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# EU and Russian discourse on energy relations

Petr Kratochvíl *, Lukáš Tichý

*Institute of International Relations Prague, Nerudova 3, 118 50 Praha 1, Czech Republic*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- We explore 201 textual units related to energy relations between the EU and Russia.
- We identify three key concepts: integration, liberalization, and diversification.
- We show that these concepts are interpreted very differently by each side.
- The "integrationist" interpretation is dominant, while diversification remains marginal.

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## ABSTRACT

The paper explores the dominant interpretations of the EU–Russian energy relations by identifying three dominant concepts around which these interpretations revolve: (1) integration, (2) liberalization, and (3) diversification. Building on a detailed discourse analysis of 97 textual units produced by EU leaders and institutions and 104 documents and speeches by Russian policy-makers, the paper argues that these three discourses differ widely in their assessment of the two partners' mutual ties, both in terms of the relationship's symmetry and the perceived benefits for each partner. The paper comes up with two basic arguments. First, in spite of the shared usage of the three basic notions by both sides, the interpretations of each of the discourses are widely different in the EU and in Russia, which causes continuous frictions and misunderstandings. Second and surprisingly, the discourse of integration is dominant both in the EU and Russia, which shows that the claims about the alleged securitization of EU–Russian energy relations are clearly exaggerated.



## 1. Introduction

While 10 years ago, energy security was still seen as a strange term which remained largely unknown to the general public, it has quickly moved to the limelight of European politics. In particular, a series of energy crises in the relations between the EU, Russia and the transit countries in 2006, 2007, and 2009 have significantly contributed to the politicization and, indeed, the securitization of the energy problematique. Although Russia might have been perceived as a relatively stable supplier of energy resources to the EU at the turn of the century, today, in some EU quarters, the discussions about the need of diversification are centered on the allegedly too strong dependence of the EU on Russia.

The debate about the mutual dependence of the two actors is, however, a complex one (cf. Proedrou, 2007, 2010; Paillard, 2010; Kaveshnikov, 2010; Binhack and Tichý, 2012, p. 61). It seems that the energy interdependence between Russia and the EU is to some extent asymmetrical in favor of the EU as Russia is more dependent on the EU energy market than the EU is on the Russian energy supplies. In addition, in the case of an interruption of import of crude oil or natural gas from Russia, the EU can relatively easily replace the energy sources from Russia by the sources from other suppliers (Norway, Saudi Arabia, etc., cf. Binhack and Tichý, 2012, p. 61). The Russian Federation would be far more affected due to its dependence on the EU energy market both in terms of geography (no diversification alternatives in the medium term) and in terms of finances (the high budgetary dependence on the financial means from the EU) (cf. Binhack and Tichý, 2012, p. 61).

## 2. EU energy policy, or the policies of EU member states?

As much as a unified EU energy policy towards Russia is discussed, substantial differences remain between EU member states, in terms of both their policies and their dependence on Russia. This pertains in particular to the division between the old and new EU member states. The argument about the asymmetrical

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +420 251 108 111; fax: +420 251 108 222.
*E-mail addresses:* kratochvil@iir.cz, petr.kratochvil@centrum.cz (P. Kratochvíl), tichy@iir.cz (L. Tichý).

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dependence of Russia on the EU is fully valid for the old EU-15 (for example, Germany currently imports about 45% of its gas from Russia, and the corresponding figures are 33% for Italy and only 21% for France). Vis-à-vis most of the new member states, however, Russia has a much more favorable position. Some of these are entirely dependent on the Russian resources (the Baltic States, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria are 100% dependent on Russian natural gas), and their ability to switch to alternative sources or alternative suppliers is severely limited as well. A complete interruption of the delivery of Russian energy supplies would thus have catastrophic consequences for many new member states (Proedrou, 2010; Binhack and Tichý, 2012).

This factor, together with the instability in Russia and in the transit countries, lies behind the continuous efforts of the EU to reduce its dependence on imported energy resources and so to increase its energy security. For this reason, the EU is trying to establish and develop a robust energy policy with goals both inside and outside the Union's territory. The main aim of the internal dimension of the policy is to create a fully liberalized and interconnected internal market in electricity and gas whereas the external dimension focuses on increasing the EU's energy security by the means of route and supplier diversification and generally by ensuring stable supplies.

Although the energy policy developed rather slowly, a series of recent events have contributed to its strengthening. These events range from the external shocks induced by the repeated energy crises to the legislative changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon. The Treaty stipulates that the energy policy is an area of shared competence between the EU and the member states, which means that in these matters (such as energy security, liberalization of the internal energy market, interconnection of energy networks, etc.) member states are bereft of the possibility to wholly control these strategic areas.

Another substantial change introduced by the Lisbon Treaty is the increased role of EU leaders, such as the High Representative and the European Council President, who are now responsible for the Union's energy cooperation and dialog with non-EU countries (for example, Russia, the US, China, etc.) and regions (cf. Termini, 2009). The competence distribution in energy policy among the main EU institutions is relatively clearly defined in the Lisbon Treaty, but the practical functioning of the quadrangle (the European Commission,[1] the European Parliament,[2] the High Representative, and the rotating Council presidency[3]) is much more complicated. The European Council[4] can also influence the policy since it can decide on the general course regarding a particular country, region or specific policy. Hence, for the policy to work effectively, "the combined politico-technical expertise and the weight of the institutional quadrangle are required to 'play in tune'" (Braun, 2011, pp. 4 and 8).

The Commission continuously tries to create a common European identity in this area and it is relatively successful in this endeavor, as it is gradually becoming more and more important in EU energy policy. This is corroborated by the Commission's Energy 2020, which speaks about the consistency of the policy with other EU activities, implicitly acknowledging a specific role for the Commission (European Commission, 2010). In September 2011, the European Commission made a further step in this direction when it asked the member states for a stronger mandate for the negotiation and enforcement of objectives of the EU energy policy towards Russia, Turkey and the countries of Central Asia and North Africa[5] (European Commission, 2011).

However, some member states still prefer bilateral ties with Russia over the common EU energy policy. An example of such bilateralism in the past was the agreement between Russia and Germany to build the Nord Stream gas pipeline, or the Russian–Italian negotiations on the construction of the South Stream gas pipeline. On the other hand, the European Commission is trying to influence such bilateral negotiations in order to ensure a minimum level of consistency of the resulting agreement with Union legislation. For example, in 2010 the Commission significantly changed the content of an intergovernmental agreement between Poland and Russia on increasing the supply of natural gas from Russia that was contrary to EU law.[6]

To put it briefly, while individual member states remain important players in the field of energy, their room for maneuver has been continuously diminishing in recent years, and the importance of the European Union has been growing. This is why our paper does not explore the bilateral energy ties between individual EU member countries and Russia, which was extensively done elsewhere (see, for instance, Bregadze, 2003; Westphal, 2008; Handl and Ehler, 2011; Coticchia et al., 2011), but instead focuses exclusively on the relationship between the Russian Federation and the European Union as a whole, represented mainly by the European Commission, and partly also by the European Council, the Council of the European Union, and the European Parliament.

The rising importance of the EU in the energy ties between EU member states and Russia is also reflected in the growing number of academic studies on EU–Russian energy relations. Many of them explore the overall nature of the mutual energy relations between the EU and Russia (Baghad, 2006; Stern, 2006; Monaghan, 2006, 2007; Sánchez Andrés, 2007; Proedrou, 2007, 2010; Milov, 2008; Milov, 2006; Le Coq-Paltseva, 2009; Romanova, 2009; Liuhto, 2009; Kirchner and Berk, 2010). Others focus on the EU's side of the equation only (for instance, Aalto, 2008; Johnson and Robinson, 2008). However, while these studies are empirically rich, thus undoubtedly pushing forward our understanding of the issue, all of them focus almost exclusively on the material conditions of the mutual relations and the institutional structures that underpin them. None of them has dedicated enough attention to the analysis of political discourses which largely determine the relationship's future (for more on this see the Theoretical section below). In addition, none of these

[1] The European Commission, i.e. mainly the Commissioner for Energy (Günther Oettinger), plays a key role, for example, in the external dimension of energy policy. The dominant position of the Commissioner in external energy policy is evident, e.g., in projects of 'European interest', such as the Southern Corridor and the Mediterranean Solar Plan, where the Commissioner takes a major initiative, while the High Representative of the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy plays a less important role (cf. Braun, 2011, pp. 4 and 5).

[2] The Lisbon Treaty strengthened the position of the European Parliament in the legislative process, which, e.g., affects decisions on energy policy. This means that the Commission and the Council of the EU must inform the Parliament about the current state of energy negotiations with third parties (cf. Braun, 2011, p. 7).

[3] The energy issue is also handled by the Council of the European Union. At the same time, the individual member states very often promote energy policy during their presidency in the Council and seek to influence the legislative process in the Council of the European Union (see Braun, 2011, p. 6).

[4] However, the European Council does not deal with technicalities and its interests are limited to general policy orientation. Since energy policy is often full of technical discussions, the powers of the European Council are only rarely fully exploited in this area (cf. Braun, 2011, p. 4).

