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Dear friends and colleagues,

We hope you have had a promising start to 2018! The last months have witnessed many developments for EU-STRAT, as well as for the wider Eastern Partnership (EaP) community.

For those who could not partake firsthand in EU-STRAT's Midterm Conference on October 5th and 6th 2017, this newsletter includes full coverage of the sessions and roundtable that took place. A side bonus includes various 'Voices from the Midterm', where we were able to collect feedback from various participants on their impressions of the conference and our project.

Our conference also served as an opportunity to reflect upon the then upcoming Brussels Eastern Partnership Summit, which took place in November 2017. Dr. Laima Andrikiene, Member of the European Parliament, has provided us with her take on the Summit as well as the European Parliament's latest recommendations for the EaP in an exclusive comment found in this newsletter.

In 'EU-STRAT at Work', we are very happy to share with you overviews of our latest working papers, which delve into the compatibility between EU engagement strategies and membership in the Eurasian Economic Union as well as interdependencies and scientific cooperation between the EU and EaP countries. The section also features a quick look at our latest workshop in Tbilisi, which aimed to develop a common

framework for event data collection on Eastern Partnership countries' bilateral relations with Turkey.

On the topic of Georgia, Kakha Gogolashvili, an EU-STRAT Advisory Board member and Senior Fellow at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies was interviewed by EU-STRAT, shedding light on the steps both Georgia and the EU should take to move forward.



We wish you a prosperous year ahead, and will be sure to stay in touch on the research we have upcoming. For now, enjoy this edition!

Sincerely,



Tanja A. Börzel  
Project Coordinator



Antoaneta Dimitrova  
Project Co-coordinator

## Panel Discussions

EU-STRAT's midterm conference entitled "The EU and Eastern Partnership Countries: An Inside-Out Analysis and Strategic Assessment" took place in Vilnius on October 5th and 6th, 2017. The midterm conference was dedicated to presenting EU-STRAT's intermediary research findings related to varieties of social orders in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries, interdependencies with and soft power by the EU and Russia, and featured insights and debates on the future of the EaP. Bringing together participants from the EU and EaP countries, as well as third countries, the project team aimed to raise awareness of EU-STRAT's research agenda across six panels and a roundtable.

The midterm conference was opened with keynote speeches by Professor Leszek Balcerowicz, Head of the International Comparative Studies Department at the Warsaw School of Economics and former advisor to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, as well as Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR). Further welcoming addresses were given by Ramūnas Vilpišauskas, Director of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University, Asta Skaisgirytė, Political Director of the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, and Andrius Kubilius, the former Prime Minister of Lithuania and current Member of the Lithuanian Parliament.



### *Zooming in: Towards a Typology of Social Orders in EaP Countries*

EU-STRAT researchers Esther Ademmer, Julia Langbein and Tanja A. Börzel began the first session by presenting their ongoing research that seeks to develop a typology of social orders in the EaP countries. Following the seminal work of North et al., they suggest understanding the six EaP countries as social systems that have not yet developed from Limited Access Orders (LAOs) based on personal relations to Open Access Orders (OAOs) of impersonal institutions.



During the subsequent discussion with the audience, one topic concerned the role of civil society in determining the degree of access to political and economic resources. While it was acknowledged that civil society should gain more room in the analysis of LAOs, some participants also stressed the ambivalent role civil society can play in political and economic change.

### *How Interdependencies Shape Social Orders in EaP Countries*

Rilka Dragneva-Lewers began the second panel by defining the role of interdependencies in the various social orders, as researched by EU-STRAT in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine across various key sectors, such as security or energy, with Russia and the EU. Marta Jaroszewicz no-



ted that during the process of mapping interdependencies, it became clear to the researchers that Belarus is a different case where more interdependencies vis-à-vis Russia exist, especially in the areas of energy and security. Ildar Gazizullin stated that in Ukraine, there is a lot of dynamism and observable increasing interdependence with the EU relative to that with Russia. Dependency



on Russia in areas like the energy sector is, however, disadvantageous and there is a wish to change it. Laure Delcour introduced the case of Moldova. In two sectors, energy and security, Moldova has been vulnerable to Russia's policies, given the absence of an alternative option. The two other issue areas, trade and migration, highlight more balanced links between Russia and the EU.

EU-STRAT panelists concluded that informal negotiations between the domestic elites of the EaP countries and their external partners can often supplement or even override existing agreements or negotiations. This is not necessarily due to the poorly designed dispute settlement mechanisms, but rather a result of the personality-based policy-making, and the pervasiveness of business and state capture in the EaP countries and Russia.

