

Measuring Russia's Snag on the Fabric of the EU's International Society: The Impact of the East-West Cleavage upon the Cohesion amongst the EU Member States *vis-à-vis* Russia

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Abstract

This article explores Russia's impact upon the cohesion of the European Union International Society (EUIS). The analysis proceeds from a systematic categorisation of Member States' positions towards Russia, using an "index of friendliness towards Russia" based on various indicators. This index allows us to analyse the relative positions of Member States towards the Eastern neighbour and to order them along an ideal continuum which goes from "normative adamant" to "normative docile". By taking a broad perspective of the different national attitudes, this article offers an innovative approach to the key question of EU-Russian relations. Existing cleavages and social differences among the members bear an important divisive effect on the development of the EUIS. The present analysis explores adherence to norms deriving from the widely accepted institutions of sovereignty and the market. While there is no doubt that these institutions boast complete devotion on behalf of EU Member States (MSs), translation into both common language and action proves to be hindered by social differences among members. The difference among the preferences of Member States towards Russia is then compared to the preferences expressed by the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) during the 6th legislature. The analysis of MEPs' voting behaviours towards Russia explores whether there is a coincidence between the positions of the MSs and those of the MEPs, as representatives of the EU's societies.

Keywords

International Society; Member States; EU-Russia relations

RELATIONSHIPS WITH RUSSIA PROVE TO BE PARTICULARLY PRONE TO INCREASE breaches into the European Union (EU)'s cohesion and ability to act. Despite the hope that

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the East-West cleavage no longer constituted a source of divisions in the Post-Cold War Europe (Browning 2003), relevant differences in confronting the Eastern colossus still originate from this cleavage of the past (Attina 1998: 221). From this perspective, the distinction between Old and New EU as stemming from the enlargements of 2004 and 2007 still explains the difficulty that the EU meets in consolidating common norms vis-à-vis Russia. On the one hand, "Old Europe" – to varying degrees of intensity – sees in the long Russian transition the opportunity to spread stability through economic integration, in including its immediate neighbourhood the normative heritage of its Society. On the other, "New Europe" considers Russia as a threat to regional security and urges the EU to assume a severe stance. The EU's Member States therefore oscillate between Liberal Institutionalism and Neo-Realist temptations in dealing with Russia. In so doing, the Member States at times hold ambitions for integrating Russia into a larger pan-European International Society, but at times showing concerns for their interests and security. It could be argued that difficulty to reach a common position towards Russia is symptomatic of different interpretations of "what ought to be done" vis-à-vis Russia.

This article starts by asking if it is possible to identify social differences among the Member States (MSs) which systematically infringe the consolidation of EU's "common interests and common values" *vis-à-vis* Russia, and to what extent this affects the functioning of the EU institutions when Russia is at stake. The benchmark of "self-identification" with the EU's International Society looks closely at those differences which define the MS' own identities. In light of the original character of the European Union International Society (EUIS), reference to normative foundations and common interests here focuses on the core values emphasised in the Treaty of Lisbon (Treaty on the European Union, TEU), rather than on MS' respect of the core primary and secondary institutions at the international level.¹

It is argued here that an analysis of consistent divisions and social cleavages among the members of a given International Society constitutes an important, though neglected, element in the study of International Societies. This importance descends from two reasons. First, separation and divisions contribute as much as commonalities to the definition of the normative foundation of a given International Society. In other words, it is the dialectic between patterns of division and co-operation which shapes the normative foundations of an International Society. Second, the mix between divisive and shared elements defines the scope for action of that Society.

Self-identification, therefore, does not mean that social differences among members of a Society fade away. Social differences among the members of a Society consistently show that agreement on the normative weave of an International Society alone is not a sufficient requisite for action. The dialectics between commonalities and differences is also reflected in a constitutive feature of the EU process of integration, that is, its inherent multidimensionality (Caporaso 1996).

Related to this, four central assumptions emerge. In the first place, main social differences among Member States contribute to both the definition and interpretation of common norms. This reveals a process of differential self-identification (Aalto 2007: 469) with the foundations of a given system. Second, social differences can determine the margins of action of a given system as well as institutional paralysis. Third, they contribute in a central way at predicting the behaviour of members of a given Society. Finally, they highlight the possible reverberation of those cleavages at the polity level.

This article offers an analysis of MS' positions towards Russia as influenced by the strength of economic flows, energy dependence, preferences for projects of regional security,

¹ For an extensive discussion on primary and secondary institutions, see Buzan 2004: 161-204.

existence of disputes and projects of energy supply. On this basis, an “index of friendliness towards Russia” was built. The index allows us to order Member States into a “normative” continuum: from the “normative adamant” to “normative docile”. In building the index, attention was paid to the complexity of measures of economic relations and dependence over Russian energy supplies, in hypothesising a bi-directionality of their causal effects, whereas Old MSs consider the strength of economic ties with Russia as a *relative* asset, New MSs still consider it as an *absolute* form of dependence, which threatens their overall stability. The analysis performed is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. This mixed approach is particularly evident in the process of definition of our index of friendliness towards Russia, where qualitatively retrieved dimensions go hand in hand with hard data addressing each country’s trade and imports with Russia. Given the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation this strategy seemed to maximise the advantages of both analytical approaches. At the same time it appears to guarantee a wider and more consistent array of indicators which depict the dynamics addressed more accurately.

Second, the article aims to compare the result of the analysis of the members of the EUIS with the positions of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The analysis of MEPs’ voting behaviours towards Russia explores whether there is a coincidence between the positions of the MSs and those of the MEPs, as representatives of the EU’s societies. Accordingly, the article compares the position of MSs with those of the MEPs, as expressed in a sample of 18 roll call votes, issued from December 2004 to July 2008.² This additional analytical step aims at evaluating to what extent MS’ individual attitudes towards Russia emerged in the first part of the analysis has the potential to affect the way the EU decision-making process works. Or, to put it another way, to what extent MS’ preferences cross the borders of national politics and embrace a transnational dimension, thereby mutually blending one another in increasingly forging the EU’s strategy towards Russia. In particular, the European Parliament represents a perfect laboratory to conduct this test. As the only directly elected EU institution it allows us to see if, and to what extent, national preferences relate to ideology in the eyes of the legislators when such a sensitive issue is at stake.

Consequently, Section two introduces the main literature and advances the theoretical ground of this work. Section three presents a relation between the norms as expressed in the TEU, diverse perceptions and social differences among the MSs, and the derivative deadlocks which can impinge over the reach of a common action. This taxonomy is further related to the variables employed in our analysis and their operationalisation. This section also presents the variables adopted in the construction of the index and the methodology employed for the analysis of the MS’ positions. Section four presents the “index of friendliness towards Russia”. Section five explains the methodology employed for the analysis of MEPs’ voting behaviour and will present the main results of the analysis. The final part of this work develops some general conclusions.

² All the votes included have been held during the 6th EP legislature, according to a time-line defined by the time period delimited by the dimensions which compose our index of friendliness towards Russia is based. Given the MEPs’ turnout between one parliament and the other we could not include also the current EP. On the other hand the inclusion of the sole 7th EP would have been severely harmed and made virtually impossible by the very limited number of votes concerning Russia held so far (3 RCVs).

Literature review: values and interests, commonalities and differences within an International Society

An International Society can be defined as the product of a group of states, which have “established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements” (Bull and Watson 1984: 1). Born in the European region as the cradle of the values of modern International Society (Watson 1982: 95; Bull and Watson 1984), the seeds of an International Society sprang into life from a perceived sense of the unity of Latin Christendom (Mattingly 1955: 16) and developed throughout the late Dark Ages around “three converging currents of tradition: ecclesiastical, feudal, and imperial, or, if one prefers, Christian, German, and Roman, embodied in canon law, customary law, and civil law” (Mattingly 1955: 19). Basic international societal institutions, such as the balance of power and diplomacy, have been progressively accepted by non-European states, on the basis of either adherence or forced assimilation to this collection of rules and practices; by means of incorporation (Watson 1966), legal reception (Watson 1978), legal borrowing (Roberson 2009) and so forth.

Scholars belonging to the English School's (ES) tradition usually refer to the concept of International Society (IS) by highlighting both common interests and values. Common values and interests bond the Member States (MSs) of a given IS to “a set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions” (Bull 1977: 13). Bull's crucial reference to commonalities is exemplificative of the awareness that shared interests and normative values constitute the precondition to the establishment and consolidation of a given IS. According to Bull, the existence of a *trait d'union* in values and interests among members of a Society needs to be complemented with their *consciousness* of the relevance of existing ties. This awareness, coupled with the normative character of common rules, is ultimately what conceptually distinguishes a system from a society of states.³ At large, the English School tradition does not deny the relevance of interests in the consolidation of an IS. But in contrast to Realist perspectives, states do not co-operate merely on the basis of security related interest and strategic calculations, but decide to tie themselves up with others on the ground of a collective identity (Andersson 2010: 49). Therefore, as for security communities, belonging to a given International Society does not imply that “interest-based behaviour by states will end, that material factors will cease to shape interstate practices, and that security dilemmas will end. Nor [...] that security communities transcend the mutual dependence between regional orderly security arrangements and stable economic transactions” (Adler 1997: 255). Being bonded to an International Society rather means that, as with neoliberal institutionalism, instrumental judgements “can be accompanied by judgements about prevailing expectations and normative considerations affecting the validity and solidity of international agreements” (Smith 1996: 10). As in any international system, one of the goals of any International Society is the one of preserving security and independence of the members (Wight 1978: 96, quoted in Diez and Whitman 2002: 54). But, in difference to an international system, members are bonded together by a common set of values, and tied up by a more or less thick set of rules and institutions.

