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**Article**

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# **The conception of EU-Russia strategic partnership. Reasons of its failure**

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## Abstract

The present paper seeks the aim to analyse the Euro-Russian relationship in the context of current situation of the political crisis provoked by the incident in Ukraine and to compare it with the elaborated model of the “Strategic Partnership”. This analysis should help us to investigate why the conception of the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Russian Federation has failed and if the revision of the relationship and turning into real strategic partners still has a sense?

## Resumen

El presente trabajo tiene como objetivo analizar la relación euro-rusa en el contexto de la actual situación de crisis política provocada por el incidente en Ucrania, para analizarlo en el modelo elaborado de "Alianza Estratégica". Este análisis nos ayudará a investigar por qué la concepción de la asociación estratégica entre la Unión Europea y la Federación Rusa ha fallado y si la revisión de la relación para convertirlos en socios estratégicos reales todavía tiene un sentido. La UE y la FR son jugadores poderosos a nivel regional y global y de sus relaciones depende el destino de todo el continente euroasiático: si va a ser integrado entre los países de la Unión Europea y los países de la Unión Euroasiática liderada por la FR o vuelven a aparecer las líneas de separación.

*Key Words:* Euro-Russian relationship, political crisis, conflict in Ukraine, Strategic Partnership between the EU and the RF, strategic partners, interdependence

*A crisis is a judgment. A judgment implies effort of all the parties with the aim of resolving the problem. A crisis isn't the end, it is the extreme phase of the fight, which can be either won or lost. In case of winning it creates premises for the next stage of development.*

S.B. Pereslegin.

## **1. Introduction**

The relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union are extremely important due to the interdependence in their geopolitical, geostrategic and energy dimension, but, in the meantime, they are enormously complicated. Considering just the high status of the parties would be enough for speaking about global political and economic problems at the international level, but the geographic neighborhood still completes the situation.

As of today Moscow conducts its own independent policy and doesn't try to follow the norms and principals of Brussels any more. If before the Russian government was weak because of huge external debt, political and financial instability and the war in the republic of Chechnya, and used to submit to the West's plans, in the last decade the situation has totally changed. Nowadays Russia is no longer an indebted country, it possess the third foreign-currency and gold reserves in the world and with its great energy recourses suddenly has transformed into one of the main powerful players at both international and regional level.

The main aim of the present paper is to elaborate the perfect model of the strategic partnership and to match it with the Euro-Russian relation before the Ukrainian crisis. Analyzing their relations we will try to understand if the parties were real strategic partners before the political crisis and why the concept of the strategic partnership between them was not successful. Besides, the paper pretends to give several reasons that the conception of the real strategic partnership will continue being the most beneficial type of relationships for both parties after the Ukrainian conflict.

## **2. The Euro-Russian relations in the format of Strategic Partnership**

Before the Ukrainian conflict the Euro-Russian relationships were developing in the format of Strategic Partnership. It should be considered that the year of establishment of strategic partnership is 2009, because this was when the EU included the RF in its list of "10 Strategic Partners" and officially recognized, in this way, the RF's status of strategic partner. Although, it should be recalled that the first reference to strategic partnership appeared in the official documents of the EU in 1998, when the EU confirmed the necessity to consider the RF as a strategic partner. Therefore, it was in relations with Moscow when the EU used this term for the first time (and the last time during the nineties). The term didn't even figure in transatlantic relations, which were the most important for the EU.

The relation of strategic partnership occupies a special position besides other types of foreign relations. Despite the term is increasingly used in the international documents, negotiations, scientific literature and press it's not researched completely in the science. Strategic partnership is a specifically post-Cold War phenomenon. The principal post-Cold War structural feature affecting interstate

cooperation is the unipolar system, which contrasts with the Cold War bipolar system and the pre-World War II multipolar system. (Sangtu Ko. 2006). The term appeared primarily in the countries of Europe and Asia, which had to react to the end of the bipolar order, developing the new strategies to communicate with the “unique superpower”. If we combine two definitions “the strategy” and “the partnership” and transport them to the field of foreign relations we will have the following definition: this is the long-term collaboration at the international level of mutual gains and equality of rights between subjects (partners) regarding to reach common aims. However, usually the term just signifies the establishment of the long-term friendly relations in the commercial field and economic contacts between governments, which use to call “the most favoured nation treatment” (Kim G, 2012).

Speaking about the strategic partnership the politics usually understand a different grade of developing of relations in every specific case. At this rate, the publication of the European Strategy of 2003<sup>1</sup> refers that strategic partnerships with countries of common European values is the political instrument aimed to fortify the efficient multilateralism. Though, it can be cited with Renard's words (2010) “there is not any official definition of strategic partners.” Jain (2008), in his turn, confirmed even before Renard that despite the fact that the term had been used frequently in recent times there is no any official definition of strategic partnership. Grevi (2010) also states that “Strategic partnerships are a political category that no EU document or statement clearly defines”. Emerson (2001) defines the strategic partnership in terms of the possibility of taking strategic action but doesn't explain what strategic action means. Peña (2010) argues that there is some confusion between the agreement of strategic partnership and agreements involving commercial preferences.