### ***Competition or Complementarity? External Actors and their Strategies Towards the EaP Countries***

In the third panel, Ramūnas Vilpišauskas introduced the aim of the research in progress: evaluating the strategies and approaches of external players towards the EaP countries, with the later

aim of investigating the opportunities and constraints that these policies bring for the EU's strategy in the region. Szymon Kardaś introduced the case of China, Margarita Šešelgytė the EU, Kataryna Wolczuk analysed Russia, and Laure Delcour presented the findings on three EU member states: Poland, Germany and France.

The terms chosen to describe various actors were further discussed with the audience. It was noted that Russia might better be described as 'flexible', rather than 'inconsistent', because one could view Russia as actually being very 'consistent' although 'flexible' in its application, as with its behaviour towards Azerbaijan and Armenia. With regard to Germany, the focus on the year 2014 and the Ukraine crisis as a turning point in Germany's strategy was critiqued, as according to one participant, change was already mounting sooner around 2011-12 with the Russian parliamentary elections and Putin's return.



### ***The EU, Russia, and the Citizens of the Eastern Neighborhood: from Messages to Evaluations***

The fourth panel presented research on the elements of soft power of the EU and Russia in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. Antoaneta Dimitrova and Ina Ramasheuskaya presented the main findings of a large scale analysis of the EU's messages published on the EU delegation websites to the three EaP countries over a period of six months, to which country coders from all EU-STRAT's local EaP partners contributed. The main finding was that while the EU's messages focus on the eco-

nomy, reforms, and democracy in Moldova and Ukraine, human rights are the most frequently raised issue in Belarus. Honorata Mazepus summarized the results of the analysis of the Russian official discourses. One of the conclusions was that the idea of the so-called “Russian world” is not explicitly promoted in the foreign policy documents and presidential addresses, but through informal channels.



Dimiter Toshkov shed light on another important aspect of the EU’s and Russia’s soft power: how the two actors are presented on national TV stations in the three countries. The monitoring of over 370 hours of TV material by researchers from SYMPA (Belarus), IDIS (Moldova), and UIPP (Ukraine) showed that Russia does not dominate TV news and that the coverage of the EU and especially its member states is more extensive.

Tatsiana Chulitskaya, the panel’s discussant, emphasized that there is room for improvement in terms of the EU’s communications, especially about the norms and values that it wants to promote. The subsequent discussion focused on how the presented results fit with the opinion polls about the image of the EU and Russia in the EaP countries, what the role of the less mainstream media is, and what the financial capacities of pro-Russian organizations are.

### ***Economic Integration Projects in the Post-Soviet Space: Commitments and Implementation***

Rilka Dragneva-Lewers opened the fifth panel by defining the differences between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the EU in order to introduce the research being done to address legal and political compatibility between the EU engagement strategies and membership of EaP countries in the EAEU. Regarding engagement with Ukraine, the EU saw the case of Ukraine as a bilateral and sovereign choice, while for Russia it was a regional and manipulative decision. Laure Delcour observed that Armenia has proved to be the most interesting case demonstrating the foreign policy autonomy limits of EaP states. It was the only country to successfully finalize negotiations on an Association Agreement (AA), but then was forced to withdraw and join the EAEU. Even when joining the EAEU, Armenia tried to preserve some complementarity with the EU. A new comprehensive partnership agreement has been negotiated, but the final verdict on Armenia’s flexibility in terms of cooperation with the EU depends on how Russia perceives this cooperation. Kataryna Wolczuk pointed out that the narrative surrounding the AAs is very ambitious in terms of promoting economic integration with the EU. However, justification of a massive *aquis* transfer is that it serves the purpose of modernizing the EaP countries, although membership is not on the agenda.

One discussion after the panel revolved around the issue of flexibility, specifically what kind of





flexibility the EU should take into consideration within the EaP countries, and how the EU could demonstrate flexibility itself. Further discussions addressed whether agreements like the Armenia-EU Comprehensive & Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) could prove to be a middle way alternative for the countries in between the EU and Russia. The discussions developed around the potential further actions that Russia could take, and what the EU's strategy should be in the case that Russia does decide to apply punitive measures to Armenia.

### ***The Impact of Scientific Cooperation with the EU on Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine***

In the last panel, Dimiter Toshkov introduced the steps taken to assess the impact of scientific cooperation between the EaP countries and the EU. Two aspects of scientific impact were the subject of investigation: scientific productivity and broader social and policy impact of cooperation. The results of the bibliometric analysis of collaborations showed that in general, the EU is the most important source of foreign funding in Ukraine and Moldova and second most important source in Belarus. Honorata Mazepus presented the re-

sults of the interviews with EU scholars and project managers who have collaborated with partners from the EaP countries. The barriers that were brought to attention by Western partners were the regime in Belarus, instability in Ukraine, visas and language skills in all the countries, as well the bureaucratic burden of the EU projects. Ina Ramasheuskaya presented the results of the research in Belarus, pointing out that the biggest added value of the EU projects was that they helped to socialize Belarusian scholars, especially the young ones, into the European research community. Tatsiana Chulitskaya also presented the results of the interviews, outlining that a shared difficulty cited in all three EaP countries was the lack of institutional capacities of national research institutions to prepare proposals and other necessary documentation for European-funded projects.