[5] On 12 September 2011, the Ministers for European Affairs and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member states approved the mandate given to the European Commission to negotiate an agreement for the legal framework for a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline system with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

[6] From the very beginning, the European Commission disagreed with some provisions of the negotiations between Russia and Poland which would effectively prolong the Polish dependence on Russian gas. The original text of the agreement mentioned the extension of gas supplies from Russia to Poland until the year 2037. Under pressure from the Commission, however, Russia agreed to change the expiration date of the contract to the year 2022.

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texts has tried to develop a more consistent categorization of the approaches of the two sides.[7]

The main goal of this paper is, therefore, to define and categorize the main approaches of the EU towards its energy ties with Russia as they are reflected in the Union's discourse on the issue. To reach this goal, we will ask a series of interrelated questions:

1) What are the main approaches to both the EU and the Russian energy discourse?
2) What are the main topics in these energy discourses?
3) How is Russia seen in them?
4) What is Russia's position towards the EU in these main energy discourses?
5) Are there any overlaps or different features between the main energy discourses?

## 3. The theoretical background and the methodology of the paper

### 3.1. Theory: exploring energy policy on the ideational level

The main theoretical claim of this paper is that an energy policy between any two actors should be analyzed on three interrelated levels: the material, institutional and ideational levels (for the general argument about the relevance of these three elements for the analysis of international relations see Cox, 1981). Hence, in this case one can start from a basic analysis of the amount of available energy resources in Russia, its mining capabilities, the existing and planned transportation routes, etc. In the second step, one can assess the institutional set-up in the mutual relations that reflects and objectifies these material conditions in the form of rules and procedures that regulate the energy relations between the two entities, thus producing a specific international regime.

The analysis would not, however, make sense without understanding the ideational framework(s) through which both the EU and Russia attach meaning to their mutual ties, interpret their mutual dependence as beneficial/threatening and, in the end, decide about the concrete political steps that can either boost the energy ties or, alternatively, try to reduce the dependence to a minimum. Obviously, while the material conditions and the institutional structures are quite easy to explore empirically, the ideational structures and cognitive frameworks are much more difficult to grasp since they manifest themselves exclusively in the communication of the two parties, i.e. in the political discourses about their mutual energy ties.

This basic difference between the relative simplicity of studying the material and institutional conditions, on the one hand, and the difficulty connected to the exploration of the discursive complexes through which these are interpreted, on the other, also explains why so much attention has been dedicated to the former so far, while the latter has been largely neglected (Kratochvíl, 2008; Tichý, 2011; Binhack and Tichý, 2012; Böhme, 2011). For this reason, we have decided to focus precisely on the second element, the discursive formations surrounding the EU–Russian energy ties.

In our understanding, political discourses should not be interpreted as mere reflections of material reality or the institutionalized structures. Although an actor's rhetoric can at times deviate from his/her actions (cf. the theory of speech acts: Searle, 1979; Kubálková et al., 1998), political discourses do play an important role in social analysis since they always mirror the actor's fundamental ideational framework and his/her cognitive processes. Hence, political discourses always reveal the basic principles on which the actor's actions are based and through which he/she interprets political reality.

### 3.2. Method: discourse analysis

This paper employs discourse analysis as its main methodological tool (Milliken, 1999; Wodak and Chilton, 2005), whereby we explore a set of textual units produced by both the European Union and the Russian Federation. Our sample contains altogether 201 units. The research was divided into the following steps: first, we created the corpus of documents to explore, covering the period of the so-called first Barroso Commission from 2004 to 2009, during which time a number of crucial events occurred that significantly affected the EU–Russia energy relations. We limited the documents to the most relevant political representatives of both sides: the President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, the European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs, and the Head of the EC Delegation to Russia Marc Franco.

### 3.3. Selections of documents

We selected only those documents in which the keyword "Russia" or "Russian" was found in connection with "energy". In this way, we obtained 86 unabridged documents (official and unofficial speeches and interviews). We also obtained a substantial part (70) of all the interviews and statements we used from the official website of the European Commission. In contrast, we found only 16 of the interviews and speeches we used, especially those of the Head of EC Delegation, on the websites of other institutions and organizations or mass media. The distribution of the selected statements and interviews by author and date of publication is summarized in Table 1.

In addition to the speeches and interviews, we also included the key documents dealing with Russia and energy published by various EU institutions, notably the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the European Council. Nine of these documents were of a legislative nature (mostly communications from the Commission, but also a green paper and an action plan). Two texts in the corpus that were not legislative texts were a working document of the European Commission (European Commission, 2008b) and a document of the Council (Council of the European Union, 2006). The distribution of documents across the different EU institutions and their dates of publication are shown in Table 2.

Overall, we gathered 86 official and unofficial speeches and interviews of the key EU representatives and 11 official (legislative and non-legislative) EU documents—altogether 97 textual units.

In a similar way, we also proceeded to identify the political representatives of the Russian Federation who often comment on EU–Russian energy relations: the Russian Presidents (Vladimir Putin, from 2004 to 2008, and Dmitry Medvedev, from May 2008), the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Sergei Lavrov), the Minister of Industry and Energy (Viktor Khristenko), the Minister of Energy (Sergei Shmatko—since May 2008, when the separate Ministry of Energy was created), and the head of the diplomatic mission of the Russian Federation to the EC (Vladimir Chizhov).

Based on this selection, we received 86 formal and informal interviews and speeches with the keywords "EU", "European" and "energy". About 80 of all the interviews and statements were downloaded from the official websites of individual Ministries and

[7] For the single major exception to this statement, see Khasson (2009).

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**Table 1**
Speeches and interviews of EU representatives.
*Source*: the authors.

| Year | Number of texts | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Piebalgs | Ferrero-Waldner | Barroso | Franco | Total |
| **2004** | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| **2005** | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| **2006** | 5 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 17 |
| **2007** | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 18 |
| **2008** | 6 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 21 |
| **2009** | 5 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 25 |
| **Total** | **25** | **17** | **21** | **23** | **86** |

**Table 2**
Documents of the individual EU institutions.
*Source*: the authors.

| Year | Number of documents selected EU institutions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | European Commission | Council of the European Union | European Council | Total |
| **2004** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **2005** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **2006** | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| **2007** | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| **2008** | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| **2009** | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| **Total** | **9** | **1** | **1** | **11** |

**Table 3**
Speeches and interviews of political representatives of the Russian Federation.
*Source*: the authors.

| Year | Number of texts | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Khristenko/Shmatko | Lavrov | Putin/Medvedev | Chizhov | Total |
| **2004** | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| **2005** | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 |
| **2006** | 8 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 25 |
| **2007** | 5 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| **2008** | 2/1 | 3 | 1/2 | 4 | 13 |
| **2009** | 6 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 25 |
| **Total** | **29** | **23** | **25** | **21** | **98** |

the President of Russia. Only 18 of the speeches and interviews we used were found on the websites of Russian newspapers and broadcasting stations. For the distribution of the selected statements and interviews by author and date of publication, refer to Table 3.

Finally, Table 4 shows our set of the key documents published by three central institutions of the Russian Federation – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Energy and the President of Russia – that focus on Russia's energy relations with the EU. Unlike the official documents by EU institutions, which dealt with the EU energy relations with Russia in 11 cases, the documents of the Russian central institutions paid much less attention to the issue of the EU–Russia energy interaction (six cases altogether).

Overall, we gathered 98 official and unofficial statements and interviews and six official documents published by central institutions of the Russian Federation—altogether 104 textual units.

## 4. The EU–Russian energy relations: the three main discourses

The preliminary analysis of the chosen documents showed that there are three major discursive complexes that dominate the official documents and speeches produced by both sides. They can be labeled as (1) the discourse of integration, (2) the discourse of liberalization, and (3) the discourse of diversification.

**Table 4**
Documents of individual central institutions of the Russian Federation.
*Source*: the authors.

| Year | Number of documents | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | President | Ministry of Energy | Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Total |
| **2004** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| **2005** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **2006** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| **2007** | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| **2008** | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| **2009** | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| **Total** | **1** | **1** | **4** | **6** |

### 4.1. Integration discourse

The integration discourse is the most positive out of the three. It stresses the mutual benefits in the EU–Russian relations, underlining the complementarity of both parties. There are, however, some differences between how this discourse is understood on the Russian side and how it is understood on the EU side. The EU sees itself as the more advanced partner, who is simultaneously more prosperous and democratic. At the same time, since the EU is also more advanced in terms of integration experience and the promotion of market integration, it is Russia that has to accommodate to the EU's rules. Russia should, therefore, gradually adopt the EU's acquis communautaire, which will make Russia a more suitable partner for the EU, thus also contributing to Russia's internal economic, social and political development.

The Russian version of the integrationist discourse, on the other hand, also stresses the need for deeper integration of the two parties, but it maintains that both the EU and Russia should acknowledge that there is no one-sided asymmetry between the two, but rather a mutual interdependence. While Russia may be less developed and in need of the EU's technologies, investments and payments for natural resources, the EU is no less dependent on the energy imports from Russia. Hence, the integration should not be a simple transfer of all existing EU norms in the field of energy cooperation to Russia, but rather a negotiated process to which both parties will contribute in equal measure.

