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RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION: YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW

Abstract

Relations between Russia and the European Union are at a crossroads. They have never been stable. There have always been ups and downs. Periods of disappointment followed moments of expectation and hope. Currently, relationships accumulate many problems, the weight of which reaches a critical threshold. The situation is aggravated by the interest shown by several political forces in the difficulties of cooperation between Moscow and Brussels. Many people try to take advantage of it. Thus, the difficulties suffered become more and more often the subject of political speculation. Prejudices, clichés and solid stereotypes have taken root in the common consciousness, preventing an impartial image of Russia and the European Union. This distortion of reality is beginning to translate into political practices that have created a vicious circle. To break this circle, great efforts are needed. We need political will, a strategic vision of the future, an understanding of the links between Russia and the European Union. We need to understand to what extent these two entities are inseparable and have mutual interests. For the moment, all these conditions are unfortunately not met. This vicious circle must be broken. This is necessary for both parties. All the other scenarios have serious consequences, both for Russia and for the European Union. Their cost is considerable. It is so high that it begins to be prohibitive. A long and meticulous job of rebuilding relations between Russia and the European Union and the development of a new appropriate legal basis taking this reality into account are to be implemented.

Key words: *Russia, European Union, interest, relations, political will, reality*

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RUSİYA İLƏ AVROPA İTTİFAQI ARASINDA MÜNASİBƏTLƏR: DÜNƏN, BU GÜN, SABAH

Xülasə

Rusiya ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında münasibətlər yol ayrıcındadır. Onlar heç vaxt sabit olmayıblar. Həmişə yüksəlişlər və enişlər olub. Gözlənti və ümid anlarının ardınca məyusluq dövrləri gəldi. Hal-hazırda münasibətlərdə çəkisi kritik həddə çatan bir çox problemlər toplanır. Vəziyyəti bir neçə siyasi qüvvələrin Moskva ilə Brüssel arasında əməkdaşlığın çətinliklərinə göstərdiyi maraq daha da gərginləşdirir. Beləliklə, məruz qalan çətinliklər getdikcə daha çox siyasi spekulyasiya mövzusuna çevrilir. Qərəzlər, klişelər və stereotiplər ümumi şüurda kök salaraq Rusiya və Avropa İttifaqının qərəzsiz imicinə mane olub. Gerçəkliyin bu təhrifi qapalı dairə yaradan siyasi təcrübələrə çevrilməyə başlayır. Bu dairəni qırmaq üçün böyük səylər lazımdır. Bizə siyasi iradə, gələcəyə strateji baxış, Rusiya ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında əlaqələrin dərk edilməsi lazımdır. Biz başa düşməliyik ki, bu iki varlıq nə dərəcədə ayrılmazdır və qarşılıqlı maraqlar var. Təəssüf ki, hazırda bütün bu şərtlər yerinə yetirilmir. Bu pis dairəni qırmaq lazımdır. Bu, hər iki tərəf üçün lazımdır. Bütün digər ssenarilərin həm Rusiya, həm də Avropa İttifaqı üçün ciddi nəticələri var. Rusiya ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında münasibətlərin bərpası və bu reallığı nəzərə alaraq yeni müvafiq hüquqi bazanın işlənib hazırlanması istiqamətində uzun və ciddi iş aparılmalıdır.

Açar sözlər**:** *Rusiya, Avropa İttifaqı, maraq, münasibətlər, siyasi iradə, reallıq*