Participants engaged the panel in further discussion on what the impact was on society in EaP countries. It was agreed that it is very hard to measure this conclusively, but that socialization is a common effect of these collaborations, and gaining local EaP teams was a positive aspect.



## Roundtable: the Future of the EaP – a Valuable Framework for Both Sides?

The second day of the midterm conference opened with a roundtable on the future of the EaP, moderated by Tanja A. Börzel, Director of the Centre for European Integration at Freie Universität Berlin. The roundtable began with the remarks of Taras Kuzio, Senior Research Associate at the University of Alberta's Canadian Institute for Ukrainian Studies and Non-Resident Fellow at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Transatlantic Relations. According to Kuzio, three domestic certainties in Ukraine are that 1) there is no alternative to European integration in Ukraine, 2) with the elections forthcoming, there will be no change in the current political vision and Poroshenko most likely will win, and 3) the process of de-sovietization will continue. Furthermore, three geopolitical certainties are that 1) there will be continued Russian hostility towards EU enlargement, 2) the domestic drivers of Russian foreign policy towards the Ukraine will not change, even if Putin were no longer to be in power, and 3) although it is a commonly held belief that Russia understands Ukraine better than the EU, this notion is not true.

Vassilis Maragos, Head of Unit at the European Commission's DG NEAR, presented the EU perspective on what lies ahead. The EU is further developing the concept of differentiation while the focus will be on implementing AA/DCF-TAs through the Association Agendas with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine as well as through the Partnership Priorities with Armenia, Belar-

us, and Azerbaijan. The EU focuses inter alia on entrepreneurship education and ensures that over 20,000 young people/youth workers from partner countries are involved in Erasmus+. The EU has also broadened the outreach and targeted support to grassroots civil society organizations, citing the collaboration between DG NEAR and EU-STRAT as playing a role in this.



Dzianis Melyantsou, Senior Analyst at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies, emphasized that in Minsk three emotions prevail regarding the EU's approach towards Belarus: frustration, irritation, and lack of trust. The frustration is related to the way that Minsk views the EaP as a means of modernizing the country through money. Therefore, as Minsk has not managed to receive a lot of money from the EU recently, the common opinion is that the EaP is not good. The irritation stems from bad press about Belarus that often emanates from the West, such as a 2010 New York Times article entitled "Lukashenko the Loser". Finally, Belarus feels a distinct lack of trust towards the EU due to perceived lack of commitment.

Igor Munteanu, former Ambassador of Moldova to the United States and current head of the Moldovan think tank IDIS, observed that Moldovan citizens were happy about the visa free regime and that the DCFTA had enhanced possibilities for the Moldovan economy to find alternative



markets. Nevertheless, Moldova faces geopolitical and internal challenges, such as oligarchs and political corruption. Public support for the EU is not strong, as the EU is blamed for not being able to help to ensure security in the region, not providing enough funds, and for not granting accession perspectives. The EU and Russia are competing for support within Moldova, and as of now, the Russian position seems to be stronger.

Her Excellency Khatuna Salukvadze, current Ambassador of Georgia to Lithuania, emphasized that European integration has proved to be one of the major driving forces of Georgia's reform process and democratic transformation. Georgia has gained a lot from the EaP and during the past several years has accomplished most of the prospects offered by the EaP. Trade with the EU has increased over the past years, culminating in the EU becoming Georgia's number one trade partner. Therefore, there is a need to look ahead to the new



opportunities that would prepare grounds for a deeper level of integration with the EU.

A discussion ensued on what role the EU could play for EaP countries in terms of security, and it was noted that the EU could engage the EaP countries more within the framework of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), particularly with cyber and security reform.

## Voices from the Midterm

### What was your opinion of the conference?

Unlike the majority of other conferences in the region, this conference was built on discussions of the researchers' concrete outcomes and not just speculations and opinions. There was a lot of new data and information.

- *Dzianis Melyantsou, Senior Analyst at the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies*

### What was the most notable finding that was discussed? Which topic did you find the most interesting?

What I appreciated most about the conference was the chance to listen to keynote speakers who gave their assessments of the effectiveness of EaP from the political point of view. Given the current political agenda, it was obvious that a significant part of the discussion would be dedicated to Ukraine, and the experience of Leszek Balcerowicz as an ex-advisor to Ukraine President Poroshenko was very informative. It was also quite interesting to hear a Lithuania Ministry of Foreign Affairs official commenting on the government's position on how the program should be changed.