Unlike the proponents of the discourse of liberalization, the proponents of the integrationist discourse accentuate the special relationship between the EU and Russia and reject the option of seeing them as mere trade partners with a typical trade partner relationship. These special ties also explain the need for regular rounds of the EU–Russian energy dialog and for the establishment of tailor-made institutions that would regulate the bilateral ties between Russia and the Union.

On a more abstract level, the discourse of integration stems from those notions which stress the privileged position of the EU as a specific kind of actor, the "normative power" (Manners, 2002) which serves as a role model for the other international actors. Interestingly, the discourse of integration is, as far as energy relations are concerned, of a purely economic nature. Russia's integration with the EU is understood in the sense of Russia taking over those norms that tackle competition policy, economic transparency and the investment climate in Russia. The more politically oriented questions related to the liberal democratic character of the Union or even the sensitive issues of civic freedoms and human rights are entirely excluded from the integrationist discourse.

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The second theoretical notion to which the integrationist discourse is linked is mutual interdependence. Thus, this discourse reiterates the key insight of complex interdependence theory (for the original formulation thereof see Keohane and Nye, 1973) that exactly due to this unavoidable interdependence both sides are encouraged to overcome conflictual situations and look for long-term mutually beneficial solutions.

### 4.2. Liberalization discourse

Like the discourse of integration, the liberalization discourse also refers mainly to the economic aspects of EU–Russian relations and not the political or security aspects. Unlike the integration discourse, however, it does not see the relationship between the EU and Russia as asymmetrical. While the discourse of integration typically accentuates the economic primacy of the EU and the ensuing need for Russia's Europeanization (or, rather, EU-ization), the liberalization discourse adopts the view that the relations are basically equal, whereby this equality is again defined exclusively in economic terms. The basic tenet of the discourse of liberalization is that economic ties between the actors in world politics have to be liberalized as much as possible and freed from oppressive state interventions.

It is important to stress here that the liberalization discourse may hide practices with a strong security focus. For instance, the liberalization of energy ties (''liberalization package'') may increase the energy security of EU member states. However, as we deal only with discourse in this paper (see the Theoretical discussion above), we do not challenge the rhetorical turns used by the speakers even when there may be doubts about their sincerity.

In any case, the discourse of liberalization does not advocate a rapprochement between any two actors, but rather common efforts aimed at the greatest possible measure of transparency and effective functioning of the shared economic space. Political involvement is, therefore, seen either as irrelevant or outright harmful, and all political activities are thus interpreted as a toolbox directed at a better functioning of the international market.

There are, however, substantial differences between how liberalization is interpreted in the EU and how it is interpreted in Russia. While the EU focuses on the critique of Russia's refusal to open its energy market to Western investors, the Russian discourse underlines the limited access of Russian energy companies to the EU's internal energy market. While both actors believe that their own liberalization levels are sufficient, they are dissatisfied with the supposedly low openness of their partner.

Another difference pertains to the influence of politics on the mutual energy ties. For the EU, the full liberalization is prevented solely by the Kremlin's efforts to keep monopoly control over the most valuable Russian energy resources. Meanwhile, Russia interprets the political barriers to liberalization as both internal to the EU (some countries' fears of the Russian economic presence) and EU-external (the US pressure on lowering the EU's dependence on Russia).

All these points can be nicely demonstrated on the different interpretation of the Energy Charter Treaty, which – as both partners acknowledge – would lead to a greater level of liberalization. However, while the EU is convinced that the ECT distributes the liberalization burden fairly among the partners, Russia claims that the ECT is one-sidedly disadvantageous for its own energy market (for a detailed analysis thereof see below).

Theoretically speaking, the discourse of liberalization is supported by arguments similar to neoliberal theories of international relations. A cooperation based on comparative advantages and on the maximization of economic profit motivates actors to overcome their mistrust, which stems from the existence of international anarchy (Keohane, 1989; Baldwin, 1993). A decrease in mistrust and an increase in transparency and predictability will, according to the neoliberals, lead to a general reduction of conflict levels in the international system.

### 4.3. Diversification discourse

The third discourse, that of diversification, deviates very strongly from the previous two. While the discourses of integration and liberalization are in many ways related, hence making possible a dual usage of both by the same speaker at the same time, the diversification discourse points in an entirely different direction. First of all, while the two previous discourses underline the primacy of economic ties, the diversification discourse is more concerned about the political and, in particular, the security implications of the Union's dependence on Russia. This is also why the discourse of diversification aims at a shift towards greater securitization of the energy ties with Russia (for a complex formulation of securitization see Waever, 1995).

The mutual dependence is not perceived as a positive contribution to the stabilization of the EU–Russian ties, but instead as a harmful factor whose influence is to be minimized. Even though in principle the relationship is symmetrical, this does not preclude the two from seeing each other as a rival who understands the mutual relations as a zero-sum game. If the EU strives for a maximum transparency of Russia's energy sector, Russia is bound to work against such a request; if the EU member states wanted to protect their distribution networks from Russian investments, Russia would probably encourage their takeover by its own companies; if the Union calls for a greater diversity of producer countries from which the EU would buy the resources, it has to be Russia's goal to prevent such a development, etc.

The diversification discourse, while using the same vocabulary as the previous two discourses, hides the greatest differences between the two partners. The main difference revolves around the question whether diversification pertains to countries of origin and transit routes. Clearly, the EU's side of the diversification discourse sees the overly high reliance on a limited number of producer countries as dangerous. Russian representatives almost never accept this interpretation and instead speak about the diversification of transit countries—hence, the Russian projects North Stream and South Stream are claimed to be examples of successful diversification. The consequences of the different interpretations are fundamentally different too: if in Russia's eyes, Russia remains a reliable partner for the West, and its many energy transportation projects should be welcomed by the EU, the Union's diversification discourse does not recognize these efforts as relevant since the main aim is to reduce the dependence on Russia as such.

In the terms of international relations theory, such views correspond with political realism (Gilpin, 1984; Morgenthau and Thompson, 1985). Both actors find themselves in the classical competition for rare resources, and Russia's ownership of these resources will be inevitably used by the Russian elites to increase their own political power and influence over the EU. To answer the question whether the energy cooperation is advantageous means not only to explore the economic benefits derived from it, but mainly to look into the political interests of both parties. As a consequence, it has to be the main goal of the Union's policies to diminish its excessive dependence on the Russian Federation, gain new suppliers, construct alternative transportation corridors, and thus increase its negotiating power vis-à-vis Russia. The main features of the three discourses are summarized in Table 5.

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**Table 5**
The political discourses in EU–Russian energy relations.
*Source*: the authors.

| Discourse of | Relations defined as | Symmetry/asymmetry | Dominant focus | Theoretical background |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Integration | Pupil–teacher | Asymmetry | Economics | Normative power Europe, complex interdependence |
| Liberalization | Business partners | Symmetry | Economics | Comparative advantages, neoliberalism |
| Diversification | Rivals, potential enemies | Symmetry | Security | Zero-sum game, neorealism |

**Table 6**
Key terms related to the three discourses and the ECT .
*Source*: the authors.

| Discourse of | Terms |
|---|---|
| **Integration** | Integration |
| | Cooperation |
| | Partnership |
| | Interdependence |
| | Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) |
| **Liberalization** | Market access, market reforms, and market rules |
| | Liberalization and investments |
| | Transparency |
| | Effectiveness |
| | Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) |
| **Diversification** | Energy security |
| | Diversification |
| | Alternative routes, sources, and projects |
| | Energy infrastructure interconnections outside Russia |
| | Energy cooperation with third countries |

In practical terms, we were searching for concrete terms which were related to the three discourses in the analyzed documents. Table 6 presents an overview of all these terms.

## 5. Overview of the EU energy discourses on Russia

In the previous section, we identified the basic approaches and attributes of the EU energy discourse that became the default framework for the subsequent detailed analysis of the integration liberalization and diversification discourses. In this section, in each of the three cases, we will explore the basic issues and content, and the position of the EU in relation to Russia. At the same time, we will focus on the common as well as the different features and processes of these three discourses.

### 5.1. Integration discourse

Despite the widespread use of the term "energy security" in the media and the fact that this term is associated with the diversification discourse, the integration discourse clearly dominates in the analyzed documents. The integration discourse is characterized by a considerable ambivalence. On the one hand, the integration discourse shares with the liberalization discourse an emphasis on mutual benefits with the ultimate aim of achieving the "…integration of the EU and Russian energy markets in a mutually beneficial, reciprocal, transparent and non-discriminatory manner" (European Commission, 2006a, p. 3). This would indicate a symmetrical understanding of their mutual relations. This emphasis is also evident in the frequent use of the term "partnership", which also underlines the equivalent nature of the two actors. Therefore, the European Commission's Green Paper: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy claims that "a true (energy) partnership would offer security and predictability for both sides, paving the way for the necessary long-term investments in new capacity" (European Commission, 2006b, p. 15).

The symmetry between the two partners is often interpreted in a utilitarian sense, i.e. that although the two partners are not in an identical situation (due to the fact that Russia owns the resources that the EU needs), their relationship can provide the same benefits to both of them since "Russia is more than just a supplier of oil, it is an economic partner" (Franco, 2006). Therefore, "the EU and Russia should see mutual long term benefits from a new energy partnership, which would seek a balance between expectations and interests of both sides" (European Commission, 2006a, p. 3).

