the presidency's political influence because they were not decisive in shaping the EU's policies towards the EaP region. Four cases gained a score of 0 because GA was 0: failures with regard to the Association Agreements with Armenia and Ukraine were the main setbacks, but could hardly be ascribed to the presidency. The other two cases when GA was 0, in which the presidency did not manage to draw explicit attention to the EaP region during the informal defence ministers' meeting and the European Council, show that these meetings are mostly steered by EU institutions – namely the EEAS and Van Rompuy's office respectively. In other cases, Lithuania's goals were achieved even when they could not be ascribed to the presidency and this points to an adequate setting of priorities. Lithuanian officials did not over-promise, assumed responsibility where appropriate, and pushed where necessary to achieve their goals.

The relatively small number of cases in which Lithuania exerted influence despite its strong prioritisation and efforts, indicates that the presidency has limited opportunities to steer EaP policies. The presidency can play its most prominent role in areas of cooperation that are not yet well-developed: the Lithuanian presidency managed to establish or deepen cooperation in different sectors with EaP countries through careful selection of priorities and resources, alliances with EU institutions and linkages to existing policy frameworks. Once a framework for cooperation is

in place, EU institutions take over and the only role for the presidency to play is to secure political backing where necessary.

Appendix 1. List of interviews

Interview 1: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 6 March 2013.

Interview 2: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 7 March 2013.

Interview 3: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 12 March 2013.

Interview 4: Diplomat from EU country, Vilnius, 19 March 2013.

Interview 5: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 5 April 2013.

Interview 6: Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 19 June 2013.

Interview 7: Lithuanian Ministry of Justice, Vilnius, 18 February 2014.

Interview 8: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 18 February 2014.

Interview 9: Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior, Vilnius, 20 February 2014.

Interview 10: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 21 February 2014.

Interview 11: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 21 February 2014.

Interview 12: Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius, 26 February 2014.

Interview 13: Lithuanian Ministry of the Interior, Vilnius, 27 February 2014.

Interview 14: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 3 March 2014.

Interview 15: Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, Vilnius, 3 March 2014.

Interview 16: Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vilnius, 12 March 2014.

Interview 17: Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, Vilnius, 14 March 2014.

Interview 18: Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, Vilnius, 18 March 2014.

Interview 19: Lithuanian Ministry of Justice, Vilnius, 26 March 2014.

Interview 20: Lithuanian Ministry of Transport and Communications, Vilnius, 26 March 2014.

Interview 21: Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 9 April 2014.

Interview 22: European External Action Service, Brussels, 9 April 2014.

Interview 23: Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 9 April 2014.

Interview 24: Lithuanian Permanent Representation to the EU, Brussels, 11 April 2014.

Interview 25: European Commission, Brussels, 6 May 2014.

Conceptual Factors Behind the Poor Performance of the European Neighbourhood Policy

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Abstract

In recent years, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has once again become a politically prominent issue in the European Union's (EU's) external-action agenda. This is mainly because of growing conflicts in neighbouring countries from Libya to Ukraine and the EU's inability to contribute to sufficiently improving security in these states. There has also been a significant rise in criticism in discourse on the ENP, to some extent even giving the impression that the policy as a whole has failed. This study pinpoints and analyses the main factors behind the poor performance of the ENP in terms of guaranteeing security in countries neighbouring the EU. The key issue is whether and to what extent the policy's failure has been caused by controversies rooted in differing expectations, interests and goals of EU member states and ENP target countries, or by the controversial conceptual approach that underlies the policy. Issues relating to the upcoming ENP reforms are also of particular importance for Baltic countries, both in supporting political and economic reforms in former Soviet republics (including nations such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) and determining the direction of EU relations with Russia.

Introduction

Regional security issues are at the heart of European political debates. Firstly, escalating tensions in Eastern Europe (particularly Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus) have given rise to disputes over the effectiveness of policy measures applied in countries neighbouring the European Union (EU) that are aimed at ensuring stability, security and peace in the region. Secondly, recent violent conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East have only compounded critical views on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) expressed in this debate.

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The ENP – a process evoked simultaneously with the EU’s fifth enlargement in 2003-2004 – was conceived as a key instrument for the democratisation and modernisation of the region’s immediate neighbours that were undergoing transition. Although the ENP consisted of the main components that made the fifth and sixth rounds of the EU’s enlargement successful, setbacks in implementing the policy in practical terms have entailed forfeiting earlier progress on democratisation and security in several target countries, as well as a loss of trust among international partners in the ENP’s feasibility.

Building on experience from the past, it has become clear that the current concept of the ENP, with its unfulfilled expectations, overdemanding values and limited resources, has been able neither in the past nor today to meet its goals. Opinions have therefore been expressed in both political and academic circles that the entire policy may need to be revised and that a new push and clearer focus for further development are required.

However, there has been significantly less discussion and analysis on the actual causes of the ENP’s ineffectiveness and on how to avoid those weaknesses in the future. At the same time, the success of the upcoming ENP reforms depends largely on well-argued and substantive discussion on matters such as whether the failure of the current policy has derived from overly ambitious targets, inadequate and unfeasible logic behind the policy’s conceptual framework, or shortcomings when implementing it.