- *Anonymous Polish student*

I think that the discourse analysis (performed on Russian foreign policy documents within the project) is the most exciting thing - it's like a reflection of a battlefield in which the fight is conducted with words, not guns. I also liked the analysis of external actors and their position on the EaP. Actually, I think there should have been a bit more space for that during the conference, because there are so many actors with so many interests. For example, the USA was not even mentioned.

- *Oleksandra Kryshchapovych, doctoral student at Freie Universität Berlin*



## Snapshots from the Conference



All photos of the Midterm Conference were taken by Emilė Indrašiūtė.

## MEP Andrikienė: “The European Parliament has laid the foundations for a breakthrough in the EaP”

An exclusive comment written by Dr. Laima Andrikienė, Member of the European Parliament (EPP, Lithuania), Member of the EP Committees on International Trade and Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Security and Defence; she is 1st Vice Chair of the EP Delegation for Relations with Central Asia.



It has been expected in the European Parliament, that the EU-EaP Summit in Brussels would not be just a formal, stock-taking gathering focusing on the achievements such as Association Agreements, free trade agreements, visa-free travel, linking the EU with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. We have hoped that November Summit would mark a real breakthrough in the EaP policy.

On 15 November, the European Parliament adopted very constructive recommendations for the EU-Eastern Partnership Summit. The recommendations were approved by an overwhelming majority: 521 votes in favour, 114 against, 45 abstentions. I had the honour of drafting EP recommendations together with my colleague Knut Fleckenstein (Socialists & Democrats, Germany).

It is now clear that the Brussels Summit did not become a historic one. The Joint Declaration more likely reflects the agreement reached between the

EU Member States and based on the principle of the ‘lowest possible common denominator’ rather than the political will and commitment to pursue ambitious goals and new dynamism in the EaP policy. The Summit did not become a benchmark, and only the signing of CEPA, the long-anticipated Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement between the EU and Armenia, which is a step forward, has helped us to ‘save face’.

Nevertheless, the work done by the European Parliament and its recommendations remain valid, they can always be referred to. By adopting its recommendations, the European Parliament has sent a very strong signal to the EU Council, the Member States, our Eastern partners, the European Commission and the EU diplomatic service that the support for our Eastern partners, first of all to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, is tremendous. It is a pity that even a single reference to the European Parliament recommendations is missing in the Joint Declaration of the Summit. The disregard of the position of the European Parliament, one of the pillars of European democracy and the only EU institution directly elected by its citizens, was a mistake and a bad example for our Eastern partners, who are still on the way to strengthening their democratic institutions.

In his speech at the Summit, Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament, who is a member of the European People’s Party (EPP) political family, expressed strong support for the ambitious and forward-looking EaP policy and encouraged EU leaders to pursue the implementation of the EaP+ model for Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.



On 23 November, the EPP Summit took place in Brussels on the eve of the EU-EaP summit. The EPP has endorsed the key provisions of the European Parliament recommendations on the EaP policy, in particular, the EU support for the most advanced Eastern partners, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. The EPP President Joseph Daul stated: “We will continue to strongly support our partners and their European aspirations. We emphasize that the prospect of membership in the European Union is the driving force behind our partners’ commitment to reforms and commitment to shared values and principles. EPP will continue to maintain closer cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries, in particular under the EaP+ model, which will ultimately bring them to membership in the customs union, the energy union, the digital single market, security and defence cooperation, reduced roaming tariffs.”

***A breakthrough: what the European Parliament offers to our Eastern partners***

If the European Parliament recommendations were to become part of the official EU policy, there would be a serious breakthrough in the EU’s relations with the Eastern partners. Democracy and the free market area would undoubtedly be enlarged. Perhaps there would also be geopolitical changes in relations with Russia, who is aggressive towards our Eastern partners and still looks at them as if they are a part of Russia’s ‘hemisphere’.

A very concrete step forward proposed by the European Parliament is the EaP+ model. It would include the establishment of a Trust Fund, also a New European Investment Plan and financial assistance instrument for the implementation of the Association Agreements. The fund would not be set up for all partner countries, but only for

the most advanced in the area of reform, namely Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. It is expected that if these countries do their homework appropriately, they could eventually join customs, energy and digital unions, even the Schengen area, enjoy reduction of roaming charges. Certainly, it is essential for the Eastern partners to implement the agreed reforms.

The European Parliament proposes to further promote and support economic reforms in the EaP countries. Those reforms would eliminate monopolies, limit the role of the oligarchs, and allow more effective combating money laundering and tax evasion. On the other hand, it is now clear that some countries, say, Belarus or Azerbaijan, are not in a hurry to pursue economic and political reforms. That is why in the European Parliament recommendations we stress the importance of differentiation and implementation of the principle ‘more for more and less for less’. The approach ‘one size fits all’, which has been used at the beginning of the implementation of the EaP policy is not workable and is counter-productive.

