

Российская Ассоциация
Политической Науки
Russian Political Science Association

Analytical report

LATVIA'S EU PRESIDENCY IN 2015:
EASTERN PARTNERSHIP - INSTEAD OR WITH RUSSIA

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP EU FINAN
USA ILLUSIONS Values LITHUANIA EU CHA
LD WAR BELARUS Russia Moldova CRISIS E
IA Armenia Ukraine Eurasian Union COLD WAR Ar
CRISIS GREATER EUROPE Cooperation GEORGIA POLI
FUTURE FINANCE CHAOS Latvia prosperit
E Confrontation ECONOMY GREATER EUP
AN UNION PROSPERITY RESISTANCE BELARU
Azerbaijan UNCERTAINTY Values ARMENIA Conf
va GEOPOLITICS RULES OF THE GAME FUTURE CO

Authors:

Yelena Ponomareva, Doctor of Political Sciences, professor, School of Political Science, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO);

Lubov Shishelina, Doctor of Historical Sciences, professor, Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences.

Editor-in-chief:

Oksana Gaman-Golutvina, Doctor of Political Sciences, professor, Head of Department of Comparative Politics, School of Political Science, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO); President of Russian Political Science Association.

The analytical report is prepared by Russian political scientists under the initiative of Russian Political Science Association. It doesn't reflect the official position of the Russian Federation and state institutions where the authors work. The report is intended for politicians, scientists, journalists.

Russian Political Science Association is an all-Russian non-governmental organization uniting political science specialists from different regions of Russian Federation. Founded in 1955, it's comprised of about 1000 specialists in political field from various regions of Russian Federation, maintains almost 60 regional offices and is a member of International Political Science Organization (IPSA).

Ponomareva Y., Shishelina L. Latvia's EU Presidency in 2015: Eastern Partnership - Instead or With Russia / Analytical report (edited by O. Gaman-Golutvina). Russian Political Science Association, Moscow, 2014. - 78 p.

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Eastern Partnership Program: Global and Marco-Regional Contexts	9
Lithuanian EU Presidency Experience: Is It Applicable to Latvia?	29
Prospects and Development Factors of Eastern Partnership Program	42
Scenarios of Further Eastern Partnership Development and Political Situation in Europe	58
Path 1. “Riga Eastern Partnership”	61
Path 2. “Prague Eastern Partnership”	65
Path 3. “Vilnius Eastern Partnership”	70
Conclusion	77

Introduction

2013-2014 events in Ukraine became the largest geopolitical crisis in Eurasian space since the beginning of the XXI century, leading to the collapse of Ukrainian statehood with impending economic catastrophe and territorial breakup. Without exaggeration, this tragic situation prompted the review process of a whole system of international relations – the Russia-EU-US dialogue under the previous conditions now has become impossible.

One of the crucial causes of the crisis was Eastern Partnership, the European neighborhood initiative aimed at six post-Soviet republics – Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Conflict-generating content, acquired by this program (Vilnius Summit in November 2013 became its pivotal moment), escalated system contradictions of Ukraine's post-Soviet development period, which in the end evolved into a large-scale standoff with Russia on one side and EU and US on the other. The future of Ukraine ceased to be a solemnly Ukrainian case, rather turning into a pretext for global readjustment of the geopolitical system of coordinates.

In this extent, special interest for analysis exists in researching the trigger initiating such large-scale international disturbances – the Eastern Partnership program, its content and ideas, enshrined in its basis, as well as key drivers and possible future. The program was initially one of the directions of common European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). After the grand EU enlargement in 2004 this policy offered privileged character of European Union's relations to new neighbors, that didn't essentially have clear framework. Technically this character of relations was based on the implementation of European legal norms in economic and political spheres, but didn't guarantee the neighboring states prospects of joining the EU as full-fledged members. Eastern Partnership program right from the start was aimed to enforce EU's economic, political and cultural influence on the countries down its Eastern borders. The program based on European countries' perception of the quite

successful experience from European integration enlargement on Mediterranean states and former Soviet Bloc nations in Eastern Europe.

Among the core principles, which this neighborhood format is based on, were the principles of normativity and conditionality. Normativity was defined by EU development as a community, whose strength constitutes in established legal standards, and assumed a high grade of harmonization of the neighboring country's national legislation with the laws of EU. Furthermore, gaining benefits for EU's neighbors was directly linked with the recognition by these states of such European values as effective and democratic governance, rule of law, democracy and human rights, principles of market economy and sustainable development. These mechanisms were supposed to become belts in Eastern Partnership's engine, with which it planned to modernize six post-Soviet states in European fashion and strengthen EU influence on them. Yet, the mechanisms only remained as ink on paper.

The mentioned principles were finally compromised by the European politicians themselves during the lengthy talks about Ukraine's association with EU.

As the main principal condition of signing the Association Agreement with Ukraine, EU demanded liberalization of the country's legal system and the release of Yulia Tymoshenko, whose imprisonment was viewed as a symbol of Ukrainian legal practices' incompatibility with high European norms. Though, when it became evident that Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, on whom the decision of "Tymoshenko question" depended, isn't going to free the opposition politician for the sake of association with EU, European leaders relinquished all their principal conditions, calling for their Ukrainian colleague to sign the EU Association Agreement during Vilnius Summit without any homework at all.

By doing so Europe substantially admitted the lack of any non-declaratory mechanisms modernizing post-Soviet republics in the Eastern Partnership, and with their own hands demonstrated its content and ideology, unacceptable under the scope of crucial interests of Russian Federation on post-Soviet space.

The geopolitical essence of the European initiative, which was previously pinpointed by Russian political experts' community, became obvious. Initially the suspicious attitude toward the European initiative from Moscow was tied with the fact that on the eve of founding the Eastern Partnership Poland and Sweden practically artificially made Russia "a third" country in relation with the program, thus, to its other participants as well. And the Vilnius Summit fiasco completely affirmed this suspicion. During the program's implementation its conflict-generating potential gained traction, which in particular manifested in deliberate (occasionally purely ideologized) opposing of the Eastern Partnership integration platforms with the Eurasian Union. Such exclusion of Russia is explained with the European Union not only striving to actively project influence on the whole Eastern borders, but with intent to create a space in this direction, which will be disadvantageous for Moscow to implement its projects of economic and political integration of post-Soviet states and will serve as a buffer zone between Europe and Russia. A wise concept handling the need of modernization, improvement of socio-economic basis of several post-Soviet states, voiced in the XXI century, was coated in archaic form, seemingly reminiscent to the Cold War era of the XX century. This could not assist the strengthening of trust between Russia and the European Union, breeding new complaints from Moscow to different drivers of EU's Eastern European policy and to the whole ideological foundation of this policy.

As Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov notes, "EU Eastern Partnership program right from the start, despite our warnings and cautions, evolved non-transparently and it became clear, that it was designed with the zero-sum game logic as an instrument to undermine integration processes with Russian participation"¹.

The main component of this policy is the creation of deep and comprehensive free-trade areas between EU and Eastern Partnership participant states, which contradicts with the plans to establish the Eurasian Customs Union, implemented by Russia and other post-Soviet states. Recent showcase example is Kiev's choice between Customs Union and DCFTA with EU. Ukraine's accession into European

¹ <http://www.vz.ru/news/2014/4/11/681602.html>

free-trade area wasn't only unbeneficial, it posed threat to the country's economic security. The fact became evident after not only President Yanukovich, along with his surrounding, refused to sign the economic part of the EU Association Agreement, but the new maidan-appointed Yatsenyuk Government as well, which came to power with appeals to undertake accelerated European integration.

The buffer component of the Eastern Partnership is enforced by energy and migration policy included in the program. The implementation of the Eastern Partnership's energy platform envisages the disintegration of participant states' programs from Russia, which in turn could damage national budgets of several EaP members and practically erase them from the energy maps of Europe.

Border facilitation measures of Eastern Partnership member states instead of visa restraints could only complicate the access of post-Soviet states' citizens to each other's territory, thus turning into the likes of new visa Iron Curtain.

Ukraine, the Eastern Partnership's lead target country has advanced further than others on the buffer state path. Ukrainian statehood, already sinking in turbulence several years prior, appeared to be stuck in the most severe crisis of its 23-year-long post-Soviet history. And Europe on the eve on May 2014 European Parliament elections and the formation of a new European Commission got dragged into a large-scale confrontation with Russia. Demonstratively ignored, pushed away from the post-Soviet space Russia resisted the US-imposed zero-sum game by suddenly raising stakes. In result, all of Europe faced a choice, whether to sacrifice its economic ties with Russia for the sake of further illogical support of illegitimate maidan-appointed government in Kiev, that, as the events unraveling in South-Eastern Ukraine showed, is ignoring the interests of its own millions of citizens solemnly on the basis that the presence on the Euromaidan wasn't their highest value. Conflict-prone, Russophobe (at large personally thanks to Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, who used EU Presidency for her presidential PR campaign) implementation of the Eastern Partnership program with the emphasis on geopolitical aims appeared to be detrimental foremost for Europe itself. The next Eastern Partnership Summit will take place in Riga in 2015.

Ukrainian crisis, sparked by failed Eastern Partnership program implementation, largely deprives the program itself of any prospects. Gradual realization of this notion by Europe was demonstrated by 24-25 April Summit in Prague, marking the Eastern Partnership's five-year-anniversary and disparagingly mocked "B-class Summit" due the lack of attention from European key-players. Czech Republic, one of Visegrád Group leaders, openly spoke about the need to transform the Eastern Partnership, already de facto called a "dead project" in Prague.

The objective of this research is defining capabilities and limitations of Latvia during its presidency in the European Union in 2015 with regard to its influence on development of the political situation in Europe in terms of implementing the Eastern Partnership program.

To achieve the following objective we must:

- evaluate the state of the Eastern Partnership program after 2013 Vilnius Summit;
- estimate internal and external factors ultimately affecting the development of the Eastern Partnership and possible ways of the program's development;
- characterize mutual effects between Eastern Partnership program implementation and current Russia-EU relations on global, marco-regional and local-national levels;
- define capabilities and limitations of Latvia in the Eastern Partnership program's development during its presidency in the Council of the European Union in first half of 2015 and project possible scenarios of evolution of the political situation in Europe depending on the paths of the European program's readjustment.

For the general method in achieving the said objective we chose the *scenario method* of political situation analysis, which allows to estimate the logical sequence of events, aiming to show how, judging from the existing situation, the future of the research subject can unfold step by step.

With that said, it must be considered, that the political subject is prescribed into a certain situational ("horizontal") and processual ("vertical") context. Therefore, in case of the original research subject we studied the political situation in Europe

formed as a result of the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit and presented scenarios for further development in search-type character. Search-type scenario, proceeding from the existing situation, depicts the state of the system and dominating tendencies of its transformation, sequence of events, logically leading to possible future state of the system. Normative-type scenario differs from an ordinary plan, because scenario shows not only the sequence of concerned party's actions, but also the concurrent transformations of the political situation in general, and in some cases – fluctuation of background indicators. In accordance with this in our research the Eastern Partnership program's development is studied inseparably with the effect of this process on the political situation specifically in Latvia, as well as on Europe in general.

The Eastern Partnership Program: Global and Marco-Regional Contexts

Under modern conditions the struggle over power, information and resources is followed by increasing turbulence on global and regional levels. US, EU and Russia, the key players on the world political scene, naturally get included into this confrontation. Geopolitical reality of the XXI century is that the global agenda can be neither brought upon, nor carried out behind Russia's back, without considering its interests². From acknowledging this depends not only the development of world politics in general, but also various regional initiatives, Eastern Partnership included.

Latvia, who'll be presiding EU in 2015 and hosting the EaP Summit, faces a difficult goal. Firstly, the Ukrainian Crisis – largely prompted by Western policy, as said particularly by former Czech President Václav Klaus, a well knower of politics behind the scenes: “Not Russia and Putin were the reasons of what set the Kiev maidan ablaze. The situation was turned around by Western Europe and US”³ – has led to irreversible geopolitical consequences. In result, the following events, paraphrasing Fernand Braudel, can be called a reshuffle of history's cards: the “Crimean Spring” became not only a consistent and justified reaction to Ukraine's destruction as a way of readjusting the spheres of influence and resources, but also breathed new life into Russia-initiated Eurasian integration and changed the world.

Secondly, Ukrainian events, leading to an actual breakup of the state, reanimated phobias and Cold War mentality, reinforced confrontationist patterns in the system of international relations. Thirdly, legalization, legitimization and institutionalization of neo-Nazi structures occurred, against which Russia has always harshly called and continues doing so. Particularly, for the first time since World War II a neo-Nazi organization leader is running for the presidential seat.

And finally, last in order but not least in significance is the lack of prospect for

² Путин В.В. Россия и Китай: новые горизонты сотрудничества // Жэньминь Жибао. 5 июня 2012. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/news/15547>

³ Экс-президент Чехии Вацлав Клаус: Запад и США спровоцировали на Украине неразрешимый конфликт. URL: <http://vm.ru/news/2014/04/23/eks-prezident-chehii-vatslav-klaus-zapad-i-ssha-sprovotsirovali-na-ukraine-nerazreshimij-konflikt-245612.html>

projects based on zero-sum game logic as an instrument opposing integration process, participated by Russia⁴. Projects of that sorts, based on unipolar world concepts and global control, went out of date beyond recall.

In this case, the Eastern Partnership should be viewed, from one side, as an initiative of smaller nations striving to “get included into supernational structures of imperial size”⁵. From the other – as an attempt to implement the “supranational”⁶, umbrella or network world establishing “unions to maintain defense and security, trade and economic agreements and zones of language and communication”⁷.

Modern science has several approaches towards the understanding of the problem of governing such “infranational” (E. Hobsbawm) community, neutralizing, “washing out” (M. Ilyin) the category of national states’ sovereignty. Most called-for among the Western countries’ establishment are the concepts of a unipolar world and global dominance.

Unipolar dominance model is based on the balance of power concept, designed by the political realism school, also rooted in hegemonic stability theory⁸. Central provision of this model is the thesis of total supremacy of United States and their allies over their potential opponents in all components of power – economic, military, technologic, in both quantity and quality⁹.

⁴ Speech delivered by Russia Foreign Minister S. Lavrov during meeting with representatives of Russian NGO’s with international profile. April 11, 2014. URL: http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/newsline/1F9973CA66EF653E44257CB7003BA7A4

⁵ Colomer J.M. Great Empires, Small Nations: The Uncertain Future of the Sovereign State. – L., N.Y.: Routledge, 2007. P.9, X.

⁶ Хобсбаум Э. Нации и национализм после 1780 года. URL: http://aleksandr-kommari.narod.ru/hobsbaum_nacii.html

⁷ Colomer J.M. Great Empires, Small Nations...P. 31.

⁸ Лебедева М.М. Мировая политика. М.: АспектПресс, 2003. С. 318. Также см.: Kindleberger C. The World in Depression, 1929-1939. Berkeley, 1972; Keohane R. International Institutions and State Power. West Press, 1989/ 270 p.; Keohane R. The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes, 1967-1977 // Change in the International System / eds. O. Holsti, A. Gorge. Boulder, CO, 1980; Krasner S. Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables // International Regimes / ed. S. Krasner. N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1983.

⁹ Бжезинский Зб. Великая шахматная доска. Господство Америки и его геостратегические императивы. М.: Межд. отн., 1999. 256 с.; Wohlforth W. The Stability of a Unipolar World // International Security. Summer 1999. P. 5-41; Bell C. American Ascendancy // The National Interest. 1999. P. 55-63.

According to the model's supporters' logic, instance of Western supremacy promotes maintenance of peace on the global scale. Such a type of world order in a sense of rough hierarchical structure spawning, like T. Friedman sharply put it, in result of "Darwinist struggle for leadership in the process of globalization"¹⁰, may hold out for quite a long time – for about 40 years¹¹. The determining role in maintaining stable reproduction of such a world order is given to US. Z. Brzezinski noted, that "American mightiness today is the highest guarantee of global stability"¹². Unipolar "stability" is also achieved because it's profitable for the majority of states to exercise dual policy: "tightly cooperate with Washington and at the same time bloviate about the need to create a counterbalance"¹³.

