Towards an EU-Russia Common Space on External Security: Prospects for Cooperation

Alexander Sergunin

St. Petersburg State University
Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg, Russia
E-mail: sergunin60@mail.ru
Tel: +7-960-282-3576; Fax: +7-812-576-4437

Abstract

This study aims at examining both how the current EU-Russia cooperation meets the existing security challenges and what should be done to improve the EU-Russia external security dialogue. It is demonstrated that the positive results of the EU-Russia co-operation include: a certain rapprochement of security doctrines; more transparency and mutual trust in the security-related spheres; creation of some new institutional mechanisms; a more active engagement of existing regional organisations in security co-operation; more coordination of security policies on the global level; some joint peace-keeping and anti-piracy operations. At the same time, there are numerous barriers to such a co-operation: differences in the understanding of basic security-related concepts; the residual mistrust between Russia and Europe; differences in current EU and Russian geopolitical priorities; internal problems; lack of progress in the regional arms control process; lack of institutional support for some critical areas of security co-operation; lack of proper coordination and division of labour between various regional institutions. The author concludes that the time is ripe for some radical changes in mutual perceptions and practical policies, and that there is a need for political will on the both sides to start moving in the right direction.

Keywords: European Union, Russia, common space on external security

1. Introduction

The EU-Russia cooperation on external security is a relatively new theme in the Russian and European political discourses. In the 1990s, both the EU and Russia focused primarily on economy, trade, environment, home and justice affairs and research/education/culture issues. The external security problematique was, more or less, left aside. There were a few activities under the Western European Union (WEU) aegis, including some development of joint military technologies, space research, and arms coproduction, but nothing really impressive. Moreover, by the beginning of the previous decade the WEU, in fact, transferred its functions and personnel to other EU-related security institutions and arrangements

For various reasons – political, ideological and institutional – neither the EU nor Russia were ready for cooperation in such a delicate sphere. For example, the EU simply did not have a proper institutional setting for the development of security cooperation with either individual foreign countries or international security organisations (such as NATO, OSCE, etc.). The EU security-related arrangements – Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and European Security and Defence

Policy (ESDP), launched on the threshold of the 21st century, – experienced numerous problems of political, administrative and financial nature and were unable to serve as proper venues for security cooperation with Russia. It took several years for them to shape their strategic vision and solve the above-mentioned problems.

Another problem was the lack of a proper conceptual/doctrinal basis for the EU-Russia security cooperation. While collaborative priorities in such spheres as economy, energy, transportation, environment, and education were more or less clearly defined, security cooperation remained in the 'grey zone' of the EU-Russia bilateral relations.

In 1997, the EU and Russia committed to a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, to run for an initial period of ten years. The Agreement established the institutional framework for bilateral relations, and set out the principal common objectives for trade and economic cooperation across a range of sectors, for political dialogue, and, to a limited extent, for cooperation in justice and home affairs. However, it said nothing about external security challenges. At that time neither the EU nor Russia saw each other as potential (or promising) partners in the field of international security.

In June 1999, the Common Strategy of the European Union on Russia was adopted by the European Council in Cologne. Again, the document was mainly devoted to other (non-security-related) issues. The EU preferred to limit itself to some general declarations on its intention to strengthen the strategic partnership between Russia and the European Union in various respects. Among the common challenges to the European continent the document emphasised the soft security problematique: environmental issues (air and water pollution, nuclear waste and nuclear reactors safety), organised crime, money-laundering, human trafficking, and drug trafficking. The only exception was a rather vague mention of possible collaboration with Moscow in the field of the so-called 'preventive diplomacy', which presupposed the following priorities:

- Enhancement of the EU-Russia cooperation to foster conflict prevention, crisis management, and conflict resolution, both within the OSCE and the UN.
- Promotion of arms control and disarmament and implementation of existing agreements, reinforcing export controls, preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and supporting nuclear disarmament and chemical weapons destruction (European Council, 1999).

Other priorities for the EU-Russia dialogue on international security were not specified. However, it should be noted, that since that time these two areas for cooperation have been firmly established as part of the EU-Russia collaborative agenda.

On the other hand, it must be said that, while the second item on the EU-Russia security cooperation agenda (arms control and disarmament) had already somewhat materialized (bilateral and multilateral consultations, discussions, mutual coordination of activities through various international forums, etc.) by the late 1990s, the first item (crisis management and conflict resolution) was almost fully neglected. Along with Russia, the EU had taken part in some consultative/mediating bodies, that dealt with local conflicts in the post-Soviet space (Transnistria, South Ossetia, and Nagorny Karabakh), but it had never been a key player in conflict management processes, usually limiting its participation to the role of an observer (Popesku, 2006). Moreover, in the 1990s the EU simply did not have adequate peace keeping capabilities, which started to develop only in the post-Kosovo period. Even by now the plan to form a 60,000-strong rapid reaction corps for peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations has not been fulfilled.

Russia's response to the EU Common Strategy on Russia, presented by the then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin at the EU-Russia summit in Helsinki in October 1999, merely echoed Brussels' initiatives and basically described Russia's concerns in view of the proposed EU enlargement (The Government of the Russian Federation, 1999). External security issues were completely ignored.

