

EXPLAINING VARIATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ALIGNMENTS: THE POST-
COMMUNIST STATES AND THE CHOICE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST, 1991 – 2014

By

ECATERINA V. LOCOMAN

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Explaining Variations in International Alignments: The Post-Communist States And the Choice
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Dissertation Director:

R. Daniel Kelemen

Why did the post-Soviet states follow different foreign policy paths when compared to the rest of the former Communist states, after the dissolution of the USSR? Why states pursue inconsistent foreign policies and how do they choose alignment patterns? Why did some post-Communist governments in Europe take office promising one foreign policy orientation (either pro-West or pro-Russia) but later changed direction and adopted the opposite orientation? The research undertaken in this dissertation is based on extensive fieldwork activities in Eastern Europe: interviews with more than forty policymakers, including former Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ambassadors, diplomats and policy makers in both Ukraine and Moldova. In addition, the diplomatic archives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Ukraine and Moldova, and the archives of the Moldovan Parliament were studied: more than 80,000 pages of diplomatic records, spanning from 1991 to 2006, were consulted. With insights from diplomatic archives and accounts from personal interviews with officials in charge of foreign policy making, the dissertation argues that political leaders in all post-Communist states chose alignment options

based on a cost-benefit analysis, weighing whether the combination of incentives and constraints posed by orienting to the West or Russia did the most to further their overriding goal of acquiring or retaining power at home. In post-Communist countries where the EU and NATO offered a credible prospect for membership, political leaders from across the spectrum converged on a pro-Western foreign policy. In these cases, the promise of financial support and security guarantees from the West proved overwhelmingly attractive to domestic politicians, easily outweighing anything Russia might offer in hopes of reorienting the country's foreign policy towards Moscow. By contrast, in the countries where the EU and NATO refused to grant a membership prospect, most notably to Ukraine and Moldova, the benefits of sticking to a pro-Western foreign policy were far less attractive and more uncertain, and less clearly superior to the incentives offered by Russia. In this context, vacillators and opportunists seeking national or personal gain from both the West and Russia – and potentially playing the two major poles off one another – came to the fore. Foreign policy alignments were therefore chosen strategically by national leaders depending on which they thought would best serve their interests. Both the pro-Western and the pro-Russia orientations were attractive alternatives: executive leaders picked one over another depending on their calculations as to whether Russia or the West would help them win and retain power at home. The EU's refusal to offer binding commitments made its demands for political conditionality (such as pro-democracy and anti-corruption reforms) less effective and encouraged leaders in the region to vacillate in their foreign policy orientations. Meanwhile, with the West refusing to offer these states membership in its organizations, Russia exploited the internal weaknesses of these states to promote its foreign policy agenda and bolster its influence in the region.

Acknowledgements*

As a fourth-grade student in rural Moldova, I vividly remember one history class when my primary school teacher showed us a map of Eastern Europe, pointing to the troubled history of our country. How it used to be part of the Principality of Moldova for more than five centuries, how it then was incorporated into the Tsarist Empire and stayed under the Russian rule for more than a century, re-united with and remained part of the then-Romanian kingdom for the inter-war period, and then re-annexed by the Soviet Union at the beginning of the Second World War. With the wisdom and prophesy characteristic to the old-times primary school teachers, Maria Ivanovna Ungureanu, looking at the map, declared from the podium that the country's search for a place on the European continent did not end with its declaration of independence in 1991, following the dissolution of the Soviet empire. The East-West zigzag movements would accompany Moldova's foreign policy path post-1991. As an inquisitive student, I asked why. I do not remember the subsequent class discussion, but I kept thinking about this question during my school years and then later as a Journalism student. Working as a reporter, I zealously sought the knowledge of any politician who would want to talk to me about Moldova's inconsistent foreign policy orientation in the post-independence years.

My interest in this question grew only deeper, motivated by the changes occurring in Central and Eastern Europe at the beginning of the new millennium. Some of the former Communist states were consistently seeking membership in the European Union and NATO. They successfully managed to be "nestled" within both of these Western organizations by 2004. At the

* This dissertation was supported in part by the Doctoral Fellowship Program, which is funded and administered by the Open Society Institute (OSF). The opinions expressed herein are the author's own and do not necessarily express the views of OSF. The international research was financially supported by the OSF, the Graduate School New Brunswick and the Department of Political Science at Rutgers University.

other extreme, some former Communist states were deepening their political and economic integration with Russia, not concerned about their relations with the West. In between, were the countries whose ruling elites had the hardest time choosing a consistent foreign policy stance, oscillating between pro-Russia and pro-Western foreign policy orientations throughout most of their post-independence history, with the “Rose”, “Orange”, and “Twitter” revolutions staggering their domestic political establishments.

Not until I was granted the opportunity to pursue Ph.D. studies in Political Science at Rutgers University, was I able to seriously and earnestly study the question, which preoccupied me for the longest period.

I would like to thank the Open Society Foundations (OSF) for offering me the financial, logistical, administrative and personal support during the period of my Ph.D. studies. Thank you to Zoë Brogden and Phillip Watkins, whose help, support and guidance, especially during the first years of graduate school at Rutgers, were crucial for my success. The OSF has played a paramount role in my academic and professional life: it was through a fellowship from the OSF back in 2006 (and with the support and guidance from Anne Campbell and Amanda Lindberg) that I was granted the first opportunity to study abroad, at an American university (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire). That first year studying abroad emboldened me to continue my education in the US and contribute with new knowledge and research to the development of the post-Communist states in Europe. Later, the research grant offered by the OSF to undertake field-work activities in Ukraine and Moldova was crucial for my research goals, as it allowed me to gather original interview- and archival-data from diplomatic records in Kiev and Chisinau; thank you to Maryia Tarpachova for coordinating the details of the award.

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Dedication

To my parents, Vasile and Zinaida.

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Introduction

Common Past, Divergent Future: Post-Communist States and their Foreign Policy Behavior 1991 – 2014

The Puzzle

Ever since the end of the Cold War and the fall of Communism across Europe, scholars have been interested in explaining the variable outcomes in the political and economic transitions of the post-Communist European countries.² Most studies focus on explaining the divergent outcomes in terms of transition to democracy and to market economy;³ others document the different ways in which anti-Communist movements emerged and brought

² For a general discussion on the variable outcomes across the post-Communist region in Europe and Central Asia, see Bunce, V. “The Political Economy of Postsocialism.” *Slavic Review*, 58, no. 4, (1999): 756-793. King, C. “Post-Communism: Transition, Comparison, and the End of “Eastern Europe.”” *World Politics*, 53, no. 1 (2000): 143-172.

³ Inter alia, Aslund, A., Boone, P., Johnson, P. “How to Stabilize: Lessons from Post-Communist Countries.” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 1 (1996). Hellman, J. “Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions.” *World Politics* 50, no.2 (1998); Bunce, V. *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*. (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Orenstein, M. A. *Out of the Red: Building Capitalism and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Grzymala-Busse, A. *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe*. (Cambridge University Press, 2002); McFaul, M. “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World.” *World Politics*, 54 (2002): 212-44. Howard, M. *The Weakness of Civil Society in Postcommunist Europe*. (Cambridge University Press, 2003). Fish, M. S. “The Determinants of Economic Reform in the Post-Communist World.” *East European Politics and Societies*, 12 (1998): 31-78. Hellman, J. “Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions.” *World Politics*, 50 (1998): 203-34; Frye, T. “The Perils of Polarization: Economic Performance in the Postcommunist World.” *World Politics*, 54 (2002): 308-37; Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Darden, K., Grzymala-Busse, A. “The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism and the Communist Collapse.” *World Politics* 59, (2005). Frye, T. *Building States and Markets after Communism The Perils of Polarized Democracy*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Levitsky, S., Way, L.A. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Bernhard, M. H., Kubik, J. *Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press: 2014). Pop-Eleches, G., Tucker, J. A. *Communism’s Shadow: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Political Attitudes* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

about the end of Communist rule;⁴ still others show the different social policies adopted by former Communist countries.⁵ The common theme in such studies is the focus on explaining why states which came “from similar starting points – a common ideology [...], state-controlled economies, single-party systems, and a sense of being part of an international movement” experienced “astronomical” divergence regarding democratic and economic performance.⁶ This dissertation stems from a similar interest in the divergent political outcomes across the post-Communist region, but instead of focusing on political regimes and economic performance, this study sets to explain divergences in foreign policy orientations of the former Communist countries in Europe.⁷

With the tearing down of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 came the end of the Cold War and the East-West division of Europe. Communist regimes across Eastern Europe collapsed like dominoes, elections were held, and democratically elected governments set the course to move away from one

⁴ Inter alia, Kuran, T. “Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989.” In Nancy Bermeo, ed., *Liberalization and Democratization: Change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 7-48.

⁵ Inter alia: Fenger, H. J. M. “Welfare regimes in Central and Eastern Europe: Incorporating post-communist countries in a welfare.” *Contemporary Issues and Ideas in Social Sciences* 3, no. 2 (2007); Vanhuysse, P. *Divide and Pacify. Strategic Social Policies and Political Protests in Post-Communist Democracies* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2006); Saxonberg, S., Sirovátka, T. “Failing family policy in post-communist Central Europe” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 8, no. 2, (2006); Stuckler, D., King, L., McKee, M. “Mass privatisation and the post-communist mortality crisis: a cross-national analysis.” *The Lancet* 373, no. 9661 (2009); Cerami, A. Vanhuysse, P. *Post-Communist Welfare Pathways*. Ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan).

⁶ King, C. “Post-Communism”, 2000, 155.

⁷ As such, it contributes to a body of literature concerned with explaining the divergent international outcomes of the former Communist countries in Europe. Abdelal, R. *National Purpose in the World Economy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2001); Tsygankov, A. P. *Pathways After Empire. National Identity and Foreign Economic Policy in the Post-Soviet World*. (New York: Rowman & LittleField Publishers, Inc., 2001). Darden, K. *Economic Liberalism and its Rivals. The formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). Miller, E. A. *To Balance or Not to Balance. Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006). Gvalia, G., Siroky, D., Lebanidze B., Iashvili, Z. “Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States.” *Security Studies*, 22, no. 1 (2013).

party rule and planned economies toward transformed political and social institutions and transition to market economy.

In the years following the collapse of Communism, however, a marked heterogeneity regarding foreign policy orientations and international outcomes among the former Communist countries in Europe could be observed. Some in Central Europe, like Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary were steadily determined to join the Western security and economic institutions and were the first post-Communist states to be accepted in NATO in 1999. Others, like Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania labeled by scholars as “illiberal”⁸ during the first decade took longer to join the Euro-Atlantic institutions and in the first 5-6 years after the fall of Communism exhibited inconsistent foreign policy choices and behaviors.⁹ Still, despite these initial diversions, these states found themselves both within the European Union (EU)¹⁰ and within NATO by 2004.¹¹

Among the former Yugoslav republics, Slovenia was the leader regarding pro-Western orientation, joining NATO and the EU in the first waves of eastern enlargement. Croatia joined NATO in 2009 and the EU in 2013, and among the rest of the Western Balkan states, some are either new NATO members (like Montenegro, who joined the Alliance in June 2017) or are successfully negotiating EU accession chapters with the

⁸ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided*, 2005.

⁹ Linden, R. H. “Security and Identity in Southeast Europe: Bulgaria, NATO, and the War in Kosovo.” In Ronald H. Linden eds. *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*. (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002).

¹⁰ Throughout this study, I will use the term “EU,” even if in particular instances, the terms of “European Community” or EC would be more appropriate, especially before the entry into force of the Treaty on the European Union in 1993.

¹¹ I will use the terms CEECs (Central and Eastern European states) to denote the former Communist states of Europe, which were not part of Yugoslavia nor of the USSR.

European Commission, like Serbia,¹² Macedonia, and Albania. Even though at different speeds and facing internal political crises, the former Yugoslav republics are steadily moving toward economic and military integration with the West.

Although in the 1990s and the first half of 2000s, the CEECs were characterized by different degrees of commitment to Western orientation and integration, and the Western Balkans were recovering from wars, by 2014 these states stamped a pro-Western choice on their political and economic policies.¹³ Twenty-five years after the collapse of Communism, these states were either already full-fledged members of the Western economic and security institutions, or moving toward becoming full members.

Among the former members of the Soviet Union,¹⁴ however, the foreign policy behavior was less steady and predictable; instead, it has been characterized by a significant amount of variation. On the one extreme lie Belarus and Armenia, whose leaders adopted a stable pro-Russia foreign policy stance throughout most of their post-independence history. At the other extreme, sit the Baltic States, whose political elites led these countries into the Western economic and security frameworks, “comfortably nestl[ing] [them] in the

¹² Unlike other Western Balkans, Serbia does not aspire to join NATO. However, cooperation between Belgrade and the alliance is concentrated specifically on issues related to democratic, institutional and defense reforms. Still, Serbia cooperates militarily with Russia as well. Since 2015, Serbia, along with Russia and Belarus, takes part in the so-called “Slavic Brotherhood” military drills.

¹³ Tense relations between Russia and the West, however, resulting from the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, led some of these post-Communist countries to show signs of support for Putin’s regime (e.g. Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic), which in turn made it more challenging for the EU to maintain a unified position of member states vis-à-vis Russia. Orenstein, M., Kelemen, R. D. “Trojan Horses in EU Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* (2016): 1-16.

¹⁴ This study will focus only on the foreign policy trajectories of the so-called European post-Soviet states, i.e. Belarus, the Baltics, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine (some authors prefer to denote these countries as Western Soviet Union). Reference will also be made to Armenia and Azerbaijan. The study will not analyze the foreign policies of Central Asian countries, i.e. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan.

European Union”¹⁵ and NATO. In between, are Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, the countries whose ruling elites did not pursue a consistent foreign policy stance, instead oscillating between pro-Russia and pro-Western foreign policy orientations throughout most of their post-independence history. Except for the Baltic States, which are already part of NATO and the EU, at the time of this writing, no other former member of the Soviet Union is a credible EU or NATO candidate.

Table 1 below illustrates the contrast in foreign policy trajectories of the post-Communist states in Europe. The table shows the consistent pro-Western foreign policy paths of the CEECs: Poland and Slovakia were chosen randomly among the CEECs to illustrate the stability/unidirectionality in their foreign policy orientations, at least starting with the second part of the 1990s. The trajectories of Armenia and Belarus stand out as consistently pro-Russia. Finally, Moldova and Ukraine show the most inconsistent foreign policy paths since the dissolution of the USSR.

Understanding this contrasting picture of foreign policy behavior and international outcomes among the European countries that were once united under the umbrella of communism and Socialism, motivates this dissertation.

¹⁵ Hale, H. *Patronal Politics. Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 5.

conducting inconsistent foreign policies for more than two decades since their independence, without overcoming the challenges of choosing one foreign policy orientation and pursuing it? Importantly, vacillation occurs not only when new governments with new foreign policy agendas come into power, but also sometimes when sitting governments choose to shift their foreign policy orientation from East to West or vice versa. What explains these patterns of vacillation?

A more nuanced and detailed answer to these questions is offered in subsequent pages, but here is the argument in a nutshell. The post-Communist states followed divergent foreign policy paths because they faced different external incentives offered by the West. The fact that the EU and NATO offered a credible prospect of membership to some post-Communist states (the CEECs and the Baltic States), along with Western political, financial and technical support, served as a focal point of convergence for the domestic political leaders and their parties in the CEECs. In these EU candidate states, a cross-party political consensus emerged to maintain Western integration as the chief foreign policy goal. The incentives of joining the EU and NATO were enticing (for both economic and electoral reasons) and this contributed to the consolidation of a domestic cross-party political consensus in the CEECs: a pro-Western orientation was preferred to a pro-Russia one. The states to which the EU refused to offer a membership prospect, two types of foreign policy behavior followed. Some followed a consistent pro-Russia foreign policy stance throughout most of their post-independence history. In Belarus or Armenia, a take-over by pro-Russia leaders with autocratic and authoritarian tendencies locked in a consistent pro-Russia stance. These states never pursued goals of joining the EU or NATO.

Finally, in the states where there was no clear membership prospect in the EU, even though they expressed interest in joining the West, and there was no autocratic take-over (different parties and leaders alternated in power) – vacillatory and inconsistent foreign policy orientations were adopted. Leaders switched between pro-EU and pro-Russia orientations on a cost-benefit analysis, weighing whether the combination of incentives and constraints posed by orienting to the West or Russia did the most to further their overriding goal of acquiring or retaining power at home. For leaders in Ukraine and Moldova, both the pro-Western and pro-Russia orientations remained appealing. Political leaders and their parties used these two policy vectors as a primary marker for political differentiation. Absent a definite Western membership prospect, incumbents in these states adopted a strategy of playing the West and Russia off one another, vacillating between pro-Russian or pro-Western vectors to achieve several goals. First, given these states' high dependence on external support (economic, financial, political), their leaders' negotiating power increased if both foreign policy alternatives were possible. The strategic foreign policy ambiguity and implicit threat of switching to the opposite pole kept leaders' options open, as it preserved a backup option, in case one pole (East or West) did not provide the support or resources sought by the leaders. Second, the strategic foreign policy ambiguity, by increasing the potential for leaders to exit the relationship with either the West or Russia, strengthened their leverage to make demands while staying in the relationship. Finally, by receiving electoral endorsements from either the West or Russia, national leaders were strategically using the foreign policy orientation card as an electoral strategy to attract voters.

In short, the leitmotif encapsulating the vacillators' behavior is best represented by the motto "*A Gentle Calf Sucks Two Cows*", a saying from folk wisdom, publicly voiced by Vladimir Voronin, Moldova's third president, meaning that by promoting economic and political ties with both Russia and the EU, a country could benefit politically and economically from both poles, without clearly and strongly committing to any relationship.

In addition, because the EU refused to offer a credible membership perspective to these states, their governments were less willing to meet EU conditions and to carry out economic and democratic reforms. Finally, recognizing that the EU would not offer these states a guarantee of membership, Russia cultivated pro-Russia factions within these states and enticed them with its forms of support to promote its foreign policy agenda and bolster its influence in these in-between lands.

Before proceeding further, some notes of terminology and geographic denominations are necessary. Throughout this study, the theoretical and empirical analysis will focus on comparing and analyzing similarities and differences regarding foreign policy trajectories between two groups of countries. The foreign policy and domestic development paths of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs)¹⁶ will be compared to the foreign policy choices of some of the former Soviet states, i.e. Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. While individual chapters are devoted only to the Baltic States and the CEECs, Moldova, and Ukraine, references and examples on the foreign policy paths of Georgia, Armenia, and Belarus will be made as well. I combine the Baltics and the CEECs

¹⁶ I include in this category the Central and East European countries, which joined the EU and NATO at the end of 1990s, mid-2000s: Bulgaria, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia. At some points in the study, I will also differentiate between the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) and the rest of the CEECs.

in the same chapter because in terms of foreign policy behavior, when compared to the post-Soviet states, the CEECs and the Baltics exhibited consistent pro-Western foreign policy paths during the period covered by the study, i.e. 1991 – 2014. Meanwhile, however, since the Baltic States were also members of the Soviet Union, I will also distinguish between the Baltics and the rest of the CEECs, in order to analyze the trajectories of the Baltics more intensely and compare them to the experience of the rest of the former Soviet states.

This project will dedicate a more focused analysis to the behavior of two vacillators: Ukraine and Moldova. Understanding the tactics of the national elites in these countries, which were sandwiched between the two power poles of Brussels and Moscow and had the option of going either way, will constitute the primary task of this research project. The emphasis is on these two vacillators because of their theoretical and empirical importance: these states behaved against the predictions of most of the IR theories and their foreign policy choices remain the most puzzling among the post-Communist states in Europe.

Throughout the study, I will also refer to the experience of the Balkan¹⁷ countries; I will use them mostly as “shadow cases”¹⁸ however. In other words, the Balkan states will be utilized as cases that “provide brief points of comparison for the case(s) of primary interest,”¹⁹ rather than constituting the central focus of analysis.

This study covers the period between 1991 and 2014. I consider the dissolution of the Soviet Union as the starting point for my study because it was this event that allowed

¹⁷ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia.

¹⁸ Gerring, J., Cojocaru, L. “Selecting Cases for Intensive Analysis: A diversity of Goals and Methods,” *Sociological Methods and Research* (2016): 1-32. doi: 10.1177/0049124116631692

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

the former Soviet states in Europe to implement individual foreign policies without directives from Moscow.²⁰ The analysis ends with the year 2014 because this marked a key turning point when for the first time in the independence history of a post-Soviet state – a government had to make a clear-cut choice between East and West. The Russian government finally put a stop to the Ukrainian government’s policy of vacillating between Brussels and Moscow, blocking Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich from signing a long planned the Association Agreement (AA) with the EU. Yanukovich’s bowing to Russian pressure sparked the massive Euromaidan protests, which eventually brought down his regime. Russia then responded by invading Ukraine, annexing Crimea and sponsoring an ongoing proxy war in eastern Ukraine that continues to this day.

Even though some voices claimed that the “EuroMaidan” was not explicitly a fight for a pro-west/pro-EU foreign policy orientation,²¹ the subsequent public rebellion against Yanukovich and his rule was triggered by his decision *not* to sign the AA with the EU, turn away from the West and integrate more closely with Russia. This decision was a turning point, which later led to specific political, security, economic and social consequences not only for Ukraine but for the Eastern and Central Europe as a region and

²⁰ In the case of the CEECs, I will also refer to certain events which took place starting with the year 1989, the year when the Berlin Wall fell and diplomatic relations with the EU were established soon thereafter. European Commission. *Enlargement of the European Union. An Historic Opportunity, 2001*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/press_corner/publications/corpus_en.pdf In the case of the post-Soviet states, some voices claimed that Ukraine, (or Belarus for the same matter), were founders of the United Nations, therefore they were subjects of international relations even during Soviet times. B. I. Tarasyuk, Foreword to the edited volume by Spillman K. R., Wenger, A., Muller, D., *Between Russia and the West: Foreign and Security Policy of Independent Ukraine* (Peter Lang: 1999) Still, however, the foreign policy implementation until December 1991 was Moscow’s prerogative. Former Ukrainian President. Interview with the Author, July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.

²¹ Ilkiv, Taras, “A Ukrainian Journalist Explains 10 Things The West Needs To Know About The Situation In Kiev,” *Business Insider*, January 24, 2014, <http://www.businessinsider.com/understanding-euromaidan-2014-1>

for changing the East-West relations. Yanukovich's foreign policy decision had grim consequences for him: he had to abandon his palaces and the wealth he had looted from his country and flee to Russia, where he remains in hiding. The massive Euromaidan protests, Yanukovich's ouster and Russia's invasion of Ukraine demonstrate the high stakes at play in foreign policy decision making for post-Soviet states.

Theoretical Puzzle

What predictions do the traditional IR theories offer to explain the foreign policy behavior of the former Communist states in Europe? Can they explain the phenomenon of foreign policy vacillation? In the following section, I review some of the most important theories in the *neo-realist*, *neo-liberal* and *constructivist* traditions and suggest how each theory might answer this study's core questions about the foreign policy orientations of post-Communist states. The main goal of the section is to show that these theories advance at most partial explanations to the foreign policy behavior of the post-Communist states in Europe. The section will then argue that the neoclassical realist theory provides better predictions and explanations of the puzzling international outcomes of the post-Communist states. Since the neorealist balance of power theories were designed to explain the international behavior of great powers, their predictions are indeterminate and unclear when applied to explain the behavior of small states geographically located in between two power poles. The section further rejects the neoliberal theories claiming that they ignore historical context and overemphasize economic interdependence as an underlying goal that drives foreign policy decision-making. Most of the existing arguments explaining the foreign policy behavior of the post-Soviet states can be grouped under the constructivist

umbrella. The section argues that ideas, identities and ideology may explain the initial inclination of parties and their leaders' foreign policy views. As parties and their leaders acquire power, however, ideology becomes a poor predictor of their future foreign policy orientations. Leaders adopt fickle behavior and would switch orientation if they think this will help them get reelected or stay in power.

Neo-realist Arguments

Neo-realists argue that the most important goal that states seek in the international system is to enhance their security. As Kenneth Waltz writes, "in anarchy, security is the highest end."²² Neo-realists believe a state's position in the distribution of capabilities determines its alignments. A state's security is endangered when other states have or are on their way to gaining superior power capabilities. According to the balance of power theories, to fulfill their security goal, states will adopt a balancing²³ behavior. Scholars define balancing in two ways: increasing a state's national power by strengthening economic capability, military strength, or searching for "clever strategies" (internal balancing) or seeking an external alliance to balance against a stronger state or existing coalition (external balancing).²⁴ In terms of external balancing, scholars further predict that states are expected to either *balance*, i.e. align with the weaker country/coalition against a stronger power, or *bandwagon* with it, i.e. align with the stronger side. When states are faced with a more powerful state or coalition, they will balance it by aligning with another

²² Waltz, K. N. *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley: 1979), 126.

²³ For an excellent review and discussion of the balance of power theories, see Jack S. Levy. 2003. "Balances and Balancing. Concepts, Propositions, and Research Design." In John A. Vasquez and Collin Elman, eds. *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate*. Upper-Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 128-53.

²⁴ Waltz., 118.

weaker state or coalition in order to impede a rising hegemonic state to achieve a dominant position in the system.²⁵ States decide to align with the weaker side because there will be no stronger power dominating them. Also, within the weaker alliance, the new member's influence increases, as the more vulnerable side needs greater assistance.

Jack Levy emphasizes that there is a great power bias in the predictions of the balance of power theory: scholars base their predictions on the assumption that only great powers “are strong enough to make a difference”²⁶, impeding a hegemonic state to rise and dominate the international system.²⁷ Weaker, “secondary states” are predicted to behave “depending on the context,” sometimes balancing against the stronger side or bandwagoning with it.²⁸ Waltz claims that if weaker states “are free to choose,” they “flock to the weaker side; for it is the stronger side that threatens them. On the weaker side, they are both more appreciated and safer, provided of course, that the coalition they join achieves enough defensive or deterrent strength to dissuade adversaries from attacking.”²⁹

Under the bandwagoning strategy, states ally with the strong side, when this side is powerful and demonstrates its power through various means. On the contrary, when a state's relative power declines, the other states will either choose neutrality or defect to the other side. Two motivations drive countries' considerations to bandwagon: first, bandwagoning implies “*appeasement*” – i.e. the bandwagoner hopes that by aligning with a powerful state, a potential attack on them by the stronger side will be deterred, and

²⁵ Levy 2003, 132.

²⁶ Ibid., 140

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 140

²⁹ Waltz., 127.

second, in times of war, a state may choose to align with the victorious side, hoping to share the rewards from that victory.

Waltz' balance of power theory further points to the "socialization" of states in the international system. If some states are successful in their balancing techniques, "others will emulate them or fall by the wayside."³⁰

Stephen Walt questioned the prediction advanced by Kenneth Waltz that states balance against the strongest power in the system,³¹ arguing in turn that states join or form alliances to balance against external threats, rather than against power.³²

When states face a significant external threat, they will balance, i.e. ally with other states against the "prevailing threat" or bandwagon, i.e. align with the source of danger.³³

The balancing or bandwagoning behaviors are determined by four factors: aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and aggressive intentions. The first three factors, aggregate power, geographic proximity and offensive power, may provide reasons for both balancing and bandwagoning. Aggressive intentions induce a balancing behavior: when weak states perceive the aggressive intentions of a threatening state or coalition, they will opt for a balancing behavior, because "if an aggressor's intentions cannot be changed by an alliance with it, a vulnerable state, even if allied, is likely to become a victim."³⁴

Can neo-realist theories predict the international behavior of the post-Communist states?

Since, as noted above, the balance of power theories have a strong great power bias, one must be cautious when translating their predictions to small state behavior. Walt's

³⁰ Ibid., 118.

³¹ Levy, 132.

³² Walt, S. *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

³³ Ibid., 17.

³⁴ Ibid., 26.

balance of threat theory predicts that weak and small states are more likely to bandwagon rather than to balance. Weak states' bandwagoning choice is explained by the fact that they have little influence and add little to the power of a defensive coalition. Offensive power, one of the four factors emphasized by Walt, induces a bandwagoning behavior among weak states: "when offensive power permits rapid conquest, vulnerable states may see little hope in resisting."³⁵ Offensive power is one of the reasons why spheres of influence emerge: when weak states are geographically located near states with large offensive capabilities and have no potential allies in their geographic proximity to deter the threat or to defend their territory, they are more likely to bandwagon. Therefore, geographic proximity to an offensive state or coalition and lack of available allies – will induce bandwagoning behavior among weak states.

The general assumption related to the balance of power theories, however, is that small states, due to their weakness and vulnerability, adopt balancing or bandwagoning behavior "depending on the context," doing what is necessary to survive.³⁶ Given this assumption, therefore, the balance of power theories are indeterminate at predicting when exactly would small states balance or bandwagon or why would they modulate between these two alternatives.

Even though weakened and consumed by the USSR collapse and loss of the Cold War, Russia, when compared to the capabilities of the rest of the post-Communist states in Europe, remained a strong power. Following the predictions of the balance-of-threat theory, one could expect the post-Communist states to align with the West and to distance

³⁵ Ibid., 25

³⁶ Levy, 140.

from Russia. The historical past, and Russia's offensive power and geographic proximity, may have led the post-Communist states in Europe to perceive Russia as a threat, determining the CEECs to seek an alliance with NATO and balance against Moscow. Most post-Communist states indeed applied for membership into the dominant Western institutions (the EU and NATO) and most of them joined NATO and the EU. The availability and capability of NATO to deter Russia and defend their territories in case of a Russian attack explain the CEECs' choice to join the Western alliance.³⁷ The balance-of-threat theory also explains the Western Balkan's orientation toward NATO and the West. Recovering from the wars, being unable to balance internally, and perceiving Serbia as a threat to their security explains Western Balkans' interest in joining the Western alliance.³⁸ Serbia is the only country that did not apply for NATO membership, although Serbia's military cooperation with NATO is greater than the cooperation with Russia.³⁹

Does the assumption of the balance of power theories that weak and small states, sometimes balance a great power and sometimes bandwagon with it, account for the varied foreign policy choices of the post-Soviet states following their independence from the Soviet Union?

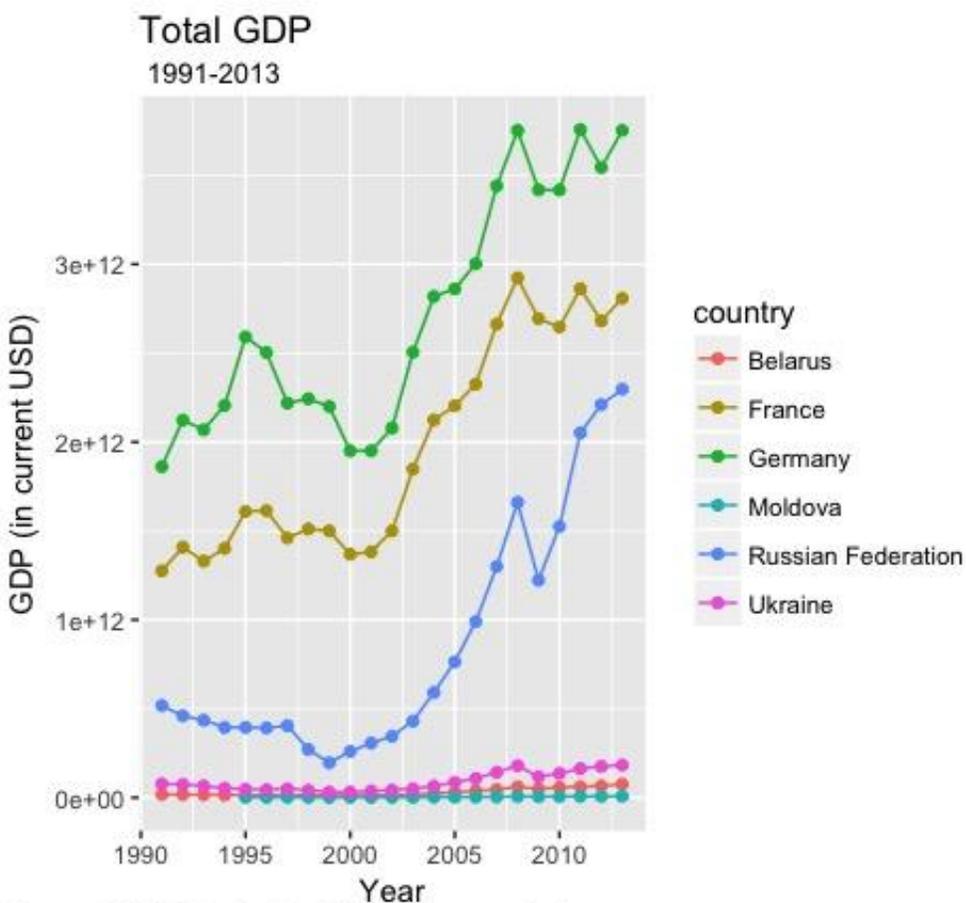
³⁷ For a more in-depth discussion of the neo-realist theories and their explanations for the CEEC's bid for NATO membership, see Schimmelfennig, F. *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe. Rules and Rhetoric*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37-40.

³⁸ Among the rest of the Western Balkan states, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have applied for NATO membership. NATO's invitation to the Republic of Macedonia was blocked by Greece at the 2008 Bucharest summit due to the naming dispute, whereas NATO launched the Membership and Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010.

³⁹ NATO Review. "Backsliding in the Western Balkans." February 2, 2017. <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2017/Also-in-2017/backsliding-western-balkans-kosovo-servia-bosnia/EN/index.htm>

The European Union and Russia’s aggregate power is incomparably higher than the overall capabilities of the former Soviet states. The figures below are offered just as examples to compare the overall capabilities of the countries geographically located in-between the two power poles.

Figure 1: Total GDP 1991 - 2013

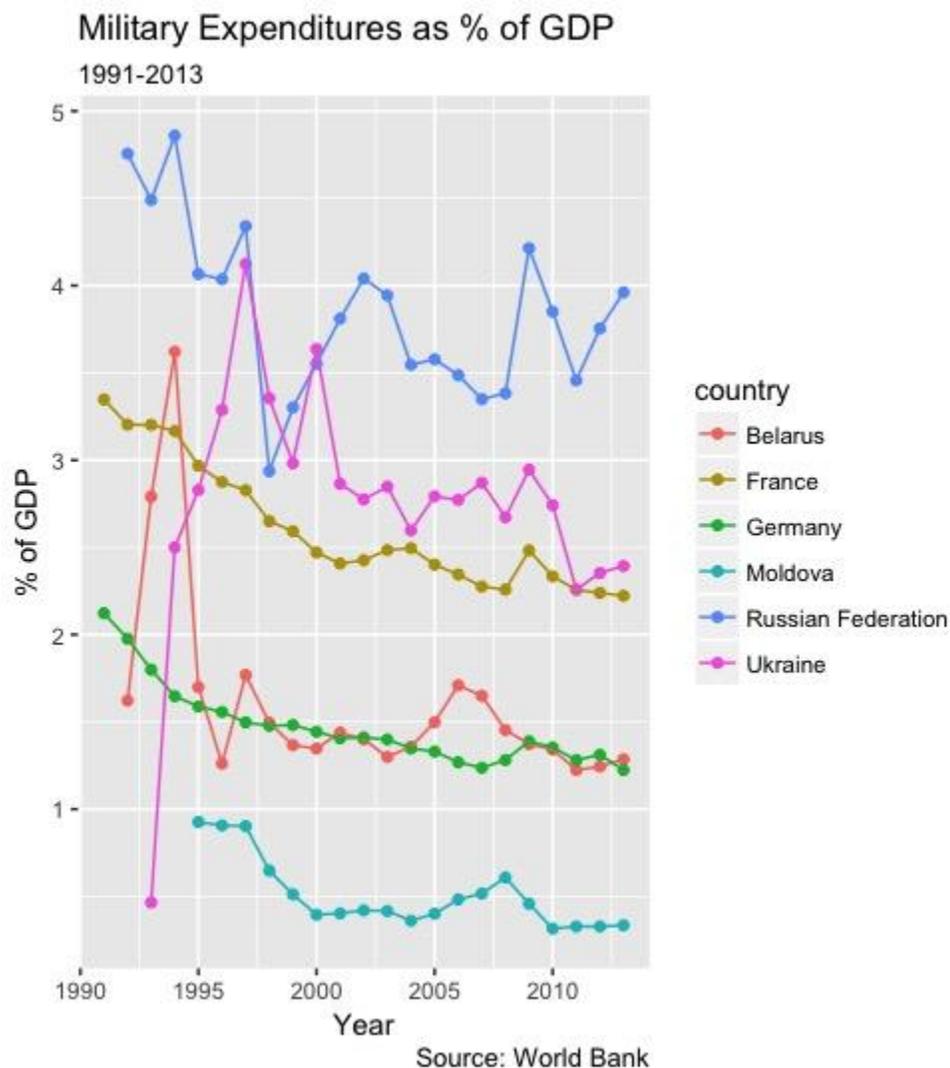


Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators

Russia was perceived by most of the states of the former Soviet Union as a threat, and this perception is based on history and previous experience when Moscow has

demonstrated its “interest” in the states of the former Soviet Union⁴⁰ and showed its tendency to increase and maintain its influence in these territories.⁴¹ When compared with the overall capabilities of Russia or the EU, the post-Soviet states are weak.

Figure 2: Military Expenditures as Percentages of GDP



⁴⁰ Secret Additional Protocol to the Nonaggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union signed in Moscow on August 23, 1939.

⁴¹ Spruyt, H. “The Prospects of Neo-Imperial and Nonimperial Outcomes in the Former Soviet Space.” In K. Dawisha and B. Parrott (Ed.), *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1997), 315-337.

Take for example Ukraine, the most populous and militarily stable of the former Soviet countries⁴²: EU's economy is 47 times bigger than that of Ukraine, while Russia overpasses Ukraine economically by 7.5 times.⁴³ Regarding military power, Russia has about four times as many soldiers as Ukraine, twice as many tanks and more than six times as many combat aircraft.⁴⁴ Russia's military expenditures overwhelmingly exceed those of its neighbors.

In the context of the post-1991 period, therefore, following Walt's balance of threat theory propositions, one could expect the post-Soviet states to bandwagon with Russia, i.e. ally with the source of danger, as they were weak and perceived Russia as a threat.⁴⁵

The European post-Soviet states did not follow the predictions of the balance of threat theory, however. The Baltic States balanced Russia, aligning against the Kremlin, joining NATO and the EU twelve years after their independence. Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine exhibited an inconsistent behavior, at times trying to balance Russia, seeking EU and NATO membership, but at other occasions bandwagoning with Russia. Despite vulnerability to economic and military threats and their contiguity with Russia, and despite the fact, that NATO was not available to deter the Russian threat and defend their territories,⁴⁶ Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova did not bandwagon consistently with Russia.

⁴² Miller, E. A. *To Balance or Not to Balance*, 2006.

⁴³ Data from the CIA Factbook, 2013 estimates.

⁴⁴ Recknagel, C. "Explainer: How does Russia and Ukraine's Armies Compare?" *RFERL Report*, (March 2014). Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-ukraine-armies-compare/25287910.html>; Hedenskog, J., Vendil Palin, C. "Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year Perspective." *Swedish Defence Research Agency*, (2013).

⁴⁵ Spruyt, H. "The Prospects of Neo-Imperial and Nonimperial Outcomes" (1997). Elman, C. "Horses for Courses: Why not neorealist theories of foreign policy?" *Security Studies*, 6, no. 1 (1996): 7-53.

⁴⁶ The literature on the modes of political integration the EU has developed with respect to the CEE countries suggests that membership perspective is considered a strong enticement, a "golden carrot", for inducing domestic democratic reforms. See, inter alia, Kelley, J. G. *Ethnic Politics in Europe. The Power*

On the contrary, they vacillated, sometimes bandwagoning with and at other times balancing against Russia.⁴⁷

Also, according to the neo-realist theories, because of socialization in the international system, states are expected to emulate the balancing behavior of successful states.⁴⁸ As scholars pointed out, however, states differ in their ability to imitate other states' behavior, either because of differences in domestic political conditions, which do not allow them to mobilize the necessary resources⁴⁹ or, as this dissertation argues, because states face different incentives and constraints in the international system. Whereas most of the post-Communist states in Europe (the CEECs and the Western Balkans) were offered a NATO membership prospect, the post-Soviet states (except for the Baltics) did not win acceptance in joining NATO or the EU. Therefore, even though some of the post-Soviet states aimed to emulate the behavior of the CEECs, seeking membership in NATO, the alliance was reticent to accept countries like Ukraine or Georgia, which also pursued goals of joining the organization.

of Norms and Size. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*, 2005; Kubicek, P. J. (ed.) *The European Union and Democratization*. (London: Routledge, 2003). Pridham, G. *Designing Democracy: EU Enlargement and Regime Change in Post-Communist Europe*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Change*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. "EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood. Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange." *European Union Politics*, 9, no. 2 (2008), 187-215. I suggest that a credible membership prospect is crucial in determining countries like Moldova, Ukraine or Georgia to develop a consistent pro-EU foreign policy.

⁴⁷ Only Armenia and Belarus chose to follow consistent pro-Russia policies. Neighboring Turkey and Azerbaijan, Armenia bandwagoned with Moscow because Russia was the only great power committed to protect and defend Armenia's territorial integrity from Turkish or Azerbaijani threats. Belarus bandwagoned with Russia as well: leaders in Belarus aimed to gain from Russia's security guarantees.

⁴⁸ Waltz, K. N. *Theory of International Politics*, 1979.

⁴⁹ Lobell, S. E. "Threat Assessment, the State and Foreign Policy: a Neoclassical Realist Model," In J. W. Taliafero et al. ed. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

To conclude, neorealism and the balance of power theories suggest that small and weak states will balance or bandwagon depending on the context, doing what it takes to survive in the system, failing to provide complete answers about the vacillatory foreign policy behaviors of small states.

Some earlier studies aimed to clarify some of the conditions under which the post-Soviet states balanced or bandwagoned with great powers. Cristian Cantir and Ryan Kennedy, focusing on Moldova's case, find that when Russia poses a threat to the internal stability of the ruling government and when the EU adopts more open policies, providing alternative ties to the small state, leaders will soft-balance Russia.⁵⁰ While highly informative, Cantir and Ryan's framework does not show the conditions under which weak and small states choose to switch between soft-balancing great powers and bandwagoning with them. Eric Miller, using Ukraine and Uzbekistan as case studies, argued that when domestic leaders face internal threats (such as assassination attempts, civil wars, and secessionist movements) and when there is high economic dependence on Russia, leaders are more likely to bandwagon with Russia.⁵¹

Miller's framework, on the other hand, suffers because it downplays Russia's actions toward the post-soviet countries as influencing states' decisions to bandwagon with Russia. Miller justifies his exclusion of Russia's incentives and constraints from his analysis by claiming that Russia's influence was uniform across the region and therefore cannot explain differences between the foreign policy orientations that post-Soviet states

⁵⁰ Cristian Cantir, Kennedy, Ryan. 2015. "Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants: Moldova's Foreign Policy toward Russia and the European Union." *Foreign Policy Analysis*, doi: 10.1111/fpa.12051

⁵¹ Miller, E. A. *To Balance or Not to Balance. Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2006.

adopted. However, research shows that Russia differentiated its behavior toward the post-Soviet states.⁵² The Kremlin rewarded or punished the post-Soviet states, based on the policies pursued by each government. To the countries that were “not striving toward Western integration and democratic reforms,” Russia applied the *policy of managed stability*, aiming to support the status-quo and the existing governments in power. Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan populate this group. On the contrary, to the “consolidated democracies and deeply integrated with the West” states, Russia directed the *policy of managed instability*.⁵³ This second group is represented by the Baltic States, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia. Since Russia uses diversified tactics toward the former Soviet states, it is important to investigate whether these tactics have any effect on the subsequent foreign policy choices of domestic governing elites.

To conclude, since the neorealist balance of power theories focus predominantly on explaining the international behavior of great powers, their predictions are indeterminate when applied to explain the behavior of small states geographically located between two power poles. As such, these theories cannot explain the vacillatory foreign policy behavior of the post-Soviet states.

Neo-liberal Arguments

Neo-liberal institutionalism posits that the main incentives states pursue in the international system are not survival and security. States are not concerned about relative

⁵² Tolstrup, J. “Studying a negative external actor: Russia’s management of stability and instability in the “Near Abroad””. *Democratization*, 16, 5 (2009).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 931

gains, but rather about achieving and maximizing their individual absolute gains.⁵⁴ States prioritize economic welfare and mutual profitability and therefore in an international system characterized by complex interdependence, to achieve their goals, states depend more on international cooperation. The expectation advanced by neoliberal institutionalism, therefore is that states tend to cooperate economically and join international organizations to reduce transaction costs or to allow domestic organized economic actors to benefit materially from joining these international institutions.

How do states decide which international organizations to join? Whereas neo-realists regard the state as a “black-box,”⁵⁵ one of the assumptions of liberalism is the primacy of societal players: “individuals and private actors” are regarded as “fundamental actors in international politics.”⁵⁶ The state, then, is viewed as aggregating preferences and interests of various domestic political groups through contention at the national level and then pursuing these national objectives at the international level “as if with one voice.”⁵⁷ The state leaders are viewed as being constrained by these societal actors to pursue particular foreign economic policies at the international level because of domestic electoral

⁵⁴ Keohane, R. O. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). Keohane, R. O., Nye, J. S. *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1977). Powel, R. “Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory.” *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 4 (1991).

⁵⁵ Taliaferro, J. W., Lobell, S. E., Ripsman, N. M. “Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy.” In J. W. Taliaferro et al. ed. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17.

⁵⁶ Moravcsik, A. “Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics.” *International Organization* 51 (1997), 516-517.

⁵⁷ Moravcsik, A. *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1998), 22.

pressures⁵⁸ or because state leaders are influenced when designing policies by domestic lobbying groups or by the electoral support they received from various economic groups.⁵⁹

The Central and Eastern European states' effort to join the European Union is explained by scholars as a rationalist cost-benefit analysis. Eastern European states expected increased "aggregate economic welfare" and "tremendous economic and geopolitical benefits" from joining the EU, these benefits outweighing the costs of compliance with EU conditionality requirements.⁶⁰ The choice of the Western Balkan states to join the European Union is explained by the neo-liberal institutionalism as well.

Does neo-liberal institutionalism, however, account for the various foreign policy behavior of the former Soviet states? Following the dictates of neo-liberal institutionalism, one could expect states to forge closer ties with those international entities, which would guarantee gains regarding economic welfare. Right after the collapse of the Soviet empire, one could have expected the preservation of economic cooperation among the newly independent states. This expectation is based on at least two reasons. First, given the high economic interdependence among the former Soviet republics, disrupting their complex economic and trade relations was expected to lead to significant negative economic consequences. Second, reorienting their economies to the West was not possible in the immediate aftermath of the USSR collapse. Even though one could argue that pursuing closer trade ties with the EU would have brought more economic rewards to the post-Soviet

⁵⁸ See, for example, Rogowski, R. *Commerce and Coalitions. How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁵⁹ See, for example, Milner, H. *Resisting Protectionism: Global Industries and the Politics of International Trade*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988). Moravcsik, A. *The Choice for Europe*, 1998.

⁶⁰ Moravcsik, A., Vachudova, M. A. "National Interests, State Power, and EU Enlargement." *East European Politics and Societies* 17, no. 1 (2003), 43. Jacoby, W. *The Enlargement of the European Union and NATO. Ordering from the Menu in Central Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

states (the EU being a region with a higher GDP and better economic prospects), this option was not available, because the EU was not very enthusiastic and was slow to open toward accepting new trade partners from the former Soviet bloc.

The international financial institutions, IMF and the World Bank, considered it a “necessity” for the economic cooperation among the former Soviet republics to be strengthened: in 1992, the IMF warned that the newly independent states would not be entitled to financial support if they exited the monetary union.⁶¹ Despite the IMF recommendations, some post-Soviet states exited the monetary union, introducing their own currencies, and “monetary relations [among the former USSR members] became disorganized and chaotic.”⁶² Moreover, despite the fact that the World Bank recommended the establishment of preferential trade links among the newly independent states, and the Common Wealth of Independent States (CIS) was formed as a way to continue the multilateral cooperation, not all of the former Soviet members joined the CIS. As some scholars document, “by mid-1990s trade volume among post-Soviet states had declined to less than half its 1991 level.”⁶³ Even though the Baltic States were dependent on subsidized energy supplies from Russia and had strong trade ties with other CIS members, they did not express any interest in joining the CIS and reoriented their economies toward Western institutions (WTO and EU).⁶⁴

Throughout their more than twenty-five years of independence, Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia exhibited ambivalent positions concerning the CIS: while initially, they were

⁶¹ Abdelal, R. *National Purpose*, 5.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁴ Abdelal, R. *National Purpose*; Darden, *Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals*.

reluctant to join the organization, later agreed to participate in treaties related to economic cooperation, but not military or security collaboration, trying to forge closer economic relations with the European Union.⁶⁵ Belarus and Armenia, on the other hand, promoted cooperation within the CIS and became members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).⁶⁶ Belarus joined Russia in the Customs Union in 1994 and integrated economically with Moscow. Neo-liberal institutional predictions seem to account only for the behavior and choices made by Belarus and to a certain extent Armenia, but not of the rest of the post-Soviet states.

Another explanation advanced by scholars to account for the varied alignment behavior of the post-Communist states in Europe, and which fits under the ideational liberalism label,⁶⁷ considers the regime type of states.⁶⁸ Asking “why did some CEECs apply for EU membership while others showed no interest in doing so?” Walter Mattli and Thomas Plümpert advance the following argument.⁶⁹ The democratic CEECs were more likely to align with the West and the EU rules and institutions, applying for EU membership, because their leaders were more electorally accountable and aware that the

⁶⁵ Georgia completed its withdrawal from the CIS in 2009, after the Russo-Georgian War from 2008. Ukraine is an associate member of the organization, whereas Moldova remains a member.

⁶⁶ CSTO is the CIS Collective Security Treaty.

⁶⁷ The argument can best account for liberalism’s concern for “the commitment of individuals and groups to particular political institutions,” that is domestic regime type. Moravcsik claims that pure institutionalist arguments care about the types of institutions/ideology “only insofar as it contributes to the certainty of coordination and commitment.” Ideational liberalism, however, is concerned with how “differences in perceptions of domestic political legitimacy translate into patterns of underlying preferences and thus variation in international conflict and cooperation.” Moreover, ideology and regime type is important to ideational liberalism because it contributed to cooperation related to regulatory issues, “prior convergence of underlying values is a necessary prerequisite for cooperation in regulatory issues.” Moravcsik, A. “Taking Preferences Seriously”, 527-528.

⁶⁸ Mattli, W., Plümpert, T. “The Demand-Side Politics of EU Enlargement.” In Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier ed. *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 52-74.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 52.

reformed judicial and administrative institutions were the best guarantees for attracting investment for economic growth. The less democratic states, however, preferred not to “venture” on the road to EU membership because of their leaders’ concerns that by implementing radical reforms, they would estrange the domestic interest groups, whose political support they needed for continuing to hold political power.⁷⁰

One problem with this kind of argument is that it downplays the importance of systemic constraints and incentives in leaders’ perceptions when deciding foreign policy alignments. Specifically, the argument downplays the role of a credible membership prospect that most of the CEECs received from the EU, whereas the post-Soviet states (except for the Baltics) did not. Mattli and Plümper argue that “the boundaries of an enlarged EU were not clearly drawn in the minds of EU leaders during the first half of 1990s” and that because the EU signed economic cooperation agreements with Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, there was no definite consensus among the EU member states on how far to the east the EU borders would extend.⁷¹ The authors then suggest that leaders of EU member states considered Russia and other CIS states eligible countries for EU membership.

This argument is inaccurate, however, because the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) that the EU signed with Ukraine, Russia and other Soviet successor states in 1994 did not include a clause acknowledging these states’ EU membership eligibility, as opposed to the Europe Agreements signed with Poland, Hungary, Romania or Bulgaria, in which the EU recognized these countries’ prospective membership

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

potential. “[T]he main significance of the PCAs is that they are *not* Europe Agreements. By deciding to create a separate network of cooperation agreements with Russia and the other CIS states, the EU placed relations with these countries on a separate track from its development of ties with the CEECs and, thus, basically *excluded* them from the enlargement process.”⁷² One could argue that despite this lack of membership prospect, the post-Soviet states could have sought to have free trade agreements with the EU. The problem was that, with the exception of the Baltic States, throughout the first two decades since the dissolution of the USSR, the EU was reluctant to forge free trade deals with the former Soviet states.

The Preamble of the Europe Agreements signed with the CEECs had a particular clause which “Recogniz[ed] the fact that the final objective of [name of country] is to become a member of the Community and that this association, in the view of the Parties, will help to achieve this objective.”⁷³ It is true that the EU advanced on the road to membership with the CEECs slowly and proceeded reluctantly and incrementally “to start accession negotiations with the CEECs.”⁷⁴ Nevertheless, agreeing to sign Europe Agreements with them and acknowledging their membership aspirations, the EU switched the light from red to blinking yellow, and this provided the encouragement and impetus for the initiation of the “second-stage,” costlier reform processes in some of the CEECs.

⁷² Baun, M. J. *A Wider Europe: the Process and Politics of European Union Enlargement*. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, p. 35. Emphasis added.

⁷³ Agreement of 16 December 1991 establishing an association between the European Community and its member States, and the Republic of Poland. Retrieved from <http://wits.worldbank.org/GPTAD/PDF/archive/EC-Poland.pdf>The same clause existed in all the Europe Agreements signed by the European Union with the associated candidates.

⁷⁴ Sedelmeier, U. “Eastern Enlargement. Risk, Rationality and Role-Compliance,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 123.

The Western recognition of the new reform-minded governments in the CEECs “as equal partners and the promise of rapid integration into Western international institutions” – provided legitimacy to the domestic political actors “by enhancing credibility vis-à-vis their own societies.”⁷⁵ Moreover, the fact that the West committed to the inclusion of these countries within its security and economic institutions proved crucial for the consolidation of domestic political forces inside CEECs, helped them in their choice of institutions and in their internal negotiations over the course of their states’ development.⁷⁶ Previous research shows that EU membership was “the highest form of social recognition,” (as well as the “highest material incentive”) to determine domestic political elites in the CEECs to mobilize and undertake democratic and economic reforms,⁷⁷ reforms that once undertaken, sealed their orientation toward the West and away from Russia. Holding out the “credible promise of membership” to the CEECs – encouraged the political elites in these countries to choose policies intended to bring them closer to the West. The fact that the EU signaled to the post-Communist states that they were regarded as credible future members of the organization provided their political elites a meaningful foreign policy goal.

The Ukrainian archival diplomatic documents suggest that from the initial stages when the debate on eastward enlargement emerged in the European political circles, the EU Member States considered Ukraine and other Soviet successor states ineligible for

⁷⁵ Batt, J. “The International Dimension of Democratization in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.” In *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratization in Eastern Europe*, ed. Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring, and George Sanford (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p. 161-162.

⁷⁶ Grabbe, H. *The EU’s Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, p. 102.

⁷⁷ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003, p. 501.

prospective membership. The Ukrainian diplomats accredited in various European capitals wrote detailed diplomatic correspondence about the Member States' positions on the question of which Eastern European countries were considered eligible for membership and which were not. Therefore, the political actors in these countries were aware that the West considered their states unfit for accession. Awareness of this fact affected these leaders' subsequent domestic and foreign policy choices, as well as the configuration of domestic political forces.

Mattli and Plümper further argue that once the post-Communist leaders in the more democratic states successfully launched costlier, "second-stage" economic and political reforms, they started to "contemplate EU membership application" as a form of "confidence in their country's ability and willingness to overcome the remaining internal obstacles to EU membership."⁷⁸ These authors further note that "[a]n application ... represented a very public form of commitment to continuing deep institutional reforms."⁷⁹ Mattli and Plümper's argument overlooks the fact that even among the countries which sent their membership requests to the EU during the 1994-1996 periods, there were several laggards, which despite few democratic successes, were courageous enough to send membership applications to Brussels. As Vachudova's research shows, differences in democratic levels did not impede the less democratic or "illiberal" states, (Romania, Bulgaria or Slovakia), to apply for membership (in line with the liberal Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic). Even after sending a formal membership application to Brussels, Slovakia under Mečiar slowed down economic and institutional reforms and flirted with

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Russia.⁸⁰ Also, Mattli and Plümper’s argument overlooks the fact that the leaders of the countries who submitted a membership application took this step only after they received a green light signal from the EU that their request would be considered.⁸¹ A membership application, therefore, represented a mutual commitment: not only the applicant countries committed to undertake reforms, but also the EU member states took on the responsibility to admit, as well as economically and politically support these countries on their road to the membership.

This project posits that it is not democratization that leads to European integration, but the other way around. The prospect of EU membership acted as a magnet for the CEECs, stirring up the costly reform process and locking in a pro-Western foreign policy orientation in the countries deemed credible future members. Previous research shows that “[b]y the end of the 1990s, ..., the variation in political and economic trajectories that had been visible among the EU’s credible future members in Eastern Europe had diminished. Almost all political leaders now found EU membership ‘appealing.’”⁸²

Further research by Plümper and others delineated the argument by introducing the idea about “self-selection process” – by which political leaders in less democratic states “were unwilling to apply [for EU membership] either for purely domestic reasons or

⁸⁰ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 73.

⁸¹ The archival diplomatic documents from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs show how Ukrainian diplomats were seeking the advice and guidance from their counterparts from Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the other CEE states which were accepted as candidates for EU membership. These diplomatic discussions suggest that the political leaders in the Central and Eastern European states received a positive signal *before* submitting the application to Brussels that their membership applications would be considered by the European Commission.

⁸² Moravcsik, A., Vachudova, M. A. “Preferences, Power, and Equilibrium. The Causes and Consequences of EU Enlargement.” In *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), 202-203.

because they anticipated little or no chance of success.”⁸³ This project takes issue with the “self-selection” argument because it seems to lead to the belief that the post-Communist states which did not apply for EU membership in the 1994 – 1996 periods renounced at the goal of joining the West altogether. Whereas this development was true for some of the post-Communist states, like Belarus and Russia, the next empirical chapters bring evidence from archival diplomatic documents, that political leaders in countries like Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova continued to lobby the Western leaders, asking to be included in the group of countries deemed credible for EU accession negotiations. Therefore, even though these states did not send official requests for EU membership, they undertook intense diplomatic work behind the scenes to receive a positive signal from the EU on their membership prospect.

To conclude, this dissertation rejects neo-liberal institutionalism’s explanations of the international behavior of the post-Communist states in Europe. One set of factors predicts that economic considerations and trade interdependence dictates a state’s choice to join international economic organizations. The strong economic interdependence among the former Soviet states was assumed to be an important driver for the continuation of their economic cooperation, ignoring some of these states’ desire to break from the Soviet past and reorient toward the West. The second set of factors overemphasizes regime type and discounts the key role played by systemic factors, especially EU’s reluctance to offer a membership prospect to some of the post-Soviet states and how this lack of perspective affected leaders’ decision-making logic.

⁸³ Plümper, T., Schneider, C. J., Troeger, V. E. “The Politics of EU Eastern Enlargement: Evidence from a Heckman Selection Model.” *British Journal of Political Science*, 36, 2005, 18.

Constructivist Arguments

Documenting in the previous sections neo-realism's and neo-liberalism's challenges to account for the various foreign policy behaviors of the former Soviet states, we now turn to the theories embedded in the constructivism/sociological tradition, asking whether their predictions explain the different foreign policy choices of the post-Communist states in Europe. In contrast to the neo-liberal and neo-realist traditions, which focus on material incentives, constructivist theories in IR view ideas as the crucial variable that forms identities, interests, and that determine social behavior.⁸⁴ Identities and interests are analyzed "as products of collective ideational structures and social interactions that are subject to cultural variation and historical change."⁸⁵ In the constructivist tradition, actors "are assumed to internalize or habitualize institutional rules and rule-following behavior," rather than perceive rules and institutions as incentives or constraints that they respond to in an "expedient" way.⁸⁶ Also, actors' interests are assumed to be socially constructed and based on norms and values, rather than emerging from goals of maximizing their own, individual utility, actors being assumed to act following "non-instrumental and non-strategic logics of action."⁸⁷ The "logic of appropriateness," rather than the "logic of consequences" is assumed to guide behavior: actors take decisions and behave following "a conception of necessity rather than preference."⁸⁸ Alternative courses of action are

⁸⁴ Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe*, 68-73.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ March, J. G., Olsen, J. P. *Rediscovering Institutions. The Organizational Basis of Politics*. (New York: The Free Press: 1989), 160-162

judged by “their conformity to institutional rules or social identities” rather than “by the consequences of their own utility.”⁸⁹

Three prominent views exemplify the constructivist explanations of the various foreign policy behaviors of the former Communist states in Europe.

Rawi Abdelal asks why some former members of the Soviet Union sought regional economic reintegration with Russia within the CIS framework; others followed an “ambivalent” course, acknowledging the need to maintain economic cooperation with Russia but avoiding multilateral integration out of fear that Russia’s hegemony would be strengthened. Finally, the third group represented by the Baltic States, rejected post-Soviet economic re-integration altogether and instead followed goals of integrating into the European Union.⁹⁰ Abdelal argues that differences in how these states responded to and perceived their national identities, “the collective meanings ascribed to nations by societies” explain their divergent foreign economic policies.⁹¹ National identities, being shaped by historical memories and by ongoing processes, motivated leaders’ foreign economic strategies. Whereas in the Baltic societies, the content of national identities was “widely shared and ... relatively uncontested”, in the “ambivalent” Moldova, Ukraine or Georgia, national identities were contested, “sometimes with significant regional variation in mass publics’ interpretation of their collective identities.”⁹² In the Baltics, then, because nationalist movements and parties acquired power, the governments were able to reorient their economies away from Russia and toward the West. In the ambivalent societies,

⁸⁹ Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe*, 69.

⁹⁰ Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 6-7.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 81.

however, since societies' national identities were contested and fragmented, the first post-independence governments were unable to achieve the goal of exiting the Russian sphere of influence and "return to Europe." Apart from the ambivalence of their collective identities, Abdelal singles out state weakness as another factor that allowed Russia to influence these countries' "domestic politics and affect military and economic outcomes."⁹³

The findings presented below challenge several aspects of Abdelal's argument.⁹⁴ First, I challenge Abdelal's contention that Western support and commitment were insignificant factors in shaping the foreign policy of the Baltic States. Second, I show how opportunistic domestic politicians used the battle over national identities in the "ambivalent" states for their own political and economic advantage.

Whereas Abdelal's nationalist argument brings into the equation the Russian pressure and influence on the post-Soviet states' domestic politics and foreign policy decision-making, it rules out any role played by the West, especially by the European Union, in influencing these states' foreign policy choices. While it is true that the initiative on the pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy orientations originated from the domestic leadership, the support offered by the West and the availability of an EU membership prospect helped consolidate and maintain the initiative of adopting a pro-Western foreign policy choice. In other words, once a pro-Western foreign policy is chosen by a specific government, the support offered by the West helps maintain the pro-Western foreign policy

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ For another critique of the nationalist argument, see Darden, *Economic Liberalism and its Rivals*, 146-149.

orientation and helps governments follow through with the reforms and institutional changes until joining Western economic and security institutions.

The experience of the vacillating countries, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, shows that the international opportunities available to states play important roles in the foreign policy outcomes. Even if governments in these states expressed goals of joining the West, the fact that systemic conditions were not in their favor (they lacked a credible EU membership prospect), led to vacillatory foreign policy outcomes. The chapter on the CEECs shows how the support offered by the EU and the West more broadly was, in fact, crucial to the consolidation of the pro-Western foreign policy choice made by the Baltic States. These countries started negotiating Europe Agreements with the EU in 1994 and signed them after less than six months of negotiations, receiving credible membership prospects. Therefore, Abdelal's claim that "None assured Lithuania of [EU] membership ... by the year 2000" is inaccurate.⁹⁵ On the contrary, the Western countries offered substantial financial and diplomatic support to the three Baltic States. Domestically, this support helped pro-Western, reform-minded parties to complete the initiated reforms and marginalize opponents, and externally, this support helped the Baltics in their negotiations with the Russians. Abdelal compares Ukraine with the three Baltic States: all four, in the first years after the collapse of the USSR, sought to re-orient their trade away from Russia and toward the West. Whereas the Baltics "followed through" with the reorientation, Ukraine did not. Ukraine's failure to "follow through", as Abdelal points out, was not only because its society rejected the policies of "Western orientation, economic reform, and

⁹⁵ Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 17.

democratization.”⁹⁶ The fact that the three Baltic States signed Association Agreements with the EU, benefiting from a free trade agreement and an associate membership status within the organization helped their governments maintain the pro-Western orientation. The EU, however, rejected all requests advanced by Ukraine to sign an Association Agreement in the 1990s.

The “high contestation” of national identities singled out by Abdelal was exacerbated by opportunistic domestic politicians in these states who amplified pro-Western versus pro-Russia differences and presented the foreign policy orientation in a zero-sum game framework. The lack of a membership prospect in the EU allowed these politicians to make use of these divides and win political capital on them. In addition, the lack of a Western membership prospect strengthened reform-resistant, pro-Russia domestic political parties while marginalizing the reform-minded, pro-Western ones. One of the arguments of the reform-resistant, pro-Russia politicians in domestic debates on the foreign policy orientation was that “the West does not want us anyway” so, why should a pro-Western foreign policy be promoted in the first place.⁹⁷ It follows then that those countries which chose a pro-Western foreign policy *and* which had a credible Western membership prospect, were more likely to join the EU and NATO (the Baltics are the clearest example). On the other hand countries which chose a pro-Western foreign policy orientation, but which *lacked* a membership prospect – had a higher chance to become vacillators in terms of foreign policy direction (Moldova and Ukraine). The governments’ motives and

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Author interviews with politicians and policy makers in Moldova and Ukraine, winter and summer of 2015.

preferences for re-orientation toward the West were not enough: if systemic conditions were not favorable for the governments to fulfill their goals, then a re-orientation in foreign policy had a higher chance of occurring. The Baltic States' government preferences to join the Western economic institutions coincided with the preferences of the West, which accepted to include these states in the Eastern enlargement project. The Western leaders, however, drew a line and excluded the rest of the post-Soviet states, which also expressed interest in joining the West.

Also, while Abdelal points to the strategies employed by Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma (the first two Ukrainian presidents) to “borrow” nationalist ideas in support of their political agenda, this dissertation shows at length the ways in which domestic incumbents respond to internal opportunities and constraints in order to increase their chances of acquiring and retaining power. Specifically, it shows how opportunistic politicians in both Ukraine and Moldova made use of the domestic contestations about national identities to gather political capital. The “intermediate” or “tous azimuths” foreign policy strategies promoted by these incumbents, had, on the one hand, the goal of “uniting” their societies under a common purpose. On the other, however, the goal was to benefit from opportunities offered by both Russia and the West, while at the same time consolidating the structures of economic and political power domestically. The fact that the West refused to offer their states a credible membership prospect proved advantageous to the political strategies of these politicians: they did not have to implement sweeping economic and institutional reforms, because there was no chance of joining the West anyway and the structures of political and economic power could remain unchallenged to

favor their interests. At the same time, Russia's pressure on the domestic economy and politics were used as confirmations that Russia has imperialistic intentions in the region and Russia's goals should be resisted. The effect of these strategies were inconsistent foreign policies, adjusted and changed according to the interests and benefits of political incumbents.

Andrei Tsygankov advanced a similar nationalist argument explaining the divergent foreign policy outcomes of the post-Soviet states by the strength of national identity. The difference between the two accounts is that whereas Abdelal considers societal contestation of national identity (or its absence) the primary factor driving divergent foreign policy outcomes, Tsygankov focuses on each country's prior experience with independence. Tsygankov argues that countries characterized by a stronger national identity are more able to resist Russian pressure. The Baltic States' stronger national identity originated in their previous experience of independent nationhood, i.e. before being incorporated in the Soviet Union, these states were independent and developed a sense of national identity. On the other extreme, Belarus did not have any historical record of independence and had been incorporated in the Soviet empire without a developed sense of political identity. Finally, countries like Ukraine, fall somewhere in between, encountering difficulties in establishing their identification with the former Soviet bloc countries, as well as with the other sovereign nations.⁹⁸

As in Abdelal's case, the main critique advanced to Tsygankov's argument is that it rules out any role played by the West in influencing these states' foreign policy choices.

⁹⁸ Tsygankov, *Pathways after Empire*, 7.

Taking a closer look beyond the post-Soviet states and analyzing the case of Slovakia, one can see that even though Slovakia did not experience independent statehood, being part of Czechoslovakia during the inter-war period, the country, despite inconsistent foreign policy behavior after 1993, joined the EU in 2004. Slovenia and Croatia, two former Yugoslav republics, represent two other examples, which despite any experience of previous independent statehood, conducted a pro-Western foreign policy orientation and successfully joined the EU and NATO. The fact that Croatia was accepted in the EU in 2013 “was widely seen as a strong signal of EU commitment to a region that was ravaged by war in the 1990s.”⁹⁹

It should be noted that the previous experience with independent nationhood, does not render itself insignificant. As the empirical chapters will show, evidence from the archives and interviews with policy makers suggests that the previous experience of independence helped the Baltic States to establish and maintain better diplomatic links with the Western countries. The Baltic governments in exile continued to exist; the Baltic diplomats in the US kept their privileges, while the State Department Publication Treaties continued to note the “non-recognition policy,” i.e. “The United States has not recognized the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.” Moreover, the US State Department maintained a “Baltic States Affairs” desk located in the Eastern European Section, separate from the Soviet Affairs office.¹⁰⁰ Once

⁹⁹ “EU Enlargement: The Next Seven.” BBC, September 2, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11283616>

¹⁰⁰ Lapinski, J. J. “A Short History of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and the Republic of Lithuania”, *Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 36, 3, 1990. Retrieved from http://www.lituanus.org/1990_3/90_3_01.htm

freed from the Soviet Union, the Baltics had a head start regarding diplomatic and political ties with the Western world, an advantage, which the rest of the post-Soviets lacked. This partly explains the different treatment that the West applied to the Baltics as opposed to the rest of the post-Soviet republics.

This dissertation, therefore, while not rejecting the nationalist argument altogether, takes issue with the complete ruling out of the role of the West in the establishment of consistent foreign policy choices among the “ambivalent” states. It was not only the contestation “of their societies’ collective identities,” the weakness of their states to resist Russian pressure and the weakness of their national identities, that led to inconsistent foreign policy outcomes.¹⁰¹ As outlined above, the internal impetus for Western integration was crucial; but so was Western support and commitment to accept non-member states into its clubs. For countries like Bulgaria or Slovakia, for example, which were also ambivalent in their foreign policy behavior in the first years after the fall of Communism, the credible prospect of EU membership and the Western incentives toward them were instrumental in overcoming domestic obstacles and debates to pursue the pro-Western foreign policy orientation.

Keith Darden offers an alternative constructivist explanation of the international behavior of the former Soviet states and their choice to join specific international economic institutions after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. He criticizes Abdelal’s and Tsygankov’s nationalist argument by pointing out that these scholars focus only on choices made by governments at the beginning of the decade (1991) and then look at the foreign

¹⁰¹ Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 81.

policy outcomes at the end of the period (2000). The nationalist argument fails, therefore, to account for instances when at important periods over this decade, some countries (Lithuania, Moldova, Latvia) pursued alternative paths than the outcome, i.e. Lithuania and Latvia were considering policies which would approach them economically to Russia, while Moldova switched its path completely after the elections of 1994.¹⁰² Darden's work seeks to correct for this shortcoming in other constructivist accounts.

Instead of focusing only on the final outcome at the end of the decade (2000), Darden's study offers a clearer explanation of why, across the decade, at critical points in time, some of the countries diverted from their initial chosen institutional paths.¹⁰³ The different economic ideas that policymakers in the post-Soviet states adopted after 1991 explain the different institutional trajectories characteristic to these states. Darden singles out three types of economic ideas that characterized the thinking of post-Soviet leaders: liberal, Soviet integralist and mercantilist. The liberals held ideas according to which free and competitive markets, with rational individuals with financial stakes will provide economic profit. The liberals in the former Soviet space were against "attempts to insulate the regional market or reconstitute Soviet era production chains."¹⁰⁴ The Soviet integralists considered monopolistic cooperation rather than market competition as the key to economic growth. Their belief was that the former members of the Soviet Union could solve their problems only by preserving the economic ties among themselves. Finally,

¹⁰² Initially, Moldova's policies resembled the ones of the Baltic states, but after 1994, new elites acceded to power and the policy of liberalism and integration in the world market was replaced by policies of re-integration with the former Soviet region.

¹⁰³ Darden, *Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals*.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

mercantilists did not see any advantages in regional specialization, as they were concerned for their countries' interests, but they were also against liberals' free markets. Mercantilists, therefore, preferred the imposition of high-profile tariffs and favored a heavy control of the state in the economy.

Although elegant, one issue with Darden's argument is that it is hard to ascribe one set of economic ideas to the thinking and behavior of post-Soviet politicians.¹⁰⁵ Analyzing the case of Moldova, for example, Darden identifies Dumitru Braghis and Ion Ciubuc (two former Moldovan Prime Ministers in the 1990s) as liberal economists. However, a close analysis of their foreign policy discourses and positions reveals the fact that they often exhibited pro-Russia, pro-CIS preferences, therefore presenting a *mélange* of integralist and liberal ideas, rather than purely liberal ones. As Darden himself admits when describing the leaders dominating the Moldovan political landscape in the 1990s, it was hard to ascribe one underlying set of economic ideas to some of these leaders. Darden describes Mircea Snegur, the first Moldovan president, as "a political opportunist who conveniently switched his economic rhetoric and political affiliation to maintain his hold on the presidency."¹⁰⁶ The same difficulty in ascribing a specific set of underlying ideas guiding foreign policy decision making arises when trying to understand Lucinschi's ideas, the second Moldovan president. As Darden again points out, "Lucinschi advocated closer ties with Moscow but there is nothing from his speeches or interviews to indicate that this

¹⁰⁵ For another review of Darden's work, see Tsygankov, A. "Review of the book *Economic Liberalism and its Rivals. The formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States*," *Slavic Review*, 69, no. 1 (2010): 196-199.

¹⁰⁶ Darden, *Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals*, 141.

was grounded in an underlying set of integralist [pro-CIS] ideas.”¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Darden claims that the 2001 parliamentary elections, which made the Communist Party the majority one in parliament, with 71 seats (out of 101), brought the integralists to power. The eight-year rule of the Communists in Moldova, however, showed that the Moldovan leadership abandoned goals of integrating Moldova with the Russia-Belarus Customs Union and instead launched ambitious goals of joining the European Union after about three years after it acquired power. It is, therefore, hard to claim that it is sincerely held ideas driving foreign policy choices so much as strategic calculations and material and power interests that political leaders have in order to ensure that specific foreign policy orientations (pro-Russia or pro-Western) would help them maintain an upper hand in the political and economic spheres of their countries. Robert Jervis raises this question about the relationship between “material [f]actors on the one hand and values and ideas on the other,”¹⁰⁸ arguing that “before attributing great casual significance to ideas, we do want to ask what produces and leads people to accept them.”¹⁰⁹ He suggests, “Beliefs are very convenient for those who hold them.”¹¹⁰

Moreover, Darden argues that foreign economic policy changes result from the shifts in the ideas of the government, i.e. a change in government results in change of foreign economic ideas, which in turn leads to a shift in foreign economic policies. The explanation that Darden offers, however, does not account for instances when an

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Jervis, R. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), Preface to the second edition, footnote 191.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., Preface to the second edition, lxxix.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

incumbent government changes foreign policy orientations. Ukraine under Kravchuk and Kuchma and Moldova under Voronin are examples when, even though the same leadership was in power, the countries experienced foreign policy shifts. Darden claims that, “actors maintain a pragmatic relationship to the ideas that guide their actions, no matter how deeply held they might seem – they will often abandon a given way of thinking if it seems to produce undesirable results.”¹¹¹ This suggests that the same leaders holding one set of ideas guiding their actions might abandon them and adopt a new group of ideas, to ensure that the sought out goals are fulfilled. Darden’s changing ideas framework can be attributed to learning from experience in foreign policy decision making.¹¹² A mix of *causal learning* in which political leaders change their beliefs about the laws and hypotheses of cause and effect or the consequences of action and *diagnostic learning*, in which politicians change their beliefs about the values, intentions or capabilities of others¹¹³ seem to be at play in Darden’s account of “pragmatic relationship” between politicians’ ideas and their actions.

Still, Darden’s framework does not specify the mechanisms through which a leader, holding liberal ideas, for example, would abandon them and instead adopt Soviet integralist or mercantilist ideas to achieve specific goals. It is my goal in this dissertation to underlie under what circumstances an incumbent president decides to undertake foreign policy re-orientations. The main argument is that post-Soviet leaders perform strategic calculations, considering the costs and benefits of foreign policy orientation not only for purposes of

¹¹¹ Darden, *Economic Liberalism and Its Rivals*, 12.

¹¹² I thank Jack Levy for emphasizing this to me.

¹¹³ Jack S. Levy. 1994. “Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield.” *International Organization* 48(2): 279-312, 285.

maximizing one state's power or economic growth; but also for purposes of maximizing their individual economic and political gains.

Another issue with Darden's argument is that it fails to consider the complex interaction of political and geostrategic factors that shape the foreign policy choices of post-Soviet states. Darden treats all 15 former Soviet republics as equals when he designs his study, however, as Tsygankov points out, how can we examine the behavior of these 15 countries without placing Russia in a distinct category, "as a regionally constitutive state given its historical status, economic significance, and military power?"¹¹⁴ Also, Darden excludes any role played by the West from his analysis. He considers that the economic, foreign policy choices made by the post-Soviet states were determined mostly by the economic ideas that their leaders adopted after 1991. However, decisions to orient toward the East or the West were made by domestic leaders who were closely scrutinizing the opportunities and constraints posed by the international system.

Georgi Gvalia et al. advance another idea-based explanation on the foreign policy behavior of the post-Soviet states, focusing specifically on Georgia: the authors focus on patterns of regional alignments rather than on international economic institutions emerging out of the former Soviet bloc.¹¹⁵ Gvalia et al. suggest that elite ideas, identities and preferences over alternative social orders play an important role in small states' foreign policy behavior and that small states will balance rather than bandwagon great powers

¹¹⁴ Tsygankov, A. "Review of the book Economic Liberalism and its Rivals. The formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States," *Slavic Review*, 69, no. 1 (2010), 198.

¹¹⁵ Gvalia, G., Siroky, D., Lebanidze B., Iashvili, Z. "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States." *Security Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013).

especially when ideology is guiding elites' foreign policy decision making.¹¹⁶ Elite ideas and identities are presented as a “road-map” or as the “filter through which material and structural threats are perceived” by decision makers.¹¹⁷

During the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, not only Georgia was the post-Soviet state, which balanced Russia. Ukraine and Moldova balanced Russia as well.¹¹⁸ Whereas from a structural realist perspective, the choice of small post-Soviet states to balance Russia, a great power in geographic proximity, is a puzzle indeed, what is even more puzzling is why and how some post-Soviet states adopted vacillating and inconsistent foreign policy approaches throughout their post-independence history. They would at times bandwagon with Russia, and at other times balance it, exhibiting pro-Western foreign policy behaviors, despite the fact that neither the EU nor NATO offered them credible membership prospects for membership.

Whereas idea- and identity-based explanations account for foreign policy changes when the composition of a ruling coalition changes, they have a hard time explaining instances when the same leadership who initiated a foreign policy orientation decides to switch gears and pursues a different (opposite) foreign policy course. Gvalia et al. point out, “ideas ensure consistency in decision making.”¹¹⁹ However, cases, when countries exhibit inconsistent foreign policy behaviors, remain unsolved if we base our explanations solely on the idea and identity-based explanations.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 100.

¹¹⁸ Cantir, C., Kennedy, R. “Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants: Moldova’s Foreign Policy toward Russia and the European Union.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 11, (2015): 397-416.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 109.

The idea-based explanations are not completely discounted: the framework proposed by Gvalia et al. accounts for some of the policy behaviors in the post-Soviet region. What this project aims to add to the debate is the argument that the executives responsible for foreign policy decision making are interpreting the external (*and* internal) threats and constraints not only by thinking about states' strategic interests and purpose within the international system. Incumbents will interpret these threats by also entering into the equation their own, egoistic political and economic stakes.

In another compelling constructivist argument, Frank Schimmelfennig advances the so-called "liberal community hypothesis" on EU and NATO enlargement, according to which regional organizations "represent international communities of values and norms."¹²⁰ Enlargement of these organizations depends on whether non-member states "identify themselves with, and adhere to, the constitutive values and norms of the community."¹²¹ It follows that organizations like the EU, NATO or the Council of Europe represent "a liberal community sharing liberal norms of domestic and foreign policy conduct."¹²² The hypothesis that Schimmelfennig advances is that "the more a state adheres to these norms, the more likely it will enter into institutionalized relations with, apply for membership in, and be admitted to these organizations." On the contrary, when non-member states "violate these liberal norms systematically," they are expected to either withdraw or be excluded from the organizations.¹²³ Schimmelfennig defines liberal human

¹²⁰ Schimmelfennig, F. "Liberal Community and Enlargement: an Event History Analysis." In Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier ed. *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 172.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

rights for both domestic and international spheres: domestically, they comprise “social pluralism, the rule of law and democratic political participation and representation, as well as private property and a market-based economy.”¹²⁴ In the international sphere, these liberal norms comprise adherence to the democratic peace and multilateralism.¹²⁵ Schimmelfennig performs a statistical analysis of the enlargement process to test whether liberal norms have any effect on enlargement and concludes that indeed, states which domestically adhered to the liberal principles of social and political order, are most likely to institutionalize¹²⁶ their relations with European regional organizations. In the same vein, the more democratic a state, the more likely it is to send an application for membership to the EU, NATO or the Council of Europe. Finally, the non-member states, which domestically adopt and comply with liberal norms and values are more likely to start accession negotiations with these organizations than the non-democratic states.

This dissertation raises several critiques related to the “liberal community hypothesis.” First, if democratic variables are the most important ones determining a state’s chance for institutionalizing, applying and acceding to regional organizations, it is not clear why certain countries in Europe institutionalized their relations with the Council of Europe, applied for membership and successfully joined the organization but never managed to institutionalize relations with the EU or NATO. The post-Soviet states, exemplified by Ukraine, Moldova or Georgia successfully joined the CoE in the 1990s but failed in

¹²⁴ Ibid., 173.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Schimmelfennig defines institutionalization as the negotiation of a trade agreement with the EU and obtaining an observer status within NATO or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Ibid., 174-175.

institutionalizing relations with the EU up until 2014.¹²⁷ Ukraine's and Georgia's roads to NATO were blocked in 2008 when the NATO members decided not to offer the two countries Membership Action Plans. At the same time, other countries in Europe, for example the Western Balkan ones, were far behind in terms of liberal norms in the 1990s (e.g. Bosnia and Hercegovina, Yugoslavia), but nevertheless managed to move forward in institutionalizing relations with the EU and NATO much faster than the noted post-Soviet states. The EU signed Stabilization and Association Agreements with the Western Balkan states as early as 2001, marking the beginning of institutionalizing its relations with these states.

Also, as Schimmelfennig himself notes, the fact that he uses the application for membership in the EU or NATO "as an indicator of a state's desire to join the organizations" is problematic, because "states may want to become members long before they formally apply because they wait for favorable circumstances."¹²⁸ The cases of some of the former post-Soviet states, notably Ukraine and Moldova, confirm this idea. Archival diplomatic documents show that even though their governments never submitted a formal application for membership to the EU, they undertook significant diplomatic and behind-

¹²⁷ In another scholarly piece, Schimmelfennig differentiates between the international organizations of the Western community on the basis of their international socialization strategies these organizations pursue. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is an organization that practices *inclusive strategies* of international socialization. The EU and NATO are labeled as practicing *exclusive strategies* of community building (i.e. socialization from the outside). The EU and NATO have a set of conditions which non-members have to meet before being entitled to join. The Council of Europe follows an intermediate strategy: non-member states are required to fulfill certain conditions before they are allowed to join (e.g. democratic elections), they are required to commit to other community norms at the time of admission, and finally their compliance with the norms are monitored from within. See Schimmelfennig, F. "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and Eastern European States – Conceptual and Theoretical Issues." In Ronald H. Linden eds. *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*. (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002): 8-9.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 174-175.

the-door efforts to institutionalize relations with the organization and showed strong “desire” to join the organization. The “liberal community hypothesis” seems to hold only in the case of Belarus.

In addition, the predictions of the “liberal community hypothesis” raise questions about the criteria used to admit some European states into closer cooperation with the EU and NATO and at the same time keep others at a further distance. For instance, even states which were fully admitted to the EU in 2007, notably Bulgaria and Romania, “fell short of EU standards, notably in their efforts to root out corruption and political interference.”¹²⁹ When the EU signed Association Agreements with Romania and Bulgaria in 1993, therefore institutionalizing relations with these states, their Polity Scores were around 8 and were marked by periods of “factionalism.” Later in the decade, around 1997-1998, when Ukraine and Moldova started their diplomatic efforts to convince the EU member states to sign Association Agreements with them as well, their efforts were unsuccessful, even though their Polity Scores improved and resembled the levels of Romania and Bulgaria in 1993-1994 periods. The diplomatic documents contain evidence about the fact that Ukrainian diplomats were raising these questions in their discussions with European leaders.

It seems likely that not only liberal criteria were at play for the process of accession of European states to regional organizations. The archival diplomatic documents suggest that EU’s decision to draw a line between the CEECs and the rest of the former member states (except for the Baltics) was a political decision. Factors related to concerns about

¹²⁹ “EU Enlargement: The Next Seven.” BBC.

Russia's reactions, fears about increased migration from the post-Soviet states, concerns related to Ukraine's geographic size and the unsolved questions from the Soviet breakup, which were still hanging over these countries like a "cloud" during the 1990s, could be some of the causes of why the West excluded Moldova and Ukraine from enlargement projects.

[A New Look at the Foreign Policy Behavior of the Post-Communist states – Summary of the Argument](#)

Since the traditional International Relations theories and the existing arguments advance at most partial explanations to the puzzling behavior of the post-Soviet states, this dissertation takes a broader look at the entire post-Communist region in Europe and advances a more encompassing understanding of the divergent international outcomes of the post-Communist states since the fall of the Iron Curtain. Why are the CEECs inside the EU and NATO, the Western Balkans on their way to join, whereas Ukraine, Moldova, or Georgia, remain outside with little prospect of joining, even though they pursued membership in these organizations? Why have the post-Soviet states followed inconsistent and ambiguous foreign policy paths when compared to the rest of the former Communist states in Europe and what factors explain the phenomenon of foreign policy vacillation of Ukraine and Moldova? Finally, why have governments that initially pursued one foreign policy direction (seeking closer ties with the EU or with Russia) sometimes choose to move in the opposite direction?

This dissertation takes a neo-classical realist perspective and argues that the process by which domestic political actors react to the different incentives and constraints induced

by the international system, as well as how they respond to domestic-level processes, accounts for the different foreign policy behaviors.

The CEECs faced different systemic incentives when compared to the post-Soviet states, and these differences influenced domestic political circumstances and subsequently determined foreign policy choices. More specifically, the expectation or lack thereof, of a credible membership prospect in the Western security and economic institutions has influenced the menu of choices of domestic executive leaders in the post-Communist countries.

Political leaders in all post-Communist states of Europe chose alignment options weighing whether the incentives and/or constraints posed by the West and Russia would assist or endanger their goals of acquiring or retaining power at home. In post-Communist countries where the EU and NATO offered a credible prospect for membership, political leaders from across the spectrum converged on a pro-Western foreign policy. In these cases, the promise of financial support and security guarantees from the West proved overwhelmingly attractive to domestic politicians, easily outweighing anything Russia might offer in hopes of reorienting the country's foreign policy towards Moscow. By contrast, in the countries where the EU and NATO refused to grant a membership prospect, most notably to Ukraine and Moldova, the benefits of sticking to a pro-Western foreign policy were far less attractive and more uncertain, and less clearly superior to the incentives offered by Russia. In this context, vacillators and opportunists seeking national or personal gain from both the West and Russia – and potentially playing the two major poles off one another - came to the fore. Foreign policy alignments were therefore chosen strategically

by national leaders depending on which they thought would best serve their interests. Both the pro-Western and the pro-Russia orientations were attractive alternatives: executive leaders picked one over another depending on their calculations as to whether Russia or the West would help them win and retain power at home. The EU's refusal to offer binding commitments made its demands for political conditionality (such as pro-democracy and anti-corruption reforms) less effective and encouraged leaders in the region to vacillate in their foreign policy orientations. Meanwhile, with the West refusing to offer these states membership in its organizations, Russia exploited the internal weaknesses of these states to promote its foreign policy agenda in the region and bolster its influence in these in-between lands. Chapter 2 presents the overall argument in greater detail.

What sets this study apart from previous works is the argument that external incentives and constraints affect not only the regime type in the post-Communist states; they bear a significant weight on the foreign policy choices the governing political elites of these countries made in the years following their independence. The EU membership prospect and the conditionality criteria which marked the accession process of the candidate countries, as well as the expectation of joining NATO, had a significant effect not only on whether political leaders adopted democratic reforms in their countries. The prospect of EU membership had a lasting impact on setting a consistent pro-Western foreign policy choice in the CEECs. The efforts directed toward reforming domestic institutions and adapting domestic legislation to correspond to the *acquis communautaire*¹³⁰ had a “spillover effect” on the foreign policies of the candidate

¹³⁰ Kopstein and Reilly, 2000

countries, even though foreign policy was not an area in which the *acquis* implementation was obligatory and foreign policies of candidate countries were not subject to mandatory rules of implementation.¹³¹

Elena Gnedina, studying Ukraine's energy policies during the 1999-2009 years, advances an argument that closely resembles the explanation that this project puts forward for the multi-vectored foreign policies pursued by some of the post-Soviet states.¹³² Presented in a game-theoretic framework, Gnedina explains the phenomenon of "multi-vector" policies resulting from "bargaining" games between post-Soviet political leaders and competing external actors, Russia and the EU, over cooperation terms. Since the post-Soviet states' power vis-à-vis the two power poles is restricted, the smaller states' strategies are based on strengthening their bargaining power "by means of tactical manoeuvring (sic) while pursuing their own objectives. The latter include wealth – and power – maximisation, as well as maintaining a degree of autonomy from both external actors in order to prolong the bargaining game."¹³³

While Gnedina's argument provides a better explanation of the ambivalent foreign policy behavior of the post-Soviet states when compared to other existing arguments, several weaknesses of her argument are discussed.

First, Gnedina's account disregards the role played by the credible membership prospect in the EU. Her reasoning is that since the post-Soviet states have not consistently

¹³¹ Kaminska, Joanna, *Poland and EU Enlargement. Foreign Policy in Transformation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan: 2014).

¹³² Gnedina, E. "Multi-Vector' Foreign Policies in Europe: Balancing, Bandwagoning or Bargaining?" *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 7, (2015).

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 1009.

pursued a pro-Western integration policy and because the West did not succeed in influencing their domestic policies, the idea that the lack of an EU membership perspective had any influence on their choice of foreign policy orientation is “speculative.”¹³⁴ In this dissertation, on the contrary, I argue that the Western steady “no” to the post-Soviet leaders’ requests to be offered a membership prospect for their countries, influenced their decision to not consistently seek an alliance with the West in the first place. If there was any membership opportunity for their countries, it was decades off and hence irrelevant to contemporary post-Soviet leaders. Some of these leaders suffered dire political consequences because of Western refusal to welcome them in the Western economic and security institutions. The post-Soviet leaders grew tired and disappointed of the consistent turndowns from the West, therefore they were opened to alternative (pro-Russia) integration options, especially when these alternatives proved successful for their domestic tactics to maintain political power.

Second, Gnedina’s argument overlooks the role of domestic political competition in altering the maneuverability and tactics available to the post-Soviet politicians when they deal with the two international actors. The configuration of domestic political scene and the positions of various political parties bear weight on the foreign policy option of the incumbent, as well as of the opposition leaders. Even though the post-Soviet states are not fully-fledged democracies, political competition among political actors is intense (even if

¹³⁴ Gnedina, E. “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe: Balancing, Bandwagoning or Bargaining?” *Europe-Asia Studies* 67, no. 7, (2015), 1011.

it often lacks a level playing field).¹³⁵ Leaders, therefore, are cautious when choosing specific tactics concerning the external powers.

During the two decades of independence of the post-Soviet states, both Moscow and the West endorsed political leaders and parties during elections periods. This external support often posed challenges to the incumbent. The support came in different forms: public appearances of Western or Russian leaders along with the post-Soviet preferred candidates, Western or Russian public endorsements, electoral support, and money for electoral campaigns. If the incumbents felt challenged by such support, they often criticized the external actors' support to their opponents, asked for non-interference of external powers in domestic affairs, or complained and accused the external power for willing to replace them with their opponents.

Finally, another weakness in Gendina's argument is the implicit assumption that the smaller, multi-vector state interacts with both external actors, but the two power poles do not communicate with each other. The archival evidence suggests, that the West signaled to Russia its lack of interest in offering Ukraine a membership prospect.¹³⁶ Russia, therefore, armed with this information, could have altered both its tactics and offers to the smaller states. Also, while in the Russian case, there was one single voice and one single center that directed actions in interactions with the smaller countries, in the case of the West – there were multiple voices and divergent preferences concerning the former Soviet

¹³⁵ Levitsky, S., Way, L. "Why Democracy Needs a Level Playing Field." *Journal of Democracy* 21, no.1 (2010): 57-68.

¹³⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia on the Russia-EU Summit, June 2, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia on Ukraino-Russian consultations on EU cooperation, May 5, 2000. . Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

states. EU and NATO members often differed in their level of support toward the former Soviet republics: this difference in position was used by Russia skillfully, lobbying various EU or NATO members to determine a course of action compatible with its interests and going against the interests of the smaller post-Soviet state.

Before proceeding further, I would like to stress that the argument in this project is not directed toward blaming the West or Russia for their commitment or lack thereof toward the countries under analysis. The argument should not be read in normative terms. My goal is to understand the foreign policy dynamic in the post-Communist states of Europe, disentangle the factors that influenced some states to maintain a consistent pro-Western foreign policy orientation, while others to remain into a back-and-forth state of indecisiveness. If I manage to do this and the reader is convinced by the theoretical argument and the empirical evidence, then I shall be content that an important intellectual task which has preoccupied me for a long time, was, at least partially, achieved.

The rest of the chapter is organized in the following way: the next section defines the theoretical concepts used throughout this project, the following part discusses the methods employed, then the conceptual and empirical contributions of this study are emphasized, and finally, the chapter ends with a short description of the structure of the rest of the dissertation.

Defining Theoretical Concepts

Scholars have acknowledged that “reversals” or “profound redirections” in foreign policies have complex consequences for the governments initiating such changes, for their

citizens, as well as for the neighboring states.¹³⁷ Most often, foreign policies change when new incumbents, with different views of the international system and different agendas, acquire power, or when the state undergoes profound political, economic and social transformations. The more puzzling cases, however, are when existing governments who initiated a particular course in foreign policy, decides to move in a different direction.¹³⁸ This section defines foreign policy change and establishes the dissertation in the neoclassical realism conceptual framework, detailing how the structural systemic factors affect the policies and choices pursued by states as well as discussing what domestic intervening variables condition states' responses.

Defining foreign policy change

I rely on the typology from Charles F. Hermann¹³⁹ and define four levels of foreign policy change (*Table 3* below).

Table 2: Foreign Policy Levels of Change

<i>Adjustment changes</i>	<i>Program Changes</i>	<i>Problem/Goal Changes</i>	<i>International Orientation Changes</i>
Changes occur in the level of effort (greater or lesser) and/or in the scope of recipients (such as refinements in the class of targets). What is done, how it is done, and the purposes for which it	Changes are made in the methods or means by which the goal or problem is addressed. In contrast to adjustment changes, which tend to be quantitative, program changes are qualitative and	The initial problem or goal that the policy addresses is replaced or simply forfeited. In this foreign policy change, the purposes themselves are replaced.	The most extreme form of foreign policy change involved the redirection of actor's entire orientation toward world affairs. In contrast to lesser forms of change that concern the actor's approach to a single

¹³⁷ Hermann, C. F. (1990). "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy" *International Studies Quarterly*, 34(1), p. 3-21.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

is done remain unchanged	involve new instruments of statecraft (such as the pursuit of a goal through diplomatic negotiation rather than military force). What is done and how it is done changes, but the purposes for which it is done remain unchanged.		issue or specific set of other actors, orientation change involves a basic shift in the actor's international role and activities. Not one policy but many are more or less changed.
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Source: Hermann, C. F. (1990). "Changing Course", 5-6.

