Sedi Consorziate (IUIES)

Università degli Studi di Udine - Università di Klagenfurt - Università MGIMO di Mosca - Università di Nova Gorica - Università Jagiellonica di Cracovia - Università Eotvos Lorand di Budapest - Università Babes-Bolyai di Cluj-Napoca - Università Comenius di Bratislava - Istituto di Sociologia Internazionale di Gorizia

XXV CICLO DEL
DOTTORATO DI RICERCA IN

POLITICHE TRANSFRONTALIERE PER LA VITA QUOTIDIANA
TRANSBORDER POLICIES FOR DAILY LIFE

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN PRACTICE
Managing Divergent Logics of Communications in EU-Russian Relations: What Role for Presidential Summits?

Settore scientifico-disciplinare: SPS/06 - STORIA DELLE RELAZIONI INTERNAZIONALI

DOTTORANDO
(PHD CANDIDATE):
GABRIELA IULIANA PREDA

COORDINATORE DEL COLLEGIO DEI DOCENTI
CHIAR.MO PROF. LUIGI PELLIZZONI
UNIVERSITÀ DI TRIESTE

FIRMA: [Signature]

RELATORE
CHIAR.MO PROF. ALBERTO GASPARINI
UNIVERSITÀ DI TRIESTE

FIRMA: [Signature]

ANNO ACCADEMICO 2012/2013
“And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music” (F.Nietzsche)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the faculty members of the University of Trieste from the Department of Political and Social Sciences and from the International University Institute for European Studies Iuies Gorizia, who inspired me during my PhD years and to the faculty members of the Free University of Brussels / l'Université libre de Bruxelles ULB and IEE- L'Institut d'Etudes Européennes that supported my work, opened new horizons for me and hosted me during my research in Brussels, in particular:

- Professor Alberto Gasparini (University of Trieste, Iuies) my thesis supervisor, for his constant support, wise guidance and encouragements;
- Professor Luigi Pelizzoni (University of Trieste) for his support during my PhD years;
- Professor Marianne Dony (ULB Brussels /IEE), for her deep interest and belief in my work and for her extraordinary ability to stimulate my thinking;

and to all the colleagues and contacts in Trieste / Brussels /Moscow (diplomats, public officials, experts, journalists ) who provided me with their valuable time and information without which this thesis would have not been possible.

· Last, but most importantly, I would like to thank my family, where the most basic source of my life energy resides, for their unfailing support and unconditional love, and my close friends, for their warmth and kind encouragements. My gratitude goes in particular to my husband, for his constant belief in me, moral support and for always being there for me along this journey, and to my parents, my longstanding supporters, who have always been a constant source of inspiration in all my endeavours.
ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the intricate relationship between European Union (EU) and The Russian Federation (referred to as Russia), through the lens of communication and public diplomacy practices. It sheds light on the question: Why do EU and Russia still lack the setup to map out a joint strategy for managing bilateral communications, despite their mutually acknowledged need to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership?

The overall claim is that, although both sides constantly reaffirm their “strong commitment” to an authentic strategic partnership on the axis Brussels-Moscow and to an enhanced bilateral communication, in reality the two actors have always maintained a certain distance in the public sphere and have never stopped perpetuating conflicting narratives on the evolution of their relationship (grounded in divergent vocabularies), while competing for the greatest possible domination of the political communication arena, as part of what appears a wide-ranging competition to sway international policy-making and gain political control when addressing common issues or concerns.

In particular, the dissertation draws attention on some of the key distinctive features that typify communication practices in EU-Russian relations, whereby the two actors constantly compete for both access to and influence over the (inter)national media (over international agenda building and frame building as one central strategic activity of their public diplomacy processes). In this sense, it emphasizes the case of presidential summits, presented as a key indicator of a particularly complex relationship between these two partners gradually drifting apart. The assumption is that the “fight”/competition between EU and Russia for the greatest possible domination of the political communication arena (media access and media framing) has always been a central element of these events, with both actors realizing that sympathetic media coverage is a prerequisite for political
influence. On this point, the thesis identifies various divergent *framings* in EU and Russian public messages, media statements, discourses and press releases distributed on these occasions, which address common issues or concerns. Temporally, the period between 1998 and 2013 /January 2014 is essential to empirically map EU-Russia interactions in this specific settings and to derive the relevant conclusions.

The dissertation speaks to various bodies of literature, as my investigation requires an interdisciplinary approach, while employing various theories and concepts, with emphasis on international relations, communications and public diplomacy. It will hopefully provide a useful baseline for future research and debates as it offers useful insights on the peculiar interplay between public diplomacy and *realpolitik* dynamics on the international political communication scene.

*Questo ricerca ha l’obiettivo di indagare ed analizzare alcuni aspetti chiave dei rapporti tra l’Unione Europea (UE) e la Russia, con una particolare attenzione alle dinamiche che riguardano la comunicazione e i canali della diplomazia pubblica negli ultimi decenni. L’analisi affronta alcuni nodi problematici ed ancora irrisolti, concentrandosi su casi ed aspetti specifici, quali per esempio quello dei canali della diplomazia pubblica russa ed europea o del significato dei summit presidenziali UE-Russia. La tesi incrocia vari temi di attualità e dibattiti internazionali attinenti la diplomazia pubblica e al rapporto tra le sue fonti intenzionali e quelle non intenzionali o il dibattito sulle sfide dei rapporti istituzionali UE-Russia.*
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PART I: THE PUZZLE - RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**  
* p.8

Chapter 1. Introduction  
* p.9

1.1. The Background  
1.2. The Research Problem  
1.3. The Rationale - Research Question. Hypothesis

Chapter 2. Research Design  
* p.28

2.1 Organization of the dissertation  
2.2. Research Design - Design/Methods, Data Sources/Collection  
2.3. Key Terms /Concepts

**PART II: REALPOLITIK DYNAMICS. ENDURING ISSUES. EMERGING DILEMMAS - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW**  
* p.49

Chapter 3. Past and present: Forging an (un)strategic partnership?!  
* p.50

3.1. The outset - The unclear criteria, The historical legacies  
3.2. The Current Institutional Framework  
- Major Shortcomings and Deadlocks

Chapter 4. Future scenarios: Enduring Issues. Emerging Dilemmas  
* p.90

4.1. Contributions from the literature  
- Brief overview of debates  
4.2. Research Gaps and Missing Links  
- Social power, Public Diplomacy, Framing
PART III: COMMUNICATION EXERCISES: FRAMING THE DEBATE ON A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP - AN EMMPIRICAL ANALYSIS -

Chapter 5. Public Diplomacy and Image Construction

5.1. Communication Practices: A SWOT analysis
– Messages, Processes, Context

5.2. Communication Styles: EU vs. Russia- Rationale, Tactics,
Key protagonists

Chapter 6. The case of presidential summits

6.1. General overview & Controversies

6.2. Mediated Public Diplomacy Tools and Selected Frames

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 7. Discussions and Concluding Remarks

Chapter 8. Limitation of the Study

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
PART I. THE PUZZLE

- RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS -
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When studying new trends in the contemporary diplomatic landscape and global communications, such as the surge of public diplomacy, the EU and Russia are two interesting cases, as both are international actors in transformation, each one in its own way.

Furthermore, the strategic relevance of their complex relationship, which might have a strong impact on the redefinition of the whole international system, raises several questions about the changes under way in an wider international context saturated with power and with its polymorphous character (Weldes & Van Ham, 2010): whether hard, soft, sharp, sweet, sticky, agentic, structural, power interaction between these two actors determines not only how political outcomes are produced, but also how their are constrained, transformed and eventually communicated to the public.

This thesis argues that, by examining the intricacies of the EU-Russian flawed cooperation\(^1\), through the prism of public diplomacy, conceptualized as a key practice of power, we might thus arrive at a better understanding of the latest tendencies affecting the evolution of diplomatic relations and thus of the vast area of global governance.

1.1. THE BACKGROUND

The study starts from the assumption that in the age of the Internet, of media ubiquity and of global communications, the evolution of diplomatic practices has reached a new stage in many aspects. Nowadays, the success of any actor on

\(^1\) The last event in EU-Russia relations analysed by the dissertation dates back to January 2014 (32\(^{nd}\) EU-Russian Summit http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-58_en.htm)
the international scene\(^2\) depends highly not only on the way it handles **partnerships** —be they strategic or not— and solves **deadlocks**\(^3\) at either bilateral or multilateral level, but also on how it **manages its (public) communications** with (non)partners, rivals and with the public opinion.

In this sense, politics involves the exercise of **power** with **various forms at play simultaneously** (Weldes & Van Ham, 2010). Interestingly enough, as Van Ham (2010) suggests, passivity and non-action may also demonstrate at times a particular form of power, namely “an actor’s power to resist change”\(^4\). Furthermore, several authors focus on the concept of “**symmetry of power**”, like Amrita Narlikar who claims **that deadlocks** often occur if there is “symmetry of power”, as neither party is able to impose its will on the other, and are more likely when parties are **symmetrically strong** (not equally weak)\(^5\). Also, according to Narlikar, mild discrepancies in **power** can lead to stalemates, with stronger parties for instance responding to the weaker party’s demand for equal treatment with escalatory tactics\(^6\) (Narlikar, 2010).

Against this background, when referring specifically to (public) communications, a growing concern with **two forms of power** —**soft and social**— is particularly relevant for the debate.

The **soft power** concept —famously defined in the early’90s by Joseph S. Nye as the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments\(^7\)— has emerged as the best-known challenger of **hard power** (Van Ham, 2010). According to Nye, soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies and should be considered a significant asset in influencing others, not by using “hard”

---

\(^2\) not just states but also international organizations, NGOs, corporations and the media among others  
\(^3\) Breaking deadlocks generally involves finding solutions to situations of standstill rather than an escalatory dynamic, no matter what forms they assume -delays, stalemates or breakdowns (Narlikar, 2010)  
\(^5\) Narlikar A., Deadlocks in Multilateral Negotiations - Causes and Solutions, University of Cambridge, 2010  
\(^6\) For more info: Vitz and Kite 1970; Faure 2005; Zartman 2002; Beriker and Druckman 1996  
\(^7\) concept defined at the end of Part I
military power, but by the ability to attract, which goes beyond influence or persuasion (Nye, 2004). For other scholars though, Nye’s notion remains agent-centred and assumes that soft power is generally based on resources, which can be either used, applied or exercised (Van Ham, 2010).

In this context, Peter Van Ham argues that it is another form of power that should be also considered, namely social power, defined as a constructivist notion introduced by Peter Van Ham, as the ability to set standards, create norms and values that are deemed legitimate and desirable, without resorting to coercion or payment (Van Ham, 2010). Social power on the other hand also involves “discursive power, drawing attention to the impact of framing, norm advocacy, agenda-setting, the impact of media and communications, as well as lesser-known practices like (place) branding or public diplomacy”.

In particular, the role of public diplomacy appears essential when investigating new trends in the contemporary diplomatic landscape, as it is generally through this key modality of social power, which depends on and is rooted in communication, that international actors spread (social) knowledge about one’s (non)attractiveness and about the importance of certain policy issues, in an attempt to counterbalance various deficiencies and the limits of their perceived legitimacy in the eyes of those for whom they claim to act (Hocking, 2008).

More specifically, public diplomacy focuses on bringing out targeted messages, by involving various types of engagement “in the open” between governments or other international protagonists and foreign publics with the aim to inform and influence audiences through a variety of instruments and methods.

---

9 Definitions of Public Diplomacy vary and continue to change over time
10 e.g.: in terms of knowledge, flexibility or speed in responding to global problems
11 IGOs, INGOs, companies, media outlets, etc.
12 ranging from personal contact and media interviews to the Internet and educational exchanges
However, as its *range of action appears rather limited as it depends on various factors*, among which the implementation models (state-centred or networks), the reality is that its practices can eventually/also hinder rather than serve the initial purpose.

In the specific case of *international partnerships* for instance, *public diplomacy practices* involving states or other key protagonists on the international scene *have often proved to be quite tricky: while not a panacea, they can indeed help set the scene for improved relations, but they can also complicate it even more.*

The thesis argues that for delivering efficient results on all sides, *public diplomacy practices needs specific frameworks and coordinated/joint efforts from all actors involved (at bilateral or multilateral level).*

Against this background, the relationship between *European Union* (EU) and *The Russian Federation* (referred to as *Russia*) and their recurrent deadlocks stand out as a unique case on the international arena. Given their unique characteristics, the claim is that the way these two actors deal with their deadlocks and manage their complex relationship, which often results in divergent logics of communication and recurrent public diplomacy crisis, may set forth “best or worst practices” across a wide range of settings on the international scene.

**But what makes these two actors so special in this context?** First, the European Union and the Russian Federation (Russia) are two unique international actors, with a key role in an increasingly interdependent and digitally connected world. While the EU is a *sui generis* player with both intergovernmental and supranational traits, its biggest neighbour and, to date, one of its “strategic partners”, Russia, is also a unique protagonist on the international political scene. It is a peculiar (re)emerging power, member of
BRICS\textsuperscript{13}, that has promptly (re)invented itself after the Soviet Union’s dissolution in 1991 aiming to become a key global protagonist, just like the former Soviet Union or the Russian Empire, whose heritage it officially perpetuates, used to be in the past.

Additionally, in the last decades they have emerged as \textit{key communicators} on the international scene. Hence, they constantly seek acknowledgement, visibility and a greater say in the way global issues are governed and communicated to the public opinion worldwide, by trying to co-opt rather than coerce\textsuperscript{14} other actors, in an attempt to thus build on their \textit{soft power}\textsuperscript{15} capabilities (while also wielding other forms of power –e.g. smart, social), influence (foreign) public(s) and foreign perceptions, and eventually consolidate their image \textit{and} prestige on the international scene, while solving, \textit{entre autres}, all deadlocks that might hinder their ambitions:

- On the one hand, \textbf{EU}’s communication with the world has often appeared quite feeble, weakened by its very status of an international actor under construction. However, it has been argued that, while operating at the margin of official foreign policy, the primary means of influence of the EU has been through its normative power\textsuperscript{16}, in other words through the ability to shape what is normal. Furthermore, EU’s emerging public diplomacy has

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Russia’s fit with this category of new or rising powers appears though quite arguable. For historical reasons, Russia is the only BRICS country that is no stranger to the ‘Great Powers’ club (recall, for instance, its role in the Concert of Europe in the 19th century or as part of the bipolar system of the Cold War in the 20th). Nevertheless, while its power appears to have increased over the past few years, particularly given the boom in commodity prices (see Amrita Narlikar, “Negotiating the rise of new powers”, International Affairs 89: 3 (2013) 561–576), many scholars sustain that Moscow still has a long road Neil Macfarlane, for instance, writes: “The notion of emergence suggests a state that is growing dynamically and undergoing a transformation; a state whose rising power causes it to question its established place in the system and to assert itself more ambitiously in international politics. This image is far from Russian fcgv bxlreality. Russia is more a state that has recently experienced substantial damage and is attempting to stop the bleeding” (See Neil Macfarlane, ‘The “R” in the BRICs: is Russia an emerging power?”, International Affairs 82: 1, Jan. 2006, pp. 41–57).

\textsuperscript{14} By using for instance (military) force or sanctions as a means of persuasion (e.g. hard power)

\textsuperscript{15} For a comprehensive description of various forms of power see Chapter 5 of the dissertation.

been conceptualized by experts and practitioners, as being also about establishing an identity for the EU as an actor as well, and about influencing foreign conceptions of other discursive elements, such as democracy, human rights, climate change.

- On the other hand, the Russian “case” is noteworthy given its dramatic comeback on the international scene after 1991. After a chaotic transition in the 1990s, Russian leaders became increasingly concerned with their country’s international image and standing. During Putin’s administration at the Kremlin, international communications and public diplomacy became trendy concepts in Moscow, in close connection with a campaign aimed at “re-shaping” Russian identity. Its goal was to seek recognition and acceptance, while enhancing Russia’s role on the international scene particularly in its “near abroad”, regarded as its own sphere of influence even after the fall of the USSR (Osipova, 2012).

Likewise, the EU-Russian multi-faced relationship is an interesting and singular case on the global arena for a multitude of reasons that, to date, go beyond the past decades’ strategic partnership label-grounded in a common, although intricate history-, given the scale of mutual economic interdependence, the intensity of political competition in both actors’ near neighbourhood or the divisions it has caused in the past.

“EU- Russia relations are essential for world equilibrium” liked to say former French president Jacques Chirac in the early 2000s, while for Romano Prodi a former president of the European Commission (1999-2004) and Italian Prime Minister, the European Union and Russia simply “have to stick together” as their relationship resembles the one between “vodka and caviar”. In other words, the two are the ideal complements to one another, as according to

---

17 NY Times, July 4, 2005 - www.nytimes.com/2005/07/03/world/europe/03iht-russ.html?_r=0
19 The “vodka – caviar” pairing -a Russian tradition- is a customary throughout the world of gastronomy, like wine and cheese.
Prodi, “they share common interests, a common history and have a similar spirit”.

Upgraded to the level of strategic partnership after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the EU-Russian relationship has experienced several stages. In the nineties, it has been rapidly been acknowledged as “necessary and crucial” for both actors: for the stability of Europe and thus of the whole international system, for the security of energy supplies in Europe, for EU’s and Russian economies etc. As a result, on the economic side for instance, relations have grown quite fast and Moscow and Brussels have become top trading partners, with Russian supplies of oil and gas making up a large percentage of its exports to Europe. To date, according to Eurostat, the EU accounts for over half of Russia’s foreign trade and 70% of its inward investment, while Russia is the EU’s third largest trading partner, after the United States and China, with oil making up some 63% of this.

However, on the political side, the dialogue has never been fluid and after a short period of stagnation (2003 – 2006), in 2006 scholars, have increasingly started talking about a protracted crisis in EU-Russia relations, characterized by recurrent deadlocks assuming various forms.

Wider scholarship seems to agree that the problem with EU-Russian relations is that, although parties share indeed some important interests - from economic to geo-political, proximity or cultural links - both their priorities and tactics have essentially remained different (Haukkala, 2012).

Hence, their promising agenda of cooperation from the nineties has begun to falter in the past decades depending on shifting majorities and on historical stances., resulting quite often in mutual frustration, manifested in continuous, paradoxical crises and isolation between the two partners. Subsequently,

---

20 URL: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Russia EU_basic_statistical_indicators
21 from stalemates or extended delays to possible breakdowns
For many researchers, EU-Russia relations have been in state of “protracted crisis” for quite some time, as Cold War legacies have constantly been endured, the ambiguity of common strategic goals have resurfaced and economic asymmetry has never ceased to exist (Aleseeva 2007; DeBardeleben 2008; Medvedev 2008; Chebakova, 2011).

1.2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

As mentioned in the previous section, in the last decades, the EU-Russian relationship has gradually fallen well short of expectations and potential, despite their strategic partnership label and a number of joint projects and policy initiatives stemming from their historical links and from an increasing interdependence. (Kulhánek, 2010)

Subsequently, their flawed cooperation has produced a complex combinations of clashes, consensus, commitments and political rhetoric at various levels. Not to mention the longstanding frustration on both sides stemming from the slow pace of negotiations on a comprehensive revised Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA)\(^{23}\), regulating bilateral relations through substantive (legally binding) commitments in all areas (including political dialogue, freedom, security & justice, economic cooperation, research, education & culture, trade, investment and energy).

To date, the general view among diplomats and international relations experts is that neither of the frameworks of bilateral relations seems to be working smoothly, being permeated, *constrained* and influenced by this state of affairs, as well as by the internal developments taking place in EU and Russia and by the new dynamics in the regional and international arenas.

Unsurprisingly, the problematic of the EU-Russia flawed cooperation has become the subject of many research studies in the past decades as well, being regularly considered an ever-increasing dilemma by researchers, diplomats, analysts, journalist and other observers. The literature offers various explanations for the drawbacks of their cooperation, which pertains on both sides and on various levels, despite their high degree of interdependence.

Politics and (lack of) political will are generally perceived as the biggest challenges, that complicate all fields of cooperation and generate continuous disagreements over numerous policies, values or ideas on human rights, democracy, security, the common neighbourhood or other global issues. Furthermore, “economics, along with identity and normative matters, are widely perceived as being contaminated by political intentions, while security agenda appears to be country-specific and fragmenting rather than unifying” (Makarychev, 2011). Consequently, for many international relations scholars, the partnership appears to be wandering aimlessly as to what direction it should take (Kulhánek, 2010) while its “strategic” label, extensively used since the second half of the 1990s (Fischer, 2008), appears less appropriate than ever, given the shallow EU-Russian collaboration and costly standoffs (Roberts, 2007).

The *realists* for example argue that the EU –Russia recurrent deadlocks stem from a clash of interests, born out of the asymmetric interdependency trap (Hughes 2006; Leonard & Popescu 2007; Bordachev 2007) and underline
that actors’ actions are shaped by the drive of their relative material gains and constrained by the available resources. Meanwhile the advocates of the liberal approach argue that the aggravation of relations is connected to Russia’s slide towards an authoritarian political regime in the time of Putin’s presidency. Finally, according to the constructivist approach, actions are shaped by actor-specific interests, which are formed in the process of communication, are constrained by normative limits and rationalized with the help of those ideas which already have a moral force in a given context (Wendt, 1992, Bakalova).

Furthermore, wider scholarship seems to agree that, despite the mutually acknowledged need to revitalize bilateral cooperation to the greatest possible extent, both sides are constantly struggling with an overall “discouraging” lack of progress in overcoming deep dissonances as far as perceptions and norms are concerned- (Makarychev A., Sergunin A., 2011), resulting in a high level of ambiguity, ambivalence, distrust, misunderstandings and, again, frustration (Gomart, 2008). For many, the defectiveness of Russia-EU relations is simply a result of the inability to agree on basic common terms of dialogue (Makarychev 2008), although in the public sphere, while not denying drawbacks, officials on both sides have often alternated moderate optimism and pessimism. The EU for instance has often toned down its rhetoric about building a strategic partnership based on common values, relying instead on day-to-day cooperation in what was considered “an attempt to help Russia align itself with European norms and rules” (Barysch K., Coker C.,Jesien L.,2011). But it seems that even this (pragmatic) approach has produced more frustration than tangible progress (Barysch K., Coker C.,Jesien L., 2011).

Against this background, several questions arise: what about bilateral communications? How do interactions actually take place between the two actors on the international political communication scene? What kind of power
do these generate on both sides (social/soft)? Do public diplomacy practices facilitate or hinder the actors’ exchanges and their coordination? How do EU and Russia handle tensions and deadlocks when addressing publicly common issues or concerns? What kind of power (if any) do they generate as communicators on the international scene? Do they team up when conveying messages about the evolution of their relationship or rather prefer to pursue communication on parallel tracks, using different channels?

As international relations literature tends to neglect the specific role of communications and of public diplomacy practices in EU-Russian relations, the dissertation aims to address at least some of the above mentioned gaps, both thematically and methodologically.

Its general objective is to advance an alternative explanation of the actors’ low performance in managing bilateral communications -which often results in public diplomacy crisis- while also providing a historical context within which specific events took place. Additionally, by examining EU-Russian intricacies through the lens of communication and public diplomacy, the aim is thus to arrive at a better understanding of how these two actors actually communicate in the public sphere -with one another and with different publics- about the evolution of their strategic partnership, while generating and employing various kinds of power (e.g. why/when they team up, ignore or go against each other on the international political communication scene, by regularly reshuffling public discourses describing the evolution of their relations).

The claim is that investigating the multiple causes of EU - Russian discord through the prism of communications might offer useful insights on both the current broad spectrum of bilateral relations and on the possible scenarios.

Finally, the dissertation argues that the way EU and Russia manage (or not) to handle their divergent logics of communication and deal with recurrent
deadlocks may become either a precedent or an example on the international scene, through either best or worst practices set forth across a wide range of settings.

1.3. The Rationale - The Research Question, The Hypothesis

1.3.1. The Research Question

Following this line of reasoning, the study seeks to answer the following research question: **WHY do EU and Russia lack the setup to map out a joint strategy for managing bilateral communications, despite the mutually acknowledged need to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership and enhance (pragmatic) cooperation?**

In other words, how can we explain the current **shallow configuration in EU-Russian communications**, notwithstanding their **essential partnership** stemming from a high degree of mutual dependency (Pick, 2012) and from the “**ambitious common vision for the future of bilateral relations**”? Why, to date, not a single joint **roadmap**, not even an (in)formal one, has been put up in place, although both Brussels and Moscow have often played the “**openness**” card in managing their bilateral communications? What does this **status quo** say about the overall evolution and about future scenarios of the EU-Russian strategic partnership?

Additionally, several questions examining the concrete communication processes in EU-Russian relations will shed light on the broader research question that guides the whole dissertation:

• Who are the key actors managing EU-Russia strategic communication and public diplomacy (main communicators)? What public diplomacy models/tools do they use for advancing or on the contrary for counterbalancing the partnership’s limitations? How do they handle communications deadlocks?

• What are the prevailing EU/Russian message frames on the evolution of their partnership? Have they brought near the two actors or on the contrary deepened divisions? Where are they grounded? What are competing vocabularies? What evidence substantiates their increasing competition in the public sphere?

• Where / When (on which occasion) do the key communicators in EU-Russia relations team up, support, ignore each other, contradict or go against each other on the international political communication scene?

• How do EU and Russia usually convey messages on issues that regard their strategic partnership? How has the image of EU - Russia partnership changed over time in both EU and Russian press releases conveyed on the occasion of key events, like presidential summits?

• Why have EU and Russia preferred to take one specific course of action or another on bilateral communication?25

With this approach in mind, the thesis investigates the EU-Russian complicated relationship through the lens of bilateral communications with a special focus on public diplomacy26 approaches on both sides, conceptualized, as previously mentioned, as a crucial “avenue” for generating and using social power27 (Van Ham, 2010).

25 main interests that drive the actions of the key players; factors shaping the two parties’ behaviour
26 defined as governmental effort to influence public or elite opinion in a second nation for the purpose of turning the foreign policy of the target nation to advantage (Manheim, 1994). See also Davison, 1974; Gilboa, 2000; Kunczik, 1997; Sheafer & 2009
27 Chapter 5 of this dissertation provides a comprehensive overview of Van Ham’s approach
1.3.2. The Hypothesis

Against this background, the proposed answer to the main research question is that a key reason for the shallow format in EU-Russian communications and for its failure to establish a commonly agreed roadmap\textsuperscript{28} (the deficit) stems from a certain tacit strategy choice in both Brussels and Moscow.

More specifically -basing itself on a comprehensive inquiry focused on relevant literature and official documents (described in the next unit)\textsuperscript{29} and on numerous briefings with diplomats and experts in the field\textsuperscript{30}-, the dissertation hypothesizes that, instead of deepening their strategic partnership by establishing a so called “partnership of choice”, in accordance with official commitments on both sides\textsuperscript{31}, EU and Russia deliberately uphold a shallow format in EU-Russian communications that would de facto maintain a certain distance between the two actors, perpetuate competing narratives when addressing key common issues and concerns, while not necessarily facilitating exchanges and the establishment of a commonly agreed communication roadmap\textsuperscript{32} (deficit- dependent variable), as one might expect from “two strategic partners”.

- Planning the argument:

\textsuperscript{28} The role of a communication roadmap is that of monitoring and regulating the information flow
\textsuperscript{29} this alternative explanation to the research question crosses traditional boundaries between academic disciplines / schools of thought
\textsuperscript{30} According to several EU diplomats interviewed by the author in Brussels in 2012/2013 (on condition of anonymity), given the circumstances, both Brussels and Moscow are constantly trying to take some advantage of these continuous controversies in EU-Russian relations and EU tries to see “the full half of the bottle”
\textsuperscript{32} These roadmaps are generally considered a useful tool not only for enhancing specific communication processes but also for monitoring communication flows, anticipating communication crisis, identifying possible solutions aimed at overcoming more efficiently potential deadlocks or even for bridging communication gaps (in ideal circumstances).
The claim of the thesis is that these narratives, grounded in a certain type of divergent vocabularies and resulting in increased antagonism, have de facto encouraged bilateral competition in the public sphere as well, with actors often “struggling” for the greatest possible domination of the international political communication arena, perceived as one central strategic activity of public diplomacy processes, in the quest for media attention and eventually public recognition.

In other words, EU and Russian decision makers have systematically infused different meanings to the same terms they regularly appeal to for interacting with one another, despite the official (mutually) acknowledged need to overcome discursive asymmetries and dissonances and to eventually build common approaches and overcome the “traditional” lack of mutual trust, with trust identified by both actors as a sine qua non element condition for their strategic partnership in any case.

Moreover, the impact of these increasingly competing storylines pursued on parallel tracks has been to bring about (more) discord and yet a new element of confusion in EU-Russia relations, along with increased competition and antagonism on the international political communication scene caused by an ever increasing struggle for “imposing” and publicizing different message frames (with both actors realizing that sympathetic media coverage / attention or simply access to the media are often key prerequisites for political influence, for eventually ensuring public support and for finally refining their soft/social power capabilities on a global scale). Naturally, these approaches come to the

---

33 Here, I draw upon previous studies on inter-subjective (dis)connections in EU-Russian relations in particular on Andrey Makarychev’s definition, according to whom it is exactly through comprehending this terminology that one can unravel the logic of deep asymmetry embedded in the EU-Russian relationship (Makarychev, 2006). However, the present study employs a much broader approach.

34 Domination can be defined as the advantage of access to limited resources (Mueller, 1973), while the most important limited resource in the political communications arena is media attention (Sheafer & Gabay, 2009).

35 The idea was largely expanded by Tamir Sheafer and Itay Gabay in various studies.

fore especially when it comes to attempts of leveraging media coverage, with both sides trying to either persuade the public(s) of the legitimacy of a specific choice or policy\textsuperscript{37} or to promote other preferred message frames, which otherwise wouldn’t necessarily end up in the news.

Furthermore, the thesis argues that, despite formal commitments to enhance teamwork, the constant presence of different message frames in the public sphere and the continuous competition/antagonism between the two actors provide substantive evidence that both EU and Russia prefer to somehow stick to this disjoint \textit{modus operandi} of \textbf{bilateral communication (on parallel tracks)} in EU-Russian relations. This \textit{status quo} appears to have had a two-fold effect on bilateral relations as a whole:

- \textit{On the one hand}, it has obviously widened communication gaps by delaying (in)formal consultative processes on bilateral communication (like the development of a \textit{joint (in)formal communication roadmap}), by bringing (more) discord and yet a new element of confusion in EU-Russia relations, along with increased competition and antagonism.

- \textit{On the other hand}, this state of affairs has allowed though both Brussels and Moscow to develop \textbf{politically expedient /convenient solutions} and to draw some advantages from their constant antagonism as well. The idea is that each side transforms their bilateral weaknesses or gaps in key messages for justifying other themes (in this cases public diplomacy tools centre on opposing their images on specific topics) - e.g. during controversies on various human rights-related topics, the trope for Brussels is often “\textit{EU as human rights defender vs. Russia as perpetrator of human rights violations}”, while for Moscow, “\textit{Russia, as a country that respects all international obligations on human rights vs. EU, as an expert in human rights double standards, that has difficulties in dealing with its own problems in this field}”.

\textsuperscript{37} “In order to look good in the public eye, we have to maintain this state of art”-Various EU public servants interviewed by the author in Brussels describe this stratagems as political expedients
EU-Russian communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format:</th>
<th>Modus operandi: Antagonism &amp; strategy choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shallow -- mutual trust?!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>competing narratives - divergent vocabularies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discursive asymmetries</td>
<td>competition on the international political communication arena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no roadmap</td>
<td>Political expediency tools?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The case-study:**

For illustrating the above propositions, the dissertation questions the level of desirability of communication arrangements in EU-Russia relations, identifies the distinctive features that currently typify bilateral communications on the Brussels-Moscow axis (while emphasizing the various forms of power derived from it on both sides - e.g. social power) and documents the congruence and the extent to which the two actors communicate publicly about the evolution of their relations (with a special focus on “how” they convey information on the occasion of key events). The issue here is not only about discursive asymmetries and divergent understanding of major issues, but also about the lack of joint public messages even when addressing “neutral” subjects, that could have somehow counterbalance the partnership’s limitations, weaknesses or concerns on other questions.

In particular, the dissertation draws attention on the case of EU-Russia presidential summits. My objective is to explore the distinctive features that typify the actors’ performance in managing bilateral communications on these specific occasions. I argue that these are the result of distinct, competitive public diplomacy strategies (on both sides), that, instead of focusing on bridging the existing EU-Russia communication gap (in line with their “strategic partnership” requirements), they have further widened it.
Temporally, the period between 1998 and 2013 /January 2014 is essential to empirically map EU-Russia interactions in this specific settings and to derive the relevant conclusions.

These flagship events\textsuperscript{38}, which take place twice a year, are an indicative example of the thesis’ hypothesis. In principle they set the tone in bilateral relations and their role is to review key achievements and challenges in bilateral relations while reuniting the leaders of both sides at the same table. Also, it is on these occasions that the EU and Russia formally delineate (or are supposed to), update and agree on common strategies that frame bilateral cooperation. However, as the dissertation reveals, the summit “narratives” that come out on both sides and the consequent storylines depicting the general evolution of EU-Russian bilateral relations appear quite different and even divergent - same general format, but different contents somehow applying the principle “every miller draws water to his own mill”, although “on the surface” they stick to the “strategic partnership” label.

While for many scholars and experts, these events have gradually lost their appeal. (Makarychev & Sergunin, 2011), according to official standpoints, EU-Russian presidential summits have not been deprived of meaningful contents and have remained major “tools” for rapprochement between Brussels and Moscow, despite their ups and downs. For the EU, summits are add significant value to EU-Russian cooperation, as they set the tone for the future: they are used to monitor progress in bilateral relations and can ideally move bilateral dialogue from one stage to another, acting at times as strategic manoeuvres for balancing an unbalanced relationship. Meanwhile, for Russian diplomats, although these meetings might not always produce ground-breaking results, they represent authentic “milestones” in bilateral relations, with a significant role in the institutional structure of cooperation.

\textsuperscript{38} These events are organized usually in Russia in the first half of the year and in Brussels in the second half (practice established after the Lisbon treaty signed in 2007 and effective since 2009)
defining many development strategies in Russia-EU relations\textsuperscript{39}. Moreover, according to numerous EU and Russian officials interviewed in Brussels\textsuperscript{40}, it appears that on the occasion of these specific high level events, turning a blind eye on divergent storylines has at times proved to be somewhat a \textit{prudent} decision on both sides, as on these specific events, it also allowed actors to publicly avoid direct \textit{discursive tensions}, at least when leaders of both sides found themselves in the spotlight.

Against this background, the dissertation argues that the case of presidential summits represents a key indicator of a particularly complex relationship between two partners gradually drifting apart. Furthermore, it can be considered one of the finest example of the EU and Russian \textbf{preferences} to stick to their disjoint approaches for managing bilateral communications (\textit{see the above hypothesis}), despite their acknowledged need to enhance communications, that in turn would strengthen their strategic partnership as whole.

These tendencies on both sides, that I labelled “strategy choices”, favour the development of competing storylines, the use of divergent vocabularies and the constant competition in the public sphere, when addressing key common issues and concerns. In other words, through their flawed communications, summits tell the story of a relationship that has gradually returned to the stage of unstable equilibrium.

Additionally, the study claims that these events represent the perfect example of \textbf{diplomatic doublespeak}\textsuperscript{41}, as on this occasions both EU and

\textsuperscript{39} notes of the author on a press briefing of the Russian Ambassador to the EU Vladimir Chizhov journalists in Brussels on the eve of the 30th EU-Russia summit (December 2012)
\textsuperscript{40} notes of the author on several off the record interviews with EEAS officials, conducted in Brussels on the eve of the 30th EU-Russia summit
\textsuperscript{41} “Doublespeak” is understood here as a type of language that deliberately disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. The term was promoted to a mass audience especially by William Lutz who wrote extensively on the topic- Source: William Lutz, Doublespeak, Public Relations Quaterly, 1988-89
http://users.manchester.edu/FacStaff/MPLahman/Homepage/BerkebileMyWebsite/doublespeak.pdf
Russia often make use of a particular type of language which pretends to communicate but in reality it doesn't and may often take the form of euphemisms, unsupported generalizations, or deliberate ambiguity: it is in fact during these events that discords and some of the most striking competitive narratives in EU-Russian relations, grounded in divergent vocabularies, have been endorsed at the “highest level”. The very act of juxtaposing the EU and Russian narratives developed on these occasions highlights the two sides’ deep disparities.

This inquiry will ideally fill various blanks in both the research on EU-Russia relations and in international communication/public diplomacy literature.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN

This section sets the stage for an appropriate research design permitting inferences. Its specific aim is to present an overview of the design map and methodology adopted by the study to achieve the aims and objectives stated in the first unit. It starts by giving details on the organization of the thesis. Furthermore, it formulates and expands on the independent and dependent variables (linked explicitly to the thesis’s research question), explains the approach taken (qualitative and quantitative data combined) and discusses the data gathering procedures that were used (e.g. documents, observations, interviews). Additionally, the chapter outlines the contingent limitations of the thesis, while briefly underlying its significant contribution in various fields of
research. Finally the section defines and discusses the key terms and the major concepts used in the dissertation. They form the core thematic focus of the research study.

2.1. ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

The thesis is organized in **four Main Parts** disposed in logical order that contain either two or three chapters per part, except for the last one (concluding remarks). The focus on my central question -**WHY do EU and Russia (still) lack the setup to map out a joint strategy for managing bilateral communications, despite their mutually acknowledged need to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership and enhance (pragmatic) cooperation?**- crosscuts all chapters of this study.

**PART I** of the thesis introduces the research project and gives details on the organization of the dissertation. Its aim is to contextualise the main themes explored in the study.

**Chapter 1** describes the objectives, significance and scope of the study, while outlining the background and context of the research, the rationale and its specific purpose. Finally, the chapter includes an outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis (overview of the organization of the dissertation).

**Chapter 2** outlines the research design adopted by the dissertation to achieve the aims and objectives stated in Chapter 1. It discusses the methodology, lists the instruments used in the study and justifies the selection of the case study. Furthermore, the chapter shows how the data was analysed (based on factual publicly available evidence alongside with the use of interviews with experts /officials) and presents the study’s limitations. Finally,
the unit reviews definitions of the terms used (key concepts) such as public diplomacy, power and several others.

**PART II** provides the necessary historical and theoretical background that paves the ground for the thesis’ empirical analysis (Part III). It aims to contextualize the main topic of the dissertation (public diplomacy and communications in EU-Russian relations) and it thus indicates which strand of literature the thesis draws on in order to answer its research question. The overall objective is to set the baseline against which the specific case of communication practices is discussed.

**Chapter 3** looks into the historical and the institutional dimension of the EU-Russian *strategic partnership* and provides key elements of a specific historical context within which relevant events took place. It argues that, throughout history, this relationship has generally been driven by realpolitik considerations that, in turn, have often risen above institutional goals, that in theory aim to enhance bilateral cooperation between EU and Russia. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on several key shortcomings, representing the underlying cause of mutual discontent in EU-Russian relations, and on various forms of deadlocks, identified through a proposed Deadlock Scorecard Template.

**Chapter 4** connects the main themes of the thesis to different strands of the existing literature, while underlining how various contributions from international relations and other social sciences have contributed to the development of the alternative and broad conceptual framework of this dissertation, which allows for a simultaneous engagement of different interpretative approaches. The chapter draws on both Western and Russian sources and locates the present dissertation in a broader context. First, it provides a brief overview of prior research studies on EU-Russia relations,

---

focusing on the main existing typologies and theories advanced by international relations literature to describe the causes of the current controversies in EU-Russian relations. Secondly, the chapter identifies several research gaps in the literature on EU-Russian relations, linked mainly to communications and to the nature and workings of power in general. While pointing out the limitations of single-theory approaches, the claim is that a comprehensive study investigating different facets of the EU-Russian relations should recognize that interdisciplinary approaches to power and communications might be rewarding and offer interesting insights. In particular, the chapter draws attention to three specific concepts it identifies as major missing links, namely: social power, public diplomacy and framing.

PART III tackles the key research question of the dissertation and, as such, focuses on the practice of communication in EU-Russian relations, with a special focus on public diplomacy tools and methods and on the case of presidential summits, flagship events in bilateral relations. It builds on the second part of the thesis, which provided a broad overview on EU-Russian relations, by exploring historical legacies, the current state of affairs and future projections, with a special focus on enduring issues, emerging dilemmas and gaps in the literature.

Chapter 5 focuses on the multi-layered EU – Russia bilateral communication practices and identifies several distinctive features relevant to the object of the dissertation, while bearing in mind the broad research question - WHY do EU and Russia lack the setup to map out a joint strategy for managing bilateral communications, despite the mutually acknowledged need to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership and enhance pragmatic cooperation? Additionally, in order to put these data into context, the chapter provides a brief overview on the different communication “styles”
in Brussels and Moscow, namely on the distinct EU and Russian approaches on public diplomacy and communication policies in general.

**Chapter 6** focuses on the case of EU-Russia presidential summits and explores the key distinctive features that typify the actors’ performance in managing *bilateral communications/* public diplomacy on these specific occasions. It also puts into perspective these flagship events in the EU-Russian relations. Temporally, the period between 1998 and 2013 /January 2014 is essential to empirically map EU-Russia interactions at this level and to derive the relevant conclusions.

In conclusion, **PART IV** summarizes some of the core insights of the thesis and advances several cautious predictions on possible future scenarios in EU-Russia communication (**Chapter 7**). It also discusses the significance of the study underlining the fact that the problematic has been subject to much research in the past decades and academic literature offers various explanations for the drawbacks of their relations, which pertains to various levels. Still, previous studies do not necessarily focus on interdisciplinary approaches or link communication and public diplomacy to explanations of various failures and deadlocks in EU-Russia “strategic partnership”. The dissertation addresses exactly this literary gap through an interdisciplinary approach by appealing to both international relations and to communication literatures. Finally, it emphasizes its limits (**Chapter 8**).