Even within an International Society, therefore, “contradictions within a set of values [...] are the everyday stuff” (Buzan 2004: 250). Therefore, differences in interpretations, values and interests need to be taken into account in the study of a given Society. Attina goes further in revealing a central gap in Bull's theoretical approach, where “he disregards social

³ In other words, “[Bull's] distinction between an international system, which exists when two or more states have sufficient contact between them to behave as parts of a whole, and an international society, which arises when states consciously conceive of themselves as bound by common rules and share in the working of common institutions” (Neumann and Welsh 1991: 328).

variables as relevant determinants of state actions and system characteristics", and in so doing he overstates "factors inducing community and peaceful coexistence rather than separation and division" (Attina 1998: 210). He applied the traditionally domestic conceptual tool of cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Rokkan 1970) to the IS and individuates three social cleavages cutting across the global International Society: the North-South (economic), the Centre-Periphery (cultural) and the most recent East-West cleavage (1998: 221). These cleavages intervene massively in shaping both the feasibility of an agreement and the range of activities pursued by the international society. They impact the policy-cycle from the introduction of a given point in the agenda to the conduct of negotiation, from the timing to the results of the overall cycle.

On the one hand, cleavages separate states into groups which are differently exposed and sensitive to the issues of the system; on the other, social cleavages result in aggregations which strongly influence political alignments and governmental coalitions in multilateral negotiation for giving formal solution to global issues (Attina 1998: 219).

These considerations highlight two sets of consequences related to the norms shared within a given society and to the creation of closer ties among selected members of a given society. On the one hand, norms shared are formulated in vague and flexible terms, to the extent that they can be considered as a "standard of civilisation" (Samhat 1997: 352). On the other, the territorial scope of an International Society is inherently "unbundled" (Ruggie 1993: 165) and its borders are fuzzy, and time- and context- sensitive. The next section will explore the way in which these conceptual categories have been applied to the analysis of the EU and the wider European order.

The EU: an International Society like no one? Inter-subjective understanding, social differences and their effect into the EUIS normative weave

The European Union (EU) constitutes a particularly thick International Society insofar, in a highly advanced process of "integration by law" (Kohler-Koch 2009: 110), Member States agreed upon a grid of principles, from human rights to social form of market liberalism (Diez and Whitman 2002: 53) and accepted to bond themselves to the EU International Society (EUIS) set of rules and institutions. In this understanding, within the overall International System, the EU can be conceived as a "specific sub-system [...] in which the societal element is stronger than elsewhere" (Diez and Whitman 2002: 48).

In the analysis of the EU/EUIS two conceptual dimensions of Society overlap: the institutional dimension, which defines the geographical political space of the EU as a system of governance (Friis and Murphy 1999); and the societal dimension, that is, the *quality* of interstate relations, both in terms of thickness of normative ties and consonance of fundamental interests.

In the first place, the consolidation of an International Society, formal institutions represent a crucial tool for embedding Members into *norm-sharing* and patterns of cooperation, whereas institutions provide for "persistent sets of rules (formal and informal) that prescribe behavioural roles, constrain activity, and shape expectations" (Keohane 1989: 3). As was noted, English School scholars often disregarded the importance of formal institutions in the strengthening of a society of states.⁴ In a global environment in which the quasi totality of states share the same basic practices and principles of relation (such as diplomacy, sovereignty, or the balance of power), the existence of thick institutional structures can be considered as a further indicator to depict the strength of ties among a

⁴ For a review on this point, see Simmons and Martin 2006: 197.

group of states, whereas the thicker is the institutional dimension, the stronger is the societal element among states.

In the second place, criteria for inclusion in the EU, and as an extension to the EUIS, repose on constitutive normative elements, such as self-identification (Diez and Whitman 2002) endorsed through membership. The EU's bedrocks are codified within the treaties, whereas acceptance of basic norms, together with the entirety of the *acquis communautaire*, constitutes a precondition for membership. This guarantees, even if within limits, that a common understanding of vague norms (such as adherence to a social form of market economy or territorial sovereignty of states) exists among members. Two primary norms are recognised as constitutive of the EU: supremacy of the Member States in the process of *norm-building*; and centrality of agreed values in shaping external conduct. In the first place, the basis of the EUIS' capability to act descends from Member States' conferral of delegated competencies "to attain objectives they have in common" (art. 1, TEU). Secondly, in light of their high catalyst power (art. 2, TEU), agreed norms are placed at the core of the EUIS' quintessence, which also shapes the EUIS' main principle "to advance in a wider world" (art. 21.1, TEU).⁵ Self-identification with the EUIS normative ground is, therefore, both a precondition for membership and a central instance of the EU's normative ethos as an international actor.⁶

Although of central symbolic importance, the sharing of common norms is only one possible reason underlying the strategy of enlargement, whereas other sets of considerations converge in the decision to expand the borders of an institutional community of states.⁷ Schimmelfennig posits that the normative argument progressively constituted a powerful strategic lens to re-interpret Europe's contemporary history. This strategic attitude characterised the position of Central and Eastern European Countries in order to strengthen their claim for accession (Schimmelfennig 2001: 55). The frequent metaphor of a return – whether to "Europe", to "democracy", to "capitalism" or to "history" – in the rhetoric surrounding the Eastern enlargement sheds light on the normative, rather than geographical, marker of Europe as a category.⁸

While EU enlargement has often been regarded as a powerful, albeit limited and improper, tools of foreign policy, the possibility of recurring to the rhetoric of common values has today nearly extinguished its potential, as "the heterogeneity of the membership", and "the costs of centralized decisions are likely to rise where more and more persons of differing tastes participate" (Sandler *et al.* 1978: 69, quoted in Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002: 511).

In light of both the institutional and societal dimension, therefore, EU's membership defines the geographical political space of the EU as a system of governance in a given

⁵ The EU/EUIS is told to projects its values beyond its borders through its presence (Allen and Smith 1990; Manners 2002; Waever 2002), its external policies (Barbe and Johansson-Nogues 2008; Kelley 2006; Rynning 2003; Schimmelfennig 2008; Tocci 2007) and through interactions with third party states and international organisations (Boerzel and Risse 2004; Lucarelli and Manners 2006; Manners 2008).

⁶ In difference to institutions as the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that were born "enlarged" to the communist side of Europe" (Pourchot 2011: 179), enlargement in the EU context is "is a key political process both for the organization itself and the international relations of Europe in general" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002: 500). In this understanding, enlargement is defined as "a process of gradual and formal horizontal institutionalization of organizational rules and norms" (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002: 504). In a EU/EUIS understanding, enlargement embodies central institutional and societal consequences, which, together with the geographical and political borders of the EUIS, shape the inter-subjective understanding of common norms.

⁷ See Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002.

⁸ Whereas: "today's Europe is to be found where its democratic, liberal and humanist values and practices succeed in shutting the door on the nightmare of authoritarian regimes, command economies, and disregard for human rights and fundamental values" (Melescanu 1993, quoted in Fierke 1999: 38).

point in time, but it does not explain three central and constitutive elements of that Society: the in-group differential self-identification (Aalto 2007: 469), the existence of a shared inter-subjective understanding of basic norms among the members (Kratochwil 1988; Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986) and the evolving relation between the EU and a changing broader European order (Smith 1996: 7).

In the first place, within the EU, differential patterns of integration occur due to a variable geometry on the ground of stronger ties in interests and/or values among selected Member States (Smith 1996: 8). Even within the EUIS, therefore, the development of the European political space can be explained in terms of a "Europe of Olympic rings", "in which the different yet interdependent regions/rings of Europe (Northern-Baltic Europe, the Mediterranean, Central Europe, etc) become simply nodes in a wider framework" (Medvedev 2000 and Joenniemi 2000, quoted in Browning 2003: 50). The strength of common interests and the identification with the values and principles of the overall International Society admits, therefore, several degrees of intensity, as constitutive values are purposely conceived and elaborated in flexible and rather vague terms (Aalto 2007: 467).

In relation to the second point, Kratochwil adds two important specifications to unravel the nature of adherence to rules and norms and their relation to behaviour. First, norms cannot be seen in a causal relation with behaviour in term of rights and obligations, but rather as factors able to "guide", "inspire", "rationalise", "justify", "express mutual expectations" or simply "be ignored" (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986: 767). Second, "no single counterfactual occurrence refutes a norm" and its existence; therefore it is the inter-subjective reaction to a violation that defines what a violation itself is (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986: 767). In this perspective, any international relationship seldom relies on authoritative interpretation: "it follows that interpretations of acts by the actors are an irreducible part of their collective existence" (Kratochwil 1988: 276). Norms, therefore, have a "communicative, rather than merely referential functions" (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986: 769). In this sense, norms produced by an International Society and embedded in formal institutions are intrinsically based on both "a subjective and inter-subjective understandings" (Navari 2009: 1), on the basis of individual elaboration on behalf of states and constant processes of re-elaborations in the interstate/inter-institutional context. As follows, this flexibility and vagueness signals the *plural* existence of the same norm, whereas norms are flexibly adapted both to different interpretations and to different interests and geopolitical considerations of the members of an International Society. Crucially, recognising the plural existence of norms indicates that an IS' normative weave can survive flexible interpretations.

In the third place, the development of the EUIS does not occur in geographical isolation, but is significantly shaped and reshaped through interactions with the outside world, especially with its neighbours, such as the Eurasian continent.