R. Gilpin outlined, that hegemonic stability is set up under five conditions:

✓ hegemon state must vastly surpass all other states in the system by economic and military-strategic indicators;

✓ hegemon must be a liberal state because only liberal state seeks hegemony, authoritarian states prefer imperialism and only liberal states are ready to create open and liberal world order;

✓ among great powers must exist at least a rudimental compliance with the hegemon's authority;

✓ hegemon must be longsighted and create international regimes necessary to maintain global prosperity;

✓ hegemon must be ready to sacrifice his own short-term interests for the sake of long-term wellbeing of the whole system of international relations. Hegemon's main function is resolving problems of long-term collective actions in the anarchic system of international relations¹⁴.

¹⁰ Friedman T. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. L.: Anchor Books, 1999. 490 p.

¹¹ Bell C. *American Ascendancy // The National Interest*. 1999. P. 55.

¹² Бжезинский Зб. *Выбор. Глобальное господство или глобальное лидерство*. М.: Межд. отн., 2005. С. 7.

¹³ Wohlforth W. *The Stability of a Unipolar World // International Security*. Summer 1999. P 37.

¹⁴ Gilpin R. *The Political Economy of International Relations*. Princeton Univ. Press, 1987. P. 72-73.

Adepts of this concept believe, that abuse of power under hegemonic stability carries limited action, therefore even if a liberal state “derails to abuse, it’s not terrible”, because “hegemons aren’t capable to sustain their leadership in a system, their resources deplete and then the system evolves either towards formation of collective hegemony mechanisms (plural unipolarity), or transforms into a “following the leader” model¹⁵, which is sustained predominately with soft power (J. Nye) of the former hegemon.

Here we should note the significance of the soft power strategy devised by J. Nye since 2004 and partially exercised by EU and US. In new historic conditions retaining the influence and hegemony demands employing smart power, combined with the full instruments kit of “hard power for compulsion and retaliation and soft power in a form of persuasion and attraction”¹⁶.

Several years ago in US the Center for Strategic and International Studies established the Commission on Smart Power, which came to the conclusion that US should shift from exporting fear to encouraging optimism and hope. Smart power isn’t just doubled soft power. It’s about the ability to conjoin hard and soft powers into effective stratagem, applicable under various circumstances. The complication of modern stage of world policy developments is that the struggle over influence, information and resources is inclusive not only to (and often, not as much) to states, but supernational institutions and transnational corporations. Nowadays there is delegation, reallocation of power from the state level to the level of supranational players¹⁷.

Nye underlines, and we can’t disagree with him, that “any attempt to elaborate single aspect of power is destined to failure, because power depends on human relations, changeable under various circumstances”¹⁸. In other words, having resources doesn’t guarantee, that you’ll receive the desired result. For example, NATO’s military potential has no equal, yet there is no question that this organization

¹⁵ Лебедева М.М., Харкевич М.В., Касаткин П.И. Глобальное управление. М.: МГИМО-Университет, 2013. С. 45-46.

¹⁶ Най Дж.С. Будущее власти. М.: АСТ, 2014. С. 18.

¹⁷ Подробнее об этом см. Негосударственные участники мировой политики / под ред. М.М. Лебедевой, М.В. Харкевича. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2013. 208 с.

¹⁸ Най Дж.С. Будущее власти. М.: АСТ, 2014. С. 32.

would resolve any case with undisputable benefit for itself. That's exactly why "turning resources into exercised power in a sense of achieving desired goals demands a well-elaborated action plan and experienced leadership"¹⁹. Practically that's what smart power is.

Of course, a very important factor is the ability and competence to influence the behavior of decision-making people. D. Eisenhower called it incentive to do something "not because you tell them that they have to do it, but because they instinctively want to do it for you"²⁰. Though implementation of such policy brings desired results only in case of forming the decision-makers' priorities in the accordance with the interests of the state conducting smart power. Thus, the exercise of power is made in formation of values and priorities of concrete people, likewise in altering the situation, in which they're forced to change the strategy.

Principal additions to realists' approaches in questions of global governance are social constructivism theories. M. Finnemore marks three key fundamental norms in the existing system of international relations that are gradually becoming parts of the states' behavioral strategy. They are the bureaucratic principle of realization of power; the market principle of economic life governance and the principle of legal equality of people, manifesting in formal electoral egalitarianism in democracies and respecting human rights²¹. All these principles are exercised in EU institutions and programs.

Descending from A. Giddens' concepts, A. Wendt attributes key meaning to the role of violence in normative system of international relations and states that "all relations in world politics must be congruent with current relations of violence or else they're rejected by the system"²². Besides that, we shouldn't forget that for constructivists form and content of global governance are defined to the large extent by ideology dominating in the world. In such a role integral West has recognized

¹⁹ Най Дж.С. Будущее С. 37.

²⁰ Цит. по Axelrod A. Eisenhower and Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006. P. 283.

²¹ Finnemore M. National Interests in International Society. Cornell Univ. Press, 1996. P. 131-135.

²² Wendt A. Social Theory of International Politics. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999. Цит. по Лебедева М.М., Харкевич М.В., Касаткин П.И. Глобальное управление... С. 51.

neoliberalism, while as a chief governance strategy it acknowledged “governmentality”, a concept emerged out of M. Foucault’s works.

By “governmentality” the philosopher understood, firstly, the “complex of institutions, procedures, researches and analyses, calculations and tactics, able to implement a very specific, yet sophisticated form of authority, whose main target are the people, the main form of knowledge is political economy, and the predominant technical instruments are security apparatuses”. Secondly, “the tendency, power line, that in all of the West has uninterruptedly led to dominance of power, which can be called “governance” of all others: sovereignty and discipline; and this on one side fostered development of a whole range of special government institutions and on the other – development of a whole range of knowledge²³. Frankly, this is what we observe in different activities of EU institutions and programs. Sources of power in global governmentality aren’t only and not as much the governments as non-governmental and supranational subjects²⁴. In result, categories of sovereignty and national interests are lost, their places are occupied by interests of supranational bureaucracies.

The exercised by EU and US principles of global insight are supplemented by R. Ashley’s concept, whose works marked the applying of postmodernism not only to the international relations theory, but to practical politics. Analyst advised to simultaneously view international community in four aspects:

(1) as an object, place and product of eternal fight, conquests and relocation of multitude of historic forces;

(2) as a place, where power and dominance have gained a foothold in normalized form;

(3) as a field of practice, where specific subjects appear, seek recognition and operate;

²³ Фуко М. Правительственность (идея государственного интереса и его генезис) // Логос. 2003. Т. 39. № 4-5. С. 20. URL: <http://www.ruthenia.ru/logos/number/39/01.pdf>

²⁴ Lipschutz R.D., Rowe J.K. Globalization, Governmentality and Global Politics. Regulation for the Rest of Us? Routledge, 2005. P. 13.

(4) as a composition of technologies, strategies and rituals, from the help of which practice is disciplined, the resisted are suppressed, “quiet zones” appear, borders of practice are guaranteed, subjects get legitimized, order normalizes and dominance is forcefully projected unto the rest of the world²⁵.

That’s why “international community doesn’t mean restraints of violence by the means of codes, rules, precedents and procedures – it’s an object of policy of force and modality, with which violence is committed and dominance is strengthened”²⁶. Building a bridge between geopolitics of political realism and postmodernist methodology, stemming from Foucault’s poststructuralism, R. Ashley became a notable figure in scientific society, as well as the political sphere, he became one of conceptualists of global governance and enlargement of Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Among the conceptualists of modern policy of integral West we should note senior British diplomat and bestselling author R. Cooper. He divides all countries into pre-modern, modern and post-modern. According to Cooper, the main challenge of the postmodernist world amounts to accepting the thought of double standards. “Communicating with each other, we rely of the bulk of laws and definitions of security based on open cooperation. But when we do business with old-fashioned type of states outside of postmodernist European continent, we have to return to the usage of rough methods of the previous epoch – to power, preemptive strikes, deception, to the arsenal required for talking to those still living in the XIX century, when every state was for itself”²⁷.

²⁵ Ashley R. The Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Theory of International Relations // *Alternatives*. Vol.12, № 4. 1987. P.403-434.

²⁶ Алексеева Т.А. Химеры страны Оз: «культурный поворот» в теории международных отношений // *Международные процессы*. 2010. Т. 10. № 3. С. 14-15. URL: <http://www.intertrends.ru/thirtieth/Alekseeva.pdf>

²⁷ Cooper R. *Breaking of Nations: Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century*. N.Y.: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2003. P. 56-57.

Unipolar world concept supporters, noting the victory of US and its dominance in first years after Cold War, made serious mistakes, that greatly distorted the real picture of the world and affected the West's political and economic strategy²⁸.

The global leadership institute's crisis got reflected in the concept of *polycentric world*, which some American analysts understand as “anti-hegemonic”²⁹ – it calls for participation in governance not only by states and interstate bodies, but other actors too. Many scholars point at the importance of involving different subjects into regulating international relations. Functionalists, among the first, drew attention to the fact that cooperation may lead to political changes and, at the end, to creation of polyfunctional world community³⁰.

According to polycentric and multipolar (in its classic sense) models, international relations are getting more drawn to pluralization along with appearance and strengthening of new players on the world scene. Pluralization of international relations by proxy signifies the balancing of their mutual capabilities³¹. This progress has direct effect on the establishment of new centers of world politics (leader of Eurasian Union Russia, China, India, etc.).

In recent years there have been signs of a vector of “re-balancing”, meaning the return under new conditions to the multipolar configuration of the world, to the balance of powers that gave sustainability to the world. French scholars note, that “multipolarity presumes not only fair distribution of world goods, but shaking the basis of political relations as well”³². International institutions, being the instruments of unipolar world and conductors of the West's interests, namely International Monetary Fund, World Bank, G8, European Commission, European Central Bank, NATO, lead rating agencies and transnational corporations are already forced to

²⁸ Мегатренды: основные траектории эволюции мирового порядка в XXI веке / под ред. Т.А. Шаклеиной, А.А. Байкова. М.: Аспект Пресс, 2013. С. 23.

²⁹ Бжезинский Зб. Выбор. Глобальное господство или глобальное лидерство... С. 14.

³⁰ Mitrany D., Garnett M. World Unity and the United Nations. L.: National Peace Council Press, 1950.

³¹ Waltz K. Globalization and American Power // The National Interest. Spring 2000. P. 55.

³² От гегемонии Запада к полицентризму // Атлас LeMondediplomatique. М.: Центр исслед. постиндустр. общ., 2010. С. 10.

transform under the conditions of the appearing of new “active subjects” (F. Perroux).

The unipolar world got virtually doomed by the actions of its leader, US and its allies, by their urge to impose their values, by their uncompromising and harsh, occasionally cruel (the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and now Ukraine, whose chaos became the pivot of the Eastern Partnership program) promotion of their interests, what in the end leads to the rise of tensions, conflicts, destructions, chaos, ultimately going out of its perpetrators’ control.

Oppositely to it, multipolarity forms a consensus of world politics. The existence of several power centers, matching the “integral might”³³, allows to fuse various models of development together instead of breaking the world up exclusively under the Western matrix.

Change of the existing matter of things is possible only through close cooperation of EU and the West with Russia in general, based on understanding and consideration of our country’s interests, readiness to recognize its and other participants’ of international relations right of projects and development models, alternative to the West. Or else it’ll be difficult to forecast successful development of the whole Eurasian continent.

Obviously, it’s hard to agree with Russia’s proposals, interest and deterrence mentality won’t allow it. Because Russia offers and is already implementing exactly what can destroy West’s world dominance – the Eurasian integration model, a “model of a powerful supernational union capable of becoming one of the poles of modern world, at the same time playing the role of an effective connection between Europe and the dynamic Asia-Pacific region”³⁴.

This project marks the end of US hegemony, who for the last 20 years viewed Eurasia as a vital center of its economic development and growing political influence. The Ukrainian example showed that the White House continues to see the world

³³ Глобальный рейтинг интегральной мощи 100 ведущих стран мира / под ред. А.И. Агеева, Г. Менша, Р. Мэтьюза. М.: МАИБ, 2008. 148 с.

³⁴ Путин В.В. Новый интеграционный проект для Евразии – будущее, которое рождается сегодня // Известия. 3 окт. 2011.

divided into spheres of influence, talking not even about national interest, but rather about interest of corporations and clans. Despite the narrowness of its opponents' position, Russia continues to insist, that a safe future is possible only in close cooperation between all parties of the political process, based on large, ambitious, equal and mutually-beneficial projects and goals, including the blending of "European and Eurasian integration processes aimed in prospect at creating a single economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific"³⁵.

The Russian side continues to insist on "non-alternativeness of collective actions", whose success was proven by decisions made concerning Iran's nuclear program, Syria's chemical weapons, calling the Geneva II Peace Conference. Non-alternative has to be also a collective agreement on the need of a peaceful solution for Ukraine. If external players continue to patronize, actually inciting opposition leaders in Ukraine, this approach will only further escalate the conflict, possibly spilling into division of the country.

It was the Eastern Partnership who at a large extent served the development of this scenario. According to Brussels' version, creation of EaP in May 2009 was reasoned by the consequences of 2008 five-days-war and Russia-Ukraine gas conflict³⁶. In reality the strategy of accelerated political approach and economic integration between EU and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine was a reaction to increasing role of Russia as an international subject and was targeted to achieve dominance on North Eurasian space and subdue the politics of mentioned states, including, in case required, the means of destabilization.

To analyze the state of Eastern Partnership program and its prospects, it's reasonable to look at this project through the marco-regional prism – through the processes underway in Central and Eastern Europe in the framework of the Visegrád Group (V4). As a result, we see a completely new angle of the "partner" process, corresponding with common restructuring of post-Soviet space.

³⁵Тамже.

³⁶ Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit. Vilnius. 28-29 Nov. 2013. URL: www.eu2013.lt/en/news/statements/-joint-declaration-of-the-eastern-partnership-summit-vilnius-28-29-november-2013

We'll remind, that at the time of socialist regional organizations' collapse in the center of Europe, occurred the rebirth of ideas not only of returning to pre-war principles of economy and policy governance, but of territorial associations and unions too. Questions of territorial and regional redesign appeared on the surface. The states, who relinquished their orientation toward Moscow, sought new possibilities of regional cooperation, constantly varying in membership and borders (Pentagonale – Hexagonale, etc.). After 1991 Ukraine and Moldova repeatedly tried to blend in the schemes of Balkan and Visegrád interaction either in capacity of an associated member, or as a participant. Ukraine managed to get closer greatly with the Visegrád Group, although all attempts of Yulia Tymoshenko to sign a more intense interaction agreement with V4 weren't met with enthusiasm from the group. They weren't inspired to see among their lines a state, surpassing them in size, yet lagging in economic development and carrying potential conflict with Russia.

Analysis of Visegrád Group's formation with its pervading search of territorial completion and the genesis of EU Eastern policy, from neighborhood to partnership, unavoidably leads us to the notion of the mutual dependence of these processes. We believe that interaction of two neighboring regions reflects the tendency that'll become rather evident with the resolving of the situation around Ukraine (later likewise in Moldova). This tendency arose after 2000 Nice Summit, when EU decided on its position towards enlargement to the East and its borders, and lodged itself 10 years ago, when in December 2003 EU with accordance with its new enlarged range and new vision of security problems adopted European Security Strategy, later placing European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) into a separate section³⁷.

The clear objective of the ENP, let us remind, was not to **“create new dividing lines between the EU and its neighbors”**, also bring the “benefits of enlargement, i.e. peace, stability and prosperity, can be extended to the neighbors of the enlarged

³⁷ Secure Europe in a better World. Europe Security Strategy. Brussels, 12 December 2003.