This study pinpoints and analyses the main factors behind the poor performance of the ENP in terms of guaranteeing security in countries neighbouring the EU. The key issue is whether and to what extent the policy’s failure has been caused by controversies rooted in differing expectations, interests and goals of EU member states and ENP target countries, or by the controversial conceptual approach that underlies the policy. Three research questions will be explored: 1) To what extent does the ENP meet the conditions for effective external governance in line with a relatively recent model on EU external affairs since the early 2000s? 2) On the basis of the current debate, what are the main factors that have affected the ENP’s performance between 2003 and 2013? 3) What conceptual reforms are needed in the near future to make the ENP effective?

Issues relating to the upcoming ENP reforms are also of particular importance for Baltic countries, both in supporting political and economic reforms in former Soviet republics (such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova) and determining the direction of EU relations with Russia.

1. The Toolbox of the European Neighbourhood Policy

In 2004, the newly developed European Neighbourhood Policy was expected to be the next major success in increasing stability and security at the EU's borders.

In principle, the origins of the ENP we see today lie in three initiatives taken by the EU in relations with external countries: 1) the Africa-EU partnership established in the 1960s, which currently provides the general framework for relations between the EU and the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP)¹; 2) the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (or the 'Union for the Mediterranean', or the 'Southern dimension'), launched as part of the Barcelona Process in 2008 in the form of a multilateral partnership of 28 EU member states and 15 Southern Mediterranean, African and Middle Eastern partner countries²; and 3) the Northern Dimension, which was introduced in 1999 and renewed in 2006 as an instrument of cooperation between the EU, North-West Russia and the Baltic Sea and Arctic regions.³

Those initiatives were supplemented in 2009 by the Eastern Partnership, which developed cooperation between the EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.⁴ Sixteen countries from different regions currently participate in the ENP; the policy's geographical ambition is thus remarkable, covering countries from Belarus to Azerbaijan and from Algeria to Syria.

As mentioned earlier, the ENP consists of the main components that made the fifth and sixth EU enlargements successful: the 'golden carrot' approach of positive conditionality (consisting of financial and institutional rewards for target countries), the central role of supranational institutions, continuous analysis of the progress of target countries, a sophisticated system for technical evaluation of ENP countries, financial support from the EU, and the opportunity for neighbouring countries to enjoy privileged relations with the EU.

The key feature of cooperation between the EU and target countries is the ENP action plan, which sets out a partner country's agenda for political and economic

¹ European Union, The European External Action Service, *The EU's relations with Africa*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/africa/index_en.htm>, 12 02 2014.

² European Union, The European External Action Service, *Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EUROMED)*, <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/euromed/index_en.htm>, 12.02 2014.

³ European Union, The European External Action Service, *Northern Dimension*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/index_en.htm>, 12 02 2014.

⁴ European Union, The European External Action Service, *Eastern Partnership*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/index_en.htm>, 12 02 2014.

reforms, defines their and the EU's interests and describes the country's needs and capabilities.⁵ A total of 12 of the 16 ENP countries have agreed actions plans and are fully participating in the initiative. Algeria is currently negotiating a plan and Belarus, Libya and Syria have not agreed on one, with these four countries thus remaining outside most of the ENP's structures.⁶ The implementation of action plans is monitored by EU committees, which prepare progress reports. Partner countries are supported by the EU directly through grants for ENP-related projects, and indirectly through the creation of better conditions for economic integration, easier movement of citizens from ENP countries to the EU, and technical and political support.

The ENP was financed between 2007 and 2013 by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI),⁷ but funding was also channelled through other instruments and initiatives such as the European Development Fund, the Development Co-operation Instrument and loans from the European Investment Bank.

The ENPI included the following components⁸: a) bilateral assistance for each partner country to support reforms envisaged in ENP action plans; b) regional assistance programmes to complement national resources for EU initiatives in the East (including the Eastern Partnership, Black Sea Synergy, Baku Initiative and Northern Dimension) and South (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership); c) interregional support, including assistance for promoting measures such as the modernisation of higher education, student mobility and cooperation between ENP partner countries and EU agencies; and d) cross-border cooperation on the funding of joint operational programmes to bring together groups of EU member states and partner countries that share common values

The ENPI's budget totalled €11.18 billion for 2007–2013 and approximately 90-95% of the funds were used for bilateral and regional cooperation through

⁵ European Union, The European External Action Service, *ENP Action Plans*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/action-plans/index_en.htm>, 12 02 2014.

⁶ European Union, The European External Action Service, *European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) overview*, <http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm>, 12 02 2014.

⁷ Russia received funding from the ENPI even though mutual relations are not developed through the ENP, but through a strategic partnership.