Eminently, Smith draws upon the analytical distinction among four types of boundaries which define the relation between the EU and the surrounding European order, the geopolitical, institutional/legal, transactional and cultural (1996). The geopolitical boundary encompasses a security dimension and implicitly demarcates a zone of order and stability from an area of disorder (the wider European environment). The second dimension embodies the institutional and legal elements which underpin membership to the EU. In this perspective, in the post-Cold War era, a close alignment came to verify between the geopolitical and legal/institutional borders in Europe (Smith 1996: 15). The transactional type of border adds up extra-regulatory layers to trade issues, while the cultural border constructs a "difference between the assumed culture of the insider and the outsiders" (Smith 1996: 17). Consequentially, borders between the EUIS and the overall European order, in this context, reflect a politics of inclusion and exclusion, "that implies a

disjunction between an entity (here the EU) and its environment (the European order)" (Smith 1996: 13).

With reference to the wider European Regional International Society, therefore, chalking out the borders of Europe has always been a context- and time-related exercise rather than a territorial or geographical one (Neumann 1996). In the eye of some observers, the borders of the European International Society seem to go from Western Europe to Russia and the most parts of the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States). This Society is characterised by the support for the institutions of sovereignty, diplomacy, the market, equality of people and human rights, nationalism in the form of self-determination, popular sovereignty and democracy (Aalto 2007: 467-89).

In a recent article, Georgeta Pourchot (2011) applied to the overall European Regional International Society (ERIS) the concepts of pluralism and solidarism (Bull 1966: 52). Bull explained pluralism by depicting the tendency of states "of agreeing only for certain minimum purposes which fall short of enforcement of the law"; whereas solidarism, "was a twentieth century tendency for real or potential solidarity in international society that enabled enforcement against lawbreakers" (Bull 1966: 52, quoted in Pourchot 2011: 192). Pourchot joins Buzan's claim for a more flexible conceptualisation on how pluralist and solidarist elements are balanced in an International Society where pluralism and solidarism represent the two extremes of a continuum which depicts the 'thinness' or 'thickness' of a given International Society (Buzan 2001: 484, quoted in Pourchot, 2011: 192). Pourchot concludes that the ERIS is a thin society, of which Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) represents a significant instant (2011: 193). Along the same lines, Diez and Whitman posit that the EU constitutes a thick Regional International Society that exists within a much broader but thinner European International Society.

An analysis of the place of Russia in the wider ERIS has been neglected (Aalto 2007). The normative undertone of the word *Europe* aptly applied, often in negative terms, to the biggest Eastern neighbour on the Eastern border. The Russian Federation has often been defined as "non-European" (Neumann 1998: 406, quoted in Schimmelfennig 2001: 69) or, at best, as "neither a part of nor apart from the West" (Kaempf 2010: 318). In her valuable review on discourses of *Otherness* in European collective identity building, Michelle Pace refers to the division of Europe into West and East as "a fundamental characteristic of modern times" (2002: 189), with Russia as a symbolic epicentre. Throughout Europe's turbulent history, Russia has been often labelled as a material competitor threatening the European living space (Carta 2008: 488). The historical evolution of Russia proved that westernisation and modernisation are two processes which do not necessarily go hand in hand (Gray 1995: 167) to the extent that the turbulent and premature entry of Russia in modern history made Russia and the West constitutively "incompatible", as if they belong to "different stages of civilisation" (Carr 1956: 362). The image of Russia as a "non-European" country in normative terms constitutes largely but not exclusively a heritage of the Cold War, whereas the Soviet Union was defined "in Europe but not of Europe" on the ground of some "master dichotomies civilised/barbarian and European/Asian and [...] a number of others such as free/unfree, market/plan, West/East, defensive/offensive, etc." (Neumann 1996: 7). Therefore, the demarcation between "accepted Europeans" and a Russia in perennial transition to *Europeanness* (Neumann 1996) has been defined in terms of a modern form of differentiation, that entails "the construction of [European collective identity's] outside as inherently different and as a threat to its identity" (Rumelili 2004: 28).

As noted previously, the fall of the Iron Curtain "ushered in a belief that territorial and psychological borders could be transcended and eroded and that 'Europe' could be reconstructed in much more open and diverse ways. One result of such optimism has been the instigation of numerous region-building projects across the East-West divide, the

aim being to eradicate that divide in favour of a new commonness" (Browning 2003: 45). In the next sections an analytical framework is proposed to see whether the East-West divide still constitutes a prism to analyse the evolution of the EU International Society and its relation with Russia. Therefore, it will focus attention on those differences among EU Member States which threaten the consolidation of a common approach towards Russia. The after-effects of the East-West cleavage still prove to be powerful explanatory tools for detecting patterns of behaviour in the European and EUIS. Social differences stemming from the East-West cleavage still inform Member States' positions towards Russia. They also impact over the EU's international *actorness* insofar as they limit the feasibility of a possible action. In parallel, differences between the Member States appear to be more composite due to the complex interactions among Member States' evolving interests and normative beliefs. This might also contribute to explain why the EU's final decisions on the issue tend to reflect an intrinsic median position, regardless from the gravity of the Russian challenge.

The EUIS and the Russian Federation: exploring social differences among the EUIS members

The analysis presented here builds upon six main elements: the East-West cleavage weighted by religion, the strength of economic flows, energy dependence, preferences for projects of regional security, existence of disputes and preferences in projects of energy supply. This provisional list is by no means exhaustive of compelling social differences. Yet, this list constitutes a valid inventory of divisive elements.

Table 1 puts some norms stated in the Treaty of Lisbon in context; diverse perceptions and social differences among the Member States, and the derivative deadlocks which can impinge over the assumption of a common action. The table further introduces the variables adopted in the analysis. As it appears, there is no doubt that members of the EUIS do not diverge from such norms as national security, independence and integrity or safeguard of fundamental interests. These manifestations of the institutions of sovereignty and the market (Buzan 2004: 187) are widely shared among the EUIS members and in the whole International System.

The basis for deadlock in common action on behalf of the EUIS, therefore, descends from different interpretations of these norms and from different security and economic considerations among the members. This urges upon the need to identify highly divisive elements among the members of the EUIS. In this direction, the heritage of the past is still a heavy stigma for New Member States. The East-West cleavage does not recall merely geopolitical considerations, but marks the nexus between geographical and historical identity and perceptions of the outside world. The recent experience of satellisation of the former Soviet Union impacts negatively on CEE Member States' visions of Russia, also in light of the "systematic policy of coercive bilateralism" (Leonard and Popescu 2007: 11) allegedly pursued by Russia. Following on from this, it is hypothesised that the East-West divide impacts the normative considerations of the EUIS members to a great extent. In the quantitative analysis here, it further substantiates the East-West dimension by taking into account the percentage of orthodox population in the Member States (see Appendix 3 for the ratio of orthodox population within the Member States). Religion traditionally played a rather relevant role in Member States' identification with Russia. Many recent political developments, such as the formal/informal pattern of alliances in the Yugoslav wars, reflect the strong appeal of this historical linkage both among the public and at elite level.

If we analyse figures of energy dependence (see Appendix 2) and commercial shares (see Appendix 3) Member States' different stake in relation to Russia becomes striking. In light of structural differences, many New Member States still perceive the *absolute* dependence

on the exchanges with Russia as a form of “dominance”, while Old MSs perceive the possibility to entertain solid economic relations with Russia as an important *relative* asset. Accordingly, our index was built in taking into account the intrinsic “bi-directionality” of these two measures.

New Member States tend to be much more reliant, if not totally dependent, on Russian trade. This seems to be the case for many EU's Member States that confine with Russia. Baltic Member States score the highest rate of commercial exchanges with Russia. Eastern and Northern Member States (with the notable exception of Denmark) also score a very high rate of commercial exchanges. In relative terms, Old Member States present lower figures. This is also the case of those Member States that Russia considers as “strategic partners”, notably, France, Germany, Italy and Spain.

The same can be said about dependence over natural gas supplies. We can distinguish between those that rely completely or nearly completely on Russian sources (such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia) and those that do not draw at all on them (such as, Denmark, Sweden, Spain, Ireland, Portugal, Luxembourg and the UK). Belgium and the Netherlands score a comparatively low level of reliance on Russian sources, while the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Austria and Slovenia draw more significantly on Russian sources. Germany, Poland and Italy score relatively high level of dependence which, nonetheless, accounts for less than 50 per cent of the total gas imported. France and Romania also have a comparatively low rate of dependence. These figures contradict the commonsensical parlance according to which some big Member States are those that are submitted the most to the blackmail of a possible Russian cut in supply.

Attitudes towards Russia are likely to be worsened by the presence of significant disputes, whether territorial, diplomatic, commercial or of other kind. Particularly, Member States from CEE have been dramatically affected by Russian aggressiveness. In this respect, the Baltic states represent an epicentre of turmoil. The ongoing crisis between Estonia, Latvia and Russia over the issue of Russian minorities and the territorial disputes affecting the Lithuanian-Russian relationship over the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad all represent a serious cause for concern. Severe diplomatic disputes have been experienced also by some Old Member States, notably, in the case of UK.

In energy related matters, the EU collectively tried to elaborate alternative natural gas supply options to substantially differentiate natural gas supplies. The Nabucco natural gas pipeline represents an ambitious attempt in this direction. The Nabucco would have transported natural gas from the Caspian region and from the Middle East through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary to Austria and then further to the West European markets. Russia was opposed to the Nabucco project, and launched the South Stream project in 2007. The project, which has been seen as strongly rivalling Nabucco, planned to pump Russian gas to Europe, under the Black Sea, via Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia and Italy, with branches crossing Hungary and Austria. This proved to have had a tremendous divisive effect over the European support to the Nabucco project. In a short space of time, Gazprom, on behalf of the Russian government, proved to be able to reach an agreement over seals pipeline for the Southern Stream gas pipeline with Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Austria. It can therefore be argued that the norm of “safeguarding fundamental interests” hold different meanings for different Member States.

