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# Russia's non-military foreign policy instruments in its 'near abroad' in the Polish expert discourse

*Victoria V. Vasilenko*

## Executive summary

The article deals with Russia`s non-military foreign policy instruments in its 'near abroad', with a focus on the soft power policies, as seen by the Polish experts. Their view is of particular interest given Poland`s active part in the EU policies towards eastern neighbours, its historically embedded perception of a danger from the east and a trend of the Russian-Polish rapprochement in the recent years. The author argues that Russia was seen as a significant hard power inclined to dominate its neighbours through different foreign policy tools, including soft power instruments. At the same time one might see more room for cooperation between Poland and Russia, especially visible from late 2011 to autumn of 2013.

## About the author

Victoria Vasilenko is Assistant Professor of Contemporary History and International Area Studies at Belgorod National Research University, Russia. Her research interests include contemporary Russian-Polish relations, and the Polish question in World War II. Her most recent publication is: "The Polish-Czechoslovak Confederation Project in British Policy, 1939-1943: A Federalist Alternative to Postwar Settlement in East Central Europe?" in *Canadian Journal of History/Annales canadiennes d'histoire* 49, autumn/automne, 2014, pp. 203-223. Victoria Vasilenko was visiting researcher at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) during spring 2014.

## Keywords

Poland, Russia, Russia`s near abroad, Russia-EU common neighbourhood.

## Introduction

Historically, Poland was perceived as – and often was in reality – Russia's rival in a considerable part of the space currently termed 'Russia's near abroad' or the 'common neighbourhood'. This thinking dates back to the time of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was established in the sixteenth century. The history of bilateral relations provides a number of landmark historical events that have affected mutual perceptions, identities and interactions: the Polish invasion of Russia in the 'Time of Trouble' in the early seventeenth century, Russia's participation in the partition of the Commonwealth approximately a century and a half later, the Soviet-Polish war after the First World War, over the territory which is now a considerable part of western Ukraine, and the Katyn Massacre in 1940, to name just a few. Interestingly, even when a significant part of Polish territory was included in the Russian empire after the Congress of Vienna, Poles were not only able to develop their national identity, but also managed at times to carry out a Polonization of the empire's western borderlands.[1] Therefore, for Poland, Russia has to a large extent constituted the 'Other', while Russia's experience, among other things, is that Poland is the actor in the region which has been able to successfully counter Russian influence.

In May 2014 Poland marked the tenth anniversary of its membership of the European Union. In the 2004 EU enlargement, the country was the biggest new EU member state and became its sixth largest country in terms of population. Poland was expected to be the most determined policymaker among the new member states. Recent studies have clearly demonstrated that these expectations were well-grounded. While Poland has been active in a number of EU policy areas, it was the EU's policy towards its eastern neighbours where it managed to 'upload' its solutions.[2] The best known and most persuasive example is its initiation of and actively lobbying, together with Sweden, for the Eastern Partnership (EaP) within the EU.

Poland's active position on region-making and its historically embedded perception of a danger from the east led it to closely scrutinize developments in the EU eastern neighbourhood and come up with its own take on policy solutions. It is therefore fruitful to examine how Russia's non-military foreign policy instruments in its near abroad, or the common neighbourhood, were perceived by Polish experts in the period May 2009 to February 2014. This kind of research can:

1) help understand how Russia's various non-military instruments worked or did not work in its near abroad;
2) whether Polish experts saw increased trust and cooperation in the neighbourhood to be a possible outcome of the trend for Russian-Polish reconciliation that started in the second half of 2010;
3) highlight what Polish experts think about Russia, its prospects and its role in the region.

In the 1990s the Russian term 'near abroad' characterized the post-Soviet space. After 2004, however, the Baltic states were transformed into the 'far abroad' due to their integration into Western institutions, and there was a rift with Georgia after the war of 2008. Thus, the near abroad is now synonymous with the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), a regional organization set up in 1991. The near abroad is the space where Russia's domestic and foreign policies are especially intertwined. This is probably one reason why the term has been removed from the Russian official discourse to be replaced, for example, by "adjoining [sopredel'nye] states".[3] At the same time, near abroad is still widely used in policy analyses and the public narrative in Russia and, to a certain extent, internationally.