⁸ Delcour L., "Improving the EU's Aid to its Neighbours: Lessons Learned from the ENPI, Recommendations for the ENI", *Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union. Directorate B. Policy Department Briefing Papers*, 2012, <http://www.iris-france.org/docs/kfm_docs/docs/observatoire-pol-etrangere-europe/23-07-2012-est79430.pdf>, 12 02 2014.

country and multi-country initiatives,⁹ with about 5% used for cross-border-cooperation programmes. Comparing national shares of multi-annual allocations in the framework of ENPI country programmes, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Egypt and Ukraine received more financial support than other countries in 2007–2010 (from authors’ calculations; see Figure 1). Funding for regional programmes between 2011 and 2013 was €288 million for the ENPI South¹⁰ and €348.57 million for the ENPI East initiative.¹¹

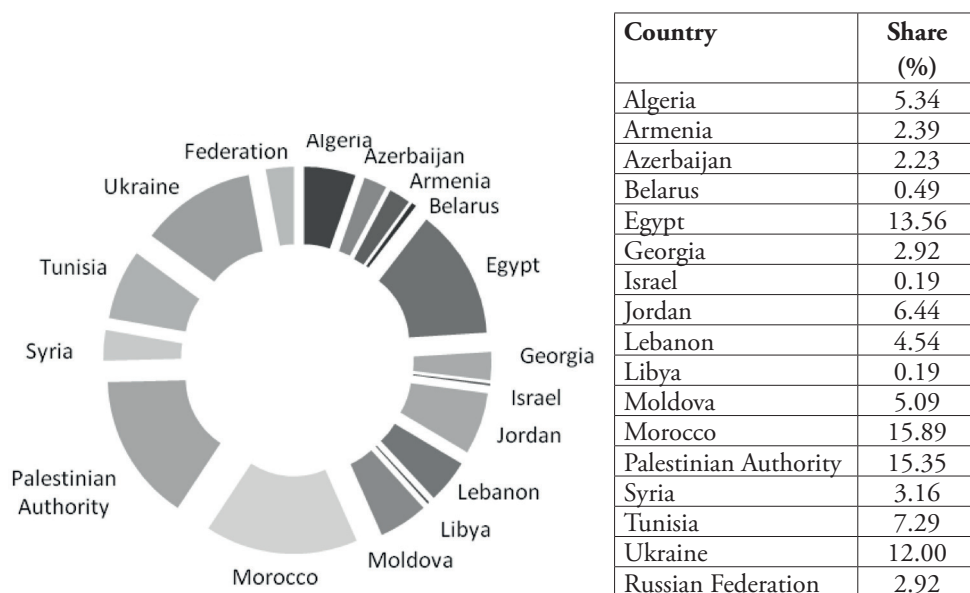


Figure 1. Shares of selected countries as a proportion of total multi-annual budget allocations in the framework of the ENPI country programmes for the period 2007–2010¹²

In 2011, a renewed approach to the European Neighbourhood Policy was initiated through plans to replace the ENPI with the European Neighbourhood

⁹ Halgand S., “The EU funding for the Neighbourhood in a nutshell”, *European Commission, DG DEVCO*. presentation made in October 2013, <www.imp-med.eu/En/image.php?id=434>, 20 06 2014.

¹⁰ Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Syria and Tunisia.

¹¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine.

¹² Authors’ calculations based on *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Funding 2007-2013*, <http://www.eu-enprelabeledjobs.eu/images/Enpi_figures_en.pdf> 12 02 2014.

Instrument (ENI) from 2014. A key feature of the new instrument was its ‘more funds for more reform’ approach, under which the EU would develop stronger partnerships with countries that made more progress. Additional funds would thus be made available, but with more mutual accountability. Growing differentiation between the amounts received by different states and stricter conditions were also expected from the new instrument. The proposed ENI budget for 2014–2020 is €18.2 billion, 63% higher than the former ENPI budget in 2007–2013.¹³

To conclude, the European Neighbourhood Policy provides a set of measures for the EU that enables cooperation with strategically important countries, but falls short of a membership option as a vital motivating factor. It is stipulated as being a mutually beneficial policy: on the one hand, it is about supporting and assisting countries in developing democracy, their economies and shared European values; on the other hand, it is about the EU trying to achieve security, stability and control around its external borders.

2. Key Variables that Impact on the Performance of the European Neighbourhood Policy

Ten years after launching the policy, the results speak for themselves in practice. In terms of political tension and even violent conflicts in Georgia, Libya, Egypt, Syria and Ukraine, the EU’s efforts and conflict resolution in reaction to these events have been relatively marginal and mainly diplomatic, and have not given visibly positive results. There has also been limited effectiveness in conducting a successful neighbourhood policy when these countries have undergone internal crises. The EU has lost much of its respect and influence in the eyes of its largest partner, the USA, and among ENP target countries. ENP member states have often considered their own national interests as more important than those of Europe, leading to the growing fragmentation of EU foreign policy. This tendency has triggered a significant increase in criticism in ENP-related discourse and some authors have even expressed the opinion that the policy is on the verge of failure, especially in recent years.

However, there have been significantly fewer discussions about why ENP measures have not been effective. This chapter summarises various aspects

¹³ CES-MED, *European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument*, <<http://www.ces-med.eu/about/partners/enpi>>, 12 02 2014.

highlighted in different studies under three main categories: a) internal factors affecting the ENP's performance; b) contradictions underlying the ENP's theoretical framework; and c) lack of implementation.