Union”.³⁸ In the silhouette of this policy, considering the historic-regional aspect, one could guess certain completeness, which Visegrád Europe doesn't yet have, but persistently strives for. Besides, all peaks of activity in the Eastern Partnership program, by one way or another, are connected with states, acceding EU after 1 May 2004. It's understandable: every state, presiding in the Council of EU, must offer European Union its own action plan. Just like Finland at the time has offered the Northern Dimension program, and Denmark and Sweden did so with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, it was completely natural for Central European states to propose either “Western Strategy”, or Danube, or Black Sea – Mediterranean one. Naturally, Visegrád Europe states felt that most appealing to them was a close “Western Strategy”, covering their direct neighbors.

Originally, 10 year ago behind the ENP façade interests of enlarging EU, concerned with security issues, were more clearly visible. On the Eastern direction Germany wished symmetry with the Mediterranean flank of France. The main emphasis of neighboring policy was attached to near-border cooperation, to a so-called readiness of neighboring states to “share EU values with newly accepted states”: trade liberalization, intensified contacts in fields of science, culture, education, reinforced care of human rights, ecology, solving energy problems, etc. ENP curators from Western states understood that farther to the East, the more difficult the goals of convergence become, thus they approached this issue very carefully. They had to deal not with 1.5 million Estonia or 3.5 million Lithuania (these states' population since then decreased), but with 45 million Ukraine, surpassing quite problematic for the EU Poland in size and multiply exceeding it in terms of political difficulty. On these goals, labeled “forming friendly surroundings”, were tossed resources of TACIS, PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD, CARDS and new programs, created under very concrete objectives. Already then it was obvious, that the EU intended to begin working towards asymmetric convergence of states – potential members of pro-Moscow integration. It was completely explicitly inscribed

³⁸ Beyond Enlargement: Commission shifts European Neighbourhood Policy into higher gear IP/04/632 Brussels, 12 May 2004.

in one of the main ENP documents – the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defense Policy report titled Wider Europe - Neighborhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbors from 5 November 2003.³⁹ Along with a declaration of importance of relations with Ukraine up to support of its aspiration of EU integration, it states that “establishment of a Common Economic Space together with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan could hamper further cooperation between Ukraine and the EU”. It said, that’s why one should support Ukraine in establishing an independent, democratic, open society, “which can decide on the country's final orientation”. Without receiving much results from European Neighboring Policy on its first stage, which concluded in 2007, in 2008 Poland, while partnering with Sweden, decided, firstly, to remind the European Union about the ENP program and, secondly, to propose a type of Western Partnership and strengthen its own role in it.

Former socialist states of Europe to a different degree were contributing to the formation of this program. For example, the issue of Eastern direction of neighborhood policy’s development strongly actualized during the presidency in the Council of EU of Slovenia, first post-socialist country to assume inner-European leadership in the first half of 2008. One of Ljubljana’s objectives (accordingly with EU traditions) was to propose new direction of its foreign policy. Back then the President of Slovenia has openly called for the need to clarify the European prospect for states like Ukraine and Moldova. Especially, that not long ago in 2007 under the auspices of ENP Ukraine had commenced talks of greater partnership.

Yet, Germans, concerned with the financial side of the question, deemed a number of ENP intensification proposals premature,⁴⁰ though deserving attention in prospect.

³⁹Report on 'Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours'. (COM(2003) 104 - 2003/2018(INI)) Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy. // EUROPEANPARLIAMENT1999-2004 Sessiondocument. FINALA5-0378/2003.5 November 2003

⁴⁰ Elmar Brok, MEP from EPP-CDU proposed to toughen up the criteria for new states’ integration abilities, the famous Copenhagen criteria. He even demanded the transition to EU consolidation period, saying “Any further enlargement without preceding consolidation will lead to many

Christian Democrats in European Parliament have proposed to elaborate a policy for the states with the status of European Neighboring Policy subjects (Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus), similar to EU Mediterranean Strategy.

European Parliament also acknowledged the need of more diversification in the relations between EU and surrounding states, the filling of legislative and conceptual gaps between enlargement policy and neighborhood policy. It stressed EU's aspiration to move in direction of the concentric circles model, to elaborate new contact grounds for relations with the states left outside of the enlargement process. The creation of the Eastern European Union comprised of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan as a "third way" in the middle between membership and neighborhood was called for by another conservative MEP Ingo Friedrich. In his view, the Eastern European Union could have looked like cordon sanitaire, that'll allow focus states without special institutional effort to move towards closer consolidation with the EU for the nearest 20 years, not demanding immediate pledges of future membership from the latter.⁴¹

But in the end, European Parliament conceded to the decision option proposed in 22 May 2008 by Polish and Swedish Foreign Ministers Radosław Sikorski and Carl Bildt. In their interpretation, configuration of five former Soviet republics got the name Eastern Partnership (it was noted, that in case of political situation's improvement a sixth state, Belarus, could join EaP). Thus, Poland's and Sweden's proposal became a cornerstone of the future Eastern European strategy of the EU, and later for the Visegrád Group, who bore special interest in it due its direct neighborhood.

While delivering a speech in Brussels 2 September 2008, in a press conference about Czech's presidency in the Council of EU starting January 2009, the country's Deputy PM Alexandr Vondra said, in the light of recent events on the Caucasus the

configurations within the EU". Europe of differing pace, in his opinion, will only cause uncontrollability within the EU, the weakening of its institutions and international influence.

⁴¹ Bulletin Quotidien Europe. 21.04.2008.

strengthening of European policy on its Eastern dimension will become the main goal of the Czech presidency.⁴²

However, during Czech presidency, the program drafted in January 2009 to the European Parliament was sharply criticized by the MEPs. The program got attacked as lacking ambitions, concrete content,⁴³ not following realities, etc. Charles Tennock of UK e.g. saw the proposal of Poland and Sweden as not following the realities in a sense that the states, considered by the program as a region, in his opinion, actually don't consider themselves as one and wish to build exclusively bilateral relation with the EU.

At the same time, Vytautas Landsbergis of Lithuania noted, that the program doesn't provide the most important – the protection of the states from the policy of “encroachment” from Russia.

That's how, already during initial stages, the contradictions in approaches to the program between Old and New Europeans were voiced quite loudly. In the end, the main conductors of the program were the Visegrád nations, especially Czechs and Poles.

The presentation of EU's new initiative on the Prague Summit on 7 May 2009, got ignored not only by the leaders of the ten leading Western states (France, UK, Italy, Spain among them), but also by two of the six invited guests – Belarus and Moldova. Nevertheless, the summit host Czech PM Mirek Topolánek tried in different ways to stress, that this fact doesn't diminish the historical significance of the event.

At the same time, prior to the Summit serious differences in positions among the EU member states concerning the Eastern Partnership strategy got sparked up. Leaders of Germany, France, UK, Italy and the Benelux warned, that this cooperation formula doesn't promise EU membership, rather it may be viewed merely as an instrument to encourage states in getting their positions closer to EU. Visegrád states – Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary deemed this position wrong. Two

⁴² Bulletin Quotidien Europe № 9731, 3.09.2008.

⁴³ Adrian Severin of Romania accused the authors in intentions to “sell the EU an empty box in pretty wrapping”.

groups disagreed on terminology too. Old Europe states proposed to call former Soviet republics “Eastern neighbors”, while Visegrád Europe and Baltic states preferred to address newcomers invited to the Summit among the former Soviet republic as “European states”. The argument was resolved to some degree after a compromise proposal to employ the term “Eastern partners”.

The significance of the announced event at large got watered down to promises of gradual progress in liberalization of visa policy for Eastern partners and differentiated approach to signing closer partnership agreements similar to the existing agreement with Ukraine. The nearest prospect saw the conclusion of an agreement, that the leaders of 33 states will meet two times a year and their foreign ministers will be conducting annual multilateral consultations. Besides that, it was planned to establish four platforms for multilateral cooperation under the Eastern Partnership program: democracy and qualified governance; economic integration and convergence in EU sectoral policy; energy supplies security; contacts between citizen. Along with the further attempts to execute the program, the wording was altered repeatedly, so, not promising the EU membership, it was possible to at maximum encourage the states to drift away from pro-Moscow integration. Therefore, the Action Plan on a certain stage got replaced with Association Agenda wording. At the same time emphasis was made on adhering to the main condition – “the ability of the EU to invite new members”.⁴⁴ Carl Bildt expressed an opinion, that “EU must calculate, how much it opens the door for every candidate country, but must not close it completely, because it would be a historic mistake”.⁴⁵

On Ukraine-EU Kiev Summit, 4 December 2009, a joint declaration was adopted, highlighting Ukraine’s European aspirations and praising its “European choice”. An Association Plan was also adopted. First clauses of the Association Agreement marked the involvement of Ukraine in EU actions in the line of Common

⁴⁴ Bulletin Quotidien Europe, № 10028, 27.11.09.

⁴⁵ Bulletin Quotidien Europe, № 10028, 27.11.09.

Security and Defense Policy.⁴⁶ It was followed by outlined measures of Ukraine's modernization, especially its energy sector.

On 2 March 2010 European Commission adopted a decision to allot 5.7 billion euro for the support of political and economic reforms and regional cooperation with 17 states, present in the sphere of European Neighborhood Policy and partnership. The program was aimed for 2011-2013 period. Ukraine was included into priority objects list of this financial project (470 million euro only in 2011).⁴⁷

Interestingly, the European Union's relations with Ukraine right from the start were built tightly with the principle "either us, or Russia". From its first steps of the Eastern Partnership project, EU began doubting the readiness of the new Ukrainian authorities to comply with the course of getting closer with European Union on the ground of their improving relations with Russia. This prompted the country's President Viktor Yanukovich to make additional pledges, that stable, good relations with Russia serve only for the best to the unchanged course of his country for prospect membership in the EU.⁴⁸ Essentially, this proved complete succession of EaP program to ENP basic setups about "pulling" former Soviet republics into its integration camp.

So what in all the above allows us to make conclusions about the drift of Eastern Partnership policy to the Visegrád Group's competence?

- The loss of interest to EaP program from the leaders of Western states after its first summit in Prague, where emerged the differences in view among the old and new players of European integration on the issue of cooperation depth with Eastern neighbors.

- Eastern Partnership summits up to this day take place exclusively in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, and from the leaders of Western community only Angela Merkel remains as constant interlocutor, because it's a precisely German flank.

⁴⁶ Bulletin Quotidien Europe, № 10035, 8.12.09.

⁴⁷ Bulletin Quotidien Europe, № 10089, 3.03.10.

⁴⁸ Bulletin Quotidien Europe, № 10199, 25.08.10.

- Lately it is the Visegrád Fund who handles the major share of programs of development of cultural, educational and scientific cooperation with these states.

- And finally, around V4 by initiative of J. Kaczyński Carpathian Europe is being formed, whose parts include Western Ukraine and Moldova.

On the eve on Vilnius Summit, in V4, just like in the EU at most, the sole opinion on the question, whether the Association Agreement with Ukraine should be signed, didn't form. The one determined to act firmly were two of four Visegrád state – Poland and Hungary, as well as former Soviet republics – Latvia and Lithuania. The Czech Republic, understanding the sensitivity of the question for Russia, surely didn't wish to complicate its advanced economic relations with our country. The determination of Poland and Hungary, we may assume, was aided by hopes, hidden behind meaningless phrases (“challenges”, “values”, etc.), to tackle more complex goals, rooted in history of regional territorial problems.

What kind of attitude among the states of Visegrád Europe was caused by Ukrainian events, followed by the failure of Vilnius Summit?

First of all, we should note, that Visegrád Group states appeared on the frontline of Ukrainian conflict not only thanks to geography. Not the least important role in their position concerning the Ukrainian question played the fact, that while being chief developers and conductors of Eastern Partnership, which became one of the main catalysts of what happened, they got accessory to the burnt up conflict in Ukraine and, thus, doomed themselves to actively partake in its solution. This, of course, on first hand applies to Poland, whose notable role in the not-signed on 20 November 2013 EU-Ukraine association program is undeniable.

Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic despite the varying degree of interest in EaP program, nevertheless as Visegrád Group members endorsed Polish initiatives and stood with quite firm joint statements.

Talking about each of the states, we can track down some nuances, spotting the differences in their positions. Following Poland, we can call the Czech Republic the state who was the most active in promoting Eastern Partnership ideas, whose representative Štefan Füle since 2010 was appointed responsible in the EU for the

Eastern Partnership. Hungary and Slovakia in this issue can be viewed rather as solidarising states.

Official Warsaw supported maidan from its first days and later expressed highest level of activity in Ukrainian affairs. After the disruption of 21 February Agreement Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski came out with the initiative to convene extraordinary sessions of EU and NATO foreign ministers.

Regardless to the fact that 2013-2014 Visegrád Group official President is Hungary, all initiatives concerning Ukraine continue to come from Warsaw. Currently the main goal, as was stated 10 March on extended session of foreign ministers of V4, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in Narva by Radosław Sikorski, will be not simply signing the discarded agreement, but an even more high level of integration.

Thus, the factor of Visegrád partnership, membership in EU and NATO serves as definite bond in articulating official positions of Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, the breaching out “personal opinions” of those interested in preserving status quo and pragmatic relations with Russia testify of still traditional for this part of Europe spirit of opposition and criticism.

Summarizing the fate of the Eastern Partnership policy from the perspective of Central / Visegrád Europe and relations of the region with EU, we can make the following conclusions:

1. In Central Europe political confrontation concerning the events in Ukraine and the assessment of Russia’s actions in Crimea is rising;
2. Brussels and Washington, undoubtedly, will undertake great efforts in building up NATO military force in the territories of Poland and the Baltic states and in applying powerful pressure on the political situation in these countries. Efforts will be targeted on Russian diaspora of the Baltic and on Kaliningrad Oblast;
3. Visegrád Group states will further be used in the Euro-Atlantic strategy as a peak of a triangle wedging into the post-Soviet space;
4. The question remains open, whether France will notice danger for itself in enhancing the might of Eastern Partnership program with Washington’s support,

because this enhancement with the crippling of France's flank of responsibility in the Mediterranean will, undoubtedly, lead to even more strengthening of German influence within EU;

5. On current agenda appears the question, is Latvia capable, as the President on European Union in 2015, to say a new word in Eastern Partnership independently, while acknowledging the consequences of irresponsible Eastern policy (which occurred during Lithuania's lead in 2013)?

Lithuanian EU Presidency Experience: Is It Applicable to Latvia?

Broadening of the EU interaction with the Eastern Partnership states was adopted by Lithuania's Seimas on 10 November 2012 as one of the four priorities of the country's presidency in European Union in the first half of 2013. Three other priorities were chosen as strengthening of energy security, cooperation in the Baltic Sea region, defense of the EU's outer borders. Though, in practice the sole real priority of Lithuania's presidency was the Eastern Partnership.

Lithuania's EU presidency program was designed by centre-right Andrius Kubilius Cabinet, formed by the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD) party. This party adheres classic neoconservatism of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Ideological grounds of TS-LKD activity is Anti-Sovietism: confronting everything Soviet, defining socialist period of Lithuanian history as “Soviet occupation”, treating the post-Soviet period as time of enduring Soviet legacy and returning to national statehood and identity “interrupted” during republic's inclusion in USSR.

Such ideology led to radically negative attitude towards the Russian Federation as a successor state to the USSR. For last 10 year this negative attitude aggravated more, firstly, due to Russian projects of economic reintegration of post-Soviet space (EurAsEc Common Economic Space, EurAsEc Customs Union, Eurasian Union project); secondly, due to correction of Russian historical policy in the new century, when the total rejection of Soviet period of history, adopted on the official level in the 90's, got dropped. Right-conservative political and expert circles of Lithuania concluded that this poses a direct threat to national security and even sovereignty of Lithuanian Republic.