Many scholars correctly point out that the countries of the near abroad occupy a special place in Russia's foreign policy, as this region is pivotal to the country's international standing.[4] In the early 1990s, the Russian leadership made some inconsistent attempts to transform Russia's traditional messianic state identity into a national identity. This resulted in a foreign policy focused on the West – especially the USA – and made its policy on the post-Soviet countries merely a derivative of this relationship.[5] This policy was short-lived, however, and the neglect of the former-Soviet space, especially the painful issue of the millions of Russians scattered across it, had contributed to its failure by the mid-1990s.[6] Since then, the significance of the near abroad for Russia has consistently grown. Although there are different explanations in Russia for why the country has its "justified [zakonnye] interests" in the CIS, there is a widespread assumption that the Russian Federation's success as a great power depends on its ability to act as a regional leader.

Thus, the objective of this paper is to reveal how Russia's non-military foreign policy instruments in its near abroad are framed in the Polish expert discourse. Non-military is defined as instruments other than the use of military force or the threat of such use. Given the size constraints of the paper, however, most attention is devoted to Russia's use of the so-called soft power instruments that were being actively introduced into the country's foreign policy arsenal during the period.

In order to reveal and understand change, I draw on Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory and its adaptations to foreign policy and security studies by Ole Waever, Isil Kazan and Henrik Larsen. Laclau and Mouffe argue that: "Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre".[7] Consequently, social reality is never fixed, but a field of constant struggles "between different 'realities'/social groups/collective meanings/discourses…".[8] A discourse "is conceived as a process where the (collective) meaning is produced/generated/changed, and is both structure and actor…".[9] In relation to foreign policy, Larsen notes that discourses create a certain 'space of possibility' for decision makers which is both constraining and enabling, since this is the basis on which policy preferences, interests and goals are constructed.[10]

I consider Russia's non-military instruments in the near abroad as discussed in the Polish expert discourse, using analytical material from the Polish Institute of International Relations (PISM) – a think tank that closely cooperates with Poland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

thus in many ways works within the official discourse. However, the opinions expressed by its experts might also provide a broader picture of possibilities for policymakers. The primary texts are Poland's official foreign policy documents and open-access online analytical material from the Polish Institute of International Relations, which is aimed at a wider domestic and foreign audience.

The time span for the analysis covers the period from the inauguration of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in May 2009 to the 'milestone' Vilnius EaP Summit in November 2013 and the start of the political crisis in Ukraine up to February 2014, when the President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, left the country, which was a crucial external signal to the whole of the EU to reconsider its policy.

## Russia's Foreign Policy Instruments

In Russia, there has been an ongoing discussion of the foreign policy instruments linked to the question of the country's international role. It is possible to say that there is an overall consensus that the Russian Federation should remain a great power, and must become more competitive in the current international environment. Part of Russia's specific Cold War legacy is that the USA remains a significant point of reference. It is not surprising, therefore, that the debate has developed primarily around US scholar and statesman Joseph Nye's concept of soft power.[11] Defining soft power, Nye pointed out that it "is not merely the same as influence…it is also the ability to attract.…The soft power of the country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (where it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)".[12]

While there is a body of opinion that stresses that talk of instruments of soft power is exaggerated, because there are many conflicts in the world where hard power instruments are being actively applied, it is demonstrated below that the Russian leadership has resolved, in addition to applying the existing foreign policy means in its arsenal, to develop instruments defined as soft power. Since the second half of the first decade of the twenty-first century, there have been visible efforts by the state to increase Russia's institutional capacities in this sphere. For example, the Russkiy Mir Foundation, which promotes the Russian language and culture abroad, and the Institute of Democracy and Cooperation, with offices in New York and Paris, were both established in 2007;[13] Rossotrudnichestvo was founded in 2008 to deal primarily with the CIS; and new public diplomacy institutions, such as the Alexander Gorchakov Foundation, focused on the post-Soviet space, and the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) were created a couple of years later.[14]

In 2013, a commitment to develop soft power as "a comprehensive toolkit for achieving foreign policy objectives building on civil society potential, information, cultural and other methods and technologies alternative to traditional diplomacy" became official Russian policy, as the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept indicates.[15]