In March 2003 the European Commission presented its Communication on "Wider Europe Neighbourhood: A new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours" (Commission of the European Communities, 2003), outlining the basic principles of the European

Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The purpose of the ENP was to build friendly relations with the EU's new neighbours in the post-enlargement era. In October 2003 the European Council welcomed this initiative and urged the Commission and the Council to take it forward. Since then, the Commission has also held exploratory talks with partners in Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean, which already had Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or Association Agreements in force.

Russia was also eligible for participation in the ENP project. However, Moscow declined the proposal for various reasons. The main reason for Russia's discontent was that the ENP concept did not provide Moscow with a special status in its relations with Brussels. Russia felt that, because of its previous intense cooperation with the EU and its geoeconomic and geopolitical role in Europe, it deserved more than the position of just one of many neighbours of the Union (Sergunin, 2005).

In response to Russia's concerns about the ENP, the EU proposed a different model of bilateral relations. The Joint Statement, adopted at the St. Petersburg EU-Russia Summit in May 2003, agreed to introduce four common spaces (economy, trade, environment; freedom, security, justice (internal security); external security; research, education, culture), including one on external security cooperation. The Rome Summit in November 2003 endorsed the idea, although no details were provided for at that time. Finally, Road Maps to four common spaces (including the common space of external security) were adopted at the May 2005 EU-Russia Summit (Commission of the European Communities, 2005). The Road Map on External Security serves as the only systematic document for the EU-Russia dialogue in this area, even though it has no binding legal force. The common spaces concept became, on the one hand, a substitute for and, on the other hand, a complement to the ENP in the EU-Russia relations. In fact, Road Maps are designed in the same way as Action Plans that were signed by the ENP participants. Moreover, in 2007 Russia (formally not a member of the ENP) has joined the financial instrument of the programme, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

This study aims at two main research objectives: *First*, to examine how the current EU-Russia agenda on external security cooperation meets the existing security challenges (regionally and globally), and, *second*, what should be done to improve the EU-Russia external security dialogue.

2. The Co-operative Problematique/Priorities

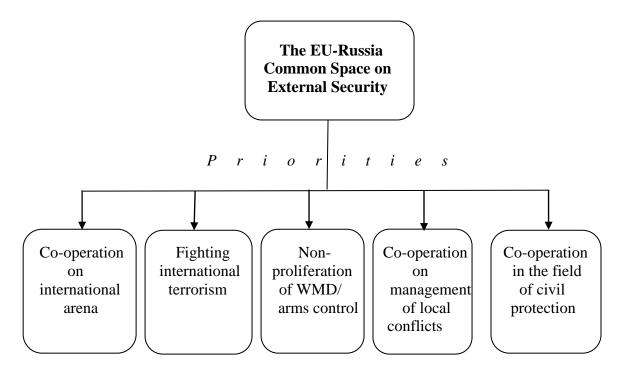
According to the road map for the EU-Russia common space on external security (Commission of the European Communities, 2005), the EU and Russia will strengthen cooperation and dialogue on security and crisis management in order to address the global and regional challenges and key threats of today, notably terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and existing and potential conflicts, both regional and local.

In particular, the cooperative agenda includes *five priority areas* (see Chart 1):

2.1 Strengthened Dialogue and Co-operation on the International Scene

Both Moscow and Brussels believe that multilateral diplomacy is one of the most important resources for solving the existing local, regional, and global problems. For this reason, they have sought to coordinate their activities in international organisations and various forums on the regular basis. According to the 2005 road map on external security cooperation, the EU and Russia decided to enhance cooperation in the following priority areas:

• Strengthening and deepening of the EU-Russia bilateral dialogue on political and security issues and on human rights.



- Strengthening of the international order based on effective multilateralism in support of the UN playing the central role, and of other relevant international and regional organisations, in particular the OSCE and the Council of Europe. This will include full implementation of all international commitments, including the OSCE commitments. It should be noted that in this case Russia differentiates between the EU, on the one hand, and the US and NATO, on the other. In contrast with the EU, which is seen as an important supporter of international law and order, Moscow treats the US and NATO as major 'spoilers' and 'troublemakers' in international relations, who regularly breach international law and undermine the role of international institutions and multilateral diplomacy. In all the most problematic cases (Kosovo, Iraq and South Ossetia) Russia appealed to the EU as a strong proponent of international law and a preferable mediator.
- Promoting conflict prevention and settlement through mutual result-oriented co-operation, including through joint initiatives. The EU and Russia expressed their will in consulting, on a regular basis, on early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management actions and postconflict rehabilitation.
- Exchange of views on new initiatives and on possible use of instruments related to security and stability.
- Strengthened political dialogue on all levels of the EU and Russian security and foreign policy strategies and concepts, and academic cooperation in this field.
- Exchange of information on relevant major international contacts of the EU and Russian officials with respect to the space of external security.
- Development of contacts between the EU and Russian military structures, including the European Defence Agency.
- Optimisation of agenda and parameters of the EU-Russia political dialogue to make it more effective.
- Cooperation between the EU Institute for Security Studies and the network of Russian academic bodies, including possible joint research projects on European security.
- The EU and Russia have decided to conclude an agreement on protection of classified information, which will allow for exchange of classified information in the context of EU-

Russia cooperation on any matter of common interest. Negotiations on technical arrangements are still ongoing (European External Action Service, 2011).