This conclusion led to the notion of a special role and even a mission of Lithuanian diplomacy on post-Soviet space. Official Vilnius positions itself as a mouthpiece of interests and values of US, EU and NATO (“free world” in neoconservative terminology) in former Soviet republics. Lithuanian diplomacy, captained by former Communist Party and Komsomol organizers, sees its mission in

assisting the creation of a pro-Western democratic states belt along Russian borders. The concept was most comprehensively described by Lithuanian conservatives' leader Andrius Kubilius in a report called Strategy to Deter Russia, published in 2007 and revised in 2014. The key points of the strategy concerning Lithuanian foreign policy are:

- ✓ The more America is present in Europe, the less Russia will be present there – this thesis must be a landmark for Lithuania's policy;
- ✓ Lithuania has little chances and capabilities to do something independently in the East. So there need to be more active action for the benefit of NATO and EU;
- ✓ Lithuania together with its neighbors and US must become an architect of new neighborhood policy in the region.

Cornerstone of the current flagrantly anti-Russian policy of Lithuania was laid out in the Strategy's following thesis: In the West Lithuania must make Western states realistically estimate the dangerous tendencies in Russia. It must demand the West to stop viewing Russia as a "special case".

By this, Lithuania played the most active role in rising a cordon sanitaire with the pro-Western orientation of former Soviet states during TS-LKD rule headed by Kubilius in 2008-2012.

The Eastern Partnership program, initially excluding Russia from the relations of the EU with six post-Soviet republics, seemed for Lithuanian authority to be an optimal form to execute its foreign policy concept, therefore the institution of EU presidency was perceived by them as a historical chance, the ability to carry out their own foreign policy as all-European one with the help of the Eastern Partnership program.

Notably, in fall of 2012 Lithuania met a government change – centre-right cabinet (Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats) led by conservatives was replaced by centre-left forces led by Social Democratic Party of Lithuania. One of social democrats' campaign promises was a reset of relations with Russia: renouncing of the cordon sanitaire concept and messiah diplomacy on post-Soviet space, establishing the good-neighborhood relations and adopting a common mindset

for pragmatism in foreign policy. Yet, upon assuming power, social democrats didn't adjust Lithuania's EU presidency program, formulated by ideologists of Lithuanian development as a buffer zone. Furthermore, Social Democratic Party virtually surrendered initiative in foreign policy to their opponents, the conservatives.

Such inner-elites configuration got possible, because TS-LKD neoconservative agenda was endorsed by the Lithuanian President, former EU Commissioner for Financial Programming and the Budget Dalia Grybauskaitė, who became (together with former Sajūdis leader and first head of independent Lithuania, MEP Vytautas Landsbergis) informal leader of Lithuanian conservatives. Grybauskaitė viewed Lithuania's successful EU presidency as a chance to return to Brussels, becoming new Head of the European Commission, as well an opportunity to strengthen own electoral and inner-elites position inside of her country. So the President's Office, under the Lithuanian Constitution responsible for foreign policy issues, became the most active driver of the Eastern Partnership, decisively giving it an anti-Russian trend. Only representative of moderate social democrats in foreign policy – Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius, who was directly controlled by the president, lost his partisan identity under Grybauskaitė's pressure and subjected Lithuanian foreign office to ideas of “detering Russia” – combating it and creating a buffer zone along its borders.

This rudimentary Cold War era logic fomented the ideological basis of the Lithuanian interpretation of the Eastern Partnership. Lithuania's presidency in the EU with its black and white viewpoint, as if it was borrowed from the worst examples of Soviet propaganda, made the failure of the idea of voluntary association of Ukraine with EU inevitable, just like it ultimately discredited the whole the Eastern Partnership program.

A graphic example of such theoretic reshaping of the Eastern Partnership is the analytical report Eurasian Union: Challenges for EU and Eastern Partnership States, prepared by the experts of Lithuanian right-affiliated Eastern European Studies Centre based in Vilnius. The report's authors, close to TS-LKD, asserted, that the Eurasian Union project is “reputable alternative to European integration” on post-

Soviet space under the strategic course of Russian leadership aimed at reintegration of former Soviet states. From which they concluded, that European Union must invigorate its activity in borderline Eastern states, surge the triumph of democracy there along with European values, in other words, to play a game beforehand with concern of impending threat from authoritarian Eurasian integration⁴⁹.

During Lithuania's EU presidency, based on aforementioned conceptual core of East-West antagonism, Lithuanian leadership engaged into loud public statements and arrangements of anti-Russian flavor, contributing the growth of conflict in Russia-EU relations and escalating the system post-Soviet problems of the Eastern Partnership.

Namely, Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, while accepting Charlemagne Prize in Germany on March 2013, spoke on the importance to “deter Russia”, whose Eurasian Union project poses a threat for the states of Central and Eastern Europe. After the meeting of Baltic states' presidents with US President Barack Obama in the White House on 31 August, Grybauskaitė said, that Baltic region is a buffer from Russia. Interestingly, this was said at the height of Syrian crisis – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia were among the few countries supporting US intentions to begin a military operation in Syria without a UN Security Council mandate. In turn, Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius repeatedly referred to Lithuania's participation in the EU association talks with Ukraine as a “geopolitical game” against Russia.

Lithuania's EU presidency showed the provincialism and unreadiness of this country to work on an all-European level and for balanced dialogue with Russia. The Lithuanian Republic under Grybauskaitė, who strongly promoted the idea of Lithuania being a “besieged fortress”, made its goal to abandon the EU-Russia dialogue at all, including on Eastern Partnership issues. Existing ramified partnership between Russia and EU countries – economic ties, cooperation with EU, NATO and

⁴⁹ Евразийский союз: вызов для Евросоюза и государств «Восточного партнерства», http://www.eesc.lt/uploads/news/id415/Eurasian%20Union-a%20Challenge%20for%20the%20European%20Union%20and%20Eastern%20Partnership%20Countries_RU.pdf

OSCE in security policy, etc. – all these facts were ignored by Lithuanian officials during its EU presidency.

After the end of Lithuania's presidency in the European Union, the country's internal and external political exaltation didn't halt – this transpired in searching of enemies inside the state and into a quite anti-Russian position, assumed by Lithuanian leadership in an international crisis arising from the situation in Ukraine and Crimea. For instance, Dalia Grybauskaitė initiated the invocation of NATO Treaty Article 4 for “collective fight against the aggressor” regarding Russia.

Lithuania's active position on Ukrainian crisis is defined by the claim of Vilnius' special role in Brussels-Kiev dialogue, which in many respects resultantly led Ukraine to political catastrophe.

In late 2012 talks between Kiev and Brussels about Ukraine's association with the European Union led to an agreement to end all negotiations and resolve existing conflicts till the second Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013 and, in case of a successful conclusion of the negotiations, to sign the EU-Ukraine Association and Free Trade Area Agreement with Ukraine on the summit.

Lithuania in the scope of its foreign policy concept prior to 2013 expressed special interest in developing relations with Ukraine as the key state in geopolitical balance of Eastern Europe. Vilnius' policy in regard to Ukraine always had anti-Russian substance: for instance, MEPs from Lithuania helped Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko to disseminate the “Holodomor – genocide of Ukrainians” concept around the Western circles.

After Viktor Yanukovich came to power, Lithuanian diplomacy's goal became not to allow international isolation of the new Ukrainian regime – Vilnius believed, that European partners' refusal to have business with Yanukovich will push the latter into Moscow's embraces, and Ukraine will fall under the Russian sphere of influence.

So this wouldn't happen, Lithuanian leadership along with Polish counterparts regularly undertook steps in saving the reputation of Ukrainian Yanukovich regime, which, since the ex-PM Yulia Tymoshenko's arrest, regularly put itself on the brink

of international isolation. Most blatant example is Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė visiting convicted Yulia Tymoshenko in Kharkiv hospital, when ex-PM's attorneys claimed, that their client is being beaten by the prison guards, after which leaders of Central European states refused to attend the Yalta Summit. To prevent Ukraine turning into a rogue state in EU Grybauskaitė personally flew to Kharkiv and upon meeting the confined declared: "Tymoshenko is looking very good and completely trusts doctors treating her", after that she went to Kiev to discuss with Yanukovich the ways of exiting the diplomatic crisis.

The project to sign the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement on the Vilnius Summit with interconnected expectations of revanche on Russia and continuation of Grybauskaitė's career in Brussels have made the attempts to rebuild the reputation of the Yanukovich regime and active participation in Ukraine-EU association talks to become the main direction of Lithuanian foreign policy in 2013.

The theme of "fight over Ukraine", battle between European and Eurasian integration projects goes through all speeches of Lithuanian Republic's senior officials concerning this issue. During Yanukovich's official visit to Vilnius in February 2013 Dalia Grybauskaitė even publicly made an ultimatum to her Ukrainian colleague: either association and free trade area with EU, or accession to Customs Union of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Thus, Ukraine was put into a need of its clear geopolitical choice, which drastically exacerbated its existing conflict between temptation of European integrations and remaining deep ties with Russia and other former Soviet states. This resulted into system crisis in the main EaP participant country – Ukraine. The crisis still isn't resolved, and the 45 million state on the EU Eastern border has turned into the source of chronic instability and threat for European states' national security.

Lithuania's treatment of EU-Ukraine association as a victory in "geopolitical game" has laid a foundation to the fact, that in the end on Vilnius Summit European values and crucial mechanisms of the Eastern Partnership program were compromised. The Vilnius Summit appeared disastrous mainly

because with the hands of Grybauskaitė the values model of the European Union got discredited: Ukraine was promised EU association despite not fulfilling any conditions earlier presented by Europe. Ukraine was actively dragged into EU not because it *got closer* to EU, but because it *moved away* from it. In this sense the Vilnius Summit, undoubtedly, made history as a summit where it got astonishingly clear, that never before had the EU been so humiliated in front of another country, literally pulling it into its orbit of influence. So if it's a victory, it's a Pyrrhic one.

It was up until the Vilnius Summit between Lithuania and its European partners there existed fundamental disagreement regarding the signing of Association Agreement with Ukraine. Lithuania, going from its geopolitical stance (supported by majority of countries in Eastern Europe), presumed that Association Agreement with Ukraine must be signed *in any case* to move the latter away from Russian sphere of influence. But the European Union leadership insisted that Ukraine must first make several important steps toward association to comply with the standards and values of the European Union.

The criteria themselves in Ukraine became known as “Füle list” by the name of European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy Štefan Füle. In February 2013 Füle presented a list of 19 demands to Ukrainian partners, fulfilling which Ukraine could count on signing the Association and Free Trade Area Agreement on the Eastern Partnership Vilnius Summit. Among them were the demands of institutional reforms (judiciary, police, prosecutor's office, law enforcement, etc.), changes in electoral legislation, return to parliamentary-presidential republic and release of political prisoners (first and foremost Yulia Tymoshenko).

In this situation Lithuanian Republic steadily played the role of Ukrainian leadership's “attorney”, calling the European partners to make concessions to Kiev. Official Vilnius' readiness to drop any demands to Ukraine, close eyes for the sake of signing the Association Agreement most explicitly became apparent in “Tymoshenko's Case”, in which on a certain stage Lithuanian politicians practically

placed themselves against the whole world, demanding Yanukovich to free ex-PM political prisoner. In Lithuania the draft resolution addressing Ukrainian authorities to release Tymoshenko got repealed in the Seimas, because this demand “makes obstacles to enter association with Europe, that’ll create only more premises to remain in the orbit of Russia, which pays exclusively little respect to human rights” (Mantas Adomėnas, TS-LKD). Lithuania’s intentions to by all means achieve the signing of EU-Ukraine Association Agreement also defined by the desires to become the chief driver of the Eastern Partnership. To do this it had to give the program a second wind, which was impossible without a bunch of conditions. “In order to increase the efficacy of European actions and avert the ultimate failure of Eastern Partnership initiative, it will be necessary to achieve some tangible progress, especially in the three crucial areas of economic integration (the signature and implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreements, increasing investments and trade exchange levels), visa liberalization (abolition of the Schengen visa regime for those countries that have made the most progress) and the development of the partners’ institutional potential”⁵⁰.

But Yanukovich’s support from Lithuania and several other states of Eastern Europe only warmed up Ukrainian leadership’s beliefs that this Agreement is needed more for Brussels, than Kiev. It caused the principal refusal to do European “homework” required for signing the EU Association Agreement.

The deadline for Kiev to fulfill Brussels’ demands was moved ahead several times: first European officials designated May 2013, later required reforms were declared “homework” for the summer, by fall “Füle list” out of 19 point fell short to 5 and till the Vilnius Summit only one point got left – release of Yulia Tymoshenko. None of the European Union’s demands were fulfilled by Ukrainian authorities, in November 2013 this resulted in a dilemma for the European leaders: to abandon the EU-Ukraine association or to virtually agree with Lithuanian interpretation of Eastern Partnership and, taking into consideration geopolitical interests, drop all the loud

⁵⁰ Rafał Sadowski, Partnership in Times of Crisis: Challenges for the Eastern European Countries’ Integration with Europe.

URL:http://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_36_en_partnership_net.pdf

phrases about the EU as a “union of values” by signing an Agreement with President Yanukovich.

The Vilnius Summit of Eastern Partnership took place on 28 November 2013. The main event of the summit was planned to be the signing of Association and Free Trade Area Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union. But on 21 November Ukrainian government suspended the process of preparation of signing the Agreement, saying that the establishment of free trade area with EU will destroy national production. After a pause for several days the government’s actions were supported by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich.

Yet, despite that, Yanukovich still agreed to participate in the work of the Vilnius Summit. As of the summits’ beginning out of all the EU demands remained only release of ex-PM Yulia Tymoshenko – up to that point the deal was not about Tymoshenko’s acquittal and rendering her innocent, but only about allowing the ex-PM to undergo medical treatment in Germany while still in confinement and under the condition of Tymoshenko’s return to prison after the treatment is done. In the end the European Union dropped this condition as well – during bilateral talks with Viktor Yanukovich German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that the European Union takes back its demands to resolve Yulia Tymoshenko’s fate if this is an obstacle for Ukrainian side to sign the Association Agreement. Ultimately Viktor Yanukovich still declined signing the document.

The course of signing the Ukraine Association Agreement at any cost led to the EU abandoning European values, deforming the whole EU values model. Values-based approach of the majority of the European states, under which EU-Ukraine association couldn’t happen until the country would demonstrate progress in the issues of democracy, respect of human rights, structural reforms, was pushed aside by momentary urge to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine at any cost (regardless of the colossal economic risks for Ukraine itself), determined by upcoming European Parliament elections.

Comparable situation occurred during the accession to the European Union by Eastern European and Baltic states. It became evident by the early 2000s, that these

states fail to meet many aspects of the European Commission's demands, outlined in approved roadmaps, and in no way fulfill the Copenhagen criteria. Many concerns were especially towards Poland and Latvia. Latvia at the time, by the European Commission estimate, was ranked 3rd in Europe by corruption level. Yet, considering exclusively desires not to allow the possibility of restoration of Russian influence, the European Union adopted a replacing assessment of "tentative fulfillment" and still accepted eight post-socialist states into its community. In case of the Eastern Partnership, due to the fact that the main policy subjects are the states formerly belonging to Eastern Europe (who call themselves Central European), apparently the demands bar became record low. What matters is the partner's compliance with the EU's conditions.

This intent was originally congenial to Lithuanian leadership – Vilnius repeatedly demonstrated that European values were secondary in this issue. Lithuania, as EU President and Vilnius Summit host, was the leader among Eastern European states adhering the geopolitical approach, under which for the sake of Ukraine's removal from Russian sphere of influence and its attachment to European orbit, the Association Agreement must be signed anyway, regardless of Yanukovich regime not sharing any European values, dismantling democracy and violating human rights in his country. Over time European democracy got more close to this approach, consistently abandoning its own demands to the Ukrainian leadership and, in the end, on the Vilnius Summit it completely dropped all demands, so Yanukovich would sign the Association Agreement. The Vilnius Summit itself, turning into futile lengthy efforts of European leaders to persuade Yanukovich to sign an agreement with EU, became a total discredit of European leaders, who dropped all EU values for the sake of President Yanukovich, whom they, as if inciting revenge for unprecedented humiliation of European diplomacy, declared illegitimate two months afterward.