It has become commonplace to argue that Russia does not possess the proper resources to become a successful player in this field, primarily because its socio-political model can hardly be called attractive. Nye joined the debate in his 2013 article in *Foreign Policy*, stressing that this is what Russia, and China, "don't get about soft power".[16] However, this did not hamper Russia's (or China's) endeavours in this area. They came up with adapted definitions of the term, which suggests that developing soft power potential was seen as a certain response to 'Western intervention'.[17] Fedor Lukyanov, editor-in-chief of the journal *Russia in Global Affairs*, stresses that Russia's interpretation of soft power is different from the Western one and it is rather an effort to revive some Soviet practices that once proved effective. However, if a country is to gain influence by soft power it must have an attractive model to offer other countries. Otherwise its efforts will "be at best limited to a set of technical measures – not entirely useless, but ultimately ineffective".[18]

Although there were different addressees of Russia's soft power policy during this period, these activities were first and foremost aimed at its diverse near abroad.[19] The Russian government was keen to deliver a message to its CIS neighbours that it had no imperial designs, but only promoted integration schemes that served the modernization of all the parties involved – but this was far from easy.[20] At the same time, the recent integration project, a Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia of 2010 and the associated Common Economic Space launched in 2012,[21] unlike previous projects, were initiatives intended to establish genuine integration, and as such presented an important challenge for the EU in its European Neighbourhood Policy.[22]

## Regionalization of Russia's 'near-abroad' or 'common neighbourhood': the Polish view

In order to get a better understanding of Poland's policies on and approaches to the common neighbourhood, it is worth looking first at how this space is regionalized. The region is conceptualized in Poland as 'New Eastern Europe', with Russia as a constituent part. It is worth noting that the work of the Russian-Polish Group on Difficult Matters has also led to the formulation of a proto-regional concept known as New Eastern Europe. The Group is based at MGIMO University (the Moscow State University of International Relations) and at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. The peculiarity of this proto-region is that both Russia and Poland are considered integral parts of it.[23] Poland's authorities and experts, however, see New Eastern Europe as the countries on the eastern border of Poland, and, more broadly, the post-Soviet space excluding the Baltic states as the target audience for the transformation from 'old' Eastern Europe, which today identifies itself as Central Europe. This meaning is embedded in the official and expert discourses and represented, for example, by a relatively new and dynamic Krakow-based journal project of the same name, *New Eastern Europe*. The journal has been funded, among others, by Poland's Ministry of International Affairs and is an outlet for PISM experts.[24]

Intensified EU-Russia competition between their integration projects in the near abroad or common neighbourhood meant that the region was increasingly perceived as uneven. It is possible to identify two separate discourses: (*a*) a 'transformation-oriented' discourse addressing the six EaP countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; and (*b*) a 'pragmatic' discourse with a wider geographical focus.

The first discourse gained momentum on the eve of the Vilnius EaP summit of November 2013. At the time, not only the viability of Poland's role as a policymaker in the EU, but also that of the European Union as a normative power was thought to be at stake. Its significance can be highlighted, for example, by the Polish experts' talk about Moldova as an exemplary country in terms of the EU's success in regard to its normative power.[25] For Poland, it was crucial to set the right priorities. Non-EU Eastern Europe came to the top of the agenda but there were different opinions about which country was the most significant – Moldova as the most successful transformation or the more strategically important Ukraine. Belarus had also been receiving increased attention in this discourse, with the implication that it was the country most prone to transformational influences due to its urgent need for structural reforms.[26] The South Caucasus was given less priority, and only Georgia was put forward as an exceptional case.[27] This was probably linked to Poland's limited chances of making a difference in this sub-region, as well as an overall acknowledgement of the EU's weak leverage in the area – demonstrated by Armenia's disappointing preference for Russia-led Customs Union and the indifferent Azerbaijan. The main argument by PISM experts was in support of a two-speed partnership to encourage those countries clearly resolved to follow the EU-sponsored modernization path.[28]

The political crisis in Ukraine, which unfolded after the refusal by Viktor Yanukovich to sign an Association Agreement with the EU, further supported the transformation logics, clearly putting Moldova forward as the 'EU EaP flagship country'.[29] Roderick Parkes and Anita Sobjak highlight the lack of EU 'transformative power in Ukrainian society', which was being replaced by the particular economic interests of member states and even power play by the 'Big Three'. This was exacerbated by both Russia's influence and internal developments in the EU. Polish experts argued that against this backdrop it was Poland, and most likely the whole of the Visegrad Group, that would be able to take the lead by, at least partly, filling the vacuum left by the EU's lack of transformative power.[30]