2.2 Fight Against Terrorism

In this field, the EU and Russia have agreed to develop cooperation in the following priority areas:

- Implementation of the Joint Statement on the fight against terrorism, adopted in November 2002;
- Intensification and enhancement of co-operation between the EU and Russia on all relevant international and regional forums (including, *inter alia*, the UN Security Council Counter-terrorism Committee), and building capacity of third countries to fight terrorism;
- Co-operation within the UN in implementing UN Security Council resolutions, in particular 1373 and 1566, to improve and strengthen international efforts in the fight against terrorism;
- Co-operation between the EU and Russia on finding, denying safe haven and bringing to
 justice, on the basis of the principle to extradite or prosecute, any person who supports,
 facilitates, participates or attempts to participate in the financing, planning, preparation or
 commission of terrorist acts or provides safe havens;
- Co-operation within the UN on elaborating under UN aegis an integrated strategy to respond to global threats and challenges of the 21st century in the context of advancing towards the goals approved in the UN Millennium Declaration;
- Becoming party to all 12 UN counter-terrorism conventions and protocols and implementing fully their provisions;
- Promotion of the early signature and ratification of the UN International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism;
- Promotion of the early finalisation of the UN Comprehensive Convention Against International Terrorism;
- Co-operation within the Council of Europe for developing and adopting instruments in the fight against terrorism;
- Co-operation within the OSCE as a forum for the promotion of international norms and standards, and taking collective decisions on crucial matters of European security in order to strengthen its antiterrorist efforts, as well as promoting implementation of the OSCE commitments in this field;
- Developing co-operation to strengthen the fight against the financing of terrorism, including freezing of funds and other terrorist assets, in accordance with the relevant international instruments.
- It was proposed that co-operation should be intensified through dialogue at both political and expert level between the relevant EU and Russian bodies *inter alia* by:
 - o Information exchange on the issues of the fight against terrorism through consultations in Brussels and in Moscow or by other means;
 - o Consultations on the eve of major antiterrorist meetings to exchange views on positions and possible joint actions;
 - o Consultations during such events to co-ordinate positions and activities.

2.3 Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their means of Delivery,

Strengthening of Export Control Regimes and Disarmament

As mentioned, the EU-Russian cooperation in this sphere has already started in the 1990s. For example, in 1999 the EU Council launched a "European Union Cooperation Programme for Non-

proliferation and Disarmament in the Russian Federation." The objective of the programme was to support Russia in its efforts towards arms control and disarmament. The programme was supposed to:

- cooperate with the Russian Federation in its pursuit of a safe, secure and environmentally sound dismantlement and/or reconversion of infrastructure and equipment linked to its WMD;
- provide a legal and operational framework for an enhanced European Union role in cooperative risk reduction activities in the Russian Federation through project-orientated cooperation, and
- promote coordination as appropriate of programmes and projects in this field at Community, Member State and international level.
- In its first phase the programme was supposed to contribute to:
- a chemical weapons destruction pilot plant in Gorny, Saratov region, Russia
- experimental studies on plutonium transport, storage and disposition (Council of the European Union, 1999).
- In June 2001, the EU took a decision to provide Gosatomnadzor, the Russian nuclear safety authority, with €6,080,000 to develop the regulatory basis and documents for the disposition of weapons grade plutonium (Council of the European Union, 2001).
- According to the 2005 road map, the priority areas for the EU-Russia co-operation should include:
- Dialogue on non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, including regional aspects, for further convergence of positions and possible coordination of activities within existing international mechanisms, including relevant international and regional forums;
- Promotion of universal adherence to and greater effectiveness of the international instruments (such as Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological & Tocsin Weapons Convention (BTWC), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), International Atomic Energy Agency, Hague International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCOC), etc.), enhancement of export control regimes (Missile Technology Control Regime, Nuclear Suppliers Group, Wassenaar Arrangement), reinforcement of compliance with multilateral treaty regimes and other international obligations such as UN Security Council resolution 1540, as well as strengthening of export controls for WMD, their means of delivery, conventional weapons, and related goods and technologies;
- Enhancement of ongoing work, including that in the context of the G8 Global Partnership (designed at the Kananaskis meeting in June 2002);
- Strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament activities (e.g. co-ordination of the EU and Russian positions at the NPT Review Conferences, promotion of earliest entry into force of CTBT, contribution to early commencement of negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices) and arms control;
- Strengthening of chemical and biological non-proliferation activities (e.g. co-operation on implementing action plans of promoting the CWC universality and national implementation, strengthening of BTWC through promoting its universality and implementation as well as developing adequate measures to verify compliance with the BTWC);
- Co-operation on further universalization of the HCOC in facilitating subscription in particular of countries possessing missile technology or capability to develop it and on furthering implementation of the Code's confidence building measures;
- Development of a legally binding arrangement for a global system of control for the non-proliferation of missiles and their related technology;

- Active support through the UN and the Conference on Disarmament to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the promotion of international co-operation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;
- Comparative analysis of EU's and Russian approaches to non-proliferation with a view to elaborating a joint document on strategic partnership in this area;
- Enhancement of ongoing work on threats posed by old ammunition, including antipersonnel land-mines, and explosive remnants of war;
- Strengthening co-operation to resume work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva;
- Establishment of a channel for regular exchange of views within existing formats on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons;
- Dialogue on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action on the illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its aspects.
- Co-operation should be intensified through dialogue at both political and expert level between relevant EU and Russian bodies by:
 - o Information exchange on the issues of non-proliferation through consultations in Brussels and in Moscow or by other means;
 - o Consultations on the eve of major non-proliferation or disarmament events to exchange views on positions and possible joint activities;
 - Consultations during such events to exchange views on positions and to co-ordinate activities;
 - o Paying special attention to co-operation and regular consultations between the EU and Russia in the context of the G8 Global Partnership.

