The European Union's 'Ideal Self' in the Post-Soviet space

CRISTIAN NITOIU, Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, Aston University, Birmingham, B4 7ET, UK.
    Email: c.nitoiu@aston.ac.uk

The European Union's 'Ideal Self' in the Post-Soviet Space

CRISTIAN NITOIU

Abstract

During the last two decades, one of the cornerstones of the foreign policy of the European Union (EU) has been the development of a strong presence in its neighbourhood. The 2003 Security Strategy and the recent 2016 Global Strategy highlighted the need to show that the EU can play a major role in the international arena by first establishing a strong presence in the neighbourhood and proving the union's effectiveness in the region. In this context, the aim of the essay is to explore the way the EU's 'ideal self' is constructed and perceived in the post-Soviet space.

DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES, ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF THE foreign policy of the European Union (EU) has been represented by the development of a strong presence in its neighbourhood (Raik & Dinesen 2015). The 2003 Security Strategy[1] and the recent 2016 Global Strategy[2] highlighted the need to show that the European Union can play a major role in the international arena by first establishing a strong presence in the

---

[1] The 2003 Security Strategy highlighted the EU's ambition to play a key role in world politics, and the expectation that it would manage to influence its neighbourhood following the 2004/2007 'big bang' enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe. For more details see: https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/european-security-strategy-secure-europe-better-world

[2] The 2016 Global Strategy stresses the fact that world politics has become less stable than a decade ago and require a different approach from the EU. The emphasis is on the need to develop an approach based on principled pragmatism, where the EU has more limited ambitions in international relations and seeks to pursue its interests in foreign policy. For more details see: https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/global-strategy-foreign-and-security-policy-european-union

neighbourhood and proving the union's effectiveness in the region. This broad aim has been translated in various initiatives towards the neighbourhood such as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)[3], the Easter Partnership (EaP)[4], and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)[5]. As part of the European neighbourhood, the post-Soviet space has thus received significant attention from the EU, who aimed to shape both the domestic and foreign policies of the countries in the region. However, the EU's track record of shaping developments in the post-Soviet space has been at best mixed (Ademmer 2014), given the reluctance of some post-Soviet states to go beyond rhetoric in adapting their policies as well as EU member states' unwillingness and lack of commitment to fully support the union's approach to the region (Nilsson & Silander 2016). EU ouvertures have also been received with scepticism by some post-Soviet states, which tend to see EU policy towards the region as deeply unilateral, asymmetrical, and without regard for the specificities or needs of each country (Delcour 2010). Most of the findings from the open literature refer to the EU's ability to promote its integration project in the post-Soviet states, that is, the range of rules, norms, and regulations that characterise its governance system (Schimmelfennig & Scholtz 2008). Less scrutiny has been directed towards the way the EU's identity in world politics has informed its approach towards the post-Soviet space, and how this identity has been perceived by the states in the region (Gstöhl & Schunz 2017).

The EU's identity in world politics is even more complex than in the case of nation states. As an economically driven project, the EU has also been driven by the need to achieve a united foreign policy that would underpin a strong presence in the international arena. The literature tends to point to the fact that the EU's

---

[3] The ENP was launched by the EU in 2003 and sought to provide a framework for Union to cooperate with the neighbourhood tastes. The main goal was to promote stability and democracy in the neighbourhood, while also helping the states in the region to develop. The ENP was revised following the Arab Spring in 2011, and then in the context of the Ukraine crisis and the migrant crisis in 2015. For more details see: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/neighbourhood/overview_en

[4] The EU launched the EaP in 2009 on the initiative of Poland and Sweden. The initiative is part of the ENP, but seeks to further enhance cooperate on trade and political issues with the post-Soviet states of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. For more details see: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eastern-partnership_en

[5] Similar to the ENP, the main aim of the UfM is to create stability and integration in the Mediterranean region. It was established in 2008 as intergovernmental forum consisting of European countries and states from the Mediterranean basin. For more details see: https://eeas.europa.eu/diplomatic-network/union-mediterranean-ufm_en

identity has been, to a large extent, shaped by its self-perception[6] rather than interactions with other states or the structure of world politics (Checkel & Katzenstein 2009). The most notable exception here is the United States, as its attempts to portray the European Union as a normative, civilian cosmopolitan or ethical power have aimed to place it as both a key transatlantic partner and as a viable and strong alternative in world politics (Rynning & Jensen 2010).

This essay focuses on the role of the perceptions of the self (the ideal self) in world politics in order to analyse the EU's approach towards the post-Soviet eastern neighbours (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine). Moreover, the essay examines how the states in the post-Soviet space perceive and interpret the EU's identity, and explain why they share or reject various aspects of it. More specifically, it explains similarities and differences between the European Union's ideal self and the perceptions of the post-Soviet states regarding EU identity in world politics. In broad terms, the ideal self is the benchmark that states aspire to and against which their actions are judged. Moreover, it is the one of the main drivers that informs how states should behave ideally in international relations, in this way constraining the range of national interests, foreign policy strategies or decisions that policymakers can adopt.[7] Thus, the concept of the 'ideal self' allows us to identify how the European Union frames its ideal behaviour, policies and influence in the post-Soviet space. Identifying the EU's ideal self in the post-Soviet space allows this essay to examine the way in which it is shared or embraced by the post-Soviet states. Consequently, this essay makes a twofold contribution to the literature. On the one hand, it sheds light on the way the ideal self-representation (that is, the ideal self) informs the foreign policies of international actors. On the other, it contributes to the growing body of scholarship on the post-Soviet space by examining the way in which the EU's ideal self is perceived by the post-Soviet states and informs their own foreign policies.

The essay presents an overview based on a larger research project that looks in detail at the way the foreign policies of the post-Soviet states interpret the European Union. As such, this essay does not provide in-depth analyses of individual states, but rather maps the way the ideal self of the EU is perceived by and reflected in the foreign policies of post-Soviet states. Nevertheless, the article focuses on individual post-Soviet states in order to substantiate claims about how the EU's ideal self is perceived in the region. More broadly, the

---

[6] The article considers the EU to have achieved actorness in world politics. To that extent references to the EU's foreign policy or to its self-perception in international relations refer to the areas where a high level of agreement exist among the member states and the EU's institutions – the neighbourhood is one of these areas.

[7] This essay posits that both states and other types of international actors such as the EU are constrained in their foreign policy by the 'ideal self'. However, for practical reasons the terms 'state' is used throughout.

validity of this approach is underlined by the fact that that these states have faced similar challenges in developing their foreign policies in the post-Soviet era: they have had to balance between the interests of multiple powerful external actors (United States, Russia, European Union), while the EU's policies towards them have generally remained consistent (Boedeltje & Houtum 2011; Beauguitte *et al.* 2015; Gnedina 2015). This approach also provides space for both comparisons between the post-Soviet states and a series of generalisable insights. This research uses official documents and statements, secondary data from media and academic reports, together with participant observations from interviews conducted with experts and policymakers between 2011 and 2016 in Brussels, London, Berlin, Moscow, and across the post-Soviet space. The essay proceeds by presenting the concept of the ideal self in the next section and then applying it to the EU's approach towards the post-Soviet space. The following section evaluates how the EU's ideal self is perceived by the countries in question and how these perceptions inform the different processes of foreign policy-making. The essay's core argument – namely that which postulates that the post-Soviet states have an instrumental view of the EU in their foreign policies – can be explained both by how the EU's ideal self is constructed and the traditional multi-vector foreign policies of the countries in the region. The last section outlines and discusses the findings of the essay.