Another potentially divisive issue is the accession of Georgia and Ukraine in the North Atlantic Alliance (NATO), a proposal that met the strong opposition of Russia. Many Member States, notably some of the “big” ones, such as Italy, France, Germany and Spain, but also, the Netherlands and Belgium, proved to be particularly keen not to hurt Russia's sensitivity on this issue. During the NATO Summit in Bucharest, held in April 2008, the

accession had been delayed, in contrast to the will of the US in light of “Russia’s legitimate security concerns”. On the contrary, New Member States chorally recognised the need to build a security belt around Russia.

Table 1: A presentation of the variables included in the analysis in light of common norms and different perceptions

Norms stated by the treaties	Diverse perceptions and social differences	Derivative deadlocks	Variables included in the analysis
Safeguarding national security	The presence of disputes in some EUIS render them more incline than other members to assume a sever stance towards Russia	Inability to set an adequate policy response	Presence of relevant disputes Dummy variable based on track record disputes.
Security, independence and integrity (21.2)	Russia is accused to threaten territorial integrity of its neighbours. Member states do not share the same strategy on how to deal with territorial security in Europe.	Different voting behaviours of MSs both in the EU and NATO summits.	NATO’s enlargement Three scale variable, dividing those that favoured the accession of new candidates in NATO (0); those who preferred to counter or postpone their accession (1); and those EU members who are not NATO members, who did not express any particular position (0,5).
Fundamental structures (4.2) and cultural diversity	New MSs tend to have a more negative approach towards Russia than older MSs. Common religious roots contribute to favour better relations for Old MSs and to a lesser extent for New MSs.	Cut across the policy spectrum	East/West weighted by religion Four scale variable developed as follows: Western orthodox (1), Western non orthodox, Eastern orthodox and Eastern non orthodox (0). ⁹
Safeguard of its fundamental interests (21.2(a))	Projects of energy independence depict different strategies in the pursuit of the EU’s fundamental interests.	Incapability to pursue independent projects in matters of energy independence.	Support for energy independence from Russian supplies Three scale basis variable ranging from 0 (support for Nabucco pipelines or opposition to the Northern Stream) to 1 (support for either the Southern Stream or the Northern Stream). A modality, ranging 0.5, takes into account those MSs that do not rely on Russian sources, thus, do not adopt any clear positions on this regard.

⁹ In our case, it fits completely to this divided as Cyprus and Malta were excluded by the analysis due to the lack of data.

Safeguard of its fundamental interests (21.2(a))	The strength of economic relations affects differently EU's MSs: it is positively related to a more friendly attitude for Old MSs, and is negatively related to a positive attitude for New MSs.	Inability to use instrument of economic coercion to sanction violations or export norms.	Strength economic relationships The strength of economic ties has been measured as the share of trade with Russia weighted by the share of overall extra-EU commercial trade. Four scale variable, ranging from 0 (maximum of exchanges with Russia on behalf of a New Member State) to 1 (maximum of exchanges with Russia on behalf of an Old Member State).
Safeguard of its fundamental interests (21.2(a))	The level of energy dependence affects differently the MSs. We can distinguish between those who rely completely on Russian sources and those who do not draw at all on them.	Stalemate and inability to present a common stance toward Russia	Level of energy dependence Measured as the share of energy imported by Russia and the overall gas imported. 4 scale variable: ranging from 0 (maximum of reliance on Russian gas on behalf of a New MSs) to 1 (maximum of reliance on Russian gas on behalf of an Old MSs).

The state of the art of the relations with Russia: a threat to the EUIS?

In order to systematically depict Member States' attitudes, an index of friendliness toward Russia was built based on the variables described above. The index proves to be reliable, scoring a Cronbach's Alpha of .683. The analysis depicted two main dimensions. These two dimensions cumulatively explain the differences in Member States' positions for a total of 59.6 per cent.

The index has been developed according to the following formula:

$$\text{IndexRus} = \left(\frac{\text{ind1} + \text{ind2} + \dots + \text{indn}}{n} \right)$$

where *indn* represents the score of each Member State on a given indicator of closeness towards Russia (ranging from 0 to 1) and *n* represents the number of indicators included. The final measure (IndRus) orders MS' attitudes from 0 to 1, where 0 indicates the lowest and 1 the highest rate of normative proneness towards Russia (see Table 2). In other words, the final measure represents each MS' average score, calculated on the basis of the six indicators included in the index (see Table 1). All the six dimensions are operationalised according to a scale ranging from 0 to 1, therefore all weight the same in the definition of the final score, and no normative assessment has been conducted in order to develop an artificial – and possibly fallacious – ranking. On the basis of Member States' score four categories were developed: "normative adamant" (ranging from 0 to 0.25), "normative intransigent" (from 0.26 to 0.50), "normative malleable" (from 0.51 to 0.75) and the "normative docile" (from 0.76 to 1).

Table 2: An index of friendliness towards Russia

<i>Estonia</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>normative adamant</i>
<i>Lithuania</i>	<i>0</i>	
<i>Poland</i>	<i>0.11</i>	
<i>Latvia</i>	<i>0.17</i>	
<i>Czech Rep.</i>	<i>0.19</i>	
<i>Slovakia</i>	<i>0.25</i>	
<i>Sweden</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>normative intransigent</i>
<i>United Kingdom</i>	<i>0.39</i>	
<i>Romania</i>	<i>0.44</i>	
<i>Slovenia</i>	<i>0.44</i>	
<i>Portugal</i>	<i>0.47</i>	
<i>Bulgaria</i>	<i>0.5</i>	
<i>Hungary</i>	<i>0.53</i>	<i>normative malleable</i>
<i>Denmark</i>	<i>0.55</i>	
<i>France</i>	<i>0.55</i>	
<i>Ireland</i>	<i>0.55</i>	
<i>The Netherlands</i>	<i>0.55</i>	
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>0.64</i>	
<i>Germany</i>	<i>0.64</i>	
<i>Luxembourg</i>	<i>0.64</i>	
<i>Spain</i>	<i>0.64</i>	
<i>Finland</i>	<i>0.69</i>	
<i>Italy</i>	<i>0.72</i>	
<i>Austria</i>	<i>0.75</i>	<i>normative docile</i>
<i>Greece</i>	<i>0.89</i>	

The results seem to validate the hypothesis that the East-West divide concurs consistently in explaining differences in Member States' behaviours. The hypothesis of a bi-directional relation of measures of commercial exchanges and energy dependence seems also to be largely validated. Hence, MS' position along the index appears to reliably portray the current state of the EU's Member States-Russian relations.

The normative adamantans

According to the results here, the most adamant Member States towards Russia come from CEE. This group of countries – composed homogeneously by Eastern Member States – has been labelled as “normative adamantans”. In spite of the fact that Schimmelfennig reports the CEECs’ claim for a “return to Europe” (2000) following the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, homogeneity seems still far to come in this respect. Thus, the East-West divide proves to be a powerful analytical prism. With the possible exception of Slovakia, all the countries in the group have been hit by Moscow’s unilateral coercive politics. Overall, security concerns upset this group of countries, which tends to assume Atlanticist positions when dealing with their security strategy.

As highly predictable, the Baltic States, namely Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, score the maximum level of intransigence towards Russia. The question related to the treatment of the Russian minorities in the Baltic States, particularly in Estonia and Latvia, can be regarded as a main source of conflict between these states and Russia, exacerbated in the cases of Estonia and Lithuania by other disputes. Compared to the other Baltic neighbours, Latvian government recently attempted to improve its bilateral ties with Moscow.¹⁰ Poland and Czech Republic can be regarded as holding similarly inflexible attitudes towards Russia. Like Lithuania, Poland has actively promoted a harder line towards Moscow at the EU level. The two countries experienced serious unilateral commercial blockages on behalf of Moscow. The antimissile shield stands at the core of the diplomatic stalemate between Moscow, Warsaw and Prague. Slovakia seems to hold a comparatively softer approach towards Russia, as reflected by its borderline position in the category. It did not register any particular conflict with Russia and tended to have a more acquiescent attitude in dealing with the Russian dossier (Leonard and Popescu 2007: 38).

The normative intransigents

The group of the “normative intransigents” contains an interesting group of countries. On the one side, appear four CEE countries, which progressively “unfroze” their relationships with Russia. On the other, four Western European countries come into sight, characterised by a low level of economic exchanges and total energy independence from Russia.

The UK is the more hostile country among the biggest Old Member States. Its commercial exchanges rate with Moscow as one of the lowest among the Member States. Moreover, it is totally independent from Russian natural gas resources. In this regard, London marks its “insularity” *vis-à-vis* the other big Member States, in confirming the special character and autonomy of its foreign policy. Several diplomatic accidents and vocal criticisms marked the British position towards Moscow, such as the Zakaev extradition case in 2003 and the assassination of Litvinenko in 2006. Moreover, the UK did not spare its severe criticism in denouncing Russian violations of human rights.