The dissertation defines major foreign policy reorientation as the last two forms of change, that is change in foreign policy goals or overall reorientation.

It explains the divergent foreign policy paths of the post-Communist states in Europe after 1991, asking why some joined the Western economic and security institutions, whereas others oscillated between Russia and the West. It tracks the behavior of individual states, analyzing the goals that these states try to accomplish in the international arena and the conditions under which they try to achieve these goals.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy." *World Politics*, 51, no. 1 (October 1998), 144-172, p. 145.

The present argument is framed in terms of the rationalist approaches to the study of international relations and institutions. As such, it is based on the assumptions of individualism, state centrism, materialism, egoism, and instrumentalism. The assumption on state centrism, merits some discussion. For neorealism, internal characteristics of states are not important, the state being regarded as a "black box." Liberalism views the state as aggregating preferences and interests of various domestic political groups through contention at the domestic level and then pursuing these national objectives at the international level. Schimmelfennig, F. *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe. Rules and Rhetoric*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 18. Taliaferro, J. W., Lobell, S. E., Ripsman, N. M. "Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy." In J. W. Taliaferro et al. ed. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 17. Moravcsik, A. *The Choice for Europe. Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 1998), 22.

Below, I discuss the differences between alliances and alignments and introduce a typology of the criteria that classify countries and the foreign policy choices of their governments as pursuing pro-Western or pro-Russia orientations.

Defining pro-Western versus pro-Russia foreign policy orientations

Certain criteria have to be laid out upon which to evaluate the empirical data, therefore this section presents the indicators which reflect when a specific state, represented by political leaders manifest pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy behavior.

Relations and interactions between states may take different forms: interdependence, hostility, cooperation, threats, or armed conflicts.¹⁴¹ The extent to which states have similar or conflicting foreign policy preferences¹⁴² is reflected in states' pattern of *alignment* and forming *alliances*.¹⁴³ Before identifying the specific indicators, which reveal a pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy orientation, this section presents a general discussion on the ways in which scholars study alliance and alignment behavior among states.

With the end of the Cold War, there was a shift in countries' preference from formal military and security alliances to other forms of alignment on specific issues.¹⁴⁴

Acknowledging that formal definitions of *alliances* are too restrictive, some scholars use

¹⁴¹ Singer, J. D., Small, M. "Formal Alliances, 1815-1939: A Quantitative Description." *Journal of Peace Research*, 3, no.1 (1966), p. 1; Snyder, R. C. Bruck, H. W., Sapin "Decision-Making as an Approach., p. 56

¹⁴² In this project I follow Sweeney and Keshk and consider that by revealing their "preferences" over certain issues, states communicate their "interests." Sweeney, K., Keshk, O. M. G., "The Similarity of States: Using S to Compute Dyadic Interest Similarity." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 22, 2005, fn. 1

¹⁴³ Signorino, C. S., Ritter, J. F. "Tau-b or Not Tau-b: Measuring the Similarity of Foreign Policy Positions." *International Studies Quarterly*, 43, 1999.

¹⁴⁴ Wilkins, T. S. "'Alignment,' not 'Alliance' the Shifting Paradigm of International Security Cooperation: Toward a Conceptual Taxonomy of Alignment." *Review of International Studies*, 38, 1 (2012): 53-76

the concept of *alliance* in the broader sense, defining *alliances* as “both formal and informal relationship of security between two or more states”, considering alliances as a well-defined subset of *alignments*.¹⁴⁵ It is, however, important to recognize that there is a conceptual distinction between *alliances* and *alignments*. Some scholars offer a more restrictive definition of *alliance*, defining it as “a formal agreement between two or more nations to collaborate on national security issues,”¹⁴⁶ while *alignment* is defined as occurring “when a state brings its policies into close cooperation with another state in order to achieve mutual security goals.”¹⁴⁷ Being connoted in terms of “cooperative behavior,” *alignment* includes formal alliances created for security reasons, but it also comprises other, more specific types, which are not necessarily military in nature: 1) coalitions created for accomplishing issue-specific goals, 2) informal alignments “demonstrating learned patterns as to how much cooperation one state may expect from others” and 3) behavioral alignments, showing informal efforts of states to coordinate their behavior.¹⁴⁸ Stated differently, “while any states that share policy positions and coordinate their actions might

¹⁴⁵ Barnett, M. N., Levy, J. S. “Domestic Sources of Alliances and Alignments: The Case of Egypt, 1962-73.” *International Organization*, 45, 3 (1991), 369-395, p. 370. Stephen M. Walt offers a similar definition in *The Origins of Alliances*. (Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 1

¹⁴⁶ Holsti, O. R., Hopmann, P. T., Sullivan, J. D. *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances: Comparative Studies* (John Wiley & Sons: 1973), p. 4. Singer and Small define alliances in a similar way, as formal, written agreements between sovereign states. Singer, J. D., Small, M., “Formal Alliances, 1815-1939,” p. 1-6. Osgood offers a definition of alliance which also takes into account the commitments that states undertake when becoming allies: “a formal agreement that pledges states to co-operate in using their military resources against a specific state or states and usually obligates one or more of the signatories to use force or to consider (unilaterally or in consultations with allies) the use of force in specified circumstances,” Osgood, R. E., Badgley, J. F. *Japan and the US in Asia*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968), p. 17. Ashley Leeds defines “alliances” underlining the military character of them: “An alliance is a formal agreement among independent states to cooperate militarily in the face of potential or realized military conflict.” Leeds, B. A., “Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions (ATOP) Codebook,” (2005), p. 4. Retrieved from <http://atop.rice.edu/download/ATOPcdbk.pdf>

¹⁴⁷ David, S. R. “Explaining Third World Alignment.” *World Politics*, 43, 2, (1991), p. 234.

¹⁴⁸ Duncan, G. T., Siverson, R. M. “Flexibility of Alliance Partner Choice in a Multipolar System,” *International Studies Quarterly*, 26 (1 982), p. 518

be called *aligned*, only those who have formalized their commitments with a written agreement may be called *allied*.”¹⁴⁹ Below, I review several scholarly works to offer a more nuanced differentiation between *alignment* and *alliance*.

Researchers can relatively easily trace and investigate alliance behavior, in the virtue of its formal, written format.¹⁵⁰ Even though the *aligned* behavior leaves less traceable marks, as it does not have a formal association format¹⁵¹, scholars have offered indicators that reflect shared foreign policy positions and coordination among states. In fact, scholars have looked at aligned behavior from different prisms: Bruce Bueno de Mesquita suggests using Kendall’s *Tau-b* to cluster states according to their similarity of alliance portfolios.¹⁵² Signorino and Ritter caution against deriving similarity of foreign policy preferences among states only from formal association in alliances, because they claim that formal “[a]ssociation does not necessarily imply similarity, and vice versa.”¹⁵³ For clarification purposes, it is important to reiterate that when states reveal their preferences with respect to a certain issue, scholars can infer their interests and relatedly the goals that states seek

¹⁴⁹ Leeds, B. A., “Alliance Treaty Obligations and Provisions” (2005), p. 4.

¹⁵⁰ Singer, J. D., Small, M., “Formal Alliances, 1815-1939,” p. 1. Despite the lack of difficulty in identifying formal, written alliances, Gibler notes that conceptual problems persist, specifically related to the lack of agreement between scholars as to what exactly constitutes commitment in a written alliance. Gibler, D. M. *International military alliances*, (2009), p. xlix.

¹⁵¹ Signorino and Ritter talk about “implicit alignment” claiming that when states are “implicitly aligned”, formal treaties among them may be unnecessary, even though the level of commitment between them is high. Signorino, C. S., Ritter, J. M. “Tau-b or Not Tau-b: Measuring the Similarities of Foreign Policy Positions.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 43 (1999), p. 123-125.

¹⁵² Similarity in alliance portfolios denotes similarities in the commitments that states undertake when part of formal alliances, approximating the extent to which pairs of states have common or conflicting security interests. Bueno de Mesquita, B. “Measuring Systemic Polarity.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 19, 2 (1975). The idea of “clusters” of states underlines the concept of “polarity” or “power distribution.” Haas defines a *pole* “as a military significant cluster of units within an international arena.” Haas, M. “International Subsystems: Stability and Polarity” *The American Political Science Review*, 64, 1, (1970), p. 99.

¹⁵³ Signorino and Ritter, “Tau-b or Not Tau-b” (1999), p. 123.

to achieve in the international arena.¹⁵⁴ Signorino and Ritter propose another tool, *S*, for measuring states' foreign policy similarities and urge scholars to use data on alliances, in combination with other available data, which would indicate the degree to which states' foreign policies, are similar or dissimilar to each other.¹⁵⁵ Using United Nation's General Assembly (UNGA) voting records¹⁵⁶ to track similarity or dissimilarity in countries' positions over issues, membership in intergovernmental organizations, the extent to which states trade with each other¹⁵⁷, or similarities in the commitments that states undertake when part of formal alliances – are some of the ways in which scholars have investigated states' similarity in foreign policy interests.¹⁵⁸ Erik Gartzke developed an index of “affinity” based on the similarity of UNGA's voting records among nations, as a way to measure states' preferences.¹⁵⁹ Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten proposed an improved method of estimating states' preferences on specific issues using UN votes, with the advantage of allowing intertemporal comparisons, differentiating between changes in foreign policy orientations and estimating which state in the system shifted foreign

¹⁵⁴ Sweeney, K., Keshk, O. M. G., “The Similarity of States” (2005)

¹⁵⁵ Signorino and Ritter, “Tau-b or Not Tau-b” (1999)

¹⁵⁶ For a good discussion of the ways in which UN votes have been used in the literature since the 1950s, see Bailey, M. A., Strezhnev, A., Voeten, E. “Estimating Dynamic State Preferences from United Nations Voting Data.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2015) , p. 3-6

¹⁵⁷ Barbieri and Keshk have compiled a data set that tracks total national trade and bilateral trade flows between states from 1870-2009. Barbieri, K. Keshk, O. “Correlates of War Project Trade Data Set Codebook, Version 3.0” (2012).

¹⁵⁸ Bueno de Mesquita discusses the advantages and disadvantages of these indicators that reflect foreign policy commitments. Bueno de Mesquita B. “Measuring Systemic Polarity.” (1975), p. 191-194.

¹⁵⁹ Gartzke claims that his “affinity” measure is similar to Bueno de Mesquita's “utility” index. The latter uses the similarity of nations' alliance portfolios to indicate similarity in countries' foreign policy preferences. Bueno de Mesquita, B. *The War Trap*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981). For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of these two measures, see Gartzke, E. “Kant We All Just Get Along?: Opportunity, Willingness, and the Origins of the Democratic Peace.” *American Journal of Political Science*, 42, 1 (1998), p. 14-15; also Gartzke, E. “The Affinity of Nations Index, 1946-2000.” *Codebook*, p. 1-2, retrieved from http://pages.ucsd.edu/~egartzke/data/affinity_codebook_03102006.pdf

policies.¹⁶⁰ Finally, Tomashevskiy and Hammond advance a new tool to track affinity/similarity among nations' foreign policies, which generates a network of association for countries incorporating not one, but several characteristics of states: alliance commitments, bilateral trade, diplomatic representation and Preferential Trade Agreements, membership in intergovernmental organizations, regime type, and religious membership percentages.¹⁶¹ This new measure of similarity combines cultural similarity between states with foreign policy alignment, this allowing for "indirect similarity"¹⁶² among nations to be captured as well. While this dissertation does not employ these measures directly to track the similarity of post-Communist states' foreign policy choices, it is important to review these indicators before advancing new indicators, which reveal a pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy orientation.

While these statistical measures of similarity express *alignment* of states' foreign policies and help explain conflict or trade patterns among states, they overlook the internal bargaining of political parties and other political actors inside the state over issues related to actions at the international level and tend to over-generalize the behavior of states in the international arena. It is true that the most recent tools proposed by scholars to measure similarity among states' foreign policies take into account regime type or percentages of populations belonging to specific religious groups, these are nevertheless static measures,

¹⁶⁰ Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten "Estimating Dynamic State Preferences" (2015).

¹⁶¹ Tomashevskiy, A., Hammond, J. "Friends and Partners: Recovering Latent Affinity Networks With the Graphical LASSO" *Presented at Rutgers University, November 2016*.

¹⁶² Tomashevskiy and Hammond define "indirect similarity" as an instance when "a pair of states A and B may be similar due to the influence of some third state, C" (p. 5). They bring the examples of Australia and New Zealand, which have ties to Great Britain, therefore shared colonial ties or shared relationships with large states may be responsible for shared similarity among states A and B. Tomashevskiy, A., Hammond, J. "Friends and Partners" (2016), p. 5.

and they do not reveal the internal considerations of states to trade or formally align with another state. In addition, while these measures of similarity suggest when foreign policy orientations of states change¹⁶³, they are unable to tell why these orientations shift, what causes the state to change its behavior.

This project proposes to look inside “the black box”, to expose the actions and motives of domestic political actors whose decisions determine the state’s foreign policy choices in the international arena. By opening this black box, this project analyzes the internal pressures on political actors, their motivations for giving preference to specific foreign policy decisions, and as such will analyze foreign policy preferences not of the central governments only, but of other territorial entities inside the state, which may put great pressures on the governing elites for specific foreign policy actions.

This dissertation tracks both formal, written commitments, as well as the less formal degrees of cooperation among states. I define *alignment* as attempts of states to 1) adjust internal institutions and policies to emulate the institutional design of other states or international actors with the goal of achieving higher political and economic integration; 2) coordinate actions to achieve specific goals in the regional or global environment; 3) strengthen economic, social, cultural and diplomatic links with other states. Apart from *alliance* as an *alignment* prototype, this project distinguishes between *security community* and *strategic partnerships* as two other types of alignment behavior. A security community is “a multilateral organization that provides some element of security to its members and mutual expectation of support in their future interactions.”¹⁶⁴ Gradual confidence building

¹⁶³ Bailey, Strezhnev, and Voeten “Estimating Dynamic State Preferences” (2015).

¹⁶⁴ Wilkins, T. S. ““Alignment,” not ‘Alliance’” (2012), p. 65

and integration among members, peace and international order are some of the characteristics of a security community.¹⁶⁵ The European Union is considered a “pluralistic security community,” as its members continue to be separate, sovereign states, which have integrated to maintain peace within the geographic and political territory of the community, benefit from economic cooperation, free trade and no customs, and which work together to develop a common European Union identity, a feeling of belonging to a supra-national authority.¹⁶⁶

While there is no agreement among scholars on the exact definition of the strategic partnership¹⁶⁷, there are some characteristics of it, which differentiate it from other forms of alignment: states align in order to benefit from joint economic opportunities, to better respond to security challenges, and the commitments undertaken by states are usually informal, with no written, rigid obligations.¹⁶⁸ In strategic partnerships, there is a joint sharing of information, skills, and resources at both the governmental, as well as at the societal, business level. The empirical chapters will discuss the strategic partnerships Russia built with some of the newly independent states since the dissolution of the USSR.

I employ Snyder’s definition of *alliance*, which states that “alliances are formal associations of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, in specified circumstances, against states outside their membership.”¹⁶⁹ As such, *alliances* are more rigid and formal, and may limit states’ behavior in the international arena.¹⁷⁰ *Alignment* behavior, on the

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ McNamara, K. R. *The Politics of Everyday Europe. Constructing Authority in the European Union*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

¹⁶⁷ Wilkins, T. S. ““Alignment,” not ‘Alliance’” (2012).

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Snyder, G., *Alliance Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Wilkins, T. S. ““Alignment,” not ‘Alliance’” (2012)

contrary, is more flexible and less binding and may change due to changes in interests, power or issue priorities.¹⁷¹ Defining alignment in this way, allows for an assessment of a wider variety of state actions: not only on the military dimension, but also in the political, economic, cultural and social domains.¹⁷² Some of the forms of alignment may be symbolic and carry no formal obligation. Indeed, as Hans Morgenthau notes, “not every community of interests, calling for common policies and actions also calls for legal codification in an explicit alliance.”¹⁷³ It should be stressed, however, that some forms of alignment do carry formality with them, in terms of written agreements, which need to be ratified by domestic Parliaments.

Being a prominent subclass of *alignments*, *alliances* share with *alignments* the following characteristics: “interstate cooperation or coordination over a problem; combination of state capabilities; pursuit of state interests; and mutual assistance.”¹⁷⁴ One characteristic, which distinguishes alliances from alignments, is their military or security focus.¹⁷⁵

By employing the *pro-Eastern* or *pro-Western* alignment as concepts, I seek to analyze to what extent states shape internal institutions and policies to facilitate integration into the Eastern/Western political, economic and security frameworks.¹⁷⁶ Do states

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ward, M. D. *Research Gaps in Alliance Dynamics* (Denver: University of Denver, 1982), p. 7, as cited in Wilkins, T. S. ““Alignment,” not ‘Alliance’” (2012), p. 56.

¹⁷³ Morgenthau, H. J. *Politics Among Nations*, as cited in Wilkins, T. S. ““Alignment,” not ‘Alliance’” (2012), p. 56.

¹⁷⁴ McGowan, P. J., Rood, R. M. “Alliance Behavior in Balance of Power Systems: Applying a Poisson Model to Nineteenth Century Europe” *American Political Science Review*, 69, 3, (1975), p. 859-860.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ A number of studies, which can be categorized under the *Europeanization* literature label, have focused on the ways in which post-Communist states in Europe copy the policies and institutions of the EU and NATO and adapt them to their internal contexts, in order to either speed up the integration into the West or benefit from financial support provided by the West. See inter alia, Jacoby, W. *The Enlargement of the European Union and NATO*, 2004; Schimmelfennig, F., Sedelmeier, U. *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. Ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2005); Epstein, R. “NATO Enlargement and the

coordinate their actions with the West or with Russian-led structures to achieve specific economic or security-related goals? How much effort is put into strengthening social, cultural and diplomatic links between specific states and the two poles? Specifically, I analyze whether and under what conditions post-Communist states in Europe sought membership and joined NATO and the EU, therefore getting into an official binding with the West, as well as whether and under what conditions states sought formal institutionalization of their relations with Russian-led structures. At the same time, I track the less formal arrangements that these states engaged in with either Russia or the West.

The dependent variable in this study is *change in foreign policy goals and orientation*, i.e. changes between pro-Western or pro-Eastern foreign policy positions. As stated at the beginning of this section, since a state's external actions and commitments of resources are decided at the national level, this project tracks the intentions and actions of the domestic political actors: the incumbents and their political parties.

In order to track empirically foreign policy changes, I rely on Hermann's differentiation. So in the case of foreign policy goal fluctuations, I expect to find changes

Spread of Democracy: Evidence and Expectations," *Security Studies*, 14, no. 1 (2005), 63-105. Linden, R. H. ed. *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.

On the literature studying specifically the post-Soviet states, which have no credible prospect for EU or NATO membership, but which adopt certain policies from the West, see inter alia Ademmer, E. *Russia's Impact on EU Policy Transfer to the Post-Soviet Space. The Contested Neighborhood*. (New York: Routledge, 2017). Ademmer, E., Delcour, L. Wolczuk, K. "Beyond geopolitics: exploring the impact of the EU and Russia in the "contested neighborhood"," *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, (2016), 57, no. 1, 1-18; Langbein, J. *Transnationalization and Regulatory Change in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood. Ukraine between Brussels and Moscow*. (New York: Routledge, 2015). Dimitrova, A., Dragneva, R. "Constraining External Governance: Interdependence with Russia and the CIS as Limits to EU's Rule Transfer in Ukraine", *Journal of European Public Policy*, (2009), 16, no. 6, 853-872; Dimitrovam A., Dragneva, R. "Shaping Convergence with the EU in Foreign Policy and State Aid in Post-Orange Ukraine: Weak External Incentives, Powerful Veto Players." *Europe-Asia Studies*, (2013), 65, no. 4, 658-681. Wolczuk, K. "Implementation without Coordination: The Impact of EU Conditionality on Ukraine under the European Neighbourhood Policy," *Europe-Asia Studies*, (2009), 61, no. 2, 187-211.

in the choice and arrangements of instruments, changes in the level of commitment, in the degrees of expressed affect, as well as policy statements and policy actions incompatible with previously stated goals or even open rejection of prior foreign policy goals.¹⁷⁷ Switches in foreign policy orientation involve major changes in both rhetoric and actions in multiple issue areas with respect to the actor's relations with foreign entities, as well as changes in alignment with other countries.¹⁷⁸

Below, I propose a typology of indicators that reflect *alignment* with either the West or the East, actions undertaken by domestic political actors in terms of foreign policy preferences and choices (*Table 4*). Specifically, I dissect the dependent variable by asking how domestic political parties and their leaders manifest their foreign policy orientation preferences. When claiming that a government/country is implementing pro-Western/or pro-Russia foreign policy orientation, it is important to establish clear criteria which distinguish these two types of choices. I apply this analytical framework in the empirical analyses in order to track the foreign policy choices of the post-Communist countries in Europe since 1991. In the empirical chapters, each government during these 25 years since the fall of Communism is categorized according to the actions/choices they make in terms of foreign policy behavior. The goal of this typology is to facilitate the analysis and improve our understanding of the multiple ways in which political actors manifest their preference for certain foreign actors. When it is difficult to categorize a government as

¹⁷⁷ Hermann, C. F. (1990). "Changing Course", 6.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

explicitly pro-West or pro-Russia, I consider those instances as “ambiguous” foreign policy orientation, when governments and leaders choose stances from both columns.

Table 3: Indicators of pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy preferences

Pro-West	Pro-Russia
Pursuing political, economic and military links	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support toward signing “European Agreements” or “Association Agreements” with the EU - Support for formal membership application to join the EU and NATO - Support for actual joining the EU and NATO - Support for signing Treaties of Friendship with Western countries - Asking for and receiving economic aid from the West¹⁷⁹ - Participating in military or humanitarian missions internationally along with NATO members - Asking for military aid from NATO members - Selling economic assets to Western companies, therefore allowing for Western business rules and practices to enter the domestic market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for joining the CIS - Signing and ratifying the CIS Charter - Support for joining the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) - Not supporting joining the CSTO, however supporting neutrality and being against NATO membership - Support for signing Treaties of Friendship with Russia - Asking for and receiving economic aid from Russia - Asking for military aid from Russia - Selling economic assets to Russian businesses, therefore strengthening Russian economic leverage in the country - Establishing links/relation between domestic parties and Russian parties

¹⁷⁹ I assume that by formally asking for economic aid from an external actor, political leaders have had previous successful contacts with the external actor. At the same time, by asking for aid, domestic political actors expect and may agree to certain commitments imposed/conditioned by the external actor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing links/relations between one own's political party with European parties 	
Pursuing diplomatic Links	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having more than three high level meetings with EU, US or NATO officials per year - Rhetoric: public declarations outlining the plans to join the European Union or NATO (during tête-à-tête meetings¹⁸⁰ with foreign leaders or in interviews with mass media) - Incentives to create new domestic agencies/ministries/bureaucratic bodies which would coordinate the integration of the country with the EU or with NATO - Asking for and receiving training for domestic civil servants in EU member states and in Brussels - Issuing and/approving decrees outlining strategies for the country's integration into the EU - Incentives to intensify diplomatic contacts with EU member states and with the US and Canada¹⁸¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Having more than three high level meetings with Russian officials per year - Rhetoric: public declarations outlining the plans to join the Russian led Customs Union (during tête-à-tête meetings with foreign leaders or in interviews with mass media) - Incentives to create new domestic agencies/ministries/bureaucratic bodies which would coordinate the integration of the country with the CIS or the Russian led Customs Union - Incentives to intensify diplomatic contacts with Russia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving financial support for electoral reasons from the West - Asking for and receiving endorsements from Western leaders during electoral campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving financial support for electoral reasons from Russia - Asking for and receiving endorsements from Russian

¹⁸⁰ I will track these declarations both from mass media reporting, as well as from private diplomatic records of discussions from the Ukrainian and Moldovan MFA archival documents.

¹⁸¹ The diplomatic documents from the Ukrainian and Moldovan MFAs contain information which allows to track these incentives

	political, as well as spiritual leaders during electoral campaigns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting legislation, like the anti-discrimination laws, advocated by the EU - Support for transposing/adapting European energy legislation in order to align the standards and operating conditions of the electricity and gas sector to the ones of the EU Member States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting legislation to make Russian an official language - Support for the energy and gas imports from Russia - Supporting Russian-backed plans to federalize countries by incorporating the separatist regions and offering them large policy attributes (including in the realm of foreign policy)

I would like to note that in Moldova's case, I consider parties and their leaders that were in favor of and supported Moldova's unification with Romania as pro-Western parties. In the Ukrainian and Belarus cases – political leaders' efforts toward intensifying political, economic and social links with Poland were also considered as pro-Western. The rationale behind this decision is that since both Poland and Romania were directing their efforts toward joining NATO and the EU after the fall of communism, strengthening relations with them implied an association with the pro-Western foreign policy orientation, rather than with the Russian one.

As the typology shows, I include structural, as well as personal and symbolic manifestations of foreign policy preferences. In addition, I track both formal and informal alignment behavior. Along with written and formal commitments between states, I assume that important links between nations are expressed in multiple other ways, including

legal¹⁸², rhetorical, or social forms. The unique glimpse into the diplomatic documents of the Ukrainian and Moldovan archives,¹⁸³ as well as the interviews conducted with Ukrainian and Moldovan policy makers, allow me to draw insights of the specific considerations that diplomats shared on the pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy stances.

The last part of this section discusses the difference between formal and non-formal interactions among states. In the formal sub-type of alignment, I include membership in alliances (i.e. membership in NATO or the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)¹⁸⁴), membership in the EU, as well as membership in the Community of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU).¹⁸⁵ When countries join the EU, they sign Accession Treaties, pledge to commit to all the community's rules and procedures, and work toward the community's interests. For this reason, in this dissertation, joining the EU and becoming a fully-fledged member of the community – is considered a formal commitment. Also, the process of signing Association and Partnership Agreements with the EU also implies a certain degree of formality, as the signatories of these Agreements pledge to respect certain commitments and their Parliaments have to

¹⁸² Showing preference for a foreign policy orientation manifested in terms of support for specific laws at home. The adoption of some laws were either conditioned by the West, like adopting the anti-discrimination laws as a condition for obtaining visa-free regime with the EU, or support for legislative initiatives to make Russian an official language domestically.

¹⁸³ The archival evidence contain records of diplomats from the Baltics, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Russia, the US, Canada, and some other EU member states.

¹⁸⁴ The CSTO is a military bloc led by Russia and created in 1992.

¹⁸⁵ The full name is “Customs Union of the Eurasian Economic Community”, however I follow Dragneva and Wolczuk and adopt the short form of Eurasian Customs Union. Dragneva, R., Wolczuk, K. “Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?” *Chatham House Briefing Paper*, 2012.

ratify these Agreements. I apply the same criteria to countries joining the CIS and the ECU (Table 4).

Table 4: Formal versus non-formal alignment types

Formal alignment types		Non-formal alignment types
Pro-West	Pro-Russia	
Joining NATO	Joining the CSTO	Exchanges of diplomatic notes with assurances of reciprocal support
Joining the EU	Joining the CIS	Official visits
Signing Association and Partnership Agreements with the EU	Joining the ECU	Adjusting internal laws and institutions to adhere to Western/Eastern standards
	Acquiring an Observer Status Member within the ECU	Offering or receiving economic aid
		Offering or receiving electoral endorsements
		Strengthening social and cultural ties
		Rhetoric of support and mutual cooperation by political actors

The non-formal links, expressed in terms of symbolic, diplomatic ties may take various forms: exchanges of diplomatic letters, verbal agreements between leaders, rhetoric of support given during bilateral meetings or in mass media interviews. In other words, non-formal alignment interactions may take various forms, which show the preference for a specific foreign policy orientation, but which at the same time do not carry any legal commitments with them. I consider the cutoff point between formal and non-formal ties

the *ratification of an agreement or a treaty by domestic Parliaments*. Ratifying a document by the Parliament increases the political debate and discussions of the agreement among domestic political groups, this, in turn, increasing the saliency of the agreement and the political weights it carries.

Embedding the study in the neoclassical realist tradition

The study follows the tenets of neoclassical realist conceptual framework, which explain foreign policy behaviors and outcomes with a focus on the constraints and opportunities faced by the states in the international system, as well as on the domestic-level processes that mediate these systemic stimuli.¹⁸⁶

The international system is considered the starting point for neoclassical realist theory.¹⁸⁷ Systemic variables, such as *clarity* of the constraints, threats, or opportunities posed by the system, the *restrictiveness/permisiveness* of the strategic environment, the relative distribution of power among states in the system – influences what foreign policy alternatives states choose.¹⁸⁸

Chapter 2 discusses how the relative distribution of power affected the post-Communist and post-Soviet states' foreign policy choices vis-à-vis the constraints and opportunities posed by the great powers in the system (Russia, the EU and NATO member states, the US).

¹⁸⁶ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 8. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, J., Steven E. Lobell., Norrin M. Ripsman. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁸⁷ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

Systemic variables and their effect on foreign policy behavior among the post-Communist states

In addition, the dissertation argues that the CEECs and the Baltic States benefited from higher *clarity* in terms of the opportunities and threats presented by the Western powers when compared to the post-Soviet states. The fact that the European Union offered a membership prospect to these states when signing Europe Agreements with them at the beginning of the 1990s and later tied this prospect to clear *time horizons*, elucidated the nature of benefits associated with accession to the EU, as well as the threats linked with being singled out of the eastward enlargement. This contributed to these states' consistent pro-Western foreign policy choice. The post-Soviet states were less privileged in terms of *clarity*: post-Soviet leaders knew that the EU was not planning to offer their states a membership prospect in the foreseeable future, therefore they were less enthusiastic to maintain a consistent pro-Western orientation. The lack of clarity in terms of incentives was exacerbated by time indeterminacy: these states were left in a grey zone, with the EU avoiding setting deadlines to institutionalize relations with them. As Ripsmann et al. argue, "the less clarity there is, the greater room there is for particular leaders, parties, and states to pursue unique solutions based on their preferences [...]."¹⁸⁹ Moreover, with uncertain incentives from the West, Russia offered competing opportunities to the post-Soviet leaders, enticing them to promote pro-Russia foreign policy orientation and abandon the pro-Western path. In addition to differences in the relative levels of clarity and uncertainty, the post-Communist states in Europe faced different strategic environments. The clear membership prospect offered to the CEECs and the Baltics and the costs associated with

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 50.

being left out of the eastward enlargement process – made the opportunity to join the EU an enticing and a hard to resist occasion, narrowing down the range of alternative foreign policy choices, therefore making the strategic environment the CEECs faced restrictive. Conversely, the fact that the offer to join the EU was a remote and less intense opportunity for the post-Soviet states – presented their leaders the privilege of making foreign policy choices in a more permissive strategic environment, where they could switch between pro-Russia or pro-Western foreign policy alternatives depending on their preferences and strategic calculations.

Table 5: Systemic Clarity and the Nature of Strategic Environment

		Nature of strategic environment (Permissive or Restrictive)	
		Permissive strategic environment	Restrictive strategic environment
Degree of systemic clarity (High to Low)	High clarity	The CEECs and the Baltics (1991 – 1997)	The CEECs and the Baltics (1997 – 2004)
	Low clarity	Georgia (1991 – 2008) Ukraine (1991 – 2014) Moldova (1991 – ...)	Georgia (2008 - ...) Ukraine (2014 - ...)

Notes: Up until 1997, the CEECs benefited from high clarity in their relations with the EU, as the EU acknowledged their goals of joining the organization in the future. Still, the strategic environment was permissive, because as the case of Slovakia shows in chapter 3, these countries' leaders could still be enticed to have an eye directed toward Russia and the threat to be left out of the EU was less imminent/visible. In 1997, however, when the EU started membership negotiations with some of the CEECs, but left some out of the negotiation process, the threat of being left out of the EU enlargement process became imminent, so the strategic environment therefore changed from permissive to restrictive. The post-Soviet states, on the other hand, were always in a low clarity systemic environment, especially in terms of the opportunities presented by the West. Up until 2008 (Georgia) and 2014 (Ukraine), these states were also in a permissive strategic environment. After Russia directly employed military actions against them, however, the Russian threat became imminent, so their strategic environment changed from permissive to being restrictive.

Domestic intervening variables

Apart from the structural systemic variables discussed in the previous subsection, neoclassical realism employs a list of domestic intervening variables “that condition

whether and how states respond to international systemic pressures.”¹⁹⁰ One important set of intervening variables concerns the beliefs held by the executive group of leaders, “who sit at the helm of the state”, charged with the tasks of designing and conducting foreign policies on behalf of that state.¹⁹¹ “This executive, sitting at the juncture of the state and the international system, with access to privileged information from the state’s politico-military apparatus, is best equipped to perceive systemic constraints and deduce the national interest.”¹⁹² These executive leaders are influenced by their “master beliefs”¹⁹³ when they choose foreign policy responses to “navigate between systemic constraints and domestic politics imperatives.”¹⁹⁴

Leaders’ decisions reflect how they perceive the incentives and constraints imposed by the international environment as well as the foreign counterparts’ intentions.¹⁹⁵ At the same time, however, leaders choose foreign policy alternatives with an eye to not only systemic constraints and incentives. Leaders perform assessments of the domestic political actors’ intentions and motives as well.¹⁹⁶ Trying to infer the actions domestic actors might

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 58.

¹⁹¹ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Steven E. Lobell. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 61; Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, J., Steven E. Lobell., Norrin M. Ripsman. “Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy.” In J. W. Taliaferro et al. ed. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁹² Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, J., Steven E. Lobell., Norrin M. Ripsman. “Introduction: Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy.” In J. W. Taliaferro et al. ed. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 25.

¹⁹³ Norrin M. Ripsman, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Steven E. Lobell identify three types of master beliefs: “philosophical beliefs about politics, instrumental beliefs about which strategies are best to achieve one’s interests, and image of one’s enemy and oneself.” Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell. *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 64.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 34.

¹⁹⁵ Jervis, R. *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), Preface to the second edition, xviii.

¹⁹⁶ Putnam, R. D. “Diplomacy and domestic politics: the logic of two-level games,” *International Organization* 42, no. 3, (1988).

take in response to a particular foreign policy decision – plays a major role in the decisions making process.¹⁹⁷ As Jervis puts it, leaders’ perceptions are also shaped by the “needs produced by the exigencies of domestic politics.”¹⁹⁸

Another intervening variable that neoclassical realist theories articulate as mediating how states respond to international stimuli is the role played by domestic institutions. This dissertation stresses the importance of *bureaucratic decision making* in influencing how executive leaders choose among foreign policy alternatives.¹⁹⁹ Information relevant for foreign policy decision making is collected and analyzed by diplomats working in governmental organizations, the presidents discuss foreign policy options and choices with their Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Ministers of the Economy, ambassadors or other heads of agencies relevant for foreign policy decision making. The archival documents from the Ukrainian and Moldovan MFAs suggest that bureaucrats study carefully the information gathered from their interactions with foreign ambassadors, as well as the diplomatic letters sent by diplomats accredited in foreign countries. The bureaucracies’ policy options, therefore, are formed based on this information. Archival and interview-based evidence suggests that the presidential administrations were often holding different foreign policy stances than the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The

¹⁹⁷ In the current American political context, even though president Trump might be more inclined to forge closer ties with Putin’s Russia, he is aware that such actions might backfire home. After meeting with Putin in Hamburg during the G20 meeting on July 7, 2017, Trump announced that he discussed with the Russian president the creation of a joint “impenetrable Cyber Security unit.” After Republicans and Democrats criticized the announcement in Washington, Trump backtracked and later declared in a tweet, that “The fact that President Putin and I discussed a Cyber Security unit doesn’t mean I think it can happen. It can’t.” Stewart, P., Volcovici, V. “Trump Backtracks on His Idea for a Joint Cyber Security Unit With Russia after Harsh Criticism.” *Time*, July 9, 2017. Retrieved from <http://time.com/4850902/trump-russia-cyber-security-putin-criticism/>

¹⁹⁸ Jervis, R. Preface to the second edition, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, xxi.

¹⁹⁹ Hermann, C. F. (1990). “Changing Course”, 11.

executive leaders were more likely to vacillate between pro-Russia and pro-Western options, whereas the officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, held consistent, usually pro-Western foreign policy stances. Differences in positions between the presidential administrations and the MFAs usually led to domestic debates about the optimal foreign policy orientations, crystalizing state-society relations, another intervening variable characteristic to the neoclassical realist tradition.

The rest of the chapter discusses the theoretical and empirical contributions it makes to the study of foreign policy change in general and the international behavior of the post-Communist states in particular and ends with a short description of the structure of the dissertation.

[The Contributions of this Study](#)

This project builds on a body of scholarship analyzing the different political and economic trajectories pursued by the post-Communist states in Europe following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It focuses on the foreign policy behavior of these countries, offering a comparative analysis of the divergent paths followed by the CEECs on the one hand, and the former members of the Soviet Union, on the other. In doing so, it aims to account for the role of the two external poles, Russia and the West and assess how the restrictions on and opportunities to the choices of elites and counter-elites coming from these external poles influenced the foreign policy behavior.

This study contributes theoretically and empirically in several ways.

First, much of the literature in Comparative Politics of “external influence” has focused on how external actors influence political regime dynamics. Initially, scholars

focused on the ways in which external actors affect transitions to democracy.²⁰⁰ Also, efforts were put toward studying the impact of particular external actors on regime transitions.²⁰¹ The number of studies analyzing the role of the Western states and entities in promoting democracy increased considerably in the last twenty-five years. The positive influence of the EU on democratic achievements in post-Communist Europe has been documented by a myriad of scholars, grouped in the so-called Europeanization literature, who emphasized the role of EU conditionality on democracy promotion in Europe.²⁰² More recently, studies started to highlight not only the positive effects of external actors on democratic performance around the world. Effects on democratization as well as autocratization processes by various external actors have been studied as well.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Huntington, S. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. Pridham, G., "International Influences and Democratic Transition: Problems of Theory and Practice in Linkage Politics," in *Encouraging Democracy: The International Context of Regime Transition in Southern Europe*, ed. Geoffrey Pridham (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991). Pridham, G., Sanford, G., Herring, E., ed. *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratization in Eastern Europe* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994). Linz, J., Stepan, A. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

²⁰¹ Studies showed that not only states or international organizations can influence regime dynamics, but international NGOs can play important roles as well. See e.g. Keck, M. E., Sikkink, K. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Risse, T., Ropp, S. C., Sikkink, K. *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

²⁰² See e.g. Kelley, J. G. *Ethnic Politics in Europe. The Power of Norms and Size*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*, 2005; Kubicek, P. J. (ed.) *The European Union and Democratization*. (London: Routledge, 2003). Pridham, G. *Designing Democracy: EU Enlargement and Regime Change in Post-Communist Europe*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Change*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. "EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood. Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange." *European Union Politics*, 9, no. 2 (2008), 187-215. Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S., Knobel, H. "Costs, Commitment and Compliance: the Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41, 3 (2003). Schimmelfennig, F. Sedelmeier, U. *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

²⁰³ Tolstrup, J. "Studying a negative external actor," 2009; Levitsky, S., Way, L. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010; Tolstrup, J.

In this project, I study how external actors exert influence not only on the regime type in the post-Communist states; the role of external actors bears an important weight on the foreign policy choices of these countries as well. This study looks at how external actors influenced domestic calculations of costs and benefits for choosing a specific foreign policy orientation. By the virtue of the geographic focus of my study, I look at both Western, as well as Russian influence on foreign policy considerations.

One important detail, which sets this study apart from the previous works, that explained the international behavior of post-Soviet states, is the crucial role I assign to the presence or lack of a credible membership prospect in the Western economic and security institutions. Scholars studying the role of the EU on domestic political change in the EU candidate countries reached agreement that EU conditionality played an instrumental role in the democratization and domestic reforms undertaken by these states.²⁰⁴ “EU accession conditionality,” write two leading scholars, “proves to be a strong and significant factor in the democratization of the European neighborhood ... Yet the effects become weaker and inconsistent if the EU offers less than membership or association that might lead to accession in the future.”²⁰⁵ Students explaining the foreign policy behavior of post-Communist states, however, disregard the role played by the West in helping these

Russia vs the EU: The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013; Vanderhill, R. *Promoting Authoritarianism Abroad*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013.

²⁰⁴ See e.g. Kelley, J. G. *Ethnic Politics in Europe*; Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*, 2005; Kubicek, P. J. (ed.) *The European Union and Democratization*. Pridham, G. *Designing Democracy*. Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. “EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood,” 2008.

²⁰⁵ Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. “EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood,” 189.

countries design and conduct consistent foreign policies or consider it insignificant in the international of these states.²⁰⁶

Studies that are more recent focus on whether, how and under which conditions the post-Soviet states adopt EU policies and rules despite a lack of membership prospect and an assertive Russia. These studies find that domestic political elites adopt EU policies depending in certain policy areas, such as telecommunications, food safety, technical regulation, shareholder rights,²⁰⁷ migration or energy diversification,²⁰⁸ depending on conditions imposed by the EU or Russia and on whether they expect these rules to benefit their power and economic advantage in the domestic and international realms.

Political leaders in the former Soviet republics handpicked policies to benefit their own power prospects and left unreformed crucial policy areas, such as the justice sectors, with corruption and cronyism rising to significant levels. The present study looks at the general international alignment patterns of the post-Communist states in Europe, and empirical chapters show how the lack of membership prospect in the EU affected not only the political calculations/strategies adopted by domestic post-Soviet leaders in their foreign policy choices. It also played an important role in the strategies adopted by Russia in its relations with these states.

Also, since the world changed after the end of the Cold War and the bipolarity system that dominated the world for more than forty years dissipated, the need to frame

²⁰⁶ Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 2001; Gnedina, E. “‘Multi-Vector’ Foreign Policies in Europe, 2015.

²⁰⁷ Langbein, J. *Transnationalization and Regulatory Change*

²⁰⁸ Ademmer, E. *Russia’s Impact on EU Policy Transfer*; Ademmer, E., Delcour, L., Wolczuk, K. “Beyond geopolitics: exploring the impact of the EU and Russia in the “contested neighborhood”.” *Eurasian Geogaphy and Economics* 57, no. 1, (2016): 1-18; Addemer, E., Börzel, T. A., “Migration, Energy and Good Governance in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.” *Europe-Asiaa Studies* 65, no. 4, (2013): 581-698

studies in terms of states' orientations or alignments toward the capitalist West or Communist East became unnecessary. This study emphasizes, however, that despite the end of the Cold War and the end of the competition between the US and the Soviet Union at the international level, the territories, which were once part of USSR, freshly freed from the Soviet Union, continued to face a choice between East and West. These countries could either opt for maintaining strong ties with Russia and the former members of the Soviet Union or choose to break from Russia's "embrace" and integrate with the Western economic and security institutions instead. Even though during the last decade of the 1990s, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia's role as a world power decreased and weakened, Moscow continued to be a regional power in the territories once part of the Soviet Union. Therefore, even though the world became unipolar after 1991, with the US strengthening its role across the globe, the post-Soviet countries have faced bi-polarity during most of their independence history. It was a different type of bi-polarity, not one based on the rivalry between Communist ideology and neoliberal market economy, but still it was a choice that these states had to make between Russian-led structures and institutions versus Western practices, norms, and rules. To my knowledge, there is no study, which offers a taxonomy of alignment in terms of pro-Russia or pro-Western orientations. This study is an effort to provide a classification of indicators, which might reflect alignment behavior for Russia or the West. This analytical framework, which differentiates between pro-Russian versus pro-Western behavior, becomes even more salient now when after the

Ukrainian and Syrian crises, EU member states are divided in their positions with respect to Russia.²⁰⁹

Third, much of the empirical evidence that this study relies on is new and not accessible.²¹⁰ The information offered by the diplomatic documents, as well as the insights from the interviews with the Moldovan and Ukrainian policy makers, enhances our knowledge and understanding about the factors that influence foreign policy decision-making processes in Ukraine, Moldova, and the rest of the CEECs. The benefit of the archival diplomatic documents lies in the fact that the content of most of these diplomatic notes and letters was not intended for outside audiences, like mass media or scholars. They were written with the purpose of providing information and facts for domestic policy makers to facilitate the internal decision-making process. These new sources, therefore, offer a unique glimpse into the deliberations that take place behind closed doors, hidden from the public eye.

In addition, when we, as outside readers, assess a final document (be it an Agreement or a Treaty among states), we have access only to the final version – polished and refined. A significant number of the archival diplomatic documents analyzed in this

²⁰⁹ Orenstein, M., Kelemen, R. D. “Trojan Horses in EU Foreign Policy,” 2016. EU member states’ leaders met in Brussels on October 17, 2016, to discuss the possibility of threatening Russia with sanctions over Moscow’s bombing of Aleppo, Syria. While the proposal was supported by Great Britain, France, and Poland. Italy was among the member states who resisted the push for harder sanctions. Robin, E., Guarascio, E. “Italy resists EU push for Russia sanctions over Aleppo bombings,” *Reuters*, October 21, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-summit-russia-idUSKCN12K2GK> ; Rankin, J., Asthanian, A. “EU leaders fail to agree on threatening Russia with sanctions over Aleppo,” *The Guardian*, October 20, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/oct/20/may-european-leaders-stop-russian-atrocities-syria-brex>

²¹⁰ John Gerring and Lee Cojocaru argue that when deciding which cases to select for case-study analysis, one consideration which researchers should take into account is whether the case adds to our knowledge by providing new or not easily available information. Gerring, J., Cojocaru, L. “Selecting Cases for Intensive Analysis,” 2016, p. 19.

study, however, offer important insights on the background work, the work that is done in committee meetings, diplomatic discussions, and negotiations. These insights suggest that considerable dynamics takes place during the process of drafting official documents among states: special attention is given to the choice of words and expressions, numerous alterations and multiple drafts are circulated to state officials, who carefully choose their words to convey specific messages. This new information has the advantage of offering a better understanding of the values, preferences, and powers held by foreign policy decision makers.

Structure of the Dissertation

The rest of this study is organized in the following way: chapter 2 presents a cross-cutting empirical defense of the argument. The subsequent three chapters present the case studies with empirical evidence to support the theoretical argument presented in chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 3 presents the CEECs (including the Baltics). It discusses the external environment that these states faced once freed from Communism and explains how external conditions influenced the cost-benefit calculations of domestic elites, eventually influencing their foreign policy behavior.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the case studies of Ukraine and Moldova. These are the countries, which oscillated between East and West the most: evidence from archival documents, as well as from interviews with policy and decision makers will be discussed to uncover the factors which explain this foreign policy vacillation.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion and avenues for future research.

Chapter 2. A Bird's Eye View of the Argument

The main argument presented in the previous chapter will be discussed and defended in greater detail in the present chapter with general empirical evidence and data elucidating the causes of the divergent foreign policy paths and outcomes of the post-Communist states in Europe.

Two sets of questions guide this dissertation: 1) what explains the divergent foreign policy paths pursued by the post-Communist states in Europe? Why have some countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, or Croatia found their place within the EU and NATO, others like Serbia, Albania, or Macedonia are on their way to becoming fully-fledged members of the Western institutions, Belarus and Armenia maintained a consistent pro-Russia foreign policy path, whereas Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova remain outside of both the EU and NATO, conducting inconsistent foreign policies for more than two decades since their independence? 2) What factors explain the phenomenon of foreign policy vacillation? Why have Ukraine and Moldova oscillated between the Western and the Eastern poles, modulating between pro-Russia and pro-Western foreign policy orientations, without overcoming the challenges of choosing one foreign policy orientation and pursuing it?

Based on the tenets of the neoclassical realist framework, this dissertation argues that the ways in which the systemic opportunities and constraints are mediated by political leaders' interests and preferences, as well as by domestic-politics processes in general – have affected the foreign policy choices of the former Communist states in Europe.

More specifically, the expectation or lack thereof of a credible membership prospect in the Western security and economic institutions has influenced the menu of choices of domestic executive leaders in the post-Communist countries, altering the composition of domestic political

coalitions and the political messages they have adopted, subsequently influencing the foreign policy paths pursued by these states.

The CEECs and the Baltics were offered a membership prospect in the EU soon after the dissolution of the USSR.¹ The expectation to join the EU and the processes associated with accession measures altered domestic expectations and the configuration of domestic political coalitions, putting them on a different foreign policy trajectory when compared to the rest of the post-Soviet states, who despite multiple diplomatic requests were denied such a membership prospect.

Joining the West was appealing to the democratizing states in Eastern Europe for both security, as well as economic reasons. Freshly released from the control of the Soviet Union, these states were undertaking economic and political reforms and “by its force of attraction of its markets and institutions, the EU exercised passive leverage” in the first years after the collapse of Communism.² Whereas Russia was perceived as a security threat, the West was not, and the aim not to be left in a “security vacuum” made NATO membership attractive for these states.³ Also, the financial and logistical support coming from the West, with increased investment and growth, “the costs of exclusion and the way the EU treats nonmember states,” topped by the expectation of the big prize – full NATO and EU membership, drove the CEECs toward the West.⁴

The offer of a clear membership prospect from the EU contributed to the consolidation of domestic political forces inside the CEECs, leading to the formation of a pro-Western cross-party consensus on the issue of foreign policy orientation. As the chapter 3 on the CEECs and the Baltics

¹ Chapter 3 offers the exact dates when the CEECs received credible membership perspectives in the EU and NATO.

² Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 65

³ Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe*, 38.

⁴ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*, 65.

shows, despite the fact that certain CEECs were less successful in democratizing their polities and societies in the initial years, (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia), the European Union adopted “inclusive” rather than “differentiating” strategies in its relations to them.⁵ The EU institutionalized relations with the CEECs, initialing Europe Agreements in 1990 and signing them later, acknowledging their eligibility for eventual EU membership as early as 1993.⁶

The lack of this membership prospect for the post-Soviet states, however, led domestic political parties to capitalize on this uncertainty offered by the international system. Political parties and their leaders chose pro-Russia or pro-EU/pro-Western foreign policy orientations depending on leaders’ preferences or interests, exacerbating the competition between parties based on these divergent foreign policy orientations. The pro-Western versus pro-Russia orientation became an important marker for party differentiation, politicians dividing societies and public opinion over the two orientation options, resulting in a vacillatory foreign policy behavior. *Figure 1* below presents the general argument in a graph.

⁵ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 98-102.

⁶ Ibid.

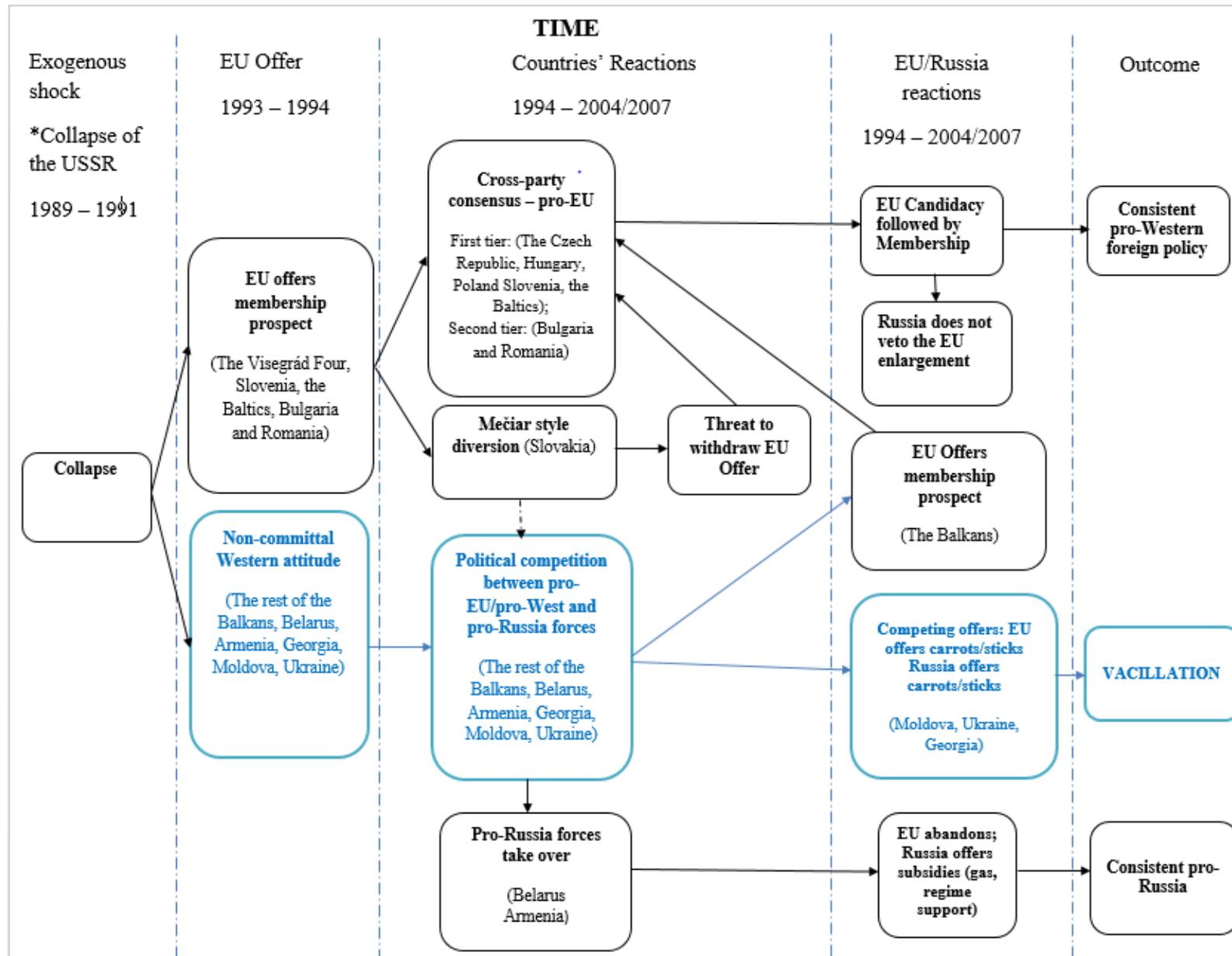


Figure 3. The divergent foreign policy paths of the post-Communist states in Europe

One might argue that the Russian factor played the central role in the EU's decision of which countries to offer a membership prospect. In other words, we must ask whether Russia's stance on whether EU membership would be acceptable for a particular state was a "deeper force", which simply vetoed the prospect of Ukraine, Belarus or Moldova to join the Western organization. If that is the case, then the EU's non-committal attitude toward these former Soviet republics is not so much a cause of their foreign policy orientation, but rather a consequence of Russian policy. Several important points need to be made regarding this view. The empirical evidence in the following chapters shows that the West's geopolitical considerations and the Russian factor played a role in EU's and NATO's membership denial to some of the post-Soviet states. Russia's protest and claims, however, were not the main factors which held the West from offering the post-Soviet states a membership prospect in its security and economic institutions.

Russia has had a negative position regarding EU's and especially NATO's eastward enlargement ever since the West was considering such plans. The diplomatic archival evidence shows that when NATO decided on its first wave on eastward enlargement to incorporate Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, Russian leaders bluntly expressed their protest against these plans.

NATO members undertook significant effort in negotiations with the Russians, being involved in "major" and "dramatic" fights with the Kremlin. The Western leaders were careful to frame the NATO's incorporation of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic not in terms of an anti-Russian move, but rather in terms of preserving security

and stability on the European continent.²¹⁷ Also, the West, especially the Americans, went to great lengths to accommodate Russian demands and made certain economic concessions to Moscow in exchange for the latter's withdrawal of troops from the CEECs' territories.²¹⁸ Chapter 3 shows that Russia had also strong claims against the Baltics' joining NATO. But the three former Soviet states went ahead and joined the Western alliance in 2004. The difference was made by the significant Western backing among NATO members to support the Baltics in their quest for membership, irrespective of Russia's claims. Germany and the US were leading the way in their support for the Baltics. Addressing Moscow's opposition to NATO enlargement, the then-German Defense Minister, Volker R u he, pointed out that NATO enlargement was a done deal and the "enlargement process was not dependent on Moscow's position or on the success of the partnership with Russia on security policies."²¹⁹ A position similar to the German one was shared by leaders in Washington, who argued that the West had to "disabuse Russia of the notion that it has a veto over the security options of the newly independent states of the former USSR and key adjacent states."²²⁰ The West, however, was more reticent to put the same amount of effort in negotiating or

²¹⁷ Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 2002, p. 19; p. 33

²¹⁸ Dobbs, M. "Strobe Talbott and the Cursed Questions." *Washington Post*, June 9, 1996. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/magazine/1996/06/09/strobe-talbott-and-the-cursed-questions/bd8dbc3c-019d-4884-abac-b6bf91f22955/>

"Central and East European Coalition's Letter to the White House to say "No" to the invitation to welcome Yeltsin." September 22, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

²¹⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Federal Republic of Germany with information on the Bergen Conference of the Defense Ministers of NATO-members, October 10 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

²²⁰ Statement of Senator Richard R. Lugar "European Security Revisited: the State of the Alliance and US Vital Interests in 1994" delivered at the Overseas Writers Club on June 28, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

exerting pressure on Russia concerning the needs and interests of Moldova, Ukraine or Georgia.

Whereas untangling the reasons behind the West's decisions to hold the membership prospect off the table for the post-Soviet states could be a topic for a new research project, it is important to reiterate that Russia was not the main factor which held the West at bay.²²¹ One reason for this lack of interest in the rest of the post-Soviet states might be the thinking of the Western leaders. As Kathleen McNamara, points out,²²² the EU leaders established "borders on the mind",²²³ delimiting the European continent between "us", the countries that deserved to be part of the EU, and "them", states that were politically and/culturally unqualified and unfit to be part of the Western clubs. Economic considerations were among some of the other reasons explaining the restrained attitude expressed by the EU member states. The unwillingness to share EU's funds with new, poorer members and the reluctance to accept in the EU economically struggling countries were among the other considerations expressed by some EU member states.

The West's reticence to put the same amount of effort in negotiating or exerting pressure on Russia concerning the needs and interests of Moldova, Ukraine or Georgia were clear since the dissolution of the USSR. Up until the EU launched its European Neighborhood Policy in 2003, it did not participate in the negotiations on the peaceful resolutions of the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet region. It also offered little support to

²²¹ As mentioned earlier, NATO's failed consensus in 2008 to offer Ukraine and Georgia a membership road map is the clearest example where the Russian veto played the central role in keeping the post-Soviet states outside the confines of the Western institutions.

²²² Kathleen McNamara. *Imagining Europe: Symbols, Practice and Banal Authority in the European Union* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

²²³ John Agnew. 2008. "Borders on the mind: Re-framing Border Thinking." *Ethics and Global Politics* 1(4), 175-191.

the reform-minded, pro-Western politicians acquiring power in these states. Comparing the Western efforts in the CEECs with EU's efforts in the rest of the post-Soviet space, scholars point out that the incentives that the Western transnational institutions offered to these states in exchange for democratic reforms were too modest and too vague to be credible.²²⁴ As Vachudova further points out, following the Orange and Rose revolutions from Ukraine and Georgia, "the Western pro-democracy groups poured in at election time, but the EU and arguably also the US have not offered much material support to the "reformers" that took office."²²⁵

Russia, however, has always expressed its interest in anchoring these countries into its own political and economic structures. Research shows that it exhibited two types of attitudes toward these countries: it provided political and economic support to the political leaders that lead a pro-Russian foreign policy, while it destabilized the governments that showed intentions to pursue pro-Western foreign policies.²²⁶

The diplomatic records suggest that while Russian diplomats admitted their political "defeat" in the Baltics and the CEECs, the Kremlin was determined not to allow the same scenario to unfold to the rest of the post-Soviet region.²²⁷ The Russian foreign policy and military doctrines stressed the fact that the territories of the former USSR (except the Baltic States) represent the zone of Moscow's vital interests and special

²²⁴ Vachudova, M. A. "The European Union. The Causal Behemoth of Transnational Influence on Post-Communist Politics", 37.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Tolstrup, J. *Russia vs the EU: The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States*. (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013).

²²⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Clinton's Visit to Latvia. July 7, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

responsibility.²²⁸ In September 1995, the then-Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, issued a Decree on “The Establishment of the Strategic Course of the Russian Federation with Member States of the CIS.”²²⁹ The Decree set the goal to restore Russian might in the territories of the Commonwealth.²³⁰

The EU’s consistent position of keeping the membership door closed for post-Soviet states that expressed interest joining the West allowed Russia to have an even greater role in the region.²³¹ There were concerns among post-Soviet diplomats that the exclusion of their countries from European integration processes could be interpreted by Russia as a tacit signal from the West that the region is “in Russia’s sphere of influence” and this, in turn, could have “encouraged Russia” to strengthen its dominance in the region, forcibly keeping the countries in its orbit.²³² Ukrainian diplomats report that Russian diplomats were trying to persuade the Ukrainians to renounce at their Western integration goals and embrace “pragmatism” instead, as there was no hope for Ukraine to join the EU.²³³

²²⁸ Brzezinski, Z., Sullivan, P. *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States : Documents, Data, and Analysis*. (M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, N.Y., 1997). Gvosdev, N. K., Marsh, C. *Russian Foreign Policy. Interests, Vectors, and Sectors*. (Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2014).

²²⁹ The full text of the Decree can be found in Russian here <http://kremlin.ru/acts/bank/8307> and here <http://archive.mid.ru/ns-osndoc.nsf/0e9272bafa34209743256c630042d1aa/4e3d23b880479224c325707a00310fad>

²³⁰ Mihalisko, K. “Yeltsin’s CIS Decree: An Instrument for Regaining Russia’s Superpower Status.” *Prism*, 1, no. 21, (1995).

²³¹ It may very well be that one reason why the EU refused to offer a membership prospect to these states was to accommodate Russia. My aim is to emphasize here not to the direction of the causal arrows, but the *effect* of this lack of membership prospect on Russia’s actions in the post-Soviet region.

²³² Information on the meeting with the ambassadors accredited to the WEU, March 19 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

²³³ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia on Ukraino-Russian consultations on EU cooperation, May 5, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

The presence of a membership prospect in the EU for some of the post-Communist states has steered the actions of domestic political leaders toward embracing a pro-Western foreign policy orientation and due to the EU conditionality and domestic political competition, a cross-party consensus on the pro-Western orientation was formed²³⁴, leading to consistent, pro-Western foreign policy orientation. Even in “illiberal” states (Slovakia, Bulgaria or Romania), where conservative incumbents exhibited anti-Western preferences and where less progress regarding democratic performance was achieved, “rulers and citizens ... enjoyed the same membership prospects” as the liberal Poland, Hungary or the Czech Republic.²³⁵ The powerful combination of domestic and international constraints steered political parties and their leaders toward pro-Western foreign policy orientation and maintained the vector consistent.

The expectation of membership in Western organizations, then, shaped the domestic political agenda by strengthening the liberal, pro-Western domestic political forces against the reform-resistant, anti-Western ones.²³⁶ Milada Anna Vachudova points out that the EU’s conditionality affected the institutional environment, and thus the menu of domestic and foreign policy choices in the less democratic CEECs, in at least three ways:

First, joining the EU served as a *focal point for cooperation* for disparate groups that opposed the ruling parties. Second, EU membership created incentives for politicians and other elites to *adapt* their political agenda to be compatible with the OSCE, the CoE, and other IOs, as well as the EU. Third, political parties that promised to move the country toward EU membership had to follow through with the

²³⁴ Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77-78.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

implementation of specific reforms once in office in order to move forward in the preaccession process.²³⁷

The awareness that their countries were considered credible EU candidates altered the messages and actions of political actors in these states: most of them adapted their political agendas to join the West, once their countries were credible future members of the EU,²³⁸ undertaking specific commitments to implement domestic legal and institutional changes to achieve this objective. Because of these commitments, the foreign policy option of joining the West – and the attractiveness of that option – limited the availability of other foreign policy options (i.e. these states were facing *restrictive* strategic environment). The process of making commitments to other states or external entities, (in this case, once the CEECs adopted the path of joining NATO and the EU), restricted the set of decision-making options of their political leaders.²³⁹ The domestic political competition and debate, therefore, was not framed in terms of whether or not to join the West, but which domestic political party was more likely to be successful in bringing the countries to the West the fastest²⁴⁰ and which policies to embrace internally that would guarantee rapid EU

²³⁷ Vachudova, M. A. “The European Union. The Causal Behemoth of Transnational Influence on Post-Communist Politics.” In Orenstein, M. A., Bloom, S. R., Lindstrom, N. ed. *Transnational Actors in Central and Eastern European Transitions*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2008): 29. Italics in original.

²³⁸ Ibid.

Vachudova, M. A. “The European Union. The Causal Behemoth of Transnational Influence on Post-Communist Politics.” In Orenstein, M. A., Bloom, S. R., Lindstrom, N. ed. *Transnational Actors in Central and Eastern European Transitions*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2008); Jacoby, W. *The Enlargement of the European Union and NATO. Ordering from the Menu in Central Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²³⁹ Bueno de Mesquita, B. “Measuring Systemic Polarity.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 19, 2 (1975).

²⁴⁰ Todorov, A. “The Role of Political Parties in the Bulgaria’s Accession to the EU.” *Center for the Study of Democracy*. 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=12844>

accession.²⁴¹ In Hungary, for example, during the June 1999 parliamentary session, out of 180 laws passed, 152 were not subject to any debate in the parliament because they were part of the *acquis*.²⁴²

As Kopstein and Reilly note, “It is all but impossible to understand politics in these countries without considering the effects of *the expectation* that they could participate in prospective EU enlargement.”²⁴³ The prospect of joining NATO and the EU strengthened the internal cohesion inside CEECs, provided enhanced security and contained ethnic conflicts.

After the EU offered the membership prospect to the CEECs, political parties and leaders that advanced alternative foreign policy choices in these states, suffered negative political consequences. Parties that posed a threat to EU membership were sidelined from the political stage.²⁴⁴ The prospect of EU accession led to a rapid marginalization of the populist and nationalist discourses.²⁴⁵ Even though in some CEECs, certain parties were advocating extreme nationalist positions, like the Istvan Csurka in Hungary, moderate political forces managed to drive them out eventually, due to fears that their messages and actions might affect the prospect of EU admission. In the Hungarian case, for example, the country’s foreign policy was influenced by sidelining the extremist political forces:

²⁴¹ Herd, P. Graeme, “The Baltic States and EU Enlargement,” in *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*, ed. Karen Henderson (London: UCL Press Limited, 1999).

²⁴² Kopstein and Reilly, *Geographic Diffusion*, 2000, p. 27

²⁴³ Kopstein and Reilly, “Geographic Diffusion,” 27. Italics added.

²⁴⁴ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S., Knobel, H. “The Impact of EU Political Conditionality,” in *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2005). Levitsky, S., Way, L. “International Linkage and Democratization,” *Journal of Democracy*, vol 16, no. 3 (2005). Kopstein and Reilly, 2000.

²⁴⁵ Kopstein and Reilly, *Geographic Diffusion*, 2000

attention was shifted from concern with the status of the large Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries toward efforts to join the EU.²⁴⁶ As Vachudova points out,

The fact “that these states [the CEECs] were credible future members of the EU, exposed to the full force of EU’s active leverage, strengthened the hand of liberal forces against the illiberal ones – not in a duel where good vanquishes evil, but in an iterated electoral game where, sooner or later, most political actors saw the benefits of moving their own political agenda toward compatibility toward state’s bid for EU membership.”²⁴⁷

The extensive monitoring by the European Commission of the reform implementation process, regular meetings between Western politicians with party leaders, members of the Parliaments and bureaucrats²⁴⁸ reinforced the foreign policy choice of joining the West. Moreover, to safeguard against shifting political coalitions in the CEECs and ensure continuity of *acquis* implementation, the European Commission was including conditionality clauses in official agreements with the candidate countries.²⁴⁹ In this way, EU’s role as a “tutor and monitor”²⁵⁰ of the processes of political, economic and institutional change in the run-up to EU membership locked-in the foreign policy option of Western orientation and integration into major Western institutions.

Another way in which the prospect of accession to the EU made the pro-Western policy option binding among the CEECs was the EU’s gradual strategy in opening its doors

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Vachudova, M. A. “The European Union. The Causal Behemoth of Transnational Influence on Post-Communist Politics.” In Orenstein, M. A., Bloom, S. R., Lindstrom, N. ed. *Transnational Actors in Central and Eastern European Transitions*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2008): 29.

²⁴⁸ Levitsky and Way “International Linkage and Democratization”, 2005

²⁴⁹ Wade, Jakoby, “Priest and Penitent: the European Union as a Force in the Domestic Politics of Eastern Europe,” *East European Constitutional Review* 8, no. 1 (1999), 62-67.

²⁵⁰ Wade, “Priest and Penitent”, 1999

to the CEECs. Even though the membership prospect was offered to all of the CEECs, the pace and timing of actual membership varied among the ten countries. During the EU Council Meeting in London in March 1998, out of the ten countries from Central and Eastern Europe, accession negotiations were opened only with five: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia. During the European Council meeting in Helsinki in December 1999, official accession negotiations were launched with the rest of the five CEECs: Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, and Slovakia.²⁵¹ The fact that the European Commission was “grading” the CEECs performance regarding reform and institutional change made the CEECs competitors in the accession race. The expectation of the “big prize” – EU membership, created a strong incentive among the political actors in the CEECs to adapt to the EU rules and procedures,²⁵² because they wanted to demonstrate that their countries were favorites among the EU candidates. The CEECs, therefore, as EU aspirants, made EU integration as their main foreign policy priority, and subsequently politically aligned with the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), because this provided additional confirmation of their commitment to the EU and offered them extra points in the accession race.²⁵³

Stated in a more general form, the membership prospect in Western economic, political and security institutions played a central role in the choice of domestic

²⁵¹ Wade, “Priest and Penitent, 1999. In fact, even though the EU had set clear membership criteria and was putting significant effort to promote institutional reforms in the CEECs candidate countries, political elites in the CEECs, especially civil servants from ministries, were reluctant to share the needs their institutions faced. They were afraid that by disclosing the dysfunctionalities of their institutions, those against EU enlargement inside the EU might use the information against the candidate countries to either delay or suspend the process of enlargement.

²⁵² Levitsky and Way “International Linkage and Democratization”, 2005

²⁵³ Kaminska, *Poland and EU Enlargement*, 2014.

institutional²⁵⁴ design that the CEECs made and which subsequently influenced their foreign policy behavior. Once the political elites in the CEECs decided that integration with the West was a goal to achieve, and crucially once the West signaled that such membership was possible for them, the domestic leaders' choice of institutional arrangements influenced the competition between various societal groups and political elite in the CEECs. The institutional choices made with the end goal of joining the NATO and the EU led to the specification of terms, and to the allocation of resources, which in turn delimited the policymakers' range of policy instruments, ultimately influencing the foreign policy strategies adopted.²⁵⁵ The purposeful attempts of CEECs' leaders to adjust their domestic institutions to the demands of the West and adapting internal rules and structures towards accelerating the process of accession to NATO and EU helped the domestic political leaders to solve their collective action problems and remain united in their goal of Western orientation.

To reiterate, the main argument advanced up until now is that the membership opportunity offered by the European Union to the CEECs altered the political considerations and actions of the domestic political parties, steering them toward a pro-Western/pro-EU foreign policy orientation. One might argue, however, that the driving force behind this pro-Western orientation was domestic public opinion in the CEECs,

²⁵⁴ I follow Elman and define institutions as "sets of rules that prescribe permissible behavior. Institutions define acceptable patterns of conduct which channel social behavior in a certain direction rather than in the many directions that would otherwise be possible" Elman M. F. "The Foreign Policies of Small States: Challenging Neorealism in its own Backyard." *British Journal of Political Science*, 25, no. 2 (1995), Fn 33

²⁵⁵ As Stephn Haggard notes: "Once developed, ... actors tend to view solutions to particular problems through the lens of the instruments that are available to them; their options are limited or expanded by the tools they have at hand" Haggard, S. *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrializing Countries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 46. As cited in Elman M. F. "The Foreign Policies of Small States", p. 182.

which, through its pro-Western preferences, determined political parties to promote European integration goals.

Most of the research on the relationship between political elites and public opinion in the context of European integration is based on countries from Western Europe, and there is no definite conclusion in the literature regarding the topic of who is driving whom. Some scholars emphasize a “top-down” approach, in which political elites cue public opinion and drive their preferences on EU policies through a process of information and persuasion.²⁵⁶ Proponents of the “bottom-up” model, on the other hand, claim that, due to electoral reasons, the political elites form their positions on issues related to European integration based on the preferences of the mass publics.²⁵⁷ Still, other scholars advance a “dual-process model,” whereby political elites both shape the public opinion preferences and update their positions based on the opinions of the publics.²⁵⁸

Scholars have pointed to a lack of sufficient research on how party competition in post-Communist Eastern European states has affected the public opinion’s support for European integration.²⁵⁹ It could be true that a “dual-process model” may be at play in post-

²⁵⁶ Feld, W., Wildgen, J. *Domestic Political Realities and European Unification: A Study of Mass Publics and Elites in the European Community Countries*. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1976). Franklin, M., Marsh, M., McLaren, L. (1994) “The European Question: Opposition to Unification in the Wake of Maastricht”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 35, p. 455–472. Wessels, B. “Evaluations of the EC: Elite or Mass Driven”, in Oskar Neidermayer and Richard Sinott (eds.) *Public Opinion and Internationalized Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Steenbergen, Marco R. and Bradford S. Jones (2002) ‘Modeling Multilevel Data Structures’, *American Journal of Political Science* 46(1): 218–37. Steenbergen, M. R., Bradford S. J. (2002). “Modeling Multilevel Data Structures”, *American Journal of Political Science* 46(1), p. 218–237. Ray, L. (2003) “When Parties Matter: The Conditional Influence of Party Positions on Voter Opinion about European Integration”, *Journal of Politics* 65(4), p. 978–994.

²⁵⁷ Carruba, C. (2001). “The Electorate Connection in European Union Politics”, *Journal of Politics* 63, p. 141–158.

²⁵⁸ Steenbergen, M. R., Edwards, E. E., Vries, C. E. (2007). “Who’s Cuing Whom? Mass-Elite Linkages and the Future of European Integration.” *European Union Politics*, 8(1), p. 13-35.

²⁵⁹ There is significant research undertaken on the topic of what factors determine citizens’ support for EU integration in the post-Communist states, however. Inter alia, see Joshua Tucker, Alexander C. Pacek,

Communist Europe, by which both parties listen to the public's preferences on EU integration, and the citizens' opinions are shaped by how parties adopt specific positions related to European integration. At the same time, one study²⁶⁰ found that political parties bear an independent effect on the public opinion attitudes concerning European integration in five Central and Eastern European states. Specifically, the study argues that the public's positive stance on the EU membership issue is driven by support for political parties that advance pro-EU policy stances.²⁶¹ Other studies, while not directly testing the effect of party politics on public opinion, suggest that political parties at the national level²⁶² and elites at the regional and local levels²⁶³ cue public opinion on support or opposition to European Union integration.

The public opinion data on the support among the Eastern European states for integration with the EU and NATO in the 1990s in the figures below shows that public opinion did not drive foreign policy choice in the post-Communist states. The debate on the process of EU integration was mainly conducted at the elite level in the CEECs,

Adam J. Berinsky. 2002. "Transitional Winners and Losers: Attitudes Toward EU Membership in Post-Communist Countries." *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(3), 557-571; Rachel Cichowski. 2000. "Western Dreams, Eastern Realities: Support for the European Union in Central and Eastern Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 33(1).

²⁶⁰ Rachel A. Cichowski. (2000). "Western Dreams, Eastern Realities. Support for the European Union in Central and Eastern Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 33(10), 1243-1278.

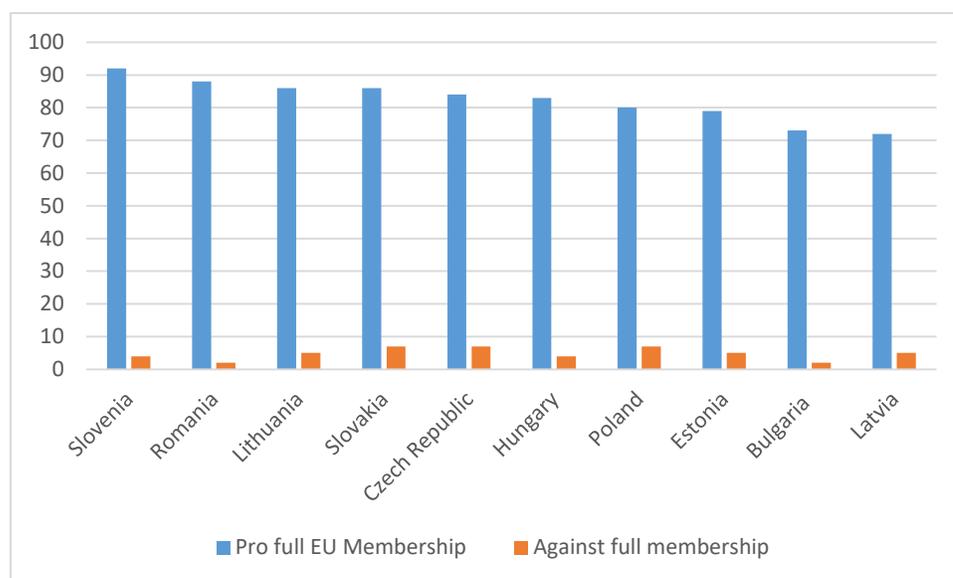
²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Petr Kopecky' and Cas Mudde. (2002). "The Two Sides of Euroscepticism Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe." *European Union Politics* 3(3), 297-396.

²⁶³ James Hughes, Gwendolyn Sasse, and Claire Gordon. "Saying 'Maybe' to the 'Return To Europe' Elites and the Political Space for Euroscepticism in Central and Eastern Europe." *European Union Politics* 3(3), 327-355.

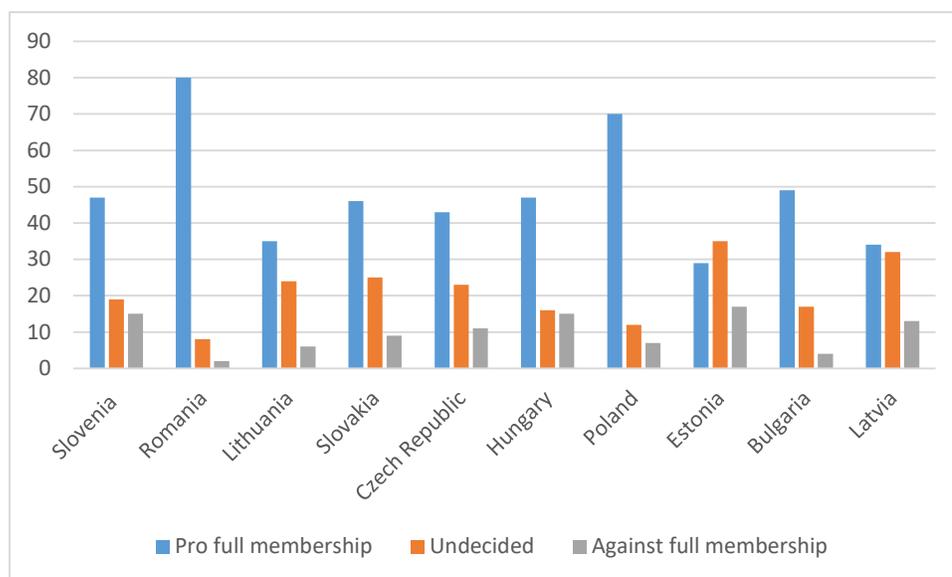
suggesting that it is political parties that lead public opinion stances on foreign policy orientations.²⁶⁴

Figure 4: Public Opinion support for EU membership in 1992



²⁶⁴ Heather Grabbe and Kirsty Hughes. “Central and East European Views on EU Enlargement: Political Debates and Public Opinion.” In Karen Henderson ed. *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*. (London: UCL Press, 1999).

Figure 5: Public Opinion support for EU membership in 1996



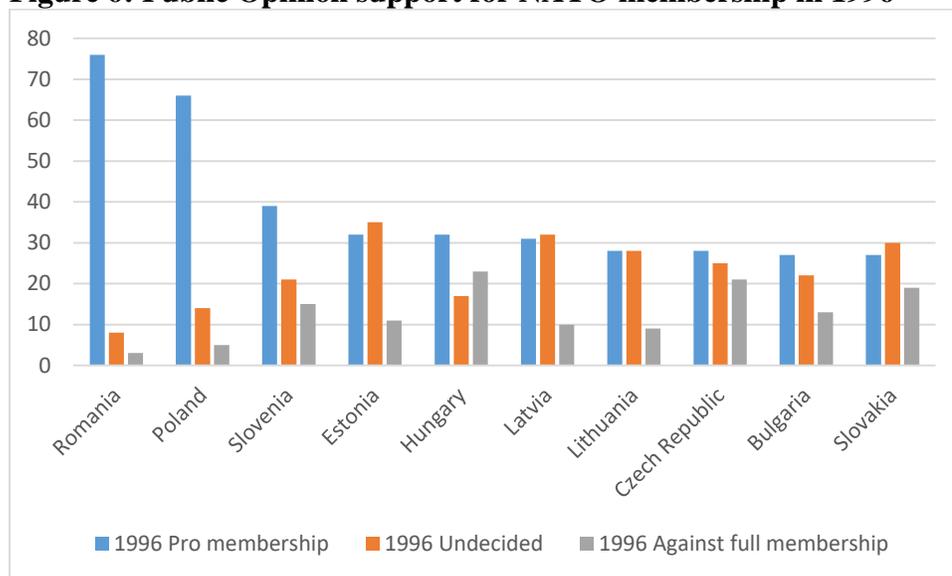
Sources: Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (1993: Annex Figure 47) (1996: Text Figure 9).

As the figure 2 shows, in 1992, one year after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, support for EU membership was high in all former Communist states in Europe. In Moldova, 85 percent were in favor of EU membership, in Ukraine 82 percent and even in Belarus, 81 percent expressed interest in joining the European Community. Among the Baltic States, Latvia stands at the end of the list, after Moldova, Ukraine or Belarus, with 72 percent of respondents saying they prefer EU accession. In the 1996 survey, only respondents in candidate countries were asked about their EU membership preferences, but below I present figures from a related question, which was asked in almost all countries in both 1992 and 1996.

The support for NATO membership was lower than that of EU support, with some countries, like Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Slovakia registering support lower than the 30 percent mark. Despite this, these countries' elites continued to push for

NATO membership, and as chapter 3 shows, governments allotted considerable amounts of money to inform the public about the benefits of joining the Western alliance.

Figure 6: Public Opinion support for NATO membership in 1996

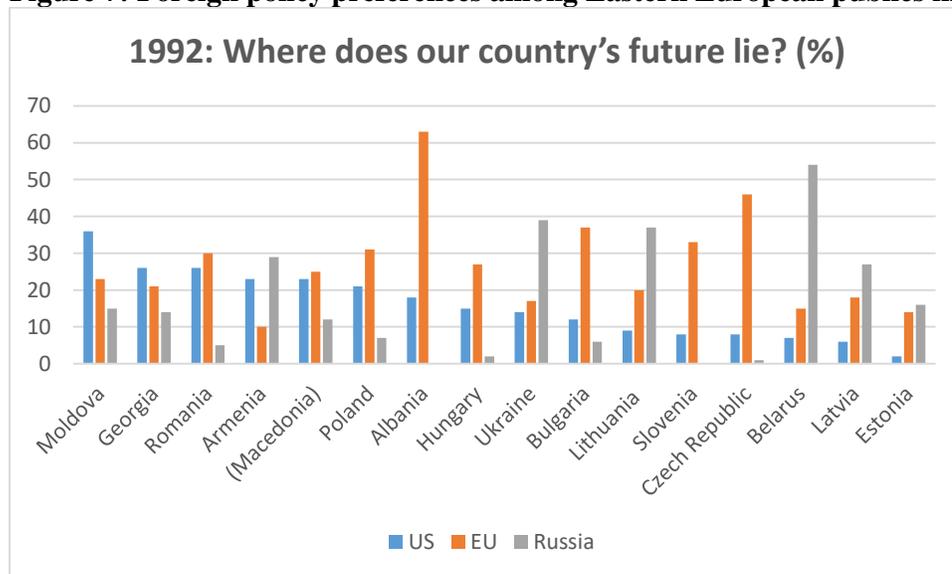


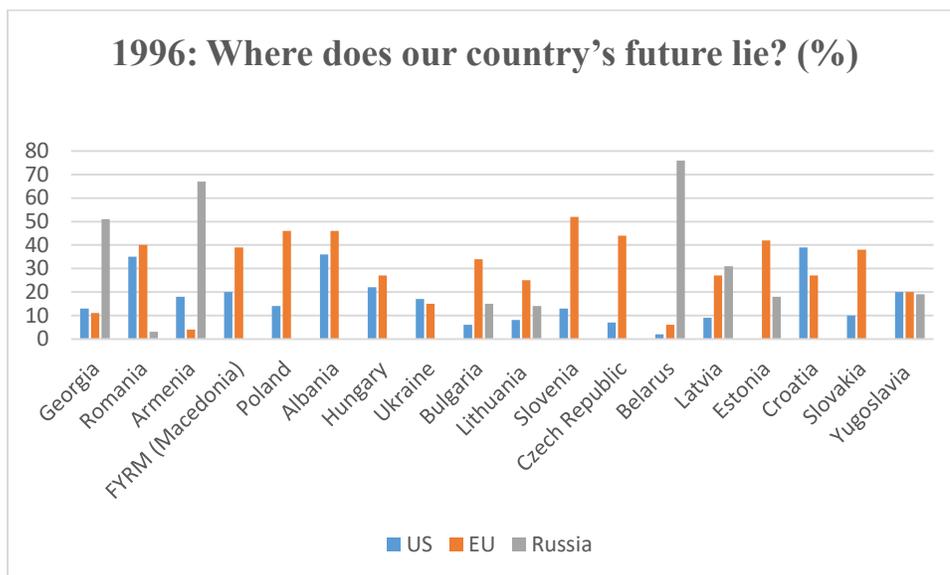
Sources: Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (1996: Text Figure 11)

Since in the survey from 1996, the question on EU membership was asked only in the EU candidate countries, excluding countries from the former Yugoslavia and former USSR, I include below figures on a related question, which tracks foreign policy preferences as well, even though not directly asking about membership. This question was asked in almost all Eastern European states in both 1992 and 1996. The data from 1992 shows that the post-Soviet states, such as Moldova and Georgia saw their countries tied closer to the US, and in total, their preferences were for closer ties with Western powers rather than with Russia. There is no clear indication that in the Baltic States, for example, public opinion was overwhelmingly pro-West in 1992, as opposed to the rest of the post-

Soviet states. Comparing the figures for Ukraine with those of Lithuania, for example, we can see that 31 percent of respondents saw Ukraine's future tied closer to the US and the EU and 39 percent saw the future linked to Russia. In Lithuania, 29 percent replied that the future lied with the West, and 37 percent with Russia. In Latvia, 27 percent saw their country's future tied closer to Russia, rather than with the West (24 percent). In Estonia, 16 percent were in favor of closer relations with the West and another 16 saw closer ties to Russia.

Figure 7: Foreign policy preferences among Eastern European publics in 1992 and 1996





Sources: Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (1993: Annex Figure 60, 62); Central and Eastern Eurobarometer (1996: Annex Figure 26, 27).

In 1996, the situation somewhat changes: the Baltics are already EU candidates, but still 31 percent of Latvians (an increase of 4 percent since 1992) see their country's future tied to Russia and 36 percent see it linked to the West. In Ukraine, on the other hand, the percentage of those who see the country's future linked to Russia increase by 7 percent, whereas the number of those who see the country's future tied to the West remains the same at 31 percent.

To conclude, public opinion did not have a significant effect on foreign policy making in the post-Communist states, political elites leading public opinion stances on foreign policy orientations.²⁶⁵ Once the CEECs and the Baltics received assurances of their eligibility for EU membership, domestic political parties adjusted their messages and

²⁶⁵ Heather Grabbe and Kirsty Hughes. "Central and East European Views on EU Enlargement: Political Debates and Public Opinion." In Karen Henderson ed. *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*. (London: UCL Press, 1999).

policies around the EU integration goal, despite the fact that some portions of their publics were not overtly enthusiastic about EU integration prospects.

The Different Paths followed by the Post-Soviet States

The situation was different in the post-Soviet states. The transitional period that followed the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the declaration of independence was characterized by changes in their domestic institutional arrangements. The lack of an expectation for a potential membership in Western political, economic and security institutions altered the choice of the political rules and structures in these states, as well as the rules guiding the domestic political game. As in the so-called “illiberal”²⁶⁶ post-Communist states, (Bulgaria or Slovakia), in the initial years after the dissolution of the USSR, in Ukraine and Moldova, there was a lack of consensus among political elites whether the pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policies to be embraced.²⁶⁷ The fact that Slovakia and Bulgaria were credible future members of the EU, placed them on a trajectory on which joining the Western institutions was the final goal, and the deliberate attempts by the West to make the CEECs stick to the Western rules and norms facilitated the achievement of this aim. Since the Western doors were closed to Kiev and Chisinau, however, the executive leaders in these capitals faced different systemic conditions and foreign policy alternatives.

²⁶⁶ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided*

²⁶⁷ Linden, R. H. “Security and Identity in Southeast Europe”

It should be pointed out that even in the case of the CEECs, the EU members were not all and immediately enthusiastic about extending membership to them.²⁶⁸ Nor were NATO members wholeheartedly supporting the expansion of the alliance to incorporate the newly democratic states of Central and Eastern Europe.²⁶⁹ As the empirical chapters show, however, once disagreements inside the EU and NATO on the topic of expanding the organizations' membership were settled, eastern enlargement occupied a central place on NATO's and EU's agendas.²⁷⁰ The CEECs received assurances that their membership in the Western political and security institutions was not a matter of "if" but one of "when"²⁷¹ therefore the anticipation of accession reinforced the pro-Western outlook in CEECs' foreign policy orientations. The post-Soviet states faced completely different conditions. The archival diplomatic documents show that throughout the 25 years since the independence of the post-Soviet states, the EU had maintained a consistent "no" policy and refused to offer them a membership prospect. NATO, too, was reticent in offering these states hopes of accession. When Ukraine and Georgia officially applied for membership,

²⁶⁸ Schimmelfennig, F. "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union." *International Organization* 55, no. 1, (2001): 47-80.

²⁶⁹ For more details on the beginnings of the eastern enlargement debate among EU member states, see Steinberg, J. B., "An Ever Closer Union." (Santa Monica: RAND, 1993). On the evolution of NATO enlargement debate to the East and the negotiations inside the Alliance see Asmus, R. D. *Opening NATO's Door. How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

²⁷⁰ NATO enlargement to the east was speedier than the one of EU's incorporation of CEECs. Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic were the first among the CEECs to join NATO in 1999, only six years after the debate of NATO enlargement swept political capitals on both sides of the Atlantic. It was at the end of 1992, beginning of 1993 when the idea about the need to expand NATO to the east first emerged inside political circles in Washington and London. The US played a central role facilitating the rapid anchoring of the first CEECs into NATO. Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 2002. Asmus, R. D., Vondra, A. "The Origins of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18, 2 (2005).

²⁷¹ On January 12, 1994, outside the US Ambassador's residence in Prague, Bill Clinton, surrounded by the leaders of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, announced that the US policy on NATO enlargement was "not whether but when." Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door*, 2002

NATO was unable to reach internal consensus on providing a membership action plan (MAP)²⁷² to them in April 2008.

Without a credible Western membership prospect, leaders in Ukraine and Moldova faced an expanded repertoire of foreign policy options: joining the West or remaining in Russia's sphere of influence remained attractive alternatives for competing politicians. Leaders' strategic calculations about what it takes to acquire power, the domestic political coalition making, and the bargaining process were altered, as the EU's influence was not strong enough to lock-in a consistent pro-Western orientation.

As the neoclassical realist framework points out, the executive leader elected to make foreign policy on behalf of a state, "possesses private information and has monopoly on intelligence about foreign countries."²⁷³ Making use of this privileged information, and with an eye toward their strategic political beliefs/interests, leaders "choose from a range of policy alternatives to navigate between systemic constraints and domestic political imperatives."²⁷⁴ In the context of the post-Soviet states, the political regimes are characterized as "hybrid" or semi-democratic.²⁷⁵ Influential executives, organized according to patronal models, with a single patron at the top of "a single pyramid," control the access to the power of other groups.²⁷⁶ Political and decisional authority is concentrated

²⁷² The Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a program of assistance, advice and support from NATO to countries aspiring to join the Alliance. It is considered the necessary first step in the process of NATO accession.

²⁷³ Ripsman, Taliaferro, and Lobell, *Neoclassical Realist Theory of International Politics*, 2016, 61.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁷⁵ Levitsky, S. Way, L. *Competitive Authoritarianism. Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press: 2010).

²⁷⁶ Hale, H. *Patronal Politics. Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press: 2014).

within the confines of the presidential administration and the president's inner circle of advisers.

Ukrainian and Moldovan leaders, therefore, knew that the Western doors were closed to their countries.²⁷⁷ The only form of institutionalized relationship that the EU accepted to have with these countries up until 2005²⁷⁸ was Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs), which unlike the Europe Agreements signed with the rest of the CEECs, did not acknowledge their eligibility for future EU membership.²⁷⁹

Despite the fact that the post-Soviet states lacked a credible membership prospect, the EU remained attractive for them.²⁸⁰ Ukrainian and Moldovan leaders acknowledged the costs of exclusion from the EU enlargement process and the repercussions following EU's treatment of non-member states.

The West and Russia as Patrons and the Post-Soviets as Clients

The theoretical framework of neoclassical realism claims that the opportunities and constraints from the international system are mediated by domestic leaders' interests and preferences. Apart from external stimuli, neoclassical realism claims that domestic politics processes influence leaders' foreign policy choices as well. In the following subsection, I will present the *patron-client state relationships* framework,²⁸¹ discussing the goals sought by the West and Russia in the post-Communist region and the systemic incentives and constraints which the post-Communist states faced in the post-1989 international

²⁷⁷ This is attested by the diplomatic archival documents, as well as by the political leaders themselves in interviews with the author.

²⁷⁸ This is when the EU signed Action Plans following the European Neighborhood Policy.

²⁷⁹ Baun, M. J. *A Wider Europe*, 35.

²⁸⁰ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided*, 65.

²⁸¹ Shoemaker, C. C., Spanier, J. *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 1984.

environment. Also, the *omnibalancing*²⁸² theory will be discussed to show how incumbents' concerns with domestic threats to their leadership affected their foreign policy decision making.

The post-Communist states had to operate in an international system which continued to be dominated by two big power poles: the EU and NATO on the West and Russia on the East. Both of these poles sought to achieve specific goals in Central and Eastern post-Communist Europe and following Shoemaker and Spanier's *client-patron* state relationships, I group the CEECs and the post-Soviet states under the "clients" label, while Russia on the one hand, and the EU and NATO, on the other, under the "patrons" label. According to the *client-patron* state framework, the primary goals that motivate the actions of the patron states vis-à-vis their client states is patrons' intention "to exert some degree of control over the client."²⁸³ The patron-states seek to influence the clients' degree of autonomy in the world affairs. Three types of patron goals are underlined: *ideological goals*, *international solidarity* and *strategic advantage* goals (Table 6). At the same time, the client states and their leaders, seek to achieve their own objectives as well: first, they want to maintain their independence in the international affairs and protect their national sovereignty;²⁸⁴ second, individual leaders of these client states may choose to bypass the interests of the states and pursue their own, egoistic economic- or power-related interests.

²⁸² David, S. (1991). "Explaining Third World Alignment."

²⁸³ Shoemaker, C. C., Spanier, J. *Patron-Client State Relationships*, 1984., p. 17

²⁸⁴ These concerns lead some to choose alignment with Russia, because they are too weak militarily and Russia is often the only guarantor of their security and national sovereignty. The best example in this case is Armenia, which throughout most of its post-independence history, has relied on Russian support to deter aggressive intentions from Turkey or Azerbaijan.

West's Goals in the Post-Communist Region

Whereas in its relations with the CEECs, the West's goals toward the post-Communist region were clear from the beginning, EU seeking to achieve *ideological* and *strategic advantage* objectives, in its relations with the former Soviet states, the Western goals remained ambiguous. During the first decade after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the West was indifferent as to whether the Post-Soviet states (except for the Baltics) were heading East or West. Only in the second decade of the new millennium, especially after the two Eastern enlargements, Brussels became more interested in ensuring security throughout its Eastern border, exhibiting *strategic advantage* goals in the post-Soviet region.