2.4 Co-operation in Crisis Management

It is well-known that the number of conflicts (some of them frozen) in the EU-Russian neighbourhood remains high: Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, the Middle East, and Western Sahara. Both Russia and the EU have direct interest in working with partners to promote resolution of these conflicts', as they undermine EU's efforts to promote political reform and economic development in the neighbourhood and could affect EU's own security through regional escalation, unmanageable migratory flows, disruption of energy supply and trade routes, or the creation of breeding grounds for terrorist and criminal activity of all kinds.

The EU is already active in preventing and resolving conflicts but, as many European experts believe, more should be done. A number of CFSP and ESDP measures have been launched. EU Special Representatives have been appointed, and police, border control and border assistance missions are developing their activities. According to some experts, however, these actions need to be planned and coordinated with longer-term EC policies, which address the overall institutional and governance context and thus favour stabilisation (Popesku, 2006). The deployment of all available tools, whether first, second or third pillar, would increase EU influence and avoid the limitations of short-term crisis management. Both Moscow and Brussels believe that the EU can make an important contribution by working around the conflict issues, promoting similar reforms on both sides of the boundary lines, and to foster convergence between political, economic and legal systems, enabling greater social inclusion and contributing to confidence building. The example of the EU Border Assistance Mission to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova integrating European Council and CFSP instruments in one approach shows how this can work. In other cases, depending on the nature of the conflict, increasing the capacities of ministries dealing with refugees, promoting the integration of minorities through language instruction, supporting post-conflict infrastructure rehabilitation, including cultural heritage, or implementing local income generation projects can constitute appropriate confidence-building measures.

The EU's institutional involvement in conflict settlement mechanisms in the pre-war 2008 (South Ossetia) period varied widely. It was a full participant in the Quartet (Middle East Peace Process) and participates as an observer in the 5+2 talks (Transnistria), while the Commission was an observer in the Joint Control Commission (South Ossetia). Only individual member states participated in the Minsk Group (Nagorno-Karabakh) and the UN Friends of Georgia (Abkhazia). According to the European views, given the EU's history of peace and stability through regional integration, the EU has added value to bring to the efforts of individual member states and must be prepared to assume a greater role in the resolution of conflicts in the neighbourhood.

As far as the Transnistria conflict is concerned, the negotiation format is most active at the level of bilaterals between Chisinau, Tiraspol and Moscow, with less activity so far in the 5+2 format (Russia, Ukraine, OSCE, EU, US + Moldova and Transnistria). While Russia believes that the bilateral format is more efficient, the EU pushes forcefully for the 5+2 format to be the principal negotiating forum. According to the European experts, the EU should do this with the aid of a high-level political representative for Moldova and with the professional support of the existing EU special representative (Emerson, 2009: 76). Under the EU pressure, the 5+2 negotiations have been resumed in late 2011. According to some expert assessment, there is a chance for the EU-Russia successful cooperation on the Transnistria conflict resolution. (Sergunin, 2012a).

Regarding the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the EU – both institutionally and at the level of individual member states – was involved in mediating these conflicts from the early 1990s. Along with the Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, the French President Nicola Sarkozy, who chaired the European Council in the second half of 2008, was a key figure in the cease-fire and post-conflict settlement negotiations in August 2008. He also played a crucial role in launching of the Geneva talks on security arrangements and IDP (internally displaced persons) return issues in the region, which began on 15 October 2008, with the participation of Russia, Georgia, EU, US, OSCE, and UN. The non-recognition of the independence of these two entities by all parties except Russia has presented difficulties from the start.

According to one scenario (designed by European experts), it is possible to have a functional cooperation with both Abkhazia and South Ossetia by all parties, including the EU, but without formal recognition of these new *de facto* states. As specialists note, there will be political reluctance to grant even this degree of implicit partial recognition, given that it may be perceived as a concession to Russia, which is seen by many Europeans as a revisionist power. On the other hand, some European experts believe that Abkhazia (more so than South Ossetia) is reluctant to become part of the Russian Federation, but rather wants to start developing as part of modern Europe. Analysts advise that this ambition should be met with an open EU position for economic relations and people contacts. They also suggest that a move by the EU to cooperate functionally with Abkhazia and South Ossetia without recognition could be reciprocated by Russia over Kosovo, with it moving to a position of abstention, rather than seeking constantly in UNSC meetings to block EU actions there (Emerson, 2009: 76-77).

As for the Nagorny Karabakh problem, there have been years of attempts by the OSCE-sponsored Minsk Group co-chairs (France as the only representative from the EU, Russia, the USA) to mediate a settlement in this region. The proposed settlement included such elements as cession by Armenia of the occupied territories surrounding Nagorny Karabakh, guaranteed transport corridors for both Nagorny Karabakh into Armenia and for Nakichevan into Azerbaijan-proper, and deferral of a final status agreement for Nagorny Karabakh. Ideas for settlement of the constitutional regime have included a special status for Nagorny Karabakh with links to both Armenia and Azerbaijan. According to these proposals, Nagorny Karabakh could be open to the economies of both Armenia and Azerbaijan, with a provision for refugee return, notably to the former Azeri-majority town of Sushi.