Sweden scores a relatively high rate of commercial exchanges, as is the case of Bulgaria, but total independence over Russian natural gas resources, a condition that makes it closer to those of the UK and Portugal. Stockholm’s reaction to Northern Streamline Project has been lukewarm and marked by concerns over the ecological feasibility of the project. Although Sweden is not a member of NATO the recent turmoil in Abkhazia and South Ossetia urged several cabinet members in Sweden, as well as in Finland, to speed up

¹⁰ Latvia indeed, progressively started to see its relations with Russia as “taking the form of a constructive dialogue in the context of both bilateral and multilateral co-operation”. Quoted in Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Bilateral relations with Russia*, published on 17 October 2007, retrieved from <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/policy/bilateralrelations/4542/Russia/>, accessed on 10 September 2008.

discussions on their membership in the Alliance.¹¹ This is coupled with Swedish tendency to raise its criticisms about the evolution of Russian politics. Within the group, Portugal seems to be a Member State which has a lesser interest in the Russian dossier as it does not have significant commercial exchanges and draws entirely upon different natural gas sources. This position is coupled with its indifference over the Nabucco/Southern Streamline quarrel. As their Eastern neighbours, Bulgaria and Romania are tied to Russia by nearly total natural gas dependence and by strong commercial rates, while Slovenia, even if consistently dependent over Russian energy supplies, proves to be far less dependent over commercial rates. These CEE states, compared to their Eastern neighbours, seem to have undertaken a more positive path in their relationship with Russia. In particular, in the case of Bulgaria, this seems related to the strategic weight of the South Streamline Project.¹²

The normative malleable

This category represents the most heterogeneous group in the index presented here. This may be due to different reasons. Among others, it represents the modal category of the index. Thus, this specific measure of central tendency might be more subject to internal inconsistency.

Analogously to Bulgaria, Hungary was also included in the Southern Streamline Project. In March 2009, the Hungarian energy company MOL and Russia's energy giant Gazprom signed an agreement to build the Hungarian section of the South Stream gas pipeline. Hungary's rate of energy dependence is high, as well as rates of commercial exchanges. Since the signing of the Treaty on 6 December 1991, inter-state relations between Russia and Hungary are told to be of "a new type based on the equality of the parties, mutual interests and benefits, free of ideology".¹³ Following on from this, Hungarians seem to be orientated to pushing their "business interests above political goals" (Leonard and Popescu 2007: 2). The most outstanding outlier in the group is Denmark. Denmark does not have particularly strong commercial ties with Russia and score a total independence from Russian natural gas supplies. However, Denmark can be regarded as the first MS that had experienced severe bilateral disputes since Putin's Presidency (Leonard and Popescu 2007: 46). States such as Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg can be considered as small Member States, with a weak foreign policy agenda and with a lower stake in relation to Russia. This group of states scores a very low level of commercial rates with Russia and presents a low reliance on Russian natural gas sources. With the exception of the Netherlands, they have generally not been involved in disputes with Russia. These Member States favoured the postponement of the accession of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO. Traditionally, these states tend to assume a rigid stance in human rights matters, though the leverage of the Eastern giant may bring them about assuming an acquiescent behaviour.¹⁴

¹¹ See 'Sweden and Finland debate NATO as Russian relations worsen', published on 01 September 2008, retrieved from <http://www.barentsobserver.com/sweden-finland-debate-nato-as-russia-relations-worsen.4504795-58932.html>, accessed on 12 September 2008.

¹² Bulgaria proved its will to strengthen relations with Moscow. Bulgaria, which was initially included in the Nabucco project, did not hesitate to change its position, by assuming actively a more acquiescent position towards Russia, by signing agreements for the realization of the Southern Streamline.

¹³ See 'Bilateral relations between Hungary and the Russian Federation', published 13 May 2005, retrieved from http://www.mfa.gov.hu/kum/en/bal/foreign_policy/bilateral/europe/russian/, accessed on 12 September 2008.

¹⁴ Benelux and Ireland do not assume the same stance towards Russia. The Netherlands and Ireland are told to assume a colder posture, while Luxembourg and Belgium a more friendly one, due to criticisms and occasional disputes in the case of the former, and of higher economic stake in the case of the latter (Leonard and Popescu 2007: 36-43).

Within the group, France, Spain and Germany can be regarded as important foreign policy players with a precise strategy *vis-à-vis* Moscow. Spain stands in a slightly different position from France and Germany. It is completely independent from Russian natural gas supplies and does not regard Russia as a relevant asset for its international trade balance. Even if Spain did not take part to the Nabucco/Southern Streamline quarrel, it often voiced the claim for a major EU's energy independence. It can be supposed that the need to maintain good relations with Russia brings it about being more acquiescent. Like Germany, Spain advocated the postponement of the accession of Georgia and Ukraine to NATO, in order not to irritate Moscow.

The activism of the EU French Presidency in the Russian-Georgian crisis proves the importance that France has historically attached to its relations with Moscow. France does not enjoy comparatively relevant commercial exchanges with Russia, and its rate of dependence on Russian natural gas sources is lower than the European average. In spite of this, France took a pro-South Streamline position in the European pipelines "dispute" and often boasted its preferential channels of communication with Moscow. The reciprocal relevance is more political than economic and is grounded on the partners' will to increase their international leverage. Recently, Russia and France assumed similar positions at the international level, notably in the case of Iraq. France voiced clearly and firmly not to favour Georgia and Ukraine's Atlanticist ambitions in overtly diverging with the approach of the US.

Among the big members, Germany is the one that scores the highest rates of commercial exchanges and natural gas dependence. Germany is the Western Member State with the strongest economic ties with Russia. Its *Ostpolitik* tradition has brought it about having a balanced and often acquiescent position towards Russia. Angela Merkel adopted a colder posture than her predecessor, in nonetheless recognising the importance of the dialogue with Russia in all issues. Angela Merkel, therefore, emphasised the importance "to talk to rather than against" each other, also in delicate questions, such as the antimissile shield and the enlargement of NATO.¹⁵ Italy scores a relatively high rate of economic exchanges, and relies consistently on Russian natural gas supplies. Even with a different emphasis, all Italian governments, regardless of their political colour, tended to stress the importance of economic ties with Russia. Italy proved to be particularly active in contrasting the Nabucco Pipelines Project. On several occasions, Berlusconi emphasised the friendly character of his relationship with Putin. Italy proved to be a loyal ally for Russia, even if its loyalty in certain cases resulted obscured by its solid Atlanticist commitment. This was the case for the antimissile shield issue when, even if in an unclear way, Italy supported the US' position. In this regard, its position towards Russia may suffer from its medium foreign policy leverage (Santoro 1991).

Austria scores a comparatively low rate of economic exchanges with Russia, but has a consistent energy dependence on the Eastern giant. As mentioned above, it signed agreements for inclusion in the Southern Streamline Pipelines. It is not involved in any direct dispute with Russia and tends to maintain overall good relations with Moscow. Even with a low leverage, Austria proved on several occasions its keenness to defend Russian interests within the EU (Leonard and Popescu 2007: 37). The last Member State in our group, Finland, proves to be remarkably careful to keep good relations with Moscow. It enjoys a comparatively high rate of commercial exchanges and a total dependence on Russian energy supplies. The leverage of Finn-Russian relations improved to the extent of approximating the replacement of Germany as Russia's biggest trading partner, also on the basis of the fact that "a quarter of all Russian imports transit through Finland" (Leonard

¹⁵ Speech of Angela Merkel at the 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy, published on 2 October 2007, retrieved from <http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?id=178&sprache=en&>, accessed on the 10 September 2008.

and Popescu 2007: 37). Historically, Finland has tried to have good-neighbourly relations with Russia, and to be able to pursue its own soft security agenda, in order to maintain a peaceful path in its relations with Russia.¹⁶

The normative docile

The last ideal-type, Greece¹⁷, embodies a state which only scores 0.89 on the scale. As mentioned, Greece boasts solid cultural, historical and even religious ties with Russia. Its rate of energy dependence proves to be high, even if rates of commercial exchanges are not among the highest. Greece concluded agreements on energy supply with Russia and proved to oppose staunchly the Nabucco Pipeline Project. Greece has never faced diplomatic or commercial harassment by Russia, and has been rewarded by being included in the Southern Streamline trajectory. The low leverage of Greece *vis-à-vis* other EU's Member States presumably diminishes its ability to threaten the EU's cohesion. Notwithstanding, Greece proved to be a solid ally for Russia.

From this insight in the index, the first preliminary conclusions can be drawn. The more New Member States are dependent on Russia, the more they adopt a critical attitude. The CEE Member States that boast a major independence or are undertaking agreements with Russia on future pipelines, tend to have a relatively milder position. Those Old MSs that hold a comparatively low dependence over Russian energetic supplies and commercial exchanges tend to assume a colder posture. Whether this posture is translated into open criticisms presumably depends also on the leverage of their foreign policy and on the stake of their relation with Russia. Proceeding along this continuum, we find those Old Member States that have a comparatively high dependence over Russian supplies and strong economic ties, which, thus, assume the most acquiescent attitude towards Russia.

Measuring MEPs' sensitiveness to national preferences towards Russia

The analysis of MEPs' voting behaviour highlights whether MEPs' positions mirror the same cleavages emerged from the analysis of the MSs. Exploring whether cleavages affecting the Member States are also reverberated at the EP level offers an interesting contribution to our analysis. If it is assumed that social variables included in the index presented here are representative of an enduring cleavage, it can be argued that – when a nationally-sensitive issue is at stake – there might be coincidence along national lines between the MSs and their respective MEPs. This analysis also seems particularly relevant, considering that many scholars tend to claim an increasing normalisation of the EP, thereby abandoning the temptation of following national positions (Hix 2001; Kreppel and Hix 2003).

The votes included in the analysis were held between December 2004 and July 2008.¹⁸ In order to assess MEPs' sensitiveness to national preferences, that is, the weight of MS' preferences in an ideologically-oriented transnational environment, in the empirical analysis it is considered that only the cases characterised by opposite majorities of MEPs at national delegation and group level. Therefore, only those votes marked by conflicting

¹⁶ Finland launched the Northern Dimension Initiative (NDI) in 1997, which later has been included on the agenda of the Luxembourg Summit and became an official EU policy. In this regard, in spite of its small dimension, Finland proved its ability to pursuing actively its goals, in order to influence the EU's agenda, even if the ability to influence further implementation of its goals is far beyond its scope of action (Arter 2000: 695).