However, it is characteristic for the integration discourse that the symmetry of the benefits of the partnership is associated with a considerable asymmetry of the degree of the adaptation of each of the partners (this is where the integration discourse differs from the liberalization discourse). This asymmetry is related to the fact that the integration discourse is based on the premise that the EU member states are already integrated, and effective energy relations with Russia can be achieved through the integration of the Russian Federation, i.e. by adopting EU standards related to energy and international trade.

The reasons for this unilateral adjustment are sometimes expressed in a surprisingly frank manner in the analyzed documents. For example, the European Commissioner for External Relations, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, argues that "the member states will not want to re-negotiate everything" just because of Russia (Ferrero-Waldner, 2009a). Similarly, she also states that "… you have to think that there're 27 member-countries for whom we negotiate with one country – a big one – but still there's one country together with 27 [others that are] of course combined and negotiated with by the European [C]ommission, by me and by us" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2009a).

The second difference between the integration and the liberalization discourse that we have identified is that an important condition for a successful cooperation is not just the liberalization of markets as such, but also a clear institutional framework that regulates the relations between both actors. The term "cooperation" often occurs in connection with the challenges inherent to the creation of a regulatory and legal framework for the energy relations between the EU and Russia, or even the creation of "a new model of cooperation between Russia and Europe as a whole" (Franko, 2006c, 2009a). At the same time, the European Commission argues that "it is essential to have a common understanding on the proposed approach on the principles for a future energy partnership with Russia" (European Commission, 2006c, p. 4).

These principles are usually connected to the demands of creating a reliable early-warning mechanism to be employed in case of an interruption of energy supply (e.g. Ferrero-Waldner, 2007a, 2009a) and of holding regular consultations, either in the framework of the "Energy Dialog" or outside of it (Ferrero-Waldner, 2007b, pp. 2 and 5; Piebalgs, 2007a). It is interesting that although the call for an early-warning mechanism and other similar measures originates in the negative experiences from the past, the adoption of such measures has a strictly positive connotation in the integration discourse.

These demands of the European Union vis-à-vis the Russian Federation reflect a certain degree of Europeanization. This is further demonstrated in the recommendations of the European

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Commission's 2004 Communication, according to which, for example, "the Community acquis could become a reference framework for a reform of the energy sector to be implemented in Russia" (European Commission, 2004, p. 14). The same European Commission document also states on a different page that "the principles of the internal energy market, such as energy efficiency, reform of internal industrial structures, reform in the electricity sector and unbundling, could provide part of the reference framework for the restructuring of Russia's energy sector" (European Commission, 2004, p. 11).

The interdependence between the two actors is defined very specifically as well. First of all, all the relevant texts – despite the usual media image – agree that the relation is not a unilateral EU dependence on Russia, but rather an interdependence between the two actors: "Russia seeks ways to secure [the] energy demand presented by the EU market. The EU needs Russian resources for its energy security. There is a clear interdependence" (European Commission, 2006b, p. 4; likewise, Ferrero-Waldner, 2009b, p. 2; or Piebalgs, 2006a, 2007a, 2008a). Sometimes this argument is reinforced by making the assertion that "our mutual dependence is very strong" (Piebalgs, 2007a) or emphasized by the pleonasm "mutual interdependence" (Barroso, 2006a). The notion of interdependence is abandoned only by the Head of the Delegation of the EC to Russia, Marc Franco, according to whom Russia is rather dependent on the EU (Franko, 2006d).

This interdependence – according to most texts – is not only going to persist into the future (cf. Piebalgs, 2006a), but its future continuation is not even perceived as something problematic in itself. On the contrary, for example, European Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner stated that the aim of EU policy is not to eliminate this dependence, but rather to "direct it". She also stressed that "we do not want to supplant Russia…" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2009b, p. 2) because "our interdependence allows for a win-win situation to be created; with improved access possibilities upstream in Russia and downstream in the EU" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2008a).

Our analysis, however, revealed that some of the texts use – in a non-problematic way – both arguments and concepts of the integration discourse and arguments and concepts of the liberalization discourse next to each other. In many instances, EU representatives imply that the liberalization and the integration of Russia with the EU are connected vessels, or even almost identical processes. Andris Piebalgs summarizes this connection most aptly when he says, "…we must therefore ensure that we continuously develop closer relations, based on openness, transparency and mutual respect for our legitimate interests" (Piebalgs, 2007a). At the same time, he also mentions the need for a European framework for energy based on the rule of law and reciprocity (Piebalgs, 2006a, 2007a), whereby he means a framework based on the EU position.

On the one hand, this argumentation represents a unilateral approach to the energy relations between the EU and Russia (which is in principle based on the assumption that Russia should approximate the EU), while on the other hand, this interpretation refers to the liberal economic approach. This is reflected in the detailed arguments used in this matter: i.e. sometimes one paragraph or a single sentence simultaneously mentions the early warning mechanism and liberalization (Ferrero-Waldner, 2007a, p. 2), sometimes it mentions both the mechanism and a "positive investment climate" in Russia (Piebalgs, 2006a, 2006b), and sometimes it mentions the need for a new agreement between the EU and Russia[8] in parallel with transparency (Ferrero-Waldner, 2008a, 2008b, p. 3; Piebalgs, 2008b).

### 5.2. Liberalization discourse

The integration discourse emphasizes in particular the need for an institutional framework in the energy cooperation and the need to foster partnerships between the EU and Russia by a gradual integration. The liberalization discourse is based on the assumption that a fully functioning and interconnected internal energy market within the EU in parallel with extending the rules of the liberalized energy market beyond the EU will help to secure stable energy supplies, increase competitiveness and improve the predictability of the energy relations[9] (Barroso, 2006b, 2007a; European Commission, 2006c). According to the European Commission, "the ongoing liberalization of the EU energy market and the development of a common external dimension of EU energy policy also have an impact on the EU–Russia bilateral energy cooperation" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 7; Piebalgs, 2007a; likewise Ferrero-Waldner, 2008a; Barroso, 2006a).

The presence of the liberalization discourse in the analyzed documents and speeches is very often associated with the integration discourse, with which – despite the above mentioned differences – it shares many common aspects. The liberalization discourse, like the integration discourse, mainly favors the economic dimension of the EU–Russia relations and the mutual importance of both actors in their energy-related interaction. "The Russian Federation is the EU's most important single supplier of energy products … The EU is the most important market for Russia energy exports and generates a significant part of its export revenues" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 7; Piebalgs, 2006b; Council of the European Union, 2006). The liberalization discourse clearly emphasizes symmetry rather than asymmetry in the EU–Russia relations.

Both discourses also agree on the benefits of the bilateral energy cooperation of the EU and Russia based on market principles and the content of the new agreement. The priority of the foreign policy of the EU in its energy relations with Russia, according to the Commission document, is "enhancing relations with Russia through the negotiation of a new robust, comprehensive framework agreement, including a fully-fledged energy partnership benefiting both sides" (European Commission, 2007; European Council, 2007). The importance of the new agreement and the resulting economic benefits are highlighted in one of the speeches of Benita Ferrero-Waldner: "… there is great interest on both sides in negotiating arrangements that [would] allow for an expansion of a Russian and [an] EU-presence in each other's markets" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2008a).

The key concepts of the liberalization discourse are the market for energy products and the reciprocal access to energy markets in Russia and the EU, which should help to reinforce and increase the efficiency of the mutual cooperation. This idea is very clearly pointed out by Andris Piebalgs: "there is also a need for a level playing field in terms of market access and access to infrastructure, including non-discriminatory third party access to pipelines in both Russia and the EU" (Piebalgs, 2006a). It is also very clearly pointed out by Benita Ferrero-Waldner: "what we need is reciprocity, transparency and a truly level playing field, covering market opening and market access,

[8] The basic document which regulates the relations between Russia and the European Union is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which was signed in June 1994 and entered into force on December 1, 1997. The PCA officially expired in December 2007, but according to Article 106 of the PCA, the

(*footnote continued*)
Agreement's validity is automatically extended each year unless one of the parties revokes it. At the moment, the Agreement is being renegotiated, but substantial differences persist regarding its contents and legal form.

[9] The liberalization of the internal market of the EU is often connected to the so-called "liberalization packages". The last EU initiative in this matter so far has been the so-called third liberalization package of September 2007. Its goal was to build the foundation for further liberalization of the EU gas and electricity market. The third package entered into force in September 2009.

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fair competition, environmental protection and safety" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2006a). The aim of this would be "…to increase stability and predictability in our energy relations" (Barroso, 2006a, 2007a; Franco, 2007).

The efforts of Russia to have a stronger presence on the EU internal energy market are very often subjected to the same demand by the EU, which "wants non-discriminatory treatment from Russia in their energy relationship, in terms of supply from Russia and in terms of access to the Russian market for EU investors" (European Commission, 2006c, p. 4). Similarly, Ferrero-Waldner stated, "…our common objective should be to create a predictability and reciprocity in terms of … market opening and fair access to transport networks…" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2006b, 2007a). In the same vein is the following quote from Barroso: "we agreed that Russia needs predictability from Europe, just as Europe needs predictability from Russia" (Barroso, 2006b). The means by which this objective is to be achieved play an important role here.