Because the Minsk group is seen by many negotiating parties as inefficient, now both Russia and Turkey seek to take the initiative over Nagorny Karabakh unilaterally. Moscow and Ankara have initiated a series of meetings with both Armenian and Azeri leaders. The two countries' proposals suggest that the conflict resolution process might start with an opening of the Turkish-Armenian

frontier for normal trade and movement of people, the removal of remaining Armenian claims (e.g. implicit in its constitution) to its earlier territorial frontiers, and moves in favour of historic reconciliation.

The European experts believe that the EU could (and should) join with Turkey and Russia in taking a lead to get a settlement. Another formula might see a reconfiguration of the Minsk Group to include Turkey with France's role converted into an EU role (Emerson, 2009: 77-78).

The EU-Russian joint peace-keeping operations in various parts of the world present another promising venue for security cooperation between Brussels and Moscow. At the EU-Russian Nice summit (November 2008) Moscow and Brussels decided to launch a series of joint peace-keeping operations in Africa. For example, the Russian helicopter groups participated in the EU-led peace-keeping operations in Chad and Central African Republic. This experience was positively assessed by both sides (Terekhov, 2009).

As follows from the European External Action Service's report, good cooperation continued between EU and the Russian naval mission deployed off the Somali coast, enhancing the levels of protection provided to merchant shipping (European External Action Service, 2011).

Russia and the EU agreed to move forward on a framework agreement in the field of crisis management operations. First expert talks have taken place in 2010 and continued in 2011 (European External Action Service, 2011).

According to some European experts, the EU's pro-active position on conflict resolution is predetermined by the Union's nature as a 'normative power' (Romanova, 2011; Tocci et al., 2008; Tocci, 2009). Adherence to democratic norms has resulted in the EU's desire to establish a zone of peace and stability in Europe's neighbourhood. And here the EU can meet Russia's interest in having a more secure and stable neighbourhood as well. Moreover, as some Russian experts believe (Makarychev, 2009), Russia itself is increasingly becoming a 'normative power,' and this can be helpful in bridging mental 'gaps' and facilitating mutual understanding between Moscow and Brussels.

2.5 Co-operation in the Field of Civil Protection

One more strategic objective of the EU-Russia co-operation is to strengthen their dialogue on promoting common ability to respond to disaster and emergencies, including in specific crisis management situations:

- Strengthening of co-ordination on the most effective use of available capabilities in the field of civil protection
- Work on implementation of the administrative arrangement between the EU Monitoring and Information Centre and the Operations Centre of Russia's EMERCOM (Emergency Committee, now the Ministry for Emergency Situations), signed on 19 May 2004. In particular, to exchange contact details to keep in touch on a 24-hour basis; to exchange templates for early warnings and requests/offers for assistance; to exchange information during an emergency, where appropriate; to conduct communication exercises on an agreed basis; and to enable operation staff to spend one week a year in the operational centre of the other service in order to gain practical experience;
- Continued discussion on concrete areas of EU-Russia co-operation, including civil protection and assistance in response to natural disasters and crisis situations.
- Exchange of information on lessons learnt from terrorist attacks;
- Invitation, on a case-by-case basis, of experts to specific technical workshops and symposiums on civil protection issues;
- Invitation, on a case-by-case basis, of observers to specific exercises organized by the EU or Russia;
- Facilitating mutual assistance in search and rescue operations for submarines, ships, and aircraft in emergency situations.

Many European experts believe that civil protection is a non-controversial field, in which there could be established a coordination framework, bringing in also the Eastern partner states and Central Asia. Some specialists suggest establishing a Pan-European Civil Emergencies Facility, which would develop operational procedures for common actions, and coordinate supply capabilities and logistics (Emerson 2009: 78).

Such an ambitious agenda calls for a close co-operation between the EU and Russia and presupposes the engagement of significant material and financial resources on both sides. A number of questions come up on the research agenda: Is such co-operation feasible? Does this list of priorities adequately reflect a real EU-Russia external security agenda? These (and related) issues should be thoroughly discussed both by practitioners and academics.

3. Problems and Solutions

Although Russia has increasingly embraced the growing number of cooperative projects with Europe over the last decade, there have also been a number of limitations restricting Russia's engagement and the success of different projects. Therefore, when thinking about the future of external security cooperation with the EU, it is important to note, that in the current situation both challenges to and opportunities for such a co-operation can be identified. Therefore, the research objective of this study is to highlight a number of the most serious challenges and obstacles to enhancing effective security cooperation, and to suggest a number of possible solutions to those problems.