Perceptions of the self (ideal self) in world politics

The identity of a state in world politics is conceptualised here as encompassing an intersubjective and a self-referential dimension. These two dimensions are inherently interlinked and inform each other. The intersubjective dimension draws on the constructivist approach to international relations, whereby interactions with other actors in the international arena play a key role in shaping states' identities in world politics (Lebow 2008; Schoen 2008). In the same vein, interactions with the structure of international relations—primarily the ideas, rules, norms, and values that originate from this structure—share (as some would argue) equal weight in influencing a state's identity (Zehfuss 2006). In this sense, the literature tends to point to various mechanisms through which the intersubjective character of identities is performed in practice; for example, socialisation, learning, and recognition (Checkel & Katzenstein 2009). Examining the intersubjective aspects of identity is important as it highlights how interactions in the international arena, with other states or various norms, rules, and processes change state identities and behaviours in world politics (Nabers 2011). This essay is interested in the self-referential aspects of states' identities in world politics. The main reason for the focus on self-referential aspects , as pointed out in the literature, is that the EU has been generally unresponsive to external

pressures or realities when constructing its foreign policy in the last 25 years and has developed a narrative that, in many interpretations, seems devoid from political reality (Korosteleva 2016; Youngs 2017). While the intersubjective aspects are more outward-oriented, the self-referential ones are more inward-oriented and imply a greater openness on the part of the actor when it comes to the evolution of identity in world politics. The self-referential aspect (or the ideal self) is the narrative that states create in order to portray to other actors an idealised image of how they behave in and interpret international relations (Breuning 2011, p. 23). Conversely, in this essay, the ideal self is also considered to serve, in broad terms, as a benchmark for states themselves. While the ideal self tends to be stable, changes appear due to long-term intersubjective aspects of identity that incrementally spill over and influence perceptions of the ideal self, or in the case of crisis or windows of opportunity where actors within the state have the ability or are forced to alter the narrative of the ideal self (Harnisch 2011).

In their ideal self-representation, states and other international actors perceive themselves as promoting (and embodying) a certain model or set of values. The ideal self sets the broad parameters within which a state's foreign policy is formulated and executed. The ideal self also contains expectations regarding the roles that an actor should play in the international arena. More generally, according to Harnisch (2011, p. 8) 'roles are social positions (as well as a socially recognised category of actors) that are constituted by ego and alter expectations regarding the purpose of an actor in an organised group'. Besides roles, the way international actors ascribe meanings, frame, and understand various key concepts in international relations— the international system, status in world politics, the nature of power, legitimacy, responsibility—is intrinsically shaped by their ideal self (Slaughter 2005; Evans 2009; Lake 2011; Beasley 2012; Goddard & Krebs 2015; Heimann 2015; Terhalle 2015; Flockhart 2016; Mattern & Zarakol 2016).

The ideal self can also be seen as an overarching vector in a state's foreign policy, as it provides more or less clearly articulated guidelines for policymakers. It tends to be stable as it develops gradually and incrementally, based on historically situated knowledge and experience of international relations. However, sudden changes lead policymakers to reframe the ideal self. For example, the 9/11 attacks made fighting global terrorism the key priority in US foreign policy and consolidated the legitimacy of interventionism and the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle in this respect as an integral part of the American ideal self (Buzan 2004). Crises in themselves may or may not lead to changes in the state's ideal self but they will accelerate reframing. Russia during Putin's third presidential term (i.e. since 2012) offers another example, as it started to reframe the ideal self that presents an assertive Moscow in world politics whose great power status is widely

recognised (Sakwa 2015). This process started in the aftermath of the coloured revolutions in the post-Soviet space (Saari 2014).

States can pursue their ideal self in world politics in an intentional manner by developing strategies and trying to put them into practice. For example, the European Union understands an integral part of ideal self to be the spread of its norms and values in world politics, and, first proving that it can act in this manner in its immediate neighbourhood (Prodi 2002; Council of the European Union 2003; Morgherini 2017). Such a broad aspiration, in turn, has informed the development of the EU strategy towards the neighbourhood and a myriad of initiatives such as the ENP, EaP, and the UfM (Schumacher 2015). Conversely, states can also be guided by their ideal self based on inertia rather than intentional effort. For example, Russia's actions in the post-Soviet space during the early 1990s, such as support for separatist movements in the newly independent countries or its lacklustre commitment for regional initiatives, did not seem to be informed by an overarching strategy (Bukkvoll 2001).

Even though the ideal self of states tends to be stable, there is considerable variation in the way policymakers understand and translate this into foreign policy strategies. Firstly, it can be framed in a an explicit manner in which states define a series of steps or strategies for pursuing the ideal self—in this way rallying domestic actors and sending well-defined messages to external ones. During the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union constructed clear and rigid dichotomous foreign policy strategies bent on countering each other's influence (Leeds & Mattes 2007). Their ideal self was essentially propagating their ideology and way of life around the world. Framing the 'Other' as an existential threat allowed policymakers to rally their societies as a whole in the ideological Cold War confrontation. Secondly, states can have an ambiguous understanding of the ideal self, which can lead to various interpretations by domestic actors and other states. This may occur due to increasing polarisation among domestic political elites or following significant internal crises or events. For example, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the newly post-Soviet states had the choice of adopting a European liberal path or embracing a conservative (closer to Russia) direction (White & Feklyunina 2014). This intense level of polarisation has led to a very ambiguous understanding of the ideal self, which in practice translated into dysfunctional multivector strategies in post-Soviet foreign policymaking. Thirdly, the ideal self can be translated in flexible foreign policy strategies that can be easily reframed in the event of unsuccessful policy outcomes. The 2003 Security Strategy, the ENP, and the EaP had ambitious and flexible goals— promoting democracy and stability in the neighbourhood, managing migration, and respectively tackling global

climate change—that were quickly downgraded when it became obvious that the EU could not live up them (Schumacher 2015).

The ideal self has a temporal dimension linked to the way policymakers understand it and frame foreign policy strategies. States that identify their ideal self in the past will seek to shape the current order so as to replicate the moment of attainment of their ideal self. Those that perceive their ideal self in the present will seek to maintain and advance the current world order. States that wish to break from the past have an abstract view of their ideal self and perceive that it will be realised in the future. However, those that see their ideal self as breaking with the past still identify negatively with an ideal self located in their historical experience. For example, in the initial decades following its creation the EU's ideal self was framed in contrast with the experience of the two world wars and the lack of peace on the European continent. The past thus became negative signifier for the EU's ideal self, from which the EU sought to break away. (Zielonka 2008)

The ideal self shapes the way states' foreign policies balance the need to preserve the national interest and the desire to better the life of people living in other states. The first, inward, approach focuses on furthering domestic needs and devising a foreign policy that maximises the benefits of interaction with other international actors (Bulley 2011). The second, and arguably less salient, outward tendency emphasises empathy and altruism, prompting states to be sensitive to and reflect on the way in which they can tend to the domestic needs of other international actors (De Zutter 2010). Priorities such as tackling global climate change, alleviating global poverty and social inequality, and international aid and development are some of the key hallmarks an outward-oriented ideal self.

In terms of the key concepts of international relations, the essay focuses on legitimacy: the way the ideal self of states prescribes the limits of legitimate and responsible behaviour in world politics (Buchanan & Keohane 2006; Mayer & Vogt 2006; Evans 2009). The internal dimension highlights states' foreign policies need to be legitimate and responsible in front of their citizens in promoting their interest. The external dimension of legitimacy emphasises the way states consider international norms and other states' interests in acting in international relations. The more sensitive a state is to these aspects, the more legitimate its behaviour becomes (Goddard & Krebs 2015). Hence, legitimacy beyond national borders is based on the beliefs or consent of other societies as external normative standards. As the next section will show, this focus on the concept on legitimacy is justified by the fact that debates regarding the EU's legitimacy have been increasingly salient in the literature.