First and foremost, the selected documents and speeches deal with a successful liberalization in the sense of opening the Russian energy market. According to the European Commission, the liberalization of the Russian energy market is one of the main preconditions of an effective and mutually beneficial partnership: "negotiations could in this way facilitate the reform and liberalization of the energy market in Russia …, provide stability and predictability of demand for Russian gas, and clarify the conditions under which Russian companies may invest downstream in the EU" (European Commission, 2008b, p. 8; Piebalgs, 2006a, 2008a).

Liberalization is seen as a prerequisite for improving and increasing the needed investment in the energy sector. This was confirmed by Andris Piebalgs, for example, when he positively assessed the situation on the Russian electricity market, which "is liberalized and attracted significant investment from European firms" (Piebalgs, 2007a). But on the contrary, inadequate investments constitute a potential risk. This example can be seen as a negative change from the previous assessment of Russia. For instance, one of the documents of the European Commission expressed the concern that Russia may not be able to adequately meet the growing demand abroad as a result of inadequate investment in the Russian energy sector: "inadequate investment in the energy sector, expanding domestic demand and low energy efficiency in Russia… present potential risks to future energy supply in Russia itself as well as in consumer countries" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 7; Piebalgs, 2008a–c; Ferrero-Waldner, 2006a).

Another requirement of the EU is transparency as "the EU aims to establish a true level playing field (i.e. transparency, non-discrimination, reciprocity of market access, …) in the face of continued difficulties that foreign investors experience in accessing the Russian upstream sector" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 7). Each of these improvements would contribute to making Europe's sources and Russia's supply more diversified and reliable because it is the "lack of transparency and information that undermine[s] mutual trust" (European Commission, 2006b, p. 3, 2008b, p. 8; Piebalgs, 2008b).

A very specific topic, which is located on the borderline between the integration and the liberalization discourse, is the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT)[10] and its Additional Transit Protocol. The ECT belongs to the integration discourse primarily as a legislative framework on the basis of which there "is need to build a genuine energy partnership with Russia" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2008b; Barroso, 2006a). For Russia, however, the Energy Charter Treaty and its Transit Protocol represent a very controversial subject, and Russia refuses to be bound by these documents. However, in its energy relations with Russia the EU often exerted pressure on Russia "to ratify the ECT" or to "accelerate the ratification of the ECT" (European Commission, 2008a; Franco, 2009b, 2009c). On other hand, with its demand for an open, transparent and competitive energy market, the ECT belongs to the liberalization discourse (Barroso, 2006a; Piebalgs, 2006a, 2008a; Ferrero-Waldner, 2007a, 2008a).

### 5.3. Diversification discourse

The third discourse analyzed in this section is the diversification discourse. Unlike the official EU approach to ensuring energy security through a combination of both internal and external measures, the diversification discourse focuses exclusively on the external aspects of energy policy. It is characterized by a strong rhetoric about the European Union's vulnerability stemming from the need to increase energy imports and by a call for a reduction of the EU's dependence on its major energy suppliers, considering that "the recent gas dispute between Russia and the Ukraine demonstrated the vulnerability of the EU in gas security. To reduce the risk of future gas disruptions, we need greater diversity in our gas supplies…" (Piebalgs, 2009a; Barroso, 2009a). In the context of this discourse, energy security is understood not simply as a requirement of a certain legal environment for energy market operators, but rather as an objective in itself, implying that the EU should have a strategy for external energy relations (Khasson, 2009, p. 13).

The diversification discourse differs in several respects from the previous two discourses. While the liberalization and the integration discourse emphasize in particular the economic aspects of the mutual cooperation, the focus of the diversification discourse is on the political impact and the security implications of the EU's energy dependence on Russia. According to one of the documents of the European Commission "…the EU will need to import an increasing share of its energy resources … from Russia" and thus "the EU's dependence on Russia as a supplier will remain strong and might be a source of concern" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 7). Similarly, Andris Piebalgs also expressed the view that the "gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine this winter had serious consequences for customers in the EU" (Piebalgs, 2009b).

Therefore, the diversification discourse is very often referred to as a "securitization" discourse. This is reflected by the shift of the employed arguments towards understanding energy relations with Russia as a security issue as well as by a strong demand for ensuring energy security in the form of reliable and uninterrupted energy supplies. Therefore, Andris Piebalgs, for instance, claimed that the "threat of disruption of supply of natural gas was one of the main reasons for increased interest in the EU's energy security" (Piebalgs, 2009a; Ferrero-Waldner, 2008b), and hence "the second driver of energy security is diversity. That means diversity in energy source[s]… and that also means diversity in energy transport, distribution and import routes…" (Piebalgs, 2008c; Franco, 2009d, 2009e).

Another difference between the diversification discourse, on one side, and the liberalization and the integration discourse, on the other side, is in the perception of the Russian Federation's energy relations with the European Union. While the integration and liberalization discourses regard the Russian Federation – with certain exceptions – as a reliable energy supplier, the diversification discourse is much more ambiguous about this. This was demonstrated by Andris Piebalgs' answer to the question whether the gas crisis had undermined the credibility of both countries: "It is very difficult to say yes or no. I would say that trust has been undermined, because we can be cut off anytime" (Piebalgs, 2009b).

[10] The Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) was signed in December 1994 in Lisbon and it entered into force in April 1998. Russia signed the Treaty in 1994, but it has resisted its ratification ever since. In October 2009, Russia unilaterally withdrew from the ECT.

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**Table 7**
Main themes of the three EU energy discourses .
*Source*: the authors

| Integration discourse | Liberalization discourse | Diversification discourse |
|---|---|---|
| – Stress on the mutual economic benefits<br>– Emphasis on the term 'partnership', which underlines the equivalent nature of the two actors<br>– Preference for an institutional framework as an important condition for a successful cooperation<br>– Focus on a mutual rapprochement and a gradual adoption of the EU's acquis by Russia<br>– Stress on the economic primacy of the EU and the ensuing need for Russia's Europeanization<br>– Emphasis on energy interdependence | – Focus on the economic dimension of EU–Russian energy relations<br>– Emphasis on the mutual importance of both actors in energy relations<br>– A vision of a fully functioning and interconnected internal energy market<br>– Stress on market principles<br>– Focus on liberalized and transparent energy relations and the reciprocal access to energy markets in Russia and the EU<br>– Emphasis on the ECT | – Emphasis on external aspects of the energy policy<br>– Focus on the political impact and security implications of the EU's energy dependence on Russia<br>– Shift towards greater securitization of energy ties with Russia<br>– Perception of Russia as a problematic energy partner<br>– A view of the EU and Russia as rivals<br>– Emphasis on the reduction of excessive dependence on Russia<br>– Preference for diversification, new energy suppliers and alternative transportation routes and corridors |

Although we have not found any depictions of Russia as a "threat" or an "enemy" in the examined documents (though such depictions are otherwise widely used), a certain change can be detected in the perception of Russia by the EU representatives. This change was predominantly caused by several previous disputes between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on gas pricing because "it was utterly unacceptable that European gas consumers were held hostage to this dispute between Russia and Ukraine" (Barroso, 2009a). The change in perception of Russia is evident if we compare two European Commission documents that were issued in 2004 and 2008.

The first document (2004) regarded Russia not just as one of the leading suppliers of fossil fuels but rather as the future hope for Europe's energy supply: "it could also to a certain extent play a moderating role in international markets, being in some ways the most promising – and geographically the closest – alternative to the Middle East as energy supplier to Europe" (European Commission, 2004, p. 2). In contrast, the European Commission document from the year 2008 highlights concerns about the possible instability of the Russian energy supplies to the EU: "while Russia has been a reliable supplier of energy products to the EU for decades, disputes with transit states as well as insufficient upstream investment and ageing pipeline infrastructure raise concerns about future supply" (European Commission, 2008a, p. 7). Similarly, Andris Piebalgs stated that "we want to diversify not only because they are afraid of Russia, but also because diversification is generally good…" (Piebalgs, 2009b, as well as Barroso, 2006b, 2007b, 2009a).

The diversification discourse differs from the two previous discourses also on the question of the status of the EU and Russia in their energy relations. Compared to the integration and liberalization discourses, which define the relations between the EU and Russia as a partnership, the diversification discourse sees both actors primarily as rivals. This was indirectly confirmed, for example, by President of the European Commission Barroso: "Russia is an important partner for the EU in energy. But it is not, and should not be, the EU's only partner. That is why the EU has started to develop energy agreements with several of our partners" (Barroso, 2006b).

The acquisition of new alternative suppliers of natural gas in addition to Russia was stressed by European Commissioner for Energy Andris Piebalgs as well: "it would be a mistake expecting that all gas will only come from Russia" (Piebalgs, 2005). In Piebalgs' view, there are other sources of gas whose supplies "can be compared with the volume of gas that we get from Russia" (Piebalgs, 2009a). Piebalgs also suggested the source areas that should supply the EU with natural gas: "it is true that the biggest single country reserves are in Russia. But the largest reserves in absolute terms are at the end of the Nabucco pipe, in the Middle East/Caspian region" (Piebalgs, 2007a). Likewise he said, "We are also developing new initiatives with alternative suppliers, in the Caspian Basin, Central Asia, North Africa …" (Piebalgs, 2007b, but also European Council, 2007).