Introduction. Stunned by a multitude of repetitive information, muddled by speeches that explain nothing and by opinion leaders whose points of view are reproduced in millions of newspapers, the Russian and European populations are forgetting the fundamental elements (Iran's nuclear and missle potential, 2009, p.6). The Russian language is largely derived from German, French, English and other languages whose origins can be traced back to the common heritage of the Roman Empire, consisting of its art, law, its traditions and representations. The Russian language has offered several images, words and notions to other languages. For centuries, our peoples lived alongside each other, facing, together or separately, the common evils of pandemics, invasions, natural disasters, sharing victories and great achievements. The historical destinies of Russians and Europeans are closely intertwined in a complex way. The culture that has been created has enriched them by making the spiritual, moral, humanitarian and civilizational components inseparable [Alting von Geusau, 1998, pp.44-54]. Several writers, poets, painters, composers, architects or scientists are considered in fact as Europeans and constitute the glory of European civilization. It suffices to name a few names: Chekhov, Dostoyevsky, Solzhenitsyn, Tolstoy, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Stravinsky, Kandinsky, Brodsky, Pasternak, Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Ulanova, Plisetskaya, Oistrakh, Rostropovitch, Lobachevsky, Gagarin. At the same time, Russian culture is inconceivable without the hundreds of names offered to the world by the French, Germans, Spaniards and other European peoples and which the Russians have made their own: from Cervantes, Shakespeare and Goethe to the contemporary postmodernists. At the end of the first millennium AD, Kievan Russia partially absorbed the Byzantine civilization. A few centuries later, it was the Muscovite State which seized the Russian attributes, which had fallen from the hands of the Empire which was weakening, and which formally became its successor, the continuator of its religious and political traditions. Averre, D. [2009, pp.689-713] argues that in the early Middle Ages, Kievan Russia generously shared its knowledge and power with its European allies. The story goes that a Russian princess, who had acceded to the French throne, introduced the tradition of patronizing the arts and education. Being not only educated but scholarly, it had built monasteries and opened schools and libraries while her spouse waged war and attended to more masculine affairs of state. Russia accepted the Tatar invasion. Having protected Central and Western Europe, it gave them an opportunity, of which it was deprived, to advance, to develop rapidly and freely. A few centuries later, they gave it back a hundredfold, generously sharing with Russia the fruits of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Masterpieces of Russian architecture were created by French and Italian masters. The Russian Academy of Sciences was founded by Germans. After Peter the Great's reforms, his military campaigns and the capital's move to St. Petersburg, Russia became one of the major European players (Barry, 2008, pp.249-251). Several facts testify to its influence and its "banality". Viewing the deployment of the Russian fleet with caution, Britain did not send its expeditionary force to restore order to its revolting colony across the Atlantic, which went down in history as the United States. -United of America. During the French Revolution, 300,000 French people found refuge in Russia and started a new life there [Headley, 2012, pp.427-447]. Before the Napoleonic wars, but also after its defeat and the creation of the Holy Alliance, of which it is one of the main countries, Russia participates actively in the European concert. The court of the tsars established multiple parental ties with ruling families in Europe. A little later, France, Great Britain and Russia were united in the Entente Cordiale and fought on the same side in the First World War until 1917. In the same way, during the Second World War, Russia found itself on the same side as all liberated democratic peoples. It suffered the majority of the casualties that were necessary for the victory of the anti-Nazi coalition. And now that the years of totalitarianism and the Cold War are behind her, Russia is fighting alongside other countries against terrorism. The lesson to be learned is quite obvious. Russia and the European Union are not only geographical neighbors. They are part of the family of European peoples. They have the same roots, a common culture and worldview, a common past and future. They need to be together. And it is important that they are in collusion. When they oppose, they condemn themselves and all other countries to misfortune and deprivation. When they unite their resources and their forces, they are able to overcome all misfortunes. We see it through the prism of history, but it also applies today. Whatever the problems, solving them is easier when both parties act together [Figus, 2020, pp.124-136]

Objective beginnings of the rapprochement

Moscow and Brussels agree on many elements concerning the contemporary system of international relations, as well as on the methods and means of managing them. They are in favor of strengthening the role of the United Nations, considered as the main guarantor of the maintenance of peace and security. Both parties believe that the essential instrument of international relations is law and not force. They are of the opinion that there is no alternative to the law, that all centers of power must contribute to the management of global transformations and that unilateral actions are inadmissible. This affinity creates good bases for the coordination of common positions, the defense of interests and the realization of common actions [Haukkala, 2011, p.149-166].

Moscow and Brussels have an interest in combining their efforts to solve the multiple global problems. First, they must prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and technologies for building rockets. Russia and some European countries are part of the nuclear club. They master space conquest technologies. They determine the future development of this field. The non-proliferation regime depends on the joint efforts of Russia and the European Union. The EU-Russia summit in Samara [17-18 2007] can be an example of this. The international media constantly talk about the Euro-Russian differences on the Iranian file. In reality, it is otherwise [Kodin, 2019, pp.172-175].

The positions of Russia and the European Union are also close on the issues of climate change, the fight against poverty and development aid. After the signing of the Kyoto Protocol, Brussels launched an extensive campaign around the world, *lobbying* to speed up its ratification and entry into force [Weitz, 2006, p.6]

There is no doubt that the European Union is the main provider of development aid, it grants large sums which far exceed those of Russia. However, we must not forget the number of industrial sites that Russia had built in developing countries, nor its contribution to the training of executives in these countries. In recent years, thanks to its economic rebound, it has also erased the debts of these countries, the amounts of which amounted to tens of billions of euros. Moscow's and Brussels' approaches to development aid imply that it is not enough to provide financial and humanitarian aid, but that it is also necessary to contribute to the internal development of these countries and to build a system of international economic relations more fair.