As there is neither any standard definition nor any criteria that would allow one to determine if a partner is strategic or not, speaking about the strategic partnership it would be better to mean the special status which the EU confers to other countries on the base of political appreciation.

In practice not all the governments interpret the term “strategic partnership” in the same manner: so, according to former President of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev, the base of the strategic partnership with the EU is “equality, pragmatism, respect towards the partner's interests and the common approach about security key problems”<sup>2</sup> while for European leaders this is “stability and commons values”. The different interpretation usually provokes misunderstanding between the partners and obstructs the development of strategic partnership.

### **3. The evolution of Euro-Russian relations and Russia's reorientation towards the Eurasian Union.**

It is worth mentioning that the partners over the history of their cooperation have progressed considerably. Among the most remarkable achievements we can highlight the following:

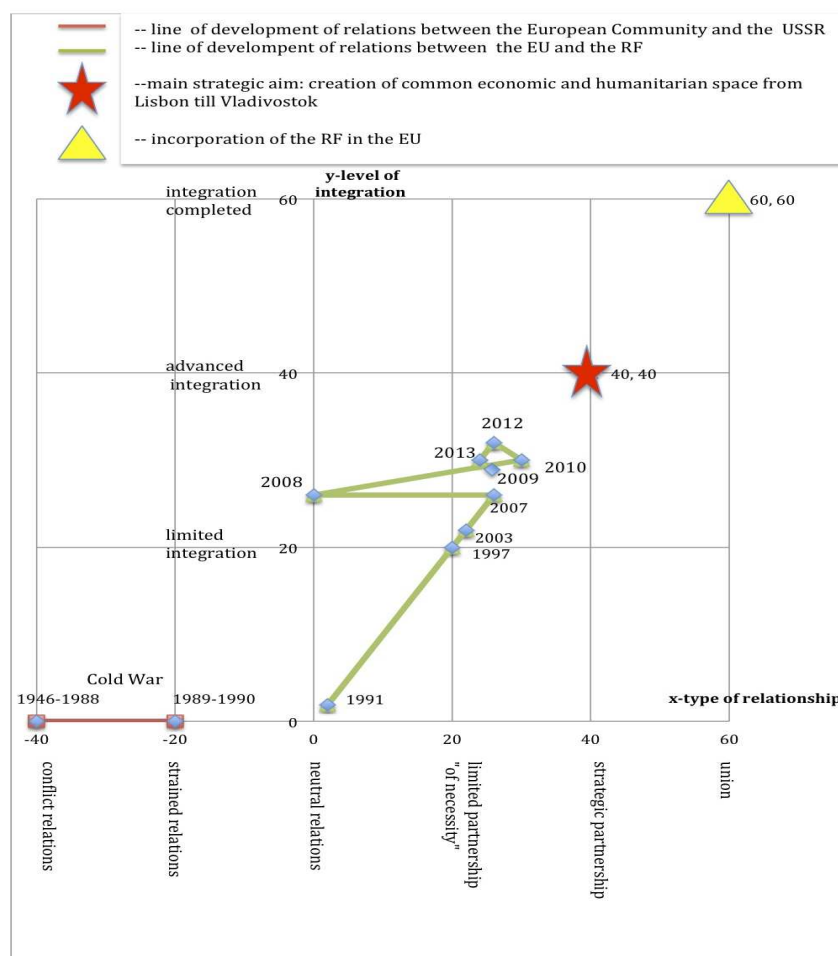
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<sup>1</sup> Op.cit. European Council, European Strategy of Security, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Speech of D. Medvedev in the conference about the results of Euro-Russian summit, 2008

elaboration of wide legal and institutional base, establishment of “Road Maps” in four common spaces; elaboration of the “Partnership for Modernization” program; simplification of visa regime for Russian and European citizens; expansion of the relations, not only in commercial field, but also in other spheres, such as ecology, science, culture, education, etc. However, their relations can be characterized as unstable due to several political and economic crises that the partners have experienced during the history of their relations. The evolution of the Euro-Russian relations can be displayed graphically (see Graph 6).

**Graph 1. Evolution of Euro-Russian relations**



Source: Own elaboration

The new wording of the conception of Russia's foreign policy confirmed by Vladimir Putin in February of 2013, establishes that the main strategic objective towards the EU is creating common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean. The President of the European Commission, in his turn, confirmed this objective with his own words in March of 2013 during

the conference on the problems of collaboration between the RF and EU in Moscow: “I think that it is important to take concrete decisions related to everyday life, policy and commerce in the long term. Such vision in the long term consists in creating common economic and humanitarian area from Lisbon to Vladivostok with free movement of people, free exchange of products and services in general within close collaboration”. Still it should be acknowledged that for the moment the partners are quite far from this objective and in order to reach it it’s necessary that “partnership of necessity”<sup>3</sup> turn into conscious choice of the partners.