The European Union's primary role in the post-Soviet space (framed in its ideal self) underscores its ability and duty to act as a normative power that emphasises the promotion of values rather than interests (Füle 2010a; Haukkala 2011). However, the failure to make a clear distinction between values and interests has not only confused other states—such as Russia or the post-Soviet states—but also led to confusion within EU policymaking circles, with particular reference to the scope and aims of the Union's policy. Firstly, the EU has partly disguised the promotion of its economic and security interests (mainly in the areas of migration, human trafficking and energy) behind the discourse of normative power; that is, the promotion of 'universal' norms such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. It has done this in an asymmetrical manner, always assuming that its values are morally superior to those of other states; in other words, value promotion has gone mostly one way (Delcour 2010). At the other end of spectrum, Russia has furthermore, denounced with regularity the promotion of EU values as an unfair intrusion into the internal affairs and political systems of other, sovereign, states (Gretskiy *et al.* 2014). Post-Soviet states have in turn mixed views regarding the promotion of EU normative power. On the one hand, they seem attracted by the benefits of European integration (Korosteleva *et al*. 2017) but, on the other, they stress that the EU's model is asymmetrical and unilateral, and that its acceptance does ultimately antagonise Russia (Youngs 2017). Hence, the post-Soviet coutnries have been constrained to choose between the EU and Russia's hegemony . In turn, the leaders of some these countries (such as Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) have used a pro-European narrative for electoral purposes and frequently adopted democratic reforms symbolically, without really aiming to implement them (Cantir & Kennedy 2015; Declour & Wolczuk 2015a; Dragneva & Wolczuk 2015).

Throughout the post-Soviet space, the European Union's ideal self has been pursued in a largely intentional manner. Following the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the union started to build and formalise various initiatives beyond its new borders. This was a deliberate move meant to highlight that the European Union could be an effective actor in the neighbourhood and thus play an enhanced role globally, making the ENP, for example, a testing ground for more global policies (Council of the European Union 2003, 2008). Consequently, throughout the last decade, the EU has developed its formal approach towards the post-Soviet space by gradually adding various layers of economic and political integration in a bid to shape both domestic and

regional developments, for example, Association Agreements (AAs) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs)[8].

The EU has understood its ideal self in rather flexible terms, which have allowed it to set ambitious goals or foreign policy strategies and downgrade them when reality failed to match them (Schumacher 2015). Some examples include the EU's ambitious goals in tackling climate change, which were downgraded after the failure to set the agenda at the 2009 Copenhagen summit (Bäckstrand & Elgström 2013), the ever-present desire to create a working European defence union, which tends to be swept under rug in times of adverse conditions (Bickerton 2011), or its approach to migration, which has been reframed several times and arguably made less cosmopolitan during the recent refugee crisis (Heisbourg 2015). In the post-Soviet space in particular, the EU rebranded its approach to promoting 'deep' democracy, justice system reform, or even altered the terms of the DCFTAs and AAs in order to match the failure to implement them (Schumacher 2015). The constant reframing of the EU's understanding of the ideal self is partly influenced by the complex nature of decision-making in foreign policy, where the interests and views of the 28 member states need to be accommodated. At the same time, during the last decade, the post-Soviet space, and the international arena as a whole, has been characterised by increasing disorder, with many events making stable foreign policy strategising rather redundant.

Moreover, the growing assertiveness of Russia in the region and its unpredictability is forcing the European Union to reconsider its presence in the eastern neighbourhood. The constant reframing of the EU's strategies in the post-Soviet space, based on the flexible understanding of its ideal self, has damaged its image and reputation in the region. In this sense, the literature indicates that the post-Soviet states tend to see the EU as an incoherent and sometimes weak foreign policy actor that lacks willingness and commitment to put its goals and strategies into practice (Freire & Kanet 2012; Chaban *et al.* 2013).

The EU ideal self differs from that of nation states as the European Union claims to be promoting its values in an altruistic manner. This ideal self resides in the European Union's ability to bring peace and prosperity on the continent and reunite Europe, hence presupposing EU moral superiority to other states (Diez 2005). The European Union has sought to promote its integration model in the post-Soviet space, an approach justified by the more than half a decade of peace and economic development on the European continent. However, due to the current economic crisis, the increasingly disordered neighbourhood, Russia's assertiveness in foreign policy and the lack of effectiveness of the ENP or the EaP, the EU's ideal self has become the pre-

---

[8] The AAs are treaties that set out the framework for cooperation between the EU and non-EU states, while DCFTAS are enhanced trade agreements that the EU has offered to Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.

crisis EU which successfully enlarged to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)—that is, the recent past. The EU's ideal self is thus located in a period in which it viewed Russia as inherently weak.

On the surface, the European Union seems to have an outward understanding of its ideal self, as it discursively emphasises the promotion of universal values and economic development throughout the world. However, in practice, its approach towards the post-Soviet space has been rather inward looking, as most of the EU's policies and initiatives have bent on promoting its own interests (European Commission 2003, 2015; Ferrero-Waldner 2005). Behind the rhetoric of the need to engage with partner countries and be open to their needs, the EU has largely overlooked the desires and specific conditions of the post-Soviet states when tailoring its approach towards the region (Edwards 2008). Conversely, policies such as the ENP and the EaP have been frequently branded as asymmetric, as they draw mostly on the EU's unilateral understanding of what is best for the neighbourhood countries (Haukkala 2011).

In terms of legitimacy of behaviour in world politics, the EU ideal self tends to frame the use of force as a measure of last resort, not a common foreign policy tool. Thus, the European Union sees itself as promoting a distinct type of normality in international relations, which, unlike the norms upheld by nation states, focuses on the need to employ non-military and non-coercive tools in foreign policy (European External Action Service 2016). This perception is in stark contrast with the way major international actors such as the United States, Russia and China view military action or the potential to use military power: as a legitimate aspect of international relations (Beasley 2012). Nevertheless, the European Union is a keen supporter of the R2P principle (European Parliament 2013a; Kadelbach 2014) and, in line with this commitment, it has sent peacekeeping missions to various parts of the world (European Parliament 2013a).

Noteworthy here is the fact that the EU's ideal self frames the promotion of its norms in world politics as inherently legitimate, even though they may not be shared by other countries and cultures (Solana 2008; Council of the European Union 2010; Ashton 2012). Significant criticism has been directed towards the European Union's promotion of norms, namely, that portraying them as universal insulates the union from criticism that it acts in an asymmetric and illegitimate way (Sjursen 2011; Tonra 2011; De Zutter 2010).

The EU's ideal self and the foreign policies of the post-Soviet states

This section examines the various way in which post-Soviet states perceive the identity of the EU in world politics and how their foreign policies reflect the EU's ideal self. In doing so, it explains similarities and differences between the European Union's ideal self and the perceptions of EU identity in world politics held by

post-Soviet states. What unites the foreign policies of post-Soviet states is their tendency to instrumentalise relations with the European Union to attain various benefits (economic, recognition of their status in world politics, acknowledgment as part of Europe). In its ideal self, the EU applies a similar instrumental logic regarding the post-Soviet states; that is, while extending the EU integration project to certain countries in the region might not bring significant added value when it comes to trade, enlargement has the potential to prove the EU's weight in international relations. As the section will show, this instrumental approach also underlines the roles that post-Soviet states assign to the EU in the region.