The EU and NATO remained reluctant to offer the post-Soviet states a membership prospect throughout this entire period, but after 2007, the EU was interested in maintaining stability on its eastern borders. The West, therefore, was offering support to encourage post-Soviet leaders to adopt policies, which would ensure stability, the rule of law and respect for human rights. This Western effort has been particularly visible after the EU launched its European Neighborhood Policy in 2003, which had the goal of ensuring that the enlarged Union is surrounded by a "ring of friends" and of encouraging its Eastern partners to accept liberalization, democratization and convergence of its *acquis*.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Kelley, J. "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighborhood Policy." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 44, no. 1 (2006): 29-55. Edwards, G. "The Construction of Ambiguity and the Limits of Attraction: Europe and its Neighbourhood Policy." *Journal of European Integration* 30, no. 1 (2008): 45-62. Smith, K. E. "The Outsiders: the European Neighborhood Policy." *International Affairs*, 81, no. 4 (2005). 757-773.

Russia's Goals in the Post-Communist Region

Russia was interested in maintaining the former Soviet republics under its influence, for security and economic reasons. Moscow strived to fulfill two types of goals: *international solidarity* and *strategic advantage*. Throughout the last two decades since the dissolution of the Soviet empire, Russia did not exhibit any ideological interests in its relations with the former Communist states, since Moscow underwent through a serious ideological crisis during this period.²⁸⁶

Table 6. Patron Goals

	Ideological Compliance	International Solidarity	Strategic Advantage
Definition	The patron seeks to transfer its own image on the client in order to show the superiority of its system to its competitors	The patron aims to show the world that the client is a member of its bloc	The patron strives to gain control over a strategic geographical area under client's jurisdiction in order to gain military advantage or it may also seek to control a resource that is important to its adversary; the patron may use the client's territory for stationing armed forces in order to block the spread of an adversary's influence
Manifestations	Demands for changes in the client's political structure; Introduction of new economic practices Changes in social mores Direct control over the client's	Voting cohesion in the UN Signing of international agreements Visits between heads of state Client statements of international	Demands for military bases on the client's soil Access to various client's facilities Cooperation between patron and client armies

²⁸⁶ Pop-Eleches, G. "Independence or Double Dependence, 2001

	domestic or security policies	support for the patron Perceptual association of the client with the patron	
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Source: Shoemaker, C. C., Spanier, J. (1984). *Patron-Client State Relationships. Multilateral Crises in the Nuclear Age*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 17-20

To be sure, the Russian leadership tried to keep its influence in some of the CEECs as well. Diplomatic evidence shows that the Russian leaders undertook diplomatic and political efforts to forge and maintain the ties with the former Warsaw Pact states. Attempts were made especially in Slovakia and Bulgaria. These attempts in the CEECs were not successful, however, as Russia's success in the post-Soviet states, for at least two reasons. First, while Russia was still recovering from the dissolution of the USSR and trying to define its new place and role on the European and global stage, the CEECs managed to build stronger links with the West. These links were strengthened by the virtue of Western openness to accept the CEECs as members of the EU and NATO, and by the political, financial and technical support delivered to their governments and politicians. To the leaders in the CEECs, the Western opportunities and incentives were more enticing in comparison to the Russian offers, especially given Russia's weaker economic and political stance when compared to the West.

Systemic incentives and constraints guiding leaders' foreign policy behavior

What were the specific systemic incentives and constraints that the post-Soviet leaders considered when making foreign policy choices? Following the logic of

consequentiality and its social *threats* or *promises* framework,²⁸⁷ *popularity* and *respect* are two types of incentives that leaders consider when designing policies. If leaders believe that *recognition, legitimacy, or association* with the West (or with Russia) would bring them political capital (ensuring their hold to power), they are expected to exhibit pro-Western foreign policy leanings (or pro-Russia respectively). In terms of constraints, *shaming and shunning* by the West is expected to have an effect on foreign policy behavior. If leaders think that the costs of conforming to the Western rules of liberal democracy and economic liberalism are too costly for their own political and economic interests, and if the West tops these costs with shaming and shunning, thus affecting incumbents' levels of popularity and respect both domestically and internationally, leaders are expected to switch the foreign policy orientation toward Russia and continue to hold onto power domestically.

Not only social threats or promises drive leaders' foreign policy choices, however. *Material* considerations were important as well.²⁸⁸ Promises to receive access to the Single Market for their countries' products, visa-facilitation regimes²⁸⁹ or financial assistance offered by the Western institutions in the form of grants – are among the incentives that have motivated leaders' pro-Western foreign policy orientations. On the other hand,

²⁸⁷ March, J. J., Olsen, J. P. *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 160-161; Schimmelfennig, F. "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and Eastern European States – Conceptual and Theoretical Issues." In Ronald H. Linden eds. *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002, 12-13.

²⁸⁸ Schimmelfennig, F. "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and Eastern European States – Conceptual and Theoretical Issues." In Ronald H. Linden eds. *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002.

²⁸⁹ Ademmer, E. *Russia's Impact on EU Policy Transfer to the Post-Soviet Space. The Contested Neighborhood*. (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 84.

sanctions such as “threats to suspend bilateral agreements, to freeze assistance payments or to impose visa bans”²⁹⁰ might *constrain* a leader to reconsider the foreign policy behavior. At the same time, if an equally attractive alternative to the Western offer is available from Russia – the expectation is that the leader would disregard the Western offer, drop the pro-Western orientation and would go along with the Russian one, exhibiting a pro-Russia foreign policy preferences.²⁹¹

Apart from the opportunities and constraints from the West, political leaders considered the threats and incentives coming from Russia. Regarding constraints, the executives were focused on the security threats that Russia posed to their countries’ sovereignty and territorial integrity. These countries had to build and maintain relations with Moscow in an environment characterized by a series of unsolved problems brought about by the dissolution of the USSR.²⁹² In addition, post-Soviet politicians considered the constraints that the Russian leaders posed to their personal power and economic prospects. Especially after Putin became Russia’s president at the end of the 1990s, Kremlin’s retaliation against post-Soviet leaders meant that domestic power prospects for those leaders were at risk. These executives were all aware that a televised handshake with Putin

²⁹⁰ Ademmer, E. *Russia’s Impact on EU Policy Transfer to the Post-Soviet Space. The Contested Neighborhood*. (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. 84.

²⁹¹ In this regard, the approach that I propose here is similar to the “preferential fit” advanced by Esther Ademmer and Tanja Borzel, who study the effectiveness of EU policy transfer to the EU’s neighborhood countries. See Ademmer, E., Borzel, T. “Migration, Energy and Good Governance in the EU’s Eastern Neighborhood.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, no. 4 (2013). In a more recent study, Ademmer focuses on the ways in which Russia constrains the transfer of EU policies to the shared neighborhood (Georgia and Armenia.) Ademmer, E. *Russia’s Impact on EU Policy Transfer to the Post-Soviet Space. The Contested Neighborhood*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).

²⁹² In the Ukrainian case, these issues were related to delimiting official borders between the two states, finding a solution to the Black Sea fleet, solving the problem of the nuclear arsenal on the Ukrainian territory dating since the Soviet times, as well as sharing the former Soviet assets. In Moldova’s case, issues were mainly related to finding a solution to the separatist, pro-Russia movements in the Eastern and southern parts of the country.

during an electoral campaign could bring them electoral votes and maintain their power position unchallenged at home. At the same time, they feared the negative consequences associated with the obstacles the Kremlin might throw in their ways of pursuing and maintaining power domestically.

Among the incentives offered by Russia were the benefits stemming from the strong economic and trade links among the various industrial and agricultural sectors and the access to the Russian market, where post-Soviet states could sell their products. In addition, these states relied on Russia for their energy supply.

Domestic incentives and constraints

Apart from facing these systemic incentives and constraints, however, political leaders are concerned about domestic conditions as well.²⁹³ Assuming that their main interest is acquiring and maintaining political power and that internal political competition filters the external incentives and constraints, national incumbents evaluate these pressures and opportunities and choose foreign policy alternatives with an eye to maximizing their chances of staying in power.

The influence of domestic factors on the foreign policy making can take the form of political competition between the executive side and the legislative bodies within a government, or the influence exerted by public opinion, interest groups or the media on the decisions of elected political leaders.²⁹⁴ Domestic struggle for political power among political parties and leaders may influence the incumbents' foreign policy choices as well.

²⁹³ Putnam, R. D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42, no. 3 (1988): 427-460.

²⁹⁴ Ripsman, N. M. "Neoclassical Realism and Domestic Interest Groups." In J. W. Taliafero et al. ed. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

As Ripsman acknowledges and as David shows in the *omnibalancing* theory, when leaders fear that they may be defeated in elections or overthrown from power, they are either more “responsive to domestic preferences and may choose riskier security policies in order to secure themselves domestically”²⁹⁵ or they may put self-interests above the security interests of their states.²⁹⁶ Foreign policy change often follows namely because of the dynamics inherent to the domestic political competition. As Hermann points out, “Competing political leaders and their supporters use a foreign policy position to differentiate themselves from opponents. If those out of power succeed, then the foreign policy changes. Alternatively, an existing regime may change its foreign policy to distinguish itself from opponents or to prevent defeat.”²⁹⁷

Building on the *omnibalancing* theory, I focus not on the “threats” to the state, on the threats to “leadership.”²⁹⁸ Political leaders will sometimes protect their political and economic wellbeing “at the expense of the interests of the state.”²⁹⁹ I amend omnibalancing theory by emphasizing that leaders adjust their foreign policy leanings and change their foreign policy orientation not only in reaction to external/internal *threats*; they also consider potential *benefits* and *rewards* that they might receive (and which would ensure their hold to power) because of pursuing a specific foreign policy orientation.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 173.

The diversionary theory of war argues that when leaders fear that they might lose power at home, they are more likely to take risky decisions and initiate a war, in order to increase domestic political support. Levy, J. S. “The Diversionary Theory of War,” in M. Midlarsky, ed., *The Handbook of War Studies* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 259-288. Smith, A. (1996). “Diversionary Foreign Policy in Democratic Systems,” *International Studies Quarterly* 40(1), p. 133-153.

²⁹⁶ David, S. (1991). “Explaining Third World Alignment.”

²⁹⁷ Hermann, C. F. (1990). “Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy” *International Studies Quarterly*, 34(1), p. 5.

²⁹⁸ David, S. (1991). “Explaining Third World Alignment” *World Politics*, 43(2), p. 236.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

How does the interplay between international incentives/constraints and domestic political pressure/competition influence foreign policy behavior? In the absence of a firm membership perspective in the West around which political leaders would converge – they pursued different strategies regarding the East versus West foreign policy question, depending on which orientation they thought would help them most in their goal of acquiring and maintaining political authority. Some leaders adopted consistent pro-East foreign policy orientations. Some vacillated in their foreign policy orientations – and as part of this strategy – to make it feasible to switch orientations – they maintained ambiguity. Why exactly did leaders embrace ambiguous foreign policy options and what were the causes that led to foreign policy vacillation?

The lack of membership prospect in Western political and economic institutions made the domestic political maneuvering of foreign policy orientations an attractive tool for political elites in their relations with external actors. Political leaders were free to advance ambiguous statements concerning their foreign policy preferences: this freedom allowed them to shift toward pro-Western or pro-Eastern orientations whenever they sensed that they could gain or lose political capital from positive or negative inducements from the East or the West. The support and legitimacy that foreign actors could offer to domestic leaders were often crucial for a successful hold onto power home.

The consistent position of the Western political leaders to say “no” to integration aspirations of the post-Soviet states has had important effects on the calculations of domestic political parties as to which integration option to embrace for electoral success. Parties and leaders which adopted an explicit and overt pro-Western integration goal and

which were later confronted with the Western rejection of their integration aspirations lost political capital at home and erosion of public support.³⁰⁰ Their political rivals, who were often promoting an open pro-Russian stance, were using the lack of membership prospect as an argument that pro-Western foreign policy orientation did not have any chance to succeed.³⁰¹ The Western consistent “no” could have been perceived, both home and internationally, as a policy failure, a defeat on the part of the post-Soviet leaders. Therefore, to leave more room for maneuver and avoid suffering consequences for a policy unfulfillment, politicians embraced ambiguity strategically³⁰² when advancing foreign policy orientation options. The vagueness in foreign policy specification (or multi-vectorness³⁰³) played two main roles: 1) it offered flexibility and freedom in terms of altering previous choices that proved unsuitable for the goal of acquiring and maintaining office, while at the same time 2) it offered leaders protection against unwanted political consequences domestically every time the West said “no” to their integration aspirations.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ One of the clearest examples is NATO’s refusal to offer membership to Ukraine and Georgia during the Bucharest NATO Summit in 2008. Both Ukraine’s and Georgia’s presidents, V. Yuschenko and M. Saakashvili, suffered dire political consequences, as NATO’s refusal was portrayed as a policy failure, NATO’s “no” was perceived home as a loss of respect for the leaders at the international level and respectively affected their reputation among domestic political voters.

³⁰¹ Bogdan Tardea blaming the pro-Western political coalition in Moldova for failing to convince the EU to offer a membership perspective statement in the Association Agreement negotiated between the EU and Moldova. *Electoral Debates on Realitatea TV*, October 19, 2016, video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dSLFHTZFdM&feature=youtu.be&a>

³⁰² Here I borrow the term “strategic ambiguity” from the field of organizational communication. Eric M. Eisenberg defines the term as “instances where individuals use ambiguity purposefully to accomplish their goals”. Eisenberg, E. M. “Ambiguity as Strategy in Organizational Communication,” *Communication Monographs*, vol. 51, 1984, p. 230. The “comforts of ambiguity” have been valued in international relations for a long time, with some voices even arguing that “the exercise of power is impossible if political actors are denied the use of ambiguity”, Eisenberg “Ambiguity”, 1984, p. 235, who cites Yoder, 1983.

³⁰³ Former Ukrainian President, L. Kuchma, is known for coining his foreign policy in terms of “multi-vectorness.”

³⁰⁴ When a political leader is ambiguous in his communication (in our case in offering a clear foreign policy orientation), he/she tries to retain multiple possible interpretations should the need arise to protect his/her reputation from a policy failure (a Western refusal to offer membership perspective), Eisenberg “Ambiguity”, 1984.

This choice for ambiguous foreign policy orientations is best captured by one of the famous quotes by Vladimir Voronin, one of Moldova's former presidents, who explaining his strategy of multi-vector foreign policy, put it this way: “A *gentle calf sucks two cows.*”

Table 7. The effect of a presence/lack of membership prospect in Western organizations on the foreign policy behavior of post-Communist states in Europe

Membership prospect in the EU and NATO	No membership prospect in the EU or NATO			
Pro-Western foreign policy orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategically ambiguous (multi-vector) foreign policy orientation - Vacillatory foreign policy behavior: both pro-Russia, as well as pro-Western options remain attractive 			
The EU's passive and active leverage emboldens the proliferation of reform-minded, pro-Western political parties against the reform-resistant, anti-Western ones, political actors adapt their political agendas to correspond to the state's bid for EU membership ³⁰⁵	The pro-Russia option emerges in two cases:		The pro-Western option emerges in two cases:	
	An existing regime is pro-Western, and the challenger picks the pro-Russia alternative to differentiate himself from the incumbent. If the challenger wins elections, the foreign policy vector switches from pro-Western to pro-Russia.	An existing government is pro-Western, but the West puts certain constraints on the incumbent (it conditions future relations and provision of financial aid on the implementation of internal reforms which might be detrimental to the	An existing government is pro-Russia, and the challenger picks the pro-Western alternative, to differentiate himself from the incumbent. As in the previous case, if the challenger is successful in elections, the foreign policy	An existing government is pro-Russia but Moscow puts constraints on the incumbent's domestic rule (it presses with certain domestic reforms, which do not fit with the incumbent's preferences, because the intended reforms are highly criticized by

³⁰⁵ Vachudova shows at length how EU's conditionality allowed for the strengthening of liberal forces against the illiberal ones. Scholars show that even among the CEECs, which were credible future EU members, governments in Slovakia or Bulgaria adopted at times inconsistent, anti-Western, pro-Russia foreign policies. However, it was namely the exposition to “EU's active leverage” which forced domestic political actors to adapt their political agendas to the pro-Western foreign policy vector. Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*; Vachudova, M. A. “The European Union. The Causal Behemoth of Transnational Influence on Post-Communist Politics,” 29.

		<p>incumbent's hold to power; it criticizes the incumbent for undemocratic reforms or political acts domestically, therefore damaging his popularity and legitimacy in the eyes of domestic constituencies and the eyes of international actors; the Western leaders offer endorsements to the domestic political opposition) and the Russian side offers incentives which could be used to downplay the constraints from the West, the incumbent decides to switch the pro-Western orientation with the pro-Russian one</p>	<p>orientation changes from pro-Russian to pro-Western</p>	<p>the domestic challengers, public opinion, and the Western community; it withdraws political support from the incumbent and instead endorses domestic challengers; it disciplines the incumbent for pursuing policies which do not correspond to Moscow's preferences by imposing economic sanctions on the country or increasing the prices for the imported oil/gas) and the utility from Western incentives exceeds the costs the incumbent has to bear by implementing the Western requested changes, the incumbent switches from the pro-Russian to the pro-Western alternative.</p>
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Strategically adopting ambiguous foreign policy options allowed leaders to switch between Russia and the West depending on which pole they thought will do the most to

help them retain political authority, gain electoral success or help maintain their states' sovereignty and territorial integrity in the international system.

Post-Soviet leaders switched between the two power poles and often chose the strategy of playing Russia and the West off one another for several reasons. First, this strategy allowed them to increase their negotiating power with the two poles and increase the financial and or political benefits they could get from each side. Showing that they had another option they could turn to offered them more leeway in negotiations, increasing their bargaining power. Second, political actors sought to gain political capital in the domestic realm. By adopting an ambiguous foreign policy stance, politicians could attract voters from a wider political spectrum, while at the same time benefiting from Russia's or EU's electoral endorsements. Politicians use foreign policy positions as means to differentiate themselves from domestic opponents.³⁰⁶ In electoral campaigns, parties and their leaders purposefully and strategically adopt foreign policy orientations to distinguish from their competitors. Political candidates in the post-Soviet states use the endorsements from Russian or Western leaders to their electoral advantage, aiming to convince voters that their foreign policy integration offer would be the best one for ensuring economic and political development at home. As the empirical chapters show, during electoral campaigns, voters in the post-Soviet states were often employing cognitive "heuristics"³⁰⁷

³⁰⁶ Hermann, C. F. "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy" *International Studies Quarterly*, 34, no. 1 (1990).

³⁰⁷ I use here the definition offered by Lau and Redlawsk, who define "heuristics" as "cognitive shortcuts", problem-solving strategies, oftentimes employed by voters automatically and unconsciously, in order to facilitate the act of processing information during the vote decision act". Lau, R. R., Redlawsk, D. P., "Advantages and Disadvantages of Cognitive Heuristics in Political Decision Making," *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2001, p. 952.

to categorize parties as pro-Western or as pro-Russia.³⁰⁸ Their final voting choice was oftentimes determined by whether the candidates promoted pro-Russia or pro-Western policies.

Lack of commitment to EU conditionality

The Western reluctance to embrace the post-Soviet states' integration aspirations the lack of accession opportunity in the EU meant that there was no binding on the part of the local political leaders to engage in necessary political and institutional reforms associated with *acquis* adoption and EU conditionality. If in the CEEC's and the Baltics' case, the anticipation of EU and NATO membership altered the relative expectations of elites and masses by providing a strong impetus to implement reforms,³⁰⁹ the lack of this prospect for the post-Soviet states made EU conditionality less efficient.

Frank Schimmelfennig and Hanno Scholtz, studying the role of EU political conditionality on the democratization efforts in Europe point out that “adopting liberal political norms (such as human rights, democratic elections, open contestation for office and the rule of law) constitutes a loss of autonomy for the target governments. These political costs need to be balanced in kind by tangible incentives such as military protection or economic assistance to improve the security and the welfare of the state.”³¹⁰ They conclude that, “Only the highest international rewards – those associated with EU membership – can be expected to balance substantial domestic power costs.”³¹¹ In the

³⁰⁸ Tanase, Alexandru. Interview by Valentina Ursu, *Radio Free Europe, Moldovan Service*, October 19, 2016, <http://www.europalibera.org/a/28063728.html>

³⁰⁹ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided*, 2005; Kopstein and Reilly, *Geographic Diffusion*, 2000; Jacoby, W. *The Enlargement of the European Union and NATO. Ordering from the Menu in Central Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

³¹⁰ Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. “EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighborhood.” (2008), 190.

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 191.

absence of a credible EU membership prospect, the EU's "sticks," even when used, did not yield the expected results on internal democratic reforms, and by extension, on bringing about a consistent, pro-Western foreign policy choice. The incentives from the West were not high enough to balance the domestic power costs and even if the national leaders refuse to comply with the recommended reforms, the EU "does not inflict extra-punishment ... Nor does it give extra support to those that fail to meet the conditions."³¹²

The delay and hesitation of the West to accommodate post-Soviet states' requests for integration played to the advantage of those forces domestically that were against democratic and economic reforms, it made room for opportunistic interests to gain power in these countries, for corruption and cronyism to flourish and for oligarchic groups to become influential decision makers.

The more the post-Soviet states were being rigged with corruption, the less the West was willing to institutionalize its relations with them.

The rest of the chapter presents the methods and data sources used in this dissertation.

Methodology

This dissertation analyzes the dynamics of foreign policy behavior of the post-Communist countries of Europe in the period from 1991 to 2014. It is designed in the form of a comparative case study: it compares the post-Communist states and their foreign policy choices since the fall of the Iron Curtain, and analyzes how the systemic constraints and

³¹² Ibid., 190.

incentives faced by these states influenced their leaders' foreign policy choices and decision-making processes. It compares the trajectories followed by the post-Communist states with had a credible membership prospect, with the ones that did not have such a prospect. It focuses on the actions of the domestic political leaders, the ones who define "the national interests" and design foreign policy based upon their calculations of relative power and other states' intentions.³¹³ Also, it tracks the actions and intentions of the international leaders, vested in Moscow or Western capitals, toward the countries geographically located between the two power poles.

Taking advantage of the diachronic and cross-spatial nature of my design, the comparative method allows me to map differences and similarities across the post-Communist countries regarding foreign policy choices. It also allows me to record changes across time within the same country in a meticulous way, by focusing on switches in foreign policy behavior of the same political actors, as well as to identify the conditions under which different political actors in the same state advance alternative foreign policy stances. Finally, in virtue of the geographical location of the countries under scrutiny, the comparative method allows me to study the differences in intentions and actions of the West and of Russia toward the post-Communist countries in the period from 1991 to 2014. Therefore, in terms of focused, structured comparison requirements,³¹⁴ the comparative method allows me to conduct a detailed examination of the foreign policy behavior of decision-makers across states, across political actors within a given state within a given

³¹³ Lobell, S. E., Ripsman, N. M., Taliaferro, J. W. *Neoclassical Realism, the State and Foreign Policy*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 25-26.

³¹⁴ George, A. L., Bennett, A. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

time, and across time in the same state. The comparative method is also useful in the examination of how the workings of external actors influence the decisions of domestic political actors.

Data Sources

This study relies on empirical evidence gathered during field-research work in Moldova (February-April, 2015) and Ukraine (July-September, 2015). The fieldwork research activities included conducting interviews with former Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, policy makers, and diplomats in both Kiev and Chisinau. In addition, data was gathered from archival research in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as from the archives of the Parliament in Moldova. In Moldova, the archival data gathered starts with the year 1991 until 2003, in Ukraine – the data acquired is from 1991 until 2006. More than 80,000 pages of diplomatic documents were consulted, out of which more than 20,000 were carefully read and translated.³¹⁵

In addition to primary sources, I rely on secondary data sources: academic literature on the cases under review reports from various international organizations, as well as articles from analytical news sites and newspapers in the CEECs and the post-Soviet states.

The next three chapters delve into empirical analysis, with most of the archival- and interview-based evidence presented to support the argument. Chapter 3 presents the cases of the CEECs and the Baltic States. It discusses the external environment

³¹⁵ Most of the documents were in Ukrainian, but some of them were in Russian, French and English.

that these states faced once freed from Communism and explains how external conditions influenced the cost-benefit calculations of domestic elites, eventually influencing their consistent pro-Western foreign policy orientation. Chapters 4 and five present the cases of Ukraine and Moldova, the countries that vacillated between East and West the most in their foreign policy behavior.

Chapter 3. The Baltic and the Central Eastern European States: Consistent Pro-Western Foreign Policy Crowned by Integration into NATO and the EU

“Let the friends come from the West and stability from the East”

Valdis Birkavs, Former Foreign Minister of Latvia

Introduction

Why did Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia¹ and the three Baltic countries follow a consistent, pro-Western orientation and fifteen years after the fall of Communism and find themselves “comfortably nested” within the EU and NATO by 2004? Their consistent pro-Western foreign policy orientation can be explained by the international conditions that these states faced following the revolutions over Communism. The prospect of membership in Western economic and security institutions (EU and NATO) for the CEECs and the Baltic States accounts for the pro-Western foreign policy paths followed by the countries of east Central Europe and the Baltics.

What is the exact causal mechanism accounting for this foreign policy outcome? As argued in chapter 2, the presence of a credible prospect of membership in the EU and NATO had a significant impact on the consolidation of domestic political forces around the goal of EU and NATO integration in the CEECs and the Baltic States. The commitment of the West to take the CEECs and the Baltic countries on board in the Western club facilitated the formation of a political consensus on the political and economic reforms to comply with the Western accession criteria.

¹ Throughout this chapter, I will use the Central and Eastern European States (CEECs) label when referring to these six countries.

Once the CEECs made the choice of integrating with the West and crucially, as soon as the West approved of this choice (by acknowledging their eligibility for membership), the pro-Western foreign policy vector was locked in by engaging the CEECs in the political, economic and institutional transformations required for Western compliance. It is important to point out that even after the West committed to accept them, some of the CEECs, (chief among them Slovakia), flirted with Moscow and intensified intergovernmental political and economic contacts with Russia. Previous research shows,² however, that the EU's leverage and conditionality played a crucial role in the electoral defeat of illiberal and reform-resistant elites and substituting them with pro-Western, reform-minded politicians, which undertook the task of taking the countries to the EU and NATO. Even if in some cases, (Romania and Croatia), the reform-resistant elites returned to power in subsequent elections, the "Zeitgeist" of Western integration had already engulfed the CEECs, EU and NATO membership becoming the only policy pursued by successive governments, being reinforced by the sweeping political, economic and institutional reforms associated with the pre-accession period.

To be sure, in some of the CEECs, political fragmentation about foreign policy was present (Romania, Slovakia), however the commitment of the West toward them singled them out as being under the "care" and "protection" of the West, encouraging reforms and strengthening links with Euro-Atlantic institutions.

We must be careful to avoid falling into a deterministic trap³ by granting too much weight to the effect of the EU application process on the political and economic trajectories of the post-Communist states in Europe: Not all of the CEECs had a uniform progress toward implementing

² Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³ Grabbe, H. *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization Through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, p. 101.

the EU requested reforms and norms even after the prospect of membership was offered to them.⁴ Nevertheless, the absence or presence of a prospect of EU membership was crucial for the foreign policy choices the post-Communist states made following the fall of Communism.

Initial conditions and time matter – the contacts and links that the post-Communist states forged with the West in the first years following their independence and the attitudes that the West exhibited to these states’ prospective NATO and EU accession, influenced the foreign policy path that these states followed. In the Polish, Hungarian, Czech, Romanian, and the Baltics’ cases – the Western commitment came early on after the revolutions over Communism. This early commitment from the West helped lock-in the pro-Western foreign policy orientation, which after being adopted by the first post-1989 governments, was difficult to be reversed, namely because the West signaled that it is willing to commit to accepting these states within its organizations. Another important temporal aspect is that the Western commitment to the CEECs and the Baltic States was made when Russia was still recovering from the dissolution of the USSR, with weaker power capabilities when compared to the Western powers, trying to define and find its new place on the European and global stage. Up until around 1996, there was a debate among the Russian elites on whether Russia itself should seek membership in the Western institutions or whether Russia should remain the anti-pole of the Western culture and civilization.

The Western recognition of the new reform-minded governments in the CEECs “as equal partners and the promise of rapid integration into Western international institutions” – provided legitimacy to the domestic political actors “by enhancing credibility vis-à-vis their own societies.”⁵

⁴ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Grabbe, H. *The EU’s Transformative Power. Europeanization Through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006

⁵ Batt, J. “The International Dimension of Democratization in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.” In *Building Democracy? The International Dimension of Democratization in Eastern Europe*, ed. Geoffrey Pridham, Eric Herring, and George Sanford (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), p. 161-162.

In addition, “being accepted as having a ‘European’ identity” and being treated by major European states as ‘fellow Europeans’, boosted self-respect and confidence on the part of the people ... that they would not be abandoned by the West.”⁶ Moreover, the fact that the West committed to the inclusion of these countries within its security and economic institutions proved crucial for the consolidation of domestic political forces inside CEECs’, helped them in their choice of institutions and in their internal negotiations over the course of their states’ development.⁷

Previous research shows that EU membership was “the highest form of social recognition”, (as well as the “highest material incentive”)⁸ to determine domestic political elites in the CEECs to mobilize and undertake democratic and economic reforms⁹, reforms which once undertaken, sealed their orientation toward the West and away from Russia. Holding out the “credible promise of membership” to the CEECs – encouraged the political elites in these countries to choose policies intended to bring them closer to the West. The fact that the EU signaled to the post-Communist states that they were regarded as credible future members of the organization provided their political elites a meaningful foreign policy goal.

The empirical evidence from this chapter shows that the signs of recognition and welcoming within the Western club came both in formal, written ways, as well as in many informal and symbolic forms. As the Table below shows, the first formal sign through which the West showed commitment to the CEECs’ membership prospect was the recognition of the fact that the CEECs’ “ultimate objective” was to become members of the European Union, clause included in

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Grabbe, H. *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, p. 102.

⁸ Julia Gray, for example, shows how the prospect of EU membership and the process of accession to the organization sent strong signals to financial markets about the candidate countries’ success in policy reforms, making them attractive to foreign direct investment. Julia Gray. 2009. “International Organization as a Seal of Approval: European Union Accession and Investor Risk.” *American Journal of Political Science* 53(4), 931-949.

⁹ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003, p. 501.

the preamble of the Europe Agreements signed between the EU and the CEECs in the 1991 – 1995 periods. The next official step toward bringing the CEECs closer to the West was the EU’s offer of a membership prospect during the EU Summit in Copenhagen in 1993 and finally, the third official sign, which swung the EU doors open for the CEECs, was the start of accession negotiations with several of them in 1997. The informal and symbolic signs of support from the West came in the form of guidelines and encouragement on the continuation of political and economic reforms, accompanied by significant financial and technical support for the reform process, as well as with solid political and diplomatic backing in negotiations with Russia, especially in the case of the Baltic States.

Table 8: Forms of Western Support toward the CEECs in the pre-accession period

Official/Written forms of support	Symbolic Forms of Support
Acknowledging the CEEC’s “ultimate objective” of EU membership in the Preamble of the Europe Agreements Offering the Membership Prospect following the Copenhagen Summit Starting Membership Negotiations	Continuous high level diplomatic contacts Guidelines on implementing reforms accompanied by financial and technical support Political and diplomatic support in negotiations with Russia

As the diplomatic archival documents suggest, leaders in the Western political circles were preoccupied with the question of “geography” and borderlines and of “who is in and who is out” in terms of Western integration prospects among the post-Communist states. Some of the Western diplomats publicly acknowledged that the former Soviet states, like Ukraine or Moldova, were geographically unfit for membership. Romano Prodi, then European Commission President,

discussed in a 2002 interview the future of EU enlargement and declared, “Where does Europe end? The Balkan countries will join, they belong. Turkey is officially a candidate, that is clear. But Morocco or Ukraine or Moldova? I see no reason for that” adding that “The fact Ukrainians or Armenians feel European means nothing to me. Because New Zealanders feel European too.”¹⁰ The question of “geographic eligibility” for “the EU’s pre-accession process ... was never in doubt” however, for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.¹¹ Whereas there was an initial degree of hesitation as to where the Baltics belonged, the EU signed Europe Agreements with them in 1995 and included them in the list of credible future EU members.

The fact that the West drew a line marking the boundary of the eastward enlargement project increased the gap between the credible EU candidates and the countries deemed unfit for membership and put them on divergent paths, especially in terms of foreign policy making. The credible prospect of membership in the West helped the CEECs leaders define internal and foreign policy goals,¹² “steer[ing] domestic dynamics [...] in the direction of compliance with the EU criteria”¹³ and mobilizing political elites to undertake institutional and economic reforms,¹⁴ with an extra-effect of this mobilization being the adoption and preservation of a consistent, pro-Western foreign policy orientation.

¹⁰ Reuters. “Prodi says Ukraine, Russia should not join EU.” November 28, 2002. Retrieved from <http://www.timesofmalta.com/articles/view/20021128/local/prodi-says-ukraine-russia-should-not-join-eu.161837>

¹¹ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 65.

¹² Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Moravcsik, A., Vachudova, M. A. “Preferences, Power and Equilibrium. The causes and Consequences of EU Enlargement.” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹³ Bechev, D., Nicolaidis, K. “Integration Without Accession: the EU’s Special Relationship with the Countries in its Neighborhood.” *European Parliament*, Directorate-General Internal Policies, 2007, p. 10.

¹⁴ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003.

In the absence of a “golden carrot” of membership for the rest of the post-Soviet hopefuls, however, the incentives to undertake political and economic transformations was weaker and crucially, the impetus to maintain a consistent pro-Western foreign policy in the absence of a credible Western prospect for membership dissipated as well.

This chapter proceeds as follows: it starts with analyzing the internal political situation in the CEECs and the Baltic States. What motivated domestic political leaders to adopt and maintain a pro-Western foreign policy orientation and how did the domestic political actors in the CEECs react to the fluid international context of those early years following the Communist revolutions? The subsequent section of the chapter deals with the relationship the CEECs forged with the West during the pre-accession period. How did the EU and the US respond to calls for eastward enlargement? Finally, the last section discusses the ways in which sore spots in relations with Russia were handled, with a focus on the critical role the West played in mitigating those relations.

Internal Situation

During the first years after independence, facing the changing geopolitical realities on the European continent, the Central and Eastern European states showed their concern with respect to the security vacuum in which they found themselves in, following the end of the Warsaw Pact, and NATO extending to comprise only the German borders and not the other CEECs.¹⁵ Some CEECs were quick in choosing their pro-Western foreign policy alignment. Poland, for example, adopted a “multidirectional policy,” focused toward the West, Russia and its eastern neighbors,

¹⁵ Information on the Meeting of the Representatives of the Departments of Planning Foreign Policy from Europe and North America (US, Canada, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Romania, USSR, Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Republic, European Community), March 22 – 24, 1991. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Accessed July 22, 2015.

only throughout its first year of independence.¹⁶ Others, chief among them – Slovakia under Vladimir Meciar’s rule, led a dual foreign policy for several years after independence, flirting with Moscow,¹⁷ being excluded from NATO’s first eastward enlargement wave and risking to miss the EU membership. Nevertheless, all of the CEECs managed to join NATO and the EU by the mid-2000s.

Archival diplomatic documents suggest that the efforts of the post-Communist states to join NATO were driven by two factors: 1) domestic political concerns of consolidating the internal political processes and of giving a direction and a purpose to the political projects advanced by the new democratic elites, and 2) perceived threat from Russia.

The Polish Ambassador to the US was telling his Ukrainian counterpart back in 1994 that “Poland sees NATO not as a purely defense/military organization from the times of the Cold War, directed against a potential adversary,” but rather as a political step, “which would insure internal stability in the country.”¹⁸ A similar view was shared by the Head of the NATO Department within the Hungarian Ministry of Defense. Speaking about the lack of preparedness of the Hungarian army to join NATO and the lack of financial resources to update the army according to NATO standards, the Hungarian official said that Hungary’s NATO membership “is a political rather than a military step.” He added, “[I]f Hungarians were to implement all the conditions required to achieve NATO standards [...] Hungary would not join the Alliance even in 50 years.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Kaminska, J. *Poland and EU Enlargement. Foreign Policy in Transformation*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2014, p. 203.

¹⁷ Kopstein and Reilly, *Geographic Diffusion*, 2000.

¹⁸ Records of Discussion between Y. Scherbak, the Ukrainian Ambassador to the US, with the Polish Ambassador in the US, Jerzy Kozminski, December 8 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 4, 2015.

The Polish diplomat believed that Russia perceived NATO as a military alliance; this is why this vision “prevents Moscow to perceive Poland’s accession to the EU in a calm way.”

¹⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Hungary on the “Brown-Simon Amendment”, January 18 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 4, 2015.

Given the fluidity of the international environment and the domestic political and economic challenges faced by the post-Communist states during the first decade after the fall of Communism – the CEECs’ steady and determined pro-Western foreign policy orientation is a remarkable achievement. Indeed, previous research pointed out that in the Polish case, for example, maintaining a consistent pro-Western path was neither an easy nor a simple process.²⁰ In the first decade after the fall of Communism, there were four parliamentary elections (two of these elections being organized after premature dissolution of the Parliament), and the country was governed by three different presidents, eight Prime Ministers and five Foreign Ministers.²¹

Several conditions paved the way for the CEECs’ alignment and conclusive establishment of pro-Western foreign policy orientation. For Poland, one of the critical factors in 1990 was its normalization of relations with Germany.²² Bonn was holding “the key to Poland’s broader agenda of rejoining Europe.”²³ Germany’s security interest was to avoid becoming the frontline state bordering a potentially unstable East and German leaders aimed to “project stability eastwards”, Poland being “the most important” Central and Eastern European country to be included in the Western eastward enlargement.²⁴ The fact that in the West a consensus, albeit slowly, but nevertheless was forming, to keep the doors open to include Poland within the Western economic and security institutions, provided the necessary condition to band political forces to the pro-Western foreign policy orientation.

In addition, the perceived threat coming from Moscow determined Poland, Hungary, and the then-Czechoslovakia to intensify their regional cooperation and unify their efforts to join the

²⁰ Meiklejohn Terry S. “Poland’s foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, 7-47.

²¹ Meiklejohn Terry S. “Poland’s foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, 7-47.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

West. The Soviet assertive reaction in Lithuania in the winter of 1991 and the “truculent” negotiation styles of the Russians on questions related to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Hungarian, Polish and Czech territories and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact alliance – were all signs of concern to the three Central European capitals.²⁵ Coalescing around the common goal of avoiding being left in a “gray zone” or in a “security vacuum”, determined Polish, Hungarian and Czech leaders to intensify their joint efforts to join the West.

When after the 1993 Polish parliamentary elections, the left-wing, post-Communist forces emerged as victors, defeating the authors of the democratic transformations from 1989, the Western leaders were concerned about the future development of the internal political situation in Poland. Taking into account that “the power was held by people whose mentality was linked to Russia,”²⁶ Western politicians expected that Poland’s relations with the West would suffer. Indeed, following the parliamentary elections from 1993, the new Coalition government was formed “of two parties from the Communist past”: the Democratic Left Alliance (which was a successor to the former Communist Party) and the Peasants’ Party.²⁷ Leaders of the two coalition parties declared that while they planned to continue the market economy reforms initiated by previous governments, their plan was to undertake the reforms at a slower pace.²⁸ Once appointed Prime Minister of Poland, Waldemar Pawlak, the leader of the Peasants’ Party (representing farmers, which disapproved of subsidized food products entering Poland from the EU²⁹), took actions to undermine the pro-EU initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed by Andrzej

²⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁶ Polish Foreign Policy in 1994 viewed by the Ministry of Foreign Policy of Ukraine. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

²⁷ Perlez, J. “Ex-Communist Picked to Be Polish Premier.” *New York Times*, February 8, 1995. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/02/08/world/ex-communist-picked-to-be-polish-premier.html>

²⁸ Perlez, J. “Leftist Leader Is Named Prime Minister of Poland.” *New York Times*, October 15, 1993. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/15/world/leftist-leader-is-named-prime-minister-of-poland.html>

²⁹ Ibid.

Olechowski.³⁰ Pawlak was trying to make independent deals with Moscow in order to “restart Soviet-style barter trade of Russian oil and gas for Polish farm products.”³¹ In addition, the coalition parties were in favor of pro-Russia policies, advancing a proposal to create “a permanent Berlin-Warsaw-Moscow consultative group” – which if created, would have offered Moscow some influence in the Polish-German relationship.³² By the end of 1994 – Prime Minister Pawlak and Foreign Minister Olechowski were in an open confrontation over issues related to the coordination of the Polish foreign policy.³³ In early 1995, the Foreign Minister resigned in protest, and the Prime Minister was ousted,³⁴ being primarily blamed for slow progress on implementing economic reforms and for increased corruption within his Cabinet.³⁵ Even though Moscow hoped it could use the internal divisions within the Polish political establishment “to diminish Poland’s credibility in Brussels” and prevent it from joining NATO,³⁶ Poland managed to maintain continuity in its pro-Western foreign policy orientation.³⁷ As this chapter argues, the fact that the West had already elevated the CEECs to “the anterooms of the EU”³⁸ (by 1993) and NATO (by 1996) and by 1997, these countries “moved to the threshold of Europe,”³⁹ (when the EU extended the invitation to start accession negotiations), made it easier for the domestic political forces, which

³⁰ Meiklejohn Terry S. “Poland’s foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, 7-47.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Perlez, J. “Ex-Communist Picked to Be Polish Premier.” *New York Times*, February 8, 1995. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/02/08/world/ex-communist-picked-to-be-polish-premier.html>

³⁶ Meiklejohn Terry S. “Poland’s foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, p. 29.

³⁷ Polish Foreign Policy in 1994 viewed by the Ministry of Foreign Policy of Ukraine. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

³⁸ Meiklejohn Terry S. “Poland’s foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, 7-47.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

avored market economic reforms and pro-Western integration policies to dominate and win the internal debates over economic and foreign policy choices.

The key point is that even in the CEECs there was no immediate political consensus on the pro-Western foreign policy direction. There were both pro-Russia, as well as pro-EU forces in the initial years following the anti-Communist revolutions and in the absence of the offer of membership from the West, these countries might have remained divided and or vacillating. However, because the West gave that prospect, this enabled the pro-western forces to come out on top and for that to become the dominant consensus.

Previous research points out that the implementation of effective domestic reforms in the CEECs was dependent on how contested the goal of EU membership was among domestic political and economic elites.⁴⁰ The fact that “[n]early all political parties represented in the parliaments of the candidate countries were in favor of joining [the EU], with only fringe parties opposed,”⁴¹ reduced political deliberations as to whether the countries should orient toward the East or the West. The EU’s favorable position with respect to the inclusion of the CEECs within its own ranks and the expectation of economic benefits resulting from membership facilitated the endorsement of joining the EU by the domestic political parties. With a membership prospect for their countries on the table and with public opinion in favor of EU membership, adopting the goal of joining the West by political parties in the CEECs was a natural choice.

In Hungary, the debate about joining the EU focused mainly on questions related to the material benefits to be acquired in the accession negotiations and “European integration did not become a primary point of reference for party differentiation.”⁴² In Bulgaria, following the

⁴⁰ Grabbe, H. *The EU’s Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, p. 101.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 109.

financial crisis and the corruption scandals from 1996,⁴³ when after protests and public demonstrations the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which dominated the government from 1989 until 1997, agreed to early elections, the debate about Europe focused on which party could bring Bulgaria into the EU the fastest⁴⁴ rather than whether or not to join the organization.

In contrast, as discussed in chapters 4 & 5, Ukraine and Moldova – the post-Soviet states that were interested in EU membership but lacked a credible prospect of membership – experienced salient internal debates among their political parties over whether to follow a pro-Western or pro-Eastern foreign policy orientation.

One way in which the clear EU membership prospect facilitated the alignment of domestic political parties in the CEECs on a pro-Western integration orientation was that this prospect came with concrete criteria that a country had to fulfill in order to be deemed ready for membership. Polish diplomats told their Ukrainian counterparts back in 1994 that the sooner the West specified the criteria under which the former Warsaw Pact members could join NATO and the EU – the better for their domestic governments.⁴⁵ Domestic policy makers “would have clear guidelines on the requirements which need to be met” in order to be accepted in the Western club.⁴⁶

Domestic political leaders in the CEECs acknowledged the crucial role the Western membership prospect played for their countries’ success in conducting market economic reforms and in anchoring them to the Western economic and security institutions. The then-Czech Prime

⁴³ Shortages of bread, a banking crisis, the collapse of the currency and revelations about government members’ connections with organized crime groups were among the main factors which brought the population on the streets. *Ibid.*, p. 109-110.

⁴⁴ Todorov, A. “The Role of Political Parties in the Bulgaria’s Accession to the EU.” *Center for the Study of Democracy*. 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.csd.bg/artShow.php?id=12844>
Grabbe, H. *The EU’s Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006.

⁴⁵ Records of Discussion between the Advisor to the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia with the First Secretary of the Polish Embassy in Russia, Mechislav Chudec, July 7, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 31, 2015.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Minister, Vaclav Klaus declared that the success-formula for his country's progress in conducting reforms and joining the West was "Identifying a strategic goal, such as joining the European economic structures, and very importantly – the willingness of these European structures to accept new members."⁴⁷

The fact that by 1995, all three Baltic States received "a clear prospect" for their eventual integration in the EU, and by 1998, a clearer prospect for NATO integration, shifted these countries' attention from concerns over being left out of the Western integration processes to efforts directed at consolidating their democracies and economies.⁴⁸ As the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, Mark Grossman, was pointing out back in 1998, instead of spending time and resources on seeking diplomatic support in Western capitals to be accepted in the Western club, the domestic leaders in these states focused on transforming their countries into "the strongest possible candidates" for future integration into the EU and NATO.⁴⁹

Indeed, Latvia, for example, launched an aggressive effort to do its "homework" properly: the government's National Program for EU integration set strict deadlines for implementing the necessary reforms required for complying with the Copenhagen criteria.⁵⁰ The Latvian government's self-imposed deadline to finalize this program was the year 2002. In addition, it coordinated its actions with the United States in order to solve one of the lingering challenges to potential Western membership: securing its eastern border with Russia. The Ukrainian diplomats

⁴⁷ Information on the Round Table "Current situation of transformations in the CEE states and their shift to market economy." May 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁴⁸ Statement by Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, "U.S. Policy Toward Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania." European Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 15, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Latvia's Foreign Policy, February 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

report that the US agreed to pay more than \$100 million to support Latvia in solving the border issues with its eastern neighbors.⁵¹

The European Commission, while on the one hand was praising the “farsightedness” and the “courage” of the CEECs in taking the decision “to follow difficult path and build open societies, modern democracies and functioning market economies,” at the same time, acknowledged that the CEEC’s reform process “undoubtedly [...] was helped and encouraged by the prospect of European integration.”⁵² This membership prospect offered “the direction of political and economic reforms” and provided the “determination” to domestic political elites to undertake the reforms in order to make their countries’ fulfill the Copenhagen accession criteria.⁵³

In addition to the expectation of a credible membership prospect in the West, incumbent political parties in the CEECs reasoned that the economic and financial benefits resulting from an alignment with the West were vital for the economic progress and political survival of their countries. The Polish leaders considered “stable economic development” as the main guarantee for “independent statehood.”⁵⁴ The Polish leaders reasoned that an economically weakened Russia would not be able to support Poland in its goal of economic progress, whereas a growing European and American economy would.⁵⁵

Security considerations and fears over the intentions of the Eastern neighbor played into the calculations of the domestic actors as well. The fact that “revanchist” and “chauvinist” political forces emerged as victors in the Russian Duma following the 1994 elections, strengthened the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Strategy Paper: Regular Reports from the Commission on Progress towards Accession by each of the Candidate Countries. November 8, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Polish Foreign Policy in 1994 viewed by the Ministry of Foreign Policy of Ukraine. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Polish leaders' beliefs that only Poland's integration in the West would guarantee the state's political independence.⁵⁶ The then-Polish Prime Minister, Josef Oleksy, pointed out during a speech at a meeting with the Western European Union's Council, that "the ultimate success of the program of reforms [in Poland] will also to a large extent depend on external conditions. We need confidence that no external powers will disturb us in the process, that nothing can imperil our sovereignty and independence."⁵⁷

Security concerns over Russia's role and intentions in the region banded political circles in the Baltic countries around the Western integration option as well. Due to the Eurosceptic mood in Lithuania, political parties emphasized the security issues as the main theme around which debates on Western integration were framed.⁵⁸ Deciding in January 1994 that joining NATO – was the only guarantee of national security, the Lithuanian politicians managed to bring clarity in the foreign policy orientation of the country.⁵⁹ In 1995, Latvia adopted its Foreign Policy Concept and similarly to Lithuania, framed integration with the West in terms of security and state survival goals. "Joining the EU is essential to the likelihood of the survival of the Latvian people and the preservation of the Latvian state," the Concept noted and it further pointed out that "Within the context of the crisis in Chechnya, the conviction that Russia could become a democratic country in the near future, diminishes."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ The Polish Prime Minister further pointed out that "[...] our historical experience, and the fact that during the last two centuries, we enjoyed only 20 years of genuine independent statehood without alien forces on our territory, makes us particularly attentive observers of all developments around us." Address by Josef Oleksy, Prime Minister of Poland, at the Meeting with the Council of the WEU, Brussels, April 5 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 7, 2015.

⁵⁸ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

⁵⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

⁶⁰ Basic Directions of the Latvian Foreign Policy to the year 2005; February 27 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

As suggested by archival diplomatic records and previous research,⁶¹ by mid-1990s, the slow progress in the EU's policy toward the eastward enlargement frustrated the domestic political elites in the CEECs.⁶² They were concerned that the slow decision-making process in the West on NATO and EU eastward enlargement would affect the domestic developments, emboldening the anti-reform and anti-Western forces to consolidate their powers. The Poles especially were embittered with what they called "the paralysis of Western policy towards Central and Eastern Europe," which they explained as "disagreement over the role and place of Russia in world and European politics", further claiming that the West tended to "side" with Russia's elites rather than prioritize on the interests of the CEECs.⁶³ The Central and Eastern Europeans were worried that "the lack of basic decisions by the West [was] having an adverse influence on the internal situation of the Central European countries."⁶⁴ The belief was that the success in "the development of [domestic] democratic political institutions" was critically determined by "external impulses and support."⁶⁵ The underlying concern was that a weak and ambiguous external support "could be detrimental and in some cases, a threat, to democracy and the market." Tensions were especially heightened because of changes in the political distribution of forces domestically: with the exception of the Czech Republic, the Central and Eastern European states were witnessing a comeback of the former Communist parties. Whereas in Poland and Hungary, the post-Communist elites continued the foreign policy programs designed by their predecessors (non-communist governments), in other states, like in Bulgaria, the reformed Communist elites questioned the pro-

⁶¹ Meiklejohn Terry S. "Poland's foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, p. 35.

⁶² Meiklejohn Terry S. "Poland's foreign policy since 1989: the Challenges of Independence." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 33, 2000, p. 35.

⁶³ Ananicz, A. et al. "Poland-NATO Report." Institute of Public Affairs, 1995, p. 20. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 31.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Western foreign and security policy designed by the previous governments. “External support” and “internal effort” – were deemed essential conditions for maintaining the pro-Western foreign policy course in the CEEC’s post-Communist transition phase.⁶⁶

The case of Slovakia

The Slovak case provides an important illustration of the fact that were it not for the membership prospect in the EU and in NATO, a CEEC state might have followed the same oscillatory foreign policy path characteristic of Ukraine or Moldova. Slovakia represents the only case among the CEECs whose foreign policy was characterized by an East-West vacillation in the pre-accession years. Slovakia stands out also because the EU applied its leverage on the Slovak domestic elites “very directly and deliberately to change their policies and to dislodge them from power,”⁶⁷ helping Slovakia join the EU and NATO.

Following the 1994 elections, Vladimír Mečiar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) formed a governing coalition with the Slovak National Party (SNS) and the Association of the Workers of Slovakia (ZRS).⁶⁸ The coalition’s rule was characterized by authoritarianism, with opposition parties being suppressed, media freedom inhibited and ethnic minorities discriminated against.⁶⁹ In his drive to uphold power, Mečiar used authoritarian tactics to suppress the powers of the Parliament and of the President. In addition, the two parties Mečiar aligned with to form his coalition government, the SNS and the ZRS, “were staunchly anti-Western and favored neutralism and close collaboration with Russia.”⁷⁰ Slovakia’s foreign policy under Vladimír

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*, p. 170.

⁶⁸ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 502-503.

⁷⁰ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003, p. 504.

Mečiar resembled the policies promoted by Ukrainian and Moldovan politicians. Mečiar and his cronies promoted a multi-vectored and ambiguous foreign policy, rhetorically devoted to Western integration, whereas in practice, designing policies aimed toward engaging in economic, trade and political deals with Russia. The Ukrainian diplomatic archives suggest that at the beginning of Mečiar's rule in 1994 in Slovakia, the Russian and Slovak executive and legislative cooperation was very intense.⁷¹ In February 1995, a Russian delegation, headed by the then-Russian Prime Minister, V. Chernomyrdin visited Slovakia and during the joint press conference, the Slovak Prime Minister, Mečiar, declared: “[...] Slovakia has to define its own geopolitical situation, intensifying its efforts to integrate with the European economic and security structures, but also by looking for a new form of relations with Russia.”⁷² Around 43 inter-governmental and inter-industry agreements were signed between the two governments prior the visit of the Russian Prime Minister to Slovakia. During the visit itself, the Slovak and Russian governments signed 55 agreements and the Slovak media was writing that the two governments were even talking about forming a “free trade area.”⁷³

Scholars pointed out that during Mečiar's rule, the domestic political debate between the governing coalition and the opposition parties had been centered on the issue of EU and NATO accession.⁷⁴ “Each side blamed the other for any signs of Slovak exclusion from Euro-Atlantic structures, the opposition criticizing Vladimír Mečiar's policies and undemocratic practices while

⁷¹ An inter-governmental commission on economic, trade, research and technologic cooperation was actively promoting the interests of the two countries. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Slovakia on the Visit of the Russian Prime Minister to Bratislava, February 16 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

⁷² Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Slovakia on the Visit of the Russian Prime Minister to Bratislava, February 16 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Heather Grabbe and Kirsty Hughes. “Central and East European Views on EU Enlargement: Political Debates and Public Opinion.” In Karen Henderson ed. *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union*. (London: UCL Press, 1999), 192.

the government claimed that exclusion occurred because the opposition presented a negative view of Slovakia to outsiders.”⁷⁵

Reacting to the worsening of democratic conditions in Slovakia following the 1994 elections, the EU applied conditionality measures to its relations with Bratislava. In fact, scholars argued that the 1994-1998 period, “witnessed the most intensive diplomatic engagement in, and criticism of, the political situation in Slovakia by the representatives of the West European and transatlantic international organizations.”⁷⁶ In what was coined as a “reinforcement by reward”⁷⁷ technique, the European Commission did not break its institutional ties with Slovakia, the Association Agreement signed in 1991 remained the main document guiding Slovakia’s relations with Europe.⁷⁸ The membership prospect was not withdrawn– the European Union “continued to assure Slovakia that it was eligible and welcome to become a member.”⁷⁹ In other words, the West embraced a policy of “legitimation and inclusion” toward Slovakia, even if when compared to the other CEECs, it was a laggard in fulfilling EU’s accession political criteria.⁸⁰ The EU started sending diplomatic démarches to the Slovak elites starting with November 1994, criticizing the suppression of political competition inside the Slovak parliament.⁸¹ In 1996, the EU troika sent a series of criticisms to the Mečiar government reminding it, “Slovakia is an associate country in a pre-accession period ... and the criteria of approval at the Copenhagen Summit are applicable to

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Rybar, M., Malova, D. “Exerting Influence on a Contentious Polity: the European Union’s Democratic Conditionality and Political Change in Slovakia” in Antoaneta L. Dimitrova (ed.) *Driven to Change: The European Union’s Enlargement Viewed from the East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 38

⁷⁷ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 503.

⁸⁰ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 151. Vachudova shows how the same policy of inclusion and legitimation was applied to the governments of Romania and Bulgaria.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 157

it.”⁸² The then-US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was referring to Slovakia as to “a black hole in the heart of Europe”⁸³ and the American Ambassador to the Czech Republic, was declaring that “the US will support only the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which are truly devoted to implement reforms and which are changing their political systems.”⁸⁴ Despite the fact that Slovakia under Mečiar was ruled according to a “semi-autocratic rule,” with lack of economic reforms and a poor record on respecting human rights,⁸⁵ the West left its doors open to Bratislava. Brussels accepted Slovakia’s application for full EU membership in 1995, but did not invite Slovakia to open accession negotiations in 1997, together with the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Estonia, conditioning the start of accession negotiations on compliance with the Copenhagen criteria and on a change in government.⁸⁶

NATO did not include Slovakia in its first wave of post-Communist enlargement, either. Czech diplomats were concerned and considered it politically, economically and culturally “unacceptable” for the Czech Republic to advance on its path of membership, whereas Slovakia to remain behind.⁸⁷ Central and Eastern European leaders saw the September 1998 parliamentary elections in Slovakia as the key turning point, when in case the “democratic forces” emerged as victors, the West could still include Slovakia in the same group of accession countries with the rest of the CEECs.

⁸² As cited in Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey.” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003, p. 503.

⁸³ MacKinnon, M. *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union*. Random House (2007), p. 32.

⁸⁴ Information on the speech of the American Ambassador to the Czech Republic, June 27 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

⁸⁵ MacKinnon, M. *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union*. Random House (2007), p. 31.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ Records of Discussion with the Director of the Department of Coordination of relations with the EU, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Jiri Gavlik, August 6 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 12, 2015.

The factor that eventually proved crucial for Slovakia's success in anchoring itself into the Western institutions was the Western support⁸⁸ and the EU and NATO membership prospect, which helped coalesce the opposition political forces around the common goal of EU and NATO membership following the 1998 elections. Even though some scholars cast doubt on the idea that EU conditionality influenced the 1998 parliamentary elections,⁸⁹ others have argued that the prospect of Western membership and the conditions advanced by the Western organizations "played the role of a catalyst in uniting the political opposition, increasing political awareness and mobilizing the public."⁹⁰

The July 1997 announcement of the European Commission not to include Slovakia in the first group of countries with which to start accession negotiations and NATO's positive invitation to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic versus the negative note to Slovakia, made public five months later, in December 1997, helped the political opposition win the 1998 elections.⁹¹ The EU's disapproval of the domestic political practices in Slovakia, affected the electoral performance of its "illiberal" incumbents, causing them to lose elections in 1998.⁹² EU's credible commitment and Brussels' "leverage" had a great effect on the consolidation of opposition forces around the pro-Western integration goal and on the electoral and political strategies these parties chose once elected to govern.⁹³

⁸⁸ MacKinnon, M. *The New Cold War: Revolutions, Rigged Elections and Pipeline Politics in the Former Soviet Union*. Random House (2007).

⁸⁹ Schimmelfennig, F., Engert, S. Knobel, H. "Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 41(3), 2003, p. 56.

⁹⁰ Rybar, M., Malova, D. "Exerting Influence on a Contentious Polity: the European Union's Democratic Conditionality and Political Change in Slovakia" in Antoaneta L. Dimitrova (ed.) *Driven to Change: The European Union's Enlargement Viewed from the East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 40

⁹¹ Rybar, M., Malova, D. "Exerting Influence on a Contentious Polity: the European Union's Democratic Conditionality and Political Change in Slovakia" in Antoaneta L. Dimitrova (ed.) *Driven to Change: The European Union's Enlargement Viewed from the East* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 40

⁹² Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 139-140. The same argument applies to Romania and Bulgaria, whose "illiberal" political elites lost elections to in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

As in the Ukrainian and Moldovan cases, when Western pressure reached the point of being unacceptable to the domestic political elites by damaging their domestic and international legitimacy, these leaders abandoned the pro-Western orientation and turned toward Russia, “looking for more and more support from Moscow.”⁹⁴ Mečiar’s foreign policy switch tipped the balance in favor of the opposition parties,⁹⁵ which differentiated themselves from the governing party as pro-Western and reform-minded. What puts Slovakia on a different path from Ukraine and Moldova, however, was the credible EU membership prospect, which helped pro-Western opposition parties not only accede to power, but also influenced their subsequent political strategies and determination to lead the country toward full integration into the EU and NATO.

Significant progress on the road to EU membership was achieved by Slovakia in the years following the 1998 elections, to catch up with all the other CEECs in their membership race. In 2001, Slovakia managed to catch Poland and Estonia in the number of negotiated and closed chapters on EU integration, even though both Warsaw and Tallinn started accession negotiations with the EU two years earlier than Bratislava.⁹⁶ Strengthened Slovak-EU contacts helped the government in Bratislava to coordinate its domestic efforts and streamline its reform processes.⁹⁷ The country successfully joined both the EU and NATO in 2004.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 159.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Slovakia on EU Membership Prospect for Slovakia. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 18, 2015.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

The Ukrainian diplomats report that the Slovak government, considered that Slovakia’s eventual successful EU membership was determined not only by domestic reforms and transformations, but also, in big part, by the external factors, especially the political decisions of the governments and parliaments of all the EU Member States and public opinion support for EU enlargement in their societies. In order to shape public opinion in the EU Member States to become more favorable toward Slovakia’s EU accession, in September 2001, Slovakia’s government approved the Strategy on the External Informational Campaign in the EU Member States, which was implemented during 2002 – 2003, until Slovakia’s full accession to the EU. Around 1 million euro was planned to be spent from the Slovak budget on the conduct of this campaign.

⁹⁸ Not surprisingly and in line with the arguments advanced in this chapter, Mečiar “honeyed” his language and during the electoral campaign from 2002, “re-invented” himself and presented an image of a “reformed” leader,

The Baltic States

Whereas Ukraine, Moldova and other Soviet states declared their independence from the Soviet Union only after the failed August coup in Moscow in 1991, the Baltic States were the first republics within the Soviet Union to declare their *de jure* independence from Moscow before the failed coup. The adoption of consistent pro-Western foreign policies by the Baltic States and the faithful maintenance of this orientation make the Baltic paths similar to those followed by Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the other post-Communist countries in the region. All of them embraced Western integration as the main post-independence foreign policy goal and found themselves within the Western economic and security institutions fifteen years after their independence from the Soviet bloc.

Among the former post-Soviet republics, Lithuania took the lead and was the first to restore its independence from the Soviet Union, when on March 11, 1990 – it adopted the *Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania*, stressing the reinstatement and legal continuation of the inter-war period Lithuanian state.⁹⁹ In response to this courageous act, Moscow cut off supplies of oil and gas to the Baltic republic for a period of 10 weeks.¹⁰⁰ On May 3, 1990, Latvia followed suit and declared “de jure” independence from USSR. Estonia reclaimed its independence in the spring of 1990. However, despite the fact that the Baltic States reclaimed their independence from the USSR, Moscow continued to consider the three republics as members of the USSR and in

advocating Western-integration policies for Slovakia and claiming that he was misunderstood when he was criticizing NATO for bombing Serbia because of Kosovo. *The Economist*. April 2002. “The Menace of Vladimir Meciar.” Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/953763>

⁹⁹ The then-Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas, recalled being asked by Mikhail Gorbachev, while the latter was still holding the leadership of the Soviet Union, “why do you [the Lithuanians] need this independence? We lived together in a great country, we could continue to live like this in the future as well.” “The spirit of the people” needed this independence, which helps Lithuania endure as a state – this was how the Lithuanian President answered Gorbachev’s question. The original in Russian: “Слушай, ну зачем вам эта независимость? Зачем вам это нужно? Вместе жили в такой большой, великой страной, будем жить и дальше.” Interview by the then-Lithuanian President, Algirdas Brazauskas, to a Russian Newspaper. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 31, 2015.

¹⁰⁰ BBC On This Day. May 3, 1990: Latvia to Declare Independence. Retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/may/3/newsid_2481000/2481337.stm

January 1991, Soviet troops marched into the Latvian and Lithuanian capitals and attempted to seize control of the media centers controlled by domestic forces.¹⁰¹ Moreover, most Western countries continued to consider the Baltic territories under “de facto” control of the USSR and did not have diplomatic relations with them.¹⁰² Only following the failed Moscow coup in August 1991, were the Baltics able to declare “de facto” independence.¹⁰³ The-then European Community welcomed the “restoration of the sovereignty and independence of the Baltic States” on August 27.¹⁰⁴ The announcement of the-then American President Bush from September 2 also emphasized the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Baltic States, marking “the culmination of the United States’ 52 years of refusal to accept the forcible incorporation of the independent Baltic States by the USSR.”¹⁰⁵

Immediately after their independence from the Soviet Union, the Baltic States were following different political and economic paths of development, which initially did not help strengthen cooperation among them.¹⁰⁶

In the first years after its independence, Estonia oriented politically toward the Nordic countries, economically it introduced almost complete price liberalization, canceled agricultural subsidies, and created advantageous conditions for foreign investment.¹⁰⁷ The Lithuanian political path was characterized by oscillations between the Nordic and the Visegrad countries, whereas economically by an indecisiveness in implementing radical reforms. Latvia’s route, on the

¹⁰¹ Michael J. Sulick. 2007. “As the USSR Collapsed: A CIA Officer in Lithuania Remembering 15 Years Ago.” Central Intelligence Agency. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol50no2/html_files/CIA_Lithuania_1.htm

¹⁰² Rich, R. “Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.” *European Journal of International Law*, 36(65), 1993, p. 37

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ As cited in Rich, R. “Recognition of States: The Collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union,” 1993, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

contrary, was characterized by slower transition, the country advocated for regional cooperation and positioning itself against the “search of new political spaces.”¹⁰⁸ By 1994 – 1995, however, the three Baltic States managed to reconcile their differences and unite around the common goal of acquiring membership in NATO and the EU. As it will be shown below, there was consolidation of both internal domestic forces, but also of the external efforts of the Central and Eastern European states to secure membership in Western structures.

The prospect for membership in the EU and NATO propelled electoral support for the pro-reform parties, in favor of progress toward EU membership, maintaining them in leading positions in parliament following the parliamentary elections in the 1990s.

In Latvia, for example, the *Latvian Way* party,¹⁰⁹ had as its main foreign and domestic policy priority – EU and NATO integration.¹¹⁰ The party was a member of every coalition government from 1993 until 2002 and four of its members were Latvia’s Prime Ministers during this period. At least two parties in the country during that period were less supportive of Western integration goals. *Our Land Party (Mūsu Zeme)* – adopted the position that only a popular referendum would decide whether the country should join the West, and *the Socialist Party of Latvia*,¹¹¹ was against Latvia joining these Western institutions altogether.¹¹² These two parties, however, had a small political influence in the country; the Socialist Party won seats in Parliament

¹⁰⁸ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ It was formed in 1993 by former activists of the Latvian Popular Front and exiles who returned to the country following the country’s independence.

¹¹⁰ Information on the Process of the Baltics States' joining the EU and NATO, October 9 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

¹¹¹ The successor of the Communist Party of Latvia.

¹¹² ¹¹² Information on the Process of the Baltics States' joining the EU and NATO, October 9 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

only in 2002, when the question of joining the Western economic and security institutions was already solved.¹¹³

Moreover, the signing of Association Agreements between the EU and the Baltic States and the promise that the associated countries that “so desire” shall join the EU – coalesced the domestic political parties with seats in parliament around the common goal of full membership. Domestic policy makers accelerated the process of reforms and found consent on the legislative changes required by the EU in order to shorten the road to membership.¹¹⁴ The-then Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, A. Ianushky, pointed out, for example, that all Lithuanian parties represented in parliament found a consensus on introducing changes to the Lithuanian Constitution and to allow the sale of land to foreigners, thus reaching a solution to a requirement the West was pressing on.¹¹⁵

In addition, following the Baltic States signing of Association Agreements with the EU in July 1995, the legislative efforts directed toward accelerating the EU membership prospect intensified. In Latvia, for example, in November 1995, when the Latvian government submitted

¹¹³ Jānis Jurkāns, the head of the Latvian National Harmony Party, was pointing out in 1996, following a visit to Moscow and meeting with members of the Russian Duma, that even though most Latvian politicians visited Russia very rarely, the Western capitals being the most common destinations for the Baltic politicians, Russia nevertheless remained an ever-present subject in the country’s political life. Depicting Russia as a “hobgoblin” and a “mystical incarnation of evil,” Jurkāns argued, politicians in Latvia showed a lack of political pragmatism, failing to bridge the ethnic divide in Latvian politics. “Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on the visit of Jānis Jurkāns, the head of the Latvian National Harmony Party to Russia,” June 12, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

Jurkāns was the first Latvian Foreign Minister following the country’s independence from the Soviet Union, but in 1992, he “was forced to resign because of his conciliatory attitude towards Russia.” Mole, R. C. M. *The Baltic States from Soviet Union to the European Union. Identity, Discourse and Power in the Post-Communist Transition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.* Routledge, 2012, p. 131.

¹¹⁴ Once the Association Agreement with the EU was signed, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reported on the multiple new opportunities of cooperation in terms of economic and foreign policies between the EU and the Lithuanian government that the new Agreement opened up. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on signing the Association Agreement between Lithuania and the EU, April 14, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 7, 2015.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

its accession application to the EU,¹¹⁶ the European Affairs Committee was established within the Latvian Saeima.¹¹⁷ The European Affairs Committee was the largest committee of the Latvian legislature; in 1999, it had 23 members, representing all parties with seats in the parliament. The Committee had an important role in coordinating the legislative efforts of the Latvian government to adopt laws according to EU standards, as well as overseeing the organization of seminars and visits to EU Member States for Members of the Parliament, and for the lawyers working within the Parliament. The Committee played a crucial role in disseminating information to all MPs with respect to EU integration processes. The Ukrainian diplomats report that the activity of the European Affairs Committee within the Latvian Parliament was crucial for Latvia's road to membership, because the Parliament took an active role in drafting and adopting legislation conforming to EU standards.¹¹⁸ At the initiative of the European Affairs Committee within the Latvian Parliament, cooperation with similar Committees from the Estonian and Lithuanian Parliaments were initiated in 1998. Collaboration between Committees included regular meetings of the heads of Committees, with the aim of exchanging information and coordinating actions related to EU integration processes.¹¹⁹

Public opinion

What was the role of public opinion in the CEECs' pro-Western foreign policy orientation?

As chapter 2 discussed, there is no definite conclusion in the literature regarding the relation

¹¹⁶ EU Affairs in the Saeima. Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, January 1 – June 30, 2015, Parliamentary Dimension. Retrieved from <http://parleu2015.lv/en/eu-affairs>

¹¹⁷ The Role of the Latvian Parliament in Latvia's EU-integration Process. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 18, 2015.

¹¹⁸ The Role of the Latvian Parliament in Latvia's EU-integration Process. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 18, 2015.

The Ukrainian diplomats also report that even though following the Parliamentary elections from 1998, the composition of the Latvian Parliament changed in proportion of 55 percent, the staff of the Latvian Parliament did not change, remaining a permanent working force implementing the country's EU integration strategy.

¹¹⁹ Cooperation between the Baltic Parliaments on EU Integration. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 18, 2015.

between political elites and masses in the context of European integration. The argument advanced in the previous chapter is that in the CEECs, political elites led and shaped public opinion on the issues related to EU and NATO integration. Concerned over the masses' skepticism to support EU and NATO integration goals, governments allotted financial resources for the design and conduct of national communication campaigns, in order to shape public opinion to conform to the political and economic goals set by political elites.

When in October 1996 the United States offered a clear deadline for the first group of post-Communist states in Europe to join NATO, there was no complete unanimity in terms of support for joining NATO among the publics in the candidate countries.¹²⁰ The Ukrainian diplomats report that in Hungary, for example, it was clear for its political leaders that a nation-wide referendum on the question of the country's NATO membership would have to be organized.¹²¹ In 1996, the Hungarian government gave a directive to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct a communication campaign to inform and educate the people of Hungary as to the benefits and necessity to join the North-Atlantic Alliance. The government set aside \$1 million for shaping public opinion.¹²² Due to the government's efforts, in the period from February to December 1996, support for NATO membership increased from 44 to 50 percent, whereas the number of people against the accession, decreased from 35 to 28 percent.¹²³ The results of the November 1997

¹²⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Hungary on Public Opinion Campaigns in Hungary to Increase Support for NATO enlargement. March 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Among the strategies employed by the government were weekly articles on NATO enlargement in widely read newspapers, (e.g. *Mad'iar Nemzet*). Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

In the Czech Republic, the numbers resembled those from Hungary: six in ten people (59 percent) were supporting NATO membership and 29 percent were opposing it, in comparison with Romania, where eight in ten Romanians were in favor of NATO membership. Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to NATO on Public Opinion in the Czech Republic and Romania on NATO membership, November 20 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

referendum on NATO membership in Hungary were a surprise both to the Hungarian political leaders, as well as to the foreign diplomats accredited in Budapest: 85,33 percent of the participants voted in favor of NATO membership. It should be pointed out, however, that out of the ten post-Communist countries from NATO's last waves of enlargement, only Hungary and Slovenia organized a national referendum on NATO-membership.¹²⁴

Support for EU integration among the mass publics in the candidate countries was changing as well. Paradoxically, the closer the countries got to EU membership, the less their citizens supported efforts for EU integration. The same trend was characteristic to the political parties: the most significant increase in party-based Euroscepticism in Poland was registered after 1998, when the EU had started the accession negotiations with Warsaw.¹²⁵ In 1999, only around 40 percent of Poles were in favor of EU integration; the ones who opposed it were mainly the inhabitants of rural areas, involved in agriculture,¹²⁶ therefore the government financed a wide communications campaign to inform the Polish public on the advantages of EU integration.¹²⁷ In 2001, for example, the highest support for EU membership was registered in Romania (78 percent), Turkey and Bulgaria, countries, which were not included in the first wave of eastern enlargement.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ On Certain Questions related to Ukraine's Foreign Policy and its Relations with NATO, October 2006. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 19, 2015.

In Slovenia the referendum was organized in March 2003 and 66 percent of the voters cast their ballot in favor of NATO membership. Report on the Results of the Referendum on the Membership of the Republic of Slovenia in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), held on 23 March 2003. Retrieved from <http://nato.gov.si/eng/documents/referendum-results/>

¹²⁵ Grabbe, H. *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization Through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2006., p. 108.

¹²⁶ Records of Discussion with the Advisor of the Polish Embassy in Greece, Adam Zhuravsky, September 10, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 14, 2015.

¹²⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland, April 8, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 14, 2015.

¹²⁸ Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the EU on the Question of Conducting Referendums for EU membership in Candidate-Countries, August 26, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 19, 2015.

In 2002, when accession negotiations were approaching the final stages, leaders of the four Visegrad countries met to coordinate their actions on conducting national referendums on the question of EU membership. Due to different levels of public opinion support for EU membership in the candidate countries, the strategy was to conduct the referendums in the countries with the highest public support for membership, in order to stimulate support in the more euro-sceptic societies.¹²⁹ The plan was to organize the referendum in Hungary first, because the Hungarian public opinion was the most sympathetic to EU membership (according to data shared by the then-Hungarian president, around 80 percent of the population was supportive of EU membership). Next, the referendum was scheduled in Slovakia, where around 60 percent of the population supported their country's EU membership. Poland was next, with 50 percent of support and the Czech Republic, where only 41 percent of the public were in favor of EU integration, was the last in the row.¹³⁰ In the Baltic Countries, according to data issued by the European Commission, Lithuanians were the most sympathetic, with 55 percent of them being in favor of EU membership. In Latvia, 46 percent were in favor, whereas in Estonia only 38 percent were in favor of EU membership.¹³¹

Relations with the West

EU Enlargement

The previous section showed how the CEECs' auspicious journey to join the West were not without domestic challenges and disputes. In the initial years following the fall of Communism,

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ This strategy was inspired by the 1994 enlargement wave, when Austria, which had the highest public support for EU membership, was the first one to organize the referendum, and then Norway, where public opinion support was lowest, was the last country where the referendum was organized. Ultimately, voters in Norway, after two attempts of the referendum, rejected the idea of joining the European Union. Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the EU on the Question of Conducting Referendums for EU membership in Candidate-Countries, August 26, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 19, 2015.

¹³¹ Ibid.

external conditions were not very propitious either, the West was not very welcoming toward the newly democratic states. Reform minded and pro-Western elites in the CEECs faced restrained attitudes from their Western counterparts. The difference between the CEECs, on the one hand, and Ukraine and Moldova, on the other, is that whereas the Western frigid attitude toward the CEECs eventually melted and the EU and NATO opened its doors to the CEECs, the EU's policy toward the post-Soviet hopefuls remained reserved throughout the entire post-independence period.

This section documents the transformative process by which the Western approach toward the CEECs changed from a restrained to a welcoming one, analyzing the process by which the West intensified its support directed at the CEECs' efforts to join the Western economic and security institutions. While documenting the West's approach to transform its policies toward the CEECs, the section will keep in perspective the different path that the West reserved to Ukraine and Moldova.

Slow beginnings

Even though the 1989 revolutions that put an end to the communist rule in Eastern Europe were undertaken under a "return to Europe" motif, the political leaders in these post-Communist states were soon disillusioned to discover that many West European leaders were holding contradictory and mixed views about opening the doors and accepting them into the European and transatlantic institutions.¹³²

In March 1991, Polish and Czechoslovak representatives were warned by the Western diplomats not to expect an economic miracle in two-three years. The Western policy makers were also pointing out that the West does not have the resources in order to offer help in the quantities

¹³² Asmus, R. D., Vondra, A. "The Origins of Atlanticism in Central and Eastern Europe." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 18, 2 (2005)

equal to the Marshall Plan, and did not want to take on the responsibility of supporting economic development in Eastern Europe. The CEECs were even advised to leave the hope of integrating with the European Community aside.¹³³

In a visit to Prague in 1991, the then French President François Mitterrand, told reporters during a press conference that it would take “decades and decades” until the former European communist states could qualify for membership into the European Community.¹³⁴ In addition, his suggestion to create a European Confederation, to keep Poland, Czech Republic or Hungary outside the core of the European Community, was also met with resentment by the Eastern political leaders. After the French president advanced his confederation concept, the then Czech president, Vaclav Havel, called for Europe to be “a friendly community of independent nations and sovereign states ... not divided into blocs and pacts. We have awakened and we must awake those in Europe who have slept through our awakening.”¹³⁵ The position held by the French political elite was not limited to Paris only¹³⁶; politicians in other EU member capitals were expressing similar views.

Previous research shows that in the early years after the fall of Communism, the debate among the Western policy makers on the question of which approach to embrace with respect to Central Eastern Europe was framed around two issues: whether the CEECs should be included in closer cooperation with the West or whether strengthening of institutional ties should be conditioned on the fulfillment of specific democratic rules and economic standards by the less

¹³³ Translation from Ukrainian. *Report on the Meeting of the Representatives from the Policy Planning Departments in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from Countries in Europe and North America*. March 22 – 24, 1991. File number 6821. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 22, 2015.

¹³⁴ Blocker, J. “France/Czech: Chirac Seeks to Repair Franco-Czech Relations,” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, April 9, 1997, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1084262.html>

¹³⁵ Vaclav Havel, Speech delivered to the Polish Parliament, January 21, 1990. Quoted in Minford, P., *The Cost of Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 107-108

¹³⁶ Asmus, Vondra, “The Origins of Atlanticism”

diligent governments in Eastern Europe?¹³⁷ Inclusion over differentiation was the preferred Western approach in its relations with the CEECs.¹³⁸ The underlying belief was that “engagement and cooperation” would provide greater support to the post-Communist countries undergoing painful democratic and economic transformations and that “conditionality could generate isolation, economic hardship, and undermine democracy as excluded governments and societies turned back to the protection of Moscow.”¹³⁹ In addition, the Western policy makers thought, “The carrot of eventual membership in the EU, [...], could help provide regional stability and prevent nationalistic conflicts of the kind seen in the Balkans.”¹⁴⁰

The year 1991 was the key year during which the debate on the future of Central and Eastern Europe took a turn in the favor the CEECs’ inclusion into the West. In mid-December 1991, the then-European Community signed first Association Agreements with the CEECs, Poland and Hungary being the first states among the CEECs to sign such agreements with the EU.¹⁴¹ The failed August coup in Moscow and the official dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 had most probably played a role in the Western deliberations, as this might have signaled to the West that there is no way back to the old, Soviet-Communist order and that the demands of the CEECs to be included in the Western club should be recognized.

In discussions with their Ukrainian counterparts, Polish diplomats acknowledged that after signing the Agreement on Trade and Cooperation with the-then European Community in September 1989, for two years until 1991, “Poland did everything possible and impossible to

¹³⁷ Vachudova, M. A. *Europe Undivided. Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁴⁰ Skålnes, L. S. “Geopolitics and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 221

¹⁴¹ Grabbe, H. *The EU’s Transformative Power*, 2006

obtain the European Community's consent to sign an Association Agreement."¹⁴² The Polish initial request to sign such an Agreement with the EC was "absolutely denied." However, in December 1991, Poland, together with Hungary, signed an AA with the EC. According to the Polish diplomats, during negotiations with the Europeans, considerable efforts had to be put in order to include a clause in the Agreement's Preamble, "recognizing the fact that the final objective of Poland is to become a member of the Community [European Union] and that this association [...] will help to achieve this objective."¹⁴³ Following the signing of this Agreement, Poland was successful in strengthening its political and economic relations with the EU, subsequently the EU becoming the biggest foreign investor in Poland, holding in 1998, two thirds of the Polish foreign trade.¹⁴⁴

Finally, after the European Council meeting in Copenhagen from June 1993, "the European Community leaders went a step further in explicitly endorsing the aim of eventual accession by speeding up the programme for the abolition of trade barriers, intensifying political links and spelling out the criteria for accession."¹⁴⁵ Once the membership criteria for accession countries were clearly presented, "Poland received an appropriate signal from the EU" and sent its membership application to Brussels in 1994.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU, B. Gudima, with Poland's Representative to the EU, I. Trushinsky, June 12, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 12, 2015.

¹⁴³ European Agreement between Poland and the European Communities and their Member States. December 1991. Retrieved from <http://wits.worldbank.org/GPTAD/PDF/archive/EC-Poland.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU, B. Gudima, with Poland's Representative to the EU, I. Trushinsky, June 12, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 12, 2015.

¹⁴⁵ European Commission. Press Release on EU-Poland Relations. N.d. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-95-122_en.htm?locale=en

¹⁴⁶ Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU, B. Gudima, with Poland's Representative to the EU, I. Trushinsky, June 12, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 12, 2015.

As previous research shows, not all EU leaders agreed on EU enlargement to the east, however.¹⁴⁷ The Member States' preferences on enlargement were different.¹⁴⁸ Based on their geographical position, EU members were divided in two groups. The states bordering Central and Eastern European states were among the “drivers” of enlargement, whereas the more geographically distant countries (except for Great Britain) formed the so-called “brakemen” group.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the countries located in the “central region” of the EU preferred a “limited enlargement” approach, i.e. countries to join in rounds, rather than all at once, whereas the southern and northern countries (except for Finland) preferred a more inclusive approach to enlargement.¹⁵⁰

Table 9: EU Member States Preferences on Enlargement

<i>Limited Enlargement</i>		<i>Inclusive enlargement</i>
<i>Drivers</i>	Austria, Finland, Germany	Britain, Denmark, Sweden
<i>Brakemen</i>	Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands	France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Source: Schimmelfennig, “The Community Trap”, 2005, p. 144

Among the “brakemen”, France’s decision to accept EU’s eastern enlargement was crucial for the agreement reached during the Copenhagen Council Summit in 1993.¹⁵¹ The internal domestic debate on eastern enlargement in France showed the risks and dangers that France was

¹⁴⁷ For an excellent discussion on the incremental process of decision-making within the EU on eastward enlargement, see Sedelmeier, U. “Eastern Enlargement. Risk, Rationality and Role-Compliance,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 120 – 141.

¹⁴⁸ Schimmelfennig, F. “The Community Trap. Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Skålnes, L. S. “Geopolitics and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005).

trying to avoid by adopting a reticent position on this issue.¹⁵² Former French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing expressed fears about the potential damaging effects of an eventual eastward enlargement on the EU, outlining the risks of accepting poorer members, many of them struggling to undergo democratic and market economy transformations.¹⁵³ The then-French president Francois Mitterand vacillated in his support for accepting the CEECs in the EU, on some occasions expressing his support for Eastern European membership, while on others holding back and claiming that eastern enlargement “could not be contemplated for ‘des dizaines et des dizaines d’années.’”¹⁵⁴ France’s general position on EU enlargement was initially similar to its stance on NATO enlargement: Paris preferred a general reform of EU institutions, a path that would lead to a deepened Union, rather than a “rushed enlargement,” leading to a wider entity.¹⁵⁵ Still, however, in efforts to change the perception that the French government was “a main obstructor” against EU’s eastward enlargement, French politicians took a more positive attitude on this question.¹⁵⁶ For example, the then-French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé, argued that not accepting these new democracies exposed the EU to an even bigger risk. “We have told the Central and Eastern European states for 30 or 40 years: “the day when you will get rid of the communist regime and will become democracies again, we will welcome you in the European family, which is yours

¹⁵² For a more detailed discussion on this debate, see Skålnes, L. S. “Geopolitics and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 221-224.

¹⁵³ Intervention du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, M. Alain Juppé, Devant le Forum de l'Expansion, Paris, May 31 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

¹⁵⁴ As cited in Skålnes, L. S. “Geopolitics and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 222.

¹⁵⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in France on the German-French Summit in Paris, May 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

¹⁵⁶ Sedelmeier, U. “Eastern Enlargement. Risk, Rationality and Role-Compliance,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 131. Schimmelfennig, F. “The Community Trap. Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union.” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 164.

as well.”¹⁵⁷ He further noted that it was in Europe’s interest to build a “durable and long-lasting stability” on the continent, a Europe constituted not only of “an ensemble of Western prosperous countries, enclosed in their certainties” while abandoning the “stammering and hesitant” democracies in Eastern Europe.¹⁵⁸

Germany, the most vocal among the “drivers” group, was interested in “strengthening its political influence and economic presence in the region, leaning on the whole EU potential.”¹⁵⁹ Germany was an active lobbyist inside the EU for including Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia in the organization.¹⁶⁰

Table 10: Key Dates in EU Eastward Enlargement

December 1990	Start of negotiations for Europe Agreements with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia
December 1991	Europe Agreements Signed with Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia
June 1993	Copenhagen European Council, during which the EU endorsed the CEEC’s membership prospect
November 1994	Start of negotiations for Association Agreements with the three Baltic States
July 1995	Association Agreements signed with the three Baltic States
December 1994	Essen European Council, during which an agreement on the pre-accession strategy was achieved
December 1995	Madrid European Council, during which an indicative date for the CEECs accession negotiations was announced

¹⁵⁷ Intervention du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, M. Alain Juppé, Devant le Forum de l’Expansion, Paris, May 31 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. He further noted that even though Russia was “knocking” at the EU’s door as well, his position was that the EU has to remain open and carefully explain to the Russians that “Russia is a partner for us, an unavoidable partner, a necessary partner with whom we have to work, however I do not see it as a member state.”

¹⁵⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in France on the German-French Summit in Paris, May 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

¹⁶⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Germany on the Visit of the Newly Appointed Hungarian Prime-Minister to Bonn. July 20, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

July 1996	Start of the 1996 – 1997 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), a key objective of which had been to prepare the EU institutionally for enlargement
June 1997	End of the IGC, Amsterdam Treaty
July 1997	European Commission publishes “Agenda 2000”, a plan for eastward enlargement
December 1997	Luxembourg European Council, during which it was decided to start accession negotiations with the first five CEECs, i.e. Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia
March 1999	The European Commission opened accession negotiations with the rest of the CEECs, i.e. Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria
March 2000	Start of negotiations for Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA) with the Western Balkans ¹⁶¹
June 2003	Thessaloniki European Council Summit, during which the EU reaffirmed that the Western Balkan countries are potential candidates for EU membership
May 2004	Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia join the EU
June 2004	The European Commission gives candidacy status to Croatia. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia received candidacy status in December 2005, Montenegro in 2010 and Serbia in 2012.
October 2005	The European Commission starts accession negotiations with Croatia
January 2007	Romania and Bulgaria join the EU
October 2009	The European Commission recommends starting accession negotiations with Macedonia ¹⁶²
June 2012	The European Commission starts accession negotiations with Montenegro
December 2013	The European Commission starts accession negotiations with Serbia
July 2013	Croatia joins the EU

¹⁶¹ The first Western Balkan countries to sign SAAs with the EU were the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia, who signed the Agreements in 2001. The rest of the Western Balkan states signed such agreements in subsequent years: Albania in 2006, Montenegro – 2007, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008.

¹⁶² Alujevic-Vesnic, L. “European Integration of Western Balkan: From Reconciliation to European Future.” Centre for European Studies, 2012. Retrieved from <https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/european-integration-western-balkans.pdf>

Adapted from Sedelmeier, U. "Eastern Enlargement. Risk, Rationality and Role-Compliance," in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 128.

Frank Schimmelfennig advanced the argument that political leaders in the CEECs, reacting to EU Member States' slow decision making on eastward enlargement, followed a so-called "shaming" strategy, by keeping Western leaders accountable for their past rhetorical commitments and matching them with concrete actions.¹⁶³ Schimmelfennig's argument, however, has been criticized because politicians are "shameless"/hypocritical creatures and one should not expect shame to be the driving force behind politicians' foreign policy actions, especially at the international level, where there are no clear accountability checks.¹⁶⁴

The leaders in the CEECs continued, however, to demanding "equal treatment" from the West by comparing the EU's eastern policy with its behavior in previous rounds of enlargement.¹⁶⁵ The Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kodolanyi, in 1990s for example, pointed out that the decision to accept Spain and Portugal to the EU was a result of "a political settlement" rather than economic screening, and that the Community had to treat the eastern European states in a similar way.¹⁶⁶

Even after the CEECs received a membership perspective from the EU, their leaders remained suspicious that the EU would advance economic conditions that would have to be met by their countries before starting accession negotiations, when previous "Mediterranean

¹⁶³ Schimmelfennig, F. "The Community Trap. Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁶⁴ R. Daniel Kelemen. (2006). "Comment: Shaming the shameless? The constitutionalization of the European Union." *Journal of European Public Policy* 13(8), 1302-1307.

¹⁶⁵ Schimmelfennig, F. "The Community Trap", p. 161.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

enlargements were characterized mainly by political motives.”¹⁶⁷ The supporters of EU’s eastward enlargement within the EU (chief among them Germany and Great Britain) used the same strategies of “exposing inconsistencies” of the Western leaders in order to push the eastward enlargement decision further.¹⁶⁸

Apart from exposing inconsistencies, another strategy used by those in favor of a “speedy” EU enlargement, was the “fear” that unless the “window of opportunity” was used by the EU and the CEECs at once, it might be lost later.¹⁶⁹ EU officials shared the view that an enlargement “as fast as possible” “kept the momentum for reform” and the concern was that the overall reform process in the CEECs could have been threatened if the enlargement took a slower pace.¹⁷⁰

Security and peace-related arguments was another approach, which supporters of enlargement adopted to justify EU’s widening.¹⁷¹ EU elites have warned that “the fragmentation of the EU, the rise of nationalism and, in more extreme cases, a return to Europe’s previous balance-of-power system and war” were presented as high costs of choosing not to incorporate the post-Communist states within the EU.¹⁷²

As the chapter 5, on Ukraine, shows, Ukrainian diplomats were also using the strategy of exposing the inconsistencies of EU leaders, in order to request the same “privileged” treatment from the EU toward Kiev. In the case of Ukraine, however, the strategy of “exploring inconsistencies” in EU’s behavior was less successful – the EU policy makers remained reticent to commit to an eventual membership of Ukraine to the EU. This may be because, as Daniel

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Kristi Raik. 2004. “EU Accession of Central and Eastern European Countries: Democracy and Integration as Conflicting Logics.” *East European Politics and Societies*, 18(4), p. 577.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Atsuko Higashino. 2004. “For the Sake of ‘Peace and Security’? The Role of Security in the European Union Enlargement Eastwards.” *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association*, 39(4): 347–368.

¹⁷² Ibid., p. 350.

Kelemen points out,¹⁷³ “shaming” politicians and “exploring inconsistencies” between politicians’ words and deeds was not the driving factor behind EU’s decision to commit itself to the eastward enlargement. In addition, whereas the Western leaders showed greater interest in anchoring the CEECs to the EU and NATO in the early years following the fall of Communism, they were less interested and unconcerned about the foreign policy path of the former Soviet states.

Some scholars argue that the Yugoslav war and the decline in public opinion support for the economic and political reforms within the CEECs – influenced the strategic calculations of EU leaders and determined them to make a commitment to eastern enlargement.¹⁷⁴

As pointed out in precious chapters, antagonizing Russia was not a key consideration in the discussions of eastward EU enlargement, as opposed to NATO enlargement, as the next sections shows. This was mainly because Russia was itself interested in broadening and strengthening economic cooperation with the European Union and building a “strategic partnership” with the organization.¹⁷⁵

The European Commission recommended to the European Council to offer a membership prospect to the CEECs in 1992. It pointed out that the “central and eastern European countries look towards eventual Community membership as the basis for their *political and economic development and stability*.”¹⁷⁶ The document further stated, “The European Council should now confirm that it accepts the goal of eventual membership in the European Union” for the CEECs, because “By offering this perspective [of membership], the Community *will provide*

¹⁷³ Kelemen, “Comment: Shaming the shameless?” 2006).

¹⁷⁴ Skålnes, L. S. “Geopolitics and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005).

¹⁷⁵ László Póti. “Putin’s European Policy” in Janusz Bugajski and Marek Michalewski ed. *Toward an Understanding of Russia: New European Perspectives*. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2002).

¹⁷⁶ Commission of the European Communities, *Towards a Closer Association with the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe*. Brussels, December 2 1992, p. 2-3, *emphasis added*. Retrieved from http://aei.pitt.edu/1586/1/east_europe_close_assoc_SEC_92_2301.pdf

encouragement to those pursuing reform and make the short term economic and social consequences of adjustment easier to bear.”¹⁷⁷

The European Council meeting in Copenhagen in June 1993 announced that it “agreed that the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe that so desire shall become members of the European Union,”¹⁷⁸ therefore opening the doors of the EU to the so-called 6+3 format of countries.¹⁷⁹ Slovenia was also deemed eligible for the EU’s eastward enlargement.¹⁸⁰ It further stated that the European Community’s “future cooperation with the associated countries shall be geared to the objective of membership which has now been established.”¹⁸¹ During the same Summit in Copenhagen, the Baltic States were invited to sign Association and Free Trade Agreements with the EU.¹⁸² Becoming EU’s associate members implied that the Baltics were offered the prospect of EU membership. Before starting negotiations on Association Agreements with the Baltic States in 1994, the European Union signed Free Trade Agreements with them,¹⁸³ “a vital step forward in the process of integration of the Baltic countries into Europe”.¹⁸⁴ The Baltics’ negotiations and signing of these Agreements with the EU took place at lightning speed. Negotiations were started in November 1994, the Agreements were initialed in April and signed

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993. Presidency Conclusions. Retrieved from www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/copenhagen/default_en.htm

¹⁷⁹ The 6+3 format included the four Visegrad states (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Romania, Bulgaria and the three Baltic States, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

Intervention du Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, M. Alain Juppé, Devant le Forum de l'Expansion, Paris, May 31 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993. Presidency Conclusions. Retrieved from www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/copenhagen/default_en.htm

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Statement by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania on the Baltic States Relations with the European Union, November 23 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 31, 2015.

¹⁸⁴ European Commission Press Release on the Signing of Free Trade Agreements between the European Communities on the one hand and the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, on the other. Press Release Database. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-94-148_en.htm

in July 1995.¹⁸⁵ Following the concluding of Association Agreements, the Baltics (together with Slovenia) were included in the EU “accession preparation strategy,” which had the goal of creating “structured relations” between EU’s institutions and those of the associated countries, so as to prepare the associated states “for integration into the internal market of the Union.”¹⁸⁶

Poland and Hungary were the first among the CEECs to apply for EU membership in 1994,¹⁸⁷ followed by the rest of the countries, which sent their accession applications in 1995 and 1996.