The EU tries to build up relations with the RF according to the principles and values shared within the Union. According to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, S. Lavrov “this usual model of “enforced adjustment” of other countries to its standards is unacceptable with Russia which doesn’t have the objective of entering the EU”.

The X-axis represents type of relations while the Y-axis shows the level of integration. The points on the line represent the most important events in the history of relations between the partners:

1989: USSR and the European Community signed the Agreement on Trade and Economic and Commercial Cooperation

1991: The fall of the Soviet Union; beginning of the Program of Cooperation between the partners; inauguration of the Representation of the European Commission in the territory of the RF

1997: Entry into force of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

2003: Signing of the Agreement on creation of four common spaces

2007: Signing and entry into force of the Visa Facilitation Agreement and Agreement on Readmission of Illegal Immigrants

2008: Crisis in Euro-Russian relations due to the conflict between the RF and Georgia

2009: Energy crisis caused by the conflict between the RF and Ukraine. The EU included RF in its list of “10 Strategic Partners”

2010: The RF starts the new “Partnership for Modernization” program

2012: The RF joined the WTO; Putin’s accession to power

2013: Period of mutual claims. The EU accuses the RF of nonfulfillment of WTO’s rules and monopolization of the energy sector by “Gazprom”. RF considers EU’s actions as discriminatory (“The third energy package” and obstruction of visa exemption).

The Graph doesn’t reflect the year 2014 which can be appointed as the most critical moment of Euro-Russian relations. The year started with a harsh political confrontation between the parties for leadership on the post-Soviet territory. The consequences of the Ukrainian conflict are unpredictable. On one hand, this conflict can put an end to the “Strategic Partnership” as development conception of Euro-Russian relations and lead to RF’s isolation from the “Western World”. There is even a possibility that the relations between the RF and the “Western World” can repeat the history and bring both sides

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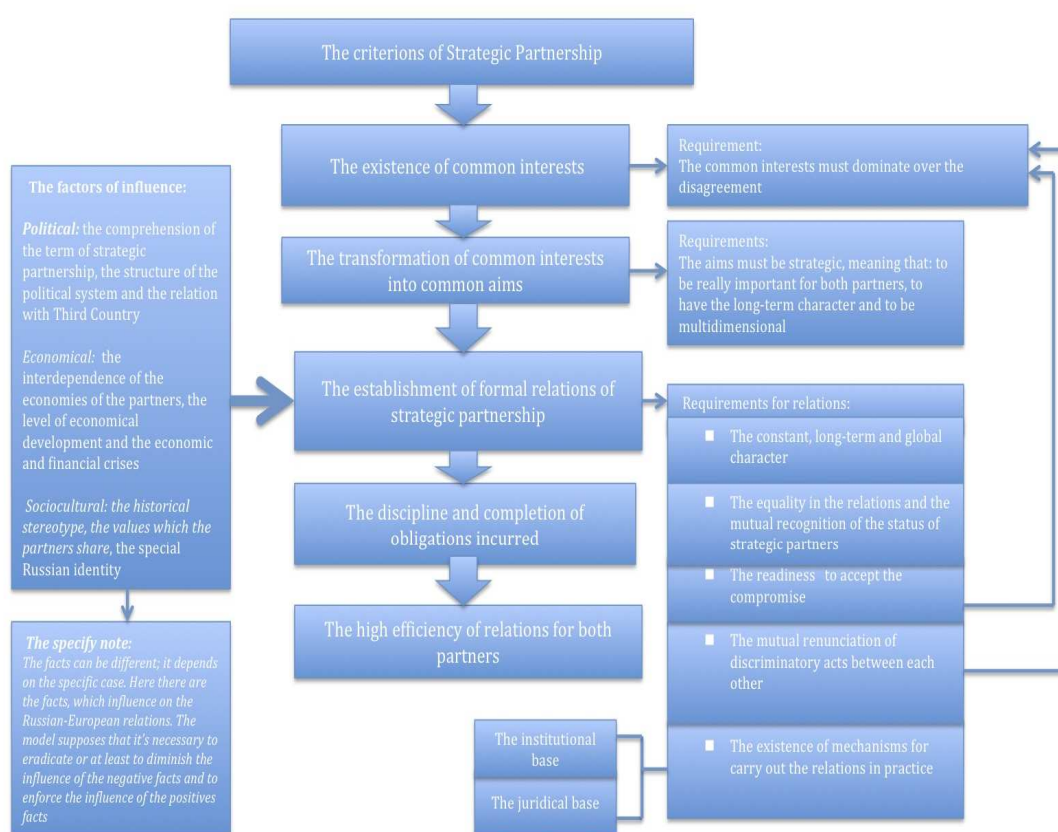
<sup>3</sup> This term was used by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of RF, S. Lavrov, in his article “Russia-EU: Prospects for partnership in the changing world”. The term means that the partners collaborate only in some fields where both of them need each other regardless disagreements in other areas

back to the Cold War era. On the other hand, there is also an optimistic scenario according to which the parties could overcome this crisis as they did in 2008 when it seemed that the conflict between Russia and Georgia didn't have any solution. But this time the situation is hampered by the fact that it has to do with a potential member of the EU.