The previous section noted the EU's ideal self stresses the importance of creating and maintaining a strong presence in the neighbourhood, including the post-Soviet space. Developing such a presence has been considered a prerequisite for proving the EU's ability to shape key issues and events on the international agenda. The ideal self underscores the EU's duty to help the countries in the neighbourhood democratise and develop fully functional economies (European Commission 2003, 2010; Füle 2010b; Council of the European Union 2011). Promoting its norms and values is seen as a key mechanism for effectively exercising this role. By having stable, democratic, and prosperous countries in the eastern neighbourhood, the EU not only manages to prove that it can shape in positive terms the domestic political settings of other countries, but also enhance the security of the region and prevent any threats that might originate from the post-Soviet space spilling over to member states. Particularly, the EU's ideal self does not put significant emphasis on the Union's interests in the post-Soviet space. Nevertheless, the post-Soviet states envisage a series of roles, which in some cases overlap, for the EU in the region (see Table 1): normative power, mediator, liberal power, trade power and partner, bargaining chip, or defender against Russia.

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

One of the most important roles that post-Soviet states attribute to the EU is that of trade partner and economic power. These perceived roles are the key drivers behind the desire of the states in the region to establish strong economic partnerships with the European Union. Nevertheless, post-Soviet states have had to balance between pursuing sustainable trade partnerships with the EU and accepting the norms and regulations that the EU seeks to simultaneously and unilaterally export. Most of the post-Soviet states have had to sign some sort of free trade area or partnership and cooperation agreement with the EU that allows them access to the common market. Signing the DCFTA has been indeed one of the key goals of the foreign policies of Ukraine

11

(Maksak *et al.* 2017), Moldova (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration 2010), and Georgia (Kakachia & Cecire 2013), and has been widely presented in public discourse as a major achievement (Ademmer 2014). Belarus (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus 2017) and Armenia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia 2017) have advocated for Eurasian integration to be made compatible with the EU's integration project, which would allow them to reap the benefits of an economic partnership with the EU while aligning themselves with Russia in foreign affairs (European Parliament 2013b). Azerbaijan (Pashayeva 2015), on the other hand, has sought a more equal type of trade deal with the European Union that would take into account its privileged position as the possessor of significant natural resources. Thus, Baku has been adamant that it should not receive similar treatment or deals as Moldova or Belarus, and that unlike the other post-Soviet states, it should have a say regarding the substance of agreements with the EU. However, the recent decrease in oil prices has limited Baku's bargaining position in relation to the EU (Jafarli 2016). On the whole, the EU's perceived economic role has been its greatest asset in influencing both the domestic and foreign policies of post-Soviet states.

Some post-Soviet states perceive the EU as a mediator in their relationship with other important external actors in the region such as Russia, China, and the US. The EU is seen to have the potential to play an independent role and mediate possible conflicts or agreements. This is to a larger degree the case for post-Soviet states that are positioned more remotely from the EU—both in their geographical location, but also in terms of being subject to weak pressure and low demands from the EU. Azerbaijan is a good example, as it relies on mediation from the EU in solving various tensions with other external actors, such as Turkey or Russia (Mehdiyeva 2011; Kazantsev 2015). Moreover, the slightly lower level of interest from the EU in shaping domestic changes in those countries allows the union to be able to play the role of a mediator. Azerbaijan (Khidayatova 2015) has sought to use the EU to access various multilateral forums, such as the World Trade Organization. The diplomatic mediation of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine with the participation of Germany and France, has allowed Belarus to claim that it has achieved greater status and reputation on the European continent..

At the same time, in their interactions with the EU, these states have put significant emphasis on ensuring that their views and interests have equal weight in any future deals or partnerships.[9] Being in an equal

---

[9] *EU Consultation: 'Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy*, Heinrich–Böll–Stiftung e.V., 2015, available at: https://eu.boell.org/sites/default/files/towards_a_new_european_neighbourhood_policy_fin.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

partnership with the EU is seen as a source of empowerment in the international arena. Azerbaijan has sought to develop foreign policies independent of the influence of external actors, sustained by the export of its abundant natural energy resources (Mehdiyeva 2011). The perception of equality has allowed Baku to claim a sense of distinctiveness in interacting with the EU or Russia. However, as the recent fall in global oil prices shows, Azerbaijan's ability to project its individual foreign policy is sensitive to global markets, which forced it to engaging with the EU's demands and ask for negotiations on a new partnership (Ledger 2016).

The EU is also perceived as a liberal power which is intent on promoting its own values as part of the relationship package. This role is seen in the region primarily as a negative role, as the EU's unilateral promotion of norms and values often collides with the interests, preferences and political culture of elites who thrive in more or less authoritarian states. To that extent, most post-Soviet states tend to resist and discourage the EU from taking on this role, or link their acceptance of it to various benefits from the EU. Post-Soviet states such as Belarus (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine 2015) and Azerbaijan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2015) emphasise the importance of sovereignty and each country's right to independently determine the range of norms and values that influence its political system or foreign policy. Other external actors, including Russia and China, while opposing the promotion of liberal values, tend be more attractive foreign-policy partners for these post-Soviet states (Kazantsev 2015).

The EU is also perceived in the post-Soviet space as a potential bargaining chip. . This role is primarily associated with the multi-vector foreign policies (policies aimed at striking balance between multiple great powers) of the post-Soviet states, through which they try to balance the interests of more powerful external actors, such as the EU or Russia. These states aim to cooperate with the EU in such a way as not to upset their relationships with other external actors. They try to maximise benefits from external actors and, at times, play them against each other and initiate 'bidding wars' between Russia and the EU (Contessi 2015; Gnedina 2015). For example, among the EaP states, Armenia (Delcour & Wolczuk 2015b) and, to some extent, Belarus (White & Feklyunina 2014), currently have the most developed multi-vector foreign policies. Although their membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) might point to the fact that they have chosen to align their foreign policy with Moscow, maintaining a good and workable relationship with the EU is also a key goal for these countries (Lane & Samokhvalov 2015). Moreover, in the case of Belarus, developing closer relations with the EU and accepting some of its conditionality has been a way of ensuring a measure of independence from Moscow (Rankin 2016). In the case of Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan and subsequent Russian support means that the EU's influence is rather constrained. However, its relations with the

EU are much stronger than those of Belarus or Azerbaijan, and the country stated its interest in achieving complementarity between Eurasian and European integration (Cornell 2017) .

The 'bargaining chip' role implies that the threat of establishing closer cooperation with the EU or the promise of limiting ties with the union have been used by post-Soviet states in order to secure more favourable deals in their relationship with Russia. The most prominent example is Belarus' increasing willingness to cooperate with the EU and accept aspects of its conditionality. For President Lukashenko, maintaining a sustainable and effective dialogue with the EU has become, since the start of the Ukraine crisis, a key foreign policy goal. This can be seen as part of Belarus' attempts to resist further political integration into the EEU and maintain its relative independence from Russia (Korosteleva 2015a). Armenia has also tried to keep the option of European integration on the horizon despite its entrenchment in Eurasian integration, for similar reasons to Belarus: to resist ceding more sovereignty to the EEU (Delcour & Wolczuk 2015b). Ukraine during the time of Yanukovich is another example of a post-Soviet state that perceived the EU as a bargaining chip in its relations with Russia. To a large extent, Yanukovich pursued the AA and DCFTA with the European Union as a way of gaining independence from Russia, and also to strengthen its bargaining position with the Kremlin (Fesenko 2015). Being seen as a bargaining chip has not given the EU any significant influence over the foreign policies of post-Soviet states, in practice rendering it a passive actor.