### 2.2. Research Design

This section answers key questions about the dissertation’s conceptualization and execution, about the used data (sources & collection) and about its limitations.
2.2.1. METHODOLOGY

As mentioned in the first chapter, the dissertation seeks to demonstrate that, despite their strategic partnership (on paper), the key reason for the shallow format in EU-Russian communications and for its failure to establish a commonly agreed roadmap (the deficit) stems from a certain strategy choice of both Brussels and Moscow to regularly endorse competing narratives (that are grounded in a certain type of divergent vocabularies) which in turn encourage constant bilateral competition in the public sphere, when addressing key common issues and concerns, aiming for the greatest possible domination of the international political communication arena. In other words, it is hypothesized that, instead of enhancing their relationship, EU and Russia have further widened their communication gap, by developing an inconsistent, but somehow “convenient” modus operandi for managing their divergent logics of communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent (IV)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>EU &amp; Russian strategy choices</em> - which endorse competing narratives (built on divergent vocabularies) that in turn foster constant bilateral competition on the international political communication arena when addressing key common issues and concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependent (DV)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The “deficit” in EU-Russian communications generating the current shallow configuration of communication frameworks in bilateral relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPERATIONALIZATION⁴³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Official documents and statistics on EU-Russian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴³ measuring the effects of variables, for both IV(relevant influencing factor) and DV(situation to be explained)
My proposal leads to a direct causal relationship whereby the deficit in EU-Russian communications generating the current shallow configuration (dependent variable -DV) stems from specific strategy choices, that is from the preferences of the two actors to retain and develop competing narratives when addressing common issues and concerns -built on divergent vocabularies- that subsequently foster bilateral competition on the international political communication arena (independent variable- IV)- see table below.

The cause-effect relationship between the two independent and dependent variables, derived from the hypothesis sketched in the previous section, is contingent on certain ceteris paribus conditions remaining constant. The assumption is that the effect of the single independent variable on the dependent variable can be isolated when other relevant factors that might interfere in this causal relationship remain constant.

The Variables’ Table underpins the theoretical basis of the present research study. In order to generate qualitative data, the thesis employs an inductive method with a longitudinal investigation of the evolution of EU Russian public communications covering a 15-year time span. In particular, the study explores the case of EU-Russian presidential summits, flagship events in

---

44 despite their strategic partnership whose aim is, on the contrary, to build or consolidate teamwork.
45 focus on the unique effects of the given factor in the present complex causal situation.
46 the reasoning process starts in fact from data, than turn to the literature
47 it examines the progression of data over precise units of time
bilateral relations⁴⁸, while providing a historical context within which these key events in EU-Russia relations took place. Temporally, the period between 1998 and 2013 is essential to empirically map bilateral interactions in this particular setting and to develop relevant conclusions.

More specifically, the study analyses the official framings of these events on both sides, by focusing on specific mediated public diplomacy instruments and products, considered the initial step of the broader EU and Russian public diplomacy and communication strategies - e.g. press releases, statements, transcripts of press conferences, speeches/public discourses, conveyed to the press through either Brussels’ or Moscow’s public diplomacy units that coordinate communications on these events. The emphasis is on various frames spotted in EU and Russian messages /discourses that construct, on parallel tracks, the narratives and images of the same events (each actor on its own, without communicating with the other partner).

The claim is that the frame discrepancies, the different storylines and the almost total lack of joint message frames spotted in these documents over the years substantiate relevant evidence on the constant expansion of EU and Russian distinct and often contrasting narratives when addressing common issues or concerns, with each side deeming appropriate and (more) “true” its own versions⁴⁹.

In line with this reasoning, it is presumed that in order to persuade the public, these storylines have constantly fostered growing competition between the two partners on the international political communication arena.

Furthermore, for answering the research question, the thesis employs a broad approach, which allows for a simultaneous engagement of different

⁴⁸ their task is to review regularly key achievements and challenges in bilateral relations
⁴⁹ the reference is at the distinct narratives coming out of the summits on both sides and depicting not only particular events, but actually the overall evolution of bilateral relations up until specific moments
perspectives and a comprehensive research method, as none of the main current accounts of international relations, on their own, from the very field of IR (international relations), to (political) communication and to studies focusing strictly on public diplomacy tackle all the aspects needed to address the thesis’ central theme.

Through an interdisciplinary and wide-ranging analysis, the aim of the dissertation is thus to avoid potential (intrinsic) biases that might accompany single methods or single-theory studies. The table below summarises the methodological issues surrounding the study (choice of the research methods) and the logic of my inquiry. As the table illustrates, the examination is carried out using textual/content analysis\(^{50}\) while the main methodology applied is qualitative analysis\(^{51}\), involving observations of the same indicator over long periods of time, with the aim to trace longitudinal changes in EU and Russian press releases conveyed on the occasion of bilateral presidential summits and to explore the imagery divide in EU and Russian framings of the same events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The logic (justification for approaches &amp; methods(^{52}))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The approaches (theoretical basis for data collection and analysis)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{50}\) Content analysis is a widely used research technique for making “replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contents of their use” (Krippendorff, 2004).

\(^{51}\) Qualitative content analysis has been defined as: • “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278), • “an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification” (Mayring, 2000, p.2), and • “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings” (Patton, 2002, p.453).

\(^{52}\) nature of investigated subject (reality) & approach/nature of knowledge

\(^{53}\) Focus on both facts (it looks for causality, formulates hypothesis and operationalises concepts) and meanings (it tries to understand what is happening, develop ideas through induction from data and use multiple methods)

\(^{54}\) This theoretical framework within which the research is conducted is generally seen as a useful compromise which can combine the strengths and avoid the limitations of positivist and interpretivist paradigms
to inquiry
- IR: Constructivist\(^{55}\)
- Communication: Framing
- Public Relations/Branding: Promoting Image & Reputation

### The methods (procedural rules for data collection and analysis)\(^{56}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Inductive(^{57})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inquiry: Case study, Observations, Interviews, Literature Review, Samples investigated over time (Longitudinal Investigation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data Collection: Documents &amp; Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Analysis: Qualitative - Content analysis + Historical Analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tools - Framing (Research Method)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.2.2. DATA SOURCES AND COLLECTION & FIELDWORK

The thesis used *raw*, secondary or worked data - based on the use of analytical techniques (academic literature, official documents, news sources, expert interviews). The broad variety of evidence was gathered thus from many sources. Primary and secondary texts were chosen from both academic literature (on the EU-Russian relationship and on public diplomacy) and from official documents (EU -Commission, EEAS, Council, Parliament, Committee of Regions- & Russian) - e.g. documents such as treaties, intergovernmental agreements, reports, press releases, transcripts, statistics, etc. In particular, the dissertation analysed dozens of official EU and Russian documents constructing the image of bilateral presidential summits, conveyed to the press.

\(^{55}\) chosen amongst approaches to political inquiry (Behavioural, Institutional, Rational Choice, Constructivist, Feminist, Normative)

\(^{56}\) nature of the approach to research /practices of research that were undertaken

\(^{57}\) As it starts from specific observation / data and it attempts broader generalizations
from 1998 to 2013 (last update January 2014) through public diplomacy units in Brussels or Moscow.

The study will thus analyse a series of key public diplomacy instruments /tools/products, discourses released on the occasion of the summits (before/during/after), which are considered of relevance – e.g. press releases, statements, transcripts of press conferences, speeches/public discourses. The investigation required massive attention to detail.

Independent surveys, web based resources, field notes, conference/workshop outcomes (captured using response sheets), observations were used as well. Finally the dissertation draws on numerous in-depth meetings / interviews held in Brussels with public diplomacy experts, diplomats, academics, EU and Russian officials, generally described by the nature of their expertise (they were identified by name only when they had no objections to it).

The relevant academic literature (Books, Papers, Reports, Websites, Press Articles, Official Documents and Treaties, etc) was reviewed comprehensively ahead of the empirical stage of research and during the study research and data collection. The resources are arranged at the end of the thesis in alphabetical order primarily by author’s name and secondarily by date. The bibliography indicates the list of all works cited and related published materials (books, chapters in books, academic journals, policy papers, reports and annuals, official governmental publications, and authored newspaper and web-based articles). Additional website references also appear in the footnotes of the individual chapters.

Dissertation fieldwork also took place in Brussels between 2011-2014. During my residence at ULB Brussels many texts (articles and books) recommended by interviewees have been used. I have conducted research

---

58 Where an author has more than one article -they were shown in order of date or publication.
using the vast Brussels based libraries and documentation centres (ULB, VUB, various EU institutions – European Commission, European Parliament, European Council) and I attended numerous conferences on EU-Russian relations, public diplomacy and other related topics.

Moreover, I had the opportunity to directly attend briefings and press conferences of three EU-Russian summits organised in Brussels (2011, 2012, 2014). My interactions with dozens of Russian and EU diplomats, public servants, contractors, journalists, lobbyists, academics, business representatives resulted in productive exchanges that strengthened my research. Moreover, being fluent in English/French (official languages used by EU) and in Russian languages, I was able to reach and interact with a broad array of experts and to understand nuances in various languages and thus use them appropriately in the research (textual analysis and interviews). Public figures are identified by name, except in cases where sources specifically asked to remain anonymous so they are described only by the nature of their expertise.

2.3. KEY CONCEPTS

Systematic research of any significant topic first requires workable definitions. Hence, this unit defines and discusses the major concepts employed in the dissertation. They form the core thematic focus of this study, suit the thesis’ purpose and provide a skeleton for much of the chapter outline. They revolve around various accounts of international relations (IR) that anchor my research project, from the very field of IR to political communications or to studies advancing possible theories of public diplomacy. The inquiry centres on three fundamental terms –power, public diplomacy and framing- that indicate the common thread to the main argument that the thesis follows and
hangs on to, but requires the integration of other related concepts as well, some of much are listed accordingly below.

**COMMUNICATION:** In simplistic terms, communication is defined as the sending and receiving of messages, as both elements must be present for communication to take place. However, the fundamental transaction of message sent and received does not presuppose that communication has occurred. As far as *diplomacy* is concerned, communication is considered as an essential element. A Unesco report presented like “blood is to the human body”. “Whenever communication ceases, the body of international politics, the process of diplomacy, is dead, and the result is violent conflict or atrophy” *(Tran, 1987)*

The thesis refers to the concept of inter-subjective communications as well. With is grounded in the understanding of “EU-Russia relations as an encounter of two subjects in transformation conducive to the formation of a sphere of inter-subjective communications that might be either divisive or cooperative”. *(Makarychev 2006).*

**COOPERATION VS. CONFLICT / COMPETITION:** Various articles and research studies stress the intrinsic and somewhat self-evident relation between partnerships and the widely debated concept of *cooperation* *(Powell, 2004).* Here, approaches are often limited though to specific schools of thought of the primary contending theoretical schools in international relations. However, in order to achieve its aim, just like the whole dissertation, this section adopts an interdisciplinary approach and for this reason it goes beyond the limits set by fundamental dichotomies, like for instance *realism/liberalism*. The assumption is that although theories based on realism, liberalism or constructivism come to rather contradictory conclusions about the prospects for international

---

60 Partnerships are not about deferring to others, but about cooperation, about working with them *(Powell, 2004).*
cooperation\textsuperscript{61}, their analyses are somehow derived from a set of shared or complementary suppositions\textsuperscript{62} and might thus result instrumental when applied to the case of strategic partnerships, given the lack of a clear consensus in the literature about what this specific phenomenon entails and thus about how it should be exactly measured. Liberal IR theories, such as Axelrod’s cooperation theory (1984) and Keohanes’s concept of “cooperation after hegemony” (1984)\textsuperscript{63}, appear for instance as key reference when assessing specific cases involving international cooperation. The basic ideas of these prominent contributions in the field are that the foundation of cooperation is not necessarily about trust, but rather about the robustness of the relationship (cooperation theory), while “cooperation after hegemony”\textsuperscript{64} is understood as a reaction to (potential) conflicts. Furthermore, the same theories of Axel and Keohane seem relevant for measuring variations of international cooperation as well. In particular, according to the two scholars, in order to better understand the success and failure of any cooperation, three key dimensions should be considered, namely mutuality of interest, the shadow of the future, and the number of players (Axelrod and Keohane, 1986).

Subsequently, when measuring cooperation, determining the degree of interdependence stands as a logical step as well, as interdependence is a key (although not sufficient) prerequisite that facilitates cooperation as a whole by allowing the parts involved to maintain agreements, secure peace and foster strategies for institution building\textsuperscript{65}. Likewise, the cooperation-competition

\textsuperscript{61} whereas realism and liberalism tend to focus on material factors such as power or conflict, constructivist approaches emphasize the impact of norms, identities and ideas

\textsuperscript{62} the reference is at the very nature of international relations

\textsuperscript{63} neoliberal concepts IR- att. in a world that de facto lacks a central authority capable of enforcing such cooperation (Axelrod 1984).

\textsuperscript{64} By defining cooperation as such, Keohane is appealing to realist concerns with power and conflict; he does not want to “relegate cooperation to the mythological world of relations among equals in power”

\textsuperscript{65} The literature on interdependence and the nexus with other practices is vast as well. Many scholars have focused for instance on its economic dimension and on the role of international institutions
dichotomy, that has always fascinated rational theory scholars\(^{66}\) appears as a useful reference when assessing the tendency of international actors to compete, balance or forsake cooperation\(^{67}\). These terms are central to the discussion on public diplomacy practices in EU-Russian relations.

**DEADLOCKS:** The thesis appeals to IR literature for employing this concept. Deadlocks are defined here as still points of all negotiation, in which lies both promise and potential to inflict damage. While there exists a rich body of literature on how to negotiate wisely and effectively, very few works have focused specifically on the problem of deadlocks. (Narlikar, 2010). Deadlocks are relevant for the thesis as the represent a subset of the bigger set of problems of cooperation (as addressed by the extended literature on problems of collective action, cooperation under anarchy, regime theory, and different variants of institutionalism including sociological, historical and rational design) and conflict resolution (as addressed by a substantial body of work within negotiation analysis).

**DIPLOMACY\(^{68}\):** The origins of diplomacy lie buried in the darkness preceding what we call the dawn of history (Nicolson, 1953) while its evolution has continually adapted to change in the international system. The thesis focuses on the evolution of diplomatic method. A growing concern with public diplomacy has to be seen in this context. Encyclopaedia Britannica, the world's oldest continuously published encyclopaedia, defines it as “the established method of influencing the decisions and behaviour of foreign

---

\(^{66}\) ever since the publication of Kenneth Waltz’s Theory of International Politics, that centres on the role of international anarchy

\(^{67}\) Various schools of realist theory explain other complexities as well-e.g. states’ failure to balance, the absence of “great-power war”, the peaceful end of the Cold War, the upsurge in institutionalized cooperation among the advanced industrial states. etc

\(^{68}\) The Oxford English Dictionary defines diplomacy (from Latin diploma, meaning an official document, which in turn derives from the Greek διπλωμα, meaning a folded paper/document) as “the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country’s representatives abroad” and as “the art of dealing with people in a sensitive and tactful way”. Oxford Dictionary of Politics: Diplomacy originated in the system of conducting relations between the states of classical Greece. It revived in medieval Europe and grew in importance in the relations between the city states of Renaissance Italy and the emerging states of post-Reformation Europe. The Congress of Vienna, 1815, regularized a system of permanent diplomacy between states.
governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence”. Generally defined as the “art” of conducting relationships for gain without conflict and as chief instrument of foreign policy, its methods include secret negotiation by accredited envoys (though political leaders also negotiate) and international agreements and laws, while its goals are to further the state's interests as dictated by geography, history, and economics. Safeguarding the state's independence, security, and integrity is of prime importance; preserving the widest possible freedom of action for the state is nearly as important. Beyond that, diplomacy seeks maximum national advantage without using force and preferably without causing resentment.

**Framing:** The thesis appeals to a bulk of scholarly work to define the notion. I start from the assumption that there is a consensus between scholars of International Relations and Communication around the key role of ideas in world politics. Communication literature, for instance, which is rich in theories, generally positions the concept in connection with other models of media effects, namely “agenda setting” and “priming”. “Framing” is generally defined as “selection”, exclusion of, and emphasis on certain issues and approaches to promote a particular definition, interpretation, moral evaluation, or a solution. “Priming” refers to criteria suggested by the media to assess the performance of leaders. Contrary to popular myth, the media represent only one actor in the framing process. Politicians, policy makers, elites, interest groups, and foreign leaders all try to win public acceptance of their framing. The thesis refers to the concept of agenda setting as well. Noteworthy is Gilboa’s definition, according to which “agenda setting” suggests that issues receiving the most attention in the media will be perceived by the public as the most important (Gilboa, 2008). Furthermore, other authors associate it to the concept of “competition”. As the ultimate goal is to eventually attract media attention, it is assumed that competition can generally take two dimensions: competing for access to the media (i.e. receiving media attention) and
competing for media framing (i.e., control of the selected version of reality presented by the media) (Cook, 1998; Hilgartner & Bosk, 1988). The first dimension is termed *agenda building* and the second *frame building*. (Sheafer, and Gabay, 2009).

**POWER:** *Power* is a key concept that can take a variety of forms in various disciplines, but it appears that many fields have underestimated its amounts, sources, types, modalities’ and practises implicated in both the constitution and in the conduct of international life. Looking across the often complementary understandings of power in various disciplines and across the assortments of actors in the international arena, the “polymorphous” character of the term stands out: it seems that nowadays power works in such diverse ways that no single formulation can fully capture it when studying the interactions between its diverse amounts, sources, types, modalities or practices implicated in the constitution and conduct of international affairs. In international relations, while realists for example usually look for power in situations characterized by conflict and are committed to understandings of power that serve the national interests of states, liberals search for ways to check and limit power of the always potential authoritarian state, whilst post-structuralists deconstruct its capillary practices that constitute the modern world and its subjects (Weldes, Van Ham 2010). Generally speaking, moving away from the classical state based authority towards global governance, political power is repositioned, re-contextualized and transformed by the growing importance of other less territorially based power systems (Held, Vam Ham, 2010). Meanwhile *communication scholars* argue that generally speaking communication, along with information, is a source of power in itself (Castells, 2007) whilst its (communicative) practices enable people to build, maintain, or resist power. Furthermore, in their view, the so-called socialized communication (the one that exists in the public realm) provides support for
the social production of meaning, as “the battle of the human mind is largely played out in the processes of communication” (Castells, 2007).

**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY (PD):** Coined in 1965, *public diplomacy* deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. Central to the term is the transnational flow of information and ideas. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications. A widely accepted definition is the following: "Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications." Alongside this conceptual debate runs the need to differentiate forms of public diplomacy and the objectives that are intended to achieve. In practice, the most common distinctions are drawn from the experience of the US that reflects long running arguments with the foreign affairs community between informationalists and culturalists approaches (Arndt 2005), that is sometimes translated into advocacy and cultural communications (Malone 1988, Brown, 2012). Furthermore, the focus broadens to other key-terms like frames, discourses –

---

69 The Murrow Center –http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Murrow/Diplomacy
treated as tools/types of “soft power” - negotiations, intersubjective communication (divisive or cooperative). The object of the present dissertation is limited to specific aspects, with a focus on several public diplomacy tools and strategies in the case of EU-Russia relations. The thesis argues that in the case of EU-Russian relations, both sides’ public diplomacy tools and strategies have widened existing bilateral gaps, instead of counterbalancing the current limitations of an already troubled relationship, given the mutually acknowledged need to “revive” their “strategic partnership”, that de facto exists only on paper.

**Social Power:** The dissertation borrows from Van Ham’s (2009) constructivist notion of *social power*, a “particular face of power” which for the author resides in diverse practices such as *agendas setting*, problem framing or public diplomacy and captures “the ability to set standards, create norms and values that are deemed legitimate and desirable, without resorting to coercion or payment” (Van Ham, 2009). The thesis employs van Ham’s definitions when analysing EU and Russian public diplomacy approaches, while focusing on the exercise of discursive powers and on the concept on framing. It starts from Vam Ham’s assumption that public diplomacy’s aim of a balanced partnership is attractive since, “by using social power, it rejects the classical paradigm of military power projection and information dominance” (Van Ham, 2010).

**Soft Power:** In international relations (IR) soft power is generated only in part by what the government does through its policies and public diplomacy. The generation of soft power is also affected in positive (and negative) ways by a host of non-state actors within and outside the country. Those actors affect both the general public and governing elites in other countries, and create an enabling or disabling environment for government policies. Soft power

---

resources –that usually arise from the attractiveness of each actor’s values, culture and policies (Nye 2004)—regularly interact in complex ways with their “hard” counterpart (hard power), that employ as key elements both coercion measures/instruments (sticks) and payment (carrots) (Gilboa, 2008). For Nye, “the soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). But combining these resources is not always easy.” Subsequently, additional facets of power emerge, such as: “smart” versions (that try to balance hard and soft power) “integrated” types (that focus on alliances and reinvented partnerships; Korb and Boorstin, 2009) or “social” versions (that reside in diverse practices such as agenda setting, problem framing, public diplomacy, discursive power, branding; Vam Ham, 2010). Noteworthy is also the concept of social power—, frequently found in cases which seem harmonious (at least on the surface) and used to advance policy issues by co-opting other actors, in other words not by acting against the interests of others or by coercing them on way or another (Vam Ham 2010).

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS (SP): The introduction of the expression in the International Relations vocabulary appears quite recent. For some authors, strategic partnerships are a kind of relationship, which involves two actors that are powerful and capable of taking strategic action together (Emerson, 2001).

The thesis focuses on EU practices, noting the lack of comprehensive definitions of this political category (Grevi, 2010), although, over the last decade, the Union has set up 10 SPs with a range of countries, considered key global and regional powers in an international system marked by power shifts and deepening interdependence (Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States). Officially, the

---

instrument of a Strategic Partnership “represents the EU’s response to an increasingly interdependent world, since cooperation with key powers is necessary to ensure that the EU’s values and interests are preserved at the global level”\textsuperscript{72}, but common elements to the EU’s various SPs are difficult to find as the EU calls “strategic partners” both individual countries and some groups of countries and international organisations.

While employing the term “with caution”, the thesis underlines that the case of EU-Russian relations demonstrates that SPs are still a work in progress for the EU, which has not yet properly defined their use nor provided a clear list of its strategic partners. Attempts at classification underline the diversity of the EU’s strategic partners, the varied procedures for establishing an SP and the different degrees of cooperation. Therefore, it has been disputed whether SPs are effective policy instruments. Doubts about a real EU strategy on SPs, with stated objectives and related achievements, as well as about the EU’s capacity to be a strategic actor have also been expressed.

\textsuperscript{72} Source: EU Parliament, Library Briefing 26/09/2012-
PART II.

REALPOLITIK DYNAMICS. ENDURING ISSUES. EMERGING DILEMMAS - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW -
EU–Russia relations have often been presented in scholarship as a unique case on the international political scene. On the one hand, ever since the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, this relationship has followed a course of greater or lesser proximity, fluctuating according to their actions, objectives, interests and depending on the (inter)national context.

On the other hand, their subsequent “strategic partnership”, often labelled a “marriage arrange”, has never been properly defined by any official document on either sides. Furthermore, in practice it appeared governed by a sort of threefold dichotomy whose poles – cooperation, conflict or competition – have constantly been articulated with one another in complex ways. Paradoxically, the matrix of oppositions has apparently involved a certain affinity although these are quite diverse notions, as throughout history cooperation has essentially coexisted with both conflict and competition trends on numerous key issues and policy areas. Moreover, it appears that over the years, these distinctive features have often overlapped, transforming this already complex relationship in a variable and unpredictable.

For historians, the current Brussels-Moscow controversies reflect simply the chronology of a complicated and unique relationship between Europe as a whole and Soviet Russia (1922–1991), the Russian Empire (1721–1917) or

---

73 The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) formally ceased to exist on 26 December 1991
74 The Soviet Union had its roots in the Russian Revolution of 1917, which deposed the imperial autocracy
the Tsardom of Russia (1547–1721)\textsuperscript{75} and so on\textsuperscript{76}. Furthermore, many refer to perennial “enigmas” in defining this relationship and in this sense like to quote a famous discourse from 1939 of the British Prime Minister of the time, Winston Churchill: “I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest (…))”\textsuperscript{77}. The overall claim is that these intricate dynamics -rooted decades and even centuries ago- are still permeating EU-Russian cooperation through all bilateral spheres on the Brussels-Moscow axis\textsuperscript{78}.

Moreover, several scholars argue that it is actually through this constant antagonism and through their “otherness” (Neumann, 1995)\textsuperscript{79}, that both Europe and Russia have forged their (separate) identities throughout the years. In this sense, Iver Neumann claims for instance that in Europe “no matter which social practices a period has foregrounded, be they religious, bodily, intellectual, social, military, political, economic or otherwise, Russia has consistently been seen as an irregularity”\textsuperscript{80}. For the author, that discusses the ambiguity surrounding Russia’s Europeanness along a temporal dimension, the most appropriate metaphor used for the current European discussions of Russian politics and economics should be that of transition, while keeping in mind that de facto “Russia has quite consistently been represented as just having been tamed, civil, civilised, just having begun to participate in

\textsuperscript{75} For more information the author recommends Riasanovky N. and Steinberg M,A History of Russia, 2010, Oxford University Press, http://global.oup.com/academic/product/a-history-of-russia-9780195341973;jsessionid=64C9B9BCD996EA71917D91179F74C6C3?cc=be&lang=en&

\textsuperscript{76} It is often suggested that on-going political debates are invariably tainted by history. Furthermore, scholars draw regularly attention to the fact that debates might also perpetuate certain representations to the detriment of others.


\textsuperscript{78} e.g. from day-to-day deliberations over institutional particulars (such as the way to handle the expansion of organisations like the EU and NATO) to discussions on security or economic issues (not only where markets for such raw materials as petroleum and aluminium are concerned, but also the overall question of what is most often referred to as the transition of former communist economies ) (Neuman, 1996)

\textsuperscript{79} just like other human collective would shape an identity by the way it represents other human collectives-the “others”

\textsuperscript{80} Neumann Iver B.. Russia as Europe’s Other, European University Institute, Florence, 1995, p.1
European politics, just having become part of Europe”. More specifically, basing itself on 500 years of writings about Muscovy, Russia and the Soviet Union, the author argues that Russia has always been perceived and represented in Europe as a constant learner since the age of Enlightenment—e.g. as a pupil who could be successful at times (late 17th- and 18th-century), as a “misguided student” that refuses to learn although it should do so (19th century), a student who stays away from school without leave or explanation (20th century) or finally as a very stubborn but somewhat gifted pupil, who regularly refuses to do what other people want or to change both opinions or habits (the present) (Ibid, 1995).

Likewise, on the Russian side as well it seems that the process of delineating a European “other” from the Russian self is an active part of Russian identity formation as well. Here again the temporal element has a key role for explaining the predominance of a particular action. For Igor Leshoukov, a scholar from St. Petersburg State University, “Russia’s perspective of the EU has always been subordinate to the general state of the country’s relations with the West, to the peculiarity and the mood of these relations.” To that Leshoukov adds the fact that not even in Russia there has generally been little consensus around the idea of Russia’s positioning either within or outside Europe. Furthermore, for the Russian researcher, Moscow’s attitude towards the EU and the phenomenon of European integration tends to mirror the country's relationship with the West in general: “When the ideological and the political - military confrontation between the West and the East was high, no pragmatic assessment of European integration was feasible.

---

81 Ibid, 1995
82 Neuman’s view of Russia as a truant or as a pig-headed student has apparently inspired several artistic movements in Russia as well (e.g. Pussy Riot).
84 Many analysts claim that the perennial divisions over the “European question” have generally caused inconsistency in Russia’s European policy;
85 Ibid, 1998
(…) while when the first improvement was reached and the Helsinki process\textsuperscript{86} started, the first chances for normalisation emerged, but the time was not ripe- - only under Mikhail Gorbachev\textsuperscript{87} did the cooperation between the EU and USSR/Russia become possible”. Iver Neumann goes even further as for the author, when Russians for instance set out to discuss Europe, in reality discuss themselves: “Identity does not reside in essential and readily identifiable cultural traits but in relations and the question of where and how borders toward the “other” should be drawn therefore become crucial. The making of Russian policy is dependent on what sort of political project its politically leading citizens want Russia to be. Since the fight about this is conducted as a question of how should relate to Europe, ideas about Europe emerge as a key background determinant for both domestic and foreign policy”\textsuperscript{88}.

Against this background, several follow up questions arise: is the current \textit{strategic partnership} capable of helping actors overcome the past’s obstacles and historical taboos? The constant use of these terms “\textit{strategic partnership}” for defining EU-Russian relations might indeed be perceived as a relevant evidence of the fact that it is supposed to go beyond the simple strengthening of cooperation between parts, having a more systemic role. But what do we really make of this privileged collaboration framework? How does it actually work? What are the two actors involved really up to? What is their long term joint vision? What are the distinctive features that typify this \textit{partnership}? What about its limits? How can we explain the actors’ persistent unwillingness to compromises or the recurrent conflicting and competitive trends in various bilateral fields, despite its establishment? What is the meaning of \textit{cooperation} in this particular case? How come it doesn’t take the form of clear binding

\textsuperscript{86} The Helsinki Accords was the final act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Finland in1975. Thirty-five states, including the Soviet Union, USA, and most European states signed the declaration aiming “to improve relations between the Communist bloc and the West”. These Accords, however, were not binding as they did not have treaty status; For more info: http://www.osce.org/who/43960

\textsuperscript{87} The last leader of the Soviet Union

agreements in key bilateral areas\textsuperscript{89}? Or should it be understood only as a context-specific phenomenon? How can it be analysed?

This chapter argues there are various ways to get one’s arm around these issues. First, it takes note of the unclear criteria of the EU-Russia partnership. Subsequently, after a short overview of several definitions and related concepts from the literature, it proceeds by identifying several distinctive features that typify strategic partnerships in general and might result applicable in the EU-Russia case as well, when assessing the evolution of the current partnership. Furthermore, the study employs a historical analysis that helps contextualize the complex dynamics between these two actors and understand the multidimensional nature of their partnership characterized by various degrees of asymmetry. Finally it deconstructs the key elements that currently shape the EU-Russian partnership arguing that they appear \textit{ab initio} constrained in a dual power logic of \textit{convergence} and \textit{divergence}.

\textbf{3.1.1. The Unclear Criteria}

The introduction of the “\textit{strategic partnership}” expression in the diplomatic language gaining relevance in EU-Russian relations dates back to the 90s. Despite the low degree of formalization and institutionalization, the terms have gradually replaced the expression “cooperative relationships” in most official documents, in support of other related concepts, like “alliances”, “agreements” or “cooperation”. Furthermore, they became a sort of a brand of EU-Russian bilateral relations, a label regularly promoted but also quite contested on both sides, to which EU and Russian leaders in like to refer to

\textsuperscript{89} here the reference is to the fact that international cooperation typically takes the form of bilateral or multilateral treaties, including representation to intergovernmental institutions
mainly in public discourses, on the eve of flagship events, like for instance presidential summits.

On the one hand, for Brussels, the EU and The Russian Federation are simply two strategic partners that are indispensable to each other’s security, economic development and prosperity (Barroso, 2013). Furthermore, Russia is also the largest neighbour of the Union, brought even closer by the Union’s 2004 and 2007 enlargements, and the third biggest trading partner, with Russian supplies of oil and gas making up a large percentage of its exports to Europe\(^9\). Likewise, the regular evaluating reports of the European Commission, that institution that mainly handles the routine of bilateral relations together with the European External Action Service EEAS and in collaboration with the Council of the EU regularly emphasize that the two actors share a complex web of overlapping interests, which simply need to form the basis for a constructive engagement\(^\text{91}\).

However, Brussels admits that as far as joint goals and visions, the EU-Russian gap is still quite deep\(^9\). Consequently, according to the head of the European Commission, Jose Barroso, in order to (partly) overcome dissonances, the EU-Russia interaction should be upgraded from a partnership of necessity to a partnership of choice (Barroso, 2013). In 2013, the president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy was urging to set aside what he called caricatures and clichés hampering the EU-Russian relationship (Van Rompuy, 2013). For Van Rompuy, “those who give in to these false mirrors misjudge our relationship. They arise precisely because we hold each other to


\(^9\) Critical approaches arise especially from the European Parliament, that unlike the Council of the European Union (the Council) and the European Commission, is not directly involved though in the institutional routine of the EU – Russian bilateral relations
high standards, which is in itself the highest sign of respect (...) between two of the world's most important players, Russia and Europe today”93.

On the other hand, for Moscow, the EU and Russia, “the largest geopolitical entities on the European continent”, are major partners, interdependent in many spheres (including economy, energy, internal and external aspects of security) and linked by common civilization roots, culture, history, and future (Lavrov, 2010)94, 95. From the Russian perspective, the strategic partnership with the EU is centred on shared European interests, culture and history, while “the fact that European culture in the broad sense spans the area to the Pacific coast is definitely Russia’s historic achievement”96. In a letter sent to Brussels on the occasion of an EU anniversary, Russian President Vladimir Putin was even pledging that “a stable, prosperous and united Europe is in our interest (while) the development of multifaceted ties with the EU is Russia’s principled choice”. However, in the meantime, Moscow emphasizes that its commitment to upgrade it is conditional: while the agenda of the EU-Russian interaction is multidimensional and covers already various sectors, Moscow is willing to enhance it on the basis of equality, trust and mutual benefits97. According to the Russian minister for foreign affairs, Sergey Lavrov, Moscow and Brussels can only achieve a fundamentally new, higher level of partnership if they regard each other as equal partners, respect each other and take into account


94 http://www.russianmission.eu


96 Lavrov, S, State of the union Russia–EU: Prospects for partnership in the changing world. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies 51(S1), 2013 pp.6

each other’s interests. Furthermore, Lavrov deplores the fact that in his opinion “it seems that recently our European partners have even somewhat abandoned our common understanding regarding the consistent development of Russia–EU co-operation” (Lavrov, 2013)

In this context, the growing use of the “strategic partnership” label for the EU-Russian relations appears rather puzzling, although proportional to the somewhat lack of accuracy concerning its real meaning or implementation criteria in international relations in general. Wider scholarship seems to agree that although Russia and the EU have become increasingly interdependent, their partnership is yet to transform into one of mutual cooperation (Baev, 2012; Ziegler, 2012; Tsygankov, 2013). Queries like “What does this really say about the evolution of EU-Russian relations?”, “What kind of relationship fits the strategic partnership framework?”, “How can we assess it?”, “Is interdependence a guarantee for an effective cooperative partnership?”, “Is this a form of policy making?”, or “What are its general prerequisites and the goals behind the use of this concept?” are just a few of the many unanswered questions on the concrete functioning of this partnership.

In fact, for many scholars, the unclear criteria in the EU-Russia strategic partnership case reflect a generalized tendency in the literature that has often neglected the wider topic of strategic partnerships in international relations, although these also represent new, key realities of power distribution in the international system.

However, the thesis takes note of the fact that, in the last few years, given the growing relevance of the term in EU vocabulary of foreign policy, several authors started investigating the topic and other related concepts more

---

98 In this sense, in its relations with the EU (but also with other global players), Russia has gradually sought to be treated as an equal actor. For example, the Russian National Security Strategy until 2020, approved in 2009, focuses on the fact that Russia has overcome the consequences of the systemic crisis at the end of the 20th century and fulfilled all criteria that ensure Russia’ emergence as a world leader; Source: National security strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020 (approved in 2009)- Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации до 2020 года http://www.scrf.gov.ru/documents/1/99.html
thoroughly. In this context, a look on several tentative definitions put forward to date by previous research studies, is particularly useful, as several distinctive features that typify strategic partnerships in general might result applicable in the EU-Russia partnership case as well.

To start with, it should be noted that business oriented understandings of the concept have gained considerable ground in the past years. The *Routledge Encyclopedia of International Political Economy* for instance defines the strategic partnerships as political instruments aimed at generally facilitating the intensification of the economic relationships (Barry Jones, 2013). Conversely, several experts still prefer to stick to simple definitions and define strategic partnerships in terms of the possibility of taking strategic action (Emerson, 2001), without discussing though what exactly *strategic action* means, while some others suggest that strategic partnerships should simply skip rigid listings as they are simple “*speech acts*” that basically allow partners to gradually strengthen their relations\(^99\).

Against this background, Giovanni Grevi’s definition of “strategic partnerships” appears, to date, the best attempt to provide an all-comprehensive description of what a *strategic partnership* should actually look like nowadays in international relations\(^100\) (Grevi 2010). The central idea of this definition is that strategic partnerships, that may concern both pivotal global also regional actors, are key bilateral means to pursue basic goals\(^101\). For Grevi, “what matters is that they deliver”. Furthermore, according to the definition, one should also keep in mind that while “cooperation of strategic partners can lead to win-win games”, it can also create a vicious circle if relations turn sour as

\(^99\) *Notes of the author on the proceedings of the SGIR Pan-European International Relations Conference Stockholm, 9-11 September 2010* – http://www.eisa-net.or

\(^100\) Grevi, G., Making EU strategic partnerships effective. Working paper FRIDE, n. 105, December 2010, pp.2-3, 5

\(^101\) *Ibid*, pp.5
“such partners are those who could inflict most harm to one another”\(^{102}\). In this sense, the scholar draws attention on the specific case of the EU, for which strategic partnerships are a political category that, to date, “no document or statement of the Union clearly defines” (Grevi, 2010). For this reasons, an output-oriented definition of strategic partnerships also suggests “some common sense criteria to assess the strategic relevance of the relations with some of the EU’s partners”\(^{103}\). However, although considered one of the most comprehensive definitions of strategic partnerships, Grevi’s explanation lacks details on the “implementation” and “assessment” phases of this type of cooperative relations: indeed it points out the fact that strategic partnerships relate to the attribution of a political status, but does not really elaborate on how exactly these strategic partners should relate to each other, in the pursuit of common or shared goals.

In this context, wider scholarship seems to agree on the central role of another key element when defining strategic partnerships, namely the value element. Marius Vahl in particular points out the relevance of these elements, of common values, that go hand in hand with common interests and mutual understanding and with the so called “equality of size”. According to Vahl, “it could be therefore argued that a prerequisite for a proper partnership is that it must be between generally similar parties of roughly equal size”\(^{104}\). For the scholar, the presence of all these elements is an essential criteria for any partnership “as opposed to mere co-operation”\(^{105}\), although there are exceptions, like for instance the EU-Russian relations.

\(^{102}\) However, according to Grevi, as the strategic quality and the ‘partnership’ nature of relations between specific countries are often questioned, the current debate on “who is a strategic partner and who is not is a circular one and the practice of attributing such political status is quite inconsistent”.

\(^{103}\) Ibid, pp.3

\(^{104}\) Vahl M. Just Good Friends? The EU-Russian “Strategic Partnership” and the Northern Dimension, Ceps, 2001 Brussels, pp.4

\(^{105}\) Ibid., pp.4
On the EU-Russia partnership specific case Vahl argues for instance that “it is difficult, to say the least, to regard the EU and Russia as equals” and for this reason “the asymmetric nature of the relationship between Russia and the EU is a considerable obstacle to the emergence of a strategic partnership”\textsuperscript{106}. However, “while the differences are rather obvious, they constitute a necessary starting point in a discussion of the future EU-Russia relationship”\textsuperscript{107}. Following a similar line of reasoning, the Finish scholar Hiski Haukkala emphasizes as well the key role of “values” in the specific case of EU-Russia strategic partnership, but associates them with a specific set of “norms”, together with which they form “the normative core of EU’s Russia policy”\textsuperscript{108}(Haukkala, 2005). The scholar argues that, for the EU, the existence of a set of shared values with all its strategic partners, and in particular with Russia, is generally perceived as having two central functions, acting as both the prerequisite for its establishment and as the benchmarks against which the prospects and depth of bilateral interaction is regularly (in principle) measured (Haukkala, 2005).

Against this background, a question then arises: given the unclear functioning criteria and the lack of sharp definitions, how can we best assess and analyse the building process of this strategic partnership, in order to grasp the key trends of its evolution? Should the focus be more on mutual interests, commitments, goals, values or on the partners’ equality? I argue that one way to get one’s arm around these issues is by first taking a step back in time (unit 4.2.), then focus on the current key tracks for interaction, namely on the current framework for collaboration (unit 4.3.) and attempt to identify major shortcomings and deadlocks (unit 4.4.).

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, pp.4
\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, pp.4
\textsuperscript{108} While “norms” are defined as a set of technical standards relating mainly to economic activities (mainly derived from the EU’s acquis communautaire), “values” are described as higher order normative principles that relate to the very foundation and existence of the relationship (Haukkala, 2005).
3.1.2. Historical Legacies

When the EU adventure started in the 1950s and the first communities were established, the response in Moscow was rather negative and antipathy was reciprocal. For a few decades, the Soviets viewed the EU as “performing a function similar to that of the political-military cooperation within NATO, namely, to contain the Russian influence in Europe” (Leshoukov, 1998). The early 1970s represented the era of a temporary rapprochement between the two “systems”\(^\text{109}\), followed by what historians have called a new “heat wave in the Cold War” that lasted until the 1980s, that is until Gorbachev’s Perestroika. “The dialogue of the deaf” between Brussels and Moscow ended eventually with the signature of the first documents formally regulating EU-Urss relations, namely a joint declaration followed by the mutual recognition in 1988\(^\text{110}\) (Delcour, 2011). These documents reflected a major shift in Soviet thinking on EU and on the East/West divide, as for the first time the Soviet establishment of the time assessed favourably the European integration process and its policies. Furthermore, in 1989, Gorbachev’s speech delivered on the 6\(^{th}\) of July in front of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe made history, as it was publicly announcing that the Soviet Union belonged to a "common home" in Europe, and that it would support extensive cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe\(^\text{111}\).