That's how the Eastern Partnership program, implemented by Lithuania in a damaging, resurrected from Cold War era ideological grounds of East-West confrontation, got Vilnius' policy to spiral into the largest crisis of European diplomacy.

The situation of harsh choice between two geopolitical spaces, invoked by Lithuania, only alienated Eastern Partnership states from the “European choice”. Armenia has already revoked the course of European integration: the country’s leadership declared intentions to join the Customs Union. In Belarus, already a Customs Union member, Lithuania’s confrontational course aimed at opposing integration projects of the EU and the Customs Union, has led to Belarus’ cooperation with EU via Eastern Partnership to slide into void. The same applies to Azerbaijan, traditionally aspiring for a special geopolitical status and rejecting integration projects from both Russia and EU. Lithuanian interpretation of Eastern Partnership virtually froze the programs functioning with regards to Azerbaijan. Yet, the main failure turned out to be Ukraine. **Lithuania as the EU president not only didn’t accomplish the common European priority project of including this country into the European sphere of influence, but forced EU to suffer enormous image losses in results dropping all of its “European values”-based demands to Ukraine. For Ukraine itself Lithuanian presidency ended up with chaos in political life, economy collapse and practical breakup of the state.**

In a matter of days following the bloody regime change in Kiev in February 2014 new Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said, that “the treasury has been robbed and is empty” and “state is led to bankruptcy”. That’s why Ukraine asked EU, US and other IMF member states to provide financial aid of \$ 35 billion for two years. It’s still unlikely, that this sum will be enough to secure the state from defaulting.

Only in 2014 Ukraine must pay \$ 15.6 billion of public debt. This sum is mentioned in the draft budget of 2014, published in December. Out of this \$ 5.6 billion must be paid as foreign debt. And Ukrainian debt for Russian gas as of early April is \$ 2.238 billion. According to Ukrainian draft budget, 2014 budget deficit is expected to be 3.6% GDP – that’s about \$ 6.6 billion. Although already now it’s obvious, that budget deficit will be much higher, because it’s impossible to achieve previously projected 3% GDP growth and 4.3% inflation (in certain sectors inflation already reaches 10%). Furthermore, Ukraine’s 2014 trade deficit is expected to be on \$ 14.6 billion level, when for nine months of 2013 it was only \$ 5.8 billion. Hryvnia

exchange rate to US dollar already suffered 9% devaluation since the beginning of the year (and that's not the limit), that'll, undoubtedly, effect the inflation rate.

Such a grave situation in the economy casts doubt on fulfillment of social obligations by the Ukrainian government – according to PM Yatsenyuk's claims, assets for financing the army will be generated due the cuts of social programs.

To financially aid the quickly deteriorating Ukrainian economy, the European Union will have to take part of the money from its own structural funds, which will first and foremost hit the interests of the Eastern European countries, namely the Baltic states, where via European co-financing nearly all major European projects are being executed. Total cost of these projects is about 14 billion euro. Only Rail Baltica, a rail link project will cost approximately 5 billion euro, depending of the final destination point. At the same time currently EU has adopted a decision to give Ukraine 11 billion euro of financial aid, which isn't enough to restore Ukrainian economy.

Official Vilnius, as an Eastern Partnership operator, didn't accomplish the program's objectives. The consequences of the failure, incited by Lithuania on the November Summit, are yet to be estimated, because they still haven't taken complete shape. By its forced actions of introduction of a Cold War logic, ignoring fundamental values' basis of common European foreign policy, Lithuanian Republic demonstrated, that it itself becomes the source of tension and distrust not only between Russia and European states, but a source of instability within the European Union. First of all, this is connected with confrontationist attitude of Lithuanian diplomacy toward Russia. The buffer concept of Eastern Europe is contradictory to the idea of Big Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok and essentially goes against pragmatic interests of the EU in the strategic prospect. Stefan Meister, an expert in Eastern Partnership policy of the European Council on Foreign Relations, noted after the Vilnius Summit, that "if it has any hope of salvaging its Eastern Partnership project, the EU has to take into account the significance and implication of Russian interests in the region. Brussels is currently engaged in a trial of strength with

Moscow... in order to see who is able to integrate the region into their sphere of influence”⁵¹.

So Latvia, upon assuming the role of EU presiding country in 2015 and the host of next Eastern Partnership Summit, faces a challenge of wise, cautious use of the resources provided to it by presidency in the European Union. Latvia, in a nutshell, appears on a crossroad of adopting a decision, whether to use the arising additional abilities for stabilizing the international situation, receiving not only reputational, but quite tangible trade and economic benefits as well, so desirable for the fragile Latvian economy, or to walk the Lithuanian path aggravating distrust between Russia and Europe, exacerbating the Ukrainian problem and in prospect assisting the disintegration processes in the region.

⁵¹ http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_after_vilnius_why_the_eu_needs_to_rethink_234

Prospects and Development Factors of Eastern Partnership Program

Events of November-December 2013 put the future of the Eastern Partnership program in question. In terms of scenario, it's quite probable, that Brussels will lose interest in the low-effective initiative, which is mostly being lobbied by Eastern European countries and after November 2013 doesn't have any serious goals for the program's development: Georgia and Moldova initiated EU Association Agreements, Azerbaijan doesn't express big aspirations to participate in the program, Armenia made a choice in favor of Eurasian integration, Belarus maintains EU contacts at minimal level, and further building of Europe's relations with Ukraine via discredited program is simply unreal.

Nevertheless, it's evident, that the European Union doesn't wish to leave the post-Soviet space – in mid-term perspective for the EU there can appear a new prospective field of work. On one side, it's attracting Azerbaijan and Belarus to more close contacts with EU, that'll be presented to these states as an opportunity to diversify their foreign policy. From the other – through the Eastern Partnership it's possible to construct cooperation with new associated EU members of this region. Besides that, bureaucratic logic of Brussels' European officials doesn't allow to revoke the already implemented, but still not finished program.

Still, we can judge Eastern Partnership's fate after the Ukrainian crisis, among other things, with connection to fates of similar EU regional neighborhood programs, Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Northern Dimension. At the time the European Union spent on Mediterranean Partnership sums two and even three times more than investment in Eastern Partnership. The peak of financing occurred at French presidency in the Council of EU. Right now the EU acts as if the Arab Spring episode never happened, just like Mediterranean Partners program didn't happen. At least currently it isn't the EU's object of pride, although, of course, EU political efforts in this direction continue, but in a routine matter.

And concerning the Northern Dimension program, after rather loud and effective announcement and start, this regional program too slipped away from EU

frontlines. But the reasons were different: after government and foreign ministry changes in early 2000s the Russian side has more realistically reevaluated the balance of interests in the program and came to the conclusion that several clauses, namely relating to joint exploitation of Russian natural resources, aren't strategically beneficial for Russia. Let us remind, that in the program clearly prevailed interest to exploit enormous energy potential of northwestern regions of Russia (natural-gas condensate field on the shelf of Barents Sea, Timan-Pechora oil field basin in Komi), as well as its natural resources such as timber and ore. Also there was a presumed interest in exploitation of the Northern Sea Route, despite that several of EU proposals, included in the program, over time were losing value. Currently the program operates only as a regional direction of EU-Russia relations.

Nevertheless, three “neighborhood” programs, albeit serving the EU common strategic goal, manifesting in “peculiar”, as we can say, understanding of maintaining stability on the bordering territories and their abilities to adapt to its economic need and political objectives, differ in their significance in common Euro-Atlantic geopolitical game. Here the weight of the Eastern Partnership is, undoubtedly, “central” in the flanks’ configuration of Euro-Atlantic amphitheater of actions, yet still may be shared with Mediterranean. And this is despite initially seen little interest of the so-called Old Europe in the events, regularly undertaken under the scope of EaP summits and meetings at other levels.

So despite the failure in November 2013, the Eastern Partnership program was named among the priorities of Latvia’s presidency in the Council of EU in the first half of 2015. With that said, Riga faced sharp demand of analysis of the further paths of the Eastern Partnership to determine the capabilities of increasing the effectiveness of this program with simultaneously decreasing its conflicting potential, which was demonstrated in Ukraine.

We can name several key factors that can seriously correct the future of this European initiative:

- common European political context,
- common European economic context,

- internal Latvian political situation.

Speaking about *common European political context* in implementing Eastern Partnership program, we can note, that disappointment with Vilnius Summit outcomes prompted European officials to realize, that this initiative requires revision and review. In February 2013 the EU foreign ministers' meeting took place, where the future of the Eastern Partnership was discussed. Discussions focused on 20 recommendations reflecting Europe's vision on the course, on which this initiative must evolve under the conditions after Vilnius Summit. The new European strategic document, defining EU Eastern policy was prepared by 13 EU states, including Germany and the UK.

According to these recommendations, in the Eastern Partnership development EU was offered to emphasize the more-for-more principle, which, in several politicians' opinion, mostly Eastern European, wasn't employed efficiently enough. In terms of this principle there are two mechanisms of financing. Firstly, each state gets assigned not with the exact sum, but with a range of sums. If a state performs its obligations well, European Commissions lifts it on a higher level of financial aid. Secondly, there is a special umbrella program. 10% of all assignments of this program can only go to states succeeding in a democratic agenda, in respecting human rights.

20 Points on Eastern Partnership Post-Vilnius stresses the need to “encourage EaP frontrunners by making full use of the “more for more” concept, including through prioritizing additional EU funding, within existing instruments as well as current multiannual financial framework, and support through IFIs”.

In addition to this, European ministers recommended to elaborate in detail the differentiated concept of cooperation within the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements for “less ambitious EaP partner countries”, to which they included Armenia. Brussels named Moldova and Georgia leaders in the Eastern Partnership, for which these states must be awarded with certain privileges. *20 Points* recommended to ensure these states with a flow of visits from senior European

politicians “with clear and constant message regarding early signature of AA/DCFTA and the need for vigorous European reforms to make full use of agreements”.

Overall, the document portrays the intensification of the Eastern Partnership’s confrontational essence.

The realization of a whole set of the document’s points inevitably leads to further distancing of a number of post-Soviet republics from Russia and as a result – a rise in inner political conflict within these countries and the region as a whole. Specifically the document proposes maximum acceleration of the signing process of Moldova’s and Georgia’s associated membership in the EU to resolved the issue before August 2014. Along with that it speaks of the necessity to spread the economic and other benefits of the Association Agreement and Eastern Partnership membership, and to “promote and publish studies that explain long term gains of the EaP, including the possible impact on Russia and the Customs Union / Eurasian Economic Union, and negate unfounded claims of costs”. The unfounded acceleration of this process in Ukraine led to serious disturbance in that country. And yet, in *20 Points* call to further expand political ties with Ukraine. Aside from that, EU countries have looked into the possibility of supporting partner countries in energy efficiency in order to lower dependence and improve competitiveness, for example, through E5P (The Eastern European Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership) expansions.

The document mentions Russia mostly as a potential threat with the European countries taking on the responsibility to resist it. On one hand, the document calls to “engage with Russia in a substantial, frank and open dialogue on integration processes in Europe”. But afterwards, it mentions the need to “underline that punitive actions and threats against EaP partner countries are unacceptable”. Furthermore, the very next point says that its necessary to prepare for external and internal threats or actions against the leaders of the program in the nearest future, such as economic embargo, limiting migration flow, tensions rising in frozen conflicts, etc.

This context of potential conflict gives a different tone to the seemingly “neutral and beneficial” measures of developing the Eastern Partnership in advancing

community ties in security. According to the document, the EU plans to increase its efforts in handling frozen regional conflicts, specifically helping and Chişinău and Tbilisi with their breakaway territories and help advance stimuli for the advancement of these contacts. It also proposed to deepen cooperation in security policies by inviting the Eastern Partners to the European Union's missions in accordance to the Common Security and Defense Policy.

The main focus in the new adjusted Eastern Partnership model is on the community ties and propagandist influence mechanisms. For example, they plan to strengthen the "Stronger Together" information campaign and strongly "spread information and respond to disinformation" in EaP countries, including inviting public experts. Along with that, it states the necessity of expanding contacts with all sectors of society in the Eastern Partnership, including visits, seminars, student exchange, common projects, European social programs in partner states "preferably involving also those not already convinced of the benefits of closer EU relations. Specific activities should be aimed at national minorities and remote regions." A separate point are the now traditional for European politics efforts of supporting civil society along with combating corruption and assisting institutional reforms. This approach is at the forefront in relations with Azerbaijan and Belarus, where it's recommended to use "Through informal contacts, and using positive attention and events in near future (BY: World Cup in Ice Hockey, AZ: Chairmanship of CoE May-Nov 2014), persuade Azerbaijan and Belarus to take positive steps on political prisoners for the benefit of relations with the EU."

And, after the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit, there is no common opinion on the future development of the program.

Under these conditions, the changes are only one option from the set of new visions of the European initiative's future. On 1 April, after a prolonged break there was a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Weimar Triangle - Frank-Walter Steinmeier of Germany, Laurent Fabius of France and Radosław Sikorski of Poland. This format appeared back in 1991 with the goal of discussing Poland's integration into EU and NATO. On the few meetings in the 2000s they started discussing not

only Poland's problems, but international politics in general (in 2011, for example, they discussed the idea of turning the triangle into a square by inviting Russia into the dialogue in this format).

The result of the 1 April discussions was that the Weimar Three said in their joint statement, that EU, while conducting its Eastern policy, underestimated the Russian factor which led to the rise of proneness to conflict in the region. In accordance with that they admitted the need to continue the political course that's already underway with the Eastern partners, especially Ukraine, but considering the Russian side's opinion. "We should reassure the security of our Allies, we should thoroughly analyze and readjust our relationship with Russia in light of recent developments and we should enhance engagement with our Partners, in particular with Ukraine in the context of the Ukraine-NATO Council. At the same time, we acknowledge that Russia and Ukraine have always had special and strong ties based on history, economy and culture. These ties must be developed in the spirit of good neighborly relations, mutual interest, genuine partnership and on the basis of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty."⁵²

The declaration states that the Eastern Partnership was created as a policy to support democratic, economic and social reform in Eastern neighborhood countries with the goal of helping them build strong, stable, prospering and socially-oriented states and contacts between people.

The most important element of the statement is the call to not focus the Eastern Partnership on having the member states stand in opposition to Russia.

"This (program goals – *author's note*) is also in Russia's interest. So we will continue our policy, and we guarantee that Eastern Partnership countries are not faced with a hard choice between getting closer to the EU and complex cooperation with Russia. Neither the EU Eastern Partnership, nor the EU bilateral agreements with its partners are aimed against Russia"

⁵² Joint statement on Ukraine of the Weimar Triangle Foreign Ministers. URL: <http://www.msz.gov.pl/resource/a3d59d07-5090-445e-8ad0-8d62bd51fc75:JCR>

Moreover, that statement from Germany, France and Poland basically admitted that the trilateral formula of Europe, Ukraine and Russia is constructive and useful in reconciling the Ukrainian crisis. “We strongly advocate a meaningful dialogue between Ukraine and Russia, as a central step for de-escalation and the establishment of a mechanism to solve current outstanding issues related to military, economic and social issues. Accompanying such a dialogue, we propose EU-Russia talks with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia about the consequences of the EU-Association Agreements with Eastern European Partners for both sides.”