#### 4. The perfect model of the strategic partnership and the comparison of the Euro-Russian relation with this model.

Taking into account the requirements, which the partners should fulfill and the criteria which allow to distinguish the relations of strategic partnership from the other types of relationships, it can be elaborated the perfect model of the strategic partnership, to which the partners should approach (see Scheme 1).

Scheme 1. The model of Strategic Partnership



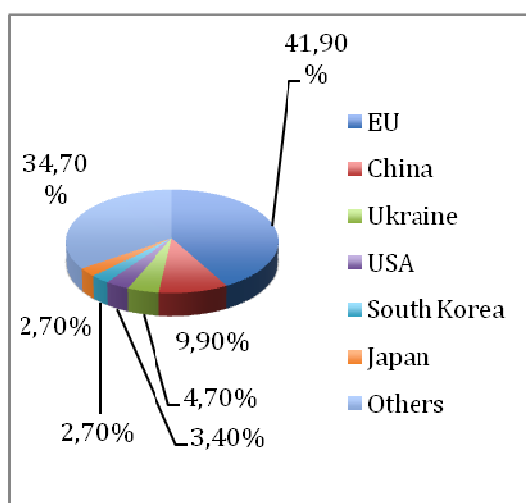
Source: own elaboration



Observing the scheme it can be said that principal issue in construction of strategic partnership is coincidence of interests which are sufficiently durable so we can speak about long-term cooperation. In this case analysis methodology is reduced to searching for interests which unite or separate the participants of the partnership. Strategic partnership is a form of relations that stops existing when disagreements begin to dominate common interests.

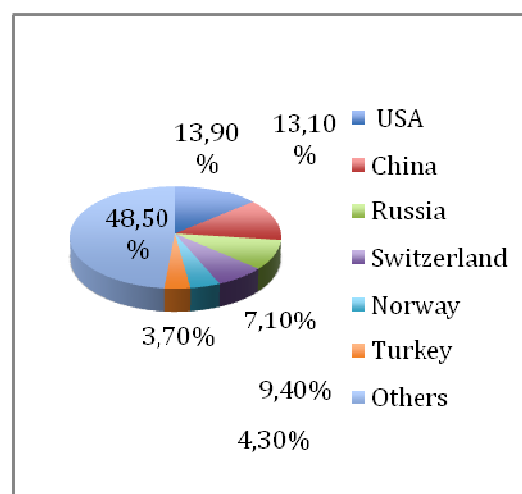
The EU is the first commercial partner of the RF (see Graph 2). For the European Union Russia is the third commercial partner (see Graph 3).

**Graph 2. Russian's main commercial partners (2011)**



Source: European Commission DG Trade 10 Jan 13  
29-Nov-12

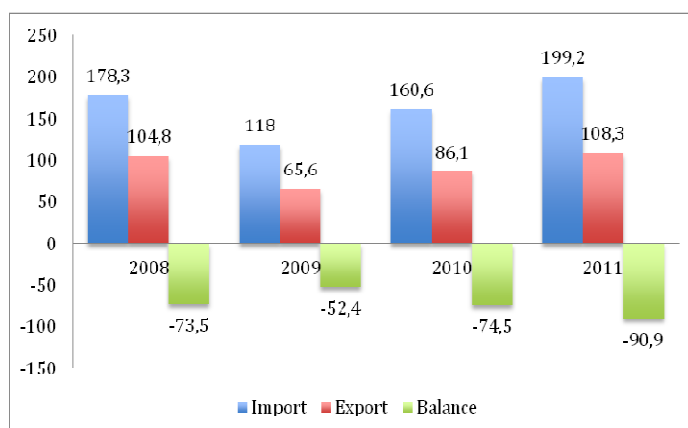
**Graph 3. European Union's main commercial partners (2011)**



Source: European Commission DG Trade

The partners are united by firm commercial relations, which is evidenced by precise data and figures: thus in 2011 commercial exchange was 308 billion euro (see Graph 4).

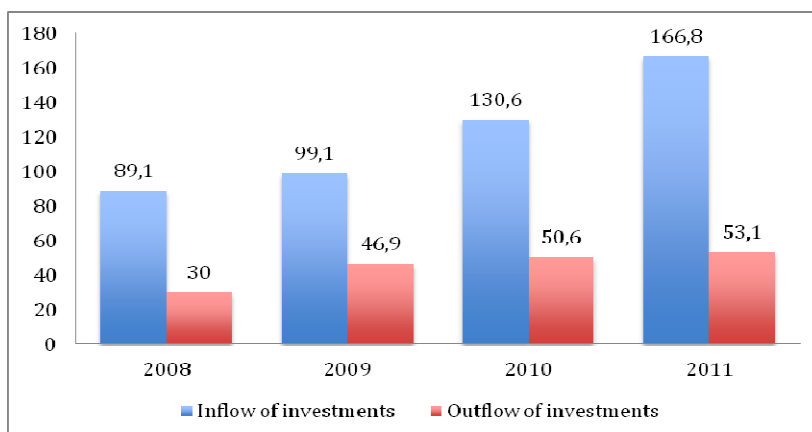
**Graph 4. Commercial relations between the EU and the RF (million EUR)**



Source: European Commission DG 29-Nov-12/Eurostat 19-Dec-2012

In Graph 5 we can observe the volume of accumulated direct investments of the EU to the RF. Accumulated direct investments to the RF from the EU in 2011 reached 53,1 billion euro.