The Polish 'pragmatic' discourse includes Central Asia, which was excluded from the EaP but is definitely gaining more attention as an important sub-region, or region-in-the-making, in the post-Soviet space. The transformation logic here gave way to geopolitical and economic considerations, with a particular emphasis on Kazakhstan. This country is seen "as one of the biggest prospective export markets", which could also facilitate the potential expansion of Polish business to "other Central Asia states as well as southern Russia".[31] It is also possible to identify possibilities for more EU political engagement closely linked to certain Kazakh moves aimed at increasing independence from Russia.

Although there has been Polish disappointment in the Visegrad Group (V4), in both its Eastern policy and its EU politics, the regional forum has been reactivated by Poland in the past two years.[32] Following a number of V4 successes in EU politics on energy security, EU funding and a distinct contribution to hard security, Poland, now its recognized leader, has increased its reliance on this regional group. Experts stress the need for the Polish leadership to unite its V4 partners on the EU's Eastern policy so that the Group can become an EU bridge to the Eastern neighbourhood, especially the EaP vanguard, and contribute to its transformation. This, in turn, would create the V4's own political identity – its Central European mission – thereby increasing its influence in the EU. The transformation argument was clearly framed in missionary terms during 'Euromaidan' in Kiev. Russia was seen as a significant constraint on the eastern policy potential of the V4, due to its 'smart bilateralism' in its relations with particular V4 countries.[33]

## Poland's conceptual approach to Russia's role in world politics and the near abroad or common neighbourhood

The key document to highlight the fundamentals of Polish policy towards Russia is *Poland's Foreign Policy Priorities, 2012–2016,* adopted in the spring of 2012.[34] It outlines two aspects of Poland's policy towards Russia: as a significant power and, separately, as an actor in the common neighbourhood.

In the first, Russia's role is presented as both destabilizing (increasing its defence spending while "Europe is going in the other direction"),[35] and opening up more space for Poland at the level of major powers and key international institutions. The latter is to be realized by participating "in mutual confidence-building measures between the West and Russia", including "Warsaw's stressing its vision of EU Partnership for Modernization"[36] while at the same time contributing to EU-Russia visa regime liberalization.

In regard to the second aspect, there seems to be less room for manoeuvre. There is only one way: cooperation with the modernizing Russia while prospects of EU accession – and significant EU development assistance – are available for most of the 'neighbours', most notably Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.[37] Ukraine is specified as a 'strategic partner',[38] which resembles the term 'priority partner' used in relation to it in the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation.[39]

The PISM experts have definitely sought to address both aspects of their neighbour's policies. There has been a growing trend in their analyses to frame Russia's role in the international system as an 'emerging power', along with China and the other BRICS countries. A preferred solution seems to be the development of a trilateral cooperation format involving Germany, Poland and Russia.[40] This is also regarded as a possible way of dealing with the problem of increasing multipolarity in the world, in contrast to the Russian view of increased multipolarity as a fully positive tendency. In regard to Russia's role in the neighbourhood, the

expert discourse has been developing along approximately the above-mentioned lines, while providing a more nuanced picture and sometimes a hint of new solutions.

## The near abroad or common neighbourhood as a security concern for Poland

The common neighbourhood, where Poland attempts "to build a secure environment for the EU",[41] had an accentuated security dimension in 2009–2011, primarily connected to Polish anxieties about the new NATO Strategic Concept[42] and the Russia-Ukraine gas supply crises.

There were two lines of argument presented by Polish experts: the common neighbourhood as a space divided between EU and Russian spheres or zones of influence; and the common neighbourhood as an area of positive-sum-game cooperation. The former justifies the opinions of Russian analysts, voiced for example by experts at the Institute of Contemporary Development, about the threat of a 'military power vacuum' in the post-Soviet space.[43] Poland, together with the Baltic states and some V4 countries, has been quite successful in instrumentalizing Russia's military moves and cooperation in the neighbourhood and promoting its vision of security within NATO.[44] The latter is focused on Russia's involvement in cooperation in the neighbourhood. It was mostly developed in joint analyses with Russian experts. For instance, in 2011 Polish and Russian experts[45] highlighted a "need for a new opening" in EU-Russia relations, that "the old-fashioned prism of geopolitical rivalry should be replaced by cooperation aimed at reaping mutual benefits".[46] At the same time, however, the positive-sum-game cooperation texts were the 'debated' ones and did not represent the dominant discourse.