Subsequently, after the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian Federation declared itself the official successor state to the Soviet Union and therefore the political heir of the Urss commitments as well, including of those

\(^{109}\) In 1972 the Treaty of Rome was signed, Leonid Brezhnev accepted the EC as "an objective reality" and the first contacts between the European Commission and the USSR were established. For more details see: P. Benavides, 'Bilateral relations between the European Community and Eastern Euro-pean countries: the problems and prospects of trade relations' in M. Maresceau (ed.), The Political and Legal Framework of Trade Relations between the European Community and Eastern Europe. Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1989, pp.21-25.

\(^{110}\) Noteworthy, for the URSS in particular, 1988 also constitutes a “watershed” as far as the expression of nationalism was concerned, be it inter-ethnic or against the Soviet rule (Delcour, 2011)

\(^{111}\) Source: Gorbachev M., Address given to the Council of Europe," speech, Strasbourg, France, July 6, 1989, European Navigator
with the EU. The process was rather complex though, not only because of the legal procedures but also because of the frequent lack of continuity in political conduct, not necessarily implying that the parts were to follow suit automatically\textsuperscript{112}. To that, one should also add the identity crisis on what Russia represented and it wanted to be, exacerbated after the dramatic events of 1993 that resulted in the worst street violence in Moscow since the 1917 Revolution and brought Russia to the brink of civil war\textsuperscript{113}.

In this context, wider scholarship seems to agree that both EU and Russian approaches towards each other in the early 1990s reflected a rather reserved state of mind. However, when compared with other major protagonists on the international political scene, like NATO, which was continuously met with mistrust and annoyance, the EU was attracting a bit more sympathy in Moscow. In 1994 for instance, on the occasion of the signing ceremony of the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation by the European Union and Russian Federation\textsuperscript{114}, Russian president Boris Yeltsin was acknowledging the significance of EU-Russian relations, claiming that Russia “has made a strategic choice in favour of integration into the world community and, in the first instance, with the European Union\textsuperscript{115}.

Moreover, in 1997, Moscow went even further and explicitly suggested the idea that, at a certain stage, Russia might join the EU\textsuperscript{116}. And yet, nobody took it seriously. These remarks appeared strictly symbolic, as both in Brussels and in Moscow, all actors involved in the game were perfectly aware that the prospect of a giant Russia joining an enlarged EU was quite unrealistic. At

\textsuperscript{112} For Leshoukov, this means that one should neither overlook the old elements in the new Russia, nor overestimate their impact (Leshoukov, 1998).
\textsuperscript{113} political stand-off between the Russian president & the Russian parliament resolved by using military force. The 10-day conflict became the deadliest single event of street fighting in Moscow’s history since 1917 187
\textsuperscript{114} http://ec.europa.eu/world/agreements/prepareCreateTreatiesWorkspace/treatiesGeneralData.do?step=0&redirect=true&treatyId=201
\textsuperscript{115} Johnson D. & Robinson P.F. (eds), Perspectives on EU-Russia Relations, London, Routledge, 2005, pp.106
\textsuperscript{116} See for example the remarks of Viktor Chernomyrdin, Russian Prime Minister of the time, during a 1997 visit in Brussels; Source: Reuters dispatch, 18 July 1997, “Russian EU aim laudable but unrealistic” by Martin Nesirky
most, according to several Russian politicians the EU integration experience could serve as a pattern in rebuilding the former Soviet space, but not as an identity model to follow (Leshoukov, 1998).

But the subsequent years marked a change in the “approach” (Leshoukov, 1998), starting with the first meeting of the EU-Russia Cooperation Council hosted in 1998 in Brussels, where both sides started using de facto a more cautious language\textsuperscript{117}. In other words, while the prospects for EU-Russia appeared quite positive, the overall picture was getting much more complex.

On the Russian side, the presence of foreign affairs minister like Yevgeny Primakov\textsuperscript{118} at the negotiations table was likely to change the cards on the table sooner than expected: for Primakov, the rapprochement to the West at whatever price was “not acceptable” as Russia was a self-standing entity and a power centre like "Europe" (the EU), the US, China or Japan\textsuperscript{119}. Consequently, Russia was presented not necessarily as a part of Europe (EU), but as a neighbouring actor who naturally had its own interests and mission and regarded the partnership with the EU not as an end in itself, but as a means to regain lost influence on the international arena and counterbalance other (American) dominance (Leshoukov, 1998).

From their part, EU institutions have started seriously wondering about the limits of Brussels’ collaboration with Moscow. According to an 1998 report

\textsuperscript{117} For details on the event (in English and Russian):
www.mid.ru/bdomp/dip_vest.nsf/99b2ddc4f717c733c32567370042ee43/abeb488dbcaacff6c325688c0050520c
\!OpenDocument

\textsuperscript{118} Primakov served as foreign minister od Russia from 1996 until 1998, when he was nominated. Prime minister.

\textsuperscript{119} Primakov was an admirer of Prince Gorchakov, who served the Russian Empire as its Foreign Minister after its defeat in the Crimean war (1853-56), is considered as a key personality in Russian history who managed to retrieve the country’s international respect; Source: Russia in the world politics - 200 years’ anniversary of A.M. Gorchakov (РОССИЯ В МИРОВОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ). Speech of E. Primakov, МГИМО, Moscow, 28.04.1998,
www.mid.ru/bdomp/dip_vest.nsf/99b2ddc4f717c733c32567370042ee43/2c7c5a708d42786de3256889002a0d7e\!OpenDocument
of the European Parliament on a Commission specific Communication of that time\textsuperscript{120}, “the future of relations between the EU and Russia lies in establishing a partnership without mental reservations (...) this requires the EU to assert itself more strongly and pursue a foreign policy of its own, free from all influences”. For Catherine Lalumière, the rapporteur for the report, “devising an EU strategy for relations with the new Russia is a challenge (as) it calls for a complete break with the perceptions inherited from the Cold War (while) at the same time it must be remembered that Russia, in spite of its current difficulties and the uncertainties of transition, remains a great power in both political and military terms (and) it would be a fundamental error to underestimate it (...) (as) the West in general, and the EU in particular, react to events in Russia rather than trying to anticipate them”. Likewise, while taking note of the fact that “Western countries have always been fascinated by Russia but at the same time they do not know how to behave toward this country which is both very European and very Asian”, the report was underlying the necessity of a rapprochement, as an essential element “if we are to overcome our mutual suspicions”.

Furthermore, against this background, the 1998 Russian financial crisis\textsuperscript{121} represented a severe chill symptom in the relationship between the parties, in a context in which, according to the same report, the Russians themselves were beginning to adopt a “critical attitude to the West”. "The cooperation and aid policy geared to promote a Western market economy – read the document- has recently come up against severe criticism in Russia\textsuperscript{122} (...) The reasons have to do with the general mentality”\textsuperscript{123}.


\textsuperscript{121} it was also called "Ruble crisis" or the "Russian Flu". It also hit Russia on 17 August 1998. It resulted in the Russian government and the Russian Central Bank devaluing the ruble and defaulting on its debt.

\textsuperscript{122} Reference to the three major types of assistance (humanitarian and food aid, technical assistance, credits and credit guarantees), provided by the EU mainly through the EU Tacis initiative
Furthermore, on a temporal scale, when referring to the evolution of EU-Russian relations, it is important to note that 1999 and the early 2000s represent key milestones that reshaped what was considered till then an ambitious plan of enhancing emerging strategic partnership. In a speech in Stockholm in October 1999, the EU’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, was arguing that: “(...) developing the Partnership with Russia is the most important, the most urgent and the most challenging task that the European Union faces at the beginning of the 21st century. (...) we need to engage Russia in partnership for security reasons. Russia is a natural security partner for Europe – our security is indivisible. We cannot have a secure Europe without a secure Russia. (...) We must in future guard against thinking that we know best what Russia needs”\(^\text{124}\).

However, many commentators tend to agree that on the same year, the EU’s Common Strategy on Russia (1999)\(^\text{125}\), Russia’s Middle Term Strategy towards the EU for 2000-2010 (1999)\(^\text{126}\) and the Russian Foreign Policy Concept (1999)\(^\text{127}\) inaugurated a new transitional phase in this relationship as these documents have brought forward for the first time the claim towards a less asymmetrical relationship between the parts.

\(^\text{126}\) The Russian Federation Middle Term Strategy Towards the EU (2000-2010) -Стратегия развития отношений Российской Федерации с Европейским Союзом на среднесрочную перспективу 2000-2010 гг. was a unique strategy in its kind for the Russian foreign policy. According to the Russian scholar Artem Malgin, neither Soviet nor Russian policy was inclined to articulate publicly its plans for further developments in relations with a specific international actor (Malgin, YEAR). Full text (Russian) at: www.fas.gov.ru/legislative-acts/legislative-acts_3810.html
\(^\text{127}\) Russia’s FP Concept- www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/6D84DDEDEDBF7DA644257B160051BF7F
This period appeared indeed as one of “mixed feelings” in EU-Russian relations: on the one hand, the EU was feeling uncomfortable with the lack of progress concerning bilateral energy dialogue and Moscow’s human rights approach, while on the other hand Russia was getting increasingly irritated with both “an overly complicated partnership” with the Union, and with NATO and EU’s expansion in Eastern Europe. In particular, the Second Chechen War (1999-2000) exemplifies plainly the lack of commonality between the EU and Russia (Haukkala, 2010). While Russia’s military intervention in Chechnya was justified by a traditional reading of Russia’s sovereignty, for the EU, by contrast, the conflict was predominantly about human rights violations and the infringement of liberal values. However, despite the fact that EU adopted several sanctions against Russia, it was the Russian reading of the conflict that eventually prevailed, in a path-dependent way casting shadow on the very nature of EU-Russia institution (Haukkala, 2010).

Over the next years this already feeble strategic partnership has gradually deteriorated with both EU and Russian leaders alternating more critical and than conciliatory tones in their approaches, despite a somewhat fair evaluation of the economic cooperation and despite other bilateral achievements (such as formal negotiations resulting in the adoption of the Four Common Spaces and of their related road-maps). In this sense, a key turning point was the 2007 speech delivered by Russian President Putin at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, which confirmed that Moscow had assertively started implementing a more self-confident foreign policy, taking advantage of Russia’s growing economic recovery.


After this particular moment, as political disagreements\textsuperscript{130} were occurring at a greater speed, analysts started insistently talking about stagnation in EU-Russian political cooperation\textsuperscript{131} and about new limits to their already ineffective \textit{strategic partnership} shaped by a number of agreements that allow rather than require cooperation between the two actors.

\section*{3.2. The Current Framework}

As shown previously, the history of the EU-Russian \textit{strategic partnership} counts over 20 years. Wider scholarship seems to agree that this relationship appears by its very nature bound to be cooperative in some areas and competitive in others (Popescu 2013). Anyhow, on the institutional level, they are regulated by an intricate, although not necessarily binding mix of instruments aimed at strengthening cooperation at different levels. The present section presents the way these relations are currently structured.

Firstly, and primarily, the EU-Russian partnership is based on the bilateral Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA)\textsuperscript{132} that the EU concluded with the Russian Federation in June 1994. The current legal basis for cooperation entered into force in 1997, after three years of negotiations for its implementation in a context of great internal instability in Russia and several disagreements between the two parts concerning especially the Chechen issue. Among various issues, the document was stressing the

\textsuperscript{130} E.g. from the anti-missile defence system project in Eastern Europe or the events in Georgia involving Russian troops in 2008, followed by the Russian acknowledgment of South Ossetia and Abkhazia’s sovereignties

\textsuperscript{131} SGIR Pan-European International Relations Conference Stockholm 2010 – proceedings, \url{http://www.eisa-net.org}

\textsuperscript{132} The text of the document is available online at: \url{http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:21997A1128(01):EN:NOT%20}, \url{http://www.russianmission.eu/userfiles/file/partnership_and_cooperation_agreement_1997_english.pdf}
importance of the “historical links existing between the Community, its Member States and Russia and the common values they share”, expressed both sides’ wish to strengthen political and economic freedoms and recalled the parties' shared respect for democracy and human rights, political and economic freedom and commitment to international peace and security.

However, negotiations on the new, EU-Russia Agreement, launched at the 2008 EU-Russia Khanty - Mansiysk summit to replace the initial agreement (renewed annually since 2007) are de facto in “stand by”. For the EU, a new agreement should “provide a more comprehensive framework for EU-Russia relations, reflecting the growth in cooperation since the early 1990s, while including substantive, legally binding commitments in all areas of the partnership, including political dialogue, freedom, security and justice, economic cooperation, research, education and culture, trade, investment and energy”. The Russian counterparts instead argue that “specific tasks for the nearest future” depend on “the very logic of development of relations with the European Union” and identify several key elements of negotiations, including “transition to a visa-free regime, establishment of a more effective and result-oriented interaction in the sphere of foreign policy, including in crisis management, launch of a dialogue on the coupling of concepts of economic and social development in Russia and the EU until 2020”.

As for the institutional architecture of the Russia-EU cooperation, the existing formats currently include: summits at Presidential level (since 1997 these events take place twice a year with the participation of the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, from the EU side and the President of the Russian Federation, on the Russian side); Permanent

134 Source: http://www.russianmission.eu/ru
135 Summits are hosted by Russia (in the first half of the year) and by Brussels, at the EU’s HQ (in the second half of the year), according to practice established after the Lisbon treaty came into force on 1 December 2009 – in Brussels (prior to the Lisbon treaty – in the EU member state holding the Presidency of
Partnership Councils (the so called PPC-s allow Ministers responsible for various policy areas to meet as often as necessary)\(^{136}\); Intensive political dialogues, regular meetings and expert consultations\(^{137}\), including on human rights matters\(^{138}\); Parliamentary consultations\(^{139}\).

On-going bilateral cooperation covers four main policy areas, established in 2003 and built around the mutual interests Brussels and Moscow share in a number of key areas, referred to as Common Spaces, that focus on: Economy and Environment; Freedom, Security and Justice; External Security and finally Research and Education, including cultural aspects\(^{140}\). Furthermore, for the implementation of these four Common Spaces the two sides adopted in 2005 several Road Maps\(^{141}\) as well, to act as short and medium-term instruments. These roadmaps set out both specific objectives and specify the necessary actions and thus determine the EU-Russian cooperation agenda for the medium-term\(^{142}\).

A key priority area of cooperation is the continuous development of economic ties, as to date, Russia is the largest oil, gas, uranium and coal

\(^{136}\) To date, PPCs have been held with Russian Foreign Minister, Minister of the Interior, Energy, Transport and Environment Ministers. (Source: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/index_en.htm)

\(^{137}\) For example, regular Foreign Ministers’ meetings, meetings of senior EU officials with their Russian counterparts, monthly meetings of the Russian Ambassador to the EU with the Political and Security Committee and at expert level on a wide range of topical issues (e.g. foreign policy, energy, transport, industrial policy, information society, space).


\(^{139}\) Meetings between members of the European Parliament and the Russian Parliament (State Duma and Federation Council) in the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee PCC that take place several times a year; Source: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/delegations/en/d-ru/home.html

\(^{140}\) Both sides regularly review the evolution of these Common Spaces. Progress reports are generally available on both EU and Russian official websites: http://eeas.europa.eu/russia/docs/commonspaces_prog_report_2010_en.pdf For more information http://eeas.europa.eu/russia/common_spaces/index_en.htm


\(^{142}\) The EU and Russia officially cooperate at multilateral level as well, on a number of other initiatives, of both bilateral and international concern, including climate change, drug and human trafficking, organized crime, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, peace processes etc.
exporter to the EU and the EU is by far the largest trade partner of the Russian Federation. In relation to the first common space in particular, the EU emphasizes the fact that the Union is the primary market for Russian exports of raw material – especially energy and that the EU aims to promote trade and investment, increase opportunities for economic operators, promote Russia’s modernisation, economic integration, enhance the competitiveness of EU goods and services on the Russian markets, and reinforce and provide new thrust to economic reforms.

However, although in its regular reports, the European Commission often underlines that cooperation in all these areas is considered to have a positive effect on the social, political and economic stability in the region and worldwide, in practice, for many observers, these four common spaces remain largely a rhetorical commitment as they practically lack concrete content.

Furthermore, the Partnership for Modernisation is considered a key track of interaction between Russia and the EU, a major milestone in bilateral

---

143 To date, Russia is the EU’s third most important trading partner (after the US and China), with 123 billion EUR in exported goods to Russia (7.3 % of all EU exports, 4th place after US, China, Switzerland) and 213 billion EUR in imported goods in 2012 (11.9 % of all EU imports, 2nd place after China). Furthermore, the EU is thus by far the largest market for Russian goods, accounting for 45% of Russian exports in 2012. The EU is also the main supplier for Russia, with a 34% market share, followed by China and Ukraine. In both 2011 and 2012, bilateral trade increased by more than 10%. More specifically, Russia is the EU’s most important single supplier of energy products, accounting for 29% of EU consumption of oil and gas. In turn, Russia’s economy remains highly based on the export of energy raw materials, with the EU as its most important destination. In 2012, 76% of Russia’s exports to the EU consisted of crude oil, oil products and natural gas. In 2011, EU stocks of foreign investment in Russia were estimated at 167 billion EUR. This was more than EU foreign investment stocks in China and India combined. (Source: EUROSTAT, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-14-13_en.htm; http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Russia-EU_-_basic_statistical_indicators


relations. It has received €7 min EU funding since it was agreed on in 2010 and builds on the needs of the rapidly evolving dialogues to provide financing for ad-hoc specific interventions. For both the EU and Russia, the Partnership is a “shared agenda” of two “equal partners”, presented as a focal point of mutual cooperation, reinforcing dialogue started under the common spaces and a flexible framework for promoting reform, enhancing growth and raising competitiveness. It deals with all aspects of modernisation, namely economic, technical (including standards and regulations) but also rule of law to functioning of the judiciary. Its latest initiatives include for instance the adoption of the Energy Roadmap 2050, signed by EU and Russia in March 2013, targeted rule of law projects (e.g. setting up an appeal system in the Russian judicial system, anti-corruption activities) or civil society development projects and economic/technical modernisation initiatives.

However, despite a complex institutional machinery that in theory lays the ground for a relationship from which all would eventually benefit, the thesis argues that realpolitik considerations often rise above many institutional

---

148 following the 2010 Rostov Summit (http://eeas.europa.eu/russia/sum06_10/index_en.htm)
149 Since 1991, the EU has provided Russia with financial support worth some €2.8bn, through the European Commission. Initially, this was done through the TACIS programme to help smooth Russia’s transition to democracy and market economy. As Russia’s financial position has improved, the need for broad-ranging assistance has disappeared. Financial assistance is now provided chiefly through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and is targeted on objectives for the EU-Russia common spaces. The EU and Russia are seen as equal partners, and the amounts made available by the Commission have been reduced accordingly. (Source: http://www.eeas.europa.eu)
150 the Russian Permanent Mission to the EU focuses on several key priority areas that include expanding opportunities for investment in key sectors driving growth and innovation, enhancing and deepening bilateral trade and economic relations, promoting alignment of technical regulations and standards, advancing sustainable low-carbon economy and energy efficiency, enhancing cooperation in innovation and research, promoting people-to-people links, and enhancing dialogue with civil society and business community. For more information: http://www.russianmission.eu/ru
151 The energy partnership within the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue aims at “improving the investment opportunities in the energy sector to ensure continued energy production, to secure and expand transportation infrastructure as well as to reduce the environmental impact.” Furthermore, following the gas dispute from 2009, the EU and Russia consider it essential to further reinforce mutual confidence by establishing an Early Warning Mechanism that ensures rapid communication and aims to prevent further supply interruptions in the field of gas, oil or electricity. http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/russia/russia_en.htm. For more information: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/russia/dialogue/dialogue_en.htm
152 In order to support various modernisation projects, considerable loan facilities have been made available by the European Investment Bank (EIB) (more than €1 billion), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Russian Economic Development Bank (VEB) – Source: EC press release on EU-Russia summit (Brussels, 28 January 2014), http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-38_en.htm
goals, as, with (still) no framework agreement, the networks of real “integration” between EU and Russia have remained in reality quite weak, dependent on political will and frequently permeated by competitive or conflicting trends. The agreement on space exploration\textsuperscript{153} is indeed an example of an area on which EU and Russia have followed up previous negotiations, established effective patterns of cooperation. In others though, including in key areas, co-operative frameworks has not managed to overcome rhetoric and drawbacks have become pretty frequent.

One way of capturing key lines of (dis)continuity of this bilateral relationship in both discourse and practice is by also looking at the case of Moscow’s relations with the different EU member states. Do these countries follow the general trends and guidelines set out by EU institutions’ or do they employ different policy approaches towards Russia not necessarily in line with Brussels’ (in)formal directives? In this sense, are there significant differences between the so called “old” and the “new” Europe, that until 1989/1991 was part of the Soviet sphere of influence (Eastern European member states)?

Several scholars argue that big member states for instance, such as Germany, France or Italy have preferred to deal individually with Russia on specific areas. Hence, they have often ignored the common interest of the Union, while Moscow has tried to get as much as possible from each bilateral relationship (Nitoiu, 2011). Meanwhile, Russia has “naturally” preferred to negotiate with member states bilaterally rather than with the EU collectively; that confirms Russia’s ambitions to “play an independent role” in the international arena (Prozorov, 2006). In a 2013 article, Lavrov explained that Russia’s strategy of dealing bilaterally with EU member states is based on practical arguments, as most of the areas where Moscow cooperates with individual member states are not within the remits of the European

Commission’s competences. He adds that agreements signed with individual member states have in the past spilled over to the EU level, while the Commission’s attempts to limit the freedom of the member states have only jeopardised the EU’s strategic partnership with Moscow (Lavrov, 2013, p. 8). Hence, the Kremlin is set to continue its approach of pursuing a dual strategy, developing the strategic partnership with the EU, while also cooperating and negotiating individually with the member states.

The thesis’ goal is not to focus on this specific case, but by evoking it, it draws attention on another key issue in EU-Russian relations, namely the lack of a common long-time vision (and voice) on EU-Russian relations among EU member states. In the sense, noteworthy is a report on the “power audit in EU-Russian relations”, coordinated by a team of analysts of the think-tank European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR, 2007). The report starts from the assumption that different countries from the EU have different history: according to the analysis\(^\text{154}\), there are five different policy approaches that best describe the relationship between each EU member state and Russia. For instance, the approach that best describes the relationship between Greece and Cyprus and Russia is ‘Trojan Horses’ because of their willingness to defend Russian interest in the EU, and, when needed, to veto certain EU proposals. Furthermore, countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain have chosen to keep ‘Strategic Partnerships’ positions in order to enjoy certain benefits that go beyond EU policies. ‘Friendly Pragmatists’ are countries such as: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, and Slovakia and these have chosen to keep their business interests as a core factor of their relations with Russia. The fourth category are the ‘Frosty Pragmatists’, which also put their business interests first, but in addition openly criticize areas that Russia needs to work on. The most controversial issue is the human rights issue, and countries such as the Czech Republic, Denmark,

\(^{154}\text{Source: ECFR, http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/eu_russia_relations/}\)
Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania, Sweden and the UK have often expressed their concerns in the past. The last category, named ‘New Cold Warriors”, includes Lithuania and Poland, considered to be the “least tolerant“ towards Russia.

According to several scholars, all these dissonances between the EU’s discourse and the practical actions of the Brussels hub or of the member states have dramatically undermined the Union’s common approach towards Moscow and on other foreign policy issues, in particular the evolution of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

Moreover, their contradictions and the subsequent hesitations have paradoxically allowed Russia’s to enhance its presence in the Eastern Neighbourhood, in order to keep the under its sphere of influence (Nitou, 2011).

3. 2.1. MAJOR SHORTCOMINGS & DEADLOCK

As mentioned previously, obstacles are not new in EU-Russian relations and, to date, have occurred in all bilateral areas. Their relationship has never been a smooth one and wider scholarship seems to agree that since the early 2000s the situation has deteriorated dramatically. For this reason, the present unit argues that, along the (unclear) functioning criteria, historical legacies and the institutional framework, an identity kit of the EU-Russia strategic partnership should also attempt to categorize their major constraints, deadlocks and recurrent problems, in order to adequately grasp their

---

155 Interestingly enough, at the same time, several Russian analysts have also argued that in reality Moscow has not formulated a clear strategy for the Eastern Neighbourhood, limiting its actions to short-term incentives for the countries in the region, that cannot be sustainable though in the long run, as they target corrupt politicians (Nitou, 2011)

156 The Oxford Dictionary defines deadlocks as “a situation, typically one involving opposing parties, in which no progress can be made” (Source: www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/deadlock); Furthermore, in
The evolution throughout the years and the major paradigm shift that have surrounded EU-Russia cooperation on specific topics. ¹⁵⁷

However, the chapter draws attention on the so-called dual character of shortcomings and of deadlocks, given the fact that the visions of the two parties on the partnership’s major shortcomings and recurrent impasses do not automatically coincide. In other words, the views in Brussels and Moscow on the current or latent problems don’t match as often as one might expect from two “strategic partners”. On the contrary, they are often divergent and for many scholars these vital differences in specific areas of concern and the lack of flexibility on both sides permeate all bilateral fields.

In this context, a strict categorization of impasses in EU-Russian relations appears thus quite challenging. Still, the unit argues that one way of proceeding in this direction is by turning to the extended literature of cooperation.

In this sense, Amrita Narlikar’s threefold concept of deadlocks¹⁵⁸ (2010) appears extremely useful. According to the scholar, depending on the outcome they generate, international impasses can be generally divided into three types (stalemates, extended delays or breakdowns) and are recognisable either after a landmark moment for an agreement passes by or when a non-agreement persists. On the basis of these theories, this units suggests a Deadlock Scorecard Template (see table below), focused on major areas of concerns in bilateral relations, which might help better classify and monitor major

impasses, occurring at different moments in time\textsuperscript{159}, while offering information on both the evolution and the possible prospects for each deadlock (overall development, possible outcomes, strategies of negotiation /tactics).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREAS of CONCERN</th>
<th>(identified as priorities in bilateral relations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TYPE OF DEADLOCKS (current/potential)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stalemates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Extended Delays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Breakdowns</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTINCTIVE FEATURES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- causes, critical factors, possible outcomes/strategies of negotiations / tactics-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stalemates** - An impasse in terms of movement, which offers in principle no possibilities for escalation\textsuperscript{160} may provide just the trigger to push parties into making concessions that could produce longer-lasting agreements

\textsuperscript{159} The temporal scale is not necessarily relevant here because of the oscillating” character of impasses-e.g. extended delay deadlocks for instance could easily transform in stalemates or result in breakdowns (depending on the context)

\textsuperscript{160} Zartman and Faure, 2005
- **Overall Development**: de-escalatory dynamics, with possible normative implications, that can facilitate resolutions\(^{161}\) providing so-called turning points\(^{162}\) with specific consequences (in this case turning point to de-escalation”)

- **Possible Outcomes**: key events, viewed as instrumental to moving negotiations from one stage to another- e.g. signing a framework agreement, developing formulas/bargaining over details, changing evaluations (the terms on the table)

- **Strategies**: Integrative\(^{163}\) - e.g. willingness to share information relatively openly to explore common problems or common threats; proposing exchanges/ concessions that might benefit both parties; relative openness to reframe issues space itself to ease an impasse

---

**Extended Delays** - An impasse generally occurring when the state of non-agreement over a particular issue area persists or worsens over a long period\(^{164}\)

- **Overall Development**: decrease of the probability of an agreement; inconsistent positions\(^{165}\); not necessarily compelling parties to concede, escalate or walk away from the negotiation

- **Possible Outcomes**: undermined credibility (for the parties involved)

---

\(^{161}\) This view suggests that not all deadlocks should be perceived as destructive to negotiations and in some case they may even indicate distinctive features of a specific institution (e.g. strength, independence or legitimacy) or represent the occasion to remind parties that making concessions could produce longer-lasting agreements (Narlikar, 2010).

\(^{162}\) Turning points describe moments in time when the situation changes (Druckman, 2001): like ripe moments (Zartman, 2000), they are often observed after periods of intense escalatory behaviour.

\(^{163}\) Value-creating strategy - instrumental to the attainment of goals that are in theory are not in fundamental conflict, and hence, to some degree, could be eventually integrated for mutual gain, as they tend to expand rather than to split “the pie” (Narlikar, 2010).

\(^{164}\) Several scholars associate it to other types of categories as well namely impasses perceived as (a simple) “failure to agree”, as an “actual failure to agree”, as a failure on “initiation” or finally as a failure on “contents” (Evenett 2006)

\(^{165}\) For Amrita Narlikar, these situations of non-agreements involve inconsistent positions of parties, that were unable or simply unwilling to make the concessions sufficient to achieve a breakthrough on a particular issue (Narlikar, 2010).
missed deadlines, rejected compromise texts, failed summits or more broadly delayed benefits (of the agreement), political disengagement or public apathy

- **Strategies:** Integrative (like in the case of “stalemate” forms of deadlocks) but also Distributive \(^{166}\) -e.g. high opening demands; refusing concessions; exaggerating one’s minimum needs and priorities; manipulating information to others’ disadvantage; taking others’ issues hostage; risk of threats, penalties; BATNA \(^{167}\) deterioration

---

**Breakdowns - An impasse that could develop as the ultimate stage of a complicated negotiation process**

- **Overall Development:** likely to persist / decline for an “indefinite” period; parties generally to abandon the discussions/negotiations table, no matter what costs this action might have in terms of sustainability (of the process) or of the search for other appropriate substitutes

- **Possible Outcomes:** lack of flexible approaches, high costs (e.g. sustainability, other options); leaves little space to expectations, compromises, concessions and finally hope in any discussion

- **Strategies:** Distributive (like in the case of “extended delay” forms of deadlocks)

  *author’s elaboration, on the basis of A.Narlikar concepts (2010)*

---

\(^{166}\) functional, for claiming value from others, when goals are partly in conflict *(Narlikar, 2010)*

\(^{167}\) Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement - It is considered the driving force behind a successful negotiator as it refers either to the best alternative to a negotiated agreement, or the best outcome one can expect if failing to reach agreement with the counterpart (Source: “BATNA Basics: Boost Your Power at the Bargaining Table”, special report from Harvard Law School 2013)
The claim is that such a specific template (see table above) might be a useful tool for delineating in a timely manner both general assessments on deadlocks / pending issues and specific evaluations on key bilateral events, in which lies much promise but also the potential to inflict much damage, like for instance presidential summits.

Below I exemplify this assertion by employing the template on the case of two specific events, namely the 2013 presidential summits held in Yekaterinburg, Russia (June 2013) and in Brussels, at EU headquarters (initially planned for December 2013, later postponed for January 2014). These specific events were chosen as through their assessment, relevant up-to-date bilateral deadlocks and major shortcomings stand out, along with key distinctive features on the 2013 state of affairs of EU-Russian relations.

I employ the Deadlock Scorecard Template for assessing the official programmes of the summits and, for this reason, the focus is limited to the key areas officially identified by both sides as “top items on the summit agenda”, and to their 2013 specific records (distinctive features), delineated on the basis of relevant chronologies indicating the existing state of affairs and the relevant EU/Russian approaches on the issue. An overview of findings (types of deadlocks, possible causes/outcomes that generate and distinctive features) is presented in the table below.

Given the narrow research objective and the limited scope of the chapter, this endeavour is limited strictly to the topics identified as top items on official summit agendas by both Brussels and Moscow. Hence, it doesn’t consider other relevant themes/areas mentioned during the press conferences that

---


169 in the sense, both EU and Russian documents were analysed (press releases, factsheets, web-infos)

170 the information was retrieved from EU and Russian official sources – e.g. statistics, reports, factsheets
followed the two events (e.g. Ukraine events in December 2013/January 2014, Eastern Neighbourhood), that would require a broader analysis embracing the whole spectrum of EU-Russian controversies, including “delicate” issues like the European Neighbourhood Policy Vs. Eurasian Union, Kaliningrad, Northern Dimension, frozen conflicts, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Concern</th>
<th>Type of Deadlocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- identified as Top Items on the Summits’ Agendas</td>
<td>Stalemate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Policy/Security Cooperation</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Partnership and Cooperation Agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Distinctive Features:
  
  o Energy:

  - Existing State of Affairs: To date, from both Brussels’ and Moscow’s perspectives, the current state of affairs is relatively stable as compared to that of 2012, due to higher (although still scarce) levels of interaction in recent
years\textsuperscript{171} and to the need of a more mature relationship based on several framework documents and an enhanced dialogue. However, both sides are always on high alert when it comes to energy issues, that remain one of the most sensitive and potentially “explosive” in bilateral relations.

- \textit{EU stance}: For Brussels, \textit{the EU and the Russian Federation are simply “natural partners in the energy sector”}\textsuperscript{172}. According to a recent report of the EU’s official agency dealing with the analysis of foreign, security and defence policy issues, The European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), “Russia is and will remain the EU’s top energy partner”, but the very scope of their partnership on energy issues appears quite different to that of several years ago, when bilateral links appeared at a certain point to be growing stronger, with new pipelines plans, new contracts on long-term deliveries of Russian gas to EU consumers or with other possible deals\textsuperscript{173}. There are many pending issues especially linked to the activities of the Russian state gas giant Gazprom in Europe, which supplies more than a quarter of Europe's gas needs, that currently is searching to find opportunities for further expansion inside the Union, let alone wield its resources for political purposes”, while for its part the EU appears “more assertive in the pursuit of its energy interests, and, due to concentrated efforts, is now much less at risk of falling victim to monopolistic or political rents”.

- \textit{Russian perspective}: From a Russian perspective, despite a certain decline in overall EU energy consumption due to global economic and financial crisis, the prospects for development of Russia-EU cooperation in the energy field remain quite high, as the EU is the largest consumer of Russian energy products (about 63 % of Russia's oil exports and 65 % of its gas


\textsuperscript{172} Source: EU - http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/bilateral_cooperation/russia/russia_en.htm

exports). However, Moscow “urges not to politicize issues of implementation of energy projects and proceeds in this field from the necessity to put emphasis primarily on technical and economic aspects, including ensuring the resource base”. The Russian authorities have never been fond of EU’s Third Energy Package, the legislative package for an internal gas and electricity market in the Union, and claims that “the priorities in this field should remain the elimination of potential threat of disruptions in supply of energy resources to the European markets and the pipelines projects.”

- **Foreign Policy/Security Cooperation:**

  - **Existing State of Affairs:** Cooperation is particularly difficult under the Common Space of External Security. Although convergent on issues like the fight against terrorism in general or various initiatives in multilateral settings (e.g. Iran talks), the two sides appear to have dealt with various type of deadlocks, generally taking the form of stalemates. Despite Russia’s contribution to the EU’s operation in Chad and Somalia or the creation of the EU-Russia Political and Security Committee in 2010 (Dettke 2011), in the external security field the EU-Russia strategic partnership reveals a rather worrying level of competition -resulting especially from their divergent positions regarding the shared neighbourhood- whereas unpredictability has become de facto a keyword in negotiations.

---

174 To date, Russia is the largest single external supplier of oil to the EU (around 20 % of total imports ; 27 % of total EU oil consumption); Russia also accounts for some 44 % of EU gas imports (around 24 % of total gas consumption) Source: The Eurostat & Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Information Kit for journalists accredited to the EU-Russian Summit in Brussels December 2012)


177 Both EU and Russia plan to construct a number of pipelines, including gas pipelines, which are to meet demand on markets in medium- and long-term prospects. The Nord Stream, South Stream and Nabucco gas pipeline projects are among them. The maximum designed capacity of Nord Stream is 55 bcm per year, South Stream is 63 bcm per year and that of Nabucco is 31 bcm per year.

178 To date the latest document signed by the sides is a joint agreement for combatting terrorism singed by the two sides on the occasion of the 32nd EU-Russian summits held in Brussels in February 2014.

EU stance: While in the past the EU assertiveness was focused mainly on the pursuit of its energy interests (in order to avoid the risk of falling victim to monopolistic or political interests used as a means to exert diplomatic pressure), in more recent times Brussels has gradually raised its voice with Moscow on these issues, especially with regard to its Eastern Partnership, launched in 2009\textsuperscript{180}, involving six Eastern neighbours of the EU (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine)\textsuperscript{181} which have a common border (and recent history) with Russia as well, that does not participate in the framework. EU regional policies in this area had already started growing in number and scope ever since 2004, through the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument ENP\textsuperscript{182}.

Although Brussels argues that these initiatives are not against Russian interests, the reality is that EU’s projects in former Soviet countries and its involvement in the settlement process of post-Soviet ‘frozen’ conflicts\textsuperscript{183} have increasingly irritated Moscow, just like the issues related to the deployment of elements of US anti-missile systems in eastern Europe\textsuperscript{184}. Hence, bilateral discussions on these topics have tended to turn a deaf ear on these specific topics.

\textsuperscript{181} The EU launched regional and multilateral co-operation initiatives for other neighbours as well through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership EUROMED (the former Barcelona Process) and the Black Sea Synergy.
\textsuperscript{182} The ENP was developed with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours, while strengthening the perception of the EU as a political and strategic international actor. 16 of Union’s closest neighbours currently participate in it (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine). Source: Overview on the EU European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) - http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm
\textsuperscript{183} The most striking example is that of Transnistria, a breakaway region in The Republic of Moldova. According to a recent EUISS report, Russia’s policy towards Transnistria is hardening, with Moscow upgrading its military presence in the region. Likewise, in the South Caucasus, despite the change of government in Georgia, Russia began the process of the so-called ‘borderisation’ of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2013 (whereby fences and barricades were erected along the administrative boundaries of the disputed territories), a decision perceived by many researchers as a risky act that can exacerbate existing tensions.
\textsuperscript{184} Moscow has reacted, in turn, with the deployment of Russian tactical ballistic missiles (capable of carrying nuclear warheads) in Kaliningrad; Source: EUISS Briefs /2013, available at: http://www.iss.europa.eu
- **Russian perspective**: For the Russian authorities cooperation with the EU has progressively strengthened in these fields, especially in combating illegal migration, organised crime and terrorism. However, “the full potential of this interaction in these and other spheres is still to be realised”, although “the main achievement of recent years, which can be hardly overestimated, is the understanding that the EU-Russian partnership is one of the cornerstones of maintaining stability and prosperity not only in Europe, but world-wide”\(^\text{185}\). According to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Serghey Lavrov, cooperation cannot spill over to other issue areas in the absence of political will: If there is political will, we may find a formula that would allow us to increase our co-operation in foreign policy and security without jeopardising the EU’s autonomy as regards decision making in the common security and defence policy CSDP or Russia’s sovereignty as a country that is not seeking membership of the EU (Lavrov, 2013).\(^\text{186}\) As far as the Eastern shared neighbourhood is concerned, Russia expressed its “openness” for co-operation, provided that its effects do not “harm” its own interests. In reality it has been very active on this dossier\(^\text{187}\) hence the underlying dynamics have already began to reassert themselves. Many observes argue that, whereas Russia understands this area its privileged sphere of influence and believes that, for that reason, it expects that the EU foreign and security policies should not interfere in its vital area of interests (Nitoiu 2011)

- **Trade:**


\(^{186}\) In this sense, the Russian sides expect that that the discussions with the EU on their own initiatives, especially on “developing a Treaty on European Security and a new legal basis for international cooperation in the energy field, as well as on the joint proposal by Russia and Germany to establish a Russia-EU Committee on External Policy and Security continue in the spirit of strategic partnership”.

\(^{187}\) a little over two years after the ENP launch, Moscow announced the Eurasian Economic Union, building on the customs union that had already brought together Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan
- **Existing State of Affairs:** To date, the EU is Russia’s single biggest trading partner. Furthermore, Russia is the EU’s third biggest trading partner – after the US and China – accounting for 9.7% of the EU’s external trade. However, although the EU-Russia economic partnership apparently rests on solid foundations, for many observers it has lost its momentum. For this reason, impasses in bilateral relations on this particular field have assumed both stalemates and extended delays forms.

- **EU stance:** On bilateral level, the EU and Russia agreed formally to create a Common Economic Space in 2003, while in 2007 talks were launched on a new enhanced agreement that was supposed to provide the legal basis for, inter alia, closer economic integration. The problem is that these talks have remained stuck ever since, although the EU is the largest investor in the Russian economy\textsuperscript{188}. Furthermore, Brussels is not keen on the idea that Moscow is apparently seeking to shift its trade talks with the EU towards a common track between the EU and its Customs Union\textsuperscript{189}, created recently with Belarus and Kazakhstan. To that Brussels adds its disputes with Russia at the World Trade Organization- WTO that have created discontent in Brussels and started less than a year after Moscow joined this trading club\textsuperscript{190}. The European Commission argues it has pursued every diplomatic channel to find solutions with the Russian partners on several trade matters but to no avail.

- **Russian position:** Moscow acknowledges the key role of the EU in the Russian economy as the EU is Russia’ leading trade partner. However “despite the positive trend of trade relations, the Russian side is not satisfied with the persistent asymmetry in the structure of bilateral trade (…..). For instance, in 2012 raw materials, first of all mineral fuels, accounted for the major share of

---

\textsuperscript{188} About 75% of direct foreign investment comes to Russia from EU Member States.

\textsuperscript{189} Source: http://www.eurasiancommission.org/ru/Pages/default.aspx

\textsuperscript{190} in the spring of 2013 the EU filled its first case at the WTO against Russia, in opposition to the protectionist fee for recycling imposed by the Kremlin on imported cars- http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-13-665_en.htm
Russian exports to the European Union. On the contrary, Russia’s imports from the European Union consisted mainly of machinery and transport equipment, chemicals and related products, various manufactured goods, as well as foodstuffs”. Furthermore, on the WTO issue, Moscow has clear ideas: Russia indeed joined the WTO with the support of the EU 2012, but this move was for Russia’s Foreign Affairs Minister Lavrov absolutely normal, due to the fact that ‘total EU investment in the Russian economy exceeds US$260 billion, and Russian investment into the EU countries amounts to US$75 billion’ (Lavrov, 2013).