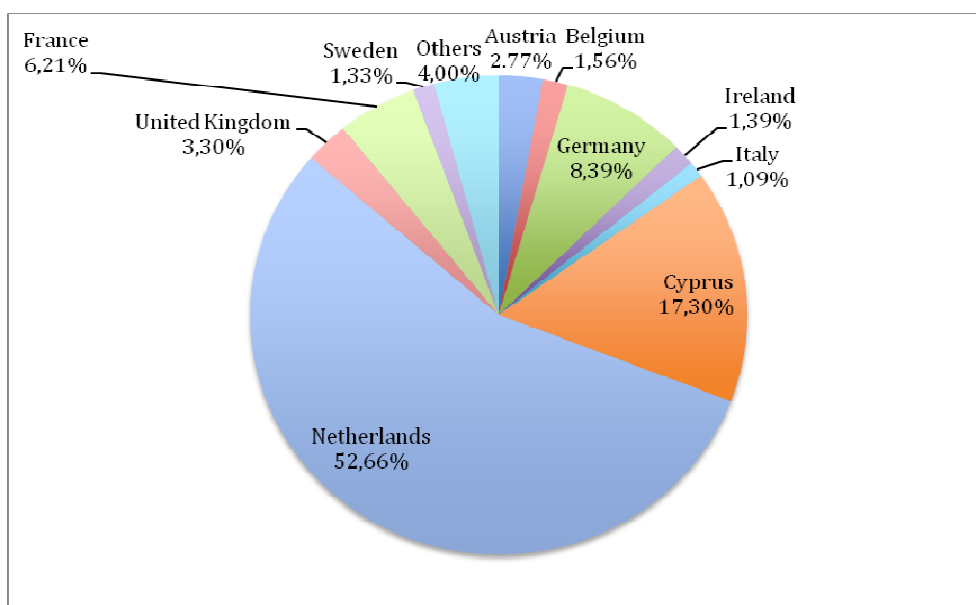
**Graph 5. Accumulated direct investments from the EU to Russian economy (billion EUR)**



Source: Eurostat 22 Jan-13

Among principal direct investors to Russian economy the Netherlands and Cyprus can be highlighted (see Graph 6). Although it is worth noticing that experts believe that direct investments from Cyprus to Russia have to do with capital flight from Russia and money laundering abroad.

**Graph 6. Accumulated direct investments 2005-2012 from the EU to the RF**



Source: Own elaboration on the base on Rosstat

Among main commercial partners of the RF members of the EU we can mention the Netherlands and Germany (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Main Russia's commercial partners, members of the EU (million \$)**

Country, member of the EU	2012			2013		
	Export	Import	Trade turnover	Export	Import	Trade turnover
<b>Netherlands</b>	76803,16	5979,31	<b>82782,47</b> 5	70126,1	<b>5845,9</b>	75972
<b>Germany</b>	35593,719	38300,388	<b>73894,10</b> 7	37027,8	<b>37916,3</b>	74944,1
<b>Italy</b>	32428,212	13425,97	<b>45854,18</b> 2	39314,5	<b>14553,8</b>	53868,3
<b>Poland</b>	19878,01	7474,69	<b>27352,7</b>	19582,2	<b>8334,3</b>	27916,5
<b>United Kingdom</b>	15028,302	8191,796	<b>23220,09</b> 8	16449,3	<b>8106,4</b>	24555,7
<b>France</b>	10526,744	13771,576	<b>24298,32</b>	9202,9	<b>13011,9</b>	22214,8

Source: Own elaboration on the base of Rosstat 2013

The statistical data about commercial exchange, investment volume and a large number of mutual projects justify that common economic-commercial interest constitutes the basis of strategic partnership between the EU and the RF.

At present the EU imports 50% of its energy requirements from abroad, particularly from extra-European, i.e. Euro-Asian regions. This energy dependence is not going to diminish but to increase to 65% by 2030. 80% of oil consumption and almost 55% of its demand for natural gas come from abroad, both from European and extra-European regions. (Haluani M, 2009). Only the RF provides the EU with 33% of its oil needs and 34% of its natural gas consumption. Some countries members of EU totally depend on Russian supplies of natural gas.