¹⁷ On the specificity of Greece's foreign policy in this regard, see Pace 2004: 227-38.

¹⁸ The minutes of the votes are available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/activities/plenary/pv.do?language=EN>.

positions between national party and European leadership are included¹⁹, assuming the national leadership to issue clear voting instructions to the affiliated MEPs, possibly reflecting MS' "hopes and fears" towards Russia. This further step seems to guarantee both the "national saliency" of the votes included and a clearer identification of the voting preferences of the European parliamentary group (EPG) and the affiliated national party delegation (NPD).

Two different measures were developed. The first one used to calculate and compare the levels of nationally-conformist defections at national delegation²⁰ level is called *absolute defection rate* (ADR). ADR represents the average proportion of nationally-oriented votes for each national delegation of MEPs.²¹ In order to compare the share of nationally-conformist votes among the 25 national delegations the *relative defection rate* (RDR) has been developed. RDR can be obtained by dividing the ADR of each national delegation by the EP average ratio of nationally-oriented defections. The RDR value will be higher than one if a single delegation defects more than the EP average share of nationally-oriented defections and will be lower than one if it does not. The main advantage of using RDR is to relatively assess the differences in the levels of defection among the delegations, thereby making them statistically comparable.

An analysis of the RCV concerning Russia: national or ideological orientations?

This analysis tested the impact of the cleavages identified at the Member States' level, both in terms of polarisation and in terms of intensity. Therefore, it is hypothesised that, even under different circumstances, both the most fervent supporters and opponents of Russia are likely to feel uncomfortable with the final outcome of the vote, given the generally assumed *median* nature of the parliamentary compromise based generally on oversized coalitions of mainstream parties²² (Kreppel 2004). As a consequence, stronger nationally-oriented pressures might be expected on the MEPs originating from those EUIS national contexts in which the impact of the cleavages is stronger. In this case, those characterised by above-the-average levels of opposition or support towards Russia (*i.e.* normative adamant or normative docile), which are more likely to be dissatisfied with the agreed, generally mild, position.

This section will test the proposed hypothesis by comparing MEPs' defection rates in the 18 votes with their stance towards Russia (Member States' index score), thereby looking at the persistence of the cleavages identified in the previous sections as a consequence of different perceptions and understanding of the norms by the EUIS Member States.

The first part of this section will look at the ADR values displayed by the 25 national delegations analysed, while in the second part we will comparatively assess the existence of a relationship between Member states' degree of friendliness towards Russia and the voting behaviour of their MEPs.

¹⁹ The analysis specifically refers to those cases in which the modal vote of the majority of the European group differs from the modal vote of the majority of its affiliated national party delegation.

²⁰ In this paper, the term *National party delegation* (NPD) refers to a group of MEPs elected under the label of the same national party, whereas the term *National delegation* (ND) includes all the MEPs of a Member state, regardless of their partisan affiliation at national and EP level. The NPD operates with the framework of an intra-group dimension, while the latter cross cuts the ideological divisions.

²¹ The ADR has been built through a multiple-step data refinement process. *First*, the modal voting option of each EPG and of each affiliated NPD has been identified for every single RCV included in the analysis. *Second*, the share of nationally-oriented votes has been identified for each NPD. *Third*, the measure for the 25 national delegations has been calculated by combining together the results of the NPDs belonging to the same Member State.

²² In the 6th EP, a winning majority involved 86.1 per cent the EPP-ED, 86.8 per cent ALDE, and 81.2 per cent PES (source: votewatch.eu).

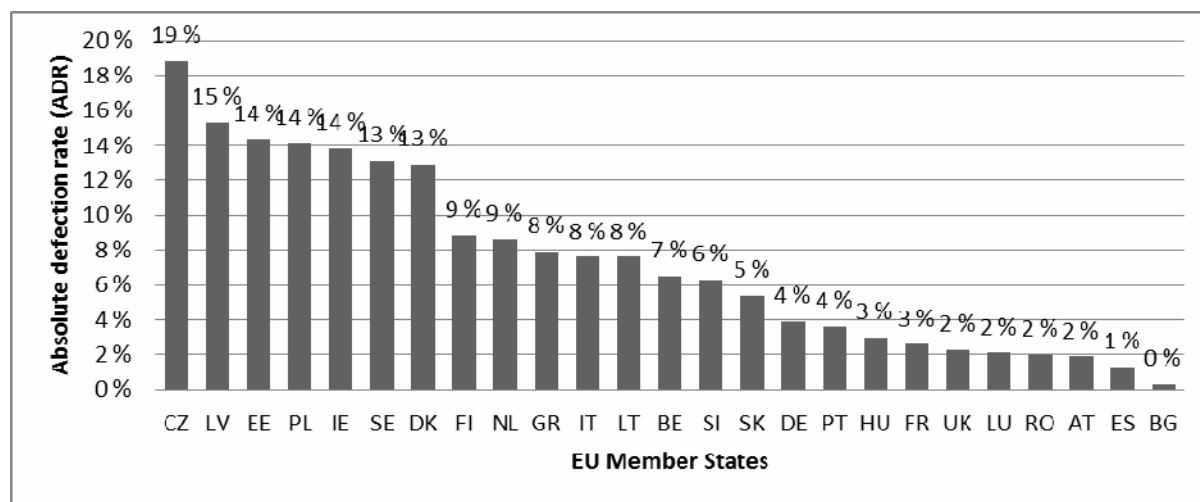
Figure 1: National delegations' average defection rate

Figure 1 summarises the results of the first analytical step. If we look at MS' ADR values – when Russia is at stake – a high level of variance among the 25 can be appreciated, which can be hypothesised as an indicator of the strength of the social and cultural cleavages. The average level of defections at EP level equals 6.04 per cent. By far, the Czech MEPs represent those who tend to defect more often from their respective parliamentary group on the Russian dossier (18.80 per cent), followed by the Latvian (15.30 per cent), by the Estonian (14.30 per cent), and by the Polish MEPs (14.10 per cent). On the other hand, the Bulgarian MEPs emerge as the most conformist as they defect only 0.3 per cent of the times. Similarly, two other delegations present an ADR value below two per cent, namely the Austrian and the Spanish ones. In line with the initial prepositions presented here, all “normative adamant” emerge as the least conformist. The exceptional nature of the Russian dossier is confirmed by an additional discrepancy which emerges when comparing MS' ADR including all the votes held between 2004 and 2009 and ADR values calculated on the basis of the votes on Russia. Czech ADR is three per cent higher when Russia is at stake, Latvia's score is five per cent higher, Estonia's is ten per cent higher, and Poland's is four per cent higher.

The Scandinavian countries appear also keener to defect. Sweden, Finland and Denmark's ADR score relatively higher than those of other Western MSs. It can be assumed that, given their geopolitical proximity, relations with Russia are perceived as a matter of greater national concern (*i.e.* higher intensity of the cleavage). Beyond the four CEE delegations and the Scandinavian group, the ADR value of most of the national delegations (18 out of 25) tends to score lower than ten per cent. It is worth noting that all the EU heavy-weights fall in the low-defecting side and that their mainstream national party delegations are therefore likely to be part of a winning majority, in the light of their ability to affect the pre-legislative policy-shaping processes at EPG level.

In the most conformist national delegations the MEPs do not seem to disagree frequently from their respective groups. Given the relevance of the Russian dossier it can be confidently assumed that national parties *do care*, but that they simply tend to agree most of the times with the policy position sponsored by the head of the group. Consistently, Faas maintains that “*if* national parties become involved in the process of voting in the EP [...] MEPs from national delegations are likely to defect in cases of conflict. In these cases, the [European] party group leadership cannot do anything but accept it” (2003: 847).

In the light of previous discussion, it can be supposed that national delegations tend to defect more in the policy-areas considered as matters of primary national concern; a dimension that – keeping the ideological characterisation of the delegation constant – varies according to the existence, intensity, and polarization of a given cleavage.