- **Visa liberalisations:**

  - *Existing State of Affairs:* for quite a long time the two sides have dealt with “extended delays”, which transformed at times into stalemates as well, depending on the international context. Recently though, Moscow and Brussels agreed on a further relaxation of visa policies – but the most important development is the so-called ‘mutual steps’ process that should eventually lead to the mutual abolition of visa requirements.

  - *EU stance*[^1]: For the EU, to date, this area is perhaps the one area where most progress in bilateral relations. According to a recent EUISS report, political and technical problems would be even easier to overcome if the overall bilateral political relationship was in better shape, given the fact that both the EU and Russia stand to benefit from switching to visa-free travel. For Brussels, much depends on Russia fulfilling certain conditions set by the EU (e.g. elimination of the push factor for migration, etc.), but this is where certain domestic political trends in Russia complicate progress on negotiations. The EU gives the example of asylum seekers originating from Russia that have

consistently constituted one of the biggest groups of asylum seekers in Europe\textsuperscript{192}.

- **Russian position\textsuperscript{193}**: Moscow has never hidden its disagreement with regard to what it has often called the slow machinery of Brussels especially on the visa issue. For the Russian authorities, Russia-EU free movement agenda has shown some practical results, but has not yet achieved its final goal, namely the abolition of visas, as “unfortunately the implementation and promotion of the principle of freedom of movement in Europe turned out to be a much more complicated job than it had seemed four decades ago”. While emphasizing that “the transition to a mutual visa-free regime for short-term travel is the main and ultimate task of cooperation between Russia and EU in this field”, Moscow often reminds that Russia submits more applications for EU visas than any other country\textsuperscript{194}.

  o **Human Rights**:

  - **Existing State of Affairs**: Issues and concerns regarding both the EU's and Russia's international commitments to guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms are a central theme in EU-Russia relations, just like in all EU’s relation with third actors\textsuperscript{195}. Tension has always been a key element in all discussions, while deadlocks have generally taken the shape of extended delays.

\textsuperscript{192} In 2010-2011, Russian citizens, numbering 18,000 per year, were the second largest group (after Afghans and ahead of Afghans, Pakistanis, and Somalis) claiming asylum in the EU. According to experts in the field, the recent legislation on LGBT propaganda in Russia - interpreted as a form of persecution - has increased the chances that a new category of Russian citizens might attempt to claim asylum in the EU, thus further driving up the numbers, given the fact that in 2013, the European Court of Justice issued a ruling which stated that being persecuted on grounds of sexual orientation is a legitimate reason for being granted asylum in the EU.

\textsuperscript{193} Sources: Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Russian Mission to the EU - www.russianmission.eu/en/visa-issues


\textsuperscript{195} the reference is to the EU Human Rights Dialogues - http://eeas.europa.eu/_human_rights/dialogues/how/index_en.htm
- **EU stance**: The EU has continuously raised its concern on issues like “pressure on civil society in Russia (e.g. restrictive legislation affecting the work of civil society or curtailing the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms of assembly, expression and association), discrimination against minorities, independence of the judiciary, the harassment of human rights defenders and opposition leaders”. At the same time, Brussels has also welcomed “some recent cases of amnesty”, while deploring “the lack of investigation into several (individual) criminal cases and the lack of systemic reforms in the area of human rights”.

- **Russian perspective**: Moscow “seeks to maintain a constructive dialogue on human rights issues with EU partners”, but according to the Russian Foreign Ministry Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Supremacy of Law “dialogue should be equal and mutually respectful. Russia rejects all EU critics and hits back at human rights criticism it faces from the EU by listing what it sees as rights failings in EU nations. For this reason, ever since 2012, The Russian Ministry for foreign Affairs publishes a report on the human rights situation in the EU countries ("Report on the human rights situation in the European Union"), presented “as an invitation to comprehensive international cooperation, including with the participation of Russia and the European Union, toward improving the human rights situation”. The last two reports took note of the “spread of xenophobia, nationalism, radicalization and discrimination in Europe, and, consequently, the population’s support for far-right parties and the discrimination of the Russian speaking minorities especially in the Baltic states.“

---

196 Since 2005, the EU and Russia have held regular, six-monthly human rights consultations. These meetings have provided a platform for dialogue on human rights issues in Russia and the EU and on EU-Russian cooperation on human rights matters, notably in international fora. Source: EEAS http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131128_01_en.pdf

197 www.mid.ru/bdomp/ns-dgpch.nsf/03c344d01162d351442579510044415b/44257b100055de8444257c60004a6491!OpenDocument
New Partnership and Cooperation Agreement:

- Existing State of Affairs: negotiations on a new bilateral agreement to replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement PCA\textsuperscript{198} could become normally implies breaking at least some of the above impasses, by finding sustainable solutions to situations of (possible) standstill rather than an escalatory dynamic. To date, both EU and Russia have officially played to openness card, by regularly reiterating their commitment for moving forward particularly on these specific negotiations, while developing deeper cooperation in all fields, including economic integration. However, in reality, negotiations are at a standstill, while their stagnation appears, to date, as a sign of mutual disenchantment and reduced expectations (Popescu 2014).

- EU stance\textsuperscript{199}: Brussels claims that to date (2013) “some progress has been made in the negotiation process” and underlines that both sides simply “need” a new EU-Russia Agreement that should become a key and comprehensive instrument to deepen these relations in the future, by providing a solid legal basis for EU-Russia relations, covering all areas of the relationship, including political dialogue, economic and trade relations, energy, sectoral cooperation as well as justice, freedom and security aspects.

- Russian perspective\textsuperscript{200}: For Moscow, the new Agreement should make “a qualitative step forward and take Russia – EU interaction to a new higher level of strategic partnership”, reflecting at the same time the recent changes\textsuperscript{201} (political, economic and social) on internal/international level. In this sense, the

\textsuperscript{198} Negotiations on a New Agreement started in July 2008 and are conducted by the Head of the EU delegation – Chief Operating Officer of the European External Action Service, on the EU side, and by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the EU, on the Russian side. The negotiations are conducted in four working groups focusing on the main chapters of the Agreement (political dialogue and external security; cooperation in the field of freedom, security and justice; sectoral economic issues; culture, research, education, media, sports and youth policies), while the results of each round are reviewed at official plenary session meetings.


\textsuperscript{200} Source: Russian Permanent Mission to the EU, Переговоры по новому базовому соглашению - http://russianmission.eu/ru/peregovory-po-novomu-bazovomu-soglasheniyu

\textsuperscript{201} since the signing of the PCA in 1994 and its entry into force in 1997
Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs deplores what it labels “inertia in the way the EU treats its relations with Russia (…) due to the Union’s general tradition of developing ties with neighbouring countries only if they approach EU standards and follow EU policies”. (Lavrov, 2013)

CHAPTER 4: FUTURE SCENARIOS - ENDURING ISSUES AND EMERGING DILEMMAS

4.1. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE LITERATURE: BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DEBATES

The unit provides a brief overview on the international relations literature about EU-Russia relations. Given the narrow object of the present research study, this is not the place to go into detail though about the precise manner in which each school of thought considers as relevant the numerous and open-ended questions on enduring problems and emerging dilemmas in EU-Russia relations. The aim is to simply lay a broader context for the development of this dissertation and identify the key aspects and recurrent themes from the literature.
It starts from the assumption that much of the literature about EU-Russia relations agrees that there is a different understanding of the exact content and objectives of their so-called strategic partnership.

Furthermore, academic literature offers extensive explanations on various nuances of this complex relationship and on the drawbacks of EU-Russia cooperation, which pertain on both sides.

The accounts taken into consideration by the dissertation are linked to the way major schools of thought in international relations literature -realism, liberalism, constructivism—tackle broader issues of world politics and of course key concepts like *power, interdependency, cooperation, conflict* or *competition*.

Before exploring them, it is important to mention that these different understandings are often criticized by many Russian academics that come up regularly with their own explanations on the causes of this intricate relationship between Brussels and Moscow.

In this sense, noteworthy is the fact that in the past decades, different approaches in Moscow and EU capitals have often led to intensive academic discussions as well between Western and Russian schools of thought and that they are often referred to during heated debates on the international political scene involving politicians or diplomats.

In particular several Russian scholars have often called for *cultural relativism* for instance, in order to avoid what is called an inherent generalization and stereotyping stamp of Western approaches on Russia.

---

202 While neorealists see structure (anarchy and power distribution) as the primary determinant of state behaviour, neoliberals see process (interaction and learning) as the primary determinant of state behaviour. Both treat identities as exogenously given (rationalists), whereas constructivists share a cognitive conception of process in which identities are interests endogenous to interaction.

203 The debate on whether value judgements can be made across cultures is not new in international relations. Starting from the idea that cultures and moral frameworks within different societies differ fundamentally from one another, cultural relativists evaluate actions according to the ethical standards of the society within which they occur. For more see The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/relativism/)
tend to be developed “in the West, by the West and for the West” (Tsygankov 2009).

Furthermore, many Western scholars argued that the defectiveness of Russia-EU relations is linked to an alleged “historical” inability on both sides “to speak the same language” (Bakalova, 2013) understood mainly as the incapacity to agree on common terms or to reach a consensus as far as dialogue is concerned.

Additionally, for explaining specific deadlocks, studies encompassing in particular the thematic of mutual perceptions of the two actors indicate the broad ambiguity, ambivalence, distrust, misunderstandings and frustrations that regularly define EU-Russian relations (Gomart 2008).

Against this background, the general view is that the EU-Russian crisis - which has gradually got worse ever since 2006, after a relative period of stagnation in bilateral relations (2003-2006)- is directly affected by the fact that EU and Russia are in a process of defining both their international actorness and their foreign policy identities (DeBardeleben, 2012).

As one might expect, various interpretations do not converge when referring to the causes of problems, enduring issues or to emerging dilemmas, depending on the different lenses through which each one approaches this problematic issue.

While realists for instance speak about a predictable clash of interests, linked to an asymmetric interdependency trap (Hughes 2006; Leonard & Popescu 2007; Bordachev 2007), liberals generally focus on the role of domestic factors (e.g. new leadership in Moscow). According to the liberal approach, EU-Russian controversies are mainly linked to Russia’s incapacity to complete domestic liberal reforms.
Furthermore, while scholars from the above schools of thought usually focus on material factors such as power or conflict, the constructivist approach emphasizes the impact of norms, identity and ideas in EU-Russia relations. This standpoint challenges the traditional realist view, according to which actors’ actions are generally shaped by the drive for relative material gains and are thus constrained by the available resources. Studies have thus encompassed numerous themes focusing on the interrelationship between ideas, power and institutions underpinning the EU-Russia relationship, including on of mutual perceptions of the actors that has revealed an increasing level of ambiguity, ambivalence, distrust, misunderstandings and frustration in EU-Russian relations (Gomart 2008).

Likewise, other insightful research studies which have investigated the Russia-EU relations from the prism of the constructivist approach have focused on European and Russian discourses for instance, the latter correlated to national identity discourses as well (Groys 1992; Hopf 1999; Kassianova 2001; Tsygankov 2009; Thorun 2009; Clunan 2009), in a context in which the “referent role of the West”, and specifically that of Europe has become quite negative (Prozorov 2007; Makarychev 2008).

The common thread among many research studies is that on a general level, the current strategic partnership between Moscow and Brussels appears to be governed by a sort of dichotomy between cooperation and conflict, that often foments antagonistic competition trends (for influence) between the two actors, on various levels. The problem is that on a significant number of issues

---

204 While the realist understanding is that ideas are employed to justify or explain selfish power-driven actions and desires, the constructivist line argues in turn that actions are shaped by actor-specific interests, which are formed in the process of communication, constrained by normative limits and rationalized with the help of ideas which have moral force in a given context (Wendt 1992, Bakalova 2011).

205 Furthermore, “the West” has been repeatedly used as a reference point in Russia’s discursive quest for self-identification, both nationally and internationally, performing the role of the significant other when referring to “norms and values” (Baranovsky 1999; Tsygankov 2009; Heller 2010).
and policy areas, cooperation has often coexisted or overlapped with conflict, making relations between the two actors very complex (Nitoiuiu, 2011).

These concepts have often been considered in scholarship to be the fundamental elements that capture the very essence of the current EU-Russia relationship, which represent anyhow a unique case in international relations. Furthermore, Haukkala (2010) stresses that the EU-Russia interaction displays a number of characteristics that set it apart from more traditional forms of international cooperation/integration in which the limitation to sovereignty tends to be symmetrical, and material interests prevail over the normative clout. In this sense, in contrast to internal pooling of sovereignty, “in its external policies the EU has a more variegated logic whereby it advocates a host of sovereignty-challenging practices while seeking to preserve its own sovereign prerogatives in full”206.

As for recurrent themes, they cover literally all areas of EU-Russian cooperation. In particular, three themes stand out and are considered by a wide scholarship as key factors increasingly fomenting antagonism and competition in EU-Russia relationship: the controversies on the Eastern shared Neighbourhood, the topic of energy (Europe’s dependency on Russian gas) and the largely debated “clash” of identities. Depending on the specific lens through which these topics are investigated, accounts advance different explanations:

In particular, the specific theme of the “shared neighbourhood” appears relevant for the present dissertation as well as it underlines relevant aspects on the various forms that competition for more influence might take between the two actors. Several relevant aspects from the literature stand out and relate to both agendas and actions “in the field” of the two actors. Some of the relevant

---

approaches taken into consideration by the dissertation (for the Deadlock Analysis in Chapter 4) are presented below:

- The complex scenario in the area of the last months of 2013\textsuperscript{207} - the political crisis and the street protests in Ukraine\textsuperscript{208}, the last minute refusal of the Ukrainian government to sign the association agreement with the EU during the Vilnius Eastern Partnership summit\textsuperscript{209}, the EU reaction to Kiev'\'s snub\textsuperscript{210} and finally the Kiev-Moscow agreement\textsuperscript{211}, clearly shows that the area represents an authentic “Pandora's box” in EU-Russia relations, and it can thus turn out to have severely detrimental and far-reaching consequences.

- The ENP, and later the Eastern Partnership (EaP), formalised the EU’s relations with its eastern neighbours and set the former on a limited path to European integration. Officially, the EU agenda in the shared neighbourhood revolves around deepening the economic and political integration of the countries, safeguard stability prosperity but also internal security.

- For this reason, the general claim is that to some extent, EU and Russia have pursued similar goals in the shared neighbourhood -each one in its own way-, aiming de facto, to expand their influence in the region and also their power “potential” (hard, soft, smart or social\textsuperscript{212}) on the international political scene, their image and “prestige” as global protagonists. 

\textsuperscript{207} The dissertation takes into consideration events up to the 32\textsuperscript{nd} EU-Russia Summit, held in Brussels in January 2014 (according to the yearly agenda of presidential summits, this event was supposed to take place in December 2013, but it was postponed at EU’s request “for organizational reasons” to January 28, 2014)

\textsuperscript{208} The wave of demonstrations in Ukraine, which began on November 21, 2013 with public protests demanding closer European integration; Source: Euromaidan Movement - Ukraine, http://euromaidanpr.wordpress.com, https://twitter.com/euromaidan


\textsuperscript{211} The coverage of these events was often different in Western and Russian media; Source: press articles published by the international newspaper The Guardian (independent) - www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/17/ukraine-russia-leaders-talks-kremlin-loan-deal- and by Russia Today (state funded); http://rt.com/business/ukraine-15-billion-gas-381/

\textsuperscript{212} The concepts are explored in the last section of this Chapter
Consequently, *competition* trends and antagonism have increased and have *de facto* become a leitmotif in bilateral relations.

- Many scholars have associated the Eastern Partnership to an intense period of divergences in EU’s relations with Moscow from its very start (Haukkala, 2008; Leonard and Popescu, 2008; Popescu and Wilson, 2009; Larsen, 2012) and some have foreseen a series of imminent standoffs. Bengtsson and Elgström have argued that the Union has sought to position itself as a normative leader in the region ever since 2004, primarily by building on the external expectations that associate EU action with fairness and the promotion of “noble goals” (Bengtsson and Elgström, 2012)\(^{213}\).

- Furthermore, with the Lisbon Treaty, effective since December 1, 2009, the Union shifted its approach from widening (in the case of the enlargement to CEE) to deepening the existing processes of European integration (Agh, 2010). However, this has led to a new EU framework of asymmetrical bilateral relation with its eastern neighbours characterised by a one-way flux of regulations, rules, norms and values. (Christou, 2010). In this context, the EU provides its eastern neighbours with only one option, that of adopting its set of rules and regulations unilaterally without asking too much in return. However the absence of the promise of future membership has stripped away the EU’s carrot in its endeavour of conditioning progress and reform in the states in the region.

- The problem is that the EU’s strategic approach towards Russia has involved refraining from substantially engaging in frozen conflicts in the region, whose existence seems to benefit Moscow’s energy interests (Popescu and Wilson, 2009; Whitman and Wolff, 2010). This has often led the countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood to adopt an opportunistic attitudes, trying to get as much as possible from each relationship, both

\(^{213}\) *The focus was thus necessarily on large amount of resources in order to influence policy outcomes in the post-Soviet states*
with the EU and with Russia. While in this dynamic the EU has been unable to create a stable and secure Eastern Neighbourhood, it has managed to attain a fine balance between its economic interests in the region and Russia’s aspirations of regaining its former status as an important international actor.

4.2. RESEARCH GAPS AND MISSING LINKS

As previously mentioned, recent scholarship has yielded a number of explanations on the various shortcomings underscored in EU-Russian relations, with international relations (IR) literature offering extensive explanations for the drawbacks in their cooperation, which pertain to both sides.

However, despite the fact that the problematic has become quite trendy in the past decades, substantial gaps exist at several levels, as scholars have often approached the subject from single-theory perspectives. Explanations generally depend on the lenses through which authors have approached various research questions, while their differences are frequently linked to the ways the three major traditions of thought in International Relations tackle broader issues of world politics.

This unit draws attention on specific research gaps in the literature on EU-Russian relations, that centre indeed on the workings of power, but somehow neglect the aspects linked to its multifaceted nature in various settings, to the role of its amplifiers or to its impact in communications. The claim is that the themes of communication and public diplomacy strategies, in particular, have been disregarded by the literature, despite their key roles for
improved forecasting (and thus strategic planning) on bilateral relations as a whole.

This tendency is perhaps part of a somehow generalized lack of interest in the literature for integrated approaches on the *locus* of power in international relations. Peter Van Ham writes for instance that “both neoliberalism and constructivism tend to overlook questions of power in general, which are equally blindsided by many studies of global governance”, while existing approaches examining contextualized and social aspects of power in particular have offered only conceptual tools which are useful but still “awaiting to be used to gain insight into the sources and mechanism of power and authority in an emerging global governance environment”214. Against this background, it is hardly surprising that little interdisciplinary empirical research has been conducted so far on the polymorphous character of power in specific case studies.

Hence, the present research study attempts to fill this lacuna by focusing on the case of the complex, multi-layered and irregular evolution of communication in EU-Russian relations, arguing that it is through these broad communication processes, tools or specific methods that diverse types of power on both sides are generated, employed and amplified in various settings, having a crucial impact on the broad picture of bilateral relations.

My claim is that a comprehensive study exploring different facets of the complex EU-Russian interactions in a variety of contemporary settings should recognize that interdisciplinary approaches on power, communications and public diplomacy might be rewarding and give some useful indications on future scenarios.

For this reason, the present unit provides an overview on several theoretical approaches from various fields in social sciences (international

---

relations, communications, media, public relations), that although do not
answer directly my research question, all suggest useful approaches toward
answering it. The sources from which I draw relevant concepts and theories in
relation to my research question are thus analysed in terms of the questions
they raise, while bearing in mind obviously the research question of this
dissertation. The focus is in particular on three missing links identified by the
dissertation in the current understanding of EU-Russia relations, namely social
power, public diplomacy and framing. I have tried to connect the dots between
these missing links, by emphasizing the role various common “denominators”
(see below):

- **Social power**: the ability to push preferred (foreign policy) frames
- **Public Diplomacy**: an “avenue” for generating social power
  (beyond competing frames and agendas)
- **Frames/Framing**: Asking why and how frames change offers insights
  into the workings of social power; Framing places issues within a
  broader context

Starting from the assumption that various forms of power are often at
play simultaneously, the claim is that, if investigated regularly, these “missing
links” and their workings might offer useful insights and eventually result in
timely interdisciplinary assessments on communication flows between the two
actors\(^{215}\), and thus on the broader picture of EU-Russia bilateral relations.

\(^{215}\) including communications with different public segments (from EU member states, Russia) with the
aim to both inform and influence, through specific instruments
4.2.1. Social power

For inquiring on the multifaceted and irregular evolution of communication in EU-Russian relations, I draw on the concept of *social power*, linked to the constructivist school of international relations. Before exploring the aspects that stand out in relation to the research question of this dissertation, a brief overview of various definitions of power and of its more traditional forms in international relations (hard, soft, smart) is though more than useful as it contextualizes the notion and thus places it within a broader context.

I start with the conviction that in international politics, as pointed out by Joseph Nye, “power is like the weather. Everyone talks about it, but few understand it.” Consequently, power “is easier to experience than to define or measure.” Indeed, depending on various theoretical choices, *power* is defined and measured differently by different research studies while it remains the political currency of the day in international relations. *Realists* for instance, who take anarchy for granted, used to examine *power* in terms of coercion (as something that is possessed, accumulated, measurable, visible, working on the surface). Furthermore, as the study of *power* had gone beyond Realism and other schools of thought had acknowledged the relevance of other concept, like *values* or *norms* as markers of the behaviour of any international actor, several research studies on power interactions have gradually widen their approach. In particular, when referring to norms, various *constructivist* authors emphasized the increasingly active role of various international

---

217 While the godfathers of the discipline of international relations (like E.H.Carr or Kenneth Waltz), were all primarily concerned with the working and distribution of power in the international system, nowadays, the debate about power appears predicated on the understanding that the very character of international politics is changing and that we are moving away from classical state base authority towards “global governance.” (Van Ham, 2010)
218 Van Ham, 2010, pp.3
219 e.g. the English School of IR, international regimes theory transnationalism or social constructivism
220 Many scholars from this schools of thought analyse international relations topics by looking anyways at elements of social reality as social facts (e.g. goals, threats, fears, cultures, identities and other elements)
actors as well (like media representatives or NGOs) and outlined the mutually constitutive characters of norms, that in theory, by reciprocal interaction, have the power to change and guide both preferences and identities\textsuperscript{221}.

It is in this context that concepts of hard, soft and smart power have emerged as the best-known forms that power can take in international relations. They are briefly introduced below:

- **Hard power** is considered to a certain extent the oldest form of power. For Nye, everyone is familiar with hard power as “it can rest on inducements (carrots) or threats (sticks)”\textsuperscript{222}. It is commonly associated in IR with realism as it is about power politics, force, and violence it is associated to the idea of an anarchic, untamed international system, where countries do not recognize any superior authority, where order is the result of competition for power and wars and where the possession and acquisition of resources is the key to success.

- **Soft power** is about the exercise of power by a state, an organization or a single person with means other than violence and force. Its sources are persuasion, seduction, myth or the force of the positive examples. In sum, soft power rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others, without the use of force, coercion or violence. This form of power manifests itself in different contexts and with different degrees of intensity, and evidence. It is about a world in which international institutions matter, in which war is not the only way to settle conflicts and in which the best way to convince and persuade others to follow a specific example should avoid coercion. A well known soft power supporter is Joseph Nye, who argues that “sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats of payoffs (while) the indirect way to get what you want has sometimes been called the second face of power”. Put differently, “a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics

\textsuperscript{221} Furthermore, literature elaborated on the role of discursive practices, persuasion, conceived as the ability to establish la règle du jeu (rules of the game), social order, etc

\textsuperscript{222} Nye, J., 2004, Soft Power: the means to success in world politics, Public Affairs
because other countries - admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring
to its level of prosperity and openness - want to follow it**223. However, various
scholars argue that Nye’s notion remains somehow agent-centred. In this sense,
in the development of the research thesis, the present dissertation endorses Van
Ham’s views on Nye’s definition, that assumes soft power remains largely
based on resources, which can be used, applied and wielded.

- **Smart power**, in turn, is used to describe a new, innovative way of managing
  power (built on the concept of soft power). Nye conceptualizes it as something
  lying somewhere between hard and soft power, a sort of “third way” in the
  complex jungle of power relations. According to the scholar, smart power fits
  particularly well into the realm of current international relations and foreign
  politics. According to many scholars, what counts as power and being powerful
  remains though quite controversial

  Against this background, the concept of **social power** developed by Peter
  van Ham (2010), emerges as a new, challenging key to understanding
  contemporary international politics.

  The scholar argues that the age of globalization implies a pressing need
go beyond both the sheer focus on hard power and the soft power’s core
components, namely attraction and persuasion.

  For Van Ham, social power incorporates the widely used notion of soft
power, and goes far beyond it as it is wielded if an actor succeeds in up-loading
its norms and values to the global level, in establishing those norms in a way
that they are seen as legitimate and desirable and in doing all this without
resorting to coercion or payment**224 (Van Ham, 2010). In other words, it is the

---

223 Ibid, 2004
capacity to establish the norms and rules around which other actors’ actions converge that constitute the core of social power.  

In international politics, it is understood as a key ability to push a preferred foreign policy frame, by co-opting others, rather than coercing them (it is thus inherently relational). Consequently, the locus of its operation is in reciprocal social interaction and it resides in diverse practices like public diplomacy, framing, norm advocacy, agenda setting, branding or discursive power, with the latter based on the given that (in principle) recipients listen to messages and are willing to place a basic level of trust in their validity.

Furthermore, while recognizing the potential limits of interpretations and the complexity of the concept, Van Ham understands social power to interact in intricate ways especially with certain aspects of hard power, as advocating new standards, norms or values might be a competitive and at times even an antagonistic process because the issue here is that of advancing new notions of desirable behaviour vis-à-vis the costumes or the more “settled” ways of doing things. In this context, the claim is that social power can use two approaches - either avant-garde - revolutionary (by uploading new norms or standards) or conservative (by maintaining them) -, as it normally takes place in a normative/political space. In any case without the use of classical hard power tools, like military force or threats to use military force.

An interesting point is that in Van Ham’s view, in case of paradigm shifts - related for instance to shocking or symbolic events which recast or challenge prevailing definitions of a situation -, the subsequent crisis can offer new opportunities to create new norms (and ultimately socially agreed facts) to

---

225 Here it would be useful to recall also how other schools consider norms to be relevant. While the regime theory assumes that norms and rules guide actors’ behaviour eventually changing their notion of national interest, constructivist authors emphasize the mutually constitutive character of norms, the implied changing preferences/identities by reciprocal interaction. For Van Ham it is the second element which is particularly interesting as it involves reciprocal social interaction as the locus of power.

226 Here it should be taken into account that foreign policy frames are more likely to be accepted when they “fit”, that is when they are culturally congruent to existing values, norms and interpretations.

227 E.g. the fall of the Berlin Wall, to 9/11, the global financial and economic crisis.
fit coherently within the status of status quo and introduced them through the use of social power, in order to be considered less threatening and therefore more *legitimate*. Legitimacy is thus another key element of social power, defined as a powerful method to justify foreign policy actions and gather support for them, as it ”changes paying tribute into paying taxes and that alters hegemony into leadership”\(^{228}\). Furthermore, *legitimacy* is a relevant element for my inquiry on EU-Russian communication, as the concept also assumes tacit or explicit agreement on the rules-of-the-game (based in shared norms and values) and implies a shared and “mutual sense of *trust*, of a shared identity, and of a belief in a common destiny”.

Finally, Van Ham’s assessment of European social power is particularly convincing for the dissertation. He argues that “inside the EU hard power counts for little (and only if it is deployed outside the EU whereas social power is everything)”\(^{229}\). Accordingly, it appears that “the EU feels comfortable in an[…] environment which privileges social power. To all EU member states, playing the two-level game of balancing domestic and European politics, has become second nature”\(^{230}\).

### 4.2.2. Public Diplomacy

When approaching the topic of *public diplomacy*, many scholars find themselves in difficulty as the area suffers from a lack of a sufficiently interdisciplinary, systematic and integrated theoretical research in the field (Gilboa, 2008)\(^{231}\). The approaches to this study field have been numerous but

---


\(^{229}\) Ibid, pp.37

\(^{230}\) Ibid, pp.73

\(^{231}\) Many scholars have developed several tools and models for analysis in several disciplines, but have not proposed a comprehensive and integrated framework, although the field is probably one of the most multidisciplinary areas (Gilboa, 2008). In other words, experts and practitioners present arguments
often focus on single-theory approaches without really providing an overall overview on this vast, fascinating and challenging area of study—e.g. on the specific nature and on the role of public diplomacy practices (international relations scholars and public diplomacy practitioners); on the impact of communication technology that has revolutionized the practice of diplomacy (journalism and media scholars) or on long-term approaches with a special focus on specific elements necessary for building, maintaining, and improving relationships with foreign publics, like dialogue and mutuality (public relations scholars)\textsuperscript{232}.

Generally speaking, public diplomacy could be defined as an \textit{umbrella term} that indicates the attempts by states or other international protagonists (e.g. IGOs, iNGOs) to change or influence the \textit{behaviour} of other states or more broadly speaking of other international actors they deal with, without the use of physical or economic force. They fall outside the traditional model of diplomacy\textsuperscript{233} because they involve members of the public as well as government officials (Nye 2005). For many scholars and practitioners, it is one of the key processes that are employed by a state or by other international actors to tap into the \textit{soft, smart or social power} resource reserves, along \textit{cultural diplomacy}, which focuses on exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding (for many scholars it is actually the linchpin of public diplomacy itself\textsuperscript{234}).

\textsuperscript{232} The last thorough critical analysis on the various attempts to conceptualize and theorize public diplomacy in several disciplines—including public relations, communication, and international relations—dates back to 2008, when Eytan Gilboa published a detailed overview in the \textit{Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science} 616.

\textsuperscript{233} Traditional diplomacy can be understood here as simply dialogue between officials from the governments of two (or more) states acting in their professional capacities (Oxford English Dictionary 1989).

Following the events of 9/11 the concept has experienced new interest by both scholars and public officials. Scholars have for instance started focusing more on the fact that on one hand, governments at whatever level, have to win support and legitimacy from domestic publics for their foreign-policy positions and on the other hand, governments also have to “win over” foreign publics if they want to secure the agreement to policy positions from their governments (Riordan, 2005). In the specific case of the US for example, “since 9/11, public diplomacy has experienced a steep learning curve. The realization that foreign perceptions had domestic consequence quickly made public diplomacy a national security issue. When the US launched the war on terrorism, public diplomacy was second only to the military offensive and was the lead instrument in the battle for hearts and minds”235. In this sense, various accounts analyse case studies and governmental policies, aimed to communicating directly with the foreign public in order to advance their interest while improving their image and public perception on specific topics with foreign publics (Melissen 2004; Gilboa 2006).

Furthermore, given the fast development of global communication that has been rapidly changed by digital technology, public relations and journalism scholars started to look more and more at public diplomacy as well.

On the one hand, public relations scholars236 regularly analyse the image-building function of governmental activities in the international arena, given the transformation of public diplomacy from a mere tool of foreign policy into a strategic management function that often revolves around the fundamental idea of building long-term relationships with targeted foreign publics (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Melissen, 2005; Riordan, 2004) in an attempt to

236 e.g. Wang & Chang, 2004; Wang, 2006; Yun, 2006
build a dialogic-based public diplomacy, essential in building mutual understanding (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008; Riordan, 2004).

On the other hand, journalism scholars focus more on the consequences of communication technologies on the practice of public diplomacy and examine mass communication’s effects on the foreign publics (Entman 2008, Gilboa, 2005; Sheafer, 2009; Sheafer & Shenhav, 2009).

Likewise, for analysing the political, social, and cultural formulations of public diplomacy, international relations scholars pay special attention to the social constructivist approach, according to which individual strategies and state interests are established in correlation to the specific historical, political and cultural contexts within which the state operates (domestic/international) (Katzenstein, 1996). Furthermore, the suggestion is that this context emerges out of a process of representation through which state officials (among others) can make sense of both their domestic and international contexts (Weldes, 1999). In this context, negative self-images tend to emerge from perceived disregard or humiliation by other states, while positive self-images emerge from mutual respect and cooperation, as well as from the recognition of sovereignty by other states (Wendt, 1999).

Following their lines of reasoning, scholars from all disciplines emphasize the key role of the media and of the public opinion, generally considered key factors with a high impact on determining the success of public diplomacy efforts especially when countering existing perceptions of foreign publics (Nisbet, 2004). Several contributions stand out and appear particularly useful for this dissertation. Although they do not answer directly the research

---

237 In the past, scholars focused mainly on the role of international broadcasting as the main tool for mediated public diplomacy (Entman 2008; Gilboa 2004, 2005; Soroka 2003).

238 According to Wendt, negative images cannot be tolerated for long and states regularly compensate by self-assertion and/or devaluation and aggression toward the other. Likewise, positive images reduce the need to secure “the Self” by devaluing or destroying “the Other,” and reassuring it not only against the physical threat of conquest, “but also against the psychic threat of not having standing” (Wendt, 1999)
question, they contribute to the research design and are reflected in the questions that guide the textual analysis.

One of the most significant viewpoints is perhaps the *Cascade Network Activation Model (CAM)* advanced by Entman\(^{239}\) (2003, 2004) for connecting public opinion, media and foreign policy, often correlated with studies suggesting the importance of the credibility of an information sender (Druckman 2001). Entman’s theory brings to the forefront a key concept the present dissertation refers to, namely *mediated public diplomacy*, indicating a government’s efforts to promote favourable framing of its policies in foreign media (through messaging, image control and relationship building through third-party media). More specifically, the study illustrates the interaction of various variables that influence the magnitude (meaning the frequency and prominence) of a news frame and thus the effectiveness of (political) communication: motivations, (cultural) congruence, power, and strategy. In other words, it suggests that the influence of (political) communication on mass opinion can be exerted on the one hand by increasing the *magnitude* of communication around a particular issue (from low to high), especially in the news media, increasing thus awareness and providing the initial *priming* and *framing* messages for the general public\(^{240}\). On the other hand, Entman argues that influence can be easier and hence communication processes effective, when messages are *congruent* with a dominant view (that is when there is a high degree of consensus around a particular issue\(^{241}\)) or when there is no single dominant view (because of considerable disagreements / controversy in a specific society).

\(^{239}\) This model, developed initially as a framework of analysis mainly for media performance (the scholar focused on the case of US foreign policy), explains how interpretive frames activate and spread from the top level of a stratified system (in the case of Entman’s study- the White House) to the network of non-administration elites, and on to news organizations, their texts, and the public and how interpretations feed back from lower to higher levels (Entman, 2003)

\(^{240}\) when there is already high magnitude there can be less scope for further influence on opinion. (e.g. s public with strong opinions about a particular issue)

\(^{241}\) Elite messages, that are in general congruent with some peoples’ views but incongruent with those of others, might appear though ambiguous while their impact uncertain.
The central idea here is that mediated public diplomacy occurs through a process of “passing” information from authorities to the publics (like in a waterfall). In this gradual process, labelled Cascading Network, each level of actors adds new frames or ideas, while some actors would have more power than others to push frames to the public. Top government officials would have for instance more power to push their own view or frame to the public. At the same time, journalists and news organizations could have more power to “control” the information presented to the public. In other words, according to Entman, several actors (e.g. presidents, chief foreign advisers, elites and the media) are trying to win over the frames that reach the public through the media and greatly influence the formation of public opinion. Furthermore, the cultural factor is perceived as extremely important as well, while keeping in mind, as Entman notes\textsuperscript{242}, that both the activation and the spreading of frames in specific (targeted) nations’ media depend on a certain degree of congruence which thus implies a degree of (in)compatibility between the general outlook and value systems of the two sides involved (Entman, 2008).

This model, extended to the international communication process, can help analyse successes and failures of key of international actors (governmental, IGOs, etc), in their efforts to promote favourable framing of specific policies in global or national media outlets and to reach various publics through specific public diplomacy strategies\textsuperscript{243}.

Entman’s concept of mediated public diplomacy, developed initially for analysing US policies, was subsequently developed by other scholars from

\textsuperscript{242} Entman gives for instance the example of the US, where the activation of favourable frames for the U.S. in foreign media is limited to media and those nations that have a positive degree of cultural congruency with U.S. political culture. Moreover, it follows that the conditions of a political culture generally favourable to neutral toward U.S. and its foreign policy, and a pluralistic media system the U.S. mediated public diplomacy has more chances for success (Entman, 2008).

\textsuperscript{243} The original presumption was that favourable framing of governmental policy in the media of foreign countries is the specific goal of mediated public diplomacy, to which some external influencing factors were added: private communications between leaders and the foreign country’s elites; coverage of governmental policy by global media, and governmental long term public diplomacy.
various disciplines\textsuperscript{244}, that applied it to various settings, with a special focus on frames and frame building. Sheafer & Shenhav (2009) place it for instance in a specific context of a changing strategic, social and cultural environment and emphasize in particular the importance of the \textit{cultural resonance} factor. Furthermore, Sheafer (2009) investigates a specific case of mediated public diplomacy, with competition over international agenda building and frame building as central strategic public diplomacy activities. In turn, Melissen (2005) warns about the downside of “using” media as a tool for foreign policy, since it can damage a country’s credibility in communicating with foreign publics. For the scholar, if public diplomacy is used as a foreign policy tool, “it exposes public diplomacy to the contradictions, discontinuities, fads and fancies of foreign policy. (Melissen, 2005). Another interesting viewpoint comes from public relations literature - after testing the applicability of Grunig’s Excellence theory of public relations (1992) to public diplomacy, J. Yun (2006)\textsuperscript{245} emphasizes the role of \textit{asymmetric/symmetric} communication, indicating the amount of control each of the parties might have over the content of communication flows, in a process where all parties can question each others’ assumptions and play a part in developing (and thus frame) the final message\textsuperscript{246}.

As far as the typology of \textit{power} used or generated through public diplomacy processes, this study turns to the international relations literature, with a special focus on Peter Van Ham’s research on \textit{social power} (2010). Starting from the assumption that public diplomacy is rooted in communication, the scholar argues that “the social power derived from this

\textsuperscript{244} Yet despite increasing interest in mediated public diplomacy and more generally in frame building, empirical examination of the field are still limited.

\textsuperscript{245} Yun applies a complex model, including the direction of communication (one-way/two-way), whether the communication is interpersonal or conducted through a media channel, and the ethical quality of the interaction.

\textsuperscript{246} The asymmetric model implies communication flows in all directions: e.g. communication from a government of a country/institution directly to the people/citizens of another partner country/institution, without necessarily passing through governmental/institutional “filters” or by involving its own citizens
strategy hinges on other actors knowing of one’s positive and alluring policies and qualities."247 Van Ham’s idea is that social power is eventually the key for spreading the social knowledge about one’s attractiveness or, in the case of new public diplomacy: the importance of certain policy issues. In this context, the role of messages and targets is fundamental, because, as Van Ham argues, unlike propaganda, public diplomacy is not only about “getting the message out”, but also about “creating a wider, perhaps even a global community, which is susceptible to a way of thinking that is considered desirable”. In other words, it is about listening, facilitating and networking, not only about telling or spreading information (Ibid, 2010). Furthermore, Van Ham notes that public diplomacy increasingly uses several concepts that are developed for marketing or (commercial) branding, with place branding248 in particular often integrated into what the scholar labels as best practice of public diplomacy practice on the international scene.

4.2.3. Framing

As Van Ham rightfully notes, the debate on this specific topic depicting how individuals, groups, and societies organize, perceive, and communicate about reality, takes place in “a crowded conceptual field”, that is with overlapping terminology249 in various fields, where notions like frames, images, scripts or paradigms refer to “approximately similar processes of creating (social) meaning”: “Frames offer mental structures shaping the way we see the world and therefore limit the range of interpretative possibilities; they tell us what is important and what the range of options and solutions are to which problems”250.

248 Place branding deals with managing the emotional ties between territory and people
249 the terminology is used by cognitive scientists, psychologists or political scientists, media scholars, etc
Framing is mainly seen in scholarship as media selection, exclusion of, and emphasis on certain issues and approaches to promote a particular definition, interpretation, moral evaluation, or a solution (Gilboa, 2008), with frames often coming from journalists’ practice of highlighting, obscuring, and excluding facets of an event or issue (Entman, 1993). In this context, many scholars focus in particular on frames and framing effects, through either frame building (how frames create common discourse about an issue and how different frames are adopted by the media) or frame setting (how media framing influences an audience). Likewise the field of political communication often associates these concepts with two other notions, namely “priming” and “agenda setting”, with both models on media’s ability to increase accessibility, indicating that mass media affect people’s judgment (priming) by making some issues salient than others (agenda setting) (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). To put it shortly, while “agenda setting” is about what issues to think about and “priming” about what to think about when evaluating an issue, “framing” is about “how” to think about issues. Framing refers to how news media characterize an issue influences audiences’ perception of the issue (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Tewksbury & Scheufele; 2009).

However, scholars note that the media represents only one actor in the framing process (Gilboa, 2008). Politicians, policy makers, elites, interest groups and foreign leaders all try to win public acceptance with their framing, as, like many scholars note, framing is essentially “an exercise of power” (Reese, 2001), with frames considered not only the central organizing ideas that make sense of an event or an issue (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987) but actually the very indicators of power, that is “the imprint of power” (Entman,

---

251 For analysing news texts for instance, scholars have even identified a series of frames, namely generic and specific. Generic frames refer to human interest, responsibility, economic consequences, conflict, and morality (Semeiko & Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese, Peter, & Semeiko, 2001), while specific frames are focused on particular news events or topics and details (Vreese, Peter & Semeiko). Furthermore, Ghanem and McCombs (in Reese, 2001) identify four dimensions of media framing: the news subject, its presentation (space and placement), cognitive attributes (details of what it is included in the frame), and affective attributes (tone). (Reese, 2001).
1993). Consequently, the role of framing is that of “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and (of) making them more salient in a communication context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” through frames\textsuperscript{252}.