Nevertheless, EU's energy consumption dependence doesn't represent a serious geopolitical and economic industrial challenge for the EU; what significantly connects the EU and Russia in the question of energy also strongly commits the latter power in financial matters with the European bloc. Income in hard currencies, especially in euro, and therefore the high finance of the Russian State to a considerable degree depend on EU's financial solvency; Russia provides only the EU with 88% of its crude oil exports, 70% of its natural gas exports and 50% of its coal exports. Therefore we can speak about interdependence between partners in the field of energy.

The interdependence in partners' economies stimulates rapprochement between the EU and the RF. Moreover, it can be said that before the Ukrainian conflict the interdependence was the factor that balanced negative impact of disagreements between the EU and the RF in the field of security.

Nowadays the issue remains open: will such interdependence be able to prevail in the case of Ukraine, the way it did before, let's say, in 2008 with the case of Georgia, such a harsh confrontation which we observe in the international area between the RF on the one side and the EU and the USA on another side?

The security field and collaboration at the international level are the most problematic spheres in the Euro-Russian relations. In spite of losing global influence after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia as its successor still is a key player at the international level. Russia inherited from the USSR its position of permanent member in the UN Security Council, nuclear potential, huge territories, population, natural resources and so on. All these factors allow to consider Russia as one of world centers of regional influence.

The joint potential of all the EU countries also allows us to consider it as one of the key participants of international relations. Taking into account only high status of the partners would already be enough to speak at the international level about global security problems, but this is also completed with geographical closeness. Land borders between the EU and the RF exceed 2250 km and constitute one fifth of all land borders of the EU and one tenth of Russian borders.

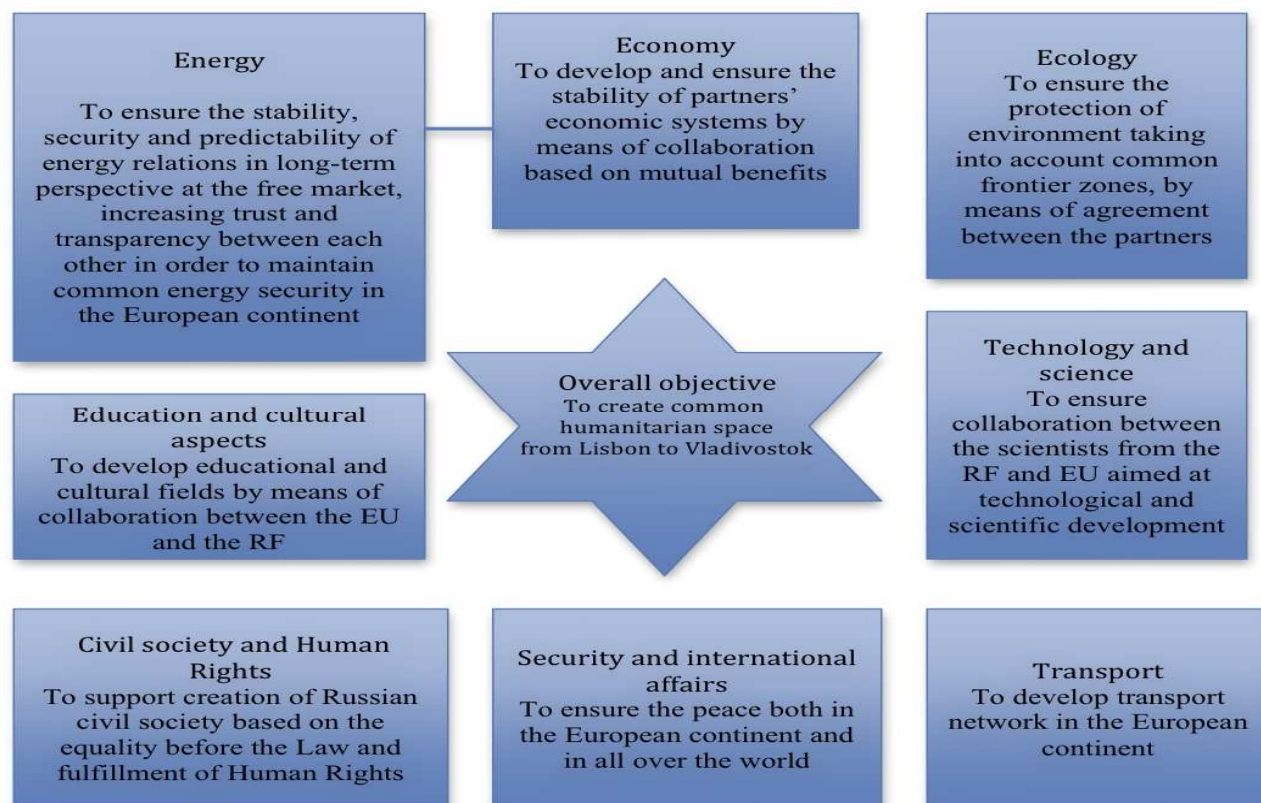
So the partners need to solve together not only global problems, but also the problems at the regional level. In practice this is achieved by creating of two common areas: the area of external security and the area of freedom, security and justice.