Without close cooperation between Russia and the European Union, it seems difficult to avert and settle international conflicts. The Cold War is over. However, its end did not allow world powers to benefit from his opportunities. The world has not become more stable in terms of security [Voronov, 2010, p.37]. New devastating conflicts have been added to the conflicts of the past. Some conflicts have shown that they are only frozen. Others continue to appear on the planet and their "explosion" is only a matter of time.

The maintenance of international peace and security is, without doubt, more delicate than ever. Dozens of states are unstable, from Asia to Latin America via Africa such as, for example, the conflict around Taiwan, the partition of the Korean peninsula, the conflicts in Pakistan, in Afghanistan, in Central Asia, the occupation of Iraq, the Kurdish question, the preventive strikes against Iran, the situation in Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Darfur, in the African Great Lakes region, in the North-Sahara, or the rebellions in certain Latin American countries. Civil, interstate and interethnic wars kill thousands of people, generate flows of refugees and undermine the foundations of development (Wood, 2017, pp.345-350). They are awful in themselves, all the more so since they constitute a permanent threat to the peace and internal stability of countries. Closer cooperation between Russia and the European Union is therefore an international imperative.

It should be noted that within the European Union and Russia, not everything is perfect. Poverty, unemployment and social isolation affect different social categories and regions, fuel protests and generate extremist or nationalist radicalism. Illegal and massive immigration increases tensions in our societies, generates various and varied phobias, aversion and intolerance (Polikanov, 2018). All of this is happening alongside the fight against organized crime, terrorist networks, human trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundering, abuse of social good and moral degradation. For now, this fight is far from over. The number of drug addicts is increasing. Organized crime is becoming more mobile and seeking new areas. More and more financial resources are allocated to fight terrorism. However, they

could have been used for civilian purposes. National means to deal with these harmful trends are insufficient. Traditional cooperation between security services is no longer enough. To counter these trends, Russia and the European Union must go beyond mere cooperation, because organized crime, terrorism, drug trafficking and money laundering know no borders (Nevskaya, 2020, pp.91-101).

Similarly, Russia and the European Union have an objective interest in economic cooperation. European industries and services would greatly benefit from a transcontinental single market. This would increase the efficiency of economic activities, allow participants to benefit more from mass production, division of labor and growth of capitalization. This would be as advantageous for the Russians as for the Europeans. Within the Union there is a single market. The Russian market is smaller [Danilov, 2021, pp.122-124]. However, it is increasing rapidly thanks to the arrival of petrodollars. The growth rate is higher in Russia than in the Union. The citizen would benefit from economic integration insofar as he could plan his life on a continental scale. It is important to be able to choose the place of your studies, as well as your professional career. In addition to greater economic freedom, this integration will allow a large number of people to access prosperity and a better quality of life.

For the European Union and Russia, it is a "win-win" strategy. Their economies are complementary. Russia abounds in raw materials, vital for the functioning of an economy. The European Union can offer everything Russia needs to modernize its economic system and diversify its branches (risk minimization, investments, advanced technologies, infrastructure, and production chains) (Zheng, 2020, pp.14-15).

Complicated adventures of bilateral relations

In the days of the USSR, Moscow had an essentially negative vision of the European Community which was perceived through the prism of political and military confrontation with the United States and NATO, that is to say the forces of social progress in the world *versus* the imperialism of American politics. The European Union was analyzed according to the Marxist-Leninist paradigm that a United States of Europe was either impossible or inherently reactionary [Polanski, 2008, pp.7-9]. Consequently, the European Union was seen as the means to relay the interests of the United States and NATO on the continent and as the association of big capital for an ever more ruthless exploitation of the working class.

The countries of the socialist bloc had bilateral relations with each Member State of the European Union, but not with the Community institutions. Neither the political thaw under Khrushchev nor the policy of peaceful coexistence under Brezhnev was enough to change this ideological perception of the enemy [Lebanidze, 2020, pp.125-130]

Driven by *perestroika* and *glasnost* initiated by Gorbachev, the ideas of universal values and a common home were born. The first and only president of the USSR came to Strasbourg to deliver a speech before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Under Gorbachev, Moscow recognized that the European Union was a subject of international law [Czerny, 2019, pp.101-104]. The USSR had authorized its allies to enter into trade and cooperation agreements and had done the same. However, despite the best will shown by Gorbachev and the CPSU he led, the USSR was never able to get out of a binary pattern that opposed irreconcilably opposing economic, political and social systems: on the one hand, a socialist regime defended by the USSR and its satellites of the Warsaw Pact, on the other a capitalist regime embodied by the United States,