The EU is perceived as a normative power, which aims to help the countries in the region democratise and develop through the promotion of its governance system or values. Countries that share this perception look to the EU for financial support, expertise, and technical assistance with the implementation of democratic reforms. Some states even aspire to be part of the EU. Countries such as Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova regard the EU as the 'gold standard' or model for upholding universal norms and values, and for promoting modernisation (Cadier 2014). Moreover, public opinion in these countries usually tends to distrust national politicians and views the recommendations and benchmarks set by the EU as golden standards for their countries' development (Jarábik & Yanchenko 2013; Korosteleva 2013, 2014, 2015b). Similar to the post-communist states from CEE the 'return to Europe' narrative is also present in the debates in some of the post-Soviet states(Edwards 2008). Arguments favouring a European path stress the positive influence that the EU can have on economic, social, and political developments, as well as the pride of being formally part of 'civilised' Europe [please rephrase] elicits.

At the same time, politicians in some of the European-oriented post-Soviet states have adopted pro-EU rhetoric in order to win or secure political power. Currently, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine see integration in

the EU as their ultimate foreign policy goal. Following the departure of Yanukovich in 2014, Ukraine is entrenched in a self-assumed European path. The country has embraced European integration its main foreign and domestic goal for the foreseeable future. This is considered not only to help the country democratise, be part of 'civilised' Europe and modernise, but also keep Kyiv at bay from future Russian aggression (Dragneva & Wolczuk 2015). In all three states European integration is a seen as a way of leaving behind the legacies of the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet mentality] (Delcour 2015).

Despite the rhetorical commitment to adopting 'superior' EU values, little progress has been made by these countries in actually implementing the EU's rules and values or adapting their political systems. One supposed benefit of EU integration is an end to the corruption and mismanagement of state funds symptomatic of the post-Soviet space as a whole (Popescu 2010). Nevertheless, while the leadership of most of these countries have subscribed to EU values, norms, and regulations on paper and in their discourse, they have failed or been unwilling to implement their European commitments (Ademmer 2014). For example, following the departure from power of the communist party in Moldova, the country was presented as a 'model student' by the EU due to the speed and the commitment with which leaders in Chisinau seemed to have adopted EU rules and regulations (Baltag & Smith 2015). However, this was not matched by policy practice, and Moldova slowly developed into one of the most corrupt regimes in the region, with $1 billion of government funds disappearing from Moldovan banks (Tanas 2015). In comparison to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have not completely embraced a pro-European path as they still acknowledge the need to have a workable relationship with Moscow (Adzinbaia 2015; TASS 2016). At the same time, the post-Soviet states have complained that the promotion of EU norms is unilateral. As a consequence the 2015 revision of the EaP also recognising this aspect (European Commission 2015). To a large extent this role matches the one framed in the EU's ideal self. However, even the post-Soviet states that seem to embrace this role have made only limited steps in implementing the range of values norms and regulations demanded by the EU.

Finally, the EU is perceived as a defender European values , and a protector against Russian aggression (be it military, economic or cultural). Most of the post-Soviet states fear in various degrees the potential loss of independence and sovereignty to Moscow (Bechev 2015In particular, states that have current conflicts with Russia or have had conflicts in the past—Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine—would like to see more EU involvement in regional security. However, the EU has not been prepared to take up the challenge, partly in order not to further unsettle its relations with Russia, but also due to differences in how to deal with Russia (European Parliament 2014; House of Lords 2015). Although it is hardly characteristic of the EU's ideal self to

view its own role as a deterrent of Russian aggression, this role increases the effectiveness for the EU's conditionality in the region, as the post-Soviet states do not have the option of balancing the EU with Russia. .

The EU's understanding (framed in the ideal self) of the legitimacy of the use of force in world politics and of the promotion of norms or values is not shared simultaneously by any of the post-Soviet states. The EU perceives the use of force as a measure of last resort, while the promotion of its (universal) norms to other international actors is seen to be legitimate. Post-Soviet states that are faced with conflicts or with the constant threat of conflict or internal separatism (Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Armenia) frame the use of force as a legitimate and normal tool in world politics. Those states not experiencing immediate threats tend to regard the use of force is a measure of last resort (for example, Belarus). This view is also based on the fact that these countries wish to avoid any type of military confrontation with the various external powers that surround them; in the case of Belarus, Russia. On the other hand, the promotion of EU norms is perceived to be legitimate by countries that support the European Union's role as a normative actor in the region (Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova). Importing EU norms is seen as a way to be integrated in the liberal world community and be part of Western civilisation (Barkanov 2015). All post-Soviet states in various degrees argue that the EU promotes its norms asymmetrically and tries to impose them unilaterally. In the more extreme version, this narrative of resisting EU norm promotion is equivalent to maintaining state independence and sovereignty (Sakwa 2014). Moreover, even those that view the promotion of EU norms to be legitimate have had problems in actually implementing the norms and regulations adopted from the EU. Consequently, the EU's view of legitimate behaviour in world politics (be it concerning the use of force or promotion) is shared by the post-Soviet states only when it matches with their interests or their needs. This further strengthens the idea that post-Soviet states tend to instrumentalise the EU in their foreign policies.

Discussion and conclusions

In the context of increasing disorder and conflict in the post-Soviet space, this article has aimed to shed light on the way the EU's identity is perceived by and reflected in the foreign policies of the countries in the region. The concept of 'ideal self' (perceptions of the self) can be understood as an overall vector in foreign policy that guides the way international actors should behave ideally in world politics. The focus on the ideal self allows the essay to identify the way the EU frames its ideal behaviour in the post-Soviet space and how the EU's ideal self underscores the union's main role as a normative power. In relation to legitimacy, the EU views the use of force in world politics to be legitimate only as a measure of last resort, while the external promotion of (universal)

norms is perceived to represent legitimate behaviour. The article also explored the way in which the EU's identity is perceived and reflected in the foreign policies of the post-Soviet states. In doing so it aimed to account for the similarities and differences between the perception of the post-Soviet states and the EU's ideal self. The analysis presented an overview from a broader research project that looks in detail at the foreign policies of the post-Soviet states. While the article presents insights from individual post-Soviet states, the emphasis is rather on identifying and explaining similarities or differences between the ways the foreign policies of these states reflect the EU's ideal self.

The analysis highlights that there are more differences than similarities in the way the post-Soviet states reflect the EU's ideal self. For example, the EU's role as a normative power in the region is shared by only a few states (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), for whom being part of the EU is a key foreign policy goal. The post-Soviet states tend to perceive a wider range of roles for the EU in the region: liberal power, security provider, bargaining chip. These roles nevertheless overlap according to the interests and specificities of the post-Soviet states. Moreover, when it comes to legitimate and responsible behaviour no post-Soviet state shares the EU's understanding of the legitimacy of the use of force and the external promotion of norms or values. Most post-Soviet states have instrumentalised their relations with the EU, trying to get as many benefits as possible. Their foreign policy has reflected the EU's ideal self primarily in cases where it suited their interests or presented costs. As the post-Soviet states have been surrounded by multiple powerful external actors, siding in foreign policy with one has the potential of alienating the others and potentially suffering dangerous consequences. In the case of Ukraine, for example, the mismatch between the EU's ideal self in the region and Kyiv's own perception of the EU's role has contributed to the Ukraine crisis in the sense that, since the departure of Yanukovich, the leadership expected more of the union than it received.