2.1. Internal factors affecting the ENP's performance

Internal aspects that affect the ENP's performance are related to geographical factors and the design of ENP measures. More precisely, the idea that all partner countries can be guided and supervised by a single universal set of rules and conditions, analysed by a similar set of bureaucratic formulas and motivated sufficiently to fulfil fundamental EU conditions but without the option of membership, seems an enormous challenge. A harmonised approach and aspirations for equality may appear an accomplishment from the perspective of the EU's self-reflection, but in practice each partner country has its own starting position, development level and dynamics, economic outlook, political regime, domestic issues and vision of relations with the EU. The view that generalisation of the ENP has created a 'one-size-fits-all' policy that is inappropriate for dealing with specificities of the EU's various borders has become a standard criticism of the policy.¹⁴

Additionally, with regard to how the neighbourhood was foreseen as developing among EU member states after the EU's fifth wave of enlargement, it can be viewed that the ENP was founded on the assumption that certain countries would act in a certain (expected) way. A stereotype became popular in the EU that the new cross-border partner countries were economically unstable, undemocratic, politically corrupt and socially divided, and did not respect human rights of citizens or national minorities to an extent considered sufficient in Europe. In principle therefore, the need to create a unified system of partnership and modernisation would not have arisen without these presumptions about neighbouring countries.

Another significant problem in the ENP's conceptual structure is the element of conditionality. More precisely, the use of conditionality in the policy's framework seems to be aimed at providing an opportunity for target countries to benefit from 'privileged relations' with the EU through improved access to its internal market.¹⁵ Because the EU has not offered credible options for EU membership or other

¹⁴ Browning C., Joenniemi P., "Geostrategies of the European Neighbourhood Policy", *European Journal of International Relations*, 14(3), 2008, p. 519–551.

¹⁵ Mocanu O., "Brief overview on the Conditionality in the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Romanian Journal of European Affairs*, 10(4), 2010, p. 42–49

significant motivating packages, the outcome that is foreseen for the ENP's target states remains unclear.¹⁶ In practical terms, the implementation of the conditionality principle has been less productive than expected. This is a result of either the absence of accession prospects or the fact that it would be largely impractical to include such terms.¹⁷ Schimmelfennig and Scholtz (2008) find in theory that the most important factors that determine the success of conditionality are the size and credibility of incentives offered as a part of the policy.¹⁸ Conditionality has been slow to deliver benefits for partner countries, while at the same time large-scale democratic reforms and economic development have been expected from them. As expressed by Smith (2005), the policy 'requires much of the neighbours and offers only vague incentives in return, making it unlikely that the ENP can meet its core objectives'.¹⁹ The concept of conditionality, which worked effectively during the fifth and sixth enlargement rounds, therefore needs further development to be used with the same success in the ENP framework.

An evaluation of the ENP should also take into account the fact that the policy was created as one of the latest components in EU external relations, in a fairly narrow niche between the global ambitions of foreign and security policies and the regional aspirations of enlargement policy. It has been argued that in principle the European Neighbourhood Policy was intended to overcome the logic of inclusion versus exclusion²⁰ and was therefore created as a substitute for further enlargement.²¹ Enlargement is often cited as the most successful element of EU foreign policy, but might become a victim of its own success because with each enlargement the number of 'European' non-member countries that qualify as potential member states decreases and the debate on where 'Europe' ought to

¹⁶ Fischer S., Lannon E., "The ENP Strategic Review: the EU and its neighbourhood at a crossroads", *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 2011.

¹⁷ Borell M., Boschma R., Monastiriou V., Wesselink E., "Report on ENP Policy Concerning its Objectives and Policy Measures over Time", *SEARCH Project*, Deliverable 1.2, 2012.

¹⁸ Schimmelfennig F., Scholtz H., "EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood: Political Conditionality, Economic Development, and Transnational Exchange", *European Union Politics*, 9(2), 2008, p. 187-215

¹⁹ Smith K., "Engagement and conditionality: incompatible or mutually reinforcing?" in: Youngs R., Emerson M., Smith K. E., Whitman R., eds., *Report 2: New Terms of Engagement*, 2005, Global Europe, Foreign Policy Centre, London.

²⁰ Comelli M., Greco E. and Tocci N., "From Boundary to Borderland: Transforming the Meaning of Borders in Europe through the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Project No 513416, EU-CONSENT*, 2006, Working paper No. 2.

²¹ Cadier D., "Is the European Neighbourhood Policy a substitute for enlargement?", *IDEAS Report* SR018, 2013, London School of Economics and Political Science.

end becomes more divisive (see Lavenex and Schimmelfennig, 2009).²² The ENP therefore seems a unique policy initiative that embodies the EU's attempts to cope with the accession-rejection dilemma by offering a form of association and interdisciplinary connection that does not measure up to full membership but is also not restricted by the limits of the EU pre-accession process, EU foreign policy, the European Economic Area (EEA) or cooperation on development, even though some have said it has implications in all of these areas.