The Ukrainian diplomatic documents suggest that once the three Baltic States signed the Association Agreements with the EU, competition among the three states on their road to membership started to intensify. Latvia was the first among the three states to apply for EU membership in October 1995, outpacing the other two neighbors by a few months, and the three countries launched into a comprehensive reform process of their economies and legal frameworks. Following the guidelines provided by the European Union’s White Paper on enlargement, the Baltic States adopted a pre-accession strategy, “dynamically transforming” all the internal, international, social, military and financial sectors to bring them in line with the EU standards.¹⁸⁸ There was a certain degree of disappointment, both in Latvia and Lithuania, when the EU decided to start pre-accession negotiations with Estonia first in 1997. Estonia’s lead forced the governments in Latvia and Lithuania to intensify their foreign policy activity, as well as take concrete steps to accelerate the reform processes and prepare their countries for integration with

¹⁸⁵ European Commission Press Release Database. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-95-379_en.htm?locale=en and http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-95-173_en.htm

¹⁸⁶ European Parliament. “European Council Meeting on 9 And 10 December 1994 in Essen. Presidency Conclusions.” Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/ess1_en.htm

¹⁸⁷ Grabbe, H. *The EU’s Transformative Power*, 2006

¹⁸⁸ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Cooperation between Lithuania and the EU, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

the West.¹⁸⁹ Estonia, for example, started accession negotiations with the European Commission in 1998 and by April 2001, 18 of the 31 negotiation chapters were already closed.¹⁹⁰

Another forum of cooperation between the CEECs and the West was cooperation within the Western European Union (WEU)¹⁹¹: in 1994, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, as well as the three Baltic States were granted the status of “associate partners” with the WEU.¹⁹² As the chapter on Ukraine showed, the Ukrainian diplomats put in significant efforts to receive the “associate status” for Ukraine as well. The refusal of the WEU members to consider the Ukrainian request – left the leaders in Kiev “discontented.”¹⁹³ The Lithuanian ambassador, on the contrary, called the results of the Luxemburg Summit – “the success of the Baltics diplomacy,”¹⁹⁴ whereas the Polish Ambassador declared that the association

¹⁸⁹ Ukrainian diplomats also report on the difficult road that the Baltics faced ahead of them during the enlargement process. The European Commission was initially facing challenges dealing with the massive enlargement process, and only when negotiations with the Eastern candidates started, the EU appointed a working group, which was charged with responsibility for the negotiation with the Eastern candidate countries.

Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on the question of Latvia joining NATO and the EU, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

¹⁹⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Estonia on Estonia-EU Relations, April 27, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 18, 2015.

¹⁹¹ The WEU was a defensive alliance, the main goal of which was to offer mutual military assistance in case of an external aggression. It was founded in 1948 and it had ten member states: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. After the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, all functions of the WEU were incorporated into the EU, and the WEU was closed down in 2011. For more information on the organization, visit: http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/weu/index_en.htm

¹⁹² Western European Union. Kirchberg Declaration, May 9, 1994. Retrieved from <http://www.weu.int/documents/940509en.pdf>

The status of “associated partners” allowed the CEECs to participate in weekly meetings of the WEU members, in the process of decision making, without the right to block the consensus, to send officers to the activities of the WEU and to participate in various operations related to maintaining peace. Information about the meeting of the Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU with the General Secretary of the Western European Union, Van Ikelen, May 11 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

¹⁹³ Information on the results of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the WEU, Luxembourg, May 9 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

Slovenia, Croatia and Moldova were not offered the “association partnership” status either and the Ukrainian Ambassador was suggesting to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to combine the Ukrainian request with those of Slovenia, Croatia and Moldova in order to put more pressure on the WEU and be included in the list of the “associated” partners.

¹⁹⁴ In discussions with the Ukrainian ambassador, he further noted that the question of the Baltics’ acquiring the status of associate partner within the WEU was solved way before the Luxembourg Summit and that the participation of the CEE states and the Baltics in the Summit – was a simple formality. Ibid.

with the WEU was “a step forward in Poland’s institutionalizing its relations with the Western security structures.”¹⁹⁵

In the pre-accession years, striving to please the EU and be deemed eligible for membership, the CEECs aligned with most of EU’s foreign policy initiatives.¹⁹⁶ After 1994, when the Association Agreements signed with the Visegrad States entered into force and following the EU Summit in Essen from December 1994, cooperation between the candidate countries and the EU Member States in the foreign policy area deepened.¹⁹⁷ Mandatory meetings between the foreign ministers of the EU Member States and of the candidate countries were introduced in order to discuss foreign policy issues. Although not allowed to take active part in the EU meetings, candidate countries were part of the working groups addressing such issues as “external relations, security, disarmament, former Yugoslavia, OSCE, terrorism and the UN” and were also invited to join EU’s foreign policy declarations.¹⁹⁸ Between 1994 – 2000, in its efforts to harmonize its foreign policy with that of the EU, Poland for example, supported around 500 foreign policy declarations issued by the EU.¹⁹⁹

NATO Enlargement

As in the EU’s case, the idea of NATO enlargement eastward was met with high degrees of hesitation in the Western political circles in the first years after the fall of Communism. In the US, even though there were voices advocating for the inclusion of countries like Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic into NATO, the overwhelming view of the political establishment was that

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Kaminska, J. *Poland and EU Enlargement. Foreign Policy in Transformation*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

opening NATO's door to the Central and Eastern European countries would add more foreign policy obligations to the already existing American involvement in world affairs.²⁰⁰ Moreover, many in Washington feared that NATO enlargement to the East might bring an unwanted Russian reaction and that it may be a threat to the current regime in Moscow, which was leading policies that corresponded to American strategic interests²⁰¹. In July 1993, Strobe Talbott, who at that time, was managing the consequences of the Soviet breakup as Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the American Secretary of State on the New Independent States, declared in a meeting with Ukrainian diplomats that the question of NATO enlargement was a difficult one due to the need for "multilateral decision-making" in the alliance: any mentioning by the US of its support for any Eastern European country in a political document would have an exclusive negative effect, especially from the nationalistic circles in Russia.

The NATO members shared a reluctant attitude toward the CEE countries and their request to be accepted in the alliance, claiming that "problems of migration, refugees, the environment and nuclear safety seemed more important to the West than the need to fill a "security vacuum" in Europe.²⁰² Despite the West's inclination to preserve its security system and remain a club unto itself, as its politicians worried that more actors would mean a more difficult decision-making process, the CEECs politicians continued to speak about the security issues confronting the new Europe at every gathering of Western diplomats. Representatives from Poland, Hungary and the

²⁰⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Ambassador in Germany on NATO Enlargement, November 26, 1993. File number 7020. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*

²⁰² Report of the NATO's Second Meeting of the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group with Cooperation Partners, Boyana/Sofia, Bulgaria, June 20 – 22, 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

Czech Republic were “clattering in [NATO’s] doors with their fists”²⁰³, warning that Eastern and Western Europe were “in the same boat” when facing security issues.²⁰⁴

“Lack of decision” and “uncertain expectations” – this is how Polish diplomats in Washington described the Clinton Administration’s position on NATO eastward enlargement.²⁰⁵ This kind of position was worrisome to the East-European diplomats. Polish representatives in Washington were reporting however, that there were significant diplomatic efforts in Washington and success was achieved in garnering the full support on Poland’s NATO membership among the ethnic Poles living in the US at that time, a figure constituting around 8-12 million people.²⁰⁶

Bill Clinton came on a European tour in 1994, visiting Poland and Latvia. While the Baltic leaders were encouraged by Clinton’s visit, the Polish politicians were disappointed by the visit and his delivered address in the Polish Parliament, because the American president failed to offer a clear answer on Poland’s NATO membership prospects. The then-Marshall of the Polish Parliament declared that Clinton’s speech “was not one which would light your heart.”²⁰⁷ The former Polish Prime Minister, Hanna Suchocka, then a member of the Polish Parliament, declared that Poland expected “a clear deadline for NATO membership and a timeline for joining.” She disappointedly pointed out that “we were closer to that [i.e. clear deadline] two years ago than we are now.”²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Interview with Indulis Berzins, Member of the Latvian Seima and of the Foreign Affairs Commission. *Panorama Latvii*, October 27 1993. File number 7004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 24, 2015.

²⁰⁴ Report of the NATO’s Second Meeting of the Atlantic Policy Advisory Group with Cooperation Partners, June 20 – 22, 1993. File number 7015. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

²⁰⁵ Records of Discussion between the Adviser to the Ukrainian Embassy in the US with the First Secretary of the Political Department, Polish Embassy in the US, November 30 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 31, 2015.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland on Clinton’s Visit to Poland. July 7, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Despite the initial disappointment with Clinton Administration, the Central and Eastern European leaders soon realized that even though in Washington there were political forces which were against NATO membership for the Visegrad states, there were also supporters of this idea, calling for the inclusion of the Eastern European states in the transatlantic institutions.²⁰⁹

In Washington, the proponents of eastward enlargement won the debate on NATO's future. Bill Clinton turned his ear toward the arguments advanced by the pro-enlargement camp, filling in key administration positions with supporters of including the former Communist states of Europe in NATO. Governments in Prague, Warsaw and Budapest, hired American experts and proponents for enlargement and managed to create a common advocacy effort and convince the administration in Washington to promote NATO enlargement. Even though by the end of 1990s, Western countries on both sides of the Atlantic became more tolerant of the idea that the former communist countries of Europe (as well as the three Baltic States) were eligible for joining the Western economic and security institutions, this attitude was not expressed toward the former members of the Soviet Union, like Ukraine or Moldova. Indeed, the louder the debate on eastward NATO enlargement in the West, the more apparent was the differentiation between the former Communist European states and their former Soviet counterparts, in the Western integration projects.

In October 1994, the US Congress adopted the so-called NATO Participation Act (or Brown-Simon Amendment), to grant the President the authority to establish a program aimed at "assisting the transition to full NATO membership" for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and other Partnership for Peace states.²¹⁰ The Act authorized the US President to provide several types of security assistance, specifically the transfer of lethal or non-lethal excess defense

²⁰⁹ Asmus, R. D. *Opening NATO's Door How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004)

²¹⁰ Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Analysis of the NATO Participation Act of 1994 ("Brown-Simon Amendment"). Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 4, 2015.

articles (EDA) on a grant basis to these Eastern European states.²¹¹ The Polish media widely reported on the adoption of the Brown-Simon, pointing out that “the Congress symbolically showed its solidarity to the Visegrád states that it supports their NATO aspiration goals.”²¹² Ukrainian diplomats report that earlier drafts of the Brown-Simon Amendment omitted the clause on “Slovakia and other Partnership for Peace countries,” being added later to the final version of the Bill.²¹³

In the summer of 1994, the Clinton Administration made the first attempts to start policy debates on NATO’s eastward enlargement. In July 1994, the American Department of State organized a meeting with all the Foreign Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CEECs hosted by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw. Poland, Romania, Albania, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and Slovenia were invited to the meeting to discuss security issues in Europe and these states’ relations with NATO.²¹⁴ The-then Ukrainian Ambassador to Poland, G. Udovenko, was troubled by the fact that Ukraine was not invited to the meeting, claiming that the “questions to be discussed in Warsaw and the security of Central and Eastern Europe are directly related to Ukraine, a country which plays an important role in this region.”²¹⁵ The US Department

²¹¹ Ibid. Several criteria had to be met by the applicant countries in order for the US to transfer EDA: full and active participation within the PfP, significant progress on political and economic reform, likely in the near future to be in a position to further the principles of the North Atlantic Treaty and not selling arms to terrorist groups.

²¹² Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland on the ways in which the Polish society reacted to the Brown-Simon Amendment adopted in the US Congress. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 4, 2015.

²¹³ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland on the “Brown-Simon Amendment”, January 1 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 4, 2015.

Ukrainian diplomats report that there were divergent points of opinion on the Brown-Simon Act itself and on its content among the Democratic and the Republican parties in the American Congress. The results of the November legislative elections in the US, however, gave the Polish side enough confidence that the American side will put in practice the clauses written in the Act. The Polish diplomats contentedly reported on some of the “visionary” steps taken by the Polish diplomacy, such as the fact that the-then Polish Foreign Minister, Andrzej Olechowski, always contacted influential republican politicians during each of his visit to the US.

²¹⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland on the Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CEECs in Warsaw, June 22 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

of State, however, informed the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington that it did not intend to change the format of the meeting and refused to invite Ukraine to the discussions.²¹⁶ This signals that by the summer of 1994, the American Administration had decided already which countries in Central and Eastern Europe were considered potential candidates for NATO membership and which were not.

In October 1996, the American President Clinton for the first time revealed a clear deadline for the post-Communist states of Europe to join NATO.²¹⁷ He announced that “the NATO’s partners “should be full-fledged members” by the organization’s 50th anniversary in 1999,” convinced that “NATO can do for Europe’s East what it did for Europe’s West: prevent a return to local rivalries, strengthen democracy against future threats, and create the conditions for prosperity to flourish.”²¹⁸

The decision to enlarge NATO eastward “was ambiguous and opaque ... emerg[ing] from behind-the-scenes bureaucratic combat, subtle high-level policy proclamations, and growing political pressure from Republican opponents on Capitol Hill.”²¹⁹ Clinton’s initial steps in NATO’s opening toward the CEECs were on the side of caution: the American President “did not want to draw a new dividing line in Europe that would isolate states of the former Soviet Union”, he wanted to avoid “alienating Russia or pushing Ukraine back into Moscow’s orbit.”²²⁰ At the same time,

²¹⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Ukrainian Ambassador in Warsaw on the Letter from the US Department State. July 5 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

²¹⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Czech Republic on the Reaction in Prague on Clinton’s Announcement on the first Wave of NATO’s Eastward Enlargement, October 23, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

In the Czech Republic, according to public opinion polls, in 1996, 54 percent of the Czechs were in favor of the country joining NATO, with the condition that no foreign troops and no nuclear arms will be stationed on its territory.

²¹⁸ Transcript of the Remarks by President W. J. Clinton to People Of Detroit. October 22, 1996. Retrieved from <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1996/s961022a.htm>

²¹⁹ Asmus, R. D. *Opening NATO's Door*, p. 59.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

the Administration believed that NATO eastward enlargement was a goal that needed to be pursued and that the enlargement process should not exclude other CEE states, but if NATO expansion was to start – it had to focus on the most feasible candidates, which were considered Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.²²¹ Despite concerns over Russia’s reaction and Moscow’s protests and denouncements of Washington’s decision to go ahead with the eastward expansion, in the end the Clinton Administration embraced the enlargement goal of the Western alliance.²²² As the subsection below shows, one of the main reasons why NATO devised different policies toward the former members of the USSR, extending the membership possibility to the Baltic States, but holding this prospect for Ukraine, was the significant American and Scandinavian support and lobbying that was put forward for the Baltics, but which was absent for the other post-Soviet states.²²³

The case of the Baltics: the road to NATO membership

The Baltics’ case is relevant in the context of this project’s argument, because it portrays the ways in which external Western support was paramount for anchoring these three countries into Western economic and security institutions. In interviews with former foreign policy makers and diplomats in Moldova, one idea frequently echoed was that the different foreign policy paths that the Baltics took when compared to Moldova, were explained by the different attitude and amount of support from the West. Whereas the Baltics enjoyed significant amount of technical, economic, political and diplomatic support from the West, Ukraine and Moldova, especially in the first ten years after independence, were left out the Western radar of policies and interests. The Ukrainian diplomatic archives document the various ways in which the West rendered its support

²²¹ Ibid., p. 74

²²² Ibid., p. 60

²²³ Ibid., p. 155-162.

to the Baltics and the critical impact the Western diplomacy had on the Baltics' relations with Russia.

To reiterate, the main argument advanced in this chapter is that the presence of a credible prospect of membership in the EU and NATO had a big impact on the consolidation of domestic political forces around the goal of EU and NATO integration in the Baltic States. The commitment of the West to take the Baltic countries on board in the Western club facilitated the formation of a political consensus on the political and economic reforms in order to comply with the Western accession criteria. As soon as the West acknowledged the eligibility of the Baltics for EU and NATO membership, the pro-Western foreign policy vector was locked in by engaging these states in the political, economic and institutional transformations required for Western compliance. The Western acknowledgement of membership was accompanied by substantive amounts of political, technical, and economic support, which helped reinforce the choice for the pro-Western foreign policy orientation. This subsection documents the process by which the Western support helped strengthen the Baltics' militaries, increase public opinion support for EU and NATO membership among the Baltic citizens, facilitate negotiations with the Russians, as well as open reluctant doors in Western capitals.

When compared to the rest of the Central and Eastern European states, the Baltics started to be considered for EU and NATO membership several years later: the European Union signed Association Agreements with them in 1995, later than it did with the Visegrad four (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia) and with Romania and Bulgaria. In addition, negotiations on EU accession were easier than NATO membership. Nevertheless, once the West decided that the Baltics should be in, the speed with which the three countries moved toward Western membership was no different from the rest of the Central and Eastern European states.

In the initial wave of NATO eastward enlargement, the Baltics were not considered among the candidates. As the diplomatic documents suggest, this was due mainly because old NATO members considered membership for the Baltics a too big of a liability. First, their military capability was considered too small and weak to bring any benefit to the overall security of the organization. Second, there were concerns that by including the Baltics in the enlargement process, Russia, which had already expressed its disapproval of NATO eastward expansion, would have been antagonized even more. Even though the Baltic leaders were “heartened” by NATO’s plans to include Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, at the same time, however, they were “frustrated by the hard judge of history” – as a result of which the Baltics were viewed initially outside of NATO’s eastward enlargement.²²⁴

Without a clear NATO membership prospect, the Baltic States, with considerable support from the West, created the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT).²²⁵ Being aware of the challenges and difficulties in achieving full NATO membership, the three Baltic states opted for the creation of a peacekeeping Battalion, which would help them achieve NATO membership²²⁶ and would signal to the world “that the Baltic States wish, and are able, to play an active role in the international scene.”²²⁷ The Defense Ministers of the three states, “approached the Nordic states and the UK for assistance” and in September 1994, the Defense Ministers of the three Baltics, were joined by those from Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom

²²⁴ Speech by Trivimi Velliste, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia at the NUPI-CSIS Conference on Baltic and Nordic Security Oslo, September 21 1993. Retrieved from <http://www.vm.ee/en/news/speech-trivimi-velliste-nupi-csis-conference-baltic-and-nordic-security>

²²⁵ Presentation to the PMSC on the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT), Ministry of Defence, Denmark. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

²²⁶ For a detailed account about the reasons behind the creation of the BALTBAT and the role it played in bringing the Baltics closer to the West, see Poast, P., Uperlainen, J. *Organizing Democracy: How International Organizations Assist Democratic Consolidation*. Forthcoming. (Chicago: Chicago University Press).

²²⁷ Presentation to the PMSC on the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT), November 1997. Ministry of Defence, Denmark. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015, p. 7.

and signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the creation of the BALTBAT. Later on, other Western countries joined the project: the Netherlands, France, Germany, and the US, donating “equipment and weapons.”²²⁸ The project received substantial coordination, military advice, and practical support from mainly Western countries. A report from the Danish Ministry of Defense describes some of the support offered by the West to the Baltics:

“[t]he Nordic states have provided substantial training assistance, together with office furniture, machinery, and weapons. The US has donated a full battalion’s scaling of uniforms, radios, rifles and ammunition, and vehicles, the UK English Language Training and infantry training, France and Germany, weapons; the Netherlands, infantry training, field kitchens, etc. and the Ukraine and Poland, countries that are not otherwise involved in the project, have both donated ammunition.”²²⁹

Table 11: BALTBAT Procurement Plan (select items), 1994 – 1997

Item	Donor Country	Items Promised	Items Delivered
Summer Uniforms	Finland	3,200	3,200
Map cases	USA	150	150
Command-post tents	Norway	8	8
Tents	USA	70	70
Folding Cots	USA	1,000	1,000
Foot lockers	USA	100	100
Blankets, wool	Norway	90	90
Canon copying machine	Finland	3	3
Sony TV	Sweden	22	22
Videorecorder	Sweden	22	22

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 3-4. The document from the Danish Ministry of Defense notes that, “Assistance is not quantified in financial terms. Thus, the value of each nation’s contribution is known only to itself. This is a deliberate policy and a fundamental principle of the project because it removes the risk of disputes about burden-sharing. Nations thus contribute according to their means, and not because they want to be at the top of a large list of donors.” p. 4.

Overhead Projector	Sweden	19	19
Field Rations	Germany	10,000 packets	10,000 packets
Canned Meat	Sweden	33 Tons	33 Tons
Field Rations	France	6,000 packets	6,000 packets
Kitchen Package	Sweden	2	2
Mines, training (tanks)	Sweden	3	3
Mines, training (personnel)	Sweden	3	3
Pentathlon equipment (set)	Sweden	1	1
Skies, set	Norway	1,000	1,000
ZODIAC walkie-talkie	Sweden	30	30
IBM Thinkpad 370C	Norway	21	21
HP Laser printer	Norway	3	3
Mine detector	Germany	1,470	1,470
Chain saw kits	USA	8	8
Night vision goggles	USA	21	0
7x50 Binoculars	Sweden	60	60
Laser range Finder	USA	49	0
28kw Diesel Petrol	Netherlands	10	10
Volvo light truck	Sweden	11	11
Chevrolet-Cargo Jeep M 1008	USA	90	90
Bicycles	Sweden	416	416
Light mortars	Denmark	16	16
Sniper rifles	USA	39	39
Pistols 9mm	Netherlands	90	90
Rifles M16	USA	750	750

AK 47 tracers	Germany	2.6 million	2.6 million
Battalion First-Aid Station	Norway	2	2

Source: Poast, P., Uperlainen, J. *Organizing Democracy*, Forthcoming

The Western countries, led by Denmark, were putting significant effort to “ensure” that the BALTBAT was “acceptable” to the UN to be deployed for peacekeeping operations.²³⁰

One document prepared by the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania goes as far as to claim that the military cooperation between the three Baltic States was taking place “under the open pressure of the West.”²³¹ The diplomatic letter further noted that, “Unlike its neighbors, the Lithuanian government does not support the idea of creating a military union with its two neighbors,”²³² highlighting some of the differences in the official positions held by the Baltic States and the divergent views shared by their political parties.²³³ Western diplomats noted the challenges in the military collaboration between the Baltics as well.²³⁴ Despite these challenges, BALTBAT represented an avenue through which Western countries were able to transfer basic arms and weapons to the Baltics “without raising the ire of Moscow.”²³⁵ It also served an important role in signaling to the West the Baltics’ seriousness about their desire to join NATO.²³⁶

Germany was another strong advocate for the Baltics’ interests, especially in their relations with Russia. In March 1994, the German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, invited the Foreign

²³⁰ BALTBAT was never deployed for peacekeeping operations as a single peacekeeping unit. In order to save face, the Nordic states included military personnel from the three Baltic States, trained through BALTBAT, into various peacekeeping operations together with their own military troops. See Poast, P., Uperlainen, J. *Organizing Democracy*, Forthcoming, p. 196-197.

²³¹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996, p. 7. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ The common underlying goal of joining NATO and the EU, however, encouraged the three Baltic countries to bypass these differences and to concentrate their efforts in intensifying economic, political and military cooperation. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Latvia’s Foreign Policy, February 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²³⁴ Poast, P., Uperlainen, J. *Organizing Democracy*, Forthcoming

²³⁵ Ibid., 195.

²³⁶ Ibid.

Ministers of the three Baltic States to Bonn, in what the Ukrainian diplomats labeled as a “sign of political and economic support to the Baltic countries.”²³⁷ Germany’s goal was to “strengthen” the Baltic States through a “quick integration into the EU” and help them become “the bridge of widening [West’s] relations with Russia.”²³⁸

In June 1994, the-then European Parliament’s president, Egon Klepsch, visited Lithuania showing his support for the Baltics’ Western aspirations. During a speech in the Lithuanian Parliament, he declared that “common European security, democracy and well-being cannot stop at the German borders.”²³⁹ The economic development of the Central and Eastern European states, from the Baltic to the Black Seas, is of concern to all; these countries could not be left “under uncertainty and suspense.”²⁴⁰

The visit, for the first time, of an American President to the Baltic States in July 1994, marked, according to the Ukrainian diplomats, “the beginning of a new era in the development of the Baltics – a restoration of the Western influence under the American auspices in the region, which for decades was under Soviet-Russian interests.”²⁴¹ Clinton’s visit to the Baltics in 1994 marked the turn in Western policy toward the Baltics: if until this date, the West was reluctant to consider the Baltics as potential candidates for NATO enlargement, Clinton’s visit signaled the US commitment to these countries’ Western aspirations.

Following Clinton’s visit to the Baltics, the foreign diplomats accredited in Latvia were invited to the US Embassy to celebrate US Independence Day and to discuss the results of the

²³⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Federal Republic of Germany on the visit of the Baltic Foreign Ministers to Bonn, March 9, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on the Visit of the European Parliament’s President, E. Klepsch, to Lithuania. June 1-2, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Clinton’s Visit to Latvia. July 7, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

American President's visit to the country. The Ukrainian Chargé D'affaires in Latvia reported that the-then Russian ambassador to Latvia, arrived at the American Embassy's ceremony in the second half of the 4-hour program. The Ukrainian diplomat, addressing the Russian ambassador, said jokingly that the American hosts were reluctant to start the celebrations, waiting for the arrival of the Russian Ambassador. "Let's abandon these jokes," the Russian ambassador replied. "They [the Americans] are not waiting for anyone anymore. At least for the next 18 years, they secured their presence in the region. Russia was kicked out from here. But flirting with Ukraine did not give anyone anything yet."²⁴²

The fact that by 1994, the Baltic region shifted from the Russian sphere of influence to the Western one is confirmed by the Russian Ambassador to Lithuania, who in discussions with his Ukrainian counterpart, pointed out that "in the Russian political circles, an agreement has been reached that in the official Russian documents, the term "near abroad" will no longer be used in relation to the Baltic States."²⁴³ During that period, members of the Estonian government were traveling to Washington almost every week and policies adopted in Tallinn were widely consulted with experts in Washington.²⁴⁴

The diplomatic documents suggest, however, that although within the American political circles, there was a general acknowledgement with respect to the need to let the Baltic States into

²⁴² "Бросьте эти шуточки. Никого они уже не ждут. Как минимум, лет на 18 они обеспечили себе присутствие в регионе. Россию отсюда выперли. А вот заигрывание с Украиной ничего пока-что никому не дало." Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Clinton's Visit to Latvia. July 7, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁴³ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on the Meeting between the Ukrainian and Russian Ambassadors, February 2 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁴⁴ One Russian newspaper reports that most probably the Estonian diplomats and politicians internalized the saying "do not have 100 friends, have at least one, especially if this friend is the US." Ivlev, V. "Waiting for quests from Moscow, Riga, and Vilnius." Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

NATO,²⁴⁵ there was lack of consensus among the NATO members on the prospect of the Baltics' membership in the organization. Even though the Western states were open to the idea of discussing the Baltics' membership perspective, there was a high level of doubt that the Baltics would be let in together with Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.²⁴⁶ Despite this, the Baltic leaders, aware of the danger of a prolonged stay in the so-called "gray zone," were determined to obtain clear commitments from NATO on their countries' eventual membership into the organization.²⁴⁷ In addition, the Baltic political leaders shared confidence, that their countries would be accepted to join the Western institutions, especially because of the American effort to lead the way.²⁴⁸

Estonia's President, Lennart Meri, pointed out during an address to the Estonian people, on the occasion of US Vice-President, Al Gore's visit to Tallinn in March 1995, that "We were assured at our morning discussion [with Al Gore] the United States would not exclude Estonia's membership in NATO" and that "we can believe in promises given by the USA."²⁴⁹ The Estonian Foreign Minister was pointing out in December 1996 that "the most significant attainment" in the Baltics' diplomatic efforts was that the security of the Baltic region reached "the focus of the debate on NATO enlargement. This is a true step forward compared to the previous marginal

²⁴⁵ In an emotional speech in Tallinn in March 1995, the US Vice President, Al Gore, pointed out that Estonia should be offered provisions to join European political structures and that no country had veto right on another's choice. Vice President Al Gore Remarks to the People of Estonia, Town Hall Square, Tallinn March 13 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

²⁴⁶ Information on the Question of the Baltic States' NATO membership, October 9, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

²⁴⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

²⁴⁸ The US Vice President, Al Gore, addressing the Estonian people in March 1995 in Tallinn, declared that "President Clinton is leading the way toward the integration of Europe's new democracies into a growing Transatlantic community of secure, prosperous, and peaceful nations. This will be a community without spheres of influence or arbitrary lines." Vice President Al Gore Remarks to the People of Estonia, Town Hall Square, Tallinn March 13 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

²⁴⁹ Address by Lennart Meri, President of Estonian Republic, at Town Hall Square, Tallinn, March 13, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

interest of large countries.”²⁵⁰ In January 1998, the US-Baltic Charter was signed in the East Room of the White House, with the Charter sending one important message: “the Baltics will not be excluded or discriminated against [in NATO or other institutions] because of geography or history and the injustices of the past.”²⁵¹ One of the most important achievements in the political realm singled out by American diplomats with respect to the Baltic States was the Western provision of a “clear perspective” for these countries’ integration into the Western economic and security institutions.²⁵²

Apart from diplomatic support, Washington was also offering the Baltics significant financial and military help. The Ukrainian diplomats were grudgingly reporting that the “US transformed the Baltic region in an area of its direct influence, helping re-arm themselves [the Baltics] according to NATO standards.”²⁵³ In 1997, the US Department of Defense assisted the Baltic States to identify weaknesses and set priorities to modernize the Baltics’ militaries, priorities, which were included by the Baltic States into their national defense planning and

²⁵⁰ Address by the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Toomas Hendrik Ilves to the Estonian Parliament, December 5 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

²⁵¹ Statement by Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, “U.S. Policy Toward Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.” European Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 15, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

The American diplomat emphasized, however, that “the Charter does not contain pre-commitments. It underscores that these states [...] must meet the same high standards that NATO sets for all new members.”

²⁵² Statement by Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, “U.S. Policy Toward Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.” European Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 15, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²⁵³ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on the Records of Discussion between Ukrainian Ambassador to Latvia with Oleksandr Kirshcheyns, Head of the Foreign Policy Committee within the Latvian Parliament, February 7 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 30, 2015.

The Ukrainians report that this financial and military support was often accomplished through third countries, for example by Estonia purchasing “Stinger” rockets from Israel. The credits which Estonia was taking from Tel-Aviv with this goal, were masked under free financing of the new defense system, which is created with the US participation.

priorities.²⁵⁴ In 1999 alone, for example, the US offered \$5 million aid to modernize the Latvian Army.

In 1997, the US launched the so-called “Northern European Initiative,” the goal of which was “to help Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania help themselves become the strongest possible candidates for Western integration.”²⁵⁵

The US support was instrumental in the efforts to combat organized crime in the Baltic States.²⁵⁶ The American assistance and support addressed “real crime problems,” helping to build and support “ties among regional and transatlantic law enforcement professionals and hold[ing] out the hope of improving the business environment for local entrepreneurs.”²⁵⁷

In addition, the Ukrainian diplomats report that indicative of the “targeted and consistent” American interest in the Baltic region was the appointment of skilled and knowledgeable diplomats to the Baltic States. In August 1998, for example, the US appointed James Howard Holmes as American Ambassador to Latvia and the Ukrainian archival diplomatic documents suggest that his previous highly ranked positions in the US Administration,²⁵⁸ display the importance of the Baltic region in Washington’s foreign policy in Europe.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁴ Statement by Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, “U.S. Policy Toward Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.” European Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 15, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Statement by Marc Grossman, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, “U.S. Policy Toward Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.” European Subcommittee, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 15, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ During 1988 – 1992, Holmes was Deputy Director of the Department of State’s Policy Planning Staff with responsibilities for European policy and during 1995-1998, as President’s Coordinator for Assistance to Central and Eastern Europe responsible for assistance programs to fourteen Central European states.

²⁵⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Latvia’s Foreign Policy, February 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

In contrast to the Baltics, author interviews with former policy makers in Moldova, indicated that the Western capitals were less strategic in sending their diplomatic representatives to Chisinau.

NATO acknowledged the Baltic States as “legitimate candidates for NATO enlargement” during a Madrid meeting in July 1997 and decided to leave the doors of the alliance open for its future enlargement.²⁶⁰ At the same Summit, The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were invited to start accession talks. In 1999, the Washington NATO Summit offered other Eastern European candidate countries Membership Action Plans to help them prepare for membership.²⁶¹ The Prague Summit in 2002 invited the three Baltic States, as well as Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to begin accession talks. All of these countries joined NATO in 2004, during a second post-Cold War round of NATO enlargement.

The Baltics’ road to EU membership

Chief among the Western supporters for the Baltics’ EU membership success were the Scandinavian countries, who took the “lead” in bringing the Baltics into the EU.²⁶²

The Ukrainian diplomats report on “the tacit workings of the so-called “Stockholm group”, in which, at the initiative from the Scandinavians, the US, Italy, France, Great Britain, and Germany were also included.”²⁶³ The group’s main tasks were to support the Baltic States in their negotiations with the Russians and in the adoption of Western standards to their domestic institutions and policies.

²⁶⁰ Gerhard Schröder “German-Latvian Partnership in Europe and in the Name of Europe.” *Diena*, December 10, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²⁶¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Enlargement. Last updated on December 3, 2015. Retrieved from http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm

²⁶² Main Directions of the Foreign Policies of the Scandinavian Countries. Document prepared for Concept on the Bilateral Relations of Ukraine with Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

Even though the Nordic countries joined the EU in 1995, they maintained strong economic links and free trade with the Baltics, which at that time were non-EU members.²⁶⁴ Strong direct inter-governmental links between the Baltic States and the Scandinavians intensified the Baltics' rapprochement with the West: the Ukrainians report that Swedish diplomats and experts were advising the three Baltic governments.²⁶⁵ For example, the former Swedish ambassador to Hungary was advising the Latvian government on foreign policy issues.²⁶⁶ In addition, the Scandinavians conducted a series of campaigns and projects to publicize the EU within the Baltics and bring the three republics closer to the West. Sweden declared the year 2000 as "The Year of the Baltic Countries."²⁶⁷ As part of this initiative, Sweden increased the number of meetings and consultations between Baltic and Swedish leaders, financed visits of Baltic journalists to Sweden and other EU countries for internships and exchanges, hired representatives from the Baltic States' regional and local public administrations in the Swedish Embassy in Brussels.²⁶⁸ In addition, it launched special telephone lines where people in the Baltics could call and receive answers to various questions related to the European Union, it broadcasted special TV programs to publicize the EU in the Baltics and it created EU information centers in the Baltic States.²⁶⁹

At the EU-wide level, the Nordic countries jointly with the Baltics, organized seminars in Lisbon, Athens, Paris and Rome, on questions related to regional cooperation and security.²⁷⁰ In February 1995, Sweden, Denmark and France jointly organized an international conference in

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ On the Concept of Developing Ukrainian-Swedish Relations. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Sweden, on the Swedish initiative of Naming the Year 2000 "The Year of the Baltic Countries", October 10, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

Paris on “The Baltic Countries and European Cooperation,” during which the-then Swedish Foreign Minister, Lena Hjelm-Wallen, declared: “I cannot recall that there has ever been a conference on the Baltic countries at such a high level. [...] This conference is a clear indication of the importance that the EU attaches to the process of integrating the Baltic countries.”²⁷¹

The Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs explained in 1995 the increased interest of the Nordic countries in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania: “geographic proximity; a shared history – particularly in the case of Estonia and Latvia; many human ties²⁷² [...]; a certain cultural affinity. [...] But at the deepest level, our policy has a firmer and more substantial basis, namely national interest.”²⁷³ Since four EU Member States bordered on the Baltic Sea, the Swedish top diplomat added, “What happens in the Baltic countries is of great importance for the security and stability in the Northern European region.”²⁷⁴

The CEECs and their relations with Russia

It is not the goal of this section to document the complex and multi-faceted relations between the CEECs and Russia in the years following the fall of Communism. Rather, the aim is to show how the different approach and increased involvement level of the West mitigated Russia’s influence in the region and facilitated the maintenance of a steady pro-Western orientation and subsequent integration into the Western security and economic organizations.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russian political establishment was characterized by a struggle for power among different political factions. The feud between the

²⁷¹ Introductory Remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, at the Conference “The Baltic Countries and European Cooperation”, Paris, February 1 1995.

²⁷² At the end of the WWII, numerous Baltic refugees crossed the Baltic Sea and settled in Sweden. Introductory Remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, at the Conference “The Baltic Countries and European Cooperation”, Paris, February 1 1995.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

conservatives and the liberal forces within the Russian political circles oftentimes manifested itself in different approaches and reactions on issues related to Russia's relations with its neighbors, the CEECs – most of them former Soviet satellite states, as well as questions related to NATO eastward enlargement.

When in 1994, debates on the enlargement of North-Atlantic Alliance started to preoccupy politicians on the both sides of the Atlantic, the conservative forces and the Russian Army Generals were loudly voicing their opposition to NATO eastward expansion. Andrei Kozyrev, the then-Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, however, made a tour of visits to the Visegrád capitals, with the goal of “debunking the information about Russian nationalism, hegemony and aggressive plans.”²⁷⁵ Acknowledging each country's right to choose the path that best guarantees its security, Kozyrev also talked about Russia's pursuits of defining its role as a “great nation” and the need to hold more discussions related to the best means to maintain European security.²⁷⁶ The then-Russian president, Yeltsin, shared a similar opinion, during a visit of the then-Hungarian Prime Minister, Gyula Horn, to Russia in March 1995. Yelstin pointed out that although Russia was not very enthusiastic, “the Russo-Hungarian relations will not be affected by Hungary's decision to join NATO.”²⁷⁷

Still, Kozyrev's ideas that the countries of the CIS and the Baltics represented a “sphere of vital interests” to Russia²⁷⁸ and Russia's requests to be offered “peace-keeping powers” and a “privileged status” in the neighborhood countries,²⁷⁹ troubled leaders in the Baltics and the Central

²⁷⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Czech Republic on A. Kozyrev's Visit to the Visegrad Countries, 19-20 February 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Hungary on the visit of the Hungarian Prime Minister to Moscow, March 5 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 6, 2015.

²⁷⁸ Congressional Record Volume 140, Number 144, October 6, 1994. Retrieved from <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-1994-10-06/html/CREC-1994-10-06-pt1-PgS18.htm>

²⁷⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Finland on the Finish Press reporting on the OSCE Summit in Rome, December 3 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 27, 2015.

and Eastern European countries. Andrzej Olechowski, the then Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs declared that Russia's position "does not contribute to stability in the Eastern European region" and Poland "does not approve of it."²⁸⁰

The Western timing in alleviating Russia's influence in the region was very important. Due to a window of opportunity up until mid-1990s, the CEECs and the Baltics were able to break free from Russia's influence and establish firm links with the West. This subsection makes three main points. First, the US was willing and put big pressure on Russia, but only regarding a limited set of countries (those closer to the west and those who they considered strategic for the US interests, like Romania and Bulgaria and their Black Sea geographic positioning). Second, because Russia was economically weak and politically unstable in mid 1990s, the Western pressure on Russia paid off and Russia's influence on these countries was alleviated, entrenching the CEECs on the western path. Finally, by the time the west might have committed more to other post-Soviet countries in the region, the window of opportunity had been missed. Russia was resurgent and less willing to make compromises with the West on withdrawing its troops from other post-Soviet countries.

In the Baltics' case, relations with Russia were complex. On the one hand, being aware of the security threats coming from Moscow, the Baltic politicians were looking for security guarantees from the West by becoming members of Western security institutions and sparking Russian negative reactions. On the other hand, however, being economically dependent on Russia, they had to find ways to maintain partnership relations with the Eastern neighbor. Politicians and party leaders in Latvia, for example, declared both in a veiled and direct fashion that the main threat to Latvia's sovereignty and independence came solely from Russia. At the same time,

²⁸⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Poland on the Speech of the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Sejm on Polish Foreign Policy for the year 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

however, Latvian economic dependence on Russia forced politicians to seek partnership with Moscow. At the end of the 1990s, the country was 93 percent reliant on Russian oil and gas, 50 percent on electricity, 90 percent on nonferrous metals, 80 percent on raw materials for the chemical industry. In addition, the Russian market was the main destination for the Latvian fish processing products, meat and dairy products, medications, and garments.²⁸¹

One lingering issue that characterized the Baltics' relations with Moscow in the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union was the withdrawal of Russian military troops from the Baltics' territories. Moscow used the same approach of power and pressure toward all the former Soviet States. What was different in the development of these relations, when comparing the Baltics with the rest of the former Soviet republics, like Ukraine or Moldova – was the Western approach. The Western level of involvement and support to the Baltics alleviated their relations with Moscow and facilitated their accession to the EU and NATO.

If the Russian military presence in Moldova and Ukraine was not a dominant issue of concern to the Western leaders, especially during the 1990s, adopting a “bystander” role in the process of how these states solved issues with Moscow, the Baltic States benefited from Western support on this question in 1992, one year after the breakup of the USSR.²⁸²

The Nordic countries, notably Denmark and Norway, promised to support Latvia in the process of withdrawal of Russian troops from its territory.²⁸³ The Baltics were also enjoying strong

²⁸¹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Latvia's Foreign Policy, February 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²⁸² The first real Western intervention to support Moldova's efforts to convince Russia to withdraw its troops and armament from Transnistria was during the OSCE Istanbul Summit in 1999, seven years after the break-up of the military conflict with Transnistria. Interviews with former Moldovan politicians also showed that in the first years since the break-up of the Transnistria conflict, Moldova was negotiating with Russia alone and that the amount of pressure the Russians put on Chisinau oftentimes led Moldovan decision makers to take disadvantageous decisions for Moldova.

²⁸³ Records of Discussions between Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, B. Tarasyuk, with Latvia's Special Envoy to Ukraine, June 25, 1992. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 22, 2015.

backing from Washington. The US played an important role in the negotiations with the Russians on the withdrawal from the Baltics of troops and military equipment from the Soviet era.

In October 1992, the US Senate passed a bill that conditioned the allotment of the \$417 million to Russia, in the form of economic and technical assistance to Russia's withdrawal of troops and armament from the territories of the Baltic States.²⁸⁴ In July 1994, the US Senate overwhelmingly voted for an amendment, threatening to cut off \$839 million aid to Russia if Russia continued to refuse to withdraw its troops on the schedule it originally set.²⁸⁵ Following a visit by representatives from the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well from all parties of the Latvian parliament, to Washington in February 1994, the Americans offered guarantees to the Latvians that the withdrawal of Russian troops from its territory would be completed by August 31, 1994.²⁸⁶ The US decided to take the dismantling of the Skrunda radiolocator, a Soviet-era radar defense-settlement²⁸⁷ under its responsibility, in order to exclude possible provocations from the Russian side. Both the US and Sweden offered \$9 million for the cleaning of the territory of the Skrunda radiolocator.²⁸⁸

In Estonia alone, there were around 10,000 fully trained and demobilized troops from the former Soviet armed forces – five times the size of Estonia's own “fledgling and poorly-equipped defense forces.” Speech by Trivimi Velliste, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia at the NUPI-CSIS Conference on Baltic and Nordic Security Oslo, September 21 1993. Retrieved from <http://www.vm.ee/en/news/speech-trivimi-velliste-nupi-csis-conference-baltic-and-nordic-security>

²⁸⁴ Stankevicius, C. *Enhancing Security of Lithuania and other Baltic States in 1992 – 1994 and Future Guidelines*. Retrieved from <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/94-96/stankevi/07.htm>

²⁸⁵ Central and Eastern European Coalition. “Statement on US-Russian Relations.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

The archival documents suggest that the Clinton Administration strongly opposed the initiatives of the US Senate, which adopted legislation to suspend aid to Russia if the troops were not withdrawn on time.

²⁸⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on the Records of Discussion between Ukrainian Ambassador to Latvia with Oleksandr Kirshteyns, Head of the Foreign Policy Committee within the Latvian Parliament, February 7 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 30, 2015.

²⁸⁷ Brown, D., Jardine, B. “Skrunda 1: Latvia's Last Ghost City.” *The Baltic Times*, October 4, 2015.

²⁸⁸ Stankevicius, C. *Enhancing Security of Lithuania and other Baltic States in 1992 – 1994 and Future Guidelines*.

In order to incentivize Russia to withdraw its troops from the Baltics' territories according to the schedule,²⁸⁹ the US offered humanitarian assistance to Russia to support the social needs of the relocated Russian military officers' families. The American and Russian Presidents signed an agreement in 1993, providing \$110 million in assistance for the construction of houses in Russia for military families.²⁹⁰

The American assistance continued following the completion of Russian military withdrawal²⁹¹ from the Baltic States: \$160 million was offered for re-training and housing purposes in September 1994.²⁹² While negotiating the terms of Russian troop removal from Latvia's territory, Moscow advanced the request of having the Latvian government pay social security benefits to the Russian retired military officers who decided to remain in the country.²⁹³ After the Latvian and Russian presidents signed an Agreement establishing the terms on this issue, Latvians protested against the agreement and the Latvian parliament went through difficult negotiations and debates on approving the Agreement.²⁹⁴ The Latvian president, however, argued that this Agreement was necessary to speed up Russia's withdrawal of troops. A Repatriation Fund

²⁸⁹ Strobe Talbott, who following Clinton's election to the White House, served as the Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, declared that the special relationship between Clinton and Yeltsin and the 10 on-one meetings between the two presidents "were decisive in resolving important questions, such as the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic States." Dobbs, M. "Strobe Talbott and The 'Cursed Questions,'" *The Washington Post*, June 9, 1996,

https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/magazine/1996/06/09/strobe-talbott-and-the-cursed-questions/bd8dbc3c-019d-4884-abac-b6bf91f22955/?utm_term=.bc122c817b33

²⁹⁰ Stankevicius, C. *Enhancing Security of Lithuania and other Baltic States in 1992 – 1994 and Future Guidelines*.

²⁹¹ On December 5 1994, the participants of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe in Budapest welcomed the withdrawal of "foreign troops from the Baltic States as agreed in paragraph 15 of the Helsinki Summit Declaration of 1992. They acknowledged this as an event of historic significance and as an important factor in stabilizing the security environment in the Baltic region." CSCE Budapest Declaration, December 5 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁹² Stankevicius, C. *Enhancing Security of Lithuania and other Baltic States in 1992 – 1994 and Future Guidelines*.

²⁹³ Information on the Results of the Negotiations between the Russian and Latvian Presidents in Moscow, April 30, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁹⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on the Russian-Latvian Relations. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

was created for this purpose: Sweden was the first Western country to donate \$1 million to the Fund, followed by the US with \$2.5 million.²⁹⁵

The EU also offered significant support to the Baltics in settling their “complex relations” with Russia. In August 1998, the EU Troika (Austria, Germany and Great Britain) sent a Memorandum to the Russian Federation, in which the Russian economic pressure on Latvia was labeled as “unacceptable” and as one, which contributed to instability in the Baltic region.²⁹⁶ In addition, in April 1998, a joint declaration was issued following the meeting of the foreign ministers of the Nordic and Baltic countries (5+3), in which Russia was urged to solve the political problems in the Baltic region through political dialogue and refrain from using economic pressure in its relations with Latvia and the rest of the Baltic States.²⁹⁷

“Active post-imperial politics” – this is how the-then Estonian president labeled Russia’s behavior toward the former subjects of the Soviet empire.²⁹⁸ The Russian negotiators used such tactics as delays and obstruction in the negotiation process, waiting for elections seasons and hoping for a change in the foreign policy orientation because of these elections.²⁹⁹ The Ukrainian ambassador in Estonia concluded that the Estonian negotiation process was similar to the Russian-Ukrainian negotiations on the sharing of the Black Sea Fleet.³⁰⁰ The difference, however, was the significant financial and political support offered by the West to the Baltics in their negotiations

²⁹⁵ Information on the Results of the Negotiations between the Russian and Latvian Presidents in Moscow, April 30, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

²⁹⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on Latvia’s Foreign Policy, February 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Insisting on Estonia paying \$23 million for Russian troop withdrawal, as well as social security benefits for the Russian retired officers willing to remain in Estonia, the Russian General Myronov, the lead negotiator, declared that “if the problem of Russian pensioners remains unsolved, then the 2.5 thousand Russian troops will stay in Estonia for as long as it is necessary and if needed, the contingents will be increased for the protection of military objectives.” The Swedish Foreign Minister, Carl Bildt, criticized Russia’s statements and said that the Russians are damaging their international image and behave as if there are no international norms. Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

with the Russians and the successful withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltics' territories in 1994, freeing their path to Western integration.

In the case of the Baltics States, Russian opposition to their membership in NATO was not sufficient to prevent it.

After Russia withdrew its troops from the Baltics on agreement,³⁰¹ once discussions of NATO enlargement intensified and the possibility of it including the three Baltic States became more probable, Russia intensified its objections towards this likelihood. A new Defense doctrine developed by the Russian Army General Staff, stated that in case NATO undertakes "preliminary work for the admission of the Baltic States into this organization, Russia will immediately bring its Armed Forces into the territory of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia."³⁰² Despite Russian objections, the Baltics joined NATO in 2004, along with the rest of the CEECs.

In June 1995, before a scheduled meeting between Bill Clinton and the Baltic Presidents in the White House, Russian President Boris Yeltsin sent a confidential letter to Clinton, labeled by some as a "second Yalta" proposal,³⁰³ asking the American leader not to publicly endorse an eventual NATO membership for the Baltic States.³⁰⁴ The letter stressed Russia's "categorical" rejection of even "the hypothetical possibility" of NATO membership for the Baltics,³⁰⁵ such a

³⁰¹ Introductory Remarks by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, at the Conference "The Baltic Countries and European Cooperation", Paris, February 1 1995.

³⁰² The Russian Foreign Minister, A. Kozyrev, told the Interfax News Agency that "he is totally unaware of such a Russian defense doctrine," however officially, the Kremlin has not denied the existence of such a doctrine. Aide Memoire from the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs addressed to the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Russian objections with respect to Latvia's NATO membership. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 7, 2015.

³⁰³ Statement of Senator Richard R. Lugar "European Security Revisited: the State of the Alliance and US Vital Interests in 1994" delivered at the Overseas Writers Club on June 28, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 5, 2015.

³⁰⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

³⁰⁵ RFE/RL Newslines, July 9, 1996. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1141207.html>

step being perceived as a “direct challenge to Russia’s national interests.”³⁰⁶ Yeltsin suggested in the letter, however, that Russia supported the Baltics’ EU membership, which was seen as a “compensation” for them not joining NATO.³⁰⁷ There were speculations that the letter may have had some impact on the American President, since Clinton made only “vague assurances” on NATO membership to the three Baltic leaders during their visit to the White House.³⁰⁸ As discussed below, however, the Western powers formed a common front and were willing to override Russia, therefore the Russian threats did not have much impact on NATO policies.

Back home, however, the Baltic leaders remained hopeful with the Estonian Foreign Minister, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, declaring that “there is no need to delve into the fears that Russia expresses” as considering such fears would mean that they were “legitimate.”³⁰⁹ At the same time, however, the Baltic diplomat pointed to the “danger of treating” the Baltics separately from the rest of the Central European states, as this gave the three Baltic countries “the status of a barter object.”³¹⁰

Despite the Western support to the Baltics and the rest of the CEECs in the pre-accession period, finding a Western consensus on NATO’s eastward enlargement was not an easy and straightforward process. Concerns over how to alleviate Russian reactions preoccupied diplomats on both sides of the Atlantic. The conflicting views of German and French politicians present the clearest example of the Western division over NATO’s eastward enlargement. Whereas the German politicians maintained that NATO’s eastward enlargement was a done deal, irrespective

³⁰⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Lithuania on Ukrainian-Lithuanian Relations, July 16, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ RFE/RL Newswire, July 9, 1996. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1141207.html>

³⁰⁹ Address by the Estonian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Toomas Hendrik Ilves to the Estonian Parliament, December 5 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

of Russia's protests,³¹¹ France, had a more restrained position. Paris protested against the US domination of the alliance and French leaders insisted on creating Europe's own security organization. France preferred NATO to be first reformed within and then accept new members.³¹²

Despite Western divergent opinions on NATO's eastward enlargement, as the BALTBAT example in the previous section showed, the West found avenues to support the security of the CEECs and a consensus on the enlargement of the alliance was eventually found. While the three Visegrád countries (Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) joined the Alliance, the West found other solutions to draw closer the rest of the CEECs. The Baltic States were invited to be part in a "super-partnership" with NATO member states, which allowed them to participate in the Alliance's military tasks, outside of the collective defense frameworks, as well as establish NATO bureaus in their capitals.³¹³

Another sore point in the Baltics' relations with Russia was the question related to the Russian minorities in the Baltic States. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the three Baltic States, in contrast to Moldova and Ukraine, adopted citizenship laws that excluded the subjects which did not speak Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian. The majority of these subjects were Soviet-era migrants who settled in the Baltics during the 1940 – 1990 years. The Head of the Foreign Policy Committee in the Estonian's National Assembly declared back in 1994 that:

³¹¹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Federal Republic of Germany with information on the Bergen Conference of the Defense Ministers of NATO-members, October 10 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

³¹² In general, France did not support NATO enlargement to the East, however for diplomatic reasons, in order not to upset the Central and Eastern European countries, which were active in their desire to join the Alliance, kept its position aligned with the NATO leadership. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in France on France's position on NATO Enlargement, February 22 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

³¹³ Developments with the CEE states, as well as with the Baltic countries, prompted Ukraine to seek a "special relationship" with NATO as well. As the Ukrainian chapter showed however, Ukraine's proposals for deeper relations with the alliance remained unanswered for a long period of time. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Federal Republic of Germany with information on the Bergen Conference of the Defense Ministers of NATO-members, October 10 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 11, 2015.

“Estonia has strict rules on offering the Estonian citizenship. [...] More than 200,000 non-Estonians would want the Estonian citizenship, however it is not possible to satisfy their request due to an entire set of reasons, the main one being their lack of knowledge of the Estonian language. If we assume that we meet their request – this would mean that we create in Estonia two sides – one Estonian and one pro-Russian, which would compete among themselves during the next presidential elections. We cannot allow this to happen.”³¹⁴

The Russians brought up the “citizenship question” in almost every negotiation with the Baltics and were blaming the Baltics for discriminating against the Russian minority living on their territories³¹⁵ every time the West was criticizing Moscow for its actions in Chechnia. Nevertheless, the Baltics remained firm and to this date are granting citizenship only to the subjects who pass a rigorous language and national history examinations.³¹⁶

The Western support was critical in the Baltics’ efforts to bridge the ethnic divide. The Western assistance was aimed at avoiding transforming the Russian minorities into “citizens of second sort,” the underlying fear in the West being that this would lead to social unrest in the Baltic region. In Latvia, Sweden offered financial support to fund schools to teach the Russian minorities the Latvian language.³¹⁷ The United States offered financial aid in the sum of \$500,000 for Latvian

³¹⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Estonia on the Visit of an Estonian National Assembly Delegation to Moscow, July 18, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015. In Moldova, on the contrary, the Parliament adopted a citizenship law preferring the “zero variant,” i.e. offering the Moldovan citizenship to all subjects living on the territory of Moldova at the time when the country declared its independence from the USSR. Whereas the Moldovan citizenship law was more inclusive of ethnic minorities, it reinforced electoral cleavages and stimulated the creation of pro-Russia political parties and electoral platforms, reinforcing the East-West foreign policy oscillation.

³¹⁵ In 1993, following the adoption of the Latvian Parliament of the Law on Elections, which prohibited non-citizens from voting in elections and candidates not speaking Latvian language from standing for elections, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a declaration calling the attention of the international community to the risk of “aggressive nationalism.” “Declaration from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Law of Elections in Latvia.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

³¹⁶ Eftode, A., Buff, M. “For Russians In Latvia, Citizenship Is Tricky, But Sights Are Set On Europe.” *RFE/RL*, August 13, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/26531069.html>

³¹⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia, February 2 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 10, 2015.

language schools and courses for the non-Latvian speakers.³¹⁸ This Western financial support to help the Baltic States implement concrete measures for the integration of non-citizens, including language training, was vital for the Baltics' EU accession progress, because the first Copenhagen criterion which Latvia³¹⁹ and Estonia had to fulfill was stability of institutions "guaranteeing respect for and protection of minorities."³²⁰

When the Baltic States' relations with Russia worsened in 1998 (especially complex were Latvia's relations with Moscow),³²¹ former US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke, made a tour, visiting all three of the Baltic States in April 1998. Even though the American diplomat declared that his visit to the three capitals were undertaken in his private, not official capacity, the Ukrainian diplomats suggest that Holbrooke's visit was coordinated with the White House, in order to demonstrate the US support to the Baltic countries.³²² In Latvia, Holbrooke met with the country's president, gave addresses to the Latvian Members of Parliament, as well as to the members of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, pointing out that "even though the US

³¹⁸ Information on the Results of the Negotiations between the Russian and Latvian Presidents in Moscow, April 30, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 3, 2015.

³¹⁹ According to a draft letter prepared by the Russian Duma on EU's decision to accept the Baltic States into the organization, it is pointed out that there are 520,000 Russians in Latvia, which lack the Latvian citizenship. The same letter notes that there are around 170,000 Russians in Estonia, who lack the Estonian citizenship as well.

Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, on the Draft of the Address of the Russian Duma related to EU Enlargement, January 21, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 20, 2015.

³²⁰ European Commission. "Enlargement of the European Union. An Historic Opportunity." 2001. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/archives/pdf/press_corner/publications/corpus_en.pdf

³²¹ For background on the crisis between the Baltics and Russia during the 1997-1998 period, see Stranga, A. "The Relations between Russia and the Baltic States: 1997-1998." N.d. Retrieved from http://www.bundesheer.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/03_jb99_10.pdf Stranga, A. "The End Product of Crisis in Latvian-Russian Relations (March-August 1998)". N. d. Retrieved from <http://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/96-98/stranga.pdf> Williamson, E. "Trouble Between Neighbors", April 25 1998. *The Moscow Times*. Retrieved from <http://old.themoscowtimes.com/sitemap/free/1998/4/article/trouble-between-neighbors/291641.html>

³²² Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Latvia on the visit of former Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke, to the three Baltic States, April 3, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 13, 2015.

was not an EU member, Washington will use its influence on the Western partners for a speedy integration of Latvia into the EU.”³²³

The evidence presented in this section shows that even though Moscow applied the same tools of pressure to the former Communist countries in Europe, the Western response to this pressure was different. The Western diplomatic support in relations with Russia and the financial provisions offered to the CEECs, especially the Baltics – were vital for the withdrawal of Russian troops, for mitigating the ethnic divide, for solving the border issues and for facilitating the maintenance of a pro-Western orientation among the political forces in these countries.

As this chapter shows and the next two chapters discuss, the fact that the West made a common front to override Russia’s threats against NATO’s decision to incorporate the CEECs and the Western support to the Central and Eastern European states put them on a different path foreign policy than Ukraine and Moldova. Three factors explain the divergence in the post-Soviets’ and CEECs’ trajectories. The Europeans were less keen to accept Ukraine and Moldova into the EU, the US was less engaged in these countries’ relations with Russia and Moscow was operating from stronger economic and political positions in the 2000s, when the question of NATO membership for Ukraine appeared shortly on the Western agenda.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that one factor which explains the CEECs’ consistent pro-Western foreign policy course was the early and credible commitment of the West toward them, expressed through a prospect for membership in the EU and NATO. The Western membership prospect supported the maintenance of a consistent pro-Western foreign policy in several ways: first, it facilitated the

³²³ Ibid.

formation of coalitions among domestic political parties around the common goal of Western membership. The fact that Western integration was a viable option, i.e. the West signaled that the CEECs were deemed eligible for accession, incentivized domestic political parties in the CEECs to promote European integration as a political goal. Promoting the Western integration goal was perceived as a “winning” political ticket, bringing electoral capital, as well as prestige and legitimacy. The “Zeitgeist” of Western integration, in turn, marginalized nationalistic parties and forces promoting alternative foreign policy orientations in the CEECs. The Slovak case is the most revealing in this sense. Romania and Bulgaria are illustrative examples as well. Second, the Western membership prospect served as a “guiding light” to the domestic political forces, showing the steps and directions needed to be undertaken to implement institutional and economic reforms and thus become ready for Western membership. Third, because of a commitment to accept the CEECs among its ranks, the West offered significant financial and technical support to the CEECs’ efforts to prepare for membership. This support, apart from contributing to the implementation of institutional and economic transformations, locked-in a pro-Western foreign policy orientation. Finally, the timely Western commitment to the CEECs’ fate at the beginning of the 1990s and the Western support in negotiations with the Russians has alleviated Russia’s influence in the region and allowed the CEECs and the Baltics to follow their Western integration goals without significant noise from Russia.

Even though not the focus of this chapter, the Western approach toward the Western Balkan countries mirrors the inclusive approach applied to the CEECs and the transformative power the Western membership prospect has on aligning the Western Balkan countries with the West. Back in 2000, the European Commission was communicating to the European Council and to the European Parliament, “The unification of Europe will not be complete until these countries

[Western Balkans] join the EU.”³²⁴ The Feira European Council meeting from June 2000 recognized the Western Balkans as potential candidates for EU membership.³²⁵ The Copenhagen European Council from December 2002 reaffirmed this perspective, emphasizing EU’s determination to continue to support the Balkan countries in their efforts to join the political and economic European institutions.³²⁶ It is true that the speed of the Balkan countries’ accession to the EU varies, with Croatia already an EU member since 2013 and with Bosnia and Herzegovina submitting its membership application in early 2016. However, the fact that the EU considers these countries as potential candidates for membership – decreases the risk of them oscillating between pro-West and pro-Russia foreign policy orientations. Domestic political leaders are aware of the benefits of EU enlargement and of the costs arising from being excluded from the EU accession process. Therefore, the prediction is that domestic political challenges and even subtle external interferences (from Russia) would be conquered while EU membership remains on the table.

The comparison between the CEECs and the post-Soviet hopefuls which did not receive a membership prospect shows that time and initial conditions matter – the establishment of formal institutions and the informal political deals reached in the early years after the fall of Communism set the course for subsequent development paths followed by the post-Communist states.³²⁷ These early institutional arrangements had different effects across the post-Communist world: whereas the CEECs’ institutional choices put them on a path of reform advancement and Western

³²⁴ Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The Western Balkans and European Integration, May 21, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 20, 2015.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ King, C. “Post-Communism: Transition, Comparison and the End of “Eastern Europe.”” *World Politics*, 53(1), 2000, p. 143-172.

integration, the Soviet successor states' institutional arrangements brought the opposite effect, the stagnation of reforms³²⁸ and the foreign policy vacillation.

The paradox in the case of the CEECs is that once the EU and NATO membership was achieved, right wing and nationalist parties, marginalized during the integration period, reared their hideous heads and affected the democratic progress made by these societies during the transition years. Ironically, oscillation in foreign policy views and rhetoric started to emerge as well. Hungary's Viktor Orban and Czech Republic's Milos Zeman are among the Central and Eastern European leaders which are pursuing policies of forging closer ties with Vladimir Putin's Russia.³²⁹

The consensus between domestic political elites/parties in the CEECs during the EU and NATO enlargement period was based on necessity and on the shared realization that internal cohesion was needed to secure Western support for EU and NATO integration. Ideological differences between political parties were subordinated, even if temporarily, to the common goal of joining the West. Because of this consensus, integration with the West was successful. Once Western integration was achieved, however, internal political battles revived the traditional struggle for power and money. Domestic leaders in some of the CEECs were pursuing strategies aimed at achieving political and electoral goals, cracking on democratic practices and values, as well enjoying the complacent position of being part of the West and benefiting from the EU funds and NATO security, but at the same time forging privileged relations with Russia, to attract resources or political support in domestic competition battles.

³²⁸ Ibid.

Grabbe, H. *The EU's Transformative Power. Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006, p. 101.

³²⁹ Orenstein, M. A., Kelemen, R. D. "Trojan Horses in EU Foreign Policy." *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 1, p. 87-102.

Chapter 4. Ukraine and its foreign policy choice 1991 – 2013

“We were unable to walk between the raindrops”³³⁰

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

Introduction

In 2010, Viktor Yanukovich is elected, in what international observers characterized as fairly free and fair elections, as the fourth president of Ukraine. In his new role, Yanukovich’s “first symbolic visit was to Brussels; but his first substantive deal was with Russia.”³³¹

In April 2010, following the signing of the Kharkiv Accords, the Russian Black Sea Fleet stationing in Crimea was extended for 25 more years in exchange for reductions in gas prices.³³² Even though the agreements sparked criticisms from Ukraine’s opposition parties, Russia was content with the accords and “seemed relieved to have a friend in the Ukrainian president.”³³³ The then Russian president Medvedev declared after signing the documents that they were significant for both countries and that they were supposed to “strengthen” the countries’ “friendship and ... brotherhood for a long time to come.”³³⁴ In 2012, in another move to re-shape Ukrainian foreign policy in a more Russia-friendly way, the Ukrainian Rada approved a new law giving Russian the status of a “regional language.” The law provided that the Russian language could be used in

³³⁰ Translation from Russian: “*Нам не удалось пройти через капельки дождя.*” Author interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. August 4, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

³³¹ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 344

³³² Menon, R. Motyl, A. J. “Counterrevolution in Kiev. Hope Fades for Ukraine.” *Foreign Affairs* 90, 6, 2011. Despite the promised lower gas prices, Ukraine continued to pray high gas prices and even Ukrainian officials were admitting privately that the deal was not advantageous to Ukraine.

³³³ Levy. C. J. “Ukraine Woos Russia with Lease Deal.” *New York Times*, April 21, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/22/world/europe/22ukraine.html>

³³⁴ *Ibid.*

schools and other public places in regions where ethnic Russians exceeded 10 percent of the total population.³³⁵

While eager to sign deals with Russia, Yanukovich did not shy away from declarations of Ukraine's EU integration goals. He supported Ukraine's negotiations on the *Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement* (DCFTA), part of a larger Association Agreement,³³⁶ which presupposed alignment of Ukraine's policies to the ones of the EU. The highest "prize" the EU offered for signing such an agreement was the visa-free travel regime for Ukrainian citizens in the EU member states. Despite actions aimed to accommodate Russian demands regarding foreign policy, the then Prime Minister, Mykola Azarov declared that joining the EU remained a priority for Ukraine.³³⁷ In fact, in September 2013, only two months before Yanukovich declined to sign the AA with the EU, Azarov expressed an optimistic future of Ukraine in Europe: "We all want clean air and water, safe food, good education for our children, up-to-date medical services, reliable legal representation, etc. All these are not abstract terms, but norms and rules that are already in place in the EU, which we need in Ukraine."³³⁸

In 2011, Moscow officially invited Ukraine to join the Russia-dominated Customs Union,³³⁹ promising another discount in gas prices.³⁴⁰ Yanukovich, however, declined the Russian offer.³⁴¹ Instead of following the steps of Lukashenko and Nazarbayev, Yanukovich wanted a 3+1

³³⁵ Tsygankov, A. "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2015. Even though Ukrainian continued to be the official language, the law did not allow discrimination over Russian in regions populated predominantly by Russian speakers.

³³⁶ The negotiations on the Association Agreement with the EU started during Yushchenko's presidency, in 2007.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

³³⁸ Elizabeth Piper. "Special Report: Why Ukraine spurned the EU and embraced Russia." *Reuters*. December 19, 2013.

³³⁹ The Customs Union was created in 2010 and includes Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan – and it became functional in January 2012.

³⁴⁰ Tsygankov, A. "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2015

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*

format of relationship with the organization,³⁴² which would have allowed him to continue his negotiations with the EU.³⁴³

In November 2013, Yanukovich was expected to sign the AA with the EU at the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania and several days before the signing ceremony, he announced that his plans of dropping the AA with the EU, choosing instead Putin's counteroffer of major discounts in energy prices and the pledge of \$15 billion in aid. Yanukovich's vacillation proved to be fatal.³⁴⁴ The mass protests in Ukraine's capital, which came to be known as the EuroMaidan Revolution, led to Yanukovich losing power and fleeing to Russia.³⁴⁵ Moscow called this a coup. Following Yanukovich's escape, Russia occupied and annexed the Crimean peninsula, later supporting unrest and military conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine, conflict, which continues to the day of this writing. Choosing to walk this tightrope between Russia's offers and Western opportunities and keeping the West, the Russians and the Ukrainian people in suspense over his foreign policy choice, Yanukovich exacerbated the public opinion divide between the

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Menon, R. Motyl, A. J. "Counterrevolution in Kiev. Hope Fades for Ukraine." *Foreign Affairs* 90, 6, 2011. Kiev could not have been part of both trading agreements. The EU and the Russian-led Customs Union apply different regulations and tariffs, making it impossible to conclude agreements with both free trade zones at the same time. In signing an Association Agreement with the EU, the post-Soviet states committed themselves to join the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and to adopt some 350 EU laws within a ten-year timeframe in areas such as trade, consumer protection, and environmental regulation. Within the Eurasian Customs Union, most internal trade is liberalized (with the exception of certain products such as rice, tobacco, alcohol, sugar) and no border control among its members. In addition, there is a common external trade tariff among the members and more than 80 percent of import duties are harmonized. Putin declared that Russia's main disagreement over Ukraine's signing an AA with the EU was that "Russia could be flooded with European goods virtually without tariffs because of an existing free-trade regime between Kiev and Moscow." ³⁴³ BBC. "Ukraine-EU trade deal 'big threat' to Russia's economy." November 26, 2017. *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, March 2014. Iana Dreyer and Nicu Popescu. "The Eurasian Customs Union: The economics and the politics." Armenia is the only post-Soviet country, which after stepping back from signing an AA with the EU, including a "Deep and comprehensive free trade agreement" (DCFTA), back in 2013, joined the Russian-led Customs Union, and in 2017 signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (CEPA) with the EU, which does not contain free trade arrangements, however, as that is now beyond Armenia's jurisdiction and within that of the Eurasian Economic Union's. See, Anahit Shirinyan. "What Armenia's new agreement with the EU means." November 24, 2017.

³⁴⁴ Tsygankov, A. "Vladimir Putin's Last Stand," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 2015.

³⁴⁵ Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

two integration options, generating social unrest and destabilizing the political situation. As one former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine mentioned, the Ukrainian politicians “failed to walk between the raindrops.”³⁴⁶

Yanukovich’s switch from promising integration with the West via the Association Agreement with the EU only to plug on that deal suddenly represented an unsuccessful foreign policy vacillation episode and only reflects a broader pattern of ambiguity and vacillation in Ukraine’s foreign policy over its 25 years of independence. Yanukovich’s predecessors embraced the vacillatory foreign policy behavior as well, but proved more skilled at the balancing act.

What factors explain the phenomenon of foreign policy vacillation characteristic to post-independence period in Ukraine? Why weren’t the Ukrainian leaders consistent in their foreign policy choices? While her western neighbors, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, as well as the Baltic States – joined the EU and NATO fifteen years after the fall of Communism, Ukraine remains outside of these Western organizations?

This chapter presents empirical evidence supporting the argument that the interplay between systemic opportunities and constraints and domestic struggle for political power determined Ukraine’s vacillating behavior on the international arena. Ukraine’s foreign policy path differed from the trajectories followed by the CEECs because Kiev lacked a credible membership prospect in the EU and NATO. In the rest of the CEECs, Western passive and active conditionality facilitated domestic party cohesion around the common goal of joining the EU and NATO, influencing intra-party competition and the political stances advanced by political leaders.³⁴⁷ In other words, the powerful combination of domestic and international constraints steered political

³⁴⁶ Author interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. August 4, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

³⁴⁷ Vachudova, *Europe Undivided*

parties and their leaders toward pro-Western foreign policy orientation and maintained the orientation consistent.

The fact that the European Union created “a separate network of cooperation agreements”³⁴⁸ with the post-Soviet states, signing Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with them in 1994, rather than Europe Agreements, as with the rest of the CEECs, “placed relations with these countries on a separate track from its development of ties with the CEECs.”³⁴⁹ The exclusion of Ukraine from the EU enlargement process signaled to Moscow that the West leaves these states in Russia’s sphere of influence. Archival evidence suggests that the diplomatic contacts between Russian and Western politicians were intense throughout the 1990s and the beginning of 2000s, so Moscow was aware that the republics of the former Soviet Union (with the exception of the Baltics) were of no interest to the West. In Ukraine and Moldova, then, in contrast to the rest of the CEECs,³⁵⁰ the norms, policies and rules that the EU sought to transfer to their domestic institutions, were often in competition with and challenged by Russian preferences and interests. Even though the EU refused to include Ukraine in the list of potential candidate countries for EU membership, the EU hoped that by offering support to Ukraine to implement the institutional and economic changes, its eastern borders would remain secure and stable.

Ukrainian domestic elites’ awareness that their country is not a credible future member of the EU and NATO on the one hand, and Russia’s constant interest in keeping Kiev under its influence, on the other hand, broadened the options of foreign policy orientations. Political discourse was dominated by the question of foreign policy orientation. Political leaders often

³⁴⁸ Baun, M. J. *A Wider Europe: the Process and Politics of European Union Enlargement*. Boston: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, p. 35.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁰ Schimmelfennig, F. “Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and Eastern European States – Conceptual and Theoretical Issues.” In Ronald H. Linden eds. *Norms and Nannies. The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002, p. 16.

adopted foreign policy orientations for strategic reasons: to either differentiate their parties and political programs from their opponents or hoping to receive Russian or Western backing during electoral campaigns. Switches between pro-Western or pro-Russia foreign policy options became appealing policy strategies. Politicians picked orientations depending on calculations as to which vector would help them maintain a higher hand on the domestic political scene.

My underlying assumption is that within the domestic political realm, political leaders' primary goal is acquiring and maintaining power. At the international level, politicians are most interested in maintaining legitimacy for their rule as well as prestige. The constraints and incentives associated with either foreign policy orientation option, then, affect incumbents' foreign policy choices. The lack of a membership prospect in the Western economic and security institutions did not provide the domestic elites with strong incentives to pursue political and economic reforms favored by the West. The Ukrainian elites were under no pressure to follow the conditionality criteria requested by the EU and bear the costs associated with adopting liberal political norms. While in the CEECs, the EU leveraged pre-associate, associate and later membership candidacy status to promote reform, these mobilizing effects were missing in Ukraine. There was no reward of EU membership at the end of the road to motivate their pro-Western foreign policy commitment. Ukrainian diplomats record in their diplomatic notes that an acknowledgment by the West of Ukraine's European perspectives would "give purpose" to Ukraine's relations with the EU and would "provide a long-term stimulus for reform."³⁵¹ The West, however, chose to remain silent to Ukraine's numerous diplomatic requests to institutionalize its relations with the EU or with NATO. Being uncommitted to the pro-Western

³⁵¹ Talking points for the meeting of Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, A. Veselovsky, with European Commission Representative, E. Landabur, November 22, 2006. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

vector, whenever incumbents feared that maintaining a pro-Western foreign policy stance presented higher costs and constraints by threatening their hold to power, they preferred to abandon the pro-EU vector and switch to the pro-Russia one. Switches in the other direction followed the same cost-benefit analysis. If an existing government was promoting pro-Russia policies and if the incumbent feared that the costs associated with this orientation were too high for his political survival or the security/sovereignty of the state, a switch from the pro-Russia stance to the pro-Western one was preferred.

While the incumbents weigh the external incentives and constraints when strategizing their foreign policy choices, they are also considering the opportunities and pressures coming from the domestic context. The configuration of domestic political scene and the position of the local parties also bear weight on the foreign policy option of the incumbent. When deciding to abandon the Western (Russian) foreign policy orientation in exchange for the Russian (Western) option, the incumbent may face domestic constraints. The domestic political opposition might capitalize on the opportunity to benefit from Western (Russian) support and endorsements, challenging the power position of the incumbent domestically. As pointed out in previous chapters, during the two decades of independence of the post-Soviet states, both Moscow and the West endorsed political leaders and parties during elections in Ukraine, support that often posed challenges to the incumbent. The backing came in different forms: public appearances of Western or Russian leaders along with the Ukrainian candidates, Western or Russian public endorsements, electoral support, and money for electoral campaigns.

Foreign policy switches carry risks and negative consequences. Walking a tightrope, this is how a former Ukrainian policy maker was describing political leaders' East-West vacillations.³⁵²

³⁵² Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

One has to be very agile and lucky to anticipate the effects of foreign policy choices and avoid Viktor Yanukovich's fate of failing to walk between the raindrops without getting wet.

This chapter presents an in-depth analysis of the Ukrainian foreign policy behavior since independence. The evidence stems from archival research at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine conducted during the summer of 2015, and it covers the years 1991 – 2006. More than 50,000 pages of archival documents were consulted, out of which more than 18,000 pages were carefully read and translated. In addition, evidence from eleven interviews with Ukrainian executives and political leaders is also brought to support the argument.³⁵³ The chapter is organized in chronological order from 1991 to February 2014, presenting each presidential administration's efforts to weigh the systemic and internal constraints and opportunities to choose the foreign policy orientation that would guarantee the best payoffs.

Kravchuk Years: 1991 – 1994

External constraints and opportunities

Ukraine strives to appear on the Western radar's screen

In the years following independence, unresolved issues between Moscow and Kiev, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, have cast a shadow over Ukraine's relations with the West. Sharing the debt and distributing the assets of the former USSR, the delimitation of its borders, especially the ones shared with Russia, the sharing of the Black Sea Fleet, the Crimean

³⁵³ More detailed information on the interviews can be found in the Appendix.

problem, as well as the denuclearization process, have all influenced the tone, the strength and the range of relations Ukraine developed with the West. Leonid Kravchuk, the first Ukrainian President, lamented back in 1992, that the international media and many American political elites hold inadequate attitudes toward Ukraine. “Acknowledging Russia’s important role in the international affairs, [these entities] are trying to please Russia, like pleasing a sick person, turning a blind eye to the pressure that comes from Moscow on its yesterday’s ‘younger brothers.’”³⁵⁴ He blamed the West for looking at the “historical confrontation” between Russia and Ukraine as at “a provocative sports competition, in the manner of a tug of war.”³⁵⁵

As early as the beginning of 1991, after Ukraine adopted its Declaration of Sovereignty but before it declared its independence,³⁵⁶ Ukrainian diplomats, both in Moscow and in Western capitals, talked about the question of Ukraine’s plans to speed up its inclusion in the general European process and European structures.³⁵⁷ Anatoliy Zlenko, the then-Ukrainian Foreign Minister, delivered a speech during a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of USSR pointing out that the question of joining European political processes “is one of our foreign policy priorities for our Parliament: both for our majority, as well as for minority factions... Our contacts with the

³⁵⁴ Working Visit to the US of the Ukrainian President, Leonid Kravchuk, April 5-11 1992, New York and Philadelphia. Talking Points for the meeting with former American president, Richard Nixon. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 23, 2015.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. The comparison was made by the French newspaper, *Le Figaro*.

³⁵⁶ On July 16, 1990 the newly elected Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada) adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine, proclaiming the “supremacy, independence, integrity, and indivisibility of the Republic’s authority within the boundaries of its territory, and its independence and equality in foreign relations.” Retrieved from http://static.rada.gov.ua/site/postanova_eng/Declaration_of_State_Sovereignty_of_Ukraine_rev1.htm The Declaration of Independence was adopted on August 25, 1991. For more background information on the process under which the Declaration of Sovereignty was adopted in Ukraine, see Kuzio, T. *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*. 2nd ed. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000, p. 135-137.

³⁵⁷ Translated from Ukrainian: “участь у загальноєвропейському процесі та європейських структурах.” The archival documents which note Ukraine’s plans to participate “in the general European process and European structures” do not explain exactly what these “structures” or “process[es]” envisage. In depth reading of the documents, however, reveals that in the initial years after independence, Ukraine’s plans were to join such European institutions as the Council of Europe.

European countries tell us, however, that the answer to this question is in Moscow.”³⁵⁸ When visiting Western capitals to test the ground for Western politicians’ willingness to open the doors of various European organizations to Ukraine, the Western leaders were reacting to these first attempts from Ukraine with reluctance. When Douglas Hurd, Great Britain’s Foreign Secretary, was asked whether London would support Ukraine in the process of joining the European political process, he replied with a question, asking: “what were the attitudes of the Soviet Union leaders related to this question.”³⁵⁹ The Western politicians acknowledged their reluctance to embrace the transformations that were taking place in the Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 1990s. A French member of the National Assembly, admitted back in 1991 that the first barrier in the process of Ukraine’s participation in the general European process was “the inertia of thinking of leaders in some European countries, who would not want to set a precedent and provoke other [Soviet] union republics to join the European process based on their autonomy.”³⁶⁰

As the chapter on the CEECs and the Baltics shows, while Western leaders’ “thinking” changed with respect to the fate of the rest of the CEECs, when the European Union acknowledged the goal of these states to join the West, these leaders remained consistent in their policy of rejecting the idea of former members of the Soviet Union, like Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova to ever join the West.

When the debate on NATO’s eastward enlargement became louder in the Western political circles, the *differentiation* between the former communist Eastern European states and the post-

³⁵⁸ Translation from Ukrainian. *Speech by A. M. Zlenko at the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of USSR and of the union republics, February 15, 1991, Moscow*. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 21, 2015.

³⁵⁹ Translation from Ukrainian. *From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Douglas Hurd, Great Britain’s Foreign Secretary, March 29, 1991*. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 23, 2015.

³⁶⁰ From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. *Records of Discussion with Xavier Deniau, Member of the French National Assembly, March 26, 1991*. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 23, 2015.

Soviet ones became more apparent. This *differentiation* can be observed in various communications offered by Western diplomats. In a speech to the Free Democratic Party Policy Congress, Klaus Kinkel, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs in Germany, declared that one of Germany's main foreign policy tasks was to bring "the central and eastern European countries closer to the European Union, NATO and the other European organizations", because "Europe is more than the Europe of the Twelve. A two-class Europe with "poverty lines" would be incompatible with the continent's security and stability."³⁶¹ Kinkel declared that Germany is the advocate for these countries' request "to join the free" and urged, "We must not abandon them at this stage."³⁶² Concerning the Baltic States, the German minister said that the West supports these countries' desire to join the EU and the conclusion of free trade agreements with them was the first step for this goal to materialize. EU membership would entail that they could at the same time join NATO. Referring to Ukraine, however, the minister said that even though it is part of Europe, Ukraine's "membership in the European Union is hard to imagine" due to its size and geography.³⁶³ A similar view was shared by James Dobbins, the then American Ambassador to the EU, who declared that the ultimate goal of the American foreign policy concerning Eastern Europe was to support the integration of the new democracies into the structure of Western cooperation. Concerning the former USSR, a priority for the US policy was the support of the reform process in Russia. The American diplomat believed that the failure of the reform process and re-establishment of the old regime in Russia would represent the biggest threats to international security.³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Speech by Klaus Kinkel to the Free Democratic Party Policy Congress, September 10 1993. File number 7028. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Speech by James Dobbins at the seminar "North Atlantic Relations in the era after the Cold War" delivered at the Institute of International Relations in Geneva. July 12, 1993. File number 7028. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

While the political battles on the corridors in Washington and Western European capitals were being waged for the CEECs, no prospect about admitting the former Soviet states into any Western organization was anywhere near the horizon. The Ukrainian diplomats in Western capitals were sending to Kiev regular dispatches filled with information about the debates of elite circles in the West to incorporate the CEECs in NATO and the EU. Several analysts from the RAND Corporation wrote an article in 1993 in the *Foreign Affairs*, being among the first voices coming from the West to advance the idea that the *Visegrad* countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and possibly Slovakia) should be included in the European Community and NATO.³⁶⁵ They argued that extending NATO eastward would help stabilize young democracies in Eastern Europe.³⁶⁶ The article, however, did not make similar calls for the former Soviet states. Concerning Ukraine, the American analysts urged the West to adopt a “constructive policy,” viewing it as a buffer between Europe and Russia.³⁶⁷

At the EU summit in April 1993 in Copenhagen, when the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the EU members met with Eastern European partners, the Baltic States were invited to the summit, while Ukraine, Belarus and Russia were not.³⁶⁸ Moreover, while the EC was signing Association Agreements with the East and Central European countries (i.e. Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria), with clear stipulations of eventual integration of these countries into the Community, this was not on offer to the former Soviet republics. With the latter, the EC

³⁶⁵ Asmus, R. D., Larrabee, F. S., Kugler, R. L. “Building a New NATO.” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993). This article convinced Strobe Talbott, deputy Secretary of State at the time, to bring Asmus into the State Department. He became Madeleine Albright’s adviser for European security issues. Brown, Emma, “Ronald D. Asmus, who pushed for NATO expansion, dies at 53.” *Washington Post*, May 3, 2011, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/obituaries/ronald-d-asmus-who-pushed-for-nato-expansion-dies-at-53/2011/05/02/AFO52UiF_story.html

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 38

³⁶⁸ “EU opens its doors...but not for everyone”. *Izvestiya*, no. 21, February 4 1993. File number 7084. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 29, 2015

negotiated Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, which did not contain any provisions of association with the community and did not specify any regime of special assistance.³⁶⁹ In November 1994, the Ministers of Finance of the EU member states met to discuss the question of offering financial aid to Ukraine, to support Kiev in overcoming the balance of payments crisis. Among the ministers who blocked the offering of a loan to Ukraine were the French and British ministers.³⁷⁰ The European officials expressed fears that since Ukraine was not an associate member of the EU,³⁷¹ offering such kind of aid to Ukraine would cause a “chain reaction” of requests from other CIS states, which have signed or were in the process of signing Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with the EU.³⁷² In discussions with the European Community representatives, the diplomats from the former Soviet states were told that their countries “must be restrained in their expectations”³⁷³ about future EC membership. Among Western leaders, the general view concerning the former Soviet states’ prospects was “*Cooperation – yes, aid – yes, integration – no.*”³⁷⁴

³⁶⁹ Relations between Ukraine and the European Community and their perspectives for development. File number 7084. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 29, 2015

³⁷⁰ British diplomats related explained that the negative reaction of the British and French ministers in Brussels is related to the fact that France and GB believe that Ukraine has not yet started real radical changes/reforms, which would show the real intentions of the Ukrainian government to modify the macroeconomic level of the country. Records of Discussion with the First Secretary of the British Embassy in Paris, Graham Hendry, December 9, 1994. File number 7277. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015

³⁷¹ The rule and practice in the EU limit the offering of aid for covering payments deficit only to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which have the status of associated membership with the EU. Ukraine did not belong to this category.

³⁷² Record of Discussion with the Adviser of the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the EU, Van Shreven, November 3, 1994. File number 7277. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015

³⁷³ Discussion with the Director of the Relations with the New Independent States in the Directorate General of External Relations of the Commission of the European Communities, Pablo De Benavides, April 3 1993. File number 7089. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 29, 2015

³⁷⁴ Information about the problems of the European Economic Community; Security Service of Ukraine, August 17 1993. File number 7045. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 29, 2015

Western Europe's restraint to welcome the post-Soviet states into the Western institutional frameworks was expressed when Alain Lamassoure, the then delegated Minister of European Affairs of France, during a visit to Poland in November 1994, declared that the "borders of the European continent" run along the borders of the CIS.³⁷⁵ The Ukrainian diplomats expressed their disappointment with the fact that the European Union "regionalized Europe in an unproductive way," considering Ukraine not as part of the Central-Eastern European region, but of the CIS, "which artificially excludes Ukraine from Europe and creates obstacles to its participation in important cooperation mechanisms."³⁷⁶ The geographical confusion as to what part of Europe should Ukraine belong – North, South, East or West, was acknowledged by some Western public officials, claiming that "in the West, many perceive Ukraine as a "buffer-country."³⁷⁷

In fact, archival evidence suggests that the delimitation of boundaries in Eastern Europe started in June 1992, during the Council of Ministers of the WEU meeting, in Petersberg, near Bonn, in Germany. Back then, a decision was approved as to "determine the boundaries of the Central and East European region, by including Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania."³⁷⁸ Later, during the Kirchberg Summit in May 1994, the

³⁷⁵ From the Diary of O. M. Kochubey, Ukrainian Ambassador to France. Records of Discussion with the General Secretary of the French MFA, B. Dufurco, November 28, 1994. File number 7273. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015.

The same view was expressed by, Jacque Delors, the then President of the European Commission, who during a broadcasting on French Television, when asked "Where do the borders of Europe end in the East of Europe?" answered: "In Poland, Hungary. Political Europe has to end there." Translation from French : « Ou sont les frontières de l'Europe a l'Est » « A la Pologne, a la Hongrie. L'Europe (politique) doit s'arrêter là. » Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in France, June 13, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

³⁷⁶ Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Counsellor to the Netherlands with the Head of the European Integration Directorate in the Netherland's MFA, May 5, 1994. File number 7275. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015

³⁷⁷ This view was expressed by R. Adam, from the Planning Department in the German Minister of Foreign Affairs. Seminar at the British Foreign Office "Ukraine After Elections," October 4, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015

³⁷⁸ In addition, the evidence notes that one of the departments within the US Department of State, which focuses on the affairs of the countries located between the Baltic, Black and Adriatic Seas, namely bordering Germany and the countries of the former USSR (except for the Baltics) was renamed into the Department of Central-European

nine CEE states which had concluded or were about to conclude Europe Agreements, preparing them for their integration and eventual accession to the EU, were offered an associate partnership with the WEU.³⁷⁹

In March 1994, searching for “optimal variants of institutionalizing its relations with the Western European Union” (WEU)³⁸⁰, the Ukrainian Representative in Brussels met with all the ambassadors of the WEU’s members to discuss the possibility of Ukraine receiving the status of fully-fledged participant in the Forum for Consultations³⁸¹ with the WEU. Only the six CEE states and the three Baltic States were participants of the Forum of Consultations. Ukraine labeled the “artificial interdiction of Ukraine to European political processes” as “discriminatory,” because it implied a “new division in Europe.”³⁸² The opinions of these ambassadors and the decisions of the

Affairs. Visit of the Romanian Foreign Minister, T. Melescanu, to London, July 17, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

³⁷⁹ “Ukraine and European Security.” Report prepared by Sir Russell Johnston on behalf of the Defense Committee, Assembly of the Western European Union, May 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

³⁸⁰ The WEU was a defensive alliance, the main goal of which was to offer mutual military assistance in case of an external aggression. It was founded in 1948 and it had ten member states: Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. After the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, all functions of the WEU were incorporated into the EU, and the WEU was closed down in 2011. For more information on the organization, visit: http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/weu/index_en.htm

³⁸¹ The Forum for Consultation was suspended in 1994, when after the Kirchberg Declaration from May 9, 1994 – Bulgaria, the Czech republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia – became Associate members of the WEU. For more information, visit: <http://www.weu.int/documents/940509en.pdf>. “Information on the results of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the EU, Luxembourg, May 9, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

³⁸² Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels, “Information on the meetings with the ambassadors accredited to the WEU,” March 19, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

The EU ambassadors held different positions with respect to Ukraine’s side: the Greek ambassador declared that even though he understands Ukraine’s position, he can offer his support only at the unofficial level; the German ambassador promised to inform the Foreign Ministry in Bonn about this discussion; the Dutch ambassador declared that the WEU does not have the material means to offer real security guarantees; the French and British ambassadors talked about the importance to consider Russia’s reaction to such a decision by the WEU. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels, “Information on the meetings with the ambassadors accredited to the WEU,” March 19, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

The Dutch ambassador reported, in a confidential form, that the Russian ambassador to Brussels, M. Afanesievskii, invited “for tea” all the WEU member states representatives and raised the question of granting special status to Russia in this organization. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels, “Information on the meetings with the ambassadors accredited to the WEU,” March 19, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

Kirchberg meeting of the WEU Council of Ministers were interpreted by Ukrainian MFA as “a political strategy to embrace Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, but keep the door shut to the former USSR republics.”³⁸³

In a statement at the Overseas Writers’ Club in June 1994, American Senator Richard R. Lugar claimed that “the most likely candidate for the new European crisis is Ukraine.” Speaking about NATO eastward enlargement, the American senator said that not all countries are equal in the West’s strategic calculus: *strategic differentiation* among countries in Eastern Europe is key for a quick integration of these countries into the Western community,³⁸⁴ claiming that by opening the NATO’s door to some Eastern European states and keeping it closed for others does not imply “line drawing.” “There is a difference between drawing lines and recognizing realities,” i.e. differentiating between strategically important countries for the West and providing them with security against concrete adversaries.³⁸⁵

In the first years after independence, Ukraine’s relations with the West were dominated by the nuclear problem. The West, especially the US, put a lot of pressure on Ukraine to destroy its nuclear weapons and to join the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, threatening the government in Kiev with international isolation and economic sanctions. A former Ukrainian president recalls, “They wanted us to say no to the nuclear weapons and ask for nothing in return.”³⁸⁶ The West and the Ukrainians were looking at the nuclear problem from different perspectives. The French, for example, criticized Ukrainians for “playing” with the nuclear arms

³⁸³ Draft Memorandum “Ukraine and Western European Union: Ways of Further Cooperation,” September 9, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

³⁸⁴ Statement of Senator Richard R. Lugar: “European Security Revisited: the State of the Alliance and US Vital Interests in 1994.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ Interview with the author. July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine. The Ukrainian president lamented that “Even though the US, Russia, France, Great Britain all signed the Budapest Memorandum in 1994, providing Ukraine with security assurances, they immediately forgot about it.”

and for delaying the process of joining the Non-proliferation Treaty.³⁸⁷ France and other EU member states conditioned the ratification of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Ukraine on it joining the NPT.³⁸⁸ The Ukrainians, on the other hand, complained that the pressure coming from the US and other nuclear countries was too difficult for Ukraine to bear alone.³⁸⁹ One quote from *The Economist* in November 1993 exemplifies the West's perception on Ukraine during those years, "Take a big country (52 million people), give it an atrocious government, watch the economy go to pot, throw in nuclear weapons and a restless Russian neighbor – and start to worry."³⁹⁰

The leaders of some of the Western European countries, continued to perceive Ukraine through the lenses of its post-independence unresolved issues. During a NATO Summit in 1994, in discussions between heads of departments from the Dutch and German Ministries of Foreign Affairs, certain issues related to Ukraine, like the status of Crimea, nuclear armament, Russian oil and gas dependence, were referred to as "ticking bombs."³⁹¹

Moreover, even though around 1994, Ukraine was getting bolder on the American radar, Washington still considered the Visegrád countries a priority in its foreign policy initiatives. The American Ambassador to Prague acknowledged that President Clinton paid greater attention to the

³⁸⁷ From the Diary of I. Kochubey, Records of Discussion with the Director of the Department of Continental Europe within the French MFA, P. Pudad, October 21, 1994. File no. 7271. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015.

³⁸⁸ From the Diary of I. Kochubey. Records of Discussion with the Diplomatic Advisor to the French Prime-Minister, October 6, 1994. File no. 7308. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

³⁸⁹ Records of Discussion with the Polish Ambassador in France, E. Lukashevskiy, March 2, 1994. File no. 7271. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015. The Polish Ambassador to France expressed his opinion that "Ukraine should not have renounced at its nuclear arsenal so quickly" and that the security in the Eastern Europe could have been built around the nuclear arms that Ukraine had.

³⁹⁰ *The Economist*. November 27, 1993.

³⁹¹ From the Diary of B. I. Korneenko, Records of Discussion with Lange Vijverberg, Dutch Ambassador to Greece. N.d. File no. 7271. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015.

Czech Republic than to Ukraine.³⁹² In addition, when in July 1994, nine CEE countries were invited to Warsaw to discuss European security issues with the American Secretary of State, Ukraine was not invited to the meeting. In discussions with the Ukrainian Ambassador to Poland, the Marshal of the Polish Senate said that the right to choose participating countries in the Warsaw meeting was the prerogative of Washington, the Americans decided whom to invite and whom to ignore.³⁹³

Some of the Ukrainian diplomatic notes from 1994 abound with objections on the indifference of some of the Western governments toward Ukraine. The Ukrainian Ambassador in France, in discussions with the Diplomatic Advisor to the French Prime-Minister in October 1994, said that France does not treat Ukraine seriously. Despite invitations sent to the French President to visit Ukraine, no visit was planned; when the newly appointed Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Udovenko, wanted to meet his French counterpart in New York, during the UN General Assembly Meeting, the French Minister declined a meeting with the Ukrainian minister due to lack of time.³⁹⁴ A visit to France, by the then Ukrainian president Kravchuk, went basically unnoticed in the French media, the Ukrainian Ambassador to Paris comparing the discretion of the visit “to a diplomatic affront.”³⁹⁵ Discussing the tense Ukrainian-Russian relations in 1994, the then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppe, said that “Ukraine ... needs to calm things down and

³⁹² The American diplomat explained the greater attention by the stable political and economic situation in Prague, and by the progress made by the Czechs in the field of market economy. From the Diary of the Ukrainian Ambassador to Czech Republic, R.M. Lubkivsky. Records of Discussion with Adrian Anthony Basora, the US Ambassador to the Czech Republic, January 26, 1994. File no. 7271. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015.