However, observing harsh confrontation between the RF and the EU in the conflict with Ukraine, it can be said that the parties pursue absolutely different interests at the international level and the fight for leadership in post-Soviet area which took place after the fall of USSR hasn't lost its relevance.

The question is whether these disagreements at the international level will separate common commercial interests. If this happens, strategic partnership between the EU and the RF will lose sense and the parties will have to search for other models of coexistence.

Common interests that the parties have formulated as specific strategic objectives cover a wide circle within the spheres of collaboration (see Scheme 2).

Scheme 2. Strategic objectives of the EU and the RF



Source: Own elaboration on the base of: official documents such as the SPA, "Road Maps", etc.; the information of the official web pages of the Russian representation in the EU and the EU's representation in the RF; reports about the results of summits between the RF and the EU; public declarations of European and Russian leaders during the summit meetings

For strategic relations it is necessary that the list of spheres of collaboration include principal fields of international relations, i.e. economy, security, ecology, culture, etc.

Referring to the Scheme 2 we can say that the relations between the EU and the RF cover almost all the fields of collaborations. Collaboration in all of them is reflected and juridically documented in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

Analyzing partners' common objectives it can be said that the majority of them are really important for both parties in a multidimensional way and also need a long-term for realization. In other words, they have strategic character and as a consequence meet the requirement established for objectives in the "Model of Strategic Partnership" (see Scheme 1).

The next step, according to our model, is establishment of official relations of strategic partnership. The EU and the RF established official relations in 1994 by signing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement although the EU included the RF in the list of “10 Strategic Partners” only in 2009.

For the moment the RF and the EU have established a broad institutional collaborative mechanism that includes high-level meetings, meetings at the ministerial level and meetings of experts and thematic groups. It should be remembered that the EU doesn't have such a wide and developed institutional base with any other strategic partner as it has with the RF. The main collaboration tool is dialogue established by the EU and RF in different fields of collaboration.

With regard to the legal basis, the partners still don't have Strategic Partnership Agreement. But it is worth mentioning here that the EU doesn't have such an agreement with the majority of its strategic partners. Nonetheless, the experts both from the EU and RF recognize that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) is no longer relevant and it is necessary to develop new Agreement.

That is so, first of all, because the PCA was created almost 20 years ago and was based on parties' interests and positions of that period. For example, at that time the EU didn't include such a big number of members and the RF was much weaker after the fall of USSR. This explained the fact that the majority of articles of the Agreement were offered by the EU because the RF had to enter new system of the world order based on capitalism and democracy. Secondly, the partners already achieved many objectives indicated in the PCA and, taking into account Russia's entry to the WTO, some articles are already useless. Finally, the PCA doesn't cover all the spheres of collaboration between the EU and RF, for some of the spheres the collaboration started more recently.

As from the year 2008 the parties work on the elaboration of New Agreement which will regulate current Euro-Russian relations covering all the spheres of collaboration. The negotiations are conducted in the format of four thematic groups according to four main parts of the future agreement: collaboration in the field of policy and external security; collaboration in the field of freedom, security and justice, economic sectorial collaboration; and collaboration on the issues of technology, science, education, culture, media, sport and youth policy.

However, there are neither exact dates nor limits for the elaboration of the New Agreement. Its development has durable character due to disagreements between the partners in some issues, especially in the field of policy and external security.

As regards requirements of established relations, it can be said that officially the parties recognized each other as strategic partners and the principle of equality in relations. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that, at first, the relations were built by unequal conditions taking into account unstable position of the New Russia and its serious problems with economic and political system after the fall of the Soviet Union. The EU considered Russia as a junior partner in need of help and mentoring.

At the moment some Russian experts suppose that the attitude of the countries of the EU towards Russia has changed over time and now Russia is considered as an emerging power and a strong and important partner at the international level. In the meantime, others are convinced that the EU still disregard Russia due to its policy, which is not democratised enough, high level of corruption and crime and economic backwardness. Moreover, it is more considered as supplier of raw materials than as strategic partner.

To maintain strategic character it is supposed that the partners must make a commitment, renounce discriminatory actions towards each other and not harm national interests of the partner. Over the long history of Euro-Russian relations the partners have shown both willingness and rejection of commitment.

As examples of willingness to compromise we can see the simplification of visa regimes, decrease of negative consequences in the relations of the EU and the RF after the countries of Baltic and Central Europe joined the EU, agreement about the issue if Russia's entry in the WTO, etc. However, there is still a long list of problems between the parties: some mutual claims and nonfulfillment of assumed obligations from both sides are still not solved and obstruct the dialogue between Brussels and Moscow (see Table 2).