In the area of foreign policy, we propose to continue to put pressure on Russia to resolve the ‘frozen’ conflicts in eastern Ukraine, the occupied Georgian regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Transnistria in Moldova. In the recommendations, we also suggested supporting the deployment of the OSCE police mission in Eastern Ukraine.

A critical point for Lithuania is that the EU is encouraged to closely monitor the development of the Astravyets nuclear power plant in Belarus and to ensure its full compliance with international nuclear safety and environmental agreements and obligations.



## Assessing Legal and Political Compatibility between the EU Engagement Strategies and Membership in the EAEU

By Rilka Dragneva (University of Birmingham), Laure Delcour (Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, FMSH), Laurynas Jonavicius (Vilnius University)

One of the challenges to the EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) policy relates to structuring cooperation with countries which have opted for membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), such as Belarus and Armenia. Following the Ukraine crisis, the EU revised its European Neighbourhood Policy, putting emphasis on the development of differentiated and flexible tools of engagement with countries that have chosen to join Russia's integration project. Delivering on this agenda, however, requires clarity on the constraints and limits imposed by membership in the EAEU. The EU has tended to establish such limits by reliance on the technocratic analysis of current obligations contained in formal legal agreements. Yet, as revealed in the Ukraine crisis, this approach has not necessarily reflected Russia's view of integration and its compatibility with EU's policies, and its ability to assert it.

EU-STRAT Working Paper No. 7<sup>1</sup> argues that establishing the limits imposed by EAEU membership requires an assessment of the range of legal as well as non-legal levers at play in individual member states in relation to Russia's integration projects. What matters is how Russia as well as its Eurasian partners play the 'integration game', and the degree to which political elites in Belarus and Armenia can manoeuvre a space for independent engagement with the EU. This is necessary because of the particular nature of the EAEU, discussed in the first part of the paper. The EAEU is defined by a mixture between existing and future commitments and the institutional boundaries between the powers of the Union and the member states can be problematic. Even when powers have been delegated to common

institutions, they cannot be enforced and there is little attention to the technocratic aspects of integration. Thus, any progress ultimately depends on the continued commitment of member states and their particular motivation for participating in the bloc. Ultimately, what matters is the power relations within the Union, played out in a highly asymmetric hub-and-spoke context. In particular, Russia has the ability to interpret the nature of the commitments undertaken and their compatibility with overlapping international agreements. It is capable of enforcing it, using its partners' dependence on Russia in a number of critical areas.

We illustrate this dynamic in the cases of Belarus and Armenia, showing how the 'compatibility space' is negotiated by these countries' elites. We elaborate on the case of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA), as the most recent test to complementarity of integration engagements in the region. We show that while the scope of cooperation between Armenia and the EU is extensive (as reflected in the title of the agreement), its depth is limited by the commitments taken by Armenia as part of the EAEU. This is especially the case in the trade area. Yet despite Russia's 'green light' to a new EU-Armenia agreement, owing to the nature of the EAEU, Armenia's ability to effectively cooperate with the EU hinges crucially on Russia's interpretation of its commitments as an EAEU member. At the same time, the case of Belarus shows that the peculiarities of Lukashenko's regime, its specific interests, and the predominance of informal relations provide some scope for manoeuvre for Minsk even under the condition of a complete economic dependence on Moscow, formally established integration mechanisms and legal commitments within Russia-dominated institutions.

<sup>1</sup> Rilka Dragneva, Laure Delcour, and Laurynas Jonavicius (2017), 'Assessing Legal and Political Compatibility between the European Union Engagement Strategies and Membership in the Eurasian Economic Union', EU-STRAT Working Paper No. 7, November 2017.

## Looking for the impact of scientific cooperation

By Honorata Mazepus and Suzan Saris (Leiden University)

Scientific cooperation is an important aspect of international cooperation. Scientists would not dispute this, but how can we establish what the impact of scientific cooperation is? It is difficult to evaluate how great the influence of international scientific collaboration is on the scholarly output and even more challenging to know how it affects public policy and society at large. We addressed this multifaceted issue in research published in EU-STRAT Working Paper No. 5.<sup>1</sup> Our research is based on a multitude of data sources and a mixed-methods approach. By combining quantitative and qualitative techniques, we assess different aspects of the potential impact of scientific cooperation programmes between scholars from Western European institutions and scholars from the Eastern Partnership countries (EaP) and in particular Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

We first looked at scholarly output, an internationally accepted measure of the impact of science. To investigate how the scientific output of scholars from the EaP countries developed over time, we used bibliometric data for the period of 2000-2016. We analysed the changes in the overall size of the scientific output in the three EaP countries, then compared the share of publications that have received funding from various countries, programmes, and agencies and finally we looked into the co-authorship networks and thematic distribution of publications.