By and large, there was less attention paid to and anxiety about Russia in the neighbourhood related to security in the period from late 2011 to the first half of 2013. Three main factors contributed: consolidation of the EU energy market with some EaP countries joining the Energy Community, the EU financial crisis and positive results from promoting Polish hard security concerns in NATO and the EU. The first relieved Polish energy-related security concerns to a certain extent, although thereafter they became coupled with disappointment at Ukraine's and Moldova's performance in the Energy Community. The crisis in the European Union made Poles more inward-looking, on the one hand, concentrating on successful EU reform,[47] while, on the other hand, the Polish 'economic wonder' gave the country a higher profile among EU member states. This, in turn, has given Poles more confidence about their role in the EU. Furthermore, a new, constructive trend in Russian-Polish relations emerged, which added to the positive dynamics, after the tragic crash involving the President of Poland's aircraft near Smolensk in April 2010.

While centuries-old mistrust, stereotyping and a pragmatic interest in 'othering' Russia in hard security and energy matters prevented substantial progress, the idea that a better climate in Polish-Russian relations was an important asset for Poland, attesting to the country's ability

to deal with its eastern neighbour and contributing to improvement of its image in Europe, also made an impact.[48]

More radical ideas of cooperation voiced in joint analyses might have attested to a certain improvement in climate in the security domain. For example, in 2012, an international group of experts highlighted the need to overcome an 'emerging institutional divide' in the OSCE space, calling for the positive involvement of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Customs Union in multilateral cooperation.[49]

Security concerns started to intensify in the summer and autumn of 2013, along lines approaching "a mini reprise of Cold War dynamics". This was connected to the actualization of the matter of the near abroad/ common neighbourhood as a sphere of Russia's "legitimate security interests", which was perceived as a challenge for the whole EU while also providing room for Poland to step in practically as a security-provider in an initiative to build more trust in NATO-Russia relations.[50]

## The Eastern Partnership and Russia's non-military instruments in its near abroad

The Eastern Partnership was central to the analyses of PISM experts, as well as the official rhetoric concerning the EU's and Poland's role in the Eastern neighbourhood. At first, Polish experts considered the EaP to be the most promising instrument for EU cooperation with Russia, even though the Russian authorities clearly distanced themselves from it at the beginning. The prospects for the Partnership for Modernization initiated by the European Commission did not receive a positive assessment, however,[51] and it soon slipped out of the analyses, although there were still references to it in official Polish discourse.[52] The implication of this was that in such a format there would be little room for special status for Russia, but at the same time it would emphasize Poland's transformational experience which was regarded as a primary instrument in the EU common neighbourhood. Russia's projects were considered unsuccessful, while its influence in the near abroad was framed as illegitimate due to its inclination for direct control. By late 2013, Polish experts had compiled a list of Russia's 'aggressive means' in the near abroad, such as "misuse of energy pricing, artificial trade obstacles, threats to withdraw security guarantees of or threats to withdraw military cooperation, and the 'instrumentalisation' of protracted conflicts".[53] In addition, Russia's conduct in different areas was scrutinized in terms of its various foreign policy tools, such as is civil nuclear capacities and the Russian Orthodox Church's activities in the post-Soviet space.[54]

At the same time, with the development of the Customs Union and the EaP a more complex narrative was appearing comprised of a number of elements, of which it is important to highlight two. On the one hand, the Polish experts kept appropriating the Western discourse on Russia as an extra-regional actor taking advantage of the EU's weakness in terms of hard power in order to control the region and maintain the status quo, which implied that Russia

was unattractive to its neighbours.[55] On the other hand, in 2013 Russia appeared at times to be an actor that was successfully using soft power tools. This meant that the European Union was being rivalled in a domain perceived as its own, with such instruments as a regime for the free movement of people, and linguistic, cultural and religious ties.[56]