Figure 2: Relationship between MEPs' relative defection rate and MS' index score

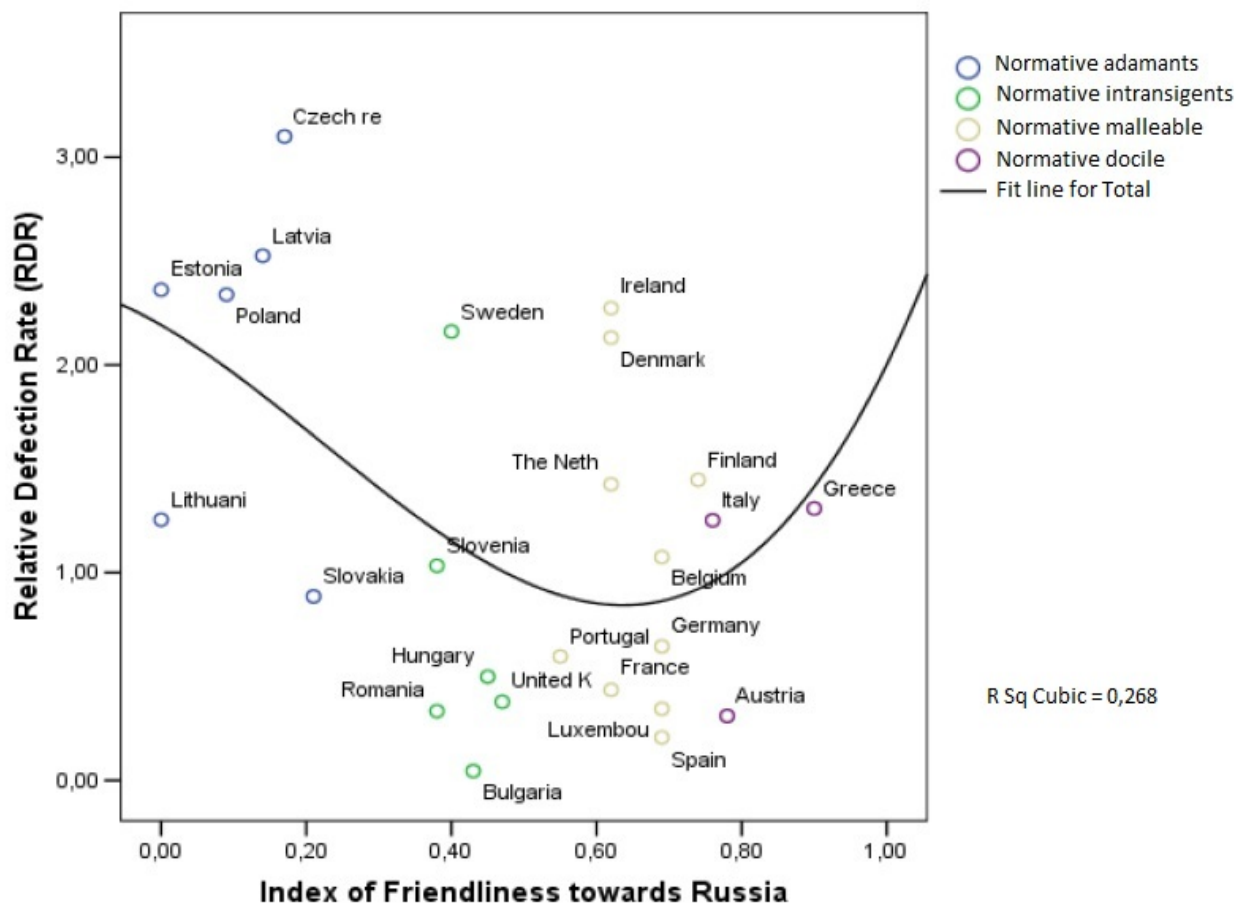


Figure 2 summarises the results of the second analysis performed. National delegations' RDR scores allow statistically consistent inter-delegation comparisons. In the horizontal dimension of the figure, MS' position along the anti/pro-Russia continuum, as defined by this index, are located. The vertical dimension reflects national delegations' voting behaviour (RDR score). The point of convergence of the two measures defines MS' position on the bi-dimensional space.

Three national clusters clearly emerge from the observation of the plot, which seem consistent with the hypothesised link between Member States' positions as the result of social and cultural cleavages at EUIS level and representatives' voting behaviour. On the left upper side of the bi-dimensional space a group composed by our four "normative adamant" CEE countries characterised by both the lowest levels of warmth towards Russia and the highest level of defections in the EP can be identified. The high RDR scores yielded by these countries indicate national leaderships' uneasiness with the voting positions adopted by the respective EPGs, supposedly perceived as too moderate. These findings confirm that not only the foreign policies of the four "normative adamant" CEE

countries depict Russia as a “normative other” (Carta 2008; Kaempf 2010) – as emerged from the index – but also their MEPs tend to reflect this intransigent approach.

Not all the “normative adamant” seem to completely fit the hypothesised pattern. Although Lithuania and Slovakia emerge as integral part of the anti-Russian front, their dramatically low score in the index (0 and 0.25) is rather matched with a relatively low level of defection rate at EP level (respectively, 7.6 per cent and 6.3 per cent).

In the specific case of Lithuania this seems to be primarily determined by specific inter-parliamentary factors and by the political distribution of the Lithuanian MEPs: the majority of the Lithuanian parliamentarians (7 out of 13) belong to the Labour party (Lithuanian: *Darbo Partija*), whose leader is the Russian-born millionaire Viktor Uspaskich. In the mid-1990s, Uspaskich quickly gained tremendous success in his business empire that now includes – among others – the importation of natural gas from Gazprom, in addition to flourishing enterprises in the food production and animal fodder industries.²³ These factors seem to explain the more moderate (and mainstream) stance towards Russia of most of the Lithuanian MEPs. This state of things is likely to change following the debacle of the Labour party in the 2009 EP elections and the victory of the centre-right Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats, more critical towards Moscow.²⁴

On the other hand, the more moderate behaviour of the Slovak delegation might well be explained by its borderline position within the anti-Russian group. Slovakia presents the highest score in the index among the hardliners (0.25). Moreover, it is worth mentioning that Slovakia (unlike all the other members of the group) did not experience any relevant diplomatic or commercial conflict with Russia.

In the central-lower section of the figure a cluster of countries characterised by the lowest degree of defection and a more balanced and median position in the anti-/pro-Russia continuum can be identified. This cluster embraces by large the countries belonging to the two median groups defined by our index: the “normative intransigent” and the “normative malleable”. The Member States in this cluster are characterised by a low RDR score.²⁵ Four of the EU’s heavyweights fall in this second cluster; in other words the majority of their MEPs seem to adopt a more pro-Russia stance. Three of them Spain, France and Germany perfectly fit the hypothesised pattern (milder stance towards Russia and low RDR). In contrast, the UK seems to emerge as an exception as its relations with Russia are generally marked by a more conflicting stance (UK scores 0.48 in the index) even if the RDR of the British MEPs (0.38) appears in line with the average of the cluster. This result seems, therefore, to denote either an imperfect link between British elites’ concerns and MEPs’ voting behaviour or a more pragmatic approach adopted by the British delegation when it comes to the vote in the plenary. In the second scenario, although generally more critical towards Moscow, a majority of the British delegation prefers to chose “voice”, rather than “exit”, thereby supporting the median-mainstream position and avoiding the risk of isolation.

In general the presence of all the major EU MSs in the least defecting group seems to confirm the possibility of significant policy-shaping power in the pre-legislative phase of the intra-group bargaining. It is worth noting that the “mainstream” position adopted by the EP is more likely to be “median” rather than “extreme” (openly, anti- or pro-Russia) as it

²³ See ‘Founder of Lithuanian Labor Party Viktor Uspaskich released from custody’, published on 28 September 2007, retrieved from <http://www.regnum.ru/english/623519.html>, accessed on 15 September 2008.

²⁴ For further details on the 2009 EP elections in Lithuania see Braghiroli 2010.

²⁵ Ireland, Sweden, and Denmark represent relevant exceptions as their defections on the Russian dossier appear to be more frequent than the average of the group. Significantly, we discovered that both Denmark and Sweden (the latter included among the “vigilant critics”) are marked by a more critical approach towards Moscow, especially in those votes related to human rights.

must involve most of the MSs in this median cluster (characterised by a moderate stance towards Moscow) to get a majority in the Parliament. On the other hand, as French, German, Spanish and British MEPs (along with the Italians), constitute more than half of the membership of the three major mainstream parties, those national delegations are necessary to get a winning majority and therefore have to be part of it.

Among the most conformist cases several CEE countries are identified whose foreign policy seems to be characterised by a more cautious approach towards Russia such as Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and the small Benelux states, characterised by weaker foreign policy agenda and lower stake in relation to Russia.

A final cluster can be identified in the left side of the figure including the “normative docile”, namely Greece, along with Finland and Italy (the only Russia's strategic partner in the group). According to the index here, these appear characterised by an evident pro-Russia stance at EU level (*i.e.* the impact of the cleavages appears strong and positively oriented). The levels of nationally-oriented defections appear higher than that displayed by the median-mainstream group, but lower than that of the anti-Russia hawks. The RDR score of the three delegations equals respectively 1.31; 1.45, and 1.25, moderately above the average level of defection.

This is possibly due to the fact that the agreed compromise appears to the elites of the three Member States more acceptable than to the anti-Russia hawks, although not totally appropriate. For this reason they appear on average more likely to defect in comparison to the second cluster, but most of their MEPs are part of a winning majority more often than those of the anti-Russian pole. From this perspective, when it comes to Russia, both MS' preferences and MEPs' voting behaviour seem to confirm that, albeit common norms do exist, these norms are subject to different and, at time conflicting, individual interpretations (Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986).

The cubic fit line in the plot tells the same story described above. If we move from opposition to normative proneness towards Russia in the horizontal dimension of the bi-dimensional figure, we assess a gradual decrease in the national delegations' defection rate whose lowest level is touched by the states sponsoring a median position towards Russia. It can be confidently assumed that those national delegations feel sufficiently comfortable with the stance of their respective EPG and this reduces their need to defect. When the pro-Russia pole of the horizontal continuum is approached, a new (even if more moderate) increase is registered in national delegations' defection rate, signalling growing concern with the agreed policy position at EP level.²⁶ In this respect, the impact of the cleavages seems stronger at the antipodal extremes.

Conclusion: condemned to be divided?

This article posited that the EU is an IS, grounded on common interests and values. Commonalities among the EUIS' members have been laid down and locked up in an unprecedented way into a highly sophisticated institutional and legal system. This system assigns to the Member States the centrality to decide which basic norms are to be considered constitutive of the EUIS. Once agreed upon, these norms are told to forge external action.

Instead of focusing the attention on those elements which touch upon commonalities it highlighted highly troubling factors of the EUIS' relations with Russia. These factors seem to originate massively from a cleavage that in the past affected the IS on a global scale: the

²⁶ The trajectory of the change is plotted as a cubic fit line with 95 per cent individual confidence intervals.

East-West cleavage. Both psychological and material elements, coupled with the persistence of intrusive policies on behalf of Russia contribute to the resilience of the East-West divide.

The analysis here explored adherence to norms which derive from the widely accepted institutions of sovereignty and the market. While there is no doubt that these institutions boast complete devotion on behalf of EUIS' members, translation into both common language and action proves to be hindered by social differences among members. This difference massively reveals the differential meanings that these norms assume in dealing with the Russian dossier.