Earlier, prior to the Vilnius Eastern Partnership Summit, Russian President Vladimir Putin voiced a similar thought when he called to convene a trilateral council Russia-EU-Ukraine about the consequences of the latter’s European integration. This statement was made as a potential answer to the growing Ukrainian crisis. A similar initiative was made by the Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich right before the Vilnius Summit, when he said that after the suspension of the preparations to sign the Association Agreement: “So we could regulate these relations, all three participants must sit down to discuss these questions in a trilateral format. They can’t be examined after the agreement is signed. They can be examined only before that.”⁵³

Putin’s and Yanukovich’s proposals were flatly declined by the EU, by the Foreign Affairs Minister of the then-presiding in EU Lithuania: “The proposed trilateral dialogue has no precedent and it is not a solution to the situation. The proposal on a bilateral Association Agreement remains in play from the EU’s side and we’re not looking into adding a third side to this process.”⁵⁴ Virtually the same idea was voiced by the European Commission President José Manuel Barroso on the press conference at the conclusion of the Vilnius Summit.

After that in February in the state of a full inner political crisis Ukraine called the EU to hold a technical discussion on the Association Agreement, where representatives of Russia would participate.⁵⁵ This initiative didn’t find support among European politicians. However, the Joint Statement of the conclusion of the

⁵³ <http://nbnews.com.ua/ru/news/106318/>

⁵⁴ <http://old.urm.lt/index.php?3926907698>

⁵⁵ <http://ria.ru/world/20140201/992571074.html>

Weimar Triangle on 1 April testified to how Germany, France and Poland, at the least, are ready for the inclusion of the trilateral format and Russia's participation in EU's Eastern policy. Acknowledgement of the necessity of an open, constructive and transparent dialogue with Russia as an EU strategic partner in the goal of building a Big Europe is gradually coming.

But the price of that acknowledgement was frighteningly high – the collapse of Ukrainian statehood after the failure of 28-29 November 2013 Vilnius Summit has led the European politicians to a cautious understanding of the necessity to rethink their views on EU policy on the post-Soviet space. This understanding could have reached the Western European capitals a lot sooner if the steering wheel was occupied by a country with real opportunities for deep and unbiased expertise of the processes underway on the post-Soviet space and not Baltic new Cold War aficionados who have had multiple years of Russian threat rhetoric as means to build up their own political weight inside the country and on the outside scene by demonstrating that they want to be more European than the founders of the European Union.

In this sense the EU is a hostage of its own rotation mechanism, where every European Union country presides in the EU in turn and they don't pay attention to the main thing: whether it can adequately express the interests of the whole community and whether it will just lead to its presidency turning into an attempt to settle old scores, sow the seeds that will bring forth, as it was with Lithuania's presidency and Ukraine, a storm that will shake the very foundations of the European Union.

So now, in the state of rising confrontations in the international space in Europe, there is no common opinion among EU members about the future of the Eastern policy and the Eastern Partnership program in general. On the level of specific European states and the all-European level they are looking into multiple options to solve the difficulties. And, in that regard, Latvia, the country presiding in EU in 2015 and the host of another Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga has a chance to play a special role in this discussion of strategic developments.

From the beginning of 2014 discussions about the Eastern Partnership's future already began in Latvia, and it's characterized by the fact that is mostly decided by the *inner political context* existing in this Republic.

One of the main characteristics of Latvia's political space in last few years is the division into two antagonistic camps. The first is represented by the most popular political force in the country – the Harmony Center (Saskaņas Centrs, SC). Despite its popularity and wide representation in the Saeima SC is not invited to form the ruling coalition for ideological reasons. Considering the SC leadership in electoral support, the planned October 2014 elections might break this trend and lead to a government with SC representation. In terms of foreign policy Harmony Center aims to have a social democratic orientation (we should note that during the May European Parliament elections the social democrats are poised to be the biggest fraction, receiving the key positions and having the most influence on the European Commission composition). The party HQ is in favor of harmonizing Latvia's relations with Eastern and Western partners, including building a pragmatic dialogue with Russia along with all of the most important countries in the European Union.

The other political camp is represented by the conglomerate of the tentative “right conservatives” and the so-called ‘Latvian’ political forces, united around the PM's Unity Party (Vienotība). The foreign policy doctrine adopted by this party is aimed at deepening the integration into Euro-Atlantic structures on one hand and systematic political and economical distancing from Russia on the other.

Consequently, the influence of one or the other political camp in Latvia will impact the characteristics of the foreign policy course of the country, European Union presidency and the lobbyist vector on the all-European level.

As Latvia's presidency draws closer, the republic's political and expert circles have created two visions and two models of the Eastern Partnership program's future.

In February 2013 the Chairman of the Harmony Center Saeima fraction and President of the Baltic Forum Jānis Urbanovičs voiced the idea that reforms of the Eastern Partnership program are necessary after the Vilnius Summit. This point of view is based on the premise of the Summit as a “neighborly failure with one of the

foreign policy cooperation programs.” The main reason for the failure is the transformation of the program into a geopolitical clash of Europe and Russia with the main victims being the Eastern partners themselves in the end. “Their enthusiasm will dry up, their hopes and plans of European integration will be forgotten. And evaluating the EaP integration conditions with a cool head they’ll realize that they are basically rejecting traditional economic ties in favor of new ones that have yet to be formed. And the price of European integration will seem too high.”⁵⁶ Altogether we can summarize a few key characteristics that the Eastern Partnership must have in accordance with this model:

- An examination of the program in order to withdraw any hidden agendas;
- The European Union relenting on the strict demands of the EaP members in terms of common market standards because some of them might contradict national economic interests of the state;
- Abandoning anti-Russian rhetoric as the logic of “struggle” for the post-Soviet space, for rearranging influence space;
- Including Moscow into the partnership: creating a format of a multilateral discussion with inclusion of the program’s target countries, EU and Russia;
- Constructing the EU Eastern policy based on the premise of Russia’s interest in being part of Europe to conduct their own modernization;
- Abandoning the policy of mentorship in relations with Eastern partners;
- Accentuating the benefit of realizing the program not only for the Eastern Partnership countries, but also for Russia and other post-Soviet countries.

Eastern Partnership development according to the *Urbanovičs model* will allow to expand on the regional program oriented only on the six post-Soviet republics and move on to strategic goal-setting – creating a united political and economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok. And the confrontational Lithuanian model basically froze this project turning the political processes of Eurasia in the opposite direction –

⁵⁶ Янис Урбанович. Настоящая цена «Восточного партнерства».
<http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/versions/yanis-urbanovich-nastoyaschaya-cena-vostochnogo-partnerstva.d?id=44092513>

in the Cold War direction. In this common European project Latvia can find its personal interests in lifting artificial political obstacles on the way to developing bilateral economic cooperation.

As Russian economists N. Mezhevich and L. Sazanovich note in *Modern Problems of Russian-Latvian Relations*, “Latvia’s economic policy is currently based on sufficient use of European integration potential and underestimation of the potential cooperation with Russia. The high GDP Latvia is showing can be facilitated by balanced Russian-Latvian relations for the coming years.”⁵⁷

Acting on the model explained above Latvia gets the opportunity to use its unique chance to lead Europe away from the road of confrontation. But, there is a risk that Latvia will go in the opposite direction.

Another Latvian perspective on the Eastern Partnership’s future was provided at the EU Foreign Ministers Summit in March 2014 by the Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs as part of a separate section dedicated to the program’s prospects. *The Rinkēvičs model* at this moment represents the most radical path to reforming the program. According to this vision of the problem, the Eastern Partnership must have the following characteristics:

- Maximum involvement of US in the Eastern Partnership implementation, down to renaming the program into the Euro-Atlantic Eastern Partnership.

This suggestion in this context is as brave as it is controversial.⁵⁸ The problem is, when comparing US foreign policy priorities on one side and EU and Eastern Europe on the other, they differ considerably. The elites of the Eastern European countries are especially devoted to the geopolitical vision of the Eastern Partnership,

⁵⁷ Межевич Н.М., Сазанович Л.С. Современные проблемы российско-латвийских отношений // Балтийский регион, №3, 2013.

⁵⁸ To analyze the situation around the upcoming Latvian presidency in the Council of the EU we can also look at the officer, appointed in 2013 as the Latvian MFA Eastern Partnership curator. This post was given to the former Latvian Counsel-Envoy to US Juris Poikāns. In late 2013 after the Vilnius Summit but prior to the February events on Maidan and the Crimean referendum he laid out his vision of Latvia’s goals in EaP for the period of Latvia’s presidency. Poikāns sees the main goal in maintaining dialogue with all six members of the EaP program and differentiating attitude to relations. Again, he reiterates that the European Union is not interested in more concrete definitions of policy goals for every country and defining their horizons. Interestingly a curator of this policy is in every country of V4 and the Baltic, which also proves the theory of the tendency of a wide-scale regional geopolitical reformatting.

while Western Europe and US are more interested in the value context. In preparations for the Vilnius Summit this was evident in positions about Tymoshenko. Politicians in Poland and Lithuania, the main Eastern European drivers of the Eastern Partnership, were pushing for the signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine without freeing Yulia Tymoshenko, explaining this with geopolitical reasonability of removing Ukraine out of Russian influence. That way a few Polish MEPs some time before the Vilnius Summit proposed signing the document *before* the November meeting. And in Lithuania they made a parliamentary resolution prepared by the ruling coalition (Social Democratic Party of Lithuania, Labour Party, Order and Justice Party and Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania) which declared the impossibility of EU associating with Ukraine until the disgraced opposition leader was freed from prison. It was reasoned by the resolution's opponents with the same geopolitical reasonability this statement of the EU president country's parliamentaries lessened the options of European politics in signing the Association Agreement with Ukraine. At the same time in the US a similar document was adopted by the Congress and the Foreign Affairs Committee level. Despite these contradictions between US and Eastern European views of the Eastern Partnership, Riga still voiced the proposal to include US interests into this program, which is, considering Latvia's diplomatic weight on the international arena, probably was previously agreed upon between Riga and her North American partner.

- Including into the Eastern Partnership roadmap not only associated membership with is vaguely defined benefits, but a promise of full-fledged membership in the European Union.

As the situation around Ukraine after the Vilnius Summit shows this condition is the least likely to be implemented. The problem is that Brussels and the Western European countries are mostly interested in Eastern Partners trading areas and implementing European norms and standards of doing business into their legislation, which will make these markets easier for expanding in, and the Eastern partner's economies more competitive in the long-term prospect. All of these opportunities open up to Europe when an Association Agreement is signed. Including countries of

the Eastern Partnership into the EU as full-fledged members will weigh on the European budget like a depression region of 75 million people. Supporting these countries from the European funds will be a disabling burden on European Structural Funds. More so, such an inclusion contradicts Latvia's own economic interests. After 10 years in the EU, Latvia's budget, as all other Baltic republics, is subsidized and a fourth of it is formed from European funds. Latvia's agriculture is the most dependent on European money – according to EU budget agreements for 2014-2020, Latvia will receive around 2.7 billion euro in that period to develop its agricultural sector. This dependency only grows if we consider that agricultural payments for 2014-2020 are 58% bigger than in the last 7 years. The additional load on the European budget to support the economy and reforms of the Eastern partners will undoubtedly lead to cuts in subsidization payments, including to Latvia itself.

- Differentiated approach. Rinkēvičs proposes to develop every country in the Eastern Partnership its own European integration mini-program, which would cover every specific issue.

In that case, the characteristic is similar to Urbanovičs' idea of abandoning the idea of Eastern Partnership countries conforming to “common market standards”

- Raising the programs efficiency through strengthening on the more-for-more principle.

The Latvian minister thinks that “Eastern Partnership states which saw themselves as part of EU values and were ready to carry out all the necessary reforms should be offered the prospect of a closer integration with the European Union.”⁵⁹

- An information opposition to Russia.

This part of Rinkēvičs' idea is similar to the *20 Points on Eastern Partnership Post-Vilnius*, which stressed the necessity of focusing the further program implementation on the information content. However, a significant difference between these two viewpoints is that the *20 Points* proposed, among other things, creating a positive picture for the future and focusing on the program's positive sides. The Latvian minister instead only stresses the means needed to limit Russia's

⁵⁹ <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/news/press-releases/2014/march/23-1/>

information influence and thus once again raising the Eastern Partnership's conflict-prone status.

Among the proposed models *Rinkēvičs' concept* is the most conflict-prone (as it adds the foundation of not only the conflict between Russia and EU, but also proposes US to directly involve itself in a purely European matter, which, as it's clearly known, is met with great opposition by the leading European states and Brussels itself; such a step of official Riga might only feed the source of mistrust inside the European Union) and resource-costly, which means is directly tied to the economic state in Europe.

The all-European economic context is another important factor that may influence the development of the Eastern Partnership initiative. Right now this program, as is the Eastern policy as a whole, is not a financial priority for the EU, which shows in the fairly modest level of official fund allocation from the EU to these countries in recent years.

**Fund allocation from the EU to Eastern Partnership countries
in 2010-2013.⁶⁰**

<i>Eastern Partnership Countries</i>	<i>Funding in 2010-2013</i>
Ukraine	526 mln. euro
Moldova	366.6 mln. euro
Georgia	239.9 mln. euro
Armenia	186.8 mln. euro
Azerbaijan	82.5 mln. euro
Belarus	73.1 mln. euro

The Eastern Partnership budget before 2013 was only 600 million euro, which is hard to call a high level of financing when comparing it to the ambitious goals of the program and amount of countries included into it.

⁶⁰ «Стратегия и идеология в проекте ЕС “Восточное партнерство”»
<http://www.foreignpolicy.ru/uploads/banners/3/Ofitserov-Belskiy%20D.%20Eastern%20Partnership.%20February%202014.pdf>

The amount of financing for the next period of 2014-2020, apparently, will be around the same as the last period. This also characterizes the current attention in the EU to Eastern policy and economic opportunities if we consider that actualizing the more-for-more principle will demand significant financial influx into the program from the EU. So it's obvious that the economic context today is a restricting factor for the Eastern Partnership. In the event of an upcoming deterioration of the economic situation in the European Union as predicted by some experts means that it'll be a full-fledged barrier to some of the Eastern Partnership program variants. At the same time, we can't discount the fact that the program itself might be used as an effective instrument of achieving EU's economic goals.

The Eastern Partnership strategic prospect is the opportunity to assist in integrating the Western and Eurasian economic spaces. The formation of a Big Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok, undoubtedly, is not a prospect of near future, however the first steps to this goal, which is beneficial to all sides of the process, must be made today. The first step of this certainly not immediate, but objectively necessary process could in fact be the transformation of Eastern Europe, the zone of two overlapping zones, from a geopolitical barrier into a geo-economic "seam" – a space for the initial efforts of a mutually beneficial cooperation of two economic spaces. The Eastern Partnership operator to first understand and begin implementing this resource of the program, while discarding the worn-out Cold War rhetoric will win out economically and politically.

Scenarios of Further Eastern Partnership Development and Political Situation in Europe

Finding the main context in which the Eastern Partnership can expand today allows us to outline the possible scenarios of the program's further development and the corresponding development of the international situation in Europe. In this case, the most heuristic potential is in the scenarios build with the search-type principle – prediction of the development of political processes of different level and scale with a step-by-step description of possible changes to the political situation.

To define the Eastern Partnership initiative's possible role in Europe, it's necessary to outline the possible scenarios of the program's development itself. The difference of these scenarios will be defined by the factor of the common European political context, economic context and the political situation in Latvia.

We must begin constructing these scenarios with the formalization of the political processes. For the starting point of the scenario technique – the trigger event – we'll use the international situation in Europe which played out as a result of the Vilnius Summit and analyzed in the previous chapter of the report. In short, this situation is characterized with a deep geopolitical crisis in the center of Europe, which was prompted by the failure of the Lithuanian presidency in the EU, a widespread and unstable international political situation, US and EU on one side and Russia on the other. *We'll call this situation S0.*

We should outline a set of factors – F, which are likely to affect the Eastern Partnership program's evolution and the political situation in Europe in general in a visible manner after the Riga Summit:

- *The “core” of the EU's opinion of the Eastern Partnership program, F1.*

From the analysis provided earlier we can say that after the Vilnius Summit Europe entered a discussion period on the future of the Eastern Partnership and there is no one opinion on it. Based on the concepts analyzed we can outline two directions of the European initiative's development: one of them, basically deepens and details

the Lithuanian model of the Eastern Partnership built on a one-sided increase in EU influence on the post-Soviet space and methodical exclusion of Russia from the region. The second direction of the Eastern Partnership's development includes, basically, a trilateral format of the program's implementation: EU-Eastern partner-Russia.