Furthermore, the considerable literature which has accumulated on the subject over the past decades emphasizes that the framing process of a specific issue or problem implies a dual cause/effect alignment, with a special attention to the so-called “framing responsibility” or attribution of a cause to a certain actor, object or entity. This process leads to sociological approaches to framing\textsuperscript{253}, drawn from the attribution theory (Heider 1958; Heider & Simmel, 1944), along the well-known frame analysis (Goffman, 1974)\textsuperscript{254}. Attribution theory, which states that people simplify their perceptions (of social reality) by making judgements about what causes others to act in a particular way\textsuperscript{255}, is a useful model for practitioners as well, especially for communication professionals\textsuperscript{256} in their attempt to develop common reference frames (for organizations/institutions and their publics) and more efficient crisis communication plans, on the basis of different understandings of the way people perceive specific events, actions or causes\textsuperscript{257}. The assumption, supported by the present thesis as well, is that message producers as well as

\begin{footnotesize}


\textsuperscript{254} Erwin Goffman (1974) was the first to introduce frame analysis to the sociological research field, by exploring different types and levels of framing activity, underlying the fact that as our thoughts and actions are influenced by the way messages are organized; framing involves information organizing and packaging. Also Goffman marked the changes in interpretative frames, according to which events are interpreted according to one of the following frameworks: natural, social or institutional; Source: Elliott A, Bryan S Turner B.S. (2001), Profiles in Contemporary Social Theory, Sage, London

\textsuperscript{255} In crisis situations for instance, the general tendency is to search for the cause and to find someone to blame it on

\textsuperscript{256} e.g. professionals dealing with public information, public relations, media affairs, communication strategy or more broadly integrated communications

\textsuperscript{257} These could include details on the contents but also indicators on the “display” - e.g. titles, leads, reference quotes (e.g. larger fonts, or highlighted phrases and central paragraphs that underscore one storyline or another)
\end{footnotesize}
their receivers are involved in constructing the social reality, whose meaning(s) can be “negotiated” up to a certain extent.

Against this background, several hypotheses on framing appear particularly useful for the present study and contribute to delineate its wide-ranging and interdisciplinary approach. First, I focus on the selection of frames and I partly turn to Entman’s concepts (1993, 2003, 2004) that identified selection and highlight as key concepts of framing (along others- e.g. magnitude, congruence). Here, the key idea is that frames -defined as “information-processing schemata” that are operating by “selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others” (Entman, 1993)- indicate problems, diagnose causes (by identifying the forces creating the problem), evaluate (by expressing opinions) and prescribe solutions. Furthermore, as framing a problem implies both causes and effects, special attention is also paid to the concept of framing responsibility defined earlier in the unit.

Secondly, the analysis tries to contextualize frames, arguing that information is set in a certain context that eventually shapes people’s reaction and perception. In this sense, I also refer to several understandings from the perspective of social power and I thus turn to Van Ham’s approach (2010), according to which framing is highly contextual, as are all aspects of social power. This implies for instance that the so called “frame resonance” varies between different target audiences and that the struggles over the framings of a policy situation -that subsequently might develop as competing frames and agendas- go beyond linguistic differences, as they represent symbolic contests over the social meaning of an issue domain, “where meaning implies not only

---

258 This leads in theory to the attribution theory (analysing and understanding the way people try to understand the events or actions’ causes) that will not be considered in the study given its limited object

259 Subsequently, as Entman argues, in the absence of an overwhelming frame of reference to analyse international, competition over “news frames” has increased politics
what is at issue but also what is to be done”\textsuperscript{260}. Furthermore, asking \textit{when, why} and \textit{how} frame changes occur might offer several useful insights on the overall communication process, including into the various facets of the generated power or into the reasons for which certain agendas prevail over others.

Additionally, several other methodologies for examining various typologies of frames appear as useful reference during the empiric investigation:

- Steensland model (2008) centres on a two-fold approach: \textit{actor representation} approach -focusing on the changing distribution of actors given voice in policy debates- and \textit{frame adoption} –focusing on the changing distribution of frames that actors attach to a policy\textsuperscript{261}. The study appears particularly interesting for the dissertation that correlates it with the Van Ham’s research that emphasis in particular the case of \textit{frame change}- the idea is that when new frames are introduced within a certain discursive field, connecting the changing distribution of actors to the different frames attached to a policy issue might indicate who detains social power (at a specific moment in time).

- Scheufele (2004, 2006) delineates in turn frames along two dimensions: \textit{horizontal} (different arenas) and \textit{vertical} (different levels). According to this matrix\textsuperscript{262}, horizontal frames occur in different arenas (media, political system, economic milieus, cultural organizations, or generally in the society) with each actor framing the same event in different ways. Furthermore, vertical frames generally act as tools for information processing and can be identified at different levels in public/media discourses; in the “structure” of certain discursive products (e.g. \textit{press articles, press releases}) or in specific cognitive patterns -built on a combination of elements like events, causes, consequences-

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{262} Source: D'Angelo P., Kuyper J. A. (2010), Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives, New York, Routledge,pp.111
\end{flushright}
that might eventually change a specific discourse. The dissertation argues that, in the case of the EU-Russian communication processes, both types of frames are traceable in press releases/official discourses.

- Vreese, Semetko and Peter (2000) identify five generic frames, describing a wide range of topics applicable in various cultural or social contexts, for analysing in particular news items -. These frames focus on either attribution issues (the cause/solution of a problem is attributed to either the government, a person, or a group), or on (potential) clashes, on the “human side” of a problem, on its economic consequences or finally on religious connotations. The dissertation argues that, in specific cases, these frames can be used as reference for analysing official discourses and press releases as well, often formatted on the model of news items, in order to facilitate the work of journalists, whose routine often depends on strict time schedules/pressures. Additionally, issue specific frames are more focused on details and thus refer to specific aspects of broader events or topics.

- Ruigrok, van Atteveldt and Takens’s model (2009), identifies equivalency and emphasis frames. The first frames present a subject in different ways, using different but logical words or equivalent phrases that modify the public’s preferences (depending on the different wordings of the same problem). The second (emphasis frames) underline the potentially relevant considerations.

All frames are identifiable through either deductive or inductive methods (Semetko and Valkenberg, 2007). The first approach assumes predefining certain frames as analytical variables (in order to verify to which extent these frames exist in the analysed resources) and involves the need to clearly identify the frames that might exist in those materials. The second approach (inductive) involves an overall in-depth analysis of a story in order to enunciate the possible frames. The dissertation uses the second approach.
PART III.

COMMUNICATION EXERCISES: FRAMING THE DEBATE ON A TROUBLED RELATIONSHIP - *AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS* -
CHAPTER 5: PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND IMAGE CONSTRUCTION

This chapter starts from the basic assumption that any communication process implies a transfer of information, thoughts or ideas —that can either be smooth or difficult— to create a “shared understanding” between at least a sender and a receiver, involving messages, channels, feedbacks, specific contexts. However, this description significantly under-represents what can actually be a very complex process especially on the international political scene, as on close scrutiny none of the myriad of protagonists is easy to understand when it communicates in the public sphere. How do they communicate between themselves and with the public? What channels do they prefer for sending out specific messages to the public, when and why? How do they relate with the media? What lies beneath official discourses? What goes unsaid in public messages? What perceptions and representations of “self” and “others” emerge from these messages? Etc.

In this sense, EU and Russia are two of the finest examples of complex communicators in the “global realm”. On the one hand, EU is a hybrid and unique intergovernmental and supranational organization. Its “communication” with the world is thus atypical as well. On the other hand, Russia stands also as a unique international actor, a (re)emerging power that has promptly (re)invented itself after 1991 aiming to (re)gain its global player status and building on the legacy it inherited from the former Soviet Union or from the Russian Empire. Likewise, as mentioned in the previous chapters, the EU-Russian complex relationship resulting in intricate bilateral communications flows, is a singular case in the global arena, for a multitude of reasons, which go from geographical proximity and a complicated common history to the last decades’ strategic partnership label, from growing political tensions to economic interdependence, from intense political competition in both actors’ near

\[263\] Communication noises, that can obstruct this transfer, can take various shapes

118
neighbourhood to common projects on international dossiers like the “Iran nuclear talks”.

Against this background, exploring the EU –Russia uneasy communication flows, while bearing in mind the type of power they produce or utilize, appears thus quite challenging for researchers, diplomats and international communication practitioners.

The present chapter argues that one way of getting one’s arm around the issue is by focusing on the general practices and on the specific approaches/styles of the two actors, that shape their fluid and non-linear communication flows and thus explain the current shallow configuration of their bilateral communication (public diplomacy exercises/image construction). For this reason, it turns to the empirical evidence gathered during the research period (for the development of this study – 2011-2013), with the aim of highlighting a number of unresolved issues surrounding EU-Russian communication that give a clear idea of the challenges ahead for both actors. In this sense, the chapter delineates an original model of inquiry that might be used for subsequent wide-ranging assessments on the impact and on the value of these communication activities. This section will not attempt though to be exhaustive, as it will focus only on the issues considered relevant for the object of this dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNICATION PRACTICES</th>
<th>COMMUNICATION STYLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(EU-RUSSIA RELATIONS)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(EU vs. RUSSIA)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Messages</td>
<td>• Rationale/Communicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Process/Channels</td>
<td>• Key Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Context</td>
<td>• Brussels’ approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moscow’s approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Threats</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to avoid the risk of incurring subjectivity bias, the chapter presents the selected empirical data in as transparent a way as possible, while providing the sources in support of every position. Despite the margins of error that every subjective analysis of this kind may face, I hope that the models I delineate in this chapter will contribute to the wide body of knowledge existing on the EU-Russia relations and on international communication/public diplomacy.

5.1. Communication Practices

This unit presents a synthesis of the empirical data collected by the author during on/off-the-record discussions with numerous EU and Russian experts (diplomats, public servants, experts and journalists)264 and during intensive archive/literature surveys of EU and Russian official sources (official documents) and of non-academic readings, taken into consideration on the basis of suggestions from either EU or Russian experts (e.g. press articles, reports from think-tanks, presentations in various IGOs sessions, internal EU reports & analysis). Furthermore, the unit emphasizes certain aspects of the overall framework of EU-Russia cooperation265, that are of particular interest when referring specifically to communication practices.

The gathered information is grouped with the help of a SWOT Matrix - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats266-, often referred to during the above-mentioned discussions, as one of the regular methods employed by experts/diplomats in their internal reports and assessments. However, the matrix is not

264 Off/On the record discussions/interviews/public events attended by the author in Brussels in 2012, 2013 on the occasion of several key events such as: EU-Russia summits 6th Joint Workshop between the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation (www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/a_ces3362-2013_00_01_tra_tcd.pdf)

265 for a detailed presentation see Chapter 4

266 While content is understood here as referring to language use (words or symbols) and thus to messages, process refers to the way messages are delivered and context to the situation or environment in which messages are delivered.
understood here as an end in itself, but rather as a way to identify and define several relevant facts about the internal and external environment affecting communication practices in EU and Russia relations -with a special focus on messages, processes/channels and on the context surrounding them\(^{267}\)-, while bearing in mind the research question guiding the dissertation. The purpose of the chapter is thus to locate the relevant data gathered during the research process in the broader context while including in the discussion arguments voiced by EU and Russian experts I had the chance to meet during the research period.

5.1.1. Strengths

Empirical evidence suggests that, despite the overall unenthusiastic trends in EU-Russian relations, several positive signs revealed in the bilateral communication practices could still be considered strengths under the current circumstances, although they do not automatically enable the communication process and they would thus need to be constantly reinforced, with a special focus on messages, processes/channels and on the context surrounding it.

- **Messages:**

Although the number of joint press releases/statements is very limited even in the case of common initiatives or events\(^ {268}\), when approaching the media\(^ {269}\), both the EU and Russia generally stick to the *strategic partnership* label of the last decades when referring to the overall evolution of their relationship. In other words, both parties try to see the full half of the bottle, each one in its own way\(^ {270}\).

Furthermore, EU institutional publications, even those depicting specific aspects of the EU-Russian relationship -including those targeting specifically the media- underline the vital need on both sides and the key role of this relationship

\(^{267}\) Through relative Communication/Press Units, but also media “load-speakers” and media brokers (e.g., Euronews, Russia Today), Informative Visits/Exchanges (e.g.EU projects for Russian journalists – visits in Brussels, Western journalists invited for visits to Moscow)

\(^{268}\) like for instance presidential summits, analysed in the next chapter

\(^{269}\) directly -during press conferences/briefings/individual interviews, social media- or indirectly -through press releases, press kits, information/background sheets, social media-

\(^{270}\) Discussions with EEAS officials, Brussels, September 2013
through *standard (although too general) phrases* on the key significance of the *strategic partnership* between Russia and the Union, often referred to simply as “Europe”. In a brochure produced for the general public for instance, the Union and Russia are presented as *close neighbours, global players and strategic partners*, while the EU emphasizes its “strong interest in working together with Russia, in order to foster political, social and economic stability, in the region and worldwide”\(^{271}\). Meanwhile, Russian official standpoints -expressed in *viva voce* by officials or through specific publications (including press releases) -emphasize that the two actors are “*major*” partners in a number of key spheres, including economy, energy, internal and external aspects of security. Furthermore, the regular updates on their interactions are not often associated with the term “*strategic*” (with the exception of statements or quotes from high level official, such as the President or the Minister of Foreign Affairs), but rather with the idea of *equality*, given fact that this relationship is “supported by a well established institutional architecture that enables the two sides to discuss at different levels practically all problems of today's world”\(^{272}\).

On a general level, communication products on both sides depicting the evolution of EU-Russian relations either stick to generalities (statistics, overview of relations), either reflect a stand on a specific issue and on the general complex state of affairs. Although viewpoints on both sides (texts included) often assume critical tones when addressing key bilateral controversies (such as the human rights issue), the general trend is an informative one.

- *Processes:*

While not all common meetings / initiatives are used as opportunities to (jointly) communicate to the public about their results, the two parties stick to the bilateral events calendar for approaching the media (and thus inform the public) and in principle take stock of the evolution of their relations –e.g. mainly on the occasion


of presidential summits, visits of high level officials such as ministers or commissioners, concrete high level negotiations or consultations on key themes (such as energy or trade)/agreements. Although often labelled by experts cosmetic (diplomatic) exercises, given their promising agenda that resulted in mutual frustration and continuous crises, these events allow both parties to approach directly the public through specific communication channels.

This element is of particular interest for this dissertation, since it implies the fact that, beyond official or secret talks, behind closed doors among politicians and diplomats, public diplomacy plays a central role as it involves the engagement between officials, governments and various publics. Within the various forms that public diplomacy might take\textsuperscript{273}, mediated public diplomacy\textsuperscript{274} stands out, as it is often through the media, perceived as a key “intermediary”\textsuperscript{275}, that these two actors attempt to shape public opinion\textsuperscript{276}, with both sides being aware of the fact that the way they frame information and convey it to the media\textsuperscript{277} (through press releases, statements, briefings, discourses, or other communication products such as web-infos-s, social media) might influence both journalistic coverage and furthermore the public.

- **Context:**

Along messages and processes, there are also other various contextual factors that subtly influence communication practices in EU-Russian relations (and consequently the effectiveness of messages) including environmental (e.g. settings, such including cultural initiatives (e.g. travelling art exhibitions, cultural exchanges, or advertising campaigns promoting a country to foreign audiences)

\textsuperscript{274} understood as the organized efforts by officials to exert as much influence as possible over the way specific policies, events or initiatives are portrayed by (foreign) media

\textsuperscript{275} other key “ambassadors” include ordinary citizens, artists, students, businessmen and women, celebrities (Cooper 2008)

\textsuperscript{276} In this context, one should also note that journalists in particular have generally a political role, as they report on a regular basis and thus they actually “construct” reality (Archetti, 2013), in a scenario that sees the public’s direct experience of reality often limited to the commuting journey between home and the workplace. The idea, is that although new communication technologies provide platforms to exchange information, communicate ideas, network or mobilize followers and resources across borders, the news from media outlets remain ”the” key source of information and thus an important “window” (the “window” metaphor was suggested by Tuchman in 1978).

\textsuperscript{277} as mentioned in Chapter 5
conference rooms etc.), cultural (e.g. cultural references, organisational cultures) or developmental factors (e.g. stage of the meeting, experience in similar settings, etc.).

The organisation of *working lunches* and *dinners* among officials on the occasion of key bilateral events, like presidential summits for instance is not necessarily perceived as a protocol rule, but rather as an indicative element on the evolution of EU-Russian communication practices.

Furthermore, the fact that EU or Russian officials make use of cultural and historical references in their discourses appears to many quite a positive element. Noteworthy is the fact that mostly EU representatives use quotes from Russian writers or refer to key events in recent history, while speechwriters working for the European Council or for the Commission don’t hide their difficulties in tracing “the right quotes” to be used in either short statements or discourses. The president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy in particular has presented himself as a fan of the Russian literary chef-d'oeuvre “War and Peace” (1869), Lev Tolstoy’s finest literary achievement, along with other masterpieces such as Anna Karenina (1877), regarded as one of the most important works of world literature: “*Asked right before (...) the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony what book inspired me most as a European, my spontaneous answer was: War and Peace – was confessing the EU official in a lecture at the European University at Saint Petersburg, held in September 2013 - A moving love story, a fascinating panorama of society and politics, and also (in chapters that some readers skip but which I find always inspiring!) a wise reflection on the great, anonymous forces of history – forces which not even great leaders like Emperor Napoleon or Tsar Alexander were able to keep*

---

278 In this sense, the fact that the official dinner between EU and Russian leaders that would have had to open the 32nd EU-Russia presidential summit (Brussels, 28 January 2014 - [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-72_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-72_en.htm)) was cancelled, appeared as a sort of omen for many diplomats, experts and journalists, although officially the justification was a shortened visit of the Russian president in Brussels, on the eve of the Sochi Winter Olympic Games 2014; For more on the subject see a useful timeline here: [www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/16/us-russia-eu-idUSBREA0F15520140116](http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/01/16/us-russia-eu-idUSBREA0F15520140116)

279 The book delineates in graphic detail events surrounding the French invasion of Russia, and the impact of the Napoleonic era on Tsarist society, as seen through the eyes of five Russian aristocratic families.

280 Lev Tolstoy (1828 –1910)
Likewise, the president of the European Commission, Jose Barroso, uses specific quotes in his speeches and often refers to historical characters. After the EU-Russian 32nd presidential summit for instance Barroso quoted for instance Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky, one of the greatest and most prominent in world literature, who once wrote that “much unhappiness has come into the world because of bewilderment and things left unsaid.”

5.1.2. Weaknesses

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are many shortcomings causing deadlocks in EU-Russian relations and, as a consequence, communication practices reflect them as well. In this sense, empirical evidence reveals increasing weaknesses on both sides and even a sort of a chain reaction: the lack of vision on both sides causes for instance weak commitments, the normative limits cause discursive dissonances, the lack of a proper strategy causes lack of team spirit even in basic issues and failure to meet specific needs or handle unpredictable situations, and so on.

- Messages:

For several experts, the key problem in EU-Russian relations is what Andrey Makarychev calls a long tradition in both Brussels and Moscow of infusing different meanings to the same words EU and Russian decision makers use for speaking to each other. According to Makarychev, in this context, terms like “soft security”, “marginality”, “spatial development”, “(doing) politics” for instance stand out as

---

282 Dostoyevsky's literary works explore human psychology in the context of the troubled political, social and spiritual atmosphere of 19th-century Russia. Although he began writing in the mid-1840s, his most memorable works—including Crime and Punishment, The Idiot and The Brothers Karamazov—are from his later years.
284 see the Deadlock Scoreboard Template in Part II of the dissertation
286 For the expert, the concept “soft security” implies a stronger role for non-state actors in the EU, while in Russia it offers a justification for increased state intervention in such spheres as environment, economics, information management, etc.; “marginality” appears in the EU synonymous with specific type of resources in the possession of non-central international actors, including regions, while in Russia it is usually associated to a policy of the weak and
striking examples. Alexander Sokolov\textsuperscript{287}, from the Russian Civic Chamber, responsible for international cooperation, civil society development and public diplomacy\textsuperscript{288}, goes even further and invokes even the establishment of a sort of vocabulary of contradictory terms, that is de facto increasing distortions, dislocations and disconnections in EU-Russia relations. Sokolov argues that it is exactly where the sources of misunderstanding come from, provoking multiple attempts to symbolize the differences and elevate them to a higher level of incompatibility.

Meanwhile, several EU diplomats and other EU experts argue (more or less openly) that the current disagreements that come our in public messages are in fact a sign of the growing value gap between the two actors. In particular, Hiski Haukkala, special advisor at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland for instance emphasizes the key role of “values”\textsuperscript{289} while associating them with a specific set of “norms”, together with which they form “the normative core of EU’s Russia policy”\textsuperscript{290}. In turn, although avoiding direct comments on this specific point, Michael Pulch, Head of Russia Division, the European External Action Service of the EU, invokes the need of clarity, of simply messages and of good will in general for pursuing common understandings especially when it comes to basic issues of common sense, that should somehow be taken for granted in the 21st century, as they are already in the texts of many bilateral political statements and furthermore they reflect universal

\textsuperscript{287}interview with the author during A.Sokolov’s visit at the EU headquarters in 28 May 2013

\textsuperscript{288}The Russian Civic Chamber (Общественная палата - www.oprf.ru) is a state institution that analyses draft legislation and monitors the activities of the parliament, government and other government bodies of Russia and its Federal Subjects. One of its commission monitors international cooperation and public diplomacy (http://www.oprf.ru/en/about/structure/internationalcouncils/internationalcouncils2012)

\textsuperscript{289}While “norms” are defined as a set of technical standards relating mainly to economic activities (mainly derived from the EU’s acquis communautaire), “values” are described as higher order normative principles that relate to the very foundation and existence of the relationship (Haukkala, 2005).

\textsuperscript{290}Haukkala argues that, for the EU, the existence of a set of shared values with all its strategic partners, and in particular with Russia, is generally perceived as having two central functions, acting as both the prerequisite for its establishment and as the benchmarks against which the prospects and depth of bilateral interaction is regularly (in principle) measured (Haukkala, 2005).
values\textsuperscript{291}. In other words, the suggestion is that the partners should take certain issues as self-evident truth without problematizing all their messages to each other.

On a general level, both EU and Russian diplomats appear to agree that the (mis)use of language in specific settings and the problems of the so-called double translation appear anyhow as key weaknesses as far as EU-Russian messages are concern. This idea, developed especially by Russian experts and diplomats, recalls somehow the work on dialogism of Mikhail Bakhtin\textsuperscript{292}, which pertains to social interaction but implies a theory of translation as well\textsuperscript{293}: according to Bahtin any meaning, culture, subject, word or utterance/statement is transformed and changes in the encounter with foreign/external meanings, languages, cultures, or subjects, in a dialogic process of reciprocal negotiation, that hence uses different tones or viewpoints and in which interaction or contradiction are both important to the final interpretation (“the self” vs. “the other”).

- Processes:

Brussels and Moscow have different views not only on the content of the messages dominating their relations but also on the channels through which information and messages are delivered to the public. As a result, as empirical evidence shows, while constructing different and competing narratives on their relations, messages are often pursued on parallel tracks and through different channels. This is a key weakness to be taken into account when delineating communication practices on both sides. Here, again, the issue of double translation and linguistics divergences stand out.

In the specific case of public diplomacy channels for instance, Russian diplomats often refer to explanations from Moscow-based experts that the draw attention on the different linguistic “shades” of the term and thus on its double

\textsuperscript{291} EESC presentation, Brussels, 28 May 2013
\textsuperscript{292} The Russian philosopher (1895-1975) states that any meaning, culture or subject changes in the encounter with other, foreign meanings, cultures or subjects
\textsuperscript{293} notes of the author on the work of M.Bahtin during a Russian language course at The Pushkin State Russian Language Institute (a.y. 1998/1999, Moscow)
meaning. The Russian Ambassador to the European Union, Vladimir Chizhov, is one of the main promoters in Brussels of this Russian school of thought and all occasions are good for recalling specific viewpoints “made in Russia”, that do not necessarily dismiss Western viewpoints, but they are at least more objective”\(^\text{294}\). Aleksandr Sokolov from the Russian Civic Chamber\(^\text{295}\), focuses in particular on the Russian translation of the basic term public diplomacy, that “in Russian has (at least) two meanings”: on the one hand if translated “общеественная дипломатия / обшчественная дипломатия”, it implies mainly the idea of public diplomacy as diplomacy of the people (with “общеественная/обшчественная” meaning indeed “public” but with a focus rather on the “social, community” aspects); on the other hand, if translated “публичная дипломатия / publichная дипломатия” it refers to a wider spectrum, that includes interstate relations, cultural /academic exchanges, overseas broadcasting (with “публичная / publichная” translated by “public” as well, but in its broader meaning)\(^\text{296}\).

In line with this reasoning, several experts of the Russian Council for Foreign Affairs RIAC\(^\text{297}\) add that the first translation is rather limited as it is rather associated if denoting only the idea of public diplomacy as diplomacy of the people and at NGOs’ level. For Riac, the “confusion is even dangerous” and for this reason “it is important to recognize that we are specifically talking about public diplomacy as a system of interaction with foreign societies for political reasons, while the term обшчественная дипломатия/общеественная дипломатия should be seen as its synonym or as one of its elements (…) limitation of public diplomacy by a dialog of non-profit organizations is an error, both semantic and, potentially, political\(^\text{298}\)”.

\(^{294}\) Useful reference can be retrieved here: Article Euractiv- “Ambassador: Russia could tell EU ‘nobody is perfect’- http://www.euractiv.com/global-europe/ambassador-russia-tell-eu-perfect-interview-504660

\(^{295}\) Discussion with the author in Brussels, May 2013

\(^{296}\) Furthermore, if associated with “state institutions”, the term “public” is translated with another term, namely “Государственное учреждение/государственные учреждения” (meaning public, state institutions)

\(^{297}\) RIAC is a Russian state-funded academic and diplomatic think tank, chaired by the former Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov - http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=507#top

\(^{298}\) Source: RIAC Round table on public diplomacy, http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=507#top
Furthermore, while these Russian views suggest a certain division in the transmitting channels used for delivering relevant information to the public, the understandings in Brussels embrace a wide span of “public diplomacy avenues”. For the EU commissioner Margot Wallström, public diplomacy implies more than state-centred initiatives, as this is “not an exercise in national branding; it is not propaganda, because we know that this does not work (…) it is the recognition of a fundamental shift, and especially so in relatively open societies, of how power, influence and decision-making has spread, and how complex it has become”\(^{299}\). In this sense, assuming that “communication is a dialogue, not a one way street”, the EU goes beyond the classical public diplomacy tools and argues that “communication is more than information: it establishes a relationship and initiates a dialogue with (…) citizen, it listen carefully and it connects to people. It is not a neutral exercise devoid of value, it is an essential part of the political process”\(^{300}\).

- **Context:**

Against this background, the general view among diplomats and international relations experts is that the context surrounding communication practices gets weaker and weaker as well, as neither of the frameworks of bilateral relations seems to be working smoothly anyways as to facilitate communication flows.

It appears thus that the contextual factors that influence and make worse communication practices in EU-Russian relations are generally “developmental”, that is related to the general “wrong timing” both in bilateral relations, and as far as domestic states of affairs are concerned (in EU and Russia respectively). In other words, the weaknesses registered in EU-Russian communication practices, are a direct effect of both sides’ ambiguity and general lack of a long-term strategic vision,


\(^{300}\) The EU’s Directorate General responsible for Communication within the European Commission and the European External Action Service EEAS, have the task to try to coordinate communication and public diplomacy initiatives, in collaboration with the European Council. The various action plans for communication by the Commission offers the usual wide range of public diplomacy initiatives and tools, from integrating public diplomacy in the EU’s external endeavors, to audiovisual services, active use of the internet, dealing with journalists, special events. Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction
of a direction on key themes in relations with each other and of the fact that, to date, both the EU and Russia are somehow at a political and economic crossroads on a domestic level as well. Officially though, the “direction” is clear for both Brussels and Moscow. Both EU and Russian officials plead for constructive approaches but flexibility remains de facto a key problem. And yet, “the ingredients for developing a good relations between EU and Russia are there, starting for instance from the potential of our independent relationship, of our business and trade interactions” comments Timo Hammaren, Russia Team Coordinator in unit "Russia, CIS, Ukraine, Western Balkan, EFTA, EEA and Turkey", European Commission, Directorate General for Trade.

Furthermore, to the above mentioned “developmental” factors, the tendency is to add cultural contextual factor as well, that bring to the fore again the value gap. In this sense, one of the top Russian political analysts Sergei Medvedev argues that the fundamental differences between Brussels and Moscow lie exactly in this longstanding value gap. For Medvedev, strategic thinking in Russia is deeply embedded in Westphalian notions of sovereignty, that is in the concept of the sovereignty of nation-states on their territory, with no role for external agents in domestic structures. Moreover, according to the same author, Moscow’s visions of a “sovereign democracy” and “nationalization of the future” have become Kremlin’s leitmotif, ever since the first mandate of Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin (2000–2004). Following the same line of reasoning, one could deduce in fact that from a sovereignty point of view, Russia has never quite figured out how to deal with a political animal like the EU and this stand might be considered indeed a key

---

301 Fir more on Medvedev’s articles, op-eds, publications see http://www.hse.ru/staff/smedvedev
302 The “ideologist” is considered to be Vladislav Surkov, the so called “gray cardinal” of the Kremlin (former Chief of Stat of the Kremlin and former government official, nominated in 2013 coordinator for Abkhazia and South Ossetia and of other delicate dossiers for the Russian Presidency). Surkov is know for having stated for instance that the current Russian president Vladimir Putin “was sent by God to rescue Russia from a hostile takeover (Source: Ria Novosti http://en.ria.ru/russia/20130920/183616980/Gray-Cardinal-Surkov-Returns-to-Kremlin-as-Presidential-Aide.html) and published extensively on the topic of “sovereignty as a political synonym of competitiveness” (See: www.expert.ru/printissues/expert/2006/43/nacionalizaciya buduschego; www.edinros.ru/news.html?id=111148 )
303 The comeback and consolidation of the nation-state has been and continues to be the key issue on the agenda of all Putin’s presidential terms (2000–2004; 2004–2008; 2012–present)
contextual factor affecting communication practices in EU-Russian relations. The same goes for EU communication practices as well, as it appears that, while pushing forward an overly technocratic and bureaucratic operational approach with their enormous non-acceding but very complex neighbour (rather than political and strategic), Brussels has had, in turn, too much irons in the fire as well: it has proved to have a limited understanding of the “various shades” in Russian strategic thinking and has not predicted possible collateral effects on EU-Russian relations. In this sense, noteworthy is the fact that Russian experts and diplomats like to repeat Henry Kissinger remark from the 1970s on any occasion, (“If Europe has a foreign policy, I wish someone would tell me its phone number!”) including for justifying the Kremlin’s choice to focus on bilateral relations with EU capitals, while keeping a low profile on certain issues with the European Council and the Commission.

5.1.3. Opportunities

Empirical evidence shows that the general tendency in both EU and Russian diplomatic corps is to manage communication challenges or obstacles as they arise in EU-Russian relations. For several experts, any attempt to trace opportunities for enhancing bilateral communication in the long run seems superfluous and even anachronistic at this stage of relationship, given the realpolitik dynamics on the Moscow-Brussels axis that require attention mostly for finding rapid solutions to overcome weaknesses. However, this unit argues that one action does not exclude the other: while addressing weaknesses, identifying concrete opportunities, built up on strengths, might appear an astute “prevention” strategy as well, as it would ideally allow both sides to (jointly) test new methods of communication designed to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts in productive ways.

- Messages:

304 Discussions/public event in Brussels during the research period for the dissertation- 2012,2013
For the president of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy, from certain points of view, EU and Russia are members of a sui generis but of the same family: “Perhaps we are, as has been said, one European family- he was arguing in 2013 in front of hundreds Russian students gathered in Sankt Petersburg for his lecture- But then again, one must be careful with a word like that, because to me it immediately brings to mind the first line of Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina: "All happy families resemble one another, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."! I would say that the European family can be happy in its own way.”

Starting from this statement, one could deduce that new opportunities to upgrade EU-Russian communication practices might arise simply by maintaining a stable bilateral dialogue and dialogic approaches that should reveal though not only what divides the two actors but also what unites them (keeping thus in mind that meaning always implies at least two voices). Against this background, both EU and Russian diplomats agree that increasing the number of regular messages focused on the “ensemble” characteristics of the EU-Russian relationship in specific settings) might have beneficial effects both on communication practices and on their partnership as a whole. In this sense, Gunnar Wiegand, the European External Action Service (EEAS) Director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia Regional Cooperation and OSCE countries, notes for instance that “the EU appreciates its current Strategic Partnership with Russia and wishes to further deepen our constructive cooperation in all areas”. Furthermore, the EU official emphasizes the constructive dialogue on several topics: “Notably, the EU values the on-going work in the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation and the many technical EU-Russia Dialogues on norms and standards, particularly regulatory convergence”.

In this context though, several Russian experts turn once again to the linguistic shades of the Russian language and underline they should be taken in consideration,

---

306 EESC presentation on Russia, May 2013, Brussels; EPP Conference on Belarus – Brussels, April 2013; Public lecture on ENPI “The EU’s Eastern Partnership in light of present challenges”
when delineating messages, distinct speech acts or statements, in order to avoid confusions and controversies. Tatiana Zonova\textsuperscript{307}, an expert of the Russian International Affairs Council and diplomacy professor in Moscow at the MGIMO University, gives for instance the example of the term \textit{humanitarian} “that has different uses in the EU and Russia”\textsuperscript{308}. Assuming that in “the EU working languages -English, French, and German- use the word \textit{humanitarian} when they speak of actions against human rights abuses or in case of emergency situations, like food supplies, medical services, clearing-off battle fields, etc.”, Zonova argues that “in Russia the expression \textit{humanitarian cooperation} is quite a polysemic term (...) and has a number of meanings, interpretations or understandings since it covers the area of cultural, inter-civilization relations, dialogue and discussion between civil societies, as well as relations with compatriots abroad”. In this sense, Zonova gives the example of the new Russian Foreign Policy Doctrine\textsuperscript{309} according to which “an integral part of the contemporary international politics is \textit{soft power}, that is a comprehensive tool kit relying on civil society resources, information and communication, humanitarian and other approaches alternative to classical diplomacy and its skills”\textsuperscript{310}.

- \textit{Processes:}

Along messages, selecting the most effective channel of communication ensuring that messages do not get garbled in transmission, is, of course, another aim for enhancing communication processes in Eu-Russian relations. However, EU and Russian diplomats are often sceptical as far as new opportunities are concerned, as


\textsuperscript{308} For Zonova “in the European sense of the word humanitarian, EU-Russian relations are moving forward involving cooperation in such fields as migration, fighting organized crime, drug trafficking, financing of terrorist organizations and cybercrime (...with Russia standing for creating a common European legal space, as well as a unified system of protection of human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; For more on the subject see here: Russian Mission to the EU, www.russianmission.eu/ru/intervyu/vystuplenie-vachizhova-naslushaniyakh-v-gosudarstvennoi-dume-federalnogo-sobraniya-rossiis

\textsuperscript{309} Source: Russian Presidency - http://news.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d447a0ce9f5a96bdc3.pdf

\textsuperscript{310} Zonova mentions several initiatives that stand out in particular the “Governmental Action Plan for international humanitarian cooperation and assistance for Russian Science and Culture” (http://rs.gov.ru/sites/rs.gov.ru/files/plan_na_sayt_0.pdf) implemented by Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation) for strengthening cultural and scientific events or the Russian Language Program for 2011-2015, focused specifically on improving the image of Russia, thorough the promotion of the language (http://rs.gov.ru/taxonomy/term/184)
the general idea is that current communication practices in EU-Russian relations are limited to a number of channels of communication anyways, while the information is generally “filtered” by press and public information units and arrives to the public through traditional media outlets, social media channels, international EU or Russian funded broadcasting (Euronews and Russia Today).

Against this background, several EU experts hypothesize that outsourcing projects and involving independent actors, acknowledged as such by both sides might diversify communication channels and thus represent a key opportunity for enhancing in a transparent way communication practices in EU-Russian relations. In this sense, the example of the EU Neighbouring Info Centre, a news-portal headquartered in Brussels\(^{311}\) that focuses on EU-Russian relations as well might stand as a well-balanced example, on which other joint initiatives might be build. Elena Prokhorova\(^{312}\), the Enpi manager responsible for Russia and Eastern EU neighbours, explains that the project seeks to increase knowledge and raise awareness and understanding of EU’s cooperation with its Eastern (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia) and Southern neighbours (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia). It produces a wide range of communications material (publications, news items for the internet portal), highlighting policy issues and cooperation in EU-Russia relations as well. Funded by the directorate Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid (which manages EU external aid programmes), the initiative is managed by an independent European network that cooperates with the Russian state-funded news agency ITAR-TASS as well (through the Cyprus News Agency) on the news section focused in EU-Russian relations (bilingual - in Russian and English)\(^{313}\).

\(^{311}\) The ENPI Information and Communication Support Project (http://www.enpi-info.eu/) is managed by the Cyprus-based Action Global Communications, an independent Public Relations Agency Network (www.actionprgroup.com), in a consortium with the Italian news agency ANSA, which also maintains ANSAMed a special portal dedicated to the Mediterranean (www.ansamed.info/ansamed/it/), and the Cyprus News Agency, which is in a strategic partnership with the Moscow-based news agency ITAR-TASS (http://itar-tass.com/).

\(^{312}\) Interview in Brussels with the author, June 2013

• **Context:**

As shown previously, the context surrounding EU-Russian interactions in the past decades has not facilitated communication in bilateral relations and consequently practices on both sides have suffered as well. However, several contextual factors might be considered potential opportunities in this specific case, provided both actors become not only realistic but also rational in regard to their bilateral relationship, as EU and Russian officials and experts often argue in their (in)formal meetings with the press or during press conferences. The Russian Ambassador to the EU, Vladimir Chizhov, for example often argues that both sides need to re-assess not only their expectations but also their goals, while the Moscow based expert of Riac Ivan Timofeev claims that EU and Russia “should re-start and focus first on new targets “in those areas that are underrated”\(^{314}\). These ideas are welcomed in Brussels, within certain “reasonable limits for the Union”. Štefan Füle, the EU Commissioner responsible for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood\(^{315}\), argues for example that several themes are not debatable such as supporting democracy, human rights and freedom of speech and suggests that the Eastern Partnership countries in particular should not become “the currency” in EU-Russia relations\(^{316}\).

Against this background, the Russian expert Tatiana Zonova suggest that since “Russia-EU relations are subject to being politicized”\(^{317}\), the gap could be bridged by taking advantage of the existing contextual opportunities, through public and cultural diplomacy tools and initiatives. While underlining that “the lack of confidence should be overcome on a mutual basis”, the Russian expert focuses in particular on the role or parliamentary diplomacy, of public diplomacy initiatives “carried on by governments and non-governmental organizations, groups and individuals” and of

\(^{314}\) Source: Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)-http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=1477  
\(^{315}\) Source: Interview with the author for the editorial group Espresso-Italy, May 2013, Brussels  
other cultural and academic exchanges. Furthermore, Zonova claims that the creation of epistemic communities throughout the EU could first “improve Russia’s image abroad” and eventually enhance EU-Russia communication as well: “A significant role in cultural cooperation belongs to the expert community. My teaching experience in Europe, as well as the experience gathered by many Russian colleagues, shows that, despite the great interest which students usually show, their knowledge of Russia is far from being complete. (…) The promotion of the Russian language is important by itself, but that is not enough. The image of Russia is highly dependent on how the Europeans, and above all, European youth are familiar with Russian history, culture and politics. For accomplishing this task there should be more dynamic presence of Russian scientists, teachers and experts in the European educational space”.