A series of comparisons show that the three EaP countries are still far from reaching the absolute levels of productivity of the Central and Eastern European EU member states or Russia. However, our conclusions about scientific productivity depend strongly on whether we adjust the number of publications by population or economic wealth. Unadjusted numbers show growth, albeit uneven

and inconsistent. If we assess growth relative to the size of the (mostly growing) economies, the scientific output has diminished in size in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. At the same time, given the challenges in financing science, we find it unlikely that Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova would have sustained even this level of scientific output without the funding from the EU, Russia and Germany. Therefore, it seems fair to say that international collaboration provided a lifeline to science in the EaP region after 2000.

Next, in order to assess the broader impact of scientific cooperation on the academic community, policy makers, and societies in the EaP countries, we interviewed scholars and project coordinators who had participated in EU-funded collaborative research. These scholars and experts were based both in the EU member states and in the EaP countries, i.e. Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Researchers and project coordinators from both regions were generally positive about scientific collaboration. The interviewees from the EaP countries noted the positive impact on their institutions in terms of access to funding, participation in networks, advances in research methodology, opportunities for the mobility of researchers, transfer of technologies and (administrative) know-how.

Our Western interviewees often praised the expertise of their EaP partners, while acknowledging the limited resources and capacity that many of the Eastern institutes have to deal with. Due to the accumulation of grants for some scientific institutes, they became specialized and recognized as 'islands of excellence' and regular participants in EU funded projects. This may create difficulties for other institutions lacking such specialization or the capacity to develop it. While the accumulation of expertise and experience in certain institutions is not a problem in itself, ideally, par-

<sup>1</sup> Honorata Mazepus, Dimiter Toshkov, Tatsiana Chulitskaya, and Ina Ramasheuskaya (2017) 'The Effects of the EU's Scientific Cooperation Programmes on the Eastern Partnership Countries: Scientific Output and Broader Societal Impact', EU-STRAT Working Paper No. 5, August 2017.

ticipation in EU projects should be more inclusive and spread out beyond the few already well-established centres.

While we found support for concluding that scientific cooperation has had a positive impact on publication output and academic institutions, the evidence for impact on public policies and societies at large is scarce. This does not, however, necessarily mean there is no societal impact. Societal impact of some branches of science is notoriously difficult to establish and our interviewees struggled to provide concrete examples. This can be partly explained by the type of research projects conducted: the focus of most projects is on

fundamental science (prevalingly the hard science disciplines), while relatively few projects have explicit policy objectives and direct societal relevance. Fundamental science projects can have an impact as they regularly fuel innovation in applied sciences, but this may happen over the longer term. Moreover, as accurately noted by one of our interviewees, the nature of scientific endeavour is such that one piece of research rarely brings about ground-breaking results that can have grand societal and policy impact on its own. Therefore, the broader impact of scientific projects, including collaborative ones, might take more time to become visible.

## **Interdependencies of Eastern Partnership countries with the EU and Russia: Three case studies on trade, migration, security, and energy**

By Laure Delcour (FMSH), Ildar Gazizulin (Ukrainian Institute for Public Policy, UIPP), Marta Jaroszewicz, Kamil Całus, Tadeusz Iwański, Kamil Klysiński (Centre for Eastern Studies, OSW)

In this set of country papers on Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, we explore the extent and nature of interdependencies with external partners across areas such as migration, energy, trade and security.<sup>1</sup> We measure the interdependence both in terms of the effects caused by one state on another in a certain area or areas and in terms of the costs or availability of policy alternatives for a state to deal with such effects.

Eventually, such effects or situations of interdependence are used to analyse the role and behaviour of domestic actors in each of the countries vis-à-vis the European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation. Both regional powers represent natural centres of gravity for all EaP countries, given the sizes of their economies and their geographical location. At same time, the three EaP countries tend to have a greater dependence on Russia across all four reviewed areas than on the EU (in some areas the difference in the level of

dependence is either not as sizable, e.g. in the migration, or changing dramatically).

The exploitation of interdependencies across different areas such as energy and security can lead to situations of extreme vulnerabilities, i.e. when even the survival of the government itself is threatened. A resulting change in the policy-making space in which domestic actors operate often speeds up or prevents social transformation. In other words, it is during these moments when the country either succumbs to the demands of the external partner or chooses to pursue policies to increase its capacity to withstand external pressure. Of course, such interactions between countries do not need to result in a zero-sum game or be viewed as necessarily hostile in nature. Costs and benefits associated with linking interdependencies in different areas tend to be unevenly distributed across sectors and actors and might have an overall neutral effect.