The EU's approach towards the post-Soviet (but also its more global) approach has been informed to a larger extent by own realities rather than by interactions with other states or the structure of world politics. In practice this has meant that the intersubjective aspects of the EU's identity have been less pronounced that its ideal perceptions of the self (i.e. the ideal self). The construction of the ideal self can thus account for why the EU is instrumentalised by the post-Soviet states. Firstly, the EU's ideal self tends to be rather flexible terms, changing its (most times) ambitious gaols when they do not match reality and political outcomes. Even though the EU perceives itself as upholding and promoting universal norms and values, as well rules and regulations leading to economic development in the post-Soviet space, in practice it has turned a blind to, for example, the corrupt practices of policymakers from the region who brand themselves as pro-European. At the same time, the

EU has frequently ignored setbacks in democratic reforms in pro-European countries such as Ukraine and Moldova, creating the impression of double standards in its approach towards the eastern neighbourhood. Hence, the flexible interpretation of the ideal self on the part of the EU has made the post-Soviet states question its commitment and adopt an instrumental approach. This has contributed to low ownership form the post-Soviet states of the ENP or the EaP, and to their instrumentalisation of relations with the EU.

Secondly, the EU's ideal self also puts emphasis on the moral supremacy of the EU, whose norms and values are deemed superior to those of the neighbourhood in the post-Soviet space. In practice this meant that, the EU's approach mirrored its own institutional make-up and ideal self and ignored the diversity of views and interests present in the post-Soviet space. EU centrism, thus pushed the post-Soviet states to view the Union more as an instrument for achieving various ends rather than a genuine partner (Cadier 2015). Moreover, only until recently with the revision of the 2015 ENP and the strategic review has the EU started to revise its ideals self in the post-Soviet space and be more sensitive to the region—this move is primarily underlined by the realisation that the whole EU neighbourhood has transformed from a ring of friends to a ring of fire.

Thirdly, on the surface the EU's ideal self-have a very well defined outward dimension, in that unlike nation states it is more altruistic and pays more attention to the wellbeing and interests of other people. As Moga (2017) shows this paved the way for EU policymakers and institutions deeply ingrained in the narrative underlying the EU ideal self to be at the helm of the EU's approach towards the post-Soviet space.

Viewing the EU as an instrument for achieving various ends should not be considered to be solely influenced by the EU. On the one hand, the EU is employed by elites in the post-Soviet who want to score electoral points by either declaring their allegiance to the EU (in pro-European countries), opposing the European integration (in more pro-Russian countries), or pointing to the EU as scape-goat in order to push forward for unpopular policies (Delcour 2015). On the other hand, the post-Soviet states have a tradition of balancing their relations with the great powers around them, and employing an opportunistic approach where they play these powers against each other in order to get as many benefits as possible. Hence, instrumentalising relations with more salient international actors is also down to the opportunistic tendency of the post-Soviet states. The analysis also provides the basis for understanding the ideal self of external actors (such China, Russia, the US or Turkey) and how it is reflected in the foreign policies of the post-Soviet states. The assumption in this case would be, that besides the clash of interests and norms between external actors, conflicts in the region (such as the Ukraine crisis) are also a result of the contradictory ways in which the ideal self of the external actors frames their role in the post-Soviet space or the four key concepts in world politics.

References

Ademmer, E. (2014) 'Interdependence and EU-demanded Policy Change in a Shared Neighbourhood', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22, 5.

Adzinbaia, Z. (2015) 'Georgia's Normalization of Relations with Russia Murky as Ever', *Georgia Today*, available at: http://georgiatoday.ge/news/1089/Georgia%E2%80%99s-Normalization-of-Relations-with-Russia-Murky-as-Ever, accessed 20 June 2017.

Allen, D. & Smith, M. (1990) 'Western Europe's Presence in the Contemporary International Arena', *Review of International Studies*, 16, 1.

Ashton, C. (2012) *Speech on EU foreign policy towards the BRICS and other emerging powers*, European Parliament, 1 February, available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/images/top_stories/020212_brics.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

Bäckstrand, K. & Elgström, O. (2013) 'The EU's Role in Climate Change Negotiations: from Leader to "Leadiator"', Journal of European Public Policy, 20, 10.

Baltag, D. & Smith, M. (2015) 'EU and Member State Diplomacies in Moldova and Ukraine: Examining EU Diplomatic Performance Post-Lisbon', *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)*, 19, 1.

Barkanov, B. (2015) 'Crisis in Ukraine: Clash of Civilizations or Geopolitics?', in Kanet, R. E. & Sussex, M. (eds) *Power, Politics and Confrontation in Eurasia: Foreign Policy in a Contested Region* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).

Beasley, N. (2012) *Great Powers in the Changing International Order* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner Publishers).

Beauguitte, L., Richard, Y. & Guérin-Pace, F. (2015) 'The EU and its Neighbourhoods: A Textual Analysis on Key Documents of the European Neighbourhood Policy', *Geopolitics*, 20, 4.

Bechev, D. (2015) 'Understanding the Contest Between the EU and Russia in Their Shared Neighborhood', *Problems of Post-Communism*, 62, 6.

Bickerton, C. J. (2011) *European Union Foreign Policy: From Effectiveness to Functionality* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).

Boedeltje, F. & van Houtum, H. (2011) 'Brussels is Speaking: The Adverse Speech Geo-Politics of the European Union Towards its Neighbours', *Geopolitics*, 16, 1.

Browning, C. S. (2006) 'Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 19, 4.

Buchanan, A. & Keohane, R. O. (2006) 'The Legitimacy of Global Governance Institutions', *Ethics & International Affairs*, 20, 4.

Bukkvoll, T. (2001) 'Off the Cuff Politics—Explaining Russia's Lack of a Ukraine Strategy', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 53, 8.

Buzan, B. (2004) *The United States and the Great Powers: World Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, Polity).

Cadier, D. (2014) 'Eastern Partnership vs Eurasian Union? The EU–Russia Competition in the Shared Neighbourhood and the Ukraine Crisis', *Global Policy*, 5, s1.

Cadier, D. (2015) 'Policies Towards the Post-Soviet Space: The Eurasian Economic Union As An Attempt To Develop Russia's Structural Power?', in Cadier, D. & Light, M. (eds) *Russia's Foreign Policy: Ideas, Domestic Politics and External Relations* (New York, NY, Palgrave Macmillan).

Cantir, C. & Kennedy, R. (2015) 'Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants: Moldova's Foreign Policy toward Russia and the European Union', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 11, 4.

Chaban, N., Elgström, O., Kelly, S. & Yi, L. S. (2013) 'Images of the EU beyond its Borders: Issue-Specific and Regional Perceptions of European Union Power and Leadership', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 51, 3.

Checkel, J. T. & Katzenstein, P. J. (eds) (2009) *European Identity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Contessi, N. P. (2015) 'Foreign and Security Policy Diversification in Eurasia: Issue Splitting, Co-alignment, and Relational Power', *Problems of Post-Communism*, 62, 5.

Cornell, S. E. (ed) (2017) The International Politics of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict: The Original "Frozen Conflict" and European Security (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).

Council of the European Union (2003) *A secure Europe in a better world—European Security Strategy*, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

Council of the European Union (2008) *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World*, available at: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf, accessed 20 October 2016.

Council of the European Union (2010) *Conclusions on Eastern Partnership*, available at:

    http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/117327.pdf, accessed 20 June

    2017.