Table 2. Problems between the EU and the RF

Problem field	PRETENSIONS	
	On the part of the EU	On the part of the RF
<b>Economy</b>	<p>Noncompliance with WTO Rules (tax for utilization of imported vehicles)</p> <p>Existence of Russia's taxes for European airline companies for flights over the territory of Siberia (with the incorporation of the RF in the WTO the problem seems to be in the phase of resolution)</p>	
<b>Energy</b>	<p>Government monopoly of energy industry</p> <p>Low domestic prices for energy carries compared with world market prices</p>	The "Third Energy Package" with discriminating character for Russian companies, which was approved by the EU after the Russian companies had invested money to the industry
<b>Civil society and Human Rights</b>	<p>Noncompliance with Human Rights (infringement of rights of ethnic and sexual minorities)</p> <p>Problems with development of the civil society and independence of the media</p>	<p>Infringement of Russian minorities rights in Baltic States</p> <p>Delay in visa abolition agreement</p> <p>Problems related with movement of citizens and transit of cargos in the Kaliningrad Region</p>
<b>Security and international affairs</b>	<p>Involving of the RF in the conflicts in the post-Soviet area</p> <p>Military presence in the post-Soviet area (in unrecognized states such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria)</p> <p>Non-fulfillment of the obligations the way indicated in the Agreement on conventional armed forces in Europe and increase of Russia's military expenditures</p>	<p>Attempt from the EU's side to decrease Russia's influence and leadership in the post-Soviet area</p> <p>NATO expansion to the East</p>



<b>Other fields including cultural aspects</b>	Contempt for EU's values Russia's nationalism and isolation. Unwillingness of Russian population to belong to the European Community High level of corruption and money laundering	Excessive attention from the EU to Russian domestic affairs and concentration on the common values Prejudiced attitude towards the RF from the side of some European members Biased opinion about the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan (future Eurasian Union)
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Source: Own elaboration

It is important that relations of strategic partnership have high efficiency impossible to achieve through another type of relations. As to the relations between the RF and EU, we can speak about high efficiency in economic-commercial sector. It is justified with precise data, i.e. growth and volume of investments, commercial exchange, mutual projects and enterprises that we have seen before.

Nevertheless, speaking about efficiency, in practice it turns out difficult to estimate it. For example, efficiency of collaboration in political and cultural field, because unlike collaboration in economic-commercial field where it can be measured with specific indicators, here not all factors have directly profit-driven character and it is difficult to elaborate indicators to cover all the aspects.

As a summary to all mentioned above, it can be said that, on one hand, before the Ukrainian conflict, the relations between the RF and EU met the majority of requirements of the elaborated model of strategic partnership and the partners had a high development potential. On the other hand, some requirements were not fulfilled or were fulfilled only partially. Among the main obstacles of strategic partnership between the EU and FR the following can be highlighted: disagreements that dominate common interests, some discriminatory action towards each other, rejection to compromise in some issues, legal base that is not up to current tendencies and delay in work on elaboration of new Agreement, nonfulfillment of assumed obligations and promises.

## **5. Conclusions**

We have analyzed the Euro-Russian relations within the elaborated model of strategic partnership. Despite official status of strategic partners, common interests and strategic objectives, collaboration in different fields, established mechanisms and broad institutional base, due to the existence of disagreements, especially in the field of security, discriminatory actions and non-fulfillment of obligations, the Euro-Russian relations during long period could rather be defined as “partnership of necessity” than as “strategic partnership” declared by the parties.

Accumulation of the problems between partners led first to isolation between the RF and the UE and then to open confrontation for leadership in the post-Soviet area. The Ukrainian conflict has been critical moment in the Euro-Russian relations and questioned the possibility of developing Euro-Russian relations in the format of strategic partnership. The conflict in Ukraine proved again that it is impossible to develop trade relations ignoring and accumulating political problems.

Taking into account interdependence of Euro-Russian economies, it seems probable that the situation will be back to the scenario which took place before the Ukrainian conflict, that is to say “partnership of necessity” with formal status of strategic partners. But this condition is unstable and dangerous because it doesn't solve the main problem between the parties and can last only until some other conflict arises.

Among all the scenarios the most reasonable and efficient for all the parties is to establish relation of a real strategic partnership between the European Union and the Russian Federation. Among the reason for this scenario the following may be highlighted:

First of all, interdependence of Euro-Russian economies requires stability and trust in the relations. Strategic partnership is a type of long-term relations with guarantees and fulfillment of obligations.

Secondly, cultural and civilization way, taking into account that common historical and cultural roots of the RF and EU are very close. Financial and business communities, tourists, students, scientists both from Russia and the EU need each other in the cooperation between two parts of the same continent.

Thirdly, the EU and the RF are neighbors and, if they want it or not, they have to count on each other. Pending regional conflicts, both internal and external security taking into account the problems of terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime, ecological problems are the fields which require collaboration between the partners and cannot be solved separately.

Fourthly, the RF and the EU have formal base and established mechanisms to turn into real strategic partners.

Finally: a real strategic partnership would be able to prevent emergence of conflicts in the post-Soviet area. With advanced integration between the RF and the EU ex-Soviet republics will not have to choose between two powerful players in the Eurasian continent.

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