In recent years, the near abroad/common neighbourhood countries have experienced influences from and projects initiated by both Russia and the EU. At the outset, it seemed to many that the choice was obvious for the EaP states (excluding Belarus) – the EU-sponsored modernization path which opened up many important opportunities. Later, however, a number of reservations became apparent, especially among the authorities. The 2012 and 2013 PISM analyses, primarily authored by Igor Lyubashenko, who examined the internal affairs of the EaP Eastern European states, provided an important message. The countries at first deemed the most promising, Ukraine and Moldova, had not demonstrated any particular success in approaching the EU in terms of their norms and legislation. This was mainly due to the logic of their economic and political post-Soviet development, and little could be attributed to Russia's influence. Among such factors, the Polish experts named their energy-intensive economies and outdated infrastructure, which make adaptation to EU standards costly and socially painful, as well as oligarchic structures in Ukraine and unstable political processes.[57] At the same time, EU membership no longer met people's expectations of anticipated positive results.[58] These factors set against a visa-free regime with Russia made integration with Russia look less demanding and more attractive.

Some Polish experts, such as Anna Maria Dyner and Natalia Ryabova, saw a potential win-win situation in the near abroad/common neighbourhood, noting that Russia's Customs Union project could open up certain opportunities for the EU, and Poland in particular, in the region in promoting modernization – a task they could deal with effectively.[59]

Russia's policy in its near abroad was not usually looked on as soft power, – there were only rare mentions of it as such in 2012–2013. However, it was pointed out in a special study for an influential German think-tank that Russia has a wide range of potential soft power tools: a visa-free regime, access to its labour market, linguistic, cultural and religious ties, the prospects for a Eurasian integration and vast energy resources.[60] However, Jaroslaw Cwiek-Karpowicz, a leading PISM expert on Russia, has argued that Russia's soft power tools could only be used if Russia underwent serious internal reform, thereby making its model of political and socio-economic transformation attractive to its neighbours.[61]

Here, the image of Russia as an actor with genuine soft power in the near abroad and that of a 'modernizing Russia' in cooperation with the EU actually coincide. Nonetheless, this scenario was not considered of relevance in the near future. In particular, no consideration was given to the problem of what to do about the two different projects in the region. After Russia's trade restrictions on Ukraine in August 2013, there was an attempt to find a possible solution that would allow the Russian and EU projects to develop in parallel. The PISM expert, Ievgen Borobiev, suggested that the EU should set up an institutional arrangement for dealing with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area -related disputes with the countries of the

Common Economic Space. This would result in "closer engagement with the Eurasian Economic Commission, until now shunned by the EU".[62] This would mean that both projects would come into contact and therefore also that Russia would recognize the EU as a region-building player in its near abroad. Against the backdrop of later developments in Ukraine, this kind of solution was ruled out for the time being.

It is important to note that as of early 2014, in the conditions of Ukraine's political crisis, the discourse has been framed primarily around problems with the internal development of the EU. Roderick Parkes and Anita Sobjak argue that the EU finds it difficult to live up to the appeal of its own normative power. The international situation, complicated by "today's multipolarity", has opened up space for external actors, most notably Russia, to gain influence. As a result, the experts conclude, Poland's position in the EU could be weakened, but there also appear to be opportunities for the country in the EU's policy on its eastern neighbours.[63]

## Conclusions

The Polish expert discourse on Russia's role in its near abroad in the given period remains mainly within the framework of (neo)realist thinking – not unexpectedly, especially given the historical context of bilateral relations. It deals with a significant hard power inclined to dominate its neighbours through different foreign policy tools, including soft power. This means less sovereignty or security for Russia's neighbours.

There is a demand in Poland for such an image of Russia's role. It has helped Poland to accommodate its important energy security and hard security interests, and promote a Polish approach to these matters in Western organizations. The Polish experts argue that Russian success in applying soft power can only be attained in case of a comprehensive modernization of Russia. It is only then, the PISM analysts stress, that a number of its potential soft power instruments could work in the near abroad. Russia's attempt to diversify its foreign policy tools, the Polish experts imply, brought certain results because of the problematic conditions in the region.

At the same time, one might say that in the recent years the room for cooperation between Poland and Russia has widened due to a number of factors, including the EU internal dynamics and a certain rapprochement between the two countries. This trend is seen especially from late 2011 to autumn of 2013 when Russian and EU-sponsored projects for the near abroad/common neighbourhood became particularly competitive and, to a lesser extent, even until February 2014.