³⁹³ Records of discussion with the Marshal of the Polish Senate, July 6, 1994. File no. 7308. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015

³⁹⁴ From the Diary of I. Kochubey. Records of Discussion with the Diplomatic Advisor to the French Prime-Minister, October 6, 1994. File no. 7308. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

³⁹⁵ Letters from the Ukrainian Embassy in Paris to “Le Figaro” and other French Publications, January 31, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015

avoid at all costs for the tone to rise,”³⁹⁶ indirectly making Ukraine bear the sole responsibility for the normalization of relations between Kiev and Moscow.³⁹⁷ When the Ukrainian ambassador to France expressed his disappointment with such a statement³⁹⁸, the General Secretary of the French MFA said that Ukraine is tightly linked to Russia and should not expect a quick solution to its problems to come from the West.³⁹⁹

Western nuclear concerns in Ukraine were to some degree advantageous to Russian interests. Some Western observers noted that Russian policy makers “have ... skillfully exploited the preoccupation of the Clinton administration with Ukraine’s nuclear status” and by “playing on American fears ... Moscow was quite successful in portraying the new leaders in Kiev as a menace to international stability.”⁴⁰⁰

The Ukrainian diplomatic archives contain reports from Ukrainian and Western diplomats, according to which Russian politicians were discouraging countries in Europe from deepening their relations with Ukraine, “suggesting that its days as an independent country are numbered.”⁴⁰¹ Polish officials were cautioned by Yeltsin’s political adviser, Sergei Stankevich that Moscow did not tolerate close political and military ties between Ukraine and Poland, due to Russia’s specific

³⁹⁶ Translation from French “...sur la situation en Ukraine, qui nécessitait de calmer le jeu et d'éviter à tout prix que le ton ne monte.” Talking Points of the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppe during the German-French Summit, May 30 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

³⁹⁷ Some Ukrainian diplomats explain the French “restrained policy” toward Ukraine as a result of the traditional “russophilia” in France, incorrectly calculated interests and the fact that France sees Ukraine not as independent country in Europe, but as a country under Russia’s order. “Information on the German-French Summit,” Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in France, May 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

³⁹⁸ The Ukrainian Ambassador declared that such a position closes Ukraine’s perspective of future EU membership.

³⁹⁹ From the Diary of O. M. Kochubey, Ukrainian Ambassador to France. Records of Discussion with the General Secretary of the French MFA, B. Dufurco, November 28, 1994. File number 7273. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015

⁴⁰⁰ Brzezinski, Z. “The Premature Partnership of America and Russia,” *Foreign Affairs*, March-April, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁴⁰¹ Solchanyk, R., “Ukraine’s Search for Security.” *RFE/RL Research Report*, May 21, 1993, p. 3. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 24, 2015.

interests in both Ukraine and Belarus.⁴⁰² The Russian Foreign Minister, A. Kozyrev, said that Western politicians still ask his permission for offering aid to Ukraine⁴⁰³ and the Dutch Ambassador to Brussels told the Ukrainian Ambassador openly in 1994 that Russia monitors all steps taken by the EU with respect to Ukraine and criticized EU officials for paying Kiev too much attention. Too rapid progress in EU-Ukrainian relations will not benefit Ukraine and will complicate relations with Russia – this was the Dutch ambassador’s opinion, which he said, dominated the thinking across the EU leadership.⁴⁰⁴

Due to the lack of financial resources and lack of trained diplomats, the post-Soviet states were unable to send their own diplomatic representatives to every Western country in the initial years after their independence. Therefore, politicians in the West often relied upon information provided by Russian officials, which was often presented in a distorted form, reflecting the Russian point of view, rather than Ukraine’s official position. There were reports that the representatives of the Russian embassy and military attachés in Belgium worked very hard to spread anti-Ukrainian information among NATO diplomats. Similarly, in Switzerland, Russian diplomats undertook active work in spreading anti-Ukrainian information among various international organizations.⁴⁰⁵ The political leadership and military officials in many Western countries were witnesses of a permanent and targeted anti-Ukrainian campaign, in particular concerning the nuclear policies of Ukraine.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Records of Discussion with the Advisor to the Dutch Embassy in Russia, John Kurt, September 15, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁴⁰⁴ Information on the efforts undertaken by the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels in the process of European Commission creating its strategy toward Ukraine, May 13, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

⁴⁰⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Moscow. February 3, 1993. File number 7045. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 28, 2015.

⁴⁰⁶ Letter of Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zlenko, to Ukrainian Embassies abroad. February 21, 1993. File number 7045. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 28, 2015.

In their discussions with Western diplomats, the Ukrainians were constantly told that until their relations with Russia and the CIS are sorted out, until all the political, economic and military assets are shared between Kiev and Moscow – close and institutionalized links between Ukraine and the European Community or the Western European Union could not be forged.⁴⁰⁷

Moreover, archival evidence shows that the West did not “differentiate” only between the CEE countries and the post-Soviet states. In the first years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Western governments “distinguished” among the post-Soviet states as well, conducting a foreign policy “tilted” toward Russia, while carrying out the affairs with the rest of the republics from Moscow’s shadow. In 1992, the US Congress passed the so-called *Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Act*. The Ukrainian community in the US raised several concerns with this Bill, as they believed that the Bill confirmed that the US Administration, as well as many Senators in the Congress, supported a US foreign policy “tilted toward Russia.”⁴⁰⁸ The Ukrainians were troubled that the bill did not specify which programs were for which nations “nor [did] it provide any information as to the total aid or its division among the 12 affected nations,”⁴⁰⁹ this leaving any future American Administration “a great deal of discretion on the spending of the money authorized by the bill.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Permanent Representative in Brussels on Ukrainian-EU relations, January 23, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

“Ukraine and European Security.” Report prepared by Sir Russell Johnston on behalf of the Defense Committee, Assembly of the Western European Union, May 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁴⁰⁸ *Memorandum on the Freedom Support Act, July 31, 1992*. File number 6861. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 23, 2015.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.* Additional concerns were raised during the Senate floor debates on the bill: the Ukrainian-American community was disturbed that the floor managers of the bill, as well as its supporters, referred to the bill as “the Russian Aid Bill” and maintained that it was important to pass the bill, so as to support Yeltsin in his actions to bring democracy and free market reforms to Russia. This created a “legislative history” and the fear was that future US Administrations may be encouraged to divert most of the aid to Russia, on the argument that this was the intent of the Congress.

Among Ukrainians, additional concerns were linked to the attitudes and biases of some of the political circles in Washington: “In at least three meetings, the staff of the National Security Council recommended that business leaders invest in Russia and not Ukraine or the other nations of the former Soviet Union. The US Export-Import Bank told an investor that they would support his proposal if it were for Russia, which has oil, but not for Ukraine.”⁴¹¹ Furthermore, the Ukrainians were unsettled that, through the G-7 group, president Bush Sr. committed \$24 billion from the Western countries to Russia;⁴¹² a proportional aid package for Ukraine was not included in the bill.⁴¹³

The American foreign policy continued its concentration on Russia after Bill Clinton came to the White House.⁴¹⁴ In the US State Department reorganization in 1994, the nations of the former Soviet Union were being consolidated in one bureau. This made some observers conclude that the

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (1992). Multilateral Financial Assistance Package for Russia [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://fas.org/spp/starwars/offdocs/b920401.htm>

⁴¹³ Only in September 2014, after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia and the escalation of the military confrontations in Eastern Ukraine, the US Congress introduced the *Ukraine Freedom Support Act*, which authorized the American president to provide aid and support programs targeted specifically for Ukraine, as well as for Moldova and Georgia. It also pointed out that it empowered the president to “provide Ukraine with defense articles, services, and training in order to counter offensive weapons and reestablish its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ukraine Freedom Support Act of 2014. Public Law No. 113-272 (2014). Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/senate-bill/2828>.

⁴¹⁴ Ukraine started to weigh heavier on the American foreign policy agenda starting with the year 1994, especially after the signing on January 14, 1994, of the Trilateral Statement in Moscow between Ukraine, Russia and the US, which provided for the transfer of all nuclear weapons on the territory of Ukraine to Russia for dismantlement. At the end of January 1994, the Clinton Administration announced it planned to double American economic assistance to Ukraine. U.S. to double its Aid to Ukraine. *Daily Bulletin*. United States Mission to Geneva, January 27, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015. The Ukrainian Ambassador to Warsaw writes that the discussion with the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, A. Olechowski, revealed that the American side changed its attitude toward Ukraine due to the diplomatic and political efforts of President Kravchuk. The Polish Defense Minister recalled that when he visited Washington, DC during an official visit, the American side clearly stated that there is no need to deal with Ukraine, which is an unreliable partner. In a January 1994 visit to Prague, however, during his meetings with Clinton and the American delegation, one could see a different, more benevolent approach of the Americans with respect to Ukraine. From the Diary of G. Udovenko, Ukrainian Ambassador to Poland; Records of Discussion with the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, A. Olechowski, January 21, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

US gave legitimacy to a Russian “sphere of influence” in the post-Soviet region.⁴¹⁵ The new administration’s commitment to support Russia’s democratic and free market reforms underscored “the backwater role that has fallen to the 14 other republics that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union.”⁴¹⁶ American experts explained Clinton’s Russia initiative as “one of those cases when you’ve got to catch the big fish rather than try to catch all 14 of the other fish”.⁴¹⁷ Other Western countries adopted the same approach to foreign policy concerning the CIS countries. Germany’s foreign policy, for example, was biased toward Russia in the detriment of the rest of the CIS countries: in 1992, for the privatization reform in the CIS countries, Germany allocated 28 million of German marks, out of which 24 million were reserved for Russia.⁴¹⁸

Several Western diplomats acknowledged the West’s tendency to put Russia first in its foreign policy decision making.⁴¹⁹ Chris Donnelly, who was serving as Special Adviser for Central and Eastern European Affairs to the Secretary General of NATO in 1993, accepted the inconsistency of the Western politics toward Ukraine and other former USSR members, admitting that this kind of politics was in many instances, counterproductive. One of the West’s mistakes, according to the diplomat, was that it built for a too long time a politics, which was primarily oriented toward Moscow’s interests and based on Moscow’s sources of information. The processes taking place in other countries from Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union were underestimated.

⁴¹⁵ Central/East European Ethnic Americans Say “No” to the White House. Letter sent by the Central and East European Coalition to the White House. September 22, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

⁴¹⁶ Clinton’s concentration on Russia makes other republics feel slighted. *Washington Times*, April 6 1993. File number 7045. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 28, 2015.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

⁴¹⁸ Materials for the visit of the Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, G. Kohl in Ukraine, June 9-10 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 28, 2015

⁴¹⁹ The archival evidence shows that Ukraine’s membership in various European organizations was oftentimes linked to Russia’s fate. Kiev’s accession to the Council of Europe was conditioned to Russia’s accession to this organization. The German MFA made a request to the 50-members of the Council of Europe with the request to accept Ukraine into this organization irrespective of the decision of Russia’s acceptance. Records of Discussion with the State-Secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Germany, Peter Hartmann, August 14, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

Moreover, the importance of specific features of these countries were not understood in the right way, their history, national traditions, the role and place of nomenklatura in the economic and social life, the problems and difficulties in developing democratic forces, the importance and positive role of nationalistic movements.⁴²⁰ The same view was shared by Klaus Kinkel, Germany's Foreign Minister, who during his official visit to Kiev in February 1993, acknowledged that the politics of Bonn was, to some degree, biased toward Moscow and both the US and other Western European states were viewing the problems of the former USSR members through Moscow's prism.⁴²¹ Still, the Germans considered Russia the most important partner in Eastern Europe⁴²² and openly claimed that "Germany by no means would risk spoiling its relations with Russia for the interests of some post-Soviet states."⁴²³

⁴²⁰ Meeting of the Ukrainian Minister of Defense, K. P. Morozov with Chris Donnelly, Special Adviser for Central and Eastern European Affairs to the Secretary General of NATO. File number 7015. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

⁴²¹ Summary of the visit of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Klaus Kinkel to Kiev, 15-16 February, 1993. File number 7098. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 29, 2015. A member of the German Bundestag, Hans-Johhan Fogel, published an article in the "Welt" newspaper in May 1994, after visiting Ukraine and meeting with politicians in the Ukrainian Parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, admitting that Ukraine is out of sight for the German politicians, even though Ukraine, as the third biggest country in Europe, should be always in the attention of German politicians. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Germany, May 27, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁴²² Whereas Ukrainian relations with the rest of the Western European states were lukewarm, the US started to pay more attention to Ukraine around 1994. During the 1994, G7 meeting in Naples, Italy, Americans played a special role in the discussion with the leaders of the heads of the richest industrialized countries. Clinton had to convince the Western partners to take concrete decisions with respect to Kiev and urged them to develop a realistic approach to Ukraine. The US President personally contributed to the signing of the Declaration by the members of the Group at the end of the meeting, which had an offer of \$4.3 billion to Ukraine to support its economic market reforms. Records of Discussion with G. Collins, Coordinator of the Financial Help to the CIS States in the Department of State, July 19, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015. The Declaration which was signed by the members of the Group at the end of the meeting had an offer of \$4.3 billion to Ukraine to support its economic market reforms.

⁴²³ To German diplomat also warned the Ukrainian Advisor to the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia that due to the democratic and market transformations taking place at that time in Russia, it would be more difficult for the Eastern European countries to come to the West and complain about a Russian threat. "This kind of position and argumentation cannot be a reliable prerequisite for widening cooperation with the West." Records of Discussion with the Advisor to the German Embassy in Russia, Dr. Norbert Baas, May 19, 1994. File number 7275. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

Ukrainian-Russian relations

The archival evidence suggests that Ukrainian diplomats feared that NATO's and EU's reticence to accept Ukraine into the Western clubs brought grist to Russia's mill. Ukrainians claimed that the Russians could have interpreted the Western frosty reaction toward Ukraine "as a recognition [by the West] that Ukraine is in Russia's sphere of influence."⁴²⁴

The Ukrainian leaders in Kiev were aware that, "the idea of an independent Ukrainian state [was] a bitter pill for Russia to swallow."⁴²⁵ Even though the Russian leadership had formally recognized Ukraine as an independent state and in numerous bilateral accords with Russia, Kremlin recognized Ukraine's territorial integrity, influential Russian politicians, such as Vice-president Aleksandr Rutskoi, and the Russian Duma altogether, affirmed on numerous occasions that Ukraine's state boundaries were subject to dispute⁴²⁶ and that Ukraine's independence was a temporary phenomenon.⁴²⁷

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one of the unsolved questions between Moscow and Kiev was the status of Crimea and the sharing of the Black Sea Fleet. The archival evidence

⁴²⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels, "Information on the meetings with the ambassadors accredited to the WEU," March 19, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁴²⁵ Solchanyk, "Ukraine's Search for Security", p. 3

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Vasylenko, V. "Letter to the Editor." *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993): 184-185. In March 1993, the Russian Ambassador in Germany, Smolyakov, during unofficial discussions with Western diplomats expressed a similar view: "Ukraine's independence has a *temporary character* ." Note from the Ukrainian Embassy in Germany, March 22 1993. File number 7098. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 29, 2015.

In 1995, the Russians and Ukrainians were conducting negotiations with respect to the Protocol of Consultations among their Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The archival evidence shows the frustration of Ukrainians with the process of negotiations, during which Russia refused to include in the final document information related to establishing formal borders between countries, as well as succession and transfer of archives from the Russian MFA to the Ukrainian one. Ukrainians concluded that the negotiations showed "that Russia looks at Ukraine, as at an independent country, in a negative way, and is annoyed by the independent policy that the Ukrainian MFA is leading." Information related to the negotiations with respect to the Protocol of consultations and cooperation between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and of Russia, Moscow, April 31, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

suggests that the Ukrainians were concerned with Russia's attempts to solve these issues by force.⁴²⁸ Despite official assurances from the central Russian government about Moscow's non-interference in Crimea, numerous Russian delegations visited Crimea, showing support for local politicians, while the local government in Simferopol declared a "war on decrees," disregarding the positions of the official Kiev.⁴²⁹ When negotiating the division of the Black Sea Fleet, the then Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Zlenko, complained that "the Russian side does not agree to a reasonable compromise, reveals double standards: proclaims one thing and means another."⁴³⁰ During negotiations, Russia continued to insist on exclusive basing rights for its portion of the former Soviet fleet in the Ukrainian port of Sevastopol, while Ukraine suggested that Russia and Ukraine each use two of the existing four bases in the Crimean city.⁴³¹ The Russian-Ukrainian Inter-State Agreement could not be signed during several years of long negotiations, due to difficulties in dividing the Black Sea Fleet.⁴³²

Another unsolved issue between Moscow and the former Soviet republics was related to the payment of the Soviet foreign debt and to the distribution of the foreign assets of the former Soviet Union among its members. The leaders in Moscow deliberately delayed the negotiations related to the sharing of the domestic and foreign Soviet assets.⁴³³ Ukrainian diplomats voiced their frustration with respect to the behavior of Russian leaders in Moscow in various meetings

⁴²⁸ From the Diary of A. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, February 9, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴²⁹ From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with the American Ambassador to Kiev, W. Miller, April 23, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴³⁰ Ibid.

⁴³¹ "Ukrainian Update: A conversation with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Hennady Udovenko", Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, Washington, DC, July 25, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 10, 2015.

⁴³² Information on the visit of Kuchma to Moscow, January 17, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 10, 2015.

⁴³³ From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Trivimi Velliste, Estonian Foreign Minister, December 13, 1992. File number 6856. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 22, 2015.

with Western politicians. The general impression was that Moscow was not ready for compromises⁴³⁴ and refused to return to Ukraine its proper share of assets⁴³⁵: “the Russian position when it comes to sharing the property of the former USSR can be summarized in one sentence: ‘Don’t Give!’”⁴³⁶ Later, Moscow urged the former Soviet members to join a “zero version” in the negotiations, persuading leaders of the republics to abandon their claims with respect to parts of the Soviet foreign assets by passing to Russia their share of foreign debt of the former USSR.⁴³⁷ In negotiations with Ukraine, Russia initially agreed to give assets in 36 countries, but later changed its mind, and instead proposed assets in 15 other countries, which were of less strategic importance for Ukraine.⁴³⁸ One former Ukrainian President recalls that in the end, Russia succeeded in acquiring all the credits for itself, as Ukraine was alone protesting against Russia’s actions, while all the other CIS members supported Russia’s proposals.⁴³⁹

Energy resources were among Russia’s favorite tools to set terms with former Soviet Union members since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

In February 1994, during an official visit to the United States of the then-Ukrainian president Kravchuk, Russia stopped the supply of gas to Ukraine. Some commentators noted that the Russian government aimed to achieve a “political effect” during the period preceding the

⁴³⁴ From the Diary of B. I. Tarasyuk. Records of Discussion with Austria’s Special Envoy in Ukraine, Mr. Veninger, March 23, 1992. File number 6857. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 22, 2015.

⁴³⁵ From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Trivimi Velliste, Estonian Foreign Minister, December 13, 1992.

⁴³⁶ From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Parliamentary Delegation from Australia, April 20, 1992. File number 6856. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 22, 2015. The remark was made when the Australian delegation asked the Ukrainian Foreign Minister about the ways in which the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea would be divided between Russia and Ukraine.

⁴³⁷ A. M. Zlenko. *Records of Discussion with Andrei Kozyrev, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, September 20, 1992*. File number 6856. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 22, 2015. Kozyrev suggested that Ukraine follow the example of Belarus and several Central-Asian countries, which have accepted this proposal from the Russian counterparts.

⁴³⁸ Information on the problems related to the Soviet foreign assets and their sharing with Ukraine, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

⁴³⁹ Former Ukrainian President. Interview with the Author, July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.

electoral presidential campaign⁴⁴⁰, which was held in June 1994. “I was on my way to the US when [Moscow] stopped the gas to Ukraine. Back then, the planes did not have phones, therefore I found out about this once American journalists asked me to comment Moscow’s actions at the airport. They [the Russians] did it namely during my visit to the US... Moscow has constantly threatened us that the gas pipe will be closed.”⁴⁴¹ Some Russian politicians wanted to see in Ukraine an obedient partner, which would be seen and perceived by the international public opinion as fully dependent on Moscow.⁴⁴² Depending on the level of a country’s subservience to Moscow, Kremlin applied different tactics and different oil prices.⁴⁴³ During a visit to Kiev in 1994, the-then Russian deputy prime-minister linked the economic cooperation and payments for Russian energy and gas with Ukraine non-aligning to NATO.⁴⁴⁴

In a speech to the Civic Union on February 28, 1993, Yeltsin addressed the international community and asked that Russia be offered “special powers as a guarantor of peace and stability”⁴⁴⁵ in the former USSR republics. According to a Finnish diplomat, “No Western country wants to be involved in solving the regional conflicts in the former USSR, ... the West was inclined toward offering Russia appropriate authority for dealing with these conflicts.”⁴⁴⁶ Some voices,

⁴⁴⁰ Records of Discussion with the Correspondent of the weekly Journal of the Center for Journalists Training, Paris, France, March 9, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴⁴¹ Interview with the author. July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.

⁴⁴² Records of Discussion with the Correspondent of the weekly Journal of the Center for Journalists Training, Paris, France, March 9, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴⁴³ Central/East European Ethnic Americans Say “No” to the White House. Letter sent by the Central and East European Coalition to the White House. September 22, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

⁴⁴⁴ Records of Discussion with the Advisor to the Dutch Embassy in Russia, John Kurt, September 15, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁴⁴⁵ Solchanyk, R. “Ukraine’s Search for Security.” *RFE/RL Research Report* 2, no. 21 (May 21, 1993): 1-6; 4

⁴⁴⁶ Records of Discussion with Deputy Director General of the Politics Department in the Finland’s MFA, March 2, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

however, criticized the US presidential Administration for “blessing Moscow’s peace-keeping” role in the near-abroad” and for praising the role of the Russian Army in the conflicts in Georgia.⁴⁴⁷

The CIS represented an important tool through which Russia tried to keep the former USSR members close to its orbit. Moscow made efforts to strengthen the cooperation between the CIS member states by widening its influence on the activities of diplomatic representatives of the CIS states overseas. In 1994, only in the Russian Embassy in Paris, for example, a permanent working group of five diplomats was formed, which had the task of coordinating the activities of the diplomatic representatives of the CIS states in the host countries.⁴⁴⁸ Moreover, Russia proposed that CIS be offered prerogatives to coordinate its member-states foreign policies with European and other Western organizations (like OSCE, NATO, EU, and WEU). Ukraine refused to offer its support for CIS to become a supra-national entity.⁴⁴⁹ Russia considered Ukraine an important linchpin of the political and economic development of the CIS cooperation, and Kiev was criticized and often punished for “restraining cooperation within CIS.”⁴⁵⁰

Responding to Internal Constraints and Opportunities

How did these external conditions faced by Ukraine shape domestic politics in the first years after independence? What constraints and opportunities influenced the foreign policy behavior of domestic political actors?

⁴⁴⁷ Brzezinski, Z. “The Premature Partnership of America and Russia,” *Foreign Affairs*, March-April, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

In discussions with Western diplomats, Ukraine expressed its concern with Russia’s attempts to become the unique “peacemaker” in solving various disputes and regulating crises on the territory of the former USSR. Records of Discussion with the Advisor to the Swedish Defense Minister on International Issues and Security, February 21, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁴⁴⁸ Records of Discussion with the Advisor of the French Embassy in Russia, March 15, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴⁴⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, A. Zlenko, to Russian Foreign Minister, A. Kozyrev, on CIS, March 21, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴⁵⁰ Records of Discussion with the Head of the Presidential Administration of Russian Federation, S. O. Filatov, March 18, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

Ukraine's political scene at the beginning of the 1990s was represented by parties on the right, the most prominent of them – the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Restructuring (Rukh) and the Ukrainian Republican Party, which were advocating for Ukrainian independence,⁴⁵¹ their stances being anti-Russian and pro-European.⁴⁵² Most of their electoral support came from Western, as well as parts of central regions in Ukraine with a maximum support of 20-25 percent of the votes.

Parties on the left, represented by the Communist Party⁴⁵³ of Ukraine and the Socialist Party, advocated for a bilingual state, promoting policies to make Russian a second official language, along with Ukrainian. These parties were also for close links with Russia. While the Communists, headed by their leader Petro Symonenko, were in favor of restoring and reunification of the Soviet Union on the territory of the former USSR, for the preservation of the Soviet identity and were strongly against market reforms, the more moderate Socialist Party was supporting Ukrainian independence, but with strong ties to Russia and the former Soviet states.⁴⁵⁴ The left wing parties gathered their votes from Crimea and eastern regions of Ukraine, with support rising to 40 percent. Finally, parties whose members represented often times industrialists, organized business interests, and local barons have dominated the center.⁴⁵⁵ These parties borrowed ideas from both the right- and the left-wing parties, adapting their political programs in order to balance the geographic divisions in the country and accommodate more views and preferences.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, 2000

⁴⁵² Abdelal, R., *National Purpose in the World Economy. Post-Soviet States in Comparative Perspective*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁴⁵³ The Communist Party was banned in Ukraine on August 30, 1991, and then restored in June 1993, when the left resumed its strong role as a “destructive opposition.” Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 173.

⁴⁵⁴ The Socialist Party's leader, Moroz, is quoted as saying “Anybody who does not regret the collapse of the USSR has no heart; anybody who wants to restore the Union today has no head” as quoted in Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians. Unexpected Nation*. 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press: 2015), p. 191-192.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Abdelal, R., *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 2001; Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015.

In his quest to acquire and maintain power, Kravchuk avoided identifying himself with a particular party, as he did not want to narrow his political base.⁴⁵⁷ During the presidential campaign in the autumn of 1991, Kravchuk adopted the state-building goals and nationalist agenda of the right-wing nationalist parties as his own, opposing to the restoration of traditional vertical modes of control between Kiev and Moscow as well as supporting full Ukrainian independence and reorientation toward Europe.⁴⁵⁸ Rukh promoted these goals until Kravchuk embraced them in 1991. Viacheslav Chornovil, the then Rukh's presidential candidate during the electoral campaign in 1991, was asked about the differences between his and Kravchuk's political programs. His answer was: "No difference, except one. My program is thirty years old, while his – thirty days."⁴⁵⁹ After winning the December 1991 presidential elections, Kravchuk, who used to be the Communist Party ideological secretary in Ukraine,⁴⁶⁰ set the goal of establishing authority within Ukrainian society and secure his own power. The political elite prioritized the military and state-building projects, establishing the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and securing national frontiers, at the expense of market economic reforms.⁴⁶¹ Kravchuk supported the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to replace the USSR⁴⁶² as a means "to see the end of the Soviet

⁴⁵⁷ Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015.

⁴⁵⁸ Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, 2000. Kuzio argues that Ukrainian leaders followed Lenin's view that "the first task in a revolutionary situation is to secure power." Kravchuk believed that Ukraine's independence in 1917-1920 failed due to a lack of a prepared army, therefore in order to take control over Ukrainian society, he gave priority to military and state-building projects, over economic reforms. (p. 188)

⁴⁵⁹ As cited in Abdelal, R., *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 2001, p. 119.

⁴⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion about the political evolution of Kravchuk, see Motyl, A. J. "The Conceptual President: Leonid Kravchuk and the Politics of Surrealism" in Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker ed. *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Westview Press: 1995).

⁴⁶¹ Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, 2000. Kuzio argues that Ukrainian leaders followed Lenin's view that "the first task in a revolutionary situation is to secure power." Kravchuk believed that Ukraine's independence in 1917-1920 failed due to a lack of a prepared army, therefore in order to take control over Ukrainian society, he gave priority to military and state-building projects, over economic reforms. (p. 188)

⁴⁶² During the December 1991 referendum, held simultaneously with the presidential elections, 90.3 percent of Ukrainians voted in favor of independent Ukraine. This victory gave Kravchuk credibility and legitimacy to meet with the Russian and Belarus leaders and ask for an end to the Soviet empire. Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, 2000.

empire.”⁴⁶³ His initial hope was that the CIS would be the ultimate mode to escape from the Moscow’s “carapace.”⁴⁶⁴ Even though the center in Moscow was weak, it was benefiting from privileged Western attention. In the months preceding Ukraine’s declaration of independence, American leaders were trying to persuade the Ukrainians and other post-Soviet leaders to stay away from total independence and go along with Gorbachev’s plan for a “looser,” decentralized, union of the Soviet republics.⁴⁶⁵ George Bush Sr. delivered a speech in front of the members of the Ukrainian Parliament (Verchovna Rada) on August 1, 1991 warning that “freedom is not the same as independence” and that the US will not support nationalist “despots” who promote ethnic hatred.⁴⁶⁶ There was a special relationship between Gorbachev and Bush Sr. The American president promised to counsel against independence during his visit to Ukraine, and in front of the Verchovna Rada, praised the Soviet leader for achieving “astonishing things” through his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*,⁴⁶⁷ suggesting that the American position with respect to the future fate of Ukraine is, “Moscow and Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev know best.”⁴⁶⁸ In addition, Bush warned against economic isolationism and protectionism certain republics were pursuing in their efforts to break from the Soviet economic system.⁴⁶⁹ In 1991 and 1992, the International

⁴⁶³ Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, 2000, p. 193.

⁴⁶⁴ Initially, all political circles in Ukraine saw the CIS as an optimal solution for dissociation of the Soviet empire. By January 1992, however, when the CIS threatened it could be a tool to keep the republics tied to each other, the then Republican and Democratic Parties of Ukraine called for the country to exit the CIS. Kuzio, *Ukraine: Perestroika to Independence*, 2000.

⁴⁶⁵ Kranish, M., “Bush says Ukraine should accept loose union with the USSR,” *Boston Globe*, August 2, 1991

⁴⁶⁶ Reuters, “After the Summit; Excerpts From Bush’s Ukraine Speech: Working ‘for the Good of Both of Us,’” Published in *The New York Times*, August 2, 1991, Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/02/world/after-summit-excerpts-bush-s-ukraine-speech-working-for-good-both-us.html?pagewanted=all>

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁸ Dahlburg, J.T. “Bush’s ‘Chicken Kiev’ Talk-an Ill-Fated U.S. Policy: Ukraine: Efforts to keep the Soviet Union intact are recalled with bitterness by some in new nation.” *Los Angeles Times*, December 19, 1991. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1991-12-19/news/mn-1010_1_soviet-union

⁴⁶⁹ Reuters, “After the Summit; Excerpts From Bush’s Ukraine Speech: Working ‘for the Good of Both of Us,’” Published in *The New York Times*, August 2, 1991, Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/02/world/after-summit-excerpts-bush-s-ukraine-speech-working-for-good-both-us.html?pagewanted=all>

Monetary Fund was also advising the republics to stay within the Soviet ruble monetary union and under the jurisdiction of the Soviet Central Bank (Gosbank).⁴⁷⁰

One diplomat based in Kiev noted back then that in Ukraine, Bush's speech "went down about as well as cod-liver oil."⁴⁷¹ The failure of the attempted coup in Moscow only three weeks after Bush delivered his speech in Kiev made the option of a decentralized Soviet Union impossible. Still, the halfhearted American support for Ukraine's independence and the West's policy tilted toward Russia influenced Ukrainian leaders' future considerations and policy options.⁴⁷²

Post-Soviet non-Russian leaders were bewildered by the lack of information that certain Western leaders had about their countries.⁴⁷³ One former Ukrainian president said that the much-needed reforms in Ukraine had no sense and no guarantee for success without the true support from the "civilized West," to which Ukraine had constantly strived; but from which it was always pushed back.⁴⁷⁴

Caught between difficulties to make friends in the West rapidly and the resentments and suspicions from the Russians, due to Ukraine's insistence for independence⁴⁷⁵ – provided no easy environment for the newly transformed democratic elites in Kiev. The euphoria of independence was soon shadowed by the sharp economic crisis, which swept the country in the first years after

⁴⁷⁰ Boughton, J. M. "After the Fall: Building Nations out of the Soviet Union" in Boughton, J. M. *Tearing Down Walls. The International Monetary Fund 1990 – 1999*, (International Monetary Fund: 2012)

⁴⁷¹ Ibid.

⁴⁷² Boughton, J. M. "After the Fall: Building Nations out of the Soviet Union" in Boughton, J. M. *Tearing Down Walls. The International Monetary Fund 1990 – 1999*, (International Monetary Fund: 2012), p. 371.

⁴⁷³ One former Ukrainian president recalls his discussions with Western leaders: "Is Ukraine the same as Russia?" and I reply, "No." "How many people do you have in Ukraine?" "Around 50 million." "Are you sure? Maybe 5?" "No, 50 million people." The former president said that this exchange showed him that Western leaders did not know almost anything about Ukraine. Interview with the author. July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.

⁴⁷⁴ Translated from Russian: "Украина должна да, проводить реформы, строить новые вооружённые силы, всё это я понимаю. Но без помощи цивилизованного Запада, к которому она стремится всё время, а её отталкивают, ... зачем нам эти реформы? Чтоб потом здесь пришла Российская Армия?" Interview with the author. July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.

⁴⁷⁵ Boughton, J. M. "After the Fall," 2012

independence. The budget deficit surpassed 10 trillion karbovantsi⁴⁷⁶ in 1993 and the inflation level reached 170% in the first quarter of 1993⁴⁷⁷, the prices on energy and food increased threefold by the end of that year. Political forces were aptly using these severe economic conditions in their fight for the minds of the Ukrainian population. The parties belonging to the nationalist orientation were putting the blame for the unstable economic situation on Russia; the parties with a left-socialist and communist orientation, on the contrary, argued that the political and economic problems stemmed from the break of relations with Russia and other former Soviet republics.⁴⁷⁸

Kravchuk's goals during his tenure as the first president of Ukraine were to strengthen the independence of the country and to include Ukraine in the European structures and processes.⁴⁷⁹ He tried to achieve these goals by turning toward the West and by distancing from Russia.⁴⁸⁰ He refused joining the Russian-initiated Collective Security Treaty Organization and signing the CIS

⁴⁷⁶ Also known as coupons, a distinct unit of currency in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states, introduced in November 1990, after the collapse of the Soviet planned economy. These coupons were needed in addition to the Soviet rubles in order to supply the need for grocery shopping and other living commodities.

⁴⁷⁷ The price for bread raised more than 7 times in September 1993, 1 kg of bread being sold for 1000 karbovantsi, when the official established minimum wage was 20,000 karbovantsi.

"Reportage on the Commemoration of 60 years since Golodomor." Mass Media Digest. *Svoboda*. September 15, 1993. File no. 7004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 24, 2015. By the end of 1993, the karbovanets to dollar exchange rate had hit almost 40,000 to one. "The Ukrainian Weekly."

⁴⁷⁸ "Reportage on the Commemoration of 60 years since Golodomor." Mass Media Digest. *Svoboda*. September 15, 1993. File no. 7004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 24, 2015.

⁴⁷⁹ Translation from Ukrainian: "включення України в загальноєвропейського процесу." From the Diary of A. Zlenko. Meeting with Douglas Hurd, Great Britain's Foreign Secretary, March 29, 1991. File no. 6800. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 21, 2015.

Report on the immediate participation of Ukraine in the common European processes and European Structures, July 7th, 1991. File number 6821 (a). Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 22, 2015. Domestic leaders in the post-Soviet republics admitted that perseverance was the way to succeed in the goal of joining Western economic and security institutions. The Ukrainian leaders in Kiev were informed by the embassies abroad that the Baltic States are "literally bombarding the forums" of various Western institutions with their requests of membership and were pointing out that "those republics which will be the most insistent, will be accepted.

Kravchuk's foreign policy initiatives reflected the strategic goal of a "return to Europe" being characterized as "overly romantic" in a pro-Western orientation. Duncan, P. S. J. (2004). Westernism, Eurasianism and Pragmatism: The Foreign Policies of the Post-Soviet States, 1991 – 2001. In Slater, W., Wilson, A. (Eds). *The Legacy of the Soviet Union*.

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with the author, July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine

Charter.⁴⁸¹ Kravchuk was blamed by the Russians for not showing an active initiative towards cooperation within the CIS. In a discussion with the Head of the Russian Presidential Administration, the then Ukrainian Ambassador to Russia tried to defend Kravchuk, by arguing that the latter does not see the CIS as a mechanism of “divorce.” The Russian interlocutor replied, “[a]t the same time, however, the president does not consider the CIS as a mechanism of “marriage” either.”⁴⁸²

During his presidential tenure, Kravchuk visited the United States two times, one time in May 1992 and another time in March 1994. He visited Brussels and the NATO headquarters, and the political dialogue between Kiev and Brussels intensified in the months preceding the parliamentary and presidential elections in Ukraine. During January – June 1994, the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Brussels twice, the EU troika of foreign ministers traveled to Kiev in March 1994, and the General Secretary of the WEU, Willem van Eekelen, came to Kiev in a semi-official visit.⁴⁸³

In the first three months of 1994, before the June presidential elections, Kravchuk scored several achievements in Ukraine’s relations with the West: Ukraine joined NATO’s *Partnership for Peace*, initialed the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU and signed the

⁴⁸¹ Despite the fact that in December 1991, Kravchuk, together with the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Belarus, Stanislav Shushkevich and Russian president, Yeltsin, signed the Belavezha Accords, which created the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), in May 1992, he refused joining the Russian-initiated Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) – also known as the Tashkent Treaty. In addition, in January 1993, Kravchuk refused to sign the CIS Charter. His decision stemmed from the worry that Ukraine would gradually lose its independence, as CIS was being transformed into a new political organization in which relations between countries were built, not as between separate, independent entities, but as between unified structures, with common borders, common strategic defense policies, etc. Kravchuk notes that there was a lot of pressure from Russia on Ukraine to sign the CIS Charter. Moscow’s aspiration was to unite all the former Soviet states into a new form, under a new umbrella. He also refers to the formality of many of the CIS decisions: many of the CIS agreements were not implemented, because the organization did not have enough levers to force the states into implementing these decisions.

⁴⁸² Records of Discussion with the Head of the Presidential Administration of Russian Federation, S. O. Filatov, March 18, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴⁸³ “Commission launches discussion on global initiative for Ukraine,” Press Release from the European Commission. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

Trilateral Statement.⁴⁸⁴ In addition, Ukrainian ambassadors in the Western capitals were instructed to inform Western diplomats about Ukraine's willingness to cooperate with the Western European Union and ask for support in developing stronger links with the EU.

The Western counterparts, noted however, either during meetings with Ukrainian diplomats, or in various reports, that despite Ukraine's geographic size, it has been "out of sight"⁴⁸⁵ for Western politicians and admitting that "in Western Europe, there are still doubts over Ukraine's position in the European framework."⁴⁸⁶

By the end of Kravchuk's tenure as president, some segments of the Ukrainian population⁴⁸⁷, were asking for an end to the anti-Russia/anti-CIS policy and an overwhelming majority of the population, 62 percent, was in favor of closer economic relations with Russia and the CIS countries.⁴⁸⁸

In those early days of independent statehood, struggling with a plummeting economy, with changes that democracy and freedom brought about, the Ukrainian population was not ready to face the new challenges. Even though they were living in an independent country, facing the difficult economic conditions, high inflation, shortage of agricultural and industrial products –

⁴⁸⁴ The Trilateral Statement was signed in Moscow, on January 14, 1994 between Presidents Yeltsin, Kravchuk and Clinton, aimed to resolve various security and disarmament issues. As part of the Statement, Ukraine undertook the obligation to transfer to Russia, within 10 months, at least 200 nuclear warheads from missiles for dismantling. Ukraine also promised to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within seven years. Records of discussion with the Adviser of the US Embassy in France, Peter Frederick, and with the Head of the Military Cooperation of the Embassy, Richard Williams, April 2, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015. Russian-Ukrainian Relations, Background Brief from Great Britain's Department of State. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁴⁸⁵ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Director of the CIS Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁴⁸⁶ "Ukraine and European Security." Report prepared by Sir Russell Johnston on behalf of the Defense Committee, Assembly of the Western European Union, May 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁴⁸⁷ Tolstrup, J. *Russia vs the EU: The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States*. (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013). In the summer of 1993, instigated by various forces in Eastern region of Donetsk, the miners in the coal districts of Eastern region of Donbas rebelled, asking for better living conditions, regular salaries, etc.

⁴⁸⁸ *Liberation* on the situation in Ukraine. Translation provided by the Info-Analytical Department of the Security Service of Ukraine. File number 7028. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

returning to the Soviet system, was always an option for them – at least in people’s minds. With a population of 52 million people, Ukraine used to be the “bread-basket” of the Soviet Union; it produced one-third of the Soviet Union’s vegetables, a fourth of its coal and a fifth of its industrial goods.⁴⁸⁹ The disintegration of the Union, however, led to a disastrous socio-economic situation. In a 1993 poll, more than 67 percent of respondents believed that a narrow group of individuals, interested in pursuing their selfish interests, led the country, and more than half of the interviewees did not trust the parliament and local governing bodies.⁴⁹⁰ In 1993, only 28 percent of the respondents trusted President Kravchuk.⁴⁹¹ By early 1994, Kravchuk’s popularity and authority losses were significant, almost half of the Ukrainian population placed “absolute mistrust” in him.⁴⁹²

Even though Kravchuk identified Russia as “the other” against whom people in Ukraine might have defined themselves⁴⁹³ and his tenure was characterized by deterioration in relations with Moscow, he opted for maintaining Ukraine’s economic cooperation in the realm of CIS and Russia. With his authority and popularity in decline and struggling to build a state, plus due to the economic hardship the Ukrainian society was experiencing the first years after 1991,⁴⁹⁴ maintaining economic links with Russia was the avenue, which Kravchuk hoped, would help him garner the necessary support to maintain power in his hands. He noted that since economic ties

⁴⁸⁹ Goldberg, K. “Movement in Ukraine Seeks Independence”, *Los Angeles Times*, October 29, 1990.

⁴⁹⁰ *Liberation* on the situation in Ukraine. Translation provided by the Info-Analytical Department of the Security Service of Ukraine. File number 7028. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

⁴⁹¹ *Liberation* on the situation in Ukraine. Translation provided by the Info-Analytical Department of the Security Service of Ukraine. File number 7028. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 27, 2015.

⁴⁹² Motyl, A. J. “The Conceptual President: Leonid Kravchuk and the Politics of Surrealism” in Timothy J. Colton and Robert C. Tucker ed. *Patterns in Post-Soviet Leadership* (Westview Press: 1995).

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*

and trade links with the West were almost non-existent at that time, and Western politicians were not ready to accommodate Ukraine's requests, economic cooperation with Russia and other CIS states were vital to Ukraine in order to keep the economy at a functioning level.⁴⁹⁵

The archival evidence shows that some Ukrainian diplomats shifted their rhetoric with respect to Ukraine's foreign policy orientations, especially in the months preceding the parliamentary and presidential elections from March and June 1994. Up until these dates, in their discussions with foreign dignitaries, Ukrainian diplomats were pointing out the country's goal of integrating with the European political structures.

The election campaign, however, in which Kravchuk's opponent, Leonid Kuchma, was running on a pro Russian program, addressing the popular dissatisfaction with the economic hardships, and the low trust levels in government institutions, changed the discourse of Ukrainian diplomats with respect to the foreign policy goals. In a discussion with a German Government Delegation, for example, the then-vice minister of Foreign Affairs, Makarenko pointed out that the economic links between Ukraine and Russia, reminiscent from the Soviet period, forced the then-tactic of Kiev to cooperate economically with Russia, Belarus and other CIS governments.⁴⁹⁶ Another vice-minister of Foreign Affairs, Boris Tarasiuk, in whose records of discussion, the idea of dual/multi-vectorness is mentioned for the first time, shared a similar view: "Ukraine's foreign policy is oriented both to the West and to the East. Orienting our foreign policy solely toward the West, without taking into account the positions of our Eastern partners, particularly those of Russia, can lead to unwanted tensions in relations."⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁵ Interview with the author, July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.

⁴⁹⁶ From the Diary of O. D. Makarenko. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Records of Discussion with the German Government Delegation, June 8 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015.

⁴⁹⁷ From the Diary of B. Tarasiuk. Records of Discussion with the Director of the International Security Program of the Advisory Council in the Verchovna Rada of Ukraine, Ian Joseph Brzezinski, June 10 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 30, 2015.

While Prime Minister of Ukraine from October 1992 to September 1993, Leonid Kuchma resigned five times, exposing the domestic political battles between the sitting president Kravchuk, his so-called “Party of Power”⁴⁹⁸ and the Parliament. In September 1993, Kuchma resigned the last and final time from his post as Prime Minister, having his eye on the presidency, with the presidential elections being scheduled for June 1994.

The 1994 presidential elections politicized both the economy and the foreign policy orientation of the country. During his tenure as president, Kravchuk pursued reorientation toward the West, following the Baltic model⁴⁹⁹ claiming that “historically, geographically and geopolitically Ukraine belongs to Europe.”⁵⁰⁰ During the 1994 electoral campaign, Kravchuk positioned himself as a pro-Ukrainian, pro-Western, anti-Russian candidate. One day before the vote, on July 9 1994, Kravchuk received a strong sign of support from the West, when the major G7 industrial democracies, meeting in Naples, approved \$4 billion in aid to Ukraine, conditioning it to progress on economic reform.⁵⁰¹ The Western support, however, came too late. Kuchma, his main opponent, campaigned on a pro-Russia platform, and emerged as the victor of the elections, gaining 52.1 percent of the vote.

Kuchma Years, First Term: 1994 – 1999

Ukraine Knocks harder on Western doors

⁴⁹⁸ The “Party of Power” was a cynical appellation for an informal group of domestic elites, usually former Communists, who have continually influenced the Ukrainian political scene throughout the 1990s. These former Communists constituted the “swing vote” in the struggle between Western and Eastern Ukraine. Abdelal, R., *National Purpose in the World Economy. Post-Soviet States in Comparative Perspective*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 121-122.

⁴⁹⁹ Abdelal, R., *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 2001

⁵⁰⁰ Arel, D. Wilson, A. “Ukraine Under Kuchma: Back to ‘Eurasia’?” *RFERL Research Report*, vol. 3, no. 2, August 19, 1994, p. 1

⁵⁰¹ Erlanger, S. “Ukrainians Elect a New President” *The New York Times*, July 12, 1994. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/12/world/ukrainians-elect-a-new-president.html?pagewanted=all>

This section brings empirical evidence to show that the reticent Western attitude toward Ukraine curbed Kiev's enthusiasm for promoting pro-Western integration goals. Even though Ukraine knocked harder on the Western doors, these doors remained closed. Domestic leaders' awareness in Kiev that the West was not willing to incorporate Ukraine into its structures, played into the decision to oscillate and change foreign policy priorities. Kuchma exemplifies the president who switched foreign policy orientations the most: he came to power on a pro-Russia ticket, once elected for his first term, promoted pro-Western integration and then disillusioned with the Western chilly attitude toward Ukraine, renounced at his EU integration goals and became an ardent supporter of economic and political integration with Russia's Customs Union.

In July 1994, when Kuchma was elected to the presidency, the World Bank called an informal meeting in Paris to discuss Ukraine's economic situation and external assistance priority. Both the IMF and the World Bank prepared series of background documents detailing Ukraine's economic situation and outlining the necessary steps to be taken by the new Ukrainian government to overcome the severe economic crisis.⁵⁰² The American delegation, present at the meeting, issued a statement, criticizing previous actions of the Ukrainian elites, which only worsened the economic situation in the country. The American statement further noted that "Only resolute implementation of stabilization policies and market-oriented reforms" could stop the "drift and decline" in Ukraine's economy. The American government declared its eagerness to work with the new Ukrainian administration and other Western donors "to formulate and support a viable and comprehensive set of economic reform measures."⁵⁰³ The Americans have also conditioned the provision of the \$350 million for economic assistance and \$350 million for security assistance

⁵⁰² Statement of the American Government Delegation to the Ukraine Informal Meeting, July 14, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015.

⁵⁰³ Statement of the American Government Delegation to the Ukraine Informal Meeting, July 14, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 3, 2015, p. 2

(pledged to be offered to Ukraine during Kravchuk's visit to the US in March 1994) on "Ukraine's ability to translate its policy commitments into an aggressive market reform program."⁵⁰⁴ Over the years 1995 and 1996, Ukraine was promised to receive over \$4 billion international financial assistance given that the country "undertakes genuine market reform" and successfully collaborates with the IMF, World Bank and the USAID.⁵⁰⁵

During the years 1995 – 1996, Kuchma's announced "radical reforms" registered some initial successes: inflation decreased, most prices were freed, the foreign trade regime was loosened, and certain steps toward microeconomic liberalization were taken.⁵⁰⁶ Praising words of Kuchma's performance could be heard from Western capitals: "After four years of minimal progress on structural economic reform, a committed group of reformers – under the strong leadership of President Kuchma – has started to make significant progress."⁵⁰⁷

Disappointed with the stalled reform process in Russia, the US decreased the amount of aid to Moscow,⁵⁰⁸ increasing the amount of aid to Ukraine. In 1996, Kiev was the largest recipient of the Freedom Support Act funds, while both for 1996 and 1997, Ukraine was third, after Israel and Egypt, among the recipients of American financial aid.⁵⁰⁹ In 1996, A US-Ukrainian bi-national commission was created with the purpose of ensuring that "the strong bilateral ties between Ukraine and the US produce concrete results that benefit both countries in ... security, economic

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 5

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 2

⁵⁰⁶ Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015.

⁵⁰⁷ Testimony from the Various committees of the US Congress on US Foreign AID to former USSR countries, June 10, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁰⁸ If in 1994, Russia alone received \$1.6 billion from a total of \$2.5 billion destined for the former USSR states, in 1996 it was scheduled to receive only less than one tenth of that sum; in 1995 – two thirds of assistance destined for the newly independent states went to Russia. Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ Records of Discussion with the Head of the Ukrainian-American Consultation Committee, Z. Bzrezhinsky, October 10, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015. Testimony from the Various committees of the US Congress on US Foreign AID to former USSR countries, June 10, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

and trade, and investment relations,”⁵¹⁰ the Americans expressing their satisfaction that relations between two countries “have now reached a level of strategic partnership.”⁵¹¹

Despite signs of improved relations between Ukraine and the US during the first two years of Kuchma’s presidency, the honeymoon between Kiev and Washington did not last long. As early as mid-1995, Kuchma renounced at the comprehensive economic reform program announced in 1994,⁵¹² and in the first half of 1997, the American administration showed its discontent with the course of economic reforms and the investment climate in Ukraine.⁵¹³ The Ukrainian Embassy in the US noted back in October 1997 that there was a certain degree of tension between the Ukrainian and the American sides because of disapproval of each side with the actions of the other. The Americans were disappointed with the tempo and character of the economic reforms in Ukraine, while Ukrainians were unhappy about the decrease of financial help from Washington, both from the US government, as well as from the World Bank and the IMF.⁵¹⁴ The Ukrainian embassy was also reporting that the American press launched an open anti-Ukrainian campaign: in 2 months, more than 20 articles were published in the most important American newspapers, covering the increased levels of corruption in Ukraine.⁵¹⁵ The Americans conditioned the extension of financial

⁵¹⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian President’s Administration, May 24 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵¹¹ Ukrainian-American Consultations, October 24 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵¹² Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 285.

⁵¹³ Current State of Ukrainian-American Economic Relations, October 16, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵¹⁴ Current State of Ukrainian-American Economic Relations, October 16, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

Certain American diplomats were sending warning signs to Ukraine as early as the end of 1995. The then Deputy Coordinator of the Program for CIS Support in the American Department of State, D. Spekchard, advanced concerns with respect to the “adverse conditions” of the Ukrainian economy to attract private investors and businesses, imperfect legislation, unstable tax policies, crime and corruption, slowness of the privatization process, attracting “bad international reputation” for Ukraine. Records of Discussion with the Deputy Coordinator of the Program for CIS Support, Department of State of the US, D. Spekchard, December 4, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

⁵¹⁵ Current State of Ukrainian-American Economic Relations, October 16, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

support with the continuation of economic reforms, policies to fight against corruption, and ceasing cooperation with the so-called “rogue states,” like Iran, to which Ukraine was selling armament.⁵¹⁶

Germans expressed concerns with the economic, social and political situation in Ukraine as well. The German diplomat pointed out that not all countries in the EU share Germany’s engagement in Ukrainian affairs: some countries prefer a reserved approach to Kiev.⁵¹⁷

Disappointments both in Kiev and in EU capitals characterized Ukraine’s relations with the EU during Kuchma’s first presidential term. Ukrainian diplomats expressed their disillusionment that in its dealings with the CEE states, EU preferred the 6+3 format,⁵¹⁸ considering Ukraine only within its aspects of participation in the CIS, excluding it from the circle of CEE states, “even though it is located in the center of Europe.”⁵¹⁹ In discussions with European diplomats and in interviews with Western mass media, the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Tarasyuk, accused the EU of “uncertainty and lack of strategic policy toward Ukraine.”⁵²⁰ Tarasyuk further emphasized that Ukraine is no less democratic than Romania or Bulgaria, and the economic situation in Ukraine is not worse than in these countries, yet EU officials continue to be reluctant toward accepting Kiev into European political and economic institutions.⁵²¹ The criticism that the EU did not have a “clear concept ... on developing relations with Ukraine” was advanced by the then Ukrainian president Kuchma during meetings with the EU Troika in May 1998.⁵²² The Head

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ The Head of the Political Department in the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed that German and American diplomats met in October 1997 to coordinate efforts in order support economic reforms in Ukraine. Records of Discussion with the Head of the Political Department of the German MFA, G. I. Peters, November 4 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵¹⁸ Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria + the three Baltic States.

⁵¹⁹ Speech by Tarasiuk "Central Eastern Europe and EU: view from the region", IIIrd Conference of the Strategic Group on the cooperation in Central Eastern Europe, October 25 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁵²⁰ Records of Discussion with the Italian Ambassador to Ukraine, D. Bertinetto, July 30, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Information on the meeting of President Kuchma with the EU Troika, May 11, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

of Unit for the New Independent States from the European Commission's Directorate General for External Relations, Hugues Mingarelli, acknowledged that the EU "does not know what to do with Ukraine."⁵²³

Comparing Ukraine's experience with that of Poland, for example, one can easily observe the different treatment that the two countries received from the EU. Poland signed its Agreement on Trade and Commercial and Economic Cooperation with the EU in 1989, only two years later, in 1991, Poland signed the Europe (Association) Agreement with the EU. Namely, because of this Association Agreement, Poland managed to develop close relations with the EU in economic and political spheres.⁵²⁴ Two more years later, in 1993, during the EU Summit in Copenhagen, the EU leaders went a step further and endorsed Poland's and other CEE states' goal of EU membership. Poland received "the appropriate signal to apply for EU membership"⁵²⁵ in four years since it signed the first cooperation agreement with Brussels.⁵²⁶

Ukrainian representatives were using the same tactics of "rhetorical action"⁵²⁷ in their dealings with the EU member states, exposing inconsistencies between, on the one hand, EU's treatment of the CEECs, and on the the other, EU's policy toward Ukraine, requesting the same "privileged" treatment.

⁵²³ Records of Discussion with Hugues Mingarelli, Head of "Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus" Unit, Directorate General for External Relations, European Commission, August 13, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 13, 2015.

⁵²⁴ Records of Discussion with Poland's Representative to the EU, I. Trushinsky, June 12, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.
European Commission Press Release Database. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-95-122_en.htm?locale=en

⁵²⁵ Records of Discussion with Poland's Representative to the EU, I. Trushinsky, June 12, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁵²⁶ The Polish Ambassador to Brussels says that it took two years, from 1989 until 1991 to convince the Western Europeans to sign an Association Agreement with Poland. He acknowledges that the initial steps were difficult for Poland as well, because the EU leaders were not very positive about this decision. Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Schimmelfennig, F. "The Community Trap. Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," in *The Politics of European Union Enlargement. Theoretical Approaches*, ed. Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 161.

They were criticizing the EU for ignoring Ukraine's requests for a "positive signal" on its eventual EU membership. The then-Ukrainian ambassador to Brussels, B. M. Gudima, was pointing out in a draft article on Ukraine-EU relations, "Ukraine's macroeconomic indicators, the development of democratic institutions and pluralism in the society – is not very different from the situation of the CEE states in 1991, when they signed Association Agreements with the EU. Back then, the EU 'did not leave' them with their low levels of reforms or inadequate levels of adaptation to the EU norms, as the EU is doing with Ukraine now."⁵²⁸

In June 1998, during the first meeting of the Council on Cooperation between Ukraine and the EU, Ukraine officially presented its intention to become an associate member of the EU.⁵²⁹ With Boris Tarasyuk as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and following Kuchma's signing of the Decree on Ukraine's plan to integrate in the EU, the special representative of the Government of Ukraine on questions of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, A. Buteiko, had a special mission to visit the EU capitals to discuss the conditions of potential association of Ukraine with the EU.⁵³⁰ The main answer which Buteiko brought back to Kiev from the West was that EU member countries "are ready to go as far as possible, but not as far as Ukraine wants."⁵³¹ Spain, Italy, and Austria were the countries which most negatively reacted to Ukraine's request for EU association status. The then Spanish State Secretary for Foreign Policy and EU Affairs told the

⁵²⁸ Article written by the Ukrainian Ambassador in Brussels on the EU-Ukraine Relations, June 19, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵²⁹ Delegation of the European Union to Ukraine. Chronology EU-Ukraine relations. Retrieved from http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/eu_ukraine/chronology/index_en.htm

⁵³⁰ Letter from the MFA of Ukraine to the British Embassy in Ukraine, March 6, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵³¹ Information on the Mission of the First Deputy MFA of Ukraine, Authorized with Questions of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, A. D. Butejka, in the EU capitals, August 27 - September 4, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

Ukrainian Deputy Minister openly: “You should not shift your problems to us. [...] We will never put the responsibility of the former USSR on us.”⁵³²

The Ukrainian ambassador to the European institutions in Brussels writes in his diplomatic correspondence that he had more than fifty meetings with European Commission officials, as well as with EU member-states envoys to talk about Ukraine receiving the associate membership status with the EU. He reports that during all the meetings, the interlocutors brought the same traditional set of arguments: EU-Ukrainian relations should not go beyond the provisions of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement,⁵³³ the difficult economic situation in Ukraine make Ukraine ill equipped for closer cooperation with the EU.⁵³⁴

The diplomatic documents revealed Ukrainians’ dissatisfaction with the negotiation style of the EU officials vis-à-vis Ukraine. During the first meeting of the Ukraine-EU Cooperation Council in June 1998, the European Commission officials “fully dominated, imposed their tone and priorities,” minimizing the political questions discussed and calling Ukrainian requests “unrealistic.”⁵³⁵ Moreover, the Ukrainians were disappointed with how the EU representatives organized the meeting. Kiev was hoping to discuss deepening Ukraine’s relations with the EU during the working lunch. However, the EU organizers did not provide enough seats for the Ukrainian delegation to sit at the same table with the EU officials. Therefore the representatives of the EU-member states and the members of the Ukrainian delegation were seated at different tables.⁵³⁶

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Records of Discussion with the State-Secretary of the MFA of Germany, September 13, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵³⁴ Records of Discussion with the Austrian Permanent Representative to the EU, Manfredo Sheich, June 18, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵³⁵ Information on the first meeting of the Cooperation Council Ukraine-EU, June 8-9, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵³⁶ The disappointment was caused namely because Ukrainians were consulting the Polish diplomats on their experience in negotiating with the EU officials. The Polish colleagues told the Ukrainians that there is usually an

Only in December 1999, the EU adopted the *Common Strategy on Ukraine* to achieve a better coordination of actions in its foreign and security policy.⁵³⁷ Even though in this document,⁵³⁸ for the first time the “EU acknowledges Ukraine’s European aspirations and welcomes Ukraine’s pro-European choice,”⁵³⁹ the strategy did not contain “fundamentally new provisions for ‘institutionalizing’ relations between Ukraine and the EU.”⁵⁴⁰ Ukraine wanted a statement which would have stated EU’s support for Ukraine’s future membership. However none of the EU member states were ready to endorse such a statement.⁵⁴¹

Whereas the Ukrainians were asking the Europeans to adopt this strategy before the presidential elections, to show a sign of support for Leonid Kuchma, contrary to the Kiev’s expectations, the EU states, adopted a “wait and see strategy” and decided to approve the strategy on Ukraine after the elections.⁵⁴²

official part of meetings, and an unofficial side, during the unofficial lunch. Based on the Polish experience, “many important questions were solved during the unofficial part of the meeting.” Ukrainians were hoping to reach some important political decisions as well, but failed. Records of Discussion with the Head of the Direction of European Integration, from the Polish MFA, April 18, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵³⁷ Records of Discussion with Hugues Mingarelli, Head of “Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus” Unit, Directorate General for External Relations, European Commission, May 14, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵³⁸ A similar strategy on Russia was adopted prior to the Ukrainian document, at the end of the German EU leadership, in June 1999. In fact, Brussels had the goal of first finalizing and approving the Common Strategy on Russia, and only afterwards start drafting strategies on all other Eastern European countries, including Ukraine. Records of Discussion with Portuguese politicians related to the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, February 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015. The Ukrainians claimed that the Strategy on Ukraine should not be a mirror copy of the strategy on Russia, as the two countries have different goals with respect to the EU.

⁵³⁹ European Council Common Strategy of December 11, 1999 on Ukraine. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/ukEN.pdf>

⁵⁴⁰ Records of Discussion with Hugues Mingarelli, Head of “Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus” Unit, Directorate General for External Relations, European Commission, May 14, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁴¹ The Common EU strategy on Ukraine and its place in the system of bilateral relations. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 13, 2015.

⁵⁴² Records of Discussion with the Advisor to the Finnish Embassy in the Benelux countries, M. Risliaki, October 8, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

Some EU diplomats were telling Ukrainian counterparts that out of all the former USSR republics, the EU member states were adopting common strategies only with Russia and Ukraine, showing the importance of these two countries for the EU.⁵⁴³ The Ukrainian diplomats, however, were disenchanted that the EU's strategy on Ukraine was a mirror copy of the Strategy on Russia, even though the two countries had different goals concerning the EU.⁵⁴⁴ In 2001, only 2 percent of Russian respondents considered EU integration an important issue for Russia, whereas Russian foreign minister, Igor Ivanov declared that he does not conceive of Russia being part of the EU.⁵⁴⁵

The diplomatic records show that Great Britain, Denmark, Sweden and to a certain extent Luxembourg, were the countries which were the most supportive of Ukraine's integration desire. At the same time, however, they were not ready to lobby for Ukraine at the level necessary to launch a new phase in EU-Ukrainian relations. In fact, some Western diplomats were advising the Ukrainians to "have a country-sponsor among the EU-member states, which would consistently advocate Ukraine's interests, in the way in which the Scandinavian countries, for example, support the Baltic States. A great importance in this area... play economic interests."⁵⁴⁶ Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands put a lot of efforts to lobby for the Central and Eastern European states' membership bid. They were not interested in supporting the Ukrainian question.⁵⁴⁷ France and Italy, positively reacted to Ukraine's EU aspirations, but generally, were not ready to support Ukraine in its EU integration goals. The Russian factor is said to have contributed to these

⁵⁴³ Records of Discussion with Deputy Director of the European Cooperation Direction, MFA of France, J. Fora, June 25, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁴⁴ Records of Discussion between Konstantin Grishchenko with the Head of the Political Direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, J. L. Voltzveld, September 3, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁴⁵ Newspaper articles from Russia on Russian-EU Relations, 2001. Parliamentary Library of the Russian Federation. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁵⁴⁶ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Head of the Direction of European Integration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Bart Uvri, October 11, 1999.

⁵⁴⁷ The archival evidence shows that around this time in 1999, these countries started to shift their attention to pragmatic questions: budget, the institutional reform, Euro, the enlargement wave.

countries' position toward Ukraine. These states were more interested in maintaining good relations with Moscow than in forging ties with Kiev. For Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Ireland – the question of EU structural funds was essential, and they did not want to support Ukraine's aspirations and then share these resources with other capitals.

Even though the adoption of the EU strategy on Ukraine was a Finnish initiative, Finland's foreign policy priorities were Russia and the Baltics at the time. Finally, the European Commission showed the most restrained attitude during the process of the Strategy creation and was the least enthusiastic about giving a positive political signal to Ukraine, permanently reminding about the ineffective implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and various trade disputes with Kiev.⁵⁴⁸

The Ukrainians were hoping that President Kuchma would be invited to the EU Summit in Helsinki in December 1999, where the Common Strategy on Ukraine was adopted, but he was not invited to attend the Summit.⁵⁴⁹ Only the leaders of the EU candidates were invited to start accession negotiations with the EU formally.⁵⁵⁰ The Ukrainians, however, were told that the summit deals with questions related to EU's internal affairs. Therefore it was not possible for external leaders to attend the event.⁵⁵¹ These developments created a sense of disappointment in

⁵⁴⁸ The Common EU strategy on Ukraine and its place in the system of bilateral relations. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 13, 2015.

⁵⁴⁹ Article in *European Report*, No. from November 17, 1999 and November 20, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁵⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Helsinki, November 11, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015

⁵⁵¹ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Head of the Direction of Europe, Netherland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Martin Lok, November 4, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

Ukraine, where more than 80 percent of the population was in favor of EU integration.⁵⁵² Ukraine was “not encouraged” by the EU’s approach to create new boundaries in Europe.⁵⁵³

The understanding that Ukraine was not on EU’s priority list at all further catalyzed the disappointment. EU’s agenda in 1999 had on top issues related to the EU reform, the CEE enlargement candidates, Turkey, the Balkans and only at the end of the list, written in small letters was Ukraine. The EU diplomats claimed that the question of Ukraine’s possible association membership would be addressed if favorable circumstances would allow it, Ukraine’s internal and geopolitical situation in the region playing a crucial role.⁵⁵⁴ Günter Verheugen, Commissioner Designate for Enlargement, confirmed the EU’s lack of attention toward Ukraine the rest of the CIS states, which were not covered by the then EU’s enlargement strategy. “Whether and when this will change cannot be predicted at this stage.”⁵⁵⁵

The sour relations between the newly re-elected Kuchma and the Western partners embittered even more after the presidential elections in Ukraine. The leader of the British Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, (PACE) Tery Davis, said that politicians in Great Britain were disturbed about the serious democratic violations allowed during the presidential elections in Ukraine.⁵⁵⁶ The Council of Europe’s election observation report called

⁵⁵² “Ukraine Made its Choice toward Europe. We will not stop knocking on doors.” Article by Ukrainian Foreign Minister, B. Tarasyuk in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 18, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁵³ Article in *European Report*, No. from November 17, 1999 and November 20, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁵⁴ The Common EU strategy on Ukraine and its place in the system of bilateral relations. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 13, 2015.

⁵⁵⁵ Questionnaire for Mr. Günter Verheugen, Commissioner Designate for Enlargement, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defense Policy. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁵⁶ Records of Discussion with the Leader of the British Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Tery Davis, November 25, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015. The British diplomat declared in addition, that the parliamentary elections which took place in Georgia around the same period of time were more democratic than the presidential elections in Kiev.

the conduct of the campaign in Ukraine a “disgrace,”⁵⁵⁷ president Kuchma being blamed for abusing his privileged position and engaging in widespread media bias, the use of public resources for his electoral purposes and interfering with the campaigns of his opponents.⁵⁵⁸

Kuchma’s first presidential term ended on a bitter note with the EU. When the EU Council finally adopted the *Common Strategy on Ukraine* in December 1999, the EU member states ignored Kuchma pleas for a “political signal” to Ukraine’s EU membership prospect. The Ukrainian diplomats have asked their EU counterparts to be more flexible with the choice of words for the text of the strategy,⁵⁵⁹ using words that would have left a window of opportunity for Ukraine’s future EU membership. They were disappointed, however, as the final version of the document did not go beyond the “strategic partnership” formulation of EU-Ukrainian relations. The legal basis of the relationship was set to be the PCA, which meant that EU members did not accept Ukrainians’ requests for an upgrade of relations to the associate membership status.⁵⁶⁰

Once elected for a second term, Kuchma renounced at his EU integration goals and became an ardent supporter of economic and political integration with Russia’s Customs Union. As the section below shows, Kuchma’s disillusionment with the chilly Western attitude toward Ukraine played a significant role in this change of foreign policy priorities.

Relations with NATO

⁵⁵⁷ Birch, S. “The Presidential Elections in Ukraine, October 1999” *Electoral Studies*, 21, 2002, p. 340.

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Head of the Direction of European Integration and Coordination, Belgian MFA, Bart Uvri. July 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁵⁶⁰ European Council Common Strategy of 11 December 1999 on Ukraine. *Official Journal of the European Communities*. December 23, 1999. L331/2, point 7. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/ukEN.pdf>

This subsection brings evidence to show that NATO's reluctance to deepen cooperation with Ukraine and the indications that it was prioritizing relations with Moscow over Kiev, signaled to domestic Ukrainian decision-makers that Ukraine could not rely on the West for security guarantees and that in the "survival" game in the international system, it was to fend for itself. Therefore, the executives in Kiev did not disregard the option of bandwagoning with Russia.

Throughout 1995, 1996 and 1997 – Ukraine's relationship with NATO was dominated by lengthy negotiations on the question of offering Ukraine a "special partnership" status with the alliance. Ukrainians' request of this "special partnership" was a reflection of their concern related to the new architecture in Europe after NATO's eastward enlargement, when Ukraine would find itself "between an enlarged NATO and an ambitious Russia,"⁵⁶¹ basically "on the political sidelines of Europe." The archival evidence shows that the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs presented a document, outlining Kiev's views on the special partnership relations to the North Atlantic Council, in September 1995.⁵⁶² In discussions with Western diplomats in October 1996, Ukrainians were expressing dissatisfaction that, after more than a year since the proposal was sent to Brussels, no official response from NATO on this question was received.⁵⁶³

When NATO officials finally paid attention to the Ukrainian proposal,⁵⁶⁴ NATO was very prudent in meeting these requests, labeling the topic as "very delicate"⁵⁶⁵ and pointing out that

⁵⁶¹ Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Ambassador in the Benelux countries with the Swedish Ambassador to NATO, January 22, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁶² Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Brussels, February 23, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁶³ Theses for the Discussion of the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Udovenko, with the American-Ukrainian Consultative Committee, Zbigniew Brzezinski, October 11, 1996.

⁵⁶⁴ Ukraine received an answer on the document around the end of 1996 – beginning of 1997.

⁵⁶⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy to Poland on the "Study on NATO Enlargement", by G. von Moltke, the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, October 19, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

“NATO members [were] not ready to create a precedent for a special partnership with Ukraine.”⁵⁶⁶

The main debate was related to the fact that Ukrainians insisted on labeling their relations with NATO as “special”, while NATO officials did not want to use such a term, because “this would complicate the NATO policy toward Russia.”⁵⁶⁷ NATO refused to include Ukrainian proposals in the final text of the document. Requests related to the guarantees to Ukraine’s national security, the creation of a permanent NATO-Ukraine Council, possibility to participate in taking joint decisions, the opportunity of cooperation in the military-technical area, and the naming of the Ukraine-NATO relations as “special” – were ignored by the Western partners.⁵⁶⁸ The final document, which was signed on July 9, 1997, during the NATO Summit in Madrid, was titled “Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine.” NATO refrained from naming Ukrainian-NATO relations as “special.” Instead, terms like “distinctive,” “effective” and “enhanced” were used throughout the document.⁵⁶⁹

The archival evidence suggests that the Ukrainian diplomats were aware of NATO’s readiness to meet certain Russian requests, make compromises⁵⁷⁰ and “encourage” Russia into cooperation with NATO “at any price” and beyond the frameworks of the Partnership for Peace

⁵⁶⁶ Meeting of Ukrainian First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, B. Tarasuyk, with the Ambassadors of the NATO member states in Ukraine, September, 1-5 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁵⁶⁷ Records of Discussion with Head of the Security Policy Department, British Foreign Office, Alyson Bailes, September 5, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁵⁶⁸ Letter from the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, H. Udovenko, to the Ukrainian President Kuchma, “On the progress of negotiations of the NATO-Ukraine Document”, May 26, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁶⁹ The text of the final document can be found here: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25457.htm Letter from Javier Solana to H. Udovenko on relations between Ukraine and NATO, February 6, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁷⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy to Russia on the first Russian reactions to NATO Assembly’s decision on Eastern Enlargement. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

Program.⁵⁷¹ When the then Ukrainian First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs asked “why not with Ukraine?” why only with Russia is NATO seeking more cooperation, the Western ambassadors replied: “We do not have problems with [Ukraine]!”⁵⁷² The General Secretary of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs shared the same opinion, claiming that NATO’s relations with Ukraine were normal, whereas Russia creates “headaches”; therefore the West pays more attention to its relations with Moscow.⁵⁷³ With Russia, NATO signed a “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security” in May 1997. The new document created a mechanism for consultation and cooperation through the NATO-Russia permanent joint Council.⁵⁷⁴ Some Russian observers at that time ridiculed both Russian and Ukrainian documents, by claiming that “If the document between NATO and Russia is largely conceded as just a piece of paper, then the charter between NATO and Ukraine is nothing more than a third copy of this piece of paper.”⁵⁷⁵ Ukrainians were unsettled, however, by NATO’s visible prioritization of relations with Russia. Javier Solana, the then NATO Secretary General, during a visit to Moscow in April 1997, declared that NATO is not

⁵⁷¹ Info on the special event at the Estonian Embassy in Ukraine in honor of the Estonian Defense Minister, October 9, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

According to information sent by the Ukrainian Ambassador in Moscow, the push to start negotiations on the NATO-Russia document was the fact that Ukraine advanced its own idea about the necessity to provide security guarantees for its national security in the process of “NATO enlargement.” The further course of events, and namely launching by the Russian side of the negotiations in the same format as the ones between Ukraine and NATO – proves that the Russian side was actively using the ideas and basic principles from the Ukrainian Document. Important to note, is that the Ukrainian proposal was used by NATO representatives as a basis for their work on the NATO-Russia document. Since Kiev was closely following Moscow’s negotiations with NATO, Ukrainians were pursuing the goal of getting an equal treatment as the Russians, if not, more. Ukrainians were requesting, for example, that the final document signed with NATO, carry more political and legal burden, than the document NATO signed with Russia. “Information on the political consultations between Ukraine and the US on security issues”, April 2-4, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁷³ The Ukrainian Ambassador to France showed his disturbance that the then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hervé de Charette, constantly mentioned only Russia, with no mentioning of Ukraine, in his speeches and statements. Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Ambassador to France and the General Secretary of the French MFA, B. Dufourc, April 30, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁷⁴ The NATO-Russia Council was established in 2002.

⁵⁷⁵ Dahlburg, J. T. Kempster, N., “NATO Signs Accord With Ukraine,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 1997, <http://articles.latimes.com/1997/jul/10/news/mn-11379/>.

interested in signing a document with Ukraine before it signs it with Russia first.⁵⁷⁶ The negotiation process and the arguments advanced by NATO shows, in the words of a Ukrainian diplomat, that the principle “Russia, above all” continues to be followed by the West. Ukraine continues to be viewed as a “post-Soviet republic within the CIS, even though most of its problems are the same as the ones of the CEE states.”⁵⁷⁷

Kuchma Responds to Internal Constraints and Opportunities

The following section documents the process by which domestic leaders take foreign policy decisions not only constrained by the systemic stimuli, but also with an eye toward domestic constraints and opportunities. The incentives and threats presented by the international system, mediated by domestic leaders’ interests and goals – influenced Kiev’s foreign policy choices.

In his inauguration speech as the new elected Ukrainian president in 1994, Leonid Kuchma defined his pro-Russia orientation, pointing out that “Ukraine is historically part of the Eurasian⁵⁷⁸ economic space” and that the “self-isolation of Ukraine and its voluntary refusal to promote its own interests actively in the Eurasian space were a serious mistake, causing colossal damage to our economy.”⁵⁷⁹ Following the idea that economics should lead politics and not the other way around, Kuchma argued that since the CIS and Russia represented Ukraine’s source of energy supplies, raw materials, and consumer goods, Kiev had to take a leading role in the process of CIS

⁵⁷⁶ Results on the Visit of Javier Solana to Moscow, April 15, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁵⁷⁷ Records of Discussion between the Director of the Policy Planning Department, Ukrainian MFA, with the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Malcolm Rifkind, December 10, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁵⁷⁸ The newly elected president referred to Eurasia as the territory of the former Soviet Union. As cited in Arel, D. Wilson, A. “Ukraine Under Kuchma: Back to ‘Eurasia?’” *RFERL Research Report*, vol. 3, no. 2, August 19, 1994, p. 1

⁵⁷⁹ Arel, D. Wilson, A. “Ukraine Under Kuchma,” 1994

economic integration.⁵⁸⁰ Kuchma was also a critic of the “Western [International Monetary Fund] model of forced liberalization,” warning that it would transform Ukraine into the “backyard of Europe,” forcing Ukraine to produce only those goods that the West was “unwilling” or “unable” to produce.⁵⁸¹

With only Kuchma and Kravchuk competing in the second round of elections, the left-wing parties (the Socialist and the Communist Parties of Ukraine) supported the candidacy of Kuchma, being attracted by his pro-Russian message.⁵⁸² The only disagreement between Kuchma’s electoral program and the left’s position were Kuchma’s pledge to implement market-oriented reforms in the economy, but they were on the same page with the pro-Russia orientation.⁵⁸³

The status of the Russian language was another topic which dominated the campaign and on which the two candidates had opposing views: while Kravchuk, during his presidential tenure, promoted the use of Ukrainian at the official level, Kuchma was a fierce advocate for Russian to be offered an “official” status, along with Ukrainian, which had to remain the state language.⁵⁸⁴ Kuchma himself only just started to use Ukrainian after becoming the country’s president.

Once elected president, the expectation was for Kuchma to transform his electoral promises into policies, specifically with respect to Ukraine’s reintegration with Russia and the CIS.⁵⁸⁵ The new Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, G. Udovenko, in his diplomatic diaries, echoed these plans. In discussions with various Western diplomats, he said that the new Ukrainian foreign policy

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 1

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p. 6

⁵⁸² Ibid.

⁵⁸³ Arel, D. Wilson, A. “Ukraine Under Kuchma,” 1994

⁵⁸⁴ He was not explicit on the difference between “official” versus “state” language. Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ The archival documents show that the Western circles were expecting a Ukraine reintegrated with Russia once Kuchma acquired office.

would emphasize the “normalization” and further development of relations with Russia, as well as “reconstruction” and “renewal” of “mutually profitable relations with the CIS.”⁵⁸⁶

Contrary to the expectations, however, Kuchma’s foreign policy was characterized by a continuation of Kravchuk’s policy toward Russia: “bilateral cooperation with Russia, but consistent rejection of multilateral economic integration with any CIS states.”⁵⁸⁷ Moreover, while before acquiring the presidential office, Kuchma was an ardent critic of the Western IMF, once becoming Ukraine’s president, Kuchma abandoned his original mandate and adopted the IMF program, being blamed for betrayal and attacked by communists and left-wing politicians for “becoming IMF’s puppet.”⁵⁸⁸

Only three months into his presidency, in October 1994, Kuchma gave an hour-long speech in front of the parliament, presenting a radical program of economic reforms and claiming that given the then-economic situation, there was no “alternate” course for Ukraine.⁵⁸⁹ Among other measures, the program proposed to conduct price liberalization together with financial and monetary stabilization and to cut government spending and reduce the budget deficit by establishing spending limits.⁵⁹⁰ The left-wing parties, which dominated the Ukrainian parliament (over 40 percent of the deputies elected in the March 1994 parliamentary elections were

⁵⁸⁶ Udovenko’s messages to his Western counterparts, however, were characterized by a certain dose of ambiguity. As he claims that Ukrainian foreign policy’s emphasis is on reintegration with Russia, at the same time he declared that “changes in the Ukrainian foreign policy will not be carried out at the expense of relations with the West, the development of which is one of [our] priorities.” From the Diary of G. I. Udovenko. Records of Discussion with Deputy-Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, D. Spring, September 27 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015. From the Diary of G. I. Udovenko. Records of Discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, A. Mok, September 27 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁵⁸⁷ Abdelal, R. *National Purpose in the World Economy*, 2001, p. 120.

⁵⁸⁸ Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 194 – 196

⁵⁸⁹ Kolomayets, M. “Kuchma Outlines Radical Program of Reforms” *The Ukrainian Weekly*, October 16, 1994. Retrieved from http://ukrweekly.com/archive/1994/The_Ukrainian_Weekly_1994-42.pdf

⁵⁹⁰ Zviglyanich, V. “The State Economic Reform in Ukraine” *Demokratizatsiya*, p. 140. Retrieved from https://www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/03-2_Zviglyanich.PDF

representing the left-wing parties⁵⁹¹), were against market reforms, emphasizing the important role of the state in managing the economy, opposing the privatization of agriculture, and calling for a delay in industrial privatization.⁵⁹²

Kuchma needed the support of international organizations and Western donors in order to finance these reforms. He placed great hopes in the Western financial assistance to facilitate the implementation of reforms.⁵⁹³ One month after his Rada speech on radical reform plan, in November 1994, Kuchma visited the US for the first time in his role as the Ukrainian president. The German press wrote at that time that Kuchma went to Washington with two trophies in his pocket: his revolutionary speech in the Rada on plans to implement sweeping market reforms and the Parliament's ratification of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Clinton promised financial support to Ukraine and the German press noted that with moral and financial backing from the US, Ukraine was before a new start.⁵⁹⁴ Returned home, Kuchma "soft-pedalled" the topics of reintegration into the "Eurasian" space and did nothing to improve the status of the Russian language.⁵⁹⁵

Since "retention of power" was his main interest, Kuchma focused more on stopping his opponents, rather than on building a party, which would have offered him the support to enact the much-needed reforms.

In fact, one feature that characterized the Ukrainian political system in the 1990s was the unconsolidated character of the political parties. In the parliamentary elections from March

⁵⁹¹ In the parliamentary elections from March-April 1994, the SPU won 25 seats in the Parliament, while the CPU acquired 84 seats. Arel, D. Wilson, A. "Ukraine Under Kuchma: Back to 'Eurasia'?", 1994

⁵⁹² Arel, D. Wilson, A. "Ukraine Under Kuchma: Back to 'Eurasia'?", 1994

⁵⁹³ Burant, S. R. "Ukraine and East Central Europe" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, vol. 20, Ukraine in the World: Studies in the International Relations and Security Structure of a Newly Independent State (1996), p. 45-77

⁵⁹⁴ German Press Review on Kuchma's visit to the US, November 11, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁵⁹⁵ Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 195-197.

1994, 60 percent of the contenders represented the so-called “independent candidates”, which did not represent any party, but which were supported by their local power base; 20 percent – represented the unions and only 20 percent – were nominated by parties, coalitions and political movements.⁵⁹⁶ After the elections, the largest “bloc” in the parliament, 163 seats, were occupied by unaffiliated, independent candidates.⁵⁹⁷ The Ukrainian media referred to this group as the *boloto* (swamp), because of its undefined character.⁵⁹⁸ These independent members of Parliament might have been more flexible in their foreign policy preferences and more willing to switch positions on Russia versus EU orientation depending on which leaders (pro-Russia or pro-EU leaders) in Ukraine were offering the best deal to them for their support.

Still, the Communist Party of Ukraine, the Socialist Party, and the Agrarian Party, controlling 118 seats, formed the largest coalition in parliament.⁵⁹⁹ Rukh and its allies controlled only 35 seats.⁶⁰⁰ Since the left-wing parties dominated the parliament, they oftentimes blocked most of the president’s initiatives on economic reform. Kuchma therefore, focused his attention

⁵⁹⁶ From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Vaclav Klaus, Prime-Minister of the Czech Republic, March 17 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

⁵⁹⁷ D’Anieri, P. *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics and Institutional Design*. (M.E. Sharpe, Inc. 2007), p. 83

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁹ In a sign that the Communists and left-wing parties had a big influence in the Ukrainian legislature, Oleksandr Moroz, the head of the Socialist Party of Ukraine, was elected the speaker of the Rada after the elections, holding this position until July 1998.

⁶⁰⁰ Vaclav Klaus, the then-prime minister of the Czech Republic, expressed his shock at these figures, declaring: “This is the End.” He pointed out that Ukraine lost the window of opportunity to implement reforms. Based on the experience of his country, he believed that political parties, with clearly defined ideologies, and not independent candidates, are needed in order for painful economic changes to be implemented. He further declared that “The most important success in the CR is not the fact that we managed to decrease inflation. Our biggest victory lies in the fact that we, as a post-communist country, created a political system from the scratch with clearly outlined ideologies for political parties. This gave the possibility to stabilize our economy with the help of political tools. If an economist who wants to implement reforms does not have a standard system of political parties – his attempts to a great extent are doomed to failure.” From the Diary of A. M. Zlenko. Records of Discussion with Vaclav Klaus, Prime-Minister of the Czech Republic, March 17, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed July 31, 2015.

on acquiring more power and strengthening the institution of presidency, while at the same time getting into bitter fights with the communist-dominated Parliament.

Given that Kuchma was elected president on a pro-Russia/pro-CIS program and that left-wing parties, devoted advocates of the pro-Eastern direction, were controlling the parliament, why did Kuchma end up continuing Kravchuk's foreign policy orientation in the first four years of his presidency, turning toward the West and seeking EU membership for Ukraine? The answer is provided by Kuchma's efforts to maintain his grip on power in Kiev, maintaining a sovereign Ukraine. After being elected president, Kuchma declared that "We have to co-operate with the Russians, but that doesn't mean we have to trust them."⁶⁰¹ He put considerable effort to work and improve Ukraine's relations with Russia's Gazprom, at the same time, however, he was aware that "What Gazprom wants is to own everything in Ukraine – especially they want the gas pipeline, our gas storage facilities, and many of our strategic factories ... We must not give them the opportunity to acquire these things."⁶⁰² Fear of splitting the country into two regions explains his reluctance to grant Russian an "official" language status.⁶⁰³ Kuchma was aware that "[t]he threat of russification is a real danger [to Ukraine]"⁶⁰⁴ and acknowledged that the rise of Russian nationalism, by which politicians in Moscow sought to return the former Soviet territories under Russian rule, represented a great threat to the independence and sovereignty of his country and even Europe as a whole.⁶⁰⁵ This is why, when becoming president, he turned his attention to the West asking to support Ukraine as "the best insurance against the re-emergence of an irredentist

⁶⁰¹ As quoted in Freeland, C., Kaminski, M. "In the Shadow of the Russian Bear" *Financial Times*, November 25, 1995

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Kuchma, L. *Posle Maydana. Zapysky prezidenta 2005-2006 (After the Maidan: The President's Writings 2005-2006)*. Vremya, Moscow and Dovira, Kyiv, 2008, p. 531-532

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 285

⁶⁰⁵ Freeland, C., Kaminski, M. "In the Shadow of the Russian Bear" *Financial Times*, November 25, 1995

Russia.”⁶⁰⁶ The Western support, Kuchma claimed, “[...] must be material, not just rhetorical,” including “strong western backing for Ukraine’s fragile economic reforms,” which would ensure an independent and united Ukraine.⁶⁰⁷

In his initial years in office, Kuchma was careful not to make too vocal pro-Western claims, being aware that most Western countries were aloof to Ukraine’s requests to be accepted into the Western club: “I am a pragmatist. I know that NATO is not waiting for Ukraine with breathless anticipation and that if I said tomorrow ‘I want to join NATO’ no one in the west would cheer.”⁶⁰⁸ Kuchma was also pragmatic in forging relations with Moscow, focusing on developing mutual relations with Russia and the CIS states. As Boris Tarasyuk, the then Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister declared in discussions with Western diplomats, Ukraine aims to develop economic links with the CIS with the goal of a normal functioning of the economy and “active economic cooperation and protection of national interests.” At the same time, Kuchma’s government refrained from participating in any military-political blocs with Russia, reflecting the fact that Ukraine was seeking ways to join the European security structures in the future.⁶⁰⁹

During a CIS Summit in Alma-Ata in February 1995, Russia attempted to convince the CIS members to accept a jointly controlled CIS border. Ukraine, with Kuchma heading its delegation, was one the most vociferous in saying “no” to common CIS borders, pointing out that Ukraine preferred its borders to be protected by its own border control guards.⁶¹⁰ Despite improvements in the Ukrainian-Russian relations due to the initialing of the Treaty of Friendship

⁶⁰⁶ Freeland, C., Kaminski, M. “In the Shadow of the Russian Bear” *Financial Times*, November 25, 1995

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁸ Freeland, C., Kaminski, M. “In the Shadow of the Russian Bear” *Financial Times*, November 25, 1995.

⁶⁰⁹ Information about the Consultations of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, B. Tarasiuk, with the General Staff of the Armed Forces of France, October 24, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 4, 2015.

⁶¹⁰ American Press Review on the Results of the CIS Summit in Alma-Ata, February 10, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

and Cooperation between the two countries in February 1995, negotiations for which lasted more than three years, the two countries were still encountering difficulties in settling their relations. The then Russian-ambassador to Ukraine, Smolyakov, characterized the Russian-Ukrainian relations as “the most complex bilateral relations, which exist in the international practice” and declared to the “Interfax-Ukraine” correspondent that Russia is “supersaturated” with the problems it has with Ukraine.⁶¹¹

In the first year as Ukraine’s president, as a result of his “adamant defense” for Ukrainian sovereignty against the “Russian threat,,” Kuchma’s popularity increased significantly, especially in the Western regions of the country,⁶¹² where during the electoral campaign he received only 10 percent of votes.

As early as the beginning of 1997, two years before the Ukrainian president faced new presidential elections, Kuchma was concerned about maintaining and strengthening his political authority in the country. In January 1997, the Ukrainian ambassadors overseas received a circular letter from the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, G. Udovenko, to send back to Kiev information on the practices of how leaders in their host countries built and strengthened their political authority. The archival documents contain letters from Ukrainian ambassadors in Belarus, the US, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Bulgaria, Armenia, Germany, Poland, Finland, detailing the means by which political leaders in their host countries worked to build their image and authority. Most letters were received from the ambassador in Belarus, who kept sending information on the activities of the Belarus president throughout the year 1997.

⁶¹¹ Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to the President of Ukraine, L. Kuchma, November 21, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 6, 2015.

⁶¹² Info on the Seminar “Internal politics achievements of Ukraine,” Carnegie Institute of International Peace, March 7 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

Some observers shared the idea that the Ukrainian foreign policy was hostage to the internal politics in Kiev.⁶¹³ Ukrainian diplomats in discussions with Western counterparts explained that, indeed, Ukraine's multi-vectorness policy was explained by the internal division inside the country: one side of the Ukrainian society held that CIS integration would solve the economic and social problems; another side believed that integration into the West would solve them. Ukrainian leaders claimed that it was extremely important to be pragmatic and understand the realities on the ground: balance the effects of these different forces and keep internal stability, peace and calmness in the country.⁶¹⁴ Some Ukrainian diplomats were frank in their acknowledgment that as long as NATO membership for Ukraine, was not certain shortly, an official declaration of intention to join NATO from Ukraine "would only irritate some political circles in Russia as well as the representatives of the left opposition in Ukraine."⁶¹⁵ They were aware that moving boldly in a Western direction would have given these left parties a gift of issues on which to mobilize various factions in the Ukrainian society and attract unnecessary challenges to the then political incumbents.

These points were confirmed after Kuchma, starting with the year 1997, made a clearer move toward the West, holding the pro-Western position until after the 1999 presidential elections. As it is shown below, Kuchma's sturdier pro-Western stance gave the left-wing parties space to advance pro-Russia foreign policy messages, as well as issues on which to mobilize their voters. Kuchma, on the other hand, hoped that by making his stance on Ukraine's pro-EU and pro-NATO orientation clearer, the West would reward him with a clear sign of accepting Ukraine's foreign

⁶¹³ Russian Duma Member, K. Zatulin in an interview with the Latvian newspaper "Panorama Latvii", December 5 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 10, 2015.

⁶¹⁴ Speech by Boris Tarasiuk "Central Eastern Europe and EU: view from the region", Third Conference of the Strategic Group on the cooperation in Central Eastern Europe, October 25, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 5, 2015.

⁶¹⁵ Records of Discussion with American Deputy Ambassador to Poland, James Hooper, August 9, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

policy goals. The frosty Western reception disappointed Kuchma, however. He relied on the EU to receive electoral support and was disturbed by the EU's unwillingness to offer such support and to recognize Ukraine's EU membership perspective. As the evidence below shows, once elected president for a second term, he switched gears and advanced a strong pro-Russia stance in foreign policy. The switch coincided with Putin rising to power in Russia.

In March 1997, during a visit to the NATO headquarters in Brussels, the then Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs Udovenko, clearly stated that Ukraine's strategic goal was NATO and EU membership, claiming at the same time that Ukraine expected Western support in achieving these objectives.⁶¹⁶ Udovenko declared that Ukraine did not want to remain in the "gray security sphere" and become a "buffer country" and further noted that the final push that determined Ukraine to take this decision was the "unpredictability of the Eastern neighbor."⁶¹⁷ During most of Kuchma's first term as president, Ukraine was oriented toward the West: while Russia was busy sorting out its own presidential election and the conflicts between Yeltsin and the Duma, Kuchma sang odes to the West.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁶ According to Polish observers, despite previous statements made by politicians in Kiev about Ukraine's NATO membership goals, this declaration by Udovenko was perceived by NATO representatives as the official position of the Ukrainian government. Reaction of the Polish political circles and media to Udovenko's NATO Headquarter's Statement, March 21, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁶¹⁷ Reaction of the Polish political circles and media to Udovenko's NATO Headquarter's Statement, March 21, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁶¹⁸ It should be noted, however, that despite claims at the highest level of authority of plans to join the European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, Ukrainian diplomats and politicians were acknowledging a certain lack of consistency between political declarations and practical implementation in Ukraine's relations with NATO and the EU. The self-critical comments are related to Ukraine's cooperation with NATO within the Partnership for Peace Program: one archival document notes that Ukraine is not fully committed toward cooperating within the PfP. "Ukraine's representatives participate in events not according to their importance [for Ukraine's security], but only when they cannot refuse participating in events." The passivity of institutions tasked with implementing PfP activities left NATO representatives to doubt Ukraine's true intentions and led them to form the impression that Ukrainians envisage their "special relations" with NATO based on the idea of a "laissez-faire" approach. The state of cooperation within the Partnership for Peace. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

In a large meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers in April 1998, Kuchma labeled the international relations activities led by the Ukrainian Government members as “careless,” “lacking responsibility” and “executive discipline.” He condemned the low level of organization of the Cabinet of Ministers, claiming that there was no communication among different ministries in Ukraine on the question of economic cooperation with foreign countries and international organizations. He criticized the diplomats within the MFA for inefficiency and warned that Ukraine risks remaining isolated from international economic transactions.⁶¹⁹

In April 1998, two weeks after Kuchma’s speech, Boris Tarasyuk became the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. This new appointment was interpreted by certain foreign diplomats as a pro-Western/pro-EU move in Kuchma’s foreign policy moves.⁶²⁰ In a speech to the Collegium of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs meeting during the same month, Kuchma said that giving a new impulse to the development of relations between Ukraine and the EU is one of the main foreign policy tasks of the MFA. Also, he signed a decree on the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU, setting it as a priority for the Ukrainian government.⁶²¹ Russian and Finnish newspapers from that period reported that during the 1995-

⁶¹⁹ Speech of Kuchma to the Cabinet of Ministers, April 9, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁶²⁰ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Pavel Telichko, May 21 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

⁶²¹ Information on the meeting between the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs with the Heads of the European Commission in Ukraine, US Ambassador, Ambassadors from Austria, and Great Britain, May 10, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 12, 2015.

Despite declarations at the highest level of accelerating Ukrainian-EU relations through the PCA, at the practical level, Ukraine lagged behind in economic cooperation with the EU. In a document from the Ukraine’s Permanent Mission to the EU dating from June 1999, it is noted that despite the PCA’s provisions for excluding quantitative restrictions on goods originating in the EU and imported in Ukraine or prohibiting any imports or exports of goods with the EU, in certain Ukrainian laws, these principles are not followed. Ukraine took certain steps to protect its own producers and this led the EU representatives interpret these actions as against the PCA provisions and as ambiguous signs of Ukraine’s plans to cooperate economically with the EU. The Ukrainian side set provisions against the PCA in the following areas: restrictions on the import of pharmaceutical products, restrictions on the import of colored TV sets; restrictions on the export of ferrous metals and agricultural products; stimulating the production of Ukrainian automotive industry. The EU, at the same time, had also kept certain restrictions toward Ukrainian products: restrictions on the export of textile materials, and steel production.

1996 years, Ukraine's possibilities to get financial aid from the West increased considerably.⁶²² Russian newspapers wrote that Ukraine played the same card as Belarus, but with opposite methods: Kiev did not bet on the CIS, seeking concessions from Moscow, as Minsk did, but instead appealed to Washington and the IMF.⁶²³

Before the presidential elections from October 1999, Ukrainian leaders and diplomats were courting the West and asking for political endorsements of the incumbent Kuchma in the elections. Kuchma declared that his administration and the government rely on EU's support, and not necessarily financial, but political and moral support, the best form of which would be an explicit recognition of a European prospect for Ukraine.⁶²⁴

The Ukrainian diplomats were also quick to assure their EU counterparts that a clear signal from the EU on Ukraine's future EU membership perspective did not involve any other obligation from the EU.⁶²⁵ "The most important [thing] for Ukraine is receiving a clear political sign from the EU on Ukraine's European choice" and that "the EU-Ukraine summit on July 23 [1999] would be a good and last reminder, *before* the presidential elections, for the EU to clearly express its attitude toward Ukraine."⁶²⁶ The EU diplomats, however, were reluctant to endorse Kuchma in the elections, with one Belgian diplomat even claiming that it was "not obvious that EU's recognition of Ukraine's European calling would be political support for President Kuchma and his reform

The ways in which the PCA is Implemented and Evaluation of Relations between EU and Ukraine, June 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶²² Review of the Finnish Press on the Negotiations in Sochi between Ukraine and Russia, June 14, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 7, 2015.