Finally, critical questions about the ENP's financial aspects have been asked in the discussion, citing insufficient linkage between the ENP framework and support from the EU under the ENPI. Country allocations under the ENPI for the 2007–2013 period (see Section 1) clearly reflect inconsistencies within the EU in simultaneously defending its values and strategic interests.

To sum up, the need to find common interests and values and develop a stronger vision that is agreed and accepted by all EU member states on the global role of the union is evident. The renewed approach of the ENP outlined in 2011 – especially the 'more for more' principle and the differentiation clause, under which each country would be supported, evaluated and rewarded individually – would potentially allow the EU to better gear its assistance towards partner countries' own needs and improve their motivation, increasing the policy's effectiveness. At the same time, the new approach needs to be incorporated into general framework of EU' assistance. The reform process and the EU's capacity to foster democratic development in neighbouring countries also depends undeniably on the domestic political situation and government interests in partner countries.

2.2. Conceptual Challenges and Dilemmas of the ENP

The evolving nature of the ENP, as well as that of the EU, means there is more than one way to explain the ENP's specific characteristics. The policy has therefore been described in existing literature by various authors as, for example, a 'realist' strategy to increase the geopolitical influence of nations,²³ a neo-functional

²² Lavenex S., Schimmelfennig F., "EU rules beyond EU borders: theorizing external governance in European politics", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16(6), 2009, p. 791-812.

²³ Biscop S., "The ENP, Security and Democracy in the Context of the European Security Strategy" in Whitman R.G., Wolff S., eds., *The European Neighbourhood Policy in Perspective*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, p. 73-88. Referenced in Stroetges F., *A Review of the New European Neighbourhood Policy*, 2013.

project of the supranational EU actors (Kelley, 2006)²⁴ and a policy inspired by the efforts of transnational bodies such as corporations and social movements and groups (Manners, 2012).²⁵ Those statements can certainly be disputed, such as arguing that although neo-functional ideas explain the dynamics of regional integration across multiple sectors, in real terms one of the main competing theories of EU integration – neo-realism – was to some extent neglected when formulating the basic principles of the ENP in 2004 because the policy’s economic benefits were highlighted instead of stressing issues such as the distribution of benefits and the role of supranational institutions. Nevertheless, neo-functional theory still for example clearly supports the view that the ENP is a valuable part of the EU integration process, in which rights and obligations are mutual and the integration process is accelerating over time. Different viewpoints therefore amply demonstrate the dynamic, evolving and sometimes even controversial nature of the ENP.

One recent feature of debates, compared with other approaches that explain the background of EU affairs aimed at external states and the ENP framework in particular, is the theory of external governance that emerged as a new method for examining the region’s foreign affairs in the early 2000s. This theory, defined as a form of interdependence in which internal rules are extended beyond the formal membership group,²⁶ has until now proved the best model for assessing why the ENP has not so far been as successful as hoped. But as mentioned earlier, like most theoretical approaches the theory of external governance can be seen as reasonable and have practical value in the future, particularly as the model might be developed over time as modes of governance evolve.

By the early 2000s, Europeanisation theories and EU governance studies have already expanded their focus from member states to the accession process, potential candidates and quasi-member states such as Norway and Switzerland.²⁷ In earlier academic debates on the boundaries of EU governance (see Friis and

²⁴ Kelley J., “New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44(1), 2006, p. 29-55. Referenced in Stroetges F., *A Review of the New European Neighbourhood Policy*, 2013.

²⁵ Manners I., “As You Like It: European Union Normative Power in the European Neighbourhood Policy”, 2012, in Whitman R. G., Wolff S., eds., *The European Neighbourhood Policy in Perspective*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 29-50. Referenced in Stroetges F., *Review of the New European Neighbourhood Policy*, 2013.

²⁶ Lavenex S., Schimmelfennig F., (note 22) p. 791-812.

²⁷ Schimmelfennig F., “Europeanization beyond Europe”. *Living Reviews in European Governance*, 2(1), 2007, p. 4-17.

Murphy 1999²⁸; Filtenborg, Ganzle and Johansson 2002²⁹), the notion of external governance was applied to countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Eastern enlargement, the Baltic Sea region and Northern Europe. Sandra Lavenex, a professor of global governance, argued in 2004 that this concept reaches well beyond these limited geographical regions and addresses all EU neighbourhood countries in one way or another.³⁰ As a result, the theory of external governance has become one of the main explanations for the integration of external states into the European rule system.

Lavenex initially suggested that external governance takes place on a bilateral basis through association agreements³¹; but five years later, she elaborated the view to the external-governance concept and concluded that this could be applied to various forms of cooperation, from the EEA and ENP to bilateral agreements.³² Together with Schimmelfennig, she expanded the discussion further, saying that external governance could even ‘emerge spontaneously when mutual interdependence is high and adaptation to EU templates meets the interest of third countries’.³³ Although the exact type and effectiveness of external governance can vary across countries, regions and policy areas, there are some common characteristics that describe this concept in the EU in general.