Council of the European Union (2011*) Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit*, available at:

    http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/124843.pdf, accessed 20 June

    2017.

De Zutter, E. (2010) 'Normative power spotting: an ontological and methodological appraisal', *Journal of*

    European Public Policy, 17, 8.

Delcour, L. (2010) 'The European Union, a security provider in the eastern neighbourhood?', *European*

    Security, 19, 4.

Delcour, L. (2015) 'Between the Eastern Partnership and Eurasian Integration: Explaining Post-Soviet

    Countries' Engagement in (Competing) 'Region-Building Projects', *Problems of Post-Communism*, 62, 6.

Delcour, L. & Wolczuk, K. (2015a) 'Spoiler or Facilitator of Democratization?: Russia's Role in Georgia and

    Ukraine', *Democratization*, 22, 3.

Delcour, L. & Wolczuk, K. (2015b) 'The EU's Unexpected "Ideal Neighbour"? The Perplexing Case of

    Armenia's Europeanisation', *Journal of European Integration*, 37, 4.

Diez, T. (2005) 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering "Normative Power Europe"',

    Millennium—Journal of International Studies, 33, 3.

Dragneva, R. & Wolczuk, K. (2015) *Ukraine Between the EU and Russia: The Integration Challenge*

    (Basingstoke, Palgrave).

Edwards, G. (2008) 'The Construction of Ambiguity and the Limits of Attraction: Europe and its

    Neighbourhood Policy', *Journal of European Integration*, 30, 1.

European Commission (2003) *Wider Europe—Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our*

    Eastern and Southern Neighbours, available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/com03_104_en.pdf,

    accessed 20 June 2017.

European Commission (2010) 'Implementation of the Eastern Partnership: Report to the meeting of Foreign

    Affairs Ministers, December 13, 2010', available at:

    http://www.eeas.europa.eu/eastern/docs/eap_meeting_foreign_affairs_131210_en.pdf, accessed 20 June

    2017.

European Commission (2015) *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, available at:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/documents/2015/151118_joint-communication_review-of-the-enp_en.pdf,

accessed 20 June 2017.

European External Action Service (2016) *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*, available at:

https://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

European Parliament (2013a) *European Parliament recommendation to the Council on the UN principle of the*

'Responsibility to Protect' ('R2P'), available at:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2013-

0130+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN, accessed 20 June 2017.

European Parliament (2013b) *European Parliament resolution of 12 September 2013 on the pressure exerted by*

Russia on Eastern Partnership countries (in the context of the upcoming Eastern Partnership Summit in

Vilnius), available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2013-

0383&language=EN, accessed 20 June 2017.

European Parliament (2014) *European Parliament resolution of 6 February 2014 on the EU-Russia summit*,

available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2014-

0101+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN, accessed 20 June 2017.

Evans, G. (2009) 'Russia, Georgia and the Responsibility to Protect', *Amsterdam Law Forum*, 1, 2.

Ferrero-Waldner, B. (2005) *Implementing and promoting the European Neighbourhood Policy*, available at:

http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/pdf/sec_2005_1521_en.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

Fesenko, V. (2015) 'Ukraine: Between Europe and Eurasia', in Dutkiewicz, P. & Sakwa, R. (eds) *Eurasian*

Integration—The View from Within (Abingdon, Routledge).

Flockhart, T. (2016) 'The Coming Multi-order World', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 37, 1.

Freire, M. R. & Kanet, R. E. (eds) (2012) *Competing for Influence: the EU and Russia in post-Soviet Eurasia*

(Dordrecht, The Netherlands).

Füle, Š. (2010a) *The EU: a Force for Peace, Stability and Prosperity in Wider Europe*, available at:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-10-706_en.htm?locale=en, accessed 20 June 2017.

Füle, Š. (2010b) *The European Union and Eastern Europe: Post-Crisis Rapprochement?*, available at:

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/728&format=HTML&aged=0&lan

guage=EN&guiLanguage=en, accessed 1 October 2016.

Fumagalli, M. (2007) 'Ethnicity, State Formation and Foreign Policy: Uzbekistan and "Uzbeks abroad", *Central Asian Survey*, 26, 1.

Gnedina, E. (2015) '"Multi-Vector" Foreign Policies in Europe: Balancing, Bandwagoning or Bargaining?', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 67, 7.

Goddard, S. E. & Krebs, R. R. (2015) 'Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy', *Security Studies*, 24, 1.

Gretskiy, I., Treshchenkov, E. & Golubev, K. (2014) 'Russia's Perceptions and Misperceptions of the EU Eastern Partnership', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 47, 3–4.

Gstöhl, S. & Schunz, S. (eds) (2017) *Theorizing the European Neighbourhood Policy* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Harnisch, S. (2011) 'Role Theory: Operationalization of Key Concepts', in Harnisch, S., Frank, C. & Maull, H. (eds) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Haukkala, H. (2011) 'The European Union as a Regional Normative Hegemon: The Case of European Neighbourhood Policy', in Whitman, R. G. (ed.) *Normative Power Europe: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).

Heimann, G. (2015) 'What does it take to be a great power? The story of France joining the Big Five', *Review of International Studies*, 41, 1.

Heisbourg, F. (2015) 'The Strategic Implications of the Syrian Refugee Crisis', *Survival*, 57, 6.

House of Lords (2015) *The EU and Russia: before and beyond the crisis in Ukraine*, available at: https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/ldeucom/115/115.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

Jafarli, N. (2016) 'Azerbaijan: Approaching crisis point', *ECFR Wider Europe Forum*, available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_azerbaijan_approaching_crisis_point5096#, accessed 20 June 2017.

Jarábik, B. & Yanchenko, H. (2013) 'What Eastern Europeans think about the democratic transition: Understanding values and attitudes', *Globsec Policy Briefs*, available at: http://www.cepolicy.org/publications/what-eastern-europeans-think-about-democratic-transition-understanding-values-and, accessed 20 June 2017.

Kadelbach, S. (2014) 'The European Union's Responsibility to Protect', in Hilpold, P. (ed.) *The Responsibility to Protect* (R2P) (Leiden, Brill).

Kakachia, K. & Cecire M. (eds) (2013) *Georgian Foreign Policy. The Quest for Sustainable Security* (Tbilisi, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung), available at: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_37002-1522-1-30.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

Kazantsev, A. (2015) 'Central Asian Perspectives on Eurasian Regionalism', in Dutkiewicz, P. & Sakwa, R. (eds) *Eurasian Integration—The View from Within* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Khidayatova, A. (2015) 'EU to support Azerbaijan's joining WTO', *Trend*, available at: http://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/business/2378862.html, accessed 20 June 2017.

Korosteleva, E. A. (2013) *Belarus and the Eastern Partnership: A National Values Survey* (Canterbury, University of Kent).

Korosteleva, E. A. (2014) *Moldova's Values Survey: Widening a European Dialogue in Moldova* (Canterbury, University of Kent).

Korosteleva, E. A. (2015a) 'Belarus between the EU and the Eurasian Economic Union', in Dutkiewicz, P. & Sakwa, R. (eds) *Eurasian Integration—The View from Within* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Korosteleva, E. A. (2015b) *Moldova's Focus Groups: widening a European Dialogue in Moldova* (Canterbury, University of Kent).

Korosteleva, E. A. (2016) 'The European Union, Russia and the Eastern Region: The Analytics of Government for Sustainable Cohabitation', *Cooperation and Conflict*, 51, 3.