The results of the May European Parliament elections may visibly impact the program's future. On one hand it could be affected by the strengthening of the leftist political forces in the European Parliament which view issues of the EU's Eastern policy in less conflict-prone and more pragmatic and balanced options. On the other hand the change of the Eastern Partnership development vector may be supported by the rightist Eurosceptic movement who support deepening Euro-Atlantic cooperation and US presence in the Eastern Partnership program.

- The EU's destabilizing economic position, F2.

The most important factor affecting the Eastern Partnership program's development is EU's financial state, which is currently a cause for worry. While presenting his summary report for 2013 on the EU Summit, the President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy warned: "We may be stronger today, but the global economy remains fluid. In addition, the economic crisis in Europe is not over yet. Growth is gradually picking up, but it is still fragile, uneven. We are still not yet where we want to be..."⁶¹. Foreign experts give even more pessimistic evaluations of the European economy. For example, the American Enterprise Institute analysis the economic situation of the EU characterizes it as such: "Sadly, policy complacency in Europe heightens the risk that 2014 could see a renewed intensification of the European sovereign debt crisis. Markets, in a much less benign global liquidity environment than in 2013, may begin to focus on Europe's poor economic and political fundamentals. Complacency makes it all too likely that Europe will continue the same policies of budget austerity and structural reform within a euro straitjacket

⁶¹ Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, Meeting with the Ad Hoc Council Annual Brussels Meeting «reflection on the last five years and what remains to be done» http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/141446.pdf

that have brought the European political economy to its present dismal state... Without a meaningful European economic recovery and a significant decline in unemployment, there is every reason to expect that the European political climate will deteriorate.”⁶²

With that in mind, the two mainstream ways the Eastern Partnership’s development provide two radically different levels of financing. The more-for-more principle requires the increase of financial expenses for leading partner integration. In addition, the deepening of the security policy, supporting energy independence, active stimulation of community contacts, etc., will be conducted primarily at the European side’s expense, and will require additional grants as part of the program. The development of the program in the opposite direction might also demand a few additional expenses (for example, expanding the community dialogue programs), however, part of the projects will be executed jointly with Russia, which will in turn lower the financial burden on the European side. But what’s more important – the EU budget won’t be required to handle various expenses aimed at compensating any losses the Eastern partners would face due to cutting ties with Russia. So this factor in its turn “splinters” each scenario into two – depending on whether there’ll be a considerable worsening of the EU economy or not.

- The Latvia election results, F3

Latvia, as EU president and host of an Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga in 2015 can cause a specific amount of influence on the formation of the updated program and its further implementation. Despite that, as shown above, there are two articulated polar opposite views on the advancement of the European initiative. One of them is represented by the ruling political forces, and the other - by the main opposition party, which may become the ruling one this fall. So Latvia’s position and where it will place its lobbyist efforts depends directly on who’s in charge in the country. Currently the dominant positions are held by the Euro-Atlantic Eastern Partnership idea supporters. Parliamentary elections into the Saeima can change the

⁶² <http://www.american.com/archive/2014/january/europes-outlook-in-2014>

political situation drastically. In the recent months the PM's party and the core of coalition, the Unity Party's ratings float around the 13% readings. The ratings of the opposition party, the Harmony Center are around 22%. Around a third of the electorate has yet to decide their political preference in the extremely low rate of the current government's approval: according to the regular DNB Latvijas barometers polls, the share of Latvians evaluating the work current coalition negatively after 2011, has never fallen lower than 70%, and the amount of people completely supporting the current rulers has always been around the amount of statistical discrepancy.⁶³ So the opposition Harmony Center has all of the chances to not just win the October 2014 elections, but even form the government. So any result of the October Saeima elections (a change of the ruling coalition or its stable position) is not just an important inner political event, but can also considerably affect the future of the Eastern Partnership program, influencing the Russia-EU relations.

So under the influence of the highlighted factors we can outline eight possible broad scenarios of the Eastern Partnership program developments. All eight scenarios can be tentatively divided into three groups, and by extension, three possible paths of the Eastern Partnership affecting the political situation in Europe, which we will tentatively call *Riga*, *Prague* and *Vilnius* Eastern Partnerships.

Path 1. Riga Eastern Partnership.

The *S1 scenario* is the course of events where Old Europe's dominating positions will be held by the perspective of changing the vector of the Eastern Partnership's development (F1 factor in action), Europe's economic situation worsens considerably (F2 factor in action), the fall elections in Latvia lead to the Harmony Center being the core of the ruling coalition (F3 factor in action).

Essentially, this is one of the two polar opposite paths of development. Each of these factors increases the strength of the others. For example, the economic crisis expectedly raises the opposition's ratings in Latvia and makes the Harmony Center

⁶³ https://www.dnb.lv/sites/default/files/dnb_latvian_barometer/documents/dnb-latvijas-barometers-petijums-nr67.pdf

victory all the more assured. In case of the SC's assured victory, the crisis of trust to the previous authority and the overall social tension gives the ruling elite less chances of holding the Harmony Center back, like say, insisting on a "broad coalition" with the inclusion of all parliamentary parties and giving the SC only a small amount of unimportant cabinet posts. On the contrary, this situation lets SC get the right to form the government and occupy the PM post, deciding the internal and foreign policy of the country.

In this case, the option of lobbying the *Urbanovičs model* of the Eastern Partnership in Brussels is open. Undoubtedly, after October 2014 it won't be possible to radically change the core of the program, considering that the Riga Summit will happen in the first half of 2015. However, it is possible to significantly influence the specifics of the Eastern partners dialogue, discarding the mentorship and confrontational elements in relation to Russia.

These new developments part of the scenario won't only be supported in Brussels, but possibly even set in motion before October 2014 as a result of the European Parliament's predicted "left shift". Adding to that, the economic difficulties will force Brussels to look for less costly formats of the Eastern Partnership program's realization. One of these opportunities will be attracting the Russian side to its own initiatives. This plan will make demand for political and expert resources of the new Latvian government, which will be open to a reset in its relations with its Eastern Neighbor.

These precedents may create the foundation for harmonization of the Russia's and EU's foreign policy interests on the post-Soviet space and the Eastern European region.

First of all, the existence of this system will affect the Eastern Partners themselves, who will stop being bargaining chips in the geopolitical "tug of war" and will get the opportunity to benefit from the integration on the East and the West. In this case, the post-Soviet republics can avoid the community divisions (which, for instance, were present in Ukraine before and after the Vilnius Summit) and avoid

radical economic changes, that demand full reorientation on Western markets and abandoning Russian energy, etc.

In the result of this scenario Eastern Europe instead of being the buffer zone will be the beneficial to Russia and the EU geo-economical seam tying the two integration projects – the European and the Eurasian. With further positive developments in this scenario it opens the road to a Common Economic Space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, against which today, and the Crimea aftermath, the most pragmatic and long-sighted politicians of Europe and Russia.

Scenario S3 is the course of events where the dominating political powers in Brussels and Latvia change and the economic situation in Europe remains fairly stable.

In this event, even without economic stimulus the change of the Eastern Partnership program's course is still possible. In this case, the main driving force of change will be the political will on the Brussels-Riga axis. The left and the Eurosceptic EU forces won't be interested in continuing the confrontational Vilnius model of the Eastern Partnership.

When forming the Latvian government the factor of social tensions won't play a part and the dominating position of the Harmony Center won't be as firm as it was in S1. The formation of the broad coalition or the formation of the government is possible, where SC will play the role of a smaller partner. Theoretically, that option is possible, which is proven by the experience of the previous developments in the country's political process. At the results of the 2011 elections, the right to form the government was given to Valdis Dombrovskis – the president of the Unity Party, which managed to get only third place at the parliament elections, while SC was the leader in terms of voter support. And the smaller partner (in terms of cabinet posts) in the coalition was the young, at that moment, Zatlers' Reform Party. In the circumstances of the ethnocratic regime in Latvia, that power stalemate in the Government didn't reflect the election results, didn't reflect the electoral attitudes, but did reflect the elite's opinion, who didn't want to allow "foreigners" to power.

A similar situation can repeat if during the government's formation with the Harmony Center and, for example, Union of Greens and Farmers. Then, undoubtedly, the lobbyist efforts of the *Urbanovičs model* of the Eastern Partnership would be somewhat limited, but could still be heard in Brussels due to them chiming in with the all-European political mainstream trend.

In this case (the same as it was in scenario S1) the vector of the Eastern Partnership will be greatly revised. Its confrontational content lowered. There'll be the opportunity to settle the politico-ideological conflicts between EU and Russia, in particular, the Ukrainian crisis. Latvia can be the intermediary to better stream the expert and political channels of EU's position in Moscow and Russia's positions in Brussels on this question. There shouldn't be any serious hindrances in creating trilateral commissions aimed at modernizing economy and political institutes of Eastern Partnership countries, which will take the countries out of the geopolitical confrontation context. The program's leading countries will get the opportunity to diversify their foreign policy interests. The program's members, viewed as "lagging" by Europe today, will be able to find new goals in participating in the program: for example, Belarus' economic interests and its urge to get its products to European markets and bringing them up to European norms and standards. Armenia, aside from the economic aspect, might be interested in the political side of the cooperation – issues of raising government staff efficiency, democratization of political institutes, expanding community ties with Europe and other activities, which do not contradict Yerevan's ambitions of being a full-fledged member of the Eurasian integration.

The logical continuation of this course of events (just like in S1) would a step towards the Common Economic Space from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

That way, scenarios S1 and S3 are a group of scenarios of the constructive development of the international situation in Europe. These scenarios have a real opportunity to harmonize Russia and European Union relations on the post-Soviet space and in Eastern Europe, which today are more of a source of instability for the sides. In a strategic prospect, these scenarios assist in

progressing the European and Eurasian projects toward a Common Economic Space of Big Europe.

However, the implementation of this scenario is significantly hindered by factors of a so-called “third force” – US and its satellites in Central and Eastern Europe (including former Soviet Bloc states). And it’s the “third force”, that considers it geopolitically important to create, deepen and support the conflict situation on the Eurasian continent, broadening the area of distrust between the EU and Russia, and inside the EU itself (which leads to its weakening and solidifying the “Economic Giant, but Political Dwarf” model).

Path 2. Prague Eastern Partnership.

Scenario S2 is the course of events where the current model of the Eastern Partnership program will lose the support of the EU core, the economic situation in Europe worsens, but the political situation in Latvia remains the same.

In this case, the Eastern Partnership is faced with a very contradictory situation. The economic situation in Europe and rise of Eurosceptic attitudes push Brussels to abandon the confrontational model of the Eastern Partnership. The European budget does not allow any chance of the more-for-more principle to compensate the Eastern partners for cutting ties with Russia, broadening the spread of European country cooperation programs. The European Commission and the main capitals of Europe came to the conclusion, that more pragmatism is necessary and activate the dialogue with Russia on Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia integration prospects.

The implementation of this reshaping of the Eastern Partnership falls on Latvia as the 2015 EU president and the country hosting the Eastern Partnership summit. However, in Latvia, due to the fall parliamentary elections the same political elite remains in power. That means that, firstly, the foreign policy is strongly affected by the nationalist ideology and the elite’s buffer mindset, which considers threats to Latvia in not only political compromises with Russia, but even its own program of

giving residence permits to big investors (most of them are Russian citizens)⁶⁴. Secondly, in order to realize such an Eastern Partnership reformat they need well-developed expert and political ties with Russia, which again, due to ideological reasons the current right-conservative Latvian elite lacks. Thirdly, the current Latvian elite already has its own vision of the Eastern Partnership's future expressed in the *Rinkēvičs model*, which will come into a fundamental contradiction with the political trend in Brussels. For EU in this case it'll be unacceptable to attract the US to program's realization for political reasons. Aside from that, the deepening of Europe's economic problems will lead Rinkēvičs' idea of offering the Eastern Partners not amorphous association, but full-fledged membership into the fantasy category – the European Unions just won't have the financial resources to support a full-fledged integration of the post-Soviet republics and compensating the damages from reorienting their economies from the post-Soviet to the European direction.

In addition, as noted above, financial support for Ukraine from the EU is impossible while maintaining the current level of grants to the recipient states of the union, including Baltic states. **The more-for-more principle will boomerang the Eastern Partnership program drivers: the more new members will be drawn into the EU, the more money it'll take to support them, meaning that the less funds there'll be left for the currently subsidized Baltic countries.**

We should note that Latvia as an EU member must act within the Union's foreign policy strategy and realize the course to reformat the Eastern Partnership. The conflict nature of the program will be lowered as result, so that means that it must at least affect the Latvian politician's rhetoric. The country's leader will have to abandon the statements of a military threat from Russia's side, of the necessity to fight the "soft power", Russian media, NGOs, etc. And in dialogue with program member states the Latvian government will have to discard its presentation of the Eastern Partnership as an opportunity to shake off the "dependence from Russia" and stop making it look as the only means of modernization.

⁶⁴ <http://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/chajna-taun-v-lige-zachem-zhiteli-podnebesnoj-edut-v-latviyu.d?id=43899964>

But, a full-fledged reformat of the program in accordance with this scenario will fail. Due to the fact that Latvia, by refusing the negative agenda, won't be able to offer the positive one – not to Russia, not to the program's members.

As a result, the very essence of implementing the program will be diluted and will return to the level of the 2009 Prague Summit when the Eastern Partnership goals and mechanisms were formulated in their primordial, neutral yet undefined and blurry form. So the Eastern Partnership will become a totally amorphous program aimed at some sort of Europeanization of the legal system of the participating states, business environment, state institutions, expanding community connections, etc. But these goals don't really interest the countries of the Eastern Partnership, so there won't be any important breakthroughs on the Riga Summit: The Association Agreement with Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova will be signed at that point, and for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus it won't be important at the time. New ideas or goals will be absent.

Scenario S5 is the course of events where the attitudes in Western Europe and common European economic situation remain the same as they have been after Vilnius Summit, but the ruling elite in Latvia changes.

In this case, no political initiatives appear on the Brussels level to drastically revise the Eastern Partnership program. The economic situation in the EU does not push towards the revision of the program either. Under these conditions, the correction of program will go in the *20 Points on the Eastern Partnership Post-Vilnius* with the focus on the more-for-more principle, intensifying the information struggle with Russia, strengthening community ties in participating countries and assisting economic distancing Eastern Partnership countries from other post-Soviet countries (mainly Russia). Due to that, the confrontational level of the European program will grow.

In the event of a new coalition coming to power in Latvia, with a noticeable participation by the Harmony Center, new dialogue options will be available to Riga and Moscow. The weakening of the artificial barriers of the state of Russian-Latvian

relations will create conditions for the growth of trade, investments, the establishment of pragmatic relations, which affects the living standards of every Latvian – whether they're a citizen or non-citizen. Confrontation with Russia will contradict Latvia's national interests along with the interests of the ruling elite.

Despite that, the Latvian authority will be forced to act as the conductor of the confrontational model of the Eastern Partnership and inevitably create a clash between Brussels and Riga positions. However, in this case the Harmony Center will have the opportunity to be the intermediate in the Russia-EU relations. On one hand, it may show itself in that the updated Latvian government will use its political and expert connections with Russia to be the advocate of European initiatives that may cause Moscow's concern. On the other hand, active interactions with Russian partners will help the Latvian authority interpret and explain Russia's position to the European politicians. This type of intermediate work will help lower the conflict-prone potential of the Eastern Partnership. Latvia's presidency will be free of conflict rhetoric of a "Russian threat" and the necessity to save Eastern Europe, as it was after the Lithuanian term.