The strong normative vocabulary that the Member States have in common, therefore, does not prevent the EUIS to sail across troubled waters when it is time to act. Norms matters, but their translation into action reposes on conditions consistently determined by social differences among members. The same norm is dissected by relevant social factors, which, consistently, explain the interpretation of "what ought to be done".

In building this index, the complexity of economic measures is depicted by hypothesising a bi-directionality of their causal effects. The strength of commercial figures or dependence over Russian natural gas supplies seems to mean different things for the Old and New MSs. This affects their preferences and behaviours in a different way. Therefore, intense exchanges with Russia means *in practice* different things for Old and New Member States.

This is confirmed by the Member States' different attitudes towards preferences over projects of regional stability. In general, New Member States tend to adopt a more rigid stance, while Old MSs tend to be more acquiescent. This does not prevent Old Member States to assume a more intransigent posture towards these issues.

By combining indicators of economic flows, energy dependence, preferences for projects of regional security, existence of disputes and projects of energy supply, four ideal-typical reactions to Russia are found: the "normative adamant", the "normative intransigents", the "normative malleable" and the "normative docile". Above all for the "adamants", a rigid interpretation of norms descends by their troubled history of subjugation from Russia. Both "normative adamant" and "normative docile" will generally tend to be the most discontent of the final outcome of the EU's decisional process. The two median ideal-types comprise a more heterogeneous group of MSs, which is arguably driven by different kinds of rationale.

As our four ideal-types show, Old and New Member States, however, do not constitute homogeneous blocks. On the contrary, our results show a more nuanced picture. Among the "intransigents", two major approaches can be depicted. On the one hand, there are Member States, mostly coming from the Old Member States that are less tied to Russia. These Member States may be more incline to assume a rigid stance. On the other, there are New Member States that undertake a softer approach compared to the neighbours, due, for instance, to the strategic importance of projects of energy supply.

Analogously, among the "malleable", there are those Member States that have a major interest in keeping good relations with Russia. They will be inclined to pursue friendly policies at the EU levels, even if this does not necessary prevent them to raise their voice. On the other, there are Member States that do not have a major commercial or energetic stake in relation to Russia. These, mostly small, Member States may tend to follow the median outcome of the EU's policy making towards Russia.

This article has focussed on factors which stem from the East-West cleavage. Yet, the methodology here could apply to detect other relevant differences. An indicator to depict Member States' attitudes towards human rights violations, to our advice, might expand the scope of this analysis. This analysis also proves to be a solid basis to explore normative clusters within the Council. The analysis, indeed, focused on members of the EUIS, rather than on the EUIS itself. This analysis can, therefore, be expanded and related to the process of norm- and policy-making within the EUIS.

As predicted, looking at the voting dynamics in the EP allowed us to roughly assess MS' relative weight in what can be seen as the gradual definition of an EU strategy towards Russia. What emerges is that the MSs located in the media categories of the index of friendliness have in general more chances to successfully see their preferences mirrored in the EU agenda. In particular, the analysis of MEPs' voting behaviour seems to confirm two relevant elements. The cleavages which affect the Member States also trouble the MEPs. Consistently, several national delegations emerge as more likely to defect than others. In the case of the national delegations belonging to the two antipodal categories ("normative adamant" and the "normative docile"), MEPs are more likely to vote "nationally", that is, to defect from their respective EPG.

These differences have emerged in the process of crossing national delegations' respective RDR and Member States' index score in the bi-dimensional scatter plot. The analysis of the results revealed the existence of three clusters marked by distinctive behavioural styles. The first cluster, mainly consisting of the "normative adamant", is characterised by low levels of warmth towards Russia and by high levels of defections at EP level. The delegations belonging to the second cluster (comprising the two median categories of the index) seem rather characterised by a milder stance towards Russia and by the lowest levels of parliamentary defections. The third cluster, consisting of Russia's best friends, is marked by a relevant increase in the RDR score, nonetheless lower than that displayed by the first group. These results bring us to an interesting consideration. Assuming that national delegations' RDR increases if they feel uncomfortable with their respective EPGs' position, it seems that EP median position leans towards the pro-Russia pole, given the higher level of discontent among the anti-Russian cohorts.

In conclusion, the analysis of cleavages and social differences seems to be a promising stream of study in order to depict living dynamics of a given International Society. In the case of the EUIS, divisive elements seem to be highly predicting factors of the margin of ability to translate common norms into action.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Member states with relevant orthodox penetration

Country	Christian Orthodox	Other Christians	Other religions / Non believers
Bulgaria	82.6%	1.2%	16.2%
Estonia	12.8%	15.0%	72.2%
Greece	98.0%	0.7%	1.3%
Cyprus	78.0%	4.0%	18.0%
Latvia	15.3%	20.6%	64.1%
Lithuania	4.1%	80.9%	15.0%
Poland	1.3%	90.1%	8.6%
Romania	86.8%	12.2%	1.0%
Slovenia	2.3%	58.7%	39.0%
Finland	1.1%	83.6%	15.2%

Source: CIA – The World Factbook 2010, retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>, accessed on 12 October 2010.

Appendix 2: Dependence on Russian natural gas supplies

Country	Natural gas consumption	Gas trade movements with Russia by pipeline	Total gas trade movements by pipeline	Ratio
Belgium ^{*27}	17.33	0.5	19.34	0.028852
Bulgaria	3.1	3.1	3.1	1.0
Czech republic ^{*28}	8.9	6.43	8.63	0.722472
Denmark	4.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Germany ²⁹	82.7	35.55	83.72	0.429867

²⁷ Source: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=BE, accessed on 18 August 2008.

²⁸ Source: <http://www.iea.org/journalists/docs/GasData2005.pdf>, accessed on 18 August 2008.

²⁹ Source: <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/BALTIC/full.html>, accessed on 18 August 2008

Estonia ^{*30}	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.0
Greece	4.0	2.89	2.89	0.7225
Spain	35.1	0.0	10.95	0.0
France	41.9	7.63	33.76	0.1821
Ireland	4.8	0.0	4.15	0.0
Italy	77.8	23.8	70.45	0.305913
Cyprus	--	--	--	--
Latvia ^{*31}	1.89	1.6	1.6	0.846561
Lithuania	3.8	3.4	3.4	0.894737
Luxembourg ^{*32}	1.41	0.0	1.5	0.0
Hungary	11.8	7.85	10.48	0.665254
Malta	--	--	--	--
The Netherlands	37.2	2.3	18.86	0.061828
Austria	8.9	5.6	7.48	0.629213
Poland	13.7	6.2	9.3	0.452555
Portugal	4.3	0.0	1.39	0.0
Romania	16.4	2.5	4.8	0.152439
Slovenia ^{*33}	1.1	0.56	1.1	0.509091
Slovakia	5.9	5.8	5.8	0.983051
Finland	4.1	4.3	4.3	1.04878
Sweden	1.0	0.0	1.11	0.0
United Kingdom	45.6	0.0	28.0	0.0

³⁰ Source: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=EN, accessed on 18 August 2008.

³¹ Source: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=LG, accessed on 18 August 2008.

³² Source: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=LU, accessed on 18 August 2008.

³³ Source: http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/country_energy_data.cfm?fips=SI, accessed on 18 August 2008.

Note: The figures are expressed in billion cubic meters; if not explicitly stated otherwise data refer to 2008; asterisk () denotes countries whose data refer to 2005.*

Source: British Petroleum Company, BP Statistical Review of World Energy, London, June 2008.

Appendix 3: Russian share in the extra EU overall trade balance

Country	Total extra-EU export	Total extra-EU import	Export towards Russia	Import from Russia	Total Import/Export	Russian Share	Country
Belgium	74651	87744	3268	4872	162395	8140	0.0501247
Bulgaria	5308	9081	328	2707	14389	3035	0.210925
Czech rep.	13185	16919	2081	3835	30104	5916	0.1965187
Denmark	22545	19370	1361	863	41915	2224	0.0530598
Germany	340307	267707	28089	27587	608014	55676	0.0915703
Estonia	2391	2439	710	1147	4830	1857	0.384472
Greece	6204	23441	438	3130	29645	3568	0.1203576
Spain	52865	105329	2050	7698	158194	9748	0.0616205
France	141115	137995	5602	10437	279110	16039	0.0574648
Ireland	32350	18299	310	74	50649	384	0.0075816
Italy	143230	158423	9579	14354	301653	23933	0.0793395
Cyprus	287	1955	19	37	2242	56	0.0249777
Latvia	1668	2522	782	973	4190	1755	0.4188544
Lithuania	4409	5634	1875	3206	10043	5081	0.5059245
Luxembourg	1872	5317	148	175	7189	323	0.0449298
Hungary	14705	21276	2231	4786	35981	7017	0.1950196
Malta	1074	855	2	1	1929	3	0.0015552
The Netherlands	88260	178618	6898	17989	266878	24887	0.0932523

Austria	32742	24608	2904	1660	57350	4564	0.0795815
Poland	21610	32292	4727	10449	53902	15176	0.281548
Portugal	8725	13999	143	559	22724	702	0.0308924
Romania	8260	14722	427	3235	22982	3662	0.1593421
Slovenia	6740	6050	965	491	12790	1456	0.1138389
Slovakia	5630	11329	959	4016	16959	4975	0.2933546
Finland	28356	21430	6724	8308	49786	15032	0.3019323
Sweden	47754	32214	7451	3386	79968	10837	0.1355167
UK	133934	205964	4077	7584	339898	11661	0.0343074

Source: Eurostat, External and Intra-European Union trade, Monthly Statistics, Issue N. 8/2008.