Problems and obstacles to Brussels-Moscow co-operation can be identified on both the EU and Russian sides (Sergunin, 2011):

- The roots of these issues go back to the very basics, e.g. to a different understanding of the notion of security by the EU and Russia. While the European Union supports a comprehensive/multidimensional understanding of security not only 'hard' but also 'soft' security problematique (and the road map on external security suggests this perspective), official Moscow still prefers a traditional vision of the concept, concentrating on its military/'hard' security aspects. Few Russian experts profess and promote views that are close to the European vision of security.
- There was also a fundamental difference between the EU and Russia in understanding another area of the EU-Russia common space on external security, namely: the struggle against international terrorism. For example, while Europeans have viewed the Chechen rebels as "freedom-fighters", Moscow has seen them as terrorists, and while for Moscow the Hamas has been a radical organisation, yet still eligible for further political dialogue, the EU has basically perceived this Palestinian grouping as a purely terrorist movement.
- In contrast with the EU that prefers multilateral diplomacy and approaches, Moscow still emphases bilateral (state-to-state) relations (such as 'special relationships' with Germany, France, Italy, etc.) instead of the EU-Russia dialogue, displaying a certain mistrust of supranational institutions. Moscow believes that bilateral contacts are more efficient that multilateral politics. In practical terms, it means that from the very beginning Moscow has not perceived the EU as a reliable security provider.
- The current economic and political climate both in Russia and Europe has also created some difficulties in the EU-Russia relations. Increases in oil prices made Russia stronger in the beginning of the previous decade, while the EU seemed a great deal weaker as a result of its constitutional and monetary crises (it is already clear that the Kremlin considers Berlin, London, Paris and Rome of more significance than Brussels). As the European Commission concluded, the EU could not take Russia for granted (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).
- Some experts believe that the EU-Russia co-operation on external security will be complicated by their diminishing strategic role in the world: they are no longer seen as

- important security providers; other centres of power (such as the US, China, Japan, etc.) will play a major role in the emerging world security order in the foreseeable future (Karaganov, 2010). On the other hand, the same experts point out, that common security threats and the need for survival can push the EU and Russia to create some new security arrangements and even establish a Union of Europe.
- The lack of a proper legal base in the EU-Russia relations is also a serious barrier to further security co-operation. The old Partnership and Co-operation Agreement between the EU and Russia expired on 30 November 2007. Both Brussels and Moscow have agreed to prolong the PCA on the annual basis until the conclusion of a new agreement. However, firstly, this agreement is inadequate for the existing level of the EU-Russia security co-operation, since it was concluded at the time, when the very idea of the EU-Russia security co-operation was at a very rudimentary stage. Secondly, because of certain problems in Russia's bilateral relations with new EU member-states (such as Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, etc.), the EU-Russia negotiations on a new agreement haven't seen any substantial progress. Thirdly, both Brussels and Moscow have only a rather vague idea of what the new co-operative agreement should look like. While Brussels does not completely dismiss the idea of bringing Moscow to the ENP framework, Russia wants, on the one hand, something very special, and, on the other, something comprehensive/global. In any case, the lack of a proper legal framework remains an impediment to the EU-Russia external security co-operation.
- The EU-Russian dialogue on external security lacks a proper institutional basis. To provide this dialogue with some institutional support, Germany and Russia launched the so-called Meseberg process by suggesting to establish a Committee on Foreign and Security Policy at the ministerial level (June 2010) (Memorandum, 2010; http://www.bigness.ru/news/2011-02-07/politika/121650/). France and Poland have recently supported this idea. The suggested agenda for future discussions in the committee is the Transnistrian conflict resolution and creation of a European missile defence system (http://inotv.rt.com/2011-05-24/Rossiya-vbivaet-klin-mezhdu-Centralnoj). Similar committees on foreign and security policy already exist at the bilateral level (for example, in Russia's relations with Germany and France) and have proved to be efficient. This experience can be successfully used in the framework of a similar EU-Russia institution. To date, however, such a committee is still in its formative phase (Sergunin, 2012a).
- EU projects within specific areas should be better co-ordinated with activities of other regional and sub-regional institutions NATO, OSCE, Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Barents-Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), Arctic Council, Nordic Council, etc., and the Commission should be granted with sufficient powers to be able to co-operate with such bodies. The EU also emphasizes the need to use the experience and know-how of regional bodies as well as to establish an efficient division of labour among them, building on their respective competencies and geographical coverage, although in practice the implementation of such a stance has turned out to be difficult. Instead of contributing to discord between the Nordic countries (as was the case with the BEAC), new regional projects need to function as a unifying element among the EU countries. A division of labour is called for among these countries. It is also obvious that the projects' financial conditions and administrative procedures should be transparent.
- The series of so-called 'colour' revolutions in the post-Soviet space (Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan) have also contributed to the deterioration of the EU-Russia relations. Moscow was suspicious about Brussels' involvement in these events and did not trust it as a security partner. To reassure Moscow and develop trust with Russia, the EU should be more transparent and cautious in its politics in the CIS space and should not challenge Moscow's (legitimate) geopolitical ambitions in this area.