After Russia was freed from the precepts of the USSR by Yeltsin and put an end to the totalitarian communist regime, a fundamentally different situation arose. The victory of the anti-communist revolution and the accession to power of pro-Western democrats removed the fundamental dispute in relations between Russia and the European Union. Theoretically, all the favorable scenarios were plausible, starting with the dissolution of NATO, the proclamation of Central and Eastern Europe as a neutral and non-aligned zone and even the inclusion of the young Russian democracy in the European structures [Deak et al, 2021, pp.230-232]

However, European officials were not ready for the turn of events. Moreover, Russia did not receive the economic aid necessary to carry out its post-revolutionary reforms. Thus ended the Euro-Russian honeymoon. Russia then returned to the crises caused by the disintegration of its political, economic and

social space. The branches of power collided [Pavlov, 2019, pp.67-75]. The presidency, backed by Western powers, opted for military force to dissolve the democratically elected parliament. However, after the legislative elections of December 1993, the democratic forces supporting Yeltsin failed. If the new Constitution was specially drafted with a view to a victory for the democratic forces, these did not obtain a majority in the Duma. Part of the voters supported the nationalist party of Vladimir Zhirinovsky. Domestic and foreign policy of the Kremlin complied with the vote of the electorate.

The heads of state and government of Western European countries quickly distanced themselves from what was happening in Russia. First, they were occupied with European construction, their priority being the political and economic integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Then they became hostages to economic decline and strict budgetary discipline [Lukyanov, 2008, p.115]. During this period, the partnership and cooperation agreement between Moscow and Brussels was signed, which crowned two years of tough negotiations. In terms of content, this agreement reproduced the association agreement.

Immediately afterwards, the pretext of a quarrel led the European Union and Russia to become completely angry. In order to put an end to the advanced process of decentralization, the weakened Russian central power chose to wage a "victorious little war" in Chechnya. This campaign had serious consequences for the country's domestic and foreign policy [Manchin, 2004, pp.3-7] Russia's newly formed friendly ties with the rest of the world have been weakened. Relations with the European Union have suffered the most. Almost all the trust capital accumulated up to that point has been lost. The positive agenda in bilateral relations with Brussels has been reduced to nothing. Russia has become the object of a sophisticated smear campaign. First justified because it was based on information from the Russian media, this criticism became more and more blind, preconceived, acquired. This criticism has truly never wavered since, with the exception of the period following September 11, 2001.

The West has positioned itself as a demanding teacher vis-à-vis Moscow, always unhappy with its student, but doing nothing to help him. The Kremlin's impotence has been exacerbated by several factors. No one saw a relevant solution to the Chechen affair. The economy and finances were not in an enviable situation. Production was down dramatically. The factories were no longer working. In fact, the country was in a phase of deindustrialization [Pashentsev, 2019, pp.261-264]. Social segregation was strong. The state was losing control of the economy. The domestic economic space was collapsing. Taxes were paid little or not at all. The federal budget had become derisory, the foreign debt a veritable abyss, the country was simply failing [Godzimirski, 2016, pp.100-105]. The authorities had neither the means, nor the willingness to pay employees and pensioners. According to polls at the time, the president's trust rating fell by as much as 2%, despite his merits. Yeltsin had no chance of being re-elected.

Conclusion. Brussels wanted to conduct the dialogue on its terms. The European Union did not want to give up criticizing and lecturing Moscow for actions that did not meet its expectations. The relationship of forces to his advantage encouraged him to act in this way. Moreover, the parties had no experience in the mutual promotion of interests. As soon as action had to be taken, the objectives pursued by the parties were no longer the same and it was therefore necessary to seek compromise. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which entered into force late, could not be of much help. It did not work properly because it did not provide the tools to resolve disputes, build a culture of compromise, prevent unilateral actions and crises. With every improvement came degradation. A retreat followed each advance. Misunderstandings were frequent. Summits often came to nothing concrete or were canceled on the grounds that Moscow's actions in Chechnya were criticized or for reasons such as the lack of freedom of the press, the excessive strengthening of the power of the Kremlin, the imperialist ambitions of Russia on the post-Soviet space, Moscow's opposition to NATO enlargement. Serious differences have also emerged over Kaliningrad. Tensions peaked at the end of 2003. The European Union, by integrating the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, ignored Russian interests. To adapt to Community directives, these countries have abrogated their bilateral agreements with Russia. In response, Moscow refused to include the "new Europe" in the scope of the partnership and cooperation agreement. The diplomatic break was near. The situation has been resolved Moscow refused to include the "new Europe" in the scope of the partnership and cooperation agreement. The diplomatic break was

near. The situation has been resolved Moscow refused to include the "new Europe" in the scope of the partnership and cooperation agreement. The diplomatic break was near. The situation has been resolved *in extremis* before the official enlargement ceremony, during the signing of the protocol including these countries in the agreement.

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