One of the key findings was that the substantial use of issue-linkages by Russia towards EaP countries is in stark contrast to the EU's appro-

<sup>1</sup> Laure Delcour, Ildar Gazizulin, Marta Jaroszewicz, Kamil Całus, Tadeusz Iwański, and Kamil Klysiński (Forthcoming) 'Interdependencies of Eastern Partnership countries with the EU and Russia: Three case studies on trade, migration, security, and energy', EU-STRAT Working Paper.



ach, which favours sector-specific conditionality (rather than cross sector linkage) as a prerequisite to closer links with the EaP countries.

The papers also suggest that Russia's use of punitive and restrictive trade measures against Moldova and Ukraine in fact reduced sensitivities to Russia's policies, since it led to greater diversification of trade flows, particularly, toward the EU. On the other hand, deep and institutionalized economic and political interdependence between Belarus and Russia continues to provide sizable benefits to the elites in Minsk and therefore disincentivizes domestic actors from exploring alternative policy options.

The effectiveness of Russian issue-linkage policy

however depends on available policy alternatives for the targeted country and the vested interests of local elites (who initiate or resist policies to mitigate issue linkage impact). In most reviewed cases, rent-seeking practices of the elite tend to prevent the effective exploration of policy alternatives (as these would be too costly for the elites) and thereby increase vulnerability to Russia's use of linkages. The case of Ukraine in 2013-2014 largely confirms this conclusion: the availability of policy alternatives and greater interconnectedness of Ukraine with the EU and the rest of the world have been instrumental in mitigating negative impacts of the interdependency with Russia. Also, the active civil society played a decisive role in counteracting initial elites' resistance to exploring policy alternatives.

## Workshop in Tbilisi

As part of EU-STRAT, Katharina Hoffmann and Ole Frahm from the University of St Gallen conducted a workshop in Tbilisi, Georgia on 20-21 November 2017 with mostly young researchers and practitioners from five Eastern Partnership region countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). In addition to the main objective of jointly developing a common framework for event data collection on Eastern Partnership countries' bilateral relations with Turkey, another key aim was to transfer knowledge on best practices of social science methods.



In organizing and running the workshop which took place at Fabrika, a converted former sewing factory, the team from St Gallen cooperated closely with the Caucasus Research Resource Center in Tbilisi with whom the university had already collaborated as part of the FP7 project ISSICEU ([www.issiceu.eu](http://www.issiceu.eu)). The meeting in Georgia therefore also served to strengthen and enlarge an existing network of researchers from the region. Befitting the occasion, the conversation at the closing dinner was held in a mixture of German, English, Russian and Turkish. A follow-up event is planned for 2018 to ensure that all participants can make ample use of the data both during the project and beyond.

## “Georgia should consistently knock on the EU’s and NATO’s doors” – An interview with Kakha Gogolashvili

Kakha Gogolashvili is a Senior Fellow and Director of EU Studies at the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies and a member of EU-STRAT’s Advisory Board. The interview was conducted by Kamil Całus and Tadeusz Iwański (Centre for Eastern Studies, OSW).



***With membership perspective out of the question and the Association Agreements (AAs) and visa liberalization already under implementation, how can the European Union (EU) incentivize Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries?***

Membership perspective is the most important thing. It’s not being discussed at this stage, but I think that in the future, in the medium term perspective, this question will be raised by governments of the states that have signed and implemented AAs. Societies in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine are very much awaiting clear indication that they will be taken into the EU.

***But what about the EU perspective on this issue?***

Well, for the moment, of course the EU is in a relative crisis. There are so many other problems currently in the EU that raising the issue of future enlargement at this moment would be politically damaging for any government in the EU. That is why they are naturally not inclined to enter in such debates. But that does not mean that EU elites have not kept this issue for the future in some way. I mean political and intellectual elites in the member states.

The very important thing is to encourage closer integration of the EaP countries who are really keen to get closer to the EU and eventually join it. For example, it would be good to encourage creation of a European Neighborhood Community, which would not be about membership, but would serve as a kind of European Economic Area Plus (EEA+). Such an arrangement initially would differ from the original EEA which was created with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries, but gradually could deepen and acquire the same features, marking a new stage in integration between these three countries and the EU. It would also serve as an effective tool for regional cooperation/integration between the three associated EaP countries.