However, despite the positive role Riga will take, there won't be any successful serious steps toward normalizing relations between Europe and Russia. The Eastern Partnership program will retain its conflict nature, which Russia will have to mirror by applying trade and economic sanctions, etc. In this scenario it's unlikely that the trilateral format of the Eastern Partnership will be set up. The main result of this scenario is the fact that the updated Latvian government's diplomatic efforts will soften the negative consequences for the Russian-European relations from the further realization of the Eastern Partnership program

Scenario S8 is the course of events where the EU leaders abandon the revision of the Eastern Partnership program, but the crisis in Europe worsens and the Latvian opposition comes to power.

In this case the leading development of the Eastern Partnership continues: they plan to create multiple dialogue spaces on different levels of representation under the

banner of this program, they form expert plans on switching the Eastern partners to the Western economic and energetic space, focusing on the more-for-more principle, etc. However, economic difficulties mount in the EU and the European budget is formed accordingly. Many plans outlined in the Eastern Partnership remain only on paper or are realized as a formality. In the end, there is no significant progress in European integration for the member states.

At the same time in Latvia under the influence of the general worsening of the economic situation the opposition takes control, the Harmony Center gets influential positions in the country's government and get the opportunity to lobby their vision of the Eastern Partnership. Considering the program's budget cuts and the factual halting of its implementation the Harmony Center gains additional opportunities to promote the *Urbanovičs model* on the all-European level. However, the effective implementation of this goal is hindered by a number of circumstances. From one side the insufficient lobbyist abilities of Latvia, especially the new elite on the all-European level (even though they'll have the ability to act through the social democrats in the European Parliament). From the other side the idea of including Russia into the Eastern Partnership's implementation is radically against Brussels' position on the issue. So if Latvia's opinion will be taken into account when implementing Eastern policy, it will be done on remote, insignificant issues – the main core of the Eastern Partnership programs will differ little from its state today.

This way, as seen from the analysis above these scenarios are rounded up in a separate group due to the neutrality of their realization. In the end, the Riga Summit will be deemed accomplished, but completely empty. Its conclusion won't have any significant influence on the situation in Europe, it won't progress the Russian-European relations, neither will it lead to short-term positive changes in the participating countries. This will be the routine, ordinary event without any destructive consequences, as there were after Lithuania's presidency. It's doubtful that this scenario will lead to deepening the conflict between Russia and Europe, as it was with the Vilnius Summit. The Riga Summit will just be a routine meeting of European bureaucrats. However, these

development options are of little interest to the EU, the Eastern partnership, and Russia. For Europe this prospect will once again prove, what was demonstrated by the Vilnius Summit – that the Eastern policy in its current form has reached its limit and you can't invite the post-Soviet countries into your field of influence with talks of values alone. To the Eastern partners themselves these scenarios are unfavorable because then the program stops expanding: the Eastern Partnership will once again return, roughly, to the positions of the 2009 Prague Summit, when they turn into a pretty undefined program with unclear goals, uncertain instruments to achieve them and weak financing.

Path 3. Vilnius Eastern Partnership.

Scenario S4 is the course of events, where after core review of the Eastern Partnership program in EU main capitals, but without strong influence of economic situation in Europe and with current Latvian political elite remaining in power.

In that case, the contradiction remains between the positions of Brussels and Riga (behind whose back the US stand) on the issues of implementing EU Eastern policy. Europe is leaning towards more constructive and pragmatic shaping of this policy, including a more active dialogue with Russia. Yet, Brussels' intentions towards the renewed Eastern Partnership won't lead to compromise, because instead of economic might it will rely of political rationale. EU can find reserves to increase financial programs to boost its Eastern policy, which may be viewed with caution from Russia. Under these circumstances, it's fairly probable, that trilateral initiatives (EU-EaP partner state-Russia) still won't appear, while other initiatives, connected with this program and directed on development of Russia-Europe dialogue, at large extent will stay a formality.

Latvia's political elite, which after October 2014 election will only strengthen itself in the country's political hierarchy, will meet an opportunity to lobby the *Rinkēvičs model* of reforming the Eastern Partnership. There won't be financial barriers on the way of implementing this model – all difficulties will be purely of political sort, but Riga will try to solve this question. Applying Lithuanian EU

presidency experience, Latvia, while coming closer to the summit, can assume a confrontationist position against Russia in attempt to provoke a neighbor to make retaliatory steps or at least harsh criticism. The manipulation with the “Russian threat” once again for Latvia, just like other Baltic republics, will become a mechanism to extract resources from relations of stronger player and to attract attention to its local issues.

Together with provocations and corresponding answers from Russia, Riga will be pushing its own confrontationist program agenda in Brussels. These attempts will unlikely lead to drastic changes, although Latvian provocations may not come unnoticed for Russia-Europe relations in general. Under this course of events, Latvia takes over Lithuania’s status as a source of instability on the Eastern borders of the European Union. In turn, such specifics of Latvian presidency may even terminate the process of EU-Russian Federation economic integration.

Scenario S7 is the course of events, where the EU core won’t decide to change the Eastern Partnership vector, in Latvia the current elite will also remain in power, although the EU will face escalation of the economic crisis.

In this case, the Brussels-Riga vertical with regards to Eastern Partnership is shaped in harmony. EU leadership, according to scenario, assumes conservative positions, and, thus, the Eastern Partnership program will alter only toward the *20 Points* direction, which will be strictly negatively assessed by Russia, the conflict-generating nature of the program will grow.

Strengthening confrontation will find support among the Latvian political elite, relying on nationalist ideology, because gradual ejection of Russia from Eastern European region will comply with these politicians’ perception of Latvia’s strategic interests. In this sense, by the time the Riga Summit will get closer, the more frequent will be the radical statements made by politicians, calling Europe to unite in opposing the Eastern adversaries, and, probably, they will discover some sort of nominal “prize” for the “victor” in this fight. But, of course, the “prize” won’t be of Ukraine’s level, which was “assigned” to this role prior to the Vilnius Summit. Also Latvia will

be issuing consultations and recommendations on fast achieving of economic, energy, cultural and any other independence from Russia. Though this part of the program's implementation will be the most problematic if we consider the growth of economic problems in the EU. In the end, Riga, in accordance with the worsening of the European economic situation, will be forced to slow down the activity in the execution of more-for-more principle and the support of economic alienation of Eastern partner states from Russia. Also, Latvia will fail to lobby its idea in Brussels to offer EaP member states full-fledged EU membership – such offer amidst the economic crisis will contradict the economic security of the European Union itself. In turn, the lowering of the “financial offers” from EU will directly affect European integration sentiments in Eastern Partnership states, that will prefer to slow down the pace of their movement closer to Europe.

In the end, up to the Riga Summit Latvia will gain quite a controversial result of implementing Eastern policy. On one hand, in condition of economic restraints, important elements of the Eastern Partnership won't be carried out, some of them will remain ink on paper. On the other hand, on the political level relations with Russia will once again be heated with Latvia and the whole EU. Under created circumstances, a relevant objective will emerge for Europe to lower the current level of confrontation, and a strategic objective of mutual economic integration of EU and post-Soviet space states, including Russia, will be pushed aside for a long time.

Scenario S8 is the course, when further events after the Vilnius Summit won't be affected by any of the abovementioned factors: Brussels didn't rethink the Eastern Partnership, in Latvia the current elites remained in power, and the economic situation in EU remains at least stable.

In this case, we can expect, that before the Riga Summit on Eastern Partnership the *20 Points* ideas will start to be implemented, and they'll require additional financial contribution to ensure the interest of the post-Soviet republics to boost European integration under the more-for-more principle. Under such conditions, Brussels will meet the understanding of the majority of ideas, laid out in *Rinkēvičs*

model, maybe with the exception of transforming the program into Euro-Atlantic Eastern Partnership. Albeit actual US influence, possibly, will be increased, despite the fact, that American society itself barely understands, what interests can US follow in the said region: for example, according to SSI study, only one out of six Americans can at least correctly locate Ukraine on the world map⁶⁵. A question about accession of Eastern partners to EU in prospect will rise, but in very blurry wording to maintain the further interest of the republics to participate in the program.

Europe's active support of the reorientation of former Soviet republics' foreign policy vector to the West will cause Moscow's discontent and the exact mirrored resistance ranging from changing the conditions of energy supplies up to trade embargo against them. This in turn will cause retaliatory reaction from the EU, which will state the unacceptability of pressure and opposing the "independent" European choice of post-Soviet republics. The spiral of confrontation, thus, will spin up similarly to the growth of conflicts in Europe on the eve of the Vilnius Summit. Also similarly to that summit official Riga on the way of preparing its own Eastern Partnership meeting will be adhering to provoking rhetoric, also with the intent to legitimize further support of Eastern partners' drift to European integration through the increase of tensions in the Russia-Europe dialogue.

In result of implementation of such policy, post-Soviet states of Eastern Partnership will once again be faced with a choice: Europe and European integration or Russia and Eurasian integration. Regardless of the choice made, Eastern Partnership states will lose part of the benefits, possible in harmonious relations with both Eastern and Western partners. In this instance, forced European integration will lead to worsening of the economic situation in the Eastern Partnership republics along with social tension inside them, which will be restrained solely with European help.

Still it's impossible that somewhere events will start unfolding like the "Ukrainian scenario". In such conditions, the Riga Summit on Eastern Partnership

⁶⁵ The less Americans know about Ukraine's location, the more they want U.S. to intervene. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/04/07/the-less-americans-know-about-ukraines-location-the-more-they-want-u-s-to-intervene/>

may become a noteworthy event for Europe, but only because it will occur amidst the next wave of a “geopolitical game” for the right of influence in Eastern Europe, in other words at the backdrops of the confrontation growth on the international scene.

The third group of scenarios is characterized by their confrontationist nature. These scenarios will become reality if the Eastern Partnership will be implemented with the currently existing geopolitical decision-adopting logic, based on the winner-takes-all model. If events will revolve in this fashion, then there won't be political wellbeing for post-Soviet republics, which is EaP program's strategic objective. The repeat of “Lithuanian Eastern Partnership” can bring the opposite – the appearance of Ukrainian-type crises in other states. In global view, implementation of the EU Eastern policy with the logic of geopolitical confrontation inevitably will lead to escalation of political and diplomatic conflict between Europe and Russia, sparked up with provocative rhetoric of Latvia and Lithuania. The result of such a state of affairs will be the division of Europe into two opposing camps and incremental rehabilitation of Cold War principles in international politics. Inside Latvia we can expect a rapid rise in political tension, accompanied by the spirit of neo-McCarthyism toward opposition political forces, worsening condition of Russian-speaking “non-citizens”, ultimate crackdown on Russian-language media, increase of secret services' influence on political process, etc. Aside from that, one of the outcomes will be creation of additional serious threats for Latvia itself, which already now, due to its multiannual discrimination of Russian-speaking population, lives in fear of “new occupation” by Russia.

Conclusion

In such conditions, it's no surprise, that Russian distrust toward EaP is growing. Several experts assume, that “continuation of EaP policy by the European Union and its members can lead to growth of confrontation with Kremlin not only in 2014, but in the following years too, especially in the context of EU members’

positions getting close on the issue of Russia”⁶⁶.

Does it mean, they won't even take into account the fact, that **Eastern Partnership program has gradually mutated into the likes of a “political Frankenstein”** and its preservation in the current conflicted state will be fought for at any cost? In this sense, the continuation of the program at any cost may be explained as an attempt to frantically grab any backbone for the shaken Eurasia in US hegemonic politics.

Despite the political futility of blatantly rudimentary logic of Russia's deterrence, the program itself, just like all creations of the European bureaucracy, has administrative “life” and drivers, interested in dividends out of its further existence in any way. Firstly, programs of a different kind and institutions raise the control of social space. Secondly, they increase the structural weight and importance of European officials, whose survival directly depends on inclusion of new members into network structures. **The extensive nature of the European integration is more reminiscent to building financial pyramids – the system works as long as there are new members.** Thirdly, the Vilnius Summit was beneficial for the Lithuanian political circles mainly because it was not only one of the ways to get hands on the money flows, but also an opportunity to exploit “big politics” in their interests, involving European leaders into D. Grybauskaitė's presidential PR campaign. Though, the cases of Armenia and especially Ukraine don't give the possibility to reason the need and unconditional attractiveness of the EaP program. In its current execution the EaP program is perceived rather not as an initiative, carrying prosperity to target countries, but as a Pandora's box – a project capable of turning into political chaos and powerful social division and even breakup of states, like it happened in Ukraine. In this case, the EaP poses as an effective instrument of destroying the statehood in target countries, by launching within them uncontrolled destabilizing processes with strength able to lead to the deepest turbulence.

If Lithuania used all resources of its EU presidency to render the Eastern

⁶⁶ Толкдорф Д. ЕС, Россия и Восточное партнерство: новая динамика отношений при новом правительстве Германии? // Russie.Nei.Visions. Февраль 2014. URL: http://russiancouncil.ru/blogs/ifri/?id_4=987

Partnership with absolutely anti-Russian flavor, which led not only to the ineffectiveness of the program, but also to its insecurity for all EU (and **notably EU starts to acknowledge the provocative destructive role, which Lithuania played in the failure of the Eastern Partnership project**)⁶⁷, then Latvia faces the choice of which path of EU presidency to take.

If the initiative of the EaP program's disposal of the idea of creating a buffer zone against Russia will be confirmed, this, of course, will be Latvia's success in foreign policy. But will the "senior partners" allow Riga to do it? Regarding that, we should wait for the European Parliament election results and the formation of new European Commission, that will economically and politically define the future of the EaP. Because not only cosmetic corrections of this initiative are possible, but also its deep essential reshaping. Just like its commission for political "recycling".

Latvia landed with the special role as the European Union President in 2015 and the state hosting the next Eastern Partnership Summit. The changing of the development vector of the program may become the initial step in transition from current confrontation to cooperation of different parts of Europe. But to undertake this vitally needed complex review and reshaping of the program, one requires exceptional political courage, supplemented by understanding of the strategic importance and the need of Russia and European Union to come closer to each other. Especially now, after Crimea. The issue of whether such reshaping becomes reality, is influenced by various factors, and Latvia's own independent position and not the following the track of outsider interests can play both a positive and a negative part in it. During its presidency and the Eastern Partnership, Riga can choose the Lithuanian path, filled with the intention of total "deterrence" of Russia and, as result, conflict of interest with it, or to offer its own vision of the program, making its objective the harmonization of the interests of EU, Russia and other states of post-Soviet space. Judging from the possible scenarios of the course of international situation, Riga's choice can crucially influence the situation in all of Europe. If Latvia assumes the

⁶⁷ Banks M. Europe still "suffering from the aftershocks" of the break-up of the Soviet Union // European Business Review. April 2014. URL: <http://www.europeanbusinessreview.eu/page.asp?pid=1200>

positions of reshaping the Eastern Partnership, in this case, scenarios of rapid spread of political conflict will be blocked.

In case of Riga's transition to positions of a new, constructive Eastern Partnership Riga Summit in the worst instance will undergo as little-noticed event without adoption of any serious decisions and won't deteriorate the situation in Europe, and at maximum will become the first step to implement the idea of Big Europe, a united economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

What path will be chosen – in this case depends on Latvia itself, on positions of its political elite. The acting political leadership of the country is interested in continuation of the Eastern Partnership model, which already led to a crisis in Ukraine and will lead to an incremental resurgence of Cold War principles in international politics. Yet, there are adepts of a principally different approach, based not on theoretical constructs of buffers and cordon sanitaire, but on pragmatic substance mostly aimed on Latvia's own interests: at least at minimizing external political and economic risks, at most receiving profit shares from cooperation of European and Eurasian economic spaces. It's important, that this course of events, besides Latvia, is favorable to the Eastern partners too, capable to diversify their foreign policy, as well as to Russia and the European Union.

РОССИЙСКАЯ АССОЦИАЦИЯ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ НАУКИ

Тираж: 100 экз.

Москва, 2014.