Finally, on the basis of empirical evidence, this unit argues that new opportunities for enhancing communication in EU-Russian relations might stem simply by building on the very strengths detected in the communication process (explored earlier), associated again to public diplomacy channels and tools on both sides. In particular, several examples of good practices mentioned by diplomats on both sides, that could develop even in key opportunities stand out, namely: the organization of regular events for the general public, not necessarily linked to the political or economic agenda, such as for instance conferences, festivals or keynote addresses on relevant topics hosted by universities /theatres /public lectures halls- e.g. 2013 lecture at the University of Sankt Petersburg, delivered by the president of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, the organization of informal meeting between officials - like dinners, lunches, visits on cultural sites - e.g informal visit to Strelna organized by the Russian President on the occasion of the 2012 EU-Russia Summit, with the president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso and with the president of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy, on-site visits in

Brussels/other EU capitals and Moscow/other cities in Russia of EU and Russian pools of journalists, NGOs experts and academics either for documentation/study visits/independent reporting or for special events focused on the evolution of the EU-Russian relations or on other relevant topics—e.g. series of workshops for EU and Russian journalists and experts on the EU policy programs with its neighbours organized in Brussels in 2012/2013 either at the European Parliament or at the European Commission HQ\textsuperscript{320}; regular interviews with high level officials in various media outlets from EU member states of from Russia\textsuperscript{321} & (joint/distinct) op-eds published by major media outlets in EU/Russia on the occasion of key events or on specific topics, that give the possibility to both sides to explain certain stands to the public as well —e.g. Joint op-ed by Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso on Eastern Partnership & Ukraine in Gazeta.Ru (in Russian language) published by a prestigious Russian news portal on 27 November 2013, on the eve of EU’s Third Eastern Partnership summit hosted in Vilnius (28–29 November 2013)\textsuperscript{322}

5.1.3. Threats

As mentioned previously, EU and Russian communication practices suffer from several weaknesses reflecting the wide-ranging shortcomings in EU-Russian relations. Empirical evidence shows that, given their chain reaction\textsuperscript{323}, many weaknesses might eventually develop into real threats for bilateral communication (and this for bilateral relations), that may in turn take various forms, becoming a sort

\textsuperscript{320} the author of the present study participate in several events for journalists in Brussels, in 2012,2013
\textsuperscript{321} e.g. Interview by Head of Delegation Ambassador Vygaudas Usackas to the Russian newspaper "Kommersant" - 28.11.13 (http://kommersant.ru/doc/2354438); Interview by the Russian Ambassador to the EU, V.Chizkov to the Euractiv news portal – 07.10.13 (www.euractiv.com/europes-east/chizkov-russia-doubts-majority-u-interview-530887)
\textsuperscript{322} Source: Gazeta.Ru - КОММЕНТАРИИ→УКРАИНА — ЕС: «Наше предложение остается в силе»- Главы Евросовета и Еврокомиссии о том, что Украина может успеть сделать до начала саммита в Вильнюс, www.gazeta.ru/comments/2013/11/26_a_5771397.shtml
\textsuperscript{323} the lack of vision on both sides causes for instance weak commitments, the normative limits cause discursive dissonances, the lack of a proper strategy causes lack of team spirit even in basic issues and failure to meet specific needs or handle unpredictable situations, and so on
of unpredictable ticking time bombs that need to be defused before they blow EU-Russian communication out of the water.

- Messages:

While the chapter has previously revealed the existence of a so called *divergent vocabulary* as a key weakness in EU-Russia communication practices, empirical evidence shows that the way the EU and Russia make use of it in their discursive strategies has increasingly produced mutual frustration and distance between the two partners, resulting in parallel *competing narratives*. The thesis argues that these storylines have fostered constant competition in the public sphere, with both parties increasingly sliding intentionally or unintentionally into a conflict – creating and crisis-prone inflammatory language \(^{324}\). Moreover, it appears that, if not counterbalanced with narratives on common achievements as well, these storylines can turn to be quite “risky” and thus unpredictable for both parts as far as communication practices are concerned, with divergences going to the fundamentals of the self-identification of Russia and the EU, and their views of each other.

Notions such as *neighbourhood* or *exceptionality* in particular, identified by various experts as keywords in both sides’ political discourses, strike immediately at the heart of the two parties’ sensitivities, deep divergences and inconsistent objectives. Referring to discourses on EU’s *neighbourhood* for instance, that de facto overlaps with Russia’s *near abroad*, a Russian expert working with Ceps Brussels, Andrey Makarychev sees for instance “the Russian version of neighbourhood as an area predominantly marked by enmity and competition”, whereas the EU sees its neighbourhood as being a *ring of friends* converging progressively on *European values*, which the EU naturally assumes to be its values. Meanwhile, according to Makarychev, “Russia seems to perceive the bulk of its neighbours as sources of danger and irritation”.

\(^{324}\) The assumption is, as mentioned earlier, that “the EU and Russia, in communicating with each other, use the same words but nevertheless speak different languages thus playing with the multiple meanings embedded in them” (Makarychev, 2008)
Furthermore, the issue of the “value gap” between the two actors stands up as well. Here, according to several experts and diplomats, the risk is that this weakness grows even more and becomes the ultimate milestone in EU-Russian communication, especially if over-associated with what Andrey Makarychev calls growing divergent versions of normativity, that de facto stem from the very essence of the actors’ split identities. For instance, there are supposedly significant differences in the way Europe defines and operates its main values and how Russia utilizes them (Makarychev, 2008). However, the reason is that “Russia questions neither of the basic European norms- notes Makarychev- instead it seeks to offer an alternative vision of each of them (...) as it seems to be seriously inclined to become a subject of communication with Europe and, therefore, gets ready for the battle for interpretation”.

Michael Emerson from Ceps, who extracted from various key EU documents, a list of what the Union considers to be its values, notes in turn that, while the values gap is undoubtedly wide at the present time and the Russian and the EU positions are a long way apart from each other, a risk is that of ending up fomenting conflicts within the Union (hence through specific messages and communication practices as well) given the various interests that divide EU members. For Emerson, these interests have often trumped discourses on values anyways and can take different

---

325 The Centre for European Policy Studies - Ceps (an independent policy research institute based in Brussels)- in particular has regularly produced research studies and organized conferences and workshops focused on EU-Russian relations. Experts from both EU member states and Russia participate in their research projects, highly appreciated for their objectivity –www.ceps.be

326 Discussion in Brussels at the Residence Palace (EJC seminar, June 2012) with CEPS experts analysing the report “The elephant and the bear try again” Brussels 2006

327 Ibid, 2006

328 These were formulated in the shape of 10 Commandments, as follows: 1. Thou shalt be truly democratic and respectful of human rights and the rule of law; 2. Thou shalt guarantee the four freedoms of movement (goods, services, capital, and labour); 3 Thou shalt provide for social cohesion between people, regions and states; 4. Thou shalt ensure sustainable economic development for the benefit of future generations; 5. Thou shalt reject nationalism and favour the multiple identity of citizens; 6. Thou shalt assure federative multi-tier governance; 7. Thou shalt assure secular governance and favour multi-cultural pluralism in society; 8. Thou shalt promote multilateral order in international affairs; 9. Thou shalt abstain from threatening or using force against others without just cause; 10. Thou shalt be open, inclusive and integrative towards neighbours that adhere to the above; For more on the topic check: What Values for Europe?, CEPS Policy Brief No. 65, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, February 2005.

329 although, on paper, the values shaping both EU and Russian policies take in consideration the same universally applicable principles generally acknowledged within the UN system, as they focus on peace, democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance.
forms: “The first general interest currently is to secure energy supplies. The second is the interest of some EU member state leaders to promote political-diplomatic objectives in world affairs through close personal relations at head of state level.”

- **Processes:**

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, one of the key weaknesses of the EU-Russian communication practices on both sides stems from the fact that Brussels and Moscow have different views not only on the content of the messages dominating their relations but also on the channels through which information is delivered to the public (as a result, messages are often pursued on parallel tracks, through different channels). The idea that, under certain circumstances, these weaknesses can become threats as well has increasingly gained ground in the past years, especially on the EU side, where many officials openly speak about cases of media manipulation for instance and complain that, especially in tensed situations, communication channels (especially public/state-funded) risk to be transformed into dangerous propaganda machines and thus distort messages with the aim to influence different publics and eventually the course of events.

In this sense, various examples of official “media outlets” accused of bias in Brussels behind “the façade of legitimate newsgathering” are often quoted - e.g. RT, previously known as Russia Today - an international multilingual Russian state-funded TV network, created in 2005 with the professional format of international news channel like the CNN or the public funded BBC and Euronews, as part of a part of a larger PR effort by the Russian government intended “to improve the image of Russia abroad to "reflect Russia's opinion of the world" and present a "more

---

330 French President Chirac’s relation with President Putin, for example; The most extreme case, which became the subject of intense criticism within the EU, was former Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi’s speech in defence of Russia’s record in Chechnya when he was representing the EU Presidency at summit level in November 2003 (For more on this summit see here: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-03-1496_en.htm)

331 RT (http://russian.rt.com) is registered as an autonomous nonprofit organization funded by the federal budget of Russia through the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation (http://fapmc.ru/)
balanced picture" of Russia\textsuperscript{332} or the editorial project “Russia beyond the lines RBTL”, a branch of the Russian state-owned newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta which publishes regular foreign-language\textsuperscript{333} newspaper supplements on Russian news in numerous international newspapers (as advertising supplements)\textsuperscript{334} and maintains a news website, seen as part of a wider effort by the Russian government to exert soft power (that had already included heavy investment in the RT network).

For Anni Podimata, European Parliament Vice-President responsible for Communication and Information Policy\textsuperscript{335}, along manipulation and here the themes of freedom of speech and media freedom come specifically to the fore. “Indeed Europe faces problems as well with freedom of expression or the media in general - explains Podimata- Take Hungary for instance, where there were problems with the mechanism of the government control over the media and the European Commission raised its voice on the issue- or Italy, where the problems on media ownership and between the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and journalists are known all over the world”. However, according to Podimata, “while here in the EU, we openly speak about our problems and we try to find solutions, the situation is much more difficult in Russia and many former soviet countries (…) The regular reports of Reporters sans Frontiers for instance are full of worrying cases of threatened or imprisoned journalists or of censure. Or, a democratic and civil society cannot function under these circumstances. After all we speak about basic human rights\textsuperscript{336}”.

For authorities in Moscow though EU critics on media freedom, freedom of speech or human rights should be sent back to the sender. While denouncing a “russophobic nature of many clauses on Russia at the European Parliament”,
Alexander Bikanto, Russian Deputy MFA Spokesman for instance recommends Brussels “to thoroughly check facts before going into moralistic lecture-like assessments”\(^\text{337}\): moreover, “we strongly recommend the European Parliament, instead of needless politicisation and interference in internal affairs of other countries, to get concerned over establishment of trustworthy and effective mechanisms of human rights protection within the European Union itself (…) Situation in the EU in this field is far from universally recognised standards”\(^\text{338}\).

In turn, the RT Editor in chief, Margarita Simonyan, rejects the accusations underlining that the Russian government would not dictate content of the TV network she coordinates as "censorship by government in this country is prohibited by the constitution"\(^\text{339}\). Simonyan claims that the RT objectivity has been tested by the fact that the channel has worked with key international figures and journalists for instance: e.g. Julian Assange (editor-in-chief of the whistleblower website WikiLeaks) or former CNN talk show host Larry King. For Simonyan, RT news are “objective” and for this reason might create controversies, while its blind spots in the coverage are for John Feffer, co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus, similar to those of any international news organization, even in the U.S.-funded Voice of America and Radio Free Asia.

In this sense, several Russian correspondents based in Brussels\(^\text{340}\) claim that the European TV network Euronews, which gets funds from the EU as well\(^\text{341}\), apparently avoids direct critics in its reports to the Union’s leadership, namely to the president of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy or to the president of the European Commission, Jose Barroso. Furthermore, the former RT correspondent in


\(^{338}\) In this sense, Moscow has often criticized for instance Estonia and other Baltic States for their minority policies and for the treatment of the Russian speaking minority

\(^{339}\) For more one the topic see: CBS Report -12.12.05; Exo Moscvi Report 04.03.2013- http://echo.msk.ru/blog/echo_rating/1021396-echo/

\(^{340}\) discussions with the author, 2012,2013-Brussels

\(^{341}\) Euronews is a European, multilingual news television channel, headquartered in Lyon-Écully, France. Created in 1993, it claims to be covering world news from a pan-European perspective. Criticisms include an alleged bias towards the interests of the European Commission (http://www.euronews.com/)
Brussels, Tesa Arcilla, speaks about “double standards”, as when it comes views on Russia, Brussels expresses its strong and persistent interest in human rights cases like that of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Sergey Magnitsky (the lawyer who worked for European companies and was found dead in jail) or of Pussy Riot and calls for full-fledged and politically unbiased investigations of each of them, “while when it comes to its own problems like racism or corruption in many countries, the EU usually tones down its voice”\(^{342}\).

- **Context:**

As mentioned previously, the general view among diplomats and international relations experts is that the context surrounding communication practices in EU-Russian relations has got weaker and weaker in the past decades. Moreover, empirical evidence reveals that several contextual factors might not only weaken communication practices but they can actually change their evolution and thus become authentic threats.

The assumption is that, while in the past both actors resorted to tactics of either slowing down or discontinuing bilateral communication\(^{343}\), nowadays the EU-Russia relations have actually reached the point of no return, going beyond the *disillusionment era* that Medvedev had characterized with a word from the late Brezhnev era, namely *zastoi*, which means “stagnation” or “muddling through” despite ritual invocation of a “strategic partnership” on both sides. (Medvedev, 2008).

The problem is that, while for Russia, the EU looks much less attractive than in the 1990s, as “an over-bureaucratized formation, pursuing socialist economic policies that stifle economic growth,” in the words of the Russian political scientist Dmitry Trenin director of the Moscow Center of the US think tank Carnegie\(^{344}\), the EU has become increasingly disappointed not necessarily by prospects for the


\(^{343}\) One of the examples is the Polish veto on EU – Russia strategic partnership negotiations which was tacitly accepted in both Moscow and Brussels as a decent excuse for taking a pause and delaying decisions on the future format of cooperation.

\(^{344}\) Source: Carnegie Endowment – http://carnegieendowment.org/
“Europeanization” of Russia, but also by what many Brussels officials see as the emergence of a semi-authoritarian bureaucratic state in Russia with Putin’s third return to the Kremlin. For many diplomats, this “contextual factor” explains de facto the persisting feeble institutional framework as well, with the lack of clear mechanisms of policy implementation, timelines, benchmarks, denoting the lack of a strategic vision on the future of EU-Russia relations in both Brussels and Moscow.

Furthermore, that fact that, beyond the vague framework documents\textsuperscript{345} (mostly phrased in the language of “cooperation” and “dialogue”) the two sides speak somehow different languages not only hinders the communication process, but can actually become a real threat. As Michael Emerson from the Brussels-based think tank notes, “here easy diplomatic language has to be sorted out from harsh realities”\textsuperscript{346}. Likewise, in line with this reasoning, the issue of identity appears as another key driver of the EU-Russian incompatibility (discursive and political), with both sides acting and speaking as a reflection of their perception of themselves and of the other.

Finally, analysts argue that, along other significant weaknesses that might become threats in specific settings as they are intrinsically linked to critical issues in bilateral relations - from hydrocarbon flows or energy security to trade wars”, from mistrust to mutual frustration, or broadly speaking, to an institutional stalemate producing perpetual outbreaks of contention etc.-, a “significant third”, influencing already EU-Russian relationship, might aggravate the already existing problems between Brussels and Moscow and thus communication practices as well —it is the potentially explosive, sui generis triangle EU- Eastern Partnership / Euroasian Union - Russia. Edward Lucas, an expert on energy security and on Russian foreign and

\textsuperscript{345} the paradox is that there has never been a shortage of framework documents in EU-Russia relations, from the aforementioned Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) to the various strategies (EU “Common Strategy on Russia” adopted in 1999 and Russia’s reciprocal “Mid-term Strategy for Relations with the EU”) or to the four Roadmaps (corresponding to the four Common Spaces: the Common Economic Space, the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Common Space of External Security, and the Common Space of Research, Education and Culture), called though by Michael Emerson from Ceps Brussels “the proliferation of the fuzzy” in EU-Russia relations. (Source: CEPS Policy Brief No. 71/May 2005)

\textsuperscript{346} Discussion with the author, EU supported seminars for journalists on ENPI- Brussels 2012. 2013
security policy, claims for instance that the EU-Russian ping pong over what the EU calls Eastern Partnership countries and Russia “near abroad” has actually become in the past years an authentic teaching lesson especially for the EU, showing that de facto “whether they like it or not they are in a geopolitical clash with Russia”.

In line with this reasoning, Nicu Popescu, a EUISS researcher, adds that, while “the latest spat between Russia and the EU is, once again, over their mutual neighbours”, it should be kept in mind that Ukraine plays a crucial role, as, beyond the unpredictable behaviour of its non-visionary leaders, Kyev’s inability to choose in 2013 between the Russian- led Customs Union and the EU reflected de facto a structural problem. For Popescu, when it comes to EU-Russian relations, “the game (great or not) between the two is indeed zero-sum, at least in part, but not because of the EU: “For post-Soviet states, creating a free trade area with the EU is wholly compatible with maintaining free trade agreements with other post-Soviet states, including Russia, or with establishing new free trade areas with any other country in the world”, while on the contrary “any state joining the Russian-led Customs Union renounces its right to enter into bilateral free trade arrangements with third countries”.

In this sense, Brussels’s concerns on what is seen as Russian bullying Ukraine and other former soviet countries that have expressed their interest in signing special

347 Lucas is the International Editor for the weekly "The Economist" and author of the book "Deception: Spies, Lies, and How Russia Dupes the West- www.theguardian.com/books/2013/feb/15/deception-russia-edward-lucas-review
348 off-the-record brainstorming session in Brussels – 11.12.2013- (the meeting brought together representatives from the EEAS, European Commission, Council of the EU, Permanent Representations of the EU member states and a few selected experts to discuss the future of the Eastern Partnership)
349 In 2011, the presidents of Kazakhstan and Belarus signed an agreement with Russia to launch the Eurasian Union (EAU) and make it fully operational by 2015, exactly 10 years later after a controversial speech of the Russian president -the annual state of the nation address to parliament- who was openly lamenting for the first time that "the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the [20th] century." (Source: http://archive.kremlin.ru/eng/text/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029type82912_87086.shtml) Membership in the EAU entails uniting economies, legal systems, and customs services - and military coordination with Russia.
350 In 2013, 33% of its total external trade (imports and ex- ports) in 2012 was with the EU, and 29% with the Customs Union. When it comes to exports, 25% of Ukrainian exports go to the EU and 30% to the Customs Union (Source: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2013 Research Studies)
351 off-the-record brainstorming session in Brussels – 11.12.2013
agreements with the EU (Strategic Eastern Partnership agreements)\(^\text{352}\) is regularly voiced by the European Commissioner Stefan Fule\(^\text{353}\), while Moscow regularly rejects critics and on the contrary fights back. During the 32\(^{\text{nd}}\) EU-Russia summit, president Putin openly argued for instance that the key issue in this case is that “EU’s Eastern Partnership shouldn’t be at expense of Russia’s economy”\(^\text{354}\) and that this approach is understandable in any country that tries to defend its interests at best\(^\text{355}\). Meanwhile, many Russian experts note that Ukraine’s desire in particular to get closer to the EU\(^\text{356}\) had created a stir in Moscow from the very start, therefore the EU’s surprised attitude appears somehow incomprehensible. The Kremlin has repeatedly warned Ukraine against the move: "We would somehow have to stand by our market, introduce protectionist measures. We are saying this openly in advance," Putin told a gathering of Russian experts and journalists in 2013\(^\text{357}\). Meanwhile, at the end of 2013, Kremlin adviser Sergei Glazyev was warning that Russia was preparing to introduce tougher customs administration in case Ukraine made what he called “the suicidal move of signing the EU association agreement”.\(^\text{358}\)

According to John Lough\(^\text{359}\), a former NATO official who is now a fellow at Chatham House's Russia and Eurasia Program, the region become "an area of increased competition" between Moscow and the West: "I think the Russian approach has become more coherent - he argues in a 2013 Chatman publication - But at the

\(^{352}\) At the end of 2013, 2 former Soviet countries, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, signed with the EU the Strategic Eastern Partnership agreements during a high level in Vilnius, Lithuania. Ukraine had refused to sign it at the last moment; Source: Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the EU- www.eu2013.lt/en/news/pressreleases/strategic-eastern-partnership-agreements-signed-in-vilnius


\(^{355}\) Press Conference – 32nd EU-Russia summit in Brussels, January 2014

\(^{356}\) In its 2013 version, the Agreement EU-Ukraine (not signed in 2013) included a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/249123/Selling2theEU_eng.pdf), but it would have not mean a sudden, massive influx of EU cash into various sectors in Ukraine. The EU’s commitment was to give around 1 billion euros to Ukraine in grants in 2011-13 and to provide an additional 600 million euros if Kyiv struck a deal on a $15 billion loan with the International Monetary Fund IMF. But these sums lied outside the agreement. Furthermore, a treaty would have opened the EU market to Ukrainian companies

\(^{357}\) Source: http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/19/us-russia-ukraine-putin-idUSBRE98I0WB20130919


same time, those countries around it have become much stronger." Furthermore, the analyst argues that in particular Russia's deep historical ties to Ukraine often cause Moscow to overplay its hand in dealing with Kyiv: "Russia finds it terribly difficult to deal with Ukraine because it is such an emotional issue (…) The heart seems to get in the way of the head and invariably they seem to adopt policies that are counterproductive and wind up driving Ukrainians away".

5.2. COMMUNICATION STYLES

In order to adequately grasp the various nuances each actor brings in the communication process, this unit provides an overview of the distinctive features, which typify the EU and Russian specific approaches to communication, their public diplomacy exercises and thus their “communication styles” (*rationale/communicators; key challenges*).

5.2.1. EU APPROACH

Undoubtedly, despite all its weaknesses, the EU is one of the most ambitious and innovative international projects of the 20th century. For Romano Prodi, former president of the European Commission “Europe is a dream, and Europe is a design. It is a dream of a world that is freer, fairer and more united. It is the design we want to carry through in practice day by day. Conscious of our history, we can look at the world in a spirit of openness, and aspire once again to take a leading role. For Europe
the time to make choices has come”\(^{360}\). Criticized and hailed at the same time, the EU has managed to develop a unique model from many points of view and “it is probably the most visible success story of very different nations coming together for common interests while still preserving national cultural identities” (Puscas, 2010)\(^{361}\). One of its “competitive advantages” of the Union is for example the fact that with the EU, we can now speak about an “EU model of conducting negotiations”. Vasile Puscas for instance notes that in this sense, negotiations have become a method for building Europe, as the EU has developed as “an enormous negotiation process”, that pursues both internal and external tracks – e.g. negotiations over the nature of the EU, negotiations within the EU (internal) and external negotiations (Puscas, 2006).

However, exploring the EU communication as a whole with a special focus on external communication (namely on public diplomacy) and through interdisciplinary lenses is not a simple task - like the Union’s (foreign) policy/ies in general, EU communication appears as a product of different processes, reflecting both internal and external dynamics as well as pressures on the Union\(^{362}\). In this sense, one has to always bear in mind that, as Marianne Dony notes, the EU has a broad and complex network of external relations developed both within the context of the European Community (trade relations, development cooperation etc) (Dony, 2009). Not to mention the fact that the “EU’s rhetoric envisaging (macro) co-operation policies in order to overcome political, economic and cultural borders, reflects the (enlarged) Europe need for a concrete political stability and economic growth dialectically linked to its internal and external regional partners” (Del Bianco, 2006). All in context that sees globalization and the (need for) peace as “two extremes of a discourse


\(^{362}\) The Union’s general aims in its external relations are clearly defined in the Lisbon Treaty as follows: “In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter” - Article 3(5).
which considers the problems and processes running between these two points, linking them and in certain features identifying their capacity for reciprocal causation” (Gasparini, 2013)

Against this background, it seems thus understandable that several questions arise regularly on both the EU varying communication framework and on its overall (non)impact, as the union is an on-going project and hence it is constantly changing as well - e.g. *Who is managing communication and public diplomacy within the union? Who are the key communicators of the EU? Who is speaking on behalf of the Union? Is it the European Council or the European Commission? Or both? What about the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Parliament? How do the Brussels institutions coordinate their strategies with the EU member states? What is the role of the EU delegations in the EU member states and in other countries? Etc.* One thing is certain: its polymorphous approach to communication delineates a singular, peculiar style on the international political scene.

- **Rationale/Communicators:**

When exploring how the EU communicates with the world, one might get confused by the way it passes messages on a global scale, given the multitude of shapes this process might take, by its various loci, sources, tools, taxonomies, definitions and impact(s). Many EU officials use the terms public diplomacy and external communication interchangeably; the issue is that various EU institutions and EU member states have difficulties in employing the more recent term *public diplomacy* when referring to the EU’s external communications activities, although the two terms indicate *de facto* the same issues.

Officially, the Commission’s understanding of public diplomacy has appeared as part of a booklet produced on the occasion of the EU’s 50th anniversary celebrations: “*Public diplomacy deals with the influence of public attitudes. It seeks to promote EU interests by understanding, informing and influencing. It means clearly explaining the*
EU’s goals, policies and activities and fostering understanding of these goals through dialogue with individual citizens, groups, institutions and the media”\textsuperscript{363}. For several analysts, although it remains rather broad, this definition captures the very essence of the EU’s public diplomacy, as it refers both to internal and external features, delineated by two broad historical phases in its evolution, corresponding to the pre-Lisbon and to the after-Lisbon periods.

Wider scholarship seems to agree that before the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon\textsuperscript{364}, the key characteristic of the EU public diplomacy was that it was highly fragmented. For Simon Duke from the European Institute of Public Administration EIPA in Maastricht, “pillarisation” was a keyword when referring to the external communication strategies of the Union, as its policies were divided into several distinct areas ("pillars"). Indeed, before 2009, both the Council and the Commission conducted public diplomacy for the EU\textsuperscript{365}, but their efforts in the area appeared rather disjointed, as there was a lack of horizontal devices to link them across the EU institutions, including the European Parliament.

On the one hand, The Council Secretariat was represented primarily by the High Representative for the he Common Foreign and Security Policy CFSP (Javier Solana from 1999 until 2009), whose work was supported by a spokesperson, a number of Special Representatives appointed by the Council and a Directorate-General for Communication, Information Policy and Protocol. On the other hand, on the Commission side, public diplomacy relied mainly on “information” activities, generated through the network of Information Centres (EUi)\textsuperscript{366} started off under the aegis of the European Commission’s Directorate-General (DG) on Communications


\textsuperscript{364} signed in December 2007 and effective since 01.12.2009

\textsuperscript{365} many activities were based on the Commission’s 2006-2009 Communication Strategy

\textsuperscript{366} These centres currently number over 500 worldwide, with multiple centres in non-EU countries as well. The centres provide information / documentation to both EU citizens as well as to a wider global public; Source: European Commission, http://europa.eu/europedirect/meet_us/index_en.htm; http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/laos/more_info/eu_information_centres/index_en.htm
and subsequently coordinated by another DG focused exclusively on External Relations (Relex). Relex was also coordinating public diplomacy activities within the Commission, through a special committee (the Relex Information Committee - RIC)\(^\text{367}\), involving several DGs. Furthermore, the Commission’s delegations were “forefront offices” in the field but they had a limited representation mandate so their diplomacy appeared to many analysts rather \textit{consumer oriented}. Finally, the role of the EU Members states was also standing out during the Rotating presidencies of the EU, as many tended to introduce new priorities into external relations depending on their preferences/national strategies. For many researchers, in this context, the key problem was that the Union lacked an overarching strategic perspective on external communication/public diplomacy that could have indicated both thematic and country/continental priorities (e.g. sustainable development; strategies in Asia, Arctic or Africa) and this status quo not only led to confusion, but has also limited itself to rather \textit{passive} information dissemination activities (Lynch, 2005). Duke argues that in this context, the tendency was “to stress the normative dialogue, emphasizing the EU’s values and principles, which, in the case of much of Asia or Russia, chimed awkwardly with the predominant trade or energy interests of the Member States” (Duke, 2013).

After 2009, in the absence of the rotating Presidency, the Lisbon Treaty changes offered the potential for delineating the central themes of EU public diplomacy and consequently a more consistent message. The idea was understanding “how to deal, as Europe, with the rest of the world”\(^\text{368}\), as noted Herman van Rompuy, the first President of the European Council under the Lisbon Treaty. Indeed, a major objective of the Treaty was to address concerns about the visibility, efficiency and coherence of the EU role in the world. In this regard some of the changes introduced in 2009,

\(^{367}\) The monthly RIC meetings assembled the relevant personnel from other parts of the extended family, which included DG Development, Trade, AIDCO (Europe Aid), ECHO (Humanitarian Aid), ELARG (Enlargement), PRESS, ECFIN (Economic and Financial Affairs), as well as Relex itself. Among various tasks, the committee ensured that the communications of the delegations to third parties reflected the views of the Commission as a whole (Duke, 2013)

notably the creation of a diplomatic service, appeared quite a promising transformation
in a number of ways: public diplomacy was no longer conducted exclusively by the
Council Secretariat and the Commission, but also by the European External Action
Service EEAS, headed by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security
Policy (HR), who is also a Vice-President (VP) of the Commission. The latter’s
activities centre on an integrated approach linking together strategic communication,
public diplomacy and stakeholder engagements.

Moreover, the Council decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and
functioning of the EEAS by bringing together in an innovative manner officials from
the Commission, the Council General Secretariat and diplomats from the Member
States makes specific reference to communication and public diplomacy actions”369. In
other words, this implies that most of the external communication/public diplomacy
activities and programs which were conducted by the Council General Secretariat and
by the Commission and its network of over 130 Delegations can be connected within
the overarching structure of the EEAS. This component is reflected in the EEAS
organigram370, which incorporates various communication divisions/units: strategic
planning, strategic communication, public diplomacy (and electoral observation) unit,
the latter being placed under the Foreign Policy Instruments service (FPI), reporting
directly to the High Representative (to date, Catherine Ashton). However, no other
EEAS units have explicit competence for public diplomacy, while the responsibilities
of the public diplomacy unit are not broadly delineated371.

However, the wide list of actors involved in public diplomacy activities requires
considerable coordination between those aspects of public diplomacy falling under
Common Foreign and Security Policy CFSP (involving the President of the European
Council, the High Representative, the EEAS, the EU delegations, the EU Member
States) and those falling under the Commission (involving the President of the

Commission and DGs which have an external mandate as well; e.g. trade). Furthermore, the EU delegations -which function as part of the EEAS, under the authority of the HR/VP, represent now all of the EU’s interests overseas (not only those of the Commission that they used to represent before 2009)- have a key role as well as far as EU public diplomacy /external communication is concerned. However, to date, very few of them have activated specific public diplomacy and communication units (to date, the only EU delegation active in this sense is the Union’s delegation in the US). Finally, EU instruments like the European Endowment for Democracy or the Civil Society Facility, both designed to support “deep democracy”, were created in the past years in order to contribute to EU public diplomacy, by raising the understanding and visibility of the EU with the civil society (special focus on non-governmental actors) in the neighbouring countries and in other regions of interest to the EU throughout the globe.

As José Manuel Barroso, first President of the European Commission under the Lisbon Treaty, the overall aim is to consolidate the role of the Union as a whole on the international scene: “As the strategic partnerships of the 21st century emerge, Europe should seize the chance to define its future. I am impatient to see the Union play the role in global affairs that matches its economic weight. Our partners are watching and are expecting us to engage as Europe, not just as 27 individual countries. If we don't act together, Europe will not be a force in the world, and they will move on without us: without the European Union but also without its Member States.”

When it comes to the actual practice of public diplomacy by the EU, beyond the somewhat special cases of enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy countries, a quick review reveals that, to date, activities on external communication

---

372 Their role has been enlarged as they assume a number of duties previously associated with the rotating presidency, notably those related to the representation and coordination of the EU positions in third countries and in international fora; Source: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, (OJ C 83, 30.3.2010), Articles 221, 34
373 URL: www.euintheus.org/press-media/
374 URL: www.democracyendowment.eu/
375 URL: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/tenders/support-for-civil-society/civil-society-facility/index_en.htm
/public diplomacy have often been limited fragmented educational, exchange or cultural programs and to communication and information dissemination activities\textsuperscript{377}, through various channels (from media to online communication on institutional website or on other EU-funded portals on specific projects), that often duplicate /triplicate information initiatives though and might eventually confuse even more public opinion.

- **Key Challenges:**

Among researchers, diplomats and communication professionals, one of the most complicating factors when exploring the distinctive features of the EU’s external communication/public diplomacy is that it is closely linked to internal communication throughout the EU member states (to date, 28 countries), where each has its own (more or less legitimate) priorities that do not necessarily correspond to the one “made in Brussels”\textsuperscript{378}. This idea had already been captured in EU documents before the Lisbon Treaty and in this sense, the European Commission’s 2005 action plan, set to improve communicating Europe to the citizen, is a key example: “Communication is more than information: it establishes a relationship and initiates a dialogue with European citizens, it listens carefully and it connects to people. It is not a neutral exercise devoid of value, it is an essential part of the political process”\textsuperscript{379}.

Furthermore, in 2006, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the former Commissioner in charge of External Relations, was talking about the need to have a two-fold approach of the EU communications strategy where internal and external aspects of public diplomacy are interdependent: “Outside the EU (...) we need to better inform a broader audience about the Union’s policies and its underpinning values and

\textsuperscript{377} In this sense, as Simon Duke notes, Brussels itself is at the centre of most initiatives, as it hosts not only the headquarters of the EU institutions, but it is also one of the largest diplomatic communities globally (164 national missions accredited to the EU and 36 international organizations and other representations), one of the biggest press centers in the world (together with Washington DC, especially during key events, Brussels registers the highest number of accredited journalists in the world) and a key “capital” for NGOs but also for the lobby groups.

\textsuperscript{378} The degree of autonomy from this point view often depends on the entry year and of the overall prestige and “weight” within EU institutions of each member state; For more see: European Commission, http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/index_en.htm

objectives as a global actor. Within the EU we need to maintain a more sustained, open dialogue with the public on our external policy. The general public is already largely favourable to the EU’s role in external policy and to development and humanitarian aid in particular. But again, there is often little knowledge of our concrete policies and activities. In other words, internally, the EU needs to tell its story within the EU, by “talking more about substance and less about institutions”, while externally, it needs to “communicate with publics across the world about what the EU stands for and about the values we promote”.381

However, many issues pose coordination challenges for the internal and external aspects of public diplomacy and on this specific point, misunderstandings and frustrations have been increasingly “pouring down” between Brussels and the capitals of the member states in the past years. As former Vice President of the 2007 European Commission Margot Wallström, was noting already in 2007, “national governments like to claim credit for EU decisions that prove popular and to blame Brussels for the unpopular ones. All too often they fail to explain to their citizens why and how these decisions were taken. The result is that too many people are ill-informed about European issues and many have a negative image of the EU. That can lead to big political problems”. Analysts note though that this internal more or less visible ping-pong, with different actors sending contradictory messages to foreign audiences, is not really a positive business card for the rest of the world and for delineating a coherent external communication /public diplomacy strategy. As Aurelie Courtier writes, the internal legitimizing factor is vital to the external appeal of the Union as an example in different areas (Courtier, 2011). In this context, for many diplomats, the EEAS has in theory the potential to develop its “mediating” role, but this is hampered by the lack of...
political vision or strategy, by the lack of coordination with other EU institutions (e.g. DGs of the European Commission), of a clear understanding of public diplomacy even within the EU institutions and by the lack of appropriate human and financial resources.\footnote{Interviews and off the record discussions with EEAS and EC official, June 2013, Brussels}

Furthermore, another challenge of the EU public diplomacy centres on its “lack of consistency” caused by the multitude of actors involved in it (Lynch, 2005). It appears that, in spite of official efforts, the new leadership architecture has generated a lot of confusion and divisions among experts as well, with regard to the balance of responsibilities and influence between the different posts. For Anna Michalski for instance, speaking with one voice is though an obvious requirement if the EU is to be able to promote its values (Michalski, 2005). Meanwhile, for other observers this status quo might be perceived as an advantage from certain points of view as in certain circumstances, it might look better to coordinate statements of different actors instead of speaking with one voice abroad, as the latter action might rather increase aversion towards what might be perceived by foreign audiences as “imposition” of certain principles by a foreign power for its own self-interest. (Rasmussen, 2009).

Against this background, the issues of identity and (soft/social) power stand out as well. As Simon Duke argues, while still complicated by the imprecise nature of the EU’s overall actorness (or, to put more simply, by the type of actor the Union wishes to become on the international stage), the EU public diplomacy is essentially about self-image, or the image that a given actor intends to project to a third party (Duke, 2013). Here, as many officials note, one should also take into account the fact that, despite its internal controversies, throughout the years the EU has been quite successful in generating soft power through its external communication/public diplomacy.\footnote{Discussion with Klaus Rudischhauser, director, DG Development and Cooperation European Commission, May 2012, on the occasion of a series of off the record seminars for journalists on the state of ENP, Brussels}. As the former Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner was noting in 2006: “Our soft power promotes stability, prosperity, democracy and human rights, delivering
concrete results in the fight to eradicate poverty and in achieving sustainable
development. (...) We are a reliable partner over the long term, and as the world’s
biggest donor we help bring stability and prosperity to many parts of the world. And
we are a champion of multilateralism, standing at the forefront of a rule-based
international order.\footnote{Source: European Commission - SPEECH/06/59 03/02/2006, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-06-
59_en.htm?locale=en}

5.2.2. The Russian Approach

All countries are unique, but Russia, particularly contemporary Russia is
undoubtedly sui generis. The “sui generis” label, widely used among scholars from
both Russian and western schools of thought, implies all sorts of references, from
geographical to political, from historical to identity-related \citep{Saunders2010}. The issue here is not only that the Russian Federation is the largest country in
the world, straddling between Europe and Asia\footnote{Extending across northern Asia and Eastern Europe, Russia takes up about 40\% of the European continent and it is
the largest country in the world, spanning nine time zones and covering more than one-eighth of the Earth’s inhabited
land area; Source: Official Russian estimates (www.gks.ru/bgd/free/B12_00/IssWWW.exe/Stg/dk10/8-0.htm); Other
sources: EU & Russian official statistics- http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/living/index_en.htm, www.gks.ru/bgd/free/B12_00/IssWWW.exe/Stg/dk10/8-0.htm}, but also that in less than a century, it
has experienced some of the most dramatic transformations any modern state or nation
cold have taken up to, from the Bolshevik revolution to the dissolution of the Soviet
Union in 1991, that came after other decades/centuries of authoritarian past, which had
inevitably affected its strategic culture and the foreign policy outlook.

Somehow underscoring the above point, former British prime minister Winston
Churchill has once described the country as a “riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an
enigma” and his words in 1939 spoke eloquently to the Western sense of Moscow as
the "other", that is an inscrutable land that plays by its own rules and often intimidates.
As ironic as it may sound, if Churchill's description were to be recast for the present
day, then Russia would still look for many Western observers like a puzzle and an
enigma lodge, “like the innermost core of a matryoshka nesting doll, in a diplomat's pinstripe folded round a pugilist's muscle and an oil baron's check-book”\textsuperscript{389}.

Against this background, Moscow’s response took the shape of numerous quite assertive external communication/public diplomacy campaigns, whose intensity has increased progressively starting with the first mandate of Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin (started in 2000).

- **Rationale/Communicators**

Before exploring the distinctive features that typify Russian public diplomacy as a whole, it is useful to turn to the various Russian translations of the term, indicative for its distinct interpretations and applications: *publichnaya diplomatiya* (focus on official public diplomacy) often defined in terms of informational initiatives undertaken by the government (Dolinsky, 2011); *obshestvennaya diplomatiya* (focus on the “social/societal” aspects), involving private and civil society organizations, as well as individuals (Govorov, 2010); *people’s diplomacy* (narodnaya diplomatiya), referring to private initiatives and direct people-to-people contacts, with a special focus on former Soviet countries\textsuperscript{390}.

However, when referring to Moscow’s image and “prestige” abroad, Russian authorities stress that the role of governmental/institutional initiatives in the field stands out as the vital one. For this reason, in the past years both the Presidency and the Government in Moscow have increasingly intensified their actions in the field, starting to actively implement numerous public diplomacy / external communication initiatives all over the world: on the one hand, these are targeting various international public(s) with the aim of promoting positive messages about Russia, on the other hand, the aim is to build up soft power capabilities in Moscow as well, as the key objective is to both inform and influence opinions at various levels (Rogozin, 2010).

\textsuperscript{389} *NYTimes Op.Ed “Churchill's definition of Russia still rings true”, 2008/08/01 - www.nytimes.com (online archive)*

\textsuperscript{390} *Source: Russian Newspaper Kommersant, http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1262515*
With regard to *soft power* in particular\(^{391}\), while underlining that Russian public diplomacy’s aim is indeed to enhance the country’s ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce, use force or give money as a means of persuasion, a number of Russian analysts\(^{392}\) emphasize the differences between Western (US) and Moscow’s views on this particular subject, that are “far from being stylistic”. In this sense, Alexey Dolinsky compares for instance Joseph Nye’s definition of the concept with the one coined in Moscow in 2012 by the Russian president Vladimir Putin, who argued that soft power is “a matrix of tools and methods to reach foreign policy goals without the use of arms but by exerting information and other levers of influence”\(^ {393}\). For Dolinsky, “the American political scientist points out *attractiveness* as the key element of the notion, while the Russian president is focused on the levers of *influence*”\(^ {394}\). Furthermore, for the Russian expert “the aim of public diplomacy is both to disseminate positive information (…) and to participate in foreign policy decision-making with due regard to its potential impact on the country’s image”.

In this sense, the “Foreign Policy Concept of Russian Federation” (FP Concept RF), adopted in 2000 (revised in 2008; subsequently several addendums were added) is a key document analysts refer to when exploring Russia’s public diplomacy /external communication. While including provisions that highlight the role of strong relationships with foreign nations, the document generally emphasizes the importance of international goodwill for the achievement of Russia’s key foreign policy objectives and mentions specifically *public diplomacy* in a provision that focuses on the “*Information support for foreign policy activities*” included in the list of the top priorities of the country for addressing “global problems” (FP Concept RF, 2008- Part

\(^{391}\) Riac experts note that the term was translated into Russian in different ways at different times – as «мягкая мощь», «гибкая сила» etc. Today the most widely used translation is «мягкая сила», however, the term «власть» – as an ability to make others do what one wants – seems to be closer to the original meaning than «сила»- Source: Riac, www.russiancouncil.ru

\(^{392}\) The Russian International Affairs Council RIAC, a non-profit academic and diplomatic think tank founded and funded by the Russian Government, organizes for instance regular roundtables on the topic - http://russiancouncil.ru

\(^{393}\) Source: V.Putin, 2012- “Russia and the Changing World” (Россия и меняющийся мир, Статья Владимира Путина в «Московских новостях»), http://www.mn.ru/politics/20120227/312306749.html

III.Point(6)\textsuperscript{395}. Furthermore, it defines soft power as a “a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy, is becoming an indispensable component of modern international relations” (Concept, par.20, 2013)\textsuperscript{396}. At the same time, the same Concept warns that “increasing global competition and the growing crisis potential sometimes creates a risk of destructive and unlawful use of “soft power” and human rights concepts to exert political pressure on sovereign states, interfere in their internal affairs, destabilize their political situation, manipulate public opinion, including under the pretext of financing cultural and human rights projects abroad”\textsuperscript{397}.