⁶²³ Russian newspapers write about the mixed Russian-Ukrainian Commission on Cooperation, March 21, 1996. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 10, 2015.

⁶²⁴ On the results of the Third Ukraine-EU Summit, July 31, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶²⁵ Records of Discussion with EU's Representative in Austria, Doctor Volfghan Shtraitenberger, October 25, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶²⁶ Records of Discussion with Deputy Director of the European Cooperation Direction, MFA of France, J. Fora, June 25, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015. Italics added.

implementation process.”⁶²⁷ The Belgian diplomat further claimed that in his opinion, an EU endorsement of President Kuchma might have a negative effect on the eve of the elections.⁶²⁸

During the Finnish presidency of the EU in the second half of 1999, the EU member states were drafting a *Common Strategy on Ukraine*.⁶²⁹ The Ukrainian diplomatic community in the EU received orders from the MFA in Kiev to concentrate their efforts and meet with EU diplomats and politicians, insuring that the EU will send a clear signal for Ukraine’s European perspective by including a statement in the text of the Common Strategy, recognizing Ukraine’s future EU membership prospect.⁶³⁰ The Ukrainian leaders and diplomats were expecting the EU member states to adopt the *Common Strategy on Ukraine* before the October 1999 elections. Their arguments in favor of such a move were related to the fact that recognition by the EU of Ukraine’s membership prospect would be a “good stimulus” for the country; it would bring together the democratic and pro-European forces in the Ukrainian society.⁶³¹ A positive political signal from the EU on Ukraine’s EU membership perspective, the diplomats argued, would promote and strengthen the positions of the reformist forces in Ukraine.⁶³²

Ukrainian diplomats reasoned that the divide between political parties, calling for opposite geopolitical orientations, a lack of confidence in a European future and an absence of a final goal in Ukraine’s relations with the EU, was expected to have a negative effect on the efforts of

⁶²⁷ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Head of the Direction of European Integration and Coordination, Belgian MFA, Bart Uvri. July 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ European Council Common Strategy of 11 December 1999 on Ukraine. *Official Journal of the European Communities*. Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/ukEN.pdf>

⁶³⁰ Records of Discussion with the Political Advisor of the Swedish Prime-Minister’s Office, September 12, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶³¹ Records of Discussion between Volodymyr Ohryzko, the then Ukraine’s Ambassador to Austria, with EU’s Representative in Austria, Doctor Volfghan Shtraitenberger, October 25, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶³² Records of Discussion between Oleh Shamshur with the Deputy Head of the Direction of European Integration and Coordination, Belgian MFA, Bart Uvri. July 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

consolidating the Ukrainian society around a common purpose and direction of Western integration. The success of internal reforms in the country, they claimed, was contingent on the certainty of a future EU membership.⁶³³

The Ukrainians' insistence bothered the EU diplomats, and some of them were frank in their discussions urging Ukrainians to stop asking for a membership perspective, as these requests complicated Ukraine's relations with the EU.⁶³⁴ The EU diplomats said that the EU member states were busy dealing with the first wave of Eastern enlargement and did not consider it opportune to offer prospects of membership to other countries.

On the background of these diplomatic failures with Ukraine's Western counterparts, the domestic political environment was flooded with events related to the presidential elections. As mentioned above, the fact that Kuchma promoted a pro-Western foreign policy orientation with his political program, the pro-Russia message (on which Kuchma campaigned in the 1994 elections) was promoted by the left-wing parties (the Communist and Socialist parties). In the 1999 presidential elections, out of 15 candidates, the largest number of contenders was representing the left wing parties (the Communist Petro Symonenko, Socialist Party leader and former speaker of the parliament Oleksandr Moroz; Progressive Socialist Natalia Vitrenko; and the then parliamentary speaker, Oleksandr Tkachenko).⁶³⁵ On the center-right, the favorite from the start was the incumbent president Leonid Kuchma.⁶³⁶ The leftist candidates were running on programs

⁶³³ Records of Discussion between Konstantin Grishchenko with the Head of the Political Direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, J. L. Voltzveld, September 3, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶³⁴ Records of Discussion with Deputy Head of the Direction on European Cooperation, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, G. For, July 2, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015.

⁶³⁵ Birch, S. "The Presidential Elections in Ukraine, October 1999" *Electoral Studies*, 21, 2002

⁶³⁶ It should be noted that in the archival documents, Kuchma is labeled as a centrist candidate, and not as a right one. During the presidential elections, however, Kuchma was endorsed by right wing, traditional "national-democratic" parties. The right wing parties supported the centrist Kuchma only hesitantly and only in the second

that advocated for political integration within the CIS framework, dominated by Russia, denying the European choice for Ukraine, as well as stopping the reforms and the cooperation with international financial institutions.⁶³⁷ Kuchma, on the other hand, campaigned on a program that advocated for Ukraine's European integration and the continuation of reforms.⁶³⁸ Kuchma also had warned of the "threat of the 'red revanche' and the breakup of the country that would supposedly entail."⁶³⁹ To weaken the chances for Oleksandr Moroz, the Socialist contender which threatened the incumbent the most, Kuchma supported Vitrenko's "Progressive Socialist Party", which was also a Socialist candidate, but with lower popularity ratings. This move was undertaken with the goal of dividing the voters on the left, supporters of the Socialist, pro-Russia party. He applied the same tactic on the right: he encouraged and supported the anti-Yushchenko "Rukh for Unity" party, led by Bohdan Boyko, to draw away some Rukh supporters from Yushchenko's Our Ukraine party.⁶⁴⁰

For the second round of elections, the two finalists were Kuchma and the Communist leader Petro Symonenko. Kuchma beat Symonenko by 56% to 38%, and subsequent analyses claimed that Kuchma's victory was a product of the leftist parties being too scattered and failing to organize behind a single candidate. Another explanation for Kuchma's reelection was the uneven playing

round of elections. In the first round, they supported the former prime minister, center-right candidate Yevhen Marchuk or candidates from the Rukh Party, Hennadii Udovenko and Yuri Kostenko. Ibid, p. 340-341.

⁶³⁷ The situation in Ukraine before the presidential elections in Ukraine. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015. Info on the ministerial meeting Ukraine-EU Troika, New York, September 23, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 14, 2015. Birch, S. "The Presidential Elections in Ukraine, October 1999" *Electoral Studies*, 21, 2002.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. one archival document, notes, however, that Kuchma was also advocating for the development and deepening of economic relations with Russia and other CIS states. The situation in Ukraine before the presidential elections in Ukraine. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶³⁹ Birch, S. "The Presidential Elections in Ukraine, October 1999" *Electoral Studies*, 21, 2002, p. 340.

⁶⁴⁰ RFE/RL Newline, December 28 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1142586.html>

field, in which the incumbent president was favored both by media coverage, as well as by the use of state resources for electoral purposes.⁶⁴¹

Kuchma's Second Term: 2000 – 2004

Impediments in Ukraine's relations with the West

Ukraine's relations with the West worsened throughout most of Kuchma's second term. Starting with the year 2000, criticisms by the West of president Kuchma's handling of internal affairs, democratic breaches, human rights abuses and lack of press freedom became louder. In December 2000, assessing the situation in Ukraine, European diplomats were pointing out that there "have been clear signs of irregularities in all the elections held [in Ukraine] to date," the country had no independent and effective judicial system, nor a public administration based on merit and professionalism.⁶⁴² When Kuchma decided to organize a referendum on constitutional changes⁶⁴³ in April 2000, the EU and US diplomats were quick in expressing their confusion as to why would a national referendum be needed, when Kuchma was the winner of the presidential elections anyway.⁶⁴⁴ There were voices in the West that even recommended excluding Ukraine

⁶⁴¹ Birch, S. "The Presidential Elections in Ukraine, October 1999" *Electoral Studies*, 21, 2002, p. 340.

⁶⁴² Draft Opinion of the Committee on Citizens' Freedom and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs on the European Council common Strategy on Ukraine, December 18, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁴³ The announced nationwide referendum was planned to address six proposals: the introduction of a no-confidence vote in the parliament; the adoption of the constitution by referendum; the authority of the president to dissolve the parliament if it did not form a majority within one month or if it failed to adopt a new budget within three months; the reduction of the number of seats from 450 to 300; the creation of a second, upper, chamber in the parliament; and the elimination of deputies' immunity from prosecution. The Ukrainian Constitutional Court ruled the first two propositions unconstitutional, authorizing a ballot with the rest of four questions. The events related to the referendum lasted for about a year, however due to the lack of legislative support, Kuchma's referendum ended without concrete results. Protsyk, O. "Constitutional Politics and Presidential Power in Kuchma's Ukraine." *Problems of Post-Communism* 52, 2, (2005).

⁶⁴⁴ The Ukrainian diplomats claimed that the referendum was needed in order to strengthen a parliamentary majority, which was characterized back then as "situational." The diplomats considered that the consolidation of such majority was important for passing important laws in Ukraine, for speeding up the development of market economy in the country. Records of Discussion with the member of the Venetian Commission, March 10, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015. Meeting of the

from the Council of Europe if the referendum went ahead. Experts from the Council of Europe expressed their concern that the referendum was a threat to parliamentarism and that the further consolidation of Kuchma's power mirrored the tendencies observed in neighboring Belarus.⁶⁴⁵

In late 2000, secret tape recordings⁶⁴⁶ revealed by one of Kuchma's security officers, M. Melnychenko, implicated that Kuchma and other senior officials ordered the kidnapping and killing of the journalist Georgii Gongadze.⁶⁴⁷ In February 2001, following the disappearance of Gongadze, the EU released a statement⁶⁴⁸ expressing its concern regarding the lack of media freedom in Ukraine and how journalists were treated by politicians.⁶⁴⁹ The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), had issued a Resolution on January 25, 2001, on matters about Ukraine. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Presidential Administration in a letter dated February 5, 2001, that it is for the first time when the EU is speaking on Ukraine with one voice. The MFA warned the Presidential Administration that these

Ukrainian Ambassador to the European Union with the US Ambassador to the EU, February 15, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁴⁵ Records of Discussion with the Deputy Head of the Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, March 16, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁴⁶ For more information on Kuchma's tape scandal, see: Arel, D. "Kuchmagate and the Demise of Ukraine's 'Geopolitical Bluff.'" *East European Constitutional Review* 10. Darden, K. A. "Blackmail as a Tool of State Domination." *East European Constitutional Review* 10. Kuzio, T. "Oligarchs, Tapes and Oranges: 'Kuchmagate' to the Orange Revolution." *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 23, 1 (2007).

⁶⁴⁷ Georgii Gongadze was a Ukrainian journalist, critical of Kuchma's policies. In September 2000, Gongadze's body had been found in a forest near Kiev. Kubicek, P. "US-Ukrainian Relations: From Engagement to Estrangement." *Problems of Post-Communism* 50, 6 (2003). Shurkhalo, D. Coalson, R. "Whistle-Blower's Return on Eve of Elections Sparks Debate in Ukraine." *RFERL*, October 25, 2013.

⁶⁴⁸ Letter from the MFA of Ukraine to the Administration of the Ukrainian President on the EU Demarche with respect to the mass media working environment in Ukraine, February 5, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁴⁹ The Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs invited the Swedish, Belgian and Head of the EU Delegation to the Ukrainian MFA to express the MFA's resentment over the EU's statement and claimed that such criticisms from the EU "could lead to destabilizing consequences and may give false signals to the opposition and undermine the efforts of the government to stabilize and consolidate the society." Information on the meeting of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, I. Charchenka, with the Ambassadors from Sweden, Belgium and the Deputy Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, February 6, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

actions “represent a tangible danger for Ukraine’s image as a democratic country.”⁶⁵⁰ In fact, the Western diplomats brought up the subject of the Gongadze case in almost every discussion with Ukrainian politicians in 2001. Distrust shadowed the relations of Ukraine’s president with Western leaders. Kuchma and his leadership were blamed for avoiding an open and frank discussion of the Gongadze case.⁶⁵¹ Their answers in talks with Western diplomats were characterized as “flimsy” and “unsatisfactory.”⁶⁵² This only contributed to worsening Ukraine’s image in Western eyes.⁶⁵³ The European Union asked the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to prepare information on the development of internal politics in Ukraine. The Polish diplomats said that they were using information sent from EU ambassadors in Kiev, as well from articles published by international media outlets. They told Ukrainian diplomats openly that “the EU does not trust what the official Kiev is saying.”⁶⁵⁴ The Adviser to the Ukrainian Embassy in London was told that despite the fact that the West is using “polite language” when reprimanding Ukrainian leaders for not fighting against high corruption levels and for the lack of mass media freedom, the West considers these major and important issues. The Ukrainian diplomats were warned that the way in which the internal situation in handled in Ukraine “works to the advantage of those forces in the EU which are skeptical concerning Ukraine’s ... right to pretend to EU membership.”⁶⁵⁵ This situation was

⁶⁵⁰ Letter from the MFA of Ukraine to the Administration of the Ukrainian President on the EU Demarche with respect to the mass media working environment in Ukraine, February 5, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁵¹ Records of Discussion with the Secretary I of the British Embassy in Brussels, November 2, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁵² Records of Discussion with Swedish representatives to the EU and to the European Commission, February 2, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁵³ Records of Discussion with the Secretary I of the British Embassy in Brussels, November 2, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁵⁴ On the EU's evaluation with respect to the development of internal situation in Ukraine, March 6, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁵⁵ Records of Discussion with the Secretary I of the British Embassy in Brussels, November 2, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the UK, March 12, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

also limiting the possibilities of Western countries, which were positively oriented toward Kiev to support Ukraine in the EU.⁶⁵⁶ After a meeting in Kiev in March 2001, the EU Troika was disappointed with the Ukrainian leadership for an “old-fashioned Soviet style of communication” and concluded that in Ukraine “there are fewer partners with which the EU can lead a dialogue.”⁶⁵⁷

The Western capitals’ concern with the development of the internal situation in Ukraine intensified after Yushchenko, and his Cabinet of Ministers was dismissed in April 2001 following a no confidence vote in the Verkhovna Rada. Yushchenko was respected in the West for his efforts to fight corruption, advance economic reforms and attract foreign investment. Powerful Ukrainian business persons, however, disapproved of his policies.⁶⁵⁸ Some Ukrainian leaders were disturbed by the West’s eulogizing of Yushchenko and his team, claiming that it was a mistake to link the success of economic reforms in the country with a single person.⁶⁵⁹

In September 2002, following more revelations from the Kuchma tapes, in which the then Ukrainian president was heard authorizing the selling of four advanced Kolchuga radar units to Iraq, Washington had publicly accused Ukraine of violating UN sanctions and being in conflict with US security and military interests.⁶⁶⁰ One day after the US made these accusations publicly against Ukraine, Washington suspended \$54 million in aid and announced a review of its policy toward Ukraine. There was an “irreparable loss of trust” in the Kuchma administration from the US officials.⁶⁶¹ The American Advisor to the US Mission to the EU told the Ukrainian Ambassador

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the European Communities on EU’s evaluation of the situation in Ukraine, March 20, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁵⁸ Ukraine Profile – Timeline. BBC. Last modified October 27, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18010123>

⁶⁵⁹ Records of Discussion with the Swedish Ambassador to Ukraine, April 27, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁶⁰ Kubicek, P. “US-Ukrainian Relations”, 2003.

⁶⁶¹ Ibid., p. 9

that the US-Ukrainian relations had been damaged so badly lately, and due to a “huge lack of trust” between the two states, the only option left for the US was “wait and see.”⁶⁶²

In November 2002, during the Prague NATO summit,⁶⁶³ NATO leaders discouraged Ukrainian president Kuchma from attending the event, saying that “his presence would not be welcomed.”⁶⁶⁴ Despite the fact that NATO officials did not send a personal invitation to the Ukrainian president,⁶⁶⁵ Kuchma attended the summit. During a meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, however, due to last minute seating arrangements,⁶⁶⁶ Kuchma was accommodated at the end of the table, with the Turkish leader on one side and nobody on the other, in order to avoid him being seated by UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair and in close proximity to US president Bush.⁶⁶⁷

After the content of the recorded tapes had become public, Kuchma’s international reputation, especially in the West, suffered significantly. A former adviser to Kuchma noted that the tape scandal was so damaging to Kuchma and the accusations of the Americans were so severe, that Kuchma decided to invite American experts to Ukraine and disclose information and open military facilities to prove to the Americans that Ukrainians did not sell military equipment to Iraq.⁶⁶⁸ Kuchma was no longer invited to visit Western states, and in 2001, no meeting between

⁶⁶² Records of Discussion with the American Advisor on Political Questions of the US Mission to the EU, January 24, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁶³ During this summit, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Romania were invited to join NATO.

⁶⁶⁴ Bransten, J. “Solidarity with Russia, Cold Shoulder to Kuchma.” *RFERL*, November 22, 2002.

⁶⁶⁵ While NATO officials insisted that no personal invitation was sent to President Kuchma, Ukraine’s president spokesperson said that Kuchma is mentioned as heading the Ukrainian Delegation to the Prague Summit in a list of delegations NATO provided to the Czech Republic. ⁶⁶⁵ Naegele, J. “Ukraine: Kuchma Appoints New, Loyal Prime Minister, Insists on Coming to NATO Summit.” *RFERL*, November 18, 2002

⁶⁶⁶ The seating arrangements were switched using the French spelling of countries, rather than the English version. Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with the author, July 31, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

the Ukrainian and American presidents took place, breaking a tradition set for previous several years.⁶⁶⁹

In November 2002, Javier Solana met with Leonid Kuchma and Polish leaders, Aleksander Kwaśniewski in Warsaw in what is reported to have been a discussion between “friends,” like between “Leonid and Javier.” In this discussion, Solana openly, leaving aside “diplomatic phrases,” told Kuchma that in order to avoid widening the gap between Ukraine and the Euro-Atlantic structures,” Kuchma had to solve two main issues. One was internal, establishing a dialogue with the opposition and stabilizing the political situation; the second problem was external, and was linked to Americans’ accusing Ukraine of selling arms to “rogue states.”⁶⁷⁰

Internal Situation

During the second Kuchma’s presidential term, the strained relations between the Western partners and Kuchma’s administration were not auspicious for Kuchma and his government to claim success in relations with the EU or with NATO. The myriad of critical messages sent by the West to Kuchma’s handling of domestic politics, as well as the Western principled position of conditioning advancement of relations with Kiev on respect for human rights, and democratic values, have convinced Kuchma to turn his attention to the East. The new Russian leader, Vladimir Putin, was eager to offer his support to the Ukrainian president.

⁶⁶⁹ American president Bush did not meet with Kuchma, because the American side’s position was to exclude any face-to-face meetings between the two leaders until the Gongadze case was completely investigated. At the same time, however, despite frosty receptions in Western capitals, however, Kuchma received important Western dignitaries in Kiev, among them Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, NATO’s secretary general, Lord Robertson, Pope John Paul II. Kubicek, P. “US-Ukrainian Relations”, 2003.

⁶⁷⁰ The US accused Ukraine for selling of arms to states like Iraq or Iran. In 2001, Kiev was also blamed for lack of transparency in selling arms to Macedonia, in this way disturbing the peace making process in the region. Records of Discussion with Head of the Political Directorate of the European Council of Ministers, November 8, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 19, 2015.

Given his focus on maintaining an upper hand within the domestic political realm,⁶⁷¹ Kuchma was particularly sensitive to the criticisms received from the West and the dividends that his domestic opponents could get from these criticisms directed at him. After the EU Commission had released its statement about the “working conditions of Ukrainian mass media and the concerns related to the Gongadze case, the then Ukrainian deputy minister of foreign affairs met with the Swedish, Belgian and EU ambassadors to Kiev. He claimed that such a statement “could lead to destabilizing consequences and may give false signals to the opposition and undermine the efforts of the government to stabilize and consolidate the society.”⁶⁷² Facing widespread discontent at home and open hostility from domestic political parties, Kuchma’s administration was urging the West to treat the declarations of its opponents as “speculative” and “unfounded.”⁶⁷³ In discussions with foreign dignitaries, Ukrainian leaders were blaming the opposition for only aiming to gain political dividends by denigrating the incumbent president.⁶⁷⁴ The Western diplomats, however, were very critical of Kuchma’s domestic actions, by claiming that “in the civilized world” it was “not acceptable” for a sitting president to threaten the state’s public servants to distance themselves from the actions of the opposition publicly or otherwise they would lose their jobs.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷¹ Interview with a former adviser to president Kuchma, July 31 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁶⁷² Information on the meeting of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, I. Charchenka, with the Ambassadors from Sweden, Belgium and the Deputy Head of the EU Delegation in Ukraine, February 6, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁷³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, on the question of foreign delegations' visits to Ukraine. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the UK, March 12, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

Kuchma rushes to Russia⁶⁷⁶

At the beginning of Kuchma's second and Putin's first terms as presidents, around the year 2000, Ukraine's foreign policy vector started to be oriented more and more toward the East. This turn corresponded, as noted above, with worsening relations between Ukraine and the EU and improvement in relations between Russia and the West. In a Declaration of September 2000, the parliamentary faction of National Rukh from the Verkhovna Rada issued a statement warning about the fact that Russian leverage in Ukraine was achieving its goals of keeping the country anchored in the "mythical union of Slavic brotherly nations."⁶⁷⁷

In September 2000, Kuchma replaced Borys Tarasyuk, as Ukraine's Foreign Minister with Anatoly Zlenko. Tarasyuk, who served as Ukraine's top diplomat since 1998, was seen as one of Ukraine's most pro-Western politicians. Some scholars suggested that Vladimir Putin, then Russia's new president, lobbied for Tarasyuk to be replaced⁶⁷⁸ and his dismissal and replacement with Zlenko was well received in Moscow.⁶⁷⁹ Tarasyuk apparently was blamed by Kuchma for his failure in obtaining a membership prospect for Ukraine from the EU. The reappointment of Zlenko as the new foreign minister was explained as a proceeding to give a "pragmatic character to the Ukrainian foreign policy,"⁶⁸⁰ alluding to the criticisms directed at Tarasyuk's "overly romantic" pro-Western foreign policy stance.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁶ Quote from an interview conducted by the author with a former adviser to president Kuchma, July 31 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁶⁷⁷ Declaration of the National Rukh in the Verkhovna Rada, September 19, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁷⁸ Kubicek, P. "US-Ukrainian Relations", 2003

⁶⁷⁹ Black, J. L. *Vladimir Putin and the New World Order: Looking East, Looking West?* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004

⁶⁸⁰ Records of Discussion with the Head of the European Union Direction, UK's Foreign Office, November 16, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 17, 2015.

⁶⁸¹ Interview with a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 23 2017, Kiev, Ukraine.

Several months after his appointment as Ukraine's new foreign minister, Zlenko acknowledged that a new chapter had opened in relations with Russia, explaining that cooperation with Moscow had taken on a "realistic and practical meaning."⁶⁸²

After a visit of the Russian Defense Minister to Ukraine, and after visible signs of intensified Ukrainian-Russian contacts at the highest level, Western diplomats were wondering whether Ukrainian leaders are changing their foreign policy priorities and turning toward Russia. In September 2001, the Russian ambassador to the EU was recorded asking whether the EU diplomats show their "jealousy" concerning the fact that Putin and Kuchma have established good relations.⁶⁸³

The Western diplomats shared the opinion that Russia's behavior toward Ukraine did not change significantly throughout the 1990s, Moscow "continually putting more and more pressure on Ukraine."⁶⁸⁴ Starting with Kuchma's second presidential term, however, Ukraine's position has changed, "now Ukraine gives in to this pressure and even welcomes it."⁶⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the EU diplomats favorably noted that the growing Russian influence in Ukraine was "less dangerous" for the EU, due to the rapprochement between Russia and the EU after Putin came to power in Moscow. They noted, however, that this influence was "to some extent dangerous to Ukraine."⁶⁸⁶

In March 2002, the presidents of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan have agreed on the creation of a common economic space through the establishment of a free trade zone.⁶⁸⁷ The

⁶⁸² Woronowycz, R. "Zlenko delineates direction of Ukraine's foreign policy." *The Ukrainian Weekly*, February 4, 2001, http://ukrweekly.com/archive/2001/The_Ukrainian_Weekly_2001-05.pdf

⁶⁸³ Records of Discussion with the Russian Ambassador to the European Union, September 3, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁸⁴ Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the European Communities on the Meeting of EU's COEST, December 20, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁷ "Moscow, Kiev, Minsk, Astana, to draft united economic zone deal," *New Europe*, March 2-8, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

Western diplomats were asking whether the Joint Agreement meant “the re-creation of the USSR”⁶⁸⁸ and were wondering whether this should be interpreted as a change in Ukrainian foreign policy course.⁶⁸⁹ The Kuchma – Putin meeting from May 2003, created an ambiguous situation with respect to the clear foreign policy priorities for Ukraine, the Polish Ambassador to Kiev ultimately pointing out that “it is unclear where Ukraine is heading.”⁶⁹⁰ The former Ukrainian MFA, Boris Tarasyuk, being the head of the Foreign Policy Committee in the Ukrainian Parliament, said that the Joint Statement of the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarus and Kazakh presidents on the creation of the common economic space represents a clear sign that Ukraine is venturing toward the East.⁶⁹¹

I advance two complementary explanations clarifying Kuchma’s “pendulum oscillation policy”⁶⁹² between East and West during his second presidential term: the first explanation pertains to a hesitant position of the West toward Ukraine. Kuchma’s disappointment with EU’s “unpreparedness” to offer a membership prospect to Ukraine, as well as Brussels’ unwillingness to have a free economic trade area with Ukraine, led Kuchma to choose the common economic space with Russia and influenced his decision to turn toward the East and search for economic

European Commission and EU member states diplomats were confused with respect to the announced plan: the ways in which the Agreement between the four countries was presented and interpreted by Russian politicians, gave ground for “irritation on the part of the EU.” Records of Discussion with the Head of the Eastern Europe General Directorate from the European Commission, G. Logan, March 18, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁸⁸ Records of Discussion with the Head of the Eastern Europe General Directorate from the European Commission, G. Logan, March 18, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁸⁹ Records of Discussion with the Head of the Central and Eastern Europe Department in the Swedish MFA, October 9, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁹⁰ Records of Discussion with the Polish Ambassador to Ukraine, May 7, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁹¹ Records of Discussion between B. Tarasyuk, Head of the European Integration Committee in the Verchovna Rada, with the Director of the Enlarged Europe, Ministry of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Great Britain, July 14, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁹² Ukrainian Press on EU-Ukraine relations, February 18, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

benefits with Moscow. During a meeting with Vladimir Putin in Odessa in March 2002, Kuchma criticized the West for “not becoming any kinder to [Ukraine]” on trade.⁶⁹³ Ukraine’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zlenko, was showing his frustration that the benefits Ukraine hoped to receive after forging better relations with Europe and the US were not evident: “We have complied with all the West’s recommendations. ... We got rid of our nuclear weapons, reduced our army, closed the Chernobyl atomic power station. And what do we have to show for it? Not much.”⁶⁹⁴

The second reason is that the Eastern option was especially appealing to Kuchma, because, as opposed to the West, Russia was not conditioning its relations with Kiev on requests for respecting human rights and democratic values. The increased Western criticism of Kuchma’s preference to strengthen his political power at home through undemocratic measures (closing opposition mass media, cracking down on protesters in the streets, falsifying elections), alienated Kuchma from his Western partners. The increased estrangement between Western leaders and Kuchma during his second tenure explains Kuchma’s reorientation to the East. Kuchma’s frustration with the Western demands of “independent judiciary, separation of political power from business, free media, etc.” was expressed in his memoir written after the Orange Revolution. Kuchma criticized the West for inciting and encouraging the opposition forces in Ukraine by advancing these kind of requirements and compared these Western demands to asking a teenager to become overnight an adult, 40-year man.⁶⁹⁵

Indeed, starting with Kuchma’s second presidency, trade and economic relations between Ukraine and Russia intensified significantly. If during 1996 – 1999, the trade turnover between the

⁶⁹³ The Jamestown Foundation. “Kuchma – a CIS Integrator?” *Monitor*, 8, 5. Retrieved from <https://jamestown.org/program/kuchma-a-cis-integrator/>.

⁶⁹⁴ Chazan, G. “West Pressures Ukraine’s Kuchma, But Russia Offers Him Support.” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB984604311692712465>.

⁶⁹⁵ Kuchma, L. *Posle Maydana. Zapysky prezidenta 2005-2006 (After the Maidan: The President’s Writings 2005-2006)*. Vremya, Moscow and Dovira, Kyiv, 2008, p. 124.

two countries decreased by 55 percent, the year 2000, for the first time, registered an increase of 17 percent, while in 2003, the trade turnover between the two countries was highest in five years.⁶⁹⁶ During this period, Ukrainian-Russian trade turnover increased by three times: while in 2001 it was \$5.6 billion, in 2004 it passed the \$16 billion mark.⁶⁹⁷ Among Russia's main economic partners, Ukraine was on the third place, after Germany and Belarus. In 2005, Russia accounted for about 60 percent of Ukraine's foreign trade turnover.⁶⁹⁸ Both Ukrainian⁶⁹⁹ and Russian diplomats noted that the "strengthening of the Russian vector" in Ukrainian foreign policy and the "increased level of trust" between the two countries⁷⁰⁰ was a result of intensified political dialogue between the leaders of the two countries: during 1999 – 2003, Kuchma and Putin met 29 times.⁷⁰¹ Kuchma's main goal was to maintain power domestically, and Putin was eager to support him attain this aim.⁷⁰² In 2003, Kuchma was elected as the chairperson of the CIS, being the first non-Russian president chosen to head the CIS since its creation in 1991.⁷⁰³ Making Kuchma and Ukraine preside over the CIS was considered by some as a tactical victory for Russia,⁷⁰⁴ as Putin wanted to strengthen the Commonwealth and increase the public trust in the CIS in member

⁶⁹⁶ Verbatim of the Press Conference of the Ukrainian Ambassador in Russia, October, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁹⁷ Transcript of the meeting between V. Yuschenko and V. Putin, Moscow, Kremlin, January 24, 2005. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22794>. The Russian version of the transcript: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22794>.

⁶⁹⁸ Talking Points for the meeting of Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yanukovich, with the Russian Leadership, August 22, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁶⁹⁹ Records of Discussion with the Adviser to the Romanian Embassy in Ukraine, R. Stanciu, October 20, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015

⁷⁰⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, April 22, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁰¹ Verbatim of the Press Conference of the Ukrainian Ambassador in Russia, October, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁷⁰² Interview with a former Adviser to president Kuchma, July 31 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁷⁰³ Krushelnicky, R. "CIS: What Does Kuchma's New Post Say About The Alliance?" *RFE/RL*, January 30, 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1102070.html>.

⁷⁰⁴ Records of Discussion between B. Tarasyuk, Head of the European Integration Committee in the Verchovna Rada, with the Director of the Enlarged Europe, Ministry of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Great Britain, July 14, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

states.⁷⁰⁵ Meanwhile, however, observers noted that the appointment was seen “an effort to boost [Kuchma’s] ailing reputation” both in the West, as well at home.⁷⁰⁶ Putin “flirted” with Kuchma,⁷⁰⁷ attempting to get Ukraine and its leaders aligned to Russia’s interests and goals in the Eurasian region.⁷⁰⁸

In another domestic move which showed that Kuchma was becoming more and more at odds with the West and drawing closer to Russia was his dismissal of Viktor Yushchenko from the position of prime minister in April 2001 and his replacement with Anatoliy Kinakh, a pro-Russian candidate.⁷⁰⁹ Kuchma was aware of Yushchenko’s high approval ratings and the Western admiration of him. In discussions with their Ukrainian counterparts, Western diplomats were not hesitating to show their appreciation for Viktor Yushchenko, claiming that in the West, Yushchenko, had the reputation of a reformer and was respected for his efforts to fight corruption and attract investment.⁷¹⁰ After Yushchenko and his Cabinet of Ministers were dismissed in April 2001 following a no confidence vote by the Verkhovna Rada’s members, Western diplomats were asking for clarifications on the development of events in Ukraine. The Swedish ambassador to Kiev, whose country was in 2001 holding the EU’s presidency, declared that politicians in the

⁷⁰⁵ Isachenkov, V. “Kuchma Elected as Head of the CIS.” *The Moscow Times*, January 30, 2003. Retrieved from <http://old.themoscowtimes.com/sitemap/free/2003/1/article/kuchma-elected-as-head-of-the-cis/240736.html/>

⁷⁰⁶ Krushelnycky, R. “CIS: What Does Kuchma's New Post Say About The Alliance?” *RFE/RL*, January 30, 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1102070.html>.

⁷⁰⁷ Translated from Russian “Путин очень сильно заигрывал с Кучмой.” Interview with a former adviser to president Kuchma, July 31 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁷⁰⁸ After becoming the new CIS chief, Kuchma declared that the appointment of a non-Russian to head the CIS should annul concerns that Russia strives to build a new empire. “If in Ukraine people still sometimes talk about Russia's ambitions for empire, I'd like that talk to cease now.” As cited in Krushelnycky, R. “CIS: What Does Kuchma's New Post Say About The Alliance?” *RFE/RL*, January 30, 2003. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1102070.html>.

⁷⁰⁹ J. L. *Vladimir Putin and the New World Order*, 2004. Kuchma in November 2002 replaced Kinakh was later replaced with Viktor Yanukovich, blaming him for failing to implement economic reforms. *Freedom House*. “Ukraine: Freedom in the World 2004.” Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2004/ukraine>

⁷¹⁰ Records of Discussion with the Head of the CIS Department, Danish MFA, July 7, 2000, Accessed August 17, 2015.

West believed that the parliamentarians in Kiev disapproved of Yushchenko's economic reforms. The Ukrainian Deputy Minister of foreign affairs, however, claimed that the primary goal of the Ukrainian society is to consolidate political power and urged the EU partners "to treat the situation in Ukraine with understanding."⁷¹¹

During a time when the Ukrainian president was facing mass demonstrations linked to the disappearance of Gongadze, Kuchma was unhappy about Yushchenko's higher popularity ratings (at the time when he was dismissed, Yushchenko had an approval rating of 63 percent),⁷¹² as well as by his pro-Western stance.⁷¹³ Having allies among the members of the Verkhovna Rada, it was believed that Kuchma could have lobbied in favor of Yushchenko if he wanted to.⁷¹⁴ Instead, he tacitly approved Yushchenko's dismissal.⁷¹⁵ While Yushchenko's removal was treated with reservations in the West, the Russians welcomed the move, Kuchma earning the trust of those in Kremlin, who started to perceive him as a reliable partner of Russia.⁷¹⁶

After being dismissed from his prime minister's post in April, Yushchenko's popularity ratings remained high. During the week when the Parliament passed the no-confidence vote against him in May 2001, a poll revealed that 44 percent of Ukrainian respondents thought Yushchenko was the best prime minister Ukraine had ever had and 59 percent disapproved of his dismissal. The poll also indicated that if presidential elections were held that week, Yushchenko would have gotten the biggest share of votes.⁷¹⁷ During that period, Yushchenko enjoyed the highest figure of

⁷¹¹ Ibid.

⁷¹² *Freedom House*. "Ukraine: Freedom in the World 2004." Retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2004/ukraine>

⁷¹³ Krushelnycky, A. "Ukraine: Yushchenko Fails Confidence Vote." *RFERL*, April 26, 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1096303.html>

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Lozowy, I. "Profile: Victor Yushchenko." *CNN International*, January 20, 2005. Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/01/20/tol.yushchenko.profile/>

⁷¹⁶ Black, J. L. *Vladimir Putin and the New World Order*, 2004, p. 263

⁷¹⁷ Krushelnycky, A. "Ukraine: Kuchma names four candidates for PM." *RFE/RL*, May 9, 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1096392.html>.

popularity among Ukrainian politicians, leading some observers to tailor the term the “Yushchenko phenomenon.”⁷¹⁸ His new party “Our Ukraine” enjoyed high popularity ratings as well, becoming the most popular party among Ukrainian voters, and getting ahead of the Communist Party, which since the country’s independence, used to enjoy the highest popularity ratings in Ukraine.⁷¹⁹ During the parliamentary elections from 2002, Yushchenko’s bloc was the winner of the multi-mandate vote with 23.56 percent, while the Communists won 20 percent of the vote.⁷²⁰ The electoral campaign tended to center around opposition to, or support for, President Kuchma.⁷²¹ Viktor Yushchenko’s “Our Ukraine Bloc,” defined itself as neither pro nor anti-presidential.⁷²² Yushchenko was initially reluctant to position himself in opposition to president Kuchma.⁷²³ Later on, however, Yushchenko accepted the post of leader of the liberal and nationalist opposition.⁷²⁴ Some former Ukrainian diplomats have cast doubt on the integrity of Yushchenko as a true anti-corruption and anti-establishment politician. Back in 2003, when he was leading the Ukrainian

⁷¹⁸ Lozowy, I. “The Men Who Would be President.” *Transitions Online*, January 28, 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.tol.org/client/article/11503-the-men-who-would-be-president.html?print>
Ukraine-related news stories from RFERL. Retrieved from <http://www.infoukes.com/rfe-ukraine/2001/1228.html>

⁷¹⁹ Ibid.

⁷²⁰ The Bloc for a United Ukraine won 11 percent, whereas Yulia Tymoshenko’s Bloc won 7.25 percent. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Observation of the Parliamentary Elections in Ukraine, March 31, 2002. Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, April 8, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 19, 2015.

⁷²¹ There were parties which were regarded as pro-presidential, among them the most prominent was the “Bloc for a United Ukraine.” Parties which defined themselves as in opposition to the president were the Communist and the Socialist Party, as well as the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko. Viktor Yushchenko’s “Our Ukraine Bloc”, defined itself as neither pro nor anti-presidential. Ibid.

⁷²² Ibid.

⁷²³ It is unclear why Yushchenko was not willing to adopt an anti-Kuchma position. Some claimed that Yushchenko was reluctant, because it was Kuchma who appointed him prime minister in the first place back 1999. Some other voices claim that he was afraid of being coerced or even imprisoned (as it happened with Tymoshenko), or fearing to get involved into deals which he might later regret. *BBC*. “Profile: Viktor Yushchenko.” Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4035789.stm>
D’Anieri, P. *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics and Institutional Design*. New York: Routledge, 2015, p. 94.

⁷²⁴ *BBC*. “Profile: Viktor Yushchenko.” Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4035789.stm>

domestic opposition, Yushchenko wrote a letter of apologies to Kuchma, calling him “his political father” – this move was labeled by some not only “as a sign of weakness, but also of cowardice.”⁷²⁵

Admired by the West for his efforts to implement economic reforms and vested with high hopes among those in Ukraine who wanted the country to integrate with the West, Yushchenko was not liked by Kremlin, the Russians not hiding their disapproval of Yushchenko and his pro-Western stance.⁷²⁶ During the Ukrainian parliamentary election campaign from March 2002, the Russian Duma Member V. Zhirinovskiy held a press conference in Moscow, “Elections in Ukraine: Whom to endorse?” The Russian politician declared that it was to Russia’s advantage to endorse Yushchenko’s “Our Ukraine” bloc. Zhirinovskiy believed that Yushchenko would implement the wrong economic reforms, which according to him, were imposed by the West and were not beneficial to Ukraine. With Yushchenko in Parliament, Zhirinovskiy claimed, all the negative sides of the Ukrainian society will be exposed, and Ukraine would finally be treated of all its “cancers.” The “wrong reforms” and “wrong policies” advanced by Yushchenko would lead to a total collapse of the Ukrainian economy, this, in turn, would strengthen the positions of the pro-Russian forces in the country.⁷²⁷

Following the parliamentary elections, even though Yushchenko’s bloc won according to the party list vote, in the single-member districts, the largest number of delegates belonged to Kuchma’s United Ukraine party. The anti-Kuchma opposition was unable to unite behind a single leader, and Kuchma managed to attract enough followers to form a pro-presidential majority in the new parliament.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁵ Interview with a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 23 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁷²⁶ BBC. “Profile: Viktor Yushchenko.” Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4035789.stm>

⁷²⁷ On Zhirinovskiy's Press Conference "Elections in Ukraine: Whom to endorse?", March 22, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 18, 2015.

⁷²⁸ D’Anieri, P. *Understanding Ukrainian Politics: Power, Politics and Institutional Design*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

In late 2002, Kuchma appointed Viktor Yanukovych as Ukraine's next prime minister, in an attempt to surround himself with a loyal follower.⁷²⁹ In his efforts to forge closer ties with Russia, Kuchma's choice of Yanukovych was not seen as a sign that would "take Ukraine to Europe."⁷³⁰

Neither the West nor Russia were bystanders as the subsequent events in Ukraine unfolded. Kuchma reached his second-term limit in October 2004, with new presidential elections scheduled in the fall of 2004. The West treated these elections "as a yardstick" by which future Ukraine-West relations were supposed to be measured.⁷³¹ Domestically, these presidential elections served not only the goal of electing Ukraine's third post-independence president, but were considered also as a referendum on Kuchma's ten-year presidency, marked by crises and scandals, especially in the second term.⁷³² Given the echoes of the "Kuchmagate", opposition and civil society groups intensified their activism in preparation for the presidential elections, coalescing to oppose corruption and to fight for democratic values. Following the November 21 runoff between then-Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych and the opposition candidate Yuschenko, the electoral officials in Kiev announced Yanukovych as the winner. Amid accusations of election fraud and irregularities, for the next 17 days, millions of Ukrainians participated in nonviolent protests in Kiev's main independence square and across Ukraine, in what came to be known as the *Orange Revolution* (named after Yuschenko's campaign colors).⁷³³ With protesters in the streets,

⁷²⁹ Naegele, J. "Ukraine: Kuchma Appoints New, Loyal Prime Minister, Insists on Coming to NATO Summit." *RFERL*, November 18, 2002

⁷³⁰ Kuzio, T. "Kuchma Replaces Prime Minister, and Appoints a Possible Successor." *RFERL*, December 8, 2002.

⁷³¹ The Western press on the meetings between Ukrainian MFA, K. Grishenko, with the NATO's New Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, January 15, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁷³² Taras Kuzio. 2005. "From Kuchma to Yushchenko Ukraine's 2004 Presidential Elections and the Orange Revolution." *Problems of Post-Communism* 52(2), 29-44.

⁷³³ Adrian Karatnycky. 2005. "Ukraine's Orange Revolution." *Foreign Affairs* 48(2), 35-52.

Yushchenko challenged the elections results. OSCE observers have also claimed that the elections were characterized by massive fraud.

Immediately after the official announcement of the results, the West poured criticisms toward the power holders in Ukraine. The European Parliament held debates related to the second round of elections, with one Dutch member of parliament addressing the Ukrainian Ambassador to the EU, saying: “The results of the elections are not satisfactory, Mr. Ambassador! Do not hope that we, here, will stay idle. If Yanukovich takes power, we will be forced to think about sanctions against the club of oligarchs.”⁷³⁴ NATO and EU members, including those that usually did not speak on such topics, such as Luxembourg and Iceland, criticized how the elections were held in Ukraine.⁷³⁵ While Kiev’s Independence Square filled with hundreds of thousands of protesters, Western countries conditioned future relations with Ukraine on the leaders in Kiev “respecting the will of the people,” reviewing the election results and re-running the second tour of elections.

Russia’s president Vladimir Putin took the 2004 presidential elections in Ukraine close to heart as well. He visited Ukraine before the elections twice and endorsed the Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich for the high post in Ukraine.⁷³⁶ Yanukovich had promised to continue Kuchma’s policies to centralize power in his hands, as well as to strengthen social and economic ties with Russia.⁷³⁷ Putin invited Yanukovich to his birthday celebration in Moscow⁷³⁸,

⁷³⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Belgium, Belgian Mass Media on elections in Ukraine and reactions in the European Parliament, November 25, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷³⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Mission to NATO, November 29, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁷³⁶ Myers, S. L. December 3, 2004. “Putin Backs Ukrainian Leader, Dismissing Call for New Runoff.” *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/03/world/europe/putin-backs-ukrainian-leader-dismissing-call-for-new-runoff.html?_r=0

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Ibid.

while the Russian mass media, especially the state television, aired subjects only about Yanukovich, while his opponent, Viktor Yushchenko was ignored or criticized.⁷³⁹

During the NATO-Russia summit from November 2004, one of the highly disputed topics on the agenda was the situation in Ukraine. The Russian ambassador to the meeting warned “against intervention and destabilization of the situation in [Ukraine],”⁷⁴⁰ at the same time claiming that “while for NATO, Ukraine is a neighbor, for Russia – it is a family member.”⁷⁴¹

Attending the Russia-EU Summit in the Netherlands in November 2004, Putin congratulated Yanukovich for winning the elections, before the official election results had been announced, despite mass protests in Kiev and claims of election fraud.⁷⁴²

Following Western criticisms for unfair elections and the street protests in Kiev, Leonid Kuchma was trying to solve the political crisis in Ukraine on two fronts. Round Table talks between Ukrainian main political actors, mediated by then-Polish president, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign Policy, Javier Solana, and Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus,⁷⁴³ led to the decision to repeat the second tour of elections. While negotiations were being held in Kiev with Western partners, Kuchma was making “emergency” visits to Moscow to meet Putin and “exchange views on the situation in Ukraine and

⁷³⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, November 18, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁴⁰ Letter from the Ukrainian Mission to NATO, November 29, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁷⁴¹ Ibid.

⁷⁴² “Russia and Ukraine reaffirm ties.” BBC, March 19, 2005. Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4363477.stm>

⁷⁴³ Three sessions of the Round Table negotiations were held during November-December 2004, in order to find a solution to the political crisis, which emerged after allegations of fraudulent conduct of the second tour of presidential elections in November 2004. Even though the main discussants around the table were Ukrainian domestic actors, Western mediators played an important role in facilitating the discussion. For more on the role of European mediators on the Ukrainian crisis, see <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/european-mediators-and-ukraines-orange-revolution>

discuss ways to exit the crisis.”⁷⁴⁴ Kuchma had claimed that “without Russia, it is hard to solve the crisis” and “Ukraine and Russia are linked by really special ties and Russia among all is the most interested in Ukraine remaining a unitary, stable country.”⁷⁴⁵

During the Round Table negotiations in Kiev in November and December 2004, the Russian representative, Boris Gryzlov, the Chairman of the Russian Duma, did not participate directly in the negotiation process,⁷⁴⁶ remaining unengaged.⁷⁴⁷ Western observers interpreted Russia’s behavior as an attempt to “untie its hands,”⁷⁴⁸ after Russia’s president Putin visited Ukraine twice during the election campaign, benefiting from high publicity and openly showing his support for Viktor Yanukovich. Once it was decided that the second tour of elections should be repeated, members of the Russian State Duma released a statement expressing grave concern regarding the “intervention from outside in the developments in Ukraine.”⁷⁴⁹ The Western influence in Ukraine was labeled as “destructive,” and the Western negotiators were blamed for the street protests and political crisis.⁷⁵⁰ Meanwhile, French analysts claimed that the presidential elections in Ukraine showed for the first time how Russia intervened in the internal affairs of a sovereign country.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁴ Records of Discussion with the First Secretary of the Lithuanian Embassy in Russia, December 3, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁶ On EU’s evaluations with respect to the internal situation in Ukraine, December 3, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁴⁷ Kosci-Harmatiy, R. (2011). European Mediators and Ukraine’s Orange Revolution. Retrieved from <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/european-mediators-and-ukraines-orange-revolution#sthash.GIAf9EQ8.dpuf>

⁷⁴⁸ On EU’s evaluations with respect to the internal situation in Ukraine, December 3, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁴⁹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, December 3, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in France, December 22, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

The winner of the repeated elections was declared Viktor Yushchenko. Western evaluations of Ukraine as a democratic state “radically improved” after the repeated second round of elections.⁷⁵² Kuchma’s readiness for open dialogue with Western emissaries, as well as his strong position against the use of force during the street protests – was praised by his Western partners and contributed to the West’s improved perception of the events in Ukraine.

Yushchenko Years: 2005 – 2010

The West’s mixed message toward Ukraine

With a new president and a new government in 2005, Ukrainians put high hopes for a more “welcoming” EU. Even though the Orange Revolution changed some attitudes concerning Ukraine in the EU, and certain voices inside the EU believed⁷⁵³ that Ukraine deserves “a bit more” because of the “unprecedented shift toward democratization,”⁷⁵⁴ the general mood in Europe was not in favor of supporting Ukrainian EU aspirations.⁷⁵⁵

Ukrainian politicians expected a “political signal” from the EU, which would have underlined Ukraine’s chances to become an EU member in the future. Ukrainians high hopes have been nurtured by some EU diplomats, who claimed that the events after the Orange Revolution changed EU-Ukraine relations in a cardinal way, both sides having a mutual consent in developing

⁷⁵² Records of Discussion with the Head of the Polish Presidential Administration, December 30, 2004. Conclusions of the EU Summit in Goteborg, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

⁷⁵³ Politicians in Sweden, for example, believed that if the EU will offer a clear political signal to Ukraine, this will “mobilize the entire Ukrainian society toward achieving concrete results as it happened before in the Baltic States.” Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Sweden, “On the future of Ukraine-EU Relations.” January 10, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁵⁴ Records of Discussion with the Dutch Charge D’Affaires in Ukraine, December 28, 2004.

⁷⁵⁵ Records of Discussion with the Head of the Polish Presidential Administration, December 30, 2004. Conclusions of the EU Summit in Goteborg, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 20, 2015.

a new level of relations.”⁷⁵⁶ In the years immediately following the Orange Revolution, however, Ukrainian diplomats expressed discontent that the “new level” of relations, was expressed only rhetorically and not translated into concrete proposals. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, then Commissioner for External Relations and Neighborhood Policy, and Javier Solana, High Representative for CFSP addressed recommendations to the EU member states in January 2005 “for ways to strengthen cooperation with Ukraine.”⁷⁵⁷ The Ukrainians, however, expressed their “deep disappointment” with these proposals, as the majority of the provisions were already being implemented or partly reflected the corresponding provisions of the Ukraine-EU Action Plan⁷⁵⁸, approved by the European Commission in December 2004, therefore bringing no benefit into raising the bilateral relation at a new level.⁷⁵⁹ Ferrero-Waldner urged Ukraine to intensify its diplomatic work in the EU capitals, to lobby and convince EU members to support Ukraine’s EU membership.⁷⁶⁰ Solana, on the other hand, claimed that “it is not statements which open doors, but rather concrete facts and practical actions,”⁷⁶¹ pointing to the so often stated need for Ukrainian

⁷⁵⁶ Letter from the Ukrainian Mission to the EU on the Address of B. Ferrero Waldner “EU-Ukraine - what can be seen beyond the horizon?”, April 29, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁵⁷ Draft Letter of Ukrainian MFA, Gryshenko, on the Proposal of Solana and Ferrero Waldner with respect to Ukraine, January 30, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁵⁸ After EU accepted ten new member states from Central and Eastern Europe, it launched the so-called “European Neighborhood policy,” which guides EU’s relations with its neighbors. This policy establishes a general framework, within which specific Action Plans were negotiated and approved with each of EU’s neighbors. On December 9, 2004, the European Commission adopted seven of these plans, including the one for Ukraine. The aim of the Action Plan was to offer not membership, but gradual integration of Ukraine into certain EU policies, like education, research, environment, as well as to improve cooperation in managing borders and population movements. For more information on EU-Ukraine Action Plan from 2005, see <http://www.euneighbours.eu/library/content/eu-ukraine-action-plan-0>

⁷⁵⁹ Draft Letter of Ukrainian MFA, Gryshenko, on the Proposal of Solana and Ferrero Waldner with respect to Ukraine, January 30, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁶⁰ Records of Discussion between the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, B. Tarasyuk, with B. Ferrero Waldner, Member of the European Commission, February 17, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁶¹ Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the EU, “On the comments of Solana on Ukraine.” January 25, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

politicians to carry internal political and economic reforms. Some other EU diplomats urged the Ukrainians to renounce at the “senseless” polemic on giving Ukraine a signal for EU membership and claimed openly that the EU’s enlargement policy has already been negotiated and on the enlargement agenda there is no place for Ukraine.⁷⁶² Ukrainian diplomats labeled Germany’s position on Ukraine as “alarming” after the contents of a document prepared by the German government, *German Presidency in the EU: Russia, the European Neighborhood Policy, and Central Asia* became available to them. The report pointed that the region of Eastern Europe was viewed as a zone between Russia and the EU, with relations between the EU and the post-Soviet states being contingent on the dialogue between Brussels and Moscow. Ukrainian diplomats were concerned that for Germans, Ukraine had no special place and was viewed in the same line with Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan.⁷⁶³

In March 2007, Ukraine and EU started negotiations on a new Association Agreement, including a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. Even though enthusiastically launched by both sides, negotiations soon stalled.⁷⁶⁴ One of the recurrent questions in the negotiations remained the Ukrainian request addressed to Brussels to include in the text a statement acknowledging Ukraine’s prospect for EU membership. The promise for EU membership was perceived by the Ukrainians as a symbolic gesture, acknowledging Ukraine’s place in Europe and at the same time

⁷⁶² Letter from the Ukrainian Mission to the EU on the meeting with the Ambassador of Luxembourg to the EU, February 21, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁶³ On the positions of the German Government with respect to Ukraine, November 14, 2006. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with a member of the Ukrainian team of negotiators of the Association Agreement with the EU, July 20 2015, Kiev, Ukraine. Negotiations on the Agreement were finalized in December 2011, during Yanukovich’s presidency. The Agreement was then initialed on March 30, 2012. European External Action Service. “The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. What’s it all about?” Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/ukraine/documents/virtual_library/vademecum_en.pdf.

as a morale-boosting effort to support Ukraine's economic and democratic reforms. The EU officials refused to include such a statement in the final version of the text.

Looking at this issue retrospectively, Ukrainian diplomats think that the Western refusal to acknowledge Ukraine's EU full membership perspective was a mistake. "One could have inserted this prospect without linking it to a concrete time frame, it would have anchored Ukraine stronger to the West, and it would have stopped the accession [to power] of such persons as Yanukovich."⁷⁶⁵ As the archival document show, however, one of the reasons why the Europeans were reluctant to promise full membership to Ukraine was their desire to avoid the "turkization" of relations with Ukraine, when as in Turkey's case, Ukraine would have taken further steps and asked for specific funds and put pressure for starting the negotiations on membership.⁷⁶⁶ Some leaders in the EU member-states were not approving of EU's decision at the beginning of 2000s to start negotiations on Turkey's accession and were concerned that by offering a clear prospect for membership to Ukraine, Kiev would follow Ankara's footsteps, exploiting this promise to ask for increased financial support in addition to requests to start accession negotiation discussions.

Relations with NATO

While the new Ukrainian leadership was disillusioned with EU's unwillingness to consider Ukraine a potential EU member, substantial progress in relations with NATO was achieved during the years following the Orange Revolution. During the Ukraine-NATO Summit in Brussels, in February 2005, Viktor Yushchenko, the newly elected Ukrainian president, announced that NATO membership for Ukraine is the final goal of the cooperation between the country and the alliance.⁷⁶⁷

The NATO members positively received this announcement, and in April 2005, NATO invited

⁷⁶⁵ Interview with a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 23 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁷⁶⁶ Records of Discussion with the Advisor on Political Questions of the Spanish Permanent Mission to the EU, May 6, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 19, 2015.

⁷⁶⁷ On Certain Questions related to Ukraine's Foreign Policy and its Relations with NATO, October 2006. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 19, 2015.

Ukraine to begin an “Intensified Dialogue”⁷⁶⁸ on Ukraine’s aspiration to membership.⁷⁶⁹ During the North-Atlantic Council’s visit to Kiev in October 2005, NATO and Ukraine discussed practical questions on membership and the members of the Council visited Ukraine’s regions to gather information of the situation in Ukraine. For the first time in the history of NATO-Ukraine relations, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine participated in a joint meeting with the North-Atlantic Council, headed by Ukrainian President, Yushchenko, with the participation of the then-NATO’s General Secretary, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer. In December 2005, a joint NATO-Ukraine statement, for the first time stated not only the fact that NATO has its doors open for Ukraine, but it also offered concrete perspectives of including Ukraine in the Action Plan (MAP) for membership.⁷⁷⁰ The Russian factor, however, played a major role in derailing Ukraine’s plans to join the alliance.

The closest Ukraine got to NATO’s doors was the NATO Summit in Bucharest when a heated debate took place among NATO members on offering Ukraine and Georgia a Membership Action Plan to join the Alliance, preparing them for Euro-Atlantic membership. Despite lobbying efforts by the then-American president, G. W. Bush, among NATO members, no consensus was

⁷⁶⁸ The formula of “Intensified Dialogue” started in the 1997 Madrid Summit, at which NATO Heads of State and Government decided “to continue the Alliance’s intensified dialogues with those nations that aspire to NATO membership” and is the first stage of the official process to prepare the aspirant countries to become NATO members. For more information on the “Intensified Dialogue” with Ukraine, see <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2005/04-april/e0421b.htm>

⁷⁶⁹ On Certain Questions related to Ukraine’s Foreign Policy and its Relations with NATO, October 2006. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 19, 2015.

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

The archival evidence suggests that Ukrainian leaders were concerned with low public opinion support of NATO in Ukraine. The documents show the reasoning of politicians that a referendum on Ukraine’s NATO membership will have to be organized, but not until NATO officially invites Ukraine to join the Alliance. In January 2006, public opinion polls showed that only 19.2 percent of Ukrainians approved of Ukraine joining NATO. This figure in October 2004 was even smaller – 12 percent. At the same time, according to the polls conducted in October 2005, 56.8 percent of Ukrainians acknowledged that they are not informed about NATO in a proper manner, with 24 percent of respondents saying that they know nothing about the Alliance. The archival documents show that Ukrainian politicians were planning to intensify the communication efforts on the advantages of joining NATO for the Ukraine, while postponing the organization of the referendum to a later date.

reached on offering a MAP to Ukraine and Georgia. Germany and France, the most vociferous challengers, were joined by Italy, Hungary and the Benelux countries in their opposition to advance Ukraine's NATO talks.⁷⁷¹ German and French diplomats shared the opinion that since neither Georgia nor Ukraine were stable enough – offering a membership plan to them would only antagonize Russia, which was firmly against the move.⁷⁷²

Some claimed that France and Germany blocked the NATO consensus for offering Ukraine a MAP due to the low level of public support in Ukraine for joining NATO.⁷⁷³ This argument is problematic, however. As the chapter on the CEECs and Baltics shows, during accession negotiations, public opinion support for joining NATO was not very high in the Visegrad countries either, however NATO members did not hold back the invitation to Budapest, Prague or Warsaw. The archival evidence suggests that Hungarian officials were worried in 1996 about the low level of support for NATO membership among the Hungarian population. More than \$1 million was set aside by the government to shape public opinion and increase its support for NATO during a extensive public opinion campaign carried out during February – December 1996.⁷⁷⁴ In fact, from the ten CEE countries that joined NATO in 1999 and 2004, only two of them, Hungary and Slovenia, organized national referendums on NATO-membership.⁷⁷⁵ In Hungary, the referendum was organized in November 1997, only after NATO had officially invited Budapest to join during

⁷⁷¹Erlanger, S., Myers, S. L. "NATO Allies Oppose Bush on Georgia and Ukraine." *The New York Times*, April 3, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/03/world/europe/03nato.html>

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ Pifer, S. "Ukraine and NATO Following Bucharest." *Brookings Institution*, May 6, 2008, Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/ukraine-and-nato-following-bucharest/>

⁷⁷⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Hungary on how is the public opinion in Hungary shaped with respect to NATO enlargement. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015.

⁷⁷⁵ On Certain Questions related to Ukraine's Foreign Policy and its Relations with NATO, October 2006. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 19, 2015.

the NATO Summit in Madrid, held in July 1997.⁷⁷⁶ The decision of the rest of the eight CEECs not to organize referendums on joining NATO shows the cautious maneuvering of the elites in the CEECs. Except for Poland and Romania, where public opinion support in favor of NATO membership was highest, 76 percent in Romania and 65 percent in Poland, no other country had more than a third of its population supporting Euro-Atlantic membership, the majority having a narrow band of 27 – 32 percent in favor.⁷⁷⁷

The archival evidence from the Ukrainian MFA shows that Ukrainian officials, concerned about the low public opinion support for NATO membership in Ukraine, were hoping that an official invitation from NATO to Ukraine to join the Alliance would increase Ukrainians' support for the Euro-Atlantic institution. Following the experience of the CEECs, the Ukrainian diplomats were also reasoning that a nationwide referendum on Ukraine's NATO membership could be organized after NATO offers the official invitation to Kiev. The leaders from Latvia, Romania, and Estonia, whose countries had joined NATO only a few years back, shared the arguments advanced in Kiev and pointed out that a NATO membership offer to Ukraine would strengthen and consolidate the society around the NATO joining idea. The then-Estonian president, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, pointed out that the NATO's MAP "is more of a big stick than a big carrot. [...] It forces nations to reform even when they don't want to do it."⁷⁷⁸ The Latvian president shared a

⁷⁷⁶ The referendum on NATO membership in Hungary had the lowest participation: the turnout was lower than 50 percent. Although of those who voted, 85,3 percent were in favor of NATO and only 14 percent were against it. Hungarian referendum on NATO membership, November 16 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 11, 2015. Kuzelewska, E. "How Far can Citizens Influence the Decision-Making Process? Analysis of the Effectiveness of Referenda in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary in 1989 – 2015." *Baltic Journal of European Studies*, 5, 2. Retrieved from <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/bjes.2015.5.issue-2/bjes-2015-0019/bjes-2015-0019.xml>

⁷⁷⁷ Cunningham, G. 1997. "EU and NATO Enlargement: How Public Opinion is Shaping Up in Some Candidate Countries." *NATO Review*, 45, 3. Retrieved from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1997/9703-4.htm>

⁷⁷⁸ Erlanger, S., Myers, S. L. "NATO Allies Oppose Bush on Georgia and Ukraine." *The New York Times*, April 3, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/03/world/europe/03nato.html>

similar opinion, claiming that a delay in offering the MAP to Ukraine delays the internal debates and domestic transformations: “No action plan, no action.”⁷⁷⁹

Inside Ukraine, political actors reacted differently to NATO’s adjournment in offering Ukraine the MAP. Yanukovich, his Party of Regions and the rest of the opposition applauded NATO’s denial of MAP to Ukraine, labeling it as a big foreign policy failure for Yushchenko.⁷⁸⁰ Yushchenko and his team, on the contrary, wishing to downplay the negative summit outcome, clung to the vague NATO’s promise that Ukraine will become a member in the future, labeling the Bucharest summit as a “key stepping stone” for Ukraine’s path to membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions.⁷⁸¹

Internal situation

The Western reluctance to open the door of NATO and the EU to Ukraine led to resentment and recrimination between the leaders of the Orange coalition, Yushchenko and Tymoshenko.⁷⁸² The bickering between the two, their constant competition for dominating the domestic political scene,⁷⁸³ and the oftentimes-opposing foreign policy messages sent by the two leaders alienated the Western politicians and increased their reluctance to be more tolerant to Ukrainian requests for membership in Western institutions. At the same time, political leaders chose foreign policy orientation as the main differentiating issue from their opponents.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Gallis, Paul, Paul Belkin, Carl Ek, Julie Kim, Jim Nichol, and Steven Woehrel. "Enlargement Issues At Nato's Bucharest Summit." *Russia, China and Eurasia* 27, no. 4 (2011): 659-697
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1700477828?accountid=13626>.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid., p. 688

⁷⁸² Menon, R. Motyl, A. J. “Counterrevolution in Kiev. Hope Fades for Ukraine.” *Foreign Affairs* 90, 6, 2011.

⁷⁸³ After the optimism that change was possible following the Orange Revolution, it seemed that a new era of politics would be ushered in. Nevertheless, due to the public squabbling between the president and the prime minister, the euphoria quickly dissipated. For more on the failures following the Orange Revolution and the conflict between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko, see Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p.321 – 333.

In their competition for power, the two most prominent Orange leaders had to adjust their political messages and foreign policy appeals, to differentiate themselves from one another, as they were competing for the same constituency.

Yulia Tymoshenko's Bloc (BYuT) had undergone several of this kind of "alterations" in the period between after the Orange Revolution and the 2010 presidential elections. Following the repeated presidential elections from December 2004, and before Tymoshenko was appointed as the new prime minister, serving as a member of the Verkhovna Rada at that time, she wrote an article in the Russian newspaper *Vedomosti*, titled "Russia and Ukraine – Russia did not lose." Anticipating that Yushchenko's anti-Russia policies would irritate leaders in Moscow and alienate pro-Russia voters at home, Tymoshenko adopted the views which would have showed to the Kremlin that she was a much trusted leader in Kiev than Yushchenko was, at the same time aiming to attract the Ukrainian voters who were holding pro-Russia views. She wrote in the article that Ukrainian-Russian relations do not have to suffer during Yushchenko's tenure as president, the two countries "have many things in common," belonging "to the same geo-economic region," therefore, being bound to be important economic partners.⁷⁸⁴ She claimed that with the new economic reforms expected from the new president, Russian capital was welcomed in Ukraine on new investment and privatization programs.⁷⁸⁵ "I do not exclude the fact that in the medium term, Ukraine will become a NATO member," Tymoshenko wrote, "however, together with Russia. Ukraine and Russia cannot be in different, hostile defense spaces."⁷⁸⁶ After Yushchenko had appointed her as Ukraine's new Prime Minister, Russian politicians had only words of praise for her: the Head of the Russian Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, S. Karaganov, called

⁷⁸⁴ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, January 11, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁶ Ibid.

Tymoshenko “a talented, pragmatic politician and experienced manager.”⁷⁸⁷ The Russian ambassador to Ukraine, V. Chernomyrdin, declared that he knew Tymoshenko from business and characterized her as a “very organized person,” able to “complete tasks successfully.”⁷⁸⁸

Tymoshenko did not hold the prime ministership position for too long. Following her dismissal from the post of Prime Minister in 2005, Tymoshenko was in an open quarrel with Yushchenko (who was seen as a staunch EU and NATO supporter). During the snap parliamentary elections from 2006, Tymoshenko adjusted her foreign policy message, distancing from her strong pro-Western messages advanced during the Orange Revolution, with her party’s manifesto containing no explicit “pro-EU” message at all.⁷⁸⁹

Tymoshenko’s foreign policy views went through another “transformation” before the presidential elections in 2010, however, when she was running against Viktor Yanukovich, who positioned himself on a strong pro-Russian platform. During the electoral campaign, Tymoshenko adopted a pro-Western position, claiming that Ukraine was “an organic, historical, geographic, and cultural part of Europe. We should not return to Europe because at the level of our mentality, we have never left it.”⁷⁹⁰

One of the labels attributed to Tymoshenko was that of a “populist.” An “effective”⁷⁹¹ and “high quality”⁷⁹² populist. Whereas Yushchenko was seen as standing for European and NATO integration,⁷⁹³ Tymoshenko was designing her foreign policy messages and behavior being in tune

⁷⁸⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, February 2, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁸⁸ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, "Russian politicians on the internal politics in Ukraine." January 25, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁷⁸⁹ White, S., Feklyunina, V. *Identities and Foreign Policies in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. The Other Europes*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁷⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 143

⁷⁹¹ Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 325.

⁷⁹² Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁷⁹³ Yushchenko was at the same time blamed for putting his personal conflicts with Tymoshenko above the national interests and that NATO membership was never a real priority for the president. Kuzio, T. “Yushchenko Ruins

with the times and public opinion polls. She was more willing to accommodate and not antagonize Russia,⁷⁹⁴ and some Ukrainian diplomats blamed her for acting treacherously: publicly she was in favor of Ukraine joining NATO, while behind closed doors she was sending subtle signals to the West that her party was not supporting Yushchenko's NATO integration goals.⁷⁹⁵ During the Russo-Georgian war from the summer of 2008, Yushchenko supported Georgia's president Saakashvili, emphasizing the urgent need for Ukraine to join NATO as a shield against Russia.⁷⁹⁶ During the height of the crisis in August, Tymoshenko, who was holding the prime ministership position at that time,⁷⁹⁷ had no public reaction to the war. Her office did not release any public commentary on Russia's actions in Georgia. Observers pointed out to the shift in her position on Russia since the Orange Revolution from November 2004,⁷⁹⁸ when she was claiming that "secret" Russian troops "wearing Ukrainian uniforms" were present in Ukraine ready to carry out orders against protesters in the streets.⁷⁹⁹ In fact, Tymoshenko's parliamentary faction did not want the adoption of a resolution on the war in Georgia on the Parliament's agenda at all. Even though Yushchenko's and Tymoshenko's parties were forming a government coalition, the two parliamentary groups failed to agree on a joint resolution.⁸⁰⁰ Tymoshenko was also traveling in the eastern, Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine, claiming that with her at the helm, Ukraine will not

NATO Chances with his Behavior." *Kyiv Post*, November 5, 2008. He was also described as having developed an "obsession" with historical issues in Ukraine and failing to coalesce the different regions of the country, enlarging the divide between the pro-Russian east and the nationalist West. Wilson, A. *The Ukrainians*, 2015, p. 325.

⁷⁹⁴ Zarakovich, Y. "Why Ukraine's Pro-Western Coalition Split." *Time*, September 4, 2008. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1838848,00.html>

⁷⁹⁵ Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁷⁹⁶ Yushchenko visited Tbilisi (together with the Polish, Estonian, and Lithuanian presidents), to show his support to the Georgian president. Arel, D. "Ukraine since the War in Georgia." *Survival. Global Politics and Strategy*, 50, 6.

⁷⁹⁷ Tymoshenko was reappointed Ukraine's Prime Minister in 2007, after snap parliamentary elections. Feifer, G. "Unloved but Unbowed, Ukraine's Viktor Yushchenko Leaves Office." *RFERL*, February 24, 2010.

⁷⁹⁸ Arel, D. "Ukraine since the War in Georgia." *Survival. Global Politics and Strategy*, 50, 6.

⁷⁹⁹ Tymoshenko, Y. "The Battle for Ukraine." *Project Syndicate*, November 30, 2004. Retrieved from <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-battle-for-ukraine?barrier=true>

⁸⁰⁰ Arel, D. "Ukraine since the War in Georgia." *Survival. Global Politics and Strategy*, 50, 6.

be dragged into conflicts among other countries.⁸⁰¹ Her party leader in the Ukrainian Rada, Ivan Kyrylenko, declared that the war in Georgia was not Ukraine's and "we do not need to involve ourselves in a foreign war."⁸⁰²

Some senior Ukrainian diplomats decried the problem of populism among Ukrainian political leaders, pointing out that most of these politicians have a short-term political outlook: "what is the difference between a politician and a statesman? The first adjusts his behavior thinking about the next elections, whereas the latter acts thinking about the next generation."⁸⁰³ Tymoshenko's efforts to adopt a more moderate position in relations with Kremlin were acknowledged by Vladimir Putin, who was then serving as Russia's Prime Minister, and who described Tymoshenko "as a person Moscow can do business with."⁸⁰⁴ In her competition with her "Orange" political rival, Tymoshenko proved agiler in playing the "smart tactical game"⁸⁰⁵ of adopting a moderate position concerning Russia and carefully designing a pro-EU and at the same time pro-neutrality (anti-NATO) stance.

Even though Viktor Yushchenko was standing firmer on his anti-Russia, pro-Western position, he was also equivocal in his political behavior as Ukraine's third president. In the summer of 2006, he disillusioned many Orange supporters, when he allied with Viktor Yanukovich and appointed him as Ukraine's Prime Minister in August 2006.⁸⁰⁶ Yushchenko paved the road to prime ministership to the same man he vilified during the Orange Revolution and whom he accused

⁸⁰¹ Zarakovich, Y. "Why Ukraine's Pro-Western Coalition Split." *Time*, September 4, 2008. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1838848,00.html>

⁸⁰² As cited in Arel, D. "Ukraine since the War in Georgia." *Survival. Global Politics and Strategy*, 50, 6.

⁸⁰³ Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁸⁰⁴ *EurActiv*. "Pro-Russia Yanukovich Takes Lead in Ukrainian Elections." January 18, 2010. Retrieved from <https://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/pro-russia-yanukovich-takes-lead-in-ukrainian-elections/>

⁸⁰⁵ Zarakovich, Y. "Why Ukraine's Pro-Western Coalition Split." *Time*, September 4, 2008. Retrieved from <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1838848,00.html>

⁸⁰⁶ Oxford Business Group, *The Report. Ukraine*, 2008.

of attempting to rig elections.⁸⁰⁷ To form the new governing coalition, Yushchenko's "Our Ukraine" party, and Yanukovich's "Party of Regions" had to make concessions. Yushchenko's central surprising compromises were related to Ukraine's foreign policy course: first, Yushchenko excluded the clause urging Ukraine to implement a NATO membership plan.⁸⁰⁸ Instead, he agreed on Ukraine joining the Euro-Atlantic institutions only after a nation-wide referendum. Relatedly, Yushchenko has also given his consent for including a paragraph in the final version of the national unity declaration among the parties forming the governing coalition, to insert a paragraph urging Ukraine's participation in the Single Economic Space with Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.⁸⁰⁹ The "partnership between the two Viktors" did not last long, however. Less than a month after being appointed Prime Minister, Yanukovich declared during his first visit to Brussels that Ukraine was not ready to join NATO.⁸¹⁰ Yushchenko accused Yanukovich of betraying national interests.⁸¹¹ Despite the fact that five members of Yushchenko's party were appointed in the new Cabinet of Ministers under Yanukovich's leadership, by November 2006, Yushchenko's party left the coalition with Yanukovich and joined the Tymoshenko's Bloc, forming an opposition to the Yanukovich government.⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁷ Some voices blame Yushchenko for helping Viktor Yanukovich to win the presidency during the 2010 presidential elections, when he urged voters not to support Tymoshenko in the elections. Kuzio, T. "Yushchenko is Afraid to Show His Face." *Kyiv Post*, March 14, 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.kyivpost.com/article/opinion/op-ed/yushchenko-afraid-to-show-his-face-339290.html>

⁸⁰⁸ Varfolomeyev, O. "Yushchenko, Yanukovich Reach Compromise." *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 3, 151, August 4, 2006. Retrieved from <https://jamestown.org/program/yushchenko-yanukovich-reach-compromise/>

⁸⁰⁹ Tolstrup, J. *Russia vs the EU: The Competition for Influence in Post-Soviet States*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013. Yanukovich made three main concessions: he renounced at the idea of federalizing Ukraine (Yushchenko's "Our Ukraine" feared that it would lead to separatism), accepted Ukrainian as the only official language, renouncing at its demand for a higher status for Russian and agreed to drop from the final national unity declaration a sentence urging "good-neighborly and mutually beneficial relations with Russia." Varfolomeyev, O. "Yushchenko, Yanukovich Reach Compromise." *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 3, 151, August 4, 2006. Retrieved from <https://jamestown.org/program/yushchenko-yanukovich-reach-compromise/>

⁸¹⁰ BBC. "Ukraine 'Not Ready' to Join NATO." September 14, 2006.

⁸¹¹ Gretskiy, I. "Ukraine's Foreign Policy Under Yushchenko." *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*, 22, 4 (2013), p. 7-II.

⁸¹² In 2007, in another move to strengthen his own power, Yushchenko dismissed the parliament and called for new snap parliamentary elections. During the elections, Tymoshenko's party gathered more votes than Yushchenko's "Our Ukraine" party. The two "Orange" leaders reasserted their alliance, even though Yushchenko was not

“Pure populism and lust for power give you bad advice” – this was how a senior Ukrainian diplomat explained Yushchenko’s and Tymoshenko’s fiascos in domestic politics and Ukraine’s external relations.⁸¹³

The failure to forge stronger relations with the West, the internal political instability which marked the five years after the Orange Revolution, and as discussed below, the worsened relations with Russia – constituted the auspicious environment for Yanukovich and his pro-Russia policies to gain ground. The pro-Western foreign policy during Yushchenko’s presidency was associated with internal bickering, crises and instability. Yanukovich’s victory in the 2010 presidential elections, winning on a ticket that promised close relations with Russia, was no surprise.

Ukrainian-Russian Relations

The section below documents how the Kremlin, not approving of Yushchenko’s pro-Western drive, used various tools to undermine domestic initiatives and the administration’s pro-Western integration goals. Frosty relations with Russia marked Yushchenko’s presidential term. In January 2005, Yushchenko made his first foreign visit to Moscow the second day after his inauguration as the new president of Ukraine, showing in this way “the great respect” Ukraine attaches to its relations with Russia.⁸¹⁴ Russian media interpreted the meeting as a signal that Ukraine wants to keep friendly relations with Russia, but at the same time to show that there is no

enthusiastic about it. Feifer, G. “Unloved but Unbowed, Ukraine’s Viktor Yushchenko Leaves Office.” RFERL, February 24, 2010.

⁸¹³ Interview with a former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 23 2015, Kiev, Ukraine. Yushchenko was characterized as a mediocre, self-centered and narcissistic politician, who lacked verticality and who took decisions in “accidental” ways.

⁸¹⁴ Transcript of the meeting between V. Yushchenko and V. Putin, Moscow, Kremlin, January 24, 2005. Retrieved from <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22794>. The Russian version of the transcript: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22794>

alternative to Ukraine's integration into the EU. Worrisome to Russia were Yushchenko's declarations that he intended to revise the Treaties signed between Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan on creating the Common Economic Space between them. Some Russian observers noted that Yushchenko put an end to the discussion on the creation of a common economic space with supranational bodies between the four countries.⁸¹⁵ The Russian Head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), noted that in Yushchenko's speech at PACE, he never, not once mentioned Russia: "[Yushchenko] spoke very correctly, and this is a plus. But the fact that in his main speech, there was no place for Russia, ..., when Europe and the EU were mentioned in every other sentence, rings a bell for me. ... this is a sign that relations with Russia are viewed as only a factor which could help or damage Ukraine's rapprochement with Europe."⁸¹⁶

In what was coined by Ukrainian diplomats as an "unfriendly gesture," the members of the Russian Duma adopted a Declaration in May 2005, criticizing the new Ukrainian political leadership. The Declaration claimed that the new political leaders did not respect the rights of the country's citizens, especially of those representing the political opposition. The document further accused the new Ukrainian leadership of attempting to establish political and ideological control of mass media and re-privatize important Ukrainian enterprises, which had Russian investment capital, in this way prejudicing the material interests of thousands of Russian citizens.⁸¹⁷ When the

⁸¹⁵ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Russia, February 2, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid.

⁸¹⁷ The Russian Duma Declaration "On the development of political situation in Ukraine", May 20, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

One Independent Russian Duma Member, V. Pochmelkin, issued a statement in which he declared that while he does not approve of the political processes taking place in Ukraine, he refused to support the Duma Declaration, accusing the Duma members for behaving according to the saying that it saw the speck from someone else's eye, and it did not notice the beam in its own eye. He claimed that instead of criticizing Ukraine, Russia should consider the conditions of freedom of speech inside Russia, noting that there the situation of lack of human rights is worse in countries like Belarus, Turkmenistan, or Uzbekistan. "Statement by one Russian Independent Duma member on the Declaration on Ukraine," n.d. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

conflict between president Yushchenko and Prime Minister Timoshenko broke out, leading to Timoshenko's resignation in September 2005, Russian political circles accused Yushchenko of consolidating his forces and as a result intensifying the tension between him and the PM. Russian state TV aired subjects citing the spread corruption among the highest political ranks to be responsible for the political crisis.⁸¹⁸ Throughout Yushchenko's years, issues remaining unsolved on the Ukrainian-Russian agenda were related to difficulties in reaching compromises related to border issues,⁸¹⁹ recognition of Ukrainian properties on Russian territory,⁸²⁰ as well as the presence of the Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine.⁸²¹

Since Moscow did not approve of the Yushchenko's pro-Western stance, it employed various tools to undermine the Orange coalition's domestic and external initiatives. While it regularly criticized Yushchenko and the Orange forces holding power, Russia strengthened its ties to Yanukovich and his Party of Regions.⁸²² Yanukovich's party had a strong external ally in Moscow during the acute political crises, which swept the Ukrainian domestic political scene after the Orange revolution. The public squabbling between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko, who were viewed as pro-Western politicians, played into the Russian hand, who promoted Yanukovich and

⁸¹⁸ On Russian reactions related to the resignation of the Ukrainian Government/Prime Minister, September 8, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁸¹⁹ Even though Russia and Ukraine finalized the delimitation of dry land between the two countries in 2003, the delimitation of maritime borders was still under negotiation, Russia proposing to share the Azov Sea in half with Ukraine, while the delimitation of aquatic borders in the Black Sea was left for later time. "Demarcation of borders between Ukraine and Russia." N.d. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁸²⁰ The Accord on recognition of Ukrainian properties on Russian territory and vice versa was signed in January 1993. While it was ratified by the Ukrainian Rada in 1994, it was not ratified by the Russian Duma. In exchange of notes between the two Ministries of Foreign Affairs, it was decided that the Russian Federation will recognize the Ukrainian property on Russian territory temporarily, until the Duma ratifies the accord. Ukraine recognized the right of property for 8 Russian objects on its territory, as well as the construction of 3 new. Russia did the same for 5 Ukrainian objects. "Note from the State Property Fund of Ukraine", February 16, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁸²¹ On the priority tasks in Russian-Ukrainian relations in 2005, April 27, 2005. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed August 21, 2015.

⁸²² Tolstrup, *Russia vs the EU*, 2013, p. 202

his party as “the only sensible and viable alternative to Yushchenko’s “illegitimate” rule.”⁸²³ In January 2006, Russia suddenly reduced gas supply to Ukraine, asking for an increase in price.⁸²⁴ With parliamentary elections scheduled for March 2006, this was seen as a political move by Kremlin to destabilize the society and penalize the Orange leaders and their parties, while at the same time support Yanukovich and his Party of Regions.⁸²⁵ Only during the period when Yanukovich held the prime ministership post, during the year 2007, Russia’s Gazprom showed benevolence toward Ukraine: gas deliveries were stable and prices reasonable.⁸²⁶ In January 2009, a new gas crisis emerged again between Ukraine and Russia, delegitimizing the Ukrainian incumbents both domestically, as well as in the eyes of their Western partners, as large parts of the new EU member states (Bulgaria, Slovakia) faced severe gas shortages and lack of heating during low winter temperatures.⁸²⁷ A solution to the problem was found after Putin, then Russian Prime Minister negotiated a deal with Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who, keeping in mind her presidential goals, was committed to showing that she was a reliable partner which Russia can trust.⁸²⁸ Yushchenko was deliberately excluded by Russia from the negotiation process.⁸²⁹

Apart from energy issues, during Yushchenko’s tenure, Russia applied trade sanctions, banning imports of meat and dairy products from Ukraine due to alleged sanitary issues, as well as tightening up the rules for importing Ukrainian alcohol into Russia.⁸³⁰ Russian officials were

⁸²³ Ibid.

⁸²⁴ Before the Orange Revolution, Ukraine and Russia agreed on a price of \$50 for 1000 cubic meters of gas to be supplied to Ukraine until 2010. In 2006, Russia was already requesting \$230 (Belarus was paying \$46.68).

⁸²⁵ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 2015.

⁸²⁶ Tolstrup, *Russia vs the EU*, 2013.

⁸²⁷ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 2015.

⁸²⁸ Tsygankov, A. “Vladimir Putin’s Last Stand: the Sources of Russia’s Ukraine Policy.” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 31, 4, 2015.

⁸²⁹ Wilson, *The Ukrainians*, 2015.

⁸³⁰ Tolstrup, *Russia vs the EU*, 2013.

also supporting the separatist sentiments in Crimea,⁸³¹ undermining the legitimacy and authority of Yushchenko and his Orange coalition.

In a newspaper interview, the former Ukrainian president Yushchenko claimed that the West “underestimates” the tools Russia is using to destabilize Ukraine and the neighboring countries: in the West, “[t]here are no detailed plans on how to deal with Russia, so Russia gets more and bolder.”⁸³² He went even further claiming that pro-Western politicians in Ukraine or neighboring countries face the danger, which he faced during the Orange Revolution in 2004 when he was attacked and poisoned with dioxin: “My poisoning took place because I had started taking steps towards the European Union. We have a neighbor who does not want this to happen.”⁸³³

One former Ukrainian minister of foreign affairs mentioned absolute differences between Western and Russian approaches to Ukrainian affairs. The Ukrainian diplomat claimed that the Western officials were never inclined to deploy forceful measures; they always preferred to use soft methods of persuasion, in the forms of recommendations, advice, or suggestions. “They will never stand up and say: do it this way or this other way. They allow you to make your own choices. They can help, but they do not want to decide for you.”⁸³⁴ He further said that the lack of strict control from the West throughout Ukraine’s independence history constituted one of the problems and causes of the spread of corruption and lack of reforms in the country: “we needed more Western advisers who would have prompted us on how to do things right.”⁸³⁵ The West’s reluctant

⁸³¹ They praised the referendum organized by the Crimean parliament on making Russian the official state language on the peninsula, and also special Russian forces from Chechenya landed on the peninsula in 2006 without official Kiev’s permission. Ibid.

⁸³² Sengupta, K. “Viktor Yushchenko: ‘Every Politician in Ukraine who Turns to the West in in Danger.’” *The Independent*. October 14, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/viktor-yushchenko-every-politician-in-ukraine-who-turns-to-the-west-is-in-danger-a6694311.html>

⁸³³ Ibid.

⁸³⁴ Author Interview, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

approach toward Ukraine, however, did not give the West the incentive and enthusiasm to be bolder in Ukraine's pace of domestic reforms.

The Russians, on the other hand, "have always acted in a rude and domineering way." The Ukrainian diplomat went further claiming that from his diplomatic experience, it was easier to negotiate with the Martians than with the Russians, characterizing the Russian approach as coercive: "If you do not like something, we will force you to do it, through economic, energy or even military tools. All the conflicts in Moldova, Georgia and now Ukraine – are specifically created by Moscow to keep these countries under pressure and never allow them to grow and develop."⁸³⁶

The constraints that Russia posed to Yushchenko's presidential term in office had to convince any future leader who aspired to hold the Ukrainian presidency that with Russia putting obstacles in the way, one could hardly hope to be victorious and that Kremlin's support was a necessary condition to succeed to acquire and stay in the power seat.

Russia meddled with the Ukrainian presidential elections from 2010, by openly delegitimizing the incumbent Yushchenko and cautiously supporting Yanukovich and Tymoshenko.⁸³⁷ In August 2009, the then Russian president, D. Medvedev sent an open letter to Yushchenko, blaming him for "anti-Russia policies" and for bringing the relations between the two countries "to unprecedented lows."⁸³⁸ He also announced that Moscow decided to postpone sending its new diplomatic envoy to Kiev, hinting that Russia was no longer interested in working with Yushchenko. "Russia hopes that a new political leadership in Ukraine will be prepared to

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Tolstrup, *Russia vs EU*, 2013.

⁸³⁸ Schwirtz, M. "Moscow Signals Widening Rift with Ukraine." *New York Times*, August 11, 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/12/world/europe/12moscow.html>

establish relations between our countries,” inferring that it endorses pro-Russia candidates.⁸³⁹ Immediately after Medvedev’s letter, Yanukovich published a statement on his party’s website, vowing to “revive normal, neighborly, equal and mutually beneficial relations with our strategic partner, Russia” once he accedes to the Ukrainian presidency.⁸⁴⁰ Moscow was also more careful and did not endorse only Yanukovich, instead signaling that it was willing to work with either Yanukovich or Tymoshenko, the two leading candidates.⁸⁴¹

Yanukovich Years: 2010 – February 2014

The Not-so-Skilled Vacillator: Playing the West and Russia off-each other

As the introduction to this chapter points out, Yanukovich’s choice to commit to neither the Western, nor the Russian incentives, opting instead for a vacillatory behavior between Moscow and Brussels, brought negative consequences for his political career and for Ukraine’s fate. Yanukovich refused Moscow’s 2011 offer to join the Customs Union (together with Belarus and Kazakhstan), instead asking for a special 3+1 format relationship with the organization. Yanukovich was said to dislike Russia’s negotiation style of treating Ukraine as a “second rate country,” of forcing Ukraine to act by its own rules, and of “not act[ing] in Ukraine’s best interests in any negotiations.”⁸⁴²

At the same time, Yanukovich was frustrated with EU’s negotiation style as well. Some of the Ukrainian diplomats involved in the negotiations and discussions on the Association Agreement with the EU criticized the EU officials for being indifferent to Ukrainian concerns concerning the economic losses Kiev might suffer after the free trade area conditions between the

⁸³⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁴¹ Tolstrup, *Russia vs EU*, 2013.

⁸⁴² Elizabeth Piper. “Special Report.” *Reuters*. December 19, 2013.

EU and Ukraine would come into effect. Yanukovich's administration claimed that signing an AA with the EU, would have had a negative impact on Kiev's trade relations with Russia and cause mass job losses, especially in Ukraine's Eastern regions, where Yanukovich's base was located and where Ukraine's mining and metallurgy industries were concentrated.⁸⁴³ The Ukrainians were responding to "private and public arm-twisting by Putin, including threats to Ukraine's economy and Yanukovich's political future."⁸⁴⁴ One Ukrainian diplomat said that he was openly told by a highly ranked British diplomat that "Ukraine's economic losses from the free trade with the EU was not an EU problem" and that Kiev should solve its problems as it sees fit.⁸⁴⁵ The unwillingness of the EU and IMF to be more flexible in their demands of Ukraine made the Western choice less attractive.⁸⁴⁶ Yanukovich was discouraged by the EU's incomprehension "of the scale of the financial difficulties he would face if he chose Brussels over Moscow."⁸⁴⁷

Yanukovich was also dismayed by Brussels' unwillingness to offer Kiev a firm prospect of membership in the EU and treating Ukraine as a "lesser country."⁸⁴⁸

Apart from the fact that Yanukovich was under pressure from Putin not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU, Yanukovich thought Putin's offer was more advantageous than the Western one for several reasons. The Russian offer of \$15 billion was, according to the Ukrainian diplomat, of excellent quality: Russia did not advance any strict conditions on Ukrainian leaders to repay the credit.⁸⁴⁹ When compared to the Western credits, like the IMF money, for

⁸⁴³ BBC. "Ukraine-EU trade deal 'big threat' to Russia's economy." November 26, 2017.

⁸⁴⁴ Elizabeth Piper. "Special Report: Why Ukraine spurned the EU and embraced Russia." *Reuters*. December 19, 2013.

⁸⁴⁵ Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, August 4, 2015, Kiev Ukraine.

⁸⁴⁶ Elizabeth Piper. "Special Report." *Reuters*. December 19, 2013.

⁸⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴⁹ Later on in the interview, however, the Ukrainian diplomat noted that every dollar offered by Russia to Ukraine carried a political, not an economic requirement. These requirements were most often related to Ukraine's geopolitical orientation.

example, the Russian offer was more advantageous. “The IMF always asks for an increase in the price of domestic retail gas and heating prices. This was always the most hurtful question for us. That is, to receive money from the IMF, we had to lose the next elections because the president who raises commodity prices – loses the elections.”⁸⁵⁰ The Russian money, however, was tempting for Yanukovich: he could use it to increase pensions and wages (or to build palaces and expensive houses for him and his cronies), things he could not do with the IMF or other Western money.⁸⁵¹ At the time when Yanukovich was weighing Russia’s and Western offers, Ukraine’s relations with the IMF were frozen, making it hard for Kiev to hope for an IMF loan.⁸⁵²

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed Ukraine’s foreign policy behavior during its first twenty-five years of independence from the Soviet Union. It sought to explain the vacillatory and inconsistent foreign policy behavior characterizing Ukrainian comportment on the international scene. The systemic and domestic constraints and opportunities that a political leader faces, determine the foreign policy choices that he will make on behalf of the state that he is leading. The fact that Ukraine lacked a prospect to join the EU and NATO affected the political strategies and foreign policy choices made by its political leaders. The EU’s and NATO’s reticence to institutionalize relations with Ukraine signaled to Moscow that the West is not interested in including Ukraine in its eastern enlargement process. Therefore Russia’s tactics and strategies to maintain Ukraine in its sphere of influence were reinforced and remained unchallenged.

⁸⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.

⁸⁵² Information on the participation of the Moldovan Parliamentary Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly EURONEST, Kiev, Ukraine, November 1-2, 2013. Archives of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed February 16, 2015.

Ukrainian political leaders, being aware of the opportunities and constraints that each external pole offered as well considering the domestic political pressures and possibilities, chose the foreign policy vector that they thought would best help them maintain an upper hand domestically. This strategy meant that occasionally the same government that initiated a pro-West or pro-Russia course in foreign policy could switch its stance during its term of office. If leaders believed that a re-orientation of foreign policy would yield net political benefits, they might switch partners from Brussels/Washington to Moscow or vice versa. Domestic political actors were striving to gain power and maintain it, often following their selfish economic interests, which were often at odds with the country's national interests. Even though not always conducted within a level playing field, elections were competitive and electoral campaigns were often carried out in zero-sum games geopolitical battles between political candidates, who promised that by integrating the country with the West or with Russia, would solve all Ukraine's problems. In the words of a former Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, "[t]he long-term strategy for Ukraine had given in always to the current interests in the political struggle."⁸⁵³ Ukrainian politicians abandoned long-term, consistent foreign policy goals because their focus was on the short-term purpose of winning elections and maintaining power. These short-term goals were achieved much easier by chameleon-type politicians, who felt comfortable in adjusting their political messages and switching foreign policy vectors to attract voters.

Throughout most of Ukraine's independence, there was no consensus in the West on the question of accepting Ukraine in its institutions. If the Western, especially the EU's foreign policy, was consistent on a foreign policy question, it was in the area of consistently denying Ukraine a membership prospect. Even though the West backed Yushchenko and his allies during the Orange

⁸⁵³ Interview with the author, August 4 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

Revolution, and ties to the West were strengthened during his presidency, (including due to the European Neighborhood Policy), the EU's influence in the country remained marginal.⁸⁵⁴ During Yushchenko's tenure, the EU did not take sides in the conflicts between the president, the prime minister and the parliament, only urging the parties to abide by democratic rules, rather than supporting particular individuals.⁸⁵⁵ After the Orange Revolution, not much support has been offered by the EU or the US to the leaders that took office.⁸⁵⁶ Overall, the EU lacked a coherent objective in its relations with Ukraine; it did not have a robust and coherent policy framework, its main goal being maintaining stability in its immediate neighborhood.⁸⁵⁷ Even after launching the Eastern Partnership Program, designed specifically for the former Soviet states, the EU provided neither a membership prospect nor a substitute for it. In the absence of a membership prospect, Ukrainian political leaders remained uncommitted to the pro-Western stance, mimicking reforms and playing Russia and the West off one another to extract financial support and political backing to continue to maintain power and control domestically. Political leaders used the lack of membership prospect as an excuse to stall reforms and continue extracting benefits from the external actors.⁸⁵⁸

Whereas the West was reticent in institutionalizing relations with Ukraine, remaining concerned solely about maintaining stability at its eastern borders, Russia remained consistent in its interest of keeping the country in its sphere of influence. It applied the same tools of soft-power and coercion toward the post-Soviet states used since the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

⁸⁵⁴ Wolczuk, K. "Implementation Without Coordination: The Impact of EU Conditionality on Ukraine Under the European Neighborhood Policy." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61, no. 2, 2009, 188.

⁸⁵⁵ Tolstrup, Y., *Russia vs the EU*, 2013, p. 206.

⁸⁵⁶ Vachudova, M. A. "The European Union. The Causal Behemoth of Transnational Influence on Post-Communist Politics." In Orenstein, M. A., Bloom, S. R., Lindstrom, N. ed. *Transnational Actors in Central and Eastern European Transitions*. (Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh University Press, 2008), 37.

⁸⁵⁷ Wolczuk, K. "Implementation Without Coordination," 2009, 188.

⁸⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

Supporting separatist enclaves, using leverage through the energy means, meddling into domestic affairs, endorsing Russia-friendly political actors, strengthening the role of Russian mass media in Ukraine, etc. These constraints were all factored in when domestic political elites made the foreign policy choices.