The diversification discourse pays attention to a number of particular projects on which the European Union should focus. According to Barroso, "projects to diversify sources and routes of gas supply also deserve our support. I am thinking of strategic projects in the Southern corridor,[11] such as Nabucco, to bring gas from the Caspian region; and projects such as Nord Stream, to link Germany and its neighbors to new gas sources in northern Russia" (Barroso, 2009b, likewise European Commission, 2007; European Council, 2007; Piebalgs, 2007b; Franco, 2009c, 2009d).

On the other hand, the diversification in the relations between the European Union and the Russian Federation is not presented as a process of running away from or terminating the energy interactions. Representatives of the EU clearly point out themselves that "it will be necessary to have more pipelines, more possibilities… and even more resources. However, Russia will remain, also in the future, our biggest supplier. That is clear" (Ferrero-Waldner, 2009a). At the same time, Marc Franco states that it is normal that "Russia attempts to diversify the number of its clients" and therefore "it is also normal for the European Union to diversify its sources" (Franco, 2006; Franco, 2007).

For a better overview of the meaning and content of the individual energy discourses of the EU, see Table 7, which compares the main themes of the three EU energy discourses.

## 6. Overview of the Russian energy discourses on the EU

Like we did in the case of the EU energy discourses, we will explore the energy discourses of the Russian Federation using the above-mentioned basic approaches. Within each of the Russian discourses, i.e. the integration, liberalization and diversification

[11] The EU plans to create a number of new gas pipelines as a part of the so-called "fourth" or "southern" energy corridor. These pipelines should supply the EU with gas from the Middle East, the Caucasus, and the Central Asian Region. The planned projects include the Trans-Adriatic gas pipeline (TAP), a pipeline connecting Turkey, Greece and Italy (ITGI), a pipeline connecting Azerbaijan, Georgia and Romania (AGRI), the Trans-Caspian gas pipeline and most recently the South-Eastern European Pipeline (SEEP). However, in spite of many doubts regarding the project, the Nabucco pipeline still remains the most important element of the strategy.

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discourse, we will analyze the major energy issues and Russia's position towards the European Union. At the same time, we will focus on the common features that these three discourses share with the EU discourses as well as the differences between the Russian and the EU discourses.

### 6.1. Integration discourse

The analyzed Russian documents and speeches revealed that among the energy discourses of the Russian Federation, the integration discourse is the one that clearly dominates. However, the integration discourse has slightly different implications in the EU and Russia. The EU integration discourse is focused on the integration process with Russia—i.e. Russia should gradually adopt the EU requirements related to energy and international trade. From this perspective, the mutual energy relations are defined as asymmetrical. However, the Russian version of the integration discourse stresses that the integration should be based not only on the transposition of EU standards but also on the principles of a mutually beneficial, symmetric energy cooperation, where Russia would be an equal partner of the EU. The Russian position was clearly expressed by Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko: "what is important for us is dialogue, not a diktat" (Shmatko, 2009a).

The second difference between the two integration discourses is the distinction between a bilateral energy cooperation between Russia and individual EU Member States and a multilateral cooperation with the EU as a whole, when "today our energy dialog is getting deeper both on a bilateral level and within the Russia-EU format" (Putin, 2006a; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, 2007). The main economic and energy partners of Russia in the EU are Germany, France, Italy and Spain. According to the present Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russia is also going to develop its relations with "Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary" (Putin, 2006b).

Russia sees its mutual energy cooperation with the EU in a positive vein. First, Russia highlights the current state of affairs: "I can only say that in our relations with the EU energy holds one of the central places. This is natural… [because]… the EU is our main partner… [with which]… we have identical interests" (Lavrov, 2008a, 2007a, but also Khristenko, 2007a). Second, it recalls the past, when "Russia and Europe have developed a close and trusting relationship. We reliably supplied natural gas to Europe for 40 years…" (Shmatko, 2009b). Third, it also highlights the future efforts that "will lead to a closer cooperation" (Shmatko, 2009c).

The character of the energy relations and the importance of the energy cooperation and partnership between Russia and the European Union from a utilitarian perspective are best explained by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev: "Energy is something that binds together the Russian Federation and the European Union countries. It is our common business and it is something that guarantees a comfortable life for millions of Europeans. Energy is therefore not a problem but an advantage" (Medvedev, 2009a).

Like the EU integration discourse, the integration discourse of the Russian Federation conditions the energy cooperation and the development of the partnership between the EU and Russia by several factors. The energy cooperation between the European Union and the Russian Federation currently takes place within the framework of the EU–Russia Energy Dialogue,[12] where Russia "would very much like the cooperation in this field to be not only mutually beneficial, but also based on common approaches and principles" (Putin, 2006c) such as "the predictability and stability of energy markets" (Khristenko, 2005a). However, an effective energy cooperation can only exist "on an equal rights and mutually advantageous basis" (Putin, 2006a, 2006b; Shmatko, 2009c; Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiiskoii Federatsii, 2004).

The legal framework for cooperation between the EU and Russia is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1997. According to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov, Russia and the EU should set themselves a target for an early conclusion of "a new Strategic Partnership Framework Agreement, which we regard as a vehicle for deepening our partner relations, above all in areas such as energy security" (Lavrov, 2009a). Also, in addition to the framework agreement, "a series of narrowly specialized agreements on economic cooperation, energy… should be prepared" (Lavrov, 2008b). Simultaneously, the EU–Russia energy partnership should be based on principles which were agreed earlier, primarily the ones that were agreed at the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg, and "which rest on a mutual consideration of interests, a balance of interests of producer countries, consumer countries and transiter countries" (Lavrov, 2007b, 2008a, 2008c, but also Khristenko, 2005b, 2005c, 2007b).

According to the Russian Minister of Industry and Energy Viktor Khristenko, the energy cooperation of Russia and the EU needs "special regulative norms" (Khristenko, 2004) and "further approximation of energy strategies and energy systems" (Khristenko, 2005c). In order to achieve this aim, Russia and the EU are going to continue working on establishing "a mechanism for mutual information and notification in the energy sector" (Putin, 2007a). In order to create a tool for the exchange of information on potential problem situations and ways of solving them, including the use of the Russia–EU energy dialog, Russia and the EU "agreed to continue work on the establishment of a mechanism of early warnings for supply and demand of energy coming from Russia to the EU" (Putin, 2007b).

Both integration discourses also agree on the issue of energy interdependence between the EU and Russia, which is simply defined as a mutual dependence where "you need gas, and we need the money" (Chizhov, 2008). However, the Russian integration discourse manifests a certain degree of ambivalence in relation to interdependence.

On the one hand, for example, V. Putin and S. Lavrov see the energy relations between the EU and Russia through the prism of symmetrical interdependence: "undoubtedly Russia and the EU are natural partners in this area. Our interdependence only strengthens energy security on the European continent" (Putin, 2006c); "our interdependence shows itself most vividly in the energy sector" (Lavrov, 2007a). The energy interdependence is then perceived positively as a "cementing factor of the established relations and this factor ought to be regarded as a thing of positive value and not as a threat" (Lavrov, 2007a).

On the other hand, V. Putin talks about a rather asymmetrical interdependence or even Russia's dependence on the EU in the same place: "I said to our colleagues … 44 percent of the EU's gas imports come from Russia, then 67 percent of Russia's gas exports go to Europe. This means that in actual fact Russia today depends even more on European consumers than they depend on their suppliers" (Putin, 2006c). In contrast, Sergei Lavrov hinted at the possibility that this interdependence might not be a permanent phenomenon, as the volume of Russian oil exports to the EU has been steadily growing, both in relative and in absolute terms: "By the year 2030, according to the EU's own forecasts, its dependence on [the] external supply of gas and oil will rise. We have no doubts that the EU can't do without Russia in this respect" (Lavrov, 2007a). Similarly, S. Shmatko expressed the following argument: "Our supply agreements are structured for the long term, so that our position as supplier to the EU over the next 25 years is not in jeopardy" (Shmatko, 2009a).

[12] The EU–Russia Energy Dialogue started in the year 2000.

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### 6.2. Liberalization discourse

The next discourse that we have analyzed on the basis of an examination of relevant Russian documents and speeches of political leaders of the Russian Federation is the liberalization discourse. While the main theme of the EU liberalization discourse is the achievement of a fully functioning liberalized market in the fields of electricity and natural gas within the EU, with the rules and principles of the Union being applied in the neighboring non-member countries – including Russia – as well, the liberalization discourse of the Russian Federation pays considerable attention to attempts of Russian entities to consolidate and strengthen their position on the EU internal energy market.[13]

On the other hand, the two discourses agree – with certain exceptions – on a positive perception of both actors, i.e. the EU and Russia, as natural trading partners whose cooperation is guided by economic interests and convenience. At the same time, the positions of both players are rather symmetrical in Russia's liberalization discourse. For example, in an interview, it is being suggested by D. Medvedev that "…Europe is our biggest customer for gas and oil supplies. It is our biggest market, and we will continue to develop our supplies to this market" (Medvedev, 2008).