In this context, in order to counterbalance “distorted images about Russia”\textsuperscript{398} and in line with Russia’s aspiration to (re)emerge as a global power on the international political scene, Moscow has started investing massively in public diplomacy programs, channels and initiatives, that focus on positive messages promoting images of a modern country that is economically strong, politically stable and home to a panoply of religious and ethnic groups, whose rights are respected.

For this reason, in 2007 the Russian government created for instance the Russian Mir Foundation (Russkiy Mir\textsuperscript{399}), with the aim “to promote understanding and peace in the world by supporting, enhancing and encouraging the appreciation of Russian language, heritage and culture”\textsuperscript{400}. A joint project by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

\textsuperscript{395} The Provision states: “An important part of the foreign policy activities of the Russian Federation is communicating to the broad world public full and accurate information about its stand on the main international problems, foreign policy initiatives and actions by the Russian Federation, its domestic social and economic development processes and plans, as well as on the accomplishments of Russian culture and science. In public diplomacy, Russia will seek its objective perception in the world, develop its own effective means of information influence on public opinion abroad, strengthen the role of the Russian mass media in the international information environment providing them with essential state support, as well as actively participate in international information cooperation, and take necessary measures to repel information threats to its sovereignty and security”; Source: Russian Mission to the EU- www.russianmission.eu/userfiles/file/foreign_policy_concept_english.pdf

\textsuperscript{396} The latest version of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation was approved by the President V. Putin on 12 February 2013 and is available on the site of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs- http://www.mid.ru

\textsuperscript{397} Ibid, 2013

\textsuperscript{398} Source: Ria Novosti article 09.07.2012, Путин призывает дипломатов активнее осваивать новые технологии работы http://ria.ru/politics/20120709/695256662.html?id=

\textsuperscript{399} Mir in Russian means. Peace. World

\textsuperscript{400} Source: Russian Mir Foundation (Russkiy Mir), www.russkiymir.ru/russkiymir
and the Ministry of Education and Science, and supported by both public and private funds, *Russkiy Mir* is primarily tasked with supporting the “intercultural” network of *Russian Centers* which provide informational resources, educational programs, organize cultural events, manages cooperation projects with universities and promote Russia’s image abroad\(^{401}\). Furthermore, another major organization officially involved in public diplomacy programs is the Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation, *Rossotrudnichestvo*\(^{402}\), established in 2008, that coordinates a large network of Russian Science and Culture Centers abroad operating in more than 70 countries, organizes arts and cultural programs (e.g. music and film festivals), paying special to programs for Russians and former Soviet citizens (Russian native speakers) living outside the Russian Federation. Other organizations, like the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, the Russian Council or other think tanks that get funds from the state for specific projects\(^{403}\) are involved in public diplomacy programs as well and they even set special committees tasked to focus specifically on the area, produce research papers, organize round.-tables, formulate proposals and in general stimulate the debate on the theme of public diplomacy, international cooperation and soft power.

Apart the above initiatives, the Russian authorities have also activated numerous mediated public diplomacy channels. In this sense, an importance back up came from a New York based public relations firm -*Ketchum*\(^{404}\), that, ever since 2006, has been advising authorities in Moscow on specific projects aimed at improving Russia’s image in the West, like supporting economic development and investment in the


\(^{404}\) Ketchum (www.ketchum.com/work) is responsible of various projects/initiatives- among these placing an editorial on Syria signed by the Russian President Vladimir Putin’s in the New York Times in September 2013 (www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/opinion/putin-plea-for-caution-from-russia-on-syria.html?_r=1&). It also operates a website about Russia called “Thinkrussia.” (www.thinkrussia.com/about). In 2010, Ketchum announced it took a majority position in Maslov PR, the Moscow-based, full-service Russian public relations company (since then, the company has operated as Ketchum Maslov-)
country and facilitating the relationship between representatives of the Russian Federation and the Western media.

The RT TV network (formerly called Russia Today) is perhaps the most prominent public diplomacy project. Launched in 2005, it currently broadcasts to around 100 countries from its studios in Moscow but also from 22 field bureaus in 19 countries and territories, with a presence in Washington, New York, London, Berlin, Gaza, Cairo, Baghdad and other key cities and employs over 1000 media professionals, many of whom are not Russian speakers. The network was designed on the model of other international news TV channels (France 24, BBC, CNN), offers 24/7 programming in Russian, Arabic, English and Spanish “covers the major issues of our time for viewers wishing to question more and delivers stories often missed by the mainstream media to create news with an edge (...). RT provides an alternative perspective on major global events, and acquaints international audience with the Russian viewpoint”. Its reports have been often criticized as Kremlin propaganda in the US and throughout EU countries, but for the Kremlin, RT was simply designed as “a player that would provide an unbiased coverage of the events in Russia and break the Anglo-Saxon monopoly on the global information streams”. However, the Russian president V. Putin admits that, while the channel “cannot help but reflect the Russian government’s official position on the events in our country and in the rest of the world” as “it is funded by the government”, it has never been “intended (...) as any kind of apologetics for the Russian political line, whether domestic or foreign”. The channel rejects the critics as well claiming that its “objectivity” has been recognized as such by several leading personalities and international journalists that have previously worked for US channels as well and by the various international professional awards.

405 Source: RT Corporate Profile, 2013
406 Ibid 2013
407 e.g. CNN, http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1403/05/pmt.01.html
408 Source: Russian Presidency- Transcript- Visit of President Putin to RT TV channel, Kremlin.ru website, 11.06.2013 , http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/5571
409 RT frequently interviews progressive and libertarian academics, intellectuals and writers from organisations like Center for American Progress (http://www.americanprogress.org/) or the Cato Institute (http://www.cato.org/) who are often critical of US policies and features little known commentators, including anti-globalists and left-wing activists.
rewarding several key reports covering specific events (e.g. such as the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the US, in 2012).

Another ambitious public diplomacy project “made in Russia” is the media project **RBTH - Russia Beyond the Headlines**, a branch of the Russian state-owned newspaper **Rossiyskaya Gazeta** which publishes every month paid multilingual advertising inserts, in the form of newspaper supplements, in several prestigious media outlets in Europe, US, Asia and South America. The publication, that also maintains a multilingual news website, advertises itself as "an internationally recognized source of political, business and cultural news and analysis that offers original, on-the-ground coverage of Russia from professional, independent journalists who are passionate and knowledgeable about the country, and opinion pieces from commentators who hold a wide range of views about Russia's leadership and direction". Often criticized outside Russia as Kremlin propaganda, RBTH rejected critics invoking the fact that it works with independent authors as well, including Newsweek journalists, writers, BBC commentators, etc.

* Key Challenges:

Despite Moscow’s systematic public diplomacy efforts to improve Russia’s image abroad and invest in its soft power ambition, both Western and Russian experts and practitioners admit the clamorous failures in the field and identify both internal or external scapegoats.

---

Furthermore, it hosted a programme of the J.Assange founder and editor in chief WikiLeaks, an online organisation which publishes secret information, news leaks and classified media from anonymous sources. (to date, Assange is under investigation in the US, a refugee in the Ecuadorian embassy in London -since 2012)

**410** The Russian Gazette provides the official publication of all laws, decrees, and official statements of state bodies; URL: http://www.rg.ru/

**411** RBTH first starting publishing monthly supplements in 2007, and now has arrangements with the following international newspapers: The Washington Post (US), The New York Times (US), The Daily Telegraph (UK), Le Figaro (France), European Voice (Belgium), Le Soir (Belgium), Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany), The Economic Times (India), Navbharat Times (India), Биволъ (Bulgaria), Folha de S.Paulo (Brazil), La Repubblica (Italy), El Pais (Spain), La Nacion (Argentina), El Observador (Uruguay), Geopolitika (Serbia), Politika (Serbia), Mainichi (Japan), UDN (Taiwan), Today (Singapore), JoongAng Ilbo (South Korea), South China Morning Post (China, SAR Hong Kong), China Business News (China), The Wall Street Journal (US), The Age (Australia), The Sydney Morning Herald (Australia), Eleutheros Typos (Greece), Gulf News (UAE)

**412** Source: RBTH corporate profile; The website and print editions also offer republished articles from Russian independent and state media, including other Russian media outlets, e.g. Russky Reporter, Gazeta.ru, Slon.ru, Kommersant, Izvestia, Itogi, Vzglyad and RIA Novosti; URL: http://rbth.com/
For several Russian scholars, the key problem and challenge lie outside Russia, given the fact that the country is constantly perceived through stereotyped lenses. In its book *Russophobia* published in New York in 2009, Andrei Tsygankov for instance explores what the author calls the activities of the anti-Russian lobby in the US and criticizes both the institutionalized “Russophobia” stemming from hegemonic tendencies and the American mainstream media that represent what the majority of media consumers are likely to encounter (Tsygankov, 2009). According to the Russian expert, biased media outlets in the US are constantly manipulating a poorly informed public, perpetuating anti-Russian sentiments (Tsygankov, 2009).

Furthermore, Tatiana Zonova, a leading Riac expert (Russian International Affairs Council) deplores the fact that the country is still depicted as a “map of stereotypes”, with “western public opinion polls showing a very cautious attitude of a large number of Europeans to their giant neighbour”⁴¹³. While acknowledging that there is no doubt on the fact that “the image of Russia heavily depends on its internal and external politics” Zonova underlines that Europeans for instance “are scared by the imaginary Russian Bear who might stop fuel supplies in the midst of winter”. For the Russian expert, “the European imagination is also excited by media allegations about Russian mafia and corruption in the Russian ruling mafia-like elite” and this status quo has a direct effect on the Russian public opinion as “in their turn, many people in Russia are more than sceptical about Western political correctness and distrust European multicultural tolerance”⁴¹⁴.

For this reason, for Alexey Dolinsky, Moscow should concentrate more on building “a system of two-way dialogue with foreign societies”⁴¹⁵, through educational exchanges or other long-term instruments, that would complement its informative

---

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 2013
⁴¹⁵ Referring to US programs targeting in particular Muslim publics, the scholar claims that “the US experience proved that one-sided proliferation of information (in an already different international political and information-communication context yields no results. The Russian attempt to replicate what the US has done earlier in the 2000s, and with a smaller budget, would hardly be more effective”; Source: Riac-Russian Council Analysis, 16.10.2012, Moscow, http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/index.php?id_4=791#top.
programme, already facilitated by the “revival of old and the establishment of new instruments of external communication (Russia Today, Russky Mir Foundation, RIA-Novosti, Voice of Russia)”: “Proliferation of information without comprehensive long-term efforts in building up credibility is futile: Russia is often kept in distrust even when it is right” (Dolinsky, 2012).

Against this background, other Western and even Russian experts⁴¹⁶ argue that the current public diplomacy problems are caused in reality from within Russia, mainly by its centralized and top-down political culture, the origins of which can be traced back centuries ago, while the systematic efforts to integrate Western concepts and terminology in Russian official statements and literature demonstrate little flexibility and openness (Osipova, 2012)

For Joseph Nye, the scholar that pioneered the theory of soft power as means of success in world politics, Moscow’s mistake is that “of thinking that government is the main instrument of soft power (…) Or, in today's world, information is not scarce but attention is, and attention depends on credibility (…) government propaganda is rarely credible”⁴¹⁷. The perception is hence that, despite its denials and attempts to engage civil society actors, the Kremlin is the ultimate “controller” and has the monopoly over Russia’s external communication, without fully grasping the specific attributes of concepts like soft power or public diplomacy. Or, for Nye, “for Russia to succeed, it will need to match words and deeds in (…) policies, be self-critical, and unleash the full talents of their civil societies. Unfortunately, that is not about to happen soon.”⁴¹⁸

An example often referred to in Brussels and EU capitals is the fact that many images and messages stemming from non-official sources, that focus on the country’s weaknesses or on other not particularly positive issues (NGOs, members of the

⁴¹⁷ Nye J. (2013), What China and Russia don’t get about soft power, Foreign Policy, 29.04.13, www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/29/what_china_and_russia_don_t_get_about_soft_power
⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 2013
academic community, political opponents of the present political leadership) are vigorously discharged by the authorities and often labelled as, lack of patriotism, “russophobia” or “double standards” especially when referring to human rights. In turn, a Russian laureate of EU prize for human rights for instance, Oleg Orlov, chairman of the Board of the Russian Human Rights Center “Memorial” and former President of the Russian Federation's council for the development of civil society and human rights institutions, argues that the situation has increasingly worsened in this sense and claims that he, along with other journalists or NGO representatives, could be considered “traitors” by the Russian government “just because he consults with international organisations”\(^\text{419}\). Orlov invokes in particular a law from 2012 that obliges all Russian non-government organizations, engaged in political activity with foreign financing to register as foreign agents\(^\text{420}\). In response, while rejecting critical remarks, Russian authorities often prefer a reactive type of communication: for example on the specific topic of human rights, while denying various allegations from Brussels for instance, Moscow also gets in the spotlight human rights violations in EU countries\(^\text{421}\).

According to Elena Klitsounova from the Brussels-based think tank Ceps, this trend towards using soft power tools through public diplomacy instruments such as media outlets, websites and think tanks to challenge Western perceptions of democracy and human rights appears to have extended into the civil society sector in Russia as well. For Klitsounova, the creation of state-backed NGOs for instance “appears to have been devised by Russian officials to tackle criticism at international forums and

\(^{419}\) Source: NT Times, ” As ‘Foreign Agent’ Law Takes Effect in Russia, Human Rights Groups Vow to Defy It”, 22.11.12; http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/22/world/europe/rights-groups-in-russia-reject-foreign-agent-label.html

\(^{420}\) For the Russian President V. Putin, this law obliging non-governmental organizations funded from abroad is designed to protect the country’s domestic policies from foreign influence; Source: RIA Novosti, 25.06.13.; http://en.ria.ru/russia/20130625/181872089/NGO-Law-to-Protect-Russia-from-Foreign-Interference--Putin.html

\(^{421}\) For the Russian Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Supremacy of Law Konstantin Dolgov, “We studied the human rights situation in the EU countries in 2013. We hoped that any improvements would happen. Unfortunately, we couldn’t watch any improvement in this sphere (...)The situation changed for the worse in certain important positions”; Source: Itar tass/http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/716398
to demonstrate the existence of Russian societal norms, including norms concerning human rights”

Finally, against this background, the problem of identity comes to the forefront as yet another key public diplomacy challenge. As Rhonda Zaharna notes, at the end of the day “all communication is inherently about identity” since the selection, organization, and presentation of any communication indicates how one party sees itself, the other, and the relationship between them (Zaharna, 2010). And in the specific case of Russia, according to several scholars “its fundamental identity remains ill defined (Mankoff, 2009), while its foreign policy continues to exhibit strong, undeniable underlying traits of an ongoing identity crisis (Marshall, 2011).

---

CHAPTER 6: THE CASE OF PRESIDENTIAL SUMMITS

It is not easy to see how matters could be worsened by a parley at the summit\(^\text{423}\). Winston Churchill’s 1950 quote appears very timely to mention here as it surprisingly lays the ground for any inquiry on the significance of summits in international relations even in the 21\(^{\text{st}}\) century. Although the international political scene has definitely changed ever since former British Prime Minister had coined the term *summit* during some of the darkest days of the Cold War, the central idea that comes out of it appears quite applicable to today’s world as well: while until the last century leaders were often and deliberately avoiding face-to-face meetings, in the past decades summit meetings have gradually become a central element of international diplomacy\(^\text{424}\) and today they are in the headlines all the time -when referring to meetings at the level of heads of state/prime ministers\(^\text{425}\)-, while the word is often used in other walks of life, especially in business.

The case of the EU-Russian summits might be considered one of the finest examples in this sense. But there is relatively little reflection about what these summit meetings are supposed to achieve or about their significance, about their costs as well as benefits, including as far as communication/public diplomacy processes are concerned. For this reason this inquiry hopes to fill some blanks in the literature.

The dissertation argues that the EU-Russian presidential summits are an indicative example of the thesis’ hypothesis that centres on the overall fragile/unstable equilibrium\(^\text{426}\) between the two actors. The claim is that a key reason for the


\(^{424}\) Historians often give the example of several dramatic encounters such as Kennedy and Khrushchev at Vienna in 1961 or Reagan and Gorbatchev in Reykjavik in 1986

\(^{425}\) Summit meetings are defined as ad hoc meetings where heads of state and/or heads of government and/or foreign ministers from at least two of the big powers are present; Source: Galtung J, Journal of Peace Research, 1964 Sage Publications

\(^{426}\) The assumption is that the unstable equilibria notion from economics and physics might be used as reference in international relations and communications as well when referring to specific circumstances like for instance the state
shallow communications format in EU-Russian relations and for both sides’ failure to establish a commonly agreed communication roadmap (the deficit) stems, paradoxically, from a certain *tacit strategy choice* in both Brussels and Moscow. The dissertation argues that, instead of deepening their strategic partnership by establishing a so called “partnership of choice” (in accordance with official commitments on both sides), the EU and Russia have deliberately maintained certain *competing narratives* when addressing key common issues and concerns, a hypothesis confirmed by the case of summits.

Due to the limited scope of this research study, the unit limits though to exploring the key distinctive features that typify the actors’ performance in managing *bilateral communications*/ public diplomacy on these specific occasions, while providing a historical context that covers a 15-year time span (1998-January 2014).

### 6.1. General Overview & Controversies

For both Brussels and Moscow, EU-Russian presidential summits are the flagship events in bilateral relations, tasked to review key achievements and challenges in bilateral relations and reunite the leaders of both sides at the same table. Both actors perceive them as defining moments in bilateral cooperation, whereby they (can) set the tone for the EU-Russia relationship as a whole. For this reason, throughout the years, despite the ups and downs of their overall cooperation, presidential summits have remained a major *rapprochement tool* between Brussels and Moscow.

---

427 These events are organized usually in Russia in the first half of the year and in Brussels in the second half (practice established after the Lisbon treaty signed in 2007 and effective since 2009)
In 2012, on the occasion of the 30th summit for instance, speaking ahead of the meeting organized in Brussels, the president of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy emphasized in fact that “the hosting of our 30th summit is tribute to the indispensable nature of our partnership and is once again an important opportunity to take stock of progress and to discuss open issues and concerns across the broad span of EU-Russia relations”. For Brussels, the EU and Russia have “good prospects for enhancing (..) solid political cooperation – from domestic judicial reform and the fight against corruption to the situation in the Middle East or the issues of Afghanistan or Iran – alongside concerns over developments affecting civil society and fundamental rights.”. Noteworthy is also the global significance given both to the EU-Russian relationship and to these specific meetings: “We want to deepen our cooperation at a global level: on challenges such as global economic governance, climate change or cooperation at the UN, together the EU and Russia can make a decisive contribution to global governance and regional conflict resolution.”.

Interestingly enough, earlier, the same year, the 29th EU-Russia summit in St. Petersburg had marked, in Moscow’s view, one of the “liveliest discussions” between the two parts on a number of topics, which according to the Russian ambassador at the EU Vladimir Chizhov, had proved the great utility of these meetings. For the Russian official, EU-Russian summits at presidential level are always useful, even in “volatile times”, despite the difficulties and the lack of flexibility that might often come up during discussions, like for instance what Chizkov calls EU’s inability to move backwards on its own decisions: “Well, some people compare the EU with a crocodile – he adds- Not because of its teeth, but because of its inability to move backwards.”.

429 Ibid, 2012
430 Ibid, 2012
431 Remarks of Vladimir Chizhov at a press briefing in preparation of the 3-4 June EU-Russia summit, 29.05.2012, Brussels- note of the author
432 Source: Euractiv article, G.Gotev- “Russian Ambassador: ‘EU is like a crocodile”, 30.05.2012
On a general level, for the European Union, the EU-Russia summits at presidential level add significant value to bilateral cooperation, as they are tasked both to monitor progress in bilateral relations and to move bilateral dialogue from one stage to another. Moreover, these high level summit meetings are included in an ambitious and broader foreign policy strategy of the Union, that entail the organization of international summits on a regular basis, either at bilateral or at multilateral levels\textsuperscript{433}. At bilateral level, EU summits are held on a regular basis only with the Union’s strategic partners\textsuperscript{434} and the location for the summits alternates between Brussels and the country concerned. The meetings with Russia, the only neighbouring “strategic partner” of the union, are the only ones regularly organized twice a year\textsuperscript{435} (among EU’s international summits).

Since 1998, these high level events are organized usually in Russia in the first half of the year and in Brussels in the second half (practice established after the Lisbon treaty signed in 2007 and effective since 2009). During the meetings, the Union is represented by the President of European Council, the President of European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Occasionally, other EU along with European Commissioners participate in specific sessions as well (e.g. commissioners for energy or trade). In turn, Russia is represented by the President and Ministers responsible for specific areas of cooperation with the EU.

For the authorities in Moscow, the EU-Russia summits at presidential level play a key role in the institutional structure of bilateral cooperation and define the strategic direction of development of Russia-EU relations. They are presented as a significant part of the high level political dialogue with Brussels that also involves regular

\textsuperscript{433} At multilateral level, summits include both international meetings (where the EU is either a member or invited to take part as a key international player, such as the G8, G20 and the United Nations General Assembly UNGA) and summits at EU level (including summits include the Eastern Partnership, EU-Africa, EU-ASEM and EU-CELAC, with the participation of heads of state or government from all EU member states, plus the European Council President, the European Commission President and the relevant heads of state or government from the participating countries); Source: EU Council, www.european-council.europa.eu

\textsuperscript{434} To date, the EU has activated “strategic partnerships” with Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States; Source: EEAS- http://www.eeas.europa.eu

\textsuperscript{435} unless either sides decides to postpone or cancel one or both for a valid reason
meetings throughout the whole year between ministers, senior officials and experts – e.g. meetings between the Russian Government and the European Commission, consultations between the members of the Permanent Partnership Council\(^{436}\) at the level of foreign ministers (at times with the participation of other ministers as well, responsible for Justice and Home Affairs, Energy, Transport, Agriculture, Environment, Culture, Science and Education), briefings between the Russian Permanent Representative to the EU and the leadership of the EU’s Political and Security Committee – PSC\(^{437}\) (monthly), meetings of the Russian foreign minister with the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and with EU member-states’ foreign ministers in New York within the framework of the UN General Assembly sessions or finally regular reunions between area experts. These last consultations are held all throughout the year (more than 20 meetings of this kind are held annually) and focus on “topical international issues”, like EU enlargement, Western Balkans, Human Rights, Conventional Arms Exports, Global Disarmament and Arms and on Non-Proliferation, OSCE and the Council of Europe, fight against terrorism, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf, Middle East Peace Process, Maghreb, the UN, Asia-Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean. They involve representatives from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the one hand and on the other hand public servants and experts representing the EU Presidency, the General Secretariat of the European Council and the Commission\(^{438}\).

To date, EU and Russia have held a total of 32 summits, since the entry into force on 1 December 1997 of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

\(^{436}\) Permanent Partnership Council PPC meetings (which replaced Cooperation Council in 2003) are held in the format of Foreign Ministers as well as other Ministers. Regular consultations allow Ministers responsible for various policy areas to meet as often as necessary and to discuss specific issues.

\(^{437}\) As a preparatory body for the Council of the EU, the PSC meets at the ambassadorial level. Its main functions are keeping track of the international situation, and helping to define policies within CFSP (the Common Foreign and Security Policy) including the CSDP. It prepares a coherent EU response to a crisis and exercises its political control and strategic direction; Source: EAS, http://eeas.europa.eu

\(^{438}\) Source: Russian Mission to the EU- Overview of the EU-RUSSIA relations, http://russianmission.eu
### EU RUSSIA SUMMITS 1998-Jan2014

**Chronology & Protagonists**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Date/ Venue</th>
<th>Key Protagonists (heads of delegations)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | 15.05.1998  | - **EU**: UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President Jacques Santer  
    - **Russia**: President Boris Yeltsin |
| 2  | 27.10.1998  | - **EU**: Viktor Klima, federal chancellor of Austria, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President J. Santer  
    - **Russia**: Evgheny Primakov, Prime Minister (in representation of President B. Yeltsin who cancelled at the last moment) |
| 3  | 09.03.1999 - Moscow, Russia | - **EU**: German Chancellor G.Schroder, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President J. Santer  
    - **Russia**: President B. Yeltsin |
| 4  | 22.10.1999 – Helsinki, Finland | - **EU**: Finland’s P.Lipponen, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President, Romano Prodi; Secretary General of the Council, High Representative, J.Solana  
    - **Russia**: Prime Minister V.Putin representing B.Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation |

---

439 this 32nd summit, initially programmed for December 2013, was postponed to January 2014 at EU’s request (officially for logistical reasons)  
440 according to the former principle of the rotating Presidency among EU member states
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>EU:</th>
<th>Russia:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>29.05.2000</td>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td>Prime minister of Portugal A. Guterres, President-in-office of the</td>
<td>V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>European Council; Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy of the EU J. Solana; President of the Commission of the European Communities R. Prodi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Council; J. Solana, Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy; President of the European Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romano Prodi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.05.2001</td>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td>G.Persson, President-in-office of the European Council; J. Solana,</td>
<td>V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary-General of the EU Council/High Representative for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU; R.Prodi, President</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of the Commission of the European Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>03.10.2001</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>G. Verhofstadt, Belgium’s Prime Minister, President-in-office of</td>
<td>V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the European Council; R. Prodi, President of the Commission of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>European Communities; J. Solana, Secretary-General of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Council/High Representative for EU Common Foreign and Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29.052002</td>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td>Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, President-in-office of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the European Council; President of the European Commission,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romano Prodi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.11.2002</td>
<td>Brussels, Belgium</td>
<td>- EU: Danish Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen, President-in-office of the European Council; President of the European Commission Romano Prodi</td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.05.2003</td>
<td>Sankt Petersburg, Russia</td>
<td>- EU: Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis President-in-office of the European Council; President of the European Commission, RProdi; Secretary General/High Representative for Common Foreign &amp; Security Policy J.Solana</td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.11.2003</td>
<td>Rome, Italy</td>
<td>- EU: Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi President-in-office of the European Council; Commission President Romano Prodi and Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten; Secretary-General/High Representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, J. Solana</td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.05.2004</td>
<td>Moscow, Russia</td>
<td>- EU: Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, President-in-office of the European Council, European Commission President Romano Prodi</td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>25.11.2004</td>
<td>The Hague, The Netherlands</td>
<td>- EU: Prime Minister of the Netherlands Jan Peter Balkenende, President-in-office of the European Council; President of the European Commission, J. Barroso; Secretary-General/High Representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, J. Solana</td>
<td>- Russia: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[^{441}\] first Summit between the enlarged European Union of 25 Member States and Russia
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 15.05.2005 | Russia, Moscow | **Russia**: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation  
- **EU**: Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker, President-in-office of the European Council; President of the European Commission, J. Barroso; Secretary-General/High Representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, J. Solana  
- **Russia**: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation |
| 11.05.2005 | Russia, Moscow | **EU**: Prime Minister of Luxembourg Jean-Claude Juncker, President-in-office of the European Council; President of the European Commission, J. Barroso; Secretary-General/High Representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, J. Solana  
- **Russia**: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation |
| 18.05.2007 | Samara-Volzhsky | **EU**: Germany’s Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Javier Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, J. Solana  
- **Russia**: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation |
| 24.11.2006 | Helsinki, Finland | **EU**: Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen, President-in-office of the European Council; Javier Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union; Commission President José Manuel Barroso  
- **Russia**: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 26.10.2007         | Mafra, Portugal         | **EU**: Portuguese Prime Minister & head of the Portuguese EU-Presidency José Socrates, President-in-office of the European Council: European Commission President J.Barroso, J.Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the EU  
**Russia**: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation |
| 27.06.08           | Khanti Mansiisk, Russia | **EU**: Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, Javier Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the EU  
**Russia**: Dimitry Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation |
| 14.11.2008         | Nice, France            | **EU**: French President Nicolas Sarkozy, President-in-office of the European Council; European Commission President J. Barroso, Javier Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the EU  
**Russia**: D.Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation |
<p>| 21-22.05.2009      | Khabarovsk              | <strong>EU</strong>: President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus President-in-office of the European Council, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, , Javier Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>EU Delegations</th>
<th>Russia Delegation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>17.11.2009</td>
<td>Stockholm, Sweden</td>
<td>Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt, President-in-office of the European Council, European Commission President J.Barroso; J.Solana High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the EU</td>
<td>D.Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.05-01.06.2010</td>
<td>Rostov-on-Don, Russia</td>
<td>European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso</td>
<td>D. Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>07.12.2010</td>
<td>Brussels / EU HQ</td>
<td>European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso</td>
<td>D. Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>09-10.06.2011</td>
<td>Nizhy Novgorod, Russia</td>
<td>European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso</td>
<td>D. Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.12.2011</td>
<td>Brussels / EU HQ</td>
<td>European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso</td>
<td>D. Medvedev, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>03-04.06.2012</td>
<td>Sankt Petersburg,</td>
<td>European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso</td>
<td>V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>EU</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.12.2012</td>
<td>Brussels / EU HQ</td>
<td>-<strong>EU</strong>: European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso&lt;br&gt;-<strong>Russia</strong>: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.06.2013</td>
<td>Yekaterinburg, Russia</td>
<td>-<strong>EU</strong>: European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso&lt;br&gt;-<strong>Russia</strong>: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.01.2014</td>
<td>Brussels / EU HQ</td>
<td>-<strong>EU</strong>: European Council President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso&lt;br&gt;-<strong>Russia</strong>: V.Putin, President of the Russian Federation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The official agenda of each summit is shaped on the basis of proposals of both sides, depending on bilateral priorities and on the international context. The key themes touch *in primis* political and economic bilateral cooperation, with a special attention to pending energy issues.

Some of the recurrent top topics of the meeting agendas include updates on: the *expert negotiations dealing with new EU-Russia Agreement* that should provide a more comprehensive framework for bilateral relations reflecting the growth in cooperation since the early 1990s while including substantive, legally binding commitments in all areas of the partnership; the mobility issues /visas; the “*Common spaces*” cooperation, covering four policy areas (*economy & environment freedom, security & justice external security - research & education, including cultural aspects); the *Partnership for Modernisation*, considered the focal point of mutual cooperation, as it deals with all aspects of *modernisation* (*e.g.* economic, technical - including standards and regulations-, rule of law and functioning of the judiciary); *trade relations*, given the fact that, to date (January 2014), Russia is the third trading
partner of the EU while EU is the first trading partner of Russia and the most important investor in Russia\(^{442}\); Kaliningrad, the Russian enclave in the EU neighbouring Poland and Lithuania; the Northern Dimension Policy (ND), the joint cooperation framework between EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland, focused on Northern Europe; other projects of financial co-operation (that supports already the Partnership for Modernisation\(^{443}\)) and top issues of “bilateral and international concern”, including climate change, drug and human trafficking, organized crime, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation, humanitarian aid programs\(^{444}\), security cooperation (special focus on “frozen conflicts”) or Foreign Policy issues (e.g. the Middle East peace process, Iran).

Despite such a rich agenda, the number of bilateral agreements or joint statements on specific common positions that come out of these meetings tend to be rather scarce. The past years have actually marked by a standstill from this point of view. As a result, summits often end without an agreement on how to negotiate closer economic links or even with a traditional joint press statement. Leaders on both sides tend to avoid all kind of commitments, plans or concrete timetables and stick to broad joint statements (usually on foreign policy topics) or to general resolutions / recommendations to accelerate bilateral expert negotiations / consultations on specific areas.

\(^{442}\) It is estimated that up to 75% of Foreign Direct Investment stocks in Russia come from EU Member States (including Cyprus); Source: European Commission Trade DG Data- http://ec.europa.eu/trade
\(^{443}\) as mentioned previously in the dissertation, these projects are channelled through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument ENPI and are targeted on objectives for the EU-Russia common spaces focusing on bilateral cooperation programmes covering: institution building, technical assistance for transport investment, support for minorities, support for the EU-Russia common spaces, funding for the European Studies Institute, establishment of EU centres, financing of the "Partnership for Modernisation" programme (€40m allocated by the EU since 2007). Initially, this was done through the TACIS programme of the EU that was focusing on Russia’s transition to democracy and market economy. As Russia’s financial position has improved, the need for broad-ranging assistance has disappeared.\(^ {444}\) reference to the EU projects in support of the support the victims of the Chechen conflict since its beginning in 1999 until the end of 2011; Source: European Commission –Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/aid/europe_caucasus/russia_en.htm
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Selection of Key Joint Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013/Jan 2014</td>
<td>Joint Statement on combatting terrorism signed at the Brussels summit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Joint Statement on the Middle East Peace (Brussels summit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Progress report on the Partnership for Modernization (Brussels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2 Joint Statements on the Partnership for Modernization (Rostov-on-Don) &amp; on the Israeli military operation against the Flotilla sailing to Gaza.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Launch of cross-border co-operation programmes (Stockholm); Progress Report on EU-Russia Energy Dialogue (Stockholm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2 joint statements focusing on the launch of negotiations for a new EU-Russia agreement and on cross border cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Progress Report on EU-Russia Energy Dialogue ; Common Spaces Progress Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2 agreement on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of the Russian Federation and the EU &amp; on readmission (Sochi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Adoption of the Road Maps for the Common Economic Space (Moscow); Progress Report on EU-Russia Energy Dialogue (London)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Joint Press Release on the conclusions of the Hague summit-The Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs contested though the discrepancies between the text agreed by the two sides for the common Press Release on the Outcome of the Summit and the “imprecise and incorrect” version published on the Internet site of the Netherlands' EU Presidency; Joint Statement on the EU Enlargement and EU-Russia relations (Moscow); Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (Moscow)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

445 Source: The European Council, EEAS, Russian Mission to the EU, Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (online archives, EU archives in Brussels)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Document Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Joint Press Release on the conclusions of the St. Petersburg summit; Joint Statement on the conclusions of the Rome Summit; Agreement to reinforce EU-Russian cooperation by creating in the long term 4 ‘common spaces’ in the framework of the Partnership &amp; Cooperation Agreement; Joint Declaration on strengthening dialogue and co-operation on political and security matters (Rome); Agreement on Concept Paper on the Common European Economic Space CEES (Rome); Final report of the high level group of the Common European Economic Space (Rome); Progress Report on EU-Russia Energy Dialogue (Rome)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Joint Statement on the Fight against Terrorism (Brussels summit); Joint Statement on transit between the Kaliningrad Region and the rest of the Russian Federation (Brussels); Joint Statement on Middle East (Brussels); Second Progress Report on EU-Russia Energy Dialogue (Brussels); Report of the High-Level group on the Common European Economic Space (Brussels); Joint press Statement on the Moscow Summit (Moscow); Joint Declaration on further practical steps in developing political dialogue and cooperation on crisis management and security matters (Moscow); Joint Statement on energy dialogue (Moscow); Progress Report on EU-Russia Energy Dialogue; Joint Statement on Middle East (Moscow); Joint Statement on the Developments in Indo-Pakistani Relations (Moscow)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>General joint press statements on the conclusions of the Moscow and Brussels Summits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>General joint press statements on the conclusions of the Paris and Moscow Summits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>General joint press statements on the conclusions of the Helsinki and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

446 7 broad themes, 300th anniversary of St.-Petersburg – celebrating three centuries of common European history and culture; Renewed mechanisms of co-operation and dialogue for EU-Russia partnership in the 21st century; Towards the Common Economic Space; Peoples of Russia and the EU - neighbours and partners; A united Europe for all Europeans; Common Response to the Threat of Drugs and Terrorism; Partners in the field of international relations, security and crisis management
Moscow Summits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Joint press statement (Vienna); Informal agreement to strengthen environmental measures related to spent nuclear fuel (Birmingham)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While some summits have officially appeared more “constructive” than others and produced concrete results, the two parts have always emphasized the importance of “frank exchanges” during these high level meetings, which hence represent, in principle, a step forward anyways in EU-Russian relations.

Moscow claims that, although these summits might not always produce groundbreaking results, they represent anyhow authentic “milestones” in bilateral relations, with a significant role in the institutional structure of cooperation, defining many development strategies in Russia-EU relations. Furthermore, for the Russian president, during summits, “we always pay attention to important issues that come up and that, regrettably, we have indeed not yet managed to resolve for a long time now.” However, for V.Putin, each summit represents an advancement in its own way as “we are making progress on even the most difficult issues”.

In turn, the President of the EU Council notes that summits are normally the occasion in which the two parties are able “to harvest the results of (...) years of constructive work.” In this sense for instance, for Van Rompuy, the 28th EU–Russia Summit, held in Brussels, marked a milestone for instance, with the launch of the first steps on the road to visa-free travel and initiatives for improving citizens mobility, with the “breakthrough achieved on Russia’s WTO accession or in the light of the resumption of formal 5+2 talks on Transnistria, a new momentum in enhancing

---

448 Notes of the author on a press briefing of the Russian Ambassador to the EU Vladimir Chizhov journalists in Brussels on the eve of the 30th EU-Russia summit (December 2012) - Residence Palace in Brussels
449 Author’s notes - Press Conference following the EU-Russian summit in Brussels, 28.01.2014
450 Ibid, 2014
the stability of the shared neighbourhood and improving the conditions for progress on other protracted conflicts.

However, the persistent lack of joint statements agreements in the past years, indicative of a certain stalemate in bilateral relations, has also fostered frustrations on both sides, with an increasing number of pending issues of the agenda “transferred” from one summit to another, along with numerous controversies surrounding delicate subjects of common concern.

For the EU, along the recurrent topics regularly discussed on the occasion of these summits, the issue of human rights in particular has stirred in particular numerous disagreements and, according to numerous diplomats, even palpable tensions during the meetings. Tensions often stem from the fact that, as part of EU-Russia bilateral dialogue, Brussels regularly “recalls Russia’s commitment to ensure free and fair elections and to fully respect the right of free assembly and speech”.

On this specific issue of human rights for instance, Moscow answers back often irritated, stating that Brussels “wants to lecture other countries” and pointing specific human rights related problems within the EU, like for instance the difficulties of the Russian speaking minority in the Baltic states. Furthermore, in 2012, the Russian authorities have started presenting its own “monitoring reports on the human rights situation” with a focus on EU member states and the US. The Russian Foreign Ministry's Commissioner for Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law presents regularly it to the press in Brussels, arguing: “it is very alarming and not understandable that certain EU countries, though verbally supporting the international human rights norms and standards, decide not to assume responsibilities even under basic multilateral treaties on human rights”.

Other controversies surrounding the summits centre on the traditional sensitive topics of the EU-Russian relations as a whole, like energy, the shared neighbourhood,

---

452 off the record discussions with the author, Brussels, Dec.2012, Jan 2014- EU-Russian summits organized at EU HQ
453 Source: European Commission, 28th EU–Russia Summit, 14.12.11-EUCO 160/11 PRESSE 496 PR PCE 119
aviation or trade, especially after Russia's WTO accession, with Brussels complaining that Moscow does not abide to its WTO commitments (e.g. freeze or reduce its export duties) and with Russia lamenting “the EU” application of anti-dumping procedures to a number of Russian sectors: the chemicals industry and the metals sector.”

Furthermore, in the past years, diplomats have noted that, while for the EU, the overall disappointment with reference to the EU-Russian “strategic partnership” often remains “at the surface” during its public communication preceding summits, the Russian side channels it frustration with the EU on punctual issues, by commissioning articles or interviews of its officials in Western media. Moscow is for instance disappointed particularly “with insufficient progress on the visa-free travel negotiations” not even during presidential summits. For the Russian minister for foreign affairs, Sergey Lavrov, “the visa regime has long been an anachronism in our relations. (.).from the technical point of view, Russia and EU Member States have been ready to waive visas for each other. This issue is symbolic; it exemplifies all the differences between Russia and the EU. It is ironic that our western partners, who were so adamant about freedom of movement when negotiating the Helsinki Final Act, are now reluctant to create conditions for free human communication on the European continent.” For the EU leaders though, “perhaps the one area where most progress has been made is the facilitating of travel between Russia and the EU.”

---

455 Trade between the two economies has in fact showed steep growth rates until mid-2008 when the trend was interrupted by the economic crisis and unilateral measures adopted by Russia, which had a negative impact on EU-Russia trade. Since 2010 mutual trade has resumed its growth reaching record levels in 2012.; Source: European Commission, DG Trade- http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/russia/
456 Discussion of the author with EU officials DG Trade, off the record, September 2013
458 Russia submits more applications for EU visas than any other country, and the number of Schengen visas issued annually in Russia almost doubled between 2009 and 2012, from 3.2 million to 6 million.; Source: EUISS Policy Brief-Report, December 2013
6.2. **Mediated Public Diplomacy Tools & Selected Frames**

This unit explores the EU-Russian communication/public diplomacy processes during 32 presidential summits (1998-January 2014), with a focus on mediated public diplomacy, while the aim is to identify the key frames and divergent messages distributed by the two actors through specific mediated public diplomacy instruments and products.

The focus of the inquiry is thus on EU and Russian official press releases, statements, transcripts, press kits, statistics, speeches, announcements, released /distributed through different channels, on the occasion of these events by the EU and Russian authorities through each side’s press/public information/public diplomacy offices towards media outlets in EU and Russia.

As a rule, these documents are supposed to be available to the public for long periods, as they had already been channelled to specific media outlets. However, although regularly published online on various EU and Russian institutional websites, these documents are often dispersed /duplicated on various portals and it is not easy to retrieve relevant information.