Switching between the pro-Eastern versus the pro-Western integration options has been a strategy widely used by the Ukrainian politicians. This chameleon-type behavior was politically advantageous. Even the current president of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, elected after the Euro-Maidan revolution, has been labeled a big “flip-flopper,” supporting various political movements inside Ukraine.⁸⁵⁹ He was among the founders of the Party of Regions (known as Yanukovich’s party), became a minister under Yanukovich’s rule, and saw no problem in supporting the Orange Revolution and the Euro-Maidan.⁸⁶⁰

When one former minister of foreign affairs was asked to name Ukraine’s biggest foreign policy mistakes in its years after independence, he said that the main mistake was the inconsistency, the oscillation between East and West, the inability of Ukrainian elites to choose the right vector of development. Ukrainian politicians strived, on the one hand, to “be European” and “wear fancy suits” and on the other hand, created and maintained conditions to “steal according to the Soviet-style.”⁸⁶¹

The tragedy of Ukrainian foreign policy has been that as politicians exploited inconsistency and vacillation between East and West for short term electoral gains, they perpetuated political and economic instability, dramatizing the schism between pro-Russia versus pro-Western orientations. The political elites in Kiev had to pay the price of a EuroMaidan Revolution, an

⁸⁵⁹ Kuzio, T. “Impediments to the Emergence of Political Parties in Ukraine.” *Politics*, 34, 4, 2014, p. 312.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶¹ Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015, Kiev, Ukraine.

annexation of Crimea and a war in Donbass to renounce (at least temporarily) at the vacillatory foreign policy behavior.

Chapter 5. Moldova – Searching for the lost opportunities

“A Gentle Calf Sucks Two Cows”

Vladimir Voronin, Third President of the Republic of Moldova

Introduction

On the morning of February 26, 2001, the day after parliamentary elections in Moldova, the leader of the winning Communist party, Vladimir Voronin, declared in an interview to Radio Free Europe that he would call a referendum on having Moldova join a Union with Russia and Belarus.⁸⁶² In a round of interviews on Russian television, Voronin said, “We must speak about restoration of our historical, traditional links with Russia and with other former republics of the Soviet Union.”⁸⁶³ In 2001, during his first year of presidency, Voronin visited Moscow three times and met with Vladimir Putin on five different occasions.⁸⁶⁴ During one of his meetings with president Putin in July 2001, Voronin remarked the “amplification of the renewed vector” in the relations between Moldova and Russia.⁸⁶⁵

Two years later, on the morning of November 24, 2003, in Chisinau, Moldova’s capital, the Moldovan military band, “dressed in full formal regalia was rehearsing” for the upcoming visit of Russian president, Vladimir Putin,⁸⁶⁶ to preside over the signing of the so-called Kozak

⁸⁶² “Communists Win Big in Moldova,” Associated Press, February 26, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 25, 2015.

⁸⁶³ Baker, P., “Moldova Votes Communists Back in Power,” *Washington Post*, February 27, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 25, 2015.

⁸⁶⁴ “MFA Report on Moldova’s Relations with Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in 2001.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

⁸⁶⁵ Results of the visit of Vladimir Voronin to Russia and his meeting with Vladimir Putin, July 11-12, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 23, 2015.

⁸⁶⁶ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West. Lessons from the Moldova-Transdnistria Conflict*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012, p. 149

Memorandum, intended to settle the conflict between Moldova proper and its separatist break-away region of Transnistria. Later that afternoon, a large delegation representing the Russian Federation's Presidential Administration had checked into one of the hotels in Moldova's capital.⁸⁶⁷ In Moscow, Russian journalists were getting ready for the trip.⁸⁶⁸ On the morning of November 25, between 4:00 and 6:00 a.m., however, when the Russian presidential plane was already preparing for departure in Moscow, Moldovan president Voronin called his Russian counterpart Putin, to "state that he – Voronin – could not sign the *Memorandum*."⁸⁶⁹ A short statement announcing Putin's cancellation visit to Moldova was published on the Kremlin website, and Dmitrii Kozak, the author of the *Memorandum*, visibly annoyed and irritated, gave a press conference on his way back to Moscow, at the Chisinau airport, blaming Moldovan leadership for "lack of political courage" to put an end to the Transnistrian conflict.⁸⁷⁰

Following this incident, the Russian president Putin refused to meet with Moldovan leader Voronin for more than three years. Visits to Moscow and meetings between Moldovan and Russian officials stopped short. Previously enthusiastic pro-Russia declarations on strategic partnership with Russia from Moldovan leaders were hushed as well. Instead, the Moldovan president turned toward the West and declared European integration as the foreign policy priority for Moldova.⁸⁷¹ Voronin renamed and reorganized the Ministry of Foreign Affairs into the Ministry of Foreign

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

According to accounts from interviews with Moldovan politicians, even the Russian president's personal cook traveled to Moldova to accompany the president.

⁸⁶⁸ Melikova, N., Prichodko, N. "What is Behind the Sudden/Unexpected cancellation of Vladimir Putin's visit to Chisinau," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 26, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 19, 2015.

⁸⁶⁹ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 153.

⁸⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁷¹ Letter on the motivation for the work of the New Foreign Policy Concept, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Andrei Stratan, February 13, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 19, 2015

Affairs and European Integration (MFAEI) and until around 2008 – the Moldovan Communist government launched into a series of actions meant to bring Moldova closer to the EU.

What explains Voronin's foreign policy reversal? More generally, why has there been oscillation between pro-Eastern and pro-Western foreign policy options in Moldova over the past two and a half decades? Vladimir Voronin was famously known for promoting the idea – drawn from Moldovan folk-wisdom that a “gentle calf sucks two cows” – meaning that by promoting economic and political ties to both Russia and the EU, Moldova could benefit politically and economically from both poles. The contradictory foreign policy messages and the East-West duality in foreign policy views were not characteristic only to Voronin's presidency; they were found across a series of governments.

Both Mircea Snegur and Petru Lucinschi, the first two presidents of independent Moldova, promoted foreign policies that resembled the double-headed eagle on Russia's coat of arms: one head looking East and another looking West.⁸⁷² In the words of a former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Moldova “fell between two stools”⁸⁷³ – both time and opportunities to integrate with the West were lost because of the lack of a consistent foreign policy and the noncommittal stance of the West toward Moldova. If Ukraine had trouble attracting the West's attention, Moldova faced even more challenges in catching the eye of the West and convincing Western capitals to open the doors of Western institutions toward it.

This Western noncommittal stance encouraged Russia to intensify its actions directed at strengthening its dominance in the region, as well as at exploiting the unpredictable and sometimes

⁸⁷² Ion Sturza, a former Prime Minister of Moldova, used the metaphor of the double-headed eagle from Russia's coat of arms, comparing the divided government in Moldova, in which the president looks East and the Government, looks to the West. Interview to Radio Free Europe, “The Country Cannot Be Rich and Wealthy with an Obscure, Dictatorial Leadership” December 20, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/28187163.html>

⁸⁷³ Author interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, March 5, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

turbulent internal developments characterizing Moldova. In comparison to Ukraine, Moldova had another lingering issue that complicated the task of pursuing a consistent foreign policy in the post-independence years: the conflict with the breakaway region of Transnistria, a territory east of the Nistru river, where Russian military troops were stationed since Soviet times and with which a short military conflict was fought in 1992.

In addition, Western reluctance to consider offering Chisinau a clear Western membership perspective played into the hands of domestic political elites. Like in Ukraine, absent a clear Western membership perspective, political leaders in Moldova adopted a strategy of playing the two sides (the West and Russia) off one another, vacillating between more pro-Russian or pro-Western foreign policies in order to extract the most political and financial assistance from the two sides.

The two outside poles (EU and Russia) stood for and encouraged very different sorts of domestic political and economic systems in states that wished to align with them. If domestic politicians chose to go the EU route, they were encouraged to liberalize the economy and to have liberal democracy. Going the Russian route, however, encouraged the introduction of competitive authoritarianism/hybrid regime and state/crony capitalism. The carrots and sticks offered by these two forces were also quite different in each case. Without a promise of EU membership, Moldovan reform-minded elites were demoralized and sidelined and domestic governments struggled to implement painful reforms. Given the constant struggle for power, reform-resistant elites took advantage of the Western aloofness to these states and followed an avenue of illicit actions to amass significant wealth and consolidate power over state institutions – actions to which the Putin regime was amenable. The chameleon-type behavior and strategic ambiguity in foreign policymaking played two different functions. First, it offered politicians more avenues for

maneuver: it kept their options open in case one pole (Russia or the EU) did not give enough political or economic support to the incumbent. Second, by signaling that they could switch sides, therefore exiting a relationship with a specific pole, incumbents had increased leverage to make demands while staying in the relationship.

Snegur Years: 1991 – 1996

Internal situation

Even though the tenure of the first popularly elected president in independent Moldova started in December 1991, changes in the political landscape in Moldova started before this date. During the February 1990 Supreme Soviet elections, independent candidates, most of them representing the nationalist movement *Popular Front*, broke for the first time the monopoly of the Communist party in Moldova's political life,⁸⁷⁴ acceding to the Supreme Soviet. Since following these elections, the internal status-quo was challenged, this section starts the analysis with the year 1990.

The section is divided in two parts: the March 1990 – January 1993 period, during which the nationalist Popular Front, held the majority in the Moldovan Parliament and promoted a policy of rapprochement with Romania⁸⁷⁵ and the West. The next sub-section covers the March 1994 – December 1996 period, when after parliamentary elections, the Parliament was dominated by the Agrarian Democratic Party, which promoted a foreign policy centered on forging economic relations with Russia and the CIS.

⁸⁷⁴ Brezianu, A., Spanu, V. *The A to Z of Moldova*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc. 2007, p. 289.

⁸⁷⁵ Several former members of the Popular Front in interviews with the author shared the idea that since Romania post-1989 was promoting a pro-EU and pro-Western foreign policy, advancing a pro-Romania position by the Moldovan politicians in the initial years following the Declaration of Independence was indicating a pro-Western leaning.

The Heyday of the Popular Front Movement

Marked by an initial euphoria related to a return to Romanian and Latin alphabet, and later about the dissolution of the Soviet Union, this period was marked by pro-Romania foreign policy views. In fact, Moldova's political leadership in this period perceived the country's independence as a temporary phenomenon, Moldova's subsequent fate being thought of in terms of an integral part of Romania. Division within the political elite also marked this period. The Parliament was anti-USSR/anti-Russia and the pro-Western stance in the first post-independence governments (up until 1993) was manifested in the strong commitment to strengthen relations with Romania,⁸⁷⁶ the Baltic States, and the Central and Eastern European countries. President Snegur, however, was less consistent in his foreign policy views. Initially, Snegur was an astute supporter of closer cultural and economic integration with Romania, declaring that a "privileged relationship with Romania" would benefit Moldova economically by opening the doors to the European Community and the US.⁸⁷⁷ Around 1993 – 1994, however, Snegur later distanced himself from the Front's pro-Romania stance and promoted a "Moldovanism" doctrine.⁸⁷⁸ This doctrine held that Moldovans were a different ethnic group than the Romanians⁸⁷⁹ and promoted the idea that Moldova should strengthen its statehood and independence, "de-ideologise" foreign policy and build "realist" and "pragmatic" external relations, capitalizing on the all-existing opportunities,

⁸⁷⁶ Partos, G. "Hungarian-Romanian and Romanian-Moldovan Relations" In Julie Smith and Charles Jenkins (eds.) *Through the Paper Curtain. Insiders and Outsiders in the New Europe*. London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003, p. 108

⁸⁷⁷ Gabanyi, A.E. "Die Moldauaerrepublik zwischen Wende und Rückwendung." *Südosteuropa*, 42(3-4), 1993, 163-207, p. 189.

⁸⁷⁸ King, C. *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 154-155.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

coming either from the East or from the West.⁸⁸⁰ Whereas the Parliament refused to ratify the CIS documents in order to confirm Moldova's membership into the CIS, Snegur favored Moldova's CIS membership and strived to maintain friendly relations with Russia and the CIS members. Snegur gave preference to the CIS option, mainly because he was afraid of the negative economic consequences of disrupting economic ties to the former Soviet republics and Russia. Maintaining the economic links with Russia allowed him to avoid Kremlin's punishing measures against the disobedient post-Soviet republics. This position eventually helped him and his Agrarian party to dominate the Moldovan political scene throughout the first post-independence decade.

Gorbachev's *glasnost*' and *perestroika* policies, led to a series of "national revival" movements across the then-Soviet republics. In January 1989, Gorbachev declared during the Plenum of the Central Communist Committee, that "We cannot permit even the smallest people to disappear, the language of even the smallest people to be lost; we cannot permit nihilism with regard to the culture, traditions, and history of peoples, be they big or small."⁸⁸¹ The forbearing position of central authorities in Moscow on these questions created the propitious conditions for socio-political movements in Moldova and other post-Soviet states to focus on historical, linguistic and cultural claims, leading to a series of "national revival" waves.⁸⁸²

A Popular Front of Moldova (PFM) was established in May 1989 and it led a vigorous campaign to reinstate the Romanian language in the public life of the republic. In August 1989, the Popular Front led a mass rally in the country's capital, the Big National Assembly (*Marea Adunare Nationala*) with the participation of almost half a million of people. Demonstrators

⁸⁸⁰ Speech of Mihai Popov, MFA of Moldova in front of the Parliament on the day of adopting the Foreign Policy Concept of Moldova, February 8, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁸⁸¹ As cited in Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States. Genesis, Political Economy and Prospects for Solution*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, p. 27.

⁸⁸² Gill, G. *The Dynamics of Democratization. Elites, Civil Society and the Transition Process*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000, p. 208-211.

denounced the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, according to which Moldova was annexed to the Soviet Union and the Assembly adopted a manifesto, which made calls for full national sovereignty and secession from the Soviet Union.⁸⁸³ Under public pressure, the Moldovan Supreme Soviet adopted on August 31, 1989 the law on the transfer from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet for the Romanian language. The law advanced guidelines for bolstering the use of the Romanian language within the state apparatus. This language law provoked resistance among the Russian speakers in Moldova, because it required all state employees to pass examinations in the state language within five years.⁸⁸⁴

During the Supreme Soviet elections from February – March 1990, even though the Communist Party was the only registered party to participate in the elections, opposition representatives were allowed to participate as “independents.” Following these elections, the Popular Front and its supporters garnered around 1/3 of the seats (around 115 seats out of 380).⁸⁸⁵ In April 1990, this new Supreme Soviet adopted the official flag of Moldova, similar to the official flag of Romania. In June 1990, it also voted for the Declaration of Sovereignty of Moldova and denounced the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.⁸⁸⁶ All these changes signifying Moldovan self-assertion

⁸⁸³ Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe. A Guide to Politics in the Post-Communist Era*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2002, p. 887

⁸⁸⁴ Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States. Genesis, Political Economy and Prospects for Solution*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2009. Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West. Lessons from the Moldova-Transnistria Conflict*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012.

⁸⁸⁵ Author interview with one of the representatives of the Popular Front, elected in the new Supreme Soviet during the February 1990 elections.

⁸⁸⁶ In this decision from June 1990, the members of the new legislature criticized the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union on August 23 1939, according to which the Soviet Union reclaimed Moldova from Romania, and highlighted the negative consequences of this Pact for Moldova and those living on its territory. This decision highlights the fact that according to the Additional Protocol between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, Hitler and Stalin reserved the right to decide the fate of Finland, the Baltic States, Poland and Romania. “Point three of the Additional Secret Protocol mentioned the interest of the Soviet Union in Bessarabia, Bukovina, which was a part of Romania, and which was never a part of the Russian Empire, was not mentioned in the Additional Protocol. One of the consequences of the Additional Secret Protocol signed between Stalin and Hitler on August 23, 1939 were the ultimatum notes from June 26 and 27 1940, sent by the Soviet government to Romania, in which ‘Romania was asked to return Bessarabia to Russia at any cost in addition with the northern part of Bukovina’ as a repay for the huge damage caused to the Soviet Union and to the population of

had a negative effect on the inter-ethnic relations in the country⁸⁸⁷ and around this time the Moldova society split in two. Forces on the one side of the society were calling for an immediate secession from the Soviet Union (some of them calling for unification with Romania). The other part of the society advocated for Moldova remaining a part of the USSR. Once the Soviet Union dissolved, these forces promoted close ties with Russia and the former Soviet republics. The nationalistic forces based their messages on accusations of political, social, and cultural “imperialism” of the Soviet Union toward Moldova and its indigenous population.⁸⁸⁸ The opposing forces, however, represented by ethnic minorities, mainly Russian speakers, blamed the nationalistic movement and the pro-Romanian policy as a motive to separate from the government in Chisinau. On August 19, 1990, deputies representing the Gagauz Turks, an ethnic minority inhabiting the southern counties of Moldova, proclaimed the formation of a Gagauz Republic in the southern part of the country.⁸⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the pro-Moscow members representing Transnistria in the Moldovan Supreme Soviet, most of them high-ranking Communists in the heavily industrialized cities on the east bank of the Nistru River, were in favor of remaining a part of the USSR, fearing the loss of their jobs and privileges.⁸⁹⁰ On September 2 1990, they proclaimed

Bassarabia during those 22 years of Romania’s governance in Bassarabia” (p. 2-3). The document by the Moldova Supreme Soviet also notes that “the decision to occupy the Northern Bukovina is a notable example of the expansionist politics promoted permanently by the Stalinist government.” “On June 28, 1940, Soviet Union forcefully occupied Bassarabia and Northern Bukovina and ... Bukovina was arbitrarily passed under the Ukrainian jurisdiction, together with three other counties: Hotin, Ismail and Cetatea Alba.” The document claims that following these events, the Moldovan Soviet Socialist Republic was created on August 2, 1940: “Once the Soviet rule was installed, crimes against humanity were committed on these territories: mass killings, forced deportations, organized famine.” (p. 4). “The Decision of the Supreme Soviet of MSSR on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Its Consequences for Bassarabia.” June 23, 1990. Archives of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Accessed on February 5, 2015.

⁸⁸⁷ Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, 2002.

⁸⁸⁸ Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States. Genesis, Political Economy and Prospects for Solution*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2009 p. 29.

⁸⁸⁹ Decision of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR with respect to the actions taken to stabilize the socio-political situation in Moldova, September 2, 1990.

⁸⁹⁰ Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, 2002, p. 888

an independent republic on the left bank of Nistru River – Transnistria.⁸⁹¹ The Moldovan Parliament did not recognize any of these two autonomous, self-proclaimed republics. Therefore, in the months following its declared sovereignty, Moldova found itself with two separatist enclaves: one to the east (Transnistria) and one to the South (Gagauzia). The Moldovan leadership was aware that there were “constraints from all sides: there were Soviet military troops dislocated in every major city in Moldova and the Ministry of Internal Affairs was still subordinated to the center in Moscow.”⁸⁹²

The archival documents from the Moldovan Parliament show that the separatist movements, both in Gagauzia and in Transnistria, had a strong support from the conservative circles in Russia. The official Soviet TV channels were spreading defamatory information with respect to the situation in the separatist regions and covering the actions of the Moldovan authorities in a negative light.⁸⁹³

Moldovan leaders were making calls to the Ukrainian and URSS Supreme Soviets, as well to the Parliaments of the world, calling for support in overcoming the separatist tendencies in Moldova.⁸⁹⁴ Even though later in the 1990s, a solution was found to the Gagauz problem,⁸⁹⁵ the

⁸⁹¹ The initial name of the self-proclaimed republic was the Soviet Socialist Moldovan Transnistrian Republic within the Soviet Union.

⁸⁹² Author interview with one of the representatives of the Popular Front, elected in the new Supreme Soviet during the February 1990 elections.

⁸⁹³ The Declaration of the Presidium of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, August 23, 1991. Archives of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Accessed on February 6, 2015.

⁸⁹⁴ On November 2 1990, Mircea Snegur, who was then the president of the Soviet Socialist Moldova, met with the leaders of the so-called Gagauz and Transnistrian republics, in the presence of M. Gorbachev, the then president of the USSR. The meeting was organized with the aim of preventing a civil war in Moldova. There were efforts to convince Gorbachev to visit Moldova, in order to mediate among the conflicting groups in Moldova. In the last minute, however, conservative actors in Moscow convinced Gorbachev not to visit Moldova. The visit never took place. Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2009 p. 29.

⁸⁹⁵ The Gagauz minority is a Turkic Christian minority, who moved to the territory of Moldova at the urge of the Russian Tsar, after the territory between the Prut and Nistru rivers was annexed to the Russian Empire, following the 1806-1812 Russo-Turkish war. More ethnic groups were called to the territories of Moldova, (including Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Czechs, Germans). This was part of the Tsarist policy of forming a new social base favoring the Tsarist rule in the peripheries annexed by the Tsarist Empire. According to the archival documents from the Moldovan Parliament, in 1818 these new ethnic groups were granted the status of “settlers” by the Tsar and were

separatist movement in Transnistria led to a short, but bitter military confrontation between the two banks of the Nistru River in the summer of 1992. Transnistria remains an unrecognized entity and as it will be shown later in the chapter, no solution was found to the conflict, which was labeled by some analysts as “frozen and forgotten,”⁸⁹⁶ by the West and which has posed serious obstructions to Moldova’s development and integration into the West.

Deputies from the Popular Front movement were elected in leadership positions following the February 1990 elections: Mircea Druc was appointed Prime Minister of the republic in May 1990, even though not all inside the Front were in favor of this decision. Some members of the Front warned against having a Prime Minister of the Republic from the Popular Front. The fear was that since the Popular Front did not have a parliamentary majority and the members of the government were representing the “old Communist chaff,” having a Prime Minister from the Popular Front would attract all the blame at the next elections in case of failed economic reforms.⁸⁹⁷ Indeed, due to lack of consensus inside Parliament, the reforms were difficult to implement and the Popular Front started to disintegrate: some of its supporters changed their political leanings, and many, especially those coming from and representing rural areas, became “independents” and were either less involved in the initiatives advanced by the Popular Front or migrated to other parties.⁸⁹⁸ In September 1990, Mircea Snegur, who previously held high-ranking positions within the Communist Party, was elected by the Parliament to the newly created position

endowed with large areas of land: 65 hectares of land for each family, whereas an average Moldovan family had the right to own around 8-10 hectares of land. Notification on the Work of some of the Commissions of the Supreme Soviet of Moldova on the Requests of Certain Popular Deputies of USSR with respect to the Autonomy of Gagauzia. Archives of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Accessed on February 2, 2015.

After parliamentary elections in Moldova from February 1994, the new Moldovan Parliament ratified a new, special status for the Gagauz region. It remained part of the Moldovan territory, and the Moldovan government determines its budget. The locally elected governor, “bashkan” – is a member of the Moldovan government.

⁸⁹⁶ Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States*, 2009.

⁸⁹⁷ Author interview with one of the representatives of the Popular Front, elected in the new Supreme Soviet during the February 1990 elections.

⁸⁹⁸ Ibid.

of president.⁸⁹⁹ Initially, the Popular Front members of Parliament, convinced Snegur to go along with the Front's pro-Romanian, pro-unionist strategy, and opposition to the Soviet Union. Therefore, for about a year and a half, (approximately May 1990 – October 1991) – both the executive and the legislative institutions in Moldova were following the same pro-Romanian policy and attempts to disintegrate from the Soviet Union.

Mircea Snegur, who enjoyed high public support at that time, gradually distanced himself from the Front's pro-Romania stance and in the December 1991 presidential elections, (the first direct democratic elections after Moldova declared its independence on August 27, 1991) was elected as Moldova's first President with a 98.17 percent of the vote, unopposed by other candidates.⁹⁰⁰

As the new elected president, Snegur put forward a more moderate position in the question of unification with Romania. He characterized himself as a "pragmatist." The Popular Front members were blaming him for undergoing a metamorphosis in terms of foreign policy views. At the beginning of 1991, he was talking in Bucharest about a "confederation with Romania"⁹⁰¹ and on August 27 1991, when Moldova declared its independence from the USSR, Snegur in an interview to *Le Figaro* declared, that Moldova's "[i]ndependence is ... a temporary phenomenon. First, there will be two Romanian states, but this will not last for too long," pointing out that "independence was a step, not an end in itself."⁹⁰² Then, in December 1991, he went to the CIS

⁸⁹⁹ Until this date, he occupied the position of the First Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Moldova.

⁹⁰⁰ The Popular Front boycotted the presidential elections, therefore Snegur did not have any other competitor in the elections.

⁹⁰¹ Basiul, V. "1991: Exiting the USSR and Joining the CIS." *RFE/RL*, August 1, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27888576.html>.

⁹⁰² As cited in Pecheanu, G. "Romania-Moldova Relations: warm and cold, spiced with mutual accusations." *Mediafax*, January 25, 2010. Retrieved from <http://www.mediafax.ro/main-story/focus-relatiile-romania-r-moldova-cand-calde-cand-reci-condimentate-cu-acuzatii-reciproce-5440851>

Summit in Alma-Ata and signed the documents of Moldova's CIS membership.⁹⁰³ Even though the Parliament in Chisinau refused to ratify the CIS documents, and the Popular Front members of Parliament labeled Snegur as a "traitor,"⁹⁰⁴ the new Moldovan president believed that joining the CIS was the right decision: "It is time to be realistic and continue to seek solutions by joining other communities. [...] Do the unionists (i.e. Popular Front members) see other options? Or do they suggest to unite with three districts only?!",⁹⁰⁵ alluding to the separatist conflicts in eastern and southern districts, Transnistria and Gagauzia, which decided to seek independence from Chisinau in case unification with Romania is pursued. This remark highlights the caution that Snegur took from the extreme pro-Romania and anti-Russia stances voiced by the opposition in Moldova. The majority of the population (around 70 percent) considered unification with Romania "undesirable"⁹⁰⁶ and Snegur hoped that taking on a more moderate message, the Transnistria and Gagauz entities would abandon their separatist plans.⁹⁰⁷ Snegur considered that his political future depended on his ability to keep Transnistria, where the heart of Moldova's industry was concentrated, and Gagauzia, a geographic region of great agricultural importance, inside Moldova. A Russia-friendly foreign policy was necessary to keep these entities within Moldova and avoid economic retaliatory policies from the Kremlin.

The year 1992 marked a clear division inside the Moldovan political elite in terms of foreign policy orientation: the Parliament remained committed to the pro-Romania and pro-

⁹⁰³ Basiul, V. "1991: Exiting the USSR and Joining the CIS." *RFE/RL*, August 1, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27888576.html>.

Author interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. DATA INTERVIULUI CU NICOLAE TAU

⁹⁰⁴ Basiul, V. "1991: Exiting the USSR and Joining the CIS." *RFE/RL*, August 1, 2016.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁶ Lamont, N. V. "Territorial Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict: the Moldovan Case," *FMSO*, 1995. Retrieved from <http://fmso.leavenworth.army.mil/documents/moldovan/moldovan.htm>

⁹⁰⁷ Author Interview with a former Member of the Popular Front, former Member of the Moldovan Parliament, March 3, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova

unionist messages, whereas the president Snegur and the government were focused more on the goals of “strengthening the independence” and “maintaining the territorial integrity” of the country. The pro-Romania politicians (an important majority of them writers, poets, journalists, professors) were labeled as “nationalist-idealists” and “romantics” in their pursuits to see Moldova unite with Romania, being less interested in economic or power gains. Once their political influence diminished within the Parliament, however, they were replaced by politicians who were more readily willing to switch foreign policy gears if they anticipated ties with Russia versus ties with the West would affect them economically.

In January 1993, Alexandru Mosanu resigned from his position of the speaker of Parliament. As an active member of the Popular Front, he was against Moldova’s CIS membership and was supporting Moldova’s unification with Romania.⁹⁰⁸ Petru Lucinschi, a former First Secretary of the Communist Party in Moldova,⁹⁰⁹ succeeded Mosanu in the speaker’s seat. The then-Ukrainian Ambassador to Moldova, in a note to the then-Ukrainian Prime Minister, Leonid Kuchma, was writing that announcing his resignation from the speakership in the Moldovan Parliament, Alexandru Mosanu said about his successor Lucinschi: “We used to have Moldova’s ambassador in Moscow, Lucinschi. Now in Moldova, as the new speaker of the Parliament, we have the Russian envoy to Moldova, Lucinschi.”⁹¹⁰ The Ukrainians further note that with the new reshuffling in the Moldovan political institutions, Moldova did not face the “risk of unification with Romania,” as the Popular Front leaders do not hold the power in the Parliament any longer.

⁹⁰⁸ Together with Mosanu, three other like-minded politicians resigned: Ion Hadarca leaved his post as the deputy speaker, Vasile Nedelciuc, as the Head of the Foreign Relations parliamentary committee and Valeriu Matei from the Mass Media parliamentary committee. Basiul, V. “1993: Communists Returning to Power.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 3, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27891234.html>

⁹⁰⁹ Lucinschi was named the First Secretary of the Communist Party in November 1989. He held this post until February 4, 1991.

⁹¹⁰ Informative Note addressed to the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, on the Ukrainian-Moldovan Relations, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 27, 2015.

“On the contrary, there is the risk of Russification” in Moldova.⁹¹¹ By 1993, the former highly ranked Communists represented the “new” (old) leadership in Moldova: the president Mircea Snegur and Prime Minister Andrei Sangheli were former Secretaries of the Communist Party, and speaker Petru Lucinschi – was the former First Secretary of the Communist Party. The Ukrainian diplomats labeled the new Moldovan leadership as an experienced and “well-trying apparatus,” “sophisticated fighters in the political war,” giving preference to the “power politics” strategies.⁹¹²

The rise of the Agrarian Party

The year 1993 marked the rise to power of the Agrarian Democratic Party of Moldova (ADP). The Parliament was dissolved and new parliamentary elections were held in February 1994, during which the Agrarian Democratic Party won 43 percent of the vote and 56 out of 104 total seats in Parliament. The Agrarian Party members were against unification with Romania, favoring instead Moldova’s participation in the CIS economic structures and strengthening bilateral relations with Russia.⁹¹³ Another pro-Russia party, the Socialist bloc,⁹¹⁴ won 28 seats in the new Parliament. This bloc advocated for Moldova’s political and military participation within the CIS, for making Russian an official language, for a confederation with Transnistria and the unlimited stay of the Russian Fourteenth Army in Moldova.⁹¹⁵ The pro-Romania parties suffered a serious loss in these elections: the Bloc of Peasants and Intellectuals won 11 seats (9.21 percent

⁹¹¹ Ibid.

⁹¹² “Несомненно одно, в Молдове к власти пришел опытный и испытанный аппарат (Снегур - секретарь ЦК, Сангели - секретарь ЦК, Лучинский - 1-й секретарь ЦК), т.е. люди искушенные в политической войне, ... причем отдающие предпочтение ‘политике силы.’” Informative Note addressed to the Prime Minister of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, on the Ukrainian-Moldovan Relations, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on July 27, 2015.

⁹¹³ Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, 2002 p. 906.

⁹¹⁴ An alliance between the Socialist Party (descendant of the former Communist Party, which was banned in Moldova between 1991 and 1994) and the Movement Unity *Edinstvo*, which originated from the Soviet *Interfront* organization (the *Interfront* was against the dissolution of the Soviet Union and prior to 1991 campaigned for preserving it). Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, 2002, p. 907 – 908.

⁹¹⁵ The Bloc was also opposing market economic reforms and privatization and supported strong state in the economy. Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, 2002, p. 907 – 908.

of the vote) and the Alliance of the Christian Democratic Popular Front won 9 parliamentary seats (7 percent). These two parties were against Moldova's participation in the CIS and favored instead Moldova's integration into the European structures. Disenchanted with the previous parliament's pro-Romania stance, facing economic hardships brought by the break-up of the Soviet Union and the conflicts with the separatist regions, the Moldovan voters opted to "return" to the "Russian sphere," in the "pragmatic realization that Moscow holds the keys to [Moldova's] territorial integrity and economic survival."⁹¹⁶

It should be noted that by 1994, the political parties in Moldova were characterized as representing three directions in terms of foreign policy: 1) right wing, pro-Romania and pro-West; 2) centrist, promoting strengthened Moldovan statehood and a balanced, multi-vector foreign policy; 3) leftist, promoting strong relations with Russia and the CIS. The right-wing parties had a nationalistic mark: the most extremist of them promoted unification with Romania, whereas the more moderate ones supported pro-Western orientation and European integration of the country, with the idea that since both Romania and Moldova were aiming to join the EU, the two countries will eventually be reunited once part of the European Union.⁹¹⁷ The leftist parties were promoting strong ties with Russia and the former Soviet members and were exploiting the nostalgia about Soviet Union in maintaining their voter base. Finally, the so-called "centrist" parties, even though vowing to promote balanced external relations, oriented both to the East and to the West, have nevertheless opted to maintain the status quo in terms of preserving strong economic ties with Russia and the CIS.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁶ *New York Times*. "Party Favoring Ties With Russia Builds Lead in Moldova Elections." March 1, 1994. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/01/world/party-favoring-ties-with-russia-builds-lead-in-moldova-elections.html>

⁹¹⁷ Bugajski, J. *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*, 2002, p. 902

⁹¹⁸ In an interview to Radio Free Europe, Igor Munteanu, Moldova's former Ambassador to the US, claimed with the coming to power of the Agrarian Democratic Party, one of the back bones of the centrist parties in Moldova, Moldova's rapprochement to the European community stagnated. Compared to the politicians from the Baltic States,

On April 8 1994, the newly elected Moldovan parliament ratified the CIS documents, making Moldova officially a member of the CIS. The then-president Mircea Snegur and his supporters were defending Moldova's CIS participation by claiming that Moldova was participating only in the economic initiatives, without joining the collective security or political-military activities within the CIS. By entering the CIS, the Agrarians were sharing hopes that Russia will withdraw the Fourteenth Army from Transnistria, and economic relations between the two countries would improve.⁹¹⁹ As it will be shown later in the chapter, however, progress on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova stagnated, irrespective of Moldova's CIS membership. Nevertheless, the diplomatic documents attest to an improvement in the Moldovan-Russian relations. The ratification by the new Parliament of the CIS documents allowed for "the convergence of the positions of the two countries" on many foreign policy issues.⁹²⁰ Economic benefits, were reported by the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs: important barriers in the circulation of goods between Moldova and the CIS members were removed. Another improvement reported by the Moldovan MFA (especially benefiting politicians' electoral prospects) were related to the fact that with the CIS membership, tensions in supplying Moldova with energy supplies

Moldovan centrist politicians, most of them heads of collective agricultural farms, agronomists and members of the old-Communist nomenklatura, united in a coalition in order to acquire power and did little to bring Moldova closer to the West. Botnaru, V. "Igor Munteanu: There is much frustration in our society. The aims of the Declaration of Independence were detournated, corrupted, replaced with other aims..." Interview on the occasion of Moldova's 25th Independence Anniversary. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 25, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27945317.html>

A former member of the Moldovan Parliament, representative of the Popular Front of Moldova, explained the pro-Russia and pro-CIS views of the members of the Agrarian Party: since most of them were agricultural leaders, "all they cared about was the availability of markets to be able to sell their agricultural products." They did not have wider horizons, being aware that the EU would not buy their products, they were instrumental in maintaining and strengthening the economic and trade ties with Russia and the CIS markets. Author Interview with a former member of the Moldovan Parliament, March 17, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

⁹¹⁹ Report on the activity of the "Europe and North America Department," for the year 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Moldova, Chisinau. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

⁹²⁰ Report on the activity of the "Europe and North America Department," for the year 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Moldova, Chisinau. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

were considerably reduced.⁹²¹ During the first years of independence, shortages of gas and energy supplies were very acute in Moldova. In 1992, Russia, for a period of two months, cut the supply of gas to Moldova.⁹²² This energy blockade forced many people living in Moldovan cities to improvise stoves in front of their apartment buildings in order to cook food.⁹²³ Reaching a deal when Russia would supply gas to Moldova on a regular basis was therefore considered an important political achievement expected to bring in votes.

After the pro-Romania members of the Popular Front lost influence in Parliament, the Agrarian MPs, dominating the Moldovan legislature, took a route of designing a “tous-azimuts” foreign policy, purposefully preferring ambiguity in policymaking in order to get the most from both Russia and the EU.

In July 1994, the new parliament adopted a new Constitution for Moldova, in which as a reversal of the policies promoted by the Popular Front until 1993, the official language was called “Moldovan” rather than “Romanian.” This decision led to certain disagreements and harsh declarations among the Moldovan and Romanian politicians. In the aftermath of the adoption of the Constitution, the Romanian government issued a declaration in which it stated that it regretted the decision to name the language “Moldovan” and negate the “Romanian” character of the Moldovan state – “a fabricated formula by the old [Soviet] propaganda, through which a new nation was invented. ... If there is a danger to the independence and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova, it does not come from Romania.”⁹²⁴

⁹²¹ Report on the activity of the Moldovan Government in terms of Foreign Policy Objectives during the period 1994 – August 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Moldova, Chisinau. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

⁹²² Basiul, V. “1992: The Russian Forces on the Battleground and in People’s Pockets,” RFE/RL, August 2, 2017. <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27891225.html>

⁹²³ Ibid.

⁹²⁴ News Reports gathered by the Mass Media Department of the Moldovan MFA, August 2, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 13, 2015.

The 1994 Constitution also stipulated a “neutrality” clause, which implied that Moldova “was committed not to participate in armed conflicts, political, military or economic alliances which had as a final goal preparation for war”⁹²⁵ and that it did not “admit the stationing of any foreign military troops on its territory.”⁹²⁶ The non-admission of foreign military troops was seen as a necessary condition for negotiating with Russia its withdrawal of military troops from Transnistria. The neutrality clause, however, has facilitated the duality game played by Moldovan politicians and their preferred tactic of ambiguity instead of a clear choice between East and West. When Russia was convincing Moldova to join the Collective Security Treaty Organization,⁹²⁷ Moldovan politicians claimed that such a membership would be unconstitutional. When calls toward NATO membership were made, the incumbents were always arguing that NATO membership would be an unconstitutional move.⁹²⁸

The parliament adopted the first *foreign policy concept* of Moldova in 1995. The MFA files offer a unique glimpse into the deliberations and discussions on the document between the MFA’s representatives and the members of the parliament. A special committee within the MFA was established to debate the merits and components of the new document. Mihai Popov,⁹²⁹ Moldova’s then Foreign Minister, claims in one of the documents that promoting the national interests should be pursued by “keeping Moldova’s orientation toward the CIS” and in bilateral relations, priority

⁹²⁵ Speech of Mihai Popov, MFA of Moldova in front of the Parliament on the day of adopting the Foreign Policy Concept of Moldova, February 8, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁹²⁶ Art. 11 of the Moldovan Constitution.

⁹²⁷ A military alliance signed between Russia and other former Soviet states (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan).

⁹²⁸ Calugareanu, V. “The Lie of Neutrality from Moldova’s Constitution.” *Deutsche Welle*, September 5, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.dw.com/ro/minciuna-neutralit%C4%83%C8%9Bii-din-constitu%C8%9Bia-moldovei/a-17903548>

⁹²⁹ Mihai Popov was Adviser to the USSR Embassy in Bucharest during 1986 – 1992. From 1992 – 1993, he was the minister-counselor to the Moldovan Embassy in Moscow. From April 1994 – July 1997, he was Moldova’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

should be given to building relations with Russia and Belarus.⁹³⁰ The draft of the foreign policy concept was circulated among all members of the parliament. Vasile Nedelciuc, opposition MP, representing the Bloc of Peasants and Intellectuals, criticized the concept as being too ambiguous. He characterized the CIS as an “institution in continuous transformation, with principled contradictions with respect to its main subjects: what does exactly being a member of the CIS entail? What specific political or economic goals are pursued?”⁹³¹ One of his proposals was for “economic integration with Romania” to be pursued, which would be a stabilization and balancing factor in the “fretful Eastern European region”, in addition to being “the first step toward the West” for Moldova.⁹³² He also suggested including two short-term objectives in the concept: acquiring association status with the EU, as well as “leaving the CIS.”⁹³³ None of these proposals were included in the final document.⁹³⁴ In the final speech delivered by the Foreign Minister in front of the Parliament on the merits of the new foreign policy concept, Moldova was set to be transformed in a “bridge which would unite [the Western and the Eastern] worlds.”⁹³⁵ “We have realized that the period of ‘romantic’ politics is behind us and that we are entering the period of ‘realist’ politics, based on economic rationale.”⁹³⁶

⁹³⁰ Summary of the proposals on the Foreign Policy Concept of Moldova, June 8, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015. The then-Foreign minister suggests that strong bilateral relations should also be aimed with Bulgaria and Turkey.

Some of the other participants in the debate su

⁹³¹ Comments by Vasile Nedelciuc, Member of the Foreign Policy Commission in the Moldovan Parliament, on the Moldovan Concept of Foreign Policy. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁹³² Ibid.

⁹³³ Ibid.

⁹³⁴ A response drafted by the MFA to Vasile Nedelciuc’s comments, states that the main principle according to which Moldova participates within the CIS is “taking full advantage of the economic collaboration that CIS membership offers.” With respect to Romania, the response notes that there is a specific paragraph on special relations with neighboring countries, Romania and Ukraine, and there is no need for a emphasizing Romania in special. Responses to V. Nedelciuc. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁹³⁵ Speech of Mihai Popov, MFA of Moldova in front of the Parliament on the day of adopting the Foreign Policy Concept of Moldova, February 8, 1995. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁹³⁶ Ibid.

Just like during Kuchma's and Zlenko's years in Ukraine, during Snegur's tenure, Moldova's foreign relations were viewed through the "pragmatic" prism of "multivectorness": "Moldova should not orient its foreign policy in one direction only, on the contrary, all possibilities must be exploited."⁹³⁷ The then-Moldovan leadership advanced the idea that "becoming a member of the Economic Union of the CIS" was not an obstacle of integration into the European Union.⁹³⁸ "Gradual integration" into the EU was presented as a "major and prospective goal" for Moldova's foreign policy.⁹³⁹

The use of such adjectives as "gradual" and "prospective" for the "EU integration goal" underlies the strategic belief according to which politicians were designing and implementing policies: putting EU integration as a distant, prospective goal, while benefiting from the rents and propitious economic conditions from friendly relations with Russia and other CIS states. When asked in an interview whether joining the CIS means abandoning the goal of EU integration, the then Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Popov, answered: "European integration cannot be achieved overnight. It is a slow process, which presupposes several phases – and since Moldova lacks a stable, advantageous market in the West, refusing the economic, traditional market developed over several decades [within the CIS], would mean a voluntary aggravation of the economic crisis."⁹⁴⁰

Moldovan political parties lacked clearly defined ideologies: politicians migrated within various political parties in search for personal benefits, rather than loyalty to certain ideas or

⁹³⁷ Ibid.

⁹³⁸ Ibid.

⁹³⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁰ Interview of Mihai Popov, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova to Radio Chisinau, May 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

values.⁹⁴¹ Organizing in 1994 a nation-wide Congress “Our Home – Republic of Moldova,” the then president Mircea Snegur promoted the ideas supported by the Agrarian Democratic Party emphasizing the distinctiveness between the “Moldovan” versus the “Romanian” nations and urging for this distinction to be promoted in the country’s external relations.⁹⁴² In 1995, however, Snegur changed his political views yet again and asked the Parliament, dominated by the Agrarian members, to change the term “Moldovan” language to “Romanian” in the country’s Constitution.⁹⁴³ He left the Agrarian Democratic Party in 1995 and together with several Agrarian deputies, formed a new political entity, Moldovan Party of Revival and Accord.

In the presidential elections from 1996, Snegur was supported by his new party, as well as by one of the heirs of the nationalist Popular Front, the pro-Romania Christian Democrat Popular Front.⁹⁴⁴ Snegur, together with the speaker of the Parliament, Lucinschi, and the Prime Minister, Sangheli, all competed for the presidency seat.

⁹⁴¹ For more details on the fluidity of party membership in Moldova and shifting political alliances in the first decade after independence, see King, C. *The Moldovans. Romania, Russia, and the Politics of Culture*. 2000, p. 160 – 161.

⁹⁴² The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe prepared a report on the process of new members joining the Council of Europe. With respect to Romania and Moldova, the report contained a clause stating “the two countries, Romania and Moldova, declared unequivocally that Moldova is a part of Romania and there are favorable conditions toward Moldova unifying with Romania.” After the 1994 parliamentary elections, however, with the Agrarian Democratic Party acquiring power in Chisinau, the new head of the Foreign Policy Committee in the Moldovan Parliament, Dumitru Diacov, heading Moldova’s delegation at the APCE’s session in Strasbourg declared that clauses claiming Moldova’s eventual unification with Romania were “outdated and did not correspond to the reality on the ground.” The Moldovan delegation issued a declaration in which it announced that Moldova is choosing an independent path, Moldova’s aim was to consolidate its statehood, aiming to become a neutral state.

News Reports gathered by the Mass Media Department of the Moldovan MFA, July 5, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 13, 2015.

Basiul, V. “1994: Deepening of the Economic Crisis.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. August 4, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27891241.html>.

⁹⁴³ Apparently he made this request after teachers and students from throughout the country participated in protests in the capital’s country, opposing the Agrarian Party’s proposals to change the names of the subjects “Romanian language” and “History of Romania” taught in schools and universities to “Moldovan language” and “History of Moldova.”

Basiul, V. “1995: the Illusion of Privatization.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. August 5, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27898783.html>.

⁹⁴⁴ Brezianu, A., Spanu, V. *The A to Z of Moldova*, 2007, p. 330.

Resembling the presidential elections in Ukraine from 1994, Snegur, like Kravchuk, took on again the nationalist tone, campaigning on a pro-Romania position. Lucinschi, however, like Kuchma, opted to run as an independent, unbacked by any political party,⁹⁴⁵ advocating stronger ties with Russia and the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. Without rejecting Western aid, Lucinschi openly campaigned as “Moscow’s man,” playing on the fears of Russian-speaking Moldovans about Snegur’s calls on closer ties with Romania.⁹⁴⁶ The winner with the elections, with 54 percent of the vote, Lucinschi declared the morning after the elections that “I have close personal contacts with the Russian leadership, and I intend to use them for the benefit of our country.”⁹⁴⁷ Russia, which openly showed its preference for Lucinschi during the election campaign, was pleased with the elections outcome, and many in Moscow believed Lucinschi’s win could be a starting point for the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict.⁹⁴⁸

Relations with the West

Moldova’s relations with the West during the 1990 – 1996 years were difficult. Once the first signs of Soviet Union dissolution started to emerge, the US and the European NATO members reacted in a restrained manner to the requests of the then-still members of the USSR for independence. As

⁹⁴⁵ Unlike Kuchma, however, who campaigned on a strong pro-reform campaign in the 1994 elections in Ukraine, Lucinschi declared himself as an anti-privatization (especially of farmland) and an anti-reform candidate.

⁹⁴⁶ Boudreaux, R. “Pro-Russian Wins Moldovan Presidency.” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1996. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1996-12-03/news/mn-5297_1_moldova-presidency

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Some Moldovan analysts believed that the election results signified that “people voted for change, it was a vote anti-Snegur, rather than a vote pro-Lucinschi, even though for many the vote meant a return to the past.” Basiul, V. “1996: Politicians Preoccupied more by Presidential Elections rather than Economic Issues.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. August 6, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27901942.html>

⁹⁴⁸ Boudreaux, R. “Pro-Russian Wins Moldovan Presidency.” *Los Angeles Times*, December 3, 1996. Retrieved from http://articles.latimes.com/1996-12-03/news/mn-5297_1_moldova-presidency

the next chapter shows, the only republics that received Western support in their demands and actions for independence were the three Baltic States – whose annexation by the Soviet Union the US had refused to recognize throughout the Cold War. By contrast, the US and other Western countries had never considered the annexation of Moldova by the Soviet Union unlawful and did not back Moldovan independence when the Soviet Union collapsed.⁹⁴⁹ In 1990, when Moldovan and Romanian politicians were advocating the unification of Moldova to Romania, they were pressured by the West to abandon aspirations for unification.⁹⁵⁰ Moreover, when Moldova faced the military conflict with the pro-Russia separatist groups in Transnistria the West provided little backing at all.⁹⁵¹

According to accounts by Moldovan members of the Parliament, the US tried to persuade them back in 1991 to ratify Moldova's CIS membership documents.⁹⁵² The then Moldovan president, Mircea Snegur, declared as well that Western economic institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, conditioned financial support to Moldova on the country joining the CIS.⁹⁵³

In the initial years following its independence, Moldova faced serious challenges in establishing relations with Western capitals and in insuring a wide visibility of the country among the Western diplomats. This was due both to lack of financial resources to boost Moldova's

⁹⁴⁹ In 1918, Bessarabia united with Romania. In 1920, the Bessarabian Treaty was signed between Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, on the one hand, and Romania on the other. Out of all the powers that signed the Treaty, Japan never ratified it, therefore the Treaty never came into force. The Soviet Union and the United States, even though not among the five signatories, played important roles in the Treaty question because of their influence on the ones who were. During the entire inter-war period, the United States considered Bessarabia "a Russian territory" (p. 352). For an excellent discussion of the Bessarabia question in Romania's relations with the great powers during the inter-war period, see Mitrasca, M. *Moldova: a Romanian Province under Russian Rule. Diplomatic History from the Archives of the Great Powers*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2002.

⁹⁵⁰ Gabanyi, A. U. "Moldova – A Test Case in EU-Russian Relations?" *Romania Regala*, n.d. Retrieved from http://www.romaniaregala.ro/pdf/Gabanyi._eseu_Moldova.pdf

⁹⁵¹ Ibid.

⁹⁵² Author Interview with a former Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, March 2, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

⁹⁵³ Gabanyi, A. U. "Moldova – A Test Case in EU-Russian Relations?" *Romania Regala*, p. 501.

presence in Western capitals, as well as due to the lack of interest of Western European countries in forging closer ties with Moldova.

Whereas Ukraine, due in part to the fact that out of all the Soviet Union republics, together with Russia and Belarus, was one of the founding members of the United Nations, had a Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Kiev and a team of trained career diplomats, Moldova lacked all these resources in the first years after independence.⁹⁵⁴ Archival documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Chisinau reveal the fact that the Moldovan diplomats lacked basic resources, such as ink, paper, typing machines, and computers, needed “to transform its diplomatic system into a modern and efficient one.”⁹⁵⁵ Some of the initial reports were hand-written rather than machine or computer typed. Apart from the lack of office supply resources, Moldovan diplomats were reporting on the lack of financial resources to open embassies in Western countries and the negative consequence for Moldova of this lack of direct contact with Western diplomats and politicians. The shortage of funds impeded Moldovan diplomats from traveling abroad. The head of the Europe and North America Department within the Moldovan MFA was writing in 1993 that it was inappropriate “ [...] that for a period of an entire year, the civil servants within the department had only 3 visits abroad, made with the purpose of gathering information.” The report added that “ [...] when our diplomatic activities take place by mail or by phone – how can one ask for more results from the department.”⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵⁴ One similarity between Moldova and Ukraine, in those first years of independent statehood, however, was the fact that both Chisinau and Kiev were able to design their own foreign policy priorities. Prior to their independence in 1991, it was always the center in Moscow, in charge of foreign policy decision making. Author interview with former presidents of Moldova and Ukraine.

⁹⁵⁵ Report on the Activity of the Europe and North America Department within the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 10, 2015.

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

Whereas Chisinau lacked financial resources to bring Moldova closer to the West, the Occident lacked enthusiasm and interest in strengthening relations with Moldova and welcoming it in the Western club. In 1993, relations with France were progressing slowly and Moldovan diplomats were reporting that whereas Paris showed signs of increased enthusiasm toward the countries from the former Yugoslavia, there was a “quasi-total lack of interest of France in Moldova.”⁹⁵⁷ The same pattern was reported in relations with Great Britain: the repeated proposals from the Moldovan side of institutionalizing bilateral relations with London were met with reticence by Great Britain. The British officials responded unequivocally that are against signing any treaties, accords or conventions with Moldova.⁹⁵⁸ Only in 1994, three years after Moldova’s independence, during the visit of the British State Secretary of Foreign Affairs to Moldova, Douglass Hogg, a Joint Declaration between Moldova and Great Britain was signed. According to this Declaration, Great Britain assumed the responsibility to support Moldova in its goal of joining the European organizations, especially the Council of Europe and the EU.⁹⁵⁹ The same reticent and prudent approach was shared by other Western nations. Finland refused to sign a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Moldova, saying that this practice does not correspond to the Finnish way of conducting foreign policy. The Austrian and other Western governments shared their preference of continuing the relations with Moldova based on the treaties signed with the defunct USSR, rather than signing new treaties based on new political realities.⁹⁶⁰ Some of the archival documents from the Moldovan MFA suggest that this “reticence” of the West toward the former Soviet republics is explained by the fact that the Western countries were slow in reviewing

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹ Report on the activity of the “Europe and North America Department for the year 1994.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid.

their policies toward the former Soviet Union: the West was prudent not to “upset” Moscow by being too engaged with the former Soviet states.⁹⁶¹

Another aspect, which suggests the low priority of Moldova on the Western agenda, was the fact that most Western embassies and ambassadors accredited for Moldova had their residences in Moscow, Bucharest, or Kiev. In 1994, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland – had their Embassies accredited for Moldova located in Moscow. Canada, Austria, Denmark – had their ambassadors for Moldova located in Bucharest, whereas Sweden in Budapest. These ambassadors were visiting Moldova once or twice per year only, mostly with the purpose of gathering information than forging stronger ties with the Moldovan government.⁹⁶² In 1995, only seven countries had their ambassadors reside in Moldova.⁹⁶³ Thirteen ambassadors accredited for Moldova were located in Bucharest, eleven in Kiev, seven in Moscow, two in Budapest, one in Athens and one in Sofia.⁹⁶⁴

Archival documents suggest that the Moldovan diplomats were aware of the fact that Germany was the only NATO member, which immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain, supported the eastward enlargement of the Alliance. Therefore, back in 1993, during the visit of Helmut Shaffer to Moldova, the then-State Minister of Germany, the Moldovans asked the German politician to support Moldova in its goal of integrating with the European institutions and euro-

⁹⁶¹ Guidelines for the conduct of Moldovan Foreign Policy. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁹⁶² Report on the activity of the "Europe and North America Department," Moldovan MFA, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

⁹⁶³ The US, Russia, China, Bulgaria, Hungary, Germany, Belarus and Turkey.

⁹⁶⁴ Activity Report of the Government in terms of foreign Policy during the 1994 - August 1995 period. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 12, 2015.

An additional phenomenon which some of the Moldovan politicians took as a sign that Moldova was not making the top on the Western priorities' list was the fact that the Western capitals were often sending not the best diplomats to serve in Chisinau. This detail was revealed to the author during an interview with a former member of the Moldovan Parliament.

Atlantic structures.⁹⁶⁵ The same request was made to the US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher during the OSCE Summit in Rome in 1993.

With respect to the EU, the immediate goal was signing the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. In the long-term, Moldova aimed to obtain an “associate status” with the EU as a precondition for full membership.⁹⁶⁶ Still, however, the archival documents suggest that during these first years, Moldova’s relations with the EU were limited to EU’s offering technical/financial assistance through the TACIS program, without attempts to forge stronger relations which would have brought Moldova closer to the EU. In 1994, the EU signed a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Moldova. Chisinau, however, was so insignificant on EU’s agenda, that “the official web site of the European Union, by explaining the purposes of the PCA concluded in 1994, uses nothing else but the text pasted from site dealing with the EU-Ukrainian relations and goes on to explain that the PCA concluded with Moldova is supposed to be instrumental ‘in bringing Ukraine in line with the legal framework of the single European market.’”⁹⁶⁷

The Transnistrian conflict plagued Moldova’s relations with the West throughout most of Moldova’s independence history: every discussion of Moldovan diplomats with the Western dignitaries involved questions related to the status and resolution of the conflict. In 1994, the then-US Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, visited Moldova and brought a letter from Bill Clinton addressed to Mircea Snegur, in which Clinton mentioned that the US was ready to support a draft UN resolution with respect to the withdrawal of the Russian Fourteenth Army, if such a

⁹⁶⁵ Report on the Activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁶⁷ Zagorski, A. “EU Policies Towards Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus.” *Occasional Paper Series*, 35, n.d. Retrieved from https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/10671/doc_10702_290_en.pdf

document would be proposed by Moldova. In fact, documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs note that Moldova asked UN's support to convince Russia to withdraw its troops from Transnistria a year earlier, in 1993.⁹⁶⁸

Relations with Russia

In the first five years of independence from the Soviet Union, Russia exercised control over relations with Moldova, relations, which were dominated by the Transnistrian conflict.⁹⁶⁹ Most of the times, Russia maintained an upper hand in negotiations, with the West being almost absent in discussions. Without Western backing (as the Baltics had enjoyed), the domestic Moldovan politicians were preoccupied to ensure that the Russian constraints and threats did not endanger their power prospects at home.

One issue impeding relations was related to Russia stationing its Fourteenth Army⁹⁷⁰ on the territory of Transnistria. The majority of soldiers of these troops were ethnic Russians from families residing in Moldova. When the military confrontations between the eastern and western banks of the Nistru River started, the troops of the Fourteenth Army were supporting the separatist leaders from Transnistria.⁹⁷¹ In fact, during the military conflict in the spring-summer of 1992,⁹⁷² the Fourteenth Army fought on the side of the Transnistrian forces.⁹⁷³ Moldovan newspapers from that time report that during the months of May and June 1992, the tanks and heavy artillery of the

⁹⁶⁸ Report on the Activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

⁹⁶⁹ For more details on the origins and causes of this conflict, see Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States. Genesis, Political Economy and Prospects for Solution*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2009, chapters 1-4 Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West. Lessons from the Moldova-Transdnistria Conflict*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012.

⁹⁷⁰ This Army stationed on the territory of Soviet Moldova since the end of the World War II – the Soviets were storing significant amounts of weapons to be used on the Southern Front in the case of a World War III. Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West*, 2012

⁹⁷¹ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West*, 2012, p. 51

⁹⁷² March 2, 1992 is considered by authorities in Chisinau as the start of the war.

⁹⁷³ Message of the Moldovan Parliament to the Parliaments and People of the World, May 26, 1992. Archives of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova, Accessed on February 6, 2015.

Russian Fourteenth Army joined the Transnistrian efforts, making the then-Moldovan Security Minister, Anatol Plugaru, to claim: “We are fighting with Russia, people! Not with those from Transnistria. The great Russian chauvinism has not died yet!”⁹⁷⁴ The Russian General Aleksandr Lebed, the commander of the Fourteenth Army, threatened that Fourteenth army would march to the Moldovan capital if politicians in Chisinau do not accept a cease fire.⁹⁷⁵ The Russian general military prosecutor acknowledged in 2004 that “during 1992-1996, 150 units of military equipment and 3,000 tons of different military patrimony from Russian peacekeeping battalions were transferred to the separatist administration of Transnistria, and that the Russian government legalized this transfer post-factum, on July 17, 2004.”⁹⁷⁶ The intervention of the Russian army on the side of Transnistria stopped the military confrontations. The country, however, remains divided and despite numerous efforts, the conflict endures for more than 25 years.

In July 1992, Mircea Snegur, the then-Moldovan president, and Boris Yeltsin, the then-Russian leader, signed a cease-fire agreement. Some politicians in Chisinau considered that the cease-fire agreement was a “treachery” and a “shameful capitulation” on the part of authorities in Moldova.⁹⁷⁷ Other politicians, including the former president Snegur, argued that the fact that the cease-fire was signed with Russia, rather than with Transnistria, signified the fact that Russia was a part of the war⁹⁷⁸ and constituted a proof that the conflict “was engineered by Moscow to enable Russia to retain a foothold in Moldova.”⁹⁷⁹ The Agreement established the creation of a tripartite

⁹⁷⁴ Basiul, V. “1992: The Russian Forces on the Battleground and in People’s Pockets,” RFE/RL, August 2, 2017. <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27891225.html>

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 52

⁹⁷⁶ Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States. Genesis, Political Economy and Prospect for Solution*. (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2009), p. 135.

⁹⁷⁷ Basiul, V. “Moldovan-Russian Relations From Mircea Snegur to Igor Dodon,” RFE/RL, January 11, 2017. <http://www.europalibera.org/a/28225381.html>

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁷⁹ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West*, 2012, p. 52.

Joint Peacekeeping Force, with the equal participation of Moldovan and Transnistrian troops and with a substantially larger participation of Russian troops.⁹⁸⁰

The Moldovan diplomatic efforts, especially within the OSCE framework, were geared toward reaching a deal with Russia, as well as putting international pressure on Kremlin to withdraw its troops from Transnistria. Even though officially, Russia signed the OSCE Summit resolutions which were calling for the “early, orderly, and complete withdrawal” of Russian military troops and equipment from Transnistria,⁹⁸¹ diplomatic archival documents from the Ukrainian MFA suggest that behind back doors, Russian diplomats were sending different messages. Moldova was trying to convince OSCE members to offer the OSCE Mission in Moldova⁹⁸² a wider mandate in the region. In 1993, the French ambassador to the OSCE, Marc Peren de Brishambo told the Ukrainian Ambassador, however, that the Russians informed him that the Russians “do not intend to withdraw the Fourteenth Army from Transnistria within the next years” and “would not prefer the OSCE Mission to have too wide powers in the question of controlling negotiations between Moldova and Russia.”⁹⁸³ In 1995, Ukraine joined the negotiation process a guarantor and as a mediator,⁹⁸⁴ whereas the US and the EU joined the settlement

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁹⁸¹ Ibid., p. 56

⁹⁸² OSCE opened a small mission in Chisinau in 1993 in efforts to find a political solution to the conflict.

⁹⁸³ Consultations of the Ukrainian Delegation in Vienna (CSCE/OSCE) with the French Delegation, March 12, 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kiev. Accessed on July 27, 2015.

⁹⁸⁴ In fact, representatives from the Russian MFA advanced to the Ukrainian counterparts a proposal to get Ukraine involved in the peace-making process in Transnistria. A letter from the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, A. Zlenko, dating from March 23, 1993, addressed to the then-Ukrainian president, Kravchuk, informs that the Russian side proposed to Ukraine to analyze the possibility of sending 1-2 military battalions to join the Russian, Moldovan and Transnistrian contingent of peace-makers. The Russians motivated their proposal with the following arguments: Russia wants to escape the accusation of conducting neo-imperial policies in the territories of the former USSR; Ukraine needs to share its part in the responsibility of the conflict, as the military confrontations take place at the borders of Ukraine. In addition, by involving Ukraine Russia wants to decrease its expenses in the peace-making processes in other territories of the former USSR, expenses which are pressing the Russian budget. The Ukrainian side replied that the Russian proposal will be considered in Kiev if such a demand comes from the Moldovan government as well. The MFA of Ukraine reasoned that by involving Ukraine in the peace-making process, Russia wanted to align Ukraine to its “peace-making” activities in the former USSR, which are seen in a negative light by the Azerbaijan, Georgian and Moldovan governments and which have a negative impact on the Russian government

negotiations as observers only ten years later, in 2005,⁹⁸⁵ after EU's first wave of Eastern enlargement.

Russians' reticence to allow the OSCE to interfere in the negotiations between Transnistria and Moldova were most probably related to the fact that the OSCE shared a viewpoint with respect to Transnistria, which did not suit the Russians. In the autumn of 1992, a special OSCE mission visited Moldova to gather information on the situation in Transnistria.⁹⁸⁶ The final report of the Mission concluded that the Transnistrian conflict had a political, rather than an ethnic or a nationalistic character and the Fourteenth Russian Army was a real threat to the sovereignty of Moldova and a guarantor for the existence of the "ghost republic" on the left bank of Nistru River.⁹⁸⁷

In 1994, Moldova and Russia signed an agreement that set the procedures for the withdrawal of Russian troops and military equipment from the territory of Transnistria within three years after signature and ratification of the treaty by each country's parliaments. The treaty contained a "synchronization clause" however: it stated that Russia will withdraw its troops once a political solution to the conflict between Moldova proper and Transnistria was found.⁹⁸⁸ The

on the international arena. In this way, Russia wants to share with Ukraine not only the economic burdens of these actions, but also the negative consequences of these policies. The Ukrainian MFA says that such a proposal could be attractive to Ukraine only if together with Ukrainian military troops, peacemakers from other CEECs, such as the Czech Republic, Poland or Slovakia would participate as well. Letter of Zlenko to Kravchuk related to Ukraine's involvement in the peacekeeping operations in Transnistria, March 23, 1993. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed on July 27, 2015.

The Russian representative in Moldova, responsible for the Transnistrian question, in discussions with the Ukrainian Ambassador to Moldova, blamed the Ukrainians for refusing to send troops to Transnistria, saying that while the Ukrainians sent their troops to the former Yugoslavia, Kiev refuses to join Russia in the peace-keeping activities in Transnistria. From the Diary of the Ukrainian Ambassador in Moldova, V. Boyko. Records of Discussion with V. M. Vasev, Representative of Russia in Moldova on the question of Transnistrian conflict settlement, March 23 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed on July 30, 2015.

⁹⁸⁵ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West*, 2012.

⁹⁸⁶ Report on the activity of the CIS Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova for the year 1992. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 10, 2015.

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁸ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West*, 2012.

solution that Moscow preferred was a type of federation between Moldova and Transnistria, with Transnistria having a wide autonomy inside Moldova.⁹⁸⁹ It was reported that Yeltsin said that Russia “would not let Transnistria at the mercy of anyone”⁹⁹⁰ and warned Moldova against using any coercive methods on Transnistria: “Let Moldova give as many rights to Transnistria as needed and we will make sure that Transnistrians do not take too many.”⁹⁹¹ Despite the synchronization provision, the Moldovan parliament ratified the treaty on the withdrawal of troops immediately. Russia, however, delayed the ratification process and after the Duma elections from 1995, Yeltsin and his team withdrew the treaty and the pact was never reintroduced for ratification by the Duma.⁹⁹²

Lucinschi Years: 1997 – 2001

Political fights between the president and parliament marked Petru Lucinschi’s tenure as Moldova’s second president. These feuds had an important impact on Moldova’s foreign policy path. As Lucinschi himself plainly pointed out “Our Contention for Power Prevails over Everything.”⁹⁹³ The preoccupation with acquiring and maintaining power affected the country’s prospects of rapprochement with the West. Lucinschi’s tenure, especially after the Alliance for Democracy and Reforms coalition was formed following the 1998 parliamentary elections, represented the only real window of opportunity for Moldova’s chance to get closer to EU

⁹⁸⁹ From the Diary of the Ukrainian Ambassador in Moldova, V. Boyko. Records of Discussion with V. M. Vasev, Representative of Russia in Moldova on the question of Transnistrian conflict settlement, March 23 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine. Accessed on July 30, 2015.

⁹⁹⁰ “Мы Приднестровье на растерзание не дадим”

⁹⁹¹ “Мы предупреждаем Молдову не применять никаких силовых методов,” “Пусть Молдова дает столько прав Приднестровью сколько надо, а мы проконтролируем, чтобы те не взяли больше.” It is reported that Yeltsin made these declarations during his discussion with the Russian representative to Moldova on the Transnistrian conflict. From the Diary of V. F. Boyko, Ukrainian Ambassador to Moldova. Records of Discussion with V. Vasev, Representative of Russian President to Moldova on the Transnistrian Conflict, June 2, 1994. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine, Accessed on July 30, 2015.

⁹⁹² Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West*, 2012.

⁹⁹³ As cited in Quinlan, P. D. “Moldova Under Lucinschi.” *Demokratizatsiya* 10(1), 2002, p. 98.

membership. Even though the West continued to remain reserved in its attitudes toward Moldova, certain diplomatic breakthroughs were achieved, especially during the governing period of the Alliance for Democracy and Reforms coalition. The enlargement euphoria which characterized Europe at the end of 1990s gave hopes to the Moldovan diplomatic community that Chisinau would at least be accepted to wait at the doors of the EU, hoping that one day it would be invited to proceed along with the Western Balkan countries to join the EU. The fact that the EU accepted to include Moldova into the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (SPSEE), even if without the right to sign a Stabilization and Association Agreement, constituted a chance for Moldova to get closer to an EU candidacy status. The Communists' win in the 2001 snap parliamentary elections, however, demolished even the smallest diplomatic successes accomplished with the West by the previous administrations. Set to join the Russia-Belarus Customs Union, in the first years of their rule, the Communists abandoned any plans of forging closer ties with the West. During the eight years of Communist rule in Moldova, the external landscape changed, decreasing Moldova's chances to be incorporated with the West. Lucinschi's strive to maintain power at any price impeded him to render the necessary support to the Alliance for Democracy and Reforms coalition's Western integration efforts.

Internal situation

One of the defining characteristics of Petru Lucinschi's presidency were the bitter fights between the president, and parliament, misunderstandings which often times hindered the activities of the cabinet of ministers and affected Moldova's foreign policy performance.⁹⁹⁴ During

⁹⁹⁴ Quinlan, P. D. "Moldova Under Lucinschi." *Demokratizatsiya* 10(1), 2002, p. 83-103.

Lucinschi's tenure, Moldovan Prime Ministers changed almost every nine months.⁹⁹⁵ Compared to Snegur, Lucinschi was a master in playing off different party factions, following the *divide and rule* tactic, while remaining an independent, unaffiliated with any political party.⁹⁹⁶

Moldova's foreign policy orientation during Lucinschi's tenure can be characterized as indecisive and ambiguous. He and his allies made this choice of ambiguity in foreign policy orientation in a conscious way. The "tous azimouts" tactic had the scope of appealing to two audiences: the West (the EU and the US) and Russia on the one hand, and the internal electorate on the other hand. The ambiguity and indecisiveness played well with the external actors, because both Lucinschi, and his handpicked Prime Ministers, could meet with Russian officials in Moscow and extract benefits or achieve successes in negotiations without attracting Russian criticisms for their pro-Western stance. At the same time, when meeting with EU officials, they could make bombastic declarations about Moldova's commitment to its EU integration goals, escaping the "pro-Russian" or "pro-CIS" labels. The ambiguity in foreign policy orientation was most advantageous with domestic audiences, however: declarations according to which Moldova could simultaneously be part of the CIS, while at the same time join the EU, were made with the aim of appealing to as many Moldovan voters as possible. Therefore, the absence of a clear foreign policy orientation was a choice: a conscious choice of ambiguity serving the aim of leaving room for maneuver and for change of foreign policy orientation when necessary for political success.⁹⁹⁷

⁹⁹⁵ Benea, R. "Chisinau: The Dismissal of the Sturza Government." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, November 9, 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/1869891.html>

⁹⁹⁶ Roper, S. D. "Moldova since 1989." In Ramet, Sabrina P. ed. *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*. Cambridge University Press, 2010

One of Lucinschi's nicknames was "*Shmecherilovich*" (from his patronymic, Petru Kirilovych) – in translation a swindler, a charlatan, a sly politician, given to him because of his good negotiation skills, the mastery of getting on top of any situation.

⁹⁹⁷ Klipii, I. "The Evolution of the Political Framework of the EU Integration Issue." *IPP*, 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.ipp.md/libview.php?l=ro&idc=167&id=494>

Three prime ministers served under Lucinschi. Ion Ciubuc served two times – his first cabinet and government program (January 1997 – May 1998) was labeled as pro-Russian, whereas his second government (May 1998 – February 1999), following parliamentary elections, was considered pro-Western.⁹⁹⁸ Ion Sturza’s government (February – November 1999) was pro-Western as well, whereas the cabinet of Dumitru Braghis (December 1999 – April 2001) was labeled as pro-Russian. The first period under Ion Ciubuc, emphasized widening and strengthening relations within the CIS framework, Russia being identified as a strategic partner for Moldova.⁹⁹⁹ The number of visits at the highest level, the official declarations of the political incumbents showed a clear pro-Russia, pro-CIS standpoint.¹⁰⁰⁰

A fragmented parliament emerged following the March 1998 parliamentary elections.¹⁰⁰¹ Four parties entered the parliament, with the Party of Communists, previously banned from political life, but later allowed to participate in elections, emerging as the largest winning party, with 30 percent of the vote and 40 seats in the parliament. Three other non-communist parties formed the Alliance for Democracy and Reforms (ADR)¹⁰⁰² and reduced the Communists to opposition. The new Cabinet of ministers was chosen based on an algorithm, representing all the parties in the coalition, with Ion Ciubuc continuing to serve in the Prime Minister position.

⁹⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Ibid.

Even though contacts with Moscow were close, in December 1997, immediately after being inaugurated as the new Moldovan president, Lucinschi sent official letters to the leaders of the European Commission expressing Moldova’s enthusiasm to acquire the status of “associated country” with the EU by the year 2000. Lucinschi and his team were pursuing an ambiguous policy in terms of foreign policy orientation. The question is whether in the absence of a clear foreign policy orientation, this lack of clearly chosen option, is still a choice: a conscious choice of ambiguity serving the aim of leaving room for maneuver and for change of foreign policy orientation when necessary for political survival.

¹⁰⁰¹ The parliament, presidency and local governing bodies underwent reform at different times; therefore, the timing of new elections at different government levels was not coordinated. In the first decade post-independence, Moldova faced elections almost every other year. See King, *The Moldovans*, 2000, p. 161.

¹⁰⁰² The ADR was formed by the Democratic Convention of Moldova (26 seats), Movement for a democratic and Prosperous Moldova (24 seats), and Party of Democratic Forces (11 seats).

The new coalition government amplified the effects of the “divide and rule” tactics applied by president Lucinschi with the parties represented in parliament. The president’s manipulations and conflicts with the domestic political parties and the cabinet of ministers – affected both the internal political trajectory of the country, as well as its foreign policy options.

The new parliamentary majority undertook important policy changes both in the internal, as well as in the external policies of the state. Compared with the first government program of Ion Ciubuc, the content of the second government program were very different. For the first time a government proposal voted and approved by the parliament emphasized the fact that European integration was the strategic goal of Moldova’s foreign policy.¹⁰⁰³ Instead of strengthening relations with the CIS as an organization, the emphasis was shifted toward developing bilateral relations with the individual members of the CIS.

In February 1999, following the resignation of Prime Minister Ion Ciubuc, due to “difficulties” in working with a cabinet of ministers appointed according to the algorithm formulas,¹⁰⁰⁴ Ion Sturza, the Minister of Economy under Ion Ciubuc, characterized as pro-reform and pro-Western, was appointed as the country’s new Prime Minister.¹⁰⁰⁵

Sturza’s government program embraced a “clear” and “coherent” pro-EU and pro-Western foreign policy promotion.¹⁰⁰⁶ In the text of the new program,¹⁰⁰⁷ the chapter of foreign policy did

¹⁰⁰³ Klipii, I. “The Evolution of the Political Framework of the EU Integration Issue.” *IPP*, 2001.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Timpul. Interview with Ion Ciubuc, August 24, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.timpul.md/articol/ion-ciubuc-premier-al-rm-in-anii-1997-1999-problema-e-ca-cineva-se-vede-numai-pe-el-presedinte-la-fel-cum-era-si-voronin-26470.html>

¹⁰⁰⁵ Reportedly, when the president Petru Lucinschi was informed about Sturza’s candidacy to Prime Ministership, he broke a coffee cup off the wall. Snegur, the previous president and the leader of the then-parliamentary coalition, attempted to advance his own protégés to the Prime Minister’s post. The Parliament however, did not support any of Snegur’s candidates. Since Lucinschi was in an open feud with Snegur, (there were reports according to which the two leaders had not spoken to each other for more than two years), in order to go against Snegur, Lucinschi agreed to appoint Sturza as the new Prime Minister.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Klipii, I. “The Evolution of the Political Framework of the EU Integration Issue.” *IPP*, 2001, p. 10.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Even the title of the Program “*Supremacy of Law, Economic Recovery and European Integration*” emphasized the clear vector of European integration.

not mention CIS at all, whereas relations with Russia were limited to settling the conflict with the breakaway region of Transnistria.¹⁰⁰⁸

In his short nine-month tenure in this post, despite weak parliamentary majority, Sturza registered some economic successes, solved the problem of debts to the Russian Gazprom and enjoyed growing popularity ratings: all of this while the ratings of president Lucinschi were plummeting.¹⁰⁰⁹

Following goals and tactics resembling those of Ukrainian presidents (as well as of Snegur, his predecessor), Lucinschi's goal in Moldova was to transform the country into a presidential state. He wanted to reduce the parliament's role to a consultative one and acquire the prerogatives of naming and controlling the Prime Minister's office.¹⁰¹⁰ Sturza was against Lucinschi's autocratic tendencies, and Lucinschi feared that the young and charismatic politician might be a serious challenger for him in the then-upcoming presidential elections.¹⁰¹¹ The president, therefore, manipulated members of the Parliament to pass the no-confidence vote against Sturza and his government.¹⁰¹²

Interviews with Moldovan policy makers and diplomats suggest that the no-confidence vote against Sturza's government in November 1999 had negative effects on Moldova's rapprochement with the EU. The archival documents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, as well as the interviews with the policy makers, attest to the fact that there were intensified diplomatic efforts on the Moldovan side to convince the EU officials to invite Moldova

¹⁰⁰⁸ Klipii, I. "The Evolution of the Political Framework of the EU Integration Issue." *IPP*, 2001, p. 11.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Timpul. Interview with Ion Sturza, August 26, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.timpul.md/articol/ion-sturza-urmatorul-presedinte-al-rm-va-fi-nascut-prin-frauda-sau-corupere-26568.html>

¹⁰¹⁰ Quinlan, P. D. "Moldova Under Lucinschi," 2002.

¹⁰¹¹ Way, L. "Pluralism by Default in Moldova." *Journal of Democracy* 13(4), 2002, p. 133.

Quinlan, P. D. "Moldova Under Lucinschi," 2002. ¹⁰¹¹ Sturza, I. "The Next President will be born out of Fraud or Corruption." *Timpul*, August 26, 2011.

¹⁰¹² Ibid.

at the 1999 December Helsinki EU Summit. Following these diplomatic efforts, as well as the overall eastward enlargement spirit of the Western economic and security institutions, the EU member states and the US were devoting more attention to Moldova and political leaders in Chisinau were invited to the EU Summit in Helsinki. Domestic political feuds, however, prevented Moldovan politicians to benefit from the short window of opportunity, opened to Moldova during that period.

Whereas President Lucinschi declined to participate in the Helsinki Summit, the Prime Minister Sturza planned to attend the Summit even without the President's approval. Italy's Prime Minister, Massimo D'Alema told the-then Moldova's Prime Minister Sturza that Italy, together with other EU members, would lobby in favor of Moldova so that the final Summit declaration would include a paragraph devoted solely to Moldova, acknowledging Chisinau's efforts to implement democratic and economic reforms and containing a clear promise of EU's support for further transformations.¹⁰¹³ Even though Europeans did not promise Moldovans a prospect for EU membership, the fact that an EU document would include a separate paragraph acknowledging for the first time Moldova's political and economic progress would have meant an important support for the reform minded politicians in Moldova.¹⁰¹⁴

During Sturza's tenure, Moldovan members of parliament and diplomats were involved in a series of diplomatic efforts in Brussels and the member states capitals to convince the EU to include Moldova within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (SPSEE). Achieving that goal would have accelerated the negotiation process of an Association Agreement with the EU.¹⁰¹⁵ “[B]oth Romania and Bulgaria were accepted in the EU not based on performance criteria, but

¹⁰¹³ Author Interview with Ion Sturza, March 27, 2015, Bucharest, Romania.

¹⁰¹⁴ Author Interview with a former member of the Foreign Affairs Committee inside the Moldovan Parliament during the 1998 – 2001 Legislature, March 17, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

¹⁰¹⁵ Author Interview with Ion Sturza, March 27, 2015, Bucharest, Romania.

based on political ones. [Starting the negotiation of an Association Agreement with the EU] would have been a chance for Moldova, [...], because at that time, there was an EU enlargement euphoria, the EU project was growing, Europe was registering economic growth.”¹⁰¹⁶ Under Sturza’s cabinet, the plan was to create a separate European Integration Department within the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The no-confidence vote in the Parliament against Sturza and his government, however, brought the diplomatic efforts to a standstill.¹⁰¹⁷ Sturza never attended the Helsinki Summit and the Final Document of the Finnish presidency did not contain any paragraph on Moldova.¹⁰¹⁸ Lucinschi’s efforts to remove domestic political challengers from his path to a second presidential term, affected Moldova’s Western prospects. The constant bickering taking place between the parliament and the president, the lack of consensus among political parties and their sole emphasis on gaining electoral authority, influenced both Moldova’s external progress as well as the ways in which the West treated Moldova.¹⁰¹⁹

After Sturza was removed from the Prime Minister’s post, a new parliamentary majority was formed,¹⁰²⁰ which voted for a new cabinet and a new Prime Minister, Dumitru Braghis. The program of the Braghis cabinet lacked the coherence and clarity of the Sturza’s government program. While it stated that “[...] foreign policy priorities will be *nuanced and adopted* depending on the international evolutions, with a direct or indirect impact on the Republic of Moldova”, it

¹⁰¹⁶ Timpul. Interview with Ion Sturza, August 26, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.timpul.md/articol/ion-sturza-urmatorul-presedinte-al-rm-va-fi-nascut-prin-frauda-sau-corupere-26568.html>

¹⁰¹⁷ Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Moldova, February 18, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

¹⁰¹⁸ European Parliament. “Presidency Conclusions. Helsinki European Council 10 and 11 December 1999.” Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hel1_en.htm

¹⁰¹⁹ According various account former members of parliament and diplomats (personal interviews with the author), it was hard enough to get EU’s attention to Moldova’s issues and requests. The diplomatic efforts in Western capitals were further hampered by the constant change of governments in Moldova.

¹⁰²⁰ The two parties which formed the new governing alliance were the Party of Communists and the Popular and Christian Democratic Party.

brought back the emphasis on “strategic” relationship with the CIS and Russia.¹⁰²¹ While European integration was stated as a foreign policy goal, it was included in the program not out of policy convictions, but out of strategic calculations: for the Moldovan society, the EU represented prosperity and well-being, therefore politicians willing to remain appealing to voters, had to include an “EU integration” goal in their political programs.¹⁰²² In fact, in May 2000, twenty Moldovan political parties¹⁰²³ signed a Declaration confirming their commitment to the European integration goal, which they characterized as a “fundamental” and “strategic” for the Moldovan society.¹⁰²⁴

In his efforts to increase his presidential powers, president Lucinschi triggered a constitutional crisis.¹⁰²⁵ Fighting with the president to preserve their powers, the members of the parliament overwhelmingly voted to transform Moldova into a parliamentary republic in July 2000.¹⁰²⁶ Following the constitutional changes, the parliament was in charge of voting the

¹⁰²¹ As cited in Klipii, I. “The Evolution of the Political Framework of the EU Integration Issue.” *IPP*, 2001, p. 13.

¹⁰²² Braghis was known as a close associate to president Lucinschi, and given Lucinschi’s close links to the Kremlin, the fact that CIS and Russia were given more priority in the government’s program was no surprise. Klipii, I. “The Evolution of the Political Framework of the EU Integration Issue.” *IPP*, 2001.

¹⁰²³ The Declaration was signed by the four parties then members in Parliament – the Democratic Party, the Party of Revival and Reconciliation, the Party of Democratic Forces, and the Popular and Christian Democratic Party. The Party of Communists, which was holding the majority of the seats in Parliament, more than 40, was not a signatory of the Declaration.

¹⁰²⁴ “Declaratia Partidelor si Organizatiilor Social-Politice privind Aderarea RM la UE, 10 mai 2000.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

¹⁰²⁵ Lucinschi presented a draft bill to the Moldovan Constitutional Court requesting amendments to the Constitution. His proposed amendments included changes to the electoral system: instead of proportional representation, he proposed that the 101 members of the parliament to be elected following two different rules: 70 MPs to be elected from electoral districts, whereas 30 based on party slates. The Cabinet of Ministers was to be responsible politically to the Parliament. Personally, however, the Prime Minister and the Members of the Cabinet were to be responsible to the President. After consultations with the parliamentary factions, the President was entitled to name the Prime Minister. In order to avoid a vacuum of power, the proposed bill also stated that in the case of a parliamentary no-confidence vote against the Prime Minister, only the Prime Minister resigns, not the entire cabinet of ministers. Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Moldova on certain aspects of the internal and external situation in Moldova, May 11, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

¹⁰²⁶ According to the new changes, the president of the country was to be elected by the parliament, requiring a majority of at least three-fifths of the deputies. The legislature was to play the main role in appointing the Cabinet of ministers, appointing the members of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, the General Prosecutor, and the top management of national TV and radio stations. The Jamestown Foundation. “Lucinschi Loses Presidency,

country's new president, once Lucinschi's first term was coming to an end. The fragmented parliament was unable to find a consensus regarding the choice for a new president; therefore, early parliamentary elections were called. In February 2001, the Communist Party, which did not hold power during the first decade after independence, and therefore was not held responsible for the economic hardships following the dissolution of the Soviet Union,¹⁰²⁷ registered an overwhelming victory. The Parliament, with 71 members representing the Communist Party, easily elected Vladimir Voronin, the head of the Communist Party, as the country's next president, who, as it will be shown below, became an expert at using the two power poles, Russia and the EU, to his party's political and electoral advantage.

Relations with the West

One of the findings suggested by the diplomatic archival documents is that during 1997, the first year of Lucinschi's tenure as Moldova's president, the pro-Western foreign policy was manifested solely through rhetoric, rather than concrete actions. In January 1997, the newly elected Moldovan President Petru Lucinschi sent a letter to the-then European Commission President, Jacques Santer, officially declaring for the first time Moldova's intention to join the EU and advancing the request to obtain the status of "associated member" by the year 2000.¹⁰²⁸

Even though the official declaration (for the first time) of intent to join the EU is an important development in Moldova's foreign policy path in the first decade of independence, Lucinschi made this choice at the beginning of his mandate not necessarily to mark a complete U-

Communists Win Greater Influence." *Monitor* 6(133), July 10, 2000. Retrieved from <https://jamestown.org/program/lucinschi-loses-presidency-communists-win-greater-influence/>

¹⁰²⁷ Way, L. *Pluralism by Default: Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive Politics*, 2015.

¹⁰²⁸ Activity Report of the activity of the MFA, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

turn from his preferred pro-Russia policy. Under the frenzy of EU eastward enlargement, with the Baltics and the rest of the CEE states in active negotiations with the EU, Lucinschi wanted to give the signal that Moldova is moving toward the West as well. In fact, however, these shy diplomatic attempts were criticized by some of the pro-Western opposition politicians in Moldova, who believed that Lucinschi was naïve if he thought he could make Moldova bolder on Brussels' radar by simply sending a few letters to EU bureaucrats. A more sophisticated diplomatic strategy was needed if Moldova hoped to be noticed by the West. Lucinschi was most probably aware of this necessity; however, he was pursuing the multi-vector strategy hoping he could get opportunities from both Russia and the West. He feared that getting too bolder on the pro-EU strategy would send the wrong signals to Moscow and he did not want to spoil the cordial relations he was enjoying with the Kremlin.

The EU capitals met Lucinschi's diplomatic requests with reluctance, expressing doubts with respect to Moldova's EU aspirations. In November 1997, Lucinschi sent another letter to the European Commission's president, asking the EU to start the negotiations on an Association Agreement with Moldova.¹⁰²⁹ The Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs made the same request in his meeting with the EU Commissioner on External Relations, Hans van den Broek in November 1997. The main argument advanced was that the "PCA [did] not satisfy Moldova's EU integration aspirations."¹⁰³⁰ As in the Ukrainian's case, however, the European Commission officials replied that the EU "was not ready to start discussions on an Association Agreement with Moldova," preferring for the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement to remain the legal basis for Moldova-EU relations.¹⁰³¹

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁰ Activity Report of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

¹⁰³¹ Ibid.

The frustrations reported among Ukrainian diplomats with respect to EU's treatment and attitudes toward Moldova characterized Moldova as well. Moldovan diplomats complained that the EU displayed a "stereotypical treatment which reflects [...] lack of interest" toward Moldova.¹⁰³² Discontent was also related to the fact that the EU always considered Russia and Ukraine first when signing accords and treaties or when advancing various initiatives. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed with Moldova in 1994 only after similar agreements had been signed with Russia and Ukraine.¹⁰³³ In addition, whereas the EU developed a Common Strategy with Ukraine and Russia, signed during the EU Summit in Helsinki, it did not have a similar initiative toward Moldova or any other post-Soviet state. This, in the words of a French diplomat, showed the significant emphasis the EU put on its relations with Ukraine and Russia.¹⁰³⁴ Another detail that signaled to the Moldovan diplomats EU's lack of interest in their country, was the fact that the EU did not have a separate delegation in Chisinau. Rather, the European Commission had its delegation in Kiev accredited for Moldova as well, even though Moldovan authorities made requests for its delegation to be accredited in Bucharest.¹⁰³⁵

Moldovans were unhappy that even at the structural level, the department responsible for relations with Russia and Ukraine inside the European Commission was also in charge of relations with Moldova.¹⁰³⁶ This discontent was related to a lack of conceptual consensus between

¹⁰³² Ungureanu, Oleg. "The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Prospect of the Inclusion of the Republic of Moldova." *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, 3(4), 2000, p. 129-138, p. 135.

¹⁰³³ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁴ France played an important role in developing this initiative. Records of Discussion between Yevhen R. Bersheda, first deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, with the Deputy Director of the European Cooperation Direction, MFA of France, J. Fora, June 25, 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

¹⁰³⁵ Ungureanu, Oleg. "The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Prospect of the Inclusion of the Republic of Moldova." 2000

¹⁰³⁶ Ungureanu, Oleg. "The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Prospect of the Inclusion of the Republic of Moldova." 2000

Moldovan and EU leaders as to which part of Europe Moldova belonged. As in the Ukrainians' case, the Moldovans were frustrated that the EU considered Moldova a mere former Soviet republic, member of the CIS,¹⁰³⁷ when they hoped to be considered part of South-East Europe.¹⁰³⁸ They decried the Moldova's "isolation from the EU"¹⁰³⁹ and protested against EU's decision to enlarge only as far as the river Prut,¹⁰⁴⁰ claiming that this was a perpetuation of the historical injustice of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact from 1939 and the "division of [the Romanian] nation."¹⁰⁴¹

Whereas explaining EU's reluctant position toward Moldova and Ukraine is beyond this dissertation's main goal, it is worth succinctly pointing out here that EU's hesitation vis-à-vis Moldova stemmed from the same root as in Ukraine's case: the slow change in Western politicians' thinking and lack of knowledge on political developments in Moldova. Russia was the main post-Soviet entity that the European Commission and EU member states were mostly interested in forging relations with. The Baltics, benefiting from bold Scandinavian support, managed to get on a direct track to join the West. Ukraine, due to its size and diplomatic noise in Brussels, was able to become bolder on the Western agenda, but still, together with Moldova and the rest of the post-Soviet states, remained off the list on EU's foreign policy priorities. Especially in Moldova's case, the lack of direct diplomatic links with Brussels and other EU member states delayed the development of stronger relations between Chisinau and Brussels.

¹⁰³⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁸ In contrast, Ukrainians wanted to be considered part of Central Eastern Europe.

¹⁰³⁹ Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the European Commission on the hearing organized in the European Parliament related to the progress of EU candidate countries toward membership, November 9, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

¹⁰⁴⁰ The official border between Moldova and Romania.

¹⁰⁴¹ Ungureanu, Oleg. "The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Prospect of the Inclusion of the Republic of Moldova." 2000, p. 134.

As in Ukraine, diplomats and politicians in Moldova were aware of the lack of consensus among the EU member states with respect to offering Moldova a membership perspective to join the EU. One of the countries which was openly supporting Moldova's integration perspectives was Germany, whose Minister of Foreign Affairs, Klaus Kinkel in July 1998, referring to Europe's Eastern borders, emphasized the efforts of several countries wishing to join the EU and offered Moldova and Croatia as examples.¹⁰⁴² Moldovan diplomats pointed out that Kinkel was the first Western official to suggest that Moldova could be part of EU's eastern enlargement.¹⁰⁴³

The year 1998, when a new governing coalition, the Alliance for Democracy and Reforms (ADR), started to govern the country, was the turning point when the "pro-European rhetoric was complemented with concrete steps and actions" directed toward achieving the goal of European integration.¹⁰⁴⁴ The growing influence in the Moldovan Parliament of members with pro-Western preferences marked a shift in the Moldovan foreign policymaking. The President Lucinschi and his administration remained committed to the multi-vector foreign policy. The new members of Parliament, however, made European integration the main foreign policy goal and set on the track to achieve it. The same pro-Western oriented foreign policy characterized the year 1999, when out of 24 foreign visits by the Minister and Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 18 were in Western countries and only two were in Moscow.¹⁰⁴⁵

¹⁰⁴² On the Speech of Klaus Kinkel, German Minister of Foreign Affairs on "German Foreign Policy," July 3, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 16, 2015.

¹⁰⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Activity Report of the activity of the MFA, 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

It was only in 1998, when Moldova decided to open a diplomatic Mission to the EU. Up until this time, Moldova did not have a separate mission to the EU. The Moldovan Ambassador to the Benelux countries was representing Moldova to the EU as well. Comparing Ukraine with Moldova during this period, Ukrainians were more instrumental in forging closer ties with the EU than Moldovans were.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Information with respect to the foreign visits of the Minister and the deputy ministers of Foreign Affairs of Moldova during the year 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

Cooperation with NATO intensified following the 1998 parliamentary elections and the formation of the center-right ADR coalition. Out of all the CIS states, Moldova was the second country to join NATO's Partnership

The year 1998 is labeled in some of the diplomatic documents from the Moldovan MFA's archives as the year when the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (with support in the Parliament) started a "diplomatic offensive"¹⁰⁴⁶ in the West, directed toward obtaining a fully-fledged membership within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe (SPSEE). Since Moldovan diplomats' efforts to obtain a clear membership perspective from the EU turned unsuccessful, "the Stability Pact was perceived in Moldova as a lifejacket that could draw the country out of the "muddy waters" of the CIS and lead it towards Brussels."¹⁰⁴⁷ The clear EU integration perspective provided by the SPSEE "attract[ed] Chisinau like a magnet"¹⁰⁴⁸ – initially, in 1999, Moldova acquired only the "observer status" within the SPSEE.¹⁰⁴⁹ In June 2001 – Moldova joined the Pact as a fully-fledged member, however the EU admitted Moldova to the SPSEE process with a

for Peace Program (after Ukraine). Cooperation with NATO, according to the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, strengthened Moldova's European integration perspective; it helped the country participate in various European processes on equal footing with other European countries and finally, NATO participation strengthened Moldova's security. Compared to Ukraine, however, Moldova's relations with NATO, however, were not as tumultuous as Ukraine's. "Information provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be published in the "Moldova Suverana" Newspaper on the occasion of the visit of Javier Solana, NATO's General Secretary, to the Republic of Moldova. September 1998." Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. Accessed on March 16, 2015.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ungureanu, Oleg. "The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Prospect of the Inclusion of the Republic of Moldova." *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, 3(4), 2000, p. 129-138, p. 133.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁹ In addition, Moldovans were content that as opposed to the EU, which did not want to recognize Moldova as a South Eastern European country, the US accepted Moldova as a full member of the South-East European Co-operative Initiative (SECI) and its inclusion in the US Plan for South Eastern Europe. *Ibid.*, p. 131. Slovenia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Romania were included in the "American Action Plan for South-Eastern Europe." Activity Report of the activity of the MFA, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

Another objective sought by Moldovan diplomats, initiative which in the end turned unsuccessful, was the goal of making Moldova part of the Royaumont Process in order to obtain an official acknowledgement from the EU of the south-east European status for Moldova. This Royaumont Process was an initiative advanced by the EU (the initial idea belonged to France), in order to contribute to "long-term stability and good neighborliness in South-Eastern Europe and thereby to the building of a new Europe, a Europe of democracy, peace, unity, stability."¹⁰⁵⁰ Ehrhart, H. G. "Prevention and Regional Security: The Royaumont Process and the Stabilization of South-Eastern Europe." Retrieved from <https://ifsh.de/file-CORE/documents/yearbook/english/98/Ehrhart.pdf>; For more information on the Royaumont Process, see Roumeliotis, P. "The Royaumont Process An Initiative for Stability and Good Neighbourliness in South-Eastern Europe." *A Journal of Foreign Policy Issues*. Retrieved from <http://www.hri.org/MFA/thesis/autumn98/royaumont.html>

condition: Moldova was not offered the chance to sign a *Stabilization and Association Agreement* (SAA) with the EU.¹⁰⁵⁰ Whereas the EU refused to sign such an agreement with Moldova, SAAs were signed and implemented with the Western Balkan countries.¹⁰⁵¹ The crucial provision included in these agreements was the explicit promise for future EU membership for the signatory states.¹⁰⁵² The Moldovan diplomatic establishment was hopeful that by becoming a full member of the SPSEE, chances for receiving a clear membership perspective were higher.