This analysis confirms the argument made by a number of scholars that competing region-building projects influence each other. For example, in the Russian case, the Eurasian Economic Union to be launched in 2015 is, to a large degree, modelled on the European Union. It has become evident in Russia, however, that its influence in the near abroad has

observable limits. The EU has seen that Russia's resistance in the neighbourhood makes EU normative power first of all difficult to apply.

The EU's success in transforming the region is critical in terms of Poland's EU identity, and there is a good chance that Poland will become more of an agenda-setter in the EU in regard to the Eastern neighbourhood. It cannot be excluded that Poland's experience will be helpful in developing pragmatic relations between Russia and the EU.

## Endnotes

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[2] Nathaniel Copsey and Karolina Pomorska, 'The Influence of Newer Member States in the European Union: The Case of Poland and the Eastern Partnership', *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 66, no. 3 (2014), p. 431.

[3] O.V. Shishkina, *Vneshnepoliticheskie resursy: Rossiya i ES na prostranstve "obshchego sosedstva" [Foreign Policy Resources: Russia and the EU in the 'Common Neighbourhood' Area]* (Moscow, 2013), p. 19.

[4] For example, Igor Torbakov, 'The "Eurasian" Orientation and its Discontents: A Note on the Debates over Russia's International Identity and National Interest', Paper prepared for the conference "Russia and the World", Helsinki, 23–24 October 2013, p. 8. I am grateful to the author for sharing the paper with me.

[5] Ilya Prizel, *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 154, 155, 241–48.

[6] Ibid. pp. 267–70.

[7] Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (London, 1989), p. 105.

[8] Isil Kazan, 'Regionalisation of Security and Securitisation of a Region'. PhD Dissertation. Copenhagen. p. 102.

[9] Ibid. p. 101.

[10] Henrik Larsen, 'British and Danish European Policy in the 1990s: A Discourse Approach', *European Journal of International Relations*, no. 4. (1999), p. 453.

[11] For example: Radikov I., Leksyutina Ya. '"Miagkaia sila" kak sovremennyi atribut velikoi derzhavy ["Soft Power" as a Modern Attribute of a Great Power]', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, no. 2. (February 2012), pp. 19–26.

[12] Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York, 2004), pp. 6, 11.

[13] IDC's main objective is to monitor the human rights situation in Western Europe and the US. See its branch websites, http://www.indemco.org/; http://www.idc-europe.org/

[14] For more detail see M.M. Lebedeva, 'Sotsial`no-gumanitarnoe izmerenie mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii v ATR [Socio-Humanitarian Dimension of the International Relations in the Pacific Rim]', *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy*, no. 1 (2013), pp. 6–7.

[15] Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii [The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. 12.02.2013, available at: www.mid.ru.

[16] Joseph Nye, 'What Russia and China Don't Get about Soft Power', *Foreign Policy*, 29 April 2013, available at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/29/what_china_and_russia_don_t_get_about_soft_power

[17] Konstantin Kosachev, 'The Specifics of Russian Soft Power', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 7 October 2012, available at http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/The-Specifics-of-Russian-Soft-Power-15683; Andrey Makarychev, 'Hard Questions about Soft Power: A Normative Outlook at Russia's Foreign Policy', *DGAPanalyse kompakt*, no. 7 (October 2011), p. 3. According to the 2013 Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation, "'Soft power", 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. At the same time, 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'.

[18] Fedor Lukyanov, 'Why Russia's soft power is too soft', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 1 February 2013, available at http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/redcol/Why-Russias-Soft-Power-Is-Too-Soft-15845.

[19] Andrey Makarychev, 'Hard Questions about Soft Power: A Normative Outlook at Russia's Foreign Policy', *DGAPanalyse kompakt*, no. 7 (October 2011), p. 5.

[20] See, for example, Kostantin Kosachev, 'The Specifics of Russian Soft Power'.

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[22] See, for example, Rilka Dragneva and Kataryna Wolczuk, 'Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?', *Russia and Eurasia Programme policy brief* (August 2012), p. 2.

[23] The concept was developed primarily in the journal *Vostochnaya Evropa Perspectivy* (website: www.newprospects.ru) and, after the journal ceased publication in 2012, in the Russian International Affairs Council projects dealing with the proto-region in question.