V. Putin also outlined the conditions under which such a cooperation could function effectively: "All of Europe needs our energy resources. And we need to remove all fears, all anxieties and establish stability, reliability and predictability. Is it possible to do this within a free trade zone? It is possible" (Putin, 2006d). According to the Russian Minister of Industry and Energy, V. Khristenko, in order to improve the energy cooperation, it is crucial to define "the mutual access to markets" and to determine the "market mechanisms of establishing the prices" (Khristenko, 2006a). Moreover, this is very important for "creating unified rules both in the energy market and in the European economy as a whole…" (Putin, 2006e; Shmatko, 2008).

In response to the criticism of the European Commission that is being voiced in the liberalization discourse of the EU, claiming that Russia should liberalize and open its energy market to European investors and approximate its domestic prices for natural gas to world prices, Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said, "I know that our energy market is much more open than markets in the world's other big energy producers" (Putin, 2006f, 2007c). Similarly, he also said, "…our energy production and transportation sector is considerably more liberal than [those] in many other energy producing countries" (Putin, 2006g).

At the same time, V. Putin has repeatedly stated that European foreign companies participate in all major Russian energy projects: "According to different estimates, up to 26 percent of the oil extraction in Russia is done by foreign capital. Try, try to find me a similar example where Russian business participates extensively in key economic sectors in western countries. Such examples do not exist!" (Putin, 2007c). Speaking about the openness of Russia to European investment, Vladimir Putin tried to present some examples of European companies investing in Russian projects by stating that "European companies are also participating in projects based on production sharing agreements, namely Sakhalin-2, Khariaga, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium…" (Putin, 2006g, but also Khristenko, 2004, 2007b).

In return for this "helpfulness" and "openness" to foreign investors, Russia expects the same approach from the EU: "If people want us to create the conditions that will allow foreign firms access to the Russian market then it is also our right to expect a non-discriminatory attitude from the governments of interested states when Russian companies plan to enter European markets" (Putin, 2006a). In this context, the very clear question of a "quid pro quo" often arises: "If they want something from us…, then we want to know what we would get in return" (Putin, 2006b). What the Russian leaders mean by this is that the conditions for entering the EU internal energy market by Russian companies should be improved in return for Russia's "openness" (Putin, 2006c, 2006g).

According to the Russian liberalization discourse, the efforts of some European countries to prevent Russian companies such as Gazprom from entering their energy markets are one of the main factors that negatively affect the energy cooperation between the EU and Russia. As an example, V. Putin has several times mentioned the case of the negative reception Gazprom received when it wanted to buy a company in the UK: "Gazprom announced that it wanted to buy one of their companies, [and] everyone got excited: 'The Russians are coming! Guards!'…." (Putin, 2006f). The EU–Russia energy relations are also negatively influenced both by "the West's intention to gain access to Russian energy resources while not forgoing anything in return" (Lavrov, 2006a) and by US policies: "We know how, say, our American partners conduct a dialogue in Europe: they go to certain countries and urge them not to take our raw materials… This is already a political matter" (Putin, 2008).

Another controversial issue in the liberalization discourse of the Russian Federation is the Energy Charter Treaty. The reasons why Russia steadily refuses to ratify the present form of the ECT and its Transit Protocol have been summed up by V. Putin repeatedly and they are as follows: "first, our partners want to liberalize energy transport in Europe… This would lead to massive speculation which would not at all benefit the final consumers in Europe. Second, there is still an issue on which we have not reached an agreement with our European partners. This issue concerns creating equal conditions for supplying nuclear fuel to the market" (Putin, 2006b). According to V. Putin, the Energy Charter and the Additional Protocol refer to granting access to infrastructure for extracting and transporting gas: "And so we ask our partners: 'Very well, we shall give you access to this infrastructure and where will you allow us access? Where are these deposits? Where are the huge gas pipelines and infrastructure like [those] that we have?' Our partners do not have such infrastructure. For that reason signing and ratifying the additional protocols with the Russian party is a unilateral decision, and we shall not accept unilateral decisions" (Putin, 2006f, but also Khristenko, 2006a, 2006b; Shmatko, 2009b; Chizhov, 2006, 2007).

In response to these alleged shortcomings of the Energy Charter Treaty and its Transit Protocol, and in order to amend the content of the ECT or to completely replace it, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev suggested a new legal foundation for international energy cooperation[14] that "reflects the interests of suppliers, purchasers, and transit nations"(Medvedev, 2009b, 2009c, but also Lavrov, 2009b). Medvedev also suggested negotiations on this new document: "We would like to start discussing these documents with the European Union and our other

[13] Gazprom – a Russian gas company – holds a privileged position among the Russian energy companies. Since 2006, it has had a de iure monopoly on the export of Russian natural gas and it exports virtually exclusively to Europe. The export of gas to the member states of the EU is Gazprom's principal source of revenues – representing some 60% of its revenues and some 20% of the Russian national budget. Gazprom also contributes about 10% to the Russian GDP (Proedrou, 2010, p. 87).

[14] During the EU–Russia summit in Chabarovsk in May 2009, President D. Medvedev presented his proposal for a "New Legal Framework for Energy Cooperation", which deems it inevitable to create a new international and universally applied treaty that would include – contrary to the ECT – all major producers, consumers and transit states on the energy market and cover all important aspects of the global energy cooperation.

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partners, as soon as possible, and hope they will respond positively to our ideas" (Medvedev, 2009a, 2009d). Simultaneously, he claimed that "it seemed to [him] that [Russia's] European colleagues show[ed] [an] interest in these ideas" and "did not reject out of hand the Russian Federation's suggestions" (Medvedev, 2009a, 2009e).

### 6.3. Diversification discourse

Of all the three analyzed discourses, the Russian diversification discourse deviates the most from its EU counterpart. First of all, the two discourses diverge on the issue of the credibility of Russia as a reliable supplier of oil and gas. While the EU diversification discourse suggests that Russia might not always be a reliable supplier of energy, the Russian discourse presents Russia as the main energy supplier in relation to the EU ("Russia is one of the largest suppliers of energy resources to European markets" Putin, 2006h; Shmatko, 2008) and as a reliable partner: V. Putin said, "I think that Russia has always been a reliable energy supplier for its European partners", and he also said that it contributes to the energy security of the EU (Putin, 2006g, but also Medvedev, 2009e).

Second, both the diversification discourses differ in their understanding of and their approach to diversification itself. Where the EU diversification discourse focuses on the efforts of the European Union to gain access to non-Russian sources of oil and natural gas and the diversification of transport routes that would bypass Russian territory, the Russian diversification discourse believes that the main aims of the Russian diversification efforts are to construct new transport routes that would bring more oil and natural gas to Europe and to strengthen the presence of Russian energy companies on the EU internal energy market. The importance of diversification in the form of building new pipelines is clearly pointed out by the Russian Minister of Industry and Energy V. Khristenko: "The implementation of these projects allows [us] to solve the most important task for the EU – to diversify the routes for energy supplies, and [the most important task] for Russia – to diversify the directions of sales" (Khristenko, 2007d).

The main Russian argument for supporting the construction of new Russian pipelines is that this would ensure the energy security of the EU, and so we hear utterances from the Russian leaders like "the South Stream project opens up new prospects for cooperation to strengthen European energy security" or "I am confident that Nord Stream is one such example,… Its successful implementation will reinforce energy security all throughout the continent" (Medvedev, 2009f; Putin, 2008; Chizhov, 2007). According to V. Putin, Europe needs both these projects because "we know about the prospects for gas extraction in traditionally gas-rich countries of Europe such as Great Britain and Norway. Extraction there is falling" (Putin, 2005a; Chizhov, 2008), and therefore, "Europe sees as positive the construction of any new infrastructure, given the conditions of the growing gas demand" (Khristenko, 2007d). Finally, another reason why the EU needs new Russian diversification projects (in the Russian view) is the risk of a disruption of energy supplies and unreliable transit countries: "we understand that diversification is one way of decreasing risks on the part of our partners" (Khristenko, 2006d), and "diversifying supplies will greatly reduce Europe's dependence on the whims of any country's political regime" (Medvedev, 2009g).

While the EU blames both Russia and Ukraine for cutting off the gas supplies to Europe during the gas crisis of 2009, according to the Russian diversification discourse, the responsibility was borne mainly by Ukraine: "first, we did not cut supplies…. We had no legal basis for supplying gas; therefore, we had to make tough decisions, which we did not want to make …" (Medvedev, 2009h). At the same time, S. Lavrov dismissed accusations of the unreliability of Russia as the main supplier of energy resources to Europe: "Fears that have sometimes been voiced about the reliability of energy supplies from Russia to Europe… have no foundation beneath them" (Lavrov, 2006b).

