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Regional cooperation between the EU and Russia: Four arenas, four different challenges?

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Setting the stage: the EU-Russia 'strategic partnership'

- Increasingly problematic relationship
- Disconnect between voiced ambitions and actual results
- Spiral of mutually diminishing expectations, growing lack of trust
- How does the regional level fit into this rather bleak overall picture?



The first three arenas:





The Baltic Sea

- The most thickly institutionalized part of this planet?
- An internal sea of the Union?
- Are the institutions up-to-date?
- Of vital interest also to Russia
- Are the interests and dynamics compatible?





The Northern Dimension

- From an EU policy to a joint project between equal partners
- The only part of the EU-Russia relationship that actually works?
- The ambivalent consequences of the economic crisis:
 - opening the Russian regions for cooperation?
 - increasing Moscow's distrust of such projects?



The Arctic



- High politics, global politics
- The lynchpin of global climate change?
- The makings of a new Great Game?
- The problem: The EU is not a player



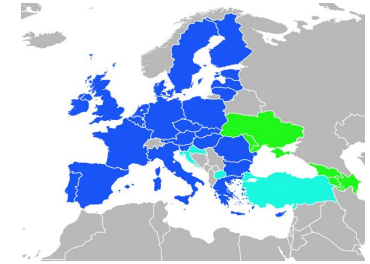


The matrix so far...

	The Baltic Sea	The Northern Dimension	The Arctic
The main actor(s)	The EU	The EU and Russia	The littoral states
The name of the game	Integration in the EU internal sea	Interest-based equal cooperation	Resource-driven competition
The main EU challenge	Getting Russia on board the EU's agenda	Getting the EU and Russian agendas meet	Getting into the game, keeping it civil and multilateral



The fourth arena: the common neighbourhood



- Perhaps the most important, definitely the most difficult
- The main **external** actor: Russia
- Name of the game: competition
- The main EU challenges: getting Russia to accept the win-win logic; the agendas of the neighbours themselves
- In the meantime, the EU must get serious in the region: ENP and EaP only the first steps in the right direction
- The issue of trust as a chicken and egg dilemma...



The way forward for the Union



- Get in the ring - all of them!
- Commit all the member states of the urgency of the strategic imperatives
- Put your money and institutions where your mouth is
- Get Russia to commit to open and transparent legal principles in all its dealings (and not only where it suits Moscow)



Thank you!

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