By definition, crucial criteria for external governance are its legal and institutional boundaries. The practice therefore consists of selective extensions of certain EU norms, rules and policies (as a legal boundary), with the preclusion of membership as an institutional boundary.³⁴ This means partially sharing the *acquis communautaire* beyond the circle of member states with the immediate neighbourhood, but at the same time cautiously preventing the institutional inclusion of an actual EU accession. The idea of external governance is mainly about the projection of ‘soft’ power and the extension of rules in so-called ‘soft’ security areas, such as justice, home affairs, and environmental and energy policy.

²⁸ Friis L., Murphy A., “The European Union and Central and Eastern Europe: Governance and Boundaries”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 37(2), 1999, p. 211–232.

²⁹ Filtenborg M. S., Ganzle S., Johansson E., “An Alternative Theoretical Approach to EU Foreign Policy: ‘Network Governance’ and the Case of the Northern Dimension Initiative”, *Cooperation and Conflict*, 37(4), 2002, p. 387–407.

³⁰ Lavenex S., “EU external governance in ‘wider Europe’”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(4), 2004, p. 680–700.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 680–700.

³² Lavenex S., Schimmelfennig F., (note 22) p. 791–812.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 791–812.

³⁴ Lavenex S., (note 30) p. 680–700.

The phrase ‘less than a government, more than a cooperation’ could also characterise the horizontal nature (focus on processes rather than output) of external governance, as well as its inclusive character and emphasis on voluntary instruments rather than legal obligations.³⁵ Because the inclusion of external players in some traditionally domestic political processes is based on voluntary acceptance, the extent to which external countries are willing to adopt predetermined EU norms and rules is dependent on international perceptions of the institution itself.

The effectiveness of adopting EU norms and rules in external countries therefore depends on perceptions in two areas: interdependence and institutional capacity. The EU has mostly been seen as a civilian power or an economic community with a relatively weak defence capacity, but hints of a common defence dimension started to emerge after the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was introduced.³⁶ The vision of the ENP as contributing to the creation of an area of freedom, security and justice and the perception of interdependence, blurs the traditional distinction between internal and external security in this context.³⁷

External governance is said to fulfil a dual purpose. More precisely, it serves not only as a foreign-policy model but can also follow functional needs when it is seen to increase the effectiveness and problem-solving capacity of internal policies. Combining a foreign-policy strategy of stabilisation and security with third countries’ pursuit of internal policy goals may be interpreted as an effective way for the EU to benefit from third countries’ political and material problem-solving resources.³⁸ For example, by managing trade relations and migration, the EU could potentially address shortages in some internal areas while aiming to establish stability and security in collaboration with third countries – interpreted as a mutual benefit in EU discourse.

The structural categorisation of external-governance models by hierarchy, network or market³⁹ will not be reviewed in detail at this point, but Lavenex, Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier have also mentioned aspects related to possible variations in external-governance models that might be worth considering when reviewing the ENP’s performance. Important preconditions for effective external

³⁵ Lavenex S., “A governance perspective on the European neighbourhood policy: integration beyond conditionality?”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(6), 2008, p. 940.

³⁶ Rehn O., “The EU – from civilian power to premier league security policy player?” Speech at the Forum of Heads of Mission, Helsinki, 27 08 2008; Smith K. E., “The End of Civilian Power EU: A Welcome Demise or Cause for Concern?” *The International Spectator*, 35(2), 2000, p. 11-28.

³⁷ Lavenex S., (note 30) p. 680-700.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 680-700.

³⁹ Lavenex S., Schimmelfennig F., (note 22) p. 791-812.

governance are cited as the international context and the possibility of competition – conditionality cannot really be effective unless there is no credible alternative to EU integration.⁴⁰ Domestic costs related to adopting rules in third countries are decisive in determining the success of EU external governance, but costs are mainly seen as being related to the domestic political regime. For authoritarian regimes and countries with relatively low levels of economic and social development, transition to democracy and adoption of EU regulations could be costly.⁴¹ Reform-minded governments in at least partly democratised countries with lower domestic adjustment costs are, in contrast, more likely to adopt the rules.

It should be stressed that a prerequisite for external governance to function is the use of conditionality.⁴² So-called path dependence as a part of a wider neo-institutionalism theory is about previous institutional decisions affecting future policies. In practical terms, the ENP shows a high level of path dependence, particularly in relation to the EU's enlargement policy. This is because the ENP, as well as the EU's external-governance policy, came about before the fifth wave of the region's enlargement. Concerns about the EU's integration capacity, possible exhaustion of the enlargement model and the emerging necessity to engage with cross-border countries set the path for establishing alternative approaches to the union's relations with its neighbours.

On the basis of these factors, the conditionality applied in the EU could be explained by an external-incentives model of governance. In comparison with other alternatives such as lesson-learning or social learning, the dominant logic that underpins this model is a rationalist bargaining strategy.⁴³ Given the highly asymmetrical relationship between EU actors and outsiders, introducing external incentives for compliance with EU rules opens a bargaining process whereby the target government seeks to balance international, EU and domestic pressures and maximise its own political benefits at the same time.