As the section on *Voronin Years* documents at length, due to the domestic political transformations in Moldova, in 2001 the power was acquired by the Communist Party, which did not have EU integration as its foreign policy goal. The Communists came to power promising and wanting closer ties with Russia. A pro-Russia foreign policy aligned with their ideology, as they were the descendants of the Soviet Communist Party. At the same time, close ties with Russia were preferred, as the Communists hoped to receive financial support and gas subsidies from Moscow. In the 2001 snap parliamentary elections, the Communists were competing against the governing ADR coalition, which was pro-EU. The Communists campaigned on a strong pro-Russia ticket. Disenchanted by the economic hardships and crises in the years following the USSR dissolution, the Moldovan voters were hoping that with the Communists back to power, the politically and economically stable old-Soviet times would return.

With the new Communist leadership, therefore, Moldova's participation within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe was given a low ranked priority. This impeded Moldova

¹⁰⁵⁰ Activity Report of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

¹⁰⁵¹ Out of the Western Balkan countries, Croatia joined the EU in 2013. At the time of writing, the accession of the rest of the Western Baltic countries was in process.

¹⁰⁵² Activity Report of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

from fully benefiting from the processes involved in the Stability Pact, leading the country to lose the window of opportunity on European integration.

Evidence from both the Ukrainian and Moldovan diplomatic archives, as well as from the interviews conducted with politicians and policy makers in Moldova, suggest the fact that Lucinschi's tenure (1997 – 2001) was the only real opportunity for Moldova to gain a membership perspective from the EU. Both the internal and external conditions were propitious for such a development. Internally, pro-EU parties, openly promoting the EU integration goals, populated the Moldovan parliament. Interviews with some former policy makers revealed that during that window of opportunity, due to increased diplomatic efforts from Moldova's side, the EU was finally paying attention to Chisinau's requests. Externally, the EU and NATO were swept by the eastward enlargement frenzy and Moldova hoped to be taken on the train leading to eventual EU membership if not together with the CEE countries, at least with the Western Balkan countries.¹⁰⁵³ Not only did Moldovans hope to make the EU more amenable to its requests, Russia, during the years 1997, 1998 and 1999 – went through economic and political crises and “did not have time” for Moldova.¹⁰⁵⁴ When the new leader, Vladimir Putin, took the scepter of power for the first time, Russia displayed positive attitudes toward the EU eastern enlargement. Back in 2000, one Russian diplomat showed a friendly attitude toward the EU, saying that EU enlargement was a “natural process”¹⁰⁵⁵ whereas another admitted that “the future of EU borders could pass on the lines of the current Russian border” – suggesting that during that point in time, Russia was not against

¹⁰⁵³ Author interviews with two former members of the Moldovan Parliament, March 3 and March 17, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Timpul. Interview with Ion Sturza, August 26, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.timpul.md/articol/ion-sturza-urmatorul-presedinte-al-rm-va-fi-nascut-prin-frauda-sau-corupere-26568.html>

¹⁰⁵⁵ Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on the International Seminar "Eastern politics of Enlarged Europe", November 6, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

Ukraine's or Moldova's EU integration.¹⁰⁵⁶ Once the Communist Party acceded to power in Chisinau, however, the window of opportunity with the EU was lost. Set to forge strong ties with Russia and join the Russia-Belarus Customs Union, the Communists abandoned the any plans of getting closer to the EU. The irony of Moldova's fate in terms of EU rapprochement was the delayed effect of Moldovan diplomatic efforts in convincing the EU to change its attitude toward Moldova and leave its door for membership partly open. During 1998 – 2000, the intensified Moldovan diplomatic efforts yielded important results, the most important of which was the invitation to join the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and later the invitation to join the European Conference.¹⁰⁵⁷ Both of these invitations, however, came after a change in Moldova's distribution of political forces, with the new leadership not putting European integration on top of their priority list. The 2000 constitutional crisis transformed Moldova into a parliamentary republic. With increased competences of the legislative body and with the Communist Party, which was not a supporter of EU integration goal, holding 40 out of the 101 seats in the parliament – Moldova's foreign policy priorities experienced significant changes, displaying a stronger pro-Russia stance.

Relations with Russia

In the virtue of Lucinschi's political background as a former Secretary General in Moldova's Communist Party and high profile personal contacts in Moscow, during his tenure,

¹⁰⁵⁶ Letter from the Mission of Ukraine to the European Commission on the hearing organized in the European Parliament related to the progress of EU candidate countries toward membership, November 9, 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 17, 2015.

¹⁰⁵⁷ The EU Council decided to invite both Ukraine and Moldova to join the European Conference during the EU Council in Göteborg on June 15 and 16, 2001.

Information on the discussion between Ukrainian Prime Minister, A. Kinakh, with the Secretary General of the Council of the EU, J. Solana, July 30, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 18, 2017.

Moldova maintained strong political and economic relations with Russia. During Lucinschi's tenure, Russia was Moldova's first trading partner.¹⁰⁵⁸ Still, even though Lucinschi and the political elite in Moldova maintained cordial relations with officials in Moscow, (Lucinschi visited Russia officially in 1998, Putin visited Moldova in 2000 and the Moldovan Prime Ministers were officially visiting Moscow at least two times per year), relations with Moscow continued to be marked by issues pertaining to the Transnistrian conflict. Lucinschi's efforts rendered unsuccessful results in solving the Transnistrian conflict. Especially difficult to discuss were disclosures according to which the Russian State Duma was offering support to the regime in Transnistria.¹⁰⁵⁹

One common story related to the Russian diplomatic style was identified from the Moldovan diplomatic archives, as well as from interviews with Moldovan policy makers: Yeltsin and other Russian officials would promise the moon to Moldovan politicians in official or in private discussions. When it came to actions, however, those promises were rarely implemented.¹⁰⁶⁰ This pertained especially to the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. Despite the fact that president Lucinschi and the Moldovan leadership maintained close contacts with the Russian leadership and the Speaker of the Russian Duma personally promised that the Duma would ratify the Treaty on the withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria, the Duma failed to ratify the Treaty, ignoring a number of other important military treaties signed with Moldova.¹⁰⁶¹

One outcome labeled back in 1999 by the Moldovan diplomats as a "success" in relations with Russia was the decision of the OSCE Summit in Istanbul to include a special clause in the

¹⁰⁵⁸ Activity Report of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1997. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Activity Report of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 1999. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Timpul. Interview with Ion Sturza, August 26, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.timpul.md/articol/ion-sturza-urmatorul-presedinte-al-rm-va-fi-nascut-prin-frauda-sau-corupere-26568.html>

¹⁰⁶¹ Activity Reports of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the years 1997 and 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

Final Act of the summit, devoted to Moldova and its Transnistrian conflict. This success was achieved during the time when the pro-Western ADR coalition in the Parliament was influential. The clause stipulated that Russia took the responsibility to withdraw and/or destroy its conventional weapons on the territory of Transnistria until the end of 2000.¹⁰⁶² In addition, the special clause emphasized the expectation of the OSCE signatory countries of “an early, orderly and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Moldova” and welcomed “the commitment by the Russian Federation to complete the withdrawal of Russian forces from the territory of Moldova by the end of 2002.”¹⁰⁶³ Very soon after the OSCE summit, however, it was clear that Russia will not abide by the commitments undertaken in Istanbul and that the Istanbul Agreement was a “delaying tactic” used by Moscow, as a way to maintain its military presence in the region.¹⁰⁶⁴ Despite the fact that Russia failed to fulfill its promises, the Moldovan diplomatic documents suggest that this was the first Western concentrated support¹⁰⁶⁵ to convince Moscow to withdraw its military troops from Moldova.¹⁰⁶⁶

Moldovan officials were contesting the role of Russian troops in stabilizing the situation in Moldova and Transnistria. The fact that Russia had deposited significant¹⁰⁶⁷ amounts of arms in Transnistria did not provide the best circumstances for solving the conflict. According to the then-

¹⁰⁶² Activity Reports of the activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the year 2000. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 11, 2015. Accessed on March 11, 2015.

¹⁰⁶³ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. “Istanbul Document 1999.”, p. 49-50. Retrieved from <http://www.osce.org/mc/39569?download=true>

¹⁰⁶⁴ Quinlan, P. D. “Moldova Under Lucinschi.” *Demokratizatsiya* 10(1), 2002, p. 96.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Politicians in Moldova were disturbed by the fact that whereas the West offered significant support to the Baltic States in their negotiations with Moscow to have the Russian military arsenal withdrawn from their territories, the Western capitals did not offer a commensurate support to Moldova, neglecting its negotiations with the Russians on the withdrawal of the latter’s troops and armament. Ungureanu, Oleg. “The Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe,” 2000.

¹⁰⁶⁶ The Moldovan diplomats acknowledged that the Western commitment to the Moldovan cause (as well as to that of Georgia, because the Istanbul Agreement referred to Russia withdrawing its troops from Georgia as well), was a result of the ongoing Chechen War in Russia, as well Russia’s violations of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). Some Moldovan observers

¹⁰⁶⁷ According to Igor Morozov, the then-Russian representative at the negotiations on settling the Transnistrian conflict, there were over 42 tons of Russian armament in Transnistria.

Moldovan Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cezar Ciobanu, the Transnistrian “region [was] being used a route for arms trafficking.”¹⁰⁶⁸

In fact, Russia did not hesitate to punish Moldova for its diplomatic efforts among the OSCE delegations to convince them to support Moldova’s plea for the withdrawal of Russian troops from its territory. Soon after the Istanbul summit, Russia cut off gas to Moldova. One former Moldovan Prime Minister directly involved in negotiations with the Russians on the gas issue, reported that even though the official Russian explanation for the gas cut off were Moldova’s debts, in private conversations Russian officials suggested that the supply of gas was suspended due to Moldova’s insistent requests on the withdrawal of the Russian military from Transnistria.¹⁰⁶⁹ The Russians were disturbed by the fact that Moldovan diplomats were complaining in Western capitals about the Russian actions in Moldova.¹⁰⁷⁰

Voronin Years: 2001 – 2009

The fickleness in Moldova’s foreign policy is best illustrated by Vladimir Voronin’s tenure as Moldova’s third president. Voronin’s Communist Party came to power following a sweeping victory in the February 2001 parliamentary elections, winning 51.07% of the vote, and 71 seats out of 101 in the country’s parliament.¹⁰⁷¹ With the new changes to the Constitution, the Communist-dominated Parliament, easily voted for Voronin, the party’s leader, as Moldova’s next president. Voronin then named the Prime Minister and the rest of the Cabinet of Ministers. Even though the new Constitution transformed the political system into a parliamentary entity, during

¹⁰⁶⁸ Basa-Pres on Transnistrian Troops in Moldova, July 2, 1998. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 16, 2015.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Author Interview with a former Moldovan Prime Minister. Chisinau, February 2015.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷¹ Only two other parties passed the 6% threshold to gain seats in the parliament: the Braghis Alliance, the party of the former Prime Minister under Lucinschi, with 13% of the vote and 19 seats in parliament, as well as the pro-Western/pro-Romanian Christian Democratic Popular Party with 8% and 11 seats.

Voronin's tenure, the presidential administration became the central policy-, decision-making and priority-setting source.

The section below divides Voronin's tenure in two periods: 2001 – 2003 and 2004 – 2009. The Communists came to power in 2001 promising and wanting closer ties with Russia. Their pro-Russia preference stemmed from ideological roots: the Communists were the heirs of the Soviet Communist Party in Moldova and the strive to maintain and strengthen economic and political ties with Russia and the CIS states was a natural fit for them. At the same time, however, the pro-Russia choice was made from strategic reasons as well. Electorally, the pro-Russia orientation was a winning-ticket, as the Communists were competing with the ADR coalition in the 2001 snap elections, which positioned itself as a pro-Western force. The economic crises and hardships following the USSR dissolution disenchanted the Moldovan voters, who no longer believed in the independence story. After ten years of high inflation, high unemployment, and soaring corruption, the Moldovan voters saw a promise to return to Russia's embrace as an easy and quick solution for their adversities. The Communists believed that a pro-Russia policy would bring cheap gas and energy prices, increased trade facilities as well as political and financial support. In addition, one of Voronin's main electoral promises and political goals was to solve the Transnistrian conflict. He believed that a pro-Russia policy was vital for marking an end to the separatist enclave's activity and bringing it back under Chisinau's jurisdiction.

Even though openly Voronin was pro-Russia, privately, he was also keeping an eye toward the West. The diplomatic documents suggest that in the first months of the new Communist Administration, even if publicly and privately promoting the goal of joining the Belarus-Russia Customs Union, the Communist leaders were negotiating with the Europeans as well, testing the ground for the EU's openness and willingness to create a free trade area with Moldova. When

meeting with EU officials, Moldovan leaders kept enumerating all the successes registered by previous administrations in the past few years, including the accession to the World Trade Organization, joining the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, as well as pointing to Moldova's advantages over its neighboring countries (particularly a smaller geographic size and fewer people).

After the failed Kozak Memorandum episode, an attempt by Russia to transform Moldova into a federative republic, when Voronin refused to sign the Memorandum in the last minute, Moldova's foreign policy suffered an "overnight" shift, turning from Russia toward the West (publicly and privately). Voronin and the Communists recognized that the Russians tricked them during the negotiations over the Transnistrian resolution and most importantly, that Moscow's conditions for the financial and economic benefits were too high. They then did an about face and went for the EU option instead – in part hoping they could get more out of the EU than they did out of Russia and in part to show the Russians that they had another option (so as to strengthen their bargaining position with the Russians). Given Voronin's choice, Putin turned away from the Moldovan leader, refusing to meet the Moldovan leader, applying economic, and energy sanctions to Chisinau. The Communist administration maintained a pro-EU stance up until parliamentary elections in 2009, when after the opposition political parties differentiated themselves from the Communists by campaigning on a pro-EU stance; the Communist leadership reconsidered their options and appealed back to calls for close ties with Russia.

Voronin's foreign policy vacillation during his tenure (he started on a pro-Russia ticket, switched to a pro-Western orientation in 2004 and then back to pro-Russia position in 2009) is explained by the combination of three factors. First, the Communists were motivated by their overarching goal of maintaining an upper hand over politics at home. Whenever Voronin sensed

that his political grip on power domestically was endangered by conditions, constraints or covert actions from the two external poles, he considered the option of turning his face in the opposite direction. Disenchantment with Russia's actions in Moldova and Transnistria, as well as Moscow's meddling into Chisinau's internal affairs – convinced the Communists that keeping the pro-Western view as an alternative was a savvy option. This allowed them not only to hope to get more from the EU than they did from Russia, but also to show the Russians that they had another option, thus strengthening their bargaining position with Moscow. Voronin was able to maintain the pro-EU option viable, especially because the EU, after the 2004 eastward enlargement, became much more interested in Moldovan affairs, aiming to secure its Eastern border by helping Moldova (and Ukraine) strengthen its democratic institutions and solve some of its economic problems. Even if the EU was not offering Moldova a membership prospect, little did Voronin and his entourage care about the lack of this prospect: all they needed was an alternative to which they could turn, given Russia's cold shoulder and meddling into Moldovan internal affairs.

This section will look in detail at the three separate factors influencing the Communists' foreign policy stances throughout the 2001 – 2003 and 2004 – 2009 periods. First, it considers the domestic opportunities and constraints faced by the Communists, and then it delves into discussing the Russia-side government policy, and lastly discusses the EU side of Communists' policy.

2001 – 2003

Internal situation

In the initial years after the new administration was sworn in, a series of feuds between the presidential administration and the diplomats within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs begun. Some of the most pro-Western diplomats inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs resigned, including the

then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Iurie Leanca, who for several years, was responsible for Moldova's relations with the West. The Moldovan press wrote back then that the resignation is explained by the difficulty "to promote a pro-Western foreign policy within the new government."¹⁰⁷² These feuds were related to disagreements and lack of consensus on the foreign policy path pursued by the country's leadership. The diplomatic archival documents suggest that whereas officials inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were pro-Western minded and designed foreign policy documents with the EU integration goal in mind, the president and his foreign policy advisers followed a pro-Russia stance and refused to follow advice and recommendations coming from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰⁷³

Similar to the Ukrainian case during Yanukovich years, interviews conducted with some of the former Ministers of Foreign Affairs and foreign policy makers during Voronin's presidency, suggest that oftentimes the President's foreign policy advisers acted like gatekeepers, restricting the MFA's access to the president. It was oftentimes difficult to schedule one-on-one policy meetings between the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the president. When policy proposals were sent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the President's Office, those proposals, before reaching the President's desk, were oftentimes altered to the degree that they barely resembled the original proposals intended by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰⁷⁴ In addition, the interviews with policy makers revealed that during Voronin's tenure, civil servants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

¹⁰⁷² Basa-Press News Agency. "The Deputy Foreign Minister, Iurie Leanca, Resigned." October 4, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁷³ Stefan Gorda, who resigned from his position as head of a Department inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after Voronin's administration took office, reported that the president's team were referring to the diplomats and bureaucrats from the MFA as to the "boys from the MFA" (Пацаны с МИДа). Gorda, S. "The Diplomacy of Double Standards." *Luceafarul*, May 17, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 25, 2015.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Author Interview with a former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, February 2015, Chisinau, Moldova

were excluded from the foreign policy making process and the heads of the MFA were marginalized by Voronin's inner circle of ideologues, notably by his advisor Mark Tkachuk. The president and his team preferred to name ministers who were "plasticine figures – people who would follow orders blindly, without questioning the merits of these orders."¹⁰⁷⁵ Voronin dismissed Nicolae Cernomaz, then Minister of Foreign Affairs in July 2001, for "lack of discipline."¹⁰⁷⁶ The disciplinary act was applied after the Minister of Foreign Affairs failed to follow the instructions of the president. During an official visit to Washington, Cernomaz made comments related to the "double standards" in the conduct of Moldova's foreign policy, claiming that while in electoral campaigns, politicians make certain promises, once in office, they realize that the political reality is different and many of the promises made remain simple declarations.¹⁰⁷⁷

In fact, the interviews and the archival documents revealed another characteristic of Voronin's presidency: rather than appointing ambassadors and foreign policy officials in various positions based on professional experience and skills, Voronin preferred to choose ambassadors and ministers based on loyalty and support to his political views.¹⁰⁷⁸ "Nepotism" and "connections" to the inner circle of president's advisors were reported among the ways in which ambassadorial posts were filled during Voronin's tenure, with daughters and sons of Voronin's allies landing jobs in embassies abroad,¹⁰⁷⁹ with one former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs going as far as to claim that "When leaders are not intelligent, they select even less intelligent team members."¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷⁵ Author Interview with a former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, March 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Jurnal National. "N. Cernomaz, the Moldovan Foreign Affairs Minister, is dismissed from his Post." July 28, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Author Interview with a former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, March 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Flux. "Tkaciuk Nu-l Vrea pe Dudau." September 11, 2002. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 25, 2015.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Author Interview with a former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, March 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

After the new president was sworn in office, his team of foreign policy advisers proposed changes to Moldova's foreign policy concept. The proposal emphasized strengthening Moldova's relations with Russia, as well as capitalizing on the "geostrategic gravity" between the two Moldova's neighbors: Ukraine and Romania, proposing that the list of unsolved problems between Bucharest and Kiev (territorial, as well as economic issues) – be used to Moldova's advantage.¹⁰⁸¹

The conflict between the President's Office and the MFA intensified when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs refused to make alterations to the then-Moldovan foreign policy concept, with some diplomats inside the MFA leaking the contents of the letter to the press. As opposed to the president and his inner circle of advisers, which, as discussed above, were pro-Russia for both ideological, as well as material reasons, the bureaucrats within the MFA shared pro-Western views, as they came from different political factions.¹⁰⁸² With the press and opposition parties scrutinizing the new administration's foreign policy directions, the presidential administration suggested to divide the design of the new foreign policy concept into an "open" process and a "closed" one. The "open" process envisioned organizing conferences with the participation of international experts to discuss and debate changes underlying the future foreign policy path of Moldova.¹⁰⁸³ The "closed" process, however, presupposed that while the press, public opinion and the opposition parties would be preoccupied with the debates on Moldova's future foreign policy

¹⁰⁸¹ "Letter from the Presidential Advisor of Moldova to the President of Moldova on the need to change the foreign policy concept, September 20, 2001." Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 19, 2015.

¹⁰⁸² Following the dissolution of the USSR, foreign policy was an area where Moldovans had to build everything from the scratch. Since foreign policy had always been directed from Moscow, after 1991, representatives from the Popular Front (a pro-Romania party) took on the responsibility of filling in key positions within the newly formed MFA. According to interviews in Moldova, this was mainly because not too many wanted to be involved in foreign policy making, politicians preferred positions in other key government areas, where rents were more readily available (economics, privatization, energy, telecommunications, etc.). The diplomacy and foreign policy realms were preferred by former university professors, historians, or writers.

¹⁰⁸³ "Letter from the Voronin's Foreign Policy Advisor, V. Doras, to the President of Moldova, November 15, 2001." Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 19, 2015.

path, the presidential administration would “put in practice” the foreign policy views of the president and his team.¹⁰⁸⁴

The disagreements between the President’s Office and the MFA team led to increased vagueness and ambiguity in the conduct of foreign policy. Oftentimes, the foreign policies carried out in practice did not correspond to the written or officially announced objectives. Even though Moldova’s revised foreign policy concept specified *European integration* as the main foreign policy strategic goal, the number of visits and meetings of the Moldovan president and his team with Russian officials and diplomats suggested that their radars were not directed toward the West, but toward Russia.

Relations with Russia

The Communist Party overwhelmingly won the parliamentary elections in 2001 with three main electoral promises: a pledge to join the Russia-Belarus Union, to make Russian a second official language in the country, as well as settle the Transnistrian issue. Upon being elected the new Moldovan president, Vladimir Voronin proceeded to translate his electoral promises to reality.

The first official visit made by Voronin as Moldova’s president was to Moscow, during which he declared that “Moscow was, is and will continue to be Moldova’s strategic partner.”¹⁰⁸⁵ In 2001 alone, Voronin met with Russian President Vladimir Putin on five occasions, three of them during Voronin’s official and working visits to Moscow.¹⁰⁸⁶ The Russian and Moldovan Ministers of Foreign Affairs met on four occasions in 2001, and a significant Moldovan parliamentary

¹⁰⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Neukirch Claus, "Moldova’s Foreign Policy Concept is Ambiguous and Difficult to Follow." OSCE Investigative Center, Peace Research and Security Policies, Hamburg University. *Flux*, December 21, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁸⁶ “MFA Report on Moldova’s Relations with Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in 2001.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

delegation visited Moscow in 2001.¹⁰⁸⁷ In the period between 2001 and 2003, the Moldovan president met with Russian President Vladimir Putin, on 24 separate times.¹⁰⁸⁸

In an interview in July 2001, Voronin declared that Moldova “should be there where [its] interests are.”¹⁰⁸⁹ He reasoned that since “95 percent of all necessary resources for Moldova come from Russia and 65 percent of [Moldovan] export is oriented toward the Russian market” it was more advantageous for the country to orient toward Russia and the former USSR republics.¹⁰⁹⁰ Domestically, Voronin promoted policies, which were designed to please Moscow: he was critical of NATO¹⁰⁹¹ and took steps to make Russian the second official language in Moldova.

Institutional relations between Chisinau and Moscow intensified during this period: Putin and Voronin signed the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Moldova and Russia in November 2001.¹⁰⁹² Only five months later, in April 2002, the Russian State Duma ratified the Treaty with an overwhelming majority. Since “earlier versions of the Treaty were forgotten in the Duma drawers” for several years until then, the then Moldovan leaders took special pride in this achievement.¹⁰⁹³

Vladimir Voronin enjoyed the support from his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. During a visit to Moscow in July 2001, Voronin complained to Putin that “given the amplified vector in Russian-Moldovan relations” it was not productive that the Russian State Duma was

¹⁰⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Todua, Z. “Russia Must Regain the Initiative in Moldova.” *Russia in Global Affairs*. February 11, 2007. Retrieved from http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_7987

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Izvestia*. “Vladimir Voronin Says there is No Way Going Back for Moldova.” July 19, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹¹ Vrabie, R. ed. *The Evolution of Foreign Policy of Moldova (1998 – 2006)*. Chisinau: Cartdidact, 2009.

¹⁰⁹² “MFA Report on Moldova’s Relations with Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in 2001.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁹³ *Moldova Suverana*. “Igor Ivanov, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs visits Moldova and initials the Basic Treaty with Moldova.” November 6, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

“MFA Report on Moldova’s Relations with Eastern European and Central Asian Countries in 2001.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

passing bills, de-facto recognizing the separatist regime in Transnistria, while the Russian media was publishing articles, paving the way for recognizing the statehood of the region.¹⁰⁹⁴ Vladimir Putin displayed an empathetic attitude toward his Moldovan counterpart, pointing out that “Russia does not have to tolerate speculations according to which leaders in Transnistria are supported by Kremlin.”¹⁰⁹⁵

The Russia-Belarus Union remained appealing for the Moldovan president throughout the first two years of his presidency. Chisinau requested and received an observer status, to the Russia-Belarus Union.¹⁰⁹⁶

The events that took place in 2003, triggered a turning point in Moldova’s foreign policy orientation. The CIS Summit in Yalta from September 2003 and the decision by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to establish a common economic space between their countries, excluding Moldova – disturbed the Moldovan president.¹⁰⁹⁷ He considered that his vanity was offended by the four leaders’ decision not to include Moldova in the deal and present him with a “fait accompli.”¹⁰⁹⁸ The then Ukrainian Ambassador to Moldova wrote in a letter addressed to the Ukrainian MFA in Kiev that the Moldovan leadership reacted grudgingly to the announced plans of the creation of the free economic space between Moscow, Kiev, Minsk and Astana.¹⁰⁹⁹ With some important economic and trade privileges removed for Moldova, some high

¹⁰⁹⁴ “Results of the visit of Vladimir Voronin to Russia and his meeting with Vladimir Putin.” July 11-12, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Neukirch Claus, "Moldova’s Foreign Policy Concept is Ambiguous and Difficult to Follow." OSCE Investigative Center, Peace Research and Security Policies, Hambourg University. *Flux*, December 21, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Author Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. March, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ibid. According to the former Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Moldovan president’s frustration was also related to the fact that in December 1991, when the three leaders of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine signed the Belavezha Accords (marking the dissolution of the USSR), Moldova (or any other former Soviet republic) were not consulted on the document, leaving its leaders with no options but to accept the dissolution of the Union.

¹⁰⁹⁹ “Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in Moldova”, September 9, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 20, 2015.

Moldovan officials expressed the doubt on the overall success of the CIS as an economic organization following the decisions of the Yalta Summit.¹¹⁰⁰

The second series of events that soured relations between Chisinau and Moscow and eventually produced a turn in Moldova's foreign policy orientation were related to the negotiation and failure to sign of the *Kozak Memorandum*.¹¹⁰¹

Throughout the year 2003, several groups of lawmakers and negotiators were working on designing a document establishing the legal basis for the re-integration of Moldova with Transnistria.¹¹⁰² The OSCE was leading one group of lawmakers on drafting such a document. Parallel with this process, however, Moldovan lawmakers, on the one side, and Transnistrian representatives on the other, were each working on their own versions of the document. The resulting document was supposed to be signed by leaders in Chisinau and Tiraspol, ending in this way the decade long-conflict between the two banks of the Nistru River. The difficult negotiations between Vladimir Voronin and Transnistrian leader, Igor Smirnov, prompted Voronin to ask Vladimir Putin to mediate and coordinate the settlement process.

Putin assigned Dmitrii Kozak, a long-time associate of the Russian president, to draft a document settling the issue. Apart from the OSCE, the Moldovan, and the Transnistrian versions, the Russians were working on their own draft of such a document. Increased secrecy surrounded the workings on the document.

The Ukrainian Ambassador in Moscow reported that the document was entirely the product of the Russian Presidential Administration, without the participation of any expert from the

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁰¹ The full name of the document was "The *Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State*." Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 139.

¹¹⁰² The OSCE was leading one group of lawmakers on drafting such a document. Parallel with this process, however, Moldovan lawmakers, on the one side, and Transnistrian representatives on the other, were each working on their own versions of this document. For an excellent background information on this process, see Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012.

Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹¹⁰³ Ultimately, the Russians managed to convince both leaders in Chisinau and Tiraspol to accept the Russian version of the Memorandum. This version provided that Moldova proper and Transnistria would be re-integrated into a confederation, with representatives from Transnistria in the upper house of Parliament having “a veto over almost all the activities of the reunited national government.”¹¹⁰⁴ Even though OSCE¹¹⁰⁵ voiced its concern over the contents of an earlier version of the *Memorandum*,¹¹⁰⁶ it completely withdrew its support from the proposed Russian document when two days before the scheduled formal signing ceremony, OSCE diplomats saw the last version of the *Memorandum*. This new, expanded, version contained four more chapters with new security provisions, in effect excluding the EU, the OSCE and Ukraine as security guarantors and “ensur[ing] unilateral Russian control of security arrangements.”¹¹⁰⁷ According to Mark Tkaciuk, the-then political advisor to the Moldovan president, Voronin, and his inner circle of advisors familiar with the negotiation process on the document,¹¹⁰⁸ were misled on the contents of the *Memorandum*.¹¹⁰⁹

The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, was scheduled to visit Chisinau to preside over the formal signing ceremony. Putin’s planned visit to Chisinau was being prepared “in an atmosphere

¹¹⁰³ “Letter from the Ukrainian Embassy in the Russian Federation on the Russian position with respect to the Transnistrian conflict.” November 29, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Accessed on August 20, 2003.

¹¹⁰⁴ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 141.

¹¹⁰⁵ OSCE and Ukraine, as two other sides of the negotiation process on the settlement of the Transnistrian conflict, had to give their consent on the Document. Both sides, however, were completely excluded from the negotiations on the document.

¹¹⁰⁶ These concerns were mainly related to the “absence of substantive reference to human rights, democratization, free elections, multi-party system” as well as to the “lack of viability” to the new Moldovan state, with “too many shared competencies between the federal government in Chisinau and the federal entity in Tiraspol.” *Ibid.*, p. 145

¹¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147-148

¹¹⁰⁸ Among them, the three most prominent ones were Marck Tkaciuk, Voronin’s political advisor, Vadim Misin, deputy speaker and Artur Resetnicov, parliamentary legal advisor and later presidential administration advisor. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁹ *Kommersant*. “Ruka Moskvyy ne Poluchila ot Rosii nikakoi pomoshchi: Sovetnik Prezidenta Moldavii Otvetil Dmitriiu Kozaku.” December 2, 2005. Retrieved from <http://kommersant.ru/doc/631793>

of heightened secrecy.”¹¹¹⁰ The Russian journalists who were supposed to accompany the Russian president were informed about the trip only on the eve of the visit, without being told where they were flying. The short answer received from the Russian presidential administration was that they were heading to “one of the CIS states.”¹¹¹¹

After president Voronin called Putin on the morning of November 25¹¹¹² to announce that he could not sign the *Memorandum*, Moldovan-Russian relations took a different turn. Putin was “furious with Voronin and anyone else who might have been involved in the failure of the *Memorandum*.”¹¹¹³

In a declaration explaining his decision not to sign the Memorandum, Voronin declared that “a document of such strategic importance cannot be adopted when there is resistance from one side or another.”¹¹¹⁴ Voronin’s declaration further added that “There is no doubt that the European integration option of Moldova presupposes that the proposed document be recognized by European institutions, first of all by the OSCE. This recognition is necessary first of all so that nobody ever could question the European future of Moldova.”¹¹¹⁵ One day before the scheduled signing ceremony in Chisinau, Moldovan president Voronin had a series of meetings with Western ambassadors, as well as phone conversations with Western officials, all informing him about their lack of support to the Russian advanced plan of conflict resolution in Transnistria. Javier Solana, the then EU High Representative, in a phone discussion with Voronin, warned the Moldovan

¹¹¹⁰ Melikova, N., Prichodko, N. “What is Behind the Unexpected cancellation of Vladimir Putin’s visit to Chisinau.” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, November 26, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed March 19, 2015.

¹¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹¹² Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 153

¹¹¹³ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 153.

¹¹¹⁴ “V. Voronin’s Declaration regarding the Memorandum on the Basic Principles of the State Structure of a United State, November 25, 2003.” November 25, 2003. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova. Accessed March 19, 2015.

¹¹¹⁵ Ibid.

president: “If you sign this *Memorandum*, you can say good-bye to your hopes for European integration!”¹¹¹⁶

Apart from pressure from the West, which the Russians blamed for Voronin’s refusal to sign the *Memorandum*, domestic considerations played a role as well in the Moldovan president’s decision. By chance, the heated November days when the Moldovan leader was weighing the risks and benefits of signing the Russian-proposed document coincided with the so-called *Rose Revolution* in Georgia, when Eduard Shevarnadze was ousted by angry protesters on the streets of Tbilisi. Voronin was facing his own loud protesters outside his presidential office on the main boulevard in Chisinau, “chant[ing] slogans against the *Memorandum*, Putin and Voronin.”¹¹¹⁷ The fact that Voronin believed the Russians had tried to deceive him intentionally, by presenting him one version of the *Memorandum*, but in fact intending to push for signing a different version, containing provisions for the presence of Russian troops in Transnistria on a long-term basis¹¹¹⁸ – all weighed into Voronin’s decision to refuse signing the document.¹¹¹⁹ Since all the domestic opposition parties loudly denounced the Russian plan and the Western powers shared the same critical position, Voronin feared that his domestic political survival was at risk.¹¹²⁰ Most probably, the Moldovan president understood what various groups inside Moldovan society were believing, and namely that the proposed Kozak plan was “a stratagem for Russia to ensure continued domination of the Moldovan state through its clients in Tiraspol.”¹¹²¹ The tense relations between

¹¹¹⁶ As cited in Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 152.

¹¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹¹¹⁸ According to the new version of the *Memorandum*, Russian troops were to be present in Moldova until the year 2020. Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012.

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁰ Interviews with party leaders in Moldova, who were forming the opposition to the Communist Party back in 2003, as well as with civil society leaders, all confirmed the staunch opposition of the Moldovan society to the Kozak *Memorandum*. For more details on the opinions shared by the Moldovan opposition, see Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 143-146.

¹¹²¹ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 136.

Voronin and Putin, as well as other Russian officials, the clear warnings from the US and European capitals disapproving the Kozak Memorandum and the signals that the West could be an alternative to his pro-Russia stance, topped by the domestic opposition against the plan, determined Voronin to abandon his reliance on Moscow and turn toward the West.¹¹²²

Relations with the West

One important achievement registered in 2001, was Moldova joining of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO success was in a large part, the result of the work of the previous administrations, the negotiations accelerating especially after the Alliance for Democracy and Reforms acquired power in 1998. The WTO Director General congratulated Moldova “for the rapid pace of negotiations for accession and ‘the impressive work’ done by Moldovan diplomats.”¹¹²³ Of the former Soviet republics, the Baltics, Moldova and Georgia were among the first ones to complete negotiations and join the WTO.¹¹²⁴

The diplomatic archival documents from the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs suggest that in the months preceding the Communists’ victory in Moldova, the EU officials were trying to forge closer links with Moldova. This change is explained by the increased efforts of the Moldovan diplomacy, especially during the ADR coalition (1998 – 2000), of getting Moldova bolder on EU’s agenda, which coincided with EU’s interest related to securing its borders in the context of the Eastern enlargement. In February 2001, the EU Troika at the level of Foreign Ministers visited

¹¹²² Ibid.

¹¹²³ WTO. “Moldova Concludes Negotiations for Accession to the WTO.” February 19, 2001. Retrieved from https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres01_e/pr209_e.htm

¹¹²⁴ WTO. “WTO’s General Council approves accession of Moldova.” May 8, 2001. Retrieved from https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/pres01_e/pr224_e.htm

Ukraine joined the organization only in 2008, whereas the Russian Federation in 2012. At the time of writing, Belarus was not a member of the WTO. Belarus resumed negotiations on its WTO membership in January 2017. For 12 years, these negotiations stalled. WTO. “Belarus resumes WTO membership negotiations.” January 24, 2017. Retrieved from https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news17_e/acc_blr_24jan17_e.htm

Moldova. The delegation was headed by the Swedish MFA, Anna Lindh. Members of the delegation also included Louis Michel, the Belgian MFA, Christopher Patten, European Commissioner for External Relations and Javier Solana – the Secretary General of the European Council. According to the Swedish MFA, “the fact that EU Troika visited Moldova shows the importance the EU gives to its relations with Moldova in the context of its Eastern enlargement.”¹¹²⁵ The EU officials also pointed out that the EU was in a state of expectation, willing to understand what was the foreign policy direction that Moldova was heading to.¹¹²⁶ The Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, wrote a proposal to the new incoming Communist administration, recommending to maintain EU integration as the main foreign policy goal. The MFA prepared a “National Strategy of Moldova’s Association with the EU” and recommended that the new government approve and promote it – this step, according to the Moldovan diplomats, “would give a clear signal to the EU institutions, as well as to the Moldovan society” about the seriousness of Moldova’s EU aspirations.¹¹²⁷

The diplomatic documents suggest that in the first months of the new Communist Administration, even if publicly and privately promoting the goal of joining the Belarus-Russia Customs Union, the Communist leaders were negotiating with the Europeans as well, testing the ground for the EU’s openness and willingness to create a free trade area with Moldova. Enumerating all the successes registered by Moldova in the past few years, including the WTO accession, joining the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe, as well as pointing to Moldova’s advantages over its neighboring countries, Moldovan politicians when meeting with EU diplomats,

¹¹²⁵ “Information on the Activity of the Moldovan Ministry of Foreign Affairs during the month of February, 2001.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹¹²⁷ “Moldova's Foreign Policy in 2001, until Vasile Tarlev becomes Prime Minister.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

were trying to convince the EU to start negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with Moldova. “Moldova cannot remain a prisoner of discussions on this subject (EU association status), together with countries like Ukraine, Russia, or Belarus, which, when compared to Moldova, are big countries, have not yet joined the WTO and are not part of the South-Eastern European framework.”¹¹²⁸ Even though the EU officials agreed that Moldova was different when compared to Ukraine, Russia or Belarus,¹¹²⁹ they remained restrained in their declarations and actions, pointing out that Moldova was not yet ready to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the EU, insisting instead that “it has to focus on promoting its economic reforms.”¹¹³⁰

This reserved position on the part of the EU convinced Voronin and the Communists that nobody in the West was waiting for Moldova with open arms and that the best path for Moldova’s development was close economic and trade ties with Russia. In the words of the then-Communist president, Vladimir Voronin: “The West does not need our goods. They (i.e. the West) are protecting their own market. It is not simple to enter the [EU] market. In fact, do we even need this? Is it bad that we will continue selling our fruits and vegetables, wines and cognacs to Russia and other CIS states?”¹¹³¹ Not only was the Russian market more welcoming of Moldova’s products, Moscow did not require Moldovan government to implement any economic reforms or to meet any quality standards. By putting the blame on the EU and the West for being too rigid and aloof to Moldova’s requests, the Communist political elites gladly dropped EU integration

¹¹²⁸ “Records of Discussion between Andrei Cucu with M. P. Carl, Director General of DG TRADE, European Commission.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Accessed on March 23, 2015.

Diplomatic records from the Ukrainian archives suggest that the Ukrainians were not very pleased when the Moldovans were showcasing their superior advantage among the post-Soviet republics, to the Western diplomats.

¹¹²⁹ Moldova was smaller in terms of geographic and population size, as well as politically more pluralistic.

¹¹³⁰ “Records of Discussion between Andrei Cucu with M. P. Carl, Director General of DG TRADE, European Commission.” Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration. Accessed on March 23, 2015.

¹¹³¹ *Izvestia*. “Vladimir Voronin Says there is No Way Going Back for Moldova.” July 19, 2001. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

goals, promoted by the previous parliament, and engaged into actions to follow the footsteps of Belarus.¹¹³²

However, as the previous section showed, the deterioration of relations between Moldovan and Russian leaders led Moldovan communists to revise their pro-Russian policy and turn toward the West. In November 2002, the then-president Voronin signed a Decree on the creation of the National Committee on European integration and in 2003 – he declared European integration as the foreign policy priority of the country,¹¹³³ whereas the Moldovan Government adopted Moldova’s EU integration Concept. It should be pointed out that Moldova’s re-orientation toward the West, was not a result of ideological convictions, or because of beliefs in the Western values. Rather, it was an act of revenge, a consequence of disturbances with respect to Russia’s lack of support to Moldova on the Transnistria issue and other internal conflicts. Voronin and his inner circle of advisors expected that the Kremlin, with both financial support, as well as political backing, would reward the pro-Russia policy promoted by the Communists in Moldova, in order to support their domestic hold on power. Moldovan elites’ disappointment with the Russian diplomatic style, with the lack of Russian support in both international fora, as well as on various domestic issues, convinced the Moldovan Communist leadership that in order to stay in power, they could turn toward Europe. It did not matter that the West was treating the Communist government with caution. Their foreign policy re-orientation was meant to show to the Russians that Moldova had an alternative, other than the one offered by Moscow.

¹¹³² Flux Press Agency. “Dudau Wants with the Belarussians.” N.d. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova. Accessed on March 24, 2015.

¹¹³³ Letter on the motivation for the work of the New Foreign Policy Concept, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Andrei Stratan, February 13, 2004. Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of European Integration of Moldova, Chisinau, Moldova. Accessed on March 19, 2015

The then-presidential policy advisor, Mark Tkaciuk, wrote an article in a Russian newspaper, blaming Russia for lack of international or internal support to the Communist government during the time when the Moldovan opposition launched a series of protests against the ruling party.¹¹³⁴ “[B]oth Russian electronic and print media predicted the imminent collapse of the totalitarian Communist regime under the pressure of the pro-Romania and pro-EU youth. Thank You! We will never forget this!”¹¹³⁵ It was namely during “those difficult months” when the Moldovan Communists started to “actively cooperate with Europe and with the support of the European left, not only managed to overcome the crisis” but were also trusted by the Europeans to hold the Chairmanship of the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers. With European support, the Communists managed to introduce the concept of national policy, declaring Moldova a “multi-ethnic country.” “With the help of the Europeans we managed to protect the Russian language and the Russian culture in Moldova... From that moment on, we were fascinated by the idea of European integration, the idea of clear rules of the game, clear incentives and explicit threats.”¹¹³⁶

2004 – 2009

Internal situation

Moldovan politicians reported that Putin refused to meet with Voronin for more than three years after Voronin’s refusal to sign the *Kozak Memorandum*.¹¹³⁷ The failure of the *Kozak Memorandum* to bring about the solution to the Transnistrian conflict, the sour relations with

¹¹³⁴ *Kommersant*. “Ruka Moskvyy ne Poluchila ot Rosii nikakoi pomoshchi: Sovetnik Prezidenta Moldavii Otvetil Dmitriiu Kozaku.” December 2, 2005. Retrieved from <http://kommersant.ru/doc/631793>

¹¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹¹³⁶ Ibid. The article also blames Russia that even though Moldova under Communists never declared its intention to join NATO, Moscow charged Moldova \$40 more per 1,000 cubic meters of Russian natural gas than it charged the Baltic States, which were NATO members since 1999. In a similar vein, in 2005 Russia charged Georgia, which was seeking NATO membership, \$50 less than for its natural gas than it was charging Moldova.

¹¹³⁷ Author Interview with a former Moldovan Prime Minister, March 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

Moscow and the tense relations between Tiraspol and Chisinau, constituted the catalyzers for Voronin's reorientation from Russia to the West.

Up until the end of 2003, Voronin had not succeeded in turning any of his electoral promises into reality. He fell short to find a solution to the Transnistrian conflict, faced significant domestic opposition to make Russian the second official language in the country and was not included by the Kremlin into the Common Economic Space between Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. With national parliamentary elections scheduled for the beginning of 2005, and with none of his main electoral promises turned to reality, Voronin needed to transform his political strategies in order to maintain power into his hands. Several tense incidents characterized Moldova's relations with Transnistria in 2004,¹¹³⁸ and the Moldovan president was "frustrated and outraged" by Russia's unwillingness to keep Transnistrian provocations under control.¹¹³⁹ Resentful of Russia's behavior, Vladimir Voronin proceeded to make EU integration his administration's main foreign policy goal.

The irony of this pro-Western orientation, however, was that with the Georgian Rose and the Ukrainian Orange Revolutions in the background, as well as with the EU's and NATO's eastward enlargements in 2004, Russia became increasingly aware of the risks it faced if the post-Soviet countries in its "near abroad" were to join the West. In a speech before Russia's diplomatic corps from July 2004, Vladimir Putin pointed out that "the latest wave of EU and NATO enlargement has created a new geopolitical environment on the European continent" and that Russia "must not adapt to it but, rather, minimize potential risks and damage to Russia's security

¹¹³⁸ Chief among them was Tiraspol's pressure and closing of the seven Romanian-language, Latin-script school in Transnistria in 2004. Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 164.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 166

and economic interests.”¹¹⁴⁰ Politicians who chose a pro-Western foreign policy orientation encountered increased challenges and constraints with this choice, not only because the EU remained reluctant to accept Moldova as a credible prospective member, but also because Putin decided to take a harder line regarding the Western intentions of promoting liberal democracy in the post-Soviet region. Following the failed Kozak Memorandum in Moldova, and Georgia’s and Ukraine’s electoral revolutions, Russia started using economic, political and military means to discourage pro-Western leanings in the post-Soviet region to a larger scale than in previous years.

In February 2004, Voronin named Andrei Stratan as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, who until this date was responsible for Moldova’s participation into the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. In December 2004, during the National Congress of the Party of Communists, the EU integration goal was adopted unanimously as Moldova’s main foreign policy orientation.¹¹⁴¹ Several weeks before the parliamentary elections, Voronin signed a three-year Moldova-EU Action Plan, within the framework of EU’s Neighborhood Policy, aimed at strengthening the strategic cooperation between Moldova and the EU.¹¹⁴²

During the electoral campaign for the 2005 parliamentary elections, Voronin and his Party of Communists were facing a more coalesced opposition than in the 2001 elections.¹¹⁴³ The Communists “simply stole the European integration platform from the opposition.”¹¹⁴⁴ The Moldovan Communists went through a political metamorphosis: if in 2001, they came to power promising to join the Russia-Belarus Union, in 2005 they made a political turnaround by criticizing

¹¹⁴⁰ As cited in Ciobanu, C. *Frozen and Forgotten Conflicts in the Post-Soviet States. Genesis, Political Economy and Prospects for Solution*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, p. 136.

¹¹⁴¹ Deloy, C. “The communist party wins the general elections in Moldova.” *The European Elections Monitor of the Robert Schuman Foundation*. March 6, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/eem/0391-the-communist-party-wins-the-general-elections-in-moldova>

¹¹⁴² EU/Moldova Action Plan, Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/moldova_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

¹¹⁴³ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 166.

¹¹⁴⁴ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012, p. 167.

Moscow's interference in Moldova's domestic affairs, advocating economic privatization and EU integration.¹¹⁴⁵ Sparring with Moscow, during the electoral campaign, Voronin's Communist Party did not use any "pro-Russia slogans on its red flags."¹¹⁴⁶

In this way, traditional political labels were altered, the voters having a difficult time distinguishing between parties' electoral programs and promises. The right-wing Christian Democratic Party differentiated itself and tried to increase its electoral chances by promoting the idea of Moldova joining NATO. The main opposition party that posed a threat to Voronin's rule was the center-center-left electoral *Bloc for Democratic Moldova*,¹¹⁴⁷ headed by the then-popular Chisinau mayor, Serafim Urechean. Since the pro-Russia platform was abandoned by the Communists, who traditionally were perceived by the electorate as strongly pro-Kremlin, the center-left electoral *Bloc for a Democratic Moldova* picked it up and tried to capitalize on it.¹¹⁴⁸ In order to make matters worse for Voronin and his party, Moscow backed the *Bloc for Democratic Moldova* in the elections.¹¹⁴⁹ The leader of the Bloc visited Moscow before the elections and met with several Russian officials.¹¹⁵⁰

Moreover, the Moldovan Communist leaders were blaming Russia for sending "political technologists" to Moldova in order to support the opposition parties.¹¹⁵¹ There was one incident

¹¹⁴⁵ Chivers, C. J. "Russia and the West Warily Monitor Moldova's Elections." *The New York Times*, March 6, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/06/world/europe/russia-and-the-west-warily-monitor-moldovas-election.html>

¹¹⁴⁶ *Kommersant*. "Ruka Moskvyy ne Poluchila ot Rosii nikakoi pomoshchi: Sovetnik Prezidenta Moldavii Otvetil Dmitriiu Kozaku." December 2, 2005. Retrieved from <http://kommersant.ru/doc/631793>

¹¹⁴⁷ This Bloc was comprised of three parties: the Democratic Party, chaired by Dumitru Diacov, former speaker of Parliament, the "Our Moldova" Alliance, co-chaired by former Prime Minister, Dumitru Braghis, Veaceslas Untila and Serafim Urechean, and Oleg Serebrian's Social Liberal Party.

¹¹⁴⁸ Even though it also campaigned for drawing closer to the West.

¹¹⁴⁹ "Elections in the Republic of Moldova." *eDemocracy*, n.d. <http://www.e-democracy.md/en/elections/>

The other opposition party, the Popular Christian Democratic Party labeled Urechean and his Democratic Bloc "as a stalking-horse for Moscow and the Kremlin's puppet-in-waiting." Chivers, C. J. "Russia and the West Warily Monitor Moldova's Elections." *The New York Times*, March 6, 2005

¹¹⁵⁰ Romanian Global News. "Serafim Urechean is Preparing His Electoral Campaign in Moscow." September 3, 2004. Retrieved from http://2004.rgnpress.ro/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=1446

¹¹⁵¹ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012.

when a passenger train traveling from Saint Petersburg to Chisinau was stopped by Moldovan authorities and forced to return to Russia, without allowing passengers to disembark. The Moldovan officials explained that their actions were lawful, because of the presence in the train of Russians coming to Moldova to influence the elections.¹¹⁵² The Russian officials were also instrumental in facilitating anti-Voronin and anti-Communist diaspora rallies in Moscow and other Russian cities. The Russian TV channels, loyally and devotedly watched in Moldova, widely reported on these rallies.¹¹⁵³

Despite lack of support from the Kremlin,¹¹⁵⁴ Voronin managed to win a majority in the parliament, by holding a strong grip on state resources and employing less than democratic tactics with the opposition parties.¹¹⁵⁵ The Communists won more than 45 percent of the popular vote, acquiring 56 of the 101 seats in the Parliament. The *Bloc for Democratic Moldova* acquired 28 percent of the vote, winning 34 seats. Missing five more votes in order to elect Voronin for a second presidency term, the Communists managed to reach some obscure deals with three opposition parties,¹¹⁵⁶ which agreed to offer their votes to Voronin.¹¹⁵⁷

The ways in which events unfolded under the second Voronin's presidency convinced domestic and international observers that "a leopard cannot change its spots." Even though

¹¹⁵² Ibid., p. 169. This incident was also mentioned during an author's interview with a former Prime Minister of Moldova, March 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁴ The Russian's State Duma threatened with economic sanctions and warned the discontinuation of gas supply to Chisinau. It also threatened that it might impose visas to the numerous Moldovan citizens working temporarily in Russia. Chivers, C. J. "Russia and the West Warily Monitor Moldova's Elections." *The New York Times*, March 6, 2005.

¹¹⁵⁵ One of the tactics the opposition widely complained about was the fact that they were denied access to mass media and state-controlled TV channels. Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁶ In the aftermath of the elections, the Democratic and Social Liberal Party announced their exit from the electoral *Bloc for a Democratic Moldova* and backed Voronin's candidacy for the presidency. Shocking for the supporters of the right-wing nationalist Popular Christian Democratic Party, its leader Iurie Rosca, had also agreed to support Voronin's candidacy.

¹¹⁵⁷ Basiul, V. "2005 – Politically Controlled Judiciary." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 15, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27919649.html>.

rhetorically the administration was promoting a loud pro-EU message – once the elections were over, the Communists continued to keep a strong grip on state resources, cracking down on independent media and controlling the judiciary – actions directed against the Western-promoted rules and values. Progress on economic reform was little if at all palpable, the country's economy relying on the remittances sent by Moldovans working temporarily abroad.

Voronin abandoned the pro-Russia policy and turned toward the West due to a combination of three factors. The Communist party's main overarching goal was to maintain power. Public opinion was overwhelmingly in favor of a pro-EU orientation and Voronin was disenchanted with Russia's meddling into Moldovan internal affairs and support for Transnistria. Given EU's fresh enlargement to the East, Brussels was interested in securing its eastern border by helping Moldova strengthen its democratic institutions and solve some its economic problems. Voronin was not concerned that the EU did not offer a prospect of membership to Moldova. Given his disenchantment with Moscow's actions in the post-Soviet region, all he needed was the option of turning to the West, which would have given him legitimacy in the eyes of Moldovan voters, helping him winning elections and maintaining power.

The overall European and regional climate helped Voronin turn away from Moscow and make his pro-Western choice. With the 2004 enlargement, the European Union started to be more involved in the fate of the countries forming its Eastern border. This change in EU's attitude was caused by the fact that the new EU members – the Baltics, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, were more informed and more involved in the realities taking place in Moldova (and Ukraine).¹¹⁵⁸

A strong pro-Western drive swept Georgia and Ukraine, following the Rose and Orange Revolutions. The Moldovan president was quick to seek support from the then-Georgian president

¹¹⁵⁸ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012.

Mikhail Saakashvili, as well as his Ukrainian counterpart, Viktor Yushenko, “revolutionary” and “pro-Western heroes.” Voronin visited Kiev and met with Yushenko on March 1, 2005 – only five days before the parliamentary elections, issuing a joint declaration saying that “Ukraine and Moldova support each other’s efforts to integrate in Europe’s political and military structures.”¹¹⁵⁹ Only one day after receiving an invitation from his Moldovan counterpart, the Georgian president Saakashvili announced that he would pay a visit to Moldova on March 2, “to express solidarity with the people of Moldova in their struggle for independence and choice of Europe.”¹¹⁶⁰ Voronin’s haste in securing the support of Georgia and Ukraine’s presidents 3-4 days before the scheduled elections was interpreted by domestic and international observers as a move designed to “cut the ground from his opponents’ feet.”¹¹⁶¹ Finally, in yet another act to sideline the opposition and diminish any electoral advantage they might have had, Voronin was quick at establishing good relations with the newly elected Romanian president, Traian Basescu, who proved more willing and supportive of Moldova’s EU aspirations than the previous Social Democrat president, Ion Iliescu.¹¹⁶²

Whereas all of these carefully orchestrated measures helped Voronin attain the electoral victory and maintain a majority in the Moldovan parliament, subsequent policies and events led to a serious deterioration of Voronin’s relations with Romania’s leadership. Diplomatic archival documents suggest that during the 2006 – 2009 period, the Moldovan president, as well as other politicians representing the ruling Communist Party, were seizing any opportunity to complain about Romania’s behavior with respect to Moldova when meeting with Western officials.

¹¹⁵⁹ Peuch, J.C. “Moldova: In Search of Allies, Moldovan President Turns to Georgia, Ukraine.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March, 2, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/1057770.html>

¹¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁶² Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012.

Relations with the West

Following the deteriorated relations with Moscow, Moldova intensified its military contacts with the West: both the American Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, as well as NATO's General Secretary, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer visited Moldova in 2004. Moldova's president Voronin attended the NATO Summit in Istanbul in the summer of 2004, during which "Moscow was warned for failing to withdraw its troops and armies from Moldova and Georgia."¹¹⁶³

Despite implementing reforms selectively, to areas deemed not dangerous to the Communist elite, as well as politically controlling the judicial system, the ties built between Chisinau and Brussels during this period were stronger compared to the first years of Moldova's independence.¹¹⁶⁴ Moldova and the EU signed an Action Plan within the Eastern Neighborhood Policy framework only two weeks before the April 2005 parliamentary elections, the European Commission opened its diplomatic representation in Moldova in 2005, and the EUBAM border assistance mission, sponsored by the EU, was launched at the border with Ukraine.¹¹⁶⁵ In May 2006, Moldova joined the South East Europe Cooperation process, viewed as a step closer to European integration and in January 2008, a visa facilitation and readmission agreement with the EU entered into force.¹¹⁶⁶

Despite these developments, however, the Moldovan diplomats were still disappointed with the Western noncommittal attitude toward Chisinau. The then Moldovan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrei Stratan, criticized the EU and the EU Cooperation Commission with Moldova by saying that during meetings with Moldovan counterparts, "the Commission [representatives] had

¹¹⁶³ Basiul, V. "2004: Rapprochement with NATO." *RFE/RL*, August 14, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27919646.html>

¹¹⁶⁴ Tolstrup, J. *Russia vs the EU*, 2013, p. 228.

¹¹⁶⁵ The Mission was established with the goal to control the Transnistrian border and prevent illegal trade and trafficking from Transnistria.

¹¹⁶⁶ Tolstrup, J. *Russia vs the EU*, 2013, p. 228

come to meetings unprepared, with outdated documents, and had, for example, ignored Moldovan proofs of improvements in its justice system.”¹¹⁶⁷ In addition, the Moldovan MFA “sadly” admitted that “the U.S. had done more to open the door to the EU [for Moldova] than had the EU itself.”

Relations with Russia

Disturbed over the failed opportunity to prove to the West that Moscow could solve the “frozen conflicts” on the territory of the former Soviet Union (due, in part to the failure of the Kozak Memorandum), and most importantly, because Voronin and the Communists proved defiant, taking a pro-EU line in foreign policy, Russia launched a series of revengeful actions toward the Communist ruling elite in Moldova.

Starting with 2005, Russia applied economic sanctions to Moldova: first, it banned imports of Moldovan fruits, vegetables, and meats.¹¹⁶⁸ In January 2006, during the middle of the winter – Russia cut the gas delivery to Moldova and in March of the same year, Russia applied the first embargo on Moldovan wines and spirits.¹¹⁶⁹

The Russians agreed to deliver gas to Moldova only after Chisinau agreed to pay a double price for the Russian gas: the price rose from \$80 per 1000 cubic meters of gas to \$160 dollars. Moldovan newspapers were reporting that only three months after Moscow declared a “war on

¹¹⁶⁷ US Embassy Chisinau. “Foreign Minister Stratan Supports US on Transnistria, CFE and OSCE.” Wikileaks Cables. Dated October 23, 2007. Retrieved from <https://wikileaksmd.wordpress.com/2007/10/>

The main criticisms advanced by the European Commission to the Voronin administration during this period was related to increased corruption, uncompetitive business climate, lack of press freedom, and lack for respect of human rights. Basiul, V. “Russia’s Offensive: ‘The War Wine’ and the Doubled Priced Gas.” *RFE/RL*, August 16, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27923204.html>

¹¹⁶⁸ Basiul, V. “Russia’s Offensive: ‘The War Wine’ and the Doubled Priced Gas.” *RFE/RL*, August 16, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/27923204.html>

¹¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

Moldovan wines” and ceased gas delivery to Moldova, the Moldovan president was ready to hold out an olive branch, making significant efforts to meet with his Russian counterpart and seek an improvement in relations. In August 2006 –Voronin had a two-hour meeting with Putin in Moscow. Voronin’s policy advisor, Mark Tkaciuk, was declaring that “thawing relations with Russia had already started.”¹¹⁷⁰

Voronin was presumably frustrated with the fact that the West was offering more support to Georgia’s Mikhail Saakashvili than to Moldova.¹¹⁷¹ Facing increased domestic pressure due to the Russian economic sanctions, during the period of 2008 – 2009, Voronin “became more accommodating toward Russia’s interests.”¹¹⁷²

Post-2009

During the 2009 parliamentary elections campaign, the political opposition to the Communist governing party was stronger and more united. It criticized Voronin for “having ‘usurped power’ and for acting like a dictator.”¹¹⁷³ The opposition parties were calling for closer ties with Romania and the EU, advocating at the same time for NATO membership (as opposed to the Communists, which were devoted to Moldova’s neutrality status written in the Constitution.)¹¹⁷⁴

In the months preceding the electoral campaign, the Communists turned again to the Kremlin, seeking backing and electoral support from Russia. This turn is explained by a combination of three factors. First, the pro-Western stance promoted by Voronin during his second

¹¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁷² Tolstrup, J. *Russia vs the EU*, 2013, p. 225

¹¹⁷³ Ciubasenco, D. “Moldova’s Communist Leader Seeks to Retain Hold on Power.” *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 5, 2009. Retrieved from

http://www.rferl.org/a/Moldovas_Communist_Leader_Seeks_To_Retain_Hold_On_Power/1379779.html

¹¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

presidential term was no longer bringing any political or economic benefits to the Communists. The West was asking for comprehensive democratic reforms, which Voronin was not willing to undertake, especially since the EU stayed firm on its reluctance to offer a membership prospect to Chisinau. Implementing the liberal democratic reforms requested by the EU would have challenged his control on domestic resources and power. In addition, the opposition parties took advantage of the Western criticism directed at Voronin's rule and forged stronger links with the EU. Since the opposition was positioning itself as a more credible pro-Western force, Voronin could no longer hope that maintaining a pro-Western stance would bring him more votes from the domestic electorate. Recognizing that maintaining the pro-Western stance would not necessarily bring political dividends and at the same time facing the Russian economic pressure, Voronin decided that a pro-Russia turn would not only bring him the domestic votes from the pro-Russia electorate, but would also soften Putin's heart, prompting Russia to lift the trade and economic sanctions on Moldovan economy.

Voronin was the only foreign leader to attend the "enthronement" of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow at the beginning of February 2009.¹¹⁷⁵ The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov visited Chisinau at the end of February 2009 – the first visit of a Russian Foreign Minister to Moldova since 2001.¹¹⁷⁶ The visit was interpreted by American diplomats in Moldova as "a small modicum of support for Voronin" during the electoral campaign, and as an "end to the Kozak period," during which Russia was angered over Voronin's refusal to sign the Kozak Memorandum.¹¹⁷⁷ During the one-on-one meeting with Lavrov, Voronin asked that Russia or any

¹¹⁷⁵ Ciubasenco, D. "Moldova's Communist Leader Seeks to Retain Hold on Power." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, February 5, 2009. Retrieved from

http://www.rferl.org/a/Moldovas_Communist_Leader_Seeks_To_Retain_Hold_On_Power/1379779.html

¹¹⁷⁶ US Embassy Chisinau. "Sova Describes Lavrov's Visit To Chisinau." Wikileaks Cable. Dated February 27, 2009. Retrieved from <https://wikileaksmd.wordpress.com/2009/02/27/09chisinau142-sova-describes-lavrovs-visit-to-chisinau/>

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

other external power, including the EU, should not interfere in Moldova's elections by supporting any Moldovan parties.¹¹⁷⁸ In a seemingly intensified Moldovan-Russian dialogue, Voronin paid a visit to Moscow in March 2009, to participate in a tripartite meeting with Russian president Dmitrii Medvedev and Transnistrian separatist leader, Igor Smirnov.¹¹⁷⁹ The visit was interpreted as a sign of support for the April elections, especially because Voronin did not return home "empty-handed ... he's bringing what looks like an unexpected gift for his voter base of destitute farmers: a promise of some 50,000 tons of Russian fuel oil, to be distributed as humanitarian aid to farmers just in time for spring sowing – and the end of the election campaign."¹¹⁸⁰ Following the April parliamentary elections, the Communists acquired enough seats (60 out of the necessary 54) to form a government, however they fell short to get one more vote to elect the president.¹¹⁸¹ After two failed attempts by the parliament to elect the president, early elections were called in July of the same year, with three parties, the Democratic Liberal Party, the Liberal Party and the Democrat Party forming a governing coalition, calling it the Alliance for European Integration. The Communists went into opposition and refused to collaborate with the new coalition.

The ruling under the Alliance for European Integration brought an intensified effort to bring Moldova closer to the EU. The 2009 – 2014 years can be characterized as the most dynamic in terms of Moldova's rapprochement with the West, in 2011 the EU singling out Moldova as "a

¹¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁷⁹ Hill, W. H. *Russia, the Near Abroad and the West*, 2012.

Not only did Voronin ask for electoral support, the Moldovan leader agreed to issue a joint tripartite declaration, together with the then-Russian president Dmitrii Medvedev and Transnistrian leader, Smirnov, on the "synchronization" of Russia's withdrawal of military troops from Transnistria with finding a political settlement to the conflict. This was considered a success by Moscow: the Kremlin managed to organize and preside over the meeting, only the second direct contact between Voronin and Smirnov in almost eight years. Tomiuc, E. "Moscow Moves to Draw Moldova, Transdniestr Leaders Back into Fold." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 18, 2009. Retrieved from

http://www.rferl.org/a/Moscow_Moves_To_Draw_Moldova_Transdniestr_Leaders_Back_Into_Fold/1512603.html

¹¹⁸⁰ Tomiuc, E. "Moscow Moves to Draw Moldova, Transdniestr Leaders Back into Fold." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, March 18, 2009. Retrieved from

http://www.rferl.org/a/Moscow_Moves_To_Draw_Moldova_Transdniestr_Leaders_Back_Into_Fold/1512603.html

¹¹⁸¹ The Moldovan Constitution stipulated that 61 MPs out of 101 were needed to elect the president.

success story” within its Eastern Partnership Program.¹¹⁸² The EU’s more welcoming attitude after it launched the Eastern Partnership Program¹¹⁸³ transformed EU officials into more active actors in Moldova’s internal affairs. After more than ten years of Moldovan diplomatic requests, the EU had finally decided to sign an Association Agreement with Chisinau. Following four years of negotiations, Moldova signed the Association Agreement with the EU, creating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. “The EU stands by your side, today more than ever before,” Herman Van Rompuy, European Council President told the leaders of Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia in June 2014, when the EU signed the Association Agreements with the three countries.¹¹⁸⁴ Out of these three states, Moldova was the only country to have been granted visa-free regime with the EU in April 2014.¹¹⁸⁵ Even if the EU had finally consented to offer its Eastern neighbors the associated status, it held back the biggest incentive and motivation sought by these governments: it refused to offer an EU membership prospect. Whereas the Stabilization and Association Agreements signed by the EU with the Western Balkan countries in 2001, contained a clear path to EU membership, the Association Agreement signed with Moldova (and Ukraine and Georgia) did not include a provision for a membership prospect.¹¹⁸⁶ This lack of prospect has

¹¹⁸² Boonstra, J. “Moldova: an EU Success Story?” *FRIDE*, August 2011. Retrieved from http://fride.org/descarga/PB_92_Moldova.pdf

¹¹⁸³ An initiative of Poland and Sweden, designed to strengthen relations and cooperation with six former Soviet countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. For more details, see https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/419/eastern-partnership_en

¹¹⁸⁴ BBC. “EU Signs Pact with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova.” June 27, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28052645>

¹¹⁸⁵ At the time of writing, Georgia had finalized its negotiations on visa free regime with the EU.

¹¹⁸⁶ Jozwiak, R. “Explainer: What Exactly is an EU Association Agreement?” *RFE/RL*, November 20, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.rferl.org/a/eu-association-agreement-explained/25174247.html>

Germany’s Angela Merkel declared during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga in 2015 that “the Eastern Partnership is not an instrument for enlargement of the European Union, but it is an instrument of rapprochement with the European Union.” As cited in Litra, L. , Chkhikvadze, I. “EU Membership Perspective for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine: Impossible, Forgotten or Hidden?” *Institute of World Policy*, 2016. Retrieved from http://pasos.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/EU_Membership-net_eng.pdf

played into the hands of anti-reform forces in Moldova, while at the same time weakening the pro-reform political groups.

The significant gap between the diplomatic success in the Western capitals and the implementation and progress of real reforms, discredited the pro-Western foreign policy vector of the politicians governing Moldova post-2009. In the years following Voronin's rule, the leaders of the Alliance for European Integration coalition believed that the pro-EU orientation constituted the best strategy to acquire and maintain power. One strategy adopted by the coalition leaders was to attract and recruit pro-Western, technocrat personalities from Moldova and to offer them leading positions within the country's ministries and agencies. While these ministers, through their reputation, improved the electoral prospects of the parties they were representing, soon while in office, they discovered that the party leaders perceived reforms not as avenues for economic, social and political progress, but simply as means to secure financial aid from Western donors.¹¹⁸⁷ In other words, the pro-EU foreign policy vector was attractive for Moldova's political elite "as a strategy" rather than as a "process."¹¹⁸⁸ Political leaders were reluctant to undertake comprehensive reform transformations, presupposed by EU integration processes, as they feared that their privileged economic status might be challenged by the rules and regulations brought about by these reforms.¹¹⁸⁹ European diplomats declared that "Asking [the current coalition members] to do reforms is like asking the turkeys to prepare Christmas dinner."¹¹⁹⁰ Applying reforms selectively in areas not deemed dangerous to the ruling parties and their economic interests

¹¹⁸⁷ Author Interview with a former Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, March 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.

¹¹⁸⁸ Litra, L. , Chkhikvadze, I. "EU Membership Perspective for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine: Impossible, Forgotten or Hidden?" *Institute of World Policy*, 2016, p. 4.

¹¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁰ Seddon, M. "Outrage Moldova Bank Scandal Threatens Reforms." *Financial Times*, January 26, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/b582ad2c-c424-11e5-b3b1-7b2481276e45>

– has had a negative effect on both Moldova’s reputation within the Western institutions¹¹⁹¹ as well as on the public opinion’s support for the pro-EU vector in Moldova’s foreign policy.

Voters associated the pro-Western policy promoted by the ruling coalition as a masquerade for deep-rooted corruption, cronyism, and an ineffective and unfair judicial system. The pro-Russia stance and the politicians promoting this opposite alternative, benefited from the fact that voters identified the pro-EU policy with corruption scandals, political leaders’ infighting, and lack of real reform progress. The victory of Igor Dodon, the leader of the Socialist Party, in the 2016 presidential elections, who campaigned on a strong pro-Russia platform, showcasing his close relations with Vladimir Putin and other Russian leaders, brings Moldova yet again into a geopolitical stalemate, where the parliament the Prime Minister and his cabinet are claiming to head toward Brussels, whereas the president sees the route to Moscow as the only viable alternative for Moldova. Dodon’s first foreign official visit was to Moscow, where during a joint press conference with Putin, he declared that he would annul the Association Agreement signed by Moldova with the EU, asking Putin to support Chisinau to join the Russia-dominated Eurasian Economic Union.¹¹⁹²

Conclusion

The division between the pro-Western political elite, eager to align the country with the West and rival politicians favoring strengthened ties to Moscow has characterized Moldova’s political landscape since its declared independence. The pro-Western politicians were initially

¹¹⁹¹ Litra, L. , Chkhikvadze, I. “EU Membership Perspective for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, 2016.

¹¹⁹² Hille, K., Buckley, N. “Moldova leader vows to scrap EU trade deal for Moscow-led bloc.” *Financial Times*, January 17, 2017.

promoting unification with Romania, later however, understanding that the unification with Romania would be very difficult to carry out, they switched to promoting integration with the EU as the only means by which to modernize and reform the country. Demographically, the educated intelligentsia and Romanian-speaking population were the main supporters of the pro-Western policy.

The former leaders of the Soviet Communist Party, as well as the former Soviet bureaucrats, and agricultural managers, with support from the ethnic minorities (Ukrainian, Russian, and Gagauz) counted among the promoters and supporters of the pro-Russia stance. Moldovan leaders figured out, early on after the independence from the Soviet Union, the advantages of using the foreign policy orientation as a strategic tool to win political games at home.

While foreign policy orientation shifted with changing factions in power, more often the same leaders in power changed foreign policy stances from East to West or the reverse for tactical reasons. In the early years of independence, the near absence¹¹⁹³ of the West from Moldovan affairs and later the lack of a membership prospect in the EU marginalized and sidelined the pro-Western politicians, who were promoting reforms and liberal democracy. Opportunists and dealmaker-politicians were brought to the fore; they used foreign policy making as a stratagem to maintain an upper hand over domestic politics, switching foreign policy vectors in their efforts to win elections, acquire and maintain power, and get political and financial support from Russia or the West. The lack of membership perspective in Western political and economic institutions made the domestic political maneuvering of foreign policy orientations an attractive tool for political elites in their relations with external actors. Political leaders were free to advance ambiguous

¹¹⁹³ Exceptions are the IMF and the World Bank programs: the strict and sometimes anti-social measures promoted by these financial organizations, however, alienated domestic leaders and determined them to turn toward Moscow, fearing that the programs promoted by IMF would lead to election losses. There were also financial aid programs built by and supported both by the EU and the US.

statements with respect to their foreign policy preferences: this freedom allowed them to pick the pro-Western or pro-Russia options whenever they sensed that they could win/lose political capital from positive/negative inducements from the East or from the West.

The support and legitimacy that foreign actors offered to domestic political incumbents were often crucial for them to retain power. Moldovan leaders' strategic calculations, political coalition making, and the bargaining process were widely influenced by these two foreign policy alternatives. Political and electoral contests often were reduced to debates around the question of whether integration with the West or with Russia should be pursued, rather than debating over other substantive issues.

During most of the 1990s, very few Western countries had embassies operating directly in Chisinau. Most of them accredited their ambassadors to Moldova within embassies in Russia, Ukraine, or Romania. Financial difficulties and lack of diplomatic experience hindered a wide presence of Moldovan embassies in Western capitals. This led to situations when EU officials were unfamiliar with the internal issues and challenges faced by Moldova (or received information from Russian diplomats, which were hardly promoting Chisinau's interests in the West), therefore being unable to offer the support needed to sustain the reform process.

During the second decade of independence – even though Moldova attracted more attention, the West, particularly the EU, maintained a cautious attitude toward Chisinau, unwilling to commit to a closer relation, other than that of a good “neighbor.” Despite multiple requests and diplomatic efforts from Moldovan governments, the EU held back a membership prospect to Moldova. In the absence of a clear commitment of the Western institutions toward Chisinau, the reform progress and democratic institutional change stalled: the Western conditionality had little effect on the Moldovan leaders, as there was no end goal, i.e. membership in the EU, for these

reforms and democratic transformations to be implemented and conclusively established. On the contrary, the EU's refusal to offer Moldova a firm prospect of closer ties (potentially leading to membership down the road), benefited those elites who were against institutional improvements to curtail corruption, diminish economic and social inequality, or attract foreign investment.

Compared to the Western unenthusiastic interest in Moldova, there was always a strong portion of the Russian elite, which was determined to keep Moldova in Russia's sphere of influence. Lack of unity among Moldovan politicians and their constant fight for power had allowed Russia to engage Moldovan leaders and to support their electoral and political actions when their policies were deemed to support a pro-Russia line in Moldova's politics. By applying various political or economic levers, the Kremlin had managed to influence Moldovan leaders' actions, at the same time maintaining a high support among Moldova's public opinion.

The Transnistrian issue has shadowed Moldova's relations with both Russia and the West. The evidence suggests that the Kremlin used the unrecognized separatist entity as a "scarecrow" to discourage Chisinau's drive to the West, as well as to make Moldova less attractive to the West. The American Ambassador in Moldova concluded back in 2008, "It is clear that the Russians hold the key to progress on a Transnistria settlement."¹¹⁹⁴

Throughout most of Moldova's independence history, Moscow's assertive behavior toward Chisinau had usually induced the West to avoid offering direct political support to the Moldovan political establishment. An exception to this rule represented the events that took place in the region in 2014. Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the military fighting in the Eastern regions of Ukraine led officials in the EU to become less rigorous in their performance

¹¹⁹⁴ US Embassy Chisinau. "Odessa 5+2 Discusses Confidence." Wikileaks Cables. Dated November 12, 2008. Retrieved from <https://wikileaksmd.wordpress.com/2008/11/12/08chisinau1106-odessa-5-plus-2-discusses-confidence/>

criteria used to assess Moldova's progress toward fulfilling the conditions for signing the Association Agreement with the EU. The decision to sign an Association Agreement with the EU was based more on political criteria, rather than performance-based ones.¹¹⁹⁵

With a new Socialist president at its helm, the East-West oscillation in Moldova's foreign policy seems to intensify. Russia is determined to maintain its influence in the region and because of low chances of a prospective EU enlargement further to the East, there is a high probability that Russia will seize the opportunity to run the region, aided by reform resistant, corrupt and self-interested domestic politicians.

¹¹⁹⁵ Cantar, A., Barbarosie, L. "Ion Sturza: For Citizens, the Benefits Brought about by the Anchoring in the European Space Matters the Most." *RFE/RL*, June 18, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.europalibera.org/a/25426099.html>

Chapter 6. Conclusion

During the three decades since the collapse of communism in Europe, researchers have been puzzled by the significant variance in the developments of the former socialist countries on the east central part of the old continent. What explains the fact that successor states of “socialist regimes ... that were remarkably alike in their form and functioning”¹ pursued contrasting economic and political pathways in the years following the communism’s collapse? This dissertation stems from a similar interest in the divergent political outcomes observed throughout the post-Communist region. However, where most existing work compares differences in regime types and economic performance, my dissertation explains divergences in the foreign policy orientations and foreign policy outcomes of these post-Communist states.

Specifically, the thesis explores why post-Communist states in Europe have followed divergent foreign policy paths after the dissolution of the USSR. Some countries, like Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia or Croatia found their place within the European Union (EU) and NATO. Others like Serbia, Albania, or Macedonia are EU candidate countries, on their way to become fully-fledged members of the Western institutions. Among the former members of the Soviet Union, however, the foreign policy behavior was less steady and predictable; instead, it has been characterized by a significant amount of variation. On the one extreme lie Belarus and Armenia, whose leaders adopted a stable pro-Russia foreign policy stance throughout most of their post-independence history. At the other extreme, sit the Baltic States, which managed to pursue consistent pro-Western foreign policies, successfully joining the EU and

¹ Valerie Bunce. “The Political Economy of Postsocialism.” *Slavic Review*, 58, no. 4, (1999), 756.

NATO in 2004. In between, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, had the hardest time choosing a consistent foreign policy stance, oscillating between pro-Russia and pro-Western foreign policy orientations throughout most of their post-independence history. This vacillation raises a number of questions. Why have the post-Soviet countries followed different foreign policy paths when compared to the rest of the former Communist states in Europe? What factors explain the phenomenon of foreign policy vacillation? Why do some governments take office promising one foreign policy orientation (either pro-West or pro-Russia) but later change direction and adopt the opposite orientation?

With insights from research undertaken in the diplomatic archives in Ukraine and Moldova and accounts from personal interviews with ministers and politicians in charge of foreign policymaking in both Kiev and Chisinau, my dissertation argues that domestic political leaders chose their foreign policy alignment based on a cost-benefit analysis, weighing whether the combination of incentives and constraints posed by orienting to the West or Russia did the most to further their overriding goal of acquiring or retaining power at home.

The chapter on the CEECs and the Baltics brought evidence to the argument that the credible prospect of membership in the EU and NATO offered to them early on in the stages of political and economic transition, along with Western political, financial and technical support, served as a focal point of convergence for the domestic political leaders and their parties. In these EU candidate states, a cross-party political consensus emerged to maintain Western integration as the chief foreign policy goal. The archival evidence suggests that the expectation of full EU and NATO membership consolidated the domestic political forces in the Central and Eastern European states, leading to the formation of a pro-Western cross-party consensus. In addition, the Western significant political and financial support, contributed not only to the consolidating of domestic

political parties around the pro-Western orientation goal, but also facilitated these states' negotiations with the Russians. Especially in the Baltics' case, the United States and the Nordic countries, formed a "shield of protection" against Russian economic and political pressure during EU and NATO accession negotiations.

The chapters on Ukraine and Moldova, the two-vacillator states, show that the lack of a prospect for membership in the EU and NATO affected the configuration of domestic political coalitions. First, the Western reluctance to offer these states a membership perspective amplified the domestic political competition and led political forces to divide into pro-Russia versus the pro-Western proponents. Aiming to differentiate themselves politically and attract voters, politicians exacerbated and dramatized differences between the pro-EU and pro-Russia orientations, dividing public opinion and manipulating voters' sentiments for political gain. Second, the knowledge that the West refused to back their states' pro-Western bid brought to the fore opportunistic politicians, seeking personal gain from both the West and Russia. Political leaders became active dealmakers: they strategically chose foreign policy alignments. Both the pro-Western and the pro-Russian orientations were attractive alternatives: executive leaders picked one over another depending on their calculations as to whether Russia or the West would help them win and retain power at home. Because the EU refused to offer a credible membership perspective to these states, their governments were less willing to meet EU conditions and to carry out economic and democratic reforms. Finally, recognizing that the EU would not offer these states a guarantee of membership, Russia cultivated pro-Russia factions within these states and enticed them with its forms of support to promote its foreign policy agenda and bolster its influence in these in-between lands.

The dissertation contributes to a body of scholarly work, undertaken earlier by Rawi Abdelal,² Keith Darden³, Andrei Tsygankov⁴ and others⁵ concerned with explaining the divergent international choices the former Soviet countries made in the wake of the break-up of the Soviet Union. The research in this project departs from existing studies in several ways. Most of these existing works rely on constructivist foundations to advance explanations of the divergent economic international behavior of the Soviet successor states, downplaying the role of external constraints and opportunities in influencing the foreign policy choices of the post-Soviet states. This dissertation instead employs the tenets of neo-classical realism and argues that the different systemic opportunities and constraints faced by the post-Communist states – and the diverse ways in which domestic elites mediated and responded to these external stimuli – explain the divergent foreign policy outcomes observed throughout these states.

Addressing the weaknesses of the major IR theories in explaining the puzzling international behavior of the post-Communist states since the fall of the Iron Curtain is one of this dissertation's main theoretical contributions. Neo-realism, neoliberalism, and constructivism advance at most partial explanations to the puzzling behavior of the post-Soviet states. The main prediction of neorealist balance of power theories regarding the behavior of weak and small states in the international system is that they will balance or bandwagon with great powers, doing what it takes to survive. These theories, however, do not provide clear predictions about the instances when small and weak states will balance or bandwagon great powers, relying too much on the

² Rawi Abdelal. *National Purpose in the World Economy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2001).

³ Keith Darden. *Economic Liberalism and its Rivals. The formation of International Institutions among the Post-Soviet States*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁴ Andrei P. Tsygankov, *Pathways After Empire. National Identity and Foreign Economic Policy in the Post-Soviet World*. (New York: Rowman & Little Field Publishers, Inc., 2001).

⁵ Miller, E. A. *To Balance or Not to Balance. Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States*. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006). Gvalia, G., Siroky, D., Lebanidze B., Iashvili, Z. "Thinking Outside the Bloc: Explaining the Foreign Policies of Small States." *Security Studies*, 22, no. 1 (2013).

information about the external constraints and opportunities faced by states in the international system. The neoliberal and constructivist approaches, on the other hand, put too much emphasis on the domestic variables, underestimating the role played by the prospect of EU membership, which is offered to some of the post-Communist states but withheld from others.

This dissertation shows that top executives, “sitting at the juncture of the state and the international system,” make foreign policy choices not only to serve their states’ security interests. Rather, since high-ranking elected officials responsible for foreign policy decision-making have privileged access to information provided by the state’s politico-military apparatus, they may use this information to their political advantage. In short, they adjust their states’ foreign policy orientation to benefit themselves politically rather than to defend their state’s national interests. Political leaders scrutinized the threats and opportunities provided by the West and Russia and chose foreign policy orientations depending on their egoistic political and economic goals.

Predictions for future developments

Three decades since the collapse of Communism, Central Eastern Europe remains divided (albeit further to the East) between states that are anchored within the Western security and economic frameworks and states that struggle in between the West and Russia. Even if the CEECs are comfortably nestled within the Western institutions, some of them defy EU norms and rules,⁶ as if neglecting all the political and economic progress made by previous governments in the years prior and after the EU and NATO enlargement. Still, despite some unfortunate political decisions in Poland and Hungary, the fate of these states looks brighter in the future namely because they are full members of the EU and NATO. In the 1990s and early-2000s, the prospect of membership offered by the West consolidated the domestic political forces inside CEECs toward the goal of

⁶ R. Daniel Kelemen. “Europe’s Authoritarian Equilibrium Invoking Article 7 Against Poland Won’t Be Enough.” *Foreign Affairs*. December 22, 2017.

joining the EU and NATO, rendering stable and consistent pro-Western foreign policies. Now, when certain authoritarian tendencies are showing their ugly heads in some of these post-Communist states, and when the Kremlin had demonstrated its readiness for an assertive behavior, the guiding hands of Brussels (and the resurrection of new competitive pressure) will bring the disobedient states in line, while at the same time keep the CEEC's democracies and borders secure.

The fate of the vacillator-states looks less encouraging. The fact that these states lack a prospect for membership in the West leaves them in a “no man's” [and no rules] land.” Opportunist, reform-resistant actors will continue to come to the political fore, with the aim of acquiring and maintaining power, to keep an upper hand over these countries' economic resources, with no intention to reform, democratize or otherwise raise the living standards of these states' citizens. Vacillatory foreign policy behavior, therefore, is here to stay in these states.

The exclusion of Ukraine and Moldova from the EU and NATO enlargement processes gives fresh ammunition to populist domestic parties. In Moldova's case, the pro-Russia option becomes stronger, with endorsements and support (both financial and political) from the Kremlin. In Ukraine's case, because a war is currently fought between Ukrainian armed forces and separatists supported by Russia, the likelihood that Kiev will switch to a pro-Russia stance in the near future is diminished. At the same time, however, the fact political forces in Ukraine are anti-Russia, does not necessarily make them pro-Western (in the sense of adopting liberal democratic reforms, respecting human rights, fighting corruption and upholding the rule of law). The rise of nationalist discourses endangers the viability of reforms and institutional transformations in Kiev.

In addition to maintaining these states into a “grey zone”, the lack of a membership prospect in the Western institutions enhances Russia's presence and impact in the region. The recent post-Soviet history has shown that the Kremlin prefers to throw obstacles and destabilize

governments, which choose to promote pro-Western foreign policies in the post-Soviet states. Russia will continue to undermine pro-Western vectors in the former Soviet states, and now, a certain differentiation in its behavior toward Moldova and Ukraine is noticeable. Having had adopted a more assertive strategy toward Ukraine, annexing Crimea and supporting a separatist conflict in Ukraine's eastern regions, Russia seems to embrace a "wait-until-it's-ripe" strategy vis-à-vis Moldova. The Kremlin is waiting for the parliamentary elections expected in the fall of 2018, offering endorsements and political support for the Socialist president, Igor Dodon, hoping that the voters, disenchanted with the current "pro-EU" ruling coalition, would overwhelmingly vote for the pro-Russia Socialist Party. The Socialists, declared as a pro-Kremlin party, are promising to drop out of the Association Agreement signed with the EU and get Moldova to join the Russia-led Customs Union instead.

The main goal that Moscow is seeking to achieve in both Moldova and Ukraine is the so-called "federalization", changing the political structures of the states by providing extensive power to the regions, including the option to allow regions to forge economic and political links with foreign countries independently.⁷ This would enable Russia to have substantial influence in the internal affairs of these states. It is less likely that in the current political situation in Kiev, a federalization of Ukraine could take place, as politicians in Kiev may never accept Moscow's proposals. In Moldova's case, with a pro-Russia president enjoying high approval ratings among Moldovans, however, there is a slight possibility that if the Socialist Party wins a majority in the November 2018 elections, the federalization plan may take bolder contours. Since the Socialist

⁷ Josh Cohen. "It sounds unlikely, but there is a way Ukraine and Russia could make peace." *The Washington Post*. March 23, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/03/23/it-sounds-unlikely-but-there-is-a-way-ukraine-and-russia-could-make-peace/?utm_term=.c299e42e2abd. Liliana Barbarosie. "Ce ar putea câștiga Rusia din alegerile moldovene? (What Could Russia Gain from the Moldovan Presidential Elections?)" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. September 29, 2016. <https://www.europalibera.org/a/28022623.html>

Dodon became Moldova's president, some progress in Moldova's relations with Transnistria, were registered. Observers note however, that if Dodon's plans of canceling the AA with the EU, of joining the Russia-led Customs Union and of federalizing Moldova materialize, the Moldovan society might experience protests and social instability.⁸

The Western active engagement in the region is necessary to avoid the worst future scenarios. During the last State of the Union Address in front of the European Parliament, Jean-Claude Juncker, European Commission's President, outlining his new vision for Europe and stressing the importance of "stability in our [EU] neighborhood," emphasized only that "we [the EU] must also maintain a credible enlargement perspective for the Western Balkans."⁹ His speech did not mention Ukraine, Moldova or any other post-Soviet state that expressed interest in joining the Union. Russia was not mentioned in the speech as well and any views on relations with Moscow were not mentioned.¹⁰ Two days later after Juncker's State of the Union Speech in the European Parliament, the Ukrainian President, Poroshenko launched a call to the EU not to leave the post-Soviet states in uncertainty, closing the doors of membership to them.¹¹ Russia would be the main beneficiary from this decision, Poroshenko warned. During the last Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2017, the 28 EU members and the 6 Eastern Partnership states issued a joint declaration, in which they "acknowledge[d] the European aspirations" of Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, but stopped short of offering them a membership perspective.¹²

⁸ Alexandr Gostev. "Доминанция любителей Путина. (The Domination of Putin's Fans)." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. January 8, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.svoboda.org/a/28963305.html>.

⁹ Jean-Claude Juncker. State of the Union Address, 2017. Brussels, September 13 2017. Retrieved from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-17-3165_en.htm

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Poroshenko Warns the EU not to make the mistake of renouncing at the "open door" policy." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*. September 15, 2017. Retrieved from <https://www.europalibera.org/a/28737652.html>

¹² Andrew Rettman and Eric Maurice. "Tusk: Poland risks harming EU appeal." *EU Observer*. November 24, 2017. Retrieved from <https://euobserver.com/foreign/140026>

Even if the European Commission and some of the EU member states remain reluctant toward granting the former post-Soviet states a prospect for joining the Union in the near future, a potential approach for the EU to embrace would be to divide its strategy toward these states into smaller stages, a “short-term” versus a “long-term” perspective. The “short-term” perspective would consist of small tasks aimed to incentivize/mobilize reformist domestic elites and help them coalesce around bigger reform projects. The EU should make it clear that in order to receive a clear promise of membership – certain short-term objectives should be attained first. In other words, instead of “dangling” one big carrot at the end of the long-term process, the EU should divide the task in smaller pieces and offer small “prizes” at the end of each successful completion. This process will make both the implementation of reforms, as well as the Western monitoring of the process, more efficient. Whereas the countries will be able to focus on smaller tasks and make deliverables more attainable, the EU will have the possibility to spot issues and fix them early on in the process.

One “short-term” approach that the EU has recently adopted vis-à-vis the post-Soviet states is the so-called Eastern Partnership Plus program. The European Parliament passed a resolution in November 2017, which stipulates that the Eastern Partnership members that are following Brussels’ conditions and implementing the expected reforms may be rewarded with such benefits as the prospect of joining the customs, digital and energy union as well as the Schengen zone. Some observers are criticizing this initiative because it continues to deny these states the prospect of membership, aiming simply to create a *cordon sanitaire* separating Russia from the EU, while at the same time reinforcing these states’ status as “the peripheries of Europe.”¹³ While there is value in these criticisms, the reality is that in the short term, Ukraine and Moldova will not receive

¹³ Bartek Tesławski. “The “Eastern Partnership Plus” is the EU’s failure.” *New Eastern Europe*. December 7, 2017. Retrieved from <http://neweasterneurope.eu/2017/12/07/eastern-partnership-plus-eus-failure/>

a membership prospect from the EU. They should, therefore, hold on to and be actively engaged in any initiative that the West proposes to them. As one old saying goes, jumping at several small opportunities may get these states in the EU more quickly than waiting for the big membership prospect to come along.¹⁴

Limitations of the present dissertation

This dissertation has limitations and there is possible scope to add more content and research to it. One limitation is related to the fact that a portion of the archival evidence used in the chapter on the CEECs and the Baltic States stems from the policy documents created by Ukrainian diplomats. One way in which I plan to address this weakness is to conduct research in the archives of the European Commission on the topic related to EU's eastward enlargement during the 1990s. The archives of the European institutions are applying the rule of 30 years between the creations of the files and their publication and delivery to the public and to the searchers and no archival records are available in the Historical Archives of the EU after the year 1987. However, the Historical Archives of the EU store some private holdings of former officials and protagonists of European integration, (including papers of Angel Vinas, Graham Avery, Robert Hull, Francois Lamoureux, etc.).

In addition, since the present dissertation finds that not only Ukraine and Moldova preferred the vacillatory foreign policy behavior during their post-independence history, but Georgia was adopting this approach as well, an empirical analysis into Georgia's oscillating behavior should be undertaken as well. The vacillatory behavior was characteristic to Georgia especially during the years of Eduard Shevardnadze's rule.

¹⁴ The original saying by Hugh Allen: "Jumping at several small opportunities may get us there more quickly than waiting for one big one to come along."

Another weakness of the analysis is that it does not thoroughly discuss the question of why the West in general and the EU in particular, refused to offer a membership prospect to the post-Soviet states. The dissertation takes this reluctant Western attitude as an exogenous factor and builds the explanation of vacillatory foreign policy behavior by analyzing the decision-making processes of domestic elites in the post-Soviet states. I plan to address this question in a separate research article, following the tenets of Kathleen McNamara's framework of how the EU legitimizes its power and authority and how it labels and maps what does and does not belong to the EU.¹⁵ The article will address the questions of how the EU decided which post-Communist countries in Europe were deemed eligible for membership and which were not. Why did the EU offer a membership prospect to nations from the Western Balkans, while remaining reluctant to render such a possibility to countries like Ukraine, Moldova, or Georgia? How does the EU map Europe regarding the "ins and outs," those that belong to the EU and those that do not?

Finally, in an era when international alliances are in flux and "global distribution of power is shifting fast," with states increasingly facing a "self-help" world-order,¹⁶ studying how states choose international alignments and why they vacillate in their behaviors, switching between alliances and alignments, may become more stringent. "Reversals" or "profound redirections" in foreign policies have complex consequences for the governments initiating such changes, for their citizens, for the neighboring states, and for the international system of states in general.¹⁷ Elucidating the causes and mechanisms that account for the phenomenon of inconsistent and vacillating alignment choices could help explain the oscillating foreign policy behavior of states

¹⁵ Kathleen McNamara. *Imagining Europe: Symbols, Practice and Banal Authority in the European Union* (Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁶ Stewart M. Partick . "Trump World Order. The Return of Self-Help." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2017, 52-57.

¹⁷ Hermann, C. F. "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy" *International Studies Quarterly*, 34(1), (1990), p. 3-21.

beyond the post-Communist region in Europe. China's neighbors (Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar), have also been sending mixed signals about their alliance preferences, vacillating between China and the US. With a Trump administration that is revising international alliances, facing a growing China and a more assertive Russia, the findings in this study could be relevant to understand the behavior of states in other regions of the world as well.

Appendix 1. List of interviews with politicians and foreign policy makers in Ukraine

1. Interview with a former Ukrainian president, July 10, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.
2. Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, July 16, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.
3. Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, August 4, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.
4. Interview with a former Ukrainian Ambassador to the UN. Former Member of the Board of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. June 12, 2015. New York, US.
5. Interview with a former Ambassador of Ukraine to the European Union. July 23, 2017. Kiev, Ukraine
6. Interview with a former Ambassador of Ukraine to the United States. July 31, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine
7. Interview with a Member of Ukrainian team of negotiators on EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and DCFTA. July 20, 2015.
8. Interview with an expert on Ukrainian politics and director of a local NGO. July 7, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine
9. Interview with a scholar and expert on Ukrainian nationalism and right-wing politics. July 14, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine.
10. Interview with a Ukrainian journalist specialized in reporting on Ukrainian foreign policy issues. July 17, 2015.
11. Interview with a political activist, expert on the politics in Belarus and Ukraine. August 10, 2015. Kiev, Ukraine

Appendix 2. List of interviews with politicians and foreign policy makers in Moldova

1. Interview with a former Moldovan President, February 9, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
2. Interview with a former Moldovan President, February 17, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
3. Interview with a former Moldovan President, March 23, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
4. Interview with a former Prime Minister of Moldova, March 6, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.
5. Interview with a former Prime Minister of Moldova, March 10, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.
6. Interview with a former Prime Minister of Moldova, March 27, 2015, Bucharest, Romania.
7. Interview with a former Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, March 2, 2015, Moldova.
8. Interview with a former Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, March 17, 2015, Moldova.
9. Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Ambassador. February 17, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
10. Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Ambassador. March 3, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
11. Interview with a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova, Ambassador. March 5, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
12. Interview with a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Moldova. February 12, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.
13. Interview with a former Vice-Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament, Chairman of the Committee on the Cooperation between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union March 3, 2015, Chisinau, Moldova.
14. Interview with a former Chairman of the Foreign Policy Committee, Moldovan Parliament, March 17, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.

15. Interview with a former member of the Moldovan Parliament; Head of the Interdepartmental Committee for the State Policy on Transnistrian conflict settlement. March 25, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.
16. Interview with a former Foreign Policy Adviser to the Prime-Minister of Moldova. March 6, 2015.
17. Interview with a Political Officer at the OSCE Mission to Moldova. March 25, 2015. Chisinau, Moldova.

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