- Arms control regime in Europe is another problematic (and very complicated) issue on the EU-Russia agenda. The only international arms control agreement, applicable to the region, is the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, concluded between NATO and the Warsaw Pact in 1990. At that stage the EU did not play any significant role in negotiating and implementing this treaty. After the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the USSR, the OSCE has been basically taking care of the CFE monitoring and revision process. The Baltic States refused to abide by the Treaty, because it was concluded when they were still part of the Soviet Union. Finland and Sweden also refused to join the treaty claiming their neutral (non-aligned) status. Since the CFE Treaty aimed to reduce excess military equipment, deemed essential for launching surprise attacks and initiating large-scale offensive operations, it has played a positive role in the prevention of military confrontation and conflict in the area.
- In 1999, the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty introduced a new regime for arms control, which discarded the bipolar concept of power balance. Instead of the group structure (North Atlantic Group, Budapest/Tashkent Group), it was based on national and territorial ceilings, codified in the agreement's protocols as binding limits. This opened the CFE Treaty up to European countries which were not yet parties, including the Baltic States, Finland and Sweden. However, the agreement has not yet come into force, mainly because of the refusal of NATO states for various reasons to ratify it.
- Finally, in 2007, Russia, having exhausted its patience in waiting for the CFE Treaty ratification by the EU/NATO nations, made a decision to suspend its participation in the Treaty. Although both the EU and NATO expressed their regret with regard to the Russian decision, in reality they did not take any concrete steps to revive the CFE Treaty ratification/modification process. The future of the Treaty remains unclear.
- It should also be noted that the CFE Treaty is applicable only to land forces. Naval armaments are mainly excluded from the negotiation processes. Unilateral measures were taken for the reduction of naval armaments and naval activities, but they related only to obsolete weapons and cannot be a substitute for a real arms control regime. According to Volker Heise, the basic hesitancy of some EU and NATO nations regarding naval armaments limitations in the Baltic Sea region seems to be that, if you initiate naval arms control in one of the seven seas, this could lead to restrictions on maritime flexibility in other seas as well (Heise, 1996, 219). However, given the changing nature of Russia/EU/NATO relations, these parties in principle could initiate negotiations on naval arms control to further improve the security environment in the region.
- Along with the arms control regime, confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) are a very important element of any regional security system (Sergunin, 2011). Transparency can provide reliable evidence that certain behaviour and actions do not constitute a threat, and help to reduce mistrust and misperception. Another positive implication of such a process is that debating, developing, negotiating and implementing CSBMs brings the parties into a dialogue and needs interaction. The result of these activities is a transformation not only in thinking and perceptions but also in behaviour and policies. Implementation of CSBMs results in establishing principles, rules, and norms, or standards, of conduct for regulating the behaviour of states. Moreover, CSBMs strengthen existing, or encourage the creation of new, multilateral mechanisms and institutions to serve as a solid basis for security and stability in a region.
- In addition to the 1994 and 1999 OSCE Vienna documents on CSBMs, the EU and Russia could develop a number of new approaches. For example, in the case of NATO/EU military conduct in East and Central Europe, these countries could refrain from military exercises on the territory of newcomers, especially near the Russian borders, including the Kaliningrad Region. Along with spatial limitations, temporal limitations on Russian and NATO and EU

- military activities in the region could also be established. Military-to-military contacts, joint exercises, exchanges and visits should be encouraged. The countries of the region should exchange information on their military doctrines, defence budgets and spending as well as on major arms export or import programmes.
- To conclude, the above recommendations, if implemented, could not only significantly strengthen military security in the region but also create a favourable atmosphere for cooperation on 'soft' security issues.
- Joint peace-keeping activities and crisis management is one more disputable question between Moscow and Brussels. For example, the issue of the division of labour in peace-keeping operations in the post-Soviet space has been left aside by both partners. The EU has sought to replace the Russian peace-keeping forces in Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The EU has also tried to mediate in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict on Nagorny Karabakh. However, Moscow looks at these activities with suspicion, and the EU-Russian road map to the common space on external security limits itself to some rather vague declarations and does not provide any details on these issues, which continue to be a source of instability in the CIS space.
- The EU also was discontent with the Russian position on Transnistria, particularly with the lack of progress on the negotiations about the conflict there and called for a resumption of the official 5+2 negotiations with the aim of finding a solution in the very near future. The Polish Presidency (second half of 2011) has succeeded in persuading the 5+2 group members to resume negotiations. There were two rounds of negotiations in Vilnius (30 November-1 December 2011) and Dublin (28-29 February 2012) although without a visible success. It should be noted that some experts believe that the resumption of the 5+2 negotiations is a result of the OCSE's rather than the Polish EU Presidency's diplomatic activism (Sergunin, 2012b).
- Although both the EU and Russia are positive about the resumption of the official 5+2 negotiations they differ by their approaches to the format and content of these talks. The EU favours discussing some 'serious business', such as the future status of Transnistria or changing the mandate for the peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone. In contrast with this 'grand policy' vision, Russia supports the 'step-by-step' or 'low politics' approach which is based on the resumption of the Moldova-Transnistria dialogue on concrete issues, such transportation, customs procedures, education, mobility of people, etc. (Sergunin, 2012a).
- The 2008 South Caucasian war triggered a serious crisis in the EU-Russia relations. On the one hand, the EU (led by the French presidency) was helpful in striking a compromise on cease-fire and post-conflict settlement (Medvedev-Sarkozy plan). The EU Observer Mission in Georgia was established. As mentioned above, the Geneva group for consultations between Georgia, Abkhazia and South Ossetia was created under the auspices of the EU and Russia.
- On the other hand, Brussels condemned Russia's 'disproportional' response to the Georgian invasion of South Ossetia and Russia providing Abkhazia and South Ossetia with state independence. For example, in July 2009 the EU noted that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev had paid a visit to South Ossetia (which Brussels considers to be a Georgian region) without the prior consent of the government of Georgia. The EU claimed this visit to be incompatible with the principle of territorial integrity and expressed its concerns about its effects on the international efforts to stabilise the region. In the same statement the EU reiterated its support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity (Council of the European Union, 2009a). The EU exhibited the same reaction to Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's visit to Abkhazia in August 2009 (Council of the European Union, 2009b), and the EU observers in Georgia have complained that the Russian side created numerous technical problems for them.