In the past years, both the EU, through EEAS /Delegation of the European Union to Russia, and Russia, through its Permanent Mission to the EU, have indeed put in place specific webpages dedicated to their relations that includes information on presidential summits as well, but, to date, they are incomplete and out-dated. Moreover, both sides have enhanced their *social media* presence, with the EEAS in particular using instruments like *Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Storify* on a regular basis for dissemination short information items to the media and more generally to the public opinion.

However, social media activities do not compensate the gaps and weaknesses visible on both sides’ institutional websites that disseminate information on EU-Russia summits and more generally on EU-Russian relations. More specifically, these
web-portals do not contain an appropriate database of press releases and statements, organized chronologically\textsuperscript{459} or a structured online photo-library. Moreover, the transcripts of press conferences organized in occasion of EU-Russian summits for instance are partly available only on Russian online resources, while on the EU portals they are not retrievable. A limited number of video excerpts are available on through EbS (Audiovisual Service of the European Commission), but they are not hyperlinked on other EU websites (for instance EEAS special webpage on EU-Russian relations\textsuperscript{460}).

Likewise, the layouts appear rather static to the user and not necessarily user friendly, as they rarely contain references /hypertexts and hyperlinks to background information or to the other partners’ website/ specific documents on the same events, so that that the reader can directly follow either by clicking or by hovering. Additionally, reports and chronologies are not always as rigorous as one could expect from institutional internet portals and this lack of precision might lead to confusion and additional misinterpretations.

According to the website of the EU Delegation in Moscow for instance, “the 3\textsuperscript{rd} EU-Russia summit took place in 1998 in Birmingham”\textsuperscript{461}. This information is incorrect (in reality Birmingham hosted the 1\textsuperscript{st} EU-Russia Summit in 1998) and might denote a certain lack of attention, strategic approach and appropriate back-up for communication activities (including information dissemination through specialized websites).

The research process for the present inquiry focused on presidential summits has thus resulted rather complex but was facilitated by the author’s linguistic advantage (good knowledge of Russian, apart from fluent English and French). The review is thus limited to the availability of data / supporting information retrieved\textsuperscript{462}.

\textsuperscript{460}http://www.eeas.europa.eu/russia/
\textsuperscript{461}Information last updated in January 2014(http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/index_en.htm)
- **Russian data**: the documentation retrieved from institutional and academic resources covers 30 meetings (online, literature/library)- e.g. *Russian Presidency, Russian Government, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Russian Permanent Mission to the EU, MGU. Russian Foreign Affairs Council* (official reports, press releases, speeches, transcripts of press conferences, analysis, statistics); they do not cover the first summit meetings (1998, 1999- limited availability of data)

- **EU data**: the documentation retrieved from institutional and academic resources covers 32 summit meetings (online, literature/library and direct access) e.g. *European Council, European Commission, European External Action Service EEAS, EU archives, DORIE – European Commission database of documents; ARCHISplus (Historical Archives of EU institutions), OpenData Portal - EU, European Parliament, think tanks, archives of the Belgium Ministry for Foreign Affairs, academic literature, etc.* (official reports, press releases, speeches, transcripts of press conferences, analysis, statistics, booklets); the key difficulty is retrieving especially old statements. Paradoxically, even EU public servants often encounter the same difficulties, although these documents are in principle public and they should hence be available. See below for instance a negative response from EEAS to one of my official requests for access to EU documents (using the standard procedure).
Dear Ms Preda,

Subject: Your request for access to documents 2013/7

Thank you for your request dated 11 January 2013, which was registered in the EEAS access to documents registry under reference 2013/7, for access to the following document under Regulation 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents ("the Regulation"):

- EU-Russia Summit in Birmingham - Final Declaration of May 15, 1998

We have examined your request and asked the responsible division to identify the document you are looking for. They have not identified any document matching your request.

We have also consulted the General Secretariat of the Council but they have not identified any document either that would match your request.

In light of the above, we regret to inform you that the EEAS cannot answer positively to your request.

All correspondence should be sent to the following address:

The European External Action Service
EEAS, Office PARC 01/278
B- 1046 Brussels
access-to-documents@eeas.europa.eu

Yours sincerely

Cesare Onestini
Head of Division
On a general basis, the praxis on both sides is that press materials illustrating the results of specific EU-Russian presidential summits are distributed to the media in two phase - one proceeding the event (1), another one following it (2):

- **(1):** These are regularly informative press releases and/or general statements on the significance of a specific event, published online and distributed (a few days before the summit) either during press briefings or by email[^463] to specific international media rosters (professional media outlets from EU members states, Russia, US). The EU often distributes two statements, one on behalf of the EU Council, focusing on the position of the President of the Council and another one from the European Commission, presenting the viewpoint of the president of the Commission. Furthermore, the EU releases an info-sheet with updated statistical data (trade), an announcement including logistical info (date, venue, delegations, contacts for media accreditations) a short factsheet on the history of EU-Russian relations (“Background info”) and at times other relevant information (e.g. brochures, leaflets). In the meantime, the Russian authorities distribute their own press info-s as well, but as a rule, before the summits, they regularly stick to one short announcement (in English and Russian), containing useful information on the organization of the event.

- **(2):** The events end with a common press conference, during which both sides address the press and answer to questions from the accredited journalists. Furthermore, both sides publish and distribute distinct press releases or written statements of the leaders participating in the discussions, that summarize the results of the summits and additionally present distinct viewpoints on specific topics. Joint press releases are rare ever since 2004 Hague summit, when the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs contested a document summarizing its results that was published as joint press release by the Dutch Presidency of the EU on their website (Moscow argued there were various discrepancies between the Dutch version and the version of the text on which the Russian part had initially

[^463]: or by fax before 2000/2002; Source: author’s direct experience as a journalist
agreed at the end of the summit). However, when they do come up, common statements are generally focused on concrete agreements or on foreign policy topics. All these documents can normally be retrieved online on the relevant institutional EU and Russian websites. They are limited to their own releases and do not even mention the statements of the other side, with the exception of the website of the Russian Presidency, which publishes online transcripts of key excerpts of the post-summit press conferences that contain statements / answers from EU leaders as well.

As both sides use distinct public diplomacy tools, products and channels, the end result is that, depending on the context, EU-Russian presidential summits often end up with two competing stories about the evolution/results of these events. Consequently, their divergent message frames offer key insights on the general ambiance in EU-Russia relations at a certain moment in time and might even set the tone for future developments.

The two storylines (EU versus Russian versions) are often quite different, they cast what's happening in different lights, while diplomats and experts, journalists on both sides often argue about which one has got the “right version”. Some even argue that up to a certain extent, they can both be simultaneously true.

Below I try to identify some of the key features of these two narratives, by focusing on some of the recurrent frames retrieved after going through a selection of more than 150 documents (press releases, transcript of press conferences, press statements before/after summits). My inquiry starts from the assumption that frames are “information-processing schemata” that are operating by “selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others (Entman, 1993)

In order to explore the differences in framing between EU and Russian press releases, various types of frames are identified through textual analysis. For the selection of frames, inductive and qualitative research methods are used as the aim is
to substantiate evidence that the two parts constantly uphold different frames and images created by different public diplomacy efforts (EU / Russia- through the press releases) when they construct specific “realities” for the same event (in this case-summits). In order to achieve this objective quantitative methods would thus be irrelevant\(^{464}\).

Furthermore, the sample questions that guide this inquiry reflect both the relevant theories, models and concepts discussed in Part II (framing) and the subordinate questions mentioned in Part I, that support the main research question and “cross” all the chapters of the dissertation. Here are some of the key queries kept in mind during the textual analysis –e.g. Who are the key communicators during summits? What kind of format do they prefer for addressing the media/public opinion (e.g. informative, assessments)? What words are included in the lead paragraph/headlines? What descriptive (key)words are used by EU/Russia in their press materials for characterizing their partnership /the “other side” / their own viewpoint?; What (kind of) information is emphasized or understated in EU/Russian press releases?; What are the sources used in the press releases?; What public diplomacy models/tools do they prefer? Where / When do the two parts team up, support, ignore each other, contradict or go against each other? How do they handle impasses or unpleasant situations? When do message frames change and in what way? How has the image of EU - Russia partnership changed over time in both EU and Russian press releases?

For the selection of frames, I partly draw on Entman’s concepts (1993, 2003, 2004), introduced in Part II of the dissertation, that identified selection and highlight as key concepts of framing (along others- e.g. magnitude, congruence)-, centring on the basic assumption that frames indicate problems, diagnose causes, evaluate and prescribe solutions\(^{465}\). I start from the assumption that in framing their narratives, each side highlights specific facets of the summits or of specific issues, while making

\(^{464}\) In this sense, this specific analysis could serve as a pilot study. The findings could therefore constitute a basis for a future more in-depth study that could focus on media coverage of both “versions” and on the impact on public opinion.

\(^{465}\) “causes” refer to the identification of forces creating the problem; “evaluation” to the expression of opinions
connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution. Furthermore, the different frames employed by both parts prove the extent of competing narratives fostered during presidential summits.

Furthermore, as framing a problem implies both causes and effects, special attention is also paid to the concept of framing responsibility defined earlier in Part II of the dissertation. Likewise, the frames are categorized bearing in mind in particular the classification of generic frames offered by de Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001), that focus on either attribution issues (the cause/solution of a problem is attributed to either the government, a person, or a group), or on (potential) clashes, on the “human side” of a problem (emotional angles), on its economic consequences or finally on moral connotations (e.g. religious). Additionally, issue specific frames are identified as they are more focused on details and thus referring to specific aspects of broader events or topics. An overview of the selected frames is presented below.

First, as far as generic frames are concerned, the responsibility one appears as prevalent in both EU and Russian press releases/statements (written or on the spot during briefings/press conferences all throughout the years). Furthermore, other generic frames are regularly identifiable in both EU and Russian materials, while their presence appears rather fluctuant and subject to constant change, as they generally depend on historical contexts/ settings surrounding the summits.

Working with a broad brush, I have tried to draw up general boundaries between different frames identified in both sides’ materials distributed on the occasion of this events, as the aim is to substantiate evidence that the two parts constantly uphold different frames and images created by different public diplomacy efforts (EU / Russia- through the press releases) when they construct specific “realities” for the same event (in this case-summits). The inquiry is thus strictly limited to the narrow object of the research.

An overview of the selected frames - responsibility, conflict, human interest,

Entman’s concepts (explored in Part II of the dissertation) appear particularly useful here.

The assumption is that press releases/statements generally contain one generic frame (that sets the general tone).
morality, economic consequence—supported by several key examples, is presented below:

- **Responsibility Frames:**

  According to this frame, both sides present key issues/problems in such way that causes/solutions are attributed either to one side or to another (when dealing with delicate subjects, often “the other” is the cause of misunderstandings). The January 2014 summit (the shortest one in history—two-hours), might be considered for instance a key example in this sense. Both in press releases and during the final press conference, although no tangible progress was reached, EU and Russian protagonists appeared as “assuming responsibility” in a conciliatory mood, despite their long-time divergences. No political accusations on the shared neighbourhood were openly formulated on either sides, as participants agreed to start bilateral consultations (expert level) aimed at reassuring Russia on the economic consequences of the EU’s Eastern Partnership initiative. V.Putin stated that the summit marked progress between the two sides. For his part, Commission President José Manuel Barroso said that over the last 10 years, he had seen those summits and EU-Russia relations expanding “in a spectacular way”. Asked if human rights had been discussed, Council President Herman van Rompuy said that this issue was always part of the summit agenda, but admitted that this time it had not been discussed in detail. The previous summit held on 4 June 2013 EU and Russian leaders appeared sharply divided over civil liberties in Russia and ways to resolve the Syrian crisis.

- **Conflict Frames:**

  These frames are often understated and invoke (potential) clashes mainly at political level. Rhetoric related to the competition is also presented (e.g. texts with these frame focus on topics like energy divergences, frozen conflicts, shared neighbourhood). Furthermore, both sides have often associated these frames to “moderate optimism” especially on controversial topics like human rights, on which they have alternated more or less assertive tones during summits.
These frames have gradually gained ground ever since 1999, the year that marked the “début” of V.Putin on the international scene, since at the time, as Prime Minister of Russia, he was representing the former president Boris Yeltsin in the discussions of which later on he became an “habitué” of these discussions over the years (see the table of key protagonists above). On that occasion, the final summit communiqué noted that “the EU and the Russian Federation exchanged views on the situation on the Northern Caucasus”, but during the press conference the first potentially “conflicting” message frames appeared from in the statement of the Finish Prime Minister Paavo Liponnen, the president in charge of the council of the EU. He stated that the EU as a whole had expressed deep concern about deteriorating situation in Chechnya, including worrying reports of recent attacks on civilian targets and urgent de-escalation of the conflict. In response, V.Putin thanked Europe for the firm condemnation of terrorism and shared EU concerns over Chechnya.

Furthermore, throughout the years conflict frames have regularly emerged in press releases /statements on both sides, especially after 2004, the year that marked the unofficial “halt” of joint press releases distributed at the end of each summit. That year, following a meeting in the Hague, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had vehemently criticized “discrepancies in the texts for the press release on the outcome of the 14th EU-Russia Summit in The Hague on November 25, 2004,”. For the Russian authorities, “the text of the Joint Press Release appearing on the Internet site of the Netherlands' EU Presidency is imprecise and does not correspond to the accords reached between President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, Netherlands Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende and President of the European Commission (CEC) Jose Manuel Durao Barroso (...) In diplomatic practice much attention is always paid to removal of this kind of inaccuracies.”

• **Human interest Frames:**

---

468 *the first leader of Russia after the dissolution on the Soviet Union in 1991*
469 *Source: EU Library Archives, Brussels– Info sheets from the Finish Presidency of the EU, Media Reports, Reports of the CFSP High Representative and Secretary General of the European Council*
470 *Source: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Russia- online archives- www.mid.ru*
471 *Ibid*
The focus is in this case on so-called “emotional angles” in order to “personalize” somehow press statements/releases (e.g. focus on topics like human rights, freedom of speech, mobility/visas). Friendship/enmity quotes from famous writers for instance accentuate the affective dimensions of several texts. In this sense, noteworthy is the fact that EU leaders often quote Russian writers in their statements or press releases, which is not the case of Russian leaders, that don’t necessarily look for specific EU “cultural” references, but emphasize rather the role of Russia in “shaping European reality in its political, economic, cultural dimensions, through history”\(^{472}\).

With various variations, this frame has always been a constant presence on both sides, ever since 2000, the year during which Moscow hosted the first summit with V. Putin as new president of a new Russia. On that occasion, the than head of the European Commission Romano Prodi was emphasizing that “rarely in the course of history does an opportunity like this present occur: for the first time in many centuries we have the opportunity to unite Europe not by force of arms but on the basis of shared ideals and agreed common rules”\(^ {473}\). Prodi added on the same occasion that an enlarged Union for instance “that offers a greatly expanded zone of stability and security in Europe (… ) has important implications for Russia, Ukraine and the other countries along our new borders (…)In this context the partnership between the EU and Russia is there to stay and grow. Together we are in the business of building a new Europe for the 21\(^{st}\) century. But we are also global partners and in this new century we have to work together with the other major actors to find just and sustainable solutions to global problems”\(^ {474}\). With Prodi’s speech in Moscow, keywords like “together”, “we” and the idea of cohesion in EU-Russian relations have entered de facto in the vocabulary of the EU-Russian summits

\(^{472}\) This theme is a recurrent one in official discourses, speeches of Russian official; Useful URL. Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs - online archives- www.mid.ru
\(^{473}\) Source: European Commission, Speech of R. Prodi in Moscow, EU-Russia Summit, 29 May 2000
\(^{474}\) Ibid, 2000
Subsequently, more or less all summits employed this specific frame especially in association with specific *priorities* and *expectations* on each side – e.g. the Russian side emphasized for instance the difficulties of the Russian normal tourists in Europe because of the visa problems, while, in turn on the EU side, used it in connection for instance with the stories on the significance of the freedom of speech. In this sense, noteworthy is for instance a remark from the president of the EU Commission Herman van Rompuy that in 2013, speaking about the significance of high level events like the EU-Russian summits, was noting that generally speaking, with Europeans and Russians, expectations can be higher and disappointments deeper, “precisely because Europeans and Russians know each other so well”\(^\text{475}\): “That is why it is important to set aside the many caricatures which hamper our relationship. Preachy hypocrites, nostalgic cynics... Powerless values, values-less power... Oh yes, we know the clichés. Those who give in to these false mirrors misjudge the relationship. They arise precisely because we hold each other to high standards, which is in itself the highest sign of respect. Clear-headed, realistic respect, between two of the world's most important players, Russia and Europe today”\(^\text{476}\).

Interestingly enough, the frame was also identified in several materials when defining their strategic partnership, with keywords and phrases like “lack/need of respect”, “(mis)trust”, “bonds”, “(un)common values” associated with it.

The final communiqué of the Rome summit of 2003 employed it for instance for emphasizing the commitment of both Moscow and Brussels “*to reinforce the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia, on the basis of common values, with the aim of consolidating stability, security and prosperity on the European continent*”\(^\text{477}\). In particular, this specific summit can actually be considered a “turning point” as far as exacerbated use of such “personified” frames is concerned. On the same occasion, during the final press conference, when referring to EU-Russia

\(^{475}\) Source: The European Council, H. Van Rompuy Lecture at the European University at Saint Petersburg- Saint Petersburg, 5.09.2013 EUCO 181/13 PRESSE 366 PR PCE 159

\(^{476}\) Ibid, 2013

\(^{477}\) Source: Online Archive- Italian Government, www.gov.it
“friendship” Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, in his capacity as president of the EU, framed EU messages using a personal touch, namely diplomatic “jokes”, subsequently criticized by the heads of EU institutions and from other EU member states, that labelled it as a *gaffe*: he has de facto appointed himself as Russian President Vladimir Putin's 'unrequested attorney' to defend his client against attacks in the media over Chechnya or Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the former boss of oil company Yukos held on fraud charges, which the accused had denied and labelled as politically motivated.478.

- **Economic Consequences Frames:**

  The focus of this frame is on the *economic consequences* of specific decisions (e.g. focus on topics like energy divergences, trade issues). Often used to underline achievements as far as economic collaborations are concerned, it might also be associated with “conflicting” frames. In 2012 for instance, while the Brussels summit (December) ended with no major decisions, during the final press conference Russian President used both “frames” in his messages, suggesting that the European Commission President J. Barroso was “not right” in his interpretation of energy liberalisation rules. V.Putin argued that the EU’s Third energy package was discriminatory against Russia, suggesting “open article 34 of our basic treaty with the EU and read for yourselves”479. Barroso denied accusation and preferred to tone down the discussion in front of journalists, recalling that the EU-Russian relations “have been constantly developing in the past years, with economic ties growing substantially in all sectors”479. According to EU diplomats, this somehow “soft” but “pragmatic” approach in using these kind of message frames has become somehow for Brussels “the rule of the game” during summits with Russia, when confronted to

---

478 “Joking” in front of journalists, S. Berlusconi has also warned V. Putin that he would bill him for his services, at the rate of one euro. V. Putin said that he was willing to pay; Source: European Voice, The painful EU-Russia summit in Rome, 13.11.2003
479 Article 34 of the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, in force since December 1997, reads: “The Parties shall use their best endeavours to avoid taking any measures or actions which render the conditions for the establishment and operation of each other's companies more restrictive than the situation existing on the day preceding the date of signature of the Agreement.”
possible deadlocks, in order to avoid what several Brussels officials have labelled, off the record, the “traditional unpredictability” of the Russian leadership.

In this sense, an indicative example are especially the EU-Russian summits of 2009, that followed a dramatic experience of a gas dispute, involving a three fold “triangle” (EU-Russia-Ukraine). The first of two EU-Russia Summits (held in Khabarovsk, Russia in May) toned down polemical trends of the previous year, while official press materials on these events focused on statistics, while emphasizing the role EU-Russian cooperation against the backdrop of the global financial and economic crisis, the energy partnership, progress under the EU-Russia four common spaces. Furthermore, the second EU-Russia Summit in November 2009 focused on general themes, like the financial and economic crisis, climate change, including the increased role of the G20, and EU-Russia bilateral co-operation under the four common spaces. Both sides preferred “informative” economic consequence frames for their public messages and for reporting the results of these meetings, emphasizing the adoption of an enhanced Early Warning Mechanism, which aims to prevent or to rapidly react to an emergency situation threatening energy supplies to the EU; the support for Russia’s accession to the WTO (2009) or the fact that the Summit reviewed the progress in EU-Russia negotiations on a New Agreement which started in 2008 (to replace will replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement).

The “economic” frame is actually the “oldest” one identified in press materials distributed during summits. It was the first issue emphasized for instance on the occasion of the first Eu Russia summit, held on 15 May 1998 in Birmingham, where the participants welcomed the progress made on economic and commercial cooperation (for instance, an agreement on the liberalisation of trade in textile products had been signed between the EU and Russia on 28 March 1998) and called for a stepping-up of bilateral cooperation to combat the trafficking of drugs and

---

480 off the record discussions with the author, June 2013, Brussels
481 After a deal was struck between Ukraine and the EU on 23 March 2009 to upgrade Ukraine's gas pipelines, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin threatened to review Russia's relations with the EU. "If Russia's interests are ignored, we will also have to start reviewing the fundamentals of our relations", Putin stated; Source: RT, http://rt.com/top_news/putin_threatens_to_review_relations_with_eu.html
money laundering as well as to ensure the safety of nuclear power stations and the destruction of chemical weapons.  

- **Morality Frames:**

The emphasis of this specific frame is on the role of values often used indirectly by citing third sources as well - including religious (e.g. focus on topics like topics like human rights).

In this sense, the EU-Russia summit held in May 2007 (during the German Presidency of the EU) appears somehow as key example, a turning point, as it marked the first public occasion in which the EU and Russia’s divergent frames have literally “clashed” in the public eye, with the two sides almost trading barbs during what *The International Herald Tribune* described as an “unusually long and acrimonious press conference.” On that specific occasion, European Commission President Jose Barroso warned for instance Russia that any action taken against an individual EU state would be considered action against the whole: “It is very important if you want to have close co-operation to understand that the EU is based on principles of solidarity.” Furthermore, the conference quickly degenerated into a quarrel over human rights, which apparently irritated all leaders, and Vladimir Putin in particular, questioned by journalists on his approach towards demonstrators. For the Russian president, “all those who want to stage demonstrations in accordance with the law have such an opportunity (…) but some provoke law enforcement to use force, and they respond accordingly”. The EU Commission president replied in turn by stressing “the importance of democracy, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of demonstration. These are values I’m sure unite, not divide, us. It’s very important for all European countries—and Russia is a European country—to ensure the full respect of those principles and values.”

---

482 The meeting also addressed the issue of Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic States; Source: European Parliament- Russia and the EU, No.14- Luxembourg, 25 October 1999, Task Force “Enlargement”, PE 167.734/rév.2
483 IHT, "Russian, EU leaders trade barbs at fractious summit-18.05.07, www.nytimes.com/2007/05/18/world/europe/18iht-18summit.5772296.html?_r=0
484 Source: Transcript of the Press Conference with President of the European Commission J. Barroso and German Chancellor Angela Merkel following the EU-Russia- Summit Meeting 18.05.07, Samara
This generic frame can be additionally broken in other specific “frames” aimed at “broadening” its span, while centring on the cooperation/competition dichotomy (that typifies anyways EU-Russian relations as a whole) - e.g. the transparency frame (press releases generally assure the media that EU /Russian leaderships remain available for the other side for “enhancing cooperation” and that they regularly inform the public); the commitment frame (the EU and Russian officials as taking responsibility for “making” relations work more smoothly, despite controversies); the disagreement frame - potentially conflicting (EU and Russia as problematic partners or as potential competitors, facing potential crisis situations); the cooperation frame (e.g. EU and Russia as strategic, cooperative or conciliatory partners). This last sub-frame is present at different “intensities” throughout all press releases/statements on both sides and associated with words/phrases like mistrust, lack of confidence of lack of enthusiasm. The first summits (1998- early 2000s) were definitely more upbeat from this point of view.

Finally, the inquiry takes note of the fact that different generic frames might often co-exist in the same documents (press releases /statements released on the occasion of EU-Russian summits), while, discrepancies are either immediately visible in the text of press materials or remain “subtle” in the background, depending on the context. Furthermore, in another inquiry (not addressed here because of the limited object of the dissertation) one way of categorizing specific discrepancies in EU and Russian narratives might be by breaking these generic /specific frames into underlying themes, with a special focus on those that have marked peculiar turning points in the use of language on both sides and have thus perpetuated various forms of doublespeak:

485 due to the limited object of research, the unit does not take into consideration themes for his particular study.

486 The term, blending two Orwellian concepts newspeak and doublethink, signifies an evasive type of verbal behaviour with the aim is to divert attention from or conceal the truth, making the bad seem good, the aggressive - noble, the inhumane - humane etc. (McArthur 1996)
PART IV. CONCLUSIONS
• Discussion:

Following the line of reasoning of the pertinent inquiries presented in Part II and Part III, the most appropriate answer to the main research question of the dissertation - *WHY do EU and Russia (still) lack the setup to map out a joint strategy for managing bilateral communications, despite their mutually acknowledged need to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership and enhance -pragmatic- cooperation?-* appears to be stemming indeed from a certain tacit strategy choice (independent variable) in both Brussels and Moscow to constantly uphold a shallow format in EU-Russian communications that would de facto maintain a certain distance between the two actors and perpetuate competitive narratives, as it would not facilitate exchanges or the establishment of a commonly agreed communication roadmap\(^{487}\) (deficit- dependent variable), as one might expect from “two strategic partners”.

The overall claim is thus that instead of deepening their strategic partnership by establishing a so called “partnership of choice”, in accordance with official commitments on both sides, EU and Russia have deliberately maintained competing narratives when addressing key common issues and concerns. Furthermore, these narratives, grounded in a certain type of divergent vocabularies and resulting in increased antagonism, appear to have encouraged constant competition in the public sphere as well, with EU and Russia often “struggling” for the greatest possible domination of the international political communication arena (perceived as one central strategic activity of public diplomacy processes), in the quest for media attention and eventually public recognition. Furthermore, the assumption is that EU and Russian decision makers have systematically infused different meanings to the same terms they regularly appeal to for interacting with one another, despite the

\(^{487}\) These roadmaps are generally considered a useful tool not only for enhancing specific communication processes but also for monitoring communication flows, anticipating communication crisis, identifying possible solutions aimed at overcoming more efficiently potential deadlocks or even for bridging communication gaps (in ideal circumstances).
official (mutually) acknowledged need to overcome discursive asymmetries and dissonances and to eventually build common approaches at least on specific issues, while somehow overcoming the mutual lack of trust that the two sides lament. The issue here is not only about discursive asymmetries and divergent understanding of major issues, but also about the lack of joint public messages even when addressing “neutral” subjects, that might in theory counterbalance the partnership’s limitations, weaknesses or concerns on other questions.

Furthermore, the thesis argues that, despite formal commitments to enhance teamwork, the constant presence of different message frames in the public sphere and the continuous competition/antagonism between the two actors (as revealed by Part II and Part III) provide substantive evidence that both EU and Russia prefer to somehow stick to this disjoint modus operandi of bilateral communication (on parallel tracks) in EU-Russian relations. This status quo appears to have had a two-fold effect on bilateral relations as a whole:

• On the one hand, it has obviously widened communication gaps by delaying (in)formal consultative processes on bilateral communication (like the development of a joint (in)formal communication roadmap), by bringing (more) discord and yet a new element of confusion in EU-Russia relations, along with increased competition and antagonism.

• On the other hand, this state of affairs has allowed though both Brussels and Moscow to develop politically expedient /convenient solutions and to draw some advantages from their constant antagonism as well. The idea is that each side transforms their bilateral weaknesses or gaps in key messages for justifying other themes (in this cases public diplomacy tools centre on opposing their images on specific topics) - e.g. during controversies on various human rights-related topics, the trope for Brussels is often “EU as human rights defender vs. Russia as perpetrator of human rights violations”, while for Moscow, “Russia, as a country that respects all international obligations on human rights vs. EU, as an expert in
human rights double standards, that has difficulties in dealing with its own problems in this field”.

In this sense, presidential summits appear to have become a perfect example of diplomatic doublespeak, as on this occasions both EU and Russia often make use of a particular type of language which pretends to communicate but in reality it doesn't and may often take the form of euphemisms, unsupported generalizations, or deliberate ambiguity: it is in fact during these events that discords and some of the most striking competitive narratives in EU-Russian relations, grounded in divergent vocabularies, have been endorsed at the “highest level”. The very act of juxtaposing the EU and Russian narratives developed on these occasions highlights the two sides’ deep disparities.

In line with this reasoning, the dissertation has actually drawn attention on the case of EU-Russia presidential summits, an indicative example for the thesis’ hypothesis and a key indicator of a particularly complex relationship between two partners gradually drifting apart. The objective was to explore the distinctive features that typify the actors’ performance in managing bilateral communications on these specific occasions.

The summit “narratives” that come out on both sides and the consequent storylines depicting the general evolution of EU-Russian bilateral relations appear quite different and even divergent - same general format, but different frames / contents somehow applying the principle “every miller draws water to his own mill”, although “on the surface” they stick to the “strategic partnership” label.

In other words, the different message frames reveal that instead of focusing on bridging the existing EU-Russia communication gap (in line with their “strategic partnership” requirements), their distinct, competitive public diplomacy strategies have further widened it. Naturally, these approaches come to the fore especially when it comes to attempts of leveraging media coverage -through press releases, briefings, statements- (with both actors realizing that sympathetic media coverage / attention or
simply access to the media are often key prerequisites for political influence, for eventually ensuring public support and for finally refining their soft/social power capabilities on a global scale).

In other words, through their flawed communications, summits tell the story of a relationship that has gradually returned to the stage of unstable equilibrium. The overall claim is these events are thus one of the finest examples of the EU and Russian preferences to stick to their disjoint approaches for managing bilateral communications. These tendencies on both sides, that I labelled “strategy choices”, favour the development of competing storylines, a constant use of divergent vocabularies and the growing competition in the public sphere, when addressing key common issues and concerns.

**Concluding Remarks:**

As mentioned previously, the present study seeks to participate in the discussion about new trends in the evolution of diplomatic practice and public diplomacy in general. For this reason, it singled out the particular role played by two sui-generis protagonists on the international political scene -EU and Russia- for the evolution of the diplomatic practice and presents the particular case of their bilateral presidential summits to illustrate the importance of the EU-Russian communications. Furthermore, it explored some of the distinctive traits that typify EU and Russian communication in general, with a special focus on presidential summits and on the framings of these events, by analysing public diplomacy practices, covering a 15-year time span (1998-2013/January 2014).

There are several reasons for having chosen to focus on these two major international actors under construction and on their relationship and they were

---

488 an international organization with supranational traits and one of its key partners, a non-member state
largely described throughout the thesis. For this reason, the thesis claims that the way EU and Russia handle their divergent logics of communication and deal with recurrent deadlocks may eventually set forth best or worst practices (across a wide range of settings) on the international scene. So far EU-Russian relations have been little investigated through the lens of communication and to date there is no specific study on public diplomacy approaches in EU-Russian relations, despite the key role of framing and messages for monitoring impact and in evaluating public perception of this intricate but strategic partnership.

By examining EU-Russian intricacies through the lens of communication and public diplomacy, the objective of the present research project was first to arrive at a better understanding of how these two actors communicate with one another and publicize their relation/"strategic partnership” and furthermore of why/when they team up, ignore or go against each other on the international political communication scene, by regularly reshuffling public discourses describing the evolution of their relations.

On a general level, in order to test the research hypothesis and thus answer the research question the dissertation explored several key distinctive features of EU-Russian communication processes, with a special focus on the congruence and on the magnitude to which EU and Russia communicate publicly about the evolution of their relations and convey information on the occasion of their flagship events (presidential summits), while touching upon specific forms of power derived from these processes on both sides (e.g. soft power, social power.

By questioning the level of desirability of communication arrangements in bilateral relations, another objective was to also advance an interdisciplinary explanation of the actors’ low performance in managing bilateral communications that often results in public diplomacy crisis. Furthermore, its specific purpose was to substantiate evidence that the two parts constantly uphold different frames and images created by different public diplomacy efforts (EU / Russia- through the press
releases) when they construct specific “realities” for the same event (special focus on presidential summits).

My investigation required an interdisciplinary approach, while employing various theories and concepts, with emphasis on international relations, communications and studies of public diplomacy. Given the linguistic advantages of the author, the thesis has drawn on both Western and Russian sources and located the present dissertation in a broader context.

First, the thesis looked into the historical and the institutional dimension of the EU-Russian strategic partnership and provided key elements of a specific historical context within which relevant events took place. It argues that, throughout history, this relationship has generally been driven by realpolitik considerations that, in turn, have often risen above institutional goals, that in theory aim to enhance bilateral cooperation between EU and Russia. Furthermore, the thesis focuses on several key shortcomings, representing the underlying cause of mutual discontent in EU-Russian relations, and on various forms of deadlocks, identified through a proposed Deadlock Scorecard Template.

Secondly, the thesis connected the main themes of the thesis to different strands of the existing literature, while underlining how various contributions from international relations and other social sciences have contributed to the development of the alternative and broad conceptual framework of this dissertation, which allowed for a simultaneous engagement of different interpretative approaches. After an overview of prior research studies on EU-Russia relations, it identified several research gaps in the literature (linked mainly to communications and to the nature and workings of power in general) while drawing attention to three specific concepts identified as major missing links.

Thirdly, the dissertation explored some of the distinctive features that typify the practice of communication in EU-Russian relations, with a special focus on public diplomacy tools and methods. Additionally, in order to put these data into context, it
provided a brief overview on the different communication “styles” in Brussels and Moscow, namely on the distinct EU and Russian approaches on public diplomacy and communication policies in general. Finally, the thesis focused on the case of EU-Russia presidential summits, flagship events in bilateral relations, and explored the actors’ performance in managing bilateral communications/ public diplomacy on these specific occasions. Temporally, the period between 1998 and 2013 /January 2014 is essential to empirically map EU-Russia interactions at this level and to derive the relevant conclusions.

As mentioned earlier, to date, this is the first study that explores EU-Russian relations, from the lenses of communication / public diplomacy, with a special focus on topics such as: image construction, competition in the public sphere, frame building (control of the selected version of reality presented to/by the media), the last as one central strategic activity of public diplomacy. Therefore, it hopes to offer general insights on the peculiar interplay between public diplomacy and realpolitik dynamics on the international political communication scene. It will hopefully provide a useful baseline for future research and debates on EU-Russian relations, international communication, public diplomacy and diplomatic methods.

CHAPTER 8. LIMITATIONS

Despite the margins of error that every analysis may face, I hope this study will constitute a useful basis for future research on EU-Russian communications and, more broadly, on new trends in the contemporary diplomatic landscape. In order to avoid subjectivity I present my findings in as a transparent way as possible, providing the sources in support of my position.
There are of course limits to be taken in consideration, starting with the gathered empirical material and with the limited availability of official public data both in EU and Russia. However, every effort was made to minimize possible bias and for this reason I have collected a bulk of scholarly work and primary texts from a broad variety of sources (EU, US and Russian experts), in order to avoid hat many Russian academics have called stamps of generalization inherent in the approaches (Bakalova, 2013) as they have been developed “in the West, by the West and for the West” (Tsygankov 2009). However, the findings and conclusions of the dissertation cannot be generalized, as they are limited to the specific case-study. Further evidence would be needed to build up follow up models /theories, as the explanations offered in the dissertation are limited to the particular content and context under observation.
This bibliography indicates a selected list of works cited and related published materials (books, chapters in books, academic journals, policy papers, reports and annuals, official governmental publications, and authored newspaper and web-based articles). Additional website references appear in the footnotes of the individual chapters, although online resources are often temporary by nature.


Bakalova E., “Mutual Misunderstanding: Conceptual Misperceptions in Russia-EU Relations”, paper Presented at “New Frontiers in European Studies”: 12th Annual Conference University of Surrey, Guildford, 30 June – 1 July 2013


D'Angelo P., Kuyper J. A. (2010), Doing News Framing Analysis: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives, New York, Routledge


Del Bianco D. (2006), Crossborder Co-operation as a Tool for Trans-national Integration and Conflict Resolution: The Upper Adriatic Euroregional Experiences; Institute of Ethonology and Folklore Research Nar. umjet. 43/1, 2006, pp. 75-88


Emerson M., Readings in European Neighbourhood Policy for the Russian-European Centre for Economic Policy), 2005, Brussels


Kessler O., “From agents and structures to minds and bodies: of supervenience, quantum,


Kto ubil “Bol’shuyu Evropu”, http://europe.inache.net/bigeuro.html

Kulhánek J. EU and Russia, 7. 4. 2010, http://www.europesworld.org


Lukianov, F. “Gosudarstvennaya model’, kotoraya stroitsa v Rossii, ne ta, na kotoruyu rasschityvala Evropa”, http://www.kreml.org/decisions/51765639/51845108


Makarychev .A and Sergunin A. CEPS Paper No. 244, 17 June 2011

PONARIS Policy Memo 333. Danish Institute for International Studies. November 

Makarychev, Andrey S., 'Neighbours, Exceptions and the Political: A Vocabulary of 
EU-Russian Inter-Subjective (Dis)Connections', in M. Emerson (ed ) The Elephant 
and the Bear Try Again: Options for a New Agreement Between the EU and 
Russia,CEPS, 2006

Maler, A. “Chystiy mif Zapadnogo Priuralya”. Russkii zhurnal, 
http://www.russ.ru/docs/93596481?mode=print

Malgin A. Russia-EU relations within European politics, Ucl, Louvain-la-neuve

Malone, G. (1988) Political advocacy and cultural communication : organizing the 
nation’s public diplomacy. Lanham [Md.] ; University Press of America ;Miller 
Center University of Virginia.

Manners I., The normative ethics of the EU, International Affairs 84: 1 (2008) 1–000 
Blackwell Publishing Ltd/The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2008 
http://rudar.ruc.dk/bitstream/1800/10616/1/Ian_Manners_The_Normative_Ethics_ 
of_the_European_Union_International_Affairs_2008_proof.pdf


Medvedev, S. 2008. “The Crisis in EU-Russia Relations: Between „Sovereignty” and 
„Europeanization”-Working paper WP14/2007/02/ Moscow: State University- 
Higher School of Economics.

Institute of International Affairs, 2006.

Medvedev, S. Catholic Europe, marginal Russia, and postmodern North. An essay on 
the origins and limits of the European project. Helsinki: Finnish Institute for 


Osipova Y (2012), Selective Processing: A Strategic Challenge for Public Diplomacy
An Alternative Approach to Russian Public Diplomacy in the United States,
Journal Volume XII Issue II Spring 2012, Georgetown University Journal of Communication, Culture & Technology, Washington,
Pick L.,EU-Russia energy relations: a critical analysis, POLIS Journal Vol. 7,
Popescu N, EU-Russia: overcoming stagnation, ISS Brief January 2014, Paris,
Powell, Colin L., A Strategy of Partnerships. Foreign Affairs. Vol 83,
N.1,January/February 2004, pp. 22-34
Prozorov, S. (2006), Understanding Conflict between Russia and the EU: The Limits of Integration, Palgrave Macmillan, New York,
http://helsinki.academia.edu/SergeiProzorov/Books/109289/Understanding_Conflict_between_Russia_and_the_EU_The_Limits_of_Integration
Puscas V. (2006), European Negotiations - A Case Study: Romanian Accession to the EU”, Journal Futuribili, IUIES International University Institute for European Studies, Gorizia


Romanova T. (2013), Энергетические связи России и Евросоюза: проблемы и перспективы (Т.Романова), Moscow, Russian Council, http://russiancouncil.ru/inner/?id_4=1492#top


Surkov, V. “Natsionalizatsiya buduschego”. Expert, N 43 (537), November 20, 2006


Zartman W and Faure G.O., Escalation and Negotiation in International Conflicts, Cambridge University Press, 2005


Zor’kin, V. “Apologiya Westfal’skoi sistemy”. Rossiiskaya gazeta, August 22, 2006


- Official Documents (selection, )


European Commission, The EU’s 50th anniversary celebrations around the world, A glance at EU public diplomacy at work (Luxembourg: Office for Official


EU Council decision on the organisation and functioning of the EEAS, 26 July 2010, (2010/427/EU)

Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, (OJ C 83, 30.3.2010), Articles 221, 34


Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A Partnership Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean, COM(2011) 200 final, Brussels, 8 March 2011 (17 pages)

Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A new response to a changing neighbourhood, COM(2011)303, Brussels, 25 May 2011


European Council (2013), Lecture at the European University at Saint Petersburg of
the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy, “Russia and Europe
today”, Saint Petersburg, 5 September 2013 EUCO 181/13- PRESSE 366 PR PCE

European Commission (2013) - Speech by President Barroso at the Russia-European
Union – Potential for Partnership conference: "Moving into a Partnership of Choice",

European Commission. (2007) The European Union and Russia: Close neighbours,

European Commission. (2008a) EU–Russia: First round of negotiations for the new agreement,

European Commission. (2008b) Review of EU–Russia relations,


A Secure Europe in a better world: European Security Strategy, ISS,
http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/solanae.pdf -

EU guidelines on human rights dialogues with third countries-
Human rights and democracy in the world, EEAS, Brussels, 2010-

The European Union and Russia: Close Neighbours, Global Players, Strategic Partners, Brussels, 2007,

http://www.russianmission.eu/userfiles/file/partnership_and_cooperation_agreement_1997_english.pdf,

Russia’ Concept of the Foreign Policy - http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/0/76389FEC168189ED44257B2E0039B16D

Russian Overview on EU -Russia Relations (Отношения Россия-EC), Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union (Постоянное представительство Российской Федерации при Европейском союзе)-
Russian Mission to the EU- http://www.russianmission.eu/ru

National security strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020 (approved in 2009)-
Стратегия национальной безопасности Российской Федерации до 2020 года