***Yes, but deepening economic cooperation requires the implementation of difficult reforms. Does it seem that some “big idea” is needed behind the reforms in order to incentivize politicians to carry them out?***

That is why it should be clearly and explicitly expressed that even if in this very moment the EU is reluctant to promise anything about institutional integration, the functional integration has no limits. Special formats can be created for this type of integration. You can tell Georgian citizens that “we have been offered an AA, so we must do reforms in order to become compatible with the EU”, but it would be difficult to sell such an approach as something tangible. This is due to the fact that the population cannot foresee exactly the outcome of this whole endeavor. Plus, the EU has AAs with many different countries including Chile, Mexico and south Mediterranean countries. So it’s not easy to explain to people that, let’s say, the free trade arrangements with those countries differs greatly from the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with Georgia, which is in

fact much deeper and envisages full liberalization of trade on almost all products. If you would, however, show them that Georgia and the EU are creating a new type of arrangement, which would not be EU membership but rather an EEA+ designed especially for these three EaP countries, then that is already something. They would understand that this is functional integration, and is something new and irreversible. They would also understand this to mean that their country is entering a club which differs from all the other types of arrangements.

***So the arrangements thus far have been too technical, and do not serve as enough “political fuel”?***

Yes. That is why we need to establish either an EEA+ or a Neighborhood Economic Community. These are not new ideas. Both of them have already been presented in the EU documents and right now we have the opportunity to use these concepts. Then the EU could start encouraging regional integration of those three countries. For the moment, trade between those states is not as large as it could be, but we need to develop trilateral trade within the region in order to create an area which is compatible with the EU, which is integrated and which is homogeneous. Those three states should help each other, just as it happened in the Western Balkans or Visegrád Group.

The second thing is the connectivity. The EU should work more seriously on this issue, especially with the Georgian government, as this country is far from the EU geographically. It is very important to develop more direct transport links. I would suggest investing as much as possible in ferry connections between Georgian ports and the Black Sea ports in the EU (like Varna, Constanta and others). I simply think that it is important to encourage people-to-people contact. We have the visa-free regime, but that is not all – people should travel. And travel should be easy. People should feel that within 24 hours (by ferry) they can reach the EU coast and enter its territory without visas. There also should be more direct flights from Georgia – and not only

from the Tbilisi – to the EU. These things together with the membership perspective could serve as incentives for politicians and societies of the EaP.

***So, we know what the EU should do. But what should Georgia do?***

Georgia should first of all keep its motivation to integrate with the EU. I’ve always said that regardless of what the EU says about the membership perspective, Georgia should keep its motivation and should consistently knock on the EU’s and NATO’s doors. At the same time, Georgia has to restructure and mobilize its society towards membership, which should be understood as the final goal.

***Is Georgia doing that? If not, where are the gaps?***

I think that not everything is being done, but the idea of the integration with the EU is still quite strong and popular. The gaps are everywhere actually. For example, I would emphasize especially the issue of decentralization and development of regional governments. The democracy is not well supported at the regional level. Also, there should be greater investment in pro-European education so that people feel more ready to join Europe. Gaps are also visible on the political landscape. I would say that the political parties are weak, and in general, the European style of conducting politics is not very well established in Georgia. There is not too much democratic consensus visible in the Georgian parliament, for example.

***But is there a political consensus within Georgia that the country should implement the AA and DCFTA and “knock” on NATO’s door?***

At the level of an idea – yes. There is even certain competition between the biggest parties to try to show which one of them is more “European”. But when it comes to the concrete decisions and steps, not necessarily. On the other hand, while consensus is not a problem for the implementation of the AA and DCFTA (only about 15-20 % of the population still supports some pro-Russian trends), the level of preparation of civil servants



and bureaucracy in general is. Georgia copes with the lack of professionalism of this staff, favoritism, lack of fair competition (which would promote the best and more motivated people) in the administration.

***Is this pro-European approach of Georgians and its political class irreversible or it can change under – for example – intense Russian informational campaign?***

It is not yet irreversible. You can see from the case of Moldova that even after an EaP country has received something from the EU side (like the visa-free regime), pro-Russian sentiments can still develop. At the same time, we have to remember that Georgian society has always been much more pro-independence, starting from the Soviet times already. The idea of our independence was always been closely linked with the idea of strengthening of our ties with Europe. Even if in Europe it is not fully recognized, we have always had this feeling that this is our place, that we should be with Europe. Of course, everything depends

on how strongly Russia might advance with its informational policy and what instrument would be used for this.

***Do you think that strategic communication from the EU side is good enough to counter this Russian soft power and propaganda?***

It is not good enough. Frankly, the EU was not ready for such attacks from the Russian side. Actually, Moscow started this information war while the EU was not even acknowledging its existence. Even now, there are countries in the EU that are skeptical about fighting with Russia and engaging in information warfare. Fortunately, little by little, this security component of the EU policy is developing. It means that we see more and more communication related to the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, especially while treating hybrid threats. The EU is an inertial type of institution, or rather set of institutions, in which decisions are never immediately taken. But if the policies are discussed and planned, then at some point they become effective.