Korosteleva, E. A., Van Gils, E. & Merheim-Eyre, I. (2017) '"The Political" and the ENP: Rethinking EU Relations with the Eastern Region', in Gstöhl, S. & Schunz, S. (eds) *Theorizing the European Neighbourhood Policy* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Lake, D. A. (2011) *Hierarchy in International Relations* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press).

Lane, D. & Samokhvalov, V. (eds) (2015) *The Eurasian Project and Europe: Regional Discontinuities and Geopolitics* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).

Lebow, R. N. (2008) 'Identity and International Relations', *International Relations*, 22, 4.

Ledger, R. (2016) 'The EU's lack of unity and strategy is being felt in Azerbaijan', *Euro Crisis in the Press*, 28 July, available at: http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/eurocrisispress/2016/07/28/the-eus-lack-of-unity-and-strategy-is-being-felt-in-azerbaijan/, accessed 20 June 2017.

Leeds, B.A. & Mattes, M. (2007) 'Alliance Politics during the Cold War: Aberration, New World Order, or Continuation of History?', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 24, 3.

Maksak, H., Shelest, H., Koval, N. & Koval, M. (eds) (2017) *Ukrainian Prism: Foreign Policy 2016* (Kyiv, Friedrich Ebert Foundation), available at: http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ukraine/13244.pdf, accessed 20 June 2017.

Matlary, J. H. (2006) 'When Soft Power Turns Hard: Is an EU Strategic Culture Possible?', *Security Dialogue*, 37, 1.

Mattern, J. B. & Zarakol, A. (2016) 'Hierarchies in World Politics', *International Organization*, 70, 3.

Mayer, H. & Vogt, H. (2006) *A Responsible Europe?: Ethical Foundations of EU External Affairs* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan).

Mehdiyeva, N. (2011) *Power Games in the Caucasus: Azerbaijan's Foreign and Energy Policy towards the West, Russia and the Middle East* (London, I.B.Tauris).

Menon, A. (2011) 'Power, Institutions and the CSDP: The Promise of Institutionalist Theory', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49, 1.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (2010) *Moldova Just a Step Away from the EU*, available at: http://www.mfa.gov.md/interviews-en/479415/, accessed 20 June 2017.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (2017) *Foreign Policy*, available at: http://www.mfa.am/en/foreign-policy/, accessed 20 June 2017.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2015) *Statement by the MFA of the Rebublic of Azerbaijan Regarding the So-Called 'Elections'*, available at: http://guam-organization.org/en/node/1695, accessed 20 June 2017.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus (2017) *Priorities of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus*, available at: http://mfa.gov.by/en/foreign_policy/priorities/, accessed 20 June 2017.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2015) *Belarus Supports Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity of Ukraine*, available at: http://mfa.gov.ua/en/press-center/news/38955-belarus-supports-sovereignty-and-territorial-integrity-of-ukraine, accessed 20 June 2017.

Moga, T. L. (2017) 'The Role of Bounded Rationality in Explaining the European Neighbourhood Policy: The Eastern Dimension', in Gstöhl, S. & Schunz, S. (eds) *Theorizing the European Neighbourhood Policy* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Morgherini, F. (2017) *Speech by Federica Mogherini at the Munich Security Conference*, available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-

homepage_en/20832/Speech%20by%20Federica%20Mogherini%20at%20the%20Munich%20Security%20Conference, accessed 20 June 2017.

Nabers, D. (2011) 'Identity and Role Change in International Politics', in Harnisch, S., Frank, C. & Maull, H. (eds) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Najšlová, L. (2010) 'The EU in the Wider Black Sea Region: Clumsy but Attractive?', in Henderson, K. & Weaver, C. (eds) *The Black Sea Region and EU Policy: The Challenge of Divergent Agendas* (Farnham, Ashgate). [Please can you give the publisher's location in Surrey]

Nilsson, M. & Silander, D. (2016) 'Democracy and Security in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood? Assessing the ENP in Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine', *Democracy and Security*, 12, 1.

Pashayeva, G. (2015) *The EU–Azerbaijan Relationship: Current Status and Future Outlook*, available at: https://jamestown.org/program/the-eu-azerbaijan-relationship-current-status-and-future-outlook/#!, accessed 20 June 2017.

Popescu, N. (2010) *EU Foreign Policy and Post-Soviet Conflicts: Stealth Intervention* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Prodi, R. (2002) *A Wider Europe—A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability*, available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm, accessed 20 June 2017.

Raik, K. & Dinesen, R. L. (2015) 'The European Union and Upheavals in its Neighborhood: A Force for Stability?', *International Journal of Public Administration*, 38, 12.

Rankin, J. (2016) 'EU lifts most sanctions against Belarus despite human rights concerns', *The Guardian*, 15 February, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/15/eu-lifts-most-sanctions-against-belarus-despite-human-rights-concerns, accessed 20 June 2017.

Rynning, S. & Jensen, C. P. (2010) 'The ENP and Transatlantic Relations', in Whitman, R. G. & Wolff, S. (eds) *The European Neighbourhood Policy in Perspective: Context, Implementation and Impact* (London, Palgrave Macmillan).

Saari, S. (2014) 'Russia's Post-Orange Revolution Strategies to Increase its Influence in Former Soviet Republics: Public Diplomacy *po russkii*', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 66, 1.

Sakwa, R. (2014) *Frontline Ukraine* (London, I.B.Tauris).

Sakwa, R. (2015) 'Politics and International Affairs in Putin's Third Term', in *Putin's Third Term: Assessments Amid Crisis* (Washington, DC, Center on Global Interests).

Schimmelfennig, F. & Scholtz, H. (2008) 'EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood. *European Union Politics*, 9, 2.

Schoen, H. (2008) 'Identity, Instrumental Self-Interest and Institutional Evaluations', *European Union Politics*, 9, 1.

Schumacher, T. (2015) 'Uncertainty at the EU's Borders: Narratives of EU External Relations in the Revised European Neighbourhood Policy Towards the Southern Borderlands', *European Security*, 24, 3.

Sjursen, H. (2011) 'The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy: The Quest for Democracy', Journal of European Public Policy, 18, 8.

Slaughter, A.-M. (2005) *A New World Order* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press).

Solana, J. (2008) *Address by Javier SOLANA, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, at the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) Headquarters in Georgia*, available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/georgia/press_corner/all_news/news/2008/20080930_01_en.htm, accessed 20 June 2017.

Tanas, A. (2015) 'Moldova detains former PM in parliament over $1 billion fraud', *Reuters*, 15 October, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-moldova-protests-filat-idUSKCN0S91BY20151015, available at: accessed 20 June 2017.

TASS (2016) 'Moldova wants to improve relations with Russia—deputy PM', *TASS*, available at: http://tass.ru/en/world/879285, accessed 20 June 2017.

Terhalle, M. (2015) *The Transition of Global Order: Legitimacy and Contestation* (London, Palgrave Macmillan).

Tonra, B. (2011) 'Democratic Foundations of EU Foreign Policy: Narratives and the Myth of EU Exceptionalism', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18, 8.

White, S. & Feklyunina, V. (2014) *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus* (London, Palgrave Macmillan).

Youngs, R. (2017) *Europe's Eastern Crisis: The Geopolitics of Asymmetry* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Zehfuss, M. (2006) 'Constructivism and Identity. A Dangerous Liaison', in Guzzini, S. & Leander, A. (eds) *Constructivism and International Relations: Alexander Wendt and His Critics* (Abingdon, Routledge).

Zielonka, J. (2008) 'Europe as a Global Actor: Empire by Example?', International Affairs, 84, 3.