[24] See, for example, K. Sasztowt, 'Russia's Policy towards Armenia: Big Stick and Small Carrot', *New Eastern Europe*, 5 Sept. 2013, www.neweasterneurope.eu

[25] Anita Sobjak, 'Is Moldova Tired of Being the Success Story of the Eastern Partnership?', *Policy paper* no. 20 (68). (July 2013), p. 2.

[26] See, for example, Anna Maria Dyner and Natalia Ryabova, 'Belarus in the CES: Advantages and Disadvantages of Economic Integration', *Policy paper* no. 24 (72) (August 2013).

[27] Elzbieta Kaca, Kinga Dudzinska and Karolina Zubel, ‚A Competitive Two-Speed Policy: The Eastern Partnership beyond 2013', *Policy paper* no. 27 (75) (September 2013), pp. 3–4.

[28] Elzbieta Kaca et al., 'A Competitive Two-Speed Policy: The Eastern Partnership beyond 2013'.

[29] Visegraid 4 Moldova. *CEPI policy paper* (February 2014). The policy paper is a result of the V4 countries think tanks' project with the PISM participation.

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[34] *Polish Foreign Policy Priorities, 2012–2016* March 2012, available at: www.msz.gov.pl

[35] Ibid. p. 4.

[36] Ibid. p. 18.

[37] See, for example, Ibid. p. 12.

[38] Ibid. p. 18.

[39] Kontsepsiya vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii [The Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation]. 12.02.2013, available at: www.mid.ru

[40] Artur Gradzuik and Patryk Kugiel, (eds), Polska w wielobiegunowym swiece. Szanse i perspektywy rozwoju stosunkow Polski z glownymi mocarstwami wschodzancymi. Raport. Lipec 2012; Trialog project Deutschland-Polska-Rossija launched in 2013, available at: www.pism.org.pl

[41] *Eastern Partnership: A Strategy for 2011 and Beyond* (Warsaw, 2010), p. 5.

[42] See, for example, *NATO Member States and the New Strategic Concept: An Overview* Report. May 2010. p. 5.

[43] *Arkhitektura evroatlanticheskoi bezopasnosti [The Architecture of Euro-Atlantic Security]*. I.Yu. Yurgens, A.A. Dynkin, V.G. Baranovsky (eds) (Moscow, 2009), p. 109; Tomasz Sikorski, 'Strategic Vacuum in Central Asia: a Case for European Engagement?', *Strategic File* no. 15. April 2011.

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[45] Mostly from MGIMO University.

[46] Stanislaw Debski and Artiom W. Malgin, eds., *Eastern Partnership: A New Momentum for the EU-Russia Relations*. Report. (Warsaw, 2010).

[47] See the speech by Poland's Foreign Minister, Radoslaw Sikorski's, 'Poland and the Future of the European Union', Berlin, 28 November 2011, available at https://dgap.org/sites/default/files/event_downloads/radoslaw_sikorski_poland_and_the_future_of_the_eu_0.pdf. The speech resonated within the EU and beyond.

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[49] 'Towards a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community: From Vision to Reality', *IDEAS* [Initiative for the Development of a Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community] *report*, July 2012.

[50] Jacek Durkalec et al., *Starting the Process of Trust-Building in NATO-Russia Relations: The Arms Control Dimension*. Report, October 2013.

[51] Jaroslaw Cwiek-Karpowicz, 'EU-Russia Relations One Year After the Partnership for Modernization', *Bulletin* no. 61 (278), 7 June 2011; Idem and Ryszarda Formuszewicz, 'Partnership on Modernization: the EU's New Initiative Towards Russia', *Bulletin* no. 43 (119), 18 March 2010. The Partnership for Modernization was launched in 2010.

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[61] Jaroslaw Cwiek-Karpowicz, 'Limits to Russian Soft Power in the Post-Soviet Area'.

[62] Ievgen Borobiev, 'The Embargo that Never Was: How Should the EU Respond to Russia's "Message" to Ukraine?', *Bulletin* no. 97 (550), 19 September 2013.

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**The Swedish Institute of International Affairs**
Postal address: Box 27035, SE-102 51 Stockholm
Visiting address: Drottning Kristinas väg 37
Tel: +46 8 511 768 00 Fax: +46 8 511 768 99
info@ui.se www.ui.se www.landguiden.se