By introducing external rules to third countries, conditionality has sometimes been criticised for illegitimate interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and the sovereignty of the state.⁴⁴ Moreover, conditionality initiated by the EU

⁴⁰ Schimmelfennig F., Sedelmeier U., "Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(4), 2004, p. 669-687.

⁴¹ Noutcheva G., Emerson M., Popescu N., "European Neighbourhood Policy Two Years on: Time indeed for an 'ENP Plus'", *Centre for European Policy Studies*, Policy Brief, No. 126, March 2007.

⁴² Schimmelfennig F., Sedelmeier U., (note 40) p. 669-687.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 669-687.

⁴⁴ Smith K. E., "The Use of Political Conditionality in the EU's Relations with Third Countries: How Effective?", *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 3(2), 1998, p. 253-274

could be criticised for being duplicitous or hypocritical, given that the union itself suffers from a democratic deficit within its institutions.⁴⁵ Then again, it has also been argued that concerns about the lack of democracy have been misplaced⁴⁶ and that the legitimacy of EU democratic conditionality is not a central problem of the region's external relations.

To sum up, external governance is very context-dependent, in that the domestic political regime is considered one of the key features that determines its effectiveness. On the basis of this argument, Lavenex also points out possible negative scenarios, predicting that partnerships negotiated with each country in selected policy areas may result in patterns of differentiated integration in the long run.⁴⁷ If the model were effective, it would result in a wider Europe not so much in terms of common institutions but more as a 'security community'. The logic of both the ENP and external governance gravitates around conditionality: the more that ENP partners develop their societies, the more the EU deepens economic integration and political association. However, there is one major difference between EU conditionality in the ENP and that in the case of pre-accession. In terms of enlargement policy, the conditionality model has brought significant positive outcomes through incentives and was expected to bring similar accomplishments in the ENP. But within that policy's framework, EU conditionality is missing the most important motivation for modernisation and reform – the possibility of EU membership. The absence of this factor has become one of the key criticisms of the ENP.

2.3. Fragmentation and Lack of Implementation: Individual Preferences of ENP Partner Countries and EU Member States

Various authors in the debate have questioned the existence of real commitment from partner countries in carrying out extensive political, economic and social reforms. The lack of a membership perspective has curbed the enthusiasm of EU-oriented governments, especially in the East. At the same time, some of the EU's partner countries might not even be interested in a political partnership

⁴⁵ Jensen T., "The Democratic Deficit of the European Union", *Living Reviews in Democracy*, Vol. 1., 2009, <<http://democracy.livingreviews.org/index.php/lrd/article/viewArticle/lrd-2009-2/9>>, 03 07 2014.

⁴⁶ Crombez C., "The Democratic Deficit in the European Union: Much Ado about Nothing?", *European Union Politics*, 4(1), 2003, pp. 101-120; Moravcsik A., "Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 40(4), 2002, p. 603-624.

⁴⁷ Lavenex S., (note 30) p. 680-700.

with the institution. For example, Belarus is rather disinterested in the Eastern Partnership and has been mostly reluctant to sign up to what the EU has to offer. Azerbaijan has a strong energy partnership with the EU, but is relatively uninterested in political reforms and non-energy-related trade dialogue.⁴⁸ Armenia has aspired to an economic partnership with Europe, but military partnership and a close economic relationship with Russia is seen as natural given Armenia's large diaspora there and its dependence on the country to guarantee its security.⁴⁹ Without the traditional incentive of accession, ENP partner countries might need alternatives to motivate them.

However, the problem from the perspective of partner countries also partly lies in the legitimacy of promoting European values. Governments in some countries do not share the same values as those of the EU. For example, the requirement for respect for human rights has caused resistance in Azerbaijan and establishment of a political dialogue with the opposition has not progressed in Belarus. But to draw conclusions on the compatibility of EU rules with domestic institutions in third countries, one would need to carry out an institutional study in each country individually. Similarly, an in-depth study would be needed to judge the quality of existing EU institutions.

The lack of enthusiasm about implementation of the ENP is partly caused by the fact that the goals and interests of the policy were not defined by small new EU member states in border areas, but by centrally located EU nations that do not share direct borders with ENP target states and accordingly feel less pressure to achieve practical results. Furthermore, because the initiative's budget is divided between the ENPI South and ENPI East regions, two instruments must compete in a situation in which EU member states have individual preferences for where the majority of financing should be channelled. Some would like to develop infrastructure in Ukraine or support the independence of the judiciary in Lebanon, while others would rather invest in Israel's industry, promote civil engagement in Moldova, or accelerate constitutional changes in Morocco or electoral reforms in Algeria. Although the budget's size has not been seen as a precondition for the effectiveness of external governance in theory, opinions have been expressed that budget constraints mean that not all ambitions can be

⁴⁸ Popescu N., "Keeping the Eastern Partnership on track", *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, 2013, Alert No. 29, 06 09 2013.