- For these reasons, the EU-Russian cooperation on crisis management in the post-Soviet space remains, in fact, blocked. Both sides believe that the lack of progress in this area is explained by the EU-Russia fundamental differences in understanding of such basic categories as international security, conflict resolution, and peace-keeping. Since 2008 Moscow has heavily lobbied the idea of a treaty on comprehensive European security to establish a sort of a new code of conduct for all international actors on the European continent. The Medvedev initiative, however, met a cool reception on the EU side (not to mention Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, etc.).
- The conflict in Chechnya is another source of tensions between the EU and Russia. This conflict has provoked widespread humanitarian problems, and the continuing crisis has threatened to tip the wider Northern Caucasus into disarray and conflict. The EU is thus concerned to support the stabilisation, recovery, and, ultimately, the development of the North Caucasus (http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/csp/index.htm).
- According to the EU assessments, the North Caucasus region is characterized by flagrant socio-economic inequality, massive unemployment, and a general breakdown of education and social services, in turn provoking general disaffection and disorder. A decade of conflict and instability has largely destroyed civilian infrastructure in Chechnya itself, while oil and chemical pollution and general environmental degradation pose a serious threat to human health (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).
- According to the EU assessments, low-intensity armed conflict and inter-communal tensions persist, rights violations are commonplace, and the application of the rule of law is heavily restricted. Small arms and landmines will continue to pose a formidable threat to human security, life and livelihood for some time to come; civilian casualty rates are higher than in Afghanistan or Cambodia, and around a third of agricultural land is affected. There has still been no effort to date to comprehensively survey the mine problem, let alone start clearance. UNICEF estimates that 500,000 landmines have been planted in Chechnya, making it one of the most landmine polluted zones in the world; some estimates put the number of mines at six times this amount (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).
- The EU has signalled its intention to play a beneficial role (e.g., through the 2005commitment of €20 million from the EC budget to contribute to economic and social recovery), while recognizing that the Russian government must play the leading part in bringing about the peaceful and durable settlement of the conflict and regional socioeconomic recovery. The Kremlin claims to have invested some €2 billion in Chechnya alone over the past five years.
- Yet, for the EU, it is far from clear that instability can be contained; there have been a number of terrorist incidents throughout Russia over last 10-15 years, notably the bombing of apartment blocks in Moscow (1999), the notorious Dubrovka theatre (2002) and Beslan (2004) sieges, a series of bombings on the Moscow–St. Petersburg railway and Domodedovo airport (2011). The EU has been particularly concerned, especially since the Nalchik events of autumn 2005 that instability is threatening to spread to other parts of the North Caucasus. Given the relatively fragile hold exercised by the Russian authorities on the multi-ethnic Federation, some European experts believe that further regional or sub-regional conflict cannot be ruled out (Commission of the European Communities, 2006).

4. Conclusions

Several conclusions emerge from the above analysis:

• Identification of international security as an important priority of the EU-Russia co-operation (and its inclusion on the list of the EU-Russia common spaces) exemplifies significant progress in bilateral relations and a growing trust between Moscow and Brussels (although the relationship had and continues to have its ups and downs).

- There are some specific positive results of the EU-Russia co-operation on security matters: a certain rapprochement of security philosophies and doctrines; more transparency and mutual trust in the security-related spheres; creation of some new institutional mechanisms; a more active engagement of existing regional and sub-regional organisations in security co-operation; more co-ordination of security policies on the global level; some joint operations to fight international terrorism, drug trafficking, smuggling, etc.; joint military exercises, military exchange programmes and visits; enhancement of exchange of security-related information, and so on.
- At the same time, as compared to other spheres the EU-Russia dialogue, the common space on external security still remains a less developed area of bilateral co-operation. Many of the declared priorities for such co-operation, specified in the respective road map, still remain only on paper.
- There exist numerous barriers to the EU-Russia security co-operation and, consequently, to implementation of the road map on external security. They include: differences in the understanding of basic security-related concepts, such as the nature of 'hard' and 'soft' security (and interaction between them), security threats, confidence-building, peace-keeping, international terrorism, arms control and its priorities, etc.; the residual mistrust between Russia and Europe; differences in current EU and Russian geopolitical priorities (especially in the post-Soviet space, the Balkans and the Middle East); internal problems (for instance, for Moscow these are the ongoing Chechen war and growing authoritarian tendencies in the Russian political life; for the EU – the uncertainties with the future of the Eurozone, difficulties with absorption of new members, debates around the needs and priorities for the next round of enlargement, the dispute between the so-called 'old' and 'new' Europe, including attitude to Russia and negotiations on a new EU-Russia co-operation agreement, etc.); lack of progress in the regional and sub-regional arms control process; lack of institutional support for some critical areas of security co-operation (e.g., peace-keeping, fighting international terrorism, intelligence co-operation, defence industry co-operation, etc.); lack of proper coordination and division of labour between various regional and sub-regional institutions, and so on.
- It is hard to believe that these numerous barriers to the EU-Russia security co-operation can be easily removed. It is clear that there is still a long way to go until the entire situation changes for the better, and the desired co-operation finally materializes. However, looking at the positive aspects of the current situation, we can conclude that there is a growing feeling among the Russian and European politicians and experts that the time is ripe for some radical changes in mutual perceptions and practical policies, and that there is a need for political will on the both sides to start moving in the right direction.

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