Shmatko (2009b) also pointed out that the European Union has to make it clear to Ukraine that it was Ukraine and not Russia who violated the Energy Charter. In this context, D. Medvedev has repeatedly pointed out the inefficiency of the ECT when "everybody thinks highly of the Energy Charter to which Ukraine is a party along with some other countries. Well, was the Energy Charter in any way helpful in the much discussed gas conflict earlier this year? Absolutely not" (Medvedev, 2009e, 2009h).

The last difference between the two diversification discourses concerns the question of energy dependence. While the EU endeavors to reduce its dependence on Russian gas and oil, Russia sees this effort as inappropriate and unjustified: "I want to say that [the] rumors and suspicions concerning our European partners' excessive dependence on Russian energy resources are grossly exaggerated" (Putin, 2005b). Likewise, V. Putin, in response to the planned construction of Nord Stream, pointed out that "the rumors that Europe could lose its independence in the energy sector are highly exaggerated" (Putin, 2005c).

In connection with the European Union's concerns and attempts to reduce energy dependence on Russia, V. Putin indirectly suggested the possibility of a partial reversal of the flow of Russian oil and gas from Europe to the east. He gave the following reason for it: "we are always hearing about excessive dependence on Russia and about how steps should be taken to

**Table 8**
Main themes of the three Russian energy discourses .
*Source*: the authors.

| Integration discourse | Liberalization discourse | Diversification discourse |
|---|---|---|
| – Insistence on the principles of mutual symmetry<br>– Russia as an equal partner of the EU<br>– Russia as a major business partner of the European Union<br>– A positive perception of energy cooperation with the EU<br>– Focus on the economic benefits of the EU–Russian energy relations<br>– Positive assessment of the energy interdependence with the European Union | – Emphasis on the consolidation and strengthening of the position of Russian companies on the EU internal energy market<br>– The EU and Russia as natural trading partners<br>– Positive perception of both actors<br>– In return for openness to foreign investors, Russia expects the same approach from the EU<br>– Negative assessment of the ECT and its Transit Protocol | – Russia as the main energy supplier of the EU and as a reliable partner<br>– Focus on the construction of new/alternative transport routes<br>– The conviction that new Russian pipelines will reinforce EU energy security<br>– Emphasis on the stronger presence of Russian companies on the energy markets of EU member states<br>– Refusal of Russian responsibility for energy crises with Ukraine<br>– Possibility of a partial reversal of the flow of Russian oil and gas from Europe to the East |

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limit Russia's access to the European energy market. What do you expect us to do… We start to look for other markets" (Putin, 2006i, 2006j). According to S. Lavrov, China is an example of an alternative market for Russian natural gas since "there are good opportunities for building cooperation with China by means of cooperation development in [the] gas sphere" (Lavrov, 2009c). But if the Russian Federation takes this step, Europe will not receive the irreplaceable natural resources "that she could have received" (Putin, 2006a).

Russia's future needs to diversify its transport routes and find new energy markets in order to reduce its dependence on the European energy market is openly expressed in the Energy Strategy of Russia for the period up to 2030. Altogether, the share of the European energy markets in the total volume of Russian energy exports is expected to be steadily declining all the way to 2030 "due to export diversification to Eastern energy markets (China, Japan, Republic of Korea, other countries of the Asia-Pacific region) … This will make it possible to reduce the dependency of the Russian energy sector on export of energy resources to Europe" (Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, 2009, p. 23).

On the other hand, Russian President V. Putin and later D. Medvedev repeatedly stated that Russia has nothing against EU diversification projects such as the Nabucco pipeline because "we are not afraid of any other alternative routes such as NABUKKO [sic] and all the others. If natural resources exist, well, then start [off] there and let there be additional routes, additional deliveries" (Putin, 2006b; Medvedev, 2009f). V. Khristenko even admitted the possibility of the participation of Russia in the Nabucco project: "Russia is ready to assess its participation in similar projects" (Khristenko, 2006c).

Table 8 compares the main themes of the three Russian energy discourses.

## 7. Summary

The energy relations of the EU and Russia have been a hotly debated subject for quite some time now, both in the EU and in Russia. The topic became the subject of a large number of academic papers and expert articles. A predominant part of these studies and publications focuses on the analysis of the current state of affairs, or alternatively on the theoretical models of cooperation or the root causes of the conflicts in the energy relations. So far, just a few studies have dealt with the energy discourses in the EU and Russia.

The main aim of the presented paper was to define the possible approaches to the European Union and Russian energy discourses dealing with their mutual energy relations and to analyze and interpret the various discourses. The discourses have been identified and interpreted on the basis of an analysis of key documents of selected EU institutions and the central institutions of the Russian Federation, and speeches by and interviews with selected representatives of the EU and Russia between the years 2004 and 2009.

The analysis has revealed the existence of three energy discourses: (1) the integration discourse, (2) the liberalization discourse, and (3) the diversification discourse. These discourses exist within the European Union as well as within the Russian Federation. In our analysis of these discourses, we focused on (a) the common and the differing aspects of the individual discourses, (b) their major topics and (c) the mutual perception. Table 9 compares the commonalities and differences in the European Union's and the Russian Federation's versions of the three energy discourses.

The predominant energy discourse in the EU is the integration discourse, which emphasizes the mutual benefits derived from the energy cooperation between the EU and Russia based on the interdependence of the two actors. The integration discourse is closely linked to the liberalization discourse, which also stresses the economic and market dimensions of the relationship. Both discourses also agree on the mutual benefits stemming from a cooperation based on a new treaty and the mutual access of the EU and Russia to their energy markets. The third separate discourse is the diversification discourse, which is the most specific discourse, especially in times of the so-called energy crises. The diversification discourse – sometimes also termed the "securitization discourse" – is marked by its focus on the political aspects and the security implications of the energy cooperation and thereby it sets itself apart from the two preceding discourses.

To illustrate our argument in more detail, we selected several quotations of EU and Russian policy-makers as the most typical examples of the three discourses (see Table 10).

Like in the EU, the integration discourse clearly dominates in Russia as well. The EU and Russian integration discourses share a positive perception of the energy cooperation and the interdependence of the two partners. Both the discourses see the need for building a strategic energy partnership based on a solid legal foundation. Another important discourse in Russia is the Russian liberalization discourse, which differs from the EU liberalization discourse in the sense that it focuses on the efforts of Russian energy companies to establish themselves on the EU internal energy market. On the other hand, it shares with the EU liberalization discourse the positive perception of the relationship of Russia and the EU, which are looked upon as natural trading

**Table 9**
Common and different features of the EU and Russian energy discourses .
*Source*: the authors.

| | Integration discourse | Liberalization discourse | Diversification discourse |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Commonalities** | – Positive perception of interdependence<br>– Need for more cooperation<br>– Stress on the strategic partnership<br>– Emphasis of a strong legal and institutional foundation | – EU and Russia as natural trade partners<br>– Stress on pragmatism and economic interests - Relations seen as mutually beneficial and convenient | – Prioritization of security considerations over economic interests<br>– Energy seen as a strategic foreign policy instrument |
| **Differences** | – The EU stresses the integration of Russia into the EU market<br>– Russia underlines mutual rapprochement, equality and compromise | – The EU is critical of Russia's refusal to open its energy market to the West<br>– Russia stresses the limited access of Russian energy companies to the EU's internal energy market | – Divergent assessments of Russia's reliability as an energy partner<br>– Incompatible interpretations of diversification (routes vs. suppliers)—different perceptions of energy dependence |

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**Table 10**
EU and Russian policy-makers on EU–Russian energy relations .
*Source*: the authors.

| | | Three energy discourses | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Integration discourse** | **Liberalization discourse** | **Diversification discourse** |
| **Shared positions of the political representations of the** | European Union | "Our interdependence allows for a win–win situation to be created…" (Ferrero-Waldner) | "The Russian Federation is the EU's most important single supplier of energy products… The EU is the most important market for Russia energy export…" (Piebalgs) | "Russia [is]… the most promising … alternative to the Middle East as energy supplier to Europe" (European Commission) |
| | Russian Federation | "Undoubtedly Russia and the EU are natural partners in this area. Our interdependence only strengthens energy security on the European continent." (Putin) | "Europe is our biggest customer for gas and oil supplies. It is our biggest market, and we will continue to develop our supplies to this market…" (Medvedev) | "These projects allow [us] to solve the most important task for the EU – to diversify the routes for energy supplies." (Khristenko) |
| **Divergent positions of the political representations of the** | European Union | "The Community acquis could become a reference framework for a reform of the energy sector to be implemented in Russia." (European Commission) | "Negotiations could in this way facilitate the reform and liberalization of the energy market in Russia [and] provide stability…" (European Commission) | "We want to diversify not only because we are afraid of Russia." (Piebalgs)<br>"Russia is not, and should not be, the EU's only partner." (Barroso) |
| | Russian Federation | "What is important for us is dialog, not a diktat." (Shmatko) | "I know that our energy market is much more open than markets in the world's other big energy producers." (Putin) | "The rumors that Europe could lose its independence in the energy sector are highly exaggerated." (Putin) |

partners guided by economic interests and mutual benefits. The discourse that is the most different in the EU and Russia is the diversification discourse. The differences lie in the diverging assessments of Russia's reliability as an energy partner and also in the different approaches to diversification and the different perceptions of energy dependence.

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