⁴⁹ Emerson M., Kostanyan H., "Putin's grand design to destroy the EU's Eastern Partnership and replace it with a disastrous neighbourhood policy of his own", *Centre for European Policy Studies Commentary*, 2013, 17 09 2013.

satisfied at once and priorities are therefore debated.⁵⁰ These priorities are largely determined by EU member states' historical preferences, national interests and interdependence, the latter of which is also one of the theoretical conditions of the external-governance model. From a critical perspective, the ENP allows member states to promote their own national priorities at the expense of regional dialogue and integration. For example, the United Kingdom and Italy have been interested in resuming mutually favourable developments in North Africa – that is, in their former colonies – whereas the former Eastern bloc countries are more in favour of integrating Ukraine, Moldova and the South Caucasus. While national interests were not officially allowed to be prioritised, in practice ENP common values and goals have often directly depended on French, British or German national interests. Additionally, a new level of securitisation has appeared, with a need to stabilise 'the neighbourhood of the neighbourhood'.

There has also been a lack of ability to define and differentiate the ENP's short-term and long-term goals, which has led to compromises with Europe's global competitors to ease the pressure of financial crisis or gain more international support for the EU's external missions. In some ways, the existing fragmentation reflects the ENP's shortcomings: as member states have different priorities in terms of regions and tools, it would also be logical to allow internal grouping on the basis of interests. In general, a more differentiated approach is needed, both in terms of target countries and respect for the varying interests of member states.

Conclusions

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) that was initiated in 2003-2004 was expected to be the next major success in terms of improving stability and security in the EU's neighbouring countries. The ENP consisted of the main components that also made the fifth and sixth rounds of EU enlargement so successful: 'golden carrot' type positive conditionality, a sophisticated system for technical evaluation, centralised financial support and the prospect of a special relationship with the EU. In 2013–2014, with the Lithuanian and Latvian presidencies in the European Council and the Eastern Partnership and European Neighbourhood Policy once again coming into the spotlight, the results speak for themselves. In the wake of recent events in Georgia, Libya, Egypt and Syria, followed by the European

⁵⁰ Kirchherr J., The European Neighbourhood Policy has failed because of its own contradictions and small budget. *London School of Economics*, 2012, 17 04 2012.

Union's reactions to crises, the union itself has lost much of its respect in the eyes of the great powers and its influence in ENP target countries. In a related process, a visible and growing fragmentation of EU foreign policy has taken place, often reflecting a situation in which member states find their own national interests more important than those of the EU. In retrospect, the ENP's creation was an institutional and symbolic act rather than a practical and political event.

The ENP has struggled to meet two partially conflicting objectives in the last 10 years. On the one hand, it has sought to establish a common security policy with neighbours; on the other, it has aimed to manage the accession aspirations of partner countries, whether real, perceived or potential. Browning and Joenniemi (2008),⁵¹ while discussing the options for rationalising the ENP through geostrategies, see this situation as a contradiction in itself because horizontal integration does not guarantee greater protection from, or resistance to, external harm. They argue that the policy is therefore unable to solve the EU's cross-border security concerns, saying 'it will fail to extricate the EU from a logic that links external security with the need for further integration of outsiders'.

Although the essential dilemma of two sometimes conflicting objectives (security and integration versus managing accession aspirations) contained in the ENP has been seen as a major deficiency alongside the inappropriateness of a 'one-size-fits-all' structure, under the theoretical framework of external-governance theory these factors were not expected to play a crucial role in determining the policy's effectiveness.

In the EU's official discourse, the European Neighbourhood Policy is an altruistic project that enables countries to become more democratic, modern and stable, and to develop their economies. From a critical perspective, it is also a brilliant way of fulfilling the EU's self-interests. In fact, the partnership's means and goals were largely shaped by the interests of the EU member states, which in some cases such as that of Azerbaijan prioritised economic interests over democratic conditionality.

As a result, the ENP's focus has altered in line with changes in context: the EU's areas of attention have depended both on regional developments and on internal developments in partner countries. When conflicts emerged in the Arab world in 2011, the EU's attention was on the South; in 2013, before the Vilnius summit and during Lithuania's EU presidency, attention was on the East; by spring 2014, the international community's attention was on Ukraine and Russia.

⁵¹ Browning C., Joenniemi, P., (note 14) p. 519–551

What is the future potential of the neighbourhood policy in light of the critical questions asked above? This analysis has pointed out challenges and recommendations on issues on which the EU could improve its stance, such as overcoming its fears on migration, using the theoretical link between CFSP and EU external action, and focusing more on each partner country's own development levels and needs rather than the EU's understanding of them. Considering the ambitious but contradictory aims of the ENP, it is clear that to increase its formal success, it is key to start from the reformulation of its aims and values and the redirection of resources so that they do not detract from the central aim or act contrary to one another. Structural updates to the policy itself might not however result in increased effectiveness in all target countries, unless the partners themselves express determination to develop a clear focus and consistency in the application of conditionality and consensus among member states. Whether the new ENI will increase the effectiveness of policy implementation in the next